

# socialist standard

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

## 21st Century Politician



### Why you're better off without them



Wynter's  
discontent  
page 13



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bashing  
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Rolling in it  
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# socialist standard

SEPTEMBER 2015

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# Introducing The Socialist Party

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

We use every possible opportunity

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

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our

ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

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

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



# socialist standard

## Editorial

SEPTEMBER 2015

## Back to the 70s?

TWENTY YEARS ago, the Labour Party agreed on a new version of Clause IV of its constitution which removed the reference to the 'common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange' (see this issue, page XX). This was hailed as the moment when the Labour Party abandoned its commitment to 'socialism', or rather to wholesale nationalisation. This decision was arrived at after suffering four electoral defeats at the hands of the Conservatives, who had successfully pursued free market policies. Thus the Labour Government from 1997 to 2010, introduced policies which were not radically different from those of the Tories.

Yet the unexpected front runner for the current Labour leadership contest is Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, who calls himself a socialist and pledges to end austerity by measures such as raising taxes for the rich, including corporation tax, tackling tax avoidance and tax evasion and introducing a 'People's Quantitative Easing', where electronic money would be created by the Bank of England to be invested in 'new large scale housing, energy, transport and digital projects'. He would also bring the railways and the energy companies back into State ownership.

How did he get to this position? Aside from some Trotskyists and Conservatives who have exploited a new rule that entitles non-Party members to vote in the Leadership election provided they register as supporters of Labour, most of his support comes from grass roots Labour supporters and others, many of them young people, who have had enough of the effects of austerity, the decline in the standard of living for many workers, the proliferation of food banks, while on the other hand, the rich continue to enjoy rising prosperity. Moreover, Corbyn is seen as being honest and principled, whereas the other three candidates come across as supine mouthpieces of a Labour establishment that supports the current consensus on austerity.

In a BBC news article ([bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33772024](http://bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33772024)),

Corbyn says, in response to accusations that he wants to take the Party back to the 1980s, that he'd go back to the 1970s Labour government. In 1974 the new Labour Government declared that they wish to 'bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families.' This was to be achieved by increasing spending on pensions and other benefits, extending state ownership and tax rises on the better off. However, capitalism was hit by a recession which resulted in a sharp rise of unemployment. Inflation was rising rapidly. The government had to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund, and was compelled to implement a programme of spending cuts. James Callaghan, the Prime Minister at the time, came to this conclusion at the Labour Party Annual Conference in 1976:

'We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession, and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists, and that in so far as it ever did exist, it only worked on each occasion since the war by injecting a bigger dose of inflation into the economy, followed by a higher level of unemployment as the next step.'

Jeremy Corbyn will have no more success in trying to reform capitalism in the interests of the working class. Production under capitalism is geared towards profits, not human need. Corbyn's proposed tax rises would cut into profits and discourage investment. Even his proposed people's quantitative easing is likely to fuel inflation, which would put pressure on interest rates to rise.

While we welcome that more people are becoming politically engaged and are looking for alternatives, it would be a mistake to follow Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, otherwise we may well end up back in the 1970s, rather than moving forward to abolish capitalism and establish real socialism.

**The biggest question? Don't ask...**

SCIENCE IS good at asking the big questions, the ones that make even Earth's tumultuous politics look trivial. Science journalists are also good at asking big questions, but usually during slow news weeks and usually without any kind of decent answers



attached.

*New Scientist* recently led with a cover article entitled 'Ten discoveries that would transform what it means to be human', featuring ten speculations which would supposedly revolutionise human life on Earth (8 August).

They proceeded as follows. What if we can't know everything (worst case: we're no worse off). What if we could talk sheep, dog or dolphin (worst case: we'd be vegetarians). What if aliens exist (if they're smart they'd avoid us). What if we could upload our brains (a digital copy of you is not *you* though, is it?). We have no free will (yawn, not *that* again). We came from outer space (panspermia merely adds a step to the existing origins debate). We could prove God exists (yawn, again) etc etc.

These aren't revolutions, they're fillers dressed as thrillers. They would not involve any sea-change in social behaviour. At most a few religions would be mildly upset or excited, until they adapted like the oily amorphous creatures they are. For socialists, this is toenail gazing. Meanwhile in the middle of the room, farting gently and wagging its trunk and big ears, a very large question stands quietly waiting to be noticed.

What if we could end conflict and deprivation on planet Earth?

If science is so good at asking the big questions, why doesn't it ask this? Is it perhaps because it's not a scientific question, in some sense? But change the terms to refer to cancer, or wildfires, or global warming, and it's obvious that scientists ask questions like this all the time.

But perhaps it's a different kind of question nonetheless, because unlike cancer, wildfires or global warming, everybody knows that conflict and deprivation are so intrinsic to our global economic system, and to all known preceding systems, that their abolition would clearly imply a set of political changes so radical and so huge that 'revolution' is an entirely appropriate word to use. The very idea is so potent that it makes many people nervous, not just scientists.

So the too-easy answer would be that scientists don't care or dare to ask questions that might annoy their bosses and funding organisations, or that might make them look like loony lefties (although such concerns didn't bother Einstein). This is slightly odd, given that statistically most are liberal or left-of-centre in their thinking, but apparently keeping very quiet about it. Another too-easy answer is that scientists suffer (as all humans do) from group-think, a compulsion to conform to orthodoxy, or fixation error, a tendency not to see the big picture, and of course good old confirmation bias, the tendency to believe what you already think (*New Scientist*, 15 August). But any argument that puts all the blame on them can't be the whole story.

Why don't scientists ask politically explosive questions? Because, from their point of view, the *answers* appear to lie outside the domain of science, in the realms of politics or religion, where nothing can be demonstrated with a pie-chart or a meter reading and rhetoric and moral posturing take precedence over empirical fact. In short, political viewpoints including ours are unfalsifiable, ie there's no way to prove that

they're wrong.

To be falsifiable is, in the Popperian school of thought, to be scientifically valid and thus worthy of scientific attention. To attract that attention, we would have to show by what criteria, and in what circumstances, our case for non-market common ownership and democratic control could be disproven. Which is not as easy as it might sound. It's no good suggesting some giant and unfeasibly expensive study, like running socialism for fifty years inside a sealed bubble in Argentina, and it's no good stipulating vague 'proofs' without saying how they are to be found (eg. 'prove to me socialism can't work and I'll abandon it').

And what would we call 'proof' anyway? Suppose that scientists discovered, say, a gene for aggression. Would we accept that as proof, and abandon our ideas about peaceful coexistence, or would we create a theoretical work-around to accommodate it, as religious people commonly do, or blithely disregard it as Steven Pinker does in *The Blank Slate*? Suppose that a computer simulation of socialism showed that it always broke down and devolved back into capitalism. Would we accept that as proof, or would we suggest instead that the computer model wasn't sophisticated enough, or possibly that the researchers (no doubt funded by capitalist corporations) had rigged the test? Is there a failure condition which is so comprehensive and unequivocal that, were it met, we could have no possible riposte, no get-out clause, no 'ah, but...?'

Gravity is falsifiable. Just allow yourself to float spontaneously into the air, and the job's done. Evolution is falsifiable. As the biologist JBS Haldane once famously retorted, just dig me up a dinosaur with a fossilised rabbit in its gut. The Periodic Table, electromagnetism,  $E=MC^2$ , all falsifiable, therefore all valid theory. Could socialist theory match that? No it couldn't.

But neither can capitalism, of course, which generates an abundance of evidence of its own failings every minute of every hour of every day, evidence which people are remarkably adept at ignoring or explaining away. So no proposed social system is falsifiable. You can't test socialism in a lab, under randomised double-blind conditions. But does that mean it's unscientific, and that scientists and science journalists are therefore right to avoid consideration of it?

No it doesn't, and here's why. Science can be said to proceed via the dislodging of unsatisfactory theories and their replacement by theories which better account for the observed phenomena and are better able to predict outcomes. In this sense socialism is a valid scientific theory. It is evidence-based, it explains events in capitalism consistently better than capitalist theoreticians can manage, and it predicts long-term outcomes better (eg predicting that Government A will not solve unemployment and Government B will not abolish booms and slumps). It's an effective tool of analysis, but also a compelling tool of change, offering a simple and utilitarian set of knowable and predictable parameters instead of the myriad, volatile and unpredictable parameters which produce chaos, suffering and destruction in money economies. For scientists to ignore such a tool is worse than negligent, it flies in the face of the very principles of scientific enquiry.

**PJS**



## Corbyn for Leader?

Dear Editors,

There are several good reasons why World Socialists should welcome the election of Jeremy Corbyn to the role of Labour Party Leader or Her Majesty's Opposition Leader in the UK, if in indeed me makes it beyond any dirty tricks from his opponents in the party. Corbyn win or lose, his success now marks the end of the long 'politically repressive' Thatcher period.



Bill Martin's little piece on Corbyn (*Socialist Standard*, August) rather missed the points, unfortunately! Sure, Corbyn's socialism is not our socialism and that's not the point either. In the USA Obama was called a socialist

(laughingly!) and now there is a candidate Bernie Sanders, a self-described 'democratic socialist' on a Corbyn-like ticket doing well so far in the US Presidential Election Party Primaries. If he doesn't win the Democratic nomination he'll force Hillary Clinton leftwards to beat him, much as Corbyn here has done with both Burnham and Cooper. Most would agree that for a person in the USA (of all places) to be doing well in a national poll and openly calling himself a 'socialist', of any kind, is pretty good progress for politics there. Not since Upton Sinclair in the 1930's.

What has that got to do with Corbyn?

Well *Socialist Standard* regulars (World Socialists) know that Corbyn's socialism is not ours, but his popularity and success and should he win here will definitely (no doubts about it) legitimize and popularize the word 'socialism' again

in the UK politics. This word since Thatcher has all but been banned and junked by the media (TV, radio and newspapers) and these outlets are where most of the public/voters still get their politics. Also junked by Labour Leaders.

Therefore, the same effect as with Sanders in the USA will likely happen here in the UK. But more again will happen here as it will likely happen in the USA. What? The word 'socialism' being currency again (sorry for the association) will lead some to research socialism and they'll come up with the SPGB & WSPUSA (World Socialist Party of the United States) in their results page!

There is another reason in that World Socialists welcome working people getting a better share of the wealth in the meantime and Corbyn as British Prime Minister will achieve this for workers.

A third reason will prove that the left cannot solve the problem of the disintegrating capitalist society—a society to which the term 'impossibilism' is better now applied to than to World Socialism. Thus Corbyn is merely a prelude to much more meaningful discussions about capitalism and socialism.

Finally, Bill Martin, a more positive outlook is required from you sir, and not to stick to 'political elitism' which is exactly the outlook of British Labour Party leaders now in their tirade against Corbyn!

**WILLIAM DUNN, Glasgow**

### Reply:

We were careful in choosing our description of Jeremy Corbyn as being 'Harold Wilson warmed up.' In the 1960s policies very like the ones Corbyn is advocating were tried. They didn't aid the course of socialism; they led to disillusionment and workers voting for Margaret Thatcher.

