

# socialist standard

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

## THE LABOUR PARTY



## ON A VOYAGE TO NOWHERE



Also:  
Marxism  
Opinion Polls  
George Galloway



# socialist standard

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## Introducing the Socialist Party

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 war.

The *Socialist Standard* is the combative monthly journal of the Socialist Party, published without interruption since 1904. In the 1930s the *Socialist Standard* explained why capitalism would not collapse of its own accord, in response to widespread claims to the contrary, and continues to hold this view in face of the notion's recent popularity. Beveridge's welfare measures of the 1940s were viewed as a reorganisation of poverty and a necessary 'expense' of production, and Keynesian policies designed to overcome slumps an illusion. Today, the journal exposes as false the view that banks create money out of thin air, and explains why actions to prevent the depredation



of the natural world can have limited effect and run counter to the nature of capitalism itself.

Gradualist reformers like the Labour Party believed that capitalism could be 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'



## Why the Labour Party is useless

As part of his 'frank conversations' with the British people, Keir Starmer recently faced a group of former Labour voters in Blackpool, where he eagerly spelt out his 'strong ideas' on how he would reform British capitalism to make it work for the working class, with measures such as support for children and the under-25s, and policies to buy, make and sell in Britain. Unfortunately for him, his audience couldn't share his enthusiasm. One remarked 'actions speak louder than words' and another asked 'where is the money coming from?' With the crumbling of the Northern red wall at the last general election, the Labour defeat in the recent Hartlepool by-election, only just retaining the Batley and Spen constituency, and receiving a measly 622 votes in the recent Chesham and Amersham by-election, Starmer is facing an uphill struggle to persuade workers to elect a Labour government.

As soon as he was elected Labour leader, Starmer got to work to not just distance himself from his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, but to purge any influence that

he and his allies may have had. He sacked Corbyn ally Rebecca Long Bailey from her post of shadow Education Secretary for retweeting an interview with the actress Maxine Peake, where the latter made comments that were deemed to be anti-semitic. He then moved against Corbyn himself by suspending him from the Labour Party for remarks he made in response to the findings of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report on anti-semitism within the Labour Party (although he has since been reinstated). Four left-wing groups – Resist, Socialist Appeal, Labour in Exile Network and Labour Against the Witchhunt – have been expelled from the Labour Party.

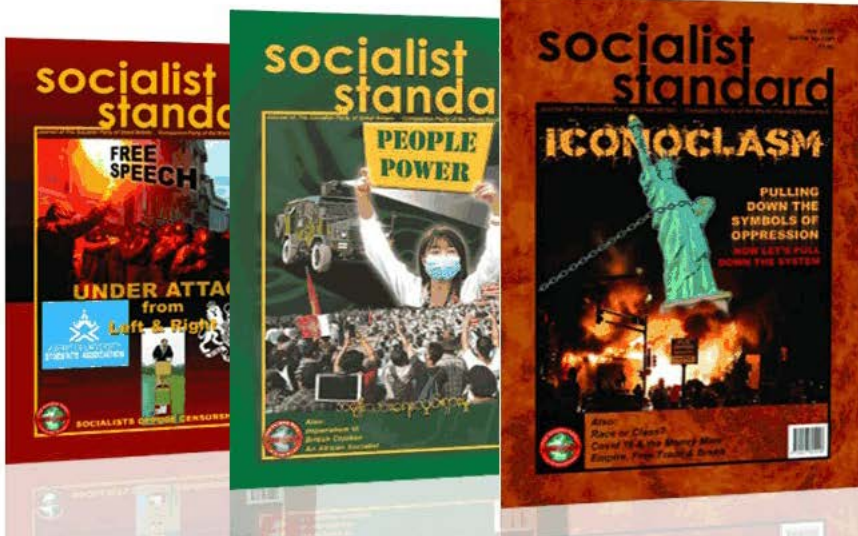
However, marginalising the Corbynistas and the left-wing is deemed not enough to convince voters that the Labour Party can be trusted. Starmer has been advised to promote patriotism and the use of the Union flag in the hope that this will help to bring the 'traditional working class' back into the fold. Beating the patriotic drum is nothing new for the Labour Party. All previous Labour governments

invoked nationalism when it suited them. Remember New Labour's bulldog arising from its slumbers in 1997.

In left-wing mythology, Starmer will no doubt join the pantheon of traitors who betrayed the ideals and principles of the Labour Party from Ramsay MacDonald to Tony Blair. In truth, there are no ideals or principles to betray, as the Labour Party is not a principled socialist party, but a capitalist one. It doesn't attempt to raise working-class consciousness, but competes for votes in the capitalist political market place, which requires it to opportunistically play on workers anxieties and fears. The Labour Party was founded with the aim of promoting parliamentary legislation on behalf of the trade unions. It sought to run capitalism in the interest of the working class. However, this cannot be achieved as capitalism can only be run in one way, that is to generate profits for the capitalist class. Through hard experience, Labour governments have ended up managing capitalism in a similar fashion to Tory governments.

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# PATHFINDERS

## Eye to eye

THE RECENT *Guardian* exposé (19 July - [bit.ly/2W29XE1](https://bit.ly/2W29XE1)) concerning Israeli company NSO and its Pegasus phone-hacking software is only the latest in a long line of media revelations about government surveillance. One can no longer be surprised by this sort of shenanigans. Of course governments watch people of interest to them. Ruling elites have always had their spy networks for keeping an eye on enemies from without and enemies from within. It's an unwise ruler who fails to keep themselves sufficiently informed, as Julius Caesar found out.

NSO says that the Pegasus software, which monitors your location and can secretly activate your camera and microphone, is only for tracking criminals and terrorists. But of course they would say that. An investigation by Amnesty International and others revealed that human rights activists, union officials, journalists and lawyers have also been targeted. One journalist in Mexico, whose number appeared on a leaked Pegasus list, was assassinated at a carwash after, it's believed, being tracked there via his phone. NSO won't say who their state customers are but they are known to include Mexico, India, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Morocco, Rwanda, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

What other countries might be customers? Pakistan, surely, and Burma, given that India is. If Saudi Arabia and the UAE are on the list, then Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Iran and Syria probably are too, demonstrating incidentally that the Arab-Israeli ideological divide which incites poor workers to kill each other is of no concern when it comes to businesses making lots of money. Other countries probably don't need Israeli software. Belarus almost certainly gets its hacking tools from Russia, as North Korea will from China. Five Eyes, the intelligence group of the 'Anglosphere' that includes the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, no doubt has its own sophisticated spyware, indeed might well have provided the Israelis with the tech expertise to develop Pegasus in the first place.

The obvious concern for workers everywhere, and for anyone who wants to see a better society supersede capitalism, is that government surveillance could become so powerful and all-pervasive that independent critical thought and deed become impossible.

When you look at some of the more authoritarian or unstable countries in

the top 25 global economies, it's easy to believe that this is indeed their ultimate aim. China is obsessed with totalitarian control freakery despite having given up any vestige of its so-called communism years ago in a bid to become the world's top capitalist economy. Russia, with an economy smaller than Italy's, is run by gangsters who have made murdering journalists and political opponents almost an Olympic sport, as have Mexico and Saudi Arabia. But what about other countries in the top 25, such as Australia, Canada, the US, Switzerland, the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, etc? Flawed to be sure, but as capitalist democratic freedoms go, these states score fairly high, with little outward sign that they are bent on creating Orwellian dictatorships.

They probably could do it, technically speaking, if they wanted to. Some, like the UK, have granted themselves the legal powers for almost unlimited surveillance, and the tools for the job already exist. Nowadays you don't need armies of red-eyed, chain-smoking spooks listening in on phone calls. You just need AI plugged into the cable and satellite feeds. Even so, round-the-clock surveillance of an entire population would be a huge drain on money and resources, and would it represent a good return on investment given that 99 percent of the population don't do anything interesting?

It depends how paranoid you are. Some regimes are so dodgy they have every reason to be paranoid. Needless to say, all capitalist states feel the need to be eternally vigilant, however for the most part, they are likely to be more judicious in their focus, keeping a weather eye on individuals and groups deemed dangerous but in general letting the population go about its business.

It's easy too for individuals, especially angry and radical dissenters, to get themselves caught in a feedback loop of confirmation bias regarding state surveillance, and become convinced that Big Brother is staring at them out of every CCTV, phone screen and laptop webcam, and that everything that happens, even in a pandemic, is part of some dark design by the deep state. How far any of this is justified or based on objective reality is a matter of debate, but unfortunately rational debate tends to fly out of the window when paranoia comes knocking at the door.

Whistleblowers like Julian Assange are held up as evidence of deep-state conspiracies, and certainly their treatment



by vengeful governments can be appalling. But if state control was really as strong as some people think, how did these individuals manage to blow the whistle in the first place? And why is it that states and their politicians seem to conduct their affairs in a way that is so often confused, chaotic and incompetent, a fact made very obvious during the pandemic? Are these devious Machiavellis just pretending to be idiots, or are they what they appear to be, venal mediocrities with little idea what they're doing? What kind of deranged global plan would include runaway climate change, now thought to be causing record heat levels, forest fires and catastrophic flooding? Is the simpler explanation not the more likely one, that capitalism is out of control and its leaders clueless?

Lose the ability to wield Occam's Razor and you can lose your bearings. Once, at a socialist meeting, a visitor asserted that there was no point doing anything because the whole world was mind-controlled by a giant media conspiracy. When socialists asked him how come, in that case, we were free to hold a socialist public meeting, his reply was 'You're in on it too.' That's a cave-dive down a very deep rabbit hole.

Still, it's understandable that a lot of radical political activists worry about state surveillance. If it's not happening now, they argue, it soon will. If you try to downplay this concern, perhaps by suggesting that any large-scale suppression of legitimate working-class activity would create more problems for the state than it solved, you can be seen as naïve. Conversely, we suspect that activists sometimes overestimate how 'dangerous' they really are. In any case, the more secretive you aim to be, the more the state will take an interest in your affairs.

So, all things considered, the Socialist Party conducts its political activity in plain sight, with open public meetings, because it's a democratic organisation that seeks change by democratic methods, and you can't be democratic from the shadows. The best way to challenge the legitimacy of capitalism is, we think, to be legitimate yourself. Instead of trying to avoid the state's gaze, we meet it, eye to eye, and wait for it to blink.

PJS



# LETTERS

Dear Editors

I am curious about the following extract from the explanation of your declaration of principles on your website [under About Us] which seems to imply a hugely simplified, black and white analysis of the mechanics at play:

“if your main income is derived from the work of others then you are a capitalist”.

This then IS the person living on state benefits but NOT the person who has inherited huge wealth OR the millionaire who fortuitously invested his earnings on the stock market etc.

It also strikes me that the attempt to represent a simple two class structure is somewhat flawed, the ultimate business owner and the lowliest of the employed being an obvious distinction, but the upper management for example are rewarded at a much higher level, this will be related to the relative wealth/success of the company and therefore by definition the labour of the employees, their main income then is also derived from the work of others and as such they are also capitalists; but not in the same class as the business owner.

Ralph P.

## Reply:

Interpreted literally and out of context the passage quoted could be pedantically interpreted as meaning that someone on benefits was a capitalist. If, however, the complete passage is read – ‘if you must work for a living then you are working class, if your main income is derived from the work of others then you are a capitalist’ – then a person on benefits is clearly a member of the working class; only, for one reason or another, they are not able to find an employer and so have to be maintained by hand-outs from the state. That, however, does not make them capitalists any more than being paid out of profits makes a capitalist’s servant one either.

In any event, whichever way to turn it, the passage cannot be said to mean that a person who has inherited huge wealth or a millionaire speculator on the stock market is not a capitalist since neither *must* work for a living.

As to ‘upper management’, by which we take you to mean

managing directors and CEOs of big corporations, you are right that most of their income will be a share of profits, disguised, for tax avoidance purposes, as an income from employment. So, yes, they are members of the capitalist class. Management below that level, on the other hand, are members of the working class doing a particular job within the division of labour (and antagonistic capitalist relations of production). As the section from which you have extracted a passage says later on, it is the labour of workers ‘including the plant management’ that creates the profits that keep the capitalists rich.

Our declaration of principles asserts that there are two classes in society – ‘those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess’. The income of those who possess land, factories, offices, communications and the other means by which society reproduces itself is a property income which accrues to them without them having to work; it is, as the tax authorities used to call it, ‘unearned income’. It takes the legal form of corporate profits, dividends on shares, interest on bonds, ground-rent on land and, also, as just explained, bloated ‘salaries’. Only a small minority of the population are in this position. The rest of us, the vast majority, not possessing such income-yielding property, are obliged to go out on to the labour market to try to find an employer. If we find one, as most of us do, then our wage is our main income; if we don’t find one, as many don’t, then we have to exist on meagre state hand-outs.

