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MARTIN LEVY
EDITORIAL

IN THIS edition of *Communist Review (CR),* we focus on class structure and analysis. As Marx and Engels said, history is the history of class struggles; and today we still have owners of capital and owners of labour power. Yet, as the draft revised 8th edition of the Communist Party's programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism (BRS)*, makes clear, the ruling class is much more narrowly defined than in Marx's time. The development of monopolies, and their fusion with the controlling sectors of banking capital, mean that the dominant layer is now 'finance capital', increasingly intertwined with the capitalist state structure.

What about the working class? In our leading article, Jonathan White demolishes arguments that a new class, the 'precariat', is emerging. Precarious work has been present since capitalism began; and what in fact is going on is part of a wider recomposition of the global working class. Finance capital and monopolistic transnational corporations have used their domination of state apparatuses to deregulate labour markets. Unions need to develop new ways of organising, particularly at key points in the long global supply chains; but they also need to confront the issue of ownership.

We include here two articles from a discussion on class analysis in our German sister journal *Marxistische Blätter.* In the first, Heinz Bierbaum dismisses the idea that the proletariat is disappearing. He criticises claims that the working class is not determined by its relation to production, but by its milieu, and that the key distinction is one of wealth. Noting changes in the production process under the impact of flexible 'Toyotism' and digitisation, he observes that the structure of the productive collective worker, and its relation to unproductive wage workers, is also changing. It is the task of class analysis to study the real relations and to disclose the core of the current social structures, he says.

Internationalisation of production, and the consequent need for closer cross-border labour movement and communist cooperation, are issues taken up by Lars Ulrik Thomsen. Drawing attention to new forms of corporatism, with bourgeois democracy being replaced by autocracy, and decisions being made by a small elite, he emphasises the necessity not only of organising the unorganised, but of class alliances in an anti-monopoly strategy, like that in the *BRS*. Such an approach, he says, parallels the popular front strategy adopted in response to the rise of fascism in the 1930s. But, just as then, the working class should under no circumstances leave the leadership to the petty bourgeoisie or others.

Our second article from *Marxistische Blätte*r is by Italian philosopher Domenico Losurdo. He makes plain that the current dismantling of the Western welfare state, and the attacks on trade union rights, did not start with the 2008-9 financial crisis; but are part of the neoliberal project, initially promoted by Friedrich von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, which aims to roll back the mid-20th century gains of the working class under the banner of defending 'individual rights'. Dealing with the way that finance capital rules, Losurdo records how the big Wall Street bankers meet regularly to protect their interests, and how the United States has become a plutocracy, where governing institutions have been taken over by corporate and private wealth. He also describes how the production of emotions – particularly indignation – via the mass media plays a key role in ensuring support for ruling class policies.

Carl Harper's article returns to the theme of precarious work, in what is called 'the gig economy'. Looking particularly at digital 'platforms' and the 'tech sector', he notes that fundamentally the means of production and the subjects of labour remain in private hands and are ever more increasingly monopolised; but that people working in the tech sector will, if organised, be prepared to resort to traditional methods of class struggle.

The book review, 'Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat', may at first seem out of place in an issue of *CR* focusing on class. On the contrary: food is a special commodity, without which we can't survive for long; and farm workers and food workers around the world are generally superexploited as wages are too low to support them and their families at the average standard of living. We need to work to change both the relation between use and exchange values, and the terms of socially necessary labour time in order to produce a system that reduces the exploitation of workers. That will affect the entire economic system.

This issue's *Soul Food* continues the theme of class, examining the output of Paul Summers, a fine working class poet whose work always touches on class issues. Interviewed by Mike Quille, Paul expounds in detail on how poetry can contribute to making a more just world – and his poems exemplify that.

The working class of course is not homogeneous. For a more rounded discussion, we should at least have had articles dealing gender and class and race and class, but this was not possible. Mary Davis's *Women & Class,* published by the Communist Party, and the Runnymede Trust's *Minority Report: Race and Class in post-Brexit Britain* (www.classonline.co.uk), are essential reading.

JONATHAN WHITE

PRECARIOUS WORK AND CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM

‘Multinationals created by the concentration and centralisation of capital are expanding and drawing more and more workers into wage labour, but in the process, creating also their own precariously employed, global industrial reserve army.’

THERE IS understandably a lot of public discussion around the issue of what is increasingly called precarious work. For some, this is evidence of the emergence of something qualitatively new in our economy. A fundamental shift has happened, the argument goes, toward a ‘gig economy’ in which a whole set of assumptions about the world of work need to be changed. Some, like Guy Standing, have pushed this further to argue that a new class is emerging out of the ruins of the post-war consensus economy: a “precariat” composed of downwardly mobile professionals, migrant workers and residual “left behind” communities. This precariat is a new dangerous class who, if they mobilise properly, can abolish themselves by winning the argument with the established classes for “basic income”.[1]

There are some major problems with this analysis. Let’s take, for example, the specificity of the precariat as a new class. Guy Standing argues that the precariat is

> “not part of the ‘working class’ or the ‘proletariat’. The latter terms suggest a society consisting mostly of workers in long-term, stable, fixed-hour jobs with established routes of advancement, subject to unionisation and collective agreements, with job titles their fathers and mothers would have understood, facing local employers whose names and features they were familiar with.”[2]

This is a caricature that does extreme violence to the actual historical development of the real working class. A properly historical analysis of the world of work in the history of capitalism would find that much of the precarious work discovered by current sociologists has been present from the inception of this particular mode of production. The female outworkers who finished cotton goods in the industrial revolution, the waves of agricultural workers who migrated into the cities during the 19th century, the dockers and matchwomen who unionised in the 1880s, all experienced extreme precariousness as part of their working-class lives. From this perspective, what needs to be explained is the relative lack of precariousness that characterised the world of work in the advanced capitalist countries of the second half of the 20th century, a period that looks increasingly anomalous and exceptional with the passage of time.

The concept of the precariat operating in the gig economy doesn’t particularly help us today either. While it is productive to identify insecurity and precariousness as a common experience in the world of work, the idea that this is a new class forming within a new type of economy obscures more than it reveals. The experience of migrant workers travelling huge distances to work in informal economies is different from that of workers in creative industries or public service professionals who find themselves unable to reproduce the lives their parents enjoyed. The ultimate forces driving the trajectories of these people and giving them a shared sense of exclusion and precariousness might have a common root, but their whole social experience is structured so differently that it doesn’t help to flatten this out by making them members of a new class, crudely counterposed to anyone in a relatively secure job drawing a salary. Similarly, talk of a gig economy ignores the fact that the experience of most working adults in Britain is not structured by platform working[3], while it totally obscures the fact that the fastest growing section of the global working class is arguably working in forms of mass production that are supposed to have been historically transcended.

Yet the issue of precariousness should not be ignored. It has emerged because it does describe an important aspect of reality. We may need a better set of concepts for understanding this aspect but it is undeniable that something is happening to workers, both in advanced capitalist countries and in the Global South, something that is partially captured by the idea that work has become more precarious and that employers treat workers more casually. The labour movement needs to understand what is happening because these workers need to be organised and need to build collective power. In Britain, organising precarious workers has become an issue for every union. Globally, the unorganised working class is huge and much of it is employed in sectors and working patterns that are understood to be ‘hard to organise’.

This article will suggest that engaging with Marx’s idea of the direct relationship between capitalist accumulation and the creation of an “industrial reserve army”[4] can help us to see precarious work in a better way, as an organic and constantly recreated part of the wider working class on which capital feeds. I shall then go on to apply this idea to the modern capitalist economy. In the current period of history, I argue, the patterns of capitalist accumulation mapped out by Marx have generated monopolistic multinational corporations and finance capital, drawing workers from across the globe into wage labour and producing an industrial reserve army that is global in scale and which is beginning to be reproduced within the advanced capitalist states of the West. They have also used their domination of state apparatuses to actively deregulate labour markets, reinforcing the downward pressure on wages, conditions of

employment and job security. What some see as symptoms of the emergence of a new precarious class are better understood as parts of a wider recomposition of the global working class. Finally, the article examines how this understanding can be applied to the British economy and its labour market, and suggests some ways in which British unions can begin to organise among the unorganised.

MARX, WORKING-CLASS PRECARIOUSNESS AND THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY

For Marx, precarious work was an inescapable feature of working class life that was born out of the way in which capital accumulates. Marx argues that capital accumulates through the exploitation of working people. As capitalists strive to maximise their profits, they drive down the value they pay in wages in a range of ways: lengthening the working day, intensifying labour during the working day and revolutionising the way in which production takes place to make labour more productive. This involves more efficient division of labour and the use of new technology to increase workers' output while holding wages down. As capital accumulates and capitalists compete with one another, so they expand their operations and draw more workers into production. At the same time, as capital grows in scale, and sucks workers into production, so it also invests in new organisation of production and new technology to keep ahead of competitors and increase productivity. This creates a series of forces that draw new workers into the labour force even as they operate to expel others forcibly.[5]

As production is revolutionised, the attempt to maximise profits at the expense of wages leads industrial capitalists to replace more expensive male workers with cheaper female or child labour or migrant workforces from rural areas or more economically dependent states. Competition destroys many individual capitals, throwing their workers out of work. Similarly, technological change destroys the need for certain skills and operations, reducing the demand for specific kinds of workers previously brought into production. Even as accumulation expands, many workers are simply thrown out of work, their skills made redundant. The key point is that capital's central drive to maximise profits, to enable accumulation, powers its efforts to drive down wages and increase productivity, and that this in itself creates what Marx called an "industrial reserve army" of labour.