It is no good getting the word socialism back on the political agenda if it is again to be associated with statism, taxation and nationalisation. If there has

been one consistent theme to the Socialist Party's campaigning it has been that we need to be clear about what socialism is and what is needed to achieve it, and we cannot welcome anything that will create confusion and muddle, however well intentioned.

We recognised that much of the 'Corbynmania' phenomenon is that 'the desires of workers (however misinformed and locked into the logic of markets) will have forced their way into the halls of power.' What that means, though, is that we have to continue to work hard to put forward and explain the socialist case to dispel the misinformation. There are no short cuts, and whether the workers support Thatcher or Corbyn doesn't change the need for clear socialist agitation.

That is not elitist at all, it is the democratic approach. – *Editors.*

## Blacklisted

Dear Editors,

In the mid-1970s the *Mail* and the *Sun* attacked the 'left' in my union branch of the CPSA (now PCS), Department of Environment and Transport HQ, for 'concealing' their political views before standing for election to the Branch Committee. They could not charge me with dissembling – because I was an open Communist and the papers' report noted this, without naming me. In fact, against trusted and CPSA 'Moderators', Janet Daly of the Tory Party, and Militant Tendency, I won three successive elections for Branch Secretary.

In 1984 Gordon Leake of the Express (a self-confessed ex-BOSS member-turned-journalist) claimed that the CPSA branch at GCHQ did not exist. In fact, Diane Green, its branch secretary, a member of the BL84 faction (the one in which Communists and Socialist caucuses and non-Militant members participated) was elected to CPSA's National Executive.

In 1996, the GCHQ Staff Association (formed after Thatcher had barred GCHQ unions), lost its appeal to the Certification Officer (a Thatcherite creation), for funds from the Thatcher fund for union postal ballots. The reason was the heavy dependence of the 'union' on Peter Marychurch, the GCHQ director, for facility time, accommodation and telephone.

**D. SHEPHERD, London NW4**

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*Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff* is a short film from The Socialist Party which questions some of the most basic assumptions about life in capitalism.

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## Catholics and Aliens

A QUESTION in the *Guardian* G2's 'Notes and Queries' column (where *Guardian* readers respond to each other's queries on anything that happens to be puzzling them) recently asked 'If there is intelligent life out there, what are the chances that it might believe in God?'

Following the recent news that exoplanet Kepler 452b appears to be remarkably Earth-like, the Vatican appears to have the answer. The Pope, it seems, is way ahead of the rest of us on this and has been prepared for the possibility for some time. In addition to the squad of exorcists the Vatican keeps on the payroll to deal with earth-bound satanic beings, they apparently also have their own astronomers to keep an eye out for aliens who presumably, if not already Catholics, could be converted.

'If there was intelligent life (on another planet) I don't see that as a contradiction with the Christian faith', said one Vatican astronomer. 'If God created aliens somewhere out there, then the Vatican is in no position to say Jesus wasn't for them too'. (*Independent* 2 August 2015). And another, back in 2010, informed us that 'aliens who seek baptism should receive it from the church, because any entity – no matter how many tentacles it has – has a soul.'

And according to another 2008 *Independent* article, Fr Jose Gabriel Funes, the Vatican priest in charge of the stargazing department announced that 'Alien life would be part of God's creation' and aliens would be 'our brothers'. So in partial answer the *Guardian*'s question of whether they are believers, any aliens planning to visit us can rest assured that they are already being eyed up for baptism into the Catholic Church. No doubt a few can be recruited into the priesthood too. They'll fit in well.

How the aliens will react to this news though, if it turns out they are already devout Martian Mormons, Moonies or Moslems for example, Saturnian Salvationists or Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses from Jupiter we'll have to wait to find out.

To clarify the situation then, let's visit [www.](http://www.)

[ufointernationalproject.com/latest-news/5th-june-2015](http://ufointernationalproject.com/latest-news/5th-june-2015). They sound as if they've got their finger on the pulse of the latest alien/ufo facts.

'The Catholic church has been pondering over whether there indeed is a far more technologically and intellectually advanced sentient species elsewhere in the galaxy'. They tell us, 'Pope Francis believes apparently, believes so and according to rumour he will not only announce his intentions to prepare the human race for ET contact, BUT he will (according to many rumours) denounce the international corporate capitalist system, that is currently contaminating the planet with toxic consciousness and greed and making us all slaves to the dollar'.

Well, that sounds interesting. These 'far more technologically and intellectually advanced' aliens probably won't need any lessons from the Pope about capitalism, but once their conversion to Catholicism starts, what will they make of the bible account of creation? Fr Funes, the chief stargazer, doesn't think that will be a problem though. 'The bible should not be held to account for its lack of scientific accuracy'. He says.

They're obviously counting on the aliens being as gullible as they think the rest of us are.

NW



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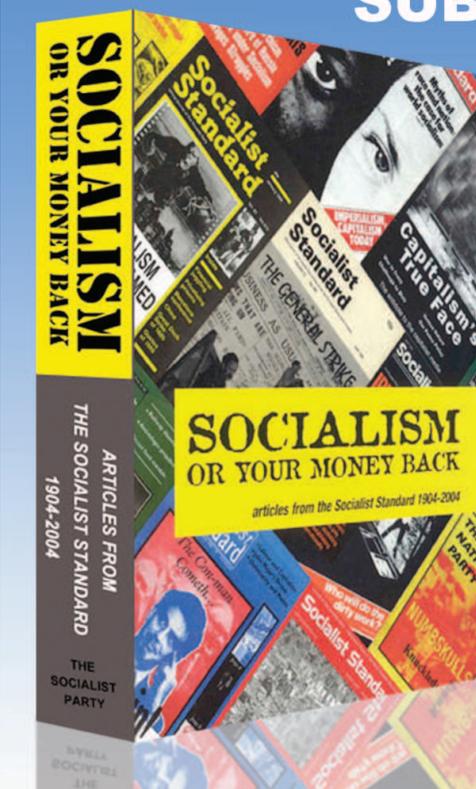
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THE INDEPENDENT



## Is he a Leninist?

ON A visit to Singapore last month the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, opined: 'Europe can't protect itself and preserve its standard of living and social structure if it has to absorb millions of Africans' (*Times*, 10 August). Is this true and, if it is, what would be the implications?

Apart from betraying an obvious race prejudice (why just pick on Africans?), he seemed to be saying that if millions migrated to Europe from outside this would have a detrimental effect on living standards by driving wages down.

This assumes that the migrants actually find jobs, but no employer is going to employ them unless they produce more than their keep which can be pocketed as profit and, if migrants do this, they will be contributing to more wealth being produced. This would have some effect on the wages of the low-paid jobs they would be doing but the wages and standard of living of workers generally would be unaffected.

Also, Europe has an ageing population and so capitalism here will need millions of workers to fill the gap as older workers retire. But Hammond is a politician not an economist and his concern is not losing the xenophobic vote to UKIP.

Suppose, for a moment, that he was correct and that the standard of living in Europe did depend on keeping out people from Asia and Africa, what would that mean? That there's a conflict of interest between people from different parts of the world, that the people in Europe should unite to defend themselves against 'swarms' and 'millions' from outside. Which is what Oswald Mosley's post-war Union Movement preached and what Anders Breivik raved on about. It would also mean that people in Asia and Africa should unite against the people of Europe. In short, it would be a justification – and recipe – for race war.

It would also lend some credence to the Leninist theory of imperialism, particularly in its Maoist form. To try to explain why a majority of workers in Western Europe did not rally to the Bolsheviks after they seized power in 1917 he came up with the idea that the workers in the 'imperialist' countries had been bribed into supporting capitalism by being given a share of the proceeds of the imperialist exploitation of the rest of the world. Mao took this a stage further by changing the slogan at the end of the *Communist Manifesto* to 'Oppressed peoples of the world, unite'. Which also implies a conflict of interest between workers in different parts of the world.

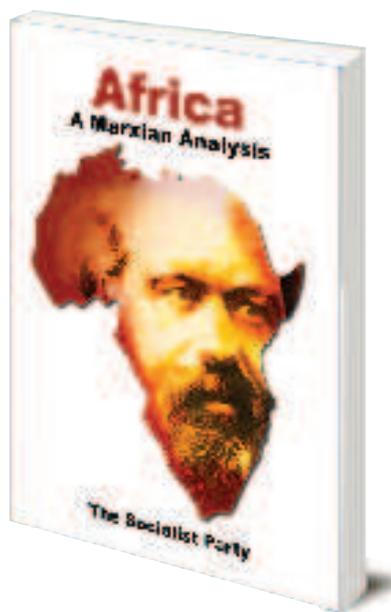
This theory was wrong. Workers in the developed capitalist countries got (and get) paid higher wages because the value of their labour-power was higher than that of workers in the other parts of the world. In fact because their productivity was higher too they were robbed of a higher proportion of what they produced, even though workers in less developed countries suffered (suffer) much lower wages and much worse conditions of employment.

So, is Hammond a Leninist? Not really, as he's not saying that the standard of living of people in Europe depends on exploiting people in Asia and Africa, though his view could be interpreted as implying that employers in Europe are paying workers a higher wage than they would otherwise have to. But no, he is just a racist, and judging by his singling out of Africans not even a pretend one out to steal UKIP votes.

**Correction.** *The quote from Adam Smith in last month's column should have read: 'It is only for the sake of profit that any man employs a capital in support of industry.'*

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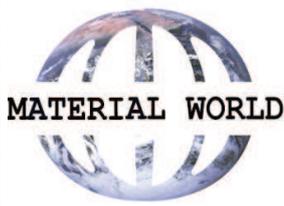
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# No peace

# in the Pacific

AFTER COSTA Rica's civil war in 1948, Jose Figueres, the then president of Costa Rica, abolished the army, took a sledgehammer and began the demolition of the nation's military headquarters. That fundamental decision was enshrined in the 1949 Constitution. To this day, Costa Rica has no army, navy or air force, no heavy weapons of any kind but instead they have the Fuerza Pública (Public Force) responsible for law enforcement and border patrol.

On September 2, 1945, a formal surrender ceremony was performed in Tokyo Bay, Japan, aboard the battleship USS Missouri. After its defeat in World War Two, Japan, as an act of remorse at its previous expansionist aggression, declared in the country's post-war constitution's Article 9, that the Japanese people 'forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes' and thus restricted the Japanese military, known as the Self-Defence Forces, to engage only in self-defence. It meant that a large and technologically advanced military could not engage in any collective alliances or coalitions aiding friendly countries under attack, principally the United States or its proxy forces such as the Philippines. In the mounting tensions of the Chinese territorial claims to much of the South China Sea and its numerous islands, the full military potential of Japan requires to be deployed to protect or acquire whatever rich resources the region possesses.

the bills will allow Japan to better defend its allies under the United Nation's collective self-defence doctrine, which allows for 'individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs.' He describes this by the oxymoronic term, 'proactive pacifism' and hopes it will draw the Japanese people away from their anti-war sentiments.

