

# CR

**Distortions of the Spanish Civil War**

Ken Fuller

**State monopoly capitalism Part 3**

Gretchen Binus, Beate Landefeld and Andreas Wehr

**A ruling class divided ... and spurned**

Nick Wright

**Space, time and dialectics**

Martin Levy

**Internationalism** Lars Ulrik Thomsen

**Soul Food: Poems from the Spanish Civil War**

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# Editorial Martin Levy

**W**E LIVE in turbulent times. This issue of *CR* was delayed pending the outcome of the EU referendum campaign, but the dust shows little sign of settling. At the time of going to press, every day brings new developments. While the attempted coup against Jeremy Corbyn was planned ever since he was elected, it is no accident that it has been sprung just now.

As Nick Wright points out in his analysis here, the vote to leave the EU presents our ruling class with major problems. Its decisive sections are hence scheming to find a way of subverting the people's vote. They understand that they cannot rely on the divided Tories and that Labour is the only cohesive political force. They need to remove Corbyn, who is "the only figure able to lead the unrepresented in a progressive direction". This is a critical battle which the labour and progressive movement cannot afford to lose. As the draft main resolution for the Communist Party's forthcoming 54th Congress states, "The struggle has now reached the stage where each side, out of necessity, must either inflict a major defeat on the other or itself be defeated."

Let us remember that the ruling class always seeks to achieve its aims by maintaining a hegemonic mass base. When that fails, it is prepared to resort to open terroristic dictatorship, *ie* to fascism. Ken Fuller's article here, published as our cover feature in connection with the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, reminds us of the sacrifices of the Spanish people and the International Brigades in the fight against Franco fascism; and he sets the record straight with regard to the role of the communists and the Soviet Union. At the end of this edition of *CR*, we return to Spain for Soul Food, which this time focuses on poets who served and died in the International Brigades.

The most substantial piece in this edition is Chapter 3 of *State Monopoly Capitalism* (SMC), by Gretchen Binus, Beate Landefeld and Andreas Wehr, continuing the series begun in *CR78*. Here the authors deal with the relevance of the SMC concept today. At 12,200 words, the article is very long; but, rather than dividing it, we reproduce it here in full, firstly to retain coherence, and secondly, to emphasise the key points, relevant to the EU debate, that the state is not neutral, that we live under state monopoly capitalism, and that monopoly capitalism leads to imperialism. A brief summary however may be helpful.

The first section of the chapter shows that competitive monopoly struggle has become increasingly sharp, with transnational corporations (TNCs) exporting capital on a scale not seen before. Finance capital plays a crucial role in monopoly capital's expansion into new, hi-tech spheres. However:

"More than ever before, monopoly capital in the individual countries, but active on the international stage, needs the state .... [T]he whole pattern of movement of capitalism is determined by the close intermeshing of the state and the monopolies ...."

The next section looks at who and what are the monopoly bourgeoisie. For Germany at least, there are three large groups: billionaire clans or dynasties; top private managers; and top state managers. To the extent that they can achieve control over disposition of the surplus product, private and state managers are "co-opted and aggregated parts" of the monopoly bourgeoisie. There has been a shift in favour of the clans since the onset of neoliberal policies. The number of billionaires in Germany is growing, but

"two thirds are ... principally so wealthy because they have inherited a family business or shares in it."

State monopoly regulation involves instrumental measures such as redistribution, boards of control, taxation and shareholdings in big corporations. The state fraction of the bourgeoisie therefore includes government appointments to these corporations, as well as to various national and international regulatory institutions. Examples of the latter are the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund. However, since the appointees owe their careers to their country of origin, no 'transnational bourgeoisie' develops.

The final section of chapter 3 of *State Monopoly Capitalism* takes up the issue of Kautsky's 'ultra-imperialism', *ie* a permanent and stable cooperation of imperialist states. In his *Imperialism*, Lenin exposed the fallacy of Kautsky's argument; and of course the First World War contradicted Kautsky in practical terms. But the idea of a united capitalist Europe came back in the 1920s, through the Pan-European Union, and was resurrected again after World War 2, in the form of the Common Market, now the EU. The authors show that the leading imperialist powers are always ready to cooperate when their striving for world domination is endangered, but this cooperation does not remove differences of interest. The EU is an area of both cooperation – against real or imaginary competitors such as the BRICS countries – and competition:

"Cooperation is always accepted only as long as it is unconditionally necessary or serves the particular interests. Otherwise, competition dominates .... The EU remains structured by the imperialist competition of its member states."

From economics we move to philosophy, with part 1 of an extended critique by your editor, dealing with current arguments among physicists and cosmologists about the nature of space and time. Then Lars Ulrik Thomsen writes about internationalism, highlighting three areas where stronger cooperation is needed: the trade union level; politically, among communists; and then theoretically, in terms of Marxism as a developing theory. In a discussion contribution, Jimmy Jancovich takes issue with Hans-Peter Brenner's previous article on *Islam as Reflected in the Marxist Critique of Religion*. Finally, Kenny Coyle reviews the third volume of our lead author Ken Fuller's series on communism in the Philippines.



# Distortions of the Spanish Civil War

by Ken Fuller

While working on a study of Dashiell Hammett – the writer of ‘hardboiled’ crime fiction who, his writing career at an end, joined the Communist Party of the USA in 1937 – I have been struck by the consistency with which most of his biographers (and those of Lillian Hellman, with whom he had a 30-year relationship) recoil in horror from his pro-Soviet orientation before advancing their own interpretations of the particular event under discussion. Typical of this is their treatment of Hammett’s support of the republican cause during the Spanish Civil War, the eightieth anniversary of which is marked this year. While Hammett gains the sympathy of these writers for supporting the republic, he loses it for championing the communists instead of the anarchists or the Trotskyists.



Lillian  
Hellman  
and Dashiell  
Hammett

*“The Russian arms and the magnificent defence of Madrid by troops mainly under Communist control had made the Communists the heroes of Spain.”*

George Orwell



IT IS DOUBTFUL that any of the Hammett-Hellman biographers conducted serious research into the Spanish Civil War. It is more probable that their Cold War views (which are sometimes, as in the case of Joan Mellen and Julian Symons, expressed in a ‘left’ guise), have been influenced, either directly or indirectly, by George Orwell and Franz Borkenau, whose books *Homage to Catalonia* and *The Spanish Cockpit* might be called classic anti-communist accounts of the Spanish conflict (or, rather, its first year). These books, which have made major contributions to anti-Soviet perceptions of the war, will be critically examined in this article. But first let’s see what the Hammett-Hellman biographers have to say.

### The Biographers Attack

“Soviet aid to the Republic”, says Alice Kessler-Harris, led to “a disastrous and divisive Soviet effort to exert leadership over all Spanish Republican forces.”<sup>1</sup> Julian Symons charges that “Stalin was interested in a Communist-controlled Spain, not in a Republican victory”,<sup>2</sup> while Carl Rollyson sees the communists as “sabotaging the Republic”.<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Gallagher also agrees with Orwell that the Soviet Union had its “own agenda” in Spain.<sup>4</sup> Here is Joan Mellen on the same subject:

“Conflict broke out in Spain. From July through October 1935, Stalin sent no help to the struggling Loyalists. He still hoped that England and France, with whom he had an alliance, would fight Hitler for him; a socialist revolution in Spain would jeopardise that goal and he set out to abort it even if it meant the victory of Franco. Socialism in a single country [the Soviet Union] meant socialism nowhere else.”<sup>5</sup>

In deploring that the Soviet Union (or, as she has it, Stalin) sent no aid to republican Spain between July and October 1935, Mellen not only overlooks the fact that the Spanish Civil War did not commence until a year later (her error here, we may concede, is probably due to mere carelessness), but she grotesquely distorts the facts, possibly comfortable in the assumption that her readers will have little knowledge of the subject beyond what they may have gleaned by reading Orwell. For example, she omits to mention that the Soviet Union involved itself with the London-based Non-Intervention Committee in the hope that international pressure might be exerted on Germany and Italy, both of which sent Franco arms, troops and equipment at an early stage.

On seeing that Ivan Maisky, its London ambassador and representative on the Committee, was wasting his breath, and following a request from the legitimate Spanish government, the Soviet Union sent assistance immediately, while the Comintern called for volunteers from all countries to go to the aid of the republic, leading to the formation of the International Brigades. That such assistance was effective is demonstrated by the fact that even the anti-Soviet Orwell concedes that:

“The Russian arms and the magnificent defence of Madrid by troops mainly under Communist control had made the Communists the heroes of Spain.”<sup>6</sup>

And, of course, Mellen’s claim that Stalin hoped that Britain and France would “fight Hitler for him” stands reality on its head, for the governments of these two countries obstinately avoided concluding a tripartite pact with the Soviet Union which might have stopped Hitler in his tracks; their hope was that Nazi expansionism would be turned eastward.<sup>7</sup> Her assertion that “Socialism in a single country meant socialism nowhere else” is a crude distortion: it was not the case that socialism elsewhere was undesirable to Soviet leaders, but that it had proven impossible at that time. In practical terms, acceptance that socialism in one country was not feasible would have led to no socialism in the USSR.

### Anarchist Ultra-Leftism

None of these critics of communist policy in Spain attempts to place events in context. The Popular Front government, which was only elected in February 1936, just five months before Franco’s military revolt, was fragile from the very start. The alliance between the Socialist Party, the republican parties and the Communist Party was a recent development; indeed, their unity pact had been signed as late as January 1936, just a few weeks before the elections.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it stands to reason that – aside from a shared desire to strengthen the democratic republic – the approaches of the constituent parties, and their longer-term aims, differed from each other. Of particular concern to the communists was that the republican government, just like a previous Republican-Socialist government formed in 1931, dithered on the question of agrarian reform, “the very essence of the democratic revolution”, which if carried through in determined fashion “would have resulted in winning millions of people for democracy and progress.”<sup>9</sup>

General Francisco Franco, the leader of the military revolt against the republic, was initially handicapped by the fact that

he was based in the Canary Islands, with the result that when troops on the mainland sought to join his revolt, the people in several parts of the country were able to rise up and overcome them. It was in these circumstances that, with the people under arms, the anarchists, who wielded considerable influence in some regions, but particularly in Catalonia, carried out sweeping confiscations. When Franz Borkenau arrived in Barcelona in early August 1936, he found the extent of expropriation (hotels, large stores, factories) “almost incredible .... All the churches had been burnt, with the exception of the cathedral ....”<sup>10</sup> Orwell also notes that “churches were wrecked and the priests driven out or killed.”<sup>11</sup> This, it must be emphasised, was the work of the anarchists, not the communists.

In villages which they controlled, the anarchists attempted to abolish money, while the communists disliked “this playing at Utopia”.<sup>12</sup> Where land was seized under anarchist leadership, it was collectivised, something that was rarely popular with the peasantry. Borkenau writes of villages outside Valencia where the anarchists were failing to gain the support of “a large section of the village population .... There is no doubt that the peasants here are not in favour of the anarchist drive towards collectivisation.”<sup>13</sup>

Entirely unacknowledged by Orwell and Borkenau, it was the communist minister Vicente Uribe who finally addressed the agrarian problem when, early in the government formed by the socialist Largo Caballero, he proposed a reform which, even after it had been diluted by the Cabinet, “gave the land of the large landowners involved in the fascist conspiracy to the peasants in permanent usufruct.” President Manuel Azaña, a member of the Republican Left Party, approved the measure without demur, thereby demonstrating, says Dolores Iburruri,

“that even the ideas of men who are most strongly against radical reforms ... can evolve and change when the masses’ demands are sufficiently loud to be heard.”<sup>14</sup>

Borkenau has no problem identifying the fundamental problem of the anarchist approach:

“Capital is needed to make large collectivised estates practicable, and, in addition, competent advice and leadership. Neither is available under the conditions of civil war. As things stand, premature agricultural collectivisations are rather the last remnants of the old anarchist faith, which attempted to base a new society on moral enthusiasm and force only, irrespective of immediate practical conditions.”<sup>15</sup>

Nor was this the end of the problems. After the upsurge of popular resistance to the military rebellion, in some areas local committees were established to rule alongside, or in some cases instead of, the established authorities, and the anarchists saw these as soviets, intending that they should become the ruling power in the country.<sup>16</sup> Orwell describes the committees as “the rough beginnings of a workers’ government,” and then asserts:

“The thing that had happened in Spain was, in fact, not merely a civil war, but the beginning of a revolution.”<sup>17</sup>

It is in this context that the claims of Orwell and Borkenau – echoed by the previously cited biographers of Hammett and Hellman – that the communists played a right-wing, anti-revolutionary, role in Spain must be considered.

Orwell goes so far as to assert, with no supporting evidence whatsoever:

“The thing for which the Communists were working was not to postpone the Spanish revolution till a more suitable time, but to make sure that it never happened.”<sup>18</sup>

### The Role of the Communists in Spain

The terms ‘right’ and ‘left’ are, of course, relative. It is perfectly correct that the Spanish Communist Party was to the right of the anarchists and the quasi-Trotskyist Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM, in whose militia Orwell served). But that could hardly be considered an error, when the latter two organisations were advocating (and, at least in the case of the anarchists, attempting to wage) a social revolution at a time when the Spanish republic was under attack by the Franco military rebellion and when the greatest possible unity was required in the republic against the military insurgents.

Critics of the communist role in Spain often claim that the Soviet Union exerted rightward pressure on the Spanish republic, using its military aid as a lever, an argument that sometimes twists reality out of all recognition. For example, when Symons claims that Stalin was interested in a communist-controlled Spain rather than a republican victory, he does not attempt to explain how, even if this were true, the communists would achieve such a result without first defeating Franco! It is further claimed that, where the Soviets did not exert direct pressure on the republic, they did so via the Spanish Communist Party which, after the Soviet Union began sending aid to the republic, underwent dramatic expansion.

In fact, as early as May 1936, *ie* before the outbreak of the Civil War, the leadership of the Spanish party and the Comintern secretariat stated clearly that

“the chief aim of the Spanish working people was to fight for a democratic republic without at present setting itself the task of effecting a transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist revolution.”<sup>19</sup>

And, yes, the Spanish party continued to receive Comintern advice, but this can hardly be interpreted as pressure on the republican government, in which the communists constituted a minority.<sup>20</sup>

Sometimes, furthermore, this advice was such as to give the lie to the claim that, as Kessler-Harris would have it, the Soviets wished to exert leadership over all republican forces. For example, although the Spanish party had proposed that it and the Socialist Party should work for organic unity as early as 1935,<sup>21</sup> the Comintern advice now was that there should be no attempt to “force amalgamation” as

“the most important thing was unity of action by both parties within the government, in all government bodies, in the trade unions, in the army, in the leadership of industry, as well as in joint action at the parliamentary and municipal elections.”<sup>22</sup>

Another inaccuracy deserving rebuttal is the claim by Borkenau that the Spanish Communist Party was of minuscule size before the war, with the mushrooming of its membership occurring after and as a result of Soviet involvement. According to him, membership in July 1936 was merely 3,000, but was claimed to be 220,000 by the end of January 1937.<sup>23</sup> It is hardly likely that a party of 3,000 members would have

been able to negotiate a unity pact with the Socialist and Republican parties. Dolores Iburruri gives a completely different account, saying that Party membership stood at 30,000 in January 1936, growing to 100,000 by July.<sup>24</sup> This makes rather more sense, for it was in January that the unity pact was concluded. Most significant however is the more than threefold growth in the next six months – before the outbreak of war, and at a time when there was not even a Soviet consulate in the country.

Did the Soviets, after they extended diplomatic and military support, make policy suggestions to the republican government? Yes, of course. Was such advice always accepted? No. In December 1936, Soviet leaders Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov wrote to Spanish premier Largo Caballero, in part suggesting that peasants be drawn into the army or form guerrilla detachments behind enemy lines, a process which might be aided by pro-peasant decrees.<sup>25</sup> Such detachments were never formed, which Hobsbawm finds “a strange omission in the country which gave this form of irregular warfare its name.”<sup>26</sup>

So how, precisely, did Spanish communists wish to influence the course of the Civil War?

Seeing real dangers in the unrealistic revolutionary romanticism of the anarchists and Trotskyists, they sought to halt the confiscations, summary executions and church burnings, as these were unnecessarily driving people into the Franco camp. Similarly, they sought to curtail the activities of the local committees, centralising government – a surely sensible measure in a time of civil war. In order to prosecute that war more effectively, it was the communists’ strong view that the militias should be dissolved and replaced by a national army, subject to normal military discipline. Even Borkenau is forced to concede that the “military inadequacy” of the militias “is beyond doubt.”<sup>27</sup>

### **The Orwell and Borkenau objections**

Now it is a curious thing that Borkenau and Orwell do not consistently disagree with these measures. Orwell says that, at a certain point, he thought the communist view preferable to that of POUM:

“The Communists had a definite practical policy, an obviously better policy from the point of view of the common sense which looks only a few months ahead .... What clinched everything was that the Communists – so it seemed to me – were getting on with the war while we and the Anarchists were standing still. This was the general feeling at the time.”<sup>28</sup>

Borkenau approves of the creation of the International Brigades, the transformation of the militias into an army, the centralisation of power, the objection to collectivisation and the check on socialisation, calling these changes “reasonable and inevitable.”<sup>29</sup> At which point, then, do they part company with the communists?

Orwell takes umbrage when the communists suggest that POUM is splitting unity by design, being in the pay of Hitler and Franco:

“This implies that scores of thousands of working-class people, including eight or ten thousand soldiers who were freezing in the frontline trenches ... were simply traitors in the pay of the enemy.”<sup>30</sup>

It implies no such thing, of course, for he later concedes, somewhat shamefacedly:

“It is true that some of the attacks in the Communist Press said, rather grudgingly, that only the POUM leaders were in Fascist pay, and not the rank and file.”<sup>31</sup>

Incidentally, the numbers Orwell throws out regarding POUM membership are entirely fanciful; Borkenau, on the other hand, considers the Trotskyists “quite a minor element of Spanish political life”, a “small and congenitally sectarian group.”<sup>33</sup>

And then, as we have already seen, Orwell comes to believe, on no evidence at all, that the communist aim is to ensure that the socialist revolution in Spain never happens at all. He further claims that once

“the war had been narrowed down to a ‘war for democracy’ it became impossible to make any large-scale appeal for working-class aid abroad.”<sup>33</sup>

This, quite bluntly, is claptrap. How does he explain the successful appeal for volunteers for the International Brigades?

It is tempting to suggest that the turning-point for Orwell came with the ‘May events’ of 1937 in Barcelona (which he witnessed), during which control of the telephone exchange was wrested from the anarchists and restored to the Catalan regional government, followed over the course of the next week by bitter armed encounters fought by the PSUC (the merged Catalan communist and socialist parties) with the anarchists and POUM. He flounders when trying to explain these events. Yes, he concedes, the government may have had the right to seize the telephone exchange, but it was

“a provocative action, a gesture which said in effect, and presumably was meant to say: ‘Your power is at an end – we are taking over.’”<sup>34</sup>

And was that not an eminently sensible attitude in the circumstances?

