

socialist standard



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BNP Utopia: Britain for the birds?



Japanese
communism
page 6



Eye for the
money
page 15



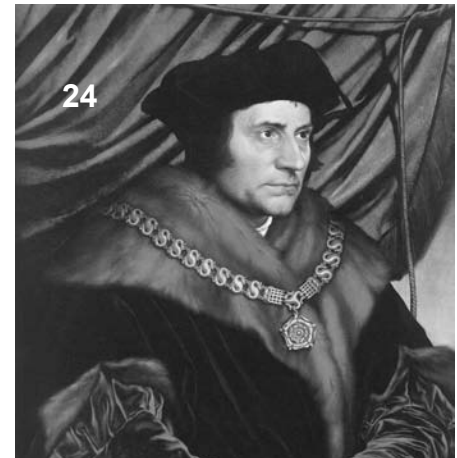
Racism: the
bigger picture
page 17



12



19



24

contents

FEATURES

- 10 **Who's afraid of the BNP?**
Is a punch-up the only solution?
- 13 **Who are the Outsiders?**
Xenophobia flourishes in Africa too, encouraged by state-building.
- 14 **Land grabs - the new colonialism**
Capitalist states have started to acquire land outside their borders again.
- 15 **Then and Now: how we live and how we used to live**
A look back at the present day from a future time when socialism has been established.
- 17 **Was Nowhere Somewhere?**
More's Utopia and the meaning of socialism

REGULARS

- 3 **Editorial**
The Democratic Circus
- 4 **Pathfinders**
Chimps, Chumps & Cheetahs
- 5 **Letters**
- 6 **Material World**
Communism in Japan
- 7 **Cartoon**
The Irate Itinerant
- 8 **Pieces Together**
- 8 **Contact Details**
- 9 **Cooking the Books 1**
Spot the Difference
- 19 **Cooking the Books 2**
Clutching at Green Shoots
- 20 **Reviews**
No chief, no god; globalization; revolutions; Cartoon Karl.
- 21 **Meetings**
- 22 **50 Years Ago**
Race & Violence
- 23 **Greasy Pole**
Hogg's ditch
- 24 **Voice from the Back**
- 24 **Free Lunch**

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 4 July** at the address below. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the editorial committee at: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High street, London SW4 7UN.
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Introducing The Socialist Party

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

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

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

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

Editorial

The passing show

The media has recently worked itself into a frenzy over the authority of the Prime Minister. The Euro-elections followed a spate of cabinet resignations. Every statement, coded phrase, nod and wink from the apparatchiks has been analysed. Whose side is Mandelson on? Will Milliband break ranks? And even, what's that badge that Blears is wearing? Kremlinologists used to try and find out what was happening in state capitalist USSR by analysing the seating positions of the party functionaries. A similar game of smoke, mirrors, cloaks and daggers appears to apply to the "democracies" of modern capitalism.

This focus on the minutiae of our leaders is what passes for democracy around the world. Democratic decision-making has become a spectator sport. We'd be as well reading our tea-leaves to find out what's happening. Jeremy Paxman could read the entrails of a chicken on Newsnight for all it matters. And as the column inches grow and the 24-hour rolling news channels multiply, year after year fewer people bother to vote.

It is in any case only every couple years or so that we get our hands on the stub of a pencil to register our pitiful preference. A few dozen crosses is your lifetime quota to express your opinion. In the time between voting, wars can start, economies may implode and climates change. And you can bet these issues won't all have appeared on the manifestos.

For world socialists, the presence of leaders is the antithesis of genuine democracy. The dominance of the market system must be removed before genuine participative democratic decision-making is possible. Crucially however it must not be forgotten that this is only achievable on the basis of majority support for socialism, by which we mean a moneyless, wageless, classless and stateless society based on producing wealth for human need not the profit of a few.

But while the democracy that capitalism provides (at least in most developed nations) is a pale imitation of the real thing, in our view it is usually still sufficient to be used to help bring about the end of capitalism.

That doesn't mean that such a transformation would be restricted to parliament (far from it – the transformation to socialism will obviously resonate across all parts of society, and in many different ways). But it does mean that any movement set on democratic revolution should not ignore the machinery of government but instead call the bluff of the democratic credentials of the capitalist state. Alongside many other developments in the wider revolutionary movement, politically we need to set out with the intent to use the shoddy political mechanism of capitalism, albeit for one purpose only, that of expressing the majority support for the ending of capitalism.

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Chimps, Chumps & Cheetahs

As evolved and unintelligently-designed bald chimps everywhere must surely know, this year is the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth. However they may be less aware that it is also claimed to be the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's sonnets, the 300th anniversary of the start of the industrial revolution and, perhaps less debatably, the 50th birthday for the Mini automobile (www.culture24.org.uk/history/art66265).

Crowning all these trivial achievements this month is of course the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. What can one say of this historic event? At the time it was hard to overhype. One small step for a man, one giant poke in the eye for the Russians, it supposedly gave us velcro, teflon and digital watches, but more to the point, it promised to launch the bone-throwing chimp species, Kubrick-like, into the galaxy.

And, er, that was it. Apollo the space overture was not followed by the opera. Since then the veterans who knew how to get to the moon have all died or retired, and now the tyro NASA chimps are back where they started, arguing about rockets and facing Obama funding cuts instead of Kennedy largesse.

What did it all mean? Not much, except to show that in science, as in share prices, optimism can overrun the cliff-edge of experience, a fact which often escapes young chimps who imagine that scientific progress is secure, inevitable and limitless. Perhaps this is because, in the non-scientific world, we don't tend to hear about the null results, the blind alleys or the dead-ends, we only hear the success-stories. This may mean, argues NASA climatologist Peter Dizikes, that we foster unrealistic expectations of science in practice: "The way we teach science is that Newton said "X" and it's correct, so learn this formula. This promotes the idea that science knows all the answers. Whereas when you look at any actual working scientist, whether it's in climate change or medicine or building a nuclear power plant, the stock in trade of science is uncertainty; it's not certainty" (www.salon.com, 19 June).

It doesn't help that capitalism is all about hard sells not hard truths, a blizzard of con rackets, snake oil cures, kwik-fixes and pseudo-solutions that all too easily make us into chumps who forget to ask the right questions. Too often the media will breathlessly report anything scientists offer them, without any provisos or qualifications, just to grab a slice of reader attention. Grey areas require grey matter, but who's got the time? To take a random sample of the latest news items, we learn, 'according to new studies', that boys who have a 'warrior gene' are more likely to end up in violent gangs (Yahoo News, 5 June), that squeamish people are more likely to be conservative (Yahoo News, 5 June) and that engineers are more likely to become terrorists (*New Scientist*, 13 June). There is not space here to detail all the ways in which these studies may be misleading, misguided



or plain wrong, but sample size, experimenter expectation and the possible existence of conflicting studies would be three avenues to explore for starters.

A possible fourth is fraud. When politicians or bankers turn out to be corrupt nobody raises an eyebrow. When catholic priests

turn out to be kiddy-fiddlers the world reacts with weary resignation. But when scientists fiddle data everyone throws up their hands in shocked amazement, because scientists are for some reason expected to be above that sort of thing.

Yet there are some legendary cases of scientific fraud, and it turns out that the latest and as yet unnamed addition to the periodic table, element 112, was held back from recognition by years because one member of the team was sabotaging the results by falsifying data (*New Scientist*, 20 June). Worse, scientific fraud may not be rare but commonplace. A recent survey involving over 11,000 academics found a third of scientists admitting to 'massaging' research data and one in fifty indulging in outright fakery: "When scientists were asked about colleagues' behaviour, 14 percent said they had witnessed research fraud and almost three-quarters said they had seen questionable behaviour". Socialists won't be surprised to learn that "misconduct was most common in clinical, medical and pharmacological research, where large grants are often at stake" (TimesOnline, 7 June). Naughty chimps! Me Tarzan, you Cheetah.

Or should that be naughty orang-utans? A new paper that flies boldly in the face of the genetic evidence suggests that humans are biologically closer to the red apes than to chimps or bonobos, an idea which is causing widespread splutterings of derision in the scientific community. Nevertheless *New Scientist* (20 June) sees fit to lead with a lofty editorial on why we should welcome scientific heresy, even if it's wrong: "Alternative hypotheses should be given an airing ... science that pulls up the drawbridge on new ideas risks becoming sterile." How true, even if it does sound a little defensive from a journal which is drawing fire for being too sensational and populist.

But heresy is risky, and scientists can be as conservative and risk-averse as anyone else. Privately many scientists could put together the same 'heresy' socialists propose, which is that capitalism, once the friend and sponsor of good science, now is more its enemy than its ally. It controls the funds and the fundamentals, it calls the tunes, it forms the corrupting context in which science does its work. In a capitalist world where politicians are vile, bankers are venal and priests are paedophiles, it can hardly be a revelation to find that science is as bent as everything else. But will they speak out against the system which holds them in check? Not while they have a vested interest in not doing so. That's why we have to do it for them.

Hypocrisy over immigration

Dear Editors

The perpetual media discussion about immigration, conveniently forgets the countless numbers of people who have migrated from the British Isles (including Ireland when it was part of the British Isles) over the past 400 years. When one considers for example that the current population of the Republic of Ireland is some seven million approximately, while the current Irish descendant population in the USA alone is estimated to be around seventy million (to say nothing of the Irish descendants in the other former “black” countries of Canada/ New Zealand/Australia/South Africa, etc, etc), the hypocrisy of the anti-immigrant debate becomes evident.

The same applies to the so called “white British” historical emigration to “black” countries around the world. The white British descendant population in East and South Africa, Oceania, North and South America etc runs into countless dozens of millions.

Further this debate ignores the fact that Britain was built exclusively on the profits generated by slavery and the pillaging of its colonies. Prior to the 16th century England was an impoverished backwater – even Christopher Columbus when he was trawling the Royal Courts of Europe to fund his New World adventure, never considered asking the English Court for assistance, as England was the Haiti of Europe at the time.

Anti-immigrant types need to acquaint themselves with their own history. Many of them fail to even appreciate that they themselves are recent arrivals in the British Isles –

their Anglo-Saxon invader ancestors were not here when the Romans with their British based African regiments, were building Hadrian’s Wall. The immigration debate needs to have these facts discussed.

Lalu Hanuman, Barbados

Reply:

We get your point, even if there is some exaggeration. For instance, the population of the Republic of Ireland is about 4 million not 7 million. And the wealth of British capitalism was not built “exclusively” on the profits of slavery and the pillaging of its colonies. This was certainly a key factor in the original accumulation of capital to start capitalism going, but after that the main source of profits was – and still is – the unpaid labour of the working class in Britain – *Editors.*

Who are the real litter louts?