Marx gave concrete examples of the creation of this industrial reserve army with reference to the English proletariat in his own lifetime. "Floating" workers were created by the process of technological change in production or by the competitive destruction of capitalist firms. These included men expelled from skilled production and replaced by cheaper women and children operating new factory machinery. There was a "latent" workforce of people moving into the towns and cities in search of work as capitalist agriculture reduced the need for labour and made subsistence farming impossible. This was supplemented by a flow of Irish migrant labour, fleeing the destruction of subsistence agriculture in their economically dependent homeland. And there was a stagnant population, comprised largely of women and children, underemployed in subcontracted part-time and casual work, working in their homes and finishing goods whose lives began in the factories.[6]

Marx's argument, then, is that capitalism constantly creates a surplus population among the working class who live in a state of precariousness and poverty. This population, the reserve army, is both an inevitable effect of accumulation and a condition of further accumulation. It forms an ever-shifting pool of labour which capital both draws on and restocks in the process of accumulation. But Marx also regards the precariousness of the industrial reserve army as a feature or a moment of wider working-class life under capitalism. At any moment, a productive worker may find herself or himself thrown into the ranks of the industrial reserve army. At the same time, workers in the reserve army are essential to accumulation and may find themselves drawn into production in new industries and used to drag down wages for established workers. From this perspective then, many, if not all, the sections of the so-called precariat, would in fact be members of a Marxist "industrial reserve army" of the working class and not in any way a separate group. But is the concept of the industrial reserve army still adequate for describing modern capitalism and the people being described as precarious in today's global economy?

PRECARIOUS WORK AND CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM: MULTINATIONALS, FINANCIALISATION AND THE GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE WORKING CLASS

Above, we saw that a Marxist understanding of capitalist accumulation enables us to see precarious employment in a different aspect as a constant feature of capitalist production and accumulation and an organic part of the working class. Here we will look at how a Marxist analysis of the subsequent development of capitalism offers a better way of understanding precarious work as a feature of a recomposed industrial reserve army. To understand the contemporary industrial reserve army, we need to look at the role of multinational corporations and their interaction with a capitalist economy increasingly dominated by finance capital.

Multinational corporations are now a huge force in the world economy. In the 1990s there were estimated to be 37,000 multinationals in the global economy. In 2004 this had risen to 77,000, employing some 62 million workers worldwide.[7] For some, multinationals are a distortion of capitalism, evidence of the emergence of monopolistic restraints on free enterprise that themselves need to be restrained in the interests of free trade. For Marxists however, multinational corporations are an inevitable outgrowth of the tendencies within capitalist accumulation. In ruthless competition, "one capitalist always kills many"[8] and capital tends to concentrate and centralise into larger and larger units, dominating entire industries and markets.

Multinationals have pursued a series of strategies that have drawn millions of workers across the globe into highly precarious waged work, particularly in the developing world. Multinationals have pursued offshoring of jobs, as well as outsourcing and subcontracting on a massive scale. Major US multinationals like General Electric, Exxon, Chevron, Ford, General Motors, Proctor and Gamble, IBM and Coca Cola now employ far more workers overseas than in the US. In part this is achieved by moving operations abroad and in part by developing complex international chains of subcontracting and outsourcing arrangements, creating 'global supply chains'. In this way, new workers from Asia and the Global South are drawn into low paid, unregulated and precarious employment.

In 1990, 50% of industrial production was located in developing world economies. In 2011 that figure was over 70%. And as workers in the Global South have been drawn into industrial capitalist production, so the forces creating

the industrial reserve army of precarious labour have also been unleashed across a worldwide division of labour. Workers in Southeast Asia, for example, have been sucked into the production and assembly of industrial components. Because of the vast reserves of workers employed in subsistence or marginal agriculture in countries like India, China and Latin America, vast reserves of 'pre-capitalist' labour continue to exist, many of them migrating into cities in search of work as capitalist agricultural businesses destroy their livelihoods. Recent estimates based on International Labour Organisation data indicate that there are 1.4 billion wage workers in the global economy; and according to some estimates the global reserve army around this population may be as large as 2.4 billion, mainly but not exclusively focused on the poorer countries.[9] Consequently, wages can be maintained at historically low levels in these countries. Yet the multinationals using them as industrial wage labour are also driving productivity up through the use of new technology and automation, expelling many from the workforce in the process.

At the same time, of course, in the context of a global economy where capital is highly mobile but workers are not, this global division of labour is leading multinationals to try to drive down wages and terms and conditions in the advanced capitalist states too. As Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik has argued, this helps to explain the paradox that workers' wages and productivity are stagnating or falling in the advanced capitalist states while at the same time, in spite of rising productivity, wages in the developing world are not rising above historically low subsistence levels. We can see, then, the same basic forces analysed by Marx, still at work today. Multinationals created by the concentration and centralisation of capital are expanding and drawing more and more workers into wage labour, but in the process, creating also their own precariously employed, global industrial reserve army.[10]

The imperative on multinationals to employ these strategies has been heightened by the fact that the world's big companies, particularly in the advanced capitalist states, are increasingly owned and controlled by financial institutions. According to analysis by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) of the top 100 multinational corporations, 52% are owned only by financial institutions and this figure excludes those owned by private equity funds. Ownership of stock exchange-listed companies has shifted away from pension funds or individuals, to be replaced by dispersed shareholdings managed by investment banks and other investment funds. These owners turn over their portfolios rapidly in search of consistently high dividends. The average holding of shares in stock exchange-listed companies has fallen from 6 years in the 1950s to a mere 6 months now. New forms of ownership have emerged like private equity, similarly geared toward extracting high dividends. Multinationals now are more than ever focused on providing consistently high dividend payments, almost regardless of other considerations, including underlying profitability.[11]

This 'financialisation' of multinationals lies behind a series of corporate strategies designed to extract dividends for short-termist shareholders. For example, it helps to explain why giant companies are indulging in aggressive mergers and acquisitions. Companies retain large amounts of cash to deter hostile takeovers and also to acquire their competitors and dominate entire markets. Market domination is a faster way of maintaining profitability than investment. In 1954, the top 60 firms in the US accounted for less than 20% of GDP. Now, that quantity is accounted for by the top 20 firms. The drive to maintain dividend payouts also lies behind the moves to tie CEO remuneration to stock holdings, as well as explaining why those CEOs then go on to authorise share buybacks that artificially boost share prices and indulge in arbitrage with international tax regimes.

For workers, the consequence of financialisation has been to aggravate all the chaotic exploitative practices of capitalist firms. Financialisation of firms has been correlated with the use of HR practices aimed at reducing job security and increasing the amount of 'flexible working' within firms. A survey of senior executives in the US and UK, the most financialised advanced capitalist economies, revealed that the overwhelming majority said that shareholder dividend payment was more important than employee job security.[12]

Pete Rossman and Gerard Greenfield, writing for the ITUF international trade union federation, have illustrated how this works in practice.[13] The effect of financial ownership, they show, has been to shorten drastically the planning horizons of corporations and drive the introduction of management strategies to enhance shareholder value while undermining real economic performance:

> "Such strategies include restructuring and cost-cutting to reduce jobs and eliminate productive capacity for the purpose of generating cash for share buy-backs to further boost share prices."

This is exemplified for them by the "Nestlé model". In 2006, Nestlé announced a 21% increase in net profits and a 12.5% dividend, while Nestlé workers faced diminished job security and job destruction through outsourcing, causalisation, production transfers and plant closures. "Of course, companies have always sought to maximise profit", they argue:

> "What is new is the drive for profit through the elimination of productive capacity and employment. Transnational food processors, for example, now invest a significantly lower proportion of their profits in expanding productive capacity. Financial markets today directly reward companies for reducing payroll through closures, restructuring and outsourcing. This reflects the way in which financialisation has driven the management of non-financial companies to act more like financial market players."

THE STATE AND RESTRUCTURING THE WORKING CLASS

The activities of financialised multinationals have been assisted by their domination of national state apparatuses and their para-state organisations. Since the late 1970s, big business and finance capital have used their positions and their economic power to argue for states to deregulate their labour markets, creating more flexible forms of work that are supposed to attract business investment. In response, states across the global economy have sought to capture multinational investment by engaging in competitive deregulation of their labour markets, pursuing policies aimed at weakening the legal frameworks within which workers are employed and eroding the ability of unions to regulate the labour market through collective bargaining.[14] In the Anglo-Saxon capitalist world, the succession of anti-trade union laws pursued by Conservative governments in Britain is an obvious example aimed explicitly at creating a flexible labour market.

But the same processes have been at work within the European Union. The EU's treaty commitments to freedom of movement for capital and labour always posed problems for unions looking to regulate European labour markets. The European Court of Justice cases of Viking and Laval, which asserted the primacy of capital's freedom of establishment over local collective bargaining arrangements, demonstrated that unions were fighting a losing battle in relation to EU law. But since the early 2000s, the leading EU states have promoted a vision of a more flexible European labour market within their own countries and through the institutions of the EU. Germany's *Agenda 2010* undermined collective bargaining and limits on temporary employment. Successive French administrations have pursued the same policies, most sharply under President Macron, but also under previous French Socialist governments. Accession states like Poland and the Baltic states weakened employment protections for workers to attract foreign investment on entry to the EU.

