BOEING
Putting Profits Before Safety
also:
Winnipeg General Strike
The Euroelections
World History
The Socialist Party advocates a society where production is freed from the artificial constraints of profit and organised for the benefit of all on the basis of material abundance. It does not have policies to ameliorate aspects of the existing social system. It is opposed to all one-party states, as well as to one-party dictatorship. Both failures have merely become transformed through a series of social measures, but have merely become routine managers of the system. The Bolsheviks had to be content with developing Russian capitalism under a one-party dictatorship. Both failures have given socialism a quite different — and unattractive — meaning: state ownership and control. As the Socialist Standard pointed out before both courses were followed, the results would more properly be called state capitalism.

The Socialist Party and the World Socialist Movement affirm that capitalism is incapable of meaningful change in the interests of the majority; that the basis of exploitation is the wages/money system. The Socialist Standard is proud to have kept alive the original idea of what socialism is — a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society or, defined positively, a democracy in which free and equal men and women co-operate to produce the things they need to live and enjoy life, to which they have free access in accordance with the principle ‘from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs’.

The World Socialist Movement stress that capitalism is incapable of meaningful change in the interests of the majority; that the basis of exploitation is the wages/money system. The Socialist Standard is proud to have kept alive the original idea of what socialism is — a classless, stateless, wageless, moneyless society or, defined positively, a democracy in which free and equal men and women co-operate to produce the things they need to live and enjoy life, to which they have free access in accordance with the principle ‘from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs’.

Socialist Standard

There is only one world

We live on a planet that is capable of providing all its inhabitants with the food, housing, health care, education and the other amenities of life that they need. But this does not happen. Instead, there are no end of problems.

No end of problems

One problem, that affects everyone, is the threat of global warming caused by the reckless burning of fossil fuels. It's not the only environmental one. There's also the pollution of the seas by plastic waste. Then there's world poverty and malnutrition while the super-rich get even richer to the extent that Oxfam has estimated that just eight men own as much as half the world. And wars. The world's most powerful states compete to control access to raw materials and routes to get them out, in which might is right. As yet there have only been proxy wars fought by local puppets, as in the Yemen, in which the local population suffers terribly. The powerful states waste the world's resources to equip themselves with the most deadly weapons of mass destruction they can afford.

Capitalism has failed

The economic system that exists all over the world today is capitalism where productive resources are owned and controlled by a few rich individuals. Corporations states and whose rules of operation are ‘no profit, no production’ and ‘can’t pay, can’t have’. It is this system of production for profits that is the root cause of the world’s problems as it imposes that making profits has to take priority over meeting people's needs and protecting the planet.

It is clear that there can be no national solutions to these problems. Those who are saying that things will get better if Britain leaves the EU are deluding themselves while those who want Britain to remain in the EU fail to see that, as one of the big blocs competing for markets and raw materials, it is part of the problem, not the solution.

The way out

The only way-out is global. It’s the world’s natural and industrial resources becoming the common heritage of all humanity so that they can be used to directly meet the needs of the world’s population on the basis of ‘from each according to ability, to each according to need’. Free of ownership by the few and the rule of ‘no profit, no production’, this is the only framework within which problems such as global warming, growing inequality and wars can be tackled for good.

This is what we are standing for in these elections. If you agree you can show this by voting for our list. If you want to know more about our aims just fill in and send us the reply coupon below.

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The Socialist Party is standing in the South East Region in the elections to the European Parliament. This covers the counties of Oxfordshire, Bucksinhamshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Kent. Offers of help and further information: sppb@worldsocialism.org.
To a standstill in action reminiscent of London this past month demonstrators to oversee climate action ‘as part of Extinction Rebellion, has formed in the past twelve months, making Chartist-like time for civil disobedience, it is time to tokenism isn’t enough, she wants direct schoolchildren around the world are going on strike. She was invited to speak to the World Economic Forum at Davos, where she gave them short shift: ‘Some people, some companies, some decision makers in particular have known exactly what priceless values they have been sacrificing to continue making unimaginable amounts of money. I think many of you here sees it: frank about herself and the task as she on strike alone outside the Swedish government’s inaction and flagrant dereliction of duty, and to rebel to defend life itself’ (Wikipedia).

Strong stuff. Their solution? ‘We further call on concerned global citizens to rise up and... do whatever’s necessary: to persuade politicians and business leaders to relinquish their complacency and denial. Their “business as usual” is no longer an option. Global citizens will no longer put up with this failure of our planetary duty. Every one of us, especially in the materially privileged world, must commit to accepting the need to do more lightly, committing not to only uphold human rights but also our stewardship responsibilities to the planet.’

Now David Attenborough, to many people the ultimate authority on life on Earth, has produced a new ‘EarthLit’ documentary warning of biblical End Times: ‘If we have not taken dramatic action within the next decade, we could face irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies’ (Climate Change – The Facts, BBC One, 18 April).

Draastic as this sounds, it’s not even the worst forecast out there. A 2018 paper by a University of Cumbria academic is so daunting it has reportedly resulted in people seeking therapy (lifeworld.com/deapptadaption.pdf). Arguing that it is now simply too late to consider how to limit global warming, Professor Jonathon E. Bennett instead promotes the idea of ‘deep adaptation’ in the face of ‘imminent near-term social collapse’. That’s starvation, violence, permanent water and power outages, riots, and all coming to streets near you within the next ten years, he says.