It was doubtful, however, whether May was a turning-point for Orwell, because, despite his claim to have only joined the POUM militia because he had entered the country with Independent Labour Party papers, he is quite obviously seduced by the revolutionary romanticism of the POUM and the anarchists. He values his short spell under arms, saying that the militias

“were a sort of microcosm of a classless society. In that community, where no one was on the make, where there was a shortage of everything but no privilege and no boot-licking, one got, perhaps, a crude forecast of what the opening stages of Socialism might be like. And, after all, instead of disillusioning me it deeply attracted me.”<sup>35</sup>

That such outfits stood no chance of winning the war seems to have been of secondary importance for Orwell. Then he recounts how, waiting to leave the country, during daylight hours he attempted to conceal his identity by frequenting upscale Barcelona restaurants, but made the immature gesture of scrawling “Visca POUM” on the walls of their passageways.<sup>36</sup> This (and, indeed, much of the foregoing) was the Eton schoolboy and former colonial policeman mounting a childish rebellion against his background.

Borkenau draws the line at the police methods followed by the republican authorities after the communists had gained greater influence. He concedes, however, that the executions which were widespread during the early stage of the Civil War were now greatly reduced:

“There was an enormous improvement in this respect, mainly due to republican and communist influence, and people were particularly appreciative of the change.”<sup>37</sup>

He laments, however, that by February 1937 the man who lived in fear of arrest and possible execution was no longer the aristocrat, the priest or the capitalist, but the critic of Communist Party policy. But this was a civil war situation, and suspected fascist sympathisers would naturally be arrested, and quite probably many innocents were caught in the net. It is equally possible, however, that Borkenau's view on this matter was influenced by the fact that he was arrested himself after his secretary, a British communist, had denounced the first section of his manuscript.

By contrast, even Ernest Hemingway, an individualist if there ever was one,

“accepted the Communist discipline in Spain because it was ‘the soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the war.’”<sup>38</sup>

This might be the appropriate place to counter claims that it was primarily the communists who routinely murdered their political rivals.<sup>39</sup> Borkenau himself says that

“a not unimportant number of ... ‘lumpenproletarian’ elements have joined the anarchist movement, and form part of its redoubtable terror organisations”.<sup>40</sup>

He writes of local socialist trade union leaders killed by anarchists, who also mounted an attack on the POUM;<sup>41</sup> and that, after the fall of Malaga, there was talk in Valencia of “certain anarchist columns terrorising and killing socialists and communists.”<sup>42</sup>

As with Orwell, there was a streak of romanticism in Borkenau, who concludes his book by admitting that he is swayed by the notion that

“the ‘backward’, stagnant, and inefficient Spaniard can well compete, in the field of human values, with the efficient, practical, and progressive European.”<sup>43</sup>

### Orwell and Borkenau with the Masks off

*The Spanish Cockpit*, however, must be seen as just one milestone in a career of anti-communism; for the Austrian Borkenau, having resigned from the German Communist Party in 1929, after Stalin had emerged as leader of the Soviet party, would after World War II become a founding member of the anti-communist Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), delivering the ‘theme speech’ at its founding conference in June 1950, arguing that the only conflict worthy of note in the world was that between communism and ‘democracy’.<sup>44</sup> In the 1960s, it was revealed that the CCF (and, therefore, its publications like *Encounter*) was funded by the CIA.

This was part of the CIA's attempt to assemble a ‘non-communist left’, and there can be no doubt that the author of *Animal Farm* would have joined Borkenau in that organisation, had he not died a few months before its foundation. In his review of Frances Stonor Saunders' *Who Paid the Piper?: The*

*CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (Granta, London, 2000), James Petras has no hesitation in including Orwell in the group which collaborated in this project.<sup>45</sup> When Melvin J Lasky, who would instigate the CCF, formed the pro-US cultural journal *Der Monat* in 1948 (funded by the US Office of the Military Government in Germany to the tune of \$50,000 a year), its first contributors included Richard Crossman, Arthur Koestler, Stephen Spender and Franz Borkenau, with Orwell listed as London correspondent. Lasky, who is described as having a “New York-Trotskyite background” before his decisive right turn, would later write that it was Orwell who originally came up with the idea of the CCF in 1946; Orwell had planned the formation of an international anti-communist organisation with Koestler, but the former's ill-health put paid to this.<sup>46</sup>

Orwell had shown his true colours in 1949, when he passed a list of those he suspected of being communists, sympathisers or ‘fellow travellers’ to the Information Research Department, an anti-communist propaganda unit of the British Foreign Office.<sup>47</sup> The fact that several of those named were anything but communists<sup>48</sup> did not make the act forgivable. In 2003, when the list was made public, Professor Norman McKenzie, one of those named, excused Orwell by saying that at the time he handed over the list he was extremely ill with the tuberculosis that would kill him, and so his judgement was obviously affected.<sup>49</sup> Such an excuse loses much of its potency, however, when it is realised that the list was based on a notebook containing 135 names, which Orwell had been compiling since the mid-1940s.

Such were the men who, directly or indirectly, influenced the biographers of Hammett and Hellman.

How much more worthy of our admiration is Dashiell Hammett who, following his Army service in World War II (he had re-enlisted at the age of 48!), returned to political activity, championing a number of Communist Party-supported causes, and in particular heading the Civil Rights Congress-New York. Such continuing displays of belief and commitment strengthened him, enabling him first to see off a threatened return of his earlier nihilism and then – after several communist leaders had jumped bail, and he had refused to identify donors to the Civil Rights Congress's bail fund – to face with dignity his prison sentence and a later grilling by Senator Joseph McCarthy.

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  - 14 Ibururi, *op cit*, pp 235-6.
  - 15 Borkenau, *op cit*, p 204.
  - 16 *Ibid.*, p 27.
  - 17 Orwell, *op cit*, p 189.
  - 18 *Ibid.*, p 207.
  - 19 Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Central Committee of the CPSU, *Outline History of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1971, p 415.
  - 20 Due to the Spanish Party's inexperience, the Comintern had assigned Italian communist leader Palmiro Togliatti to assist it. Eric Hobsbawm says that Togliatti, who was among "the last to escape from the country in 1939", "in effect ran" the Party. See Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1989*, Michael Joseph, London, 1994, p 161.
  - 21 Ibaruri, *op cit*, pp 160-1.
  - 22 *Ibid.*, p 420.
  - 23 Borkenau, *op cit*, pp 190-1.
  - 24 Ibururi, *op cit*, p 289.
  - 25 Institute of Marxism-Leninism, *op cit*, p 418.
  - 26 Hobsbawm, *op cit*, p 160.
  - 27 Borkenau, *op cit*, p 187.
  - 28 Orwell, *op cit*, p 202.
  - 29 Borkenau, *op cit*, pp 290-1.
  - 30 Orwell, *op cit*, p 204.
  - 31 *Ibid.*, p 238.
  - 32 Borkenau, *op cit*, p 240.
  - 33 Orwell, *op cit*, p 209.
  - 34 *Ibid.*, p 223. Interesting in view of Orwell's outrage at communist claims of POUM leaders being in the pay of Hitler is the fact that on 11 May 1937 German Ambassador General Wilhelm Freiherr von Faupel reported to Hitler: "Franco has told me that the fighting was provoked by his agents. Nicholas Franco [brother of Francisco] has confirmed this report, informing me that they have a total of 13 agents in Barcelona." See Ibururi, *op cit*, p 282.
  - 35 Orwell, *op cit*, p 82.
  - 36 *Ibid.*, p 177.
  - 37 Borkenau, *op cit*, p 255.
  - 38 C Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, The Literary Guild, London, 1969, p 413. Baker gives the impression that these words were uttered by Hemingway, but in fact, although doubtless they reflected his own thinking, he put them in the mouth of his character Robert Jordan (see Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Collier Books, Macmillan, New York, 1987, p 163). The Spanish Civil War had a significant effect on Hemingway's maturity as a writer and on the belated dawning of his social consciousness. In this period, he cooperated – knowingly and without regret – with communists, as when, in June 1937, he addressed the Writers' Congress, an event sponsored by the Communist Party-influenced League of American Writers, and at which party general secretary Earl Browder was a speaker (see Baker, *op cit*, pp 376-7).
  - 39 See, for example, Symons, *op cit*, p 123.
  - 40 Borkenau, *op cit*, p 15.
  - 41 *Ibid.*, p 91.
  - 42 *Ibid.*, p 232.
  - 43 *Ibid.*, p 300.
  - 44 C Belfrage, *The American Inquisition*, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1973, pp 138-139.
  - 45 See J Petras, *The CIA and the Cultural Cold War Revisited*, in *Monthly Review*, November 1999.
  - 46 G Scott-Smith, 'A Radical Democratic Political Offensive': Melvin J. Lasky, *Der Monat*, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 35, No 2, April 2000.
  - 47 See, for example, T Garton Ash, *Orwell's List*, in *The New York Review of Books*, 25 September 2003.
  - 48 One of those on the list was Margaret Stewart, the labour correspondent of *Tribune*, the journal where Orwell had spent almost five years as literary editor, columnist and reviewer.
  - 49 F Gibbons, *Blacklisted writer says illness clouded Orwell's judgement*, in the *Guardian*, 24 June 2003.



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# State monopoly capitalism

## **Chapter 3** Topicality of the SMC analysis

‘After the defeat of socialism in Europe, the ‘bipolarity’ of the two systems was at first replaced by the dominance of the USA as sole leading power. At the same time, however, an era of economic and political development was introduced, in which the foundations of a new world order only gradually began to emerge’



# by Gretchen Binus, Beate Landefeld and Andreas Wehr

## 3.1 Changes in the world situation – a new stage of monopoly competition

The downfall of European socialism was a decisive break-point with immense effects on the international balance of forces of states and power centres, competitive relationships and the situation of the working people. Such caesuras in capitalist development are however not new; in the course of the 20th century there had already been two previous such qualitative changes in the international situation.

The first was bound up with the Great War and the October 1917 Russian Revolution, which led to the fracturing of the hitherto uniform capitalist system. The second such break occurred with the end of the Second World War, when the Soviet Union faced the USA as a world power, and a socialist international system developed, as a result of the defection from capitalism of many Eastern European and Asian countries.

This *third* serious transformation, setting in with the epochal events of 1989/90, and hitherto the most severe defeat of the international revolutionary process, has been accompanied by the restoration of capitalist relations of property, power and distribution in Eastern Europe. It is bringing forth a radical change in international capitalist development, characterised by new polarising competitive struggles, conflicts and crises, and a period of profoundly changing configurations in the international balance of forces, whose development and consequences have been unforeseeable up to the present day.

A few characteristic tendencies should be briefly mentioned:

After the defeat of socialism in Europe, the ‘bipolarity’ of the two systems was at first replaced by the dominance of the USA as sole leading power. At the same time, however, an era of economic and political development was introduced, in which the foundations of a new world order only gradually began to emerge. There was a change in the general conditions for organising international relations, which has had repercussions on the internal political, and especially social, situation in the capitalist countries.

Following that, an economic and political power construct developed in the form of the USA-Japan-EU ‘triad’, due on the one hand to the new economic quality of integration and political formation of the European Union, and on the other to Japan’s strong economic growth, based on its application of new scientific discoveries and advanced technologies, its expansion on the international market and its consequent political strengthening. In fact, this ‘triad’ was only significant up to the turn of the millennium, since Japan lost its position of power in a long drawn-out crisis. However, in this ‘multipolarity’ a long-term tendency towards hegemonic loss by the USA also began to appear, especially as in the same period China grew in importance through its economic and political rise, and other states like India, Brazil, South Africa and Russia gained an enhanced role.

In the most recent decade the change in the balance of forces between the major powers has continued more intensively:

- With its market opening, a catch-up market-economic capitalist development and an enormous economic growth,

China is coming forward as a leading economic power with international political claims *vis-à-vis* the USA.

- Despite its hitherto unproductive internal structure, Russia is striving to recover its role as a political and military world-power, on the basis of its enormous resources of raw materials and the political stabilisation of the power of the state.

- The EU is positioning itself, under the diktat of Germany, as the strongest economic power, with its political-strategic interests in the global power struggle as representative of a European capitalism. It is anxious to assert its international autonomy ever more strongly in the areas of foreign and military politics.

- New regional powers such as the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – are emerging in the international political system as a new power block, but at the same time are attempting to push through their own national interests *vis-à-vis* the countries of the Third World.

- On account of this change, and ‘imperial fatigue’, the USA is accelerating the pursuit of preserving and expanding its economic, political and military domination in many parts of the world. It is changing its geostrategic and military orientation with the main emphasis on the Asiatic-Pacific region, aiming to check China’s growing influence. At the same time, however, it is also putting the EU under pressure with the orientation towards strengthening NATO as a phalanx against Russia.

The development of new power centres, their international ambitions and claims to status affect the whole world. In addition, a whole arsenal of wider potentials for conflict is coming forward: new scientific-technical revolutions, including the introduction of automatic systems for waging war (drones); the growing energy and raw materials problems; the continuing processes of the international economic crisis, and the wider smouldering financial crisis; the still dangerous gap between the North and the South; a new round of the arms race, and the militarisation of international politics; growing internal conflicts and instabilities in many countries and regions of the world, as well as the increasing impact of global problems – all these bring to the global community a tangle of difficult-to-solve problems.

### Rigorous monopoly competition

The changes in the world situation reinforce the way in which the polarising potentials of rivalry are brought to bear. Above all, the monopoly competitive struggle becomes increasingly sharp. Currently, this appears as a completely new stage in the struggle of international monopolies, states and groups of states for redistribution of the world, for geopolitical power, for markets and raw materials – and that also increasingly in aggressive forms right up to new imperialist wars.

Competitive struggles are constantly developing, depending on the particular concrete conditions for capitalist exploitation. At the beginning of the 1970s it was the overaccumulation crisis, due to the low profit prospects in the real economy, which accelerated the run of corporate groups to the finance market. Currently, it is the changed ‘external’ factors which are additionally impinging on the strategies of the monopolies and thereby on the relations of competition. After the disappearance of competition with the socialist system, which had constrained capitalism for many decades, these ‘external’ factors are decisively determining the ‘internal’ functioning mechanism of capitalism as a whole. They are



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displayed via a chain of basic characteristics:

- The development towards high-tech capitalism, with new spheres of investment for capital, above all by the installation of worldwide IT integrated networks with wide-reaching consequences for changes in the character of wage-labour, including the precariousness of work.
- Progressive globalisation, on the basis of the internationalisation of capital with transnational production and internet networks.
- The development of financial corporations capable of controlling the market, and their dominating role in the economy and world politics.
- The accelerated accumulation of big capital as ‘economising through expropriation’, with multiple forms of social exclusion and further monopolisation by privatisation of public assets.
- The inability of policies, oriented towards the short-term logic of profit, to solve the growing global problems of energy, climate and the environment.
- The clearly stronger emergence of the continuity of the imperialist striving for power and of the accelerated politics of force.

A direct reaction to the new competition situation, and a prerequisite to its accomplishment, is a new level of monopolisation, an economic concentration of power in huge mega-businesses – through elimination of the weaker competitors, the buying up of potential competitors and changes in their capital property structures. Linked to this is the expansion of the leading positions of the monopolies in the world economy, and their role in economic relations as well as in world politics. This process of the new quality of monopolisation is characterised by two tendencies:

*Firstly*, due to the expansion of the monopoly property structure, the power of the monopolies is being constituted in new dimensions and structures. That affects the real economy. Transnational corporations (TNCs), with huge internationally structured economic complexes, and production locations in many countries, are dominating the nationally determined economic areas and through their operations are playing the decisive role in the development of present-day capitalism. At the same time the management structures have been internationalised, which is of significance for monopoly capitalism’s mechanisms of rule.

*Secondly*, and above all, the finance market as a regulatory instrument has been moved into the foreground of capitalist development, and thereby of the monopoly competitive struggle. The dominance of finance capital caused the unshackling of the finance markets; it hastened the changed structure of exercising political power towards the financial dictatorship of the ruling elite; and it set in motion a grandiose mechanism for redistributing ownership of money and capital, including a proliferating ulcer of speculation.

Here are a few facts that describe the new dimension in the economic power process of the monopolies:

UN statistics, published annually since 1954, on the top 100 most powerful corporations in the world,<sup>74</sup> make clear the changed power relations between the largest transnational monopolies of the leading states (Table 1). In 2012 their assets amounted to \$US12.842 billion. Their overseas assets came to 60% of the total. They employ almost 17 million people, of whom almost two thirds are in their overseas establishments.<sup>75</sup> The list of 100 is dominated by electrical, energy, automotive and steel corporations, as well as telecommunications, pharmaceutical and food industry companies. According to

Jean Ziegler<sup>76</sup>, approximately the 10 largest foodstuffs corporations control 85% of the worldwide trade in food. A separate table, published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), covers the 50 largest international finance giants. Their total assets in 2012 amounted to \$US51.003 billion.

**Table 1: Change of Power Relations in the World Corporate Structure\***

Country/Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2001	2012
Number of corporations						
USA	69	63	47	26	24**	22
Japan	3	8	8	12	16	8
BRD***	11	10	15	9	10**	10
France	2	3	11	14	13	14
GB	11**	8**	10**	13**	14**	14
Italy	1**	3	4	4	2	3
Netherlands	3**	3**	5**	4**	5**	1
Spain	-	-	-	-	2	3
China	-	-	-	-	1	3
Other countries	-	2	-	20	17	22

\* Based on the volume of foreign investments of the 100 biggest non-financial TNCs.

\*\* Double counting of TNCs from two countries of origin.

\*\*\*BRD = Federal Republic of Germany.

Sources: *IPW-Forschungshefte, Die Wirtschaft kapitalistischer Länder in Zahlen (Institute for International Politics and Economy, Research Reports, The Economy of Capitalist Countries in Figures)*, 1982-1, p 68 and 1987-1, p 63; UNCTAD, *World Investments Report*, Geneva/New York, current.

The big TNCs are at the same time the *carriers of capital export* – the hallmark of monopoly domination, according to Lenin. Their foreign direct investments (FDIs) are decisive for further expansion in the struggle around spheres of influence, resources and high rates of profit. The whole portfolio of FDI by private undertakings in the world increased more than tenfold from 1990 to 2012 and currently runs at \$US23.592 billion.<sup>77</sup> *Up to 70% of these investments are by corporations from the big economic power centres of capital.* Just how profitable capital export is for the corporations is apparent from the United States’ balance of payments statistics, which alongside direct investments also shows the profit transfers arising from them. Thus, in the period from 1991 to 2010, outward FDI from the USA exceeded inward FDI by \$US591 billion; but over \$US2.5 trillion more in profit was transferred into the USA than exported to other countries.<sup>78</sup>

The growing number of take-overs of firms, and holdings in other companies, is directly connected with foreign investments. In 2012 alone there were, on the international market, more than 5,400 part-holdings and take-overs by private enterprises, of value \$US308 billion, to which the 10 largest purchases alone contributed almost \$US85 billion.<sup>79</sup> This method of competition – centralisation of capital through buy-out and holdings, with appropriation and liquidation of competitors at the same time – has over the past two decades gained outstanding significance for the development of huge internationally structured economic complexes and the new role of the finance giants, including their criminal manipulations. Lenin already referred to this method when he wrote:

“The ‘holding system’ not only serves enormously to increase



the power of the monopolists, it also enables them to resort with impunity to all sorts of shady and dirty tricks....”<sup>80</sup>

As an instrument for constructing branched networks, information technology plays an important contemporary role in monopoly capital’s expansion into new investment spheres with high profit expectations. These are, above all, areas which require mastery of science, technology and resources, which exhibit a high degree of socialisation on the basis of the complexity of the labour process, and which promote an extraordinary degree of capital accumulation. To these challenges finance capital, with its development of web-like structures, corresponds – *from the monopolisation of new scientific-technical results, and the integration of university research areas into corporate research, up to taking holdings in companies for the application and realisation of their profit strategies*. At the same time, however, the system has escalated to being a mechanism of speculation, and has achieved, over the last two decades, a completely new importance in economic power relations:

“Today, stocks and shares are especially bought on speculative grounds, *ie* in order to sell them on dearly as quickly as possible – the stock market as casino.”<sup>81</sup>

The financial market players – banks, insurance companies and stock exchanges – function as regulators in the formation of new corporate structures, nationally and internationally. First and foremost, the big banks act as advisers on international mergers, and negotiate transactions worth billions. The big insurance companies, building up their positions of power, are taking over regulatory tasks, with an increased orientation towards cover for overseas expansion, in an ever more unstable world economic order. The stock markets, with the focus of their securities trade on lucrative investments, have become the hub of this financial market development. The *finance sector* is thus not only a lever for the effectiveness of the country’s whole economic potential, and the essential functioning mechanism of state regulation. It is *crucial* for capitalist exploitation and monopoly expansion into new spheres of investment. It deals with the necessary mobilisation of capital at new levels, the placing and management of huge streams of capital in a strongly contested world market and the protection against risk of immense capital investments aimed at widening monopoly economic structures in an increasingly internationally shaped economy.