The 2008 crisis presented new opportunities. States which ran into budgetary difficulties like Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy were strong-armed into catastrophic levels of labour market reform, explicitly aimed at creating flexible, casualised labour as part of austerity packages, in return for bailouts that were in any case simply agreements to pay off German, French and British creditors. In Portugal the number of sectoral collective agreements fell from 172 in 2008 to 36 in 2012, while the number of extensions fell from 137 to 12 in the same period. The number of employees covered by collective agreements fell from almost 1.9 million in 2008 to some 225,000 in 2014. Severance payments for permanent and temporary contracts were cut, with the express aim of reducing the cost to employers, and the proportion of temporary employment in Portugal has grown.[15]

The result has been the creation of an industrial reserve army of precariously employed workers surviving within and moving between European states. Four out of every five new jobs in the EU are part-time or temporary. States like Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have seen millions of workers pushed into 'informal' employment in highly precarious and poorly paid jobs. Poverty levels have spiked, leading to significant migrations among younger people, mostly into precarious work in other EU states.[16]

In the Global South the drive to attract multinational capital investment drove states like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, China, Indonesia and the Philippines to introduce rafts of reforms aimed at attracting foreign investment, including deregulating their labour markets. Levels of temporary and casual work in these economies range between 25% and 70% of the wage-earning workforce; and the use of temporary worker agencies, by companies forming part of global supply chains dominated by multinationals based in the developing world, has grown in recent years.[17]

Finally, state policy has been geared to creating a reserve army within the extensive public sectors that developed in the post-war period. The same monopolistic multinationals and financial institutions who drive the thinking behind the pursuit of deregulated labour markets, also strive for the creation of efficient markets within publicly owned industries and services. Privatisation of nationalised industries has pushed workers into the arms of multinationals or led to the downsizing or indeed destruction of entire industries. Neoliberal 'new public management theory' has been used to create pseudo-market structures and imperatives within public services. Public services have been hived off to outsourcing or subcontracted provision, often provided by financialised services multinationals, while that which remains in the hands of public companies has been subject to budgetary restraint and new human resource management strategies aimed at driving down the cost of labour. A key aim and consequence of this project has been the creation 'flexible labour' within public sector employment.[18]

So, at a general global level, the emergence of financialised multinationals and their domination of the state apparatus in advanced capitalist states have operated to create a distinctively modern and globalised reserve army of labour. This new reserve army has been created partly out of the worldwide expansion of capitalism but partly also out of the conscious destruction of the labour securities in the socialist states and the wreckage of the so-called 'Golden Age' of capitalism in the post-war period. At the heart of this process lie the same basic forces and tendencies analysed by Marx in the mid-nineteenth century. How have these forces played out in Britain?

PRECARIOUS WORK AND THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY IN BRITAIN

In Britain, the processes analysed above have assumed a quite virulent form because of the extent to which British capitalism was vulnerable to early financialisation, and its unusually rapid and extensive deindustrialisation. The long dominance of the City of London and what has been called the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of corporate ownership combined to prevent industrial modernisation over the long term in the post-war period. Crudely, British finance capital has always had alternative sources of high rapid profit-making to long-term industrial investment. Once financialisation really took off in the global economy during the 1980s, this short-termism became fatal. British manufacturing companies have struggled to compete, hampered by low levels of research and development, dependent on their own retained profits and geared toward providing short-term profits for dispersed groups of fast-changing owners through the stock market.[19] The precipitous deindustrialisation and the recomposition of capital that followed from financialisation in Britain can be measured in the changing constitution of FTSE 100 companies in the period from the 1980s. In 1984 the FTSE 100 included 39 manufacturing giants in the food, tobacco, aerospace and pharmaceutical sectors. In 2007 only 15 FTSE 100 firms were in manufacturing, employing between them no more than 100,000 workers. Instead, the FTSE 100 is now dominated by the big four retail banks, big retailers and supermarkets like M&S, Tesco and Sainsbury, utilities firms like BT, SSE and Centrica and outsourcing companies like Capita and Serco, between them employing many more people than the manufacturers.[20]

Between 1990 and 2014, manufacturing employment fell from 4 million to 2 million; while within what remained we can see the familiar activities of monopolistic companies driving down working conditions and the labour rate. For example, in the meat processing industry, the grip of shareholder value-oriented supermarkets like Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury is felt by employees in the supplying manufacturing companies. The supermarkets' quest for short-term profit margins drives them to squeeze their suppliers' contracts. For workers in food processing companies the consequences have been below-inflation pay awards, and a sharp growth in the use of highly precarious agency work. Agency workers comprise between 15% and 70% of the workforce in many meat-processing factories.[21]

The construction industry accounts for around 10% of all employment in the UK. The industry is dominated by a group of monopolistic big contractors including Balfour Beatty, Laing O'Rourke, Kier and of course the recently liquidated Carillion. These companies then subcontract to a long tail of small and medium entrerprises comprising 99.9% of the businesses operating in construction. Many of these firms have small numbers of workers but they are completely dependent on contracts won by the big multinationals and which are passed down the line. Because of their size and the small margins they operate within, these smaller firms have little incentive to invest in either the latest technologies or the skills of their employees, while the larger ones remain enslaved to the short-term interests of their shareholders, and squeeze their subcontractors' margins. Not coincidentally, the industry has seen a growth in various forms of bogus self-employment. According to Unite the Union, more than 1 million construction workers, around 43% of the construction workforce, are now paid via the Construction Industry Scheme which denies them basic employment rights.[22]

As we have seen, with the recomposition of capital, as manufacturing has declined, so employment has grown in the business and services sectors. Employment in trade, accommodation and transport, for example, has grown from 7.4 million in 1994 to just under 9 million and is projected to rise further. This sector includes retail and wholesale employment, transport, accommodation and food services.[23] These subsectors are also those with very high levels of insecure employment. According to research by the Learning and Work Institute, food and beverage services, land transport and retail were among the biggest employers of workers on zero-hours contracts, low paid self-employment and other forms of precarious contract.[24] The growth of automation in some of these subsectors such as retail, in the form of e-commerce, also threatens to throw some of these workers into even more dependent parts of the industrial reserve army in Britain. Again, financialised monopolistic companies predominate in many of these sectors.

In addition, whatever one's view of the cost benefits of Britain's membership of the European Union, it is a fact that, with the accession of austerity-battered Eastern European economies in 2004 and 2007, its labour market has been entangled with the migration of a "ready, flexible and well-educated labour force … that could be tapped into as a huge 'reserve army of labour' to perform jobs at wages and under working conditions that in the main, national workforces in Western European member states rejected".[25] A series of landmark industrial disputes over wage dumping has taken place, including at Irish Ferries in the Republic of Ireland, the aforementioned Laval dispute in Sweden and the Lindsey oil refinery dispute in Britain in 2009. But most migration, as Charles Woolfson has noted, has been into unregulated parts of the labour market where flexible labour has expanded, like hotels, restaurants, catering, transport and construction, further increasing the downward pressure on wages, terms and conditions and contracts.[25]

At the same time, waves of privatisation created new monopolistic companies in the water, energy and transport markets, many becoming subject to mergers and acquisitions, often from abroad and themselves becoming increasingly financialised over time. Similarly, marketisation and privatisation in public services has fragmented older career paths and created a new 'flexible' workforce of highly casualised labour. The privatised domiciliary and residential care sectors, dominated by private equity fund-owned companies, for example, are highly casualised with an estimated 300,000 care workers on zero-hours contracts. Austerity-promoted cuts to council budgets have only fuelled this downward pressure on wages and conditions.

The growth of precarious employment in Britain is best seen as part of a wider process whereby financialised multinationals in the advanced capitalist states have used economic power to create a huge, global working class and a global reserve army of labour, acting to drag down wages and employment conditions in the West while maintaining very high rates of exploitation in the Global South. At the same time, they have used their domination of state machinery to deregulate labour markets in the public and private sectors alike. In Britain, these general trends were accelerated by the dominance of the historically powerful financial sector, which helped to propel an unusually rapid and extensive deindustrialisation and the creation of a precariously employed reserve army of labour which has stretched across the growing service sectors, residual manufacturing and former public services alike.

ISSUES FOR BRITISH UNIONS

The need to organise the unorganised is one of the great mantras of the trade union movement. Yet there are formidable obstacles to doing so.

There are undoubtedly problems of organisation and leadership strategies. For example, efforts by larger unions to organise the unorganised in retail have been notably hampered by sweetheart deals or accusations of breaches of the Bridlington principles. The existing conventions of TUC affiliated unions' behaviour are arguably not helping and need to be reviewed. Equally the 'new radical unions' are good for publicity but their impact on the precarious workforce is so far negligible. The IWGB, for example, is good at mobilising and generating column inches but appears to be largely opportunistic, and too often targeted on areas where unions are already active. The capacity of such unions to make targeted interventions elsewhere, build sustainable organisations or win tangible collective bargaining successes is harder to detect. Unions must develop organisations and ways of working that can combine strategic intervention, tactical flexibility and yet at the same time build sustainable organisations that can act as sources of workers' power in areas where workers are not organised. Those that do not wish to do this should be side-stepped where necessary.