The evidence for global warming is so well known that it is not worth repeating. Even the most die-hard denialist has to face the fact that the past thirty years on record have been the last 22 years. Professor Bennett’s evidence for imminence of the most dangerous climate change on record is not just in the ice melt; that’s a clear consequence of the loss of this effect is expected to add the equivalent of an additional 25 percent of all global CO2 emissions in the coming years. The second factor is more speculative: submarine methane hydrates, gigantic deposits of frozen methane on the ocean floors, could be released into the atmosphere by oceanic warming causing general social collapse and possibly a wholesale extinction event from which humans would not be excluded. ‘If all the methane gets out’, said an international Energy Agency spokesman in 2014, ‘we’re looking at a Mad Max movie’ (see this column, July 2014).

Socialists, if we were numerous enough means them giving up their power and cajoled, persuaded or reasoned with if it rich 1 percent who ultimately control every one of you. This is how most people at the moment see things, referring to Britain as ‘we’. ‘We export this,’ ‘We spend too much on defence’, ‘We let in too many immigrants’ and such like are frequently heard in political conversation. But we, the many, the majority of wage and salary earners, don’t do any of these things. It’s the 1 percent who own and control productive resources, who do. Everywhere, and not just in Britain, society is divided into this few and the rest of you. Those interests are antagonistic to each other. It’s us, and them versus us and vice versa. There is no common ‘we’. So, it wouldn’t be the many, who would be trading on WTO terms. We are not part of a homogenous, faceless market. They are, and they’ve got into a huge mess since a referendum vote to leave the EU as their political representatives in parliament can’t agree on what this means.

The leading advocates of ‘leaving on WTO terms’ wouldn’t agree with the trading arrangements you are proposing that Britain outside the EU as a country sharing a common interest. It’s not just you of course. This is how most people at the moment see things, referring to Britain as ‘we’. ‘We export this,’ ‘We spend too much on defence’, ‘We let in too many immigrants’ and such like are frequently heard in political conversation. But we, the many, the majority of wage and salary earners, don’t do any of these things. It’s the 1 percent who own and control productive resources, who do. Everywhere, and not just in Britain, society is divided into this few and the rest of you. Those interests are antagonistic to each other. It’s us, and them versus us and vice versa. There is no common ‘we’. So, it wouldn’t be the many, who would be trading on WTO terms. We are not part of a homogenous, faceless market. They are, and they’ve got into a huge mess since a referendum vote to leave the EU as their political representatives in parliament can’t agree on what this means.

In socialism, which too will be a worldwide system, materials and finished products will of course still be moved from one part of the world to another but this won’t be on the basis of trade, where what is moved to one part has to be in exchange for something of equal monetary value from that part. It will simply be a question of goods being moved from where they are produced to where they are needed. Logistics will replace buying and selling and profits won’t come into it. It is only on this basis that production can be freed, as you want, from the insatiable pursuit of profit and be geared instead to meeting human need.

Do ‘we’ trade? Dear Editor,

I can’t call what’s so bad about a No Deal and the UK making its own trade deals with whoever it wants under WTO rules (Cooking the Books, April Socialist Standard). A focus on domestic production would be healthy. Why should we desire the import of products we can produce in the UK anyway? Cheaperness has always been a Trojan Horse. It may be advantageous in the short-term to import cheap meat or cheap milk, for example, but in the long-term we will pay through the teeth for these items. If the UK loses its farming industry or its farming industry is drastically shrunk by cheap imports and we lose our ability to produce in the UK demand for farming produce and we then become dependent on the importation of farming produce, we will see that produce spiked in price. No. The workers are far more valuable than cheap imports to produce in the UK. So maybe we need to trade less with the world and promote domestic production. However, the profit imperative in the economy disallows for this focus on domestic production. If only we could analyse the nature of global economies as we have with Brexit then we might realise there are better alternatives to globalisation and the insane pursuit of profit rather than production for human need.

Louis Showcress, Hillsborough, Northern Ireland.

Reply: Who do you mean by ‘we’? You write as if everyone living in Britain is a community sharing a common interest. It’s not just you of course. This is how most people at the moment see things, referring to Britain as ‘we’. ‘We export this,’ ‘We spend too much on defence’, ‘We let in too many immigrants’ and such like are frequently heard in political conversation. But we, the many, the majority of wage and salary earners, don’t do any of these things. It’s the 1 percent who own and control productive resources, who do. Everywhere, and not just in Britain, society is divided into this few and the rest of you. Those interests are antagonistic to each other. It’s us, and them versus us and vice versa. There is no common ‘we’. So, it wouldn’t be the many, who would be trading on WTO terms. We are not part of a homogenous, faceless market. They are, and they’ve got into a huge mess since a referendum vote to leave the EU as their political representatives in parliament can’t agree on what this means.

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Editors.
socialist consciousness will allow us all when our turn comes to articulate potential to express dissent and to potentially become a whistle blower. That is why we must learn to approach the world with the historical perspective to explain the context of any event. History is humankind's primary teacher. If we have failed to learn from the experience of the past then this will be highlighted. Socialist consciousness will allow journalists to access the dialectical processes inherent within any system and this will, hopefully, reveal the internal faults (or strengths) that have led to a 'newsworthy' event. From this the reader may assume, as we do, that this news of the future will be primarily 'good news' - something which is, with good reason, almost entirely absent in the contemporary media. Given our cynical cultural context many will roll their eyes at the perceived naïvety and idealism of our approach to journalism. In an increasingly unforgiving world and in an age of weaponizing the media for political ends, it is imperative that our journalism is unbiased and unswayed by vested interests.

In a world of increasing social and economic inequality, the socialist movement must remain committed to the fight against oppression and exploitation. To achieve this, we must continue to build a movement that is inclusive, diverse, and democratic, and that is able to mobilize the power of the working class to create a better world for all.

