

socialist standard

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Moment(um) of truth Corbyn's battle for the heart of Labour



PLUS

Knowledge

Labour Leaders

Job Creators

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Introducing the Socialist Party

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



capitalism.

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

German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

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

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

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Editorial

Who needs leaders?

IN THE wake of the vote to leave the European Union, many Labour MPs, fearing for their jobs if an early general election was called, set about to depose their leader, Jeremy Corbyn. After a vote of no confidence in him, Angela Eagle and then Owen Smith challenged Corbyn for the Labour leadership. Eagle dropped out leaving Smith as the sole challenger. Corbyn claims that he is building a grass roots movement to challenge the Tory government, whereas Smith maintains that the Labour Party needs a viable candidate to win the next general election.

In addition, the Brexit vote brought about a change in the leadership of the Conservative Party. After the resignation of David Cameron, Theresa May took over not only as the Conservative Leader, but also as the UK's new Prime Minister.

Not only do most political organisations have leaders but that they strive to provide leadership, either for the day to day running of society or, as the Leninist parties, such as the SWP, insist, for the working class to advance towards 'socialism'. Even the Green Party, which

for many years claimed to be a leaderless organisation, has acquired a leader.

People can be forgiven for thinking that political leadership is an integral part of political life and no society can function without it. This is certainly the case under capitalism, where the minority capitalist class owns the means of wealth production to the exclusion of the majority working class. Here political parties vie to become the government of the day and rule over the workers to ensure that they are producing profits for the capitalist class and that the capitalists have the necessary access to the global markets and sources of raw materials. To these ends, they will need to run the state machine with its police and armed forces. This is as just as true in a so-called 'socialist state', where the means of production are in the hands of the state, as it is in an openly free market capitalist state.

In socialism, minority class ownership will be abolished and everyone will have free access to what society produces. There will be no need for a means of exchange, hence no monetary system

and nation states will come to an end. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate in the decision making of society. The administration of things will replace the government over people. Therefore, a socialist revolution will require the active participation of a majority of class conscious workers who understand the need to replace capitalism with socialism. Workers cannot be led into socialism, however 'revolutionary' the leadership is. This is why the Socialist Party is organised without leaders. Decision-making is controlled by the membership via our annual conferences and our Party Officers and Executive Committee are elected annually and are answerable to the membership.

Whoever is announced as the winner of the Labour leadership contest on 24 September, it will be business as usual, as the Labour Party will continue to be a capitalist party, and the next Labour Prime Minister will have to run capitalism, in ways that are not radically different from the Tories.

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The mismanagement of measuring

SEE WHAT you think of this recent statement by a genetics researcher, commenting on the long-running political war over IQ testing: “The left-wing view is that everyone’s born the same and you can make everyone achieve the same way. From genetics research, we’ve shown that’s not true” (<http://qz.com/740569/t/429017>).

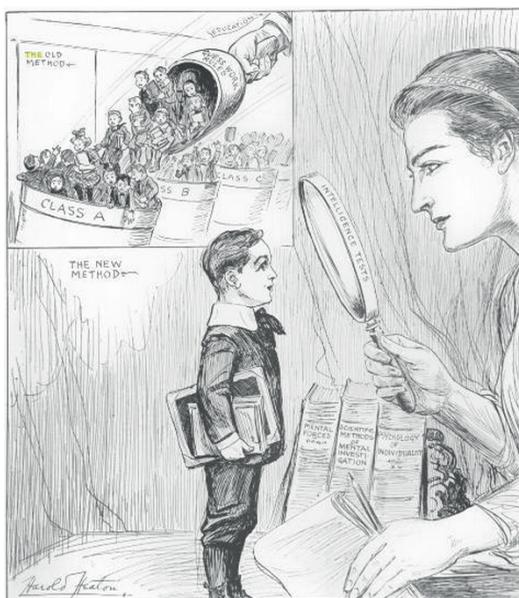
Chances are you’ll first bridle at the phrase ‘the left-wing view’, this being the sort of careless and sweeping precursor to some equally careless right-wing prejudice. Then you’ll try to recall if you’ve ever heard anyone, regardless of political orientation, come up with the fundamentalist view that ‘everyone’s born the same’. You’ll probably decide that you haven’t, because in your experience nobody really buys this ‘blank slate’ argument. Your conclusion? That the above statement is a pretty vacuous straw man argument which reflects badly on its owner and indeed invites some suspicion over the ‘genetics research’ being thus promoted.

Research into human intelligence, what it is and how to measure it has made great strides since the days of the craniologists and their tape measures, but the debate is as plagued now as it was then by political bias, and by the tendency of both sides to dig trenches and fire heavy caricatures at each other. The ‘left’ trench had a big hitter in the form of palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould, who launched a flamethrower with his 1981 book *The Mismeasure of Man*, which set out to savage the ‘genetic determinists’ and their class-based obsession with rankings, reification and hierarchies. But opponents responded angrily that Gould had missed the point by attacking largely out-of-date research and methodologies and ignoring new research, and that ultimately his argument assumed what he set out to prove. Richard Dawkins, with whom Gould had a famous spat over the question of ‘adaptationism’ in evolutionary theory, would likely agree that Gould was not above caricaturing the views of his opponents for the sake of a good polemic. But Gould was also the subject of savage caricature, notably by the philosopher of science Daniel Dennett, known by certain wags as Dawkins’ bulldog.

Complex and heated as the arguments are, the basics of the IQ question are simple enough. Modern computing power combined with big data and meta-analyses (discipline-wide reviews of all relevant studies), together with a torrent

of new knowledge from MRI scans of the working brain, present a forceful case that genetics has a clear role in human intelligence, almost regardless of how you care to define that word. To put it bluntly, everyone can’t be Einstein, even given all the opportunities in the world.

On the other side of the scale sits the ponderous and imponderable combined weight of social, environmental and other factors. Nobody argues that these don’t exist, but nobody knows how to control for these factors in testing, so no scientific test can realistically be pronounced conclusive or even fair. To be sure, studies of twins, raised separately yet exhibiting identical IQ scores, mannerisms or other



habits, are powerful genetic evidence that lead some researchers to claim that the genetic component of intelligence is anything up to 70 percent. But while these twin studies seem to remove much of the common environmental background noise, nobody can say what other factors might have been introduced instead. You can’t control for coincidence. If you meet and talk to 10 random people at a bus stop, the chances are you’ll share certain behavioural, emotional or intellectual tics with at least some of them. Thus the interpretations based on twin studies may look strong without necessarily being so.

The well-known Flynn Effect, named for the observation that IQ scores have increased on average by three points per decade for a century, also throws a hefty spanner in the genetic works. If IQ really is genetic, how can it keep getting better at a rate far in excess of the glacial pace of natural evolution? James Flynn himself thinks he has the answer, in short that people are drawn to environments that suit their genes, thus creating intellectual feedback loops that amplify their genetic

differences (*New Scientist*, 30 July). This is similar to Dawkins’ idea of the extended phenotype, which sees not just your physical body as a uniquely identifiable genome, but extends the idea to include your house, shoes and career choices too.

What do socialists say? Obviously, that we don’t know any better than scientists, and await their further research with interest. We are committed to the view that humans should be able to live in an equitable world in which they can give to the community what they are able and willing to give, whatever the practical limitations on that may be, while at the same time being entitled to receive whatever it is that they need, with similar provisos, and crucially, without the one in any sense entailing the other.

But we might also say that capitalist society is a terrible test bed on which to study intelligence or any other human quality because being in no sense a ‘fair’ system it can therefore in no sense deliver a fair test. Riddled with bias and rigged by the rich, it can never be the definitive authority on who we are as humans or what we’re really capable of.

The real ‘mismeasure of man’ that blights the human condition is not some reductionist mission to isolate, count, measure and label every atom of what it means to be a sentient human. It is the fact that all this science is done in the interest of the plundering of our bodies and minds and abilities by the rich elite. The ugliness behind the façade isn’t the feuding partisanship of the technical arguments, it’s the fact that the rich elite who ultimately bankroll the debate don’t look upon us, the vast majority of humanity, as people or even as workers, they look on us as a natural resource, a money-generating human ‘ore’ with the magical ability to mine itself and refine itself and then grade and polish and put itself to use for life until it wears out and discards itself, but not before helpfully providing its own replacement. The IQ debate isn’t really about science, it’s about quality control on the capitalist production line, and that’s why socialists should refuse to get drawn into it, either on the nature or the nurture side.

In socialism, in most normal circumstances where risk to others is low or zero, the real arbiter of a person’s ability should, like that person’s needs and that person’s interests, be that same person and nobody else. Whether objective estimations of IQ continue to be seen as valid or relevant may be a moot point. After all, it was people with such objective expertise who told Einstein he would never amount to anything.

PJS

Letters

Alan Coombes

Dear Editors

To add to the notice in the August *Socialist Standard*, Alan Coombes (born 31 January 1927, passed away 6 June), originally from Highworth (UK), joined the merchant navy in 1946 with voyages all over the world, and finally settled in New Zealand in 1950.

Alan joined the World Socialist Party (New Zealand) in the late 1970's, and soon became an active member in both the Executive Committee and Auckland Branch.

At the same time Alan was also active within other organizations such as: Rationalist Society, book binding at the Museum of Transport & Technology (MOTAT), chairman of Friends of

Sherwood, U3A, Grey Power, and NZCTU (NZ Council of Trade Unions).

He was well known within the WSPNZ, at local and central government elections, to voluntarily take more than his allocated quota of printed leaflets, which were targeted for letterboxes and handouts in his local area. He would tirelessly spend his spare time promoting the idea of 'A World of Free Access'.

During the early 2000s Alan was General Secretary of the WSPNZ – he offered his home in Kingsland (Auckland) as a venue for the monthly EC meetings – this locality was a central meeting point and was appreciated by the other EC members who attended.

After relinquishing his position of General Secretary, Alan still managed

to attend both EC and Auckland Branch meetings on a regular basis at the WSPNZ's new HQ in Manurewa, Auckland.

In later years, as Alan's health interfered with his many interests. He found it more difficult to be actively involved with the day to day issues within the WSPNZ, but he still subscribed to the *Socialist Standard*, which he enjoyed reading – he then passed copies of the journal onto anyone remotely interested in the Socialist case.

Alan will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege of being associated with him – a staunch relentless advocate for the need for World Socialism.

WSPNZ

Knowledge: A matter of Opinion?

It is often said that: 'we all have a right to our opinion'. Socialists would confirm this, perhaps not as a matter of rights but as an inevitable consequence of an enquiring mind. The expression of an opinion within the public arena is, of course, a rather different matter. I was once informed by a librarian that he would not stock the *Socialist Standard* because they would then have to make available fascist material in an effort to balance two political 'extremes'. Somehow, in this perverse logic, because we have always opposed xenophobia, racism, class/political elites, militarism and authoritarianism (the essence of fascism) we are responsible for our own antithesis!