Then there are the problems presented by employer ownership structures. The rapid recomposition of capital and the working class in Britain has meant that there are entire swathes of the labour market where union organisation is absent, let alone collective bargaining coverage. The short-termism that dominates the decision-making of large, financialised companies in Britain also means that capital has the threat of mobility to wield over workers' heads. In many cases it also means that even where collective bargaining rights are won and workers' organisations are built, unions struggle to make sustainable gains for their members, partly because the actions of remote financial owners who turn over the investment portfolios in search of high profits are impervious to agreements signed with unions. In many ways, this is a new version of an old problem: the limits of trade unionism in a capitalist economy. But it's a sharply accentuated version.

If the multinational and financialised nature of ownership places obstacles in the way of union organising, it also brings with it opportunities. For example, long global supply chains

can be vulnerable, particularly at key points. As international transport unions have recognised, the ability to organise at key points among logistics workers can bring organising benefit to workers at completely different points in the value chain. Striking transport workers can help win collective bargaining rights for workers in production, distribution and retail. But this requires the establishment of long-term cooperation among different industry unions and a sound understanding of where power lies. There are few quick wins.

Similarly, financialised multinational capital has created the basis for alliances with organisations of 'consumers'. As these firms have expanded into every area of social life, they have come to dominate land and housing, welfare, education, energy, transport and so on. For families struggling to get by, the power of these firms is felt in every facet of their lives, not just in the workplace. To an extent this was always true and the history of working class struggle and the formation of the labour movement is thickly populated with the interaction of struggles over distribution and consumption as much as with wage struggles. Unions have always had to reach out beyond the immediate workplace to a degree. But privatisation, structural adjustment programmes and austerity have arguably strengthened the potential basis for such mobilisations.

Ultimately, however, unions cannot avoid confronting the issue of ownership. In an era of financialised multinationals, it is less possible than ever to exercise effective working-class power simply through industrial organisation and collective bargaining. In a sense this is simply a case of re-learning the old lesson that Marx and Engels taught the labour movement, that trade unions are a form of organisation inherently limited by capitalism and that it is always impossible to achieve irreversible advances in wages and conditions without controlling capital from above through political class struggle.

In Britain, for example, a change of government would undoubtedly help in altering the balance of power in the workplace. Repeal of the anti-trade union laws and legislation to raise the floor of employment rights would make a big difference to labour's ability to organise and collectively bargain. But would it compel multinationally organised companies to extend their investment horizons beyond the quarterly bottom line or even to continue their operations in Britain? Not unless ownership can be freed from the grip of the investment banks and asset management funds. An active state, assisting the expansion of social ownership is no less important to building better jobs than it is to creating a growing, productive economy in Britain.

But at the same time, as Marx and Engels pointed out, if trade unions are inherently limited, they are also indispensable. Trade union struggles play a vital role in educating workers in struggle and organisation in the place where the exploitative nature of society is most clearly apparent – the workplace. Trade union struggles might be limited but they are a precondition for the development of any wider political class consciousness. The fight for an alternative economic and political strategy to control the multinationals and finance capital would be immeasurably enhanced with an active, organised trade union movement at its head, linking up with and building community and regional collective action and rebuilding a fighting working class movement.

The fight for decent jobs that enable a decent standard of living is the labour movement's mobilising issue. The task is to build organisations that can fight sustained trade union battles which link up with and strengthen the political movements and parties that are beginning once more to challenge the ownership structures of capitalist society.

Article first published on 27 March 2018 at https://tradeunionfutures.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tuf-a4-precarious-work.pdf, and reproduced by the permission of the author.

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HEINZ BIERBAUM

CLASS RELATIONS TODAY

EXTRACTS FROM AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE AT THE SPRING ACADEMY OF THE DIE LINKE PARTY, JUNE 2017.

TODAY THE concept of class is playing a greater role in political discussion. The background in particular is the worldwide financial and economic crisis, still not really overcome, which is also the cause of the continuing deep crisis of European development. For that reason social inequalities and class antagonisms have again come into focus, more strongly. Thomas Piketty's study, *Capital in the 21st Century*,[1] in which the growing social inequality is demonstrably proven with detailed statistics, has created furore. The criticism of capitalism has been strengthened and the questions of an alternative social developmentt have become more pressing.

In literary-political terms, Didier Eribon's book, *Returning to Reims*,[2] and the discussion around it, have allowed the class question to become current. Eribon answers the question why the French working class, which previously voted to the left and in particular communist, is now turning to the extreme right-wing National Front. He explains this by the conclusion that the working class has lost its political representation and is finding it again, in increasing measure, in the National Front. He defines the working class, alongside its material and social situation, through cultural aspects, behaviour and attitudes, and thereby above all through its milieu. Consequently its political representation depends on the means by which this milieu is best received.

> "The placing inside the social structure and the world of work no longer determines a 'class interest' and also does not automatically provide for the fact that people perceive this as their own. Thus intermediary theories are necessary, with which parties and social movements offer a specific way of looking at the world. Such theories confer a form and sense to the lived experiences at a specific point in time, and can be completely differently interpreted, according to exactly which theory or discourse one turns to, in order to find support in it."[3]

[Editorial note: At this point in his lecture, Bierbaum sketched the classic Marxist class theory, dealing in detail with its critic Bourdieu and his reproach of "economics", as well as with others who in a different way adhere to the basic thesis that, with the development of productive forces and labour the proletariat as a class is disappearing (André Gorz, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Jeremy Rifkin, Paul Mason). He continued with the section 'Class relations today'.]

In my opinion, neither the assumptions of Gorz, Hardt and Negri, nor those of Rifkin and Mason, are tenable. It is doubtless correct, that the precariousness of work is increasing and is definitely taking on global characteristics. But the proletariat is neither disappearing nor becoming the "multitude", in which the distinctions in application of labour are disappearing. It is certainly correct that something like a Third Sector with non-profit areas and "collaborative common production" is developing, to which the approaches of Solidarity Economy[4] count. But they are not so dominant as Rifkin and Mason maintain – also not the trend. To this it can be added that, eg, activities in social care are in part rather the reaction to the deficit in state social services than the expression of new community work. Labour under capitalist conditions is not disappearing, but on the contrary is expanding. It is exactly typical of neoliberalism that it attempts to subjugate ever more areas of society to capitalist exploitation. An expression of that is the comprehensive privatisations which also include areas of social welfare provision, especially health care.

In order to investigate the actual changes, it is necessary to shed light on the development of labour. Constant further development of the productive forces is inherent to the capitalist production process. Consequently, this has decisive consequences for the form of organisation and application of labour. Thus the period of Fordism is identified with mass production and high specialism (Taylorist organisation of labour), separation of mental and physical labour and a strong hierarchical structure, which is very vividly expressed by the conveyor belt. In the subsequent period of post-Fordism the functional specialisation has been partially reversed and group labour has developed. In production, manufacturing islands are superseding the conveyor belt. Production is becoming more flexible, which then also preferably requires a flexible application of labour power. 'Lean production' is propagated, also described as 'Toyotism', because this form of labour organisation was first practised at Toyota.

Today in particular, the ever-increasing digitisation is at the heart of production processes. The talk is of a fourth industrial revolution ('Industry 4.0'[5]), because the extent of application of information and communication technology has assumed a new qualitative stage. There are very differing opinions about the effects. Indeed this development will not lead to the disappearance of labour, but labour itself will change substantially and there will be new qualification requirements.

Alongside the changes of labour in the development of the capitalist production process, there have also been changes

‘As regards the working class, the basic structure of the productive collective worker and unproductive wage workers is preserved. However, both the relationship between the two, and in particular the structure of the productive collective labourer, are changing – since, due to capitalist development of the organisation of labour, the type of service provision and qualification demands change.’

on the capital side, with corporate policy developing right up to finance capitalism. We are talking here of the ‘shareholder value’ model, by which management is supposed to be more committed to the concerns of the capital owners. Associated with it is a qualitative change in corporate policy. The business is considered simply as a financial investment, with a claim to a minimum interest rate. If this is not achieved, then that is seen as destruction of value, even if a profit is achieved. Hence demands for profits increase, costs are drastically reduced and the pressure on the workforce is increased. The real economic dimension gets out of focus, and it is no longer recognised that labour represents the actual source of value.

This also has consequences for class structure. Thus, for example, Klaus Dörre talks about a new manager elite:

> “The shareholder-oriented corporate leadership has helped a new manager elite to break through, which neither feels itself committed to a collective will of the business nor allows itself to commit to growth targets. Instead it starts from a high degree of agreement between its own interests and that of the business and puts the pursuit of short-term profit maximisation at the heart of its own activity.”[6]

Though we can still distinguish the owners of capital, managers as functioning capitalists, and finance capitalists, the relative weights are shifting. The representatives of finance capital maintain a dominating position and the managers put short-term corporate increase in value at the heart. This is reflected in the managers’ incomes, a striking expression of which is the astronomically high payments in a number of cases.

As regards the working class, the basic structure of the productive collective worker and unproductive wage workers[7] is preserved. However, both the relationship between the two, and in particular the structure of the productive collective labourer, are changing – since, due to capitalist development of the organisation of labour, the type of service provision and qualification demands change. This brings an increasing precariousness of labour, which Dörre describes as “secondary exploitation”. He understands by this term a particularly intensive exploitation, in which labour power is driven below its own value, as for example with migrant workers. As a consequence of this development there comes an increasing split in the working class, with what Lenin described as a “labour aristocracy”. Thus in Germany there is a part of the working class which earns relatively well and has fair working conditions, eg the core workforces in the big motor factories; while on the other hand increasingly precarious employment relationships can be found in the supporting activities. There can however be no question of a disappearance of the industrial working class, as was previously claimed by Gorz.