Moreover, the finance market, with its new instruments, such as investment funds and derivatives, has generally gained dominance in state monopoly regulation. Finance capital determines the direction of development, which is illustrated by the term ‘finance market capitalism’ as a synonym for present-day capitalism. Compared with Hilferding’s time, this is in fact a new quality of capitalist development, although he had already characterised it as a basic tendency in property development:

“Finance capital signifies its tendency towards the development of social control over production. It is however socialisation in antagonistic form; the domination over social production remains in the hands of an oligarchy.”<sup>82</sup>

Lenin spoke further of “The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital”, and this means, as he wrote, *the predominance of the financial oligarchy and the singling*

*out of a small number of states to hold financial ‘power’* <sup>83</sup> – a finding which should be studied today, given the economic and political supremacy of Germany over the weaker EU countries.

The long-term accumulation of huge financial wealth – the piling up of financial resources – forms the economic foundation for the financial market’s strengthened role in the most recent period. The more rapid growth, over the last 30 years, of this wealth than of the whole world social product is connected not only with the worsened conditions of capitalist exploitation in the real economy but also with the neoliberal policies and the liberalisation of capital markets adopted at the same time. As a result, the stream of excessive profits has flowed into the lucrative investment spheres of the finance market. The billions-worth transactions of the big private banks or hedge funds – through which the national and international business mega-mergers have been realised in the most recent decades – are a decisive instrument of the current monopoly competitive struggle; and this has given a powerful boost, in favour of big capital, to the redistribution mechanism, to capital centralisation and hence to centralised disposition over external capital. On the one hand, therefore, the finance market is the so-called ‘*capitalist-rational form*’ <sup>84</sup> for the maintenance and expansion of present-day capitalism. However, on the other side, it is at the same time the present most significant *destabilising factor* in the world – through its big uncontrolled finance businesses and huge financial speculation – as financial crises, sovereign debt crises and EU crises prove.

The giant monopolies are, now as ever, dependent on the existence of a strongly subdivided and sectorally differentiated overall business landscape. Small and medium-sized companies, as the ‘backbone of the economy’, form an indispensable basis for monopoly competition. The continual extension of monopoly power does not exclude the emergence of new capitals. On the contrary, especially with the rapid scientific-technical progress, small and medium-sized enterprises become increasingly important for the national economy and also for the expansion strategies of the big corporations. However, because of their oppressive dependence under the domination of big capital, these enterprises suffer a poor financial situation characterised by rigorous pressure on costs and prices.

For the European Union in 2012, the figure of more than 20 million small and medium-sized enterprises has been quoted.<sup>85</sup> That comprises 99.8% of all non-financial businesses. But just a relatively small number of big corporations have at their disposal the economically decisive production conditions and reproduction relationships, and are thereby in a position to realise the corresponding profit strategies. These big corporations occupy towering positions in key industrial areas and in the financial system; they determine the shaping of the economy’s structures; and thus, with economic and non-economic force, they put all other enterprises and social areas under pressure.

More than ever before, monopoly capital in the individual countries, but active on the international stage, needs the state, *ie* guarantees for its conditions of reproduction – for state intervention to enforce its strategies in the competitive struggle. This is shown in the relation between economics and politics as a new quality: the whole pattern of movement of capitalism is determined by the close intermeshing of the state and the monopolies; and, under pressure from finance capital, government political decisions are influenced, dictated, leveraged – or made ineffective. Ever new functions and

mechanisms expand the content of the state's economic activity. It is true that, in concrete terms, state activities are determined by the political power relations between the various classes and layers; but the state in its historical specifics is always to be derived from the existing real power relations. In the current period, in which monopoly capital dominates the conditions for reproduction in a far-reaching way, the activities of the state are subject to the big corporations.

This power relation finds its expression in the rise of new tendencies in national and international state monopoly development and is shown in the reaction to the beginning 'new round' of the struggle of the international monopolies and states for power positions in world affairs, for redistribution of the world and for a 'new world order'. On the basis of the current monopolist fundamental structure, the state guarantees the functioning of capitalism with the help of various mechanisms:

- The classic state regulation measures (subventions, taxation etc) are adapted to the changed conditions (key word: eco-tax, as a form of taxation on use of energy).
- New state institutions are created, which are designed to guarantee a profitable return on capital or – in a crisis – to secure the dominance of the banks.
- New types of state monopoly mechanism gain significance – such as the concept of public-private partnerships (PPP), the 'infrastructure funds' of the banks, the ratings agencies as 'assessors of the world economy' etc.
- In particularly relevant areas – such as energy and raw materials, armaments, and the finance sector – state monopoly complexes such as the German Raw Materials Agency (DERA) 2010<sup>86</sup>, or new types of cooperative links between German federal states and corporations, for energy security, have developed.
- For improvement in competitive positions, new international mechanisms develop or regroup, like the military-industrial complex in the EU becoming a 'political-military-industrial complex'; and new institutions are established, like the European External Action Service (EEAS). In all these organisations political policy makers play a bigger role, and they make the EU external, military and development policies into instruments.
- The fusion of personnel from the state and the monopolies has reached a new level. Monopoly interests are much more openly implemented in state politics by the growing role of lobbying organisations and capital associations. The 'personnel exchange' of executives between the state apparatus and corporations has reached a new dimension.
- The interests of capital are more strongly presented as the interests of the whole of society, and are intended, as 'common sense', to produce mass acceptance of the current social situation.

The *financial market* is the preferred target of state intervention at the present time. Already, such interventions have essentially promoted the emphasis on this sector. The extensive privatisation; the liberalisation of the capital markets; the participation of the banks in the state process of creating money and credit; above all, however, the redistribution from earned to unearned income and the *legally sanctioned cuts in social services* – all these encourage capital accumulation. They procure, on behalf of the participants in the financial markets, significant free space for their worldwide monopoly expansion, for their huge speculative transactions and high rates of return. In addition, since the turn of the century the 'financial market integration' in the EU has been effective as an economic-political instrument for reciprocal opening of the financial

markets and for free movement of capital. For the leading European monopoly banks this initiated new lucrative spheres of investment and enabled an almost unlimited participation in speculative transactions. These are, as a consequence, the essential causes of the sovereign debt crises of the EU countries. Currently the state is helping these banks via the collection of interest and repayments – visibly in Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus through the imposed memoranda of the EU Commission.

The new competitive situation and new features of state monopoly activity are emerging particularly in the *foreign economic and political policies* of the leading states. First of all, with the problems of raw materials and resources, the dependence of state policies on the ruling economic elites has reached a particularly high level. And this area of politics takes increasingly aggressive imperialist characteristics. In this political area the state becomes the direct auxiliary agent, through the realisation of big capital's corporate strategies in the struggle for redivision of the world.

### 3.2 What is and who are the current monopoly bourgeoisie?

The present global economy is essentially driven by the largest transnational monopolies and the unequally developing, overlapping economies of a small number of capitalist big powers and rising developing countries. The group of 20 most important industrialised and developing countries (G20) generates 90% of the world gross domestic product (GDP). The bulk of UNCTAD's figure of *ca* 85,000 TNCs and banks come from just a few centres. In 2012 alone, two thirds of the 500 biggest originated from the member states of the seven most important industrialised countries (G7). The USA furnished 132, Japan 68, Germany 32, France 32, Great Britain 26 and China 73 of the 500 biggest. The ranking of a country in the international state hierarchy can be read off from its proportion of TNCs in the list of the top 500.<sup>87</sup>

The billionaires of the world are also concentrated in the economically strongest countries. Further evidence of the intermeshing between the monopolies, the big states and the ruling classes is given by the observations that, in 2012, states were the principal shareholders in 100 of the 500 biggest European corporations, and 22 of the 100 largest had a state major shareholder. The names of the larger corporations and banks world-wide link to addresses which as a rule were already monopolies 100 years ago, or have emerged from such. Their rise was and is flanked by that of the states from which they come, and whose economies they generally shape.

The big nation states have created different variants of regulation. According to their place in the international division of labour, and their specific historical and cultural traditions and class relations, they have formed decisively differing 'business models', with which their national economies are maintained in the globalised world economy and on the financial markets. Also, if they are subject to certain pressures to adapt, in the competition in their business location, then it is a matter of a relatively stable variant of capitalism or state monopoly capitalism.

### Separation of ownership and function

The development of capitalism accompanies changes in the structure of the capitalist class. They result from the competition and class activity of the bourgeoisie in the system-inherent processing of capitalist contradictions. Important stages were: the separation of property and function by the

emergence of joint-stock companies; the differentiation of the total capital into monopoly and non-monopoly capital; and the implementation of SMC, which after 1945 went through first a Keynesian and then a neoliberal phase of regulation.

The separation of ownership and function in the joint-stock company placed managers as leaders of the enterprises alongside the owners of capital. Formally, they are ‘employees’ but in reality their interests are merged with those of the capital owners, on the basis of their position in production, their high remuneration and their share options. However, differences remain: managers are supervised by the shareholders and can be ‘hired and fired’ by them, mostly with high severance payments. Owners of capital can bequeath wealth and power and found ‘company dynasties’.

The Marxist social scientists Heinz Jung and Josef Schleifstein describe the private and state managers as “co-opted and aggregated parts” of the monopoly bourgeoisie,

“who only gain a firm (and hereditary) foothold in it, to the extent that they are in the situation to shape capitalist property and powerfully to achieve disposition of property title over the surplus product.”<sup>88</sup>

Modern finance capital is based on the concentration of production, the monopolies growing out of that, and the merging of bank and industrial capital. It is thereby not a matter of a rigid form of intermeshing, but rather of the many-sided dependence of corporations and banks, and of their property ‘growth’, which arises from the need for finance of monopoly volume production. It becomes visible through mergers and big buy-outs, which are a part of monopoly world market competition.

Despite its detachment from productive functions, modern finance capital remains strongly connected to monopolisation, via the process of accumulation. Jung and Schleifstein describe this as follows:

“It nestles at the level of money capital and of the fictional capital arising from property titles. It thus embodies the growing claims to surplus value arising from the property titles. It is integrated with the property relations of the acting capital and establishes its control station at the hubs of the economic process.”<sup>89</sup>

Monopolies dominate particular relationships of the social reproduction process principally via financial control through shareholding. In the structure of the ruling class, this transfers the weight in favour of finance capital. It becomes the “typical ‘lord’ of the world” because

“it is particularly mobile and flexible, particularly interknit at home and internationally, and particularly impersonal and divorced from production proper; it lends itself to concentration with particular ease, and has been concentrated to an unusual degree already, so that literally a few hundred multimillionaires and millionaires control the destiny of the world.”<sup>90</sup>

### Groups of the bourgeoisie

In the Federal Republic of Germany (the BRD) there is a clear structural differentiation in the whole capital: out of a total of over 3 million taxable businesses, 99.7% are small and medium-sized enterprises, furnishing 38% of all turnover. Only 0.3% are big businesses, which however account for 62% of

the turnover. We can regard this 0.3% as corporations which are monopolies or which competition has closely led towards monopoly. They comprise fully 9,000 businesses.<sup>91</sup>

The centralisation of capital thereby increases continuously. In 2008, of the 100 biggest corporations in trade and commerce in the BRD, scarcely one third (32) were subsidiaries of domestic corporations, which also counted in the biggest 100. Fourteen had foreign parent corporations. In 1985 there had been, in this leading group, 17 subsidiary companies of domestic firms and 18 branches of foreign corporations. In 1958 there were 8 domestic subsidiaries and 17 foreign subsidiaries among the top 100.

The relations between industrial and financial corporations are close: the big TNCs increase their profits, *inter alia*, by use of exchange rate fluctuations, differences in tax systems and wages, profit transfers through intra-firm pricing, and speculation in foreign exchange and raw materials. Motor manufacturers offer credits, insurance and other financial services. In this context every corporation needs its own financial superstructure, and at the same time cooperation with the internationally active big banks. Correspondingly, in 2012 the industry association BDI<sup>92</sup> acted against an all-too rigid regulation of the banks with the argument that German industry would need not just “standardised cash points round the corner, but also strong banks”, which could “serve the international business of the enterprises.”<sup>93</sup>

The monopoly bourgeoisie of the BRD, since 1945, has been comprised of three large groups: capitalist clans (‘business dynasties’), top private managers and top state managers. The relations of property and control inside the enterprises vary. In a 1965 study, the sociologist Helge Pross defined control as “the power to install or dismiss management”.<sup>94</sup> In corporations this power is mostly exercised by big shareholders, if necessary in coordination with creditor banks and/or other holders of voting rights. If dominant ownership is lacking, as with companies where the shares are predominantly held in ‘free float’,<sup>95</sup> then it is a matter of management control. In that case the heads of enterprises, representatives of insurance and investment companies, business partners and proxies of creditor banks reciprocally control each other.

### Oligarchic control of corporations

A constant visitor at shareholder meetings wrote as follows about the composition of the leading groups of manager-controlled businesses:

“In every general meeting you come across the same faces, from which you know that they mutually help each other to position and authority.”<sup>96</sup>

‘Free floating’ is not ‘shareholder democracy’ but rather leads to oligarchic control by corporations. Factors which bring this about are the passivity and lack of coordination of the small shareholders, who leave the leadership of the firm to ‘experts’. This makes it possible for banks and other share portfolio managers to bundle up voting rights in their hands. At the same time the presence of those entitled to vote at the general meetings is so much smaller, the bigger the spread of share ownership. For a majority, 51% of those present and entitled to vote is sufficient. Since, in the run-up to meetings, the heads of the business consult with the bigger controllers of voting rights, their proposals are generally approved with 90% majorities.

Depending on the level of fragmentation of share

ownership, there is a varying separation between ownership and control, bringing about various types of control, which often exist in mixed forms. Thus Pross distinguishes between manager-control and “conditional manager-control”. The latter is present if a large minority of the shareholders disposes of a power of veto, which forces the management to consult on important decisions. Another mixed form is the “control by several minorities”, within which Pross and others include the big cooperatives.

In her investigation of the 100 biggest corporations of the year 1958, Pross comes to the conclusion:

“The representative phenomenon of the present relations of control is not the predominance or indeed dictatorship of private property-owners, private managers or representatives of the public power, but rather the *coexistence of these three*.”<sup>97</sup>

The class analysis by the Institute for Marxist Studies and Research (IMSF) also starts in the 1970s from the “internal structure of the bourgeoisie” in “functioning owner-capitalists, managers and capitalists in the state apparatus”. It emphasises at the same time that the “internal structuring of the bourgeoisie essential for modern monopoly capitalism” is “between the monopoly and non-monopoly bourgeoisie”.<sup>98</sup> Jung has characterised the relation of the two to each other, as follows:

“Just as capital is the basis of monopoly capital and finance capital, so the bourgeoisie is the social recruitment basis of the stratum of monopoly capitalists and of the dominant group of the financial oligarchy. Just as monopoly capital steps up the domination over the total capital, pushes through its interests and allocates function and influence to non-monopoly capital, so the layer of the monopoly bourgeoisie or rather the group of the financial oligarchy achieves domination over the whole of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>99</sup>

The centralisation of capital to the advantage of the biggest corporations increased continuously after 1945. At the same time a clear shift took place between the three groups of the bourgeoisie. This shift suggests that we can speak of two phases, which correspond to relevant phases of regulation of SMC.

In the first phase, from 1945 to 1975, ie the period of social system competition (or, of ‘Fordism’), the role of the state grew through the regulation of economic processes. SMC prevailed on a broad front. The ratio of government expenditure to gross national product reached a value many times that at the beginning of the century. Correspondingly, in the shareholding structure up to the 1980s, the influence of state and private managers grew with respect to the proprietors and functioning capitalists, while that of the business dynasties appeared to decline, especially in and along with the heavy industries. A shift to “more state and less private” is recognisable.<sup>100</sup>

### Shift in favour of the billionaire clans

In phase 2, the 30 years of neoliberalism, there was in contrast a shift to ‘more private and less state’. Between 1985 and 2007, the turnover share of the clan-controlled businesses among the 100 biggest trade and commerce corporations doubled from 17% to 36%. Indeed, it even increased with respect to the 1958 level of 22%. Against that, the state proportion sank to approximately the 1958 level, ie 14%, compared with 23% in 1985. The turnover proportion of ‘free float’ corporations under

control by managers on the other hand only underwent small variations, from 27% (1958) via 31% (1985) to 22% (2007).

The share of foreign-controlled enterprises in the turnovers of the 100 biggest firms remained almost constant at under 20% in both phases. The 14 subsidiaries of foreign parent companies, which in 2007 together transacted fully 18% of the turnover, came from the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, Sweden and Switzerland. The German Monopoly Commission indicated the turnover proportion of foreign businesses as 19% of the total (including financial corporations).<sup>101</sup> Another analysis of the proportions, covering 947,603 enterprises, ie almost all capitalist businesses, revealed that in 2008 the 35,422 foreign-controlled firms held a substantial 20% proportion of the turnover and balance-sheet sum and 13% of employees.<sup>102</sup>

The explosion of wealth at the top of society correlates with the resurgence of big private owners in the corporations: at least 1% of Germans, ie over 800,000 people, are millionaires.<sup>103</sup> In 2008, that included 122 billionaires, while in 2013 there were 132. On their sources of wealth, the sociologist Christian Rickens wrote as follows:

“Just a mere 8% named paid employment as the most important source of their wealth. The employed top manager, chief physician or investment banker thus forms rather the exception among Germany’s millionaires.”

According to Rickens, out of the 100 richest Germans, who are listed annually by *manager magazin* (*Manager magazine*), 34 earned their wealth by the founding of their own business.

“The remaining two-thirds are therefore principally so wealthy because they have inherited a family business or shares in it.”<sup>104</sup>

Well-known heirs are Porsche/Piëch<sup>105</sup>, Quandt<sup>106</sup>, Oetker<sup>107</sup> or Henkel<sup>108</sup>. Among the well-known social climbers are Götz Werner<sup>109</sup>, the ALDI brothers and the 5 founders of global software company SAP. Our own investigations for the year 2008 revealed that 82 of the 122 billionaires got their assets that year through being big or majority shareholders of at least one of the 500 biggest corporations of the BRD, 15 others from smaller corporations, 8 from large shares in foreign corporations and 7 from severance payments or enterprise sales with subsequent financial investment. The billionaire and millionaire clans hold their share packages through investment companies, endowments and joint inheritance communities.