Sincerely,
Tim Hart
UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS
LONDON
North London branch. Meets 3rd Thurs, 8pm at Torrington Mansions, 122 Torrington Ave, NW5 2RX. Contact: Chris Dutton 020 7609 0983 nllb@gmail.com
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Aberdeen. Contact: Paul Edwards 01564 581138. rainbows@thestopworld.org
Scottish Socialist Discussion. 6A Whittow, Close Cowhill, Edinburgh. Contact: Stuart McPherson, 07805 581379.
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THE WHEELS OF justice turn slowly, and the effects of lead poisoning are also slow and pernicious. The city of Flint’s water crisis began in April 2014. In a cost-saving measure to save around $5m the state-appointed city manager changed the city’s water source from treated Detroit Water and Sewerage Department water, sourced from Lake Huron and the Detroit River, to water from the Flint River. General Motors used the river as its private dumping ground for decades; it is highly polluted and highly acidic. Typically, water in mass systems at the city and wider level is treated with compounds which reduce the likelihood of pipes corroding. Officials failed to call on its managers to relax,' saying that there was no 'broad problem' with contamination. They described the whistleblowers as 'rogue employees.' They also attacked the work of experts. The Governor misled them into assuming there was no 'broad problem' with contamination. But in private, he worried about the need to return Flint to DWSD water and the political implications of the crisis. But in public, he denied all knowledge, despite being aware of the developing crisis. As a result, plaintiffs were lured into a false sense of security. They could have taken protective measures, if only they had known what the Governor knew. Instead, the Governor misled them into assuming that nothing was wrong. Governor Snyder's administration even encouraged them to continue to drink and bathe in the water. People in Flint and their children were merely collateral damage in a larger war. The class war of the capitalists against everybody else.

What do lead to the human body? Infants and small children can suffer brain and nervous system damage, weakened immune systems and general physical collapse that can lead to death. Pregnant women have a higher risk of stillbirth or miscarriage. A raft of studies has pretty much concluded that lead can cause cancer. It causes cardiovascular diseases and kidney damage which, like cancer, can also kill. Five parts per billion are a concern. 5,000 parts per billion is considered toxic waste. From April 2014 until October 2015 the people of Flint were drinking water with up to 13,000 parts per billion in it. Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality officials urged people worried about lead to 'relax,' saying that there was no 'broad problem' with contamination. They described the whistleblowers as 'rogue employees.' They also attacked the work of experts. The Governor misled them into assuming there was no 'broad problem' with contamination. But in private, he worried about the need to return Flint to DWSD water and the political implications of the crisis. But in public, he denied all knowledge, despite being aware of the developing crisis. As a result, plaintiffs were lured into a false sense of security. They could have taken protective measures, if only they had known what the Governor knew. Instead, the Governor misled them into assuming that nothing was wrong. Governor Snyder's administration even encouraged them to continue to drink and bathe in the water. People in Flint and their children were merely collateral damage in a larger war. The class war of the capitalists against everybody else.

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The Flint River

People in Flint and their children were merely collateral damage in a larger war. The class war of the capitalists against everybody else.
C
apitalism’s supporters are always telling us that competition brings out the best in human beings. It is supposed to encourage efficiency and creativity and promote innovation. We are also informed that capitalism’s drive for profit creates high quality goods that most people desire at a competitive price. However, as we have shown time and time again, the reality is different, and as in the two recent air crashes, the consequences can be fatal.

On 10 March, an Ethiopians Airline flight bound for Nairobi from Addis Abba crashed shortly after take-off, killing all 157 on board. This was eerily similar to the Lion Air crash that took place five months earlier in Indonesia where 189 passengers lost their lives. In both cases the pilots were unable to prevent their planes from taking a steep nosedive and both planes were of the new Boeing 737 Max 8 design. Preliminary investigations in the Ethiopian Airlines crash absolved the pilots of any blame.

**Competitive pressures**

Around ten years ago, Airbus developed a new range of aircraft with enhanced fuel efficiency and lower operating costs. They were able to pick up a lot of orders from airlines keen to lower their running costs. Boeing feared that they might lose out on market share to their European rival and were spurred to action when American Airlines, a longstanding customer of Boeing, purchased a large consignment of the new Airbus model. Boeing set to work to design an aircraft to compete with Airbus.

For a plane to fly successfully without stalling, that is avoiding a situation in which the angle of the plane points so far upwards that it stops flying properly. So they made the fatal decision to fit the new heavier engines onto the existing 737 design. The 737 Max 8 aircraft was introduced in 2017. The aerodynamics of the new plane were altered with the heavier engines, in certain flying conditions, the plane would dangerously cut corners to maintain their market share. One notable case in the 1970s was the Ford Pinto car, in which the fuel tank was placed behind the passengers to maintain their market share. One notable case in the 1970s was the Ford Pinto car, in which the fuel tank was placed behind the passengers in order to keep their costs down. In 1966, disaster befell a small Welsh mining village called Aberfan when a colliery spoil tip collapsed and engulfed the village, including schools, killing 116 children and 28 adults. A period of heavy rain led to a build-up of water within the tip which caused it to slide downhill as a slurry. The National Coal Board, a state-owned company, decided it was cheaper to dump the colliery waste on the mountain slope above the town. In 1967, a fire ravaged Kings Cross station killing 31 people. A shortage of staff and lack of maintenance due to budget cuts resulted in more people losing their lives. More recently there has been the tragedy of the Grenfell fire where the local council had the block of flats covered with cheaper but highly flammable cladding.