We would say that some opinions have more value than others when analysed in terms of motivation and obvious intrinsic humanitarian content. On a more prosaic level if you have problems with your car it is rational to consult a qualified mechanic rather than someone who has watched motor racing on the TV occasionally. It is the same with politics – an opinion not grounded in some level of study is of less value than that of another who has dedicated their life to understanding the origins and evolution

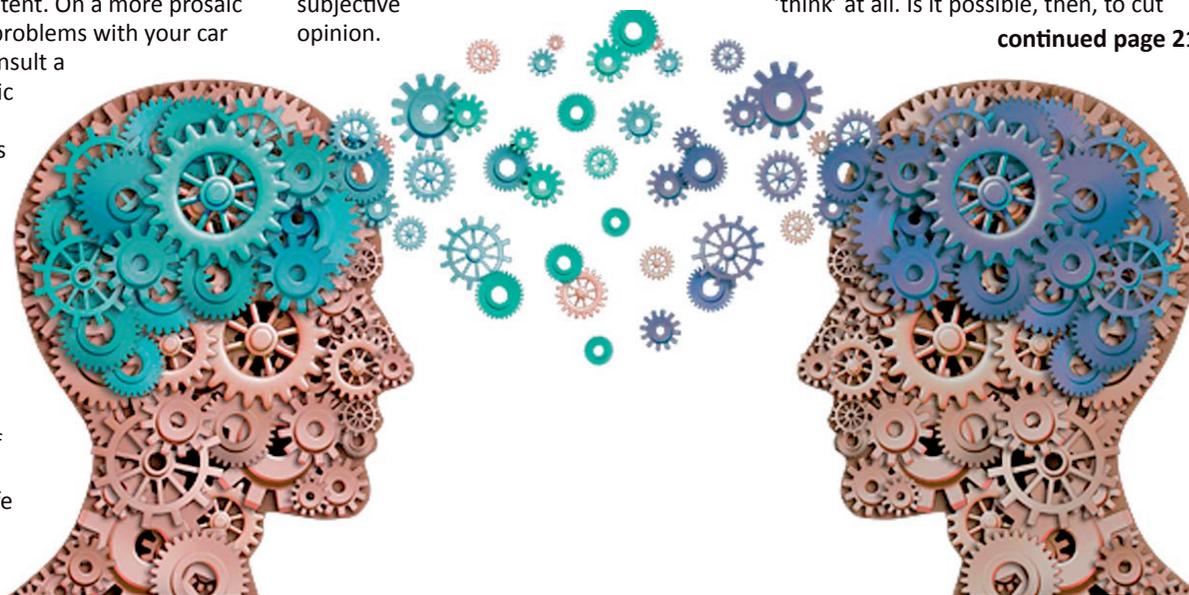
of social power. It may be objected that even those who have made such a study may, and do, come up with very different, and often opposing, values and perspectives. Is, then, all knowledge merely a matter of opinion?

Most of us would not consider 'gravity' as a matter of opinion. It is, of course, a theory that attempts to explain the observed phenomena of the attraction of two bodies – commonly called 'falling'. It might be said that this is a scientific fact and so cannot be compared to political ideas. But anyone who is interested in the history of science is aware that scientific consensus is often the result of bitter internal struggles within the science establishment. Some have maintained that the discipline of history (including the history of science) is purely the creation of historians and is, therefore, entirely composed of subjective opinion.

But has any historian claimed that Belgium invaded Germany to start the First World War; or that Napoleon won the battle of Waterloo? If they were to do so then the subsequent derision would be well deserved as in the case of the theories of 'holocaust deniers'.

Socialists are materialists and one of the consequences of this philosophy is the insistence that events, whether scientific or political/historical, occur independently of their observation. We insist that a tree can fall even if there is nobody there to observe it doing so. This, in no way dilutes the importance of human agency within the understanding of phenomena but it insists that it is the objective existence of phenomena that must always precede our ability to observe it and think about it. Our minds, both physically and psychologically, have to exist independently before we can 'think' at all. Is it possible, then, to cut

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Religion retreats

THE ROLE of religion throughout history has been extremely powerful. Indeed it could be argued that it has affected human beings in every stage of society. In a hunting/gathering society human beings felt themselves surrounded by inexplicable forces. An erupting volcano was the voice of a god, lightning was a battle of invisible titans and the mysteries of birth and death could not be explained by any natural process. Into this enigma of existence strode the shaman, the soothsayer and the modern priest, imam and assorted holy men. A career in the black arts of superstition was rewarding.

With the advance of scientific knowledge religion has found itself in an ever increasing decline. Zeus, Thor, and millions of other ancient gods have been given their P45s and packed off to the land of myths and fables. We still have Jehovah and Allah kicking about haunting the minds of the gullible but their days are numbered. As the power of religion dwindles its adherents become more and more ludicrous in their claims. Here are a few recent crazy examples from 2008:

"A prominent Saudi Islamic cleric has issued a *fatwa*, or religious edict, against Mickey Mouse, whom he characterized as an agent of Satan sent to corrupt young minds. Sheikh Mohammed Al-Munajjid told Saudi Arabia's Al-Majd Television that his beef with Mickey is that he is a mouse, a creature that Islam sees as 'repulsive and corrupting.' Al-Munajjid explained that Islamic law refers to the mouse as 'little corrupter' and a creature that is 'steered by Satan,' and grants permission to all Muslims to 'kill [mice] in all cases.' Therefore, according to Islamic law, insisted the sheikh, 'Mickey Mouse should be killed'" (*Israel Today*, 16 September).



No word yet of a fatwa on Donald Duck or Goofy yet but then maybe the Sheikh doesn't get to the movies much these days. We wonder what he makes of Tom and Jerry.

"More than half of Americans believe they are protected by a guardian angel and two in three are certain that heaven exists, according to a study of US religious beliefs released Thursday. The survey, conducted by researchers at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, asked 350 questions about religion to 1,648 adults across the country. Fifty-five percent said they believed they were protected from harm by a guardian angel, a figure that researcher Christopher Bader said came as a surprise. 'To find out that more than half of the American public believes this was shocking to me. I did not expect that,' he said. Sixty-seven percent said they were 'absolutely sure' heaven exists and 17 percent believed it 'probably' does. Seventy-three percent of Americans believe in hell, it found'" (*Yahoo News*, 18 September).

This is a case of a Waco researcher asking wacco questions and getting wacky answers.

"In Israel's ultra-Orthodox Jewish community, where the rule of law sometimes takes a back seat to the rule of God, zealots are on a campaign to stamp out behavior they consider unchaste. They hurl stones at women for such 'sins' as wearing a red blouse, and attack stores selling devices that can access the Internet. In recent weeks, self-styled 'modesty patrols' have been accused of breaking into the apartment of a Jerusalem woman and beating her for allegedly consorting with men. They have torched a store that sells MP4 players, fearing devout Jews would use them to download pornography" (*Yahoo News*, 4 October).

And people sneer at fundamentalist Muslims!

RD



Negative interest?

'NATWEST HAS become the first bank to warn business customers it may charge negative interest rates on money held in current accounts', reported the *Daily Telegraph* (25 July). But how can there be negative interest rates? Why would anyone lend money for a period only to get less back at the end of it?

Interest is the price of borrowing money and is governed by supply and demand, more by demand in fact. The rate of interest (or, rather, rates as there are different ones depending on the risk of non-repayment) reflects the state of the economy. When business is slack, due to a lack of enough profitable investment opportunities, the rate is low because supply, as from companies not reinvesting profits, is more than what other companies want to borrow. In times of recovery and boom, when profit prospects are seen to be good, it is the other way round. Demand exceeds supply and the rate tends to rise.

Governments and their central banks think they can control the economy by

varying the rate of interest up or down with a view to decreasing or increasing bank lending. The only rate they can directly control is the rate at which the central bank will lend money to banks as 'the lender of last resort', or Bank Rate.

After the Great Crash of 2008 the Bank of England tried to revive the economy by reducing the bank rate to 0.5 percent, a record low that lasted until this August when it was reduced to 0.25 percent. It is this that has raised the spectre of the banks paying negative interest. Banks are financial intermediaries whose income (their profits as well as money to cover their operating costs) comes from borrowing money at one rate of interest and re-lending at a higher rate.

An ultra-low, even more a zero or negative (as already in Japan and the Eurozone), bank rate creates a problem for banks as there are only two ways that they can maintain the spread between the rate at which they borrow and the rate at which they re-lend, and so their profits. They can increase the rate they charge borrowers or reduce below zero the rate they pay depositors. As the Bank of England put it when it cut the bank rate in August:

'[A]s interest rates are close to zero, it is likely to be difficult for some banks and

building societies to reduce deposit rates much further, which in turn might limit their ability to cut their lending rates.'

To avoid this, the Bank set aside £100 billion for a 'Term Funding Scheme' under which banks can borrow money at 0.25 percent provided they increase their lending by the same amount that they borrow, explaining:

'[T]he TFS provides participants with a cost effective source of funding to support additional lending to the real economy, providing insurance against the risk that conditions tighten in bank funding markets.'

Note, in passing, the matter of fact assumption that banks need funding to make loans. No nonsense here about their supposed ability to create money to lend out of thin air.

This policy is just pushing on a piece of string. It's not the supply side that's the problem but the lack of demand from credit-worthy businesses, who don't see enough profitable investment opportunities at the moment to use up the supply. Until they do, the economy won't fully recover from the slump, however much the government fiddles about with the bank rate.



How do you like your Leaders?

AS WE were asked again and again, while one Westminster aspirant after another withered from their unnourished ambitions until Labour had only Jeremy Corbyn and Owen Smith left in contention for their party members' votes – while the Tories were compelled to accept Theresa May and her deliberate technique of fostering or stifling the careers of her party underlings.

For Labour the conflict was particularly distressful; when Ed Miliband gave up the leadership there was a brood of competing successors – Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper, Tristram Hunt ... remember them? And those others, hoping that some rival's spectacular failure would give them an opening. And the rest? One by one they were ground away until they were conclusively despatched by the simple, predictable process of the overwhelming votes of their party supporters for the hitherto obscure Jeremy Corbyn. Remember him? The locally popular MP who persistently voted against party instructions while stolidly grappling with the problems his constituency voters passed on to him? Who thereby amassed a formidable, unforeseen growth of simple popularity among the local people which infected the Party membership at large.

That was when David Cameron, deluded by expected success in the EU Referendum, revelled in stirring up his Back Benchers' hysterical rapture with his corny jibes from the Despatch Box. Take your pick from a library of his feeble sallies. But somewhere among your choice will be the jibe about Ma Corbyn giving advice to Her Majesty's Loyal Leader of the Opposition to pay more attention to adjusting the hang of his trousers, to smoothing his shirt front and to keeping his hair placidly combed. The Tories hungrily adored it. But it was actually ineffective.