Apart from their main income some workers own shares or other interest-bearing savings but, as we say on our website, none ‘have the luxury to quit their jobs and live off investment income’. In fact, according to a recent survey by the Yorkshire Building society ‘19 per cent of adults had less than £100 in savings ... Thirteen per cent of people have no savings at all to fall back on and more than a quarter (26 per cent) have less than £500 put away’ (*Times*, 15 June). Even those with ten or twenty times as much as that wouldn’t be able to stop off working for wages for long.

Present-day society is manifestly divided into two classes – a small minority who live off profits and the rest of us who are wage-seekers.—*Editors*.



# COOKING THE BOOKS

## Something for Nothing

'Large private equity firms have been targeting UK supermarkets, which they view as undervalued and attractive due to their large property portfolios' (BBC, 5 July). That's why three different sets of these vulture capitalists were circling Morrisons. It was certainly not because they want to enter the grocery business. Like the BBC says, they wanted the land on which Morrisons' supermarkets and warehouses are situated which they calculated could be put to a more money-spinning use.

It is not so much commercial profits that they are after as ground rent. Ground rent (not to be confused with house rent, which is a price) is a pure property income that accrues to the owner of land simply because they monopolise a portion of the Earth's surface. It enables them to extract an income from the industrial or commercial capitalist they let use the land; the better the location and the higher the demand for its use the higher the rent they can extract.

In Volume III of *Capital* Marx pointed out that one feature of ground rent was 'the palpable and complete passiveness of the owner, whose sole activity consists

(especially in mines) in exploiting the progress of social development, toward which he contributes nothing and for which he risks nothing, unlike the industrial capitalist' (Chapter 46). At the end of the previous chapter he had described it as 'something for nothing'.

However, if they are clever, the ground landlord can increase their income from rent if they are prepared to invest some money to make their land more desirable by building houses or shops on it. In addition to bringing them a return on their capital this will increase their ground rent. This is what the aristocratic landowners who own large parts of central London have done. The Cadogan Estate, for instance, which reported recently:

'Earl Cadogan and his family have controlled about 93 acres of Chelsea and Kensington for 300 years ... Retail property accounts for about half of Cadogan's rental income. A third comes from residential and remainder is offices' (*Times*, 1 July).

Their rental income will be partly a return on their investment in the buildings but most will be ground rent (like with houses prices, where most of the price is not for the building but for the land on which it is built).

The vulture capitalists circling Morrisons wanted to get in on this act. They wanted

to acquire the supermarket as it 'owns the freehold of 85 percent of its 497 sites' (*Guardian*, 5 July) and to use some of this land to erect different buildings that would bring them more income.

This kind of thing went on in Marx's day too. Marx quotes the evidence of a London builder to a parliamentary committee in 1857:

'The builder makes very little profit out of the buildings themselves; he makes the principal part of the profit out of the improved ground rents. Perhaps he takes a piece of ground, and agrees to give £300 a year for it; by laying it out with care, and putting certain descriptions of buildings upon it, he may succeed in making £400 or £450 a year out of it, and his profit would be the increased ground rent of £100 or £150 a year, rather than the profit of the buildings at which ... in many instances, he scarcely looks at at all'.

Since the vulture capitalists would be the freeholder (rather than leaseholder as in this case) the whole £400-450 would go to them, as it does to the Earl of Cadogan, Duke of Westminster and Howard de Walden families and other parasites on parasites that ground landlords are.



# World Socialist

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**FULLY BOOKED!**

# **AFTER THE REVOLUTION: Life in a Socialist World**

**The Socialist Party's Summer School**

**6th—8th August 2021**

**Fircroft College, Birmingham**

**A socialist society will only come about when a sizeable majority of people worldwide want it and democratically and co-operatively work towards it. As such, it can only happen after many of today's attitudes have changed, once people have rejected capitalism and its institutions of states, employment, money and classes. Instead of the dead-ends of reformism and division, society will be working together to make a world which satisfies everyone's self-determined needs and wants.**

**We can't say anything certain about what life would be like in a socialist world. That's for the people at the time to decide, and would vary between communities and regions. How things run will also be shaped by future advancements in technology, and also by what environmental damage has been inherited from capitalism. Although we can only speculate, we can say that a socialist society could only succeed by being based on the principles of equality, democracy and voluntary co-operation.**

**This weekend of talks and discussion is an opportunity to imagine some of the possibilities of this new world. How might decisions be made? What kind of job roles would we have, and what would motivate us? How might friends and families spend time together? How would free access to goods and services work in practice? And how would we balance a world of abundance with safeguarding the environment?**

**The event includes an exhibition, bookstall and exclusive publication.**

**Talks and sessions during the weekend:**

## **Socialist Recipes**

**Richard Field**

Humanity makes its own history, and socialists in the process of building a post-capitalist society will make choices based on what they believe to be possible and desirable. The success of the socialist project will rest in some measure on the choices made. So what arguments can we make now to ensure a positive outcome?

## **New News From Nowhere**

**Glenn Morris**

In 1890 William Morris wrote the utopian novel *News from Nowhere* in which a certain William Guest fell asleep and awoke in a socialist society. Glenn will focus on a few areas of what life in a socialist society might look like today over 100 years since Morris' novel.

## **Do Utopias And Works Of Sci-Fi Offer Appealing Visions Of A Socialist World?**

**Leon Rozanov**

Are there any works of fiction that offer a vision of an appealing and realistic future socialist society where one really wants to start living right away?

## **Town Planning For Socialist Living**

**Carla Dee**

What could a town high street, village or city look like in a post-capitalist world? What would or wouldn't be needed and wanted? This is your chance to be designers and planners of our new world - all you need bring to this session is your imagination.

## **Socialist Decision Making And The Rule Of Three**

**Paddy Shannon**

The World Socialist Movement has favoured delegate democracy as the decision-making model most likely to be adopted in a future socialist society. But that was before modern online communications made direct democracy a real possibility. Though attractive in theory, it sounds like chaos in practice. Who would get to vote on what, and on whose say-so? But that was before modern online communications made direct democracy a real possibility. The entire thing might be managed by the application of just three rules, backed by the same ethical principle that applies across every other sphere of socialist life: from each according to ability, to each according to need.



## UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

All meetings online during the pandemic.  
See page 23.

### LONDON

**North London branch.** Meets 3rd Thurs. 8pm at Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Ave, NW5 2RX. Contact: Chris Dufton 020 7609 0983 [nlb.spgb@gmail.com](mailto:nlb.spgb@gmail.com)

**South London branch.** Meets last Saturday in month, 2.30pm. Head Office, 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Contact: 020 7622 3811.

**West London branch.** Meets 1st Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. [spgb@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb@worldsocialism.org)

### MIDLANDS

**West Midlands regional branch.** Meets last Sat. 3pm (check before attending). Contact: Stephen Shapton. 01543 821180. Email: [stephenshapton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stephenshapton@yahoo.co.uk).

### NORTH

#### North East Regional branch.

Contact: P. Kilgallon, c/o Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UN.

**Lancaster branch.** Meets 3rd Mon, 3pm, Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane. Ring to confirm: P. Shannon, 07510 412 261, [spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org).

**Manchester branch.** Contact: Paul Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, M21 7LB. 0161 860 7189.

**Bolton.** Contact: H. McLaughlin. 01204 844589.

**Cumbria.** Contact: Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4BG.

**Doncaster.** Contact: Fredi Edwards, [fredi.edwards@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:fredi.edwards@hotmail.co.uk)

### SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST

**Kent and Sussex regional branch.** Meets 2nd Sun. 2pm at The Muggleton Inn, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1HJ. Contact: [spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org).

**South West regional branch.** Meets 3rd Sat. 2pm at the Railway Tavern, 131 South Western Road, Salisbury SP2 7RR.

Contact: Stephen Harper [spgbsw@gmail.com](mailto:spgbsw@gmail.com)  
**Brighton.** Contact: Anton Pruden, [anton@pruden.me](mailto:anton@pruden.me)

**Canterbury.** Contact: Rob Cox, 4 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB.

**Luton.** Contact: Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP.

**Cornwall.** Contact: Harry Sowden, 16 Polgine Lane, Troon, Camborne, TR14 9DY. 01209 611820.

**East Anglia.** Contact: David Porter, Eastholme, Bush Drive, Eccles-on-Sea, NR12 0SF. 01692 582533. Richard Headicar, 42 Woodcote, Firs Rd, Hethersett, NR9 3JD. 01603 814343.

**Essex.** Contact: Pat Deutz, 11 The Links, Billericay, CM12 0EX. [patdeutz@gmail.com](mailto:patdeutz@gmail.com).

**Cambridge.** Contact: Andrew Westley, [wezelecta007@gmail.com](mailto:wezelecta007@gmail.com). 07890343044.

### IRELAND

**Cork.** Contact: Kevin Cronin, 5 Curragh Woods, Frankfield, Cork. 021 4896427. [mariekev@eircom.net](mailto:mariekev@eircom.net)

### NORTHERN IRELAND

**Belfast** Contact: Nigel McCullough. 02890 930002

### SCOTLAND

**Edinburgh branch.** Meets 1st Thurs. 7-9pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh. Contact: J. Moir. 0131 440 0995. [jimmyjmoir73@gmail.com](mailto:jimmyjmoir73@gmail.com)  
Branch website: <http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/>

**Glasgow branch.** Meets 1st and 3rd Tues. at 7pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Contact: Peter Hendrie, 75 Lairhills Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0LH. 01355 903105.

[peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk).

**Dundee.** Contact: Ian Ratcliffe, 12 Finlow Terrace, Dundee, DD4 9NA. 01382 698297.

**Ayrshire.** Contact: Paul Edwards 01563 541138. [rainbow3@btopenworld.com](mailto:rainbow3@btopenworld.com).

**Lothian Socialist Discussion @Autonomous** Centre Edinburgh, ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA. Meets 4th Weds. 7-9pm. Contact: F. Anderson 07724 082753.

### WALES

#### South Wales Branch (Swansea)

Meets 2nd Mon, 7.30pm (except January, April, July and October), Unitarian Church, High Street, SA1 1NZ. Contact: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB. 01792 643624.

#### South Wales Branch (Cardiff)

Meets 2nd Saturday 12 noon (January, April, July and October) Cafe Nero, Capitol Shopping Centre, Queens Street, Cardiff.

Contact: Richard Botterill, 21 Pen-Y-Bryn Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 3LG. 02920-615826. [botterillr@gmail.com](mailto:botterillr@gmail.com)

### Central Branch

Meets 1st Sun, 6pm (UK time) on Discord. Contact: Paul Edwards [rainbow3@btopenworld.com](mailto:rainbow3@btopenworld.com)

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## COMPANION PARTIES OVERSEAS

### Socialist Party of Canada/Parti Socialiste

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### World Socialist Party (New Zealand)

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### World Socialist Party of the United States.

P.O. Box 440247, Boston, MA 02144 USA. [boston@wspus.org](mailto:boston@wspus.org)

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# MATERIAL WORLD

# Stolen Children

*Article 2 of the UN Genocide Convention defines genocide to include: '...e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.'*

AS EARLY as Australia's Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act of 1869, legislation allowed the removal of Aboriginal people of mixed descent to force them to assimilate into white society. Up to the 1970s, in Australia, thousands of 'mixed-race' children were stolen from their mothers by welfare officials. The children were given to institutions as cheap or slave labour, and many were abused. Described as 'breeding out the colour', the policy was known as assimilation. In 1997 a landmark report, *Bringing Them Home*, disclosed that as many 50,000 children and their mothers had endured 'the humiliation, the degradation and sheer brutality of the act of forced separation... the product of the deliberate, calculated policies of the state'. The report called this 'genocide'.

The violence against indigenous peoples around the world is truly shocking. It has been a story of stolen lands and of stolen children.

From the nineteenth century until the 1970s, more than 150,000 indigenous children were forced to attend state-funded Christian boarding schools in an effort to assimilate them into Canadian society. And it was justified by the settler-colonialists as humanitarian and for the child's own good. Far from being protected, indigenous children were regularly victims of abuse. Indigenous children were taken from their families, often by force. They were housed in crowded, state-funded, church-run facilities, where they were abused and forbidden from speaking their languages or participating in any form of cultural practice or activity, and forced to adopt new names and identities. Many of these children were informed that their families had either given them up or had died. To increase the success of removal policies, the authorities would often send the children vast distances from their families and friends.

