

socialist standard

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Flagging Hopes



Why the Greeks can't avoid austerity



Doing the
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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.

If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.



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Editorial

AUGUST 2015

Seven lean years

IT IS now seven years since the global economic crisis erupted that led to what is known euphemistically as the Great Recession. Overinvestment had brought about a crash in the housing market, in which poorer homeowners were unable to pay their home loans and newly-built houses could not be sold. The downturn spread to the rest of the economy, and with the sharp fall in production and employment that ensued, governments suffered a fall in tax revenue. Banks that had been lending heavily in this market found themselves laden with toxic loans that were not going to be repaid and were in danger of becoming insolvent. To avoid this, governments have had to step in and bail them out.

Governments had come to incur substantial budget deficits and to be saddled with large amounts of debt. Hence, the so-called era of austerity was ushered in, where governments introduced policies of mainly cutting expenditure on public and welfare services and raising some taxes. The impact of this austerity has largely fallen on the working class. Indeed, in the last few years, many capitalists have increased their wealth.

In the Eurozone, countries such as Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece had to seek bail outs from the Troika (The European Commission, The European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund). In return for cash, these countries have had to follow tough austerity policies. Greece has been particularly badly affected. Its people have had to endure five years of sharp falls in their living standards.

Of course, governments won't admit that the need for austerity measures arise from a crisis in the market system. They usually blame their predecessors or the fecklessness of the working class. The last coalition government in the UK, for instance, blamed overspending and financial mismanagement by the previous Labour government.

Some have argued that if the rich were made to pay more taxes, we could avoid austerity. This misses the point

that austerity measures are not just about improving the government's finances. It is hoped that by reducing the cost of running the state, and along with the fall in real wages that occur during a recession, the prospect of higher profits will encourage capitalists to invest more in production.

Movements have arisen which seek to challenge austerity. The Podemos movement in Spain, the People's Assembly in the UK and the Syriza coalition of different parties in Greece. In January of this year, Syriza were elected to office on a platform of rejecting Greece's bailout terms, opposing further cuts in public services and pensions and calling for debt relief. In response, Greece's creditors set out new bailout terms which offered no debt relief and would entail further cuts in public expenditure and reductions in pensions. On 5 July, 61 percent of those voting rejected these terms in a referendum called by the government. Despite this, Greece's creditors imposed tougher terms and after strong pressure from the ECB and other Eurozone finance ministers, the Greek government caved in and the new terms were ratified by the Greek Parliament.

In the UK, aside from the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Green Party, Sinn Fein and other smaller parties, Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North and a contender in the current Labour leadership contest, has pledged to oppose austerity. Were he, in the unlikely event, to become Prime Minister and try to put his policies into practice, he would find resistance from the markets. Investors would require a higher rate of interest before lending to the Government and there would probably be a run on the pound. He would be forced to make a climb down.

What this era of austerity has clearly shown, particularly in the case of Greece, is that in capitalism human welfare does not only come second place to profits, but it sometimes has to be sacrificed to it.

Harmony of the Hive Mind

WHEN YOU watch a really good band play a gig, you probably notice the rhythmically and harmonically 'tight' performance, the 100 percent focus and commitment, the way the players proceed in lock-step, almost as one mind. You know of course that this is an illusion created by many hours of painstaking rehearsal during which every element is calculated, measured, argued-over and scripted out, every variable is banished or budgeted for and all the words, chord structures and extempore passages are fixed and memorised. If you pay close attention you can even read the subtle signals passing between the various players who, behind the music, are 'talking' each other through the song.

Imagine for a moment that the players in this band were telepathic, not for show but for real. They wouldn't need to count in, or maintain eye contact, or rehearse endlessly. They wouldn't have to stick to the script in order to play perfectly. They wouldn't even need a script. Each of the players would share the others' thoughts as if present in their heads, though not in words because words take too long to process, but instead in abstract feelings or sensations, perhaps mixed with fragmentary visual images or fluctuations in mood. The effect would not be like a silent negotiation between individual minds but a single 'multi-mind' spontaneously thinking and acting.

Even better, suppose the audience was telepathic as well. Then they could become part of the band, ultimately blurring or abolishing the distinction between listener and performer, singing or creating rhythm or playing their own instruments, the whole consisting of balanced arrangements in controlled volumes without the need for a sound engineer. In short, a telepathic gig would be phenomenally good by anybody's standards. Rolling Stones? Oasis? Arctic Monkeys? Who they?

Well, you guessed it. Scientifically-speaking, something like this may be possible in the future. Recent work with monkeys showed that it was possible to connect the electrical output from the parts of their brains involved in movement so that they were able to move an object on a screen towards a desired goal, in order to get a reward (*New Scientist*, 18 July). Each of the three monkeys was connected via electrodes to a computer which allowed them to move the screen object in just one dimension. To move it successfully required synchronised thinking from all three monkeys, operating what the researchers dubbed a 'brainer'. Further work with rats showed that they could receive, store and transmit usable information to a computer, functioning as a parallel processing unit or 'hive mind'.

The world is wiring itself together at every level, from rats to neural networks to the 'internet of things'. Human telepathic control over these networks is the ultimate logical goal, albeit on the assumption of future background technology rather less obtrusive than today's clunky electrodes, scanners and wire cables. The description of a musical performance given above, though of course speculative, is meant as an analogue of any human endeavour requiring collective participation. Formal spoken languages would no longer be a barrier, and may for many purposes become redundant. The possibilities for science, engineering, games, learning and the arts are certainly beyond our present ability to predict, and nearly



beyond our ability to imagine.

There is one problem with all this, though it's not one that socialists will lose any sleep over.

The ability of humans to think collectively as a group-mind would be catastrophic for capitalism. All workers sharing their ideas, without language, labels, prejudices and egos getting in the way? It must be stopped at once. Divide and rule is what's needed to keep this market economy on the straight and narrow. Cut those monkey scientists' funding immediately!

Cyberspace in black and white

Apparently we're getting less spam in our emails these days, as anti-spam policing has for the first time since 2003 managed to cut it to below 50 percent of all email traffic (BBC Online, 18 July). Or rather the various spammers and phishers have finally twigged that we've all long since twigged, and their nasty little games don't work anymore. The bad news is that malware is on the increase, including the dreaded 'ransomware' (pay up, or never see your files again). So the arms race between

the black hats and the white hats (ie baddy hackers and goody hackers) continues to escalate in a war which is of course all about screwing money out of you. If you're not paying the black hatters, it's only because you're paying the white hatters. Maybe it's not the most pressing concern for socialism, but the lack of a profit incentive would mean pretty much the end of spam, of malware, even of all those hated passwords.



When do plutocrats get their wallets out?

From vague pixelated blur to stunning hi-res image, we've all followed with bated breath the passage of the New Horizons probe to distant Pluto to reveal its secrets. And its secret is now revealed – it's a cold, boring planetoid where nobody in their right mind would ever want to go. Still, it's amazing that the first moon probe was launched as recently as 1959, within the lifetime of many of our readers, and now every planet in the solar system has had close-up photo opportunities from the NASA paparazzi. Pluto, though, is about as far as we can realistically go unless someone invents a Star Trek-style warp drive. Even at New Horizon's record speed of 50,000mph it would take 100,000 years to reach our nearest stellar neighbour (*New Scientist*, 18 July).

Most socialists find science interesting and planetary exploration equally so, but unlike excitable media journalists they are not hopelessly confused about the reasons for it. Talk of public interest and selling science to school kids is all very worthy, but socialists know two things the journalists don't. First, space exploration is not funded by the public out of taxes, because those taxes ultimately derive from the rich, therefore it is the rich who are financing it. Second, the rich are doing it as a speculative investment to see what returns they can get out of it. Think science is purely the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake? Think again. That's not how the rich see it at all. They aim to get more rich, and investing in science – even those avenues that seem to offer no obvious profit potential – is the way to do it. Pluto, if you recall, as well as being the god of the underworld, was also the god of wealth.

PJS

Blacklisted

Dear Editors

I am glad you found our book *Blacklisted* had value (Book Reviews, July Socialist Standard). With the announcement last month of the Pitchford inquiry's terms of reference on undercover police officers, the point about calling for an inquiry is apposite.

One point I would raise (and Dave Smith may have a different view) is that we primarily set out to explain in detail the operation and effect of the construction blacklist. Part of that required putting that particular scandal in context – because it doesn't arrive from nowhere – but this isn't a comprehensive socio-economic analysis and doesn't pretend otherwise.

There is about half as much again that we left because it didn't drive our key narrative. For instance there is more on how the unions operated that we felt, ultimately, sent us off course. This is a book to be read and distributed and campaigned with and used to inform and, yes, entertain.

So, I think to some extent your comment about not calling for the abolition of wage slavery is a criticism of something we never pretended we would do. And I don't think every piece of work need have that call within it for it to be considered successful.

We are quite clear in the book that blacklisting is not an aberration but part of the mechanism of control deployed by corporations. We are explicit that the state is not neutral. We are also clear that there are reservations about the reformist approaches adopted by the Scottish Affairs Select Committee and some unions in this matter. The debates on this are part of the story of blacklisting.

People may use the information in the book to support or undermine whichever political approach they like – but they can't deny the scale, organisation and impact of blacklisting and that was our key objective.

I do hope we get more reviews which challenge us as yours has because it is only through debate that we can learn.

Phil Chamberlain, Associate Head of Dept for Broadcast and Journalism (acting), Bristol School of Film and Journalism

The problem is not the Tories, it's Capitalism

THE PROBLEM is not Austerity... that's just a turn of the screw. We have always been rationed by the size of our pay cheque and the poor have always been poor. It used to be Soup Kitchens; now it's Food Banks. Meanwhile the rich go on getting richer. We can't hope to end poverty and inequality – whether in Britain or throughout the planet – until we get rid of production of wealth for the exclusive profit of a few.



Tories...not the problem



The problem is not Trident... it's war. Getting rid of Trident makes barely a dent in the global killing machine fuelled by capitalism's wars over our bosses' markets and resources. A campaign against Trident alone leaves the cause of war – capitalism – untouched.

The problem is not Zero-Hours Contracts

... it's wage-slavery. Unions should fight for the best deal they can get. But let's not kid ourselves that the system of employment can ever be geared to our needs.

Some argue that we need to just focus on defeating the Tories. Or that we need to try and make capitalism work. Or that, to establish 'progressive politics', the Labour Party needs a leftwing leader or that Scotland needs to separate from England. We were once told us to put our trust in Tony Blair; now it's Nicola Sturgeon who's the great hope.

The fate of the Labour Party is an irrelevance. The rise of the SNP is a side show. Real political change has never come through leaders, and it never will. We have the potential to make real change rather than just tinker at the margins. So, let's start to end capitalism. Otherwise it's the same old same old.

As a poet once said, 'You are many – they are few'. We can make a democratic revolution – but only based on real understanding of how capitalism works against our interests, and how reforms of capitalism will always be offered in order to distract us. You just cannot challenge capitalism and reform it at the same time.



Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number —
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you —
Ye are many — they are few.

(Percy Bysshe Shelley)

Demos and rallies may make us feel like we are 'doing something', but it's an illusion. The real battle is over ideas: the ideas in the heads of those who do all the work but get little reward. That's why the rich and powerful spend so much time trying to suppress and ridicule any idea of an alternative

The world is rich enough. We can have a world where free access to wealth replaces the market, where useful work is to be enjoyed rather than endured, and where no individual can monopolise access to wealth. Armed with knowledge, humanity can finally start to demand the possible.

– adapted from a leaflet issued by our Glasgow branch.



Fellow African, why do you believe this hogwash?

ALTHOUGH WHOEVER wrote the Bible wrote it all by rote, they did not write it right. At best it is a history of the Jews, their neighbours and their beliefs, tragically misunderstood, misinterpreted by psychologically defeated, timid, brainwashed and gullible Africans.

The story of Eden, Adam and ensuing events depicts an area and a primitive tribe, like all primitive (ancient) peoples, and primitive geography, who were not aware of the existence of other people and remote regions, and in other cases completely detached from them. Note that the Bible map is confined to the far north Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya), Middle East and a few neighbouring areas. That is why (I stand to be corrected) I have yet to come across in the Bible the fate of London, Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, Maputo, Harare, Gaborone, Cape Town, unlike the fate of Jerusalem.

Sadly, religion in Africa is mistaken for morals and yet it is the epitome of arrogance and selfishness, eg. read the silly talk 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' No, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead' (Matthew 8:21-22). To admire such in this era calls for the suspension of logic. Why would anyone now and 10,000 km away despise my relatives and friends and emulate/adore an arrogant, primitive egoist who is said to have died more than 2,000 years ago? But to the majority African the 'second coming' is real, and hell is real. Despite endless strife in Jerusalem, my ill-learned black apostles sing daily that they will soon join mighty Jesus in Jerusalem (I could send you tons of discs of 'circus' like events, mainly being prayers and spiritual healing sessions).

The so-called 'second coming' is based on false primitive dreams and hallucinations. The prophecies are mere prognostications based on previous events. Since the events leading to the condemnation of Galileo by Christians the majority of Westerners have come to realise that all phenomena considered mysterious and transcendental, are mathematically, scientifically proved (or disproved) and predictable. Unlike 'waffling' prophets (generalising/prognosticating on previous events) scientists can accurately forecast some natural events to the exact minute and place. I recall, eg. in June 2001 and on 9 December 2002 (here in Zimbabwe a total eclipse of

the sun at the exact place and time). Nothing mystical as per the religionists.

And what then happened to the very communicative 'God of Israel', always forewarning on events to come? It is strange that after

'sacrificing his only son' to end sin and strife, there is worse sin and strife; Jerusalem is most certainly not a quiet habitation (Isaiah 9) (Gaborone is, but never known by the Lord). Is he the same kind Lord now sitting quietly in eternal peace in Jerusalem (on Mount Zion) dispensing without forewarning storms, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, landslides, causing great suffering/deaths, which he could prevent (if he wanted as suggested by religion), just to prove his might? As much as he sacrificed his only son to save the world – which was never saved – and to make Israel the greatest nation, which was almost wiped out by Hitler instead. So much for propagating and adhering to primitive dogma based on archaic dreamers submissive to illusions and hallucinations.

Brethren, and some religious zealots elsewhere, do not realise that the unending strife in the Middle East (current changes of leaders aside) now spreading to north Africa, is sustained by adherence to such primitive bigotry, dogma and propagating mythical tribal superiority. *Brothers and sisters, all religion is rubbish. A prayer is a wish!* For sure, we cannot live without wishes. However fervent our wishes and prayers, they can never erect an imaginary thing into something tangible. Heaven and Hell never exist.

The socio-political systems adopted by all so-called independent African leaders and governments are based on capitalism as learned in many cases from former colonial masters. Counties have been 'won back' soon after hoisting their 'own flag' and for decades the masses will celebrate this flapping piece of cloth, realising too late that they have entrenched the same old oppressive robbery. Only the complexion, the individual politicians or the religious diversions will have changed.

GODWIN HATITYE, ZIMBABWE



It doesn't take a mystic...



Man dressed up as witch doctor in Seattle



Man dressed up as witch doctor in Rome



The other Adam Smith

'SOCIALIST FLAT-EARTHERS must wake up to reality,' ran the headline in an article in the *Times* (11 June) by ex-Tory MP Matthew Parris, 'Capitalism has conclusively won the day but Conservatives need to get over their reluctance to defend private profit.' According to him, 'free-market economics' has been proved right compared with 'socialist economics' just as Darwin's theory of evolution has when compared with creationism; so 'socialist economics' should be treated in the same way as creationism.

'This century's intellectual consensus should show Marxism the door. Whether strictly defined as public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, or more loosely as state direction of the "commanding heights" of the economy, socialism must be counted as definitively discredited.'

He's talking about state-run capitalism of course, not genuine socialism. As a way of running capitalism it could be said to have failed (certainly failed to improve workers' lives), though not to the extent that Parris suggests. The state is involved so much today in the running of capitalism, via taxes, subsidies, regulations, laws and economic policies, that to call the modern capitalist economy a 'free-market' is a misnomer. It's a state-regulated production for profit market economy.

Basic to any form of capitalism is the pursuit of profit. This is what drives the economy, whether it is the private profit of private capitalist firms or the surplus of state-owned industries. Where, as in most countries currently, most industry is owned and operated by private enterprises, governments have to recognise that these enterprises have to be allowed to pursue profits. All governments have to be 'business-friendly' to avoid provoking an economic slowdown. As Parris put it,

'You cannot have free-market economics without the profit motive. You cannot have the profit motive without letting the pursuit of private profit weave itself intimately into the fabric of ordinary citizens' lives.'

He wants Adam Smith to be taught in schools in the same way Darwin is 'as a scientist whose analysis is now the consensus amongst most thinking people.' Smith certainly tried to analyse in a scientific way the market economy that operated in his day and he did correctly conclude that, under it, 'it is only for the sake of profit that any man employs a profit in support of industry' and that:

'The consideration of his own private profit is the sole motive which determines the owner of any capital to employ it either in agriculture, in manufactures, or in some particular branch of the wholesale or retail trade.'

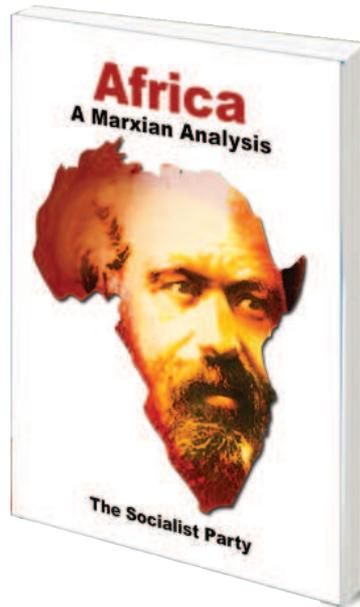
There is no harm in teaching this scientifically-established fact in schools, irrespective of whether or not this is considered the best way to organise the production and distribution of wealth (which it isn't but it's what we've got). There are other things in Smith. He outlined a labour theory of value (Marx got the idea from him) and suggested that it was labour that added value to materials in the course of production and that this was the source of profits as well as wages. As he put it:

'The value which the workmen add to the materials ... resolves itself ... into two parts, of which the one pays their wages, the other the profits of their employer He could have no interest to employ them unless he expected from the sale of their work something more than what was sufficient to replace his stock to him.'

Labour as the source of profits! This may explain the reluctance that Parris noted of supporters of capitalism to defend private profit as this would have to involve defending the exploitation of labour.

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Africa A Marxian Analysis



This pamphlet is made up of articles on Africa, mainly written by socialists from that part of the world, that originally appeared in the *Socialist Standard*.

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THE 193-member General Assembly, the UN's highest policy-making body, declared water and sanitation a basic human right in July 2010. The United States, Britain, Australia, Austria, Canada, Greece, Sweden, Japan, Israel, South Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Ireland all abstained. It has remained a pious resolution, a human 'right' that is yet to be implemented. Most developing nations have fallen short of meeting their goals on sanitation and the world's poorest countries have been lagging far behind, according to a UN report (reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Progress_on_Sanitation_and_Drinking_Water_2015_Update_.pdf).

The world has missed the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target by nearly 700 million people. The UN has now vowed that the practice of open defecation must be totally eliminated by 2025 (yet another example of wishful thinking). One in three people, or 2.4 billion worldwide, are still without sanitation facilities – including 946 million people who defecate in the open. The report says progress on sanitation has been hampered by inadequate investments in behaviour-change campaigns, lack of affordable products for the poor, and social norms which accept or even encourage open defecation. Today, only 68 percent of the world's population uses an improved sanitation facility – below the MDG target of 77 per cent. At present rates of progress it would take 300 years for everyone in Sub-Saharan Africa to get access to a sanitary toilet, said the report. More optimistically in Cambodia latrine coverage has been increasing by 1.3 percent per year – a growth rate at which it could take more than 60 years for the country to be 'Open Defecation Free.'

There are 41 million people who do not have access to a toilet in Pakistan and as a result they are defecating in the open. In India alone, there are nearly 600 million people (out of a total population of over 1.2 billion) without access to sanitation, according to the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. The Indian 2011 census found that nearly 70 percent of rural households, as well as over 18 percent of homes in towns and cities, don't have toilets.

The study says diarrheal disease, largely caused by poor sanitation and hygiene, is a leading cause of malnutrition,



The sign reads: "Don't defecate in the open. Don't put your life at risk"

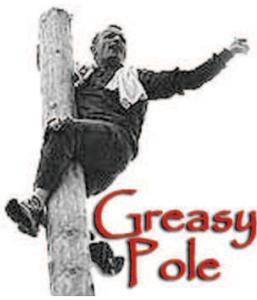
stunting and child mortality, claiming nearly 600,000 under-five lives every year. Where there is open defecation, pathogens spread quickly, causing diarrhoea, cholera, bilharzia (caused by freshwater worms) and other diseases. More than 1,400 children die each day of diarrhoea-related diseases linked to a lack of safe water, basic sanitation and good hygiene.

Inadequate facilities also affect education and economic productivity and impact the dignity and personal safety of women and girls. Women across rural India are stalked by sexual predators and raped or molested when they venture out into the fields at night. In one such incident two teenage girls from the village of Katra Shadatganj (228 km southwest of New Delhi), were raped and hung from trees. Since then, at least four other similar cases have been reported in the same region. It subsequently emerged that each of these women came from homes that did not have toilets, and were accosted while attempting to relieve

themselves at night. The truth is that the ruling elite (that's the government and multinational corporations who own the country) do not care for those living in abject destitution. India is the world's biggest arms importer. It budgets tens of millions on a Mars space programme. It is spending its money on crap. As far back as 1925 Gandhi said 'Sanitation is more important than independence'.