NECESSITY OF CLASS ANALYSIS

At the beginning of 2017 Oxfam released a report saying that 8 billionaires have exactly as much wealth as the poorer half of the world’s population.[8] There are numerous studies which all confirm that the wealth divide is getting ever wider and that social inequality is increasing. In addition, the most recent poverty and wealth report of the German Federal Government confirms this. Piketty’s study has received much attention, in which he maintains:

> “The process by which wealth is accumulated and distributed contains very powerful forces pushing towards divergence, or at any rate towards an extremely high level of inequality.”[9]

The Occupy movement coined the slogan of the 99% against 1%, which has meanwhile become the predominant political paradigm of the left altogether. An example of that is Sahra Wagenknecht[10], who in her book *Reichtum ohne Gier (Wealth without Greed)* speaks of feudal economic relations of the 21st century.

> “Also, at the beginning of the 21st century, the most important economic resources are concentrated at the disposal of the richest 1%. ... The ownership of these resources is passed on unchanged from one generation to the next according to the principle of heritability and blood-relationship. In many cases today the earnings are also pocketed virtually tax-free. Once again 99% of the population work overwhelmingly, directly or indirectly, for the wealth of the new moneyed aristocracy.”[11]

With a reference to Piketty she castigates inheritance in particular, for having contributed to this concentration of wealth.

> “Finally it is the inheritances, which give to the capitalist upper class that intergenerational dynamic stability, which thus profoundly resembles the old aristocratic nobility.”[12]

A consequence of that is the oligarchisation of economy and society:

> "But under current conditions unproductive income is simply a monopoly price which we must therefore pay, because the existing property order concentrates capital in the hands of a small social minority."[13]

However, since she abridges the class difference to wealthy people who receive unproductive income, which increases ever more through inheritance, she arrives at the consequence that genuine entrepreneurship is not compatible with capitalism:

> "Genuine entrepreneurs do not need capitalism. Should capitalism disappear, then the exclusivity of the access to capital and the associated ability to turn other people's labour into unearned income would also disappear."[14]

Capitalism, as she characterises it, is economic feudalism, to which she counterposes the market economy. Now indeed the market economy does not necessarily have to be a capitalist market economy; it also has a place within the framework of a socially determined economy. But, as Marx says, as long as the driving principle is profit,

> "Free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production, in the shape of external coercive laws having power over every individual capitalist."[15]

It is a matter of the capitalist market economy, with the relationship between wage-labour and capital shaping its social structure.

The social structures and interest groups are very much more complicated than are expressed in the popular contrast of the 1% versus the 99%, which substantially curtails reality. A glance at the employment statistics in Germany shows quite an interesting picture. In 2016 there was an annual average of 43.4 million employed. According to data from the Institute for Work and Qualification (IAQ) at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the structure of the working population has been developing as in Table 1:

1 WORKING POPULATION IN GERMANY, 1999-2015[16]

	1999	2015
Wage workers	36.1%	25.1%
Salaried employees	46.6%	59.2%
'Officials'	6.8%	4.9%
Self-employed	10.6%	10.7%

A particular phenomenon, with which numerous studies deal, is that of 'atypical occupations'. According to data from the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, more than 4 out of every 10 employees are working atypically. This includes part-time employment, marginal employees, agency workers, short-term jobs as well as self-employed or associates mostly lacking social security. Their proportion among all employees has been developing as in Table 2.

2 ATYPICAL OCCUPATIONS IN GERMANY, 2003-2015[17]

	1999	2015
Part-time employees	21.4%	25.5%
Mini- or midi-jobbers	19.0%	22.8%
Agency workers	1.1%	3.0%
Short-term jobs	7.1%	7.8%
Solo self-employed	5.5%	5.5%

The increasing atypical employment, which is marked by low wages, poor working conditions and little or no social security cover, is an expression of the above cited precariousness of employment. However, this picture arising out of the statistics is only a superficial expression of the real social relations. What needs to be taken into account is that, over the course of time, responsibility for social welfare provision has, despite equal or similar activity, shifted to the employees, and in the public service many duties formerly done by officials are now undertaken by lower grades.

In order to arrive at a description of the real relations, we need a class analysis, which starts from the basic relation of wage-labour and capital, and the changes which have been been experienced in the course of capitalist development. In this connection we can point to the Erfurt programme of the Die LINKE Party, in which the theme of class connection recurs.

> "Germany is a class society. The production of goods and services takes place primarily in private enterprises with the aim of attaining preferably high profits. The great majority of the working population work as employees. They receive as wages only a part of the value they create, the owners of capital appropriate the surplus ....
>
> The structure of the working class has changed substantially in the course of development ....
>
> On the other hand, however, the class of capitalists is in no way homogeneous. Capital as property and capital as function are frequently separated, so that we must distinguish between the owners of capital and their representatives, the management ....
>
> Different interests can also correspond to this different situation.
>
> However, alongside big capital owners and finance magnates, there are also many small and medium-sized enterprises and freelancers, who do not consistently live by the exploitation of other people's labour."[18]

It is the task of class analysis to study the real relations and to disclose the core of the current social structures. Relative incomes are only a superficial expression of class relations – which are determined much more by the place in the social production process. For that reason a central significance belongs to the development of labour.

Alongside the opposition between wage-labour and capital, the contradictions resulting from patriarchy have been asserted, especially by the female side. We have not gone into those here, but without considering them the totality of the social structure cannot be grasped. From social science milieu research, further findings can be gained which, in connection with the material class determination, deliver the basis for the identification of interests and thereby also the basis for creative politics.

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5 A term originating from a project in the high-tech strategy of the German Federal Government.

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10 Sahra Wagenknecht is joint parliamentary chairperson of the Die LINKE party.

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LARS ULRIK THOMSEN

CLASS AND CLASS ANALYSIS

CLASS ANALYSIS and class theory is indispensable for any communist party. Without theory and analysis of social conditions, it is impossible to determine a political course that leads to progress. It is incredibly easy, in today's media-driven society, to be a victim of any kind of voluntarism and spontaneity. In his first major work, *What is to be Done?*, Lenin elucidates the significance of theory and the need to overcome voluntarism In the labour movement.[1] It was a process that 15 years later secured victory for the Russian Bolsheviks in the October Revolution. These experiences not only relate to Russia, but are fundamental guidelines for all revolutionaries adapting to existing conditions.

CLASS ANALYSIS

The issue of class analysis took almost a religious character in the late 1980s. The scientific-technical revolution caused changes in the production process, and in society as well, and these formed the material basis for the discussions.

Among the participants in the debate were several who thought that we were moving away from the old-type production community, towards a knowledge society or post-industrial society, as it was termed. These theories would later form the basis for a new trend in the labour movement, the so-called 'New Left'. In fact the ideas were not new, but a revival of utopian socialism in new forms. The great advantage of Marxism is its scientific outlook in all aspects of life, whereas the utopian outlook is an idealist view hoping to convince the ruling classes of a more reasonable policy. It is like asking the bear to become a domestic dog.

There are still a number of issues that requires clarification, including the following subjects:

What is the impact on class analysis of the changes in the internationalisation of production?

How do we create a greater degree of cooperation across borders, which can curb the monopolies and the domination of finance capital?

How do we strengthen internationalism in the communist movement?

There are features in our current society that are pointing towards socialism, including the internationalisation of production and enhanced international cooperation in regional groupings, such as the EU, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) etc. But as things stand now, this internationalisation does not happen for the benefit of the people, but solely to promote capital accumulation and its concentration. The efforts of the monopolies, and capitalism in general, promote a competitive society with 'winners and losers', including a tremendously rich upper class and an increasingly impoverished underclass.

This development is not a law of nature. It can be broken if the labour movement and the communist parties are able to develop closer cooperation than is the case today. This is the objective for a renewed debate on class analysis.

The kind of society we are working towards is what Marx and Engels called "the society of freedom", where we go from the domination of the blind law of the market to a society governed by strict control and accounting of all of values in society.[2] A society where equal cooperation is achieved – nationally and internationally – is of paramount importance and an objective goal for the international labour movement.

CONTRADICTIONS IN CAPITALISM

The fundamental contradiction in capitalism is that between labour and capital. In the 1970s, the other main contradictions were between:

the state monopoly capitalist system and the interests of the people;

- monopoly interests in different imperialist countries;
- imperialist integration and national democratic interests;
- capitalism and socialism; and
- the interests of imperialism and those of humanity as a whole.

Today, class relations have changed, because since the counter-revolution of 1989 we have been living in a period of reaction, with intensified competition between the monopolies. Also, we must add a new element – Russia – to the opposition between the imperialist powers. With regard to the final bullet point, the climate crisis, imperialist wars and the great refugee and hunger problems have all worsened in the 21st century.

Understanding all these contradictions and how they are solved is crucial for a current class analysis. The task therefore consists in showing the dialectical connections between them and prioritising which takes precedence over the others.

As a consequence of the 2007-08 financial crisis, the relative unity of the imperialist powers has been replaced by obvious and serious contradictions. The picture of imperialism is more and more reminiscent of the 1930s trade war and protectionism. This development means a sharpening of the wars in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. It means increased military spending, at the expense of social and educational budgets.