Official statistics from the Home Office’s Office of National Statistics show that there is a high level of concern about the problem of litter. Indeed, of all crime and anti-social behaviour litter has the second highest source of concern (33 percent of those surveyed felt “a high level of worry”). Vandalism comes top of the list (34 percent), both much higher than racial harassment (8 percent) and fear of burglary (14 percent). Hardly a week goes by without a letter sent to local papers on the subject. Now common or garden street litter is hardly one of the world’s major problems, but most people are primarily concerned with things that affect them – it is simply a human response to something right before the eyes. People clearly want and indeed should expect a decent local environment. What can be done about this problem? We examine a few solutions . . .

Solution no. 1: More bins.

It might be suggested that more rubbish bins would solve the problem. Certainly this could have some effect. However my local area has plenty of bins (empty ones) and plenty of litter. Putting the rubbish in the bins is clearly something different from putting the bins up in the first place.

Solution no. 2: The strong arm of the law.

A crackdown on ‘litter louts’– fines or imprisonment – can be a short term solution particularly in areas with a

traditional respect of authority. Such a policy has been carried out very successfully, for example in Singapore. However, whether large and disparate societies have the resources to deal with what is basically a minor infraction of the law in such a heavy-handed manner is doubtful.

Solution no. 3: Education.

A rather cheaper method than a policeman on every corner would be a concerted campaign in the schools: “Naughty children: don’t throw things on the street.” However education (or what passes for it in these sad times) seems to be part of the problem. It is almost certainly the case that the majority of street litter is thrown by children or adolescents.

Solution no. 4: ‘Alternative’ education.

If it really is the case that littering is a product of alienation in the schools it might be advisable to change the system of schooling to one more child-friendly. At the risk of us being deluged with letters from irate ‘alt-ed’ enthusiasts, the idea of ‘nice’ schooling is ridiculous in a world that is most definitely not nice. The modern system of education generally fits the bill required - that of producing (and reproducing) the ideal modern worker. Also again we hit the problem of resources - who will pay for this intensive, alternative approach?

Solution no. 5: A ‘green’ idea.

Very popular in Germany, the Green ‘Law of Return’ means that councils are



entitled to ship product wrappings back to the factory of origin. A ton of crisp packets dumped on the doorstep is a powerful argument for making biodegradable or recyclable packaging. This comes close to the problem and all credit here for identifying the real litter louts. But recycling uses resources – surely better, as far as is possible, not to produce potential litter in the first place; however, this cannot be expected from those whose business is to produce.

Solution no. 6: Socialism.

Litter, like most other problems of the world, is a product of the current phase of capitalism. Consumption to the nth power (including snack foods, the main cause of street litter), within a background of built-in obsolescence determined chiefly by the great corporations, is the order of the day, all driven by the relentless quest for profit. Compounding the issue within capitalism is the sense of alienation, especially among young people, the result of the class ownership of society and the commodifying of everyday life – all of which helps produce the carelessness of littering. Powerless and voiceless – why should the ‘litter lout’ care? The streets really are not our own, nor can they be under capitalism.

KAZ



Communist Party meeting in Shibuya, March 2009



get support from the Japanese working class and, hopefully, bring it to power.

At first the JCP supported the American occupation, considering it a “liberating force”. Although considering Japan to be a highly developed capitalist state, it nevertheless claimed that all feudal remnants must be eliminated before proceeding to what it considered to be socialism – actually state capitalism.

By 1947 the Communist Party had 100,000 members; and in the 1949 general elections polled three million (10 percent) votes. By the time of the Korean war, the party ceased to collaborate with the American occupiers; and by 1951, it was reduced to a semi-legal status. With the Soviet-Chinese split, the JCP leadership tended to side with the People’s Republic of China, and was increasingly critical of Khrushchev. By 1965 all the pre-Soviet officials were expelled from the party.

Nevertheless, despite all its ideological problems, the Japanese Communist Party could claim almost 300,000 members in 1966. Later, it fell out with Mao and membership declined. It considered itself to be a completely independent, national Japanese party.

According to the *Guardian’s* Tokyo correspondent, Justin McCurry, “the JCP is barely recognisable from the party of 30 years ago”. It has seen its fortunes transformed after years of being dismissed as an irrelevant hangover from the Cold War. Membership is now said to be over 410,000, with around 15,000 joining since 2007, of which 25 percent are under 30. It is popular with students. The circulation of the party’s official paper, *Akahata* (“Red Flag”), has

increased from about one million six months ago to 1.6 million now, although in 1980 circulation topped 3.5 million.

The party owes some of its success to a novel, *Kaniksen* (“The Crab Factory Ship”), first published in 1929, and forgotten until last year when 500,000 copies were sold in a few months. It describes how fishermen rebelled against their bosses.

Need the Japanese capitalist class worry? I doubt it. It talks about welfare and jobs, and improving education. It has also made itself felt on the internet. With regard to the traditional Liberal Democratic Party, the JCP says: “We would co-operate on individual policies, but we wouldn’t be part of a coalition.” Of the 480-seat lower house of the Japanese parliament, the JCP has nine seats. It has, it proclaims, a commitment to “democratic change within the current framework of capitalism”. And not a word about communism/socialism.

PETER E. NEWELL

Surprisingly, the Communist Party of Japan still exists and, indeed, seems to be flourishing. Faced with the Japanese economy in steep decline, and ever-growing unemployment, many Japanese workers are, in the words of the *Guardian* (24 April), turning “to a new trend of cuddly communism”. But are they? Is the JCP educating common ownership, production for use instead of profit and the abolition of the wages system?

The Japanese Communist Party was formed in July, 1922, largely by anarcho-sindicalists who were quite influential among Japanese workers prior to 1914.

Between 1922 and the end of the second world war, in 1945, the JCP was an illegal organisation, with an underground membership which never exceeded 1,000. With legality it became a typical Leninist-Stalinist party, faithfully supporting the Soviet Union and advocating those reforms which it felt would

IRE OF THE IRATE ITINERANT



AH, THE VIRTUES OF THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC...



... SO DEEPLY INGRAINED IN OUR CULTURE THAT WE DESPISE THOSE WHO DON'T WORK, UNLESS THEY'RE RICH, SAT ON A YACHT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THEN, WE RATHER ADMIRE THEIR LUXURIATING IN IDLENESS.



GREGORY 09

BUT IS HARD WORK QUITE THE NOBLE THING WE'VE BEEN TAUGHT TO BELIEVE? MAYBE BY NOT WORKING, WE'RE HURTING THE PLANET LESS THAN THOSE WHO DO. MAYBE BY WORKING HARD, YOU'RE JUST HURTING YOURSELF, AND HURTING THE ENVIROMENT.



... AND FOR THAT MATTER, WE COULD EASILY LIVE WITHOUT BANKERS, STOCKBROKERS AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS...



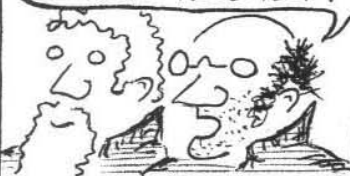
SUCH A HUGE AMOUNT OF OUR ENERGY IS WASTED ON THE PRODUCTION, PROMOTION AND SALE OF STUFF, SERVICES, WE DON'T REALLY WANT, OR NEED. ALL THIS TOTALLY UNNECESSARY HARD WORK. WE COULD HAPPILY LIVE WITHOUT IT...



HOW MUCH OF THE WORK THESE FOLKS DO IS REALLY USEFUL.. I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT PROFESSIONALS LIKE LAWYERS AND POLITICIANS DELIBERATELY CREATE A COMPLEX KIND OF RACKET TO KEEP THEMSELVES IN (WELL PAID) EMPLOYMENT. DID WE REALLY NEED THE LONDON ASSEMBLY?



A LONG TIME AGO THOSE UTOPIAN VISIONARY FUTUROLOGISTS... WELLS, CLARKE ET AL, FORESAW A WORLD WHERE MACHINES WOULD FREE US ALL FROM THE DRUDGERY OF WORK...



OF COURSE, WORK SOMETIMES JUST FULFILLS A NEED. WITHOUT CRIME, WE'D HAVE NO POLICEMEN, SECURITY GUARDS, PRISON STAFF. WITHOUT ILLNESS, NO DOCTORS, NURSES, SURGEONS. WITHOUT WAR, NO SOLDIERS, SAILORS, OR THE WHOLE ROTTEN PARAPHERNALIA OF THE 'DEFENCE INDUSTRY' - ESPECIALLY IN THE U.S.A, A WHOLE SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY DEVOTED TO SOMETHING FAR WORSE THAN USELESS.



THEIR OPTIMISM SEEMS RATHER MISPLACED NOW. MACHINES JUST SEEM TO MAKE MORE WORK FOR US. LOOK AT PEOPLE SAT IN THEIR CARS IN A TRAFFIC JAM, AND BEHOLD HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS ENSLAVED US!



LIKewise, WE SURVIVED WELL ENOUGH BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE MOBILE PHONE, INTERNET, JET PLANE BUT NOW LIFE IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THEM. THESE TECHNOLOGIES HAVE EFFECTIVELY EMASCULATED US! AND THEY ALL NEED PAYING FOR. SO WE'RE OBLIGED TO WORK, EVER HARDER, IT WOULD SEEM.

YOU KNOW, 'DOWNSIZING' SEEMS LIKE SUCH A MIDDLE CLASS CONCEIT. AFTER ALL, YOU NEED SOMETHING TO DOWNSIZE FROM! BUT MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT. AND MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T RANK PEOPLE, AND OURSELVES, ON THE WORK WE DO...