There are big private majority shareholders, as with VW, BMW, Beiersdorf<sup>110</sup> or Merck<sup>111</sup>, where the top managers share the power with the representatives of the billionaire clans. In the case of overwhelming ‘free float’, as with Daimler, Siemens, Deutsche Bank and Allianz, the managers have overall prerogative. Reciprocal membership on the boards of directors is just as normal with manager-controlled enterprises as with corporations under control by clans or high finance. For example, in 2013, Paul Achleitner, the managing director of Deutsche Bank and ex-chair of Allianz, sat together with his wife Ann-Kristin Achleitner on the boards of 7 of the 30 DAX corporations.

In 2013, the BMW board included – alongside representatives of the owner family Quandt – Wolfgang Mayrhuber (chair of the board of Lufthansa AG), Henning Kagermann (co-founder of SAP, board member of,



others, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Post, Munich Re<sup>112</sup> and Nokia), Franz M Haniel (chair of the board of Haniel & Cie GmbH, board member of Metro AG<sup>113</sup>), Karl-Ludwig Kley (CEO of Merck KGaA, board member of Bertelsmann<sup>114</sup>, and president of VCI, the German chemical industry federation). Similar interconnections can be found with every other corporation.

### Control by foreign financial investors

Most of the big corporations are controlled by parent companies, with which there is at most an agreement on control or profit transfer. In manager-controlled corporations, Arabic state funds or Russian oligarchs as anchor shareholders<sup>115</sup> are desirable, in order to protect against hostile take-overs. That requires them to bind themselves to the German financial oligarchy and not to strive for control themselves.

Authors like Werner Rügemer see a shift of power in corporations in favour of financial investors, pension funds and asset managers from the Anglo-Saxon area.<sup>116</sup> Actually, in the BRD the number of mutual and special funds of banks, insurance companies and investment businesses has multiplied. However, they are often not strategic investors, but buy only in order to sell again relatively soon at a profit. The share packages of the mutual funds lie mostly under the 5% legal threshold for reporting. The biggest US investor in DAX<sup>117</sup> corporations is BlackRock, which holds in each case a proportion of around the reporting threshold. Thereby it gets influence, but no controlling power. BlackRock is clearly not a strategic investor.

Share ownership and interdependence are therefore not identical with control. Whether or not they make control possible depends always on the overall picture of the share ownership structure: on the size, number and types of other shareholders, on regulations on voting rights, and on the attendance at general meetings. From 10% share ownership, major shareholders are subjected to legal duties of communication and information over their intentions. Thus, regarding Munich Re, Warren Buffet had to renounce strategic aims and interference in the filling of management bodies. For companies which are claimed to be 'relevant to security', the state must approve the acquisition of larger foreign shareholdings. With Lufthansa, the maximum total foreign shareholding must be less than 50%.

The largest potential for pressure by financial investors without majority ownership is their exit option, *ie* exit through unsatisfactory rate of return. This pressure on profitability is intentional under the neoliberal regime. Controlling major shareholders as well as speculating bankers profit by it, and higher surplus value is squeezed from the labour force. The unleashed financial market as a regulation mechanism is not to be confused with the control and domination of individual enterprise groups.

Monopoly power signifies indeed domination over specific social connections of reproduction but in no way the removal of the spontaneity and anarchy of the international market. The contradiction, between planning in the individual enterprise and the anarchy of the market, continues to operate and the more so, the bigger the volumes which are at stake. This contradiction cannot be overcome under capitalism. In addition, the most wealthy and powerful corporation or investment fund is not in a situation to direct the international market in a planned way. On the one hand this carries a major destabilisation potential, while on the other it should cut the ground away from conspiracy theories.

### Interwoven, networked and 'politically hard-wired' with the state

Managers appointed by the state are today to be found in the German railways and postal service, in national state banks such as the KfW<sup>118</sup>, in the shrinking sector of the regional banks as well as in the savings bank sector. In the former state energy sector, which was privatised in the 1970s and 80s, there has in recent times been a partial recomunalisation. The financial crisis forced nationalisation of banks and the establishment of 'rescue funds', like the Enterprise Rescue Fund, the bank rescue fund SoFFin<sup>119</sup> and the participation in the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

State monopoly regulation occurs principally via state redistribution policies, banks of issue, boards of control and competition, via support programmes, taxation policies and subventions. Consequently, alongside the state-appointed managers of state-owned enterprises, the state fraction of the bourgeoisie also includes the government-deployed heads of regulation institutions such as the Federal Bank, the Federal Institution for Supervision of Financial Services (BAFin<sup>120</sup>), the SoFFin, the Federal Cartel Office as well as the boards of international regulation like the European Central Bank (ECB), the EU Commission, the ESM, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

As the sociologist Michael Hartmann has shown, the placement of international regulatory board members happens, now as before, along national career ladders. They are often recruited from governments or national regulatory boards. That militates against the claim that a 'transnational bourgeoisie' develops in these board members. The people raised to that level feel themselves much more obliged to the networks of their countries of origin, to whom they owe their career.<sup>121</sup> Not much else is conducted with the 'transnational manager class' presumed by some. On the one side there is the tendency towards internationalisation, and overseas experiences are helpful for one's career. On the other hand, in order to be reliable for big shareholders, the 'smell of the stable'<sup>122</sup> is a virtue.

The economic and political domination of the monopoly bourgeoisie and finance capital is implemented via a dense network of official and unofficial consultative and decision-making bodies. Parties, trade associations, joint-purpose committees, foundations, research institutes, the common consultancy field, the common patronage and honorary offices in culture and sport, joint executive positions, and the revolving door to careers provide for the frequent togetherness of the same group of people. The heads of the big industry, employers', commerce and trade associations, the BDI, the BDA, the DIHK and the BGA,<sup>123</sup> are occupied throughout by monopoly representatives. At their annual association conferences the Federal Chancellor regularly explains her political purposes.

Along with that, there are many places of cooperation and consultation, culminating in the working out of parliamentary bills by enterprise associations. For decades, an important role has been played by the economic council of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, to which alone 10,000 enterprises belong, and whose 'Economic Conference' has been described by *Handelsblatt* as the "annual general Meeting of the German economy". Central networks and think tanks such as the German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP<sup>124</sup>) or the Science and Politics Foundation (SPP)<sup>125</sup>

inspire opinion-forming and strategic discourse of the bourgeoisie.

The DGAP assists “in scientific preparation, critical-constructive accompaniment and also public explanation of German foreign policy”. Its chair Arend Oetker is also vice-chair of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation<sup>126</sup>. Corporations are involved in the promotion of projects.<sup>127</sup> The SPP carries out scientific investigations on international politics “with the aim of political advice”. Originally founded by the federal news service, the BND<sup>128</sup>, the SPP has close contacts with the secret service and the Federal Armed Services.<sup>129</sup> Its president Hans-Peter Keitel was until 2013 head of the BDI. In 2014 its board included the head of the planning staff in the Federal Foreign Office, the state secretaries in the Ministries for Defence, Development, the Interior and Education, and representatives of Otto GmbH<sup>130</sup> and Deutsche Bank.<sup>131</sup> Further board members, such as from the inter-ministerial committee for raw materials or the dialogue forum Financial Centre Germany, have been added.

The direct cooperation of banks and the government during the crisis beginning in 2007 is well-known, as is the influence of the Springer Corporation or the Bertelsmann group on opinion- and public policy-formation. Nonetheless, a purely instrumental relation of the monopolies to the state must not be inferred. It is true that this occurs, but state monopoly policies must strive to bind together antagonistic interests. Furthermore, a unified interest of monopoly capital does not exist in all issues, nor is there a unified interest of all non-monopoly classes and layers.

In a changing situation, a mass basis must be maintained for the monopolies and their parties. To that end coercion and pressure to conform are applied, but they are not sufficient. Political, ideological and cultural hegemony is necessary – including material concessions. Hence the ‘*social partnership*’ in Federal Germany is an important competitive advantage of its SMC. In phase 1, 1945-75, it could be seen as class compromise on the basis of the power relation, which made it possible for the working class to push through social and codetermination rights; but in the neoliberal reconstruction phase 2 it developed, principally in the export industries, into *competitive corporatism*, which subordinated the interests of the employees to the competitiveness of their ‘own’ corporations.<sup>132</sup>

This *power shift* followed structural changes which had diminished the industrial core of the working class, and decimated it in once militant sectors such as steel and mining. To that should be added the splitting of workforces into core, precariously employed and unemployed workers. Politically, the defeat was sealed with the going over of the Social-Democratic Party and the Greens to neoliberalism, and with the inability of the trade unions to mobilise their members to prevent Agenda 2010<sup>133</sup>.

### 3.3 Continued rivalry of imperialist states or ultra-imperialism?

#### The dispute over ultra-imperialism

On the eve of the First World War, there was a bitter dispute in the international working class movement, over the character of imperialism. At the centre was the question whether a particular stage of capitalism was leading to the development of an ‘ultra-imperialism’, *ie* to a permanent and stable cooperation of imperialist states; or whether their opposition remained irreconcilable. Karl Kautsky and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin stood on opposite sides.

“From the purely economic view,’ writes Kautsky, ‘it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase, that of the extension of policy of the cartels to foreign policy, the phase of ultra-imperialism,’ *ie* of a superimperialism, of a union of the imperialisms of the whole world and not struggles among them, a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism, a phase of the ‘joint exploitation of the world by the internationally united finance capital.’”<sup>134</sup>

In this Kautsky took up the view of the English liberal critic of imperialism John Hobson, who had already written about an ‘inter-imperialism’ in 1902.

Lenin contradicted Kautsky decisively:

“From the purely economic view’, is ‘ultra-imperialism’ possible, or is it ultra-nonsense?

If the purely economic point of view is meant to be a ‘pure’ abstraction, then all that can be said reduces itself towards the following proposition: development is proceeding towards monopolies, hence towards a single world monopoly, towards a single world trust. This is indisputable, but it is also as compellingly meaningless as is the statement that ‘development is proceeding’ towards the manufacture of foodstuffs in laboratories. In this sense the ‘theory’ of ultra-imperialism is no less absurd than a ‘theory of ultra-agriculture’ would be.

Kautsky’s utterly meaningless talk about ultra-imperialism encourages, among other things, that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, *ie* that the rule of finance capital lessens the unevenness and contradictions inherent in the world economy, whereas in reality it increases them.”<sup>135</sup>

#### Wars and alliances between imperialist states

The First World War, as a life-and-death power struggle, strikingly contradicted Kautsky’s thesis of the dawning of an epoch of ultra-imperialism. Rather, it confirmed Lenin’s position, in which the war was the outcome of inter-imperialist contradictions. Yet, at the end of the First World War, the idea of an ultra-imperialism was revived. It appeared to materialise in the new world order proclaimed by US president Woodrow Wilson. It was grounded in the League of Nations, which, however, the United States itself did not join. This new world order, based at that time on human rights and international law, was enthusiastically greeted by the German social-democrats.

In the 1920s, hope germinated on the European continent that peaceful unification might be possible. In its 1925 Heidelberg Programme, the German Social-Democratic Party committed itself to a united Europe. The Pan-European Union – which can be regarded as the ideological predecessor of the European Union – had already been founded in 1923. In contrast to the chauvinist forces, who demanded changes to the state frontiers drawn up as an outcome to the First World War, the Pan-European Union backed the recognition of the status quo. It demanded economic cooperation and common policy interests with respect to the USA, the Soviet Union and the British Empire. However, this first attempt at establishing a European state order, with the aim of overcoming imperialist differences on the continent, collapsed with the rise of fascism, first in Italy and then in Germany. The German fascists pursued their policy of the ‘New European Order’ by war, occupation and annexation.

At the end of the Second World War, there was a new

attempt at overcoming inter-imperialist differences. The United Nations, the Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) and the IMF were seen as instruments for reorganising international payment settlements, in order to guarantee an ‘everlasting peace’. The prospects for success were now dissimilarly greater, since – in contrast to the 1920s – the dominant force emerging from the Second World War, the USA, committed itself consciously to its role as the global hegemonic power.

Decisive for the enforcement of this hegemony was the fact that the USA now took over the leadership of the West in containing and driving back the anti-imperialist forces. These forces had been strengthened worldwide, arising from the defeat of the German Reich and Japan. The Soviet Union was able to extend its influence right into the centre of Europe. In China the Communist Party succeeded in gaining power. Also, in Yugoslavia and Korea, national liberation movements under communist leadership were victorious. At the same time, anti-colonial movements underwent an upswing, on the Indian subcontinent, for example. In order to prevent further setbacks for the West, and to regain lost ground, the leading imperialist powers saw themselves forced to limit their mutual competition and above all to renounce its military consequences.

Expressions of this willingness towards cooperation under the leadership of the USA were the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Organisation of American States (OAS). These formal alliances presented a new quality in cooperation. At the same time, they followed historical role models in the process. Already, in 1900, troops from no fewer than eight imperialist countries had fought against the Chinese anti-colonial revolt, the Boxer Rebellion. That alliance of forces was, however, to last only a few years, since the participants overran each other in the First World War. Right after its end, nevertheless, they renewed their joint endeavour, in order once again to take up the fight against anti-imperialism. Now the young Soviet Union was to be destroyed in the War of Intervention. This again displayed the fact that, in historical situations in which their striving for world domination is generally endangered, the imperialist powers are ready and capable of reaching a certain cooperation and deferment of competing interests.

Yet, even in phases of close cooperation, inter-imperialist differences of interest do not disappear. This was shown, for example, in the Suez crisis of 1956, when the USA – by the way in consultation with the USSR – forced Great Britain, France and Israel to withdraw their troops from Egypt.<sup>136</sup> Even at the height of the Cold War, therefore, it was not possible to speak of an ‘ultra-imperialism’.

### **The European Union as an alliance of states**

European integration, starting at the beginning of the 1950s, was a component of the Western strategy of rolling back socialism. First of all, therefore, it was supported by the USA. It made use of its supremacy in Germany, in order to promote this process.<sup>137</sup>

Today, the European Union is considered to be the most advanced regulation system among capitalist states. And in fact the degree of integration reached by the EU is remarkable. It is not comparable with the other economic state alliances, be it the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Differently from those loose unions, the EU is based much more on an extensive

system of treaties and strong institutions. The *Acquis Communautaire*<sup>138</sup>, built up over more than 50 years, comprises thousands of rules as well as treaties, decrees and protocols. The EU disposes of its own budget, it has a Court of Justice, a Court of Auditors, a Central Bank and a common currency, which is currently the legal tender in 18 of its member states. There exists a European Parliament, but this is not in fact a genuine parliament, on account of lacking power of its own. Because of the extensive transfer of competences to the European level, national legislatures are often left with only the task of transposing the decisions reached there. In the course of the integration, the legal protection systems of the member states have changed. The principle of direct application of EU law obliges the national courts to apply European legal norms.

However, since the European Union is a union of capitalist or imperialist states, limits are placed on its development. Thus, the core area of national sovereignty, foreign and security policies, remains reserved to the member states. Also, they are able to assert themselves in internal and legal policies, in taxation as well as finance and budgetary policy. Everywhere here the integration pushes at limits, since the member states, on account of the continually existing competition between them, cannot renounce these central areas of statehood. In contrast to the era of development of the modern European nations in the 18th and 19th centuries, no new state arises with the EU. We are therefore not, as the following book titles suggest, *On the way to the Superpower*<sup>139</sup> or to a *World-Power Europe*<sup>140</sup> There is no *Eurocapitalism*<sup>141</sup> nor a tendency towards “Euroimperialism”<sup>142</sup>, as is often maintained, since the decisive foundations for such a new statehood, for a comprehensive transnational European capitalist class, are absent.<sup>143</sup> The European Union rather presents a developed form of state cooperation.

Yet the EU is an arena of competitive struggle of its member states. Its history is principally one of the struggle between Germany and France for decisive influence, in which phases of close cooperation, as for example between Nicholas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel, take turns with such open competition. Since the annexation of the DDR by the Federal Republic and the winning back of room for manoeuvre for German monopoly capital in Eastern Europe, the struggle for hegemony in the EU is decidedly in favour of Germany.

In the Euro crisis, Germany has been able to extend its supremacy. The German press commented as follows with satisfaction:

“It is obvious that the financial and sovereign debt crisis has strengthened the shift of power between the member states. Thus, for example, the position of Germany is ... today so strong, as was never before the case in the history of the Union. The mirror image is the relative weakness of France and Great Britain.”<sup>144</sup>

Also, the changed relations of domination between the European core and the periphery are working themselves out in an aggravating way, in the crisis. The picture of the EU as a community aimed at cooperation is becoming ever paler. Rather, a hegemonic order with Germany at the top has come into being.

### **The EU in global imperialist competition**

The states united in the EU use it in order to extend their own world-political room for manoeuvre. For that reason the EU is intended to develop into a ‘global player’ which is

capable of cooperation with equal rights – as well as competition – with the centre of world capitalism, the United States. The rise of the developing countries is invoked as a new danger for Europe, with the warning that the EU states on their own would in future no longer be equal to the growing competition of emerging powers like China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa and India. The appeal *For a Change of Course in European Politics* includes just such a warning of a decline of Europe:

“The European peoples must learn that it is only together that they can maintain their social-state business model and the national state diversity of their cultures. They must pool their forces, if they want to have any influence at all on the agenda of world politics and on the solution of global problems. The renunciation of European unity would also be an abandonment of world history.”<sup>145</sup>

The fear of the European elites, that they would no longer be able to set the tone in the worldwide competitive struggle, was already there at the starting-point of the European project. In 1926, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, founder of the Pan-European Union, explained:

“International free trade is impossible, as long as the current tension rules between living conditions and rates of pay in America, Europe and Asia. But a European customs union is possible and is the only escape of the European economy in face of the world domination of Anglo-Saxon capitalism or Russian Bolshevism.”<sup>146</sup>

And Lenin referred as follows to the former social-democrat Hildebrand:

“The German opportunist Gerhard Hildebrand ... supplements Hobson well by his advocacy of a ‘United States of Western Europe’ (without Russia) for the purpose of ‘joint’ action ... against the African Negroes, against the ‘great Islamic movement’, for the maintenance of a ‘powerful army and navy’, against a ‘Sino-Japanese coalition’, etc.”<sup>147</sup>

### China - the new enemy image

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the camp allied with it, the traditional image of the enemy of the West – which forced united action by its states – also faded. Since then, the inter-imperialist differences of interest have again deepened. Ever more frequently, the USA’s claim to leadership is being called into question by the European powers. An expression of these new differences was the refusal of France and Germany, in coordination with Russia, to participate in the second Gulf War against Iraq. The USA responded to that with the attempt to play off the so-called ‘old Europe’ against a ‘new Europe’, comprising the central and eastern European countries allied with it. Also, in the attack on Libya, the Western powers did not act in a united way, Germany refusing to participate. In order to strengthen the weakening cohesion of the West, the USA is above all holding fast to NATO, and formulating ever new aims for this military alliance in a ‘worldwide fight against terrorism’. The strengthening of the NATO alliance also serves the planned Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP.