Fife

Consider, to begin with, the matter of the Honourable Jacob William Rees-Mogg, son of a now-deceased life peer and editor of the *Times*. An offspring of a family who grew rich from the labour of Somerset people in their coalmines and who at school wallowed in the absorptions of Eton College before enriching himself in his City of London company by the name of Somerset Capital Management – the function of which needs little

imagination. At the age of 38 Rees-Mogg failed to persuade the voters of the (at that time) obdurately Labour constituency of Central Fife to welcome him as their representative in Westminster by touring the poorer districts in what was said to be a Bentley car, accompanied by a woman who had been his 'nanny' during the luxury of his childhood in the family stately home. But there were other, less demanding constituencies and in the 2010 election he won the new North East Somerset constituency with a majority of almost 5000.



Rees-Mogg

The point is that Jacob Rees-Mogg is also noted for being the very opposite of Jeremy Corbyn for his appearance, with his double breasted suit immaculately smooth and

controlled, an appropriate tie and shirt and hair. How significant is this in relation to his performance? One of his campaigns as an MP was to legislate so that the county of Somerset should have its own time zone, 15 minutes behind London. He supports zero hours contracts for their 'flexibility', disregarding those desperate unemployed workers who have no choice but to conform to this additionally exploitative device. He is against same-sex marriage and in favour of state-financed repatriation of immigrants to return them to their 'natural homelands'. And, in case it is not by now obvious, he describes himself as 'a monarchist'. All of which emphasises that it is most urgently obvious that all leaders must be judged on matters other than their appearance.

Riots

And on that basis where does Jeremy Corbyn stand? There is no shortage of promises from him on every relevant problem. But then both of the big parties, as well as the smaller, equally squirreling, groups compete for votes with programmes which at first sight may offer straightforward strategies and foresight to adjust capitalist society into being problem free. This grim fact exists and flourishes despite the evidence conclusively against it. For example on the currently dominating matter of public disorder in reaction to the stress of urban life, Tim

Newburn, Professor of Criminology at the London School of Economics, who has a dominant reputation in the subject, spoke recently on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 riots: 'The underlying conditions for those riots still persist... There's no real sign that things have improved for the lives of the kinds of people who were involved and caught up in the riots. Certainly it's not implausible that there could be more riots'. (*Guardian* 6 August). And amid this morbid chaos all those previous, short-lived hopefuls for the Labour Party leadership have been replaced by Owen Smith, the MP for Pontypridd.

Smith was first elected in 2010 and was allocated to a succession of Shadow Ministerships including as Secretary of State for Wales. Previously he had a career which included a spell as Head of Policy and Government Relations for the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer – who, he ominously said, were 'extremely supportive' of his ambitions for political advancement. With this encouragement, during his first effort to get into Parliament at a by-election in 2006, he came out in support of the Private Financial Initiative in the NHS, with its promise of rich profits for private companies such as Pfizer. He was once a member of the CND, with typical reservations about the Trident programme but he later reversed this into support for that devastating weapon. During his campaign for the Party leadership he called for the constitution to refer specifically to tackling inequality '... right at the heart of everything that we do' and he later announced this as '... a British New Deal for every part of Britain'. In terms of promises to reform the agonies of capitalism there is nothing novel or stimulating about Owen Smith. He is simply the latest in a history of futile, hopeless imposters.

So how do we like our leaders? And how do they like us? We endure this social system – pervading, dominant and repressive – where one group possesses all that is essential to human lives. In this our function is to keep relationships operating in that way and, when we are allowed to express our response, to confirm that we support it all at whatever cost to human interests. In this, the politicians' role is to operate a machinery to persuade us that it would be impossible to have it any other way. But in truth we can change it so that the likes of Rees-Mogg, Corbyn, and Owen Smith are part of a bitter history.

IVAN



Socialism as a World Commons

THE WORLD'S environmental crises stem largely from the failure to share the ownership and use of the world's natural and industrial resources. The principle of sharing has always formed the basis of social relationships in societies across the world. We all know from personal experience the importance of sharing to family and community life. In fact, sharing is far more prevalent in society than people often realise. The idea of individual (or private) ownership of land is a relatively recent phenomenon. There is now a growing movement that reminds us of this and which promotes the development of 'the Commons' and which has gone beyond the prevailing ideas of conventional capitalist private property economics.

Professor Cosmo Innes (1798-1874), Advocate and Professor of Constitutional Law and History wrote in his *Scotch Legal Antiquities*,

'Looking over our country, the land held in common was of vast extent. In truth, the arable - the cultivated land of Scotland, the land early appropriated and held by charter - is a narrow strip on the river bank or beside the sea. The inland, the upland, the moor, the mountain were really not occupied at all for agricultural purposes, or served only to keep the poor and their cattle from starving. They were not thought of when charters were made and lands feudalised. Now as cultivation increased, the tendency in the agricultural mind was to occupy these wide commons, and our lawyers lent themselves to appropriate the poor man's grazing to the

neighbouring baron...'

Many parts of the world have had a tradition of common property rights. In Scotland, for example, they include rights arising from commonities, grazing rights, peat-cutting rights, salmon rights, rights to use harbours and foreshore, mineral rights, sporting use rights, rights to usufruct, rights of access to resources and rights of passage over land and inland water. 'Commonty' in Scots Law means a piece of land in which two or more persons have a common right. A widespread example of such common property is living in a tenement. Those who own or rent a flat also hold other parts of the property, e.g. the stairs or close (and have its common responsibility - taking turns to clean the stairs) and access to the communal back-garden (drying greens). It is estimated that half the land area of Scotland was still common land in 1500. They provided areas of free access. It was not a 'free for all' but their use was covered by sets of rules that were well established and understood locally. The resources of the commonty were solely for personal usage, and individuals could not, for instance, cut timber for sale or rent grazing to someone else. No-one could make any financial profit.

This past still lives on in many Scottish place-names. A green provided an area where markets and other events were held, garments bleached and a host of other communal activities carried out. The greens in fishing communities were used for the repairing of nets, the salting and drying of fish. A loan was a common route through private property to and from an area of common land or some other 'public' place. The distinction between this and a right of way was that the loan

was itself common land and not just a right of use. Rigs were narrow strips of cultivated land. Traditionally, rigs were used by different cultivators and the rigs periodically re-allocated between them. This system was known as runrig.

In socialism the immediate users of parts of the Commons that the world's resources will have become would not be trying to make an independent living for themselves but would be carrying out tasks on behalf of the community where the aim of production would be to satisfy society's needs on a sustainable basis. This is not the kind of 'one size fits all' solution since socialism need not be exactly the same everywhere and at all times, though plainly its basic principles will not vary: a system of production and consumption where the Commons is for all and wealth is shared by all but owned by none.

Humanity has to move away from today's private and state ownership models, and towards a new form of resource management based on non-ownership. Common ownership would embody the principle of sharing on a global scale, and it would enable all communities to take collective responsibility for managing the world's resources. Without a global movement of responsible people that share a collective vision of change, it will remain impossible to overcome the influence of the vested interests of the capitalist class. Currently, the world still lacks a broad-based acceptance of the need for planetary reconstruction but such a mood is beginning to stir.

ALJO



Lack of Momentum

The Labour leadership election between Jeremy Corbyn and Owen Smith is a battle for the heart and soul of the Party; we examine what is really at stake.

A few years ago the idea that Jeremy Corbyn might be leader of the Labour Party would have been as likely as Lord Lucan appearing in Kensington High Street riding Shergar. But such is the disillusionment with much of what the Blair and Brown governments stood for – including the Iraq War – that the Labour Party seems to be a rather different place these days.

There are, of course, positives to this. Large numbers of Labour members and affiliated supporters are questioning the received wisdom of Labour's role as one of being a more effective management team for UK PLC than the Conservatives – an effectiveness, it was argued, that would enable Labour governments to be more caring and generous to the poor. After 13 years of Labour government people rightly began questioning why this transparently didn't happen, with inequality in Britain being at least as bad now on most measures than it was when the Blair landslide happened in 1997. Then there was the Iraq War and attempts at a potentially similar intervention in Syria, which left people disgusted with evidently spurious justifications of warmongering.

That people are questioning these things (and have been now for some time) is undoubtedly good. That many have now rallied around a hitherto highly marginal, left-wing Labour politician as the antidote to what has gone on before is rather more questionable, and herein lies much of Labour's current woe.

Trade unions

Since its formation in 1906 out of the trade-union inspired Labour Representation Committee, the Labour Party has had one, clear overarching aim. This is to secure political office – by contesting elections for parliament and local councils – so that it can enact reform measures that are in the interest of wage and salary earners ('labour' in the broadest sense). As such it has largely been the political arm of the trade union movement and the trade unions have been historically its main financial backers, as well as providing a proportion

of its elected MPs. In terms of its entire ethos and ideology (reflected in its internal constitution) Labour as a political party has no other purpose than this.

The main charge against Corbyn and his supporters from those challenging his leadership is precisely that this purpose is being disregarded. Corbyn has spent his entire political life as a serial rebel against successive Labour leaderships, mainly with a penchant for supporting single issue protest groups (CND, anti-apartheid, environmentalism, etc). The charge is that he is turning the Labour Party from being a potential government that can enact reforms to being a cheerleader for grassroots single-issue campaigns, drawing large numbers of members into the Party from these types of single-issue interest groups.

Corbyn denies this and claims – however unlikely it may sound – that his goal is to be the next Prime Minister. But if he really believes this, what we can say is that the evidence is not on his side.

Weathercocks and signposts

Corbyn's political mentor, Tony Benn, always claimed that the main choice in politics is over whether you are a weathercock blowing with the political wind, or a signpost pointing towards a new direction. Genuine socialists, being interested in securing a fundamental change in the way society is organised, are obviously in the signpost category. The equally obvious problem is that this is a signpost most people cannot see and when on occasion they do see it, it points down a path they are not usually inclined to explore that far. This has been the dilemma at the heart of the broader labour movement in the UK and elsewhere for well over a century – what became known originally as the disagreement between the 'possibilists' and 'impossibilists'. The possibilists argued that you can only put forward ideas and policies that are likely to be broadly acceptable to the working class given their current ideology, while the so-called impossibilists have advocated the maximum programme of 'socialism and nothing but' as a way to change people's minds towards the

need for a revolutionary alternative to capitalism.

The Labour Party is the ultimate possibilist political organisation and what Corbyn and his supporters are certainly not doing is advocating a turn instead to what the Labour Party has always derided as impossibilism (of the sort, for instance, advocated by us). They just want to advocate a form of possibilism through reform-campaigning that seems historically less likely to attract support and hence political power than the more conventional form advocated by more mainstream Labour – if you like, a form of utopian possibilism, a phrase which sounds like it should be a contradiction in terms.

Momentum

The pro-Corbyn activist organisation set up a month or so after his initial leadership victory in 2015 seems to grasp little of this. Momentum appears to be an amalgam of supporters of a variety of single-issue causes and is largely full of people who have joined Labour in only recent times – swelling the Party membership to over half a million. This is a significant increase on recent years but well below the peak of over a million Labour members achieved in 1952-3 and which was followed by two heavy successive election defeats (which just goes to illustrate that activist political membership and the wider popular vote are very different things).