The spectacle of 'socialists' seeking to improve capitalism on behalf of the ruling class has a long history. During the early 20th century in America grew a movement called 'sewer socialism.' In the Britain the term was 'municipal socialism'. It sought to reform capitalism on the local level by cleaning up neighbourhoods with new sanitation systems and municipally-owned water supplies. But 'sewer socialism' has gone down the stinking drain as a step in the direction of socialism. The socialist transformation of the political and economic system is absolutely necessary to stop the waste of valuable resources on senseless wars and to raise the living standards and quality of life of the vast majority of the population. A socialist party deserves the name only to the extent that it acts towards that necessary social revolution, nothing less. Capitalism is shit: let's flush it down the toilet.

ALJO



Liam Byrne out of the shadows

IT WILL not be found on the notice boards in any of Iain Duncan Smith's Job Centres nor in the Situations Vacant column of the popular press

but a needy job-seeker may be interested in the Labour Party's search for someone to perform the miracle of reviving their hopes as a validly contesting political party. One who has yet to expose all his talents for this is Liam Byrne who offers a CV which, although defiled by his failure to get things right, includes an impressive history of governmental jobs. Between 2010 and 2013 he was Shadow for four ministerial posts, including the prestigious Chief Secretary to the Treasury. And before then, between 2005 and 2010 he was in charge at eight ministries. Whatever stress he experienced in those jobs his reputation, with one or two embarrassing lapses, endured pretty well. In *A Journey* Tony Blair described him as one of the '...smart, young professionals' he was able to encourage into Parliament and onto the Greasy Pole. When Blair escaped from those nightmare days of Labour staggering towards the end, management of the dismal chaos known as the British economy passed to Alistair Darling and Byrne was promoted to Chief Secretary. In his account of those times – *Back From The Brink* – Darling cherished his memory of Byrne: 'I assumed at first that this was the latest No. 10 attempt to keep an eye on me. I was wrong. Very quickly, Liam became a staunch supporter of my argument against the simplistic "investment versus cuts" narrative. He worked hard to build a credible plan to cut the deficit'.



Liam Byrne

Immigrants

But overall Byrne's record is not unblemished. In November 2006 he oversaw a retrospective change in the Immigration Rules designed to ensure that those who had come here under the Higher Skills Migrant Programme were prevented from staying unless they could show that they had earned at least £32,000 a year and had a 'good knowledge' of English. This 'moving of the goalposts' was denounced by the Parliamentary Joint Commission on Human Rights as 'clearly incompatible' with the existing legislation and it was overturned on appeal. The whole affair would not have sat easily with Byrne's constituency of Birmingham Hodge Hill and its predominantly Asian inner city. The area is classified as having a 'high percentage' of people dependent on what Duncan Smith calls 'benefits' and a housing situation which rates it as one of the highest in West Midlands for 'Multiple Deprivation'. This grim picture did not deter Byrne from claiming the maximum MP's allowance while he moved from one luxury London flat to another – one of which cost £2400 a month in rent – while he looked for somewhere more permanent. During the summer recess he used hotels and claimed £400 a month for food and for service dinners.

Instructions

In 2006, when he became Minister of State at the Home Office Byrne decided that his staff - his civil servants – would need some firm and comprehensive instructions

on the essential details of an efficient organisation. He composed an eleven-page document which he later took with him to other ministries. To begin with, his room should be cleared before he got there in the morning. All briefings should be in large 16 point font. 'Never put anything to me unless you understand it and can explain it to me in 60 seconds'. Among the rules are some which pointedly reveal much about the true function of government as required by the elements of capitalist society: 'Money is the root of all progress. Finances are a vital part of the initiation conversations'. And when it comes to an expression of the contempt in which the working people of capitalism are held he orders that 'Key messages must be set out in 'big speeches' and repeated at every, repeat every, opportunity'. Which brings us to the passage about the comforts and security which the minister needs: 'I am' he informs them 'addicted to coffee. I like a cappuccino when I come in, an espresso at 3 pm and soup at 12.30 – 1 pm.' One MP described it as 'a briefing note for slaves'. In defence a spokesman for Byrne countered that he is '...a highly efficient minister but has become more flexible since then. Some days, he has his soup at 1.30pm'.

No Money

In the coalition after the 2010 election Byrne was replaced at the Treasury by the Lib Dem David Laws. In a clumsy attempt to make light of Labour's rejection Byrne left a brief note: 'I'm afraid there is no money. Kind regards and good luck'. But Laws was not amused and publicised the missive so that it was widely interpreted as derisive and contemptuous – which left Byrne 'haunted' by his mistake offering a 'friendly word' to his successor in their 'first day in one of the government's hardest jobs'. Among all this posturing a number of significant facts were neglected. Byrne was not the first Minister at the Treasury to act in that way and it had even become something of a tradition; for example the Tory Reginald Maudling told his successor James Callaghan that he was '...sorry to leave it in such a mess, old cock'. And David Laws lasted only 17 days at the Treasury after being exposed by the Parliamentary Standards and Privileges Committee as responsible for '...a series of serious breaches of the rules, over a considerable period of time'.

Changes

In January, anticipating the election, Byrne conducted a coach tour of supporters through Essex, where he grew up and which then threatened to be UKIP territory. His theme was clear: 'Ed (Miliband) has very firmly put young people at the core of our election campaign... right now (this country) needs young people's creativity and optimism as never before...' But then came the election and soon afterwards, on 14 June in *The Sunday Times* he was promoting a different line, in a different tone: '...we must be the party of older voters, not just the young... Labour faces a demographic timebomb unless we transform our standing with older voters... if the next Labour leader does not connect with older people – especially older women – then quite simply we will lose again... Let labour's changes begin'. How often have we suffered this same message from some desolate Labour politician, when their intention is to maintain this same callous way of life?

IVAN

Greece , Austerity, and Capitalism

When Syriza won the elections in Greece in January on a 'No to Austerity' platform left-wing opponents of austerity throughout Europe were delighted. If they can do it, so we can', they chanted. Yes, but do what? Saying 'No' to austerity is one thing. Ending it is another.

Why there is austerity

Knowing how capitalism works, we were sceptical; maybe Syriza could mitigate austerity a little for some workers, but end it, no. 'Austerity', ie. cutting back on government spending, is a policy that all governments are obliged to apply when capitalism is in one of its periodic downturns, at least if they don't want to make the situation worse.

The capitalist economy is driven by business investment and businesses only invest with a view to making a profit. A slump is an expression of the fact that, for one reason or another, production on the previous scale is no longer profitable. The only way that capitalism can get out of a slump is if profitability is restored. The main way this comes about is through the devaluation of capital assets: some firms go under and their assets pass cheaply to rivals, which means that less profit needs to be made to achieve the previous rate of profit on capital invested.

Another factor increasing profitability is the fall in labour costs: with higher unemployment there is a downward pressure on wages. The government can help by reducing taxes on profits as businesses are only interested in after-tax profits. But, as in the end all taxation falls on profits and property by

being passed on to them wherever it initially falls, it isn't just by decreasing direct taxes on profits that the government can help. It can also reduce taxation generally by cutting its own spending, including on 'welfare' and 'benefits' for workers, undoing past social reforms.

Besides the pressure to reduce taxation to help restore profitability, governments are under an additional pressure in a slump to cut their spending. With the fall in economic activity there is also a fall in their tax receipts.

All this is why governments can be legitimately said to be 'obliged' to pursue a policy of austerity in a slump. Of course governments have the power, both in law and in theory, to decide not to do this. But the consequence would be that they would make things worse, by prolonging and perhaps deepening the slump in economic activity.

More government spending no way out

Those who say that a government should refuse to impose austerity in a slump offer a seemingly plausible and common sense argument: as total purchasing power falls in a slump, increase government spending to compensate and that will get the economy growing again. Surely, reducing it only makes matters worse? If capitalism was a system driven by paying demand this might make sense. But it's not. It's driven by business investment for profit. It's the effect of increased government spending on this that's relevant. The key question is: where is the government to get the extra money to increase its spending from?

As governments don't produce anything themselves (except marginally if they happen to directly operate some profit-seeking business) there are only three possible sources: taxation, borrowing, or the printing press.

Since all taxation falls in the end on profits, increasing it will have an adverse effect on business investment for profit, which is what drives the capitalist economy.

Borrowing needn't have this effect, but the interest on the extra borrowing would have to come out of taxation (as would in the end repaying the loans).

Printing more money might give a temporary boost to production,



but would eventually lead to a rise in prices, creating other economic problems such as making exports more expensive and so less competitive; imports would be cheaper so threatening the jobs too of workers employed by businesses producing for the home market.

So, however financed, government spending in a slump is not a way out of it. When tried, as with the Labour governments in Britain in the 60s and 70s and with Mitterrand in France in the early 80s, it hasn't worked. The economic situation got worse and the governments which tried it had to resort to austerity. Basically, both theory and practice demonstrate that there is no way in a slump in which a government can avoid imposing austerity without making things worse.



Printing money: gives a temporary boost to production, but eventually leads to a rise in prices

Greek debts

The Greek state was hit particularly hard by the crash of 2008 because, with the drop in economic activity that followed, its revenue from taxes fell while its debt – what it owed those who had lent it money by buying its bonds – increased as, like other states, it had to borrow money to bail out its banks.

Critics have blamed the scale of the problem on the profligacy of the Greek State, even on the Greek people in general, for borrowing and spending money recklessly. But it takes two to tango and in the period up to 2008 banks from other European countries were buying Greek government bonds as part of the general lending spree which nobody thought would end. If there were reckless spenders there were also reckless lenders. But the

“Austerity is a prime example of the capitalist imperative to put Profits before People”

economic boom did end and it is this that has caused the Greek sovereign debt problem. In fact the various Greek bail-outs are aimed at bailing out the Greek government's creditors as well as the Greek government.

Other European countries, whether or not they were in the Eurozone or even the EU (think Iceland), suffered from a similar problem, even if not on the same scale, and adopted austerity to try to deal with it.

The Eurozone is basically an agreement between the EU Member-States involved to maintain a fixed exchange rate between their

a productive reconstruction of the economy' (13 July).

But it's a delusion. If Greece withdrew from the euro, it still could not escape austerity. It would just take a different political form and could even be worse. Tsipras and most of Syriza seem to have realised this or at least were not prepared to put it to the test and preferred to have it imposed from Berlin. And just where would the money to finance 'a productive reconstruction of the economy' come from? Maybe Lapavitsas is thinking of the same sort of state-capitalist siege economy as in Cuba (or formerly in Russia and East Europe), as if that avoids austerity.