Normally, amending the Constitution would require two-thirds approval in both houses of Parliament, followed by a national referendum. Abe has circumvented that process by having his government declare a reinterpretation of the Constitution and then following up a package of eleven security-related bills which, unlike a formal constitutional change, requires only a majority vote and there is no referendum. A recent survey by Asahi Shimbun newspaper showed only 26 percent support the legislation that will enable Japan's Self-Defense Forces to engage in wars overseas. 56 percent of those polled expressed opposition.

Many countries try to bamboozle us with Orwellian language. America's 'Department of War', a more truthful name, thought it wiser to re-name itself 'Department of Defense'. Israel describes its military as a 'Defence Force', and by doing so, hopes it explains away the occupation of and the offensive actions against Palestinians. Wars are now called 'peace-keeping' missions or 'humanitarian' interventions.

The Socialist Party has always held that the menace of war cannot be done away with and will always loom over us while its cause, the capitalist system, remains. Modern

## “Modern war is really an extension of business...”

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe wants Japan's armed forces to join in military activities abroad and actively assist allies. Abe's right-wing nationalism has created suspicion among many that it would lead a country that has long embraced pacifism into war again. The Abe government has yet to offer a full and unconditional apology for past aggression and atrocities committed by previous Japanese militarism during its period of colonisation. Abe seeks to 'normalise' the Japanese armed forces' role in foreign policy and he defends the bills creating a more muscular military by saying they 'are not for engaging in wars' but are a deterrent to 'prevent war.' He has argued that

war is really an extension of business when the economic rivalries between the vying national sections of the capitalist class can no longer be peacefully resolved or controlled. The Japanese people are to be applauded for the stand they have taken against wars of aggression. However, the realities of diplomacy and nationalism mean that the capitalist class will protect their interests in whatever way they can ... and perhaps the reason their armies are called 'defence' forces is that they exist to defend the ruling class. It would be encouraging if all nations could follow in the steps of Costa Rica but sadly it won't happen. While we have capitalism we cannot have stability.

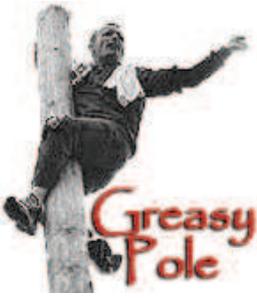
Always new crises will occur and new sources of conflict will appear over markets, the sources of raw material and geo-political strategic points.

Seeing the world as it really is, we know that we shall have wars because the capitalist basis for them remains.

ALJO



# Catching a Crabb?



ALTHOUGH HE was out of step with his own declared standards of order – which included training ex-soldiers as teachers to impose stricter discipline in the schools – the former Secretary of State for

Education Michael Gove in March 2014 gave voice to his opinion that David Cameron's inner cabinet included such a concentration of Old Etonians as to be 'ridiculous' and comparable to that of Robert Gascoyne – Cecil, Lord Salisbury, whose cabinet at the beginning of the twentieth century '... was known as Hotel Cecil. The phrase "Bob's your uncle" came about and all the rest of it. It is preposterous'. It was shortly after this outburst that Gove was moved from Education to become the Tory Chief Whip and then, after the 2010 election, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice so that his attendance at certain traditional events requires him to appear in robes that an outsider might consider to be as preposterous as those of any ceremonial Old Etonian.

## Beard

But among Gove's colleagues on the Tory benches there is Stephen Crabb (pictured) the MP for Preseli Pembrokeshire and Secretary of State for Wales, whose background and ready smile clearly place him



outside the ranks of the blue-blooded but preposterous. For Crabb was brought up by a single mother – his father's violence in the family led to the parents splitting up – on a council estate in Pembrokeshire; as a student he spent his holidays working on building sites. He was first elected in 2005, winning the seat from Labour in what had been a 'Tory-free zone' and went on to increase his majority in 2010 and 2015. He was promoted to Secretary of State after his predecessor David Jones was sacked – a result of Jones' persistently combustible contacts with the Welsh Administration. There is another Tory MP in Pembrokeshire but he is Simon Hart who, in contrast to Crabb, went to public school and agricultural college and was for ten years Master of the local Hunt (the less respectful locals are inclined to lump the two MPs together as as Crap and Fart). Another way in which Crabb distinguishes himself is that he has a beard; he is in fact the first Conservative Cabinet minister to be so adorned since the Fourth Earl of Onslow, an Old Etonian who in 1903 was President of the Board of Agriculture. But Onslow's beard, with his handlebar moustache, was bushy and abundant while Crabb's is cropped and trained; during Prime Minister's Questions he sits on the Front Bench inviting one of the cameras to swing towards him and he smiles – or rather the beard smiles. Its message is that he is contented with his record so far and expects it to see him into an exultant future.

## CARE

In the beginning Crabb was a youth worker in London, going on to apply what that experience taught him as a marketing consultant at the London Chamber

of Commerce. His first taste of the Commons was as a parliamentary intern – which then, as now, was a demanding but unpaid job - for an organisation called Christian Action Research and Education or CARE. There are now some 20 MPs using this service, supplied by CARE free of charge for work such as research and organisation. Crabb has one on his staff but there is no mention of it in his current biography website. CARE describes itself as a 'Mainstream Christian charity bringing Christian insight and experience to matters of public policy' but others prefer a term more in tune with its association with the 'mission' of the American pressure group Focus on the Family of 'defending the God-ordained institution of the family and promoting biblical truths worldwide'. These 'truths' involve a theory that homosexuality is a disorder which all-right thinking people would strive to 'cure'; opposition to equal rights, including marriage, for same sex couples, to the processes of assisted dying and to the repeal of the infamous Section 28. There are five MPs who have broken their contact with CARE, one of them describing its policies as 'deeply offensive'.

## Food Banks

As part of his avowed intention to alleviate poverty, even as a staunchly ambitious MP, Crabb became a trustee of the Pembrokeshire Action To Combat Hardship. One of the starkest and most debilitating symptoms of hardship right now is evident in the growing dependence on food banks. Foremost of the charities in this field – the Trussell Trust – states the problem clearly and without doubt: between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 they distributed three days' food on 1,084,604 occasions, feeding some half a million people, which represented a year-on-year increase of 19 per cent. Of the people they helped some 44 per cent were in emergency through delays in, or cessation of, their benefit payments. Crabb's response to this crisis of need was to vote to reduce the benefits of social tenants subjected to the infamous bedroom tax. And to vote against raising welfare benefits in line with price rises. These votes were a part of the government policy to inflict even worse damage on the people already suffering extreme poverty. At the same time they improved Crabb's chances of working his way up the Greasy Pole.

## Expenses

And then there is the matter of his expenses. He claimed over £8,000 on a second home to refurbish a flat which he then sold at a considerable profit; then he 'flipped' a claim for a house which he was buying in Pembrokeshire and a room in another flat was classed as his second home. His justification of all this was that he had not '... claimed for things like plasma TVs, even though the rules allow it' and then that an official in the fees office had encouraged him in the manipulation: 'Steve I'm looking at your allowances and you've spent hardly anything... you'd get more for your allowances if you switched'. In all during four years he claimed £67,6333 in second home expenses. These details must have been of some interest to anyone struggling to survive on what are called welfare 'benefits' and food bank 'charity'. And to anyone interested in the flexibility of what Crabb presents as his 'Christian honesty'. To be recalled along with the 'honesty' of the others like Michael Gove, Simon Hart, David Jones . . .

**IVAN**

# Clause Four resurfaces

As we go to press, it is with the Labour Party leadership battle raging and its four contenders spouting all manner of promises to secure votes. At the forefront of this contest is the long-serving and perhaps unusually principled left wing MP, Jeremy Corbyn. For a Labour MP, he is as radical as they come and a genuine throwback to the days when Labour was considered by many in Britain to be 'socialist'. His attack on everything Blairism has come to represent, his stance on nuclear weapons, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and many social issues, has won him much support, a lot of it from other parties on the left.

In early August came news that Corbyn was championing Labour's old Clause 4 – its supposed socialist commitment to common ownership of production, distribution and exchange. 'Corbynmania' kicked in almost overnight, with social media sites buzzing with news that 'socialism' was back on the agenda, whilst the rightwing press, big business and big Labour donors

have done all in their power to discredit him and anything to do with old Labour.

Liz Kendall, another Labour leadership contender and avid Blairite said: 'Life has moved on from the old Clause 4 in 1994, let alone 2015. We are a party of the future, not a preservation society.' Big Labour donor and businessman Assem Aklam, who swelled Labour's coffers with £300,000 in donations, said he would stop funding the party if Corbyn became leader, announcing that he would not back a 'dead horse'.

## Fabianism

Nostalgic workers, who mourn the demise of Clause 4 in the 1990s, would do well to remind themselves of its authors and who they actually were – the Fabian Society – and what they actually thought about the working class. Perhaps the closest we come to a definition of the Fabians is Engels' description of them as 'a clique united only by their fear of the threatening rule of the workers and doing all in

their power to avert the danger.' What danger? A danger that had been prophesied by the ILP when they wrote 'that should there be a workers' revolt in Europe, there is nothing save a narrow strip of sea between us and what would then be the theatre of a great human tragedy.'

With Engels description in mind, however, we can begin to set Clause 4 in its real context. For it was penned in November 1917, when news of the Bolshevik takeover in Russia was still making news in Britain, when there were uprisings in Germany, Hungary and Ireland, when the Bolsheviks were arguing the case of peace with Germany, when workers all over Europe were war weary and sick of the social problems the war was creating, when crime rates in Britain were spiralling and when the ruling elite were beginning to realise that the Britain the soldiers would return to would not be, as Lloyd George had promised, 'a land fit for heroes'.

The fear of insurrection amongst the ruling elite – amongst whom the Fabian Society considered themselves – was real enough. The Fabians had in fact felt such qualms for thirty years, seeing in the working class not a mass of exploited workers, impoverished workers, in whose united strength resided their own emancipation, but rather a seething mass of potential revolutionary fervour that must be contained at all costs.

In the 1890s, Beatrice Webb could expect 'no hope from these myriad of deficient minds and deformed bodies – what can we hope but brutality, madness and crime?' Two decades later, her views had not changed, for she saw unions as nothing but 'undertrained and underbred workers'. Bernard Shaw even toyed with a solution – 'sterilisation of the masses' – an idea later to be taken up by Churchill and Hitler.

From the outset, the Fabians did not wish to abolish capitalism and thus remove themselves from their privileged positions. They wanted to reform capitalism, to soften some of its harsher effects, to make capitalism worker-friendly. They wanted peaceful, gradual change from capitalism to what Shaw was to describe as 'state socialism'.

## Clause IV of the Labour Party Constitution, as originally drafted in 1918 and subsequently amended

### Objects

1. To organise and maintain in parliament and in the country a political Labour Party.
2. To cooperate with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, or other kindred organisations, in joint political or other action in harmony with the party constitution and standing orders.
3. To give effect as far as possible to the principles from time to time approved by the party conference.
4. To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.
5. Generally to promote the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

### Inter-Commonwealth

6. To cooperate with the labour and socialist organisations in the commonwealth overseas with a view to promoting the purposes of the party, and to take common action for the promotion of a higher standard of social and economic life for the working population of the respective countries.