The system's purpose: 'To kill the Indian in the child'. Children in native residential schools were wards of the federal government and consequently came under the responsibility of various religious communities. 'The use of the word school is a misnomer,' said Cindy Blackstock, a professor at Montreal's McGill University and the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. 'They were prison camps.' ([tinyurl.com/ychmpdxs](https://tinyurl.com/ychmpdxs))

Intimidation and fear were the teaching

tools used to ensure children could not practise their customs and traditions, cutting off any bond to their history.

Conditions were consistently horrendous and distressing, leaving emotional scars on most. Thousands of children taken to the 'schools' died of disease and other causes. We are only now discovering that many were buried in unmarked graves, to be forgotten as easily as they were neglected.

The Canadian Federal government formally apologised for the policy and abuses in 2008 which its Truth and Reconciliation Commission called 'cultural genocide.'

The churches also apologised for their roles in the abuse. Nearly three-quarters of the 130 residential schools were run by churches. One, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate which ran the Kamloops Indian Residential School from 1890 until 1969, apologised for what it called the cultural and religious 'imperialism' that motivated residential schools, the disruption of families and communities that resulted, and instances of physical and sexual abuse that occurred. At the time, it made no mention of the 215 unmarked graves found at the site, and now admit that they are unable to explain their official records of only 50 deceased children. So it appears to any reasonable observer that the true death rates were being covered up.

Indian Boarding Schools had also been established in the United States with the objective of 'civilising' Native American children. The current US Interior Secretary, Deb Haaland, has directed her department to 'uncover the truth about the loss of human life and the lasting consequences' of the 'dark history' of these institutions.

The Catholic Church, to hide its complicity in the abuse that took place

in its institutions, approved of a state law in South Dakota designed to halt survivors from seeking legal retribution from the Catholic authorities, so shielding the Church from any responsibility or accountability ([tinyurl.com/y3ccu5fw](https://tinyurl.com/y3ccu5fw)).

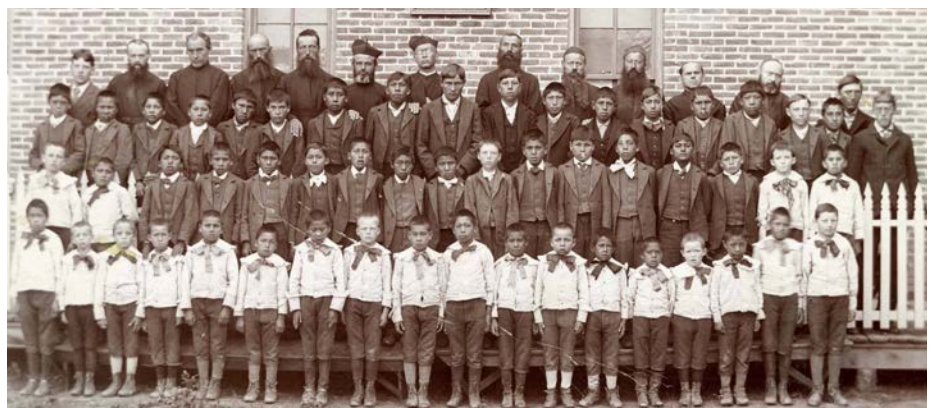
Today, similar policies very much reminiscent of the residential school systems persist but the language is couched in euphemisms. The children are still being 'taken into care' for their own 'welfare' and 'protection'.

In 2016, 7 percent of children across Canada were aboriginal, but they accounted for nearly half of all the foster children in the country. In the province of Manitoba, 10,000 of the 11,000 children in care are indigenous and are taken from their homes for reasons such as poverty, bad housing or lack of wholesome food. Capitalist Christian 'family values' would rather break up families than fix the problem of deprivation and the underfunding of social services to the indigenous communities.

Even in the UK, we have witnessed the 'abduction' of kids due to the prejudice against those deemed different from 'us'. From 2009 to 2018, the number of Roma children in care in England has risen by 933 percent, a figure disproportionate when compared with other ethnic groups.

Socialists have been accused of standing for uniformity but the advocate of assimilation, intent upon eradicating the lingering traces of pre-capitalist culture, has been and always will be the ruling class, striving for homogeneous consumers with a few pockets of indigenous peoples retained as curiosities for the tourist trade. Socialism is not about one-size-fits-all. Communities and cultures will co-exist, in a global cooperative commonwealth that celebrates both diversity and unity

**ALJO**



*Jesuits and boys at the Holy Rosary Mission circa 1880-1900. Courtesy of Marquette University, Raynor Memorial Libraries and Holy Rosary Mission – Red Cloud Indian School Records, ID: MUA\_HRM\_RCIS\_02937.*

## Where is Labour going?

**B**atley and Spen, a constituency in West Yorkshire, had a by-election on the first of July. There were a number of surprises – most notably, that the seat was held by Labour. The election was taken to be something of a judgment on the Labour Party as a whole, with polling suggesting that it would be a 6 percent lead for the Conservatives (Survation, 18 June). Losing Batley and Spen would have been a particularly painful blow for Labour, as it was the constituency of Jo Cox, the Labour MP who was murdered in 2016 by a neo-fascist, Thomas Mair. Her sister, Kim Leadbeater, won the seat this year by 323 votes (a lead of 0.85 percent of the vote, having won about 35 percent overall). The seat had been Tracy Brabin's, a Labour and Co-op MP, since the by-election following Cox's death. Her leads were 16.7 percent (55.5 percent overall) in the 2017 general election, and 8.7 percent (42.7 percent overall) in 2019. While Labour's holding the seat was unexpected, considering how narrow the victory was, and how the seat has often historically been Labour's more strongly, this is by no means a turning-of-the-tides.

### Workerism

One of the other surprises was that almost 22 percent of the vote went to George Galloway's 'Workers Party', which he describes as 'the working-class patriotic alternative to fake woke anti-British 'Labour'' (*Telegraph & Argus*, 12 May). The party's Deputy Leader, Joti Brar, is vice-chair of the CPGB-ML. Whoever they represent it is not the workers. Their website announces that they are a 'socialist organisation', but also that they 'defend the achievements of the USSR, China, Cuba etc', and that the party 'believes in the importance of a planned economy, in the directing role of the state. Free-market fundamentalism has gutted Britain of its industries (...) castrating our society and adversely destabilising proud working-class traditions, culture and way of life.'

One would be hard-pressed to find a better example of what one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party Bordiga derided as 'the typically opportunist conception of the labourist or workerist party to whom all those individuals who are proletarian in terms of their social condition are admitted by right', to say nothing of the alarming fetishisation of oppressive state-capitalist regimes, past and present.

Socialism's goal is not to preserve 'working-class traditions, culture, and way of life' – on the contrary, in an important sense, it is to abolish those things. We demand the *elimination* of class, not the extension of the proletarian way of life to the whole of society. Indeed, isn't it dissatisfaction with the proletarian way of life that gives motivation to socialist sentiment in the first place?

### Panic

At any rate, the result was astonishing. Galloway took himself to be 'standing against Keir Starmer', and that 22 percent

backed the Workers Party, placing it third overall, can reasonably be read as an indictment of the Labour Party as it stands. Indeed, perhaps the only reason Labour didn't lose is sheer luck. The week before the election, the news broke of then Health Secretary Matt Hancock's affair and breach of the social-distancing rules he himself set out. This and the Conservative Party's reaction (or lack thereof) did not reflect well on them, and presumably led to a drop in Tory turnout on the day of the vote. Keir Starmer's declaration that 'This by-election is a turning point (...) Labour's back, and the promise of a better future is back too' (*Guardian*, 2 June) is certainly too quick. Indeed, comparing leads over the years, it is not a turning point at all. It is a continuation of the dwindling of victory margins Labour has seen.

Indeed, some of the party's campaigning tactics showed signs of panic and desperation. Leaflets were distributed showing PM Boris Johnson with the Indian PM Narendra Modi, of the radically Hindu nationalist BJP. This was to appeal to the Muslim vote, especially given continuing human rights abuses in Kashmir, a region disputed by India and Pakistan for generations. The frantic appeal to votes led to some internal division within the party, with Labour Friends of India requesting withdrawal of the leaflets. The vote still

remained divided: Kim Leadbeater was heckled and intimidated after being questioned about her stance on LGBT rights, Palestine, and Kashmir (*Guardian*, 27 June). One man who chased her said he was acting on behalf of Muslim parents concerned about LGBT-inclusive education. Across given demographics, then, Labour has not won many hearts.

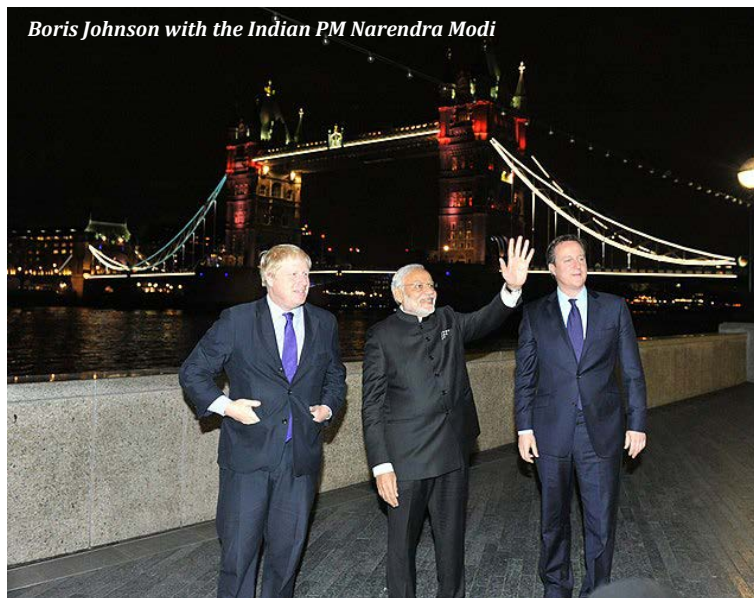
### Lucky

The victory will, of course, still be welcomed by the Labour party. But it is not a victory that they can

take much comfort in. Indeed, looking at it as anything but an immense stroke of luck is probably mistaken. The signs point to a need for change in the Labour Party, if they want to win again – and that change, contrary to what Starmer has suggested, has not already taken place. George Galloway's Workers Party is an important surprise in the election – Labour would be remiss to not take some note. Handing over 22 percent of the vote to a rival left-leaning party is not a concession they are in any position to make.

Labour's position is somewhat precarious now, with no signs of a forthcoming reversal in fortunes. The reason they won seems to have as much to do with the Conservatives' blunders than their own successes. Starmer's jubilation had better be a mere façade if Labour is to return to serious positions of power in parliament. He writes that 'Batley and Spen was an important win – in the most difficult of circumstances. But it is only the start.' Even this might go too far. Perhaps it isn't the start, but a mere confirmation that Labour is going nowhere fast.

**MP SHAH**





# GEORGE GALLOWAY: WOULD-BE POPULIST LEADER

On the day the results of the recent Batley and Spen by-election were announced a Labour Party supporter responded to a comment about the meagre majority achieved. He was insistent that the 323-vote margin would have been 8,000+ higher had it not been for the appearance of George Galloway for the Workers Party of Britain.

From a purely psychological point of view the Galloway performance was remarkable for a representative of a small, leftish party. Nearly 22 percent of the vote secured a comfortable third place, a good 7,000 votes ahead of the Liberal Democrat, 5,000 or so behind the winner.

So perhaps the disgruntled Labour supporter had a point, except, of course, there is a large presumption involved. There is no way of determining whether an absence of Galloway and his new party would have resulted in his 8,000 votes defaulting to Labour. Indeed, the experience of the previous by-election in Hartlepool suggests the Conservative candidate might have been a beneficiary too, especially given Galloway's pro-Brexit stance.

There is a strong suggestion that Galloway profited from an alienated Muslim vote who may have perceived themselves as being tainted by Labour's broad brush anti-Semitism accusations levelled at almost any anti-Zionist or pro-Palestinian. It must be galling for a community more often the target of racism to feel themselves viewed as racists by the party they traditionally supported.

There is surely little doubt that the impressive vote was for Galloway personally rather than being an ideological breakthrough by the Workers Party of Britain. He has a background of championing anti-Zionism and favouring Islamic causes. There have even been suggestions that he converted from Roman Catholicism to Islam, although he has denied this.

The Workers Party of Britain appears to be a left-wing manifestation of that recent political phenomenon, populism. On its website the Party states it is a response to a need following the defeat of Corbynism. It believes:

The importance of a planned economy directing the role of the state.