Both blocks, the USA and the EU, share the interest of maintaining the West’s global supremacy. With the warnings about the rise of China, it is not just a matter of being prepared

for further competition on the international market. Over China, it is much more a case of the growth of a serious political rival, since that country is sticking to its socialist orientation, and does not allow itself to be bound into a Western-led political or military alliance. This distinguishes China from Japan and South Korea, which were and are, through all their economic strength, always loyal political and military allies of the USA.<sup>148</sup>

### The dialectics of competition and cooperation

The concept of ‘ultra-imperialism’ is today rarely used for the description of the relations of imperialist states to one another. Yet, as an imaginary construct, the idea of a cartel of states, in which the competitive struggle between them has been mitigated, if not indeed eliminated, is at the same time very vibrant. In the discussion over the character of globalisation, concepts are applied, which invoke an alleged fully new, internationalised, stage of capitalist development. There is talk of a “transnationalisation”<sup>149</sup>, the domination of a “transnational financial oligarchy”<sup>150</sup>, a “transnational high-tech capitalism”<sup>152</sup>, and also of national or European departments of a “global capital”<sup>152</sup>.

The followers of these ideas often make the point that an ever stronger international cross-linking would merely be the outcome of the objective socialisation of the capitalist economy, which acts as a quasi law of nature. The attempt to ignore this development or indeed to want to cancel it, would therefore be worldly innocent or even reactionary. Here, Lenin’s answer to Kautsky has already been cited, in which the expression “the development moves in the direction” signifies nothing at all, since the necessary concrete analysis of the concrete situation has not been furnished. In evaluating the European Union, that means that the statement, that it is the expression of an increasing internationalisation of European capitalist economies, is still far from signifying that this internationalisation can only happen in this way and not any other. That is to say, that if we study the EU more accurately, then we can easily maintain that it is rather the expression of an “imperialistically deformed social organisation”<sup>153</sup>. The EU remains structured by the imperialist competition of its member states.

The dialectics of competition and cooperation remains decisive, both globally and in Europe. It is part of this dialectics that cooperation is always accepted only as long as it is unconditionally necessary or serves the particular interests. Otherwise, competition dominates as the natural form of capitalism. Lenin’s statement therefore still applies, that

“the only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies etc is a calculation of the strength of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength etc.”<sup>154</sup>

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- 89 *Ibid*, p 142
- 90 V I Lenin, *Preface to N Bukharin's Pamphlet, 'Imperialism and the World Economy'*, in *Collected Works*, Vol 22, p 105.
- 91 if Institut für Mittelstandsforschung (IfM: Centre for Small and Medium Sized Business Research), Bonn, <http://www.ifm-bonn.org>.
- 92 BDI = Bundesverband der deutschen Industrie (Federal Association of German Industry –Ed).
- 93 'BDI-Präsident: Keitel wirft Steinbrück Realitätsferne vor' ('BDI-President; Keitel accuses Steinbrück of lack of contact with reality'), in *Handelsblatt*, 3.11.2012; online at <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/bdi-praesident-keitel-wirft-steinbrueck-realaetsferne-vor/7340880.html>.
- 94 H Pross, *Manager und Aktionäre in Deutschland: Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Eigentum und Verfügungsmacht (Managers and Shareholders in Germany: Studies on the relation of property and power of control)*, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt am Main, 1965, p 18.
- 95 *ie* a majority of shares can be publicly traded –Ed.
- 96 Kurt Fiebig, cited in H-O Eglau, *Wie Gott in Frankreich: Die Deutsche Bank und die Industrie (Like God in France: The Deutsche Bank and Industry)*, Heyne, Munich, 1993, p 227; online at [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche\\_Bank](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Bank).
- 97 Pross, *op cit*, p 115.
- 98 A Leisewitz, *Klassen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland heute (Classes in the Federal Republic of Germany Today)*, Verlag Marxistische Blätter, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, p 139ff.
- 99 H Jung et al, *Klassenstruktur und Klassentheorie – Theoretische Grundlagen und Diskussionen (Class Structure and Class Theory – Theoretical Basis and Discussion)*, in *Klassen- und Sozialstruktur der BRD 1950-1970 (Class and Social Structure of the BRD, 1950-1970)*, Part I, IMSF, Frankfurt am Main, 1973, p 128
- 100 *cf* IPW *Forschungshefte (Humboldt University Institute for International Politics and Economy, Research Reports)*, No 4, 1988, p 99ff.
- 101 Weniger Staat, mehr Wettbewerb, Siebzehntes Hauptgutachten der Monopolkommission 2006/2007 (Less State, More Competition: 17th major opinion of the Federal Monopoly Commission, 2006/7), Bonn, 2008, p 97.
- 102 M Simmler and B Rudelle, *Deutsch-französische Unternehmensbesteuerung: keine überzeugende Fortschritte (German-French Company Taxation: No convincing progress)*, in *DIW-Wochenbericht (Weekly Report of the German Institute for Economic Research)*, Berlin, 2013, No 8, p 13ff.
- 103 Asset millionaires.
- 104 C Rickens, *Ganz oben: wie Deutschlands Millionäre wirklich leben (Out in the Open: How Germany's millionaires actually live)*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Köln, 2012, pp 56, 131.
- 105 An Austrian family descending from automotive industrialist Ferdinand Porsche –Ed.
- 106 The family behind BMW; Johanna Quandt, who died in 2015, was the world's 12th richest woman –Ed.
- 107 The family behind Dr August Oetker KG; the company's fortune was initially forged by close collaboration with the Nazis –Ed.
- 108 Henkel is a TNC operating in laundry and home care (including Persil), beauty care and adhesive technologies (including Loctite) –Ed.
- 109 The founder and co-owner of the German drugstore chain, dm-drogerie markt, with stores in 12 countries –Ed.
- 110 A global company with more than 150 affiliates, Beiersdorf focuses on personal care products and pressure sensitive adhesives. Its brands include Nivea and Elastoplast –Ed.
- 111 Merck KGaA, a chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences TNC; the family still control 70% of the shares –Ed.
- 112 One of the world's leading reinsurance companies; it assumes part of the risk covered by its insurance company clients –Ed.
- 113 The Haniel company is a conglomerate active in wholesale pharmaceuticals, recycling of industrial waste, and investment in Metro AG, the 4th largest retailer in the world –Ed.
- 114 One of the world's largest mass media companies, also active in the service sector and education.
- 115 Anchor shareholders or investors agree to take a substantial stake that they will not sell for a period, in order to provide stability and boost confidence for others to invest –Ed.
- 116 W Rügemer, *Deutsches Kapital beherrscht Europa? (Does German Capital Dominate Europe?)*, in *Z: Zeitschrift marxistische Erneuerung*, 2013, No 94, p 170f.
- 117 DAX = Deutsche Aktienindex (German stock index) consists of the 30 major German companies trading on the Frankfurt stock exchange –Ed.
- 118 KfW = Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Credit Institution for Reconstruction –Ed).
- 119 SoFFin = Sonderfonds Finanzmarktstabilisierung (Special Financial Market Stabilisation Funds –Ed).
- 120 BAFin = Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht.
- 121 M Hartmann, *Eliten und Macht in Europa: ein internationaler Vergleich (Elites and Power in Europe: An international comparison)*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2007, p 197ff.
- 122 Meaning the social milieu of the individual referred to, *ie* his/her origin or long-term membership of a group, a business or a family –Ed.
- 123 BDA = Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (Federal Union of German Employer Associations); DIHK = Deutsche Industrie und Handelskammertag (German Chambers of Industry and Commerce); BGA = Bundesverband Grosshandel, Aussenhandel, Dienstleistungen (Federal Association of Wholesale Trade, Foreign Trade and Services) –Ed.
- 124 DGAP = Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik.
- 125 SSP = Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP); to avoid confusion the English initials are used here –Ed.
- 126 Established in 1959, the Thyssen Foundation supports research in the fields of history, language and culture, state, economics, society and medicine –Ed.
- 127 J Kronauer, *West-östliche Gehilfin (An East-West Helpmate)*, in *junge Welt*, 17.01.2013.
- 128 BND = Bundesnachrichtendienst.
- 129 J Kronauer, *Die Berater (The Consultants)*, in *junge Welt*, 20.12.2012.
- 130 Otto GmbH is the world's largest mail order company and currently one of the biggest e-commerce companies; the Otto family owns a majority of the business –Ed.
- 131 Taken from <http://www.swp-berlin.org/de/ueber-uns.html>.
- 132 F Deppe, *Von Klassenkampf zum Wettbewerbskorporatismus: die grosse Transformation der Gewerkschaften (From Class Struggle to Competitive Corporatism: The big transformation of the trade unions)*, in *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik (Pages for German and International Politics)*, 2013, No 2, p 100.
- 133 Agenda 2010 = a series of measures by the governing Social-Democrat/Green coalition, aimed at 'reforming' the German welfare system and labour relations –Ed.
- 134 K Kautsky, in *Die Neue Zeit (The New Times)*, 1914 and 1915, quoted by Lenin in *Imperialism*, *op cit*, Ch VII, in *Collected Works*, Vol 22, p 271.
- 135 Lenin, *Ibid*, pp 271-2.
- 136 L Canfora, *Zeitenwende 1956, Entstalinisierung, Suez-Krise*,

*Ungarn-Aufstand (Epoch Change 1956: Destalinisation, Suez Crisis, Uprising in Hungary)*, Neue Kleine Bibliothek, Köln, 2012, p 102.

- 137 Werner Abelshauer has written the following about the role of the USA at the beginning of European integration: "In Germany, on the other hand, they even determined the Law on Trade and were able to employ West Germany as the lever for reorganisation of the world trade system." (Abelshauer, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart (German Economic History: from 1945 to the Present Day)*, 2nd revised and extended edition, C H Beck, Munich, 2011, p 219.)
- 138 All the accumulated treaties and laws (directives, regulations, decisions), declarations and resolutions, international agreements and the judgements of the European Court of Justice –Ed.
- 139 G Oberansmayr, *Auf dem Weg zur Supermacht: Die Militarisierung der Europäischen Union (On the Way to the Superpower: The Militarisation of the European Union)*, Promedia, Vienna, 2004.
- 140 T Pflüger and J Wagner, *Welt-Macht Europa: Auf dem Weg in weltweite Kriege (World-Power Europe: On the road into worldwide wars)*, VSA, Hamburg, 2006.
- 141 M Beckmann, H-J Bieling and F Deppe, eds, *'Eurokapitalismus' und globale politische Ökonomie ('Eurocapitalism' and Global Political Economy)*, VSA, Hamburg, 2003.
- 142 A Karras and I Schmidt, *Europa: lieber sozial als neoliberal (Europe: Rather social than neoliberal)*, AttacBasisTexte, VSA, Hamburg, 2004, p 51.
- 143 Hartmann, *op cit*; B Landefeld, *Europäisiert sich die Bourgeoisie? (Is the Bourgeoisie becoming European?)*, in *Marxistische Blätter*, 2010, No 1; cf also Section 3.2 in this work.
- 144 K-D Frankenberger, *Grosse Verunsicherung – wie die Krise Europa verändert (Big Uncertainty – How the Crisis is Changing Europe)*, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7.4.2012.
- 145 J Habermas, J Nida-Rümelin and P Bofinger, *Für einen Kurswechsel in der Europa-Politik (For a Change of Course in European Politics)*, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4.8.2012.
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- 147 Lenin, *Imperialism, op cit*, Ch VIII, in *Collected Works*, Vol 22, p 281.
- 148 On the significance of the China bogeyman in the ideology of the EU, cf A Wehr, *Der europäische Traum und die Wirklichkeit: Über Habermas, Rifkin, Cohn-Bendit, Beck und die anderen (The European Dream and the Reality: On Habermas, Rifkin, Cohn-Bendit, Beck and the Others)*, Neue Kleine Bibliothek, Köln, 2013, p 144ff.
- 149 M Candeias, L Oberndorfer and A Steckner, *Neugründung Europas? Strategische Orientierung (Reestablishment of Europe? Strategic Orientation)*, in *Neues Deutschland*, 10.2.2014.
- 150 cf Institut für sozial-ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (Institute for Social-Environmental Economic Research), <https://isw-muenchen.de/2006/06/imperialismus-globalisierung-staat-zur-imperialismustheorie-und-ihre-geschichte> .
- 151 cf W F Haug, *Der gesplittene Kosmopolitanismus des transnationalen Hightech-Kapitalismus (The Split Cosmopolitanism of Transnational High-Tech Capitalism)*, editorial in *Das Argument*, No 282, 2009.
- 152 C Schuler, *Unter Brüdern: Die USA, Europa und die Neuordnung der Welt (Between Brothers: The USA, Europe and the Reordering of the World)*, PapyRossa, Köln, 2003, pp 151, 153.
- 153 W-D Gudopp, *Der Imperialismus und 'die Periode der Weltkriege' (Imperialism and 'The Periods of the World Wars')*, in *Marxistische Blätter*, No 3, 1997.
- 154 Lenin, *Imperialism, op cit*, Ch IX, in *Collected Works*, Vol 22, p 295.

# A ruling class divided ... and spurned

by Nick Wright

Britain's vote to leave the European Union presents our ruling class with big problems. For the working class movement, the trade unions and the Labour Party, the extraparliamentary left and the socialist forces it is an opportunity.

In an unguarded moment the *Guardian's* fervently Blairite Patrick Wintour illustrated the depth of the shock our ruling class faces. "All the familiar points of authority in London society – Downing Street, big business, economic expertise, the foreign policy establishment – have been spurned"

This was a revolt of the oppressed, exploited and under represented.

**A**LREADY THE decisive sections of the ruling class – Britain’s *haute bourgeoisie*; those sections most closely tied to the big banks and finance capital; to the monopolies; to the military, defence, aerospace and intelligence sectors and to US capital – are scheming to find a way to overcome the obstacles the vote has posed to its cohesiveness as a ruling class, and to subvert the people’s vote.

Boris Johnson, who took both sides in the referendum debate, was found wanting. Theresa May, who now heads the main party of the bourgeoisie, will be tasked to ensure that the new arrangements between Britain and the EU ensure that the neoliberal regime is maintained, albeit with some accommodation to those sections of British capital disadvantaged by the previous arrangements.

In this, the existence of a parliamentary majority for Britain remaining within the EU will be one factor in shaping the character of this attempt at a new accommodation. The parliamentary Labour Party is substantially made up of people who have no illusions about the nature of the EU. In their majority, they understand it as the essential institutional framework for the present system, to which they are reconciled. Their treachery seems unbounded. Their remoteness from life in austerity Britain finds no more explicit expression than the choice of Angela Eagle as standard bearer for the coup against Corbyn and the party. This is a woman who backed Blair over the Iraq war, Benn over the bombing of Syria and Harman over the welfare cuts.

Where illusions do exist they are among union activists, Momentum and the left of the parliamentary party and this reflects the myths that have made it very difficult for the working class to present its distinct interests in this dispute which has often assumed the exclusive character of a quarrel between two wings of our bourgeoisie.

Immediately, the main direction of the ruling class attack is on the new Labour leadership because they understand that they cannot rely only on the Tories and that Labour, for all its contradictions, is a threat to their strategy. They need to remove Corbyn who is the only figure able to lead the unrepresented in a progressive direction.

That capital – arising from its inherent contradictions, from competition and the growth of monopoly, from crisis and conflict – is compelled to reorganise and constantly seeks new ways to maximise profits is evident.

Within the capitalist system, the labour market, like other markets, and thus the working class, is constantly reorganised and reconstituted. That the labour market – in a country like Britain, the fifth largest economy in the world, at the centre of the vast network of financial connections – reconstitutes its pool of labour through migration rather than raising labour productivity through social investment in training and education is a feature of late parasitic financialised capital.

Illusions about the class character of migration – in which the push factors are imperial war, neo-colonial exploitation and poverty; and the pull factors include a substantially deregulated labour market – are clothed in a specious rhetoric that fails to account for the ways in which exploitation is intensified both for already established workers and for migrants.

Because Britain’s health service, public services and many sectors of the manufacturing and service economy depend on a constant stream of migrant skilled labour Britain’s working population is among the most heterogeneous and culturally diverse in the world and has been for centuries. This

is a valuable reserve of sophisticated understanding drawing on diverse experiences of colonial and anti-capitalist exploitation and resistance.

Jeremy Corbyn brilliantly exposed the hypocrisy at the heart of the EU’s trade and foreign policies when he said: “It is morally wrong that the US Government and the EU Commission pay farmers to over-produce. They then use taxpayers’ money to buy the over-production, so it is already a double purchase, and it is then shipped at enormous public cost across the seas to be dumped as maize on African societies. That destroys all the local agriculture and leads to urbanisation and all the problems that go with it. The practice is simply crazy and must be stopped”. House of Commons, May 26, 2005

The impressive range of forces assembled against the secretly-negotiated Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership received a big boost with Jeremy Corbyn’s public commitment that a Labour government will veto TTIP. His pledge to repeal the anti-union laws binds him even closer to organised workers.

The decision to leave the EU creates a new situation in which the working class movement must find a way to widen the consensus around its range of progressive policies – ending austerity, investing in the productive economy and manufacturing, public ownership of utilities and public transport, a well funded NHS, a massive public housing programme, an end to anti-union laws, free and comprehensive education and skills training.

The coming battle to exit the EU and implement the popular will throw up new contradictions within both the ruling class and the working class.

Exiting the EU makes it possible to implement progressive Labour policies only if this is coupled with a challenge to the racist government policies and the toxic populism that has underpinned the official Brexit campaign.

The Lexit campaign alone has provided a raft of credibility that will be invaluable in reaching out to decisive sections of the working class who have voted for Britain to leave the EU – albeit from contradictory and confused positions – and to the many trade union members who have shown how out-of-step their leaders were in falling in behind the bourgeois Remain campaign.

Given his difficult position, saddled with an existing Labour policy from which he has long dissented and with a Parliamentary Labour Party and TUC signed up to Remain, Jeremy Corbyn has played a difficult hand.

His refusal to appear with the Tories, his well-founded criticisms of the actual operation of the EU and his studied distance from the official Remain campaign give him a greater credibility with a wider working class audience than his opponents in the PLP.

When it emerges from its current inner party struggles the new Labour leadership now has an opportunity to consolidate its position with a democratic mandate from the people in which the working class played a decisive role.

Like the referendum on Scottish independence this campaign has drawn millions into politics with incalculable consequences. Labour and the trade unions must demand an early General Election to give effect to the popular mandate for EU withdrawal and reach out to the millions of Labour voters – lost in the Blair-Brown years – on the basis of a government programme that puts the interests of working people and their families before those of the bankers, bosses and bureaucrats.