### International (Gaitskell amendment in 1959?)

7. To cooperate with the labour and socialist organisations in other countries and to support the United Nations and its various agencies and other international organisations for the promotion of peace, the adjustment and settlement of international disputes by conciliation or judicial arbitration, the establishment and defence of human rights, and the improvement of the social and economic standards and conditions of work of the people of the world.

Rejecting the Marxian view that the state was a manifestation of the domination of the capitalist class, the Fabians believed the state to be impartial, neutral, to be used by anyone who could take power. However, the idea of the workers



Above: Liz Kendall. Right: Bernard Shaw.

taking control was anathema to everything they stood for.

Their idea of socialism was one in which the state was controlled by experts and professionals 'like themselves' – trained in the new social sciences. They were, it appears, technocrats, believing that the technical administration of society should take the place of party politics. They certainly did not believe that the upsurge of protest against capitalism could be led by a class-conscious majority intent on social change in their own interest.

Moreover, the Fabians did not care who took their ideas on board and even harboured the notion of selling their wares to the Conservatives and Liberals.

They were arrogant, held the workers in contempt, feared them and were more than guilty of the charge of blatant class collaboration. Neither was Clause 4 written out of a genuine sympathy or empathy with the workers and with a view to changing the existing social system. It was penned to assuage, to pacify that section of society that was beginning to nurture the idea that it was time it took matters into its own hands.

Clause 4 was penned in an attempt to persuade that section of society that posed a threat to the ruling class that their lot could be bettered if they put their faith in an elite, an

intellectual vanguard, who would work on their behalf in parliament and at a time when workers elsewhere were attempting to change society themselves, even if this was proving to be without any foresight.

### State capitalism

Clause 4 did not mean socialism, only ever state-run capitalism, the nationalisation of capitalist industry, which would continue to be run according to the dictates of the profit system, only by a state-appointed board, not by private capitalist firms.

The 'common ownership' clause, which would eventually be reproduced on every Labour Party membership card was nothing short of a Fabian blueprint for a more advanced, as they saw it, form of capitalism, and with its adoption the Labour Party became the foremost advocate of state action to control and humanise the operation of private enterprise – which has nothing to do with socialism, because the profit system and its myriad shortcomings still exists and workers are always subject to the worst



excesses of its contradictions.

To be sure, the idea of 'socialising' the means of production and distributing wealth was by no means a new idea in 1918. The notion had been mooted by previous Labour Party conferences and, although the idea attracted a lot of support, it never appeared in the party's constitution. Whilst many a delegate regarded themselves as socialist, it was believed that such a blatant expression of 'socialism' would be a vote-loser.

This is an important point, as it shows that the Labour Party then, as now, was not so much interested

in promoting ideas that threatened the hegemony of the capitalist class, but in securing the most votes. What made it possible, and indeed urgent, that the Labour Party should adopt Clause 4, without it being an electoral liability, was the radicalisation of workers brought about by war. But the time would come when Clause 4 was seen as an electoral liability.

### Electoral liability

In 1955, Labour had lost 1.5 million votes compared with the 1951 election. Conservative seats rose from 319 to 345 seats and Labour's share fell from 293 to 277. At the 1959 election, Labour lost a further 196,000 voters, whilst the Tory tally rose by 448,000. One Labour commentator, Douglas Jay, speaking of nationalisation, said: 'We are in danger of fighting under the label of a class that no longer exists.'

After the 1959 defeat, the then Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell decided there had to be some serious changes in Labour Party policy. At a specially summoned post-election conference, previous defeats were discussed. Gaitskell declared: 'In my opinion capitalism has significantly changed, largely as a result of our own efforts and the changing character of the Labour Party. Importantly, he argued, Labour had lost votes through its identification with common ownership – Clause 4'. Conference listened quietly, but cries of derision greeted his next words: 'Standing as it does on its own, this clause cannot possibly be regarded as adequate ... it implies that the only precise object we have is nationalisation, whereas we have many other socialist objectives.'

Although Gaitskell's idea to drop Clause 4 was supported by many, including Bevan, it was quickly rejected.

Seemingly, it was Mrs Thatcher who eventually brought the question of Clause 4 back to the debating table, when she decided to privatise anything that stood still long enough to be privatised.

In 1983, the Labour Party manifesto claimed that common ownership would be expanded. The following year, the party conference passed a resolution on a show of hands that reaffirmed: 'Clause 4 Pt 4 of the Labour Party constitution is the central aim of the Labour Party,' and called for 'repossession of all parts of the public sector privatised by the Tories.'

At the 1985 conference, Roy Hattersley asked for support for a

resolution on 'the need to extend social ownership and democratic planning into a significant number of key organisations, in banks, manufacturing, new technology and the service sector.' Conference obliged. It also supported a resolution which called on 'the next Labour government to return all privatised services ... and all privatised industries to public ownership, and to repeal any privatisation legislation.'

By the time of the 1987 election, though Labour pledged to take back only BT and British Gas under 'common ownership', neither company would be in line to be nationalised. Instead, existing shares would be converted into new bonds, including varieties of 'deep bonds', designed to be attractive to institutional shareholders. Again, at the 1987 conference, the NUM moved a resolution to renationalise all industries privatised by the Tories. The union block votes were wheeled in and the motion was lost 3,869,000 to 2,397,000 votes. Within a few short years there was a gradual acceptance of Tory ideas that would continue.

Another nail in the coffin of 'common ownership' through nationalisation was the support for increased share ownership. Bryan Gould, Labour's campaign manager in 1987 argued, in an amazing piece of Tory logic: 'The idea of owning shares is catching on and, as socialists, we should support it as one means of taking power from the hands of the few and spreading it more widely.'

### Enter Tony Blair

After three successive defeats at the polls, many in the Labour Party were now intent on burying Clause 4. One thing was certain, argued new Labour leader Tony Blair – if Labour was to stand a chance of winning the next election, Clause 4 as it stood had to be ditched. Blair declared this to be his intention at Conference 1994 and the party's new Clause 4 appeared in March 1995 in time for a specially summoned conference on April 29th.

The vote was put to the membership whether Clause 4 should be reworded. Jarrow CLP became the first to vote in favour of holding on to the original Clause 4, but only three more would oppose it. Blair's new version won the day. A discussion document – *Labour's Objectives: Socialist Values in a Modern World* – had been available before the vote. If Labour Party members had studied it – Clause 4

aside – many would probably have resigned in the belief that it was penned by Margaret Thatcher. The document explained that the idea of common ownership only came about because 'there was a genuine revulsion at the sheer anarchy and exploitation associated with the free market of Victorian capitalism.' The reference to 'Victorian capitalism' was a clever piece of trickery, giving the reader the idea that capitalism in the 1990s was no longer 'anarchic' and was now worker-friendly.

And what of the new Clause 4? Again we could see regurgitated the same old lie that 'The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party'... which aims to put 'power, wealth and opportunity in the hands of the many' which was something Thatcher had claimed privatisation was doing.

This startling new 'socialist' objective claimed 'we work for a dynamic economy' in which 'the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and cooperation to produce the wealth the nation needs.' Little wonder the *Sun* could announce (of Blair) 'He speaks our language.' Little wonder that when Labour took power, Thatcher could proudly inform a gathering of the Tory faithful that Tony Blair was her 'greatest achievement'.

It was a mammoth achievement for the Tories, so much so that Labour continued to lurch further to the right year on year.

### Never was socialist

For over a hundred years this journal has been arguing that Labour was never socialist. Even with Clause 4 being held up as a sign of its commitment to real change in the interest of the many, it has always been a party of capitalism and, in office, ever willing to serve as the executive arm of the capitalist class, never hesitant to use the might of the state to club the workers into submission whenever they became uppity, whether using troops to break strikes, creating the Special Patrol Group, internment in Northern Ireland or supporting and indeed initiating myriad conflicts throughout

the world, from World War I, right through the Vietnam War and up to the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. For over 110 years, Labour has hoodwinked the workers, and endlessly led them down the blind alley of reformism, always mindful that its real allegiance was to the master class who own and control society.

Make no mistake. A Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn would make no departure from the historical record. Its task would be primarily to try to make capitalism – a system based upon the exploitation of one class by another – work in the interests of the exploited. Labour, under Corbyn, would not really control the economy, it would control him. The historical record shows that if the dictates of capital demanded, the workers

would have to be lied to, betrayed and made out to be villains of the peace and a threat to the economic interests of the country. No Labour leader to date has failed to be cast in a mould created by the capitalist class, no matter how noble their intentions.

If workers are really attracted by ideas of common ownership they would do well to realise that a party which has stood uncompromisingly and unwaveringly for real common ownership and, more, real democratic control of the earth's natural and industrial resources, is still in existence – the Socialist Party. Moreover, you will find no aspiring leaders within the Socialist Party, slugging it out and making rash promises to the membership, only a membership of equals in which Party affairs are decided democratically by the membership.

Neither are we keen on reforming capitalism or prostituting our principles on the high altar of opportunism as Labour has been doing since its inception and will continue to do even with Corbyn as leader. We seek the abolition of capitalism and all it represents, replacing it with a system of society in which money has been abolished, class antagonism eradicated and in which each person has free access to the necessities of life.

**JOHN BISSETT**



Tony Blair: helped bury Clause 4

# The Rainbow Party and its vision of 'Socialism'

*Our correspondent in Zambia looks at local political developments*



The Rainbow Party was formed by Wynter Kabimba way back in 2003. However, Kabimba ditched the Rainbow when he joined the Patriotic Front (PF) in 2009 and became its general secretary.

A lawyer by profession, he had strong objections to corruption and worked tirelessly to root out corrupt elements from the ruling party when it came to power in 2011.

He became more or less the second most powerful man in the PF, second only to President Sata. It was typical of him to differ with fellow cabinet ministers within the PF. This was especially the case when he published corruption allegations against Finance Minister Alexander Chikwanda and Geoffrey Mwamba, the Minister of Defence.

In 2013 he became embroiled in a tit-for-tat row with Mwamba that went unresolved until the latter resigned from the Cabinet in 2014. There were widespread calls for the removal of Wynter Kabimba from within the PF to which President Sata turned a blind eye.

Thus Wynter Kabimba became the political spokesman of the PF, explaining and defending the social and economic policies of the party.

It was Wynter Kabimba who advised President Sata to appoint Mutembo Nchito as Public Prosecutor in 2012 in order to remove the presidential immunity of former MMD President Rupiah Banda. It was alleged that Rupiah Banda and his son Andrew had swindled the Zambian government through a bogus oil deal signed between the

Zambian government and Nigeria in 2009 to import crude oil from Nigeria. It was discovered by the Taskforce on Corruption that the government had paid huge sums of money for this but that the crude oil was not delivered to Zambia.

Wynter Kabimba



The political career of Wynter Kabimba took a nosedive in August 2014 when he was relieved of his duties as party secretary general and justice minister by the late President Sata. The departure of Wynter Kabimba had become a foregone conclusion and caused relief within the ruling party.