Incompatible with capitalism

According to Nigel Farage the deal imposed on the Greece government 'shows that national democracy and membership of the Eurozone are incompatible' (*Times*, 14 July). Others, from the left as well as the right, have made the same point, but it's misleading. If Greece withdrew from the Eurozone – or if Britain withdrew from the EU – the trappings of 'national democracy' would be restored, but what its 'sovereign' government would be able to do would still be restricted by the pressures of capitalism in a slump. Austerity would still be the order of the day, only it would now be decided by an independent decision of a government exercising unrestricted sovereignty.

The Greek deal does show an incompatibility between democracy and capitalism. The Greek people voted 'No' to austerity twice – when they elected the Syriza government in January and when they voted OXI in the 5 July referendum – but it made no difference. They still got austerity. The people may propose, but capitalism disposes.

It's not just carrying out democratically-made decisions that is incompatible with capitalism. It's also meeting human needs. In April the Greek parliament appointed a Truth Committee on Public Debt (on which Trotskyist economists such as Eric Toussaint and Michel Husson were appointed, as if Syriza wasn't stuffed full of its own left-wing economists). In its preliminary report in June (cadtm.org/Preliminary-Report-of-the-Truth) it argued that most of the Greek debt was 'illegal, illegitimate

(Continued on page 17)

Six Days Shalt Thou Labour, and on the Seventh ...

Workers in the retail industry will be relieved that George Osborne's recent budget plan allowing shops to increase Sunday trading hours is being hampered by the fact that there are only 24 hours in a Sunday in which it is possible to make them work.

Ever since the 1950 Shops Act, which gave retail workers specified meal breaks, a half-day holiday each week and time off in lieu of Sunday work, there have, of course, been numerous attacks on their working hours and conditions, including Thatcher's 1986 Shops Bill, though this was defeated when rebel Tory and Labour MPs joined forces and were backed by the Church of England and a religious campaign group.

But governments have not always taken the same view of Sunday trading. In 1855, after complaints in the House of Lords that five million people had become estranged not only from the Church but from Christianity, Lord Robert Grosvenor's 'Sunday Trading Bill' was introduced in an attempt to herd them back into church.

It failed, and it kicked off a series of protests which led, eventually, to the establishment of Speakers' Corner in London as a place of Sunday working class discussion and debate.

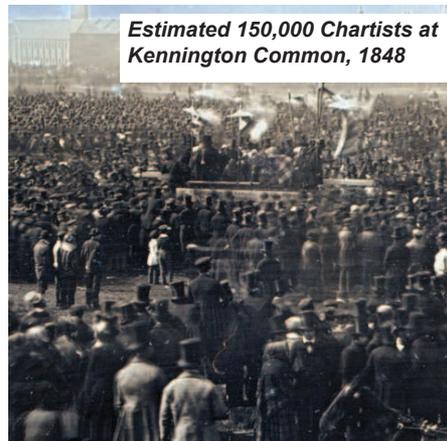
The Bill was designed to prevent small traders on whom the poor were totally dependent from doing business on Sundays. Large shops remained closed anyway, and since the normal working week was six days with wages being paid late on Saturday, the Bill would be irrelevant to the rich but cause real hardship to the poor. When this was pointed out Grosvenor's response was that 'the aristocracy are largely refraining from employing its servants and horses on Sundays'.

The timing of his Bill was not good.

'Bread riots' protesting at widespread poverty had recently taken place in Liverpool and London, and the 'Beer Bill' restricting Sunday trading hours in the places where workers met to socialise had just been passed.

Notices drawn up by the Chartists soon appeared around London announcing that a public meeting was to be held in Hyde Park on the following Sunday:

'New Sunday Bill prohibiting newspapers, shaving, smoking, eating and drinking and all kinds of recreation and nourishment, both corporal and spiritual, which the poor people still enjoy at the present time. An open-air meeting of artisans, workers and 'the lower orders' generally of the capital will take place



in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon to see how religiously the aristocracy is observing the Sabbath, and how anxious it is not to employ its servants and horses on that day, as Lord Robert Grosvenor said in his speech. The meeting is called for three o'clock on the right bank of the Serpentine on the side towards Kensington Gardens. Come and bring your wives and children in order that they may profit by the example their 'betters' set them!'

Hyde Park, on a Sunday afternoon in June, would have been swarming

with London's high society parading their horses, carriages and uniformed flunkies. But on this occasion, as witnessed by Karl Marx who was in attendance:

'At three o'clock approximately 50,000 people had gathered... Gradually the assembled multitude swelled to a total of at least 200,000... The police who were present in force were obviously endeavouring to deprive the organisers of the meeting of what Archimedes had asked for to move the earth, namely, a place to stand upon. Finally a rather large crowd made a firm stand and Bligh, the Chartist, constituted himself chairman on a small eminence in the midst of the throng.

No sooner had he began his harangue than Police Inspector Banks at the head of 40 truncheon-swinging constables explained to him that the Park was the private property of the Crown and that no meeting might be held in it. After some pourparlers in which Bligh sought to demonstrate to him that parks were public property and in which Banks rejoined he had strict orders to arrest him if he should insist on carrying out his intention, Bligh shouted amidst the bellowing of the masses surrounding him, 'Her Majesty's police declare that Hyde Park is private property of the Crown and that her Majesty is unwilling to let her land be used by the people for their meetings'.

...Suddenly shouts could be heard on all sides: 'Let's go to the road, to the carriages!'. The heaping of insults upon horse riders and occupants of carriages had meanwhile already begun...The procession of elegant ladies and gentlemen; 'commoners and Lords', in their high coaches-and-four with liveried lackeys in front and behind, joined, to be sure, by a few mounted venerables

Interior of the Great Exhibition, in the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, 1851



slightly under the weather from the effects of wine, did not this time pass by in review but played the role of involuntary actors who were made to run the gauntlet. A babel of jeering, taunting, discordant ejaculations, in which no language is as rich as English, soon bore down on them from both sides... To this must be added outbursts of genuine old-English humour peculiarly mixed with long-contained seething wrath. 'Go to church!' were the only articulate sounds that could be distinguished. One lady soothingly offered a prayer-book in Orthodox binding from her carriage in her outstretched hand. 'Give it to your horses to read!' came the thundering reply, echoing a thousand voices... The spectacle lasted three hours' ('Anti-Church Movement', *Neue Oder-Zeitung*, 28 June 1855).

The following day's *Morning Post* reported the events: 'A spectacle both disgraceful and dangerous in the extreme has taken place in Hyde Park, an open violation of law and decency... an illegal interference by physical force in the free action of the Legislature... This scene must not be allowed to be repeated'. It added however, that the 'fanatical' Lord Grosvenor was solely responsible for provoking the 'just indignation of the people'.

Lord Grosvenor, however, not only refused to withdraw the Bill but

re-stated his determination to press it through. The chartists responded with a handbill for another meeting the following Sunday.

'Lord Robert Grosvenor wishes to drive us all to church! Let us go to church with Lord Grosvenor next Sunday morning! We can attend on his Lordship at Park Lane at half-past ten: 'go to church' with him, then go home to dinner, and be back in time to see 'our friends' in Hyde Park. Come in your best clothes, as his lordship is very particular'.

On Sunday a notice banning the meeting, signed by Sir Richard Mayne, the Commissioner of Police, was attached to The Park gates. The crowds, however, poured in. According to the following morning's *Times* 'By half-past two o'clock there must have been nearly 150,000 men, women and children present.... The proceedings began by the usual stump oratory, which continued for some time, until a cry of 'the Police' being raised put an abrupt termination to it'.



Carriages in Rotten Row, Hyde Park, c.1890



High Society in Hyde Park, c.1875

'The police' had arrived in the form of Sir Richard Mayne on horseback, plus approximately 800 truncheon-wielding officers determined to enforce the ban. With the meeting abandoned, the assembly again turned their attention to the spectacle of the wealthy parading up and down in their carriages. This time the police charged the crowd. Over 100 arrests were made and dozens were injured, one fatally.

The following day Lord Grosvenor withdrew the Bill and confessed to being in 'rather an awkward predicament'. The intention of his Bill, he said, had been merely to increase the amount of holidays to the 'overtaxed thousands of the Metropolis'

For several weeks things were fairly calm with a few sporadic meetings held at which the police kept a low profile. After a while, however, police renewed their intervention. Eventually a notice was issued, signed by the Commissioner of Police banning public meeting from all London Parks. It warned, 'All necessary measures will be adopted to prevent any such meeting, or assemblage'.

No more meetings were held for several years. In 1866, however, the Reform League announced that a meeting was to be held in Hyde Park on 2 July.

Mayne at first announced that the ban would be enforced, but at the last minute relented and the meeting, attended by about 50,000, went ahead. A further, evening meeting was announced. This time Mayne was determined to prevent it. The ban was reissued and promptly declared invalid by Edmond Beales, a barrister and President of the Reform League claiming the Park was the

'property of the nation'.

On the evening of the meeting the arriving crowd was met by about 1,700 police officers mounted and on foot, and the gates locked. A large crowd had already assembled inside and were unable to leave. When Beales and other leaders of the Reform League arrived the crowd attempted to force open the gates and enter, and the police, according to the *Times* 'used their staves freely to defeat this attempt'.

It was suggested that the meeting be transferred to Trafalgar Square, and Beales and the leadership set off in their cabs. The vast majority of the crowd however, some who had walked miles to be there, were in no mood for this and determined to hold a meeting, proceeded to pull down the railings and enter the Park.

The first breach was made in Bayswater Road, followed by several more along Park Lane. And, according to the *Times*, 'The police

brought their truncheons into active use, and a number of the roughs were somewhat severely handled'. The *Morning Star* reported that the police had used their truncheons 'like savages who, having been under temporary control, were now at full liberty to break heads and cut open faces to their hearts content'. But despite numerous and severe injuries, and dozens of arrests, the crowd flooded in.

The Grenadier Guards and the Life Guards were rushed in to back up the police, but were ineffective. The meetings and speeches were in full swing and could not be prevented.

The Reform League then called a meeting for 6 May 1867. Walpole, the Home Secretary, immediately announced a ban, to be backed up with the appointment of 12,000 special constables, together with whatever regular police and military force necessary. It was obvious though, and Walpole realised it, that the ban would be ignored. At the last moment it was lifted.

Over 150,000 people marched into Hyde Park on 6 May. The police and troops stood by and watched as the massive rally took place - peacefully and calmly. The following morning Walpole resigned.

Finally, in 1872, in an attempt to dress up their defeat as an act of benevolence, the 'Royal Parks and Gardens Act' was announced, which they claimed, and still claim to this day, gave the right to hold meetings in the public parks.

In fact, this right was never *given*. The government used everything in its power (including the use of the army) to prevent the public meeting to discuss their concerns. The right to free speech in the public parks had to be *taken*. And paid for with working class blood.