Persistent rumours of Trotskyist infiltration notwithstanding, at Momentum's core are a number of people (such as its main driving force, Jon Lansman) who have long been known on the hard-left Bennite wing of the Party. Some of them like Lansman himself had been part of the left-wing core of activists who set up the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and other groups in the 1980s supportive of Benn and his key positions – such as a massive programme of nationalisation of industry, radical Keynesian economics, import controls, unilateral nuclear disarmament, and opposition to membership of the then EEC. They had a significant influence on Labour policy under Michael Foot, culminating in the Alternative Economic Strategy that was at the heart of the Labour manifesto for the 1983 General Election (dubbed by then Shadow Cabinet member Gerald Kaufman as the 'longest suicide note in political history'). This led to a 1983 Labour vote share of 28 percent, still the worst Labour performance in the post-war period, even worse than those since achieved by Brown and Miliband.



The electoral lessons learnt from this disastrous defeat in 1983 led over a period of years from Neil Kinnock and John Smith through to Tony Blair. This drift to the political centre was also in broad alignment with the significant economic changes that occurred over these decades that rendered the 1983 manifesto obsolete, including the free movement of capital across borders, the internationalisation of industry (which rendered direct state ownership of business difficult if not impossible), the collapse of Soviet Russia's empire and the

end of the Cold War, and so on.

What Corbyn and Momentum now want to do is effectively turn the tide back to the inglorious days of 1983 in the hope that the 'anti-establishment' feeling among sections of the electorate at present can give them the type of radical surge that failed to happen in the 80s. But there is little if any evidence that this is likely to happen.

Examining the record

To some, Corbyn has done better than expected in his electoral tests so far. This is actually true, though only because most people's expectations have been so low to start with. In the local government elections this May the Labour lead over the Conservatives was 1 percent, the same as it was in 2011 one year into Miliband's leadership, with the Labour share of the vote only slightly up on the 2015 General Election. In the parliamentary by-elections that have occurred under Corbyn's leadership, where more volatile swings occur with often low turnouts, the average swings have tended to be around 8 percent to Labour, almost identical to those achieved by Miliband. This perhaps suggests that the 'Corbyn



effect' is actually less than either his supporters or detractors maintain.

Either way, it is not indicative of a radical upsurge and there is no indication that the increase in Labour Party membership is mirrored by an increase in popular support for their ideas more generally. Labour is trailing badly in the opinion polls again too, despite recent turmoil in the governing Tory Party. And as Cowley and Kavanagh have recently pointed out in *The British General Election of 2015* 'Almost all psephological analysis of Labour's support between 2010 and 2015, as well as what we know of non-voters, the UKIP vote or indeed the nature of support for the SNP, would indicate that the Corbyn strategy



is a route to an electoral brick wall' (p.384). It is for these reasons that the vast majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party – arguably more in touch with the wider electorate and their views than they are with the Party's activist base – have said 'enough is enough' and are supporting Owen Smith in his leadership campaign.

Splitters

If Owen Smith doesn't defeat Corbyn (or at least come

close enough to justify another push next time) there is a real possibility of the Labour Party splitting. This is partly because the attitude to reforming capitalism from the PLP and much of the more long-standing membership is a rather different one to that of Corbyn and Momentum. It is also because – and this is partly the attraction of Corbyn to Momentum supporters – he is not a traditional political leader in either his utterances or demeanour (almost what marketing geeks would call a self-consciously ‘non-brand’ brand). To extend the analogy with 1983, the same could



Momentum: turning the tide back to 1983

have been said of Michael Foot.

The Labour Party has split before of course, in 1981 when elements of the right-wing in the Party decamped under pressure from the left-wing activists then in the ascendancy, and founded the Social Democratic Party. This is what partly led to Labour achieving its lowest post-war vote in 1983, though today the portents are worse. The Labour vote in 1979 was 37 percent and then fell to 28 per cent. In 2015 it was under 32 percent and so is already at a lower base. And this time in terms of splitters it is unlikely to be as few as the 29 MPs who eventually threw in their lot with the SDP. On that occasion, the vast majority of the right and centre of the Party stayed (including heavyweights like Healey and Kaufman) whereas this time the vast bulk of the PLP is in rebellion, not a small minority of it.

If a split of this type occurs, it is difficult to see how the Labour Party in its current form can survive or what its purpose would be even if it did. People can join all sorts of single-issue groups and advocate particular reforms, but unless there is an electable political vehicle to put these reforms into action, it becomes a sterile and narrow form of campaigning around individual hobby-horses. And people can do this (and have done for decades) irrespective of whether they are in the Labour Party or not.

Socialist standards

This current confusion and division in the Labour Party – as well as a general political climate that seems more sceptical about political leaders – should be an opportunity for socialists. While there are concerned, decent and genuine people in all sections of the Labour Party (and other parties too for that matter) Labour as an organisation has repeatedly failed to defend the interests of wage and salary earners – hence the reason it repeatedly disappoints and gets kicked out of office. In truth, the ‘possibilism’ that has long characterised the Labour approach is really not so possibilist or realist at all in the sense that capitalism has never been fundamentally changed by reformist Labour governments elected into office (if anything, it has been changes within capitalism over decades that has helped change Labour instead).

Labour in government has sent troops in to break strikes, backed all of the major wars engaged in by the UK this last century (and has initiated a few of them), and has repeatedly attacked working class living standards to ensure the profitability of British industry. There is nothing to suggest that either Corbyn or Smith, despite their radical phrases, would behave any differently in office – all national governments are there to administer their particular section of world capitalism, and as Syriza in Greece found out soon enough, have very little control over the market economy as events unfold.

Momentum activists will no doubt argue that Corbyn is a decent man with a track record of opposing war. But this misses the point about how capitalism entraps those who seek to administer it. And while Corbyn may have opposed the senseless butchery of the Iraq War, he is a man (along with John McDonnell) who has sought to apologise

repeatedly for the nationalism and terrorism of organisations like the Provisional IRA and Hamas. Men like these who commemorated IRA terrorists and who refused to condemn some of the most anti-working class atrocities in UK history (such as the Birmingham pub bombings and Enniskillen) are men whose peaceful and socialist credentials deserve to be viewed with quite some scepticism.

What is of importance now is that people who may identify with wanting to create a genuinely socialist society of common ownership, democratic control and free access to wealth, don’t get suckered in by a radical-sounding, ‘populist’ reform movement that has yet to prove its popularity anywhere beyond the already like-minded. The attempt to reform capitalism by so-called benevolent governments has always been a disaster and there’s nothing to suggest it would be any different next time under either Corbyn or Smith. Socialists have always been content to leave the Labour Party to the reformists – and the more we think about it, the more they are welcome to it.

DAP

Labour, Lib-Dem, Tory

The Socialist Standard examines their case

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Turkey: background to a failed coup



A personal view of the recent attempted coup in Turkey based on talking to people there.

Writing three weeks since the attempted coup on the 15 July in Turkey, my initial reaction was one of complete rejection of its validity – it had to be a ‘false-flag’ because, based on early reports, the Turkish armed forces are quite simply not *that* inept!

As the days passed reports and information emerged that explained why the coup had failed so quickly and dramatically. It was clear that many in the higher echelons of the armed services and MIT (state intelligence service) were not aware of the plotting and would not have supported the plotters if they had been.

Young conscripts when faced with orders to shoot on crowds of civilians protesting against the coup refused, laid down their weapons and surrendered to the people or police. The mistreatment and even murder of these conscripts by the crowds and the failure of the police to prevent it were in many ways astonishing.

A sergeant shot himself dead rather than obey an illegal order to fire on a crowd.

A junior officer, when he realised what was happening, shot dead a brigadier who was a senior commander on the ground for the coup plotters.

Thousands of people answered the call from the president via social media and the mosques’ loudspeakers to fill the streets and stop the coup. Tanks were stopped by people laying down in front of them or by having socks stuffed in the exhaust pipes. Even so, hundreds were gunned down or died in the bombing by helicopter gunships and F16 fighter aircraft.

Perhaps the single most telling reason for the failure of the

coup is to be found in the actions of the Russians. Relations between Turkey and Russia nose-dived after Turkish aircraft shot down a Russian plane over Syria (eventually even NATO agreed that the Russian aircraft had not crossed into Turkish airspace). Erdoğan’s bombast and refusal to apologise led to crippling sanctions that have deeply damaged the Turkish economy. Such was the damage that eventually Erdoğan swallowed his pride, admitted responsibility, apologised and agreed to pay the Russian government and families of the dead crew compensation.

Russia’s advanced electronic warfare and surveillance post at the Hmeimim Air Base in NW Syria intercepted communications between helicopters that indicated that a coup was about to be launched against the government of Turkey. That information was channelled to President Putin via the FSB (formerly KGB) who authorised that it be passed to MIT (Turkish Intelligence Service). Russia’s action has been ignored by Western media but has been openly acknowledged by the Turkish government. The head of MIT, Hakan Fidan, a staunch Erdoğan loyalist, immediately met with the chiefs of the armed services and an order grounding all aircraft and forbidding any movement of troops or armour followed.

The coup plotters, realising that they were exposed and would face a long jail sentence whether they surrendered or not, decided to bring their plans forward by six hours and execute the coup. Russia’s timely warning enabled those opposed to any coup time to prepare. The president was evacuated from his holiday hotel and rushed to an aircraft just forty minutes before renegade troops backed by helicopters attacked the hotel. His plane was escorted by two fighter

aircraft from Dalaman in the South West to Istanbul on the advice of the General Staff as Ankara was too dangerous. En route two putschist F16s locked their weapon systems on to Erdoğan's plane but for whatever reason failed to fire.

Who was behind the coup?

I doubt that there is a single Turk who does not believe that the US was behind the coup attempt. Why? They will tell you

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- History! It is hard to find a coup anywhere in the world that the US was not behind. All previous coup d'états in Turkey were backed by the US.

- Silence from the US as they awaited the outcome of the coup. Russia and Iran, for example, condemned it immediately.

- The refusal of the US to extradite Fethullah Gülen from his self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania to face charges of conspiracy and sedition. Gülen is seen as a tool of the CIA, his application to reside in the US was backed by three senior CIA officials.

Many Turks believe that either the US government, or the CIA acting as a rogue element, whilst happy to keep the AKP government in place wants rid of Erdoğan whom they see as erratic and unreliable.

Fethullah Gülen is central to much of what has happened

As the Gülenists patiently infiltrated all the components of the Turkish state from the army to the judiciary to the police to the education system to the general bureaucracy they were able to facilitate the rise of their own into the highest posts. After the video came to light many accused Gülen of infiltrating the state with an illegal organisation. Soon after Gülen fled to the US Hanefi Avcı, who was a police commissioner at the time, stated: 'People spoke about the presence of Gülen's followers inside the police force, but there was no apparent criminal activity. Only after 2006 did certain police officers start to show deeper allegiances to the movement than to the state'.

When the AK Party came to power in the 2002 general election it allied itself with Gülen and together they set about drawing down the power and influence of the secular military. The sensational *Ergenekon* (Deep State) and *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer) investigations purported to expose what the military were up to. There followed a series of show trials of the officer corps on trumped-up charges. Many spent up to three years or more in prison without trial. As the secular Kemalist officers were weeded out the Gülenists filled their boots. The military was devastated and deeply wounded. Throughout other elements of the state the same process was going on.