Not only does capitalism exploit us, it is gambling with our lives. State ownership, tighter regulations and software fixes cannot change this. We need to stop being chips on capitalism’s roulette table and organise to get rid of this pernicious economic system once and for all.

TRUMP’S GOVERNMENT PURSUED A FREE MARKET CAPITALIST AGENDA WHICH IS HOSTILE TO REGULATION, AND TRUMP IS IN FAVOUR OF PRIVATISING THE FAA. HE HAS REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MAJOR BANKS AND CORPORATIONS IN HIS GOVERNMENT. INDEED, FORMER BOEING EXECUTIVE PATRICK SHANAHAN IS TRUMP’S ACTING SECRETARY OF DEFENCE AND IT IS ALLEGED THAT HE HAS TRIED TO ENHANCE BOEING’S CONTRACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. BOEING HAS SpENT BILLIONS ON LOBBYISTS TO OBTAIN LUCRATIVE DEFENCE CONTRACTS AND HAS GIVEN DONATIONS TO BOTH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT LAWMAKERS.

WHEN A GOVERNMENT IS SAID TO EMBRACE FREE MARKET IDEOLOGY, WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS IS THAT IT IS COMMITTED TO PURSUING THE INTERESTS OF ITS CAPITALIST CLASS RUTHLESSLY WITHOUT THE IMPEDIMENTS OF WORKERS’ RIGHTS, HUMAN SAFETY AND HUMAN WELFARE. THIS IS NOT JUST THE CASE WITH TRUMP, BUT ALSO WITH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT PRESIDENTS BEFORE HIM. INDEED IT IS THE FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENTS WITHIN CAPITALIST SOCIETY TO DEFEND AND PROMOTE THE PROFITS OF THEIR CAPITALIST CLASS. OVER RECENT YEARS, GOVERNMENTS HAVE COME UNDER GLOBAL COMPETITIVE PRESSURES TO CUT THEIR COSTS AND THEREFORE IMPLEMENT MORE ‘FREE MARKET’ POLICIES OF DEREGULATION.

**Cheating the regulations**

Then there are manufacturers who try to cheat the regulations. In September 2015, the US Environment Protection Agency discovered that Volkswagen installed software in the engines of their diesel cars that were able to detect when they were being tested and give out false emission readings to enable them to pass emission tests. These cars would be pumping out more pollution into the atmosphere compromising people’s health. As with Boeing, Volkswagen shares fell and its reputation was badly damaged.

In the era before Trump and ‘indulgent free market economics’, some companies would dangerously cut corners to avoid a situation in which the angle of the plane points so far upwards that it stops flying properly. So they made the fatal decision to fit the new heavier engines onto the existing 737 design. The 737 Max 8 aircraft was introduced in 2017. The aerodynamics of the new plane were altered with the heavier engines, in certain flying conditions, the plane would dangerously cut corners to maintain their market share. One notable case in the 1970s was the Ford Pinto car, in which the fuel tank was placed behind the passengers in order to keep their costs down. In 1966, disaster befell a small Welsh mining village called Aberfan when a colliery spoil tip collapsed and engulfed the village, including schools, killing 116 children and 28 adults. A period of heavy rain led to a build-up of water within the tip which caused it to slide downhill as a slurry. The National Coal Board, a state-owned company, decided it was cheaper to dump the colliery waste on the mountain slope above the town. In 1967, a fire ravaged Kings Cross station killing 31 people. A shortage of staff and lack of maintenance due to budget cuts resulted in more people losing their lives. More recently there has been the tragedy of the Grenfell fire where the local council had the block of flats covered with cheaper but highly flammable cladding.

Not only does capitalism exploit us, it is gambling with our lives. State ownership, tighter regulations and software fixes cannot change this. We need to stop being chips on capitalism’s roulette table and organise to get rid of this pernicious economic system once and for all.

OLIVER BOND
I am, you are, we are. In fact the masses of the great majority of the global population are of the working class. Together we deliver everything that we need to survive, to live, to dream about even. We depend on each other often without realising it. Who likes a beer at the end of a day’s work? How often do we pause to consider from where and how did it come to be in front of us? The preparation of the soil, the sowing, planting, reaping and picking of the hops and the barley, the choice of water and the skill of how to combine these ingredients to satisfy us with a decent pint – and consider the making of the barrels, the storage and transport to the bars where the beer pipes and taps all need taking care of before we, as end users, can satisfy our thirst.

Consider your own work, or that of any other individual: however you arrive at your workplace, how many other workers were involved to enable you to get there? By car? It may seem that if the car is yours then you don’t need anyone else until it’s time for a service or routine fill up, but what about the design, the mining of the raw materials and all the individuals required for making the car? It’s possible that dozens, if not hundreds, of individual workers from different parts of the world had a role in producing the car that you call your own. The same holds for public transport with the addition of all the staff required for driving, ticketing, servicing, cleaning, refuelling and timekeeping. So many fundamental functions performed throughout our daily lives without a thought for the integral part played by so many others, most of whom we’ve never met.

I well remember the sixties in industrial South Yorkshire: working for 24/6d an hour in a toy shop during the Christmas break from University. It seemed grossly unfair to me that a ‘regular’ girl eighteen months younger than me earned less for doing the same job. Then there was the factory work during the longer summer break. Sorting peanuts from a fast-moving belt for two hour stretches followed by weighing two ounces of said peanuts onto a fast moving vertical machine, assembling cardboard boxes, filling boxes and so on, all for two-hour stretches. Hand up to visit the law and don’t stay too long or you’d be in trouble. Here the women were also working for peanuts, but it was this or something similar they had to look forward to. I considered myself lucky as I planned ‘a better job’ later. Then I recall the brass foundry where muscles were greatly strengthened hurling the huge water valves we assembled onto the ground. On the opposite side of the aisle were the skilled men, toolmakers and the like and walking up and down all day were the men, usually immigrants on the lowest pay scale, pushing and loading like and walking up and down all day were the men, usually immigrants on the lowest pay scale, pushing and loading. On the opposite side of the aisle were the skilled men, toolmakers and the like and walking up and down all day were the men, usually immigrants on the lowest pay scale, pushing and loading like and walking up and down all day were the men, usually immigrants on the lowest pay scale, pushing and loading.