MEGA-DEATH MARKETPLACE

"The annual Asia Security Conference, a forum for discussion, brought together some of the world's main arms-makers with military chiefs nervously eyeing their neighbors' moves and looking to upgrade defenses in a region full of long-running insurgencies, potential maritime disputes and growing wealth. 'Defense suppliers find it very important to be here to make a set of contacts,' said Jonathan Pollack, professor of Asian and Pacific Studies at the U.S. Naval War College. Japan's defense minister told the gathering that the country, anxious about North Korea's latest nuclear test, would not strike first but it was still looking to boost its air force with Lockheed Martin F-22 fighter jets. Top executives from firms such as Boeing, the Pentagon's No.2 defense supplier, flew to Singapore to rub shoulders with potential clients, as they look to expand foreign sales at a time when the Obama government is starting to cap defense project spending." (*Yahoo News*, 31 May)

TODAY'S PRICE OF OIL

"President Alan Garcia labored Saturday to contain Peru's worst political violence in years, as nine more police officers were killed in a bloody standoff with Amazon Indians fighting his efforts to exploit oil and gas on their native lands. The new deaths brought to 22 the number of police killed — seven with spears — since security forces moved early Friday to break up a roadblock manned by 5,000 protesters. Protest leaders said at least 30 Indians, including three children, died in the clashes. Authorities said they could confirm only nine civilian deaths, but cabinet chief Yehude Simon told reporters that 155 people had been injured, about a third of them with bullet wounds." (*Associated Press*, 6 June)

YESTERDAY'S PRICE OF OIL

"Royal Dutch Shell and the families of Ken Saro-Wiwa, an executed Nigerian opposition leader, and other activists hanged by the military government in 1995, on Monday agreed a \$15.5m settlement in a New York court case stemming from allegations the oil group was complicit in the executions. The settlement, in which Shell and its Nigerian subsidiary denied any liability, ended a 13-year campaign by relations and supporters of Saro-Wiwa to hold the company accountable. A spokesman for the plaintiffs said \$5m of the settlement to be paid by Shell would be put into a trust fund to promote education and welfare in the Ogoniland region of the Niger delta. The balance would be shared among 10 plaintiffs after legal costs were met. Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists were hanged after leading a campaign against Shell's activities in the region and the then military-led government. ...Oil production stopped in Ogoniland in 1993 when Shell ceased operations amid mass protests led by Saro-Wiwa against the environmental damage alleged to have been inflicted by the company's operations. The plaintiffs had alleged that at the request of Shell, and with its assistance and financing, Nigerian soldiers used deadly force and massive, brutal raids against the Ogoni people throughout the early 1990s to repress a movement against the oil company." (*Financial Times*, 9 June)

Contact Details

UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

LONDON

Central London branch. 2nd Weds. 6.30pm. 2nd Wednesday 6.30pm. Coffee Republic, 7-12 City Road, EC1 (nearest Tube and rail stations Old Street and Moorgate).

Enfield and Haringey branch. Thurs 26th. 8pm. Angel Community Centre, Raynham Rd, N18. Corres: 17 Dorset Road, N22 7SL. email:julianvein@blueyonder.co.uk

South London branch. 1st Tues. 7.00pm. Head Office. 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Tel: 020 7622 3811

West London branch. 1st & 3rd Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (Corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. Corres: 51 Gayford Road, London W12 9BY

Pimlico. C. Trinder, 24 Greenwood Ct, 155 Cambridge Street, SW1 4VQ. Tel: 020 7834 8186

MIDLANDS

West Midlands branch. Meets every two months on a Sunday afternoon (see meetings page for details). Tel: Tony Gluck 01242 235615

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NORTHWEST

Lancaster branch. Meets every Monday 8.30pm. P. Shannon, 10 Green Street, Lancaster LA1 1DZ. Tel: 01524 382380

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

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

Carlisle. Robert Whitfield. E-mail: rewcbri13@yahoo.co.uk tel: 07906 373975

Rochdale. Tel: R. Chadwick. 01706 522365

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Luton. Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP

Redruth. Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 1PB. Tel: 01209 219293

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Edinburgh branch. 1st Thur. 8-9pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh.

J. Moir. Tel: 0131 440 0995 JIMMY@jmoir29.freemove.co.uk Branch website: <http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/>

Glasgow branch. 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Richard Donnelly, 112 Napiershall Street, Glasgow G20 6HT. Tel: 0141 5794109. E-mail: richard.donnelly1@ntlworld.com

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Dundee. Ian Ratcliffe, 16 Birkhall Ave, Wormit, Newport-on-Tay, DD6 8PX. Tel: 01328 541643

West Lothian. 2nd and 4th Weds in month, 7.30-9.30. Lanthorn Community Centre, Kennilworth Rise, Dedridge, Livingston. Corres: Matt Culbert, 53 Falcon Brae, Ladywell, Livingston, West Lothian, EH5 6UW. Tel: 01506 462359 E-mail: matt@wsmweb.fsnet.co.uk

WALES

Swansea branch. 2nd Mon, 7.30pm, Unitarian Church, High Street. Corres: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB. Tel: 01792 643624

Cardiff and District. John James, 67 Romilly Park Road, Barry CF62 6RR. Tel: 01446 405636

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Spot the difference

The BNP has an economic policy? Apparently, and it's not just send all non-white people (and Poles) back to where they came from and give their jobs to British workers. Their manifesto for last month's European elections said: "All the old parties are in the pockets of the banks and big business. Lab-Lib-Con all pretend to be worried about job losses but have allowed globalisation to destroy jobs and drag down wages . . . We will protect British jobs from cut-throat foreign competition and put British workers first – every time!"

How they propose to do this can be found on their website:

"Globalisation has caused the export of jobs and industries to the Far East, and has brought ruin and unemployment to British industries and the communities who depend on them. Accordingly, the BNP calls for the selective exclusion of foreign-made goods from British markets and the reduction of foreign imports. We will ensure that our manufactured goods are, wherever possible, produced in British factories, employing British workers. When this is done, unemployment in this country will be brought to an end and secure, well-paid employment will flourish." (<http://bnp.org.uk/tag/bnp-economic-policy/>)

That's easier said than done. Basically, it's a proposal to try to isolate capitalist Britain from the world market. But this couldn't be done without making things worse.

It is naïve to assume that if a British government imposed a "selective exclusion of foreign-made goods", i.e. protectionism, the governments of other capitalist countries would just take this lying down. They would adopt similar measures aimed at selectively excluding British, i.e. for them "foreign", imports. British manufacturing exports would be bound to suffer. Unemployment would return (if it ever disappeared) and "secure, well-paid employment" would wither not flourish.

The BNP was not the only party to advocate such a pie-in-the-sky policy as a supposed way to secure jobs and end unemployment. Here is what the No2EU list, led by Bob Crow of the RMT union and supported by the Communist Party of Britain (*Morning Star*) and the ex-Militant Tendency Trotskyists:

"Nation states with the right to self-determination and their governments are the only institutions that can control the movement of big capital and clip the wings of the trans-national corporations and banks. . . . To revitalise the economy, Britain must return to creating wealth based especially in manufacturing, hi-tech and trade across the world . . . To return to an economy based on manufacturing requires massive investment and where appropriate protection of home industries. It is the only way to ensure jobs and a decent safe future for the peoples of Britain." (<http://www.no2eu.com/economiccrisis.html>)

They don't explain any more than the BNP where the profitable market for these extra manufacturing goods is to come from. They, too, dream of a national capitalism permanently providing high wages and steady jobs.

No wonder the groups that made up No2EU refuse to debate with the BNP. When it comes to economic policy, it wouldn't be much of a debate as they wouldn't find much to disagree about, especially as the BNP also advocates "the renationalisation of monopoly utilities and services, compensating only individual investors and pension funds". We, on the other hand, are prepared to debate against both of them (together if need be, to save time) and put the socialist case that, as capitalism is already a world system, there are no national solutions to the problems it causes for workers and that the only answer is go forward to world-wide socialism not back to the Nation State.

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Egging on the racists?

Who's *afraid* of the BNP?

The BNP's racist ideology is hateful and it is understandable – and to be welcomed – that most people don't like it. But what's the best way to deal with them?

Despite the high profile media campaign supported by the churches and all the other parties to try to stop this, the BNP did manage to get two MEPs elected to the European Parliament in last month's elections. The BNP is an obnoxious outfit and people are stupid to vote for it. It is no more able to provide an answer to workers' problems than the other parties. The problems facing working people and their families are not caused, as the BNP claims, by immigration or immigrants and will not be solved by the Fortress Britain they advocate with "British Jobs for British Workers". They are caused

by capitalism which the BNP, like the other parties, supports. Even if all immigration was stopped and all (recent) immigrants expelled this would not make things better for those the BNP calls the “indigenous population”.

The other parties had a cheek in asking people to vote for them to keep the BNP out. That’s because they all support capitalism and it is capitalism’s insoluble problems that the BNP exploits to gain votes. Voting for some other capitalist party to keep the BNP out is as stupid as voting for the BNP. That’s to vote to maintain the conditions which allow the BNP to flourish.

Others, on the Far Left, want to take a more confrontational attitude towards the BNP. They say it is a fascist party and that it should be physically “smashed” before it has a chance to smash political democracy. One problem with this is that the BNP is not a fascist party. Some of its leaders have expressed pro-Nazi sympathies in the past (and may well still harbour them) but, unlike the Nazi party in pre-1933 Germany, the BNP is not blaming parliamentary democracy for causing working-class problems. If it did, it wouldn’t get the votes it does. It blames workers’ problems on immigration and immigrants. So, it is anti-foreigner and racist, which is objectionable enough, but that’s not the same as fascism.

The only effective way to deal with the BNP is to confront *their arguments* head on and that includes their nationalism. The other parties cannot do this because they too are nationalists. The BNP is only expressing in an extreme form a nationalist position that they themselves share. They have even tried to steal the BNP’s clothes here by emphasising that they are against “illegal” immigrants and vie with each other to boast how many they have, or should have, deported. They encourage nationalism by describing members of the armed forces as “heroes” and by flying the Union Jack or even the

“The rivalry between the BNP and the Far Left can be seen as a rivalry between two leadership groups – one calling itself a ‘vanguard’, the other a ‘spearhead’”.

flag of St George (a traditional fascist emblem) on public buildings. All grist to the BNP’s mill.

Like the BNP, the other parties claim that all “British people” have a common interest as against the people of other countries, i.e. as against “foreigners”. But this is not the case. UK citizens are divided into two classes, on the basis of their relationship to the means of production – those who own them and those who don’t –, whose interests are quite opposed. It is in the interest of those who own Britain to convince the rest of us living here that we share a common interest with them in them acquiring and protecting outside markets and investment outlets. To get us to support them is the role of the nationalism that is inculcated into us from birth and reinforced every day by the media.

The semblance of justification for this is that, if employers are successful in this, then they can offer more and more secure jobs. In actual fact, however, those in



“What BNP members need is not a kicking, but putting right”

one country who have to work for a wage or a salary have a common interest with wage and salary workers in other countries rather than with our employers. That is the socialist, anti-nationalist position which the Socialist Party maintains against all other parties, not just the BNP.

Bash the Fash?

The Far Left have made two mistakes in trying to counter the BNP. The first has been to adopt a policy of physically fighting with them. The second has been to invoke the BNP as a bogey to try to gain recruits amongst post-war immigrants and their families.

Beating somebody up never changed anybody’s mind. It probably reinforces their views. In any event, this is defeatist in assuming that people can’t change their minds. Which, fortunately, has been disproved many times. For instance, the actor Ricky Tomlinson, who introduced the Scargill Labour Party’s Party Political Broadcast in the recent elections, was once a member of the National Front, even a candidate for them in a local election. Now he thinks that the EU not immigrants cause working-class problems. Still wrong, but no longer a racist.