'Thoughts live easily together, yet in space things push harshly against each other'
Schiller, *Wallenstein*

In this restructuring of capitalism, right-wing populism and fascism play an important role. They are used to split the labour movement and impede the struggle of the democratic forces against the cut-backs in social welfare.

In this connection, the contradiction between imperialist integration and national interests is of particular significance.[3] From a development with centripetal forces, the tendency today has shifted towards domination by centrifugal forces. The working class has an objective interest in supporting this development towards national self-determination.

CRITIQUE OF MARXISM

When analysing class relations at the national level, many claim that Marxism is obsolete and that it does not give a true picture of societal development. But the question is whether one can only look at these relationships in a national framework? The monopolies' method of controlling production is significantly different from the 1970s. They move production according to the highest profitability, and geographical distances no longer play any significant role.

Therefore, to get a true picture of class relationships, it is crucial to include most countries and their economic and political development in the analysis. If you close a car factory in Birmingham and move it to Bucharest, then you need to incorporate the relationship of both countries. The class analysis of Marxism therefore remains fully valid, when used in the right way.

Another argument against Marxism is that Marx's division of society into the three main classes of working class, capitalists and landowners[4] is far too simplistic. In fact, in his short (unfinished) section on classes in *Capital*, Vol 3, Marx truly presents the foundation for understanding class society. It is the way in which revenues are distributed that is central to the analysis. The section should be seen in conjunction with the previous one on 'Distribution Relations and Production Relations',[5] which shows that revenues are distributed among the classes according to their position in the hierarchy. The landowner's income may be called rent, but it is derived from the surplus value created in the conflict between wage-labour and capital.

Marx expressly points out that agriculture is increasingly being driven on capitalist grounds, and that the main opposition is between labour and capital. Is this not the actual development we can see in all highly developed countries today?

The same questions are elaborated in Vladimir Lenin's *A Great Beginning* from 1918:

> "And what does the 'abolition of classes' mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance.
>
> Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy."[6]

This is an extended explanation of classes, compared with Marx's remarks in *Capital*. Lenin continues:

> "Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, not enough to abolish their rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish all private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. In order to achieve this an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small-scale production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservatism which are connected with these survivals."[6]

This passage raises questions about politics in those countries still considered to be socialist, where the market economy is part of production. This surely has to be seen as a temporary measure, and not a lasting one.

Despite all the predictions about the disappearance of the working class and a transition to a post-industrial society or a knowledge economy, the working class is growing in number. The confusion arises because of the decline of the old industrial workplaces, together with a lack of recognition that workers in high-tech jobs are part of the working class. This gives a false picture of the general development of society, and promotes illusions about the transition taking place.

The second point that many overlook is that the functioning of state monopoly capitalism (SMC) requires a lot of new features in society. This applies to, eg, social tasks, health care and education. It was this analysis that was the prerequisite for the anti-monopoly strategy of the communist parties in the 1970s. This strategy should be expanded, to include international class alliances that can counter the dominance of the monopolies.

THE WORKING CLASS

What are the primary changes in the working class since the 1970s?

The internationalisation of production has meant that part of industry – shipyards, engines, foundations for oil platforms, textiles, electronics etc – has shifted to low pay countries with few or no unions. Traditionally these sectors were among the best organised by trade unions, with a high degree of class consciousness. New industries have replaced the older ones, but without the same degree of organisation. Generally the opening and closing of branches in different countries is a major problem for the unions, increasing the insecurity of the working class.

However, the internationalisation of commodity production means a considerable growth in freight transport, by land, sea and air. This can open up possibilities for united action against monopoly policies, if there is a coordinated effort from the unions.

The breaking down of national borders and customs has meant an increase in migration of people from overseas countries who are trying to make a living. This adds to the insecurity of working class people in the countries receiving migrants, because of the impact of social dumping on wages and working conditions. Unions must exert great efforts to organise the new colleagues from abroad.

The changes in the public sector are also considerable. With or without privatisation, austerity means that former agreements are undermined by lower real wages and worse terms and conditions. The fight for defending social rights has been a central question for the unions. Solidarity with public sector workers fighting austerity measures is of great importance.

The role of the media is increasing in modern society. This means a growing number of waged jobs in this sector, with a lot of new functions. Again it is a problem to organise these workers, and to build cooperation between the different unions.

The total picture of the conditions in the different branches is one of considerable changes, both on a national and an international level. That is why a topical class analysis must involve workers on an international level.

Many new branches have occurred, and it takes time before the unions are able to adjust to the new conditions. In a few words, the changes has been a true revolution in technology, transport and commodity production. They have meant export of jobs from the old capitalism to the new, and a growing insecurity in employment, with short-term contracts. These challenges must be solved on the basis of solidarity and cooperation on an international basis.

CORPORATISM IN NEW FORMS

It is an important lesson that the fundamental issues in the labour movement do not change significantly. If you do not comply with this principle, it will inevitably lead to new defeats. The prerequisite for renewed progress is that the communist parties maintain the anti-monopoly strategy and learn from historical experience.

In order to understand today's development in capitalism, it is necessary to give a short summary of corporatism in the 1920s and 30s, as well as showing how it has occurred in different forms in the 1970s and today.

The corporate state was created as a counterweight to the rapid development of the labour movement and the growing influence of Marxism. The Italian monopolists and the owners of the great latifundia agreed to finance the fascist state whose superstructure was corporatism. It was the same development that took place 10 years later in Germany, and roughly simultaneously in Spain and Portugal. All the current definitions of the corporate state deny this fact.

As in many other circumstances, capitalism and its apologists hide the true content of the nature and forms of exploitation in the corporate state. In Italy, it required significant and serious considerations in the labour movement of how to counter the new threat to the working class. We can thank the Italian Communist Party because they were able to develop a strategy that matched the new conditions.

Palmiro Togliatti's contribution to the development of the popular front policy is remarkable. In a series of lectures in Moscow in the 1930s, he generalised the Italian experience and made it available to workers fighting in other countries. In these lectures, corporatism is shown in its true form. Togliatti provides an excellent picture of how the corporate state covers all aspects of society, not only in the factories but also in the family, and in leisure time.[7]

But not only does he analyse the character of the new state. He also shows the ways to overcome it through the development of very flexible and thoughtful tactics, including: "penetrating and working inside the fascist organisation and the masses that it influences"; taking up immediate demands that can mobilise the masses, relying on their discontent and will to struggle; bringing down the barriers that formerly divided communist and social-democratic workers; raising democratic demands; and making "the most vast and courageous utilisation of the legal possibilities offered by fascism's manoeuvres themselves."

These lectures are valuable in the struggle against today's monopolies because they contain the germs for understanding the tactics that may be used, – of course, adapted to today's conditions.

Corporatism shows different content today because, instead of fascism, the main tendency is towards bourgeois democracy being replaced by autocracy and decisions being made by a small elite, while nominally democracy still exists. The ruling classes have new opportunities for controlling the masses of the people, eg by continually monitoring the activities of the revolutionary elements in society, and then excluding them from having a regular life with work and leisure. This has been evident over a long period but the secret activities are accelerating.

CLASS ALLIANCES

A central issue for the labour movement and communist parties is that of alliance policy. Was the anti-monopoly strategy developed by the communist parties in the post-war era, especially in the 1970s and 80s, correct? Did not the defeat in Chile by the fascist coup in 1973 confirm the validity of criticisms of this strategy?

These are questions that deserve a more detailed analysis. The fight against fascism in the 1930s and later in World War II meant that the communist parties changed their course and proposed a new alliance policy.[8] It was a matter of stopping fascism at all costs and replacing it with Popular Front

governments in various countries, eg Chile, Bulgaria, France and Spain. The basic question was a defence of bourgeois democracy that could unite across political boundaries.

Was the popular front only a tactical manoeuvre to defeat fascism? This is where the waters are separated in the present debate between communist parties, especially after the counter-revolution starting in 1989, which has given rise to self-examination. But the communists' strategy is not based on fluctuating economic conditions, victories or defeats. It is developed on the basis of a careful analysis of the basic contradictions and the main motives of capital at the time.

Nowadays, we see a clear right turn in all capitalist countries as a result of the financial crisis of 2007-08. Therefore it must be an obvious consideration to look at the profound experiences of the unity and people's popular front policy in the 1930s. It was not a tactical manoeuvre but a long-term strategy, which was a consequence of the changes in capitalism.

It was the same attitude that Palmiro Togliatti took in the post-war era, which contributed to the Italian Communist Party (PCI) becoming the strongest political force in the country. He advised using the experiences of the popular front adapted to the new conditions in post-war Europe.[9] What we can see is that a smart and flexible alliance policy, in conjunction with a consistent class attitude, leads to the desired results.

This does not mean that no errors were made during the work. Those errors included the historic compromise in Italy in the 1970s, and Chilean Popular Unity government's undervaluation of the military loyalty to US imperialism. However, these errors are not linked to the strategy, but to its tactical execution in the individual countries.

Was it a relevant decision to call the new strategy one for anti-monopoly democracy? It was a completely correct decision, because it clarified the new conditions based on democratic experiences and that the main opponents were the monopolies and finance capital. In other words, it was a renewal of the unity and popular front policy.

THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

Where problems arose in several developed countries, the question was about the leadership of the peace and democratic movements. It is a classical question that was also relevant in the Russian Revolutions, in that the working class should under no circumstances leave the leadership to the petty bourgeoisie or others.[10]

In the 1970s we saw a tendency to leave the leadership to the petty bourgeoisie in the growing state functions, social services, education and administration, which in these years grew sharply. Many were well-educated and they often became elected to positions of trust in the various movements, especially the peace movements. When the reaction began in the mid-1980s, these people became more susceptible to anti-communism. They turned to utopian socialism, giving up the alliance with the working class, forming new parties such as the so called Red-Green Movement or those regarded as 'New Left', and turned to the bourgeois parties in the various parliaments, hoping to gain influence.

It is an important lesson that the fundamental issues in the labour movement do not change significantly. If you do not recognise this, it will inevitably lead to new defeats. A scientific approach means using dialectics in all these questions; to understand what the core of matter is and then replace obsolete parts with new ones.

The prerequisite for a renewed progress is that the Communist parties stick to the anti-monopoly strategy, learning from the historical experience and developing thetheory further.

That is the primary challenge of the labour movement: to find new forms to counter the monopolies. This can only be done by uniting the efforts on a national and international basis - proletarians of all countries unite!

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1 V I Lenin, *Colleced Works (LCW)*, Vol 5, pp 347-530.
2 K Marx and F Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Vol 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, pp 98-137.
3 This is the main link in the chain, because of the direct impact on people's standard of living.
4 K Marx, *Capital*, Vol 3, in K Marx and F Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol 37, pp 870-1.
5 *Ibid*, pp 863-70.
6 V I Lenin, *A Great Beginning*, in *LCW*, Vol 29, pp 408-34.
7 P Togliatti, *Lectures on Fascism*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1976, especially pp 114-5, 151-4.
8 At the 7th World Congress of Comintern in Moscow 1935.
9 P Togliatti, *The Marxist Conception of the Working Class Party,* in *Ausgewählte Schriften (Selected Works),* Neue Kritik, Frankfurt am Main, 1967.
10 V I Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Section 12: 'Will the sweep of the democratic revolution be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoils from it?', in *LCW*, Vol 9, pp 92-104.

DOMENICO LOSURDO

‘THERE IS NO SOCIETY, ONLY INDIVIDUALS’

‘Firstly, the monopolist control exercised by big finance on the means of production of thoughts, and particularly of emotions, plays a much bigger role in domestic politics today than in Marx’s time. Secondly, we should pay attention to the dominant power relationships today: the military apparatus erected by the USA is monstrous and of a power which has never existed previously.’

ARE THE dismantling of the social welfare state in Western Europe and the destruction of ‘social and economic rights’ exclusively the result of the financial crisis and the associated budgetary difficulties? The ruling power and ideology continue to insist on this thesis, though they don’t address the basis for the increasing of wealth of a small but increasingly greedy oligarchy. There is however a more important consideration: the processes which are playing out at the present time go back to a dispute which has a long, indeed a very long, history.

Towards the end of the Second World War Friedrich Hayek[1] issued a warning from Britain, where the welfare state was taking its first steps, that the “essential characteristics of Western civilisation” were being severely threatened, and that “individualism” and not only the “liberalism of the 19th and 18th centuries” were endangered, but, still further back, the heritage of Erasmus, Montaigne, Cicero and Tacitus, Pericles and Thucydides! The struggle against the welfare state was, he said, a battle for civilisation, indeed a religious war: “individualism” (the opponent of the welfare state) had its roots both in the “philosophy of classical antiquity” and in Christianity.

Fifteen years later Hayek, one of the two patriarchs of neoliberalism (the other, as we shall see, was Ludwig von Mises) came back to the attack,[2] calling for an end for all time with “ ‘social’ or totalitarian democracy”, which had arisen in France (and on the European continent) with the 1848 revolution and the then demand for the right to work. This thesis was affirmed in the 1970s: the “social and economic rights”, important for the United Nations (an institution which in the eyes of the conservatives was exposed to the demagogy of the Third World), and the “freedom from want” introduced by former US president Franklin D Roosevelt, were stigmatised as expressions of the damaging influence of the “Russian-Marxist Revolution”[3].

Demanding the deletion of “social and economic rights” (and “freedom from want”) from the Charter of Human Rights, Hayek made no reference to problems of the state budget or affordability. The welfare state was basically to be combated for much nobler reasons: even if it took the form of ‘social’ democracy, such a state was totalitarian in reality, alien to Western civilisation and in the final analysis a synonym for barbarism.

The October Revolution was made principally responsible for all that. In fact “Communist Russia” was the first country which “had made the satisfaction of the social basic needs of its citizens into a declared state aim”. Reacting to such a challenge, the Weimar Republic had safeguarded in its constitution the pursuit of the aim of a “decent existence for all”.[4] And the communist challenge was also said to make itself felt in the North American republic, first in Roosevelt’s measures, which were intended to act against the Great Depression, and then in the proposition and demand for “freedom from want”, *ie* freedom from poverty and material deficiency.

Beyond the “Russian-Marxist Revolution” Hayek also brought the French Revolution into the discussion. And again he hit the mark: in fact Robespierre had spoken of the right to life as the first of the “inalienable human rights”.[5] No less interesting was the answer which Sieyès provided to the Jacobin leader: widening the sphere of politics to include the social question signified transforming the “ré-publique” (public thing) into a “ré-totale” (totalitarian thing), *ie* transforming the republic into a total or totalitarian institution.[6]

That is the accusation which the neoliberals continue to hurl against the welfare state. In the eyes of the dominant ideology today, it goes back to an evil political tradition, or is the result of a quite long class struggle. Hayek was aware of that, having denounced, in his condemnation of the ‘social’ or totalitarian democracy, the pernicious role of the *ouvriers,* the French workers, who had been the protagonists of the 1848 revolution.

Thus we have before us a class struggle which comprises more than 200 years of history. Right after the end of the Second World War the protagonists of constructing the welfare state in Western Europe recognised “in the spreading out of strong forms of social support a suitable means of countering the ideological and political influence of the Soviet Union”.[7] Consequently Hayek remained widely isolated as he launched his neoliberal crusade; but his influence gradually grew as the attractiveness of the socialist and communist movement declined in the world. In 1974 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for economics; and around that time he became the inspiration for Ronald Reagan’s and Margaret Thatcher’s economics. The final triumph came in 1989-1991. The turning point: after the “great leap forward, which concerns social justice”, stimulated by “the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917”, there followed the “ultra-liberal wave”, which had been building up over the years 1980-1990.[8] “When America gained victory in the Cold War, there no longer appeared to be any strong rivals for our American model.”[9] And further:

> “In looking back one will probably say that it was the collapse of socialism which led capitalism – hitherto

inhibited in this way – and its spin-doctors from fine and empty words to a rhetoric of harshness. The system competition had ended, and capitalism intended no longer to fear its [*ie* socialism's –*Ed*] acceptance."[10]

Actually the ideological climate has changed radically from what it used to be. The "Four Freedoms" of which Roosevelt – allegedly influenced by the "Russian-Marxist Revolution" – spoke in his speech of 6 January 1941 place the recognition of the "priority of human rights" and the realisation of "freedom from want" in one; now, so little attention is paid to the latter, that it is passed over or ultimately left to organisations which by their statutes are concerned with the protection and extension of human rights. Nowadays workers who have been sacked, the unemployed, the poor, have no-one else to whom they can turn.

Thus – it is said – when such workers wave the banner of "social justice" and chase after "the illusion" of it, they show that they are individuals afflicted by "atavism" and nostalgia for "tribal society", resembling in a certain way "people considered to be crazy".[11] Such people are said to insist on appealing to society and only show that they have not understood the lesson given by British prime minister Margaret Thatcher in September 1987 [see article title –*Ed*]. Indeed, a successful American philosopher had already decreed 40 years ago that there is no "social entity", "there are only individuals with their individual lives".[12] This was the year 1974; the Vietnam War was raging and the obligatory draft was in place in the USA. The state proved itself such a domineering "social entity", that it demanded the use of people's lives, right up to their sacrifice; but it fled into non-existence if individuals or social classes demanded its regard for their difficult or desperate situation.

Could these workers, here coarsely addressed by the philosopher and the politicians, not attempt to help themselves, by proceeding in a unionised way against their situation? Could, for example, the 'working poor' not organise with the aim of achieving a more appropriate remuneration? Even that does not look rosy, especially in the USA: the number of employees organised in trade unions has fallen, particularly in the private sector, and 'the impersonal powers of the market' are not to blame in the first instance. Employers use illegal means, since it is not difficult for them to pay the modest penalties for breaking the (quite patchy) labour laws.[13] On the other hand the social circumstances make it still more difficult, to organise in trade unions and to resort to strike action:

> "Only 27% of the unemployed can reckon with support. That allows the businesses to punish the trade unions and to threaten the employees who seek to organise themselves (at a trade union level)."[14]

With its 1,400,000 employees the big department store chain Walmart "is the biggest private-sector employer in the United States. No-one there is organised in trade unions." Every attempt in this direction has been mercilessly subdued.[15] The calculation of the company is however simple:

> "Here in the USA every employee – including those in public services – is endangered with dismissal. I have seen how, due to financial cutbacks at local government level (federal states and municipalities), thousands of public service workers have been made redundant."[16]

If a "potentially terminable worker" signs up with a trade union, that is as if his termination is guaranteed.

