

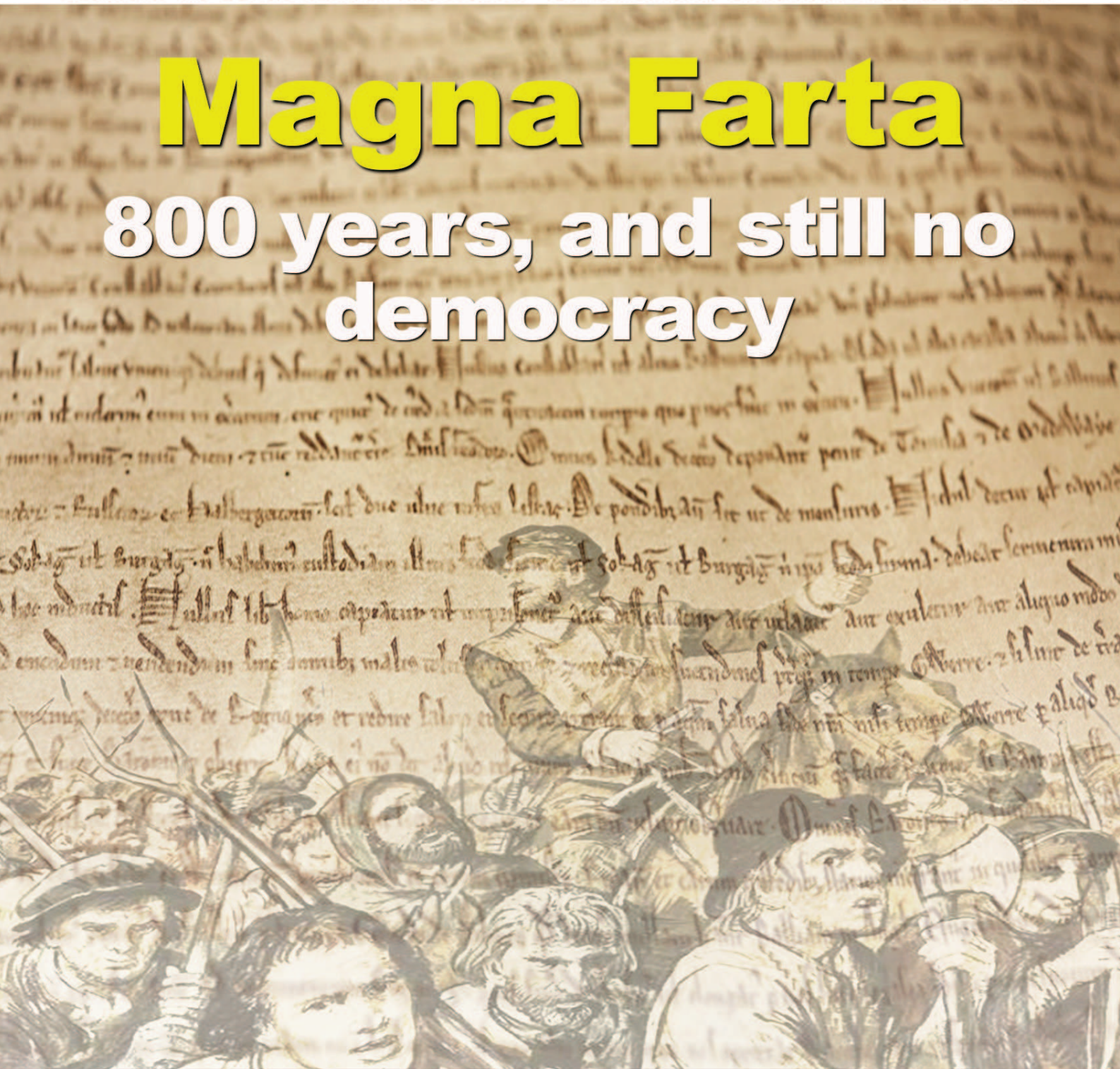
# socialist standard

June 2015  
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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

## Magna Carta

### 800 years, and still no democracy



Under  
pressure  
page 12



Complicity  
page 16



Silk Routes  
page 21



# socialist standard

JUNE 2015  
contents

## FEATURES

<b>Magna Carta</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Stressed Out</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Indian Bandh Strikes</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Complicity</b>	<b>16</b>

## REGULARS

<b>Pathfinders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Halo Halo!</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Material World</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Greasy Pole</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mixed Media</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proper Gander</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>50 Years Ago</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Action Replay</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Voice from the Back</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Free Lunch</b>	<b>24</b>

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The next meeting of the **Executive**

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# Introducing The Socialist Party

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

We use every possible opportunity

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

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

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

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

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



# socialist standard

JUNE 2015

## Editorial

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### The aftermath

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CONTRARY TO expectations, there was no hung parliament and there isn't a coalition government. Just a one-party Tory government with a small majority. No moulds were broken except of course in Scotland where there was a near clean sweep for the SNP which now holds 56 of the 59 seats there reducing the number of Scottish Labour MPs from 41 to just one.

The Tory victory means that there will now definitely be an in/out referendum on whether the UK should withdraw from the EU. In promising this Cameron took a big risk: that a majority might vote to withdraw whereas Big Business, whose interests the Tory party traditionally champions, wants to stay in. Given the prevailing mood of xenophobia which he helped to stoke up to try to stop people voting UKIP instead of Tory, he is going to have to prove to be an astute politician if he's going to serve Big Business well and also avoid the financial and economic crisis that a No vote would provoke.

For socialists the issue of whether or not capitalist Britain withdraws from the capitalist EU is irrelevant from the point of view of those forced to work for a wage or salary. The EU is an intergovernmental arrangement between capitalist states the dominant section of whose ruling class perceives it to be in their interest to create a vast tariff-free single market for their goods with the same common standards; also to pool some of their sovereignty to be in a better bargaining position in negotiations with other capitalist states and blocs over trade and other economic matters.

It is true that some sections of the capitalist class in Britain – those producing mainly for the home market or mainly for export outside Europe – are in favour of withdrawal but they are a minority. It's a dispute between two sections of the capitalist class. This is why as socialists we shall be urging people neither to vote Yes nor to vote No. Even so, as *world socialists* who stand for a world without frontiers we will be particularly opposed to those leftwingers who will be beating the nationalist drum for a No to EU vote.

Labour's failure even to obtain more seats than the Tories led to Ed Miliband throwing himself into the dustbin of history, starting off a contest for the leadership of the Labour Party. All the candidates seem to have come to the same conclusion: that to win again Labour will have to become a nasty party like the Tories. One says that Labour lost because they weren't tough enough on immigration. Another that they were too tough on business. A third says it was a mistake to have concentrated on promises to end zero-hour contracts and raise the minimum wage as these don't concern most voters. It looks as if the Labour Party is going to get the Leader it deserves.

The only positive outcome of the election was what happened in Scotland. Not of course the vote for the petty-minded, subsidy-seeking Scottish Nationalists but a demonstration that it is possible for people's political views to change dramatically in a relatively short period of time.



## Post-election blues

RUSSIA HAS been claiming since late last year that the Scottish referendum on independence was rigged by Westminster in favour of a 'no' vote (*Guardian*, 19 September 2014). Following up this exercise in pots calling kettles black, they have hailed the landslide victory of the SNP in the general election as proof positive that they were right. How, their propagandists want to know, could Scotland be split down the middle on independence one minute, and then vote unanimously for the Scottish National Party the next, if there wasn't substantial monkey business going on? Many confused UK voters may be wondering the same thing.

Let's put aside the obvious retort that if Westminster was going to rig the independence referendum why didn't they rig the Scottish vote in the general election as well? The real answer to this conundrum is not nearly so cloak-and-dagger, though it does remain puzzling to many. Greens and especially UKIP voters woke up wide-eyed with shock and cries of 'We wuz robbed' on post-election day upon finding that their votes had gone en-masse down the toilet while only Tory votes had the magical power to produce MPs.

People just don't seem to get how first-past-the-post works, despite having the whole business out at tedious length in a special referendum in 2011. If your vote isn't for the winner, it's the same as if you hadn't bothered voting at all. The 2014 Scottish referendum was a close-run thing, with a 55.3 percent No vote against a 44.7 percent Yes vote on an 84.59 percent turnout. In the General Election, assuming just a two-horse race between the SNP and Labour and assuming the same voting ratio in each seat, the result would still have been a SNP landslide. That's not how it was, of course, because there were several horses in the field to split the anti-SNP vote. In the event, Labour had just under 25 percent of the vote, Cons had 15 percent and Lib Dems had 7.5 percent. When you add this lot up and throw in the dreg Other votes it comes to about 50 percent. So the SNP landslide of 56 out of 59 seats was derived from just 50 percent of the votes. Which represents just 5 percent more nationalist fervour (or dislike of Miliband's pink Tories) than we saw in the referendum.

No need for Kremlin Konspiracies then. But it is still surprising how surprised people are about this FPTP system. It's as if nobody can remember the debate anymore. Matters seemed clear enough back in 2011. Aside from a lot of guff about fair representation and the hallowed ideals of democracy, the choice was between a political system that was forever locked into a swinging pendulum between two identikit parties which spent their entire decade-long terms undoing each other's works, and a Euro-style consensus politics where political horse-trading, coalitions and compromises were the order of the day. In the one system you get a periodic rollercoaster of drama and convulsion ultimately culminating in no change, while in the other you get a lot of humdrum sameness culminating in no change. Around 70 percent of British voters chose the drama. And now they act surprised when they get it.

Socialists have varying opinions on this matter. Ultimately though, for socialism to be established across the world, and for it to work, support for it would have to be so massive that it wouldn't make any difference what voting system was in place. There is the more vexing question of how to do voting in a socialist society, given that mathematically-speaking there is no voting system which can be 'fair' to everyone. This sobering fact was first established in 1950 by Nobel prize-winning economist Kenneth Arrow, whose 'impossibility theorem' surveyed all the possible voting systems then known and found that none

could meet all his proposed criteria for fairness. Since then new contenders have come forward, or at least old ones in new livery. One of these is 'range-voting', a style of voting used in medieval Venice and more recently to rate YouTube videos, where you give candidates a score out of 10, or give them no score, or the same score, with the highest aggregate score giving the winner (*New Scientist*, 12 April 2008). But there are downsides to every system. In many, a candidate can win even if they were not most people's first choice. Plus the systems can be gamed by strategic voting, a tactic quite likely in capitalist elections if not in socialism.

Still, this is not a question for socialists to get bogged down in. People in socialism would choose the system which delivered the greatest fairness to the greatest number. If it turned out not to work, they'd try something else. Formal voting might not even be a large factor in socialist society, since for all we know people might devise more informal ways of operating society which did not require it. How often do you see hands-in-the-air voting systems employed in groups organising a picnic or a volunteer building project, after all? It might be that



The amended resolution now reads: 'the next song shall be 'Get Lucky' by Daft Punk'. Can I see votes in favour?

voting would only occur, on the whole, on the rare occasions when disputes arose, or things went wrong, rather than as a regular and ritualised social institution. How this might work, and work transparently, is not for us to guess. What is true is that we can't make assumptions about democratic structures in socialism based on structures which exist in today's capitalist world, where an elaborate apparatus exists mainly for show. Opponents like to caricature socialism as endless meetings getting in the way of real work. Socialists who are accustomed to today's procedural complexities have sometimes projected similar procedures into the future, scaling them up to the level of global super-conferences and the like and thus inadvertently lending support to the caricaturists. What gets forgotten in all this is the issue of trust. As we have learned to trust scientists to do a good job, and the scientific method to expose those who don't, so we might learn to trust other socialists to do a good job, and the socialist political method to uncover bad jobs where necessary, rather than set ourselves the impossible task of personally scrutinising every decision, every resource budget and every policy document for signs of weakness. The emancipation of humanity from wage-servitude doesn't have to mean we all become full-time nit-pickers and bureaucrats. It could just as easily mean a welcome release from obsessing about the democratic process itself.

PJS



## Who's spreading confusion?

Dear Editors

I wish I could say thank you for your review of my book *The 1% and the Rest of Us* (May *Socialist Standard*). But I can say thanks for bothering to read the book. So thanks.

I'm sorry, however, that you are extremely misguided and it is people like you who fail to do proper research that keeps up the confusion around money and the problems faced by the working classes of this world. How we produce money in our society and how it is allocated is of incredible consequence for inequality and the future of the planet (e.g. what we invest in like energy/food/shelter etc). Your review gives me little hope that this one day might be addressed based on evidence rather than conjecture.

Not only does Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times* recognize that banks create money out of thin air but so too does Positive Money (I wonder whether you even visited their site or read their literature) among many others who have bothered to actually do research rather than pontificate out of conjecture on the web.

Moreover, I wrote my book in late 2013 early 2014, which Zed's production team did not get out until this year. What we have known for a while thanks to various statements, leaks and logic, has now been empirically confirmed and published in the peer reviewed journal: the *International Review of Financial*

*Analysis* in late 2014 (when my book was already in press, hence it is not cited). It is written by Richard A. Werner from the London School of Economics which you may or may not be familiar with.

As it turns out, banks do indeed create money out of thin air when they make a loan. It appears as an asset on their balance sheet and a (deposit) liability for the borrower. No reserves are checked with the central bank and money does not move from a saver to a borrower.

I doubt you have seen or heard of the article or probably care given your penchant for Biblical Marxism and love of this 19th century economic religion.

So, given the evidence (of which you martial [sic] absolutely none) the bad news is that your review is bad . . . really bad. In an honest world, after you've actually considered the evidence you'd retract your review, or at least amend it. But following the Church of Marx and blind faith might be easier for you. I just wish you'd stop spreading confusion.

Cheers mate,

**Tim Di Muzio, Editor, RECASP, Senior Lecturer, School of Social Inquiry and Humanities University of Wollongong, Australia.**

**Reply:** We are well aware of the theory put forward by Richard Werner and discussed it in, for instance, the October 2012 *Socialist Standard*. Incidentally he is not 'from the London School of Economics' except that he once studied there. We

also know of Positive Money and have in fact debated against them (video recording here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUHZVbbJkpw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUHZVbbJkpw))

You appear to be unaware that there are two rival theories which claim that 'banks can create money out of thin air'. One, favoured by Martin Wolf and Positive Money among others, that it is only the whole banking system including the central bank that can do this. The other, favoured by Richard Werner and wilder currency cranks generally, is that an individual bank can do this, and have done so since banks first came into existence. We don't agree with using the term 'out of thin air' as it is confusing and opens the door to all sorts of currency crank ideas.

The empirical study you direct us to is of a small savings bank in Germany. Werner's conclusion is:

'This study establishes for the empirically that banks individually create money out of nothing. The money supply is created as 'fairy dust' by the banks individually, "out of thin air".' ([www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1057521914001070](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1057521914001070))

In fact it doesn't show this, but merely that when a bank makes a loan those immediately in charge of granting it do not check that the bank has the money in its reserves. This may well be the case for a single loan, but the study doesn't go on to examine what then happens afterwards. The March 2014 issue of the *Bank of England Quarterly Review*

**continued page 18**

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## Pope Francis and the Devil

WE DON'T know whether Satan employs a spin doctor, or has his own PR team to boost his image and keep himself in the public eye, or how many believers he actually has these days; but if he does, they haven't been doing a very effective job for, well, the last couple of hundred years at least. Now though, his public image is taking a sharp upturn. The devil, apparently, is enjoying a sudden surge in notoriety, if not in popularity, and believe it or not, it's all down to the Pope.

According to the *Independent* (14 April) a recent gathering of exorcists in Rome have concluded that Pope Francis has prompted a rise in the number of Catholics who believe themselves to be possessed by the devil. Most recent popes, it seems, were in the habit of treating Satan like an embarrassing and rather dodgy uncle who was never to be mentioned outside the family, and only in very hushed tones – a bit like a randy Catholic priest – only worse. Francis, however, has no such inhibitions about Old Nick and apparently keeps banging on about him in front of anyone who happens to be listening.

He recently informed a delegation from Mexico that the Mexican drug wars were due to the Devil's influence. The conflict in the Middle East too, he announced was all down to Satan. And if visitors express surprise at his views he sternly warns them 'Look out, because the Devil is present'.

And so much faith do Catholics have in their leader that the demand for more exorcists is sharply on the rise. The Rome diocese has doubled the number it provides, Milan has increased its number



from five to twelve, and even in Britain, bishops who have previously not bothered to keep an exorcist on the books are now trying to fill the vacancies.

But maybe there's some method in the Pope's madness. They can't afford to let the devil die out can they? What would happen to the church if suddenly there was no more Satan, and therefore no more sin for them to save us from? Not only do they need him, they should put him on the payroll. As Satan's own website [www.churchofsatan.com](http://www.churchofsatan.com) says 'Satan has been the best friend the Church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!' (Nine Satanic Statements).

When we last visited Satan's website (see *Halo Halo* January 2012), to be frank he did seem a little bit mad; liable to attract entirely the wrong type. Now, although there is no mention of

this new understanding he has with the Catholics, he does seem a bit more restrained in his aims and claims. (Although he does still advise 'When walking in open territory, bother no one. If someone bothers you, ask him to stop. If he does not stop, destroy him' (Eleven Satanic Rules of the Earth). That one seems a bit harsh, even from Satan.

And unlike the Catholic Church, he does seem to be trying to get out of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The old membership application form with questions such as – 'Are you satisfied with your sex life?' – 'How many years would you like to live?' – 'Do you feel oppressed or persecuted in any way?' has gone, and is replaced by a simple requirement for applicants to send a cheque for \$200. The Pope would be proud of him.

NW

**The principles of revolutionary socialism were formed over a hundred years ago. Then, capitalist growth was being fuelled by the technological and logistical developments following the Industrial Revolution. Since then, the history of capitalism has been marked by economic peaks and troughs, two World Wars, the rise and fall of state capitalism, massive advances in science, and widespread shifts in culture and beliefs. The Socialist Party argues that its original principles are still valid despite all these changes. This is because the basic structure of capitalism persists, regardless of differences in the way it is organised.**

But is this right? Has society changed so much that class structure and the role of the state are significantly different now compared to previous centuries? What effects have these changes had on class consciousness and the likelihood of revolution? And how should revolutionary socialists respond through their theory and activity?

It's always healthy to re-examine our beliefs, to see if they still apply to our ever-changing world. This weekend of talks and discussion will be an opportunity to take a fresh look at several important aspects of the socialist viewpoint.

### Sessions:

- As A Marxist, Frankly, I'm Skeptical – Simon Wigley
- The X Factor: Revolutionary Political Consciousness – Brian Gardner
- The Argument Clinic: Logical Fallacies and Cognitive Biases. How thinking about thinking can help give new perspectives to old arguments – Darren Poynton
- Revolutionary Action - Johnny Mercer
- Gaming the Revolution – Bill Martin
- Imagine a Boot Stamping on a Human Face, or Givin' it Str8 on da St8: Socialism and the State in the 21st Century – Steve Clayton

Full residential cost (including accommodation and meals Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) is £80. The concessionary rate is £40. Day visitors are welcome, but please book in advance.

To book a place, send a cheque (payable to the Socialist Party of Great Britain) to Summer School, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, York, YO51 9ER, or book online at <http://spgb.net/summerschool2015>

E-mail enquiries to [spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk)

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## Marx and the SNP

'THE "SNP are Marxists", says Conservative MP' was a headline in the *Independent* (11 May). The MP in question was Owen Paterson, who sits for Shropshire North, a buffoon who even Cameron had to sack from his Cabinet for incompetence.

A minimum definition of a 'Marxist' would be someone who agreed with Marx's theories of economics, history and social change, and also with his aim of a society based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of production. There might, perhaps, be some individual SNP members who share Marx's materialist approach to society and history. After all, Marx himself acknowledged that the so-called 'Scottish Historical School' had foreshadowed to some extent his own 'materialist conception of history'. In *The German Ideology*, he and Engels wrote that, in contrast to German history-writers: 'The French and English ... have nevertheless made the first attempts to give the writing of history a materialistic basis by being the first to write histories of civil society, of commerce and industry'. Since the writers in English they had in mind (Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, John Millar) were all from Scotland calling them 'English' was the sort of *faux pas* that gets Scottish Nationalists hot under the collar.

But no one in the SNP stands for a society of common ownership and democratic control, as Marx did. The SNP's aim, rather, is the establishment of a separate capitalist state in Scotland. As such it represents the interests of smaller capitalists producing for the home market there, as opposed to the larger capitalists producing for export who want to remain part of the UK.

It is true that in his day Marx did support the separation of Ireland from the UK, though not as an end in itself but as a means to the end of furthering political democracy in the rest of the UK by weakening the power of the landed aristocracy. He didn't take the same position with regard to Scotland. He was well aware that the Scottish landed aristocracy was just as ruthless as their English counterparts and devoted a section of *Capital* (at the end of Chapter 27 on 'The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land') to movingly describing the fate of the Gaelic clansmen at the hands of their chiefs, who had transformed themselves into absolute owners of the one-time clan land, clearing them off it as part of the process of 'the primitive accumulation of capital'.

Not that the SNP itself claims to be socialist. The most it claims is to be 'social-democratic' like the Labour Party used to be. As such it proposes to tax the rich in a bid to bring about a less unequal society. It is maybe this that has led Paterson to think they are 'Marxists'. But Marx did not stand for a redistribution of wealth away from the rich as this would still leave private ownership as the basis of society. He stood for the common ownership of wealth. Which is something quite different.

Nor is there any such thing as a 'Marxist tax policy' or a 'Marxist economic policy' (whatever some left-wing supporters of Scottish separatism, and not just Paterson, imagine). This would imply that Marx favoured putting forward policies for capitalist governments to pursue; in other words, of advising them how to run capitalism. But Marx was not into that. Insofar as Marx could be said to have had an 'economic policy' it was to end the capitalist economy altogether. It's an aim we share but the SNP does not.

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# Indigenous suicides

THROUGHOUT THE world indigenous peoples suffer from high rates of alcoholism and suicide. Relocation, epidemics, depopulation, and subjugation have put indigenous peoples everywhere at high risk of depression and anxiety. Every culture provides ways by which individuals may satisfy their needs for meaning, prestige, and status. Small-scale, hunter-gatherer societies provide several: excellence in hunting, storytelling, or as a healer. Whatever its size, complexity or environment, a central task of any culture is to provide its members with a sense of belonging and purpose. What happens, then, when a people's way of life is destroyed through disease, genocide, loss of territory, and repression of language and culture? It leads to self-destruction. James Anaya, former United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples said suicides among indigenous youth, across the globe, are common in situations where tribe members have seen the upheaval of their culture, which produces in the indigenous a lack of self-confidence and grounding about who they are. 'They see taking their own lives as unfortunately and sadly an option,' he said.

In the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native men ages 15 to 34, and is two and a half times higher than the national average for that age group. 75 percent of Native American men and one third of Native American women can be classified as alcoholics or alcohol abusers. These numbers are amazing, and do not even accurately reflect the far-reaching effects of alcohol abuse, such as physical problems, mental illness, community violence, unemployment, and domestic abuse. Indians die from alcohol-related causes at a rate four times higher than the rest of United States citizens. In fact, four of the top ten causes of death among Indians are alcohol related.

Australian Aboriginal people commit suicide at a far younger age than non-Aboriginal Australians, with reports of prepubescent children, some as young as eight committing suicide. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men ages 25 to 29 have a suicide rate four times higher than the general population in that

same age group in Australia.

Among the indigenous peoples in Brazil, the suicide rate was six times higher than the national average in 2013. In the Guaraní tribe, Brazil's largest, the rate is estimated at more than twice as high as the indigenous rate over all, the study said. In fact it may be even higher. The Guaraní have long made their home in the fertile land of Brazil's southwest, where swaths of vast forests and savannas have been transformed into farms and ranches. In the process, the tribe has been dispossessed and uprooted from its traditional way of life. Many in the tribe face extreme discrimination and live in abject poverty close to the farmers and ranchers who occupy land that was once theirs. 'Living in this non-place, they commit suicide,' said Professor Alcantara, an anthropologist at the University of São Paulo who has studied adolescent suicides among the Guaraní. Nearly 100 years ago, the Guaraní, who today live primarily in Brazil and Paraguay, were forced off their ancestral land when the Brazilian government granted farmers and ranchers the legal title to that land. Tribe members were placed in crowded reservations, and often separated from family members. Distress, poverty and violence against tribal leaders have led to despair among Guaraní teenagers, who feel they don't have a future. Professor Alcantara said that over the past 10 years tribe members have come to live between two cultures — the culture of nearby cities, where they are discriminated against, and the culture of their own tribe. Young tribe members, in particular, feel that they don't belong either to the city or to the tribe, she said.

Professor Colin Tatz of the Australian National University suggests that when you are engaged in a struggle, a struggle to survive, suicide rates are very low

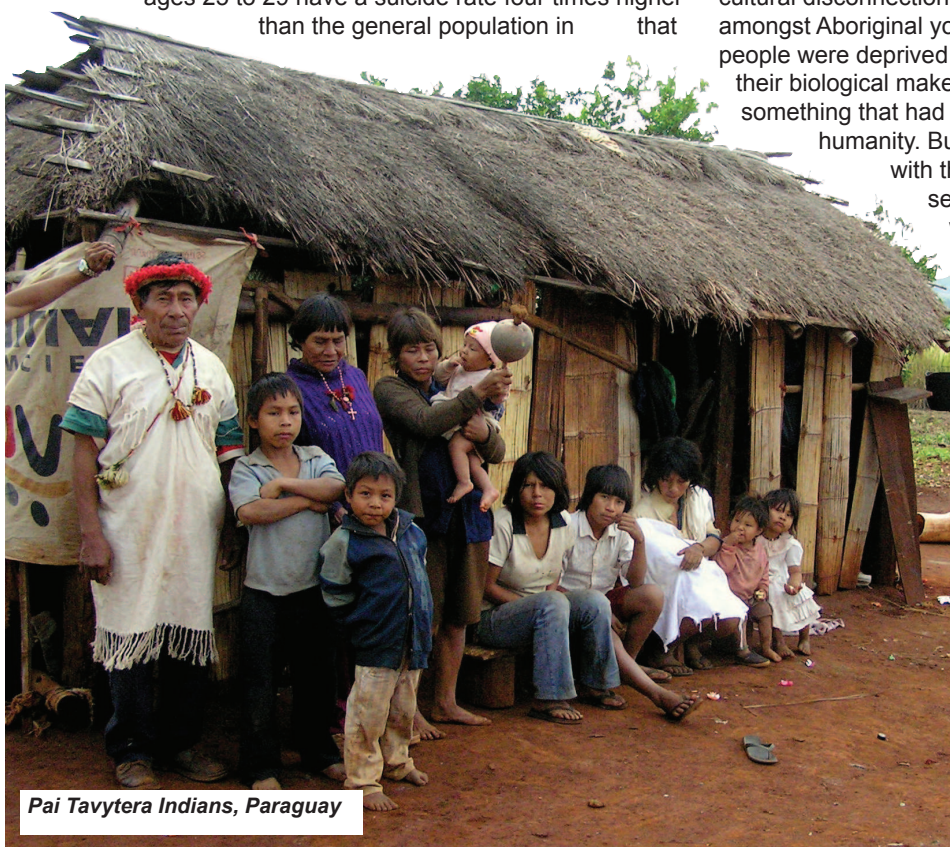
Dr Norm Sheehan, from Swinburne University of Technology sees suicide as the direct result of colonialism:

'Colonialism deprives the colonised of positive self-images and for me, that's a crucial part of the Aboriginal experience. ... cultural disconnection was a major cause of suicide especially amongst Aboriginal youth,' Sheehan explained '... Aboriginal people were deprived of a true understanding of self because their biological make-up was seen as an impediment, something that had to be erased. That's a crime against humanity. But Aboriginal people have had to live with that legacy and develop a concept of self in a zone like that, so understanding what culture is in that context is almost impossible.'

Psychiatrist Professor Martin Graham from the University of Queensland, believes 'There is a deep sadness among Aboriginal peoples and that translates to a sense of anomie perhaps. A kind of deep sense of sadness and boredom and dispiritedness relating to loss of land, loss of culture, loss of languages in some cases and a sense that none of it can be changed.'

Historians and politicians should stop boasting about progress and civilisation of capitalism until they understand the brutality and falsehood it brought yet while we call for a new understanding, it's more important to advocate social change to make real change.

**ALJO**



Pai Tavytera Indians, Paraguay





# Wandering in Wolverhampton

EVEN WITHOUT the entertainment of 2010 – like Gordon Brown misunderstanding the word ‘mobile’ to mean using his

phone as a missile aimed at his underlings – this year’s general election was historically exciting. If we were not moved by sympathy for the defeated leaders such as Miliband, Clegg and Balls and gratitude for their justifying this system of poverty, disease and conflict there was also the matter of the marginal constituencies with their particular tension between some desperately participating tricksters. Prominent among these was Wolverhampton South West, famous as a hyper-marginal but regarded as safe Conservative until it fell to Blair’s runaway victory in 1997. In 2010 it reacted to give the Tory Paul Uppal a majority of 691 over Labour’s Rob Marris who had persistently declared his intention to win the seat back. In all it was enough to satisfy the hungriest psephology obsessive.

## Immigrants

It turned out to be one of the few Labour gains, giving Marris a majority of 801. He was delighted: ‘It’s not been a good night for Labour nationally, quite a good night for Labour in parts of the West Midlands and of course a great night for Labour here in Wolverhampton’. For Uppal, perhaps because the late Enoch Powell was once the local MP, it was not so good. He describes himself as a ‘Smethwick-born Sikh’ whose father came from East Africa in 1961 and he was a babe in arms when Powell declared himself to be ‘filled with foreboding’ at the prospect of unchecked immigration from the Commonwealth. He can recall the Deputy Head of his school enquiring of his class if they were planning to spend time during the week-end ‘Paki-bashing’ but now he says there are ‘various groups’ which get on ‘incredibly well’ so that Powell’s widow ‘tells me that he would have loved me’. However there is still anti-immigrant feeling there, directed against those coming from Eastern Europe for roughly the same reasons as did Uppal’s father all those years ago. For all is not well in the Midlands: 32.4 per cent of the employed people in Wolverhampton South West receive below the official living wage of £7.86 an hour, so that the single food bank which was there to help the most needy people in 2010 has sprouted into five.

## River Tiber

The immigrants were at first welcomed by Powell but in April 1968, when he was Ted Heath’s Shadow Defence Secretary, he responded to the Race Relations Act and the prohibition of discrimination in matters such as housing on grounds of race by his controversial, enduringly quoted speech which included the passage ‘Like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood. That tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic ....is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. Indeed, it has all but come...Only resolute and urgent action will avert it even now’. This was ominously attractive; notably the London

Dockers demonstrated their support in a march – even although that reference to the River Tiber was a reminder of Powell’s reputation as a classical scholar. As a youth at King Edward’s School in Birmingham he had been one of a select few to be awarded a 100 percent mark in an end-of-term examination. Later at Cambridge he sat an examination in Greek prose which was timed to last three hours but he was able to leave after an hour and a half because in that time he had produced appropriate translations. He went on to accumulate several classics prizes and ended with a Double First degree, presented to him at a ceremony disciplined in the university traditions of dress, speech, demeanour and the like.

## Ulster Unionist

Before the protests over his ‘river foaming with blood’ speech Powell’s contributions in the Commons often aroused a torrent of adoring praise: ‘The cleverest person I have seen in this place’ was the opinion of Bruce Grocott, who in the 1970s was Minister of Agriculture and PPS to Tony Blair. From the other side the venomous ex-Etonian Tory MP Alan Clark sneered at the style of some of the MPs in a debate: ‘...bellowing any point concerning which his conscience made him uneasy...’ and ‘...cannot speak or even read particularly well’ but when it came to Powell’s contribution: ‘...perfectly brilliant; what a superb Chancellor he would make’. But Powell was not consistent in his opposition to immigration. During his time as one of Edward Heath’s ministers he campaigned for policies which were designed to assert the superiority of market forces above state planning in matters such as housing, social services and the level of the exchange rate. At this time one opinion of him was Andrew Gamble’s ‘...the foremost critic of the new interventionist state the Conservatives developed to help restructure capital and contain wages’. But in this Powell took no account of the fact that immigration, as a response to the demands of the market and the availability of opportunity, was an expression of market forces; indeed during his time as Minister of Health there was an active drive to recruit immigrants to fill vacancies in hospitals and the like. And during his closing years he confusedly turned his back on the Conservative Party and, in the general election of October 1974, became an Ulster

Unionist MP while advising the voters to support the Labour Party. When he died in February 1998 along with his reputation as a political firebrand there were rumours that he had been involved in a Westminster paedophile network. Powell’s biographer Simon Heffer strongly disputes the allegations but the matter had been passed to the police by the Bishop of Durham.

The voters of Wolverhampton South West and of all the other constituencies have questions to consider now, after their votes have returned a Tory government with an avowed policy of tightening the screw of poverty as against the Labour Party alternative to do roughly the same. They should now ask themselves if this is the most effective use of their power to alter this society in the best interests of all its people.

IVAN



Above: Rob Marris.  
Right: Enoch Powell.







# Hype and hypocrisy – Magna Carta

King John's Great Seal, 1215

The good burghers of the borough of Runnymede are getting excited, and Surrey county council is thrilled to bits, because on 15 June 2015 they will be celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. A committee and an advisory board has been set up. Members of these bodies range from Trevor Philips, the chairman of the Equal Opportunity Commission, to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. who, according to the website [magnacarta800th.com](http://magnacarta800th.com), is a 'Magna Carta private owner'. Nearby Royal Holloway College is preparing quite an array of events, courses and a smartphone app to mark the anniversary.

The strapline for the celebrations? 'Commemorating 800 years of democracy'. Imagine, democracy for 800 years, encompassing the evisceration of John Ball after the Peasants' Revolt in the second century of 'democratic' England, the shooting of leveller Robert Lockyer by Cromwell in 1649, and the hanging

of 12 year-old Abraham Charlston for Luddite activity in 1812. Democracy?

Clearly not democracy. So what are Surrey Council, Runnymede Borough, Royal Holloway and any number of other organisations celebrating exactly?

King John, known as Lackland (king of England from 1199-1216) had had many disagreements with his richer subjects. Things came to a head in London on Sunday, 17 May 1215 when, whilst many people were in church, the City gates were opened to the rebel landowners by sympathetic rich Londoners. With the capital full of his opponents and too difficult to take by siege, the king had to negotiate. For a few weeks, a peace was brokered between representatives of Lackland and the barons; a document was put together, agreed to, and given to the spigurnels (chancery clerks responsible for sealing documents) to do their work. Copies of this document would have been distributed throughout the country, signifying this accord between the king and the barons. Peace, then, had broken out.

A few weeks later the document was made 'null, and void of all validity forever' by the Pope, in response to a request from the King. Nine barons and all the citizens of London were excommunicated. The civil war was back on. In response to resistance throughout the country, John's soldiers destroyed villages, raped and thieved first in the North, and then down to East Anglia and across to Oxford. But not long afterwards, the French prince Louis, having been invited to invade by the barons, entered London in June 1216. Then on 18 October the King died from dysentery and within ten days his son Henry III was crowned. The document was given a few tweaks and reissued in November as a peace offering by the new King, but with little immediate effect.

It was only after a few more battles in the following year, including those of Lincoln and Sandwich, that peace was agreed with the Treaty of Lambeth in September 1217, and the French prince left the country with a bribe of 10 thousand marks.

The document was issued for a third time, with further tweaks, and named 'Magna Carta' to distinguish it from another, smaller, issue, the Charter of the Forest. This latter document took the bits in the previous document that pertained to the forests – that is, land set aside for royals to use for hunting. It has been said that this document relates more to ordinary people than does Magna Carta. It is true that, amongst its demands that foresters mutilate their dogs' paws so they can't chase deer, there is a clause that bans the removal of limbs, or life, for stealing venison. However, the document does not explicitly ban blinding, a punishment at that time. The prescribed punishment in the Charter of the Forest was a fine as heavy as can be levied according to the thief's means, and if it could not be paid then it's a year and a day in prison followed, if the money was still not available, by being kicked out of the country (i.e., they must 'abjure the realm').

These documents were regularly reissued throughout the thirteenth century, generally when the king was in need of more revenue. From starting its life as an attempt to negotiate a peace with a king, Magna Carta seemed to turn into a way of generating taxes.

By the sixteenth century, with the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism, it is hardly surprising that a document that spoke of the rights of the (Catholic) church, and drawn up in a time in his reign when Lackland felt it expedient to submit to papal authority, would not be something to flash around. Shakespeare's *King John*, for instance, does not mention



Magna Carta. When the Chief Justice, Edward Coke, suggested that the king was not above the law, James I had him dismissed, leaving him with free time to write *The Institutes of the Lawes of England*, which expressed his view that Magna Carta was the basis of the common law.

In the seventeenth century, with the conflicts between parliament and king, it became fashionable, although not with the Lord Protector Cromwell, who is said to have referred to it as the 'Magna Farta'. Levellers such as John Lilburne and Thomas Overton saw it differently, Lilburne invoking it at his trials for treason against Cromwell, quoting Coke's *Institutes*, and Overton quoting the charter in *An Arrow Against All Tyrants*.

The leveller William Walwyn, however, had a more astute understanding. In *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* he says: 'Magna Carta itself being but a beggarly thing, containing many marks of intolerable bondage, and the laws that have been made since by parliaments have in very many particulars made our government much more oppressive and intolerable...'

Onwards into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we see the United States considering it as a basis of their constitution and Bill of Rights. The symbol of the state of Massachusetts is a man holding a copy of Magna Carta.

So there we have it. This is the focus of the celebration. A document that lasted in law for a few weeks in a failed attempt to prevent handbags at dawn between a king and his rich subjects, which was then split into two documents over the course of the century, and reissued whenever a thirteenth century monarch wanted more money. These bits of vellum have become a fetish that signifies democracy.

It offers protection under the law for free men. By free men, of course, it doesn't mean the likes of us (putting gender aside for the moment). It means protection for the rich.

And it is argued that this is the first time a king has been held to account, and a limit set to his power. Yet the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells of the power of the Witan – the councils of 'wise' men – in pre-Norman England, and their influence on the monarchs.

Meanwhile, back in Surrey...

In woodland, close to where Magna Carta is purported to have been sealed, lies the Runnymede Eco-Village community. It is on



King John's real opinion of civil rights - medieval toilet at Carrickfergus Castle

land occupied by the group Diggers 2012, land that has been vacant and otherwise unused since 2007 when Brunel University left the area, having sold it to a property developer, who soon afterwards was given planning permission. For around three years these hippies have been building shelters, setting up solar electricity and growing vegetables. Or, as the *Daily Mail* website puts it, 'Dope-smoking anarchists sully site where King John sealed the Magna Carta with litter-strewn shanty town' (odd that the *Mail* believes that the king sealed Magna Carta with a litter-strewn shanty town and not some kind of wax on a stick).

The landowners are in the process of going to court to evict Diggers 2012.

And on 15 June there will be a celebration of democracy in Runnymede, in the presence of the Queen – a non-elected hereditary head of state, it seems, is the perfect example of these '800 years of democracy'. That and a thirteenth century document resulting from a

hissy fit between royalty and rich men.

And perhaps freedom will be celebrated by the force of the law booting a few hippies off nearby land.

And two final commentaries written not so far apart:

'...it is implied that here is a law which is above the King and which even he must not break. This reaffirmation of a supreme law and its expression in a general charter is the great work of Magna Carta; and this alone justifies the respect in which men have held it.'

Winston Churchill

'... it's through that there Magna Charter,

As were made by the Barons of old,  
That in England today we can do what we like,  
So long as we do what we're told.'

Marriott Edgar

VINCENT JONES





# Stressed Out

**G**eneral practitioners are highly-qualified, do obviously important work and are paid well above the average wage. So you might expect them to be very contented and motivated workers, satisfied with their lot and well-respected by their patients and by society at large. But in fact GPs are leaving their posts in droves, taking early retirement or whatever. Medical students are increasingly unwilling to go into general practice, preferring specialisms of one kind or another, though some will end up as GPs anyway if they do not make the grade in a more specialised area. The number of unfilled GP posts has quadrupled in the last three years, and one doctor said he felt that 'general practice is on the verge of being irreparably broken' (BBC Online, 2 March).

The reason behind this situation

is, in a word, stress. GPs work long hours, are subject to various pressures, and experience decreasing amounts of job satisfaction. A survey from 2013 found that around nine thousand GPs were expecting to quit the profession in the next five years: 'A total of 86% of GPs reported considerable or high pressure from rising workload, 81% from paperwork and 78% from having too little time to do their job justice' (gponline.com, 16 September 2013). Earlier this year, the British Medical Association published guidance aimed at 'finding ways of freeing up GPs' time for patient consultations by halting inappropriate, excessive and unresourced work' (bma.org.uk, 14 January). Doctors in all jobs are subject to similar pressures, with relatively high rates of depression and anxiety.

In fact this is just part of the ever-mounting stress problems affecting health service workers, nurses as well as doctors. In London in 2014, almost 1500 nurses took time off because of stress, with an average of 38 days (*Observer*, 18 January), and perhaps as much as 30 percent of all NHS sick leave is caused by stress. Jobs are frozen or even cut, while an ageing population and poorer health in general in the recession mean an increase in patients, and all these lead to overwork by the staff who remain. In some disciplines, this may involve lengthy spells of solo working. One senior A&E nurse described the pressure placed on staff as worse than what she faced on the front line in the Iraq War. In September last year, a nurse in Walsall killed himself after months of working 14-hour days, six days



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## “One senior A&E nurse described the pressure placed on staff as worse than what she faced on the front line in the Iraq War”

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a week.

The health industry is of course not the only one where workers experience high levels of stress, though the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) lists it as one of those with the highest prevalence (the others are given as education, social care, public administration and defence). The charity Mind reported in December that, more generally, 87 percent of emergency services staff and volunteers surveyed had experienced stress, low mood and poor mental health at some point in their work; but they are less likely than other workers to take time off for poor mental health. A report last year for the Prison Officers' Association found, unsurprisingly, that many were subject to verbal and physical abuse from prisoners. But in addition, many felt impelled to go into work when unwell and were unable to 'switch off' outside work

that their general level of stress was high or very high.

In 2013–14, there were 487,000 cases of work-related stress in Britain, resulting in over eleven million working days lost. To be more precise, these figures are for 'work-related stress, depression or anxiety', defined by the HSE as 'a harmful reaction people have to undue pressures and demands placed on them at work'. Sometimes a distinction is drawn between pressure (when you feel you can cope with the demands placed on you) and stress (when you feel unable to do so). The HSE sees stress as a problem for employers as well as workers, since it can lead to increased absences and staff turnover, and to more mistakes by staff. So it gives out various kinds of advice, for instance that line managers (who may be stressed themselves) should be aware of issues of

of stress-related illness or injury to employees, though of course that does not imply that such minimising will take place.

Inevitably the EU has set up a body to deal with these matters, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. This is currently running a campaign 'Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress', launched in April last year and due to culminate in a summit this November. It is intended to provide 'the support, guidance and tools needed to effectively manage work-related stress and psychosocial risks'. Employers and workers need to work together to combat stress, supposedly, and the whole enterprise is based on the assumption that things will go well as long as reasonable people are well-informed and co-operate and show genuine concern. There is little or no awareness of the power that employers exercise and of the subordinate position of workers, not that we would expect it from such a body.

Someone suffering from stress, whether work-related or not, may have a range of psychological, emotional and behavioural signs, from lapses of memory and mood swings to insomnia and loss of libido. Behind all these symptoms and causes of stress, from overwork to depression, is the basic factor of people lacking control over their working lives. They have little or no choice in how many hours they work, how much they are expected to get through in their working time, what sort of breaks they can take, the kind of work they are required to do and so on. Changes to their schedule or reorganisation of workplace structures and how they relate to managers and colleagues are generally imposed on them with little or no consultation. All that is the consequence of being a wage worker under capitalism, of being employed by a system that is interested in profit and cost rather than the health and well-being of workers.

**PAUL BENNETT**

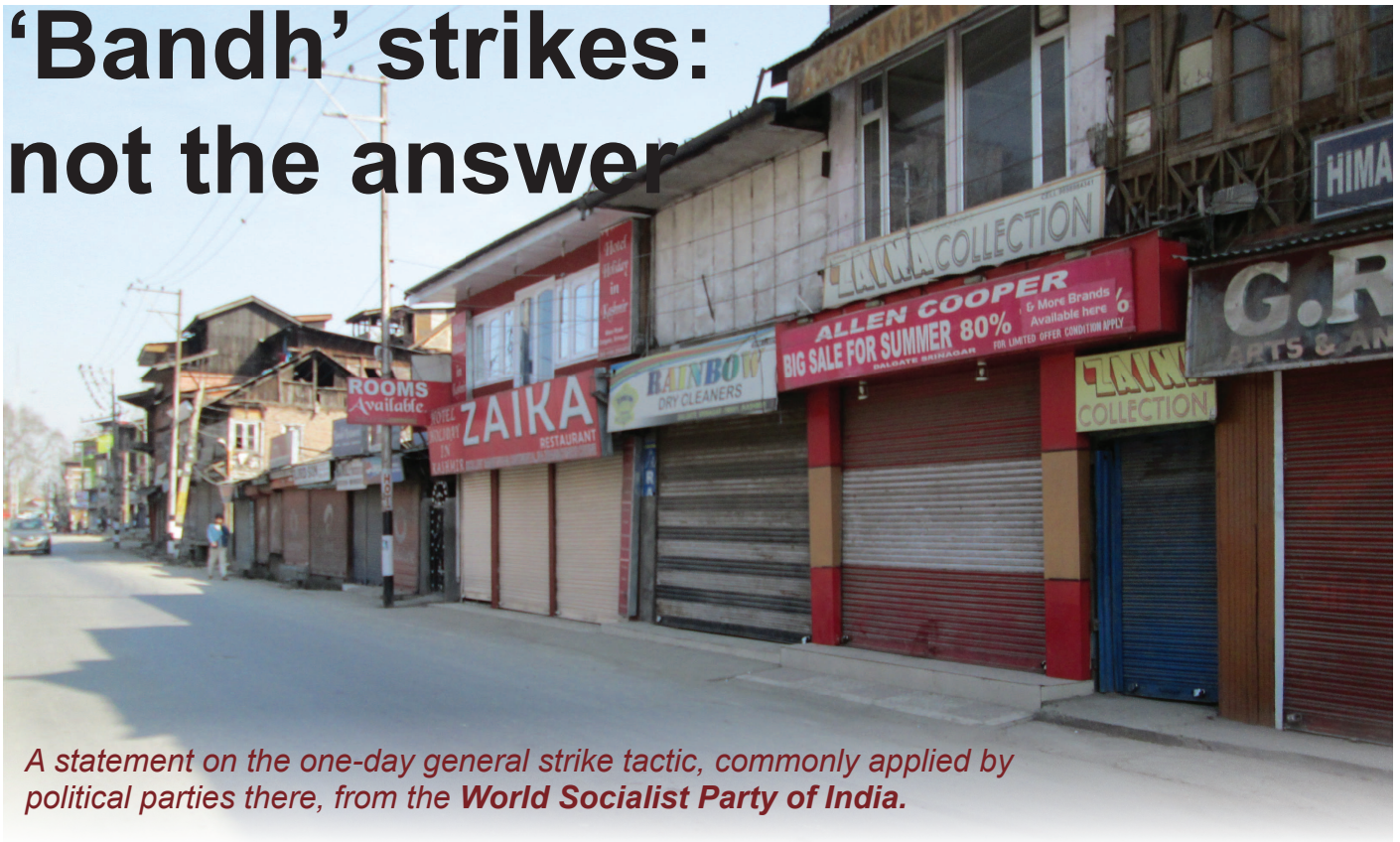


*Work-related stress: over eleven million working days lost to it in 2013-14*

hours. Over a third had been diagnosed with a stress-related illness while working in the prison service. A similar report for the University and College Union found that 87 percent of respondents in further education felt their job was stressful, and 64 percent stated

workload and harassment, handle sensitively people returning to work and generally provide appropriate support. Companies have a general duty of care to their workers, and under the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 employers have a duty to minimise the risk

# ‘Bandh’ strikes: not the answer



*A statement on the one-day general strike tactic, commonly applied by political parties there, from the World Socialist Party of India.*

In this era of capitalism’s decadence the general strike (or ‘bandh’) for more reforms or mere protest is futile. It has lost its edge. Its usefulness has become ineffective vis-à-vis world level productive abundance. It is not the answer to the problems produced by the potential and from time to time actual ‘epidemic of overproduction’ (*Communist Manifesto*) that is prevalent today.

During its rising phase capitalism, ie. the capital/wage labour relation, was spreading out by swallowing up antiquated pre-capitalist economic relations and transforming the feudal social classes into two great modern antagonist classes – the minority collective capitalist class vis-à-vis the majority collective working class – or as in recent parlance 1 percent vs. 99 percent. Feudal relations of production were giving way to the capitalist relations of production. The capitalist class got the working class to help them to accomplish their historic assignment of socio-economic and political change, which had been effectively accomplished by the beginning of the last century.

Until that juncture, despite ongoing exploitation and periodical economic crises – booms and slumps – the working class had benefited from some overall rise in real wages at the expense of profits in this phase. Thereafter, despite periodical rises in real wages in times of booms, their *relative wage* ie. their share in the total global wealth they produce in relation to that of the capitalist

class, has tended to fall. From then onwards the task of making history has become the exclusive responsibility of the working class, since the productive forces have outgrown the capitalist relations of production, signifying that the way of life under capitalism has grown old, antiquated, causing extreme inequality, harrowing austerity, unrelenting impoverishment, abysmal poverty and dehumanizing suffering for members of the great producer class. You cannot rejuvenate capitalism with its own rules, but can only understand it; it is anachronistic; it has become utterly reactionary; it has to be done away with lock stock and barrel; it has to be abandoned on the dumping ground of history.

## **The wasted century of Leninism**

The working class, the class that has the power (pending unity) and the means (organisation and ballot) to change the world, has transiently lost their revolutionary vision and wisdom generally in the blind alley of Leninism, and in the quagmire of leftism. They have, for now, due mainly to the Leninist distraction, forgotten about the responsibility which history has conferred upon them. Leninism has been a deadly infectious blight over all revolutionary principles and messages of Marxism which declared: ‘the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class’ (*Communist Manifesto*). Leninism has utterly distorted the lessons of history and kept the working

class under the servitude of capital in general and of all-powerful overweening dictatorships in particular. Up until now this class-collaborationist ‘vulgar socialism’ (state capitalism) has stolen over a century from genuine socialism’s life. As far as human freedom is concerned, a century has been lost.

So, now without further delay, the working class has to tear off the snare of Leninism-reformism, ruthlessly criticise and reject all reformist maneuvers as useless and organise world socialist parties and groups everywhere for self-emancipation and thereby the emancipation of the whole humanity from the clutch of the division into classes. The working class is the producer class; we produce, store and distribute everything needed to sustain society; we secure, defend, protect and run the society and the state. Then why should we beg anything from our exploiter and oppressor parasites who actually are





takers, and not givers? We can get everything we need simply by taking possession of the entire affairs of life. We have to become class-conscious and united for socialism here and now. Why should we settle for anything less when abundance is knocking at the door? Abundance for all, that is socialism. However, the task of taking possession of abundance remains pending. Its historical taker – the working class is still lacking this revolutionary will. Hence decadence.

### Unsold stocks

The all-round application of science and technology has created potential abundance and, from time to time, unsold overstocks at world level, on the one hand, and devastating unemployment on the other. Then goods remain unsold; means of production and machines remain idle, while work-hands remain jobless. This situation has become a regular problem for the global capitalist class. In their ultra-modern factories, farms and workplaces a continually decreasing number of workers are daily producing huge amounts of goods and services and adding to the already existing potential and actual plenty.

Under this circumstance a *bandh* can sometimes actually bring some relief for the capitalist class, by helping them to relinquish at least a part of their overstocking, and in two

ways. Firstly, as the people have to live on during the strike period, when shops too are closed, they will require to buy and store food and all other necessities for consumption whereby a part of the overstocking will be sold out before the strike begins; secondly, during the strike period production will remain suspended making no further addition to the stocks. Moreover, the daily wage workers, ie. the lowest strata of the collective working class become hard hit owing to their loss of wages; they become more impoverished. Further, a *bandh* called by the leaders of some minority group, party or parties (as is often the case) boils down to an imposition on all, including those disinclined, hence is undemocratic. In addition, during the strike period people have to remain confined at homes due to absence of any transport, but the capitalist government bosses are at liberty to move about and deploy the armed forces as they deem necessary.

### Beyond reformism

Therefore the working class has to raise their consciousness and organisation, beyond and above their ongoing conservative, defensive and reformist state, to revolutionary consciousness and organisation, breaking through the barriers of reformism. They ought 'to win the battle of democracy' (*Communist Manifesto*) through political class

struggle. They ought to turn themselves from their present status as a *class-in-itself* into a revolutionary *class-for-itself* as an independent political party and peacefully and democratically seize political power state-wise and worldwide. They must self-organise and take decisive political action via universal suffrage, via ballots sending mandated and re-callable MPs as socialist delegates to the parliaments to make the one historical declaration: annulment of all property and territorial rights and all that is on and in the Earth will become the common heritage of the whole humanity.

The basis of the society that Marx envisaged as going to replace capitalism will be: 'an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common' (chapter 1 of *Capital*); 'a co-operative society based on the common ownership of the means of production' (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*); 'abolition of private property', 'the Communistic abolition of buying and selling', 'the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production' (*Communist Manifesto*); and 'abolition of the wages system' (*Value, Price and Profit*). In short, a classless, stateless, moneyless, wageless, leaderless society based on the common ownership of the means of production and articles for distribution.

**BINAY SARKAR**



Opposite: 5 day shutdown in Srinagar, Kashmir, 2013. Only lake vegetable sellers were allowed to trade.



# Complicity

Whilst discussing the Atlantic slave trade of the past and the part played in it by the British a friend said that he felt some guilt about it. This, no doubt, was due to the part that his 'nationality' plays in his sense of identity. The 'sins of the fathers' were, for him, visited upon all who are 'British'. In contrast to this I felt that the guilt was to be focused on the ruling class of the time and that he was blameless for their crimes.

However a case could be made that if we do not oppose the criminal actions of the ruling class of our own time then we are, indeed, complicit. This is compounded by the fact that much of the wealth that gives the capitalist elite their power in this country was derived originally from the slave trade. While underlining the

**'On the Inhumanity of Dealers in human flesh...' A 1792 cartoon of the slave trade.**

continuity and importance of history this fact also illustrates the difficulty in allocating collective responsibility for the actions of some members of a community. That there must be some level of collective culpability is surely indisputable since we would all take some moral responsibility for our actions (or inactions) and this must include our political activities.

This year sees the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration/death camps and the complicity of the German population in their existence is still hotly debated by historians. Nobody would dispute that the members of the Nazi Party were complicit in these terrible crimes but what of those who voted for them originally and can those who did nothing to oppose the Nazis gaining power be exonerated from some culpability? Merely pointing at Hitler and Himmler and claiming to be 'just obeying their orders' provides no moral or political justification

for committing inhuman acts. After they came to power there's no doubting the level of fear that forced many into actions they would never otherwise countenance but there were many who were, to some degree, ideologically sympathetic – and not just in Germany. Some would shrug or throw their arms in the air saying something like: 'That's an extreme example which could never happen again' or 'Any attempt to explain the Holocaust would be merely a rationalisation since the magnitude of the crime is incomprehensible'.

In contrast to merely despairing about 'the human condition' socialists seek to explain Nazi rule in its historical and political context because of its importance in warning us of what can happen during one of capitalism's inevitable episodes of extreme economic and political instability. This period also has important lessons for us in respect of keeping a close eye on the actions of







**Complicit: Dr. Fritz Klein, a German doctor at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, stands in a mass grave.**

those who would take advantage of such instability, both of the left and right wing. Above all it teaches us that any level of moral and political complacency towards the activities of our 'leaders' can and does lead to disaster – we must accept responsibility for the actions of those who do so in our name unless we oppose them politically.

It has long been recognised that people acting in a group can behave differently than they would as individuals. Lynch mobs and football hooligans are classic examples of this type of tribal behaviour. Nation states rely on this psychology in times of war as the individuals who compose their armies would never 'cold-bloodedly' murder another human being in their everyday lives. Of course all kinds of political conditioning are needed for this to happen but perhaps we can pick out one that might help explain the seemingly complacent attitude that many exhibit when nations murder in their name. Because of the numbers involved – sometimes millions when nations are at war – there is a kind of dilution of moral responsibility.

Someone who would suffer great guilt if their actions or inactions were to cause a family member, friend or neighbour an injury (let alone their death) does not feel the same level of responsibility for the deaths and injuries that occur in a war that they supported (or did not oppose).

After the conflict dies down (wars rarely end neatly) the subsequent analysis might reveal that the causes were not quite what was claimed (as with the recent Iraq war) and so a debate ensues where blame is apportioned. The leaders and their advisers are questioned but rarely condemned or punished for their mistakes or crimes. But what of the people who let it all happen in their name? This is when the 'dilution' of moral and political responsibility comes into focus. Bush and Blair take the lion's share of any guilt (which, of course, they strongly refute) then the 'intelligence' community (for 'sexing up' the WMD dossiers), then perhaps the military leaders or even the oil companies etc., so that any culpability that is left is felt to be so negligible that it's not worthy of consideration. Such a contrast to individual moral responsibility – nobody would defend their immoral activities by claiming

that the murder they committed was somehow diminished by the volume of the other murders carried out that year or that the person they beat up suffered less injury than the victim of another thug. We socialists are appalled by the level of complacency shown by the mainstream political parties, voters and the politically cynical in this regard. How and why did we get to such a position where seemingly nobody takes responsibility for their political actions?

At the heart of this we have the contradiction inherent within capitalist culture where, on the one hand, we are told that everyone is a competitor and there's 'no such thing as society' and on the other hand we are told that we're part of a 'nation'. The latter designation is usually only called upon in times of war or when some group are to be demonised as 'immigrants'. Liberals tend to think of the world purely in terms of individuals as their ideology forbids any group or class consciousness and this is partly why they find the concept of collective complicity so difficult. Another reason for absence of any feelings of political responsibility for the actions of the state is because of the 'professionalisation' of politics. Westminster seems to many to be another world where ex public school boys play some kind of exotic role playing game that somehow decides national policy. The majority are completely alienated by this anachronistic theatrical nonsense and feel no relationship with (or responsibility for) the strange decisions that are made there.

In an integrated global economic and political structure like capitalism nobody can escape the consequences of its existence. We are all responsible for what happens in the world because capitalism has truly made it 'one world' – in this respect, there's no 'third world' or 'developed world'. As long as we allow the political elite to do the bidding of the parasite class we are all complicit in their crimes. Only working for socialism can provide you with an 'alibi' should one ever be needed. When the majority feel morally and politically responsible for the world, as most do about their actions in their 'private lives', then we are all finally motivated to change things.

'What did you do during the war daddy?'

'I opposed the war and what caused it before it began, my son'.

**WEZ**



## from page 5

provides an answer, as well as confirming our view that banks don't make profits by simply creating money from nowhere and charging interest on it:

'A bank's business model relies on receiving a higher interest rate on the loans (or other assets) than the rate it pays out on its deposits (or other liabilities). (...) The commercial bank uses the difference, or spread, between the expected return on their assets and liabilities to cover its operating costs and to make profits (...) In order to make extra loans, an individual bank will typically have to lower its loan rates relative to its competitors to induce households and companies to borrow more. And once it has made the loan it may well 'lose' the deposits it has created to those competing banks. Both of these factors affect the profitability of making a loan for an individual bank and influence how much borrowing takes place. (...) Banks therefore *try to attract or retain additional liabilities to accompany their new loans.* (...) *Alternatively, a bank can borrow from other banks or attract other forms of liabilities, at least temporarily. But whether through deposits or other liabilities, the bank would need to make sure it was attracting and retaining some kind of funds in order to keep expanding lending'* (Our emphasis).

In other words, a bank does have to cover its new loans by attracting more funds (which will appear on its balance as 'liabilities', i.e. what they owe to those who provide them). In his study Werner doesn't appear to have asked the managers of the bank he studied whether they felt they could go on indefinitely creating 'fairy dust' loans of €200,000 without attracting extra funds.

It is repeating currency crank theories and advocating banking and monetary reform that is spreading confusion. The solution to the problems facing the wage and salary working class the world over is not Monetary Reform. It lies in making the means of wealth production commonly owned by all, which would make banks and money redundant. – *Editors.*

## Party news: our election campaign

For the first time since 1997 we fielded more than a single token candidate in a general election. In 1997 it was 5; this time it was 10. Although this was not enough to qualify for a Party Election Broadcast (a party needs over 100 for that) it was enough, at least for the BBC, to grant us a couple of five-minute interviews on the BBC2 Daily Politics Show and on the BBC Parliament channel, respectively at:

<http://tinyurl.com/pd8jbu4>

<http://tinyurl.com/now7cko>

At this stage the main purpose of us contesting elections is to put the socialist case to more people than usual as well as to build up and consolidate socialist activity in and around the places contested. A total of a half-million leaflets were distributed, mainly free by Royal Mail, in the ten constituencies. In addition, local members and sympathisers held street stalls, took part in hustings (sometimes attended by over 200 people), wrote to and were interviewed by the local press and radio. A new feature was the number of emails from pressure groups, from 38 Degrees in particular. This provided an audience of self-selected participants. 3000 or so email replies must have been sent (the modern equivalent, and not so time consuming, of knocking on doors).

In terms of votes, these confirmed that only about 1 in a thousand are prepared to vote for socialism. Over 300 in a thousand were not prepared to vote for any of the capitalist parties, no doubt largely because they knew from experience that it would make no difference to their daily life.



## Property poverty

'PROPERTY POVERTY', read a headline in the *Oxford Mail* (30 April): 'Soaring rents leave workers no chance to buy their own home.' The article explained that workers were unable to save money for a deposit to begin buying a house or flat because 'soaring housing costs mean Oxford workers are spending increasingly high proportions of their wages on renting a place in the city.'

Capitalism is in fact based on 'property poverty' for the vast majority, but not necessarily of a 'property' to live in, but property in the means of production, property in assets that yield an unearned income. Workers will never be able to afford to buy enough such property so as to be able to live off the income without having to sell their ability to work on the jobs market.

In that sense, the wage and salary working class is a property-less class even if some do, after years of hard work as an employee, eventually come – by finally paying off the mortgage – to own the house or flat where they live. But even this seems to be becoming 'unaffordable' for increasing numbers of better paid workers. Not that owning your own home makes you a capitalist any more than owning your own car does. Neither are income-yielding assets.

'Affordable housing' was a term much bandied about during the election campaign. It's one of those things nobody can be against: who would not be in favour of lower house prices and rents? But the term also has a precise, legal definition: any rent which is less than 80 percent of the market rate (still unaffordable for many of course).

Property companies building houses and blocks of flats for profit are not going to invest in building any for people who can't afford to pay a rent that will bring them the going rate of profit. Left to themselves, in the present state of the market they would build only luxury flats. To try to get round this, planning law allows councils to make it a condition for getting planning permission that the property company agrees to provide some 'affordable' housing as well. Councils can't impose this and so have to negotiate it, with the property companies being in the stronger bargaining position as if a council asks for too much 'affordable housing' they can simply walk away. In effect, they are being asked to pay for planning permission, a modern, institutionalised, legal equivalent of the backhander that notoriously used to be paid to councillors and council officials.

The Labour Party's election promise to make housing 'affordable' was to bring in rent controls. The proposal was modest enough: no increase in the rent above the rate of increase of inflation for three years (and then the landlord could ask for what the market would bear). It was met by howls of protest by those investing in housing for profit.

'The Association of Rental Letting Agents (ARLA) said that three-quarters of its members feared the plans would "see landlords exit the market and reduce supply" ... The British Property Federation has warned that the rent control plans "could deter much needed investment in the housing sector"' (*Daily Telegraph*, 27 April).

But it's true. Rent controls, by keeping rents below what the market would bear, would mean that there would be less profit to be made out of building or letting housing for rent. Inevitably, given the nature of capitalism as a profit-driven system, this would mean less investment in housing building. Less profit = less production. It's simple, if stupid.



## Bowie's Piano Man

*Bowie's Piano Man: The Life of Mike*

*Garson* by Clifford Slapper is a musical biography of the avant-garde jazz pianist who has worked with David Bowie over the last forty years.

Garson came of age musically in the 1960s when people would 'listen to Bartok, John Coltrane and Jimi Hendrix all in the same day', and he had his big break in 1965 in Greenwich Village when Elvin Jones, renowned drummer with John Coltrane called on Garson to replace a pianist. Slapper describes the influences of jazz pianists Cecil Taylor, Erroll Garner, Herbie Hancock, and Bill Evans on the young Garson. Jim Merod concluded that Garson is 'within the circle of genuinely masterful jazz pianists including Bill Evans, Art Tatum and Thelonius Monk.'

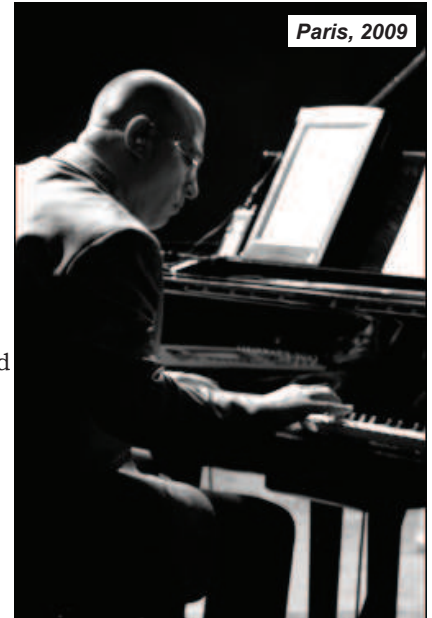
Slapper details Garson's work with Bowie beginning with the 1973 album *Aladdin Sane*, which he expressively describes as 'the arrival of *Aladdin Sane* was the 1970s equivalent of joining the first passenger jet into space.' The album lyrics describe New York City's urban decay, decadence, drug addiction, violence and death just prior to some catastrophe. Garson's piano parts on *Aladdin Sane* are exquisitely beautiful cascading notes. Nicholas Pegg wrote that 'Garson's breathtaking jazz/blues inflections forcibly steer away from pure rock'n'roll, creating a vigorous hybrid somewhere between the Stones and Kurt Weill.' The song *Time* is Brechtian Cabaret, and it is interesting to compare with the cabaret music of Jacques Brel and Weimar Marxists Brecht-Weill. Garson used the old stride piano style from the 1920s which 'sounds like those old-fashioned rinky-tink bar-room pianos.' There are a number of links between Brecht-Weill and Bowie-Garson; Brecht-Weill's *Alabama Song* was recorded by Bowie in 1978, Bowie had the title role in the 1982 BBC TV dramatisation of Brecht's *Baal*, and at his father's funeral at his request Garson played Weill's *September Song* and Brecht-Weill's *Mack the Knife*.

Garson's sweeping piano runs were a key feature on the songs *We are the Dead*, 1984, and *Big Brother* on Bowie's 1974 album *Diamond Dogs* which was based on George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. The lyrics describe a dystopian post-apocalypse nightmare, and highlight Bowie's political anxieties about leadership, submission to authority and conformist beliefs. Bowie later said it was an 'apocalyptic kind of view of our city life... it just coincided with the first economic disasters in New York.' Allan Tannenbaum's *New York in the 70s* describes how 'economic stagnation coupled with inflation created a sense of malaise', in 1975 New York City was on the verge of bankruptcy, then AIDS devastated the gay and artistic community (see Larry Kramer's *Reports from the*



*Holocaust*.)

Garson was a Scientologist in the 1970s but Slapper does not elaborate on Bowie's 1997 *Q* magazine interview where he says Scientology had caused 'one or two problems', although Garson does say he 'went through a period of being overbearing in his attempts to persuade others to take an interest in his spiritual beliefs.' David Buckley wrote that Garson's 'proselytising efforts had converted both



Trevor Bolder and Woody Woodmansey', and D'Agostino in *Glam Musik* quotes Bowie: 'He tried it on with me a bit until we had a fight about it. He was so po-faced. Very serious guy. We used to call him Garson the Parson.' William S Burroughs believed that Scientology might help where psychoanalysis had failed, and that auditing techniques could do more in ten hours than psychoanalysis could do in ten years but he was 'disgusted by the authoritarian organisation and the stupidly fascistic utterances of L Ron Hubbard. The aim of Scientology, complete freedom from past conditioning, was perverted to become a new form of conditioning. He had hoped to find a method of personal emancipation and had found another Control System. It was like a State, with its own courts and own police' (*Literary Outlaw*, Ted Morgan)

Garson 'has a lot of faith in humanity and the goodness of human nature', and the need to spread the idea of connecting to something bigger and deeper through an exploration of artistic creation. Garson says 'everybody is innately connected to God, and is God', and 'We are indeed all deeply interconnected' which evokes Jung's 'collective unconscious.' Garson, and Slapper to some extent, appear to have sympathy for the Jungian concept of 'synchronicity.'

Garson's spirituality can find echoes in Erich Fromm's *Marx's Concept of Man*: 'For Spinoza, Goethe, Hegel, as well as for Marx, man is alive only inasmuch as he is productive, inasmuch as he grasps the world outside of himself in the act of expressing his own specific human powers, and of grasping the world with these powers. In this productive process, man realizes his own essence, which in the theological language is nothing other than his return to God.'

Garson sees creative artists 'projecting what the future society is supposed to be', and the positive social significance of art and creativity which we see in William Morris's *Art, Labour and Socialism*. Slapper writes 'there is plenty of evidence showing how the human brain is capable of great cooperation and collective creativity. Every performance by every orchestra bears testimony to this.'

*Bowie's Piano Man* is a welcome addition to my bookshelf and sits between the bookends of *The Complete David Bowie* by Nicholas Pegg, and *Strange Fascination - David Bowie: The Definitive Story* by David Buckley.

**STEVE CLAYTON**

Bowie's *Piano Man* can be ordered at [www.fantomfilms.co.uk/books/cliffordslapper\\_mikegarson.htm](http://www.fantomfilms.co.uk/books/cliffordslapper_mikegarson.htm)



## Worker take-overs

**An Alternative Labour History. Worker Control and Workplace Democracy.** Edited by Dario Azzellini. Zed Books. 2015.



This is a collection of articles describing – and advocating – ‘workers control’ at various points in history and in various places, particularly Latin America, today.

The authors see workers spontaneously taking over workplaces as the way to a new society without private or state capitalists.

In times of economic and political chaos when factory owners lose control or abandon their factories, workers do not just sit back and do nothing. They take over the factories and try to keep production going. This shows, as Azzellini points out in his introduction, that ‘workers do not need bosses to organize production’. But this has never lasted for any length of time.

Sooner or later ‘order’ has been restored, either by the old ruling class re-establishing control or by a new ruling class taking over, and ‘bosses’ have come back, whether the old private ones or new state ones. In some cases, however, the ‘recuperated’ factories have been given a legal basis as cooperatives producing for the market. But this is no solution. Cooperatives, Azzellini writes in the section of his introduction ‘Limits and contradictions of the cooperative model’, ‘tend to operate within the capitalist logic of productivity and profitability ... the pressure on them to adopt a capitalist business logic is immense ... cooperatives are embedded in the framework of the capitalist economy and compete on the capitalist market following the logic of profit-making ...’

This is a better fate than being forcibly suppressed but is still a dead end. Which is why Azzellini favours a revolution in which there is a general movement of workers to ‘take and hold’ the means of production (to use the terminology of the old IWW, which surprisingly doesn’t get a mention).

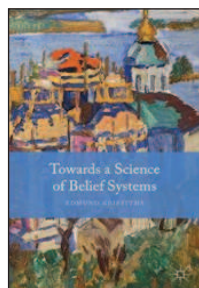
A revolution led by workers’ councils would certainly be better than one led by a vanguard party but still underestimates the degree of understanding of those involved as to where they are going and ignores the

need to win control of political power to permit this and/or to back it up.

**ALB**

## Would you believe it?

**Towards A Science of Belief Systems.** Edmund Griffiths. Palgrave Macmillan. 2014.



Edmund Griffiths has recently been a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford and this philosophical work was written as a product of his research there. His aim is a laudable one:

‘How other people think and feel, both generally and individually, seems to me to be one of the things in life that are most urgent and most compellingly worth knowing’ (p.154).

As such, this is a study about sets of ideas, their component elements and how these elements interlock and lead on from one another. Griffiths contends that the most effective way to understand belief systems – irrespective of their content or nature – is through a method he calls ‘descriptive logic’. This is an objective method that can be used regardless of whether one agrees with the belief systems being analysed or not.

He uses it to discuss belief systems as varied as Fabianism, Gnosticism, and flying saucers. Here, below, is an illustration of it with regard to alternative historiography, where the proposition A could range, for instance, from the view that Giza is really modeled on Orion’s Belt, to ‘9/11 Truth theories’, to the view that the moon is really an artificial construction:

‘1. Official knowledge is drab, conformist, monolithic, and an obstacle to the free exercise of the imagination and of the sense of wonder.

2. Therefore, official knowledge should be refuted.



3. Official knowledge is incompatible with the proposition that A,

4. and yet some evidence can be assembled which does tend to show that A.

5. Therefore, A.

6. Therefore, official knowledge is wrong.

7. Therefore, we are once again free to imagine for ourselves and to feel wonder’ (pp.123-4).

Griffiths has developed his descriptive logical method in a way that is underpinned by the Marxist materialist conception of history though he argues that his method is in its early stages and much more work has now to be done (including logical annotations of key representative texts to illustrate how the ideas presented develop, interlock, and link with similar types of argument presented elsewhere).

In style, the book verges from the wry and whimsical at times to the difficult – it is, after all, a theoretical work and one which is academically rigorous. Griffiths is also exceptionally well read and the text is illustrated by references that range from the pronouncements of the North Korean state to quotations from ancient poetry.

The general method and standpoint of Griffiths is not incompatible with our own. In terms of its objective (if not method) it also has some similarity with the theory of systematic ideology developed by Harold Walsby, George Walford and others. This was a group who left the SPGB in the 1940s and who became motivated by a need to understand the ideologies of the modern world – their defining features, how they interlock and particularly the limitations on their spread and development.

We have sparred with the advocates of this theory many times in the past, though ironically this is one book that might have benefited from a consideration of their ideas. This is because – whatever the flaws in their arguments – theirs was one of the very few other attempts to traverse this type of terrain. In essence, they attempted to use a dialectical method to account for why people think as they do, why types of ideas recur persistently in society, and why some seem to attract more adherents than others.

Nevertheless, it is clear Edmund Griffiths has produced a very useful and informative book that represents a significant contribution to the study of belief systems, both ancient and modern.

**DAP**



# Silk Roads, Old and New



LONG-DISTANCE trade existed well before the growth of capitalism. The Silk Road was a series of routes, some on land and some by sea, that linked China and India to the Mediterranean region. It emerged gradually, so it is hard to date its origin precisely, but it was well-established by the second century BCE. Along it travelled not just Chinese silk to Europe, together with many other goods (pottery, for instance), but also ideas such as Buddhism from India to China.

The original Silk Road was in decline by the 15th century, and Chinese capitalism, in its grab for wealth and power, now has something along similar but far more ambitious lines in mind. Nowadays, though, a great deal of planning and investment has to go into such developments. One such structure is the Silk Road Economic Belt, an overland route through Central Asia, and part of this is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This involves a series of infrastructure projects, costing as much as US \$46bn, that will link the Chinese city of Kashgar to the Pakistan seaboard. In addition to roads and upgraded rail lines, this will include an international airport and various energy projects in Pakistan (including wind farms and gas pipelines). In April came the announcement of the first stage, a 720,000-kilowatt hydroelectric power project in the Punjab province of Pakistan, which is expected to cost \$1.65bn. It is financed by various state-owned Chinese banks, should

become operational by 2020, and will be run by Chinese companies for thirty years.

The other major project is the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Economic Belt (Maritime Silk Road for short). The plans here seem to be less detailed at present, but they involve a route via the South China Sea, then two separate parts, one to the Indian Ocean and one to the South Pacific. In September last year, President Xi Jinping visited the Maldives and Sri Lanka in order to push this scheme. Sri Lanka has in fact already received \$1.4bn from China to improve the port facilities at its commercial capital Colombo, as a rival to Singapore and Dubai. China will also be financing the upgrading of the Maldives' international airport and the improvement of transport links within the island chain.

The two umbrella projects, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road, are known collectively as the Belt and Road Initiative. The intention is that, within a decade or so, trade between China and the Belt and Road countries will be over \$2.5 trillion. However massive the investments are, the hoped-for profits are even greater. The funds come from various Chinese investment vehicles, such as the Silk Road Fund, and banks like the Export-Import Bank of China. Economics and politics are of course closely linked, and co-operation in terms of security and coastguard operations will all be part of the deal with the aim of reducing tensions and disputes over maritime resources.

The area for the envisaged Economic Belt has a population 'close to 3 billion people and represents the biggest market in the world with unparalleled potential', Xi said at a talk in Kazakhstan in September 2013. As for the maritime route, a Cambodian minister stated last year that for China and nations in South-east Asia, 'it is necessary to build a maritime silk road in order to bolster economic cooperation, particularly in the fields of trade, investment and tourism'.

So the Chinese ruling class's plans for economic expansion and rivalry with the US cover not just the other BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa), but also Pakistan and other places in Central, South and South-east Asia. Capitalist competition is forging new struggles over trade routes and resources. **PB**



## 'I Love The Smell Of Rubbish In The Morning'

THERE'S A lot of trash on the telly, especially if you tune in to BBC2's fly-on-the-wall documentary *Wastemen*. This

lifts the wheelie-bin lid on how we deal with the rubbish we chuck out and then forget.

Every hour, Britain produces enough refuse to fill the Albert Hall, which someone has to deal with. *Wastemen* follows the various scrap merchants, bin men, wardens and waste processing plant staff who handle what the people of Newcastle throw away.

1,200 tons of rubbish arrive each week at the Byker Waste Processing Plant, where it gets sorted by hand, by magnets and by sieves, and then composted, recycled, or turned into fuel to produce electricity. Oddly, there isn't a local market for this fuel, so it gets exported to Sweden, which can't produce enough rubbish for its own waste-to-electricity power plants.

The cameras also follow the official and unofficial scrap dealers who try to make a living from what others

leave behind.

The programme reminds us that even waste can be a commodity, like anything else that gets bought and sold. Waste has more value if it's reused, but recycling facilities vary according to levels of investment across the country. Not many waste processing plants are set up to recycle as much as the one in Byker. And these days, councils are likely to be cutting funding for recycling rather than increasing it. If services aren't there for people to use, then more rubbish will get illegally dumped. Newcastle council tackles this with its neighbourhood wardens and the snappily-monikered 'Enviro-crime' team. They try to identify flytippers from CCTV footage of tyres and furniture being hoisted out of vans, and by snooping through bin bags for something showing an incriminating address.

So, the way we manage our rubbish is shaped by market forces and dictates from the state. We've got the technology to reuse and recycle much of what we throw away, but its use isn't encouraged enough by our current system. Before we can find more sensible and practical approaches to using our resources, capitalism itself needs to get thrown on the scrapheap.

**MIKE FOSTER**





## Meetings

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

### Kent & Sussex Regional Branch

Tuesday 16 June 2015 7.30pm  
'An Introduction to the Socialist Party'  
The Brighthelme Centre (Activities Hall - Basement),  
North Road, Brighton BN1 1YD

### West London Branch

Tuesday 16 June 2015 8.00pm  
'Magna Carta, did she die in vain?'  
Guest Speaker: Vincent Jones  
Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace,  
London W4 4JN

### Manchester Branch

Saturday 20 June 2015 12 noon  
Hike - Etherow Country Park, George Street,  
Compstall, Stockport SK6 5JD

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 21 June 2015 3.00pm  
'The New Dust Bowl: Soil and Survival'  
Speaker: Gwynn Thomas  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 25 June 2015 7.00pm  
'TTIP- the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 27 June from 12 noon  
Canterbury street stall,  
The Parade pedestrian precinct, Canterbury

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 5 July 3.00pm  
'The Failure of Capitalist Production: Political Implications of the Great Recession'  
Guest Speaker: Andrew Kliman  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Kent & Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 18 July 2015 from 12 noon  
Canterbury street stall,  
The Parade pedestrian precinct, Canterbury

### Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 19 July 3.00pm  
'What became of Labour's "socialism"?'  
Speaker: Pat Deutz  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

### Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 30 July 2015 7.00pm  
Trade Unions: 'centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital'  
Speaker: Steve Clayton  
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

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## The Socialist Party badge



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## Declaration of Principles

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

### Object

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

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# 50 Years Ago

## Where we stand

SOCIALISTS ADVOCATE a world where the whole of humanity is united about social relationships of equality and co-operation. The identity of the Socialist even now is not with any national grouping, brand of religion, any alleged 'race' or local culture. The Socialist has no loyalties to Britain or America, to Protestantism or Catholicism, to white men or brown men, to Welsh culture or African culture. By his perspective of history, by his knowledge of the economic nature of modern society, the Socialist has gone beyond the shallow allegiances that misdirect the attitudes of those who are still burdened by nationalism, religion or racism. Our argument is that if the majority were Socialists, the security of all men in material comfort in a world of harmony and freedom would at last become a reality.

It is true that the world picture of racism at present is gloomy; it is a running sore of a problem, frequently accompanied by outbursts of physical violence. Apart from its form as widespread prejudice, in some parts of the world it is still maintained as official government policy. Although it is the product of different historical conditions, and although up to now the South African Government has not begun to build gas chambers, apartheid is in direct descent from the Gestapo's 'final solution'. Racism may be dormant in Hamburg, but its ugliness has reappeared in Smethwick and Notting Hill.

Socialists have no hesitation in taking a stand. We condemn racism. To us it is repugnant. We are opposed to any attitude that discourages the unity of the working class. Even so, our disgust is extended by an understanding of the problem. Disgust without knowledge is impotent. The racists of Johannesburg, Salisbury, Birmingham Alabama or Birmingham, England, are not inherently evil men. They are men who are moved by fear, insecurity, frustration and ignorance, all of which are attitudes conditioned by social forces. The working class of Smethwick have a social history of struggle and insecurity. They are on the defensive, they are anxious to protect jobs, a standard of living, a standard of housing, that they feel has been hard won. Mere condemnation will not help them. They have to realise that they are victims of a universal situation that impinges on members of the working class wherever they exist.

(from editorial of special issue of *Socialist Standard* on the Race Question, June 1965)

## ACTION REPLAY The Big Fight

AFTER ALL the ballyhoo and razzmatazz the big fight was disappointing. All three judges scored Floyd Mayweather the winner by a unanimous decision against Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao's best period was the early part of the fight, his bustling style unsettling Mayweather but Floyd kept Pacquiao at bay with some stinging jabs. In round 5, Floyd started to dictate the fight, using his speed, footwork and superb defensive skills to outpoint his opponent.

It later transpired that Pacquiao had entered the ring with a shoulder injury. Revealing that he had suffered a 'torn rota cuff' in training but had decided to continue with the contest. The Nevada State Commission (NASC) was unaware of this until they received a request from Pacquiao to have an anti-inflammatory injection 90 minutes before the fight started. Pacquiao could now face NSAC penalties and possible law suits, after not disclosing the injury in a medical questionnaire prior to the fight.

Before taking up professional boxing Floyd and Manny experienced difficult

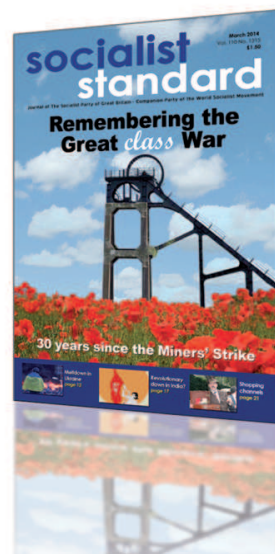
starts in life. Pacquiao once slept on beds in a gym and fought for 5 dollars in scraps organised for gambling. If he won he bought rice, if he lost he starved.

Floyd's childhood was brutal, his mother was a drug addict and his father a loose cannon prone to violence. The story goes that when barely a year old, Floyd senior used his boy as a human shield when his uncle (mother's side) came seeking retribution. He hoisted Floyd into the gun sight forcing the assailant to shoot him in the leg.

As far as money is concerned early indications of pay-per-view sales in the US suggest that Mayweather will earn \$200m and Pacquiao in excess of £120m - not bad for one night's work. Floyd's next scheduled fight is in September against an opponent of his choice. Several fighters are 'lining up' to take on Mayweather including Britain's Amir Khan and Kell Brook but Floyd may prefer Miguel Cotto or Saul Alvarez both previous opponents or perhaps Danny Garcia who defeated Amir Khan. Whoever the opponent is, you can be sure it will be the opponent who generates the most money at the box office and pay-per-view, because in Floyd Mayweather's world, it's all about the 'Money, Money, Money'.

KEVIN

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# Voice from the Back

## Minimum wage, 'living' wage or a world without?

In Congress, Sen. Patty Murray, D-Washington, and Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Virginia, have introduced the Raise the Wage Act, which would increase the federal minimum wage \$1 an hour starting in 2016 to \$12 by 2020, and thereafter base increases on the growth of the federal median wage. 'No one who works hard in a full-time job should have to live in poverty,' Murray said in introducing the legislation (*Herald Net*, 1 May). No more crumbs! Not even a slice of cake! Workers should demand what is rightfully ours: the whole bakery.

## Earning a wage is a prison occupation

One in three full-time employees in some of the world's largest economies say maintaining a healthy work-life balance has become more difficult in the last five years... 'It's really important in a sustainable 24-7 global marketplace to be able to offer people the ability to ebb and flow to make life work while they're working so hard,' says Karyn Twaronite, an Ernst & Young partner and global diversity and inclusiveness officer. 'The workday is vast. There really aren't start and end times, and it does have a significant overlap into everyone's personal life in a significant way. You no longer can leave your work behind at the end of the day' (*US News*, 5 May). 9 til 5? More like 24/7, except for the unemployed 1 percent! Socialists, like Marx, by contrast, claim that in a communist society there would be more leisure time, more time for education and that everyone would participate in the running of society. It's time to break free.

## Deification of a dictator

'Over the past five years I've often watched documentary films about Stalin, about that time on television and learnt more about him,' the 29-year-old told AFP. 'And now I don't have any negative feelings towards him. He had good intentions' (*Yahoo! News*, 5 May). This

comes as no surprise to socialists, after all, the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production. In Stalin's case, the process started long ago. Here is one example, part of a poem which was published in *Pravda* on 28 August, 1936:

O Great Stalin, O Leader of the Peoples,  
Thou who didst give birth to man,  
Thou who didst make fertile the earth,  
Thou who dost rejuvenate the Centuries,  
Thou who givest blossom to the spring...



Like the Moonies, only with labour camps

## Drapetomania

There is a long history of science being used to support the status quo. Russian psychiatrists famously aided Stalin by diagnosing dissidents as insane. In 1850s America a Dr. Cartwright identified a 'condition' that caused black slaves to flee plantations. More recently, a report written by six health professionals and human rights activists claims that the American Psychological Association

secretly worked with the George W. Bush administration to justify a post-9/11 torture policy (*Time*, 30 April).

## They won, you lost

'The question is: who is this country going to be run for?' Mr Axelrod said. 'Cameron is absolutely right about the question. But it is not a question of whether the country is going to be run for Scotland. It is a question of whether the country is going to be run for the wealthy and powerful interests, who have thrived and prospered under Tory policies while everyday working people have struggled just to keep up' (*Independent*, 2 May). Labour, Liberal, Tory - same old boring story. The Greens, SNP, UKIP etc., are part of it too.

## From the horse's mouth

David Cameron's former chief strategist has launched a stinging attack on the 'insular ruling class' threatening Britain's democracy. Steve Hilton said too many of those at the heart of government go to the same dinner parties and send their children to the same schools. He said the UK's political system is now in 'crisis' because the same type of people stay in charge whatever the outcome of the elections.

In what will be seen as a criticism of the 'chumocracy' of his former boss, Mr Hilton warned: 'Our democracies are increasingly captured by a ruling class that seeks to perpetuate its privileges.'

'Regardless of who's in office, the same people are in power. It is a democracy in name only, operating on behalf of a tiny elite no matter the electoral outcome' (*Daily Mail*, 17 May).



## FREE LUNCH