As the AK Party government established its writ throughout

much of the country the ambitions of then Prime Minister Erdoğan began to dominate. He no longer desired the 'guidance' of Gülen and the two fell out very publicly.

When Gülenists inside the system, almost certainly acting on Gülen's instruction, leaked evidence of massive corruption within the government and Erdoğan's family the rift became total and a war of attrition began. The generals and senior officers of the armed forces



Anti-coup protest, Istanbul

in Turkey since the AK Party came to power. The Gülen Movement is known as *Hizmet* which means Service and it can be divided into two distinct parts.

The part that is seen and openly supported by millions around the world promotes tolerance, openness, moderate Islam, acceptance of differences, education, etc., transparency in all things. It operates thousands of schools and colleges in many countries. It raises billions of dollars annually from its business operations, donations, gifts, legacies and tithing – it is immensely wealthy.

The part that you do not see functions in a very different way and has very different objectives. Turkey has been the target of Gülen for many years. In a leaked video of one of his sermons, which is still available on Youtube, he can be seen and heard saying the following: 'You must move in the arteries of the system without anyone noticing your existence, until you reach all the power centres. You must wait until such time as you have gotten all the state power, until you have brought to your side all the constitutional institutions in Turkey'.

were pardoned and released with an apology from Erdoğan and an explanation that it was the corrupt elements of *Hizmet* that had infiltrated the judiciary that were to blame for the huge miscarriage of justice. Many were reinstated because Erdoğan now needed different 'friends' within the system.

Purges of the Gülenists have been ongoing for some time and no doubt many of them saw the coup as a last-ditch chance to retain influence. Many outside of the *Hizmet* organisation believe that had the coup succeeded Gülen would have returned to Turkey rather like *Ayatollah Khomeini to Iran in 1979*.

Hizmet Structure

The structure of that element of the *Hizmet* organisation that functioned secretly within the state apparatus is interesting. Most organisations are hierarchical – they are 'up-down'. The secret, deep-state *Hizmet* structure is best described as horizontal. A member of *Hizmet* will know only one other person. This person is his abi or older brother and his instruc-

tions are to be followed through without question. Secrecy is paramount to protect the organisation and the people within it. So, within the military for example, one can find the interesting example of a senior non-commissioned officer issuing instructions to a general and those instructions being carried out to the letter. This level of secrecy contributed to some of the disarray during the coup attempt. If there is no 'abi' to pass on changes of plan then chaos can reign. Add to that the ineptitude of the putschist use of the Whatsapp social media application and you have a recipe for failure. That said, the coup attempt came within a forty minute ace of succeeding. Without the Russians passing on the information they had intercepted Erdoğan would likely have been killed or captured.

State of Emergency

Following the failed coup great swathes of the armed services and the bureaucracy are being purged. All government employees have had their passports cancelled and are forbidden to leave the country. Within the judiciary anyone who voted against Erdoğan's 'reforms' of that element of state structure has been automatically fingered as a Gülenist and suspended until investigated and proven innocent. All private universities, colleges and schools have been closed or taken under state supervision whilst their affiliations are examined. Any member of the bureaucracy whose bank records show they have made donations or gifts to the Hizmet or its various subsidiary organisations has been suspended pending investigation. Many of those who have made donations will have been fulfilling their obligations as Muslims unaware of the links to Hizmet and will be innocent of any 'disloyalty'. They could also very well be AK Party supporters. Although tens of thousands have been detained or suspended there is a steady flow of those who have been investigated and released or reinstated.

The Future – is Erdoğan Weaker or Stronger?

There are no crystal balls and Turkey is a very complicated and fractured society at present. What has united people across the board is their opposition to the coup attempt. Erdoğan was as bombastic and belligerent as ever immediately after the event. His position has mellowed considerably since he no doubt realises that he is hated by half the country's population, all of his so-called NATO allies and most of the populations of the neighbouring states. He has withdrawn all of the thousands of libel actions against those who have 'insulted the president' (with the exception of the largely Kurdish HD Party – a tactical failure that he may live to regret). He has started a process of rapprochement with two of the main opposition parties but again his obsessive hatred of all things Kurdish has clouded his judgement and he has excluded the HDP. He has stepped back from reintroduction of the death penalty. He has drawn back from his plans for forcing through constitutional change and an executive presidency. He is heading to Russia for private talks with Putin. There are now friendly overtures towards Iran. The prime minister has said that Turkey wants to mend fences and normalise relations with Assad and Syria – Erdoğan has not contradicted this. If, or more likely when, this happens it will nail the lid on the coffin of the US' project to Balkanise the Middle East and secure Kuwaiti gas pipelines to Europe which would have undermined Russia. As a result of his recent toning down I think that Erdoğan believes he is in a weaker position, at least in the short term.

Within a fairly short time frame it is possible that Turkey might leave NATO and, together with Iran, accept a Russian invitation to join the Eurasia Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The officer corps that is rising

within the armed forces after the abortive coup is most definitely not Atlanticist like the Gülenist-CIA faction. They believe that Turkey's future lies not in the EU-NATO-Western alliance but eastwards within Eurasia. This is a vision of the future that I believe Erdoğan shares.

Turkey has applied for Gülen's extradition (again) and has presented the evidence that they have accumulated. If the US fails to comply then it will confirm the Turkish government's view that the US/CIA/Gülen was indeed behind the coup. If they do extradite him then it will show that his 'sell by date' has passed and the NATO Gladio Operation in Turkey is at an end.

In closing it has to be said that Turks of every political persuasion seem optimistic about the future. 'Things will be much better in Turkey now' is a constant refrain. There are some who believe that Erdoğan will face charges in court for



his corrupt and illegal practices within three years. Turks are amazingly optimistic people! That this coup attempt and Erdoğan's counter-coup would lead to such an optimistic outcome was hard to understand. There is a feeling that 'democracy' and the people have triumphed.

People believe that Erdoğan realises that he was saved not by those who support him but by those who support democracy. He was saved because of the people who laid down in front of tanks or paid with their lives for resisting on the streets as bullets flew. He was saved because an army sergeant killed himself before he would fire on his countrymen and women. He was saved by the young who used Facebook and Facetime to inform their fellow citizens of the coup threat (perhaps now he will reconsider his opposition to – and constant attacks on – social media). He was saved by the Chief of the General Staff who was kidnapped by his Gülenist ADC and, when invited to speak with his 'older brother' Fethullah Gülen, flatly refused. Above all, he was saved by Russia and President Putin who saw an opportunity to drive a wedge between Turkey and the West, and in doing so relieve some of the unrelenting pressure by NATO at Russia's borders.

For the majority of the population life remains 'normal', on the surface nothing much has changed. Behind the scenes much is changing and as the country moves forward more will follow. In the West the media has distorted, exaggerated and lied about what has happened and is happening. Erdoğan is authoritarian and autocratic and his political involvement is contrary to the existing constitution, according to which power should really lie with the prime minister and cabinet. That said he is not a dictator and he is the first directly elected president of Turkey. If, as seems likely, his erstwhile friends and allies in the various western alliances are indeed found to have been involved or even neutral to the events leading up to his attempted overthrow then the break up and realignment that will surely follow will be monumental and game-changing. US Secretary of State Kerry is due in Turkey shortly, his welcome is likely to be very cool!

(Name supplied but withheld)

The Heroic Tragedy

Civil war and social revolution in Spain



'Back the revolutionary general strike the very instant anyone [i.e. the military] revolts. We, the people of Catalonia, let us be on a war footing and ready to act. Be valiant. Arm yourselves and do battle. Long Live the CNT! Long Live Libertarian Communism! Launch the revolutionary general strike against fascism.' - CNT statement of 19 July 1936

Eighty years ago this summer, Spain saw an attempted military coup being temporarily defeated by ordinary people in many parts of the country. This was the beginning of what was to be a three year long civil war, resulting in half a million deaths, and followed by the four decade dictatorship of General Franco. This article will aim to describe some of the key features of the conflict, paying close attention to the 'social revolution' in Catalonia and Aragon which is of most relevance to socialists.

To understand the outbreak of the civil war it is first necessary to understand some of the background to the conflict. Spain in the early twentieth century was a predominately agrarian society; large scale industrialisation had only taken place in the north of the country and in Catalonia, around Barcelona. In the countryside an entrenched land owning class, of which the church was a significant section, had been resistant to agrarian economic reform, rural workers were locked into a state of poverty, often forced to work for long hours for little more than subsistence wages. Decades of agitation and self education had given birth to a strong and militant anarchist and syndicalist movement. Spain had become the only country where the anarchist ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and others had given rise to a social movement of significant numbers. By the time of the 1930's the major workers unions where the CNT (National

Confederation of Labour) and the UGT (General Workers' Union). Despite ideological differences and occasional conflict there was often cooperation between the two organisations. The CNT was an anarcho-syndicalist organisation that shunned parliamentary elections and advocated industrial direct action as a means of overcoming capitalism. From the late twenties onwards, the FAI (Anarchist Federation of Iberia) had gained influence within the CNT. The FAI pushed for a programme of insurreccional 'revolutionary gymnastics' with the intent of immediately bringing about anarchism through violent confrontation with the state. These policies clashed with those of the more orthodox syndicalists within the CNT who saw the social revolution as only being possible after a longer period of working class self-education and self-organisation. The UGT was affiliated to the labourist social-democratic PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) and pursued a line that was more in favour of winning legal concessions from the government.

The military declaration of 1936, which bought the beginning of the civil war, was not the first time that Spain had faced dictatorship. The dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera came about in 1923 when the government resigned in the face of a similar *pronunciamiento* from the Army. Following a bloodless coup, Primo de Rivera stayed in power until 1931, when the support of the military and the wealthy

classes was lost. Subsequent elections gave victory to anti-monarchist parties, causing the King to abdicate and flee the country, thus bringing into being the Second Republic of Spain.

The coming of the Second Republic saw a sudden rise in working class activity as workers looked to it as a means to finally solve their economic and social problems. Rural and urban workers, even in areas not previously known for their radicalism, began to demand improvements to working conditions, public meetings became commonplace and the church, seen by many to be defending the privileged and the wealthy, often became a target for grievances. The increase in working class militancy, and particularly attacks on the Roman Catholic Church, enraged certain sections of the ruling class. In the election of 1933 a confederation of Catholic parties, the CEDA, operating on a quasi-fascist platform, won the largest amount of seats but not enough of a majority to form a government. Despite this, power was offered to the second largest party, the Radical Republican Party. The Radicals cooperated with the CEDA and in 1934 they ceded, giving three



ministerial positions to the CEDA.