Now bigger profit is much easier to achieve a long way from home. Developing countries long ago began looting and plundering the ‘undeveloped’ parts of the world for their own advantage and it seems that they are now reaching the top of their curve as they cause more and more misery to the working-class people of the wider world. Companies open mega factories of clothing, electronics, computer, mobile phone or other assembly or manufacturing plants, but big corporations make deals with foreign governments which involve emptying great swathes of land for the benefit of the working class people who, up till that time worked the land for themselves and their local communities. What we are witnessing here is on a scale our predecessors could only dream about. My point here is that, we, the working class of developed countries, in large numbers, do not seem to be aware of what is being done by our own countries’ controllers to bring untold harm, deprivation, starvation and death to the working class population of a large part of the world, supposedly to provide us with our needs and wants.

Socialism is a universal concept. You, me, we – we’re dependent on one another, all of us. We absolutely cannot do without each other and this message has to be driven home. Without that wage coming in then you are undoubtedly of the working class – welcome! Academic, last furnace, chemist, doctor or dry cleaner, librarian, miner, nurse, window cleaner, youth worker or teacher – fill in the gaps, there’s an unlimited scope.

Another question we could ask each other and ourselves is about how many individuals we know who are not working class. I mean know personally. The likelihood of many parts of the capitalist class on the way to work or at the pub or restaurant we choose, at the gym or football match, at the hairdressers or the supermarket. Yes, we know them by name or reputation but do we ever get a chance to put our views and questions to them? The people we see every day, are they the workers who made our cars or televisions or shoes? Are they the people who had a hand in bringing us all closer together, to recognise the absolute need of the workers of the world to achieve our common aims together. Different languages, different colour skin, different cultures, an amazing tapestry of humanity of which we are all a part.

JANET SURMAN
The Winnipeg Strike will go down in history as a magnificent example of working-class solidarity and courage’ (Bill Pritchard).

In February 1919, Seattle workers engaged in the general strike tactic, with workers and their employers walking out for 5 days in sympathy with 38,000 shipyard workers. The city’s mayor, Ole Hanson, described the strike as an ‘attempted revolution’. A few months after, on 15 May, the Winnipeg general strike took place. It ended on 26 June. As in Seattle, the authorities declared that the Winnipeg general strike the first stage of a revolutionary conspiracy. For six weeks Winnipeg was the scene of a dramatic general strike when, having to endure unemployment, high prices and poor working conditions, workers from both the private and public sectors joined forces. The New York Times headline was ‘Bolshevism invades Canada’. The strikers, however, as in Seattle, sought only the right to collective bargaining and a wage increase. The evidence is overwhelming that the intent was not political revolution, and the great majority of Canadian workers, including most workers in Winnipeg, were not socialists. For most men and women, the Winnipeg General Strike arose from economic inequality that had become too impossible to ignore. Hugh Amos Robson wrote in his 1919 Royal Commission report on the causes of the strike. ‘There has been... an increasing display of carefree, idle luxury and extravagance on one hand, while on the other is intensified deprivation.’

Not a revolution

The immediate reasons for the building trades and metal workers going on strike were for better wages and working conditions, for recognition of their unions and for the principle of collective bargaining. What took place in the city was a historic labour protest and one of the biggest social struggle movements Canada has ever seen. On 1 May, after months of negotiation, the building trades and metal workers went on strike. The workers were orderly and peaceful, avoiding any excuse which would provoke military force. Essential services were maintained. But the reaction from the employers, city council and the police force was harsh. Winnipeg Mayor Mayor Gray refused to sign a no-strike agreement. They were all arrested the editors for commentating on the events of Bloody Saturday.

Sources

The authorities’ reaction

General Strikes as union tactic
People as Commodities

A slave is the property of another person, just like a book, a shirt or a car. A slave can be bought, sold, punished, mistreated, ordered around, with no power or means to object or resist. Slavery was a lengthy stage in human history, found in the Roman Empire among many other places, and, with the slave trade, played a significant part of the development of countries such as the UK and the USA. It still exists today, and one of its most prevalent forms is human trafficking, the trade in human beings, which brings in vast profits for some and is accompanied by unacceptable human misery.

Human trafficking ‘involves recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion (where they are forced to work against their will)’ (Rehab International). It applies to perhaps twenty million people, though statistics are unreliable given its secretive nature; in 2016, there were globally fifteen thousand documented cases of trafficking, mostly of women and girls; and an estimated two hundred and fifty thousand in the USA alone (New York Times, 23 July 2015). It began as a small-scale operation but gradually became much larger, even involving people being misguided so they could be trafficked. As the Global Slavery Index 2016 notes, ‘twenty-five thousand people were trafficked in the first three months of 2015. People would be held in camps and their families asked for a ransom before they were released; and mass graves were discovered. It became a multi-billion-dollar business, and any arrests were confined to low-level participants, rather than the police or politicians who were ‘rummaging through the pockets of traffickers’.