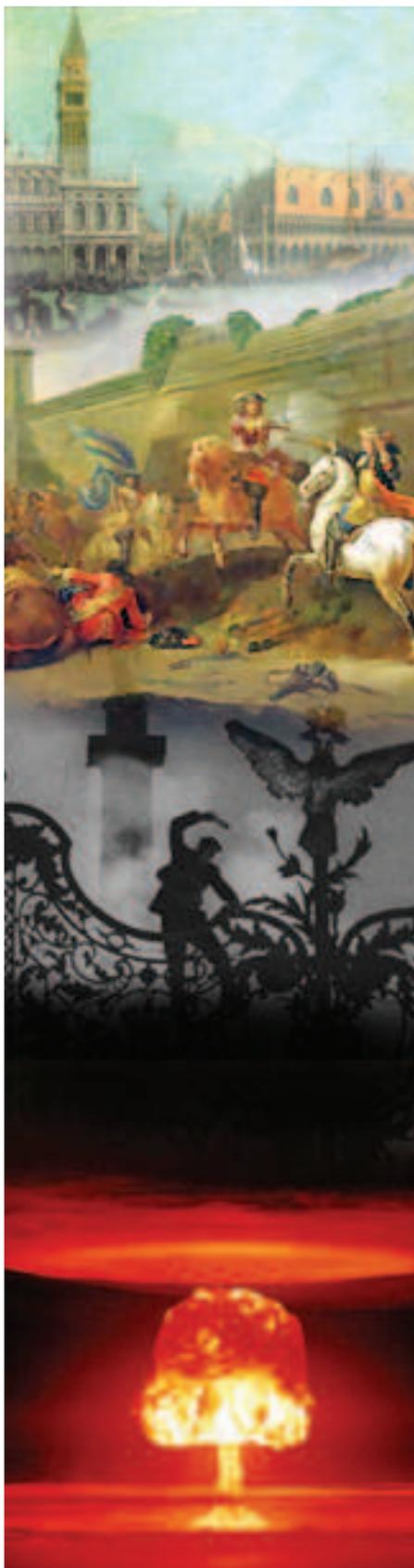
NICK WHITE



Speakers' Corner, 1944

Past Present and *Future*

We examine key changes in society and why they happen, using a Marxist perspective.



An essential part of the socialist analysis of our world is the intellectual grasp of its restless dynamic of change. Everything is in the process of becoming something else: an acorn becomes a seedling which becomes a tree which becomes a home to animals and produces acorns which those animals bury to become seedlings. A star explodes and seeds space with dust that becomes other stars and planets which develop life from that stardust. In any single object, and the abstraction that we use to comprehend it, we can see that it is composed of the memory of its conception together with the seeds of its future.

To restrict the understanding of anything to just its present form would be very misleading. When we look at a baby we think of the adult it will become, when we see beauty we are conscious of its inevitable corruption by age and when we look at a building under construction we imagine its final façade; we see the piles of bricks as what they will become just as an archaeologist will see a less structured pile as what it once was. Cultural and political history are subject to the same dynamic – although reactionary ideology is dedicated to denying this obvious truth. We are told that capitalism is the paradigm of human cultural achievement and that any denial of this, especially with reference to the universal dynamic of change already described, is hopelessly idealistic and politically destructive. People say to socialists: ‘how can you possibly be sure that what you advocate will be better than what we have now?’ or ‘the revolution will only make things worse’. Nobody can look into the future with absolute clarity but if we’re correct in our belief that everything is composed of both its past and possible future, then can an analysis of the present give us some reliable clues as to our future? What are the elements within the present that give socialists the confidence to believe that the new world is emerging within the womb of the old?

Looking at the past we can see elements of our present within it; cities built on trade such as Venice, London and Amsterdam were developing a flourishing merchant class during Europe’s renaissance and the reformation periods. The wealth of this emerging ‘bourgeoisie’ gave them the means to challenge the power of the ‘ancient regime’ of the King and aristocracy. The technologies of navigation, steam power and the mechanisation of production gave rise to this emerging ‘middle class’ and the economics of capitalism which today is ubiquitous in every part of human existence. Of course the rise to political

power of this new class did not go unchallenged and the resulting struggle we call ‘the bourgeois revolutions’.

Class struggle

Using this perspective of history we can see that technological change leads to new forms of production which in turn creates new economic relationships between members of a community. When such a new group or ‘class’ becomes conscious of its economic importance and how the contemporary political structure frustrates its development it will then challenge that structure for political power (usually to help accelerate its own wealth). The dynamic element within history is this ‘class struggle’. Can we glimpse elements of our future using this historical analysis? Socialists believe so: and whenever the current ruling classes start howling about ‘threats to the health of the economy’ we know they are pointing to social reforms such as health and welfare expenditure, etc.

The greatest emergent quality within capitalism is, ironically, social production itself. All of the necessities of life are produced socially but acquired individually (by the capitalist). That the producers (the working class) perceive that their economic interests are not represented within the present political power structure reflects the similar relationship of the past between the bourgeoisie and the king. So, in this way, we see the seeds of our future (socialist revolution) in the economic relationships of the present. Human culture is a dynamic economic and political process that is always changing. Any attempt to analyse economics and politics without a realisation of this most important factor is like trying to get onboard a speeding train while wearing a blindfold. The popularity of this ‘blindfolded’ approach to the study of political economy is obviously in the interests of the status quo whose agency within industry and the centres of learning has encouraged superficial theories such as ‘neo liberalism’ etc. In this way almost all contemporary economic and political theories have been merely attempts to rationalise the irrational realities of the market system which is conceived of as eternal and essentially unchanging.

Marxian approach

Does this Marxian approach imply some kind of ‘economic determinism’ and its proponents as ‘crystal ball gazers’ and prophets? It is impossible to conceive of the ‘present’ without reference to the past and future; our understanding of all three can be more or less comprehensive depending, decisively, on their mutual inclusion. All Marxists do is recognise

(Continued on page 18)

My election contest with Jeremy Corbyn

Our candidate who stood against Jeremy Corbyn in Islington North at the general election looks at his politics.



After seeing off the challenge of the Socialist Party at the general election, Jeremy Corbyn (left) clearly feels himself invincible, taking on all -comers and challenging for the leadership of the Labour Party. To some he is the left-wing rejuvenator of true Labour values;

for others, he is the lunatic left and ultimate Islington socialist.

Often at hustings in previous elections, I had found myself clearly more radical than the cautious Labour candidate, as they tried to control expectations, and put forward achievable demands. Against Jeremy Corbyn (along with a fairly radical Green candidate, and a Tory smart enough to talk to the needs of the constituency), this wasn't the case. It would often depend on who got their turn in first, to put a radical anti-capitalist analysis of the problems of health care, housing, mental health or education.

One event illustrates this neatly. We were asked for a song that epitomised our campaign. After deciding that my own preference, Slayer's 'War Ensemble', wouldn't quite cover it, I fell back on what I knew would be most Socialist Party member's preference: John Lennon's 'Imagine'. As it happened, I was asked before Corbyn was, and he would have chosen the same song.

Throughout the campaign, people asked me why we were standing against Jeremy Corbyn, since 'he is a socialist.' I wrote a letter to the local press, pointing out that whatever he stood for, he would still a member of a party that explicitly supports capitalism. The last sentence, that a vote for Corbyn was a vote for poverty and unemployment was mysteriously excised by the paper (surely not for reasons of space). I made the point several times that despite his opposition to nuclear weapons, and the fact that he would vote against it, a vote for him would (in effect) be a vote for a Labour Prime Minister committed to replacing Trident.

He clearly takes some pride in his rebellious voting record. Normally, as befits a comfortable incumbent who is certain to win, he was able to shrug off my barbs and jibes (indeed, he affably accepted that our campaign was happening and never himself asked why we were standing against him). When, however, I mentioned our Party's democratic policy of binding mandates for delegates, he took umbrage at the idea of MPs voting as instructed. The fact that his party is not itself democratically organised does at least excuse his position.

He is certainly a passionate advocate of the needs of the poor: throughout the campaign he would come back to the notion that children should have warm dry beds to sleep in; he raised the issue of the horrific drowning of economic migrants in the Mediterranean (instead of merely focusing on local bread and butter issues); he linked mental health issues of poverty and exploitation. It was clear he knew his patch well, and, again, gazed

me by rattling off the same facts about Islington that I'd spent my time researching and learning. The problem, though, is not his analysis of the problems of capitalism, but his approach to trying to resolve them.

An example: at one hustings a very local matter came up. It was a detailed and specific question about the renovation of a council estate in Islington, and the apparent withdrawal of councillors from liaison with the tenants and their proposed designs. I hadn't heard of the matter, even in the local press, and didn't know the facts. My cold reading of the matter was that it was probably down to public administration law, and the nature of state property as private property of the council. Corbyn, who mercifully answered before me on this one, confirmed as much, noting that the tenants' interests

Jeremy flogs a dead horse

ON THURSDAY 9 July, I attended a public meeting in Birkenhead Town Hall where Jeremy Corbyn delivered a speech as part of his campaign to become leader of the Labour Party. The meeting attracted some 250-300 people, male and female, young and old alike. Outside all I had seen were a handful of sellers of *The Socialist* and leaflets for the People's Assembly and a *Socialist Appeal* campaign for 'Red Labour'. Although I arrived with five minutes to spare, inside the vast majority were already seated. With hindsight, this was the first clue this wasn't as independent a 'public meeting' as first appearances suggested. As the platform



Mark Steel

warm-up speakers progressed, it became clear that the platform were the rabble-rousers and we, the audience, were the chorus line. Our chorus? Enthusiastic applause on cue. This seemed more like a Labour members' and trade unionists' rally and the absence of comedian Mark Steel (who was billed) didn't seem to matter.

Without Mark Steel, it was altogether less humorous, with trade unionists and a Labour councillor speaking before Jeremy pushed some left-wing buttons. He was in CND, he was against austerity, he supported the trade union link with Labour and was leading the Stop the War Coalition. His tones were reminiscent of a less inspiring Tony Benn, but actually less contemporary. Corbyn had been in the Campaign for Labour Party democracy since its inception in 1970, it seemingly never occurring to him to stop flogging a dead horse. He also raised issues from his constituency in London, not something of interest to the Birkenhead audience.

His supporters were keen to talk him up, but he himself wasn't so much, for Labour party leaders and followers this isn't always effective. His conclusion was interrupted loudly by a lady from the Woodcraft Folk. 'Span the world with friendship, Jeremy', something about as inane as children's programme My Little Pony's slogan 'Friendship is Magic'. Questions followed the standing ovation, but the level of support made meaningful discussion pointless, so I left early.

DJW

had to be balanced against the overall needs of Islington's property estate.

When it comes down to it, he is better described as a statist, rather than a socialist (in our terms). He believes in state action: laws to reduce knife crime; public ownership of the NHS rather than private ownership; controls on rents and security of tenancy; expansion of council housing, etc.. He confirmed as much after the election, describing the Miliband manifesto as 'basically good'. Indeed, a look at his Labour leadership campaign manifesto shows that he is far from being the frothing radical the right-wing press love to depict him as. In his response to Osborne's July budget, he wrote: 'I am calling for a people's quantitative easing – and asking my fellow candidates to join me in that call... The Bank of England must be given a new mandate to upgrade our economy to invest in new large scale housing, energy, transport and digital projects.' Put another way: his leadership would be Harold Wilson warmed up.