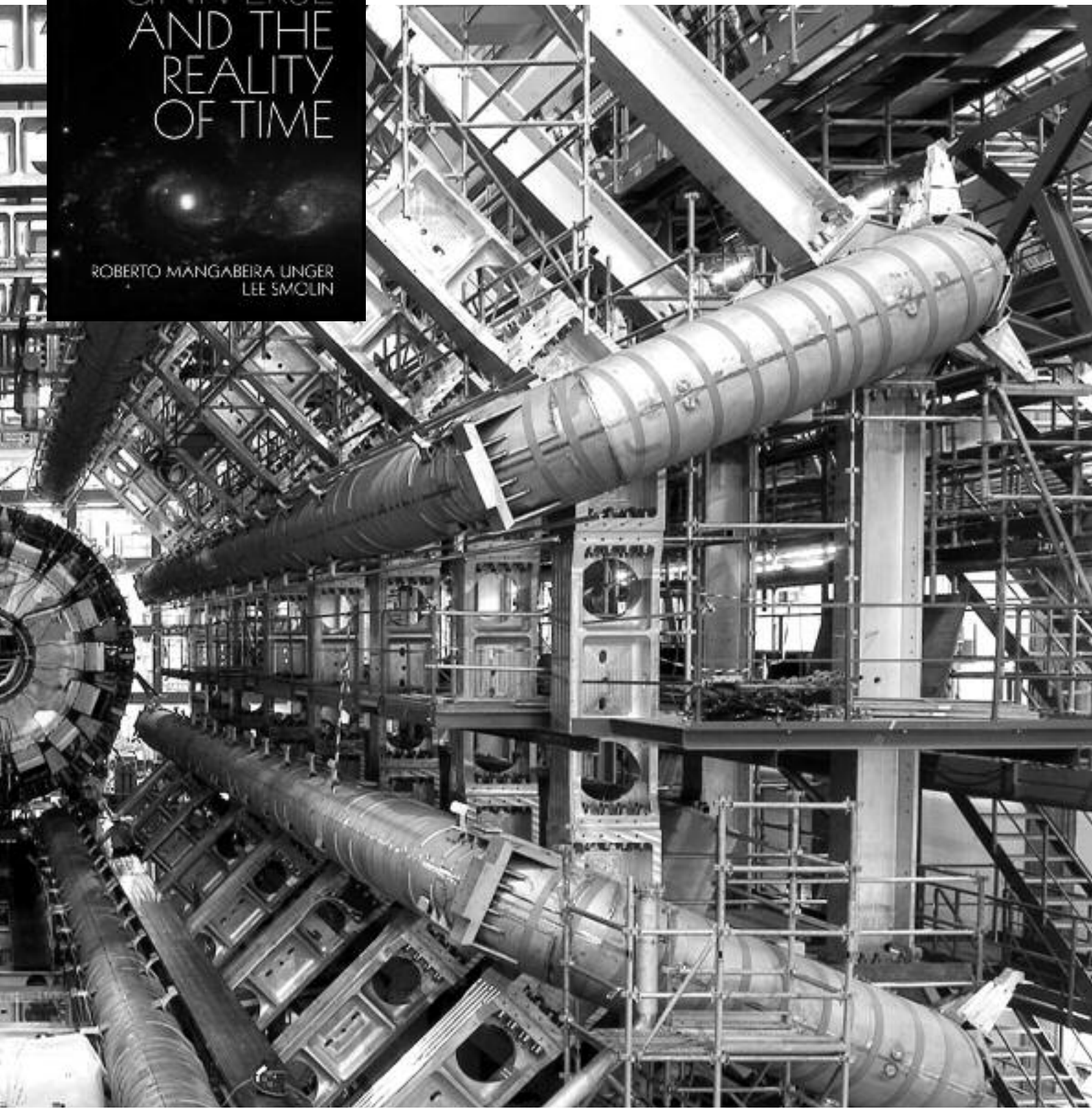
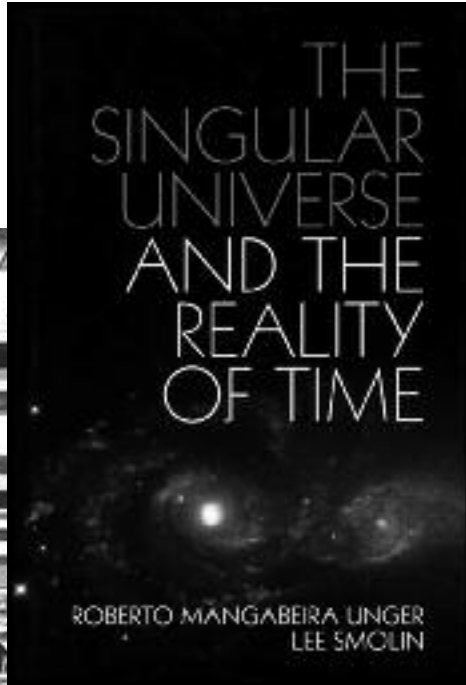


Nick Wright



## EXTENDED CRITIQUE

# Space, Time – and Dialectics, Part I





## The Singular Universe and the Reality of Time

By Roberto Mangabeira Unger and Lee Smolin [Cambridge University Press, 2015, 564 pp, hbk, £19.99. ISBN 978-1-107-07406-4]



Martin Levy

by Martin Levy

IN 1908, in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin wrote: “Modern physics is in travail – it is giving birth to dialectical materialism.”<sup>1</sup> He was responding to the trend at that time in physics and philosophy, which essentially denied – on the basis of recent discoveries – “the objective reality given us in our sensation and reflected in our theories”.

It has been a long process of labour since then. There have been staggering advances in physics and associated sciences, yet the mass of physicists do not consider themselves dialectical materialists. Even in science, bourgeois ideology – idealism or mechanical approaches – persists, as Christopher Caudwell observed in *The Crisis in Physics* in 1936:

“Bourgeois physics is completely contained within the categories of a bourgeois world-view and when it escapes from them even Einstein ‘cannot understand’ it.”<sup>2</sup>

At the microscopic level, those staggering advances in physics include:

- quantum theory;
- the discovery of wave-particle duality; and
- the development of the Standard Model of fundamental particles with, most recently, the experimental verification of the existence of the Higgs boson.

At the grandest, cosmological, scale, we have seen, inter alia:

- Einstein’s special and general relativity;
- the famous  $E = mc^2$  equation, underpinning the mass-energy conversion in nuclear fission and fusion;
- the discoveries of the expanding universe, black holes (‘singularities’ of infinite gravity) and the uniform cosmic microwave background (CMB);
- claims for the existence of ‘dark matter’ (which only interacts via gravity) and ‘dark energy’ (accelerating the expansion); and
- the deduction of a ‘Big Bang’ origin for the universe, as a singularity of infinite density, temperature and gravity.

These two extremes have come together in the theory of the infinitesimally short instants following the ‘Big Bang’. It has been concluded that, during this period, the four fundamental forces of nature (gravity, strong nuclear, weak nuclear and electromagnetic) became separate and all the fundamental particles were formed, leading ultimately to matter as we know it today; and that the universe underwent an extremely rapid stage of inflation before the more sedate expansion stage.

Yet a number of issues remain:

- The nature of ‘dark matter’ and ‘dark energy’.
- Why the ‘Big Bang’ should have led to any excess at all of matter over anti-matter, since mutual annihilation of particles and their anti-particles should have occurred.
- Why the particular values of the fundamental constants of nature (the masses of the elementary particles, strengths of the fundamental forces etc) are what they are, which appear to ‘tune’ our universe for life (for example, small changes in the strong nuclear force and the electromagnetic force would mean a significant drop in the stellar production of carbon and oxygen, essential for life<sup>3</sup>).
- The ‘flatness’ and ‘horizon’ problems in cosmology. The first is that space seems to be neither positively nor

negatively curved, which implies a very improbable circumstance for the immediate outcome of the ‘Big Bang’. The second states that the CMB – a claimed vestige of the very early universe – is far too uniform, implying that everywhere in the universe was at the same temperature when the CMB radiation was emitted, even though there would not have been enough time for that equilibrium to have been reached.

The power of mathematics to provide theoretical underpinnings to the developments cited above has given it enormous prestige. In fact, the conclusion of the *singularity* of the ‘Big Bang’ follows directly from the equations of general relativity, and assumptions about the distribution of matter in the universe. However, whether the ‘Big Bang’ really did occur is open to question, as Hyman Frankel has argued in *Out of this World*, referring to the theory as a “cosmological juggernaut”.<sup>4</sup>

In Einstein’s general relativity, the flow of time varies throughout the universe, depending upon the strength of the gravitational field. In a black hole, time becomes extremely slow. In the field equations of relativity, time appears as a sort of ‘fourth dimension’, to accompany the three dimensions of space, a formalism which has led to the term ‘block universe’, in which, in the words of astronomer Paul Davies,

“Physicists think of time as laid out in its entirety – a timescape analogous to a landscape.”<sup>5</sup>

This illustrates a common aspect of the approach to mathematics in physics, that the more beautiful a mathematical theory is the more likely it is to reflect reality. Einstein himself was guilty of this, when he wrote in a condolence letter to the son and sister of his friend Michele Besso that:

“For us believing physicists, the distinction between past, present and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.”<sup>6</sup>

His belief was not in a personal God but in the God of Spinoza:

“admiration for the beauty of and belief in the logical simplicity of the order and harmony which we can grasp humbly and only imperfectly.”<sup>7</sup>

String theory, which has been applied to a variety of problems in black hole physics, cosmology and nuclear physics, falls into this category of “beauty” and “order and harmony”. Since it potentially provides a unified description of gravity and particle physics, it is a candidate for a “Theory of Everything”.<sup>8,9</sup> Quite apart from the reductionism in such a slogan, string theory suggests that our universe is not the only one and that many universes – a *multiverse* – exist parallel to one another. In that circumstance, the fact that our universe seems ‘tuned’ for life boils down to it being just one of a vast set of possibilities.

These issues – whether time is real or an illusion, whether there are many universes or just a single one, and the place of mathematics in nature and its representation – are important ones for Marxists. They go to the very foundations of dialectical materialism. It is therefore interesting to find a modern-day philosopher, and a cosmologist, seeking to get to grips with these issues, and to transcend the metaphysics and mechanism typically employed, even if they explicitly accept that

The Large Hadron Collider near Geneva, where the Higgs boson was discovered.

something like the ‘Big Bang’ and inflation happened.

Robert Mangabeira Unger and Lee Smolin’s book, *The Single Universe and the Reality of Time*, is not a Marxist treatise but does show some parallels with Marxism and deep insight in places. On the other hand it also has substantial misconceptions – which arise either because it does not follow through the logic of the position completely, to a full dialectical materialist approach, or because it seeks to be too clever.<sup>10</sup>

To do justice to the issues raised, it has been necessary to split this critique into three parts. The present article will serve mainly as an introduction. So first, some background on the authors.

### Lee Smolin

Lee Smolin is a renowned American theoretical physicist, best known for his development of loop quantum gravity (LQG), which attempts to merge quantum mechanics and general relativity. The main consequence of his theory is that space is predicted to be a network of loops of the size of the tiny Planck length, approximately  $10^{-35}$  metres. Beyond this, he says, there is no meaning to distance. A further consequence of LQG is that the evolution of the universe can be continued back beyond the ‘Big Bang’.

Smolin has written a number of ‘popular’ books outlining his ideas on cosmology. In *The Life of the Cosmos* (1992), he proposed that a sort of natural selection – the process which drives biological evolution – operates on a cosmological scale. He surmised that a collapsing black hole causes the emergence of a new universe whose fundamental constants may differ slightly from those of the original. A universe whose parameters drive the production of many black holes is therefore most likely to give rise to successor universes which do likewise, and with similar but slightly different parameters.

In *The Trouble with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next* (2006), Smolin strongly criticised string theory, and its near-monopoly on fundamental physics in the United States, claiming that the theory makes no predictions that can be verified using any technology that is likely to be feasible within our lifetimes, and that a theory that has up to  $10^{500}$  solutions (that is 1, followed by 500 zeroes) is equivalent to abandoning accepted science.

In *Time Reborn: From the Crisis in Physics to the Future of the Universe* (2013), Smolin argues strongly against the idea of time as a “persistent illusion”. Not only is it real, he says, it is the most fundamental feature of reality.

The present book, a result of several years of collaboration, is essentially an attempt to provide a more philosophical basis to these ideas, in terms of what the authors describe as reinventing “the vanished genre of natural philosophy” (p xvii):

“A natural-philosophical argument about the universe and its history ... is a cosmological argument. It intervenes, and takes a position, in the cosmological debates with which it deals. It does so on the basis of ideas and considerations both internal to contemporary science and external to it.” (p xviii)

As a bare statement that seems to open up two possibilities: either eclecticism or a comprehensive approach, based on materialism and dialectics. There are elements of the latter in the book – profound in places, but they are inconsistently applied.

### Roberto Mangabeira Unger

Unger, educated in Brazil and the United States, is a prolific philosopher who is also politically engaged.<sup>11</sup> He has a record of support for anti-establishment causes in Brazil, and has served twice as Minister of Strategic Affairs, under Lula (2007-9) and Dilma Rousseff (February to September 2015), after which he returned to teach at Harvard University. In November 2015 he left the ‘big tent’ Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) for the Democratic Labour Party (PDT). While the former has been instrumental in the recent impeachment proceedings against Rousseff, the latter – including Unger – opposes it. Though criticising her for “serious and numerous mistakes”, and pointing out that corruption is a problem in Brazil, Unger says that such corruption is localised and that there is no basis for removing Rousseff from office.<sup>12</sup>

According to his Wikipedia entry:

“Driving Unger’s political engagement is the idea that society can be made and remade. Unlike Mill or Marx, who posited a particular class as the agent of history, Unger does not see a single vehicle for transformative politics. He advocates world-wide revolution, but does not see this happening as a single cataclysmic event or undertaken by a class agent, like the Communist movement. Rather, he sees the possibility of piecemeal change, where institutions can be replaced one at a time, and permanent plasticity can be built into the institutional infrastructure.”<sup>13</sup>

An analysis of his whole oeuvre of legal thought, social theory, programmatic alternatives and philosophy is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that he is a materialist and seeks to form a view of the whole of reality, including – like Hegel – its historic development. While he rejects Hegel’s perspective of the Absolute Spirit unfolding itself into reality, he has some knowledge of dialectics, and of Marx’s writings, indeed praising Marx’s critique of political economy as “the most accomplished and influential expression” of the insight that “the structures of society are made and imagined” (p 69). As for those who claim that a market economy works best, he accuses them of:

“degenerat[ion] into rightwing Hegelianism: the retrospective rationalisation of a world whose historical vicissitudes and transformative opportunities it is powerless to grasp.” (p 74)

On the other hand, he also accuses “Marx and others” of “illusions of false necessity” (p 71):

- “the idea of a closed list of alternative institutional systems, such as feudalism, capitalism and socialism, available in the entire course of human history for the organisation of society”;
- “the idea that each type is an indivisible system, all the parts of which stand or fall together”, so that “politics is either reformist management of one of these systems or its revolutionary substitution by another system”;
- “the idea that higher-order laws of historical change drive forward the succession of individual institutional systems in history”. Unger calls these “meta-laws”, and refers in particular (p 72) to “the laws of historical materialism, as summarised in *The Communist Manifesto*: the interaction between the forces and relations of production that anoint a particular social class as the bearer of the universal interests of humanity in overturning the established relations of production for the sake of the fullest development of the

forces of production.” If such meta-laws existed, he says, then history would have a pre-written script.

Unger’s argument is a rather more sophisticated reworking of the postmodernist claim that ‘grand narratives’ no longer apply, and of the bourgeois line that Marx’s predictions have failed, as we still have capitalism. Elsewhere, in his books *The Left Alternative* and *The Future of American Progressivism*, Unger paints a picture of two main Lefts in the world today – a “recalcitrant” one seeking to slow down and reverse the advance of markets and globalisation; and a “humanising” one, which accepts the status quo but seeks to “humanise it”. He calls instead for a “Reconstructive Left” which would reorganise the market economy and deepen democracy by looking at different ways in which private and social property can exist. This flies in the face of the realities of power in state monopoly capitalist society, and in particular ignores the role of imperialism.

Unger’s whole *political* approach is that of a social democrat who has not really understood Marx, not even the dialectics within *Capital*, which stresses the essential importance of contradiction – between humanity and nature, between the use and exchange values of a commodity, between the methods and relations of production, between the private ownership of the means of production and the social character of the production process, and between the two main classes of labour and capital. Like all right-wing social democrats, he does not understand that the struggle around these contradictions is the motor force of history, and that the laws of historical materialism – which are in any case tendencies – arise out of these basic contradictions.

This lack of recognition of contradiction is also a major flaw in Unger’s approach to cosmology. Yet, as we shall see here and in subsequent articles, there is still some insight in what he and Smolin have to say.

### Central Ideas of the Collaboration

The book itself is not so much a collaboration as a symposium for two people: an introduction in which they set out “the nature and scope”; separate sections in which each addresses the topic; and then, at the end, “A note concerning the disagreements between our views”. In the introduction, the authors make clear their philosophy of treating the universe as a whole, remarking (p x) that

“no one can develop and defend ideas about parts of reality without making assumptions ... about nature as a whole.”

Three ideas are central to their argument:

- 1 The singular existence of the universe – *ie* there is no multiverse, just one universe at a time.
- 2 The inclusive reality of time, as the most real feature of the world – “Everything changes sooner or later, including change itself” – *ie* even the laws of nature are subject to change (p xi).
- 3 The selective realism of mathematics – *ie* it is effective in its application to natural science only because it is limited and relative.

These ideas, the authors say, “support and refine one another” and we need to appreciate their connections.

Furthermore (pp xiv and xvi):

“Two large philosophical traditions inform the ideas of this book ... the relational approach to nature and the priority of becoming over being. ... The relational idea is that we

should understand space and time as orderings of events or phenomena rather than entities in themselves ... everything influences everything else through causal links. ... [The second idea] affirms the primacy of becoming over being, of process over structure, and therefore as well of time over space. It insists upon the impermanence of everything that exists.”

“The new is not simply a possible state of affairs, prefigured by eternal laws of nature. ... It represents a change in the workings of nature.”

These ideas resonate strongly with Marxist writings such as Engels’ *Dialectics of Nature* and *Anti-Dühring*, Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and the *Conspectus of Hegel’s ‘Science of Logic’*, Caudwell’s *The Crisis in Physics* and Frankel’s *Out of This World*. Indeed Caudwell wrote that

“The bourgeois conception of determinism ... is however unable to attach a reality to Time and evolution ... it always imagines the events ‘lying on the table’<sup>14</sup>

and that

“This unlikeness, this discontinuity, this novelty, this effect, is Time. It is the difference of everything. ... Time involves change – the emergence of unlike – and hence change is a mode of existence.”<sup>15</sup>


In the next article we will look at Unger’s philosophical-cosmological arguments in more detail.

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- 12 *Impeachment gerou onda de ódio (Impeachment generated a wave of hatred)*, in Folha de São Paulo (São Paulo Broadsheet), 29 May 2016; online at <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2016/04/1759946-impeachment-gerou-onda-de-odio-diz-mangabeira-unger.shtml>.
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- 14 Caudwell, *op cit*, p 138.
- 15 *Ibid*, pp 148, 156.

by Lars Ulrik Thomsen

# Internationalism – past, present and future



Palmiro Togliatti,  
longtime general secretary  
of the Italian Communist Party

**I**N THE *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 the basis was laid for the labour movement and its internationalism. That resulted, 16 years later, in the formation of the First International at the London congress of September 1864. This was to be the start of a professional and political organisation of the workers in many countries.

The tasks that the labour movement faces today are of a quite different nature. Technological developments have led to the production of consumer goods and machinery in many different parts of the world, and they can be transported relatively easily to the desired market. This means that the national sections of the labour movement strive to preserve as many jobs as possible in their ‘own country’. This national contradiction is exploited by the bourgeoisie to play off workers against each other. Imperialism’s policies result in mass migrations from war-ravaged and drought-stricken areas, putting great pressure on wages and working conditions in the capitalist centres.

All this calls for a revival of internationalism and closer cooperation between the unions and political organisations of the labour movement in the various countries. There are efforts to intensify cooperation with international meetings, but there is little progress when it comes to coordinated actions.

This article presents a historical overview, and a suggestion for making further progress in the future for united cooperation. It draws attention to the importance of Marxist theory and its development, as the crucial factor for the victories (and, without it, the setbacks) in the 20th century.