Free-market fundamentalism has gutted British industry, castrated society and destabilised the working class. The state should guide economic life.

The working class needs to be united on shared class interests to struggle for socialism.

Countries that have tried to build the socialist new world include the USSR, China, Cuba et al.

Brexit is a positive move to secure Britain's independence to pursue fiscal and monetary policies and take key utilities and transport into public ownership.

There is 'A ten-point programme for workers' promoted on the Party's website that sits easily with left-Labour aspirations. It has garnered the support of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist), which situates itself in the tradition of Stalinism and Maoism. Indeed, Galloway's deputy leader Joti Brar is from a family closely associated with the CPGB (ML). For the Workers Party of Britain the problem is free-market capitalism, the solution... state capitalism.

Galloway has been here before of course. In 2005 he did even better, winning the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency for Respect, a political grouping backed on that occasion by the Socialist Workers Party. A parting of the ways quickly followed and it would seem he has moved from the neo-Trotskyist camp to the neo-Stalinist one. Either way, the

prospects for democracy would be dim should such a grouping ever succeed.

Is it a party at all, or a Galloway supporters' club? It seems highly unlikely that some John or Joan Smith standing for the Workers Party of Britain in Batley and Spen would have garnered anything close to 8,000 votes and their performances elsewhere have been derisory.

Personality politics blurs the line between those who'd style themselves left or right wing. Thus George Galloway was quite sanguine about sharing a platform at a Brexit rally with Nigel Farage. The public moment being far more crucial than principles.

The charismatic leader, or a leader who thinks himself charismatic, becomes all important. A previous attempt to displace Labour as the party of the working class in Yorkshire was the now less than marginal Socialist Labour Party led by Arthur Scargill who tried to politically exploit the prominence he gained from the 1984/85 miners' strike. Indeed, the CPGB (M-L) was a split from it.

What these parties have in common is being political cul-de-sacs. Setting aside implications of serious democratic deficit in its politics, should the Workers Party actually succeed in displacing the Labour Party nothing much would change for the working class.

With Galloway as prime minister implementing his 10-point plan the workers would still be working for wages that represent only a portion of the value their labour power creates. After all, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' has successfully created numerous billionaires while the working masses most definitely do not have control of the means of production and distribution.

In other words, the Workers Party in power would replace capitalism with capitalism, and a less successful version of capitalism if some of the models quoted on the Party's website are anything to go by.

The Batley and Spen by-election is a demonstration that there are no answers to the problems created by capitalism for the working class in any of the parties on offer, major or minor, left wing or right wing.

Kim Leadbeater MP made the usual platitudinous vague promises to serve all the community, bring people together and further local interests. Had the Tory won he would have spouted an almost identical speech. Similarly, the LibDem. Galloway would undoubtedly have been more vocally belligerent, but it would have amounted to the same.

This is because community divisions, Brexit, economic decline and the plethora of other problems are rooted in capitalism. The dreadful murder of Kim Leadbeater's sister Jo Cox, the then sitting MP, was an extreme example of politics under capitalism. It is a system wasteful of human lives that is immune to political point scoring.

The Labour Party supporter decrying George Galloway for undermining the Leadbeater vote remains politically blind, as presently all too many are. There are no short cuts, no inspired leaders, no previous models to draw on. Only a majority recognition of the need for a system of common ownership of economic means, moneyless and cooperative – socialism – can address those problems people have in common, even as they seem to be divided.

Until popular delusions can be effectively dispersed the people of Batley and Spen and everywhere else in the world will continue to labour for the pecuniary benefit of the capitalist few.

DAVE ALTON

The upcoming November UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on Climate Change in Glasgow will be the 26<sup>th</sup>. There have been 40 Earth Days, while Earth Hours have been ongoing since 2007, plus there have been countless other diplomatic and scientific conferences on the climate. Only someone skilled in sophistry would ascribe to them any significant success. It is accepted opinion that the 'landmark' Paris Agreement of 2015 has failed in most of its targets.

The four horsemen of the Apocalypse, Famine, Pestilence, War and Death, are galloping across the globe, plunging our planet into catastrophe and chaos. Experts raise the prospect of coastal cities sinking into the oceans, deadly flooding, disastrous droughts, desertification and deforestation, devastating storms, decreasing soil fertility and harvests failing, and pollution of land, air and water. And all of it leading to the mass migration of climate refugees. It is described as a climate Armageddon.

The World Socialist Movement (WSM), however, is not parading about with placards calling upon fellow-workers to 'Prepare to meet thy doom'. We are not predicting the end of the human race, as a species, humans are too adaptive for that. But we are suggesting that many people may possibly see society falling apart around them.

The WSM has been criticised for our sceptical and dismissive response to reforms aimed towards mitigating climate change. Environmentalists have presented a vast array of legislative and regulatory proposals, the Green New Deal being one example, that they insist will provide more time for further fundamental policies which will halt and reverse global warming. The WSM is accused of not possessing any answer to the ecological crises, other than assuming negative attitudes about parliaments passing 'practical' measures.

*'Socialism may be the ultimate answer, but we'll have to wait a long time for it to come and so in the meantime we need to do something right now.'* is what we hear from campaigners.

It is just that procrastination that delays the advent of socialism, which can come as soon as the majority wishes and enacts it. Then decisions will be made with a view to satisfying the real human needs of everyone on the planet, and



the removal of harm to the environment. What causes global warming can be addressed with sanity and science.

Instead, we are told that we can learn from the success story of the 1987 Montreal Protocol where the world banned excessive use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to close the holes in the ozone layer as an example of what can be accomplished. What is not mentioned is that there was no conservative lobby opposing government intervention even though the issues were similar with the State curbing the freedom of industry, but back then, the vested interests involved were few and there was little need for any political push-back.

Why are we socialists so sure that government action won't work? First, we do not deny that some government initiatives might make a marginal difference in curtailing the worst of climate change, however a marginal difference is not enough. What is needed is a massive change, not just in government policy but in the way capitalism ultimately functions, and we don't think governments can ever deliver that. As far as

we're concerned, under capitalism, the environmental emergency is unsolvable.

World socialists reject the plunder and pillage of our environment in the interests of the rich and not in the interests of ourselves, *homo sapiens*. The manner in which humans organise to meet their own material needs always has to be the basis of any society. This is its mode of production and it is the same thing as its relationship to the rest of nature. Humans survive by interfering in the rest of nature to change it for their own benefit.

It is a mistake to view this intervention as inherently destructive of nature. There is no reason why it should be. That





humans have to interfere in nature is simply a fact of human existence. How it is done depends on the type of society we live under. It is unreasonable to regard human involvement in nature as some disturbing alien force. In fact we are part of nature, so it is natural for us to do so. At present, the way we are encroaching on the environment is destroying the natural balances and cycles, yet the crucial point is that human beings, unlike other species, are capable of changing their behaviour.

Countless scientific studies and innumerable academic papers have been written on the climate crisis. Many describe the effects, but nearly all avoid explaining the core issue and without defining and determining the root cause there can be no real solutions.

Some commentators point an accusatory finger at modern technology and seek a return to pre-industrial pastoral life. Others argue that since technology got us into this mess, then it can get us out of it, so they propose all sorts of techno-fixes and anti-pollution gadgets. Meanwhile the bankers and financiers concentrate their focus on fiscal policies and trading carbon credits.

Whatever their answers, they can never remove the requirement for one corporation to compete against its business rivals. No matter how sound and sensible a policy may be, it cannot be placed in the way of accumulating capital and making profits. And this corporate entitlement to compete will always be safeguarded by the government. The environment becomes a casualty and unavoidable collateral damage.

A great number of people concerned about the environment have been naive enough to believe that their protests and demonstrations would force the captains of industry to take action to head off climate change, even if only because of self-interest. But this is a cruel illusion. The people can demonstrate on the streets all they like. But the CEOs won't listen as they cannot disregard their responsibility to produce shareholder dividends.

Capitalism is primarily an economic system of competitive capital accumulation derived out of the surplus value produced by wage labour. As a system it must continually

accumulate or go into a crisis of stagnation. Consequently, human needs and the needs of our natural environment take second place to this imperative. The result is environmental degradation and unmet needs on a global scale. The ecologist's dream of a sustainable future within the logic of capitalism will always remain just that, a dream. If human society is to be able to organise its production in an ecologically acceptable way, then it must gear production directly to the satisfaction of peoples' needs and not capital accumulation.

Many ecologists talk about 'zero-growth' and a 'steady-state' society and this is something we should be aiming at. This is what socialism could do. But if we want this, we cannot retain the market system in which goods are produced to sell at a profit. The market can only function with a constant pressure to generate sales and if it fails to do this, people are made unemployed and incomes are cut. It is a fundamental flaw and an insoluble contradiction in the eco-activists' argument that they can have a green economy along with a market system. These aims are totally incompatible with each other.

The World Socialist Movement rejects the idea that capitalism has any self-correcting economic mechanism. If nothing changes, the depressing prognosis will be climate chaos and the human tragedies that will accompany it. In this circumstance, a redistribution of resources for a world of abundance, without pollution, disease and squalor makes total sense. The skills and the science already exist, and rather than using them to add to environmental destruction, we can apply them for constructive purposes. Unless the capitalist system of profit-making is superseded the grim reality may be a dystopian future ahead for all of us.

ALJO

## Climate on collision course

**Infinite growth on a finite planet?** That's a car crash! Problem is, **capitalism can't ditch infinite growth.**

Why not?

A capitalist business **needs to make a profit in a competitive market.** This means **investing in the latest tech and machinery.** If it doesn't keep up with business rivals, it will go bust.

So it needs to take that profit and turn it into **more capital** to reinvest in future production, future 'needs' and future markets.

More and more capital, more and more tech, more and more stuff, on and on.

**Infinite growth** is not just about bosses being greedy, it's the **iron logic** that capitalism is built on.

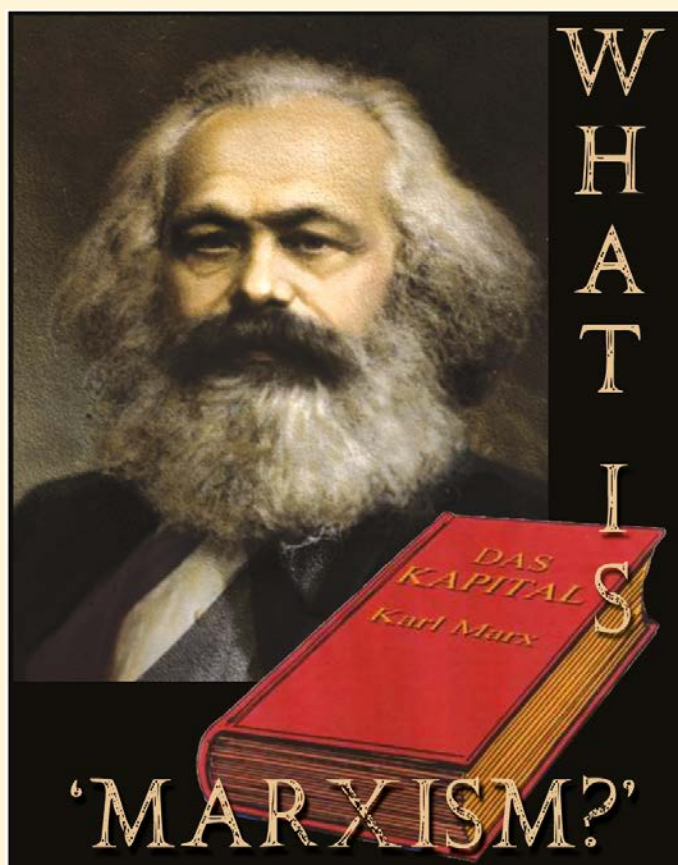
**Grow, or go under.**

But as we're discovering, the price for this growth is **environmental destruction.**

**CAPITALISM CAN'T DITCH INFINITE GROWTH, BUT WE CAN DITCH CAPITALISM.**

Think about it. The **buying and selling** system is **old and obsolete.** We don't need it. We have the global tech and know-how to create a **cooperative, post-scarcity global system** where there's no buying and selling because everything is free.

Don't destroy the planet, upgrade it, and **solve most social problems** at a stroke.



**M**arx himself did not call his theories of history, society and the capitalist economy 'Marxism'. That would have been arrogant and, besides, to attribute the views he developed to the mind of some uniquely great individual would be contrary to his own theory that social conditions gave rise to ideas that were relevant to the social circumstances and problems of the time. If Marx had never lived, 'Marxist' ideas would still have arisen.