The real source of his radical image is his persistent stance on foreign policy. First, backing dialogue with Sinn Fein back in the 1980's, and nowadays being at the forefront of campaigns for the Palestinians. Indeed, one clear point of attack from some within the Labour Party has been the meeting he addressed where he welcomes 'our friends' from Hamas and Hezbollah. When questioned about that on Channel Four news, his response was to aggressively pushback, and try and get the issue back to resolving the Israel Palestine conflict. There's no doubt that he is a passionate advocate for peace, but also, clearly, a practical politician willing to work with the existing ruling groups, but he is clearly in hock to the dismal ideology of nationalism and national liberation.

The right wing press has gone mad over him. Some Tories, taking advantage of the Labour Party's new open primary system of electing a leader, where anyone can pay three pounds to become a 'Labour supporter' (and sign a declaration that they are not a supporter of any other party) and get to vote, gleefully announced that they would join up and vote for Corbyn, because he will take the Labour Party into the wilderness for decades to come. The reality, perception aside, is that Corbyn is simply a traditional Labour MP, who puts forward the case for state intervention in a capitalist economy. The only thing he does differently, is that he believes in putting the case openly, instead of pitching to a marketing strategy in order to win power to make reforms on the quiet.

He is a decent, intelligent and committed politician, but he wouldn't have survived in politics so long without a certain amount of steel. If he surprises everyone by winning the leadership, he could surprise the gloating smooth-faced Tory mockers by actually winning a general election. The biggest, surprise, though, would be just what a staid, unradical government it would be in reality. There would be noise, but the detail is clear, he would have to work within the possibilities of capitalism and its overall profitability. We've seen it before in the 1960s.

If he does triumph in the leadership election it will be because the process of installing increasingly sophisticated party and electorate management policies by the Labour leadership have run out of steam, and the desires of workers (however misinformed and locked into the logic of markets) will have forced their way into the halls of power. The media and party managers cannot paper over the lived experience of millions in this country who feel they have no voice nor control.

If he does become Prime Minister, I'll be telling people it's all my fault, until then, I'll continue doing my best to stop him.

BILL MARTIN

from page 11

and odious' and suggested that these were grounds for repudiating it which would hold up in court (which planet are they living on?). One section, on 'The impact of the "bailout programme" on human rights', argued that, because repaying and servicing it imposed savage cuts on people's education, health, housing and other



basic needs, it infringed their 'human rights' under UN and other charters. This is an excessively legalistic way of putting it, but the general point is valid: austerity does mean that human needs are ignored and come to be met even less than normally.

Capitalism is incompatible with meeting basic human needs too. In fact, austerity is a prime example of the capitalist imperative to put Profits before People.

There is a lesson in Syriza's abysmal failure to even mitigate austerity in Greece, let alone end it. It's that as long as capitalism is in a slump it can't be ended. All the articles by left-wing economists saying that it can are not worth the paper they are printed on. All the (quite legitimate) protests and demonstrations against austerity are misdirected when they call on governments to end austerity. This is an impossible demand. All this energy would be more effectively directed instead at replacing the capitalist system of class ownership and production for profit by a socialist system of common ownership, democratic control and production directly to meet people's needs. Only then will austerity be ended forever. Only then will what people vote for be able to be carried out.

ADAM BUICK

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this inescapable logic in our analysis - the efficacy of which can be tested on recent historical events such as the failure of the Soviet regime to establish socialism and the rejection of 'state capitalism' by its citizens.

Our rejection of any socialist content or potential within the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was based on the historical analysis described. The contention that the future is 'unknowable' is the same as contending that the past and present are also 'unknowable' - as, indeed, they are when any one of the three components is absent within the analysis. Economic determinism is a leftist misinterpretation of Marxian theory because it excludes the vital concept of 'majority' consciousness becoming a material force for historical change. The economic elements for making Socialism a practical alternative have been in place for at least a century but as is painfully obvious the mass consciousness necessary for revolution is almost entirely absent.

Many aspects of the history of the last century are discussed as reasons for this: the carnage of two world wars and the subsequent loss of confidence in human potential to make a better world (poignantly expressed in Adorno's phrase: 'Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric') and the ubiquity of the distraction of consumerism together with the minority control and ownership of the mass media being two of the most probable. None of these explanations, however, can disguise the cultural, political and moral bankruptcy of 21st century capitalism. If you, the reader, are convinced by our analysis we invite you to become a part of the 'material force' for revolutionary change; by doing so you validate the theory you embrace. The Left may advocate endless slogans and demonstrations generated by their elitist view that they know what's good for you and that they can lead you to a better life. We know that mass consciousness and self-determination is the only way to create socialism; history will decide if we are correct because, among other things, it can never betray you.

WEZ

Obituary

Roger Chadwick

We are sorry to report that Comrade Roger Chadwick from Rochdale has died at the age of 73. Roger joined the Party in 1993, having earlier been a member of the Labour Party and the Communist Party. He was a qualified nurse and worked abroad for some years.

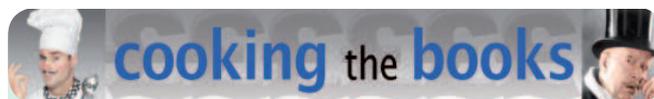
Roger had a very impressive knowledge of politics, history and science, and was active in many ways in various parts of north-west England. He was very effective in putting the socialist case across, arguing quietly and convincingly, yet never afraid to speak his mind when the need arose. He was also a frequent letter-writer to the local press. In 1995 he was the election agent when the Party had a candidate in a by-election in the Littleborough and Saddleworth constituency, and that same year he stood for Rochdale Council, winning a respectable 144 votes (4.6 percent of those cast).

In a book review in the September 2014 *Socialist Standard*, Roger mentioned his own political background and referred to his attempts to unmask paedophile Rochdale MP Cyril Smith years before his misdeeds became generally known.

Manchester Branch members will in particular recall his launching of the annual Branch Hike. Unfortunately, the first two hikes he took us on - to the hills above Rochdale and Littleborough - were aimed at pubs that turned out to be shut!

Roger's wife died in 2004, and ill health had limited his activities in the last few years, but we will remember him with great affection. Our sympathies go to his family.

Manchester Branch



Hypocrisy and the unemployed

THE GOVERNMENT blames the unemployed for being 'a burden on the taxpayer', denouncing those of working age without a job as scroungers and devising all sorts of schemes to try to drive them off state benefits and on to the labour market. They do this well knowing that there will always be a pool of unemployed and so that not everyone can get a job, however hard they try and however harsh the sanctions. Their calculation is that bashing the unemployed is a vote-catcher.

Not only do they know that there will always be a pool of unemployed but they also want there to be. They don't want 'full employment' as this would exert an upward pressure on wages, cutting into profits. But the truth sometimes slips out, as in an article in the *Times* (10 June) by its Economics Editor, Philip Aldrick. He referred to an 'equilibrium unemployment rate', defined as 'the level at which wage inflation pressures build up.'

This used to be called 'the natural rate of unemployment' but conceding that unemployment was natural to capitalism was considered too much of a concession to its critics and it is now called in economics textbooks the 'non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment' (NAIRU). It's a bit of a dubious concept (it's trying to calculate when a boom begins to get out of hand, but even if this could be done it wouldn't make any difference as nobody could do anything about it). But that's not the point. The point is that government policy-makers believe it.

Economists differ as to what this rate is. Some put it at 6 percent. The Bank of England puts it, for the UK, says Aldrick, at '5.1 percent - the average between 2001 and 2007'. He quotes a City economist (these days the media interview them rather than academics despite their obvious lack of independence) called Michael Saunders of the Citi investment bank, as suggesting that the rate here could now be as low as 4 percent, and comments:

'In other words, at the economy's optimum cruising speed, 400,000 fewer people need be unemployed than before the crisis.'

'Need be unemployed'! That's a telling phrase, saying that some people need to be unemployed. In the three months to April this year the unemployment rate was 5.5 percent, or 1,810,000. If it had been 4 percent this would still have left 1,316,000 as 'needing' to be unemployed.

The government may well, from one point of view, want to cut the benefits bill by reducing the number on the dole, but, from another point of view (that of big business whose interests they serve), to reduce the number too far would set off an upward pressure on wages to the detriment of profits. It's a balancing act. Capitalist firms will have to pay one way or another. Either their profits are taxed to pay unemployment 'benefit' to at least 1,316,000 (or on the Bank of England's figure 1,678,000). Or their profits will be eaten into by rising wages.

So, however many application forms they fill in, however many courses they go on, however many times they report to the DWP, between one and two million people will not get a job because, if a substantial number of them did, it would upset 'the economy's optimum cruising speed' and the government doesn't want that. In saying that they are practising 'tough love' by harassing people as a means of helping them to get a job, Cameron, Osborne and the rest (the leaders of the Labour Party too as they are also into bashing the unemployed) are shameless hypocrites.



‘attempting to give a moral sanction to greed and self-interest, and to pull it off she must at times indulge in purest Orwellian newspeak of the ‘freedom is slavery’ sort. She has a great attraction for simple people who object to paying taxes, who dislike the ‘welfare’ state, who feel guilt at the thought of the suffering of others but who would like to harden their hearts. For them, she has an enticing prescription: altruism is the root of all evil, self-interest is the only good, and if you’re dumb or incompetent that’s your lookout.’ Vidal concludes that Rand ‘has declared war not only on Marx but on Christ’ and he believes ‘altruism is necessary to survival.’

Anarchist Communist Peter Kropotkin in his work *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* concluded that cooperation and mutual aid are the most important factors in the evolution of the species and the ability to survive. Kropotkin wrote ‘the mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven

with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history.’ He also writes that in *The Descent of Man* Darwin ‘pointed out how, in numberless animal societies, the struggle between separate individuals for the means of existence disappears, how struggle is replaced by co-operation, and how that substitution results in the development of intellectual and moral faculties which secure to the species the best conditions for survival.’

For Rand the best social and economic system for realising human potential is capitalism. But as the *Socialist Standard* pointed out in December 2010, it is a ‘not really-existing capitalism, more a utopian vision of what a free market, laissez faire future might be like if only people acted rationally and according to their own interest, and the state got off people’s backs. Marx’s *Capital* shows that capitalism, even when it is operating perfectly well, without corruption or unnecessary state interference, must necessarily produce misery and exploitation; and that the state, far from standing in the way of free markets, was an absolutely essential tool for creating and maintaining them.’

STEVE CLAYTON



The Ayn Lady

The Ayn Lady written and performed by Emma Kilbey, with Lennard Sillevs was produced at the Oval House theatre in Kennington, South London last year. Kilbey and Sillevs play three roles each: as Barker and Larkin, ‘objectivist’ management consultants attempting to crack through the Russian-doll layers of Ayn Rand, also as Ayn Rand and her husband Frank O’Connor and also as Rand apostles Nathaniel and Barbara Branden. Kilbey is mesmerizing in all three roles.

