

# socialist standard

May 2017  
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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

## De-globalisation

Is the world going into reverse?

**PLUS**

**French Presidential Elections**

**Say TATA to your pensions**

**Bothies: mutual aid in action**

**Bull, Bear & Black Dog**

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## Introducing the Socialist Party

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



capitalism.

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

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

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

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## Here we go again

FOR THE third time in as many years we are being asked to make a decision for the capitalist class. Last year it was whether Britain PLC should or should not remain in the capitalist EU. The year before it was about which set of professional politicians should run the state machine on behalf of the capitalist class. Now, we are being asked to do this again.

The reason Theresa May gave for calling this election is distinctly undemocratic. The parliament elected in 2015, she said, was not sufficiently compliant with what the government wants over Brexit, therefore it must be dissolved.

It is true that the rather inaptly named Fixed Term Parliament Act does require two-thirds of MPs to vote for dissolution but Labour, the only party with a one-third blocking minority, was never going to employ this, if only to avoid being accused of being afraid to put their policies before the electorate. Besides, most Labour MPs will have seen a premature general election as a chance to get rid of the Corbyn leadership

and resume their careers. Labour loses, Corbyn falls on his sword and their chance to become ministers is brought forward from 2025 to 2022.

So, here we go again. This time many more will probably, and understandably, abstain. But, despite the antics of the professional politicians, parliament remains the route to political power and, given that the electorate is made up overwhelmingly of members of the wage and salary working class, in the final analysis a general election is about whether or not the working class is prepared to leave political power in the hands of the capitalist class.

We have no illusions on that score. We predict that, unfortunately, the capitalist class will win this election as all previous ones, whether represented by Tory, Labour, Liberal, Nationalist or Green politicians. All these parties agree that the legal right of rich individuals to own the means of living should remain intact and that production should continue to be in the hands of profit-seeking enterprises, even if some of them may wish to

tinker with the system or try to impose unrealistic demands on it.

But, in voting to continue with capitalism, those who bother to vote will be voting for the problems in fields such as housing, health care, education and the environment to continue, because the root cause of these problems is capitalism and its economic imperative to put making profits before satisfying people's needs.

We socialists will still be going to the polling stations to show that we consider the vote a potential weapon that the working class can use to dislodge the capitalist class and clear the way for the establishment in place of capitalism of a system based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production so that they can be used to turn out what people need. But, except in the few constituencies where there will be candidates standing for this, we shan't be voting for any of the candidates on offer but instead casting a write-in vote for world socialism by writing this across our ballot paper.

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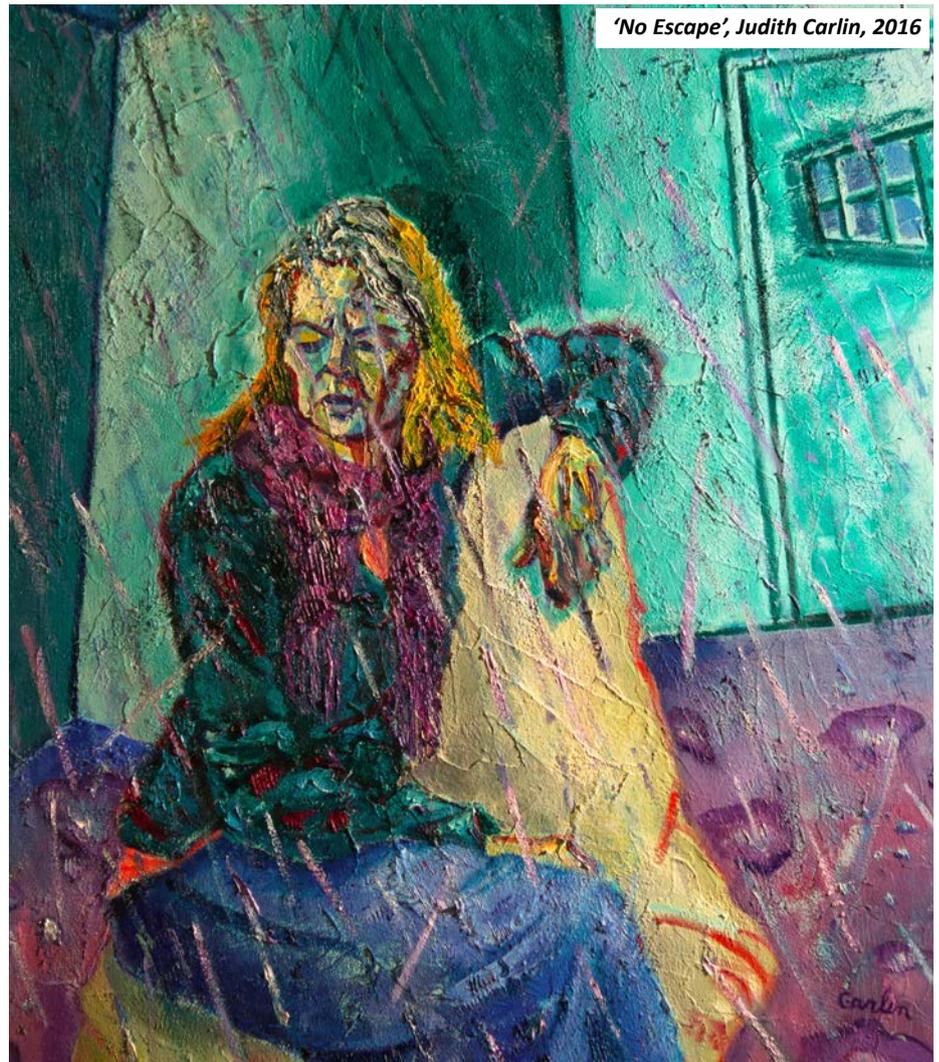
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## The Market System – Bull, Bear and Black Dog

ONE THING guaranteed to bring out the worst in socialists is rich people banging on about their problems, but one would have to have a heart of stone not to feel some sympathy in the recent stories of princes Harry and William speaking out about their mental health problems after the death of their mother Diana 20 years ago. The revelations were quickly joined by others from Lady Gaga and the CEO of Virgin Money until, ok we get the idea... money doesn't necessarily buy you happiness. But as some wit once remarked, if you think that, try poverty.

And one thing the poor are not poor in is mental health problems. The US Centers for Disease Control 2017 survey reports that 8 million adult Americans, or 3.4 percent, have such problems (*New Scientist*, 17 April). However this is likely to be an order-of-magnitude underestimation, as under-reporting in this area is rife. According to a 2016 report by the charity MIND, in the UK almost half of adults (43.4 percent) think they have had a 'diagnosable mental health condition' during their lives, and while around 20 percent of men and 34 percent of women have had this suspicion confirmed by medical professionals ([mentalhealth.org.uk](http://mentalhealth.org.uk)), a further 30 percent said they had never consulted a doctor. This is consistent with a lack of self-reporting across all areas of mental health, possibly because people try to tough it out, or else do not understand that they are suffering from an illness which might be treated but instead believe that they are personally inadequate in some way, for which no cure exists. Women suffer more in all categories. 1 in 4 young women self-harm, an alarming statistic given that self-harm is the most reliable risk factor in subsequent suicide – 1 in 25 hospitalised self-harmers will kill themselves within 5 years. Among UK residents aged 10 or over there is currently around one suicide every two hours (2014 figures). Ironically, given that such people typically have a low or zero sense of self-worth, MIND informs us that the average cost of a suicide, in terms not just of police, hospital and funeral costs, but also of loss of total lifetime 'output', is £1.7 million.

Globally, according to the World Health Organisation, mental health problems that are left untreated form 13 percent of the total disease burden, and will by 2030 be the biggest cause of death. The WHO estimates that nearly half the



'No Escape', Judith Carlin, 2016

world's population suffer from some form of mental illness. That's more than from cancer, heart disease or diabetes. Costs are literally incalculable, as many factors are involved. Costs to the UK economy alone are estimated at between £70–100 billion. Global costs are projected to reach \$6 trillion by 2030.

What can capitalism do about any of this? It can't abolish poverty, a well-documented cause of mental illness. To do that, it would also have to abolish the privilege and luxury of the elite. It can't abolish its own hierarchy, another well-known cause. It can't get rid of war, or crime. It can't take the stress, fear and anxiety out of being a wage-slave except by abolishing wage slavery. It can't do anything about the entire matrix of oppressions which begins with the CEO yelling at the executive and ends with the black girl kicking the cat. Capitalism is the embodiment of mental illness, a destructive society pathologically bent on chasing its own end. If it were a person, it would be hospitalised as dangerously insane. That half of the population suffer mental illness is not surprising. What is

surprising is that the other half don't, or say they don't. But then, perhaps nobody really knows, in capitalism, what good mental health even looks like. In a society full of broken people, just managing to get through the day may be deemed 'healthy'.

Socialism, in doing away with property society's rules, would do away with most if not all of the environmental factors in mental illness. It's not a magic cure-all. It can't address chemical or genetic factors, at least not without more research. It can't do anything about bereavement. But what it could do is give people a decent life without fear, without low status and a consequent sense of low self-worth. It could give people the support of a strong community, a sense of open possibilities and the freedom to explore them, a chance to determine their own identity and desires and to have these acknowledged and respected by others. There's nothing magic about it. Socialism would simply stop torturing people. And if that sounds like a hopeless daydream, it's only because you're so used to living in a nightmare.

PJS

# Am I class conscious?

Dear Editors

1. I believe my 7 billion brothers and sisters (the family of Man) should all have the same natural rights to participate in and enjoy the full benefits of civilization.

2. That this can only be possible when the means of life belong to and are democratically controlled by everyone.

3. There exists an owning class and a non-owning class whose interests are diametrically opposed. The former take the surplus product, produced by the labour of workers, which they sell to make a profit. The latter are given a wage by the former which in many cases is just enough to provide them with life's necessities for a week. Which means they have to keep on working 5 days a week for 50 years. At which point they are too knackered to work any more, and they are given a cheap watch, a small pension, and told to piss off.

4. Neither the government nor the opposition want to change the system; because they are doing very nicely out of it, thank you very much. The system is the common hack they take turns at riding. It's like what the country people call 'ride and tie'. You ride a little way then I.

5. The workers of the world (in modern parlance, the 99 percent) have nothing to lose but

their chains of bondage by organizing their emancipation from the owning class.

6. The owning class back in the mists of time made up laws which now mean that the resources of the Earth, the wealth of the Earth, the means of production and distribution – the Earth, in short – is the property of 1 percent of Man when it should be the common ownership of all. Every baby born today, and for all the days till the end of time on Earth, should have bestowed upon them the wealth of Earth as a birth right.