Nevertheless, after his death those who agreed with his theories began to call themselves 'Marxists,' despite this originally being a term of abuse coined by his opponents, and to call the body of his work 'Marxism': the materialist conception of history, with technology and class struggles as the driving forces; his analysis of the economic workings of capitalism as a mechanism of uncontrollable capital accumulation that proceeded in fits and starts; and his insistence on the need for the wage working class to win control of political power in order to establish a communist (or, the same thing, a socialist) society based on the common ownership of productive resources and production to directly meet people's needs rather than for sale with a view to profit.

Marx himself would no doubt have favoured an impersonal description such as 'communist theory' or 'the theory of revolutionary socialism'. But 'Marxism' is the term that, historically, revolutionary socialists have inherited even though it is also a term that others have appropriated or been wrongly identified with, in particular the 'Leninism' that evolved in primitively capitalist Russia as the theory of state-led capitalist development in countries with a weak private capitalist class.

### Marx foremost a socialist

An important aspect of Marx's view that academics, even those who claim to be Marxists, tend to overlook, in fact often deliberately play down so that they can treat his views as merely academic, is that he identified himself with an already existing movement to see a communist (or, in later usage, a socialist) society established. As he wrote in the conclusion of

his main published work *Capital*, this society was to be based on 'cooperation and the possession in the common of the land and of the means of production' (chapter 32 on 'The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation'). He further described it, in some 1875 notes on the programme then adopted by German Social Democrats, as a 'cooperative society based on the common ownership of the means of production' where 'the material conditions of production are the co-operative property of the workers themselves'.

At the present stage in the evolution of human society and technology, a world society in which the Earth's natural and industrial resources are the common heritage of all humanity is the only framework within which the problems currently facing humanity in general and the wage working class in particular can be rationally tackled and permanently overcome.

This is the next stage in human social evolution, the material basis for which has developed under capitalism, as indicated by such current terms as 'world market', 'world trade', 'world wars', 'globalisation' and 'global warming'. A single worldwide network of productive units already exists, but the ownership and control of these is in the hands of only a small part of humanity, either directly as rich individuals or indirectly via corporations and states. Instead of this network being co-ordinated to produce what the world's population needs, it is used to produce items of wealth for sale by private and state enterprises, competing to make profits.

### Marx in his day

Today, and for the past hundred or so years, this has been an immediate possibility whereas this was not the case in Marx's day, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Then, capitalism was still in its ascendancy and had yet to fully build up the material basis for a world socialist society. Marx himself recognised this and it led him to take the long view and support what he judged would speed up the development of capitalism, its political forms as well as its spread as an economic system. For instance, he supported the Franco-British-Turkish side in the Crimean War, the North in the American Civil War, independence for Poland as a buffer between Tsarist Russia and the rest of Europe, and independence for Ireland to strengthen the hand of Britain's industrial capitalists against the ruling landed aristocracy.

This is one source of the distortion of Marx's view into one that supports the development of capitalism even after this was no longer necessary. Not all went as far as the so-called 'legal Marxists' in Tsarist Russia who openly favoured capitalist development by private capitalists, but it was an aspect of Social Democracy and Bolshevism which, both in their ways, favoured – and in practice advanced – the development of capitalism, generally in the form of a state capitalism (state organised production for sale with a view to making a monetary surplus), which they imagined, and even defined, as 'socialism'. However, state or government ownership is not the same as the common or cooperative ownership envisaged by the movement Marx was engaged in.

Marx supported the further development of capitalism in his day in order to hasten the creation of the material basis for world socialism. Once this had been achieved, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the logic of this position no longer applied. There was no longer a case for those who wanted socialism to support the further development of capitalism; they could now work directly for the immediate establishment of world socialism. The tragedy of the twentieth century was that so few took this position.

This underlines that Marxism is not what Marx did, but his general approach to economic and social development.



## Materialist conception of society

Marx's analysis of society, as set out in the well-known Preface to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, has, following Engels, traditionally been called 'the materialist conception of history' but it also applies to existing capitalist society and its transformation into world socialist society. It was called 'materialist' to distinguish it from the openly 'idealist' theories of history that were prevalent at the time, in particular that of Hegel who saw human history as the unfolding of some abstract Idea, though this was also the view of other Christians.

Marx was essentially making the point that the basis of any human society was the way in which its members were organised to satisfy their material needs, to produce the food, clothes and shelter that they needed to stay alive, together with the technology and infrastructure used to do this. As a particular system of production changed, so did all the other ways of social living.

Marx's materialism was not a denial of the role of ideas. On the contrary, 'Man makes his own history,' with humans motivated to act by the ideas they held, even if these arose from the social circumstances in which they found themselves, including, in class-divided societies, the different social circumstances of different classes with regard to production. The driving force of history was struggle between classes, in which a newly arising class championing a new way of organising production challenged an entrenched ruling class that wanted to preserve an established way from which it benefitted.

This view is still valid as a general approach to the study of the past but, more importantly, is of practical relevance for the change from a world capitalist to a world socialist society since it implies that this change of society too will be the result of a class struggle. This will be the last class struggle in history in fact, between the minority class that monopolises the world's productive resources and the excluded majority. World socialism is going to have to be the outcome of the excluded, majority class pursuing its material interest to establish a society in which the satisfaction of its material needs, indeed those of all humans, will be the direct aim.

## Marxian economics

As to Marx's analysis of the way the capitalist economy works – his 'critique of political economy' as he subtitled *Capital*—this has been confirmed time and again. Marxian economics has proved a better tool for explaining how capitalism works than any other economy theory.

Marx analysed capitalism as a system based on what his first English translator called 'the self-expansion of value', value being the basis of the economic exchange value that products of labour acquired through being produced for sale on a market, a concept Marx inherited and refined from the classical political economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

When the producers' ability to work – translated as 'labour power' – also became an item for sale due to their being separated from the ownership of land or instruments of production, they produced a value greater than the value of their labour-power, a 'surplus value' or, in its monetary form, profits. It was through their work that pre-existing value 'expanded', with the production and accumulation of surplus value becoming the driving force of the economic system that Marx called 'the capitalist mode of production.'

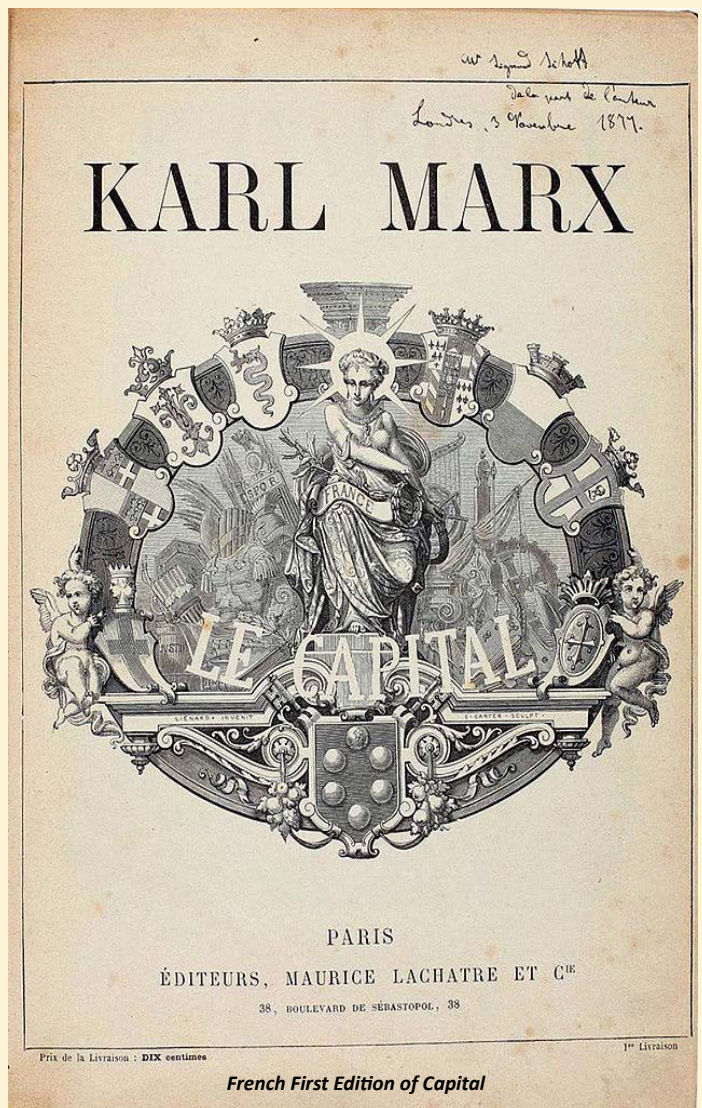
For Marx, this was not a choice by the owners of means and instruments of production but an imperative imposed on them by the competitive struggle for profits that they were engaged in with each other; they were not free agents but cogs in the mechanism of capital accumulation. This competitive

struggle for surplus value gave rise to economic laws which acted on economic agents as if they were laws of nature that humans could not change. This has proved to be the case even for governments, which have also had to submit to these economic forces, despite the much-increased role in economic affairs that they have assumed since Marx's day.

So, capitalism is an uncontrollable, impersonal system of capital accumulation out of surplus value. This, Marx analysed, is not a smooth process. The trend is upward but in fits and starts, with periods of expansion ending in a crisis and a period of reduced production during which the conditions are created for a resumption of the upward trend, which will eventually be stalled by another crisis and slump, and so on in an ever-repeating cycle of booms and slumps. No government, no type of political regime, has ever found a permanent solution to this. The capitalist economic system is simply not amenable to human control. For so long as capitalism lasts Marxian economics will have a future in demonstrating this.

The lesson here is that capitalism cannot be reformed to work for the benefit of all, and certainly not for that of the excluded majority, the exploitation of whose labour to produce surplus value is the basis of the whole system. However, capitalism will not collapse economically of its own accord. It will move uncontrollably from boom to slump and back until the excluded majority organise consciously to put an end to it and move on to the next stage of human social evolution of a united world society based on the common ownership of the planet's productive resources.

ADAM BUICK



# Capitalism 'Bad', Socialism 'Good'

At the beginning of July two openly pro-capitalist think tanks – the Tory-leaning Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and the free-marketeer Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) – published the results of polls they had carried out on people's opinion of capitalism. Both indicated that many people don't think much of it.

The one for the CPS was compiled by US pollster, Frank Luntz:

'... Dr Frank Luntz is testing public opinion in Britain to find an alternative to 'capitalism', after 170 years of use, because he fears it is becoming a bad word (...) Capitalism itself is already a "bad word" in the US and is fast becoming so in the UK too. "It's one of the key things I am trying to figure out: Does this country need an alternative to the word capitalism? I think it does"' (*Sunday Telegraph* 19 June).

In the event, he didn't come up with an alternative, merely noting that 'voters are almost as fed up with business as with politicians – presenting a huge challenge for supporters of capitalism and enterprise'. Those polled were asked to choose from a list four 'words and phrases they thought of first when thinking about British companies'. The two most chosen were 'Profits before People' (47 percent) and 'They put shareholders first, not ordinary people' (44 percent). It is not clear why Luntz felt that these factually correct and easily verifiable statements represent a challenge to supporters of capitalism. Normally, its supporters are prepared to defend both as the best way of organising the production and distribution of wealth.

While the CPS poll was concerned with people's attitude to 'capitalism' the IEA one was more concerned with their attitude to 'socialism'. A representative sample of those aged between 16 and 34 were presented with a number of statements and asked whether they agreed with them or not, without the option of 'don't know'. 67 percent said 'they would like to live in a socialist economic system' and 75 percent agreed that 'socialism is a good idea, but it has failed in the past because it has been badly done'. 78 percent blamed 'capitalism for Britain's housing crisis' and 75 percent agreed 'that climate change is a specifically capitalist problem'.

What are we to make of these results? Opinion polls are worth what they are worth and as Tory Lord Finklestein pointed out in his comments on the CPS one, 'You can't just ask consumers, and indeed voters, what motivates them, and trust what you get back' (*Times*, 7 July). Those questioned are only being asked to give a fleeting opinion that commits them to nothing. And the questions can be framed to get the answer the pollster wants.

In these two particular polls, 'capitalism' was not defined. The tacit assumption of those who drew up the questionnaires (though not necessarily of those who answered the questions) was that capitalism meant production for profit by private capitalist enterprises. Capitalism is certainly a system of production for profit – in fact, the 'Profit System' might be the alternative name for it that Luntz is looking for – but 'private enterprise' is only one form of this. Capitalism can also take

the form of state enterprises producing for the market with a view to profit. In both cases, the profit arises from the unpaid, surplus labour of the wage workers who are employed, whether by a private or a state enterprise, to produce what is to be sold.