## Dissatisfaction

The Rainbow Party is one among the myriad political opposition parties that were formed after the death of President Sata in 2014 to express dissatisfaction with the current political and social policies of the PF government under President Edgar Lungu.

The terminology of 'socialism' is not unique to the Rainbow Party, but is embedded in the political constitution of the PF. Dr Cosmas Musumali, the deputy general secretary of the

Rainbow, recently said that the Rainbow Party would not hide that its focus was on workers, students, peasants and all progressive Zambians who have borne the brunt of capitalism since its 'adoption' (actually, moving away from state capitalism) in 1991 by President Chiluba: 'If you look at the key documents of the PF constitution, you will find that under article 4, they are talking about socialism.' According to article 4 of the PF constitution the party 'shall wage a relentless fight against domestic and international forces of reaction. It shall fight for the eradication of capitalism, with its offshoots of hunger, ignorance, disease, corruption and the exploitation of man by man.'

Musumali went on to say that governance mistakes that have come as a result of capitalism should be exposed because remaining silent on the matter would be like giving ammunition to those who exploit others.

He said that Rainbow was not ashamed to expose the past failures of 'socialist' initiatives of the past:

'For our part we believe in the future of socialism and we are not ashamed to expose the past failures because this is what gives us legitimacy. We went the capitalist route in 1991 and to date. In the past 24 years what have we achieved in Zambia?'

He further urged intellectuals in Zambia to familiarise themselves with the Rainbow Party's manifesto and its social and economic programme.

It is a palpable fact that the Rainbow Part does not have a mass following among the workers, students and peasants in Zambia compared with the PF and the UPND. The 'socialist' ideas which are being parroted by the Rainbow Party do not echo well among many ordinary Zambians in the sense that the words 'socialism' ('communism') bring memories of police brutality, suppression of political opposition and indiscriminate political detentions that characterised the one-party so-called 'socialist' state under Kenneth Kaunda.

We in the WSM look askance at the 'Marxist-Leninist' version of 'socialism' being propagated by the Rainbow Party as it is really a programme for state-run capitalism.

**KEPHAS MULENGA**

# More union bashing

In July the government published details of its Trade Union Bill which is expected to have its second reading in the House of Commons in September or October. The Bill contains wide-ranging measures designed to restrict the organised working class acting collectively and taking industrial action.

The main proposals are thresholds for turnouts in strike ballots, restrictions on the right to picket and the removal of the ban on the use of agency workers to replace striking workers. The government is also extending the role and powers of the Certification Officer who is responsible for regulating trade unions, including providing this official with a new power to impose financial penalties on unions.

Industrial action, including strike action, will only be lawful if there is a minimum 50 percent turnout amongst trade union members who are entitled to vote, 40 percent of those who were balloted must vote in favour of industrial action. In addition, the Bill lays down that abstentions should be treated as 'no' votes for industrial action; which contravenes the policy of the International Labour Organisation which states that only votes cast should be taken into account. The 40 percent yes vote requirement would apply to four 'essential public services': health, the fire service, transport and education. This is in fact far more wide-ranging than it appears at first glance as transport services include roads, rail, aviation, maritime, border security and Transport for London (i.e. London Underground). There will be time limits for strike mandates which will reduce the momentum in union campaigns, reducing or removing trade unions' rights to facility time, specific and bureaucratic requirements for picket lines, the introduction of new criminal offences and sanctions for picketing although unlawful picketing is

already regulated by both civil and criminal law.

The removal of the ban on agency workers to replace striking workers (a ban in place since 1973) will permit employers to use 'scab' labour to break strikes. This is manna from heaven for the capitalist class. Jack London, author of *The War of the Classes* wrote 'after God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a scab. A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water brain, a combination backbone of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumour of rotten principles. When a scab comes down the street, men turn their backs and Angels weep in Heaven, and the Devil shuts the gates of hell to keep him out' (*The Scab*).

Frances O'Grady, the TUC general secretary, responded that 'the government's proposals on union ballots will make legal strikes close to impossible. Union negotiators will be left with no more power than Oliver Twist when he asked for more. After five years of falling living standards the prospects for decent pay rises have just got a whole lot worse' (*Guardian* 12 May).

The new Trade Union Bill follows



Jack London, c.1916

the capitalist class onslaught on the organised working class in the 1980s and 90s. Alan Budd, the economic adviser to Thatcher has said 'raising unemployment was an extremely desirable way of reducing the strength of the working classes – if you like, that what was engineered there in Marxist terms was a crisis of capitalism which recreated a reserve army of labour and has allowed the capitalists to make high profits ever since' (*Guardian* 23 April 2012). In the 1980s and 90s a series of trade union laws were introduced that removed immunities in industrial action, imposed restrictions on the right to picket, increased legal interference into the internal affairs of the unions, the closed shop was made unlawful and the definition of a dispute was narrowed, including restricting industrial action to disputes between workers and their own employer, thus outlawing solidarity action.

The current capitalist crisis and recession has seen production cut back and large numbers of workers lose their jobs, and as a result of high unemployment and job insecurity trade unions become less effective as bargaining organisations, meaning that laws restricting trade unions are easier to implement. Keith Ewing, President of the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom said in May there had been a 'shocking decline in collective bargaining with just 20% of workers covered by an agreement, compared with 82% in the 1970s. In 1978 I was one of 13 million trade unionists and I am now one of only 6 million. Our collective bargaining structures are collapsing' (*Morning Star* 14 May).

All this presents the working class with a problem in maintaining real wages. A pay increase which does not keep up with the cost of living represents a fall in 'real wages'. The capitalist class know this and will exploit it to their own benefit.

Marx pointed out that 'the general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages' (*Value, Price and Profit*). It should be remembered that wages can never, for long, rise above the level which allows the employers to make a profit. The times when the workers can hope to gain an improvement are when the capitalists are doing well, expanding

wages falling below the value of their labour-power and below the subsistence level. To resist the intensity of exploitation and to maintain real wages against inflation workers will have no choice but to struggle for higher wages even if this means using the strike weapon. The strike, during an economic depression, though, is a blunt instrument to wield. It is difficult

struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the



production and accumulating capital. The most successful strike is the one that never happens because when trade is brisk employers may yield to the mere threat of a strike interrupting production and profits.

The wage which the working class receive is the price of their labour-power and the price of this commodity fluctuates, like that of all commodities, around its value as determined by the amount of socially-necessary labour incorporated in it. If competition between the working class for jobs was unrestricted then wages would tend to fall below the value of labour-power, as often happened in the 19th century before effective trade unions existed. Combining together in unions to exert collective pressure on employers is a way the working class can prevent their

to use the strike to gain more pay when production is being curtailed, workers being laid off and the business facing bankruptcy.

Trade unions, then, are defensive organisations of the working class against what Marx called 'the never-ceasing encroachments of capital' but they cannot stop the exploitation of the working class. This exploitation is inherent in the wages system and can only be abolished along with it through the conversion of the means of production into common ownership under the democratic control of the whole community.

As Marx wrote: 'at the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday

never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: 'Abolition of the wages system!' (*Value, Price and Profit*).

As socialists, we stand with our fellow working class in their necessary battles to defend themselves, but we point out at all times that the real victory to be achieved is the abolition of the wages system.

**STEVE CLAYTON**



# The *human* condition

**H**uman society today consists of 7.4 billion people, each needing food, shelter, clothing, travel, education, health care and entertainment. The obvious, rational way to proceed would be for us to use all of the planet's resources and technology to produce wealth and services to meet all of those human needs. However there is one obstacle to this which must be removed first. At the present time the bulk of our world's resources are in effect locked away from us, and withheld from such use. They are under armed guard, controlled by a tiny minority. That small fraction of the population who own and control the vast majority of productive resources have shown time and again that they only ever allow them to be used when to do so will lead to their own further enrichment and empowerment.

This year's the *Sunday Times* Rich List showed that in the UK the richest thousand people, or 1 in 30,000 of the adult population, own between them £574 billion, an average of over half a billion each. Their collective wealth has more than doubled in the past ten years despite the world recession during most of this period. The important point about this is that it represents actual control of society's resources: minerals, land, machinery, and also the vast 'army' of human labour which they purchase day after day to generate further surpluses with which to further cement their complete monopoly over vital global resources for human survival.

From where does this huge surplus keep flowing? From the constant hard work of the 99 percent without that social power. There is no other way in which useful produce and wealth can be created, other than through the joint efforts of people like ourselves. As long as this extraordinary situation continues there is no point even discussing what 'we' should do with society's resources, as they are not yet 'ours' to discuss the

use of.

Obviously the increasingly extreme concentration of wealth and social power in so few hands is not limited to the UK. Look at *Forbes* magazine's international research and reports on the global situation. Despite talk of 'everyone' having suffered in the recessions of recent years, there are 1,500 billionaires around the world, whose net worth has increased in the past few years.

## Access denied

Let us be under no illusion. If any individual or group of people try to access or use any of those privately held resources – whether land, factories, transport or anything else – that 1 percent have never had any hesitation in using the brutal armed force of the state or private militias to deal with such a transgression. If the broad human community try to access those resources we *will* be threatened with armed force. And generally speaking, that use of force is quite legitimate because in most parts of the world today the electorate has given their permission and acquiescence to this, however passively, by voicing the view that this system of property relationships is the only way in which society can be run. What is urgently needed is for that majority who give their political support to that system – or at least vote on the basis that 'this is the only possible way of running human society at the present time' – to instead develop and express the opposite view, that there is indeed a viable alternative now, and that the current social system must be ended.

The richest man in the world is no longer Bill Gates, but Carlos Slim who owns Mexican telecoms. His wealth, now at 73,000 million dollars, also vastly increased in the past year. Figures like these mean something real; they represent a huge chunk of the earth's resources. That is the simple reality of the

social system which political parties like Labour, Conservative, Liberal, Greens, UKIP and others are asking you in effect to vote for, to give your endorsement to, to recognise as the only possible way of running human society. Their policies are all based on this lie. The truth is that it is not the only possible foundation for human society today.

A recent report from Oxfam showed that the richest 85 people in the world – just one 'busload' – own £1 trillion, as much as the poorest 3.5 *billion* people. Their researchers said it was likely wealth ownership was even more skewed, with more than £11 trillion held unrecorded and off-shore. 7 in every 10 people live in countries where inequality has increased since the 1980s.

For over 99 percent of the population, on the other hand, the largest transaction they ever enter into throughout their lifetime, if at all, is to muster all their resources to implore those with wealth to *loan* them a mere few hundred thousand with which they might secure their own individual housing. On what terms would Carlos Slim allow us access to, for example, even just one percent of his wealth, or 730 million dollars, so that we could start producing food, housing and other resources for those who need them? The answer is very simple: never.

This is not about jealousy or bitterness toward these people: what makes these statistics about the social elite both important and infuriating is simply that their ownership is the same fact as our poverty and inability to make rational use of the planet's resources. Technology has advanced exponentially, but social relationships have not kept pace. We are still stuck in the model of *employment* – which allows capital to accumulate in the hands of a minority, supplied from the unpaid labour of the active and working, majority class.