The Hungarian philosopher Andras Gedö has described development in Marxism with the following words:

“The timeliness of Gramsci’s questions about, and researches into, the historical philosophy of Marxism is dramatically increased in the situation of weakness, crisis and defeat of the Marxist labour movement. Here Marxism’s

influence is not only drastically reduced, but at times seems almost to disappear; shock, lethargy and disappointment threaten not only to overwhelm the consciousness of many Marxists, but also to diminish or obstruct the possibility of understanding the changes and of critically taking stock of oneself; and thought is allowed to stagger between nostalgia and resignation. *The concept of the historicity of the philosophical theory of Marxism* implies in this situation both critical continuity and the recognition of a new beginning after the decisive break of a historic setback. It is the alternative to that non-historical pragmatism, which has for many decades penetrated the handling of Marxist philosophy, indeed of Marxism altogether, and which has subjected that with its sphere of influence to fatally-discrediting degeneration and undermining.”<sup>1</sup>

## Mutual strife and unity

By its origin, the labour movement is international; and in its essence, it has been an *anti-war movement*, right from the beginning. The diversity of the delegates at the founding conference revealed the national and political views that had to be overcome:

“The first congress of the International was held in London, from September 25 to 29, 1864, and was very important. There were the English delegates representing the various trade unions: men like Odger, Cremer, Howell, Wheeler, Shaw, Dell, Weston, etc. With these cold-blooded, business-like men, who hardly became excited in discussion, were the active, lively French delegates: Tolain, Limousin, Varlin, Fribourg, Clarion, who seemed to enjoy listening to their own speeches, and yet seemed to be quite helpless in all matters relating to questions of organisation, but were quite willing and ready to make speeches on that very question.



From Switzerland came Duplex, who represented the French-speaking population, and John Philip Becker (a native of the Palatinate, who had shown a remarkable military talent in the Baden insurrection of 1849, and now was no less distinguished as an industrious organiser and an indefatigable agitator on peaceful lines), who was a delegate from the German-speaking portion of Switzerland. From Belgium came de Paepe, a doctor, who was also an able writer, very intelligent, energetic and good in all things. ...”<sup>2</sup>

However, the rapid growth of the International in the 1860s was followed by antagonistic views and finally its dissolution in 1872. The Second International, founded in 1889, essentially broke up because its major participants went over to the side of their respective national imperialisms. It was followed in 1919 by the founding of the Third (Communist) International, with the Bolsheviks as the leading and driving force.

The preparations for the October revolution were extensive. Lenin’s letters of October 1917, to various groups of the Bolshevik Party, show constant references to the international situation and the responsibilities of the Bolsheviks to act as *internationalists*.<sup>3</sup>

From 1919 to 1943, the Third International assisted in a worldwide rise of scientific socialism. As with the two first Internationals, it was also characterised by ideological strife, but managed to overcome most of the differences and played a vital role in the victory over fascism. After the Second World War, collaboration between communist parties was mainly via international conferences and meetings, together with the journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, published in Britain as *World Marxist Review*. This period was characterised by a tremendous international growth of the *communist movement*, making it the most influential post-war political movement.

The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is an important event for understanding the further development of the communist movement. The errors of the past had to be corrected and a new line in international cooperation had to be defined. But the reforms had hardly had any chance to take effect, before the process was turned back to previous handling in theory and methods of discussion. However, the 20th Congress became a starting point for the Italian Communist Party to consider its position and future policy. This resulted in an open debate in that party to define the new way.

Experiences from World War 2 played an immensely important role in these discussions because the party had proved its ability to gather millions of Italians into the liberation movement and, first and foremost, had given the correct slogans to the factory workers and the labour movement.<sup>4</sup> These thoughts and ideas were melded together with those of other European parties and finalised in a new strategy of anti-monopoly unity in the 1960s.

However, during the same period, the situation in the world communist movement became critical, with contradictions especially between the USSR and China. Imperialism did its best to widen the antagonism. The Italian communist leader Palmiro Togliatti (*above left*) made great efforts to bridge the differences, eg in his Yalta memorandum written in 1964.

### The Yalta memorandum

Togliatti’s ‘memo’ contains interesting aspects: an advanced way of overcoming differences in the labour and communist

movements, and an analysis of the changes in capitalism, and how they affect the balance of forces between the classes. Togliatti stresses the new conditions of the monopoly bourgeoisie in western Europe:

“The bourgeois world’s economic crisis is very profound. In the state monopoly capitalist system, we see totally new problems arising, which the ruling classes cannot manage to resolve with traditional methods.

In particular, the question is arising today – in the biggest countries – of the centralisation of the direction of the economy, which they are trying to bring about by planning from above in the interests of the big monopolies through state intervention. This question is on the order of the day throughout the West, and already there is talk of international planning, which the leading organs of the Common Market bodies are preparing for.

It is obvious that the working class and democratic movement cannot be disinterested on this question; we must fight on this terrain too. This requires a development and coordination of immediate working-class demands with proposals for economic structural reform (nationalisation, agrarian reform etc), in a general plan for economic development to be counterposed to that of capitalist planning. Certainly this will still not be a socialist plan, because the conditions for this are lacking, but it is a new form and a new means of struggle for the advance towards socialism.

The possibility of a peaceful road for this advance is today closely bound up with how this problem is presented and solved. A political initiative in this direction can make it easier for us to win a new great influence over all those strata of the population who have not yet been won for socialism, but who are looking for a new way.”<sup>5</sup>

Then follows the analysis of the political practice in the communist movement and the different conditions in each country. The ‘memo’ ends with a short notice on the conditions of the liberation movements in the colonial and post-colonial countries and with the situation in the socialist world – primarily that of Eastern Europe.

From my point of view, there is logic in the way Togliatti outlines his analysis. The economic, cultural, political and ideological situations are treated as interdependent – as a dialectical process. We can’t transfer the conditions of the 1960s to the present situation, but we can learn from the dialectical theory and method, which is characteristic of all Togliatti’s activities.

There is one critical point concerning his rejection of the building of a new *International*. Togliatti’s desire to have autonomy for the national parties is understandable, but there is no contradiction between *unity in diversity*, and coordinated action against capital. The last point is decisive for our success, in overcoming capitalism and imperialism.

With the reverses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, we can see the difficulties in the economic, political and ideological foundation of scientific socialism, as it then was. These are rooted in the rapid development of productive forces as a result of the Second World War, and in the way in which the Americans boosted the Western European economies through the Marshall Plan (1948-51), to roll back the influence of communism.

In the 1980s it became clear that the economic and political situation in the USSR and other socialist countries



Lars Ukrik Thomsen

was unable to meet the demands of their peoples and that the productive relations were in *contradiction with the productive forces*.<sup>6</sup> The international communist movement was divided over the question of support for *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the USSR. This in short is the background to discussing the present conditions for strengthening the international communist movement and the labour movement.

### Diversification of forces

In the present situation there are parallels to the period leading up to World War 1. The growing antagonism of the imperialist powers, including Russia, indicates that the world is sliding towards a new confrontation. Today the economic and political contradictions are at a quantitatively and qualitatively different level, with greater demands on the ability of the communist movement to cooperate internationally, to use the differences in imperialism for the strengthening and success of the forces for peace. This can only be achieved by a new international collaboration, in forms adequate to the present-day development of science, economics, political theory and other aspects of our societies.

International solidarity was the indispensable reason for overcoming imperialist aggression against the USSR. It was the backbone of the defence for the Spanish Republic in the 1930s and of the inestimable support for the liberation of Vietnam from foreign aggression, just to mention a few examples.

There are encouraging signs in the international communist movement for a stronger cooperation. This is clearly evident in the declaration from the 12th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Tshwane, South Africa, in December 2010. This is a highly interesting document which gives a straightforward analysis of the world situation after the outbreak of the financial crisis. On the role of communists in strengthening the anti-imperialist front for peace, environmental sustainability, progress and socialism, it says:

“Imperialism’s crisis and counter-offensive are leading to the **broadening and diversification of the forces that objectively** assume a patriotic and anti-imperialist stand. Everywhere, in our diverse national realities, communists have a responsibility to broaden and strengthen the anti-imperialist political and social front, the struggles for peace, environmental sustainability, progress, and integrate them in the fight for socialism. The independent role of communists and the strengthening of the communist and workers’ parties, is of vital importance to ensure a **consistent** anti-imperialist perspective of broader movements and fronts.”<sup>7</sup>

Here one of the great challenges for our movement comes to the fore. The question of cooperation between the communist parties, the labour movement and the social movements is one of the most important to solve, if we are to overcome the “diversification of the forces that objectively assume a patriotic and anti-imperialist stand”.

### Unity in theory and action

There are three areas where stronger cooperation is needed. First of all, at the trade union level: in the new types of manufacturing, parts are produced all over the world, involving rapid changes in production, and local unions trying

to defend or boost pay and working conditions. There have been some cooperative results in the International Transport Federation, for example over conflicts in Europe, the USA and Australia; but there is still a long way to go before there is real and effective cooperation at an international level.

The second area is political. The communist movement has witnessed a significant number of international conferences and meetings, and progress has been made in inter-party contacts, although the divisions over support for *perestroika* and *glasnost* are still damaging the level of cooperation. The resolutions and documents of the international conferences are inspiring for all members of the communist movement, but from speeches to actual action there is still a considerable distance.

The third area concerns the theoretical basis. As mentioned in the introduction, many of the present difficulties could have been prevented, if the communist movement (before and after World War 2) had considered Marxism as a *theory in movement* – as a *developing theory* and not a final theoretical system. Today we pay the price for these shortcomings.

A central point here is the history of the Soviet Union. To overcome the various trends of anti-communism, we need solid facts about the first socialist country in the world. This will help us to overcome deficiencies in theory and practice in a dialectical manner.

Therefore part of the international cooperation should be to find ways of developing Marxism, according to the present needs. This could be done via international conferences, or in collaboration with those remaining socialist countries, which have universities and higher education institutes based on scientific socialism.

The labour movement has gone through great changes since the foundation of the First International. Great challenges lie ahead, that can only be solved by an advanced theory of dialectics, and by international cooperation of the communist parties.

The future belongs to Marxism, and internationalism will prove to be the most vigorous weapon in defence for *peace, social progress and socialism*.

### Notes and References

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# DISCUSSION

## On Hans-Peter Brenner's article, *Islam as reflected in the Marxist critique of religion*<sup>1</sup>

by Jimmy Jancovich

**F**IND IT hard to understand how to take comrade Brenner's article. Despite the title, it seems more to be an article about religion as a whole, and the Marxist perspective seems more like that of the early Soviet anti-religious museums than Marx's attitudes to religion. Indeed it takes him almost two pages to come to Marx's famous paragraph ("heart of a heartless world" etc<sup>2</sup>), after quoting a couple of other paraphrases, by other writers. As is too often the case he omits to point out that, for a European in the 1840s, the reference to "opium" did not mean drug addiction and social exclusion but just its widespread use as a painkiller, as we might use the word aspirin or paracetamol today.<sup>3</sup>

One might almost read this article as a refutation of comrade Wagner's earlier article *Oppression and Freedom in the Old Testament*<sup>4</sup>, in which he stressed the democratic and egalitarian values put forward by the Old Testament prophets. However, Brenner shares Wagner's tendency to treat the Bible as gospel, *ie* as if it were a historically accurate document. He quotes extensively God's alleged orders to Joshua to exterminate completely the population of Canaan. There is, in fact, absolutely no archaeological evidence for this invasion, even less for the wholesale destruction of cities described in this part of the Bible. Indeed, many of those cities did not exist at the time that rabbinical tradition gives for this invasion (1200 BCE) but developed in about 700-800 BCE. Since this alleged invasion occurred in a period when the Rameside pharaohs were exercising complete control of Canaan, such an invasion would have been totally impossible anyhow.

The Amarna letters (about 1300 BCE) contain complaints from Canaanite principalities (conquered or subjugated half a century earlier) to Pharaoh Akhenaten about some peoples they called Habiru entering Canaan and taking their lands. Since these princes wrote repeatedly, they

were obviously not being conquered or destroyed. What obviously happened was that tribes of herdsmen were coming in from the desert and pasturing their flocks on land that the existing settled population wanted for agriculture. This conflict over land use, between settled agricultural populations and nomadic or semi-nomadic stockbreeders, is traditional – and in fact was remarked upon in the Marx-Engels correspondence which comrade Brenner quotes.

Coming to Islam and the Islamic question, comrade Brenner spends a lot of time dealing with Mohammed's treatment of the Jews in Medina, and then with the Ottoman persecutions of Christians at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Yet he omits two salient points: firstly, that in 7th century Medina, and in the Ottoman Empire towards its end, we are dealing with wartime situations; and secondly, that there is a fundamental difference between Islam and both Judaism and Christianity, namely the former's complete absence of a priesthood or any form of organised religion and theology.

Although Mohammed's aim, in emigrating to Medina, was to be safe from Meccan persecution, the Meccans continued to attack the exile community, which found itself on a permanent war footing. Since Medina was on or close to the route from Damascus to Mecca, it was probably a convenient stopping point on the journey, and many Medinans probably had good trading relations with the Meccans. The permanent war footing actively gave rise to a typical attitude of 'those who are not with us are against us' – hence the ejection of the Jewish tribes. Given that Mohammed probably thought the monotheistic Jews would be easily converted, and the Jews probably expected to convert Mohammed, then it follows that the mutual disappointment would have aggravated the conflict.

In the case of the Ottoman Empire, it should be recalled that the reform movement to modernise the Empire did not take a democratic form but rather a Turkish chauvinistic one. The Young Turk regime not only persecuted Christian minorities, whom it suspected (probably with some justification) of being sympathetic to the Russian and British enemies; it also persecuted the Arab national movement that was developing in Syria, Palestine and across the Jordan, leading to the British-backed Arab revolt.

Regarding Islam's lack of organised religion and orthodoxy, this means that – unlike Christianity – Islam had no Pope to launch a 'Holy War', whereas the mediaeval Western Church launched repeated

crusades. These were, moreover, not only against Muslims: Charlemagne fought one to 'convert' the Saxons; the Teutonic Order was created to convert pagan and Orthodox Christian Slavs alike; another crusade was launched against the Cathar heresy in the South of France.

Despite Wagner's belief that monotheistic religions only became intolerant when associated with an authoritarian state, the Catholic Church in the early Middle Ages was not backed by such a state. It was so weak that it sought protection (against the Byzantine Empire mainly) from Charlemagne, and named him "Holy Roman Emperor" to symbolise that protection. Holy Wars were much more a Christian obsession – the last major one was, I think, against Queen Elizabeth I of England. – unless you include the various anti-Jewish pogroms. These, however, were more spontaneous and 'popular' than papally inspired. Indeed, as I pointed out in my comments on Wagner's article,<sup>5</sup> most of the Sephardic Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition felt safer emigrating to Muslim countries (though some did go to Protestant countries) – as did many Balkan Jews in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Indeed, the Copts and the Eastern churches welcomed the Muslim conquerors of Egypt and Syria as protectors from Byzantine Orthodox persecution

The lack of an organised church, together with Mohammed's insistence that "people of the Book" should be respected since they were (even if in an 'out of date' fashion) followers of the one God, meant that there was no basis in traditional Islam for holy wars. The main religious wars that took place, especially in the first century or two after Mohammed's death, were between different Muslim factions and interpretations of his message. Moreover, Islam developed, in its first five or six centuries, a high level of culture as it followed Mohammed's advice to seek knowledge everywhere, even from China (which for him must have been the furthest ends of the earth). Islam translated the Greek philosophers and scientists into Arabic, and studied them, developing them still further. It was in the Muslim Universities of Toledo and Granada that the Western European Christians discovered the classical sources of their own civilisation! This gave rise to the first, 12th century, Renaissance and inspired a search for the Greek and Latin originals – which created the second Renaissance of 15th and 16th centuries.

The current wave of repressive and sectarian violence associated with Islam is the product of one particular sect, Wahabism, which was so retrograde and

sectarian that, from the outset, it was rejected by all other forms of Islam – of which there are literally hundreds or even thousands!<sup>6</sup> This extremely violent sect has been strengthened by the imperialist exploitation of natural resources and its encroachment on the national cultures and interests of the national liberation movements – especially the republican and relatively democratic ones. Without this, Wahabism would have remained isolated in the Arabian deserts where it was born. It is no accident that the very officially Wahabite state of Saudi Arabia is the United States’ main ally and ‘adviser’ in the region.

### Conclusion

While I agree with comrade Brenner that religion does not provide any solutions to the world’s problems, this does not mean it should be ignored as irrelevant. It is not a solution, for the same reason as Marx and Engels give – that it is a passive reflection of the oppressive world most people experience, not a means of understanding and acting on how to change it. A painkiller, not a cure. Nevertheless, it is an important factor in many people’s view of the world; and if we want them to play a part in changing things for the better, we need to understand this and NOT brush religion aside.

Radical Roman Catholics in Latin

America (‘liberation theology’) have been an important factor in the changes there. Even in Britain, the Christian Socialist movement has played a much-neglected role. Beginning in the Chartist era, it included the 19th Century novelist Charles Kingsley, and Helen MacFarlane, who translated the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* into English. The Independent Labour Party, one of the three political parties that founded the Labour Party, was created by a mixture of Christian Socialists and dissidents from Morris’s Socialist League, and was probably the most important factor in the ‘hard left’ trend within the Labour Party. Starting with Keir Hardie, it has, more recently, produced the Movement for Colonial Freedom (1950s-60s), renamed Liberation (from 1970), in which first Tony Benn and later Jeremy Corbyn cut their political teeth.

The attempt by some Muslim clerics to reintroduce the traditional concept of ‘interpretation’ into Islam was a factor in the developing democratic national movements in the Near and Middle East (Egypt and Persia in particular) in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Only Muslims can ‘reinterpret’ Islam – but ignoring them and their contribution can only serve to strengthen the conservative and retrograde Wahabite trends that are wreaking havoc in the region and beyond today.

### Notes and references

- 1 H-P Brenner, *CR78*, Winter 2015/16, pp 2-11.
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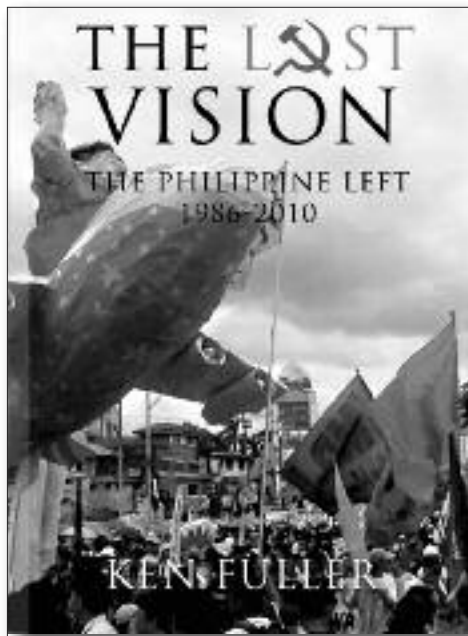
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## Book Review

# Which way for Philippine communism?



### **The Lost Vision: The Philippine Left 1986–2010**

By Ken Fuller

(University of the Philippines Press, 2015, 502 pp, pbk, £35.65, ISBN 978-97154-27739)

## Review by Kenny Coyle

WITHIN DAYS of his May 2016 poll victory, Rodrigo Duterte, the newly elected president of the Philippines, floated the idea of bringing senior members of the illegal Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) into his cabinet.