In protest against the CEDA entering the government the PSOE declared a general strike on 5th October 1934. In most parts of the country the strike was rapidly defeated as the government declared a state of martial law and the army took over the running of essential services. In Barcelona the regional government declared an independent state of Catalonia. A blood bath was avoided, when a request to arm the workers was refused, and when the military general in charge of re-establishing the authority of the Madrid central government ordered his troops to be 'deaf, dumb and blind' towards any provocations. The only place the strike held on for any amount of time was in the northern mining area of Asturias where, unlike in other areas, the strike had the backing of all the workers organisations. There the situation rapidly became insurrectional. An estimated 15,000 to 30,000 armed miners took part in an uprising. Civil Guard posts and public buildings were attacked and several towns being successfully occupied. *Comunismo libertario* was declared with revolutionary committees taking on the social responsibilities of government, the use of money was restricted and ration vouchers were distributed to families. In response the government sent General Franco and the Moroccan Army of Africa, as well as the navy and airforce, to quell the disturbance. Retribution was brutal, around 2000 miners were killed and a further 20,000 to 30,000 imprisoned. Moorish troops unleashed a wave of looting, rape and summary executions on the surrounding mining villages. The Asturian uprising showed a pattern of events that would be repeated on a larger scale two years later, as the civil war took its course.

The military rebellion

In 1936 a leftist popular front, supported for the first time by the votes of the anarcho-syndicalists, won the election. The victory was partly due to the promise to release the thousands of prisoners who were still being held following the uprisings of '34 and to also reverse and improve on wage reductions imposed by the previous government. Determined to put a stop to the growth of working class militancy, anti-religiosity and regional separatism that had accompanied the coming of the republic, a conspiracy of officers in the military sought to reimpose what they saw as being the true will of the nation. A coup was organised to take place in the July. The generals hoped that they would achieve a rapid victory. However, this was not to be. In the event, beginning on the 18th July, significant elements in the military and security forces remained loyal to the Republic. The whole of the Navy remained loyal, just over half of the Guardia Civil (Civil Guard – a rural paramilitary police force) as did over 70% of the Guardias de Asalto (Assault Guards – an urban paramilitary police force set up during the time of the republic).

On hearing of the military rising the government, in the beginning in denial about the seriousness of the situation, was at first unwilling to arm the workers organisations. So initially through their own initiatives, by raiding gun-shops, digging up weapons stored since the Asturias uprising or by being provided weapons by loyal Assault Guards, ordinary workers began to come out against the rising. In Madrid a crowd stormed the Montaña barracks. In Barcelona factory sirens sounded to warn of the rising and an immediate general strike came into effect. Thousands of people took to the streets, setting up barricades to hinder the incursions of the military. Where the workers movement was strong, and opposition was organised quickly, the rising was defeated. In areas which failed to offer resistance, the rising was successful and the military rebels (henceforth referred to as the 'Nationalists') began serving out a brutal repression of the workers organisations and anyone who was seen as being loyal to the republic. Spain was split into two zones, as noted by Raymond Carr 'those who happened to be in a zone that was hostile to their beliefs had to conform, escape, or risk imprisonment or shooting. Loyalty was often a matter of locality.' Though, where given the choice, the working classes generally supported the Republic and the upper classes, the Nationalists.

The working class in the saddle

The effect of arming the unions meant that the workers organisations were in control. In Barcelona, the CNT was offered full control of the Generalitat (Catalonian regional government) but refused to take it, partly because they did not want to set up a 'workers' dictatorship', and partly because they were not sure how to deal with the situation. Instead they took a place on the Anti-Fascist Militia Committee, which was in effect a sub-committee of the regional government. This committee was later dissolved and the CNT took a minority position within the Generalitat. While the CNT held power in the factories and workplaces, a vast swathe of governmental state power, including the administration of military affairs and the overseeing of justice, was left with the Generalitat. This would later be used as a level to prise power away from the syndicalists.

In Barcelona, Catalonia, Aragon and the surrounding areas the CNT enacted their anarcho-syndicalist ideology and set about collectivising large sections of industry, though it was in the countryside that the most far reaching attempts at realising 'libertarian communism' were attempted. Following the upheavals, most large landowners

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Are They Job-Creators?

The employing class create jobs, people sometimes say, so we cannot do without them. Opening a new office or factory or supermarket leads to jobs being created, it might seem.

IS THIS really an argument for capitalism, and for the existence of a class of capitalists who own companies and the land, factories, and so on? Emphatically not, but to see this we need to step back a bit and look at how society and production are organised.

In order to work, people need to have access to raw materials, a workplace, equipment, machines and other tools. This applies not just to digging your garden or doing a spot of DIY, but also when someone is working in a factory, building site, office, call centre, hospital, school, restaurant, shop, etc. In the case of someone working for an employer, the real question to ask is: what stops them from having access to the means of production, to use the formal term for the various kinds of machines and so on, in the first place? Why can people not get together and co-operate to make phones or serve coffee or build homes?

This is where the whole way that society and production are set up enters the picture. People cannot just work together without the materials they need, precisely because the employing class own and monopolise, and so control access to, the means of production. They say in effect, 'You can't work here and produce that without our say-so.' This is not a matter of what individual capitalists state but of what the collective power of the capitalist class implies. They can sack workers or reduce their working hours or alter their working conditions or simply

refuse to employ people who are willing to work, all because they cannot make a profit (or enough of a profit) from employing them. They are in a position, then, to stop people working, so at the very least 'creating jobs' means they don't prevent people from working and producing useful goods and services.

What about the claim that the capitalists produce the ideas and inventions that people make use of? This is hardly ever the case, as most technological developments are the results of the combined efforts of many workers (scientists, engineers, technicians, and so on), not of the capitalists. And nobody could seriously argue that it is the owners who produce the machines that workers use: it is the working class who produce the lathes and tractors and computers and software that are used in the production process.

So the capitalists do not create jobs, and workers do not need a class of employers. Rather, they need us in order to produce their profits. A classless society will have no place for a separate set of employers to make production possible: people will just get together, organise things by and for themselves, and perform useful and satisfying work.

PB



Who funded the Brexit campaign?

AFTER THE EU referendum the Electoral Commission released figures on the funds received by the two sides. They showed that the Leave side spent about £17.6 million and the Remain only £14.3 million. These were not contributions from grass-roots supporters but, on both sides, from individual capitalists. Since staying in the EU, and especially the single market, was in the overall interest of the majority section of the British capitalist class, how come that capitalists gave more to Leave than Remain? In fact, who were the capitalists who funded the Leave campaign, and why?

Among the dozen largest Leave donors were: Peter Hargreaves (£3.2m), Arron Banks (£1.95m plus a loan of £3m), Jeremy Hoskins (£980,000), Lord Edmiston (£600,000), Crispin Odey (£533,000), Jonathan Wood (£500,000), Patrick Barbour (£500,000), Stuart Wheeler (£400,000), and Peter Cruddas (£350,000).

What all these have in common (apart from most of them appearing in the *Sunday Times* Rich List) is that they are

involved in hedge funds and other such financial activities.

Hargreaves, who is literally a billionaire since his pile amounts to over £1,000 million (the others are only multi-millionaires), was a founder of the financial services company Hargreaves-Lansdown. Hoskins set up Marathon Asset Management. Odey runs Odey Asset Management. Wheeler made his money out of a spread betting firm IG Index. Cruddas's was CMC Markets. Wood's is JO Hambro Capital Management.

It might seem strange, since the City stands to lose from Brexit, that those who funded the Leave campaign should be financiers (other financiers funded the Remain campaign). But there are financiers and financiers. The City establishment tends to see some hedge fund managers as cowboys engaging in practices it doesn't regard as entirely above board and which it is prepared to see regulated. It is precisely such regulation that the Brexit financiers wanted to avoid.

One of the Brexit supporters, the Tory MEP Daniel Hannan, let the cat out of the bag when, in an article in the *Daily Mail* (12 April), he painted a picture of what a Brexit Britain would look like in 2020:

'London, too, is booming. Eurocrats never had much sympathy for financial services. As their regulations took effect in Frankfurt, Paris and Milan – a financial transactions tax, a ban on

short selling, restrictions on clearing, a bonus cap, windfall levies, micro-regulation of funds – waves of young financiers brought their talents to the City instead.'

That was their main aim, then, their manifesto for the referendum: allow all these practices which enhance their profits to continue. To achieve this, they in effect hired politicians, not just lightweights such as Hannan but also national figures like Boris Johnson and Farage, with a remit to go out and get a vote to Leave by any means. They didn't really care about the NHS or immigration, but left it up to the politicians to deliver. Which, against expectations, they did.

The rest of the capitalist class are furious with them but are going to have to adapt to the result. Most of them will want a deal with the EU that allows them continued free access to the vast tariff-free single market with common standards and its coming extension to services, even if this involves accepting some free movement of labour and a payment to Brussels. Some of the Brexit funders might well be prepared to go along with this as long as there is no regulation of their activities.

The sad thing is that so many workers were led to back this maverick section of the capitalist class in the belief that they were protesting against the 'elite', while in fact they were being duped into pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for a part of it.



Back To The Future

Pick any recent decade, and an argument could be made that it was pivotal in shaping the trends of our current (oddly nameless) decade. The 60s saw the erosion of many repressive

attitudes, the 90s brought us the internet and mobile phones on a wide scale, and the 00s gave us a financial crisis and reality TV. In *The 80s With Dominic Sandbrook* (BBC 2), the historian makes the case for the decade of legwarmers and Rubik's cubes. Sandbrook likes to use these kinds of symbols to highlight significant social developments. At various times he invokes Delia Smith, the Austin Metro and a Chesterfield vs Mansfield football match as representing the spirit of the time. But his argument isn't as shallow as this might suggest. For him, Delia Smith's straightforward recipes symbolise how working couples had less time to cook, the Austin Metro was a patriotic attempt at revitalising British industry, and rivalry between supporters of Chesterfield and Mansfield's football teams was based on whether each town's miners went on strike. He wants us to re-evaluate some of our assumptions about what and who pushed society's changes, especially during the 80s' first half.

Sandbrook says that Margaret Thatcher's reputation as the driving force behind the economic, social and political changes during the decade has been overstated. He argues that she embraced, rather than caused, the trends which were shaping society, such as the rise of consumerism and fall of traditional heavy industries. With or without her influence, many British industries were in a long-term decline due to wider market forces. The communities which relied on mining, in particular, 'faced unemployment and disintegration' due to their decline, and Thatcher was 'a very convenient scapegoat'. The manufacturers she championed, such as the producers of the Austin Metro car and BBC Micro computer were hoped to be the businesses of the future, although both brands ended up

overtaken by imported competitors.

The more successful industries during the 80s didn't just produce commodities, but also commodified our identities. According to Sandbrook, consumerism isn't really about the stuff we buy, but more about how our purchases relate to our image. During (and since) the 80s, taste was something which defined our personalities, whether we're sloanes choosing jackets for the office in Next or New Romantics buying a Duran Duran LP. Previously, our identities were formed more by where we worked, especially in the politicised and unionised heavy industries. One symbol of this shift among countless others is the opening of the Merry Hill shopping centre near Dudley, built after the nearby Round Oak Steel Works closed.