The US food industry makes much use of trafficked workers, in restaurants, bars and agriculture (npr.org, 29 March 2017). The workers come mostly from Asia and Latin America, are housed in squalid conditions, have no medical care, and can be controlled by being threatened with deportation. Poor knowledge of English helps to isolate them and makes it hard for them to fight against their oppressors. The border between Nepal and India is a busy route for traffickers. Often men make contact with girls on Facebook, and then convince them to leave their families and flee with them, but with the sole aim of selling them to a brothel once they are over the border in India. One woman now helps to spot trafficking victims at a border post said, ‘My boyfriend sold one of my kidneys and then he sold me. I am only alive today because I was rescued’ (Guardian, 8 February 2015).

In 2013 the US State Department published a comprehensive report on human trafficking. The then Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, noted there that trafficking robs human beings of their freedom and dignity. But he also stated that it ‘distorts global markets’ and ‘undermines the rule of law’. This is one reason why capitalism is opposed to trafficking and so attempts to stop or at least restrict it: it disrupts some people’s ‘lucrative’ cross-border and market system. If some employers can get round laws relating to minimum wages, health and safety, and workers’ abilities to defend their working conditions, they are likely to make bigger profits and so might allow trafficking to continue. Politicians and so on may have moral objections to trafficking, but there are economic arguments too.

Slavery is dependently different from wage labour. Whatever the restrictions on workers who sell their labour power for a wage, slaves and trafficked workers are in a far worse situation. They have their whole lives controlled by those who own them, and cannot stand up for themselves in any way. Their living and working conditions are much inferior to even the most badly-paid and insecure wage workers.

The causes of slavery and trafficking are not hard to see. A drug addict knows that thirteen thousand people in the UK are held in slavery. In a Bangladesh town, Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were trafficked to Malaysia, sometimes paying for the journey, sometimes taken by promising a better life in Malaysia. This highlights much the same conditions: examples of class resistance by the masses to their oppression. Most of this class struggle was of course unequal and inefficient in an ever-increasing scale. So we are told how in Iron Age China, as the Qin rulers fought for supremacy over the Zhou dynasty, after one battle, 100,000 prisoners were beheaded and the Qin king adopted the title of ‘Divine Emperor’ (New York Times, 23 July 2015). It is described as ‘the legendary, imperial system of robbery with violence’ in which ‘the Roman ruling class seized by force the surplus, labour and means of production controlled by foreign ruling classes’.

The necessarily ‘broad sweep’ method that a 500-page book seeking to cover the whole of human history has to adopt is highly successful here in conveying how the system has developed in various parts of the globe, and the different patterns of slavery and trafficking. It illustrates the immense complexity of the development of class societies in different parts of the globe, which includes the similarities, i.e. ‘the dominance of one class over another or others, the exploitation of a propertyless majority by a small, wealthy, property-holding majority, this always seeming to be a permanent, unchanging and never-ending state of affairs’.

Oh dear

People as Commodities

I n his A Radical History of the World (Pluto Press, 2018), described as ‘a history of the world from below’, Neil Faulkner is at pains to point to the endeavours of the ‘common people’, to show how they have highlighted many instances of ferocity, arbitrariness and murder against the poor, weak and powerless by the wealthy, strong and powerful. At the same time the author makes it clear that history has also had (and perhaps continues to have) ‘a narrative of struggle, in which the victorious take revenge on their vanquished’. There is a great deal of the overall historical development which the author is keen to point out, ‘the amount of corporate and political power, wealth and control has increased since the end of the Second World War’.

The book seeks to present a radical narrative of the history of the globe since the end of the 19th century, a narrative that will challenge the dominant narrative which begins with the French Revolution and is based on the premise that the world since 1917 has been under the rule of a new world order dominated by the market and the profit motive’ is narrated with the succinctness and clarity characteristic of the author’s perspective on the development and events of modern capitalism. He sees many of the twists and turns of modern technology to produce an abundance of goods and abolish human want (‘humanity is capable of producing unprecedented amounts of wealth’). It also makes real the enormity of capitalism’s wars in terms of people killed, lives destroyed and environmental ruin. Yet it is somehow stuck in the idea that a decent alternative society to replace capitalism can be brought about by a disgruntled but not initially class-conscious majority being led by a class-conscious minority to seize state power and this majority quickly developing that consciousness as a result. This is what informs the author’s view about what he sees as ‘near misses’ in revolutions in the twentieth century (Russia, France, Spain, etc.). In reality the society to replace capitalism, though it needs to be consciously fought for, can only happen when the masses first understand the need for it and collectively take action to bring it about. So, though the author has no illusions about the horrors Stalinism visited on the working people ‘to satisfy the pace of state capitalism accumulation, the working class, the peasantry and the national minorities had to be pulverised and subjected, in other words, to regard the views he expresses on the Russian revolution and other uprisings elsewhere in the world since as other than romantic illusion.

So, however, to return to the book, and more an ever so elegant manifesto – broadly speaking a Trotskyist one. Yet, even so, from a socialist point of view, there is a vast amount to recommend in this book. Its consistently pictorially characterises of important truths are a joy to read ‘capitalism is a system of competitive capital accumulation driven by profit and the enrichment of the few’, ‘the struggle for reforms is about to make a decisive turn’, ‘capitalism is an imperial system of robbery with violence’ and ‘the Russian revolution and other uprisings elsewhere in the world since as other than romantic illusion.

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Howard Moss

May 2019

Radical World History From Below

Socialist Standard

May 2019
Many documents about serial killers have a barely-disguised morbid streak to them. Gravel-voiced narration, flashy graphics and salacious reconstructions of the crimes often sensationalise the most horrendous acts. Fortunately, these kinds of cheap tactics to pull in the viewers weren’t found in BBC4’s recent three-part series The Yorkshire Ripper Files: A Very British Crime Story. Filmmaker Liza Williams focuses on the women who were attacked by the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’ and the police’s hunt for him, interviewing some of the victims and their families, along with detectives, lawyers and journalists involved. Williams perceptively draws out how the case highlights some of the attitudes to women common during the 1970s.