The IEA didn't define 'socialism' either, but the question about socialism 'having failed in the past' indicates that they think it is what existed in Russia – or, their current favourite, Venezuela. The concept of state capitalism is ruled out, even though the author of its report, Kristian Niemietz, had referred, in a previous report, to this concept and specifically to us:

'... There are exceptions to this, such as the Socialist Party of Great Britain. They are not, and as far as I know, never were, apologists of Soviet-style socialism, which they describe as

'state capitalism'. They are among the few socialists who have at least some idea of what they mean by 'real' socialism. They use that term to describe a hypothetical system in which working-class people own and control the economy's productive resources directly, not via the state; a system in which public ownership is not mediated through a government bureaucracy' ([iea.org.uk/has-real-socialism-never-been-tried/](http://iea.org.uk/has-real-socialism-never-been-tried/)).

Once again, it cannot be assumed that those who answered the question meant the same as those who asked it. Had the question been 'Would you like to live in an economic system where all industries are state-owned?' the result would have been very different. On the other hand, had the question been 'Would you like to live in a system where the means of production are commonly owned and democratically controlled and the principle of *from each according to ability, to each according to need* applied?' the result could well have been the same. But this wouldn't mean that those answering 'yes' thought that such a system was achievable, only that it was desirable.

In an 80-page booklet analysing the results, *Left Turn Ahead? Surveying attitudes of young people towards capitalism and socialism*, Niemietz was more realistic as to what this meant:

"The rejection of capitalism may never have huge real-world consequences. "We should ditch capitalism, and try a socialist alternative" may well be the political equivalent of "One day, I will learn a foreign language, run a marathon, and write a novel". It may be an idea that is popular as an abstract aspiration, but less so as a concrete action plan' (p.17).

Unfortunately, this is fair comment.

However, there will be some significance that, amongst younger people today, capitalism has become a 'bad word':

'Young people associate "socialism" predominantly with positive terms, such as "workers", "public", "equal" and "fair". (...) Capitalism, meanwhile, is predominantly associated with terms such as "exploitative", "unfair", "the rich" and "corporations"' (p.7)

That can't be a bad thing.

ADAM BUICK



Dr Frank Luntz



# THE BEEF CHAIN: A USEFUL INVESTIGATION

*'Cattle ranches are destroying the rainforest enabled by giant beef companies while their US, EU (and UK) international financiers made flawed assessments.'*

Above is a statement on the destruction and deforestation of large parts of the Amazon, both legal and illegal, taken from a lengthy 2020 investigation by Global Witness entitled *Banks, Beef and the Brazilian Amazon* ([tinyurl.com/4y3bmcd6](https://www.tinyurl.com/4y3bmcd6)). It covers all aspects along the supply chain from cattle ranchers, beef traders, international financiers, supermarkets, fast-food chains and the governments which regulate them.

The numbers are staggering, whether those of cattle on ranches, size of forest cleared or the increased speed of the devastation in recent years. The investigation finished at the end of 2020 when there were approximately 390,000 beef ranches in Brazil, 40 percent of them in the Amazon. About 70 percent of cleared land in the Amazon is populated by cattle, and there are more cows than people in the country. Starting with ranches the chain continues with the beef dealers, including three Brazilian giants, which mostly control the slaughterhouses and sell on the beef. These three beef companies slaughtered more than 18 million cattle in 2017, equivalent to 40 percent of Amazon beef. These same multi-billion-dollar beef companies sell 64 percent of the total Brazilian beef exports to the EU, US and China. Next in the chain come the intermediaries who finance all aspects. These are the banks and big finance companies: the World Bank, Blackrock, ING, Barclays, Morgan Stanley, Santander, Deutsche Bank, BHP Paris, HSBC. Nearing the end of the chain retailers and fast-food outlets include Walmart, Carrefour, Nestle,

the age of the cattle. First are the ranches for breeding, from which the animals are moved on to rearing ranches and then to fattening ranches. When the time comes for slaughter they are moved once again, this time to the traders' slaughterhouse facilities.

All traders are obliged to have no-deforestation pledges and to monitor the supply chain of beef to check both non-compliance with forest destruction laws and human rights abuses. Whilst the numbers are staggering a few of the examples mentioned here give some idea of the scale of this whole beef production topic. One of the three biggest beef traders briefly mentioned above, Marfrig, describes itself as the world's second largest beef producer with a work force of over 30,000 employees. Gross profit in 2019 – over \$1 billion. Marfrig claims to have met the Greenpeace agreement regarding protection of the Amazon rainforest and no illegal deforestation nor any human rights abuses for the previous five years. Another of the 'big three', JBS, had audits carried out by the DNV-GL company on behalf of Greenpeace and the Pará state prosecutor. The auditor's Code of Conduct states that it must avoid 'any combination of roles and services that could be perceived as representing a threat to the impartiality and independence of its services. We do not classify, certify or verify our own work.' Their audits for the Greenpeace agreement claimed that JBS's cattle purchases were 99.99 percent compliant (2016) – but its audits for the Pará prosecutor's agreement the same year showed almost 20 percent of JBS's purchases were *not* compliant.

Similar improper situations occurred with banks claiming to be compliant with laws and agreements relating to illegal deforestation. Such examples as a leaked document seen by Global Witness from HSBC to the JBS company heavily criticising them for giving no clear information or statement regarding the sources of cattle and for having 'no vision, action plan, timeline, technology or solution.' Then, in the same document, HSBC recommends that investors buy shares in JBS. Other examples reveal complicity in human rights abuses of workers and those forced from their land by threats and even murder. Some perpetrators have received heavy fines or prison terms, but most escape punishment.

The top ten countries importing from the three biggest beef suppliers include China 34.4 percent, EU 10.9 percent, Russia 6.65 percent, US 3.51 percent and UK 2.89 percent. The major retailers listed earlier tend to sign up to various treaties such as threatening to boycott produce if further land grabbing or deforestation continues but when

contacted by Global Research with questions on progress or results there is often no reply.

If we look at the position of consumers, those at the end of the chain, in this case buyers of beef from Brazil and particularly from the Amazon, this report suggests that most will only have information from those they are buying from, that is supermarkets and fast-food chains. They will know where the beef was sourced but will be unaware of the various steps in the chain. If they were aware of, for instance, the global banks and their investors, plus the multinational beef traders funded by these banks, perhaps they would have second thoughts about their purchases. Over years many consumers have become aware of the harm done in other countries by the pension fund they are personally linked to



Burger King, Sainsburys, Subway and McDonalds.

Beef production in Brazil is the number one cause of deforestation emissions across Latin America. According to the World Resources Institute more than 20 million hectares of Brazil's Amazon primary tropical forest were lost between 2002-2018. Year on year forest fires driven by deforestation increasingly devastate more of the Amazon, all for the sake of profit while the planet shows all the signs of being out of control. In the years 2005-2013, before Bolsonaro became president, state interventions helped to bring about a 70 percent drop in Amazon deforestation. Bolsonaro, as president, has attacked safeguards and agencies protecting the Amazon and the situation has now become critical. Ranches fall into one of several categories depending on

and have protested to stop it. Many indigenous people in regions of the Amazon have been forced from their traditional lands, have been threatened and even killed for protesting, and continue to suffer threats and violence while trying to protect the forests which are their home.

Regarding the final section of the report which is related to what should be done, as is to be expected it is very detailed but also filled with unreal expectations of capitalism. All is tied up with law, the responsibility of traders, auditors, banks, financial actors, importers, supermarkets, federal environmental prosecutors and the Brazilian government. Having said this the PDF is well worth reading for the sheer amount of detail it offers on any and all of these important aspects, facts and figures, plus some mention of the loss of and risk to the many varied and endangered life forms, a topic from which too many are distant or ill informed. Diagrams and photographs give some added understanding of the enormity of the problem.

This global system of capitalism which thrusts separate countries into constant competition with other nations and forces many smaller states into positions of subservience to the

more powerful is absolutely the opposite of what is urgently required if the planet is to remain a safe place for all life. Surely no one can be ignorant of the fact that we are one world and that all areas affect and are affected by others, whether as the result of mining for fossil fuels on land or in the sea, from emissions of global trade practices or, as we have here, massive destruction of the lungs of the world in order to raise more beef for sale on the world market.

**JANET SURMAN**



## COOKING THE BOOKS

### Divvying up?

In an article in *New Left Review* 128 (March-April 2021), Kenta Tsuda imagines a computer that calculates the world's wealth and then allocates an equal amount to every man, woman and child on Earth. Credit Suisse's research institute estimated total global wealth in 2019 to have been \$360 trillion. Sharing this out equally amongst the world's population of 7.8 billion gives everybody \$46,000 (or £33,000) worth of wealth.

He wasn't advocating this himself. There are others who do advocate redistributing wealth so that it is more evenly divided than at present. Normally they don't advocate that everybody should have the same amount but that the present highly unequal distribution of wealth and income should be drastically reduced.

Some – and some of them – think that this is what socialists want. But we don't and never have. Friedrich Sorge, a close associate of Marx who was in regular correspondence with him, wrote in a pamphlet *Socialism and the Worker* that was first published in 1876:

'Concerning the division of money, I must relate an anecdote invented to ridicule people who are represented to have such intentions. One day in 1848, as the story goes, Baron Rothschild took a walk on the Common of Frankfurt-on-

the-Main. Two labourers met him and accosted him thus: "Baron, you are a rich man; we want to divide with you." Baron Rothschild, not the least puzzled, took out his purse good-humouredly and answered: "Certainly! We can do that business on the spot. The account is easily made. I own 40 millions of florins; there are 40 millions of Germans. Consequently each German has to receive one florin; here is your share;" and giving one florin to each of the labourers, who looked at their money quite confused, he walked off smiling' ([www.marxists.org/archive/sorge/1876/socialism-worker.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/sorge/1876/socialism-worker.htm))

What socialists want is not to divide up existing wealth but for it to become commonly owned by society as a whole. Dividing it up doesn't make sense. Most wealth is not houses, cars and the other things people consume to live. It is the wealth that is used to produce more wealth ('the means of production') in the form of farms, factories, warehouses, shops, roads, railways, communications systems, and the like. These can only be operated cooperatively and are interlinked as a world-wide network of productive units (most items, even consumer goods, incorporate the work of people from different parts of the world).

In this sense the production and distribution of wealth is already

'socialised'. What is not is the ownership of them and of what they are used to produce. That is in the hands of a tiny minority. Socialists want to bring ownership into line with the reality of production by making the means of production the common property of all society, so that they can be used for the benefit of all instead of as at present to make profits for the few.

Some of the wealth of the super-rich isn't really wealth, for instance most of that attributed to the major owners of the tech giants – Bezos, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and the others. This is commonly measured by the stock market value of the shares they own in their company. But shares are not actually existing wealth; they are claims on *future* wealth (and so which does not yet exist), with their price based on the future income they are expected to bring. There is nothing physical that corresponds to them. Their value is different from that of the real things (buildings, machinery, IT systems) that companies own. When their price goes up no new wealth is created any more than wealth is destroyed when their price goes down. There is nothing there to be divided up. Or to be commonly owned.



# PROPER GANDER

## Brexit and Exports

THE PANDEMIC has understandably pushed Brexit out of the limelight recently. But an edition of BBC One's *Panorama* reminded us that the issue drags on, and has impacted on how many businesses which export overseas run. *Brexit: Six Months On* follows several 'UK businesses at the sharp end of Brexit' and how they have managed through top-down changes to the market they have to operate within.

One common complaint is the burgeoning bureaucracy now involved in transporting commodities to Europe. For Loch Fyne Seafarms, a shellfish business in west Scotland, one delivery to a European Union country used to involve one delivery note, whereas now there are over 80 pages of tiresome forms which take hours to complete. 'Paperwork, paperwork. It's just madness. It's so much a waste of paper, a waste of time, a waste to the environment, a waste to cost' says managing director Jamie McMillan. One piece of required admin is a 'transit declaration', a messy procedure involving umpteen reference numbers from umpteen different databases. Another food exporter featured in the programme, Creative Nature, faced headaches from other Brexit-related regulations. A planned delivery to Malta got delayed for months while they argued that their vegan snack bars don't need the same certification as animal products, and then while they added mandatory new labelling to all their Europe-bound stocks. An estimate from before Britain left the EU said that all this kind of knotty red tape would cost British-based businesses £7.5 billion a year. As well as costs taken up by the time taken to plough through additional admin, firms have also had to pay out for customs fees and health certificates when exporting to Europe. For Jamie McMillan these are equivalent to tariff costs which Boris Johnson boasted wouldn't be part of his 'jumbo' Brexit deal. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable to financial pressures from increased costs (compounded by the pandemic), lacking the resources and capital which allow larger companies a little more security. In time, it's likely that protocols will change so that costs are reduced, because costs eat into profits. Ultimately, Brexit means a shift in the markets so that some profits end

up going to different capitalists than they otherwise would have. Along the way, the weakest businesses will go bust, wrecking the livelihoods of their staff, although the documentary doesn't cover businesses cut off by 'the sharp end of Brexit'.