A former mayor in Davao city on the island of Mindanao, Duterte was long known to have close contacts with the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), which is still a powerful force on Mindanao.

A political maverick, Duterte has made a negotiated end to the NPA's nearly 50 years of insurgency a key part of his platform, much to the horror of the country's political and military establishment. This would involve releasing political prisoners, a general amnesty and the possibility of CPP members taking a variety of government

portfolios. Time will tell whether these moves will bear fruit.

This unexpected twist makes the appearance of the final part of Ken Fuller's trilogy on Philippine communism all the more timely.

Covering the post-Marcos years, this book is a fitting finale to the work; and those picking up this third volume on its own will find Fuller's prologue concisely summarises his preceding book, *A Movement Divided*, which deals in more detail with the 1960s Maoist breakaway of the CPP from the original Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP-1930).

Formed initially by a group of young intellectuals, the CPP managed to link up with an older generation of activists from the Huk Rebellion, an armed movement formed initially to fight the Japanese occupiers in World War 2, but who had continued armed struggle against the various post-war governments in Manila. While the young intellectuals brought the weapon of criticism, the former Huks brought the criticism of weapons. The fusion of a deeply rooted indigenous insurgency and Maoist doctrines of people's war imported from China proved to be highly effective in its early years, with the CPP-NPA creating a broader National Democratic Front (NDF) which effectively colonised radicalised sections of the Catholic Church as well as non-governmental organisations and even government-funded social programmes. In addition, there were youth, student, women's and peasants' organisations and – rather late in the day – an allied trade union federation. By 1986, when this book takes up the story, the CPP-NPA-NDF was the dominant force on the far left.

Yet, as Fuller shows, a combination of rigid dogmatism over armed struggle and a mistaken analysis of the nature of Philippine society paralysed the Maoists when faced with the popular – although strongly misdirected – overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos. Instead of the left benefiting from the moment, the People's Power movement was safely channelled along lines acceptable to the Catholic Church and the USA.

Corazon Aquino, who came to power – the widow of the assassinated bourgeois opposition leader Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino Jr – was a member of a powerful landowning family. Lauded in the West as something akin to a democratic saint, Aquino nonetheless continued the strategy of 'dirty war' against alleged CPP supporters.

Fuller quotes one source who claimed:

"As of December 1988, the running total

for the most serious violations under Aquino were 1,402 killed, 224 disappeared, and 1,676 tortured while in detention."

Unsurprisingly this reinforced the view of those remaining in the CPP-NPA that armed struggle remained a necessity, if not for power then at least for survival.

However, the post-Marcos years also saw significant defections from the CPP-NPA-NDF camp, some for reasons of personal opportunism but also because the continuation of armed struggle seemed to many to be irrelevant or at least counter-productive in the new situation.

The CPP's obvious inability to capitalise on the ruling class crisis took its toll. Some of its 'National Democratic' allies defected to the new regime, while others questioned the NPA's 'protracted war' strategy and the CPP's internal democracy.

By the 1990s, the division between so-called 'reaffirmationists', led by CPP founder Joma Sison, and their 'rejectionist' opponents in key regional committees, such as Manila-Rizal, had spun out of control, leading to a dizzying series of sharp and often bloody splits. Fears, both real and exaggerated, of 'deep penetration agents' led to mass trials and executions that decimated guerrilla and party ranks.

While the CPP-NPA retains some pockets of substantial support in specific regions, Mindanao being one, the Maoist movement is a shadow of its former self on both political and military levels. It may be that Duterte's offer provides both an honourable opportunity to decommission the NPA and for the CPP to re-emerge on the national stage. Given the past, however, this is unlikely to be a smooth path, if indeed it exists at all.

The other original wing of Philippine communism, the PKP-1930 (the suffix is the date of the PKP's foundation and is used to help distinguish it from the CPP) also comes under Fuller's scrutiny.

The year 1986 was a fateful one for a party that belonged on the pro-Soviet side of the world communist movement. This was the first full year of Mikhail Gorbachov's leadership of the Soviet Union; and the flush of hope was soon dissipated as first *perestroika*, and then the Soviet Union itself, began to disintegrate. The disappearance of the European socialist states badly hit the PKP-1930, with promising developments in women's work and other sectors being no match for the loss of layers of intellectuals and key party activists disillusioned by the 'end of communism'. The PKP-1930 remains committed to socialism and to building the

kind of broad alliances necessary to achieving it but its voice is still weaker than that of the CPP and thereby often overlooked.

Yet it is the PKP-1930's analysis of Philippine society that seems to have the greatest staying power. The party had long argued that the country's central problem was its weak national economy, leading to an unbalanced dependence on foreign imperialism, primarily US but also Japanese and even British capital in certain sectors. The country was not characterised by "semi-colonial, semi-feudal" conditions, as the CPP believed, but rather by a subservient neo-colonial capitalism. The

overthrow of the Marcos regime – defined by the CPP as fascist – seems to prove the point. The subsequent 'democratic' regimes proved to be every bit as corrupt and repressive as the Marcos era without the slightest trace of independent direction, however weak and erratic, which Marcos had shown in his earlier years.

Duterte is yet to be tested on the national stage. His wild rants incorporate misogyny, disdain for civil rights and the rule of law, contempt for the Catholic hierarchy and the Manila political establishment, and a claimed concern for the poor. What he will actually do in power is anyone's guess. He has however ignited the hopes and

aspirations of tens of millions of Filipinos in the cities and the countryside, as well as those overseas, who are sick of the corruption, cronyism and nepotism that have blighted the country since independence.

If ever the Philippines needed a united movement of the left it is now. Fuller's work is essential in understanding why that aim is so urgent and yet so far unfulfilled.

(*The Lost Vision* can be ordered directly from the publisher, UPP, by emailing [uppressbooks@gmail.com](mailto:uppressbooks@gmail.com) or [uppressbooks@yahoo.com](mailto:uppressbooks@yahoo.com). UPP will send payment and postal cost details.)

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## Dare Devil rides to Jarama

a new play by Neil Gore

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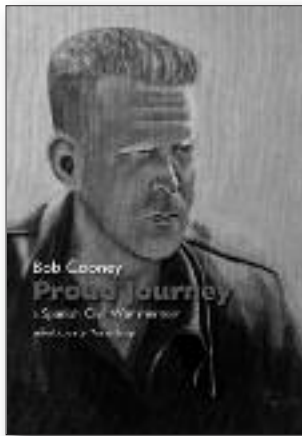
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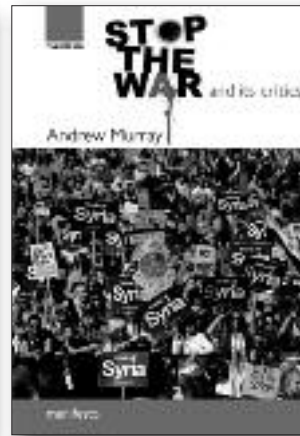
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# SOUL FOOD

by Mike Quille

## “Poets Exploding Like Bombs”: Poems from the Spanish Civil War

**F**OR THIS ISSUE, Soul Food contains some poems about the Spanish Civil War. This is: firstly, to accompany the leading article by Ken Fuller; secondly, to mark the 80th anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War; and thirdly, above all in memory of the British and Irish International Brigaders who wrote poems and who died in that war.

The war against Franco’s fascist rebellion saw “poets exploding like bombs”, as WH Auden said in his famous poem *Spain*, published in 1937. And the war has sometimes been called ‘the poets’ war’, probably because more progressive political poetry was written about it, from combatants and others on active service, than about any other war in the twentieth century, even though it was considerably smaller and shorter than other wars. However, as in every other war in modern times, 80% of the fighters were men from manual trades. None of the poems below was written by a professional poet. All the writers were, though, exceptional individuals, activists from the Communist Party, the Labour Party, the trade unions and some of the allied cultural and educational institutions.

**Alex McDade** was a labourer from Glasgow who fought and was wounded at the battle of Jarama in 1937. He became a company political commissar for the British Battalion and was killed on 6 July 1937. His poem, *Valley of Jarama*, was the basis for the song by Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Lee Hays, but it’s shorter, bleaker, and more soldierly.

### **Valley of Jarama**

by Alex McDade

There’s a valley in Spain called Jarama,  
That’s a place that we all know so well,  
For ’tis there that we wasted our manhood,  
And most of our old age as well.

From this valley they tell us we’re leaving  
But don’t hasten to bid us adieu,  
For e’en though we make our departure,  
We’ll be back in an hour or two.

Oh we’re proud of our British Battalion,  
And the marathon record it’s made.  
Please do us this little favour,

And take this last word to Brigade:

“You will never be happy with strangers,  
They would not understand you as we.  
So remember the Jarama Valley  
And the old men who wait patiently.”

**Charles Donnelly** was an Irish republican, communist and trade union activist, who was also killed at Jarama. Like a number of war poets, his modernist poetry is formally innovative, finding bluntly effective ways to express the horror, cruelty and inhumanity of war.

### **The Tolerance of Crows**

by Charles Donnelly

Death comes in quantity from solved  
Problems on maps, well-ordered dispositions,  
Angles of elevation and direction;

Comes innocent from tools children might  
Love, retaining under pillows  
Innocently impales on any flesh.

And with flesh falls apart the mind  
That trails thought from the mind that cuts  
Thought clearly for a waiting purpose.

Progress of poison in the nerves and  
Discipline’s collapse is halted.  
Body awaits the tolerance of crows.

### **Heroic Heart**

by Charles Donnelly

Ice of heroic heart seals plasmic soil  
Where things ludicrously take root  
To show in leaf kindnesses time had buried  
And cry music under a storm of ’planes,  
Making thrust head to slacken, muscles waver  
And intent mouth recall old tender tricks.  
Ice of heroic heart seals steel-bound brain.



There newer organs built for friendship's grappling  
Waste down like wax. There only leafless plants  
And earth retain disinterestedness.  
Though magnetised to lie of the land, moves  
Heartily over the map wrapped in its iron  
Storm. Battering the roads, armoured columns  
Break walls of stone or bone without receipt.  
Jawbones find new ways with meats, loins  
Raking and blind, new ways with women.

**Norman Brookfield** worked in a library in Essex and died in September 1938 at the Sierra de Caballs in the battalion's last day in action. His style is much more traditional than Donnelly's, almost hymn-like, but equally anguished.

### ***Rest, I will know your all-pervading calm***

by Norman Brookfield

Rest, I will know your all-pervading calm  
Relax my limbs, and feel your soothing balm;  
Beneath light's tranquil stars I'll sleep at ease  
When dawn's well past, to rise, and day-time fill  
With pleasant strolls and food and talk at will.  
Shaping vague thoughts beneath the olive trees;  
Watching tobacco wreath its lazy fumes  
Quintessence rare, O rest of your perfumes.  
And yet this is a respite that must end  
An interval between the course of war  
Which all too soon will raise its dreadful roar,  
Bidding my laggard pace once more to mend;  
But 'tis the thoughts of past and future strife  
That make you sweet, O rest, and with you – life.

**George Green** was an ambulance driver, dispatch rider and hospital orderly in Spain, and was killed on the same day and at the same battle. He wrote in a very modern, prose poetical way, vividly evoking the battlefield almost cinematically. What's more, this poem shows more political and historical consciousness than anything about the war by Auden, Spender or Day-Lewis.

### ***Dressing Station***

by George Green

Casa de Campo, Madrid, March 1937

Here the surgeon, unsterile, probes by candlelight the embedded bullet.  
Here the ambulance-driver waits the next journey; hand tremulous on the wheel, eye refusing to acknowledge fear of the bridge, of the barrage at the bad crossing.  
Here the stretcher-bearer walks dead on his feet, too tired to wince at the whistle of death in the black air over the shallow trench; too tired now to calculate with each journey the diminishing chances of any return to his children, to meals at a table, to music and the sound of feet in the jota<sup>1</sup>.  
Here are ears tuned to the wail of shells: lips that say, this one gets the whole bloody station: the reflex action that flings us into the safer corners, to cower from the falling masonry and the hot tearing splinters at our guts.  
Here the sweet smell of blood, shit, iodine, the smoke-embittered air, the furtive odour of the dead.  
Here also the dead.

Here also the dead.  
This afternoon five.  
Then eight.  
Then two neat rows.  
And now ... this was the courtyard of the road-house, filling-station for the Hispano-Suizas<sup>2</sup> and the young grandes' bellies. The sign 'American Bar' still hangs unshattered.  
I cannot count. Three deep: monstrous sprawling: slid from dripping stretchers for more importunate tenants: bearded plough-boys' faces: ownerless hand: shattered pelvis: boots laced for the last time: eyes moon-cold, moon-bright, defying the moon: smashed mouth scaring away thought of the peasant breasts that so recently suckled it ....  
I cannot count.

But poet, this is old stuff.  
This we too have seen.  
This is Flanders 1917. Sassoon and Wilfred Owen did this so much better.  
Is this all?  
Do twenty years count for nothing?  
Have you no more to show?

Yes, we have more to show.  
Yes, though we grant you the two-dimensional similarity, even (to complete the picture) allowing you the occasional brass-hat and the self-inflicted wound.  
Yet there is another dimension. Look closely. Listen carefully.

Privilege here battles with no real privilege.  
The dupe there, machine-gunning us from the trenched hillside, fights still to preserve a master's title-deeds, but we ... we battle for life.  
This ... we speak a little proudly, who so recently threw off the slave shackles to do a man's work ....  
This is our war.

These wounds have the red flag in them.  
This salute carries respect.  
Here the young soldier says "camarada" to his general.  
Here we give heed to no promise of a land fit for heroes to live in, but take for ourselves the world to mould in our hands.  
These ranks can never be broken by four years of mud and bitter metal, into sporadic and betrayed rebellion.  
Here the consciousness of a thousand years' oppression binds us as Brothers .... We have learnt our lesson.  
Look. Over the bridge (it is not yet dawn) comes a Russian lorry, ammunition-laden.  
Forty-three years gone, unarmed St Petersburg's blood paid a heavy duty on those shells.<sup>3</sup>  
And I? The Chartists commandeered this ambulance from a Portland Street shop-window.  
I drove: and dead Communards raised living fists as far south as Perpignan. I saw the perils of the Pyrenees spurned by feet that once had scaled a Bastille, by the fair-haired boys who graduated in the streets of Charlottenburg<sup>4</sup>, by those who paid a steerage passage, to tell us how their fathers fell at Valley Forge<sup>5</sup>.  
For this is not 1917.  
This is the struggle that justifies the try-outs of history.  
This is the light that illuminates, the link that unites Wat Tyler<sup>6</sup> and the Boxer rebellion<sup>7</sup>.  
This is our difference, our strength, this is our manifesto, this our song that cannot be silenced by bullets.

And finally, to **Rupert John Cornford**, a Cambridge communist who was the first Englishman to enlist. He travelled twice to Spain, first, briefly, to fight for the POUM<sup>8</sup> and then on the second occasion to join the International Brigades against Franco's rebels; he died in December 1936 at Lopera, near Cordoba.

"These are poems of the will, and the will bangs a drum", wrote Stephen Spender of Cornford's poems, which like some of the poems above combine a modernist sensibility with direct, blunt and unflowery descriptions, images and diction. Here he is, banging the drum from Aragon.

### **A Letter From Aragon**

by John Cornford

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

We buried Ruiz in a new pine coffin,  
But the shroud was too small and his washed feet stuck out.  
The stink of his corpse came through the clean pine boards  
And some of the bearers wrapped handkerchiefs round their  
faces.

Death was not dignified.

We hacked a ragged grave in the unfriendly earth  
And fired a ragged volley over the grave.

You could tell from our listlessness, no one much missed him.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

There is no poison gas and no HE<sup>9</sup>.

But when they shelled the other end of the village  
And the streets were choked with dust  
Women came screaming out of the crumbling houses,  
Clutched under one arm the naked rump of an infant.  
I thought: how ugly fear is.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

Our nerves are steady; we all sleep soundly.

In the clean hospital bed, my eyes were so heavy  
Sleep easily blotted out one ugly picture,  
A wounded militiaman moaning on a stretcher,  
Now out of danger, but still crying for water,  
Strong against death, but unprepared for such pain.

This on a quiet front.

But when I shook hands to leave, an Anarchist worker  
Said: "Tell the workers of England

This was a war not of our own making

We did not seek it.

But if ever the Fascists again rule Barcelona

It will be as a heap of ruins with us workers beneath it."

## **Sources and Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements and grateful thanks are due to Jim Jump. The poems are all taken from a highly recommended book called *Poems from Spain*, edited by Jim, and published by Lawrence and Wishart, 2006. The book contains a foreword by Jack Jones, an excellent, clear introduction to the poems, notes on the poets and poems, and a brief history of the British and Irish Brigades' involvement in the war.

## **Notes and References**

- 1 Jota = a genre of music and dance known throughout Spain, generally in 3:4 time.
- 2 *Hispano-Suiza* was a Spanish luxury car manufacturer at that time.
- 3 The "Forty-three" is probably an error. From the context, the poet is most likely referring to the 1905 Revolution in Russia, thirty-two years before the poem was written.
- 4 Charlottenburg is a suburb of Berlin and this seems most likely to refer to the violent attack there on pro-democracy activists on 20 August 1848. Charlottenburg subsequently became a very affluent area.
- 5 During the American War of Independence, Washington's army overwintered from December 1777 at Valley Forge, 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Disease, malnutrition and exposure killed over 2,500 soldiers by the end of February 1778. But those who survived were trained intensely and gained a strong will to win, so this was a turning point in the war.
- 6 Leader of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt in England.
- 7 Chinese anti-imperialist struggle, 1899-1901.
- 8 For the POUM, see Ken Fuller's article in this issue of *CR*.
- 9 Presumably stands for "high explosive".



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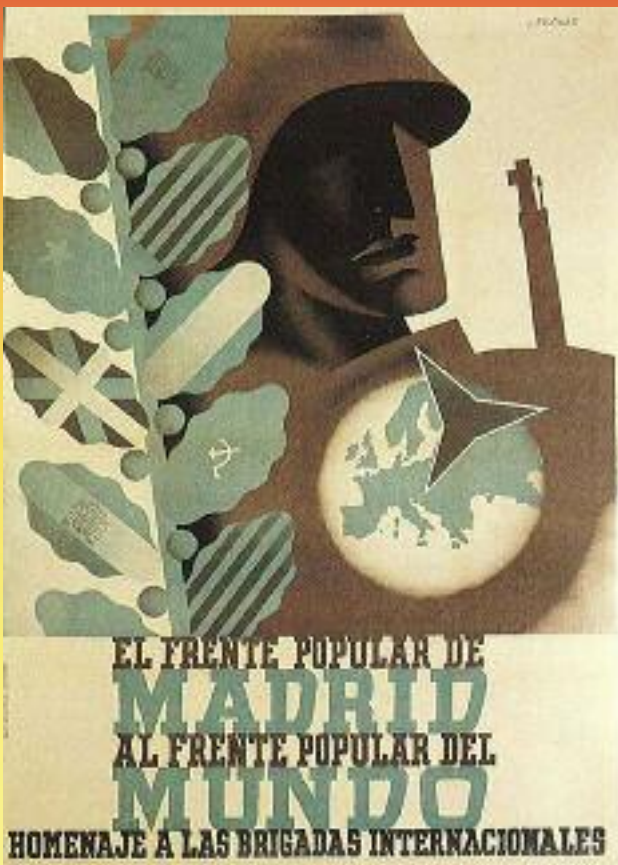
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