Sandbrook says that 'the real authors of change were us', rather than Thatcher. As markets shifted, we focused on spending more on ourselves, and our homes. One symptom of this was the rise in popularity of video recorders. According to Mary Whitehouse and the mainstream media, much of the time we were using them to watch 'video nasties'. The moral panic over gory films brought out deeper social anxieties about the intrusion of the big, bad changing world into our lives. Other tensions, such as the Brixton race riots and appearance of AIDS, exposed anxieties about Britain's changing demographics.

For Sandbrook, these kinds of 'identity politics' were also central to the 1984 Miners' Strike. He argues that the popular impression of the strike being the flashpoint in ongoing rivalries between the left and right wings of politics is misleading. He argues that the real conflict was within the miners, between those loyal to the unions and those who wanted to maintain their income by working. Sandbrook's analysis is that the real faultline of the Miners' Strike was between 'collective loyalty and individual aspiration'. Changes in employment patterns are more fundamental than the ideologies of the political parties and unions.

For this reason, he tells us it's a myth that Thatcher won the 1983 general election because of the Falklands War, as voters were really thinking more about jobs and the economy. Her cause was helped by latching on to trends like entrepreneurialism and individualism, and by being media-savvy. Thatcher's government wanted to use the then-new Breakfast Television for propaganda purposes, as shown in a hitherto-secret memo.

In contrast, the Labour Party of the time was held back from electoral success by not concentrating enough on society's changes. Grainy footage shows the 1980 Labour Party conference sharing a venue with Mike Yarwood and the Nolans. While the acts might have changed, the performances are similar again today, with conflicts between left-wing tendencies and those wanting to appeal to the centre ground (within the Labour Party, that is, not the Nolans).

Sandbrook's main point is that the impact of market forces on us was what changed society during the early 1980s. The industries which traditionally lent themselves to collective action through unions were replaced by the industries which promoted the individualistic consumer. His perceptive argument puts economics in a rightfully prominent place, without relying on dry financial statistics. And any documentary with a soundtrack of Tears For Fears and The Human League is worth a watch.

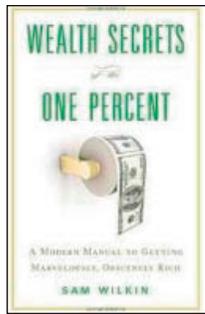
MIKE FOSTER



BBC Micro - State of the art in the 1980s

Open Secret

Sam Wilkin: *Wealth Secrets of the 1%*. Sceptre £9.99.



There's no secret, really, is there? The one percent get their wealth by exploiting the rest of us, by paying us less in wages than the value of what we produce. This is not, however, the kind of thing that Sam Wilkin deals with

here, since he is really concerned, not with how the capitalist class in general become rich, but with how and why some capitalists, in contrast to others, become very rich indeed. His answer is by 'gaming the system': by having the government introduce regulations that make competition difficult, and by making it more or less impossible for companies, especially banks, to lose money.

One chapter deals with the robber barons, the common term for a number of American capitalists who made vast fortunes in the last few decades of the nineteenth century: the likes of Carnegie, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Pierpont Morgan. As a comparison, Bill Gates' wealth is less than one percent of US economic output, whereas John D Rockefeller's net wealth was nearly two percent of US economic output at the time. The robber barons all despised competition, as it reduced their profits, and were able to acquire valuable patents and enforce vastly-profitable monopolies. For instance, Vanderbilt controlled all the railway lines into New York, while by means of a cartel Rockefeller owned nearly all of the oil-refining business. Morgan's US Steel made tremendous profits by buying up other steel companies, eliminating competition and keeping prices high.

Wilkin also examines the methods used by Gates and Microsoft, focussing on the way they employed intellectual property ownership to gain a monopoly on some lucrative technologies. Microsoft did not create DOS, the operating system it originally made its money from; it just used its power and cunning to obtain a contract to sell DOS, helped by the fact that Gates' father was a lawyer, so he had some background in legalese. As Wilkin says, there are two distinct issues: coming up with technological innovations and making money from these innovations are by no means the same thing. And profiting from a technology product has more to do with it being widely used than with it having the best features.

One point that emerges from the book is that there is no basis for claims that

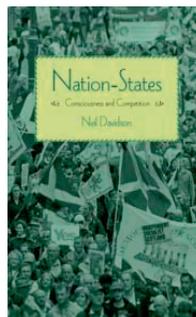
capitalism used to operate by means of a free market with unfettered competition, with this having been replaced by crony capitalism, where the state provides licences and protection for some companies. There has always been state interference with the workings of the capitalist economy, and competition has always been limited in various ways.

We mentioned earlier that Wilkin is not concerned with exploitation and the real origin of profit: those who produce the wealth receive little attention here. He does refer to the Homestead strike and lockout of 1892, at the works of Carnegie Steel, in which nine workers were killed by thugs employed by Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick. This is given the euphemistic description 'an exceptionally heavy-handed crackdown on striking workers'.

PB

Contradictory

***Nation-States: Consciousness and Competition*. By Neil Davidson, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2016.**



This book, a collection of previously published articles, does not live up to the blurb on the back that 'Davidson draws out how nationalist ideology and consciousness are used to bind the subordinate classes to "the nation", while

"the state" is simultaneously wielded by capital as a means of conducting geopolitical competition.'

That Davidson is going to criticise and oppose all nationalism as an anti-working class ideology is shattered in the preface where he reveals himself as a supporter of both Scottish independence and Brexit. As a Trotskyist, who was in the SWP till 2013 (when most of the chapters were written), he is able to come up with some convoluted non-nationalist argument for doing so – that either or both would 'provoke a crisis for the British nation-state, of a type that has been relatively rare in its history.'

More generally, he agrees with Lenin (introduced on page iii of the preface) that the left should support oppressed nationalisms against oppressing ones (though he thinks Scottish nationalism is neither) and the 'right of nations to self-determination', i.e. to a separate state. He explicitly rejects Rosa Luxemburg's view that, in the era where capitalism dominates the world, this doesn't make sense.

Luxemburg also argued that this wasn't

possible and so was clearly wrong about that as at the last count the world is divided into some 194 states and statelets. Davidson discusses why in the chapter entitled 'The Necessity for Multiple Nation-States for Capital'. The emphasis here is on 'necessity' as he is arguing against both the possibility of a single world capitalist state and that the world just happens to be divided into capitalist states but doesn't *have* to be, positions defended by some of those he is arguing with (including SWP leader Callinicos who defends the second).

His argument is that capitalism is necessarily a competitive system for profits and that states are, and have to be, just as much involved in this as capitalist enterprises:

'Capitalism is a system of competitive accumulation based on wage labor, and these two defining aspects also point to the reason for the persistence of the states system: on the one hand, the need for capitals to be territorially aggregated for competitive purposes; on the other, the need for that territory to have an ideological basis – nationalism – that can be used to bind the working class to the state and hence to capital.'

So, for him, and rightly, nationalism is a product of capitalism, a position he defends in polemics about when a Scottish 'national consciousness' arose. He argues that it was only after the 1707 Union as it was only after then that capitalism developed in Scotland. His opponents – a Stalinist hack and the more respected Tom Nairn – put the date, in accordance with Scots Nat mythology – much earlier, to 1296 even.

Another chapter criticises the term 'ethnicity', which has become a politically correct substitute for the unscientific and discredited term 'race', and calls for it to be dropped. We agree and is why we refuse to answer the question about this on the census and other official forms except by 'human being' or 'member of the human species'.

In view of the rise of Trump in the US and the victory of the UKIP position in the UK EU referendum, the chapter that has the most immediate relevance is the one on 'Far-Right Social Movements as a Problem for Capital'. In it Davidson discusses why so many workers have been turning to such non-fascist, far-right movements as the Tea Party and UKIP. He attributes this to disillusion with and contempt for the current political elites for imposing 'neo-liberalism' (in practice, redundancies, job insecurity, cuts in social services and payments). This is a plausible explanation of the Brexit vote in Britain, which certainly has caused a problem for British capitalism.

Davidson writes

'... even if I am right that certain aspects

of far-right politics are detrimental to the needs of capital, it does not follow that the increased chaos resulting from the implementation of these policies would necessarily benefit the left, even indirectly.'

Which rather contrasts with the reason he gives in the preface for voting Brexit.

ALB

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in republican controlled areas had fled. With the landowning class absent, rural workers began spontaneously commandeering and collectivising land. Collectivisation meant that access to equipment, resources and labour could be pooled, leading to and increase in output and productivity and an improvement in living conditions. Within the collectives attempts at achieving an equitable distribution of goods and services were conducted in a various different ways. Some, a minority, practised a system of free access where people could simply take what they needed from the communal store. Others printed their own forms of currency or ration cards. As time went on the normal state of affairs gravitated towards that of being paid a fixed 'family wage' where collective members were entitled to certain quantities of various household items. To say that money was abolished is to push too far, 'money' does not necessarily mean only state minted currency but whatever can serve as a general measure of value and means of exchange. Whilst some agricultural collectives did not pay their workers in state currency, it was still used as a means of accounting between units. Despite the collectivisations the basic economic unit was still that of separate and competing enterprises.

"Anarchists abandoned the idea of a substitute for national money. The agrarian collectives decided to abolish money, only to adopt other systems of exchange.... The difficulties created by local money and the lack of a unified currency soon became evident. Very soon the collectivists of Aragon saw the advantages of a kind of national bank" – Frank Mintz

In Catalonia and Aragon nearly 70 percent of the workforce was involved in the collectives. Across the whole of the Republican territory there were almost 800,000 involved on the land and just over one million in industry.

Industrial collectivisation was not as deep or far reaching as the efforts in the countryside. In the first days of the revolution workers simply seized abandoned factories and restarted

Page 5 continued

our way through all of the preconceptions and prejudices that so often make up an 'ideology' and get to the elusive 'what actually happened'?

Class struggle

The recent success of the 'Brexit' campaign has been explained by some as an example of an uneducated and politically naive section of the population being easily manipulated by lies about the nature of the EU and the benefits of leaving it. But what of those who make this judgement – from where does their superior information originate? The 'liberal' media also has an ideological agenda that is just as politically superficial as that of the Brexiteers. How can we be sure of this? Because both camps completely ignore the biggest political elephant in history's room – the class struggle. Well over one hundred years ago the discovery was made that this was the dynamic element within human culture which drives historical development. The implications of this for liberal sensibilities are intolerable and so are ignored thus rendering any attempt at political analysis superficial and ultimately meaningless. It's like trying to understand evolution without reference to genetics or physics without reference to quantum mechanics.

All political phenomena have their origin within the relationship of social groups (classes) with the means of the production of life (industry, etc). This mutual antagonism is reflected within all political ideologies whether recognised or not. Some debate the possibility that you can be involved in the class struggle without being conscious of its existence but nobody would claim that before we became aware of the existence of bacteria and viruses they had no effect on human life. This is the essence of materialist

production. Workers in a collectivised enterprise would organise themselves into committees, and the committees would be federated regionally. The



basic unit of organisation was the factory committee. The requisitions were retrospectively made legal in late October 1936. This was partly in

thought – we strive to create theories that are increasingly successful in describing our world which, in turn, allows us to be more confident in our predictions of how it might change. Knowledge is the historical assimilation, refinement or rejection of such theories; in this sense it can never be purely a matter of personal opinion unless that opinion originates within, and recognises, this context through study. It is not a matter of cultural consensus since this is invariably the creation of power elites who only seek to justify their continued existence and therefore explicitly reject any theories concerning the dynamics of historical change which might indicate an end to their rule.