The new complications and costs of exporting to EU countries have meant that many British companies have found that it's easier and more lucrative to transport goods elsewhere, or they have needed to do this to survive. Loch Fyne Seafarms stopped exporting to Europe altogether and instead switched to places such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Similarly, Creative Nature decided to concentrate on the Middle East and American markets. It might sound counter-intuitive for it to be more worthwhile to export thousands of miles further, especially considering the additional pollution caused by moving shellfish or snack bars halfway round the world to places which could probably produce them anyway. But the market isn't driven by what's practical or sustainable, nor by genuine needs and wants, but by whatever's more profitable.

Concert equipment transporters Stagetruck fell foul of new rules restricting how they can operate overseas. Lorries registered in the UK can no longer make more than two drop-offs in Europe, causing a problem because their business supports musicians on tour across multiple venues. To get round the change, Stagetruck built a new base in Holland for their lorries to be registered from, and then had to arrange Irish driving licences for their British drivers so they could travel

around Europe. Lynas Foodservice, also featured in the documentary, is based in Northern Ireland, which is still part of the European Single Market and therefore subject to specific rules complicating how they deal with British companies. Its managing director Andrew Lynas says that nowadays it seems easier to attend a trade show in France than one in England. The convoluted way which these and other firms have had to manoeuvre around the system highlights its absurdity. The root of the problem here isn't Brexit, but rather in nation states and the way that they divide up people. Legislation, policies and procedures formalise and normalise this, clogging up our lives and alienating us from others. *Panorama: Brexit: Six Months On* doesn't reach this conclusion, of course, its analysis not looking deeply into capitalism's workings, and certainly not beyond them.

The programme includes the views of a few economists, such as Julian Jessop of the Institute of Economic Affairs. An optimist about Brexit, he claims that shocks to the economy can have a positive impact if they make businesses think about doing things in a fresh way. In other words: treat 'em mean to keep 'em keen, which could be one of the guiding principles of capitalism itself. All that businesses can do is try to adapt to different circumstances, not having any say over what the legislators decide, nor, more fundamentally, any control over market forces. And this is the case whether or not Britain is part of Europe.

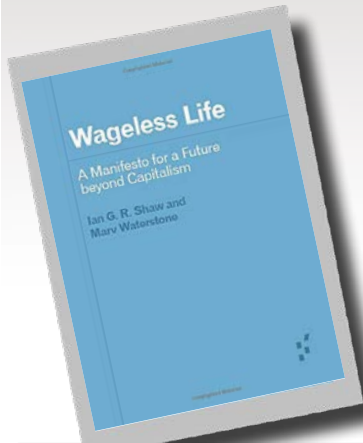
**MIKE FOSTER**



Credit: BBC

# REVIEWS

## Misleading title



**Wageless Life. A Manifesto for a Future beyond Capitalism.** By Ian G.R. Shaw and Marv Waterstone. University of Minnesota Press, 2020. 131pp.

People who advocate a moneyless, wageless society of free access to all goods and services, as members of the Socialist Party do, would be likely to see in the title of this book an expression of support for this idea and expect to find in it details of how life in that 'wageless' society would be organised. However, the first few pages would make them aware, and perhaps disappointed, that this is not what is meant by the title. They would realise that 'wageless life' is not a way of describing the basis on which a post-capitalist society would be organised, but rather a reference to what the authors perceive as an ongoing development within capitalism, that is its inability to offer its populations wages to enable them to live.

That contention is neatly summed up by the book's statement that 'we live in a world sculpted by money but populated by the moneyless' and is repeated in various different ways time after time throughout its pages. This wageless-ness of people due to their being surplus to capitalism's requirements is seen as having begun seriously in the 1970s and as having intensified over the decades since, especially with the increased power of finance capital (so-called 'financialisation'), so that now, we are told, 'workers bounce between short-term jobs, zero-hours contracts, and other forms of induced precarity' and most face 'a jobless future'. As the authors see it: 'Some of us are *virtual paupers*, other are *actualized paupers* – but pauperism is our shared condition of oppression.'

Some may see this as an over-dramatic statement of the reality of advanced capitalism. Certainly other anti-capitalist commentators have taken different views of the effects of automation on the job market and the lifestyles of its wage workers. It should also be borne in mind that, even if the current development of capitalism may seem to be inevitably leading to long-run technological unemployment or at least wage stagnation and a proliferation of 'bad jobs', capitalism in its history has gone through numerous phases and crises and on the whole has managed, even if in an extremely uneven and irregular way, to actually improve living standards and conditions for large numbers of its wage slaves. In other words, current 'trends' are not necessarily long-term ones.

None of this however takes anything away from the authors' thesis that we are 'fundamentally *pauperized* under capital', a system they characterise as 'a war of profit against life on earth'. In capitalism we all scramble to sell our energies, 'under conditions of duress and unfreedom', as the authors put it, being denied our ability to control how we work, and so suffering an alienation that separates us 'from the material conditions that enable humans to flourish'. They are undeniably correct to say that 'we sell our time – our existence on planet earth – to somebody else, leading to a global division between those who sell their time and those who buy it'. And, among all this is their observation – especially striking and pertinent in view of the recent sporting events in Europe – that 'distraction technologies and the entertainment industry sell us meaningless thrills to patch over the pain'. Their picture of modern capitalism is completed by a number of powerfully expressed reflections on the effects of capitalism on human psychology such as that 'the keystone of capitalist realism remains the utter worship of paid work', that capitalism 'thrives on producing docile subjects who are alienated from their surroundings' and that 'we live in a society that prizes the most psychotic impulses of humanity: greed, violence and reckless individualism'.

All this constitutes a withering and irrefutable indictment of capitalism, which inevitably leads to a rallying cry from the authors for a different kind of society from the one existing today. Early on in this book they quote approvingly David Harvey's statement from his *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*

that 'automation and artificial intelligence now provide us with abundant means to achieve the Marxian dream of freedom beyond the realm of necessity' and tell us that 'reversing the toxicity of the market economy has never been more urgent: to create alternative worlds animated by the ancient spirit of reciprocity, redistribution, and autonomy'. But what precise form will these 'alternative worlds' take? In this connection the authors refer to André Gorz's *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society* and his advocacy of 'a culture-based society and multi-activity for everyone', in which 'work would occupy a much less important role in everyday life' and 'people would then be free to pursue other interests, either individually or in concert with others'. They declare the need for 'rejection of hierarchy and authoritarianism, and a belief in collective self-management'. They talk about 'decolonizing our minds of the entrenched common sense of what constitutes meaningful work and its connection to happiness, identity and self-worth'. They advocate the 'right' to movement across the planet, and a share in its resources'. And in the penultimate chapter entitled 'Alter-Worlds: A Manifesto', they stress the need to move away from seeing the objective of work as 'earning enough to buy commodities' to 'working for the world' and, in the words of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Commonwealth*, 'fostering the expansion of our powers to think and create, to generate images and social relationships, to communicate and cooperate'.

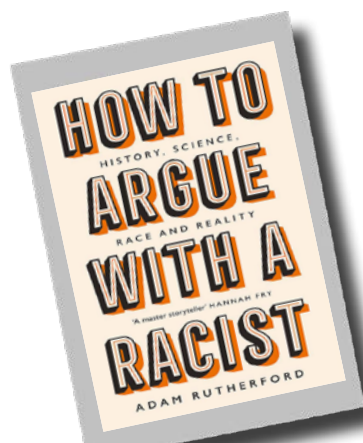
To achieve all this, the authors argue, we need an 'alter-politics'. The trouble is that, apart from abstractions such as 'inventing a new economy that de-economizes exchange' and the need to 'threaten the capitalist system with *mass demobilization*', to 'build autonomous spaces' and to 'fight for the commons', the authors do not seriously present what they themselves state as a necessity, i.e. 'a credible and coherent alternative to capitalism'. They do not seem to contemplate that wageless, money-free economy which is readily achievable and can be voted into being if enough of us want it and in which democratic associations and women and men will engage in voluntary work and have free access to whatever goods and services they need because the whole society will then collectively own and control all the resources that provide these. In that society the whole nature



of work will have changed, just in fact as Shaw and Waterstone advocate, since there will no longer be exploitation. People will no longer have to do jobs they hate because they need money — they will be able to do work they *want* to do and enjoy. And if there are some jobs that are less popular, there is no reason why more automation and the use of robotics could not take care of this. People will cooperate to do the work that makes society function and they will make decisions democratically- in workplaces, in their local communities, in their regions and, with some policy decisions, even globally. Above all there will be no more top-down control by leaders and governments and no more money controlling people's lives, wasting so much of our time and energy and causing so many of the problems so eloquently detailed and analysed by the authors of this powerful and stinging critique of the capitalist system. This kind of society is precisely one that promises the 'new social relations, new modes of economic existence and new collective worlds' that the authors argue we should dare to imagine. So we would invite them to go a step further than they themselves dare to in their book and help to promote this vision of a society advocated by the Socialist Party and well described by another writer, Aaron Benanav, in his *Automation and the Future of Work*. He describes it as one in which 'everyone can go to the social storehouses and service centres to get what they need' and in which for most people it will be 'the first time in their lives that they could enter truly voluntary agreements – without the gun to their heads of a pervasive material insecurity'.

**HOWARD MOSS**

### From Eyes to Isopoints



**How to Argue With a Racist: History, Science, Race and Reality.**  
By Adam Rutherford. Weidenfeld & Nicholson £8.99.

Rutherford defines racism as 'a prejudice concerning ancestral descent that can result in discriminatory action', and his book is an extended argument against racist ideas. Race exists, he says, because it is a social construct, but its lack of scientific validity is illustrated by the fact that racists cannot even agree on how many races there are. The concept of race was invented during the era of European exploration and exploitation, as a way of justifying the mistreatment of subject people.

The first chapter deals with the complex interactions between genes and inheritance. Even standard schoolbook examples such as red hair and eye colour are far more complex than they appear, and a child can in fact have any colour eyes, whatever the combination of their parents' eyes. Over the millennia humans have moved around a great deal, and, as one example of the consequences, a small number of white Yorkshiremen have Y chromosomes most commonly found in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, a gene flow that may date back to Roman Britain. *Homo sapiens* originated in Africa, and pale skin is an adaptation via natural selection to exposure to a weaker sun in northern regions. But even then there is no simple correlation between skin colour and latitude, and there were diverse skin colours well before the human dispersal from Africa.

Going backwards in time, family trees frequently intersect, and the genetic 'isopoint' is the time when the whole population is the ancestor of the entire population today. For Europe the isopoint is the tenth century CE, so all Europeans are related in this way. As Rutherford says, 'every Nazi has Jewish ancestors'. True 'indigenous Brits' lived here a million years ago, and were not *sapiens*. There is 'no such thing as racial purity'.

A discussion of links between ancestry and athletic and other kinds of ability is interesting. Long-distance running was once dominated by Finns, but now the medal-winners are largely from specific areas of Ethiopia and Kenya. This seems to be explicable by a combination of lean body shape and a culture of running, not some supposed racial advantage. Most classical musicians are white, while most jazz musicians are black, and this is clearly due to cultural traditions. Intelligence is not a single thing, so measuring it by a single IQ score is not sensible, and IQ tests are culturally biased.

Rutherford's book gives a clear and well-argued account of the fallacies of racist ideas. However, it is unfortunate that some of the works mentioned in the text are not included in the list of references. Also that it is necessary to deduct 26 or so from the page numbers stated in the index in order to find the actual discussion of the terms in question.

**PB**

### Anti-Bolsheviks



**The Council Communist Reader.**  
Radical Reprint, 2021

The articles in this collection – by Paul Mattick Snr, Herman Gorter, Karl Korsch, Otto Rühle and Anton Pannekoek – have long been available elsewhere.