7. Capitalism is not and never will be a fair system of society. The money system doesn't and never will work in the best interest of mankind or even a majority. It is an insane game that has one aim: to make a profit. If played to the end, it will mean destruction of humankind. The only way to win is not to play. But to instead establish 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

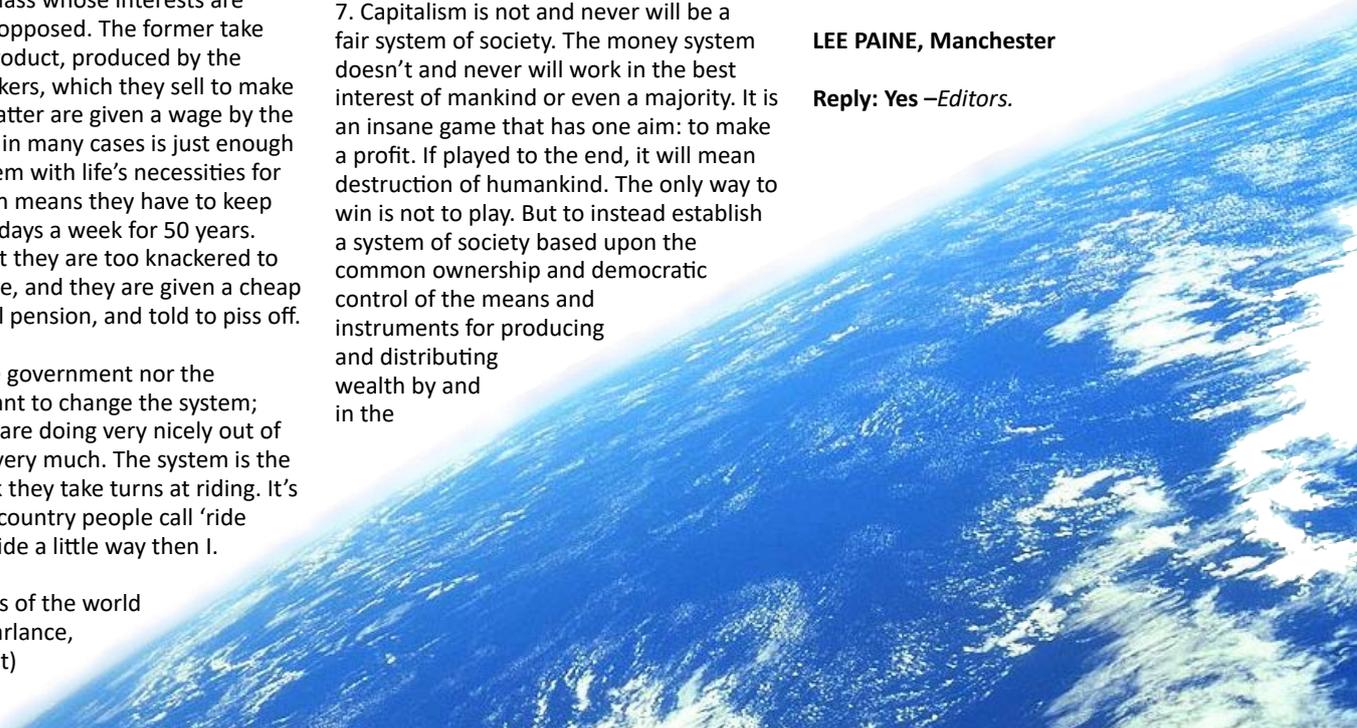
interest of the human race.

8. That the afore-mentioned system is the only way to give people maximum leisure time to enjoy their lives; to give free access to the best standard of goods that can be produced; to remove the threat of nuclear war; and to stop the increasing damage being done to the Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and lands on a daily basis in the quest for profit before it's too late.

9. The revolution must be peaceful. Non-violent revolution is after all the best kind. By that I mean most likely to succeed.

LEE PAINE, Manchester

Reply: Yes –Editors.



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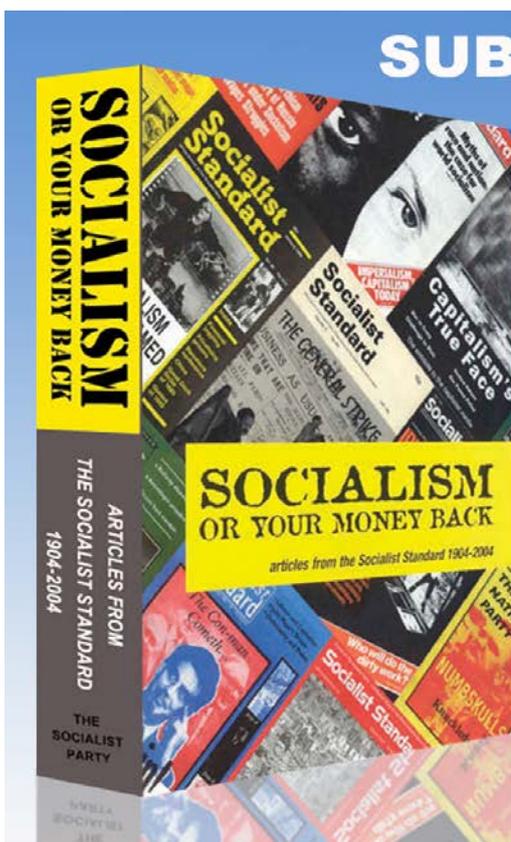
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**THE INDEPENDENT**



# Russia 1917 as we saw it

*In March (February under the old Russian calendar) the Tsar was overthrown. The Socialist Standard saw it as a 'bourgeois revolution':*

THE OUTSTANDING feature of the past month in the domain of public affairs is undoubtedly the "Russian Revolution". That this is an event of some importance in the development of human society cannot be denied, but its importance is far less than, and lies mainly in an altogether different direction from that which the capitalist Press of the whole capitalist world would have us believe.

Far from it heralding the dawn of freedom in Russia, it is simply the completion of the emancipation of the capitalist class in Russia which started in the "emancipation" of the serfs some seventy years ago – in order that they might become factory slaves. The revolution's greatest importance from the working-class view-point is that it brings the workers face to face with

their final exploiters. (April)

Perhaps the most unexpected of the changes has been the revolution in Russia. Information published here is small in quantity and only of such kind and character as the master class choose to let us know, hence caution is necessary before arriving at conclusions based upon such news as we have. One of the most significant features of the business is the speed and unanimity with which the several governments and other supporters of the capitalist system of society have hastened to praise the Russian revolution, and to offer their congratulations and advice particularly the latter to the Provisional Government and the Workers' Committee. The common theme of all these messages is the need for the more vigorous prosecution on the part of Russia of the war against the Central Powers.

So far as can be judged from the news published here, the replies seem generally to be favourable to these promptings, though the repudiation by the Workers' Committee of the idea of annexation of territory as a result of the war appears to have somewhat staggered the other parties, who are fighting only for liberty, righteousness, democracy, and freedom.

All the information available, both past and present, shows quite clearly that the upheaval in Russia is not a revolution of the working class, clearly seeing its slave position under the old order and setting to work in an organised fashion to emancipate itself. Far from this is the truth, we are sorry to say. It is but another example of the capitalists using the discontent and numbers of the working class in Russia to sweep away the Feudal rules and restrictions so strongly symbolised in the Czar and the Council of Nobles, and to establish a system of government in line with modern capitalist needs and notions. (May 1917)



## No Profit, No Care

'ELDERLY LOSE home care as providers pull out' read the headline in the Times (20 March), a reminder that under capitalism even basic needs are not met unless they can be paid for.

It must have seemed a good idea – to ideologically-motivated supporters of capitalism. Take running care homes for the elderly out of the control of local council bureaucrats and let the profit motive operate. So, the government came to require local authorities to farm out this service to private profit-seeking companies. These were invited to tender for the service and, if successful, would be given a contract paying them to provide the service which would include an element of profit.

The idea was that, as they would be able to increase their profits if they cut costs, this would act as an incentive to provide the service more cheaply than local councils had been doing. The principle was the same as taxation in

Roman times when the collection of taxes was given to contractors who paid the state a fixed sum and then were free to tax people as much as they could get away with. The difference is that, today, the contractors are paid a fixed sum but are then free to reduce their costs, so making an extra profit.

It is applied not just to care homes, but to utilities, trains and buses, 'free' schools, and parts of the health service. This is not free market capitalism, but state-dependent capitalism, even crony capitalism where politicians campaign for 'privatisation' and the contracts go to those who had lobbied them.

The failure in 2011 of Southern Cross, then the biggest provider of care homes, had already shown that the priority was making profits not providing care. Southern Cross had been acquired in 2004 by a group of vulture capitalists who introduced a dubious scheme involving the care home buildings before getting out just before the property boom burst (in the meantime making pots of money). Commenting at the time on the failure, the Observer (11 July 2011) noted:

'Even during the best of times, profit margins in the care business are thin; as long as occupancy rates remain comfortably over 85%, a company that leases homes from landlords can make

good profits. But below that level, it becomes harder to break even, leaving businesses vulnerable to relatively small changes in the trading climate.'

This is the other side of the profit 'motive'. If profits are good it is an incentive to produce, but if they are bad it's an incentive not to produce. This is what is now happening in the home care market. The 'trading climate' has changed; costs have gone up and local councils are in no position to cover them. The result, as the Times news item reported, is that 'dozens of care providers are going bust and a quarter are at risk of insolvency'. A spokesman for Mears, one of the largest care home companies, which had cut its losses and handed back its contract with Liverpool, was quoted as saying:

'We absolutely did not take that decision lightly, but frankly what choice did we have?'

What choice indeed. If you are a business providing a service for profit and are not making a profit then you don't have a choice. You have to stop providing the service. That's the way capitalism works. Profits before needs. And some people still think that this is the best way to organise the production and distribution of useful goods and services.



# Taking the Rise with Tony

IT WAS some years ago when Tony Blair finally surrendered to the ambitions of Gordon Brown so that his abusive deputy could take over as Prime Minister, leaving Blair to devote appropriate attention to matters of raising his promising offspring, fostering his wife's career as a legal eagle, making piles of money through dealing in expensive houses and presenting his version of recent history in speeches and writing. In the beginning that seemed enough, satisfactory for so long a resident of Number Ten Downing Street. But recently there has been an evident change, encouraging Blair to emerge from those lucrative shadows and give voice to some different intentions, to the extent that the more nervous observers of the political scene began to question whether he might be considering a re-occupation of those House of Commons benches. We were warned of the possibility of such a change when Blair recently spoke up at a meeting he had arranged to a group calling itself Open Britain (in itself suspicious of what was planned to follow) under the banner of the Bloomberg Institute which manages its disappointment at the Brexit-triumphant Tories by campaigning for another Referendum about British membership of Europe.