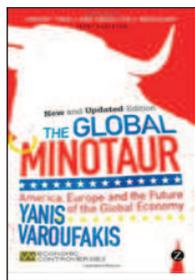
Rand is notorious as the author of *Atlas Shrugged* which promoted her ‘objectivist’ philosophy which boils down to: individuals need to pursue their own self-interest and their own happiness, that is their moral duty. She was anti-altruism, anti-self sacrifice, anti-welfare, big on laissez-faire capitalism, deregulation of the markets, and zero empathy. She wrote that the individual should ‘exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself’ and extolled egoism as ‘the virtue of selfishness.’ The play shows how personal relationships suffer in the absence of empathy when Rand and Nathaniel Branden begin an open affair with the reluctant permission of their spouses. Kilbey also includes statements from Tory politicians such as Boris Johnson and former prime minister Margaret Thatcher which resonate with Ayn Rand’s philosophy.

One of Rand’s apostles was Alan Greenspan who would later become Chairman of the US Federal Reserve 1987 to 2006. In the 1980s Rand became the Reagan administration’s ‘novelist laureate’, and her ideas influence today’s economic world stage. The Tea Party in the USA was described by Ben McGrath in *The New Yorker* as a collection of ‘Atlas Shruggers’, and in fact according to an American survey, *Atlas Shrugged* was ranked second only to the Bible as a book that had most influenced their lives.

Gore Vidal in his review of Rand’s book *New Intellectual* in *Esquire* in July 1961 had warned that ‘the muddy depths are being stirred by new monsters and witches from the deep. Trolls walk the American night. Caesars are stirring in the Forum. There are storm warnings ahead.’ Vidal dissected Rand’s rancid philosophy as

Greek Myth

The Global Minotaur. America, Europe and the Future of the Global Economy. Yannis Varoufakis. Zed Books. 2015.



It will only be because the author later become Greek Finance Minister for a while that this book, that originally came out in 2011, has been republished (with a new introduction and

an added chapter, plus a preface by Paul Mason). It's an account and attempted explanation for the course of the world economy since the end of WW2 and up to the crash of 2008.

Varoufakis agrees with Marx's basic analysis of how the capitalist economy works: that it is driven by capitalist corporations in pursuit of profit and that consumer demand and the demand for bank loans are dependent on this. Even though he places 'financialization' at the heart of modern capitalism, he doesn't fall for the illusion that banks get their profits by creating money out of nothing but knows they do it by borrowing at one rate of interest and lending it at a higher rate, even the notorious CDOs and CDSs (don't ask) that flourished in the run-up to the crash.

He also accepts Marx's view that capitalist crises are cyclical and self-correcting in that slump conditions eventually create those for a recovery (eg. by purging unprofitable firms) but, he adds, from time to time a big one with a capital C comes along from which, despite what Marx held, capitalism won't spontaneously recover. 1929 was one. So, he says, was 2008.

His explanation for the crash of 2008 was the fatal wounding of what he calls 'the Global Minotaur.' The Minotaur was a monstrous half-man, half bull in Greek mythology which demanded that young men and women from the areas subject to Crete be sent to fight and be killed by it, reflecting as Varoufakis points out the domination of the Greek-speaking world by Crete at one time.

The US – of course – is the new Crete and the Minotaur its financial system, based on the dollar being the currency in which other states and multinationals hold their reserves. This allows the US to run both a trade and a budget deficit. According to Varoufakis, this way of balancing world capital and trade

flows broke down in 2008 and the world economy won't recover until another one to replace it emerges. He favours what Keynes had proposed at the conference at Bretton Woods in 1945 to work out a new international payments system: 'to create an International Currency Union (ICU), a single currency (which he even named the *bancor*) for the whole capitalist world.'

So, although he is a critic of some aspects of capitalism, he still thinks that it is in principle capable of reform to work in a different way from how it currently does. Since Keynes's type of reform was not on the agenda, he must have felt in his discussions (when Greek Finance Minister) with his counterparts in the EU and Eurozone, that all they were discussing was tinkering with a broken system. It will be interesting to see what he writes about these in his memoirs which, judging by this book, should be readable and even amusing.

ALB

Capitalist crises

Capitalism's Crises: a debate. Contributions by Andrew Kliman, David Harvey, and Doug Lain. Marxist-Humanist Initiative. 54 pages.

Andrew Kliman wins this debate hands down. David Harvey has tried to argue that Marx didn't really hold or didn't stick to the theory of 'the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall'. He did suggest that, as labour is the only source of profit and as capital accumulation tended to be labour-saving, there was a tendency for the amount of profit to grow more slowly than the amount of capital invested. So Harvey's view is easy enough to rebut. The real debate, which Harvey does not enter into, is how this tendency might be related to financial crises and economic downturns.

Some argue that there is a direct link between the falling rate of profit theory and crises, in that, as a result of the introduction of more and more labour-saving machinery over a period, the rate of profit eventually falls so low that there is no longer an incentive to invest so much and so there's a slump in production.

Kliman's argument is that the link is only indirect:

'Marx did not regard the tendency of the rate of profit to fall as an *immediate* cause of commercial or financial crises. He argued that a decline in the rate of profit leads to a

crisis indirectly and after some delay. It promotes overproduction (by, eg., depressing productive investment demand). It also promotes financial speculation and swindling (...) it is only when debt finally cannot be repaid that a crisis – that is, a financial crisis – erupts, and the crisis then leads to stagnation' [Kliman's emphasis].

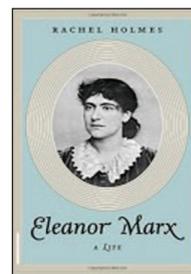
He also writes of 'the existence of many intermediate links between the fall in the rate of profit and the outbreak of crisis.' But with all these intermediate links is this really a falling rate of profit theory of crises? Doesn't it amount in the end to saying in effect that capitalism causes crises?

No such questions arise over the complementary view that during a slump the rate of profit rises through the devaluation of capital (capital is not a thing but a sum of values), so creating the condition for a resumption of capital accumulation. Kliman explains this well, underlining a very useful distinction between a financial crash (the actual 'crisis' point) and the drop in production that follows, useful because those in the Marxist tradition (including ourselves on occasion) sometimes use the word 'crisis' to cover both.

ALB

A Life Cut Short

Eleanor Marx. Rachel Holmes. Bloomsbury £12.99.



'Eleanor Marx changed the world,' reads the first sentence of this biography's preface. This is a grand claim to make and one which is not truly borne out.

Its subject's life is remarkable enough, without having to exaggerate.

Eleanor was born in 1855, the youngest by ten years of the three children of Jenny and Karl Marx who survived beyond childhood. Holmes gives a vivid description of the crowded, multilingual, literature-loving Marx household where she grew up. She had little formal education but learned a great deal from her father.

She was determined that her life not be taken over by pregnancy, childcare and household labours, with little opportunity for a career or committed political activism, as she had seen happen to her mother and

Car wars

Bikes vs Cars (2015, Directed by Fredrik Gertten)



Public spaces ought to be for public use, right? And one of those public uses might be safe affordable transport for all, right? Wrong, according to the automotive lobby. For it, roads should be planned around cars (not bikes, buses or pedestrians) because people drive cars through free choice; increased car dependency represents progress or is at least 'natural'; and cars provide jobs. Never mind, say its opponents, that cars pollute through both noise and air, are inefficient, expensive and driven by dangerous road hogs.

The widely rumoured claims that US public transport has been historically actively sabotaged by the car industry aren't proven, just blithely repeated in the film. The film belies its title, too, as it shows that different modes of transport historically co-existed happily and that more car lanes aren't always the answer

sisters. She was indeed a dedicated and meticulous administrator and organiser in political groups and trade unions, such as the dockers and gas workers. She also taught basic literacy and numeracy to many union officials. In addition, Eleanor became her father's secretary and research assistant, edited and published some of his works after his death (such as *Value, Price and Profit*), and was his first biographer. Many of her writings can be read online at www.marxists.org/archive/eleanor-marx/.

One aspect of her rejection of prevailing values was her decision to live with a man who was already married, though separated from his wife. Unfortunately her partner was Edward Aveling: virtually everyone seems to have disliked him, and Holmes describes him as 'an attractive, clever cad'. He had a series of affairs, was an inveterate conman and liar, and consistently strung Eleanor along with promises to marry her and start a family. She died in 1898, committing suicide after yet another betrayal by Aveling.

The nature of her political views can be seen in this extract from a speech made in the US in 1886, in which she advocated 'abolishing all private property in land, machinery, factories, mines, railways etc.; in a word, in all means of production and distribution. But this is not abolishing private property; it means giving property

to the thousands and millions who today have none.' In 1884 she was a member of the executive council of the Social-Democratic Federation, but at the end of that year, with Aveling, William Morris and others, she founded the Socialist League, in opposition to HM Hyndman's jingoism. The League officially advocated working through parliament to achieve its aims, but Eleanor resigned in 1887, since it was subject to too much influence from anarchists. As she said in another speech in the US: 'the socialist ... believes in political action, in the seizure of political power by the working class as the only means of attaining that complete economic emancipation which is the final aim'. She was later reconciled with the SDF.

As for changing the world, this seems to mean essentially paving the way for others to fight for and win such matters as votes for women and the outlawing of child labour. Holmes describes Eleanor as 'the foremother of socialist feminism': she certainly opposed anti-women prejudice in trade unions, for instance, and double standards concerning men and women who lived together without being married (she felt she had to explain her decision to others, while Aveling did not).

This is a lively and well-researched biography; it is just a pity that some of the claims made are overblown, and quite unnecessarily so. **PB**



Together In Electric Dreams

EVER FANCIED having a robot around to do the household chores? Or, indeed, ever fancied a robot? Channel 4's drama series

Humans imagines if robotics had reached the point of developing lifelike walking, talking androids – or 'synths' – for us to use as servants and colleagues, or in 'fight clubs' and brothels. Some of the synths have acquired consciousness, and the story follows the people living with them and searching for them.

There's little that's original about the series. It's a remake of the Swedish drama *Real Humans*, and most of its themes were explored decades ago by Karel Capek, Isaac Asimov and Philip K Dick, among others. Where the show breaks with tradition is that it's set in a 'parallel present' rather than the future. This approach may have been taken to avoid the cost of producing futuristic clothes, cars and sets, but it also reflects a lack of confidence in the viewer to be interested in how society would be changed by this technology. The series doesn't dwell on how a 'class' of robots could impact on workplaces and the economy. Instead, the synths are plonked into our current way of life, and disappointingly used

in a storyline borrowing tropes familiar from umpteen crime dramas. The show would have been more thought-provoking if it had been programmed with more emphasis on possible political and philosophical implications.