The absence of class consciousness prevents political evolution because ideologies swirl around the anachronistic phantoms of nationality, race, gender, religion and (the most fantastic of all illusions within a capitalist context) economic fairness and social justice. Because, historically, the working class represent the revolutionary catalyst they have a privileged perspective in terms of relevant knowledge – they see the world as it really is and, potentially, what it can become. The universe is indifferent to the needs of our species, as is history. Many have dedicated their lives to creating equality and justice but without knowledge their failure was inevitable. The resolution of the class struggle is the only way to liberate our species from the slave mentality that sustains capitalism. Once achieved there seems to be no limit to our potential – think about this the next time you are promised a few more crumbs from the rich man's table by liberal/leftists, whether we are part of the EU or not.

WEZ

an effort for the central government to regain control of industry. Part of the legislation meant that each factory council had a designated 'controller' that was responsible to the government. The vast majority of industry in Catalonia was organised in this way. While the workers certainly had more control over their working conditions than in a privately or state owned enterprise, the industrial situation could best be described as kind of trade-union controlled capitalism; production was still being conducted for the purpose of exchange, both within the Republic and with the outside world.

(to be continued and concluded next month)

DJP

The Lost Boys

Manchester Metropolitan University

JOHN PARR was killed on 21 August 1914 in Belgium, and was the first British soldier killed by enemy action in World War One. He was only seventeen, and presumably had lied about his age in order to enlist when he joined the Middlesex Regiment in 1912. The lower age limit for service in the British Army was nineteen, but in



reality an estimated quarter of a million underage soldiers fought in the First World War. Recruiters were not always as insistent as they might have been on verifying people's ages, especially after the war had begun, and in fact often encouraged volunteers to be less than truthful about their age.

A small but informative exhibition 'The Lost Boys' has been on display in the library of Manchester Metropolitan University. It does not in fact contain a vast amount of material relating to underage soldiers, though an accompanying leaflet is helpful, but features a lot of other memorabilia, and related ceramics created by students from Stoke-on-Trent and surrounding areas. Two 'potters battalions' were raised by a descendant of the founder of the Wedgwood company. Some ceramic figures commemorate the football matches between soldiers from the two sides on the Western Front that took place on Christmas Day 1914 during an unofficial truce.

One display case features books aimed at young people that romanticise the war. Sample titles are *With Haig on the Somme* and *Under French's Command* (the latter authored by 'Captain Brereton'). Four lithographic prints by Muirhead Bone, the first official British war artist, illustrate the



British, left, and German, above, boy soldiers in WW1

destruction visited on many French and Belgian towns.

Nowadays the British Army's minimum recruitment age is just sixteen, though soldiers have to be eighteen before they can serve in operations; this was changed after seventeen-year-olds had fought in the Gulf War and Kosovo. Some people have objected to such a low recruitment age, but Tim Collins, an Iraq War commander, wrote, 'If we stopped recruiting bright 16 and 17-year-olds, we would destroy the opportunities currently afforded to these young people' (*Mail Online* 19 May 2013). This means the opportunity to kill and be killed for the ruling class, just as a century ago.

PB

Socialist Standard

Vietnam and the anti-war movement Are we armchair socialists? Universities and the working class News in review I'm not interested in politics Man should matter most Capitalism: the crisis society Apartheid must go

50 Years Ago

Apartheid must go

THE SOCIALIST Party is opposed to Apartheid, just as to any other policy or movement based on colour prejudice. We think racism is foolish, unscientific

and against the interests of the working class. We can see that the South African government's slogan of *Apartheid* ('separation') is really a hypocritical screen for *baasskap* (white domination), and that all manner of atrocities and hatreds flourish under the Verwoerd tyranny.

Our attack on apartheid is quite distinct from the attacks made on it by other organisations such as the Labour Party, Communist Party, Christian Action, etc. We do not support the "anti-apartheid" movement.

Socialism will be a world wide democratic community without private or government ownership of the means of production and will mean the end of Apartheid, together with a lot of other major human problems like wars, slumps and poverty.

To detach ourselves from other organisations who attack apartheid is no sectarian quibble: the most that members of the anti-Apartheid Movement can suggest to replace Apartheid is

something rather like we have in Britain today. In other words, they want to swap one system of oppression for another. The only 'equality' they want for the races of South Africa consists of the equal 'privileges' of wage-slavery.

The best interests of industrial capitalism in South Africa call for the abandonment of Apartheid policies and the putting into



effect of social reforms aimed at integrating Africans into the labour force as better trained exploitable wage workers. However, in view of the historical background of South Africa,

capitalism has to adjust itself to a political situation that expresses the deeply entrenched prejudice that exists. (...)

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is with the working class of South Africa in their struggle for democracy, for the vote and for the right to strike. But more than that, we work for the day when black, white, coloured and Indian workers in South Africa will unite with workers all over the world to remove wage-slavery and establish Socialism.

(from article by Steele, *Socialist Standard*, September 1966)

Meetings

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

SEPTEMBER 2016

WAKEFIELD Socialist History Group Saturday 3 September, 1.00 p.m.

James Connolly and the Easter Rising (1916). Adam Buick (Socialist Party) will be one of five speakers. Venue: The Red Shed, 18 Vicarage Street South, Wakefield, WF1 1QX. Free admission. Free light buffet.

NORFOLK

Sunday, 4 September from 11.00 a.m.

Venue: Burston Strike School Rally, Church Green, nr Diss, Norfolk, IP22 5TP. The Socialist Party will have a stall at this event.

WIGAN

Saturday, 10 September from 11.00 a.m.

Diggers Festival. Venue: Gerrard Winstanley Gardens, The Wiend, Wigan. The Socialist Party will have a stall here.

BRIGHTON

Tuesday 13 September, 7.30 p.m. – 9.30 p.m.

“Post-Capitalism – what now?”
Venue: The Victory Pub, 6 Duke Street, Brighton, BN1 1AH

CANTERBURY

Saturday 17 September from 12.00 Noon Street Stall.

In the Parade pedestrian precinct

WEST LONDON

Chiswick

Tuesday 20 September, 8.00 p.m.

The U.S. Presidential Election. Open Discussion. Venue: Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London, W4 4JN.

Saturday 24 September 2016 from 10.30 a.m.

West London Peace Market. Venue: St

Michael & All Angels Church Hall, The Avenue, Bedford Park, W4 1TX. The Socialist Party will have a stall at this event.

OCTOBER 2016

MANCHESTER

Saturday 1 October, 2.30 p.m.

“Where Will I Get My Apples?”

A discussion (opened by Peter Rigg) about ‘Democracy, production and distribution in a socialist world.’ Venue: The Unicorn, 26 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PW.

CANTERBURY

Saturday October 8 from 12.00 Noon

Street Stall. In the Parade pedestrian precinct

NORWICH

Saturday October 8, 12.00 noon – 4.00 p.m.

East Anglian Regional Branch meeting

Venue: The Heartsease Pub, 180 Plumstead Road, Norwich, NR1 4JZ.

LONDON

Clapham

Saturday October 15 and Sunday October 16 from 10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. both days

Autumn Delegate Meeting

Venue: Socialist Party Premises, 52

Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN.

EC Meeting

Saturday 1 October, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN. Correspondence

should be sent to the General Secretary.

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

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.

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REAR VIEW



Ortega, Somoza Mark II

Daniel is determined not to lose any more elections. Having ousted the previous dictator Somoza in 1979, he and the Sandinistas became the new darlings of the Left and used the inane slogan 'between Christianity and socialism there is no contradiction.' Following a decade of dictatorship the Sandinista regime agreed to release some political prisoners and hold free elections in return for the closing of Contra bases in Honduras. He subsequently lost several elections before returning to power in 2007 as the Catholic president of Nicaragua, one of only five countries where abortion is totally illegal. 'President Daniel Ortega has named his wife as his running mate in November's elections, leading to accusations he is trying to found a political dynasty. The former guerrilla fighter hopes to win a third consecutive term for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) with his wife, Rosario Murillo, as his vice president. "This revolution – in which women have participated shoulder to shoulder – has opened the doors to the full participation of women in all spheres: political, social and economic," he said' (theweek.co.uk, 4 August). Such nonsense is only matched by that of another President, Ronald Reagan, calling Nicaragua a beachhead of communism.

Corbyn's Commandments

'Jeremy Corbyn will today set out ten

pledges "to rebuild and transform Britain". Speaking in London, the Labour leader will promise to ensure full employment as prime minister by creating one million jobs to build new infrastructure and call for an NHS free of private-sector involvement. "We could all be living richer lives in a sustainable, more prosperous and more caring society," he is to say' (theweek.co.uk, 4 August). These pledges include expanding wage slavery and a million new homes being built over five years. Yet no Labour government has ever left office with unemployment lower than when it started and after World War II (Labour has supported all wars since WWI - bang goes the peaceful foreign policy pledge!) Bevan promised to solve the housing problem. Other pious pledges include 'security at work' (recall the use of troops as strike breakers against the dockworkers) and a secure NHS. Labour Minister Bevan felt more secure with his own private physician, and let us not forget he oversaw the introduction of charges for dental and optical services as well as prescription fees. Tuition fees? That was Labour too. Do not bank on the pledge for them to be reversed! The climate change pledge? That's likely to be just hot air. Free transport? No, nothing more than the possibility of an expanded publically-controlled bus network. Apparently, FTSE 100 CEOs are now paid 183 times the wage of the average UK worker.

Expect a redistribution of crumbs, nothing more. Emphasis on human rights? Your right to be exploited is guaranteed under Labour!

Socialism, the smart answer

'If futurist, inventor, and Google executive Ray Kurzweil

is right about the future, we'll all be augmenting our brains with extra capacity in the cloud at some point in the future. Which sounds exciting, even if a little frightening. But this very advance could also pave the way for the rich to become thousands of times smarter than poor people, which would likely permanently solidify and even exacerbate current socioeconomic stratifications' (venturebeat.com, 2 August). The rich do not need to become smarter - we work for them and run society from top to bottom. A member of the 1 percent does not need to be particularly smart to know if they have enough money in their Swiss bank account to purchase 'a \$22 million penthouse in Las Vegas' and its 'fast car, fine art and free tickets to sporting events' (wsj.com, 1 August). A more likely scenario is that some of us would be augmented in order to develop new weapons, advertising campaigns, reality TV concepts, or discover why 'homeowners in affluent neighbourhoods play host to more species of arthropods than their poorer counterparts' (washingtonpost.com, 4 August). But just imagine for a moment how useful enhanced intelligence could be in a society where everyone of us could benefit.



FREE LUNCH