What BNP members need is not a kicking, but putting right. And the best way to do this is to confront the ideas of their leaders in open, public debate. That’s why the Socialist Party is opposed to the policy of “No Platform for the BNP”. On the contrary, we want them up on a platform to face socialist criticism of their erroneous ideas and futile policies.

Organising particular immigrants as a group, as the SWP tried to do with Muslims through Respect (before George Galloway threw them out and continued this with the aid of other Trotskyist groups), is dangerous and plays straight into the hands of the BNP by introducing “communalist” politics. If, says the BNP, Muslims can organise as a “community” to defend and further their “communal” interests, why can’t the “indigenous” (read: “white”) working class do the same? Indeed, under Nick Griffin, this is the successful strategy the BNP has pursued. The BNP, he argues, seeks to represent the interests of “indigenous” workers as against immigrants who, he claims, are being given preferential treatment by the “liberal Establishment”. It’s untrue, but it finds an echo amongst some sections of the working class, though not amongst those living and working in close proximity with immigrants who have learned to regard second and third generation “immigrants” as fellow workers.



In other words, two can play at “communalist” politics and the BNP will always be able to make more progress at this than the Far Left since they are appealing to a majority “community”. It is possible to detect a certain jealousy amongst Leftists at the ability of the BNP to “mobilise” workers they would like to be able to mobilise themselves. Indeed, the rivalry between the BNP and the Far Left, which sometimes finds expressed in physical fighting, can be seen as a rivalry between two leadership groups – one calling itself a “vanguard”, the other a “spearhead” – to lead workers. To which workers should adopt “a plague on both your houses” attitude.

As capitalism is the cause of the problems workers face these problems will continue as long as capitalism does. And as long as capitalism continues there will always be parties like the BNP which scapegoat other workers as the supposed cause of these problems. The answer is not to stop these parties by voting for other parties or by physically fighting or banning them. It is to organise on a world-wide class basis to end capitalism – which, necessarily, involves a rejection of nationalism.

ADAM BUICK

Xenophobia flourishes in Africa too, encouraged by state-building.

Who are the outsiders?



2008, a Mozambique immigrant burned alive in South Africa while the police look on

It is not only in the West that black people are subjected to racism and abusive languages by the host nation's population as "bloody foreigners", "parasites", "aliens", "refugees", etc, but also Africans living in other African countries are grimly accustomed to the same abusive language. Matters have sometimes been getting out of hand in recent years. There is an irony that this is happening when many countries in Africa are busy trying to organise a Union of African states to replace the useless organisation that the OAU has been.

A few years ago, tens of thousands of Eritreans and Ethiopians were expelled against their will when the two countries started war (May 1998 till June 2000). The Eritreans and Ethiopians who happened to be respectively living in each other's country had lived there for most of their lives, in some cases many of them didn't know their country of origin. The rulers of both sides accused each other, accurately, of human rights violation.

The reasons for these mass expulsions and violence are almost always the same in each country. "Patriotic" citizens are quick to assert, nationalistically, that the "outsiders" have come to take over their resources, their jobs and what have you. However, though the grievances of the masses may be related to economic factors, it is unreasonable to blame it on their fellow poor workers.

In order to ward off unrest various tactics are employed by governments. One of them is creating divisions among the poor workers by, for instance blaming foreigners and whipping up nationalistic feelings. In response to the official propaganda, the masses who are hungry and illiterate are taken in by the government policy.

Since anger is emotional and overpowers reason, the least provocation can result in misdirected violence, usually manifested in riots. The violence is usually turned loose on the "aliens". This is the real cause of xenophobia: the rich pitting the

poor against the poor.

In the past when Africa didn't have artificial boundaries such as there are today, wars and hatred were not as rife. Making up nations has taken a great deal of building. There is almost no nation-state that has not had its boundaries drawn in blood. America was built on the bodies of the native population. It is a process that continues today in Africa. The effort, though, has to be ongoing. States have required the use of an education system, to standardise learning, spread a national history and a sense of shared culture.

Language became a factor in establishing state power, and thus it became a factor in determining a "nation". It is no coincidence that nationalism is accompanied by a mania for classifying, delineating and defining people into categories. These practical considerations were made explicit by the Polish Nationalist Pilsudski, who observed that "it is the state that makes the nation, not the nation the state".

In order to enforce the new system of property over the whole range of its influence, the ruling class needed the state, and its legitimising ideas of nationalism and the nation. Culture resides in sets of ideas, values and practices that set out a sense of precedent, self and future possibility.

Nationalism imposes the idea of the nation, complete with its inherent notions of territorial ownership and property, upon a culture, on the very self-image of the people within that culture.

The idea of "the nation" functions as supreme good, beyond the physical and mechanical functionings of the state, to which any cause may appeal. It is a fantasy which can be used to cover up for problems and contradictions in the practice of the state's daily life. Its function is to legitimise both the state and class rule, and sustain a large quantity of support, through workers who identify with the ideas of nationhood and believe themselves to be the same as, and have the same interests as, their masters.

Workers of course, do not share a common interest with their masters. It does not follow that if the "national wealth" increases, or if trade increases, or even if profit increases, that higher wages will be gained by workers. It might appear that workers and employers share a common interest. In fact the interest of workers is conditioned by the interest of the employer, in exactly the same manner as hostages held by a kidnapper: unless the kidnapper/employer, demands are met, they will not allow the hostage/workers to have what they need to live.

In the powerful nations, history becomes a means of winning popular emotions to the cause of stability. An influential and well funded nostalgia industry has long been used in these nations to persuade workers that there is something great about being the nation's subject.

The valid definition of a modern nation is a geographical and political area in which goods and services are produced for the sale on the market with a view to profit and with the general class division of ruling and ruled. And the fact that the majority of population owns little but its ability to work is evidence the working class has no common interest with the minority ruling class.

MICHAEL GHEBRE

Land grabs - the new colonialism?

Capitalist states have started to acquire land outside their borders again.

At the start of capitalism land was grabbed on a large scale by Europeans in the Americas, Africa and Asia – wherever there were useful, desirable, valuable resources. Never mind the indigenous populations, they could be bought off cheaply or cowed into submission militarily. Accumulation was the name of the game, on behalf of powerful states and royal families.

Colonies sprang up worldwide explaining, among other things, the curious spread of different languages from relatively tiny nations to huge continents across oceans – English, Spanish, Portuguese and French - and ultimately to the use of English/American as the global business language.

It is now widely recognised that colonialism was responsible for subjugating local populations, imposing governmental and legal systems and generally exploiting and expropriating whatever natural abundance or rare animal, vegetable or mineral matter happened to be discovered. As time went on the exploitation was taken over by corporations and continues not only unabated but increasingly rapacious, bringing commodities to customers worldwide, degrading environments worldwide and impoverishing populations worldwide whilst enriching a tiny minority.

Now local populations are starting to fight back, to protest against their treatment as second-class or non-citizens, demanding land and water rights. Populations from China to South America and many places in between are in struggles against domestic or transnational mining corporations, against governments over population dispersal for big dams and Special Economic Zones, against food corporations and agribusiness trying to enforce small farmers' removal from their land in order to grow mono-crops for food and bio-fuels specifically for export.

Against this back-drop of “peasant/worker awakening” is the very latest emergence of a new form of colonialism – of land-grab – by “food insecure” governments fearing for the future of their own populations’ food needs and also by food corporations and private investors looking for new ways to make profits in this current economic crisis. Since March 2008 “high-level officials” from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Libya and Egypt have been visiting countries with fertile

farmland including Uganda, Brazil, Cambodia, Sudan and Pakistan to strike deals which guarantee them sole use of farmland to grow crops for export back to their own lands. The reciprocity is foreign investment or oil or technology deals.

Another angle to this new colonialism – financial returns – is seeing all manner of players getting involved, seeking a new avenue for profit; investment houses, hedge funds, grain traders and others from the finance and food industries, all looking to take control of fertile soil with access to water supply in foreign lands. Whilst governments are largely the ones making the deals for food security it has been made plain that it is the private sector that will control the enterprises. Likewise, the hunt for financial returns is the business of private investors. In both cases foreign private corporations will be taking control of farmland to produce food not for the local communities but for export back to the investor countries. Another form of accumulation by driving more local farmers from their land and stealing their livelihoods.

Here are three examples of deals struck so far (a full report is available from www.grain.org plus an annex in table form of over 100 cases of land-grab for offshore food production; online there is also a notebook of full-text news clippings being added to continuously to which people can contribute by emailing landgrab@grain.org).

First, China has sealed 30 agricultural cooperation deals which gives them access to “friendly country” farmland in exchange for Chinese technology, training and infrastructure development funds, in Kazakhstan, Queensland, Mozambique and the Philippines (to mention a few) and to which China flies in its own farmers, scientists and extension workers to grow rice, soya beans and maize as well as sugar cane, cassava and sorghum as bio-fuel crops.

Second, the Gulf States, short of water and productive soil but rich in oil and money, have been hard hit by the simultaneous rise in world food prices and fall in the US dollar to which (most) of their currencies are pegged. Their collective strategy has been to make deals particularly with other Islamic countries to which they will supply oil and capital in exchange for guarantees to farmland from which they can export the crops back home. Deals have been and continue to be made with Sudan, Pakistan and others in SE Asia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uganda, Ukraine, Brazil and others. From the millions of hectares of farmland already leased under contract harvests are expected to begin this year, particularly of rice and wheat.

Third, India’s corporate agribusinesses and the government-owned State Trading Corporation are looking to produce oilseed crops, pulses and cotton abroad. One deal with Burma to enable India to have total control of



the agricultural process entails providing Burma with funds to upgrade its port infrastructure. They are also doing deals with Indonesia for palm oil plantations, talking to Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil about land for growing pulses and soya beans for export back home.

How will the indigenous populations react to this latest threat? This aggressive new policy of colonisation of land specifically for export crops and speculation is bound to increase pressure on local populations, more of whom will be struggling to feed their families working for wages, if so lucky, at a pittance level. Populations who don't need to be bought off cheaply this time because their own governments will willingly sell them out and who can easily be subdued militarily should the need arise, this time by the self-same government's police and armed forces.

JANET SURMAN

Then and Now: how we live and how we used to live

Part 1 – Then: A look back at the present day from a future time when socialism has been established.

It is strange to visualise now that the world up to and including the early years of this century was caught in a stranglehold of economic competition, national political boundaries and the overriding requirement to make a monetary profit out of the production and sale of property. Hardly anyone took seriously, or even much considered, the possibility of living as complete equals with collective ownership of the world's resources.