PETER SUTCLIFFE KILLED 13 women and attacked at least eight others between 1975 and 1981, with his first assault dating back to 1969 (which the police dismissed as a time). He found his victims in Leeds, Bradford and surrounding areas, leading the police to dub him the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’. Sutcliffe looked for women out alone late at night, began to talk to them and then struck them with a hammer before stabbing them. As well as the pain and grief caused to the victims’ families, communities across the north lived in fear and suspicion.

Sutcliffe tended to target suburbs known for their sex workers, such as a street in Keighley, Leeds. Many families were struggling to cope financially, with jobs lost through the decline of heavy industries in the area, and so some women were pushed into the sex trade to bring in enough money. Police referred to the victims as women of ‘loose morals’ or ‘doubtful moral character’, and it was expected that they would treat crimes against sex workers less seriously than those against other people. For the police, sex workers were a frequent annoyance. Whenever a sex worker was arrested, they would get fined or imprisoned, where he remains now.

Sutcliffe himself. It seems that he led an otherwise unremarkable life, on the surface. He was quiet, married, and worked as a lorry driver. He developed a fascination with corpses, and a violent anger towards women other than his wife. He targeted sex workers because of their vulnerability and likelihood to be out alone after dark as much as because he hated them. Once arrested, he was released, but kept the attacks going, meaning that his trial didn’t need to determine whether he had committed crimes, but instead whether mental illness accounted for his actions. Sutcliffe claimed diminished responsibility following his diagnosis of schizophrenia, but this defence wasn’t accepted, and he was convicted and imprisoned, where he remains now.

So, what does the case tell us about the society’s attitudes at the time? As the documentary brings out, it was particularly shaped by views towards sex workers, not only in Sutcliffe’s brutal crimes, but also in the police’s demeaning attitudes. Attitudes to women, both in terms of dismissing their evidence and of them somehow being less worthy if they were sex workers, shaped and delayed the investigation. The police, being a part of the state, are bound to reflect the values encouraged by our alienating, divisive system.
The label Alternative Right (now usually shortened to Alt-Right) was coined in 2008. It refers to a ‘far right radical movement’ in the US, which has had some impact but is possibly now in decline, plagued by infighting. Here George Hawley discusses its origins, history and influences, and its connections to other political viewpoints.

As a movement rather than an actual party or organisation, the Alt-Right consists of a range of views, but the obvious core beliefs of its supporters can be described fairly simply. The oft-cited Fourteen Words are: ‘We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children’, while the website of the National Policy Institute, an Alt-Right think tank, describes it as ‘dedicated to the heritage, identity, and world identities of anonymous Alt-Right social media, making great use of social

In his introduction to this reprint of a book that first came out in 1984, the editor points out that fascism is not a contemporary threat as historical conditions are not the same as they were between the last two centuries’ two world wars. ‘The word ‘fascist’, however, is still frequently bandied about today and not just by ‘ant-fascists’ as it has come to be used to describe any authoritarian individual or action. It was even misused at the time, as Tollgatti, a leader of the Italian Communist party, once did in one of his articles reprinted here: ‘It has become customary to use it to designate every form of reaction. [...][W]henver the so-called democratic freedoms sanctioned by bourgeois constitutions are attacked or violated, one hears the cry: ‘Fascism is here, fascism has arrived.’’ The book is a collection of articles from the period by mainstream Communists, dissident Communists, and Social Democrats. The original fascists were the followers of Mussolini who came to power in Italy in 1922 but the word was soon used to describe any reactionary, openly anti-working-class movement anywhere. The official Comintern line was that fascism was a mass mobilisation of the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ to further the interests of ‘finance capital’ that arose because of the failure of other countries to emulate the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power in Russia in 1917. After Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 it was seen as a particular case where foreign policy interests the Comintern was committed to defending. Despite what Henry Nash Smith in his article reprinted here: ‘It has become customary to use it to designate every form of reaction. [...][W]henver the so-called democratic freedoms sanctioned by bourgeois constitutions are attacked or violated, one hears the cry: ‘Fascism is here, fascism has arrived.’’

This is a report on time spent living in various towns and working in insecure badly-paid jobs. It gives a vivid and depressing picture of life for so many workers late or underpay them. His final destination was London, where he worked as a call centre for Amazon’s ‘independent contractor’ in the gig economy. Industries like this are full of nice-sounding terms that mask the underlying reality: the money earned at Deliveroo is called a fee rather than a wage. Uber benefits from having lots of drivers on call, with all the risk of going some time without a fare passed on to the drivers. The pay earned is unpredictable, and there are limits on how many trip requests can be rejected. He reckoned that his annual take-home pay would have been £15,600, about £7.50 an hour. Besides describing the work he did, Bloodworth also says quite a bit about the towns he stayed in. Rugeley is one of several former mining areas that are now home to Amazon, where you can see little ‘economic regeneration’. Of EBwb, Vale he says it ‘remains trapped in limbo between an industrial past and a future that has yet to arrive’. Blackpool, where the tourist trade has drastically shrunk, is one of the most deprived areas in England, a big homelessness problem and a suicide rate almost twice the national average. He says that consumers have become used to products that are cheap because of some of the most deprived areas. Industries like this are full of nice-sounding terms that mask the underlying reality: the money earned at Deliveroo is called a fee rather than a wage. Uber benefits from having lots of drivers on call, with all the risk of going some time without a fare passed on to the drivers. The pay earned is unpredictable, and there are limits on how many trip requests can be rejected. He reckoned that his annual take-home pay would have been £15,600, about £7.50 an hour.
50 Years Ago

Elitism still haunts disenchanted Bolsheviks

Socialists are active wherever workers are developing their ideas through discussion. So a few of us turned up at the weekend conference of ‘Libertarian Socialists’ in Manchester. This was organised mainly by people who had become disenchanted with Bolshevism in the shape of the so-called ‘International Socialist’ group.