Despite this, *Humans* does consider what it might be like to have a robot as part of the family. Generally, most of the women characters become fixated on their synths, and most of the men end up being emasculated by them, while the damage done to relationships outweighs the benefits of not



having to do the cooking and ironing. The script may also be saying that it's easier to use someone if we lack empathy with them, or that when we use someone, we're treating them as if they're just an object. But it might be giving the drama too much credit to say that it's a detailed analogy of how workers are used.

Humans doesn't quite live up to its potential, but remains worth watching, especially for Gemma Chan's eerily believable portrayal of synth Anita. **MIKE FOSTER**

Meetings

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

West London Branch

Tuesday 18 August 2015 8pm
'What's all the fuss about TTIP?'

Speaker: Steve Clayton
Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace,
London W4 4JN

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 16 August 2015, 3.00pm
'Origins of British Socialism: 1884-1904'
Speaker: Keith Scholey
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4
7UN

Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 22 August 2015, from 12 noon
Canterbury Literature stall
The Parade pedestrian precinct,
Canterbury CT1 2JL

Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 27 August 2015, 7.00pm
'Fracking: the Metabolic Rift with Nature'
Speaker: Steve Clayton
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4
7UN

Socialist Party

Monday 31 August 2015, from 10.30am
Literature stall at the Carshalton
Environmental Fair
Carshalton Park, Ruskin Road,
Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3DD

SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2014

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East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 12 September 2015, 12 noon to
4.00pm
Business meeting
The Quebec Tavern, 93-97 Quebec
Road,
Norwich NR1 4HY

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 20 September 2015, 3.00pm
'The Politics of Alternative Medicine'
Speaker: Carla Dee
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4
7UN

Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 24 September 2015, 7.00pm
The EU - 'It is better to be exploited by
one's own fellow-countrymen than by
foreigners?'
Speaker: Steve Clayton
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4
7UN

Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 26 September 2015, from 12
noon
Canterbury Literature stall
The Parade pedestrian precinct,
Canterbury CT1 2JL

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 27 September 2015, 3.00pm
'The Economic Calculation Argument:
Baron von Mises's case against
socialism'
Speaker: Adam Buick
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4
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Film Review continued

to the problem of more car traffic.

Counterposing Bikes vs Cars is, however, certainly the case made by the likes of crack-addled Toronto mayor Rob Ford, who views his removal of bike lanes as part of the war between bikes and cars.

This is a well-produced documentary film which raises questions about all the myths around urban planning and car dependency. So the lesson is not so much 'socialism can only arrive by bicycle' as was once stated, but how capitalism tends to prioritise the more lucrative forms of transportation in so-called public spaces.

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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 of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

Nuclear waste

IT WAS 20 years ago this month that the world witnessed the terrifying spectacle of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Twenty years of gradually mounting evidence to help piece together like a jigsaw, a background of cynical and calculated brutality that is almost without parallel. Twenty years in which the soundness of the Socialist Party's stand on the whole question of war in all its forms has been again and again vindicated.

This will no doubt be a month of commemoration and protest. From statesmen and politicians of every variety we may



expect the usual tired platitudes, lies and hypocrisy as they spuriously talk about peace and prepare for another war. CND will be well to the fore, attempting to deal with nuclear weapons in isolation from their root cause—Capitalism. But society cannot put the scientific and technical clock back. From this time forward man's ability to manufacture nuclear weapons is here to stay. The only truly reliable way to "Ban the Bomb" is to establish a society where human relationships could not possibly cause war or call nuclear weapons into use. Only world Socialism really guarantees that Hiroshima or Nagasaki could not happen again.

We have felt it important to return to the question again this month because apart from the threat to humanity's existence in a world armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons, it illustrates well a point we have made many times—the shocking wastefulness with which Capitalism not only squanders society's material resources, but squanders humanity itself. (...)

Even whilst CND have been campaigning, more nations have entered the nuclear field. The bombs are bigger, and there are more of them. CND have protested against one aspect of capitalism's wastefulness. They will miss the important point until they realise that the need is to remove Capitalism itself. Gigantic waste which is horrifying in its effects is synonymous with Capitalism in every direction, from nuclear terror, to world hunger. The campaign against these problems outside the context of the demand for Socialism cannot carry the prospect of success.

(from editorial, *Socialist Standard*, August 1965)

ACTION REPLAY

Women's Football team earns roar of approval

ENGLAND'S WOMEN'S football team, dubbed 'Lionesses' by the popular press, earned third place in the Women's World Cup in Canada by overcoming Germany 1-0 with a penalty kick by Fara Williams in the 108th minute. The World Cup winners America defeated Japan in a 5-2 romp.

As the tournament progressed the team became better known with each performance as did the individual players. England's first goal was scored by Fran Kirby who stopped playing football at 17 – she suffered depression after her mother's death. Playing park football rekindled her love for the game. Karen Carney has also experienced depression and once had to be pulled from a car to attend training by Laura Basset the current centre half, then a team mate at Birmingham City.

Veteran midfielder Fara Williams became homeless as a teenager after being estranged from her family. She has spent years playing for England while living in hostels and on the streets. Extrovert striker Lianne Sanderson and former captain Casey Stoney (MBE) are two players who are role models in the gay community. Casey recently had



twins with her partner Meg Harris.

The quality of the England team's football has been mixed. But there has been very little diving, barely any dissent and no rolling around in fake agony which is commonplace in the men's game – when Bassett was elbowed in the eye by a French player, she simply got up and played on.

Admiration for England's male footballers is qualified by resentment of occasional boorish behaviour and massive wages. The women however

are well behaved but relatively poorly paid. If they had won this competition their bonus would have been £35k each. Had the men won in Brazil last year they would have received £350k

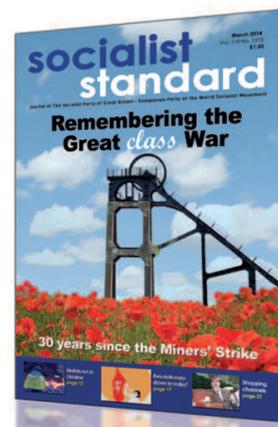
Most female England players do reasonably well, considering they are subsidised by the men's football. They have a central contract with the English Football Association worth £20- £25k, plus club contracts that can reach £40,000.

It appears that the shared experiences and the obvious empathy of England's 'Lionesses' create a sense of wellbeing in the team squad. In contrast the macho approach in male football – not talking about their problems and seeking resolution in alcohol is a poor substitute for the openness in women's football.

KEVIN

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Too many people?

While only 59 percent of lay respondents believe that a population boom will become a problem, 82 percent of scientists are concerned about overpopulation (goodtherapy.org, 6 July). Is the world overpopulated? Socialists are convinced there is good evidence to the contrary. Dr. Paul Ehrlich recently opined that women should not be allowed to have as many babies as they want as this is akin to letting everyone throw as much of their garbage into their neighbour's backyard as they want. Does he or most of the scientists surveyed, no doubt seeing this 'problem' through a capitalist lens, not know that half of all food is thrown away or that we could all move to New Zealand and experience a population density less than that of Manhattan?



Sultan Erdogan and his golden throne

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has denied (Today's Zaman, 3 July) that his gigantic presidential palace is fitted with gold-plated toilet seats. Should we believe him? A more interesting question is what would a socialist world do with the tens of thousands of tonnes of gold currently locked away in vaults? Well, some may take inspiration from More's *Utopia* and use gold to make bathroom fixtures. We would also have to decide what to do with Erdogan's 1,150-room palace, which was built at a cost of around €490 million when money still existed.

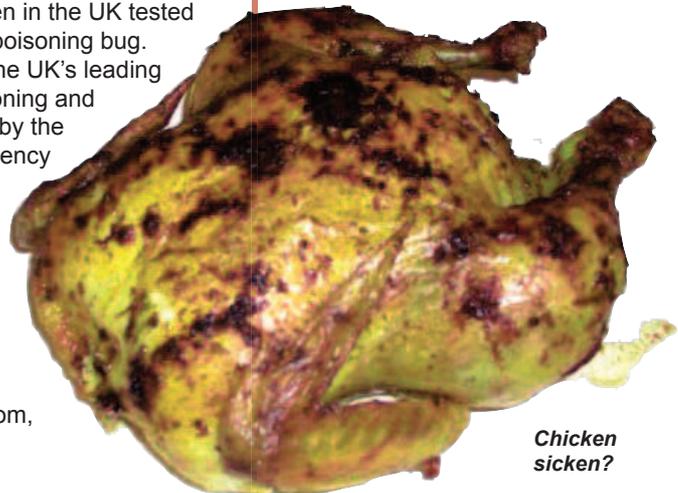
No nations

William Morris wrote 'While theologians are disputing the existence of a hell elsewhere, we are on the way to realising

it here: and if capitalism is to endure, whatever may become of men when they die, they will come into hell when they are born.' Haiti is certainly one candidate for hell on Earth as in addition to natural disasters and the rule of the one percent, our class there has recently suffered from the attention of the United Nations and Red Cross. The former is responsible for the ongoing cholera outbreak, an epidemic which has killed thousands and hospitalised hundreds of thousands, as well as exchanging food and medicine with over 200 women and underage girls for sex. The Red Cross raised half a billion dollars and built just six homes leaving most of the population existing in shacks made of rusty sheet metal, and without access to drinkable water, electricity or basic sanitation. Now 'some half a million stateless Haitian-Dominicans face mass deportation from Dominican Republic in what's been called an 'ethnic purge.' Poverty-stricken Haiti has condemned the expulsion measures and signalled it is not equipped to deal with the security issues posed by a massive influx of migration' (Telesur TV, 1 July).

Let them eat Campylobacter

Nearly three-quarters of fresh supermarket chicken in the UK tested positive for a food poisoning bug. Campylobacter is the UK's leading cause of food poisoning and a year-long survey by the Food Standards Agency showed 73 percent of chickens tested positive for the pathogen, with one in five (19 percent) within the highest band of contamination (foodqualitynews.com, 3 July)



Chicken sicken?

K.I.S.S.

Socialists are smart. We do not know the answer to life, the universe and

everything, but we have the solution to war, pollution, and many other global 'problems'. We are members of the working class, smart enough to run society from top to bottom for the enrichment of the vestigial capitalist class. Until we learn better, even 'the smartest people in the world' will find 'problems of hunger and poverty are wickedly difficult' (grist.org, 2 July). D'oh! As long as capitalism remains so will its attendant 'problems'.

Looks like a duck

So-called socialist or communist states (actually a contradiction in terms) show the hallmarks of capitalism. State capitalist Venezuela and Guyana are in an uncomradely argument over resources:

'This particular border controversy covers an area of some 160,000 sq. kilometers (62,000 sq. miles), which signifies some three-quarters of the territory of Guyana, according to a decree signed recently by Maduro. For its part, Guyana claims that Venezuela modified its maritime borders to include the area in dispute, which includes territory where large petroleum deposits were recently discovered' (Fox News Latino, 4 July).

FREE LUNCH