## What capitalism is

So we have to end capitalism before we can even begin to discuss the rational use of the world's resources. What is capitalism? Contrary to the confusion peddled by politicians, it is not a tendency or an attitude, a style of life or even a political regime – it is the actual way in which society is currently organised, and it encompasses every country, every company, every government department and every individual, regardless of their activities, lifestyle or individual choices. It is not an attitude or a state of mind, it is a *system* – the social system which currently exists throughout the world and needs to be ended, if humanity is to flourish or even survive.

Capitalism's key features are: class division – 1 percent or so own and control almost all productive resources whilst the rest of us work for them directly or indirectly to create further wealth – and production for profit, rather than for use. Wealth is not produced simply to be used according to human needs, instead it is produced only if and when it can be sold in a way which will generate financial surpluses or profits for those who own and control the production process.

The many problems which result directly from the existence of the capitalist system as our current way of running human society include the relative impoverishment of the great majority who do all the work – ranging from hundreds of millions literally starving, to billions more whose lives are



blighted by constant struggle and stress. It also creates constant war and the threat of war as rival ruling groups and profit-takers in different parts of the world enrol the rest of us to fight their battles, to determine which of them controls which minerals, land and trade advantages.

In particular capitalism has created a crisis in the very environment itself. Climate crisis is perhaps the most pressing example of capitalism's madness. Naomi Klein, writing in *New Statesman* (29 Oct 2013), cited many of the world's most respected scientists all reaching the same conclusion, that

capitalism has to be swept aside if ecological catastrophe is to be avoided: 'It makes the ditching of that cruel system in favour of something new (and perhaps, with lots of work, better) no longer a matter of mere ideological preference but rather one of species-wide existential necessity'.

#### How to end capitalism

How do we go about ending capitalism? We need urgently and rapidly to build a majority who reject the entire system which exists, who see that it is no longer viable, that it can and must be replaced

## Sunday Times 2015 Richest UK Residents (source: Wikipedia)

Rank	Wealth	Name	Origin	Source of wealth	2014 rank	2014 wealth
1	£13,170m	Leonard Blavatnik	UK	Industry	4	£11,000m
2	£13,000m	Sri and Gopi Hinduja	India	Industry and Finance	1	£11,900m
3	£11,000m	Galen and George G. Weston and family	Canada	Retailing	11	£7,300m
4	£9,800m	Alisher Usmanov	Russia	Mining and Investment	2	£10,650m
5	£9,700m	David and Simon Reuben	UK	Property and Internet	7	£9,000m
6	£9,450m	Ernesto and Kirsty Bertarelli	Switzerland & UK	Pharmaceuticals	5	£9,750m
7	£9,200m	Lakshmi Mittal and family	India	Steel	3	£10,250m
8	£8,700m	Kirsten Rausing and Jörn Rausing	Sweden	Inheritance and investment (Tetra Pak)	8	£8,800m
9	£8,560m	Gerald Grosvenor, 6th Duke of Westminster	UK	Property	10	£8,500m
10	£7,290m	Roman Abramovich	Russia	Oil and industry	9	£8,520m
11	£7,240m	John Fredriksen and family	Cyprus	Shipping and oil services	6	£9,250m
12	£7,145m	Charlene and Michel de Carvalho	Netherlands	Inheritance, banking, brewing (Heineken)	12	£6,365m
13	£6,500m	Sir David Barclay and Sir Frederick Barclay	UK	Property, media, retailing	16	£6,000m
14	£6,400m	Hans Rausing and family	Sweden	Packaging (Tetra Pak)	17	£5,900m
15	£5,935m	Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber and family	Saudi Arabia	Property, hotels (MBI Group)	13	£6,160m

Total wealth: £133,090,000,000

Estimated UK population in 2015: 64,094,028 = £2,076.48 per person

Average UK household to be £10,000 in debt by end of 2016 – *Guardian*, 23 March 2015

with a system of common ownership and democratic control of all productive resources. A majority who will no longer look to politicians or leaders but are developing the knowledge themselves to see through this huge con-trick which has evolved, the lie that capitalism equals freedom and is the only option for society.

Anyone who sets out to look at society, to debate how we should live, to campaign for change or human rights, has three blindingly simple questions which they must consider and answer before all others. What resources do we have to fulfil the task of meeting the human needs of the global population? The natural resources, land, crops, minerals; the human labour; the machinery we have built. The World Health Organisation and the United Nations have reported over and over that current resources are actually sufficient to meet the needs of several times the current world population, if properly accessed and used rather than being laid to waste whilst high enough financial profits are awaited. For example, the UN has found: 'Growth in world cereal production has steadily outstripped world population growth. Yet each year there are more people in the world who do not get enough food. Global agriculture has the potential to grow enough food for all, but food is often not available where it is needed.'

Secondly, we must ask: what prevents this from happening, then? Because ownership and control of those resources is in the hands of a tiny fraction of the world's population. They allow those resources to be used by the rest of us only under the most strict and anti-social of conditions: if and when further production might increase their wealth and power further. The third and final question we must ask is: do we stand for the retention of that kind of regime, or for its abolition?

Revolution is not a wild idea – it is an imperative. And this is why: human needs are not being met. Billions of children, men and women are in varying degrees of deprivation, and those of us in the more developed parts of the world who work for salaries or wages continue to be exploited and to face a huge array of unnecessary problems. In order to meet human needs universally and comfortably, we need first to repossess the earth we inhabit. To do that we must first dispossess the minority who currently own and control it. And to do that necessitates a complete revolution and the democratic use of what structures we currently have, purely to enact that. And the only groundwork we can lay for that is the education of ourselves and our fellow workers to recognise that capitalism cannot ever serve our needs, in any form. Any other political programme than this, any attempt to improve or patch up capitalism, is futile, doomed to failure, and maintains the suffering which this system continues inevitably to cause.

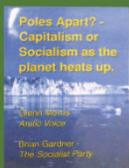
**CLIFFORD SLAPPER**

## socialist party dvd



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## Who pays the working poor?

'BETTER THAN Raising the Minimum Wage. Help Americans who need it with a major, carefully crafted expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit' was the title and subtitle of an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (21 May) by Warren Buffett, one of the world's richest capitalists.

His argument was that the modern economy requires more and more skilled jobs and fewer and fewer simple, unskilled ones and that, as a result, there are now fewer jobs for those capable only of doing unskilled work. As he put it, this

'is simply a consequence of an economic engine that constantly requires more high-order talents while reducing the need for commodity-like tasks. The remedy usually proposed for this mismatch is education ... But even with the finest educational system in the world, a significant portion of the population will continue, in a nation of great abundance, to earn no more than a bare subsistence.'

According to him, raising the minimum wage other than marginally won't solve this problem but would in fact make it worse because it would drive out of business small employers who could not afford to pay it. He's got a point. No employer will take on someone whose labour can't produce them an adequate profit, in some cases which doesn't even reproduce the value of the labour power they purchase.

He proposes instead to use the tax system to pay a tax credit to workers incapable of commanding a wage above the poverty line. This exists in the US under the self-explanatory name of 'Earned Income Tax Credit'. It is in effect a subsidy to employers as it allows them to pay below-poverty-line wages knowing that the state will top up their employee's income to this level.

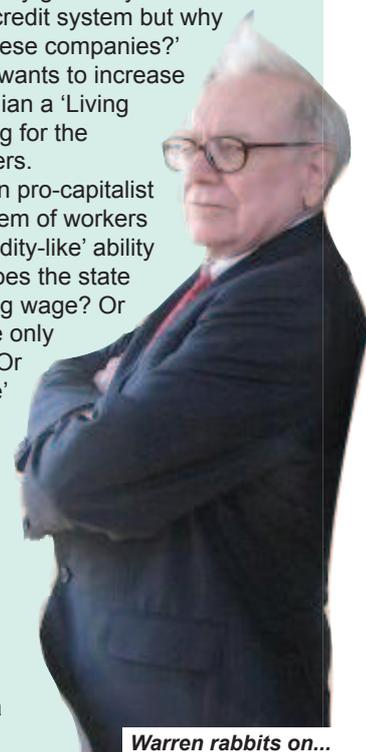
A similar scheme exists in Britain, introduced by Gordon Brown in 2003 when he was Chancellor. But while Buffett wants to increase payments in the US George Osborne announced in the July budget that they are going to be cut. The arguments used were revealing, openly admitting that tax credits are a subsidy to employers. Rachel Sylvester, in her column in the *Times* (23 June) quoted an ally of Ian Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, as saying:

'You've got some big businesses that are making huge profits but paying their workers poverty wages. They get away with it because workers are supplemented by the tax credit system but why should ordinary taxpayers subsidise these companies?'

Unlike Buffett, the government here wants to increase the minimum wage (renamed in Orwellian a 'Living Wage'), so shifting the burden of paying for the working poor from the state to employers.

Clearly, then, there is a dispute within pro-capitalist circles as to how to deal with the problem of workers unable to sell their low quality, 'commodity-like' ability to work for a so-called 'living wage'. Does the state try to make employers pay them a living wage? Or does it top up the low wages which are only what employers are prepared to pay? Or again, does it simply pay them 'welfare' for not working?

In the end, as with many political issues, it comes down to which section of the capitalist class should bear 'the burden'. The last two options involve taxing the capitalist class as a whole, one of them to subsidise some employers. In practice, the first does too in the end as a higher minimum wage increases the number who are 'unemployable' and so dependent on a handout from the state.



**Warren rabbits on...**

# Steel City

Kelham Island Museum

*The Wealth of England -  
Titcomb, 1895*

THE KELHAM Island Museum in Sheffield displays the industrial history of Sheffield, once known as the 'Steel City.'

The painting *The Wealth of England: The Bessemer Process of Making Steel* (1895) by William Holt Yates Titcomb is on display to complement the impressive Bessemer Steel Converter (iron into steel), by Henry Bessemer which was licensed to Brown and Cammell, Sheffield steel makers in 1858. The Bessemer process involved the converter tilting down to pour molten pig iron in through the top, then swung back to a vertical position and a blast of air was blown through the base of the converter, flames and fountains shot out of the top of the converter, the converter was tilted again and the newly made steel was poured out. The first converters could make seven tons of steel in half an hour. The Bessemer steel was used for railways, ships, and bridges. This Bessemer Converter is one of only three converters left in the world. It was used by the British Steel Corporation in Workington until 1974 and produced the last Bessemer Steel made in Britain.

The 1851 Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park showcased Britain as the 'workshop of the world', and the triumph of capitalism. At the Great Exhibition, 158 Sheffield companies displayed their wares. Annual steel production grew from 49,000 tons in 1850 to 5 million tons in 1900. The alloy was given pride of place at the Crystal Palace, in the shape of an ingot of Sheffield steel, weighing over a ton.

The most impressive exhibit in the Museum is the River Don Engine, built in 1905, which worked in Sheffield until 1978, first at Cammell's mill then the British Steel Corporation River Don plant. This 12,000 horsepower engine powered a huge rolling mill, made armour plate for the first Dreadnought battleships, and rolled steel reactor shields for nuclear power stations towards the end of its working life. It is the most powerful surviving steam engine in Britain. The Bessemer Converter and the River Don Engine are testament to the Marx and Engels observation that 'the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production... it has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals' (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*).

The main occupation of working class women in South Yorkshire was in segregated areas doing tedious, monotonous, dirty and dangerous jobs such as feeding spoon blanks through rollers at Mappin and Webbs steel works. In 1911 4.8 million women were working

in industry in South Yorkshire, and by 1931 this had risen to 5.6 million. Working class women have always had to work in capitalism. 'Buffing' was a main occupation for women in the steel industry. Mary Dyson was a 'buffer girl' in the 1930s, and later in 1971 as Lady Mayoress of Sheffield, she visited her old workplace, Viners Ltd. She was asked 'Did you enjoy working for us?' and replied 'No! The work was too hard and you didn't pay us enough!'

Sheffield, as a working class Labour city, was fully behind the Labour Party's 'Nationalisation' Clause IV 'to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry.' The Labour Government's 1949 Iron and Steel Act established the Iron and Steel Corporation of Great Britain which was effective in February 1951; the Corporation becoming the solo shareholder in 80 principal iron

and steel companies. After 1952 it was returned to the private sector by the Tory Government. With Harold Wilson's 1963 speech on 'the Britain that is going to be forged in the White Heat of Technology' and the election in 1964 of a Labour Government, Sheffield steel workers looked forward to 'nationalisation'. The 1967 Iron and Steel Act established the British Steel Corporation which comprised 90 percent of the UK's steel making capacity, employing 268,500 workers, one of the world's largest steel making organisations.

Nationalisation promised the workers that industry would be 'managed on behalf of the people' but it was state capitalism, the wages system under new management. There was no industrial democracy or workers' self-management. British Steel was a public corporation to manage the industry on a commercial basis, as a profit-seeking business, not as a public service.

With changing market conditions, 'the anarchy of production' (Engels *Anti-Duhring*) in capitalism makes nonsense of all attempts to plan production, and nationalised industries have to earn a return on capital while competing in the market place. With crisis and recession in capitalism after 1973, and the election of Thatcher in 1979 capitalist re-structuring and de-industrialisation began which involved the closure of steel works, loss of steel jobs, and a rapid contraction of the steel industry. A national steel strike called by the British Iron and Steel Trades Confederation lasted 13 weeks from January to April 1980 but did not halt de-industrialisation. Between 1979-82, 20,000 steel jobs were lost in Sheffield and eventually the British Steel Corporation was 'privatised' in 1988.

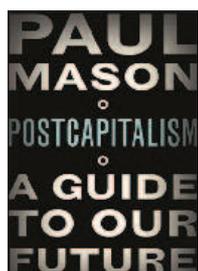
**STEVE CLAYTON**



River Don Engine

## Postcapitalism?

*Postcapitalism. A Guide to Our Future.* By Paul Mason. Allen Lane.



In his new book Channel 4 journalist and one-time Trotskyist Paul Mason begins by explaining the periodic growth and contraction of the capitalist economy by Kondratieff wave

theory.

Kondratieff waves are named after the Soviet-era Russian economist (shot under Stalin) who imagined a 50-year periodicity in capitalist economic activity, and who then concluded that each economic cycle reflected the advent, adoption, flourishing and demise of its age's defining technology.

Kondratieff's waves operate on a timescale midway between the epochal transformations of social systems, based on a change of class ownership and control of the social means of production, and the Marxian economics of nature-imposed social reproduction under the capitalist social system, based upon its characteristic mode of class ownership and control of the social means of production.

Scientifically, one would seek to explain Kondratieff's apparent wave phenomena in Marxian terms, i.e. in terms of the social system's essence – *capital* -- but such attempts have so far failed to convince and this intriguing problem for Marxian theory remains unresolved.

However, for the purposes of Paul Mason's argument, capitalist society has now started to ride the *information technology* Kondratieff wave. For him, information technology is the surfboard that took us out to the wave and, once we master it, it will be the surfboard that rescues us from the capitalist depths and carries us to the post-capitalist shore. Our ride will take one Kondratieff period of 50 years.

So what characterises the Kondratieff IT wave which Mason says we are now on?

The IT wave has already established its essential characteristics through the emergence of free Open Source software, free creative commons internet resources, free Wikipedia collaboration, etc. The IT wave's free goods are premised on the assumption that IT development and IT maintenance require a vanishing amount of human labour, and that consequently IT software products

and IT firmware-based technology possess a vanishing marginal cost (i.e. can be replicated for everybody for free). And IT technology will invade everything we produce.

His argument is that this characteristic invariant of the IT wave -- free technology and its technology-based products -- is totally subversive of capitalism, since the indispensable compulsion for a capitalist ruling class to withhold ownership and control of the means of production from the working class, thereby forcing the working class to work on its terms, will no longer serve its capitalist purpose once everything is free. The means of production might just as well be owned by everyone or by no-one.

That, in a nutshell, is his argument. IT will issue us into an Age of Abundance -- the necessary precondition for postcapitalism to succeed. Postcapitalism will be characterised by renewable energy, neutral carbon, zero socially necessary labour time, and zero marginal cost.

So far, so good, up to a point. Some interesting socialist (in our sense) arguments, entertainingly and intelligently told, including a good description of the labour theory of value, a good discussion of the economic calculation pseudo-problem, etc.

But Mason's argument is tainted by his apology for gradualism and his reformist transitional plan.

If this seems an unnecessarily harsh judgment, judge for yourself from the legislation, and the prevailing capitalist social relations under which it is to be promulgated, that he wants 'a government that embraced postcapitalism' to pass while on its IT Kondratieff wave.

Here is his list of some of his transitional reforms outlined in his final chapter as 'Project Zero': Suppress market forces for energy. Suppress or 'socialise' all monopolies. Pay everyone a basic income. Regulate the rate of profit. Enforce profits to be ploughed back into 'social justice.' Make WiFi free to break up the telecom monopolies. Cheapen the cost of basic necessities. Produce more stuff for free. Sell water, energy, housing, transport, healthcare, telecommunications and education at cost price. Shrink (national and personal) debt. Reduce the time for holding patent and intellectual property rights, e.g. 25 years. Increase the use of creative commons copyright. Incentivise investment in renewables. Support local power grids. Elect bank bosses democratically, and scrutinise

their financial behaviour. Track down and suppress all off-shore trading. Make it unethical for a chartered accountant to propose a tax avoidance scheme. Issue fiat money to kill neoliberalism. Increase the velocity of circulation of money to 'tame' speculation. Set a high inflation rate to stimulate sustainable growth, etc. etc.

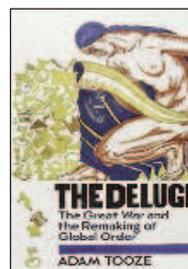
His laudable aim is to promote the transition to a non-market economy of abundance where goods and services are free, but his long transition period turns out to be a fantasy hybrid world, an illusory economy in which markets, profits and banks exist alongside a growing non-market, non-profit, non-money-based sector

The Marxian answer to his gradualist project and its reform agenda is that, while capitalist social relationships exist, his reforms have no chance of succeeding. And once a socialist majority consciously abolishes capitalist social relations of ownership and control of the social means production, his reform agenda becomes redundant, unnecessary and meaningless.

TWC

## New World Order

*The Deluge: the Great War and the Remaking of Global Order.* By Adam Tooze. Penguin £12.99.



Which side won the First World War? The straightforward answer is that it was the Entente – Britain, France, etc – that prevailed over the Central Powers, mainly Germany and Austria-

Hungary. But, as Tooze shows here, it was rather more complicated than that, and the true victors were the United States and, to a considerably lesser extent, Japan. We should add the kind of provision that he does not make, that it was the ruling class in these countries that really won.

The lengthy fighting, with its incredible costs in materiel and its disruption to industry and agriculture, had greatly weakened the major European powers, with even the 'winners' owing vast sums to the US. In 1923 the British government agreed to repay \$4.6bn to the US, with interest, over 62 years. Most of the reparations paid by Germany to Britain and France in fact ended up being passed to the US.

It can be said that the real end of

the war came, not with the Versailles Treaty, but with the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–2; holding it in the US was itself symbolic. There Britain in effect conceded naval and hence global power to the US, Japan was allowed a Pacific fleet, and other countries were relegated to the status of minor players in terms of their navies. In 1928 a British Foreign Office memo recognised the new situation: ‘Great Britain is faced in the United States of America with a phenomenon for which there is no parallel in our modern history – a state twenty-five times as large, five times as wealthy, three times as populous, twice as ambitious, almost invulnerable, and at least our equal in prosperity, vital energy, technical equipment, and industrial science.’ Even the fact that the US did not join the League of Nations gave it a kind of veto over the decisions of the major players who were in the League.

Not that the American ruling class had it all its own way, even in its own backyard. There were widespread strikes in 1919, often

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opposed violently by the employers. At US Steel, twenty workers were killed before the company won a comprehensive victory in January 1920. Immigration was drastically cut, and a ‘Red Scare’ led to many non-US-born labour activists being deported. All this was, says Tooze, ‘a shock from which the American labour movement was never to recover.’

Moreover, the official end of the war by no means meant anything approaching peace. From the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 and the French invasion of the Ruhr in 1923 to the British military defence of Shanghai in 1927 and other examples, fighting and preparations for fighting continued right down to the bloodbaths of the thirties. The outcome of the Great War was not Peace without Victory, as trumpeted by US President Wilson, but Victory without Peace.

**PB**



## Under the Concrete Carpet

OVER ON BBC4, Professor Jim Al-Khalili is our guide on a rare tour of the Sellafield nuclear fuel reprocessing plant, mostly only seen in old newsreel about radiation leaks and Greenpeace protests. *Britain's Nuclear Secrets:*

*Inside Sellafield* gives us useful primers in what a nuclear reaction is, as well as Al-Khalili enthusiastically showing us as much of Sellafield as its tight security allows. Along the way, he says ‘this place is buzzing with activity!’, including the radioactive kind. We visit the ‘legacy pool’ and ‘shear cave’, the misleadingly mystical-sounding areas where toxic, radioactive waste is held. On the same site are the decommissioned nuclear reactors Windscale and Calder Hall, places which split opinions as well as atoms.

The programme simplistically frames the debate about nuclear energy as whether the potential for limitless electricity without much of a carbon footprint justifies creating waste which will remain radioactive for millennia. Al-Khalili’s similarly simplistic solution is that the nuclear industry has to think more about its long-term effects, regardless of economic and political pressures. But the problem is that those economic and political pressures dictate how much importance is placed on limiting radioactive waste, or indeed whether nuclear energy is worth the risks at all. There are already better ways of dealing with spent nuclear fuel than sweeping it under a concrete carpet and ignoring how much it will make our descendents resent us. But any new methods have to prove themselves as cost effective as well as efficient.

Science is as influenced by the market as anything else is, shaping how nuclear technology develops. And because of its connections with weaponry, nuclear power is even more politicised than other industries. Economic and political forces determine how nuclear technology is used, rather than considerations of what’s in the best interests of ourselves and the planet.