It was encouraging to find a number of workers, formerly committed to the extreme centralism of the Vanguard Party, who have since seen through that fraud and come out against leadership. Unfortunately it soon became clear that elite ideas were not dead. The conference was dominated by three speakers (R. Sumner, S. James, M. Orr), who took up 90 per cent of the time. The air was thick with talk of ‘the International Socialism’ group.

‘We need to start cooperating and sharing the remaining resources of this planet in a fair way,’ so said one of the students involved in the climate change school strikes. She probably does not regard herself as a socialist, but she echoes the goal pursued by the Socialist Party of Great Britain since it was founded in 1904: the planet owned in common and democratically controlled by the people who live on it, with production for need and not for profit.

Brexit or no Brexit, the market system continues to stand between us and what we need to live a healthy, food, good housing, access to health care and a clean environment.

Take the Folkestone seafront redevelopment.

A socialist society would freely cooperate to design and build this on a human scale. It would democratically agree to use resources to repair and run the Leas lift without having to beg for funding: in a society of common ownership, finance will no longer be a factor. Compare this with the powerlessness we all feel today, at the mercy of what is profitable for developers.

Voting for the Socialist Party will not of course bring about this society overnight. But it will send a signal that we will no longer tolerate a world run in the profitable, destructive interests of a tiny minority. There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come.

The Socialist Party candidate is Andy Thomas.

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 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 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 of the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise 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 brought about, and will be, 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.

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


**Chronic poverty**

Mark (Groucho, that is) said: ‘Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.’ The same applies to reformism.

1965: Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) formed.

1997: UK had the highest rate of child poverty in the industrialised world.

1999: Blair: ‘Our historic aim will be for ours to be the first generation to end child poverty forever, and it will take a generation. It is a twenty-year mission, but I believe it can be done.’

2019: ‘DWP child poverty figures a "national scandal" as 4.1million kids are hit’ (mirror.co.uk, 28 March).

**Diagnosis**

This ‘problem’ existed long before the CPAG and many other charities came into being and will persist for another 50+ years if we continue to address symptoms rather than the underlying disease. Oscar Wilde expressed this well: ‘their remedies do not cure the disease: they merely prolong it. Indeed, their remedies are part of the disease. They try to solve the problem of poverty, for instance, by keeping the poor alive; or, in the case of a very advanced school, by amusing the poor. But this is not a solution: it is an aggravation of the difficulty. The proper aim is to try and reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible’ (The Soul of Man under Socialism, 1891). The same Daily Mirror article informs us: ‘The Child Poverty Action Group warned the Tories’ cruel benefit freeze will plunge another 100,000 children into poverty by 2023-24.’

1999: CPAG and many other charities came.

2019: ‘national scandal’ as 4.1million kids are hit (mirror.co.uk, 28 March).

**Prescriptions and pronouncements**

Prescriptions and pronouncements from politicians should be treated with the contempt they deserve. ‘Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd admitted the figures were “disappointing”. She told MPs: “I have acknowledged that today’s statistics are disappointing and I am highlighting that there is more to be done, both in terms of other services around benefits and in terms of my engagement with the Chancellor.”’

**Political placebo**

‘Their remedies do not cure the disease: they merely prolong it. Indeed, their remedies are part of the disease. They try to solve the problem of poverty, for instance, by keeping the poor alive; or, in the case of a very advanced school, by amusing the poor. But this is not a solution: it is an aggravation of the difficulty. The proper aim is to try and reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible’ (The Soul of Man under Socialism, 1891). The same Daily Mirror article informs us: ‘The Child Poverty Action Group warned the Tories’ cruel benefit freeze will plunge another 100,000 children into poverty by 2023-24.’

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**The socialistic scalpel**

Reformists and MPs, however well intentioned, serve the status quo here in the UK as do their counterparts worldwide. Too many poor? Let us have fairer wages. Only two minutes to midnight? Let the great leaders sign treaties. Are we drowning in plastic? Let us ban drinking straws. No more reformist rhetoric! Reforms can secure social stability; when the rule of capital appears to be under threat the ruling class is ‘only too glad to buy a prolonged armistice at the price of ever-repeated concessions to the working people’ (Engels). Capitalism is a worldwide system of war and want. After hundreds of years of reformism, both the problems of war and poverty, which most people consider to be rather important, are still major problems and are nowhere near solution. Those prescribing continuing medication when radical surgery is needed tell us that it is utopian to seek change which is not slow and gradual. We reply that we are in a hurry; we are not content with the way in which capitalism has been reformed and there are no reforms which could be offered that will distract us from the clear road ahead; we have a world to win and those who will not join us stand in our way. 

**FREE LUNCH**

**YES, WE CRAM THE HENS’ TOGETHER, DRIP-FED ANTIBIOTICS AND SEETHING WITH GERMS...**

**-BUT IT’S OK! WE SLOSH ‘EM WITH CHEMICALS, AND TURN ‘EM INTO STERILE SLABS OF RUBBER!**

**GREAT AD, WE’LL GO WITH IT!**