The anti-trade union activism deployed by the employers is anything but discouraged by the political power. In summer 1981 US president Ronald Reagan sacked *en bloc* 13,000 air traffic controllers, who had gone on strike to improve their salaries and working conditions. This act of power had wider immediate effect and was of great significance:

> "In the public sector, particularly in some states, the trade union still had a considerable presence: that was the basis for the 'coordinated offensive' against it, which was launched by the Republican government."[17]

Ideology must not be forgotten: the majority of economists contribute to the delegitimisation of the trade unions.[18] Nothing new under the sun! Neoliberalism and its two forefathers have always had a hostile view of trade unions, regarding them as being solely responsible for 'destructive ideas'. That is the main charge formulated by von Mises,[19,20] who didn't hesitate to take aim at the "legal protection of labour" and the "juridical regulation of working time" which, he said, are recommended by "political writers", but which are to blame for the reduction in "the scope of the required work and the income of the economic production process", and therefore also for the promotion of "destructive politics". In more recent times Hayek[21] maintained that "it would undoubtedly be the moral duty of the government, not only to avoid interfering with free play (of the market), but also to prevent any other organised group from doing it", *ie* trade unions. Even more, he said, it is mandatory to attack the latter with a very simple argument: by enforcing labour market standards, it is precisely these "worker organisations" which "injure other workers, in that they completely deprive them of the possibility of a good job" and thereby prevent them "from doing the work which they would like."

As we can see, the trend towards abolishing trade union freedom of association in the USA has a long history, which is studded with illustrious names; and we need scarcely add that the crisis is currently sharpening in one or more European countries. While poverty and social insecurity are increasing, it is becoming altogether more difficult to do anything against it or to restrain it by means of trade union organisation.

If not through trade union activity, then we could try to change the existing social relations through commitment to political freedom and free elections. But where do things actually stand regarding such a proposal? Let's give the *New York Times* the floor:

> "On the third Wednesday of every month, the nine members of an elite Wall Street society gather in Midtown Manhattan. The men share a common goal: to protect the interests of the big bankers in the vast market for derivatives, one of the most profitable – and controversial – fields in finance. They also share a common secret: the details of their meetings, even their identities, have been strictly confidential .... In theory this group exists to safeguard the integrity of the multi-trillion dollar market. In practice it also defends the dominance of the big banks."[22]

"Dominance of the big banks", and not only in the economy: we must reckon with this reality! The (rare) attempts of the political power to exercise control or at least to provide clarification, come up against an insurmountable

barrier: in the US Congress it consists of those who theoretically are supposed to be representatives of the people, but who have often "received large campaign contributions from bankers" and consequently turn out to be grateful and solicitous to their financiers.[22]

Unfortunately the big banks have the power, and more generally the big money, indeed so undisputed and effective, that an increasing number of observers and analysts are lamenting the undermining of democracy. Already, a few years before the outbreak of the crisis, one could read in the *International Herald Tribune*: "The United States has become a plutocracy" where "the takeover of governing institutions by corporate and private wealth" now succeeds, while "the rest of the people are left out".[23] Since the outbreak of the crisis the accusation of "plutocracy" has also been heard from time to time in Europe,[10] while "plutonomy"[24] is becoming a recurrent theme in the USA. It is a plutocracy which, under the conditions of the present "patrimonial capitalism", certainly sanctifies the power of wealth, but more precisely inherited wealth, which has no sort of relation to individual merit.[25] While restricting or suppressing trade union activities, the "plutocracy" is in the process of emptying representative bodies of their content.

...

FROM THE PRODUCTION OF THOUGHTS TO THE PRODUCTION OF EMOTIONS

The setback of 1989-91 is not sufficient to explain the weakness still marking the Western left, despite the economic and political crisis and the succession of wars which have been launched in violation of international law, which are clearly of colonial nature and are precursors of far worse atrocities. The analysis needs to be deepened by the study of events which have occurred in the metropolis of capitalism. In order to understand it, we start with an observation by Marx and Engels in the 1840s:

> "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, *ie* the class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it."[26]

Naturally this analysis is only valid for a relatively stable situation, and we must also not lose sight of the fact that there is a separately developed lower-class ideology standing in opposition. In order adequately to assess the above oft-cited text from *The German Ideology*, we should juxtapose it with a contemporaneous text from Alex de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America,* which described the situation in that country, as concerned the press:

> "[T]he creation of a newspaper is a simple and easy undertaking: a few subscribers suffice for the journalist to cover his expenses. The number of periodical or semi-periodical writings in the United States therefore surpasses all belief. The most enlightened Americans attribute the little power of the press to this incredible scattering of its forces."[27]

We don't have to stress that this picture – possibly even then, as it was sketched, not totally unadorned – has nothing at all to do with the current reality, which is marked by a gigantic concentration process, which has in real life secured the press monopoly for the big bourgeoisie. After all, since the time of Marx (and de Tocqueville) something new has come. *The German Ideology* related to the press, to the production of "ideas" and the immediate suppression of the "ideas" of the lower classes. However, as Gustave Le Bon remarked at the end of the 19th century, one should take account of the following: "The masses are ... like women" [sic], irrational, and so, in order to control them, one must rely on "feelings", on "suggestion", and promote enthusiasm for "clearly a little unconscious heroism" or for "chimeras, the daughters of the unconscious".[28]

Since then the control of ideas, but principally of feelings, has certainly been at the centre of the fight for power; and achieving or maintaining such a control has been made possible, first and foremost, by use of the "unconscious". For this even the techniques of commercial "advertising" are to be applied: an election candidate, or a war started by a government, is to be propagandised just like "chocolate", namely by systematic repetition of a "plain and simple claim, free from every consideration and every proof".[29] The connection of more or less unconscious suggestion and obsessive repetition was intended to make it possible to undermine the already weak rational resistance forces of the "masses".

More than half a century later, this ingeniously sensed change became daily and scientific practice, due to the coincidence of mass production, mass consumption and commercial advertising, with the aim of stimulating just this mass consumption. In the years of postwar reconstruction and of the economic miracle, Vance Packard's very successful book, *The Hidden Persuaders* published in 1957 in the USA, directed attention towards an unknown and worrying phenomenon: the grip on the unconscious of everyone, which latterly had been used by commercial advertising and had achieved a qualitatively new dimension. One had to see the reality: "Our daily life is incessantly subject to manipulations, of which we notice nothing"; now "hidden persuaders", "magicians of the deep", who are involved there, call the shots in analysing and creating "unconscious special effects". The "producers of pictures had arrived at the conclusion that only the factor of feeling would be decisive in mass commercialism"; thus the cleverest 'persuaders' make use instead of key concepts and key images, in order to incite the wished-for reactions.[30]

The turn not only affected mass consumption. Commercial advertising and public relations also played an important and decisive role in political life *per se*. A bleak conclusion arose:

> "At a national level, the method essentially serves the politician who impacts on the voter, who in turn is conditioned every day like Pavlov's dog, through the massive application of correspondingly manipulated and repeated symbols."[31]

Politics, which we are talking about, mainly prevails inside an individual country; commercial advertising and public relations have not yet completely covered international politics. A few years before Le Bon published his *Psychology of Crowds*, German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, having failed in the attempt at colonial expansion – which had been propagated by the German Empire as well as by the other Western great powers in the name of

spreading civilisation and defending human principles – turned to his colleagues and said "Can we not find chilling details about human cruelty?" On the wave of moral outrage then released, it would then have been easier to call for a crusade against African and Islamic barbarity and to strengthen Germany's international role.

The Iron Chancellor can be regarded as the first theoretician of 'humanitarian war': the end of the 19th century, like today, was inspired by the love of freedom and justice or by disapproval of the continued existence of slavery in the Near East and Africa. Here the famous aphorism of Nietzsche fits: "And no-one lies as much as those who are outraged".[32] If Le Bon moved the stress from the production of thoughts to emotions, Bismarck recognised that outrage was the emotion of decisive significance: the future manufacture of outrage and its power thereby became an instrument of international politics. In that he targeted the 'barbarians' whom Europe and the West were supposed to subjugate and civilise, Bismarck intended to use that instrument through campaigns which would be supported by an outraged mass of the people.

In the USA, accustomed from its birth to waging campaigns against the indigenous people as wars for civilisation and religion, the recourse to production and manipulation of outrage had already tended to be an essential component of belligerent undertaking, whoever was the enemy. The Spanish-American War, at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, was ideologically prepared by Washington through dissemination of completely false "Notes" which accused the Spaniards of having killed unarmed prisoners and massacred 300 Cuban women.[33] Thus arose the outrage against an enemy which – according to the Congress resolution of 20 April 1898 – had not hesitated to grasp the means which appeared repulsive to "the moral sense of the American people" and represented a "disgrace for Christian civilisation".[34]

...

To the extent that the sharpening of conflicts between 'civilised' peoples also brought about the expulsion of the enemy from civil society, a weapon was taken up which had been traditionally reserved for the fight against the 'barbarians'. Of all the conscious as well as unconscious messages, none which could increase the level of indignation was left out. The 'total mobilisation' – the phrase which in all countries accompanied the First World War – went hand in hand with total manipulation, whose kernel was formed by the production and power of indignation. Thus, the method suggested by Le Bon was closely connected with that raised by Bismarck: the main task of war propaganda was the incessant repetition of 'discoveries' and the tireless evocation of images which, thanks also