*Inside Sellafield* was part of the *BBC Four Goes Nuclear* season, marking 70 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed. Another of the season’s shows focused more on the relationship between nuclear power and political power. The press release for *Storyville’s Atomic – Living In Dread And Promise*, called it ‘an impressionistic kaleidoscope’. In other words, a compilation of footage of mushroom clouds, CND rallies, Chernobyl and CERN, to a soundtrack of Mogwai’s electronic beeps and gurgles.

Despite its tricky editing occasionally being distracting, the documentary highlights the sizeable impact nuclear technology has had on society. Our mixed feelings about this are summed up in the programme’s title, with the emphasis on footage of blast damage and contaminated Ukrainian villages representing ‘dread’ more than ‘promise’.

Together, both shows remind us how splitting the atom has released potential for both benefit and harm, which capitalist society struggles to balance. **MIKE FOSTER**



## Meetings

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

### East Anglia Regional Branch

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

### Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Tuesday 15 September 2015, 7.30pm  
'The Environment and Red/Green Politics'  
Speaker: Howard Pilott  
The Brighthelm Centre (activities Hall - Lower Ground Floor), North Road, Brighton BN1 1YD

### West London Branch

Tuesday 15 September 2015, 8.00pm  
'Carry On Up the Labour Party'  
Speaker: Adam Buick  
Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN

### Yorkshire Regional Branch

Saturday 19 September 2015, 2.00pm  
'The road to Socialism: reform or revolution?'  
A debate between Dave Shaw (Labour Councillor Doncaster) and John Wheeler (SPGB)  
The Railway Tavern, West Street, Doncaster DN1 3AA

## Labour, Lib-Dem, Tory



**The Socialist Standard examines their case**

### Lambeth Discussion Group

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

### Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

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

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 27 September 2015, 3.00pm  
'The Economic Calculation Argument: Baron von Mises's case against socialism'  
Speaker: Adam Buick  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 17 October 2015, 2.00pm  
'Fracking - the Metabolic Rift with Nature'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
The Reindeer Pub, 10 Dereham Road, Norwich NR2 4AY

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 18 October 2015, 3.00pm  
Film 'Culloden'  
Introduced by Rob Worden  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 29 October 2015, 7.00pm  
'All Coppers are Workers: The Police, the State and the Working Class'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Annual Delegate Meeting

Saturday 24 October and Sunday 25 October 2015, from 10.30am  
Socialist Party Head Office  
52 Clapham High Street  
London SW4 7UN

## The Socialist Party badge



Cheque or postal order (no cash) for £10.00 payable to "Socialist Party of Great Britain," post to the Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7BR. Please include own phone number or other contact details.

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## Declaration of Principles

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

### Object

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

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

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

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

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

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

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

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

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

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

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

# 50 Years Ago

## What runs the Labour Government?

IT IS almost a year now since the Labour Party formed a government. They felt that thirteen wasted years of Tory rule would give way to an administration that could solve social problems. It has been a year of renewed failure, in which their optimism has been humiliated by their inability to control Capitalism.

We do not doubt that the Labour Government really believed they could "get the economy moving". There was to be steady expansion. Out of a four per cent increase in productivity there were going to be more schools, hospitals, roads, pensions. There were going to be more wages. A "planned" incomes policy. A "planned" growth rate. None of these schemes have begun to get off the ground, nor do they show any prospect of doing so.

We do not doubt that the Labour Government is serious when it implores the country to "pull its weight in the national interest". The inane weakness of appeals to community spirit in a money grabbing, competitive society escapes them.

Mr. Wilson no doubt thinks of himself as an architect of social progress but in practice he imposes credit squeezes. In the reality of Capitalism his burdening problem is "to devalue the pound or not to devalue the pound?" This is the pathetic plight of a politician who claimed to have practical solutions.

No doubt members of the Labour Government are free from race prejudice yet they have legislated against the immigration of West Indian and Pakistani workers. Under Labour Government management, economic frustrations may well be creating more acute racial tensions.

In his role of peacemaker, no doubt Mr. Wilson is sincere. As head of the Commonwealth mission he felt that his wise counsels might prevail in Vietnam. Some months later we have almost forgotten about the peace mission, but the fighting continues.

The debate between Socialists and reformers goes on. They claim that as a Government they can control Capitalism. They argue that through a process of reform they can direct its affairs in the interests of the whole community. The sorry spectacle of the Labour Government today underlines how tragically wrong they have been.

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

## ACTION REPLAY From Ashes to Ashes

THE FIRST Australian cricket team to tour England was in 1868. It was made up entirely of Aborigines selected from western Victoria and coached by Tom Willis (the founder of Australian football). The colonial view was that involving the indigenous population in sports created a kind of imperial glue that wedded the natives to their new British identity. Despite an onerous schedule, and having no history in the game and playing in a foreign culture, the team managed 14 wins, 14 losses and 19 draws.

The Ashes originates later, from a satirical obituary published in a British newspaper, *The Sporting Times* immediately after a White Australian team's victory at the Oval in 1882. The obituary stated that English cricket had died, and 'the body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia.' The mythical ashes immediately became associated with the 1882-83 series played in Australia, before which the English captain Ivo Bligh had vowed to 'regain

those ashes.' The English press dubbed the tour 'the quest to regain the Ashes.' It has stuck ever since.

In winning the fourth test at Trent Bridge by an innings and 78 runs at the beginning of August, England regained the Ashes from a below par Australian side. The standout moment of the whole series was the dismissal there of the Aussies in the first innings for a paltry 60 runs with Stuart Broad taking 8 wickets for 15 runs. The Australian fans were shell shocked into silence while the English supporters were ecstatic.

This was regarded as a national disaster in Australia where support for the national cricket team has become a glue to wed the population to their new post-colonial identity. The Australian captain, Michael Clarke, had to fall on his sword, like the leader of a political party which loses an election. Which is appropriate since the job of captaining the Australian cricket team is commonly regarded down under as more important than that of the Prime Minister of Australia:

Nowadays few Aborigines play cricket. Rugby and Aussie Rules football are more popular.  
**KEVIN**



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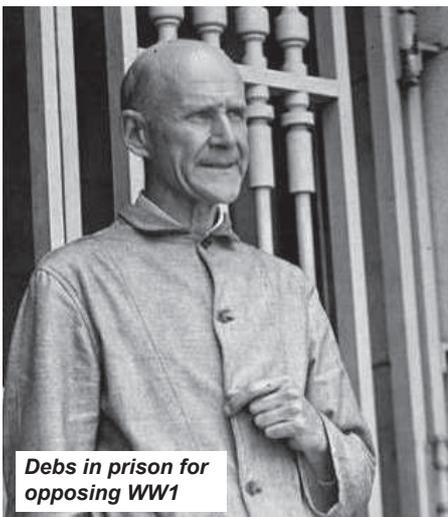
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# Voice from the Back

## Down with Leaders

Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor, Donald Trump, Jeremy Corbyn or Bernie Saunders? Nay, nay and thrice nay! No Governments, No Leaders, No Led! Take Bernie, a staunch supporter of the Democrats. If he becomes the next US President (or, indeed, if Jeremy Corbyn becomes next Prime Minister), what would this mean for the 99 percent? More of the same – and business as usual for the capitalist class. Eugene Debs, an earlier candidate for the same office, made the same observation in 1904: 'The Republican and Democratic parties ... are the political wings of the capitalist system and such differences as arise between them relate to spoils and not to principle. With either of these parties in power one thing is always certain and that is that the capitalist class is in the saddle and the working class under the saddle ... The ignorant workingman who supports either of these parties forges his own fetters and is the unconscious author of his own misery.' The same could be said of Labour and the Tories in this country.



Debs in prison for opposing WW1

## Praying for Armageddon

'Pope Francis will give mass in Cuba's capital on an altar next to a portrait of the revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara. A

construction crew has begun erecting the altar where Pope Francis is planned to give mass on 20 September as part of his tour to Cuba and the United States. The altar will be placed next to a 36 meters high sculpted outline of Argentinian revolutionary Che Guevara, which covers the facade of the Ministry of Interior. The portrait is based on a famous photo by Alberto Korda and sculpted by Cuban artist Enrique Avila' (*telesur.net*, 4 August). This seems appropriate as Che is viewed as the patron saint: at school every child must repeat each morning, 'we will be like Che.' The icon is on record as stating, one year after the Cuban missile crisis: 'the people [of Cuba] you see today tell you that even if they should disappear from the face of the earth because of an atomic war unleashed in their names ... they will feel completely happy and fulfilled.'

## Ru\$\$ia

'Pictures of Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman flashing a watch worth an alleged \$620,000 [£397,000] on Monday sparked controversy in the crisis-hit country. Dmitry Peskov, who is given a broad remit to voice the views of the Kremlin strongman, was photographed wearing the pricey timepiece as he tied the knot with Olympic ice dancer Tatiana Navka on Saturday in the Black Sea resort of Sochi' (*Zee News*, 3 August). Socialists are not surprised by such news, having long ago realised that the November 1917 revolution did not end capitalism or the class system which continue today under Putin.

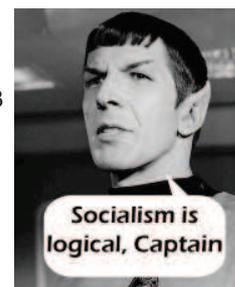
## Up, up and away

The development of nuclear missiles in India started decades ago and more recently the launching of satellites commenced. Back on Earth, we are reminded that 'of the 300 million households surveyed, an overwhelming majority (73 percent) live in villages. Of this rural population, less than 5 percent earn enough to pay taxes, only 2.5 percent own a 4-wheeler vehicle

and less than 10 percent have salaried jobs. Not only does rural India have miserable statistics on income and asset ownership, its literacy rates are low. Only 3.5 percent of students graduate and around 35.7 percent of residents can't read or write' (*CNN*, 2 August). The same source adds 'it comes as no surprise that the bulk of the Indian population is still overwhelmingly poor.' Indeed.

## Beyond economics

'When discussing my upcoming book on the economics of *Star Trek* with people who have only a passing interest in the show, I have noticed that the issue of work keeps coming back. More specifically, casual viewers, professional economists and members of the press alike seem to hone in on the (fictional) consequences of automation. Arguably, *Star Trek* is the only sci-fi franchise that takes automation seriously. In *Star Trek*, the necessity to work to provide for oneself has vanished. *Star Trek* society, as depicted in the show, is perhaps the most popular example of what is called a 'post-scarcity' economy, for lack of a better term' (*Business Insider*, 3 August). Everyone in a socialist world will have the possibility to live long and prosper - without money.



## Employment is prostitution

There has been much debate in the *Guardian* this summer over prostitution, should it be decriminalised or not? Lacking, sadly, is the socialist perspective, as put forward by Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, for example, in which he saw such work as 'only a specific expression of the general prostitution of the labourer.' Such dehumanisation of those involved will only end when the terms buyer and seller become redundant with the establishment of socialism.

## FREE LUNCH