Visions of a future society portrayed in the science fiction novels and films of the time were almost invariably dystopian: civilisation might move out to the stars, but the prognostications were of ever increasing extremes of rich and poor, harsher governments and soaring crime rates. Fictional colonisations of new planets – giving humanity a fresh start free from the shackles of Earth – were almost invariably based on money, employment and profits.

The vast majority of people were limited in terms of what they could do by the amount of money they possessed, since the only way to obtain food, goods and services that they could not produce themselves was to exchange money for them. Those who had little or no money lived very poorly in a way we can scarcely imagine now, indeed many of them died through lack of life's necessities. A minority, on the other hand, those in control of the world's major resources, had more personal wealth than even the most imaginative of them knew what to do with.

Many people were reasonably well off by the standards of the time. They would "work for a living" for around 40 hours each



Tiny Tips

A collection of more than 3,000 inverted stamps has sold at auction in New York for more than \$5 million:

<http://tinyurl.com/mg4pmy>

One billion people throughout the world suffer from hunger, a figure which has increased by 100 million because of the global financial crisis, says the UN:

<http://tinyurl.com/mhr77q>

Cancer is a silent disease in Africa and in the developing world. World Health Organization (WHO) statistics shows that cancer kills more people in Africa than HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria combined. This is not a well-known fact, and a very disturbing one, especially since cancer diagnostics and treatment are of very poor standard in most African countries. Take for example Ghana - a country with more than 23 million people. They only have four oncologists to diagnose and treat cancer patients. WHO estimates that if we don't take act now, more than 11 million Africans may die of cancer in 2020:

<http://tinyurl.com/n6ayek>

One in four men in South Africa have admitted to rape and many confess to attacking more than one victim, according to a study that exposes the country's endemic culture of sexual violence

<http://tinyurl.com/mcvv28>

The Dalai Lama has encouraged Tibetans in exile to embrace the democratic system of electing a leader, saying it was essential to keep step with the larger world and to ensure the continuity of their government:

<http://tinyurl.com/l53l53>

Uganda has lost nearly a third of its forest cover since 1990 due to expanding farmlands, a rapidly growing human population and increased urbanisation, a government report said

<http://tinyurl.com/ma2798>

The Senate unanimously passed a resolution yesterday apologizing for slavery, making way for a joint congressional resolution and the latest attempt by the federal government to take responsibility for 2 1/2 centuries of slavery

<http://tinyurl.com/llnxgp>

Nearly twice as many US army soldiers today are either alcoholic or engage in damaging behaviour such as binge drinking than six years ago, and experts blame the rise on repeated tours in war zones:

<http://tinyurl.com/lv79mx>

President Hugo Chavez is standing by his man in the Middle East, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, even as hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iranians took to the streets Wednesday for the fifth straight day to protest his claim to a landslide reelection

<http://tinyurl.com/n84yz4>

Zimbabwe is suffering "persistent and serious" human rights violations despite the formation of a unity government four months ago, Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khansaid

<http://tinyurl.com/mrmm9k>

week, and as long as they were seen to be contributing to their employer's wealth, they were paid a monthly salary with which to pay for the necessities of life – food, heating and shelter – for themselves and their immediate families. Many months they might have a small surplus to save for future use or spend during holidays from employment or on 'luxury' items.

Employers, the owners of capital, were ever seeking new ways

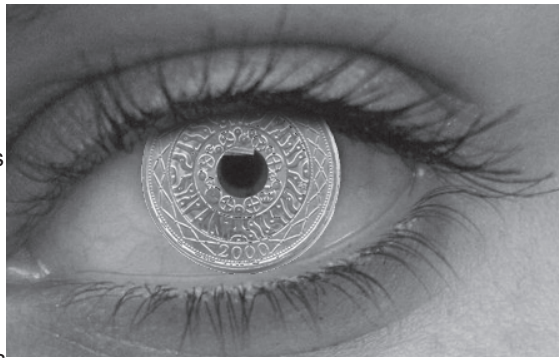
of increasing their profits and attempting to draw their workers into their world, to get them to see things from their side, to be inventive in creating ways of packaging new products, or re-packaging old products, to make them appear ever more attractive. Workers were divided into a hierarchy, with the better paid ones, generally more imbued with the "company ethos" instilled into them by the owners, assuming authority over those lower down in the pecking order.

The vast majority of workers complied with their employer's wishes through a need to carry on earning money. Employees at all levels were constantly encouraged to "think outside the box" in their efforts to please their employers; in reality worker and employer alike were unable to see the walls of the huge box that contained them all.

Money permeated the whole of life and almost nothing was exempt from the need to generate it, earn it or spend it. And because the owners of the world's resources as a group controlled the channels of communication, the message expressed or implied to the population at large was that this state of affairs was necessary and unchangeable and that their leaders knew what was best for them.

Largely because of such propaganda, not all workers saw themselves as exploited or even hard done by. People were, for the most part, simply grateful to be among those whose skills and abilities were seen as necessary and hence saleable. And many, such as doctors, teachers and care workers, performed useful roles despite the often longer than average, stressful hours they had to work and, in some cases, the paltry amounts of money they received in return.

But others were not so fortunate. Millions worldwide were unable to secure or maintain the employment necessary to provide them with the money to buy life's necessities. Many people were left entirely to their own meagre resources. Some were forced to work almost the whole day long to secure the price of a meal and a bed, while still others had no recourse but to beg. Many people understandably resorted to the peddlers of alcohol, drugs and religion, to the relative comfort



of an anaesthetised life on Earth or the vacuous promise of a second life free of care after death.

As is no doubt evident, money was a form of rationing – the less you had, the less access you had to the best quality food and goods. This resulted in manufacturers producing a whole range of goods at varying qualities and hence varying prices, to ensure they catered for, and therefore profited from, the needy as well as the better off. And because personal possessions were

hard-gained, people tended to be inordinately proud of them and jealous of others who had more.

People generally lived in a family unit typically comprising a married couple and up to three or four children. This restricted economic unit generally served its purpose in ensuring that children were adequately looked after until they in turn were ready to do service to an employer; if it broke down, however, say by the married couple splitting up or one of them dying, this could place an intolerable burden on the one parent left supporting the children, usually with very little outside help. There was very little left of the extended supportive family or community such as had existed even in earlier capitalist times. And if both parents died or were incapacitated, alternative care provisions for the children were rudimentary at best.

Dependence on money, and the stress caused through lack of it, meant that arguments and outbreaks of violence were frequent – "we can't afford it" or "where is the money going to come from?" were often heard among the members of the cocooned family units, even among the more comfortably off. Buyer and seller, employer and employee, even husband and wife, inevitably regarded one another as sources of financial or material gain, and hence, in part, as one another's possessions.

Sections of the working population were constantly played off and made to compete against one another, either deliberately or passively, on the basis of such irrelevant considerations as skin colour, nationality or even gender, in an attempt to keep them weak and divided. And the need for capitalist enterprises to compete against one another in their quest for profits inevitably led to wider conflicts, resulting time and again in failed businesses with the resultant loss of livelihoods and, in extreme cases, in bloody and ruthless wars.

Factories and commercial centres tended to be concentrated in large urban areas, to and from which workers would have to travel on a daily basis in crowded trains or on congested roads. Despite the limited adoption of variable working hours, peak travel times were unpleasant if not nightmarish.

It was also evident that capitalist society was incapable of addressing the problems besetting the environment which came to the fore in this period. As global warming increased, caused at least in part by man-made pollutants from wasteful, inefficient technology, with increasingly erratic climate systems resulting in the disappearance of much wildlife and an increase in the number of floods and fires, however well-intentioned the proponents of corrective action, remedies were always subject to the constraints of what could be done profitably and were therefore never adequately effected, to the extent that some of the damage to the environment nearly became irreversible.

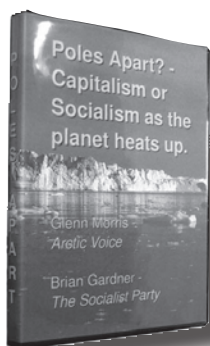
To think of the world as it was only so few decades ago has been at best sobering and at worst traumatic; the conclusion I reach is that this period of man's history is best left where it is... consigned to the history books or, better still, to the memory.

Next month Part 2: a look back from a future at the changeover to socialism.

ROD SHAW

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WAS NOWHERE SOME- WHERE?

MORE'S UTOPIA AND THE MEANING OF SOCIALISM

The word *utopia*, together with its derivatives *utopian* and *utopianism*, is a familiar part of our political vocabulary. It originated as the title of a work by the Tudor lawyer, statesman and writer Thomas More, first published in Latin in 1516 as a traveller's description of a remote island. *Utopia* is a pun: it can be read either as *ou-topos*, Greek for 'no place', or as *eu-topos*, 'good place' – that is, a good place (society) that exists in the imagination.

More invented the word, but the thing it represents is much older. Plato in his *Republic* discussed the nature of the ideal city state. Medieval serfs took solace in the imaginary ease and plenty of the Land of Cockaigne. More's utopia, however, is the first to embody a response to capitalist social relations, which in the early 16th century were just emerging in England and the Low Countries (in agriculture and textiles). As the first *modern* utopia, it has a special place in the emergence of modern socialist thought.

Contents of More's *Utopia*

The work consists of two 'books'. Book I is More's account of how he came to hear of Utopia. Book II describes the Utopians' way of life – their towns and farms, government, economy, travel, slaves, marriages, military discipline, religions.

More presents his story as true fact. Henry VIII sends him to Flanders as his ambassador to settle a dispute with Spain – and we know that this is true (it was in 1515; the dispute concerned the wool trade). During a break in the negotiations he meets his young friend Peter Giles, who introduces him to an explorer, Raphael Hythloday, just back from a long voyage. There follows a long conversation between More, Giles and Hythloday.

Giles and More urge Hythloday to put the vast

knowledge acquired on his travels to use by entering the service of a king. Hythloday refuses, arguing that no courtier dare speak his mind or advocate wise and just policies. This exchange is thought to reflect More's misgivings about his own career in royal service.

The conversation then turns to the situation in England. They discuss the enclosure (now we call it privatisation) of common land to graze sheep, the consequent pauperisation and uprooting of the peasantry ("your sheep devour men"), the futile cruelty of hanging wretches who steal to survive, and other social ills.

This leads them to the question of remedies. Hythloday declares that the injustice, conflict and waste inherent in the power of money can be overcome only by doing away with private property. More objects that this would remove the incentive to work. (Sounds familiar?) Hythloday replies that More would think otherwise had he been with him in Utopia.

Utopia is, indeed, a society without private property. Households contribute to and draw freely on common stocks of goods. Money is used only in dealings with foreign countries, while gold and jewels are regarded as baubles for children and "fools" (i.e., the mentally retarded). In these respects Utopia resembles socialism as we conceive of it.

In other respects, however, it does not. Decision-making procedures are only partly democratic. A hierarchy of "magistrates" enforces draconian regulations: travel, for instance, requires official permission. The main penalty for serious transgressions is enslavement – not to individuals, of course, but to the community. Thus, there is a class of slaves who do not participate in common ownership but are themselves owned. Utopia is not a classless society.

Was More joking?

Almost all critics treat More's factual presentation as a mere literary device. They do not believe that he met an explorer while in Flanders or that he was influenced in his description of Utopia by

Labour, Lib-Dem, Tory



The Socialist Standard examines their case

information about real places. This is not to say that they attribute everything solely to More's fertile imagination. They often draw connections between his ideas and the thought of Greco-Roman antiquity. In the foreword to an edition of *Utopia* published in 1893, William Morris even calls Utopia 'an idealised ancient society'. More was one of the foremost classical scholars of his day, so it is a plausible view.

Yet More always maintained, even in private correspondence, that *Utopia* was based on fact. Was he joking? He liked a good joke.

Two researchers take More at his word. It is quite possible, they argue, that he did meet an explorer who had encountered or heard about a pre-Columbian society in the Americas that served More as a prototype for Utopia. Arthur E. Morgan, an engineer who was chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1930s, takes the Inca Empire as the prototype (*Nowhere was Somewhere: How History Makes Utopias and How Utopias Make History*, University of North Carolina Press 1946), while the anthropologist Lorainne Stobart identifies the Utopians with the Maya of the Yucatan Peninsula in present-day Mexico (*Utopia: Fact or Fiction? The Evidence from the Americas*, Alan Sutton 1992).

They argue that it is not valid to argue that Hythloday cannot represent a real person because Europeans knew nothing of the Maya or Incas at the time when More was writing *Utopia* (1515–16). This is true only if we accept the conventional chronology that conflates discovery with the military expeditions of the Spanish conquistadors (Cortes first landed in Yucatan in 1517; Pizarro entered Inca territory in 1526). But Morgan and Stobart refer to old maps and documents indicating that Portuguese explorers reached the eastern shores of Central and South America as early as the 14th century (Hythloday is Portuguese), while English sailors were trading with the new lands by the 1470s. Whether any of these early travellers got as far as Peru is less certain, though some may have obtained indirect information about the Incas.

How closely does More's Utopia resemble the Maya and Inca civilizations? Morgan and Stobart detail numerous similarities in political and economic organization, dress, social customs, city layout, family life, science and art, and so on – even down to such practices as the erection of memorial pillars and ceremonial wearing of quetzal feathers. The Maya and the Incas, like the Utopians, used money only in foreign trade and had common stores from which officials distributed produce (except that, in contrast to Utopia, it was rationed). It is extremely unlikely that so many close parallels should arise purely by chance.

But there are also important differences. The most telling criticism made against these authors is that they obscure a wide gap in social structure between the aristocratic autocracies of the Maya and the Incas and the basically democratic governance of More's Utopia (see George Logan's review of Stobart in *Moreana*, June 1994).

It is therefore doubtful whether *Utopia* is a direct

representation of any specific pre-Columbian society. Nevertheless, More's account does probably reflect the influence of knowledge of such societies that he had somehow acquired, possibly from a Portuguese explorer he met in Flanders.

A bureaucratic mode of production

This conclusion has implications for our understanding of the development of socialist ideas. For it means that a seminal work of modern socialist thought bears the imprint of archaic societies that though not based on private property were far removed from the classless democracy of genuine socialism.

The Maya and Inca social systems are strikingly 'pure' examples of what Marx called the 'Asiatic mode of production'. In this mode, a royal bureaucracy extracts and redistributes surplus from pre-existing peasant communes and directs public works. The monarch is considered the owner of land and resources. The word 'Asiatic' does not, of course, fit the New World context (Marx had mainly India in mind). Karl Wittfogel, stressing the centrality of water management, coined the term 'hydraulic mode of production'. Or we might call it the pre-industrial bureaucratic mode of production.

Louis Baudin paints a vivid picture of what it was like to live under this system in his *Daily Life in Peru under the Last Incas* (Macmillan, 1961). It was a hard life for the common people, but their basic necessities were

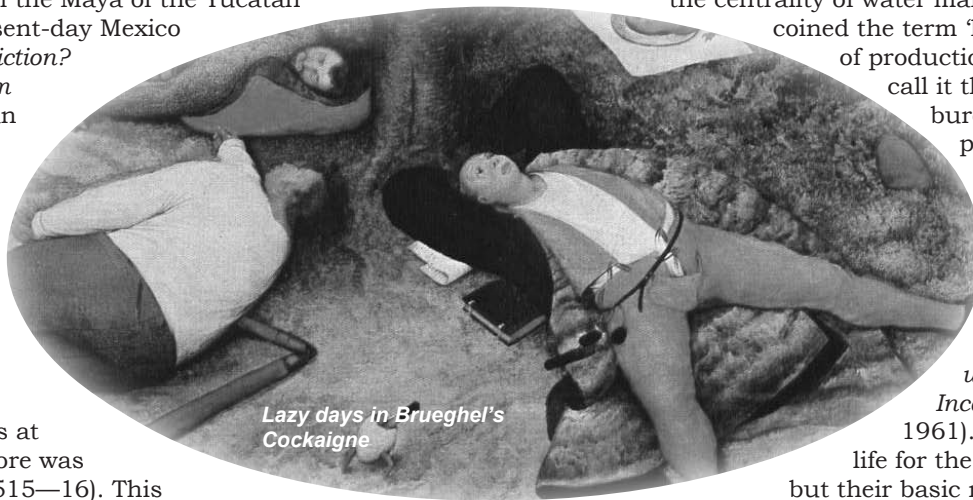
supplied: a small dwelling, two woollen garments each when they marry, a patch of land, relief in the event of local famine. They were more fortunate in this regard than poor people were in More's England – or than they themselves would be after the Spanish conquest. But they were victims of class exploitation nonetheless.

It is understandable that the Incas and the Maya should have appealed to early European critics of capitalism. Theirs, however, was not the only alternative model that the pre-Columbian Americas offered to the reign of private property. The New World was also home to the much more egalitarian 'primitive communism' of peoples like the Iroquois who so fascinated the 19th-century anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan and through him Engels and Marx, influencing their conception of 'advanced communism'.

An upright and honest official

More's utopia is a sort of compromise between the democratic and authoritarian-bureaucratic conceptions of communal life. He omits important information that would help us clarify the nature of the society that he is portraying. In particular, how are the higher officials appointed or elected? (We know that lower-level officials are elected.) Do they have material privileges? Does Utopia have an aristocracy of any kind?

I interpret this ambiguity in light of More's general attitude toward the lower classes. He felt genuine compassion for the suffering of the poor. This is clear not only from the sentiments he expresses through his *alter ego* Hythloday, but also from his reputation as an



Lazy days in Brueghel's Cockaigne

upright and honest judge and official. He did not take bribes from the rich and he patronised the poor. By the standards of his day and age, he was open-minded and tolerant. He belonged to the same social type as that other upright and honest official, his near-contemporary in Ming China, Hai Rui.

But More, like Hai Rui, was no rebel. He was a "good servant" of God and king, a member of the ruling class with a strong belief in order and hierarchy. His ideal was not the fully democratic self-administration of society, which he could hardly imagine, but rather paternalistic "good government" by upright and honest officials like himself.

In conclusion

So what shall we make of More's *Utopia*? It is, to be sure, an eloquent critique of the cruelty and perversity of capitalism, all the more remarkable for having been written at a time when that system had scarcely bared its fangs. However, More – although he envisages the abolition of money – does not provide a picture of what we now mean by socialism. But then that could hardly have been expected of him.

STEFAN

Meetings

LONDON

Sunday 12 July at 6.00pm

"Here come the Robots?"

Speaker: Bill Martin

Sunday 26 July at 6.00pm

"What is real democracy; how do we get it?"

Speaker - Vincent Otter

Saturday 25 July 7.30pm

Public Debate

SHOULD CAPITALISM HAVE A FUTURE?

Yes: Magnus Nielsen (UKIP)

No: Gwynn Thomas (Socialist Party)

Socialist Party Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, SW4
(nearest tube: Clapham North)

GLASGOW

Wednesday 15 July, 8.30pm

"Capital Accumulation"

Speaker: Peter Hendrie

Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road

MANCHESTER

Monday 27 July, 8.30 pm

"Revolution in a Box"

Unicorn, Church Street, City Centre

Lothians Discussion Group (under the auspices of the Socialist Party's Edinburgh Branch)

Venue: ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh

Every 4th Wednesday of the Month

Time: 7.30pm-9.00pm

Contact:

Fraser Anderson: Fraser@prolerat.org

Jimmy Moir: jimmy@prolerat.org

EAST ANGLIA

Saturday 11 July 12-4pm

Branch Meeting

Reindeer Pub, 10 Dereham Rd, Norwich



Clutching at green shoots

The textbooks may say that the banking system can create loans worth ten times more than an initial deposit in any bank in the system, and currency cranks may misrepresent this to mean that an individual bank can create money to lend out of thin air, but practising bankers and financial journalists know better.

A recent article in the *Investors Chronicle* (22-28 May), discussing the difference between banks in Asia and banks in Britain and America, gave the views of an investment manager, Mike Kerley:

"Consider the banks in the US and the UK," says Mr Kerley. "They lend out far more than their deposit base and rely on credit markets to fund this, which has been shown to be ill-advised, costly and ultimately catastrophic." Although the Australian market is closely aligned with the UK banking model, elsewhere in Asia the deposit base more than covers lending, so there are no serious liquidity issues. "Banks are the opportunity in Asia. Asian loans to deposit ratios are 80 per cent," he says. "Asian banks do what banks should do and make money on margins'."

This is a typical confirmation that banks make their core profit out of borrowing money at one rate of interest and re-lending it at another, higher rate. No bank can lend money it doesn't have so they have to get this from somewhere. In the past all banks used to get the money to re-lend, as banks in Asia still do, from what had been deposited with them. In recent years, however, banks in Britain and America, started to borrow money to re-lend from the money market.

Banks in Britain and America still make their profits (or suffer losses) out of the margin between the rate of interest at which they borrow and the rate at which they lend. The difference is their reliance more on borrowing money from the money market than from depositors (a deposit is essentially a loan to a bank). The money market is a much more volatile source of funds than deposits, as American and British banks eventually found to their cost.

When the crisis began interest rates on the money market went up, so squeezing the margin between the two rates of interest, in some cases wiping it out or even making it negative. Hence the banking crisis. Things seem to have settled down a bit at the moment.