## President

Towards the end of his term as Prime Minister Blair had a spell presiding over the European Council of Ministers, an experience which he remembered as '...a simple issue. It was to do with the modern world. ... Britain needed Europe in order to exert influence and advance its interests. It wasn't complicated. It wasn't a psychiatric issue... I regarded anti-Europe feeling as hopelessly, absurdly out of date and unrealistic... the product of a dangerous insularity, a myopia about the world... a kind of post-empire delusion'. Which made it inevitable that when Blair was confronted with the prospect of a National Referendum on the matter he would hope that the result would have been for Britain to Remain in the Union, if possible more secure and comfortable than ever. And if it did not turn out that way the whole episode would be regarded as a hopelessly unrealistic psychiatric case, enough to arouse an out-dated political trickster to sound off with some colourful responses.

## By Elections

In late February – some months before the

Referendum – there were two parliamentary by-elections in what had been safe Labour seats, both due to the calculated withdrawal from politics of the MP in question. In the case of Stoke on Trent Central the Labour candidate survived with a reduced majority but in the other seat – Copeland – the Tory won by 2147 votes. This was a constituency which was traditionally strong for the Labour Party but the evidence was that there was considerable anxiety over the future of the nuclear power station there coupled with Jeremy Corbyn's opposition to the Trident nuclear submarine. But in Stoke there was also concern about the threat from UKIP, in spite of the fact that their candidate, their new chairman Paul Nuttall, made himself notable for what might go down in history as some ill-advisedly bizarre statements. At the vote there was little to choose between UKIP and the Tory candidate, which indicated that the voters were influenced by doubts – to some degree prejudice— over the issue of what Blair had once described as 'the immigration tinder box' and the stress this had exerted on him as Prime Minister and which persisted as a major issue during the Referendum.

## Mission

So it was that in January this year Blair announced his 'mission' to set up an 'institute' – not a 'think tank' but a 'policy unit' to be financed from his own resources to encourage a re-think about Europe on the grounds that the British people had voted in the Referendum without knowing enough about Brexit and its real-term inevitable consequences; 'I don't know if we can succeed. But I do know we will suffer a rancorous verdict from future generations if we do not try. This is not the time for retreat, indifference or despair, but the time to rise up in defence of what we believe'. This was a sentence likely to provoke some uneasy memories of leaders who urged their followers to confuse their freedom and safety – even their lives – in a cause which only the leader was aware of or had any interest in. It can never be a refreshing experience to allow that Boris Johnson has spoken appropriate and



constructive words on an issue but it was not a time to disagree with him when he accused Blair, after his 'rise up' speech, of having 'contempt' for the voters; and encouraged them to rise only to turn off the TV the next time the discredited ex-leader of the Labour Party comes on with his 'condescending campaign'.

## Blair

Except that Blair does not need such advice, particularly from a buffoon such as Johnson. After all, when Blair was at his peak he was careful to dissuade his followers from rising up, however desperate the provocation they were subjected to from his government's repressive and exploitative policies: 'I learned how to disarm an opponent as well as blast them. They get angry; you get mild. They go over the top; you become a soothing voice of reason. They insult you; you look at them not with resentment, but with pity. Under attack, you have to look directly at them, study their faces, your eyes fixed on theirs rather than rolling with anxiety'. When he exploded with his rallying cry about rising up Blair was at a meeting in a hall where, appropriately, David Cameron had originally announced that the European Referendum was planned to go ahead in July. It was a far cry from the day when he informed the House of Commons, in his maiden speech as the new Member for Sedgefield that 'I am a socialist... because it stands for equality'. Perhaps he is aware of the fragile irony of these words. Towards the end of his time in power and even more so since then, it was common for angry demonstrators to show their opinion of him by displaying posters with the two middle vowels in his name transposed. For he is one of the most persistent examples of leaders who have flourished into world class riches after a career of condemning millions of others to regimes of cruellest poverty. And to mass destruction in military conflicts. He has made it impossible to estimate the true scale of his riches. And of the damage he has done to the people of the world.

IVAN





# All Migrants are Workers



*Migrant family, California, 1936*



*US-Mexico border, 2007*

ANTI-MIGRANT feeling is running high in many countries. The anti-foreigner nationalists are having a feeding frenzy of xenophobia. The right-wing media publish headlines provoking panic. It is all too easy to blame immigrants for causing problems such as unemployment, bad housing or crime. An accusing finger can always be pointed at *'them'* for making things worse for *'us'*. It is often alleged that *'newcomers'* live off the backs of *'locals'*. If migration has led to the rise of the far-right — it is only through the racist tactic of blaming economic woes on the new arrivals. Many *'natives'* cannot contain their indignation that their *'indigenous'* culture is being undermined. But what happens when those migrants are your *'own folk'* from another part of the nation? Californians in the '30s would have been amenable to a wall along the state's eastern border, not its southern one.

During the 1930s the mid-west of the United States suffered a series of droughts that drove hundreds of thousands off their land. Many from Arkansas and Oklahoma headed westwards to California. They were the Dust Bowl refugees and 86,000 arrived in California from the drought states between June 1935 and September 1936 alone.

When they reached the Californian state line, they did not receive a warm reception. The Los Angeles police chief, James *'Two-Gun'* Davis, deployed police at entry points into California with orders to turn back any with *'no visible means of support'* (or, as Woody Guthrie, sang it, *'if you ain't got the Do Re Mi'*). They were called *'The Bum Brigade'* and were given specific orders to search all incoming cars, wagons, and trains.

When migrants reached California they found that most of the farmland was owned by large corporations run by managers so many gave up farming. 40 percent of the Dust Bowl refugees who became migrant workers ended up picking grapes and cotton in the San Joaquin Valley where they replaced the Mexicans who were deported. Even though tons of surplus food were produced, the Okies who worked on those farms suffered the very real threat of starvation. Author John Steinbeck witnessed the burning of extra produce by a California company — a result of the New Deal concept of limiting production of goods so that the demand, and thereby the price, would increase. Companies wanted to keep prices high, and so they destroyed excess food, crops, and livestock.

Other migrants settled near larger cities in shantytowns called Okieville, on open lots local landowners divided into tiny subplots

and sold cheaply in monthly instalments. They built their houses from scavenged scraps, and they lived without plumbing and electricity. Polluted water and a lack of trash and waste facilities led to outbreaks of typhoid, malaria, smallpox and tuberculosis.

The California Citizens Association formed in 1938 and its secretary, Thomas W McManus made clear its attitude towards the newcomers:

*'No greater invasion by the destitute has ever been recorded in the history of mankind... Californian jobs go to Californians and not to the horde of empty bellies from the Southwest'*.

It succeeded in extending the waiting period for California relief from one to three years, vigorously supported by the agricultural corporations who were resorting to their usual knavish tricks in order to guarantee a cheap, surplus supply of labour. The purpose of the California Citizens' Association was to offer wages below the minimum decency standard of relief, and to enforce this wage rate by giving workers no alternative — the usual *'work or starve'*. At this point, the California Citizens' Association dropped its disguise and became the Associated Farmers, Inc. The powerful Associated Farmers (the growers) feared the *'Okies'* might unionise and demand better wages. They feared that white migrants would not prove to be as docile as the Mexican workers.

A Californian called Fred Edwards drove his destitute brother-in-law from Texas into California in 1939, and was found guilty of violating a California statute criminalizing transportation of indigents into California. In 1941, the Supreme Court unanimously struck down the California statute as unconstitutional and no longer did individual states possess the authority to interfere in the free movement of peoples. Once war approached and the West Coast industries boomed, many migrants abandoned the fields and orchards for the shipyards and armament factories. In fact, during the 1940s the number of people coming to California from the Prairies actually increased.

Donald Trump's incitement of the anti-immigration sentiment is not new. Immigrants to America have always been feared and hated.

What people were saying about the Irish or the Chinese or the Okies in the past, they now say about Hispanics. There is always another group to look upon as a threat, and demagogues like Trump use that to gather support and garner power.

**ALJO**

# DEGLOBA



# IS GLOBALISATION G

A few years back we suggested (Material World, October 2008) that globalisation has lost impetus and may even have passed its zenith. Now, in the aftermath of Brexit and the inauguration of a protectionist American president, even the capitalist press talks about ‘de-globalisation’. Some pundits (e.g: Simon Nixon in *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 October 2016; Pierpaolo Barbieri in *Foreign Affairs*, 13 November 2016) still refer merely to a threat or possibility of de-globalisation, but others acknowledge that ‘de-globalisation is already in full swing’ (Amotz Asa-El in *MarketWatch*, 31 August 2016).

De-globalisation, like globalisation, is a multidimensional process. In the economic sphere it means abandoning the goal of unified world markets in goods, services, labour and capital and tightening controls over transnational migration and international trade and investment. In the political sphere it means reasserting national sovereignty and weakening or even abolishing supranational institutions. These two aspects are closely connected. In particular, international agreements to unify markets at the global level (WTO) and in specific world regions (NAFTA, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, etc.) have established shadowy committees of legal experts with the power to thwart attempts by national and subnational governments to regulate economic activity in the interests, say, of public health. Within a few days of assuming office Trump had withdrawn the United States from the TPP and announced that henceforth the US will rely on bilateral rather than multilateral trade agreements.

## Is it inevitable?

For a long time many analysts viewed globalisation as an ‘objective’ reality that had to be accepted as inevitable and irreversible. Some still do. In a recent article Pankaj Ghemawat presents an informative critique of this view (‘Even in a digital world, globalisation is not inevitable’, *The Harvard Business Review*, 1 February). He argues that advocates of the ‘inevitability’ thesis exaggerate the impact of technological developments in transportation infrastructure (high-speed transnational rail links, the containerization of freight) and in IT and telecommunications (enabling speculators to conduct near-instantaneous financial transactions). He acknowledges that these developments *facilitate* globalisation, but is ‘unconvinced that [they] are sufficient, given everything else that is going on in the world, to drive globalisation forward’.

Governments have retained the capacity to exert a measure of control over globalising technologies. This is exemplified by the case of Singapore, which managed at least partly to thwart the speculators and insulate itself from the Asian financial crisis of 2008 by imposing controls over exchange rates and capital flows. It was able to defy the ‘Washington consensus’ in this way thanks to reforms instituted after the previous financial crisis in 1998. The ‘inevitability’ thesis has also functioned as a mystification, helping to deter people with misgivings about globalisation from actively opposing it. In the final analysis, globalisation and de-globalisation depend on policies adopted individually or jointly by governments.

## Constraints

It might be if not impossible then at least extremely difficult to reverse globalisation if the process had reached a more advanced stage, with firmly established institutions of supranational governance. Embryonic institutions of this sort do exist in the bureaucracies of intergovernmental agencies like the UN, the WTO, the IMF and – at a regional level – the European Commission. However, these bureaucracies have always been susceptible to pressure from the governments that set them up and maintain them. Another constraint on globalisation has been the determination of some states – actual and potential members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation like Russia, China and Iran – to preserve full national sovereignty. We have never come anywhere close to a completely globalised world.

Many corporations operate in several countries, but that does not make them free-floating entities without a long-



certain effects of the free (or freer) movement of capital and labour, such as the loss of jobs when factories are relocated to countries where labour is cheaper, wage competition with migrants and disorienting changes in the cultural environment as a result of rapid large-scale migration. Local capitalist interests are also threatened by globalisation, but this factor seems to have less impact.

## Backlash

Commentators worry that de-globalisation will heighten the risk of war, both conventional and nuclear. They point out that the last era of de-globalisation encompassed the two world wars and the unstable period between them. But there have also been quite a few wars during the recent seventy-year era of globalisation, with escalation to the nuclear level a real danger at various times.

Moreover, the division of the world into pro- and anti-globalisation states has itself become a major source of tension. In the context of the US presidential election and the confrontation between NATO and Russia, it was the arch-priestess of globalisation – Hillary Clinton – who beat the battle drums, while Trump, the de-globaliser, warned of the danger of nuclear war and called for improved relations. De-globalisation may weaken the global awareness that we as a species have achieved, uneven and fragile as it may be – that is, awareness of humanity as a whole and of the Earth as its single home planet. This is a serious concern for anyone who aspires to world socialism, ecological rehabilitation and human survival.

But capitalist globalisation also does little to foster real global awareness. It has proven itself quite compatible with narrow nationalism and religious bigotry: globalism for the elites, nationalism and bigotry to divert and divide the masses. For example, the big Indian capitalists have highly globalised business operations but they all gladly backed Narendra Modi of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party for prime minister (even those of them who are not Hindu but Parsee).

The popular backlash against globalisation does have one positive aspect. It expresses a protest against the undemocratic character of supranational institutions – for example, the ‘democratic deficit’ in the European Union and the secrecy and unaccountability of the committees that oversee international economic relations. The socialism to which we aspire is democratic as well as global. Perhaps the backlash will create an opening for a new democratic globalism.

**STEFAN**

term attachment to any specific state. On the contrary, each corporation has a ‘home state’ where its headquarters is based. That is why General Motors is identified as an American corporation, Mitsubishi as Japanese, Volkswagen as German, Gazprom as Russian and so on. (A few corporations have two home states – for example, the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell.)

It is often said that a corporation has no loyalty to the ‘national interest’ of its home state. No doubt that is true, and there is nothing new about it. But it is not the crucial point. The corporation does not exist to serve the state; rather, the state exists to serve the corporation. The state is loyal to ‘its’ corporations: it is always prepared to intervene on behalf of their interests abroad when asked to do so. That is a continuing material basis for strategic competition and even military conflicts between states.

The main impetus behind de-globalisation appears to be political rather than economic. In particular, politicians like Trump exploit the discontent of many workers with



# BOTHIES

## Any volunteers?

When socialists introduce our fellow-workers to the concept of common ownership, of making work voluntary, we frequently meet with the response, 'It's all very well but it can't happen in practice'. This often makes socialists rock back on our heels with surprise because we can see all around us where the principles of cooperation and mutual aid are applied by ordinary folk with a shared need.

A 'bothy' was traditionally a building constructed for the accommodation of farm or estate workers. However, these days it means a building used as shelter for hill-walkers and



climbers, mostly in remote areas. The Mountain Bothies Association (MBA) maintains about 100 shelters across Great Britain. These shelters are unlocked and are available for anyone to use. The maintenance and upkeep is carried out by volunteers. Users are asked to follow a 'bothy code' which prohibits the use of the buildings by commercial groups, for example by guided tours or adventure holidays although they are free to use the bothies as a lunch shelter or in the event of a genuine emergency. It is only profit-seeking commercial groups that abuse this. As the BMA complained in a statement last August:

'There have been incidents when legitimate bothy users have been made to feel unwelcome, inconvenienced or even refused entry when commercial groups have been in residence. Our volunteers who maintain the bothies, not unreasonably, feel aggrieved to know that their hard work is contributing to the profits of a business that probably does not support our organisation in any way.'

As one user explained 'Of course, not everyone is going to be your new best pal, and there are people who simply prefer to keep their own company, but the one thing you should be able to rely on from a bothy companion is trustworthiness and mutual

assistance. I've both given and received advice in bothies, shared someone's last teabag and seen a drookit (drenched) traveller clad for the night in bits and pieces of several others' dry clothes while his own hung in front of the fire. In a bothy you really are all in it together'.

Also we should not ignore how ramblers and mountaineers rely upon mountain rescue volunteers in an emergency. Rescue teams give up their time to provide a free service to people who request assistance. Volunteers save lives and are available 24/7, 365 days a year, in all weather conditions. Some suggest that in socialism unpleasant and dangerous jobs would be avoided but there never seems to be any lack of volunteers for mountain rescue.

And who would willingly place themselves in a life-threatening position? Well, lifeboat crews of the non-state organisation, the RNLI, voluntarily and without recompense risk their lives in storms at sea for the welfare of others and the common good of society. And there exists a waiting list of suitable applicants to join it, so recruitment is not a problem.

Kropotkin, the author of *Mutual Aid*, pointed out: The crew of a lifeboat do not ask whether the men of a distressed ship are entitled to be rescued at a risk of life... One of the noblest achievements of our century is undoubtedly the Lifeboat Association. Since its first humble start, it has saved no less than thirty-two thousand human lives. It makes appeal to the noblest instincts of man; its activity is entirely dependent upon devotion to the common cause, while its internal organisation is entirely based upon the independence of the local committees'. (*Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles*).



One thing we don't require to be told is people's capacity to organise self-help in support of each other. Along with many other charities these are affirmations of our humanity.

**ALJO**



## Banking for Food

**F**ood banks are one of the most obvious examples of the extent of poverty, and more and more people have been using them. In the six months to September last year, the Trussell Trust, which operates a large number of food banks throughout Britain, handed out three-day food parcels to over half a million people, an increase over the same period in 2015. There are also more food banks in operation now than ever before. Many of the hungry are in fuel poverty too, and some food banks have even begun to give out tampons, as some women were using newspapers or handkerchiefs when they could not afford proper sanitary products.

Clearly, poverty is the reason why people resort to food banks to feed themselves and their families, but specifically two out of five who went to Trussell Trust operations cited delays in receiving benefits or changes to benefits as causing them to go there. A DWP spokesperson stated, 'Reasons for food bank use are complex so it's misleading to link them to any one issue' (*Telegraph* online, 08/11/16). Individual cases vary, of course, but talk of 'complex reasons' just serves to muddy the water. To put it plainly, it is poverty and the inability to make ends meet that drive people to food banks.

In 2014 the *Mail on Sunday* ran a typically nasty story claiming that people could get vouchers for food banks without ID or checks and just by telling sob stories. Moreover, many of those who used the food banks were asylum seekers! This exemplifies the capitalist propaganda machine: focussing on a tiny number who supposedly 'abuse' the system rather than the widespread poverty that makes the system necessary, just as allegedly-dishonest welfare recipients are publicised in order to undermine the whole system and so humiliate, discourage and harass those who have genuine claims.

In 2015, 391 people in the UK died from malnutrition or hunger-related causes, and there were 746 admissions to hospital on grounds of malnutrition. There seem to be no reliable figures for the extent of hunger in Britain, but the increase in children starting school under weight and the rise in the use of food banks suggest that the situation is bad and getting worse. One volunteer reported on some painfully thin people who attended one food bank: 'There were people who had not eaten that day or the day before, or who had walked for two hours to get there, because paying for a return bus journey was out of the question' (*Guardian* online, 29 January).

What is usually claimed to be the world's first food bank

was started in Arizona in 1967. In the US 42 million people still face hunger now, including nearly thirteen million children and five million seniors ([feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org)). That



Many church buildings are used as food banks

is roughly one person in eight, which shows graphically why food banks are still badly needed.

One in nine of the world's population – that's 800 million people – do not have enough to eat, and nearly three million children die each year from hunger-related causes. According to the Global Foodbanking Network ([foodbanking.org](http://foodbanking.org)), households and nations suffer from food insecurity, 'conditions where people do not have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food'. The GFN is currently aiming to raise \$1m 'to provide nutritious meals to eight million people facing hunger by the end of 2018'; but this is barely a drop in the ocean of what is needed.

Food banks are a classic case of dealing with the symptoms, not the cause. But the need for food banks and the increasing demands on them show very clearly that capitalism cannot provide a decent and secure life for everybody, despite the potential to produce more than enough food and other goods.

**PB**

# 'IMPERIALISM'

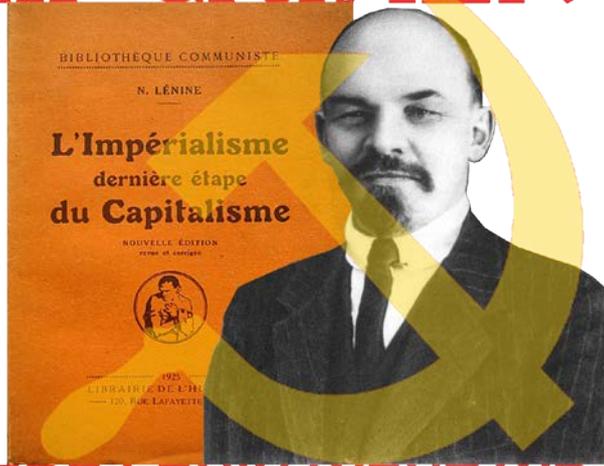
A hundred years ago last month Lenin's pamphlet *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* was published. We take another look at its defects.

In his introduction Lenin wrote that the pamphlet was based on the views of the English non-Marxist writer JA Hobson in his book *Imperialism* (1902) and those of the Austrian Social Democrat Rudolf Hilferding in his *Finance Capital* (1910). Hilferding, basing himself mainly on German experience, described how banks, through what would now be called their investment banking side, had come to merge with industrial capital, raising capital for them and not only charging for this but retaining a share for themselves. Hobson, who was an underconsumptionist, argued that what had led to imperialism, as investment and territorial expansion abroad, was a surplus of capital that could not find a profitable outlet in the home country.

Lenin combined these views to come up with a definition of imperialism as 'the monopoly stage of capitalism' where 'finance capital' as the 'bank capital of a very few big monopolist banks' had 'merged with the capital of the monopolist combines of industrialists'. Accepting Hobson's surplus capital theory, Lenin said that 'monopoly capitalism' led to the formation of 'international monopolist capitalist combines which share the world amongst themselves' and to the 'territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers'.

This was a passable description of some aspects of capitalism at the time, especially in Germany, and Lenin's was correct in seeing the First World War as a war over the division of the world amongst the biggest capitalist powers. On the other hand, his acceptance of Hobson's theory of surplus capital as an explanation for the 'export of capital'. i.e., overseas investment, was dubious. A more straightforward explanation for the capital being invested abroad would be that it was more profitable to invest it there rather than at home.

Lenin was also mistaken to see the German-style merger of bank and industrial capital as 'the highest stage of capitalism'. It was a common view amongst the Social Democratic parties at the time that capitalist competition would lead to monopolies and that what socialists had to do was to take these into common ownership and re-orient production to satisfying people's needs rather than for profit. Karl Kautsky had speculated that the process of monopolisation could lead to a single world trust and a non-aggression arrangement between the imperialist powers, which he called 'ultra-imperialism'. Lenin had a point when he said that this was impossible as the powers would never agree on a permanent carve-up of the world but would seek to change this as their respective strengths changed. But he failed to



## WHERE LENIN WENT WRONG

see that this applied to 'monopolies' in his 'imperialist' countries. The capitalist class there was not a monolithic bloc but different sections had different interests and none wanted to be held to ransom by some monopoly. Hence 'trust-busting' legislation in the US and nationalisation and the threat of

nationalisation in Britain.

True to his polemical style, Lenin attributed a motive to Kautsky, accusing him of advocating a peaceful, united world capitalism even though Kautsky had only envisaged 'ultra-imperialism' as a theoretical possibility. Lenin posited a link between the 'opportunism' of which he accused Kautsky and 'imperialism', arguing that the reformism of the Social Democratic and Labour parties of Europe was due to the 'imperialist' powers using a part of their 'high monopoly profits' to bribe 'certain sections of the workers' into supporting both reformism and the state in which they lived. After the Bolshevik coup d'état this was developed into a full-blown theory that the top layer of workers in the countries with colonies had been bribed to support capitalism out of the super-profits of colonial exploitation and that the independence of colonial territories would undermine this, with the result that, deprived of their share of the super-profits, the workers there would abandon reformism and become revolutionary.

This was mistaken on a number of counts. First, it goes against the Marxian theory of wages that wages are the price of what workers sell and that higher wages reflect higher training and skills, not any share of surplus value as Lenin implied. Second, it led to supporting the creation of new capitalist states to the benefit of a local capitalist class. Third, it assumes that workers would become less reformist if their standard of living fell.

Lenin himself mentioned an objection, which he attributed to the anti-war Menshevik Martov, that the situation for socialists would be pretty hopeless 'if it were precisely the best paid workers who were inclined towards opportunism', e.g. skilled engineering workers. Lenin's reply was, typically, to accuse Martov too of defending opportunism and reformism.

If the Bolsheviks had not retained power in Russia this work would have remained an obscure, dated pamphlet. However, due to Lenin's position and later quasi-deification, it became inflated into a serious work of research and theory. The result was that its mistaken ideas - especially about some workers sharing in colonial exploitation and that socialists should support the 'anti-imperialism' of rising capitalist classes - became more widely accepted than they otherwise would have.

**ADAM BUICK**

# TA(TA) for nothing!



## Tiny minority damages thousands of people's lives in UK – again

On 15 February, the Community, Unite and GMB unions announced the results of a ballot of members employed by Tata Steel on the union recommendation to support an end to the final salary (or defined benefit) pension scheme. Three-quarters of those voting agreed with the recommendation. In effect, they were intimidated by the employers' threats of job losses.

Understandably, when they were interviewed on the box, officials and lay members of all three unions talked about how hard that decision had been, as many must surely have realised they were being forced to surrender a benefit to which they have contributed over several decades, more or less ensuring a reduction in their whole-lifetime wages.

We sympathise with the dilemma our fellow unionists faced. Plant closures would have devastating effects on workers in the areas where Tata operates, as those of us who live in former textiles, shipbuilding and mining areas can testify.

We wonder if they got any comfort from this gem on the Tata website:

‘The notion of social stewardship, integral to the way business is conducted at Tata Steel, together with a continual improvement philosophy has been driving the Company's excellence orientation for over a hundred years!’

Is anyone idiot enough to fall for such nonsense? Like any other capitalist grouping, Tata is there to extract as much profit as possible, and it will bear down on conditions of employment whenever they are able to get away it. The Tata defeat is indicative of the erosion of workers' conditions. We are now to be forced to work longer (later retirement age), many are stuck with zero-hours contracts or forced to work for nowt (so called interns) or in the cool-sounding ‘gig economy’ (no paid leave, no guarantee of earnings, no sick pay, no union representation, reduced safety – it's what building workers used to call ‘the lump’, and doesn't sound quite so

cool, does it?)

Coincidentally, within a week of the union decision, the government announced a consultation with industry and ‘consumers’ because many company pension schemes have shortfalls in their funds because ‘Increased life expectancy, changes to working patterns and the economy mean that defined benefit schemes are operating in very different circumstances from when they first became popular’.

So, in part, you're to blame, for living longer. No mention, by the way, of the fact that when pension funds were in surplus in the 1980s, employers were quick to take a ‘contributions holiday’, despite pressure from unions. In other words, the owners did what they always do – they kept hold of as much as they could for themselves.

It now seems highly likely that changes will be made to make it easier for companies to reduce benefits to pensioners.

And one more thing: measure it how you wish, over the last 100, 50 or even 20 years, there have been enormous increases in productivity in any field we could mention, be it transport, textiles, engineering, food production, whatever... And yet....despite the huge potential for wealth and comfort, we workers are faced with having our working lives forcibly extended, we can achieve no lasting economic security and, with increasingly inadequate social care, can't even be sure of a dignified old age.

We have always argued that, our class, working on a shop-floor, building site, in an office or in a field, must organise and maintain democratic trade unions. As wage slaves, we have to defend ourselves as best we can via unionisation, and this includes the issue of pensions. But any advances we can force out of the employers are always threatened whenever capitalism hits one of its inevitable crises of production, or whenever a cheaper source of labour power can be found. The only way for us to guarantee our future is to call time on this system – put the tiny minority out of business and bring an end to out-dated capitalism and its anti-worker practices.

**FINCH**

# French presidential elections: capitalism wins

There were at the time of writing (20th April) eleven candidates are standing in the first round of this year's French Presidential Elections being held on 23rd April. They are a mishmash of left and right-wing populists and establishment parties, ranging from the Trotskyist Lutte Ouvrière (Workers' Struggle), the nationalist and anti-US Union Populaire Républicaine (Popular Republic Union), the Gaullist Debout La France (Stand Up France) which is anti-EU, the New Anti-Capitalist Party headed by a Ford factory worker, and Jacques Cheminade, a follower of the American conspiracy theorist, Lyndon LaRouche. A candidate secured more than 50 per cent of the votes, as is most likely, (in fact no candidate obtained more than 25 percent) the contest is will going to a second round on 7th May.

What marked this election out from the others is that the main front runners were outsiders – Marine Le Pen of the Front National, Emmanuel Macron with his new movement En Marche (On the Go) and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the so-called hard Left candidate. What is also unprecedented is that, due to the deep unpopularity of his government, François Hollande, decided not to stand again. Working class people are angry that their living standards are stagnating and at what they see as an indifferent and out of touch political elite. Unemployment is running at 10 percent (about 25 percent among 18 to 25-year-olds) of the workforce amidst a slow recovery from the 2008/2009 recession. Moreover, many are dissatisfied with the government's response to the recent terrorist incidents and there are concerns about immigration. This is not unique to France. We have seen how working class discontent has played a part in the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and in the vote for Brexit in the UK.

Because of the Hollande's failure to resolve the social and economic problems of French capitalism, 'Socialist' Party members opted for Benoît Hamon, the more radical left winger, to be their party's candidate. His platform included a basic universal income, a tax on robots to pay for the retraining of workers that they replace, a tax on banks' 'super profits', raising the minimum wage. However, he only got a humiliating 6 percent of the vote.

Marine Le Pen worked tirelessly to rebrand the Front National as being more of a patriotic party than a fascistic one, with the same appeal as UKIP has in the United Kingdom, and even went as far as kicking her father out of the organisation. However, this has not precluded her from putting forward xenophobic proposals, such as giving priority to French nationals over non-nationals for jobs, houses and welfare and placing new restrictions on immigration. She is attempting to court the working class vote by promising to reduce the retirement age from 62 to 60 and reduce income tax for the lowest earners. She is anti-EU and pledges to renegotiate the terms of EU membership and hold a referendum on whether



to leave the EU. A win for her could jeopardise the future of the EU and thus create instability within world markets.

François Fillon of the Les Républicains party was the favourite until he became embroiled in a financial scandal involving alleged payments to his wife for fake jobs. He was standing on a platform of austerity, pledging to reduce public spending and cut a half million public sector jobs. He wanted to increase the working week for some public sector employees, scrap the wealth tax, reduce corporation tax, raise the retirement age to 65, put a cap on unemployment benefits.

Now the favorite, Emmanuel Macron, who finished top in the first round, is a former investment banker and economy minister in François Hollande's government. He claims that to be revolutionising French politics, but what he is proposing is pretty standard capitalist fare – lower corporation tax, extending the working week for younger workers, reduce public spending by cutting 120,000 public sector jobs by 2022. He is pro-EU and says he is in favour of a more open France which accommodates cultural and ethnic diversity.

Chavez-admirer Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who was backed by the 'Communist' Party, did surprisingly well with nearly a fifth of the votes. His programme included reducing the working week to 32 hours, increasing the minimum wage and social security, raising taxes on the highest earners, re-negotiation of the EU treaties. Like Le Pen, he pledged to reduce the retirement age to 60. That some of his policies were similar to those of the Front National is no accident. Both he and Le Pen were trying to woo the so-called 'left behinds', workers who have seen the demand for their skills eroded and their livelihoods disappear with the economic and technological changes of world capitalism.

We predict with confidence that, whatever the outcome in the second round, the losers will be the working class. For all their differences and grand promises, none of the candidates, including the two who went through to the second round, challenged the capitalist system, that is the private and state ownership of the means of production and production for profit, they seek only to modify it. Once whoever is elected, their priority would have to be to ensure that French capitalism is competitive and profitable, and if, under certain conditions, this requires that social provisions are cut and workers are laid off, then so be it. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

**OLIVER BOND**

# What is Socialism?

*Extract from a Socialist Party contribution to a panel on the subject organised by the Platypus Society on 23 March.*

In 1893 in Britain William Morris took the initiative for the publication of a *Manifesto of English Socialists* which declared:

‘Our aim, one and all, is to obtain for the whole community complete ownership and control of the means of transport, the means of manufacture, the mines and the land. Thus we look to put an end forever to the wage-system, to sweep away all distinctions of class, and eventually to establish national and international communism on a sound basis.’

That this was signed by such non-Marxists as GB Shaw and Sidney Webb shows that, at that time, the difference between reformists and revolutionaries, possibilists and impossibilists, was not so much over what the aim was as over how to get there.

This definition of socialism was shared by Marx and Engels. They themselves got it from workers in the 1840s in Paris and Manchester who called themselves ‘communists’ or ‘socialists’. This definition is reflected in the *Communist Manifesto* which talks of ‘the communistic abolition of buying and selling’ and endorses measures advocated by ‘Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism’ such as the abolition of the wages system and ‘the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production’.

In other words, a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by and in the interest of the whole community. This definition of socialism was shared by the tenors of the pre-WW1 Second International still read today: August Bebel, Karl Kautsky, Rudolf Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg and by Bolsheviks such as Alexander Bogdanov, Stalin and Lenin himself. They all argued that socialism would be what the Germans called a ‘natural economy’ as one where wealth would be produced directly for use and not for sale on a market.

Here, for instance, is August Bebel, one of the most popular leaders of German Social Democracy, on ‘the future society’ in his *Women and Socialism*:

‘It does not produce “commodities” to be bought and sold, but produces the necessities of life that are used up, consumed, and have no other purpose ... There being no “commodities” in future society, neither can there be any money’ (*Society of the Future*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p.47. Bebel’s emphasis).

And the Bolshevik Alexander Bogdanov, in a textbook used both before and after the Bolshevik coup:

‘The new society will be based not on exchange but on natural self-sufficing economy. Between production and consumption of products there will not be the market, buying and selling, but consciously and systematically organised distribution’ (A. Bogdanov, *A Short Course of Economic Science*, Labour Publishing Co, 1925, p. 389 *His emphasis*).

In 1848 Marx and Engels had called it ‘communism’. In his preface to the first English edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, forty years later in 1888, Engels explained why it hadn’t been called a ‘Socialist Manifesto’ (because at that

time ‘socialism’ was more associated with various schemes proposed by Utopian Socialists who rejected the working class struggle for political power as the way to get there). So, had the manifesto been first published in 1888 it could just as well have been called ‘The Socialist Manifesto’ and might in fact have been better understood if it had been. This reflected the fact that, for Marx and Engels, ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’ were interchangeable terms describing the same society they expected to see replace capitalism.

The change of meaning of ‘socialism’ – a decisive break with previous practice – came in 1917 when the Bolsheviks planned to seize power in Russia. Up till then Lenin had held the same definition of socialism as the rest of the Second International and also its view that a socialist revolution was not possible in a backward country such as Russia. When he returned in April 1917 from exile in Switzerland, Lenin astounded even members of his own party when he proclaimed that the immediate aim of the Bolsheviks was now to seize power, not to complete the bourgeois revolution as had previously been their policy, but for ‘socialism’.

When those who stuck to the Second International definition of socialism reminded him that this was not possible in Russia, he cleverly gave the specious reply ‘You are talking about Communism but I’m talking about Socialism’. As he put it in his *The State and Revolution* when critics ‘talk of the unreasonable utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of ‘introducing’ socialism, it is the higher stage or phase of communism they have in mind...’

He immediately went on ‘And this brings us to the question of the scientific difference between socialism and communism’, a distinction which no one had ever heard of nor was remotely ‘scientific’. In 1875 Marx had indeed written about a ‘first phase’ and a ‘higher phase’ of communist society but, as just pointed out, this could equally have been said to be about a first and higher phase of socialist society. In any event, these were, precisely, phases of the same society – a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production. They were not two, distinct types of society.

Lenin’s innovation (distortion, actually) was to label the first phase ‘socialism’ and the higher phase ‘communism’. By ‘communism’ he meant what before 1917 had been called ‘socialism’. Not that his definition of ‘socialism’ corresponded with Marx’s ‘first phase of communist society’. Referring specifically to ‘the correct functioning of the first phase of communist society’, Lenin wrote:

‘All citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. All citizens become employees and workers of a single countrywide state “syndicate”. All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay...’ (Chapter V, section 4).

So the wages system was not to be abolished. Instead, everyone was to become a hired employee of the State. This, of course, was not socialism in its previous sense but state capitalism, the wages system under new management. Which in fact is what the Bolsheviks did eventually establish in Russia.

As the Bolsheviks retained state power and enjoyed a certain amount of prestige among militant workers and with the aid of the Russian state, they were able to impose their definition of ‘Socialism’ at the expense of the previous definition. Hence, today’s confusion where most people equate socialism with state capitalism rather than with its original meaning.

**ADAM BUICK**

# The Environment



## Summer School 2017 21st – 23rd July Fircroft College, Birmingham

These days, concerns about the environment tend to get pushed into the background by issues like Brexit, Trump's presidency and ongoing austerity measures. But climate change, pollution and extinctions don't go away just because the headlines are filled with other events. 2016 was the warmest year on record, with implications for sea levels and habitats; more and more waste is produced for future generations to deal with, and many hundreds of species continue to become extinct every year.

Legislation places some restrictions on the use of dangerous materials, hunting and waste disposal, for example. However, legislators can only work within a system which is structured to safeguard the interests of the wealthy elite, rather than everyone. And of course laws don't always prevent environmentally-damaging methods from being used if they save or make money. Capitalism turns the natural

### Janet Surman: **WORLD MILITARY versus THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**

War is one of the most profitable arms of capitalism. This session investigates the negative impacts of militarism on the global environment

### Paddy Shannon: **THE VEGANS ARE COMING!**

Attitudes to meat production and consumption are changing. This session explores the various arguments with a view to clarifying what our position as socialists ought to be.

### Carla Dee: **ONE WORLD, OUR WORLD - A QUIZ**

What do you know about climate change, the natural world and urban environments? Test your knowledge here.

The event will also include a bookstall, an exhibition about the SPGB's approach to environmental issues over the decades and an exclusive publication.

world into a resource to be exploited for a profit.

The Socialist Party argues that the environment can only be managed responsibly if society as a whole is managed co-operatively and in everyone's interests. If our industries and services were owned and run in common, then we would be able to produce what we need and want in the most reasonable, sustainable way.

Our weekend of talks and discussions looks at the current state of the environment, and its prospects for the future we make for it.

Full residential cost (including accommodation and meals Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) is £100. The concessionary rate is £50. Day visitors are welcome, but please book in advance.

To book a place, send a cheque (payable to the Socialist Party of Great Britain) to Summer School, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, York, YO51 9ER, or book online at [spgb.net/summerschool2017](http://spgb.net/summerschool2017) or through the QR code. E-mail enquiries to [spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk)



## The price of a home

EVERYBODY IS supposed to aspire to owning their home. It is true that, in the insecure world that capitalism is, owning where you live does give you a measure of security. But it's pretty expensive and dependent on having regular employment for twenty to thirty years. And the house doesn't become yours till you've completely paid off the loan you took out to buy it; up till then it belongs to the bank or building society you got the loan from and they can repossess it if you default. Having a mortgage round your neck also tends to make you less inclined to go on strike; which of course was one of Mrs Thatcher's calculations when she pursued the policy of turning workers from renters into owner-occupiers.

Renting is now increasing as stagnating wages and rising house prices make buying a house too expensive for more and more workers. Actually, it's not the price of houses that is rising, but the price of the land on which they are built. Most of the cost of buying a home is for the land, as can be seen in the

difference between what a building is insured for and the price at which it will sell.

Commenting on the financial results of the house-building firm Bovis, the Times (21 February) noted:

'Ultimately, building houses is not rocket science and profits are not driven as much by the cost of supplies or labour as by a company's skill at acquiring land at the right price.'

Hence the phenomenon of 'land banking' where property speculators buy up land and leave it unused while waiting for the most profitable time to develop it.

Land, as it is not the product of work, has no value in the Marxian sense. It has only a price, which is determined solely by demand. Some plots of land have a higher price than others because they are located where firms and people want to use it. Location is all-important. Henry George, the late 19th century land reformer, pointed out that as cities and towns grew the price of the land on which they were built went up to the benefit of those who owned it. The centre of London is still owned by aristocrats such as the Duke of Westminster whose ancestors got fabulously rich without having to lift a finger or invest a penny and still the money rolls in.

This is why pro-capitalist reformers like Henry George proposed a 100 percent

tax on increases in land values. Others, equally pro-capitalist, proposed land nationalisation. Today's reformers are less bold. They only propose tinkering to try to bring land prices down. The charity and reformist campaigning group Shelter is proposing:

'greater powers for councils over land in their area. Land would be sold to developers with proposals that most closely meet community needs, rather than selling to the highest bidder alone. Shelter said lower land prices would mean developers did not need to keep house prices "artificially high" (i paper, 2 March).

That's assuming that developers are out only to make a normal profit from merely building houses whereas, as the Times article points out, they are also out to make money out of rising land prices. And, do Shelter expect cash-strapped local councils not to get the best deal they can for the land they own or control?

Housing is a good example of the irrational way that capitalism treats meeting a basic need. What in a society geared to meeting people's needs would be a straightforward question of deciding how best to use land and then doing it is complicated under capitalism by such extraneous factors as profits, loan repayments and the price of land.



## The Vegan Revolution

SIMON AMSTELL is carving himself an interesting career, graduating from presenting *Popworld* and *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* to writing and directing for television, alongside gigs as a stand-up comedian. His work often draws on his ruminations about his own life, and his vegan diet has drawn him to his latest work. *Carnage* (BBC iPlayer) almost pulls off the tricky feat of combining sci-fi, comedy and satire in the mockumentary format to raise some important questions about societal change.

The film is made in the year 2067. By this time, the populace is vegan: peaceful, polyamorous young adults can't understand how people used to eat animal products, while some older people join support groups to deal with their guilt and shame at having been carnivores in the past.

Through clips, newsreel and talking heads, *Carnage* looks back on the history of animal-free diets since 1944, when The Vegan Society was formed. The movement was slow to attract support, with vegans getting little positive exposure to the wider public. 70s TV shows featuring dowdy, stilted vegans presenting an array of beige food couldn't compete with the excitement of Fanny Craddock mutilating a pig in the Royal Albert Hall. Most people didn't think about what they were eating because 'the animals people were consuming stopped looking like they'd ever been animals', thanks to the fast food industry and its gaudy marketing.

Despite increasing awareness of the risks of an animal-based diet, such as susceptibility to heart disease, obesity and cancer, and the dangers of intensive farming spreading diseases, there was still a 'meat-driven political culture'. This was challenged in 2010 when the UN announced that veganism is essential to limiting climate change because of the carbon dioxide emissions caused by the livestock industry. Increases in flooding incidents over the next few years reinforced concerns about changing weather patterns and their causes.

After an epidemic of 'Super Swine Flu' in 2021, intensive farming was banned. 'Sadly, chickens people had been eating were so genetically modified it was very difficult for them to celebrate the news'. Then followed 'the era of confusion' when people wanted to act more responsibly, but weren't sure how, until inspirational role models emerged. Hip activists and chefs on the telly spread a positive message about veganism: 'we've got to shock people with love. We've got to shock people with compassion'. Other signs that the vegan movement was growing were 2024's hit musical about the cruelties of the dairy industry and Albania winning the Eurovision Song Contest with a power ballad about veganism. The movement was galvanised when a

prominent activist was killed by a member of the Great British Meat League. This, along with the pro-meat vlogger vlogging 'This is England! We aren't lentils!' makes a link between right wing politics and eating animal products. In 2032, the argument for veganism was strengthened when technology was invented which can read and translate animals' thoughts, such as 'I am not a cheese factory. I am a goat'. Three years later, eating animal products was banned in the 2035 Bill of Animal Rights.

*Carnage* throws a lot of ideas from the screen, through faked footage, archive clips and Amstell's sarky narration. Sometimes its serious message about the supposed advantages of veganism gets clouded when a scene veers too close to *Brass Eye*-style satire, but the gags prevent the film from sounding preachy. The scenes from abattoirs, of cows being shot and chicks on a production line speak for themselves. But *Carnage* isn't just about veganism; it also explores what makes a cause popular enough to create lasting change.

Could as significant a shift as mass conversion to veganism happen within capitalism? In *Carnage*, the transition sounds fairly straightforward: scientists show that eating animal products is bad for the environment and cruel, support for this view grows among the public and government, and legislation bans the meat and dairy industries, leading to utopia. In real life, it's doubtful that the capitalist class would be so flexible, considering the economic clout of these industries. Would popular pressure and the changing climate be strong enough reasons for capitalism to be reformed in this way? Even so, mass veganism - if desirable - could only happen within capitalism if vegan-friendly industries became more profitable for their owners.

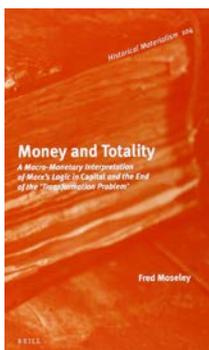
The programme starts to explore whether such a shift could only happen as part of wider change. One of the future experts looking back links the eating of animal products with the acceptance of hierarchies: 'The Queen, despite being just another animal, was above all British people, so I suppose we thought that we should be above something'. Unfortunately, *Carnage* doesn't expand on the notion that if we reject hierarchies between people we would also view animals as equal.

Instead, it focuses on the how the future road to veganism gets played out in the media, and the viral videos, performance artists, social media campaigns and telegenic role models probably would be part of any growing movement.

The BBC tends to hide its more challenging output away on its iPlayer service, and *Carnage* is worth finding if you're hungry for some food for thought.

**MIKE FOSTER**

## Book Reviews



### **Money and Totality.** **Fred Moseley.** **Haymarket Books, 2017.** **400 pages**

THE SUBTITLE sums up what the book is about: *A Macro-Monetary Interpretation of Marx's Logic in*

*Capital and the End of the 'Transformation Problem'.*

We sometimes say that universities neglect Marx on economics. This is not strictly true as there is a sub-section which does look at Marx's views here, from an academic point of view. One of their fields of study is the so-called 'transformation problem'.

In Volume I of *Capital* Marx assumes, for explanatory purposes, that 'commodities', as items of wealth produced for sale, exchange at their 'value', determined by the amount of necessary labour expended to produce them from start to finish. In Volume III, published after Marx's death by Engels in 1894, he has commodities selling at their 'price of production', defined as their monetary cost + the average rate of monetary profit; which is what tends to happen in practice.

Marx-critics immediately cried 'contradiction' and one of the more mathematically-minded of them used algebra to try to demonstrate that it was impossible to 'transform' values into prices of production without dropping the assumption that total profit = total surplus value; in which case, the labour theory of value was wrong, or at least useless and irrelevant. This became what Moseley calls the 'standard' interpretation and criticism of Marx. Over the years it has provided academics, both those who consider themselves Marxists and those who don't, with plenty to argue about.

Moseley's argument is that, if you understand properly what Marx meant by 'capital', there is no such problem. Marx, he says, meant 'money capital' as 'money that becomes more money', i.e., as Moseley puts it, 'money advanced into circulation in order to extract *more money* from circulation'.

Capital is not something physical, not 'capital goods' (machinery, buildings, raw materials) but also not labour time. In both Volumes I and III, argues Moseley, capital is assumed to be the same given sum (any sum) of money used to buy physical goods and labour power, whose use leads to the creation of a given amount of surplus value. Volume I explains

where this comes from (the unpaid labour of the working class). Volume III explains how this same amount is distributed amongst the various competing capitals (in proportion to size). There is no period of time during which values need to be 'transformed' into prices of production. The basic assumptions in both volumes are the same. There is no 'transformation problem.'

Moseley identifies the false problem as having arisen from a misunderstanding of what Marx meant by 'value' and 'capital'. Capital is a sum of values but value (the amount of necessary labour embodied in a commodity) cannot be measured directly but only via the market as price, i.e., only as money. So capital is in practice a sum of money, one that seeks to grow larger. Like value, capital is a social relation rather than a thing. Contradictions only arise if you assume that it is something physical.

Another valid point made by Moseley (Andrew Kliman disagrees) is that by 'price of production' Marx meant the same as Adam Smith and David Ricardo meant by 'natural price', i.e., a long-run price around which market prices oscillate (Moseley calls it the 'long-run centre of gravity price') consisting of cost + a mark-up for profit. Smith and Ricardo just accepted the mark-up as a fact of life. Marx provided an explanation of where it came from and that it wasn't just an arbitrary addition to costs.

Moseley's book, although clearly written, is rather technical, but it does provide a comprehensive guide to all the arguments, for and against, the so-called 'transformation problem'

**ALB**

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### **Haven Your Cake** **Richard Murphy:** **Dirty Secrets: How Tax Havens** **Destroy the Economy.** **Verso £12.99.**

A tax haven is a place that provides tax advantages for someone who does not live there. Some are further described as secrecy jurisdictions, as they also enable secrecy for those who use these tax arrangements. Tax havens rely on the notion of an offshore transaction, which is recorded in one place even though all the parties to it reside elsewhere. As one, admittedly extreme, example discussed here of the use of a tax haven, in 2013 Barclays Bank had nearly 55,000 employees in the UK, where on paper the company lost over £1.3bn, but in Luxembourg it had just fourteen employees and made a slightly larger profit.

Tax havens are not just places such as Jersey and the Cayman Islands, for the US and the UK are enormous tax havens too. The US state of Delaware was perhaps the first tax haven, in 1898, and nowadays over half of US corporations have their legal home there. Clearly one consequence of the use of tax havens is that vast amounts of tax that 'should' be paid to governments are in fact not paid; estimating the extent of such tax avoidance and evasion is extremely difficult, but Murphy suggests it may be as much as £120bn a year in the UK.

He argues, however, that loss of tax revenue is not the only problem resulting from the existence of tax havens. Since they also involve a great deal of secrecy relating to ownership, accounts and profits, they undermine the workings of the market, as people do not have the open and accurate information needed to act rationally, allocate resources properly and estimate risk. As a result tax havens reduce productivity, growth and profits, and so prevent the 'proper' working of capitalism. Doing away with tax havens would mean, as Murphy puts it, 'saving capitalism from itself'.

Tax havens are used not just by companies but by super-rich individuals as well. One estimate is that in 2010 nearly half of all offshore wealth was owned by the world's richest 91,000 people (0.001 percent of the global population). These people owned at least a third of the world's private financial wealth. Tax havens contribute to increasing inequality and the continuance of ownership of massive amounts of wealth by the privileged few.

Murphy is associated with the Tax Justice Network (taxjustice.net), and his proposal is to do away with tax havens, thus reducing inequality, making countries more democratic and improving the rule of law. It would also, supposedly, make markets fairer and more efficient. Perhaps this signals one of the problems with tax havens from a capitalist point of view: with their secrecy and lack of transparency, they make it harder for smaller firms to compete and for companies to enter a new market. This is hardly an issue for workers, though: taxes are a burden on the capitalist class, and arguments about tax havens are in reality disputes as to how much of this burden different capitalists should bear.

Murphy's book gives a broad coverage of various points relating to tax havens, but is overly-optimistic about what abolishing them would lead to. The book could also have done with an extra round of proof-reading, as there are rather too many typos (including an unfortunate reference to 'on pubic record').

**PB**

# Exhibition Review

## Saddleworth Museum

SADDLEWORTH IS an area of farms and villages on the western edge of the Pennines, about halfway between Manchester and Huddersfield, with some spectacular scenery. Traditionally part of Yorkshire, it has, since the local government reorganisation of 1974, been part of the Borough of Oldham (which is itself within Greater Manchester). This annoys some of the residents, who maintain it is still in its previous county and have set up the Saddleworth White Rose Society (as if it matters in the slightest). The area is often described as 'a Yorkshire community on the Lancashire side of the Pennines'.

Saddleworth Museum is located in the area's largest village, Uppermill, in what was once the steam house of a mill. Originally established in 1962, it re-opened last year after extensive refurbishment. It traces the history of the area, with artefacts and display boards. Castleshaw, in the north of Saddleworth, has the remains

of two Roman forts dating from the first and second centuries CE, which were important bases on the road between Chester and York. But most of the museum naturally deals with more recent



times.

The acidic soil meant the area was not good for crops, so farmers had to rely on keeping sheep and cattle, combined with home weaving of cotton and wool. It was not a prosperous area, and in the early 1800s one-third of the population were

on poor relief, unable to find work. From the 1840s wool and cotton mills were established, becoming the main local employers. For a hundred years down to 1960, looms were manufactured in one

of the local villages, for use locally and elsewhere. The displays include a replica of a banner carried by the Saddleworth contingent at Peterloo, with the slogan 'Equal Representation or Death'. Suffragette Annie Kenney was born here in 1879, and worked in a cotton mill from the age of ten before becoming very active in the Women's Social and Political Union.

In the course of the twentieth century, the mills closed in the face of competition and were either demolished

or converted into housing. Saddleworth is now mainly a dormitory district for Manchester.

An interesting local museum which gives a very worthwhile account of a rather unusual area.

**PB**

### ACTION REPLAY

#### Heading for trouble

LAST YEAR the *Daily Telegraph* (30 May) published an article on the link between football and dementia accusing the powers that run football of behaving like the notorious tobacco industry of the 1960s. It warned about its 'scandalous' failure to carry out research into the alleged link, in the world's most popular sport, between heading the ball and dementia.

This issue was brought into sharp focus because it coincided with the 50th anniversary year of England's 1966 World Cup triumph. Four of the eight surviving outfield players of England's greatest team are suffering with significant memory problems. Ray Wilson, Martin Peters and Nobby Stiles were diagnosed with Alzheimer's in their sixties while Jack Charlton has

struggled with memory loss since his late seventies. The incidence rate among the 1966 heroes was said to be 'frightening' but alarm was already spreading due to anecdotal evidence of the devastating stories affecting hundreds of other former footballers. John Stiles said of his father 'It can't be a coincidence – it seems almost to be of epidemic proportion'.

According to the Alzheimer's Society, the number of men suffering from dementia in the wider national population between the ages of 65 and 69 is one in 75 or 1.25 percent. In 2012, an inquest ruled that former England striker Jeff Astle died of an industrial disease caused by the damage to his brain from playing football but a promised joint Football Association and Professional Footballers' Association study into the wider risks was never published.

Since that inquest, Jeff Astle's family have been contacted by hundreds of

other families with similar experiences. They have tried to work constructively with the authorities to find answers but have become exasperated and suspicious at football's lack of action.

Dawn Astle, Jeff's daughter, said 'they have tried to sweep dad's death and the verdict from an inquest under a carpet because of fear for the implications of football. I think they are terrified of what this research is going to show. For a coroner to say dad's job killed him and then 15 years on to be no further forward is shocking, It was a landmark decision that would have had earthquake repercussions in any other industry. It feels like a huge conspiracy. It's a disgrace no one in football wants to find out if football is a killer.'

She met representatives of the FA in 2014 and was told that they would forward research questions to FIFA. Dawn was subsequently enraged when the FA altered their terminology to say that it would 'imminently' put questions to FIFA. She sent an immediate email to FA chairman Greg Dyke and PFA deputy

*Continued p.22*

# 50 Years Ago:

## Our Boys in Aden

WHAT ARE British troops doing in Aden, apart from putting the boot in and expressing a willingness to accept a massive punch-up?

The newspapers tell us they are keeping the peace, which avoids the question of why the peace is threatened.

Aden was annexed (a diplomat's word for stolen) by Britain in 1839, and used as a base to guard the trade route to India. (It is still the only fortified point between Egypt and Bombay).

When the British left India in 1948 it could have been the end of their interest in Aden, had it not been for the rich oil fields which had been discovered in the Middle East.

Aden now stands guard on the Persian Gulf, where two-thirds of the oil resources of Western capitalism lie. Britain gets more than half its oil from the countries around the Persian Gulf and British oil companies own about one third of the Gulf's production.

It is to protect these interests that Our Boys in Aden are being killed - and are themselves doing a bit of killing. Sir William Luce, who was Governor of Aden 1959-60, made it clear in an article in the *Daily Telegraph* on April 12 last:

'We did not undertake the "policing" of the Gulf for some vague, altruistic purpose; we went there, and have remained there, because it has suited us to do so.'

By 'we' and 'us' Sir William is really talking about the East India Company in the old days and the oil companies today. These are the interests which need working class bodies to protect them, interests which are threatened today by claims from Persia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia and by the opposing Aden nationalists.

British capitalism's only hope is to stay in Aden until some sort of order has been imposed in this conflict. A withdrawal now could well plunge the place into a Congo-like war, with serious results for the oilmen of the Persian Gulf.

So it looks as if Our Boys in Aden will have to carry on keeping the peace for a while, even if they have to kill half the population to do it.

(From "Review", *Socialist Standard*, May 1967)



### from p.21

Chief Executive John Bramhall stating that the 'lack of respect for those who have died and their families who have seen them stripped of all dignity is beyond belief'.

Dyke and the PFA chief executive, Gordon Taylor, replied to Dawn and a meeting was arranged with Charlotte Cowie, the FA's head of performance medicine. Taylor said the PFA had been approached by 'quite a number' of former professionals with symptoms of cognitive decline. 'I share the frustration, this does need addressing,' said Taylor.

Pressure to do something is gathering. Dr Willie Stewart, of the University of Glasgow is the neuropathologist who examined Astle's brain and found chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) – a condition that can cause similar symptoms to Dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or motor neurone disease but can only be diagnosed in a post-mortem. Stewart stated 'it shouldn't take 15 years to answer the question: Does participation in football alter your risk of dementia?' and feels football's authorities need

to allocate a fraction of the vast sums of money they have to answer the question. 'We have teams in the 1950s and 1960s where five or six of the players have developed dementia, said Stewart. One



Astle Gates, The Hawthorns

player perhaps would be in the odds but when you see this in team after team you have to start wondering. I'm surprised football isn't embracing this.'

Dr Michael Grey a motor neuroscience physiologist at the University of Birmingham likens the situation to the old smoking debate. In the 1950s and 1960s, the tobacco companies were saying there is no link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, but of course we now know there is. 'I am shocked at FIFA, the FA and the PFA. I just do not understand why they have not invested in independent research.'

Well, one answer maybe is that the governing bodies of football may think that by kicking the problem into the long grass, affected parties may just give up and go away. They may have to think again because the courts could rule that they 'owe a duty of care to current and former players'. By doing nothing about existing problems they could end up facing similar action to the American Football authorities who have been sued for \$1 billion [£684 million]. That might get them to do something if nothing else will. Money talks, in fact it never stays silent.

KEVIN

# Meetings

## May 2017

**Monday 1st, 12pm-3pm**

**Guildford Street Stall**

Tunsgate Arch (off High Street), Guildford GU1 3AA (supporting forthcoming County Council elections)

**Monday 1st, 1pm**

**Burnley May Day Festival**

Towneley Park, Holmes Street, Burnley BB11 3RQ Literature, Ideas, etc.

**Tuesday 2nd, 8pm**

**West London Branch Meeting**

Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN

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

**Thursday 4th, 7pm**

**Edinburgh Branch Meeting**

The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh EH1 2JL

**Monday 8th, 7.30pm**

**Swansea Branch Meeting**

Unitarian Church, High Street, Swansea SA1 1NZ

**Sunday 14th, 2pm**

**Kent and Sussex Branch Meeting**

The Muggleton Inn, 8 High Street Maidstone, ME14 1HJ

**Wednesday 17th, 7pm**

**Glasgow Branch Meeting**

Maryhill Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 7YE

**Thursday 18th, 8pm**

**North London Branch meeting + 'The Overpopulation Myth'**

Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RX

**Saturday 20th, 10.30am-3pm**

**Levellers Day**

Burford Recreation Ground, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4NB Stall, politics, debate, childrens activities, refreshments, music

**Saturday 20th, 12pm**

**Folkestone Street Stall**

Folkestone Town Hall, junction of Sandgate road and Guildhall Street, CT20 1DY Organised by Kent and Sussex Branch

**Saturday 20th, 1-5pm**

**'World Socialism - Nothing Less' (Day School, Doncaster)**

The Ukrainian Centre, 48 Beckett Road, Doncaster DN2 4AD Film, speakers, buffet, bar

**Wednesday 24th, 7.30-9pm**

**Lothian Socialist Discussion**

The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh 17 West Montgomery Place Edinburgh EH7 5HA

**Saturday 6th, 1pm**

**EC Meeting**

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee

## June 2017

**Thursday 1st June, 7pm**

**Edinburgh Branch Meeting**

The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace, (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh EH1 2JL

**Saturday 24th, 12pm**

**Canterbury Sreet Stall**

Parade Pedestrian Precinct Organised by Kent and Sussex Branch

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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.

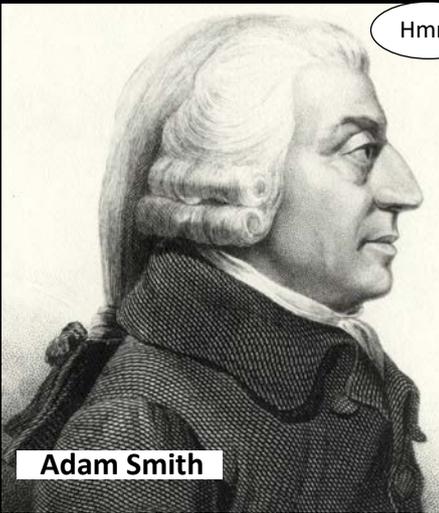
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local,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

Workers  
of the World,  
unite!

Hmm...



Adam Smith

### Utopian capitalists

Dr. Butler, Director of the Adam Smith Institute, asked recently 'Is Ayn Rand still relevant 35 years on from her death?' This resulted in some feedback, the most outrageous example being that 'Ayn Rand will remain relevant till the end of time for the same reason as Newton, Michelangelo, Copernicus, or any other brilliant mind who discovered eternal principles.' One blogsite, theobjectivestandard.com (5 April), is slightly less effusive: 'It's great to see such a prominent thinker at such a renowned think tank recognizing the nature and importance of Rand's ideas. I suspect that if Adam Smith and Ayn Rand were alive to see it, they would greatly appreciate this development.' Smith would likely be horrified by the Institute which bears his name, by Rand and by capitalism today. One of his admirers was none other than Marx. Smith held that 'labour... is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities,' noted 'the masters, being fewer in number, can combine much more easily; and the law, besides, authorises, or at least does not prohibit their combinations, while it prohibits those of the workmen' and, tellingly, 'wherever there is great property there is great inequality. For one very rich man there must be at least five hundred poor, and the affluence of the few supposes the indigence of the many' (*Wealth of Nations*, 1776).

### Philosophers have only interpreted the world

Noam Chomsky is listed as one of the ten most quoted writers of all time, but the description of him as the 'most dangerous man in the US' has surely been trumped. Chomsky is more cognisant of capitalism than Sanders but shares his reformism, alas. During a recent interview titled 'Chomsky: Why Trump Is Pushing the Doomsday Clock to the Brink of Midnight' (alternet.org, 4 April), Noam stated '.. a couple of years ago, the secretary-general of NATO made a formal statement explaining that the purpose of NATO in the post-Cold War world is to control global energy systems, pipelines, and sea lanes. That means it's a global system and of course he didn't say it, it's an intervention force under US command, as we've seen in case after case.' Whether he means Anders Fogh Rasmussen or the incumbent Jens Stoltenberg does not really matter – this is surely the first time that socialists are in agreement with Chomsky and a head of NATO.

### Waiting for the last Chechen?

'I haven't had a single request on this issue, but if I did, I wouldn't even consider it, Kheda Saratova, a Chechen activist who is on Kadyrov's human rights [sic] council, told a Russian radio station. In our Chechen society, any person who respects our traditions and culture will hunt down this kind of person without any help from authorities, and do everything to make sure that this kind of person does not exist in our society' (theguardian.com, 4 April). Examples of such primitive prejudice – in this case towards homosexual men – and practices abound. Will the lack of social progress delay the establishment of socialism? No. Developments in communications technology allow for the near instantaneous dissemination of ideas everywhere, as well as the circumvention of state censorship. Further, globalisation leads to the increasing uniformity of conditions and experiences and convergence in thinking. Socialists can use such factors in targeting our arguments.

### Die young

'Wealth and health are intrinsically linked in the United States, with rich Americans living between 10 to 15 years longer than their poor counterparts, a study has found. A series of five papers published in the medical journal *The Lancet* found that a widening income gap, structural racism and mass incarceration are fuelling growing health inequalities' (newsweek.com, 7 April). Bernie Sanders' diagnosis cannot, for once, be faulted: 'the USA is one of the richest countries in the world, but that reality means very little for most people because so much of that wealth is controlled by a tiny sliver of Americans'. Tragically, his treatment plan, as outlined in *Our Revolution*, if followed, amounts to yet another spin on the reformist misery-go-round. Dr. Marx's observation, published 150 years ago, that 'accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital' remains valid. His cure is possibly best summarised as *workers of the world unite!*



Homeless in the USA  
In February 2017 there were 62,000 homeless people in New York

### FREE LUNCH