They called themselves Communists as they agreed with Lenin's break with pre-WW1 Social Democracy when he changed the name of his party in 1918 from RSDLP to Communist Party; some initially joined the Communist Party in their country. They had regarded what happened in Russia in November 1917 as what it purported to be – a workers' revolution in which workers, organised in soviets (the Russian word for 'council'), had assumed control of society. Within a few years they realised that this had not been the case but continued to call themselves Council Communists as opposed to Bolshevik-sponsored 'Party' or 'State' Communists.

Their basic position was that workers should abandon the parliamentary Social Democratic parties and trade unions and organise themselves in work-based councils both to wage the day-to-day class struggle and to overthrow capitalism. They became very anti-party and anti-parliament, which made them similar to Syndicalists except that they situated themselves in the Marxist tradition.

They were what Mattick Snr called 'Anti-Bolshevik Marxists' (among which we can be included), regarding Russia under the Bolsheviks (Trotsky as well as Stalin) as state capitalism and opposing Lenin's vanguard party concept. They weren't always clear on the implications of a post-capitalist, communist society, some of them drawing up elaborate schemes for labour-time accounting and labour-money (not included here).

Annoyingly, Paul Mattick Jr repeatedly refers in his introduction to the German Social Democrats who took political control in Germany immediately after the end of WW1 as 'socialists'. He must surely know they weren't.

**ALB**

# 50 Years Ago

## Revolt on the Clyde

We'll occupy the yards and bring the government down! Only force will get us out! These were the sentiments expressed by the UCS shop steward's convenor just after the government announced its refusal to help Upper Clyde Shipbuilders out of yet another financial difficulty.

These sentiments are understandable but the fact remains that the occupation of the shipyards — other, perhaps, than for a short while as a token demonstration of anger and protest at

the way capitalism works — would be utterly futile. Those who urge the Clyde shipyard workers to believe that they can in this way coerce the government to preserve their jobs are cruelly and foolishly misleading them. That workers, especially in a declining industry like shipbuilding, have any “economic power” capable of overcoming the all-too-real and socially accepted political power of the government is a myth.

Locked in the yards with no work and no money, the workers would only be able to hold out for a short while. All the government would have to do would be to sit back and wait for them to surrender. They would not even have to consider using troops. The plain truth is that there is nothing the workers can do to save their jobs. The most they may be able to get is a short postponement or a little more redundancy pay. ( ...)

As workers in an unprofitable industry about to lose their jobs, sooner or later, en masse or in dribs and drabs, they are victims of capitalism. They have our sympathy as fellow-workers and we wish them luck in using their bargaining strength to get the best of redundancy terms they can, but it would be dishonest of us to pretend — as do the loud-mouthed advocates of occupation, nationalisation, workers control, etc. — that there is any way out for them under capitalism. The way to fight back is to recognise the essentially defensive and limited nature of industrial action and to join in the political struggle for Socialism, to make all the means of production the common property of the community and to abolish forever the system of employment for wages.

*(Socialist Standard, August 1971)*



## Obituary

### ROBERT VALLAR

**(20 July 1920 – 9 June 2021)**

Born over 100 years ago, Robert Vallar was a remarkable man. To his family he was dad or grandpa, to a selected group of others he was Comrade Vallar, but to everyone else who knew him — friends, customers and acquaintances — he was simply Bert.

The son of Prince Vallar and Margaret Collis, Bert had a younger brother, Stephen and a younger sister Hetty. Growing up in a loving family in the 1920s and thirties Bert saw at first hand the massive inequality, economic hardship, political turmoil and social deprivation capitalism created.

Influenced by his family and what he saw around him, in his youth Bert began to look to socialism as a way of creating a better society and way of life for everyone.

A highly intelligent person and a gifted artist Bert entered Glasgow School of Art in 1938. However, the start of the Second World War the following year saw him moving to Ireland to live with relatives. As someone with strong socialist beliefs and pacifist principles Bert fully recognised the futility of becoming cannon fodder in what was essentially a war between opposing capitalist systems.

While living in Ireland Bert gained citizenship and an Irish passport through his Irish connection. While he was in Ireland he met Teresa O'Neill. They married in 1944 and had three children: Joyce, Lorraine and Brendan; five grandchildren and

eleven great grandchildren.

After the war Bert joined his father Prince, then Scotland's preeminent tattoo artist, in his studio at 404 Argyle Street, taking over when his father died in 1947. Over the years he developed an increasingly useful side-line in supplying professional photographers with mounts, albums and photo frames.

In 1965 Bert closed the studio and moved to new premises in York Street to concentrate on developing and expanding his new business — supplying professional photographers and manufacturing and selling picture frames. Bert continued to work full time well into his eighties.

These core values and the economic and social deprivation that he saw growing up led Bert to want to change the world he and others were forced to live in under the yoke of capitalism. In 1943 he joined the Socialist Party of Great Britain. He remained a member for the rest of his life, constantly developing and enhancing his understanding and knowledge of how our economy and society really works. For many years he was one of the key members of the party's Glasgow Branch. An accomplished public speaker Bert conducted public meetings and membership drives across the city right up until the 1970s. Bert stood as the party's Parliamentary candidate for the Glasgow Woodside constituency on three occasions in the 1960s. For Bert and his family the annual Mayday meetings in Glasgow, to which he usually invited comrades from the Party's London Branch, were one of the highlights of the year.

His wife, Teresa died in 1994 and he is survived by his two daughters and son, his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

*(From the eulogy delivered at his funeral).*



# World Socialist Movement Online Meetings

## AUGUST 2021 EVENTS

**Sunday 1 August 12 noon (BST)**

Central Branch: Regular first Sunday of the month meeting

**Sundays at 19.30 (IST)**

Weekly WSP (India) meeting

**Friday 6 August 19.00 BST (GMT + 1)**

**Summer School. Listen to Friday evening session**

Speaker: Dick Field

'Socialist Recipes'. See page 7 for details.

**Friday 13 August 7.30 BST (GMT + 1)**

**Did you see the news?**

Host: Howard Moss

**Friday 20 August. No meeting**

**Sunday 22 August 10am BST.**

**Free Access: Sustainable Socialism or a  
Consumer's Cornucopia?**

Speaker: Alan Johnstone

As the COP26 summit in Glasgow approaches, there is one aspect of the Socialist Party case that will inevitably be questioned by environmentalists and it is our goal to build a money-free world of abundance while simultaneously moving towards a steady-state, zero-growth society. Such an aim green activists claim is incompatible and irreconcilable.

Although viewing themselves as radical anti-capitalists, eco-warriors remain fixated on the neo-Malthusian belief that it is the excessive number of people and their unrestrained consumption which is the problem and not the fundamentals



To join contact the admin at  
[spbg.discord@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spbg.discord@worldsocialism.org).

of our economic system that are at fault. We say only socialism can liberate the boundless potential of the people and release our planet's bountiful resources to bring about a cooperative commonwealth.

Today catastrophists project a dystopian future rather than an emancipatory future. Our vision is to take over the machine, not turn it off. Automation and robotics could reduce the labour needed in manufacturing with the least expenditure on energy and less waste so safeguarding the environment from pillage and plunder.

**Friday 27 August 7.30 BST (GMT + 1)**

**Patch Adams: the 'funny doctor'**

Speaker: Joy Baszucki

In a country, the USA, where the first thing you are asked when you seek medical treatment is 'Can you pay?', Patch Adams is a doctor who stands out for offering free health care and for having gathered together teams of other medically trained staff to do the same. Such action within the framework of the money-based system we live in can only be attractive to socialists in that it prefigures the will and ability many people have, even in capitalism, to offer their energies free of charge to those in need simply on the twin basis of empathy and personal satisfaction.

**Cardiff Street Stall,  
Capitol Shopping Centre,  
Queen Street (Newport Road end). 1pm-3pm every Saturday,  
weather permitting.**

## 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.



## Chinese Capitalist Party

'China is now an integral and irreplaceable part of global capitalism' (consortiumnews, 28 July 2020). More recently, the *Financial Times* had this to say:

'The very first line of the Chinese Communist Party's constitution declares it is "the vanguard of the Chinese working class". In reality, the last ruling Communist party of a major country has morphed into a conservative reactionary party bent on preserving the power of state capitalist elites and advancing a distinctly 19th century form of ethno-nationalist imperialism. None of this will be allowed to spoil the festivities as the CCP celebrates the centennial of its founding next month' (ft.com, 16 June).

There was nothing to celebrate, and the event merited no mention in last month's *Socialist Standard*. The FT's largely correct analysis in a piece titled '*How Xi's China came to resemble Tsarist Russia*' provoked numerous rebukes, including one from Zeng Rong of the Chinese Embassy in London, who described it as '...ideologically biased and full of smearing, defaming and groundless accusations against the Communist Party of China and China's political system. It smacks of political prejudice and is a long way from the standard of journalism and professional ethics of the FT as an influential international newspaper. The leadership of the Communist party is a choice of the people...' She could not be more Rong!

## One nation under Xi

'One party has ruled China for 72 years, without a mandate from voters. That is not a world record. Lenin and his dismal heirs held power in Moscow for slightly longer, as has the Workers' Party in North Korea. But no other dictatorship has been able to transform itself from a famine-racked disaster, as China was under Mao Zedong, into the world's second-largest economy, whose cutting-edge technology and infrastructure put America's creaking roads and railways to shame. China's Communists are the world's most successful authoritarians' (economist.com, 16 June).

The history of Leninism and Maoism in power shows that allowing elites to rule on behalf of the working class is always disastrous -- for us. Working

class self-emancipation necessarily precludes the role of political leadership. So, for its anti-democratic elitism and its advocacy of an irrelevant transitional society misnamed 'socialism', in theory and in practice, vanguardism deserves the hostility of workers everywhere. And there are signs in China and elsewhere of resistance: 'Zhang is a Chinese millennial who has joined the ranks of a social movement called *tang ping* - the "lying flat movement." It's a mindset, a lifestyle, and a personal choice for some disillusioned Chinese youth who have given up on the



rat race and are staging a quiet rebellion against the trials of 9-9-6 [9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week, plus overtime] work culture' (insider.com, 8 June).

## Arbeit macht frei

'The Chinese government remains in opposition to the "lying flat" movement. It promotes working hard -- as Chinese President Xi Jinping said during a 2018 televised address -- as the "most honorable, noblest, greatest, and most beautiful virtue."' Emperor Xi wants his wage slaves to continue working hard: 'The number of US dollar millionaires in China will increase by 92.7 percent to 10.17 million by 2025, compared with a 27.8 percent rise in the US to 28.06 million US dollar millionaires over the same period, according to a projection by the Swiss lender' (scmp.com, 22 June).

Wealth is the product of human labour, acting upon nature-given materials, that is capable of satisfying needs. We work, they take and pass on. Paul Lafargue reminds us: 'The Greeks in their era of greatness had only contempt for work: their slaves alone were permitted to labour: the free man knew only exercises for the body and mind... The philosophers of antiquity taught contempt for work, that degradation of the free man, the

poets sang of idleness...' (*The Right to Be Lazy*, 1883). The Ju/'hoansi people work only 15 hours a week and 'they hate inequality or showing off, and shun formal leadership institutions. It's what made them part of the most successful, sustainable civilisation in human history' (theguardian.com, 29 October 2017).

## Ministry of Truth

'Xi Jinping's new history of Chinese communism has little room for criticism of Mao Zedong. In February Mr. Xi issued a revised version of "A Brief History of the Communist Party of China," the official party history, in preparation for next month's commemoration of the party's 100th anniversary. This edition plays down Mao's atrocities, in particular softening the party's historic 1981 condemnation of the Cultural Revolution. That places Mr. Xi in the dubious company of dictators for whom "yesterday's weather can be changed by decree"—a power George Orwell attributed in 1942 to

Franco, Stalin and Hitler' (wsj.com, 20 June).

But it was another journalist, Julian Harvey, writing a century earlier who came much closer than Orwell to describing the democratic (i.e., leaderless) revolution socialists work for and regard as essential if we are to establish a post-capitalist world of production for use and allocation according to self-defined need: 'It is not any amelioration of the conditions of the most miserable that will satisfy us; it is justice to all that we demand. It is not the mere improvement of the social life of our class that we seek; but the abolition of classes and the destruction of those wicked distinctions which have divided the human race into princes and paupers, landlords and labourers, masters and slaves. It is not any patching and cobbling of the present system we aspire to accomplish; but the annihilation of the system and the substitution, in its stead, of an order of things in which all shall labour and all shall enjoy, and the happiness of each guarantee the welfare of the entire community' (*The Red Republican*, October 12, 1850).