Not that the banking crisis was going to last for ever. Nor will the economic crisis. However, before a recovery can begin stocks must first be cleared, though this won't be enough in itself. There are signs that this may have started, but is being optimistically seen by some economic commentators as a sign that the depression is over. "Recession is over, says think-tank as it reports growth in April and May", headlined the *Times* (11 June) reporting the opinion of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

The *Times*'s own Business Editor, David Wighton, was more cautious:

"If the upturn we are seeing now is in large part because of restocking, there will be a spike in orders which will inevitably fall back again".

There is still some way to go before economic conditions will be ripe for a recovery to really begin. Unprofitable firms must be eliminated, their capital destroyed or devalued, and real wages must fall, so as to restore the rate of profit. That means more company failures and more unemployment. In short, more misery in a world that could provide plenty for all if it weren't for capitalism.

No Chief, No God

Don't Sleep, There are Snakes. By Daniel Everett. Profile £15.



In 1977 Dan Everett travelled with his wife and their three young children to the midst of the Amazon jungle. They were going to live among the Pirahã people, where Everett was to learn their language in order

to translate the new testament into it and so convert them to christianity (he was working for a missionary organisation). He learnt the language but failed to convert any of the Pirahã; rather, they and their culture had a profound influence on his own beliefs, about language, religion and how to live.

The Pirahã, who now number less than four hundred, are typical of pre-state societies. They depend on hunting, foraging and fishing, and a family can acquire enough food for a week by working at most twenty hours each (including the children), though fishing and so on are fun and don't really count as work. They do not plan for the future, and do not preserve food. They have few possessions but no concept of poverty. There is a strong sense of community and of mutual responsibility: an elderly disabled man who could not fend for himself was given food as a matter of course. There are no chiefs, and ostracism and exclusion from food-sharing are the main means of 'coercion' used to control each other's behaviour.

Spirit 'voices' can also influence the Pirahãs' conduct, but they claim to see these spirits regularly and have no concept of a creator god. Their lives are very much in the here and now, and what they talk about is limited to what the speaker or someone they know has witnessed. Consequently, they were completely unreceptive to Everett's religious message, based as it was on books produced by people he had never met. He translated Mark's gospel into the Pirahã language, but they were only interested in hearing about the beheading of John the Baptist!

This led Everett to question his own faith in unseen things, and to a realisation that it was perfectly possible to be contented without believing in sin, hell and heaven.

He kept his new-found atheism a secret for many years, and when he eventually came clean it resulted in the break-up of his family.

Everett describes the Pirahã as happy, patient and kind, certainly happier than any religious people he has encountered. It is important not to romanticise them and their way of life: they live in a dirty and dangerous environment, suffer high infant mortality and can be astonishingly violent to outsiders. But the Pirahãs "show no evidence of depression, chronic fatigue, extreme anxiety, panic attacks, or other psychological ailments common in many industrialized societies."

This book shows clearly how life under capitalism is just one means of human organisation, not the consequence of 'human nature', and that life without money and mortgages and god has plenty of attractions.

PB

Globalization

Marxian Economics and Globalization. By Binay Sarkar and Adam Buick, Avenel Press, Calcutta, 2009. ISBN 81-902529-5-X

Is globalization just another word for capitalism? The short answer is yes. A longer answer is provided in this invaluable book written by two socialists. Using Marxian economics as their explanatory framework, there are chapters on 'Capitalism as a world system', 'What is political economy?', 'The basic categories of Marxian economics', 'The marginal revolution in economics against the labour theory of value', 'The cyclical nature of capitalist production', 'The era of permanent inflation', 'The Bolsheviks and the abolition of money', 'Anti-globalization or anti-capitalism?', 'Why we need global change'. The book is dedicated to "The Working Class of the World".

Today we live in a world completely dominated by capitalist production, where wealth is produced for sale on a market with a view to profit. Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx's analysis of capitalism had identified it as an inherently globalizing system. As the *Communist Manifesto* put it, "the cheap price of commodities ... compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production". The authors look at the globalization of capitalism since his day, as manifested in the ever-widening world division of

labour, world wars and rivalry for sources of raw materials, markets and investment outlets, the rise of the multinational corporation and the emergence of global financial markets. They discuss the opposition to these developments and argue that anti-imperialism and anti-globalization are not the same as anti-capitalism, as this has to be a movement aimed at a world socialist society where the resources of the globe have become the common heritage of its entire people.

There are a few quibbles. State capitalism is said to be the "most regressive, dehumanizing and degenerating" form of capitalism (page 55). But this is arguably a judgement on which socialists do not need to take sides; we are opposed to capitalism whatever form it takes. We are told that under state capitalism, "capital remains private property of the state functionaries collectively" (page 56). But this could suggest that state functionaries had a legal claim on capital, which was generally not the case, though they did exercise possession as a class through their control of political power. It is claimed that John Stuart Mill was an "opponent of Karl Marx" (page 90). But though Marx was well acquainted with the writings of Mill, there is no evidence that Mill knew of Marx's existence. But these are quibbles. Hopefully a future edition will have an index, so enabling the reader to easily track down the many fascinating ideas and quotes to be found in this important book.

LEW

Revolutions

Endnotes #1 - Preliminary Materials For A Balance Sheet Of The Twentieth Century. 216 pages. Available from Endnotes, 12 London Road, Brighton, BN1 4JA. £10

The opening issue of this new journal is based around a dialogue between contemporary French ultra-left groups *Troploin* (Gilles Dauvé & Karl Nesic) and *Théorie Communiste* (who remain anonymous). Of the contributors Dauvé is probably most well known to English speakers for his tracts written under the pseudonym 'Jean Barrot' - *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement, Critique of the Situationist International and Fascism / Anti-fascism*.

As Endnotes state in their introduction "...we have no wish to encourage an interest in history per se. [...] We hope [...] to undermine the

illusion that this is somehow “our” past, something to be protected or preserved. [...] We would go so far as to say that with the exception of the recognition of the historical break that separates us from them, that we have nothing to learn from the failures of past revolutions — no need to replay them to discover their “errors” or distil their “truths” — for it would in any case be impossible to repeat them.”

Both groups, and presumably Endnotes, are tied to the concept of “Communisation” – communism is not something that happens after the revolution, it is the “immediate production of communism; the self-abolition of the proletariat through its abolition of capital and the state.” Notions of both a “transitional society” and “workers self-management” are rejected. Capitalism is a system of production, value accumulation can as easily be managed by workers as by private capitalists or state bureaucrats.

The structure of the journal – each chapter is a critique of the one preceding it – makes for a stimulating and engaging read. A wide range of concepts and historical events are covered and subject to lively criticism. From the Paris Commune to Argentina 2002 via the Russian and German revolutions, Italian “Red Years”, the Spanish tragedy, Paris 68 and the Italian “Hot Autumn” we are taken on a radical train journey of revolution and counter-revolution, though the spirit isn’t one of nostalgic reminiscence but firmly rooted in the possibilities of the present moment.

Whilst the politics of both Tropic of Cancer and Théorie Communiste don’t converge with the Socialist Party on all counts there is certainly plenty of food for thought on offer here and a good opportunity to become acquainted with a not overly well known current of contemporary European thought.

DJP



Cartoon Karl

Taro Aso, the current Prime Minister of Japan, is widely known to be a fan of “manga”. His love of comic books seems

quite genuine (although it may be related to his notorious inability to read even some of the more basic

Japanese *kanji* characters). Setting aside whatever personal reasons he may have, however, it is clear that Aso loves manga for practical political reasons as well, as he is convinced that it can contribute to an expansion in Japan’s “soft power.” Aso has clearly stated a hope that manga will assist Japanese diplomacy by raising what he calls the “brand image” of Japan, particularly in



those Asian countries where people’s memories have been branded by the experience of Japanese colonial rule.

The problem for Aso is that not every manga published today conforms to the hollow “cool Japan” marketing image that he is peddling. Around two years ago, for instance, one top-selling manga was a version of a 1920s “proletarian novel” written by the Communist author Takiji Kobayashi, which depicted the harsh life of workers at the time and exposed nationalistic ideology. And now, to Aso’s dismay I suspect, there is also a *manga* version of Marx’s *Capital* available in Japan.

This new manga, published by East Press last December, comes in two pocket-size volumes. Volume one presents a fictional tale of a young man named Robin, who is first seen in the marketplace selling cheese that his father produces on his small farm. Against the wishes of his father, who is a sort of anti-capitalist curmudgeon, Robin accepts the financial backing of a smooth venture capitalist named Daniel (who resembles a young Mick Jagger) to go into the cheese business on a large scale.

The rest of the story depicts how Robin, once he has become a capitalist, must follow the logic of capital, ruthlessly seeking to raise productivity, even it means squeezing his workers dry; and how the workers begin to rebel against their servile position as wage slaves. Instead of an overly simplistic tale of heroes and villains, the story makes it quite clear that the characters are forced to act in accordance with the nature of the capitalist system. However sympathetic Robin might be as an individual, and however pure his (initial) intentions, he ends up acting as a capitalist must act to remain a capitalist.

The second volume concentrates more on the actual content of *Capital*, particularly the first few chapters where the labour theory of value and the all-important concept of surplus-value are presented; and

Marx and Engels appear to explain those and other points. At the same time, the example of Robin’s cheese factory is again referred to as a way to clarify how capitalists go about trying to squeeze out more surplus-value as a means of increasing their

own profits and driving competitors out of business. On the first page of this second volume, where the cast of characters is introduced, it is clearly stated that, “Within capitalist society lurks an insatiable monster” – and the reader soon discovers that this monster is the insane pursuit of profit that drives capitalism forward.

One might quibble with certain aspects of the books, including what seems to be an idealization of small-scale producers (like Robin’s father), but on the whole both succeed in clarifying the most-important aspects of the capitalist system in a vivid way that even young readers can understand.

Currently the manga is only available in Japanese; but the publication generated a number of newspaper reports in the UK and elsewhere, and there is some possibility that it will eventually be translated into English.

MS

New Pamphlet An Inconvenient Question: Socialism and the Environment



see order form on page 9 for details

Party News

The Socialist Party stood a list in the London Region in last month's election to the European Parliament, so giving over 5 million electors the choice between capitalism and socialism (more than in a number of EU countries, Ireland for instance). In the event only about a third, or 1.7 million, voted. Of them 4050 were for the Socialist list. There were 18 other lists or individual candidates.

Besides the two meetings we ourselves organised, we spoke at 7 meetings organised by others and were granted the whole of 30 seconds air-time on BBC regional TV and radio (you have to contest all regions to get a Party Political Broadcast, and then you have to pay for it to be produced). 240,000 leaflets were delivered free by

the post office to 4 areas (parliamentary constituencies) we selected; a further 28,000 were distributed by members. Statistics showed that there were over 20,000 looks at the on-line version of our leaflets on our website at www.worldsocialism.org/spgb.

Outside London we ran a write-in for socialism campaign, with a further 12,000 leaflets being distributed. A token number of leaflets were distributed, in the language of the country, by members and sympathisers in Italy, Spain and France. The leaflet was also available on our website in German, Dutch, Swedish, Polish, Turkish and Bengali.

The Socialist Party will be contesting Vauxhall in the coming general election, which must take place before next May, and also two wards in Lambeth in the London borough elections next May.

Socialist Standard

Bound volumes (2005-2007) for £25 plus postage, each, order from HO, cheques payable to "The Socialist Party of Great Britain"

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Race & Violence



With the recent murder of a coloured man in Notting Hill, race-prejudice has once more become a subject of public interest. It is not possible to say at this stage whether or not Kelso Cochrane died as a result of racial hatred.

What can be said is that passions, hatred and sympathies have been aroused. A large crowd of mourners, both white and black, followed Cochrane's coffin through the streets. Many organisations have had their say about Notting-Hill; some of them, such as the Union Movement, propagating racial discrimination. There is no doubt that the Union Movement is anti-coloured, and rabidly so. It considers that this country should be reserved for Englishmen. This is a "one way only" policy however. Not so many years ago a main plank in Mosley's platform was the intensive economic

development of British Africa; for the benefit of the British, of course. "Keep out the coloureds" does not mean keeping the Pinks out of South Africa, Kenya or Nyasaland. The left-wing too, have been having their little stir. They, poor souls, are in a bit of a quandary, for the Labour Government's record does not look particularly attractive. The imprisonment of Nkrumah and the banishment of Seretse Khama must make the collection of coloured people's votes a rather difficult matter. There are, too, plenty of advocates in the Labour Party for the policy of restricting or excluding immigrants. The supporters of such views, to be logical, should exclude or restrict the movement of anybody going anywhere to look for jobs.

(from front page article by F.R. Ivimey, *Socialist Standard*, July 1959)

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.



Hogg's Ditch

What with all the talk about reforming Parliament, antagonising MPs by restricting their ravenous appetite for expenses, it may not be long for the famous green benches to be swept clean of those venerable persons wallowing in titles like the Right Honourable Douglas Hogg, Old Etonian, Third Viscount Hailsham, Privy Councillor, Barrister at Law, Queen's Counsel, Member of Parliament (for the present) for Sleaford and North Hykeham, brother of a High Court Judge, husband of a baroness and owner of Kettlethorpe Hall, a stately home in Lincolnshire. With a moat - about the only exterior relic of the original 13th Century house. It is some time now since Hogg was at his most active politically; he was Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food from July 1995 until Labour's victory in 1997 since when he has stayed contentedly inconspicuous.

Whistle Blower

But that was before the *Daily Telegraph*, digging into the secrets of the MP's claims as revealed by that whistle blower's expensive aids to research, turned the spotlight away from the drab fiddlers on the Labour benches and onto the gloating Conservative manipulators opposite. This made sickeningly fascinating reading, for among the claims for money for a chandelier and a swimming pool was one for clearing the moat at Hogg's home. The new Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy marked the occasion at a Manchester school: "What did he do with the trust of your vote?/Hired a flunky to flush out the moat". A nation-wide rush to consult architectural reference books revealed that a moat is water surrounding somewhere - a castle, a fortified house - important enough to need such a defence against an invading enemy or perhaps, in some cases, irate deprived Lincolnshire peasantry. A moat is expected to be, in scale with the place it defends, impressively large - wide and deep (Alan Clark, the late alcoholic and disreputable MP who owned the magnificent Saltwood Castle in Kent, was in the habit of taking a swim in the moat there) with a drawbridge to filter out unwanted visitors. The photographs of Hogg's moat, however, showed it to be not much more than an above average sized ditch - although one which obviously needs regular, expensive cleaning paid for through parliamentary allowances. David Cameron was infuriated at the revival of the stereotypical image of the greedy Tory toff which he has worked so hard to eradicate.

Lord Chancellor

As a lawyer Hogg is accustomed to defending the indefensible and his response to the *Daily Telegraph's* exposure was desperately evasive: "That is not correct. It was in a letter which explained what expenses we had incurred, it wasn't an expenses schedule...All the claims I made were agreed in advance". Reinforcing this

attempt to pass the blame for his behaviour elsewhere he conceded, when asked about his constituents' anger at his claim for the moat, "It is true that the system is clearly flawed". Hogg's ancestors would have been proud of his lawyerly skills here; although he has remained a humble QC both his father and grandfather rose to the heights of Lord Chancellor, head of the country's judges and in the House of Lords sitting, by ancient custom, on a large cushion called the Woolsack from where the noble lords were kept under control, speaking to the point and avoiding all challenge to the presumptions of property society. However humble, Hogg is a rich man, with shareholdings and property investments which protect him from the kind of penury familiar to some of his infuriated constituents.

BSE And CJD

Unlike his eminent forefathers Hogg did not make a name for himself in government. At his peak, in charge of Agriculture Fisheries and Food he was marked down as The Minister Without A Friend. Rivals on the lower reaches of the Greasy Pole happily fed the media with snide gossip about him, typically that he had been given the job when the first choice had turned it down because it was politically suicidal. When the BSE crisis broke in 1996 and the first cases of the human variant CJD were reported Hogg was cruelly exposed as lacking the sleight of word so essential to survival. Alan Clark, who could always be relied on to kick someone when they are down, recorded meeting "little Douglas Hogg" in 1983, when he was a Junior Whip: "I can't decide whether he is likeable or not. (But I should say that many do not have this difficulty.) I don't mind people being rude, provided that they are not uncouth with it. But he is colossally self-satisfied. Or is it a chip?...Well, I said 'how are you keeping all the new boys in order?'...'By offering them your job'.



Sacked

Well very soon someone will be offered Hogg's job. "I have decided" he said on 18 May "that now is the time to tell the Sleaford and North Hykeham Association that I will not be standing at the next election". It was a polite way of saying that he had been sacked for failing to fit in with Cameron's efforts to recast the Tory image into a youthful, classless, open party who can, by a process so far unattainable to all others, transform capitalism into a humane society. But euphemisms are essential to a politician's vocabulary; over the expenses scandal they have been extensively used to muddy the reality that while the amounts of money involved in the Lord's and the MP's wretched scams are mind-boggling to so many workers struggling to survive they are trivial compared to the cost, in every sense, of the damage capitalism does to the world and its people.

IVAN

Voice from the Back

Greens And Green Backs

It is fashionable for every capitalist politician to say that they are "green" – it is a good vote-

catcher, but the realities of capitalism are the production of more and more profits. So when it comes to the crunch, profit-making is going to be a bigger priority than the environment. "US Energy Secretary Steven Chu says the US will not be able to cut greenhouse emissions as much as it should due to domestic political opposition. Prof Chu told *BBC News* he feared the world might be heading towards a tipping point on climate change. This meant the US had to cut emissions urgently – even if compromises were needed to get new laws approved. ... President Barack Obama says he wants cuts in greenhouse gases but has left it to Congress to make the political running. The House of Representatives is debating a climate and energy bill but even if it passes it may be rejected by senators, many of whom are funded by the energy industry." (*BBC News*, 21 May) Politicians are deeply concerned about "green" issues - the issue of green-back dollars.

Improving Capitalism?

Socialism is a good idea, but rather than dream of a future society without social problems we should get on with the practical business of improving capitalism gradually with a series of reforms of the system. That is the claim of many opponents of world socialism, but what has 40 years of reform and 40 years of charity done to aid the problem of

world hunger? "A UN report says hunger in South Asia has reached its highest level in 40 years because of food and fuel price rises and the global economic downturn. The report by the UN children's fund, Unicef, says that 100 million more people in the region are going hungry compared with two years ago. It names the worst affected areas as Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The report says South Asia's governments need to urgently increase social spending to meet the challenge. It says that climate change and urbanisation also need tackling. According to the World Bank, three quarters of the population in South Asia - almost 1.2 billion people - live on less than \$2 (£1.2) a day. And more than 400m people in the region are now chronically hungry." (*BBC News*, 2 June) Who are the dreamers? Socialists who wish to abolish the system that produces world hunger or "practical" people with their reform programmes and charity drives that have succeeded in only making the problem worse over the last 40 years.

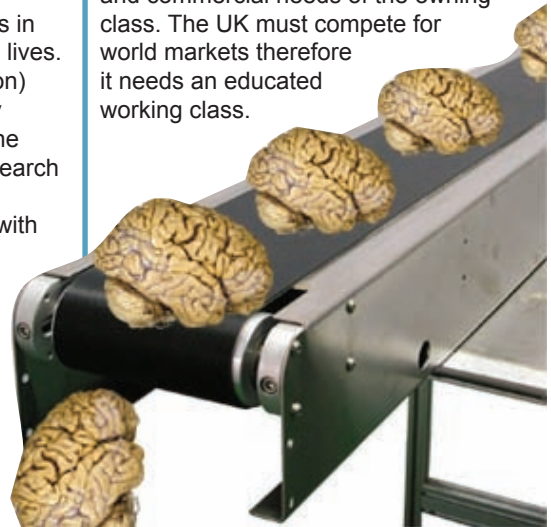
A Shameful Waste

This glaring problem of world hunger is happening in a society where capitalist governments throughout the world are spending immense amounts of human labour and natural resources in producing means to destroy human lives. "China spent \$84.9 billion (£53 billion) on its military last year, second only to the United States, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Its report said that France moved into third place in spending with Britain fourth. Military spending worldwide rose by 4 per cent to \$1.46 trillion, the report said." (*Times*, 9 June) Only the new society of world socialism will abolish this madness. Think what that \$1.46 trillion represents in human labour and natural resources and think what it could achieve in abolishing world

hunger.

Education's Real Role

There is a widespread illusion that the purpose of education, especially higher education, is to produce well-rounded human beings who are equipped with a basic thirst for knowledge and curiosity about the world around them. It is a wonderful concept but like most of capitalism's ideas it is a complete fraud. "England's department for higher and further education has been scrapped, just two years after its creation. The prime minister has created a new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills under Lord Mandelson. Universities do not figure in the name of the new department, whose remit is 'to build Britain's capabilities to compete in the global economy'. Number 10 said it would invest in a higher education system committed to widening participation. The role would include 'maintaining world class universities, expanding access to higher education, investing in the UK's science base and shaping skills policy and innovation'." (*BBC News*, 5 June) Far from being concerned about an individual's intellectual development, inside capitalism the purpose of education is dictated by the industrial and commercial needs of the owning class. The UK must compete for world markets therefore it needs an educated working class.



Free Lunch in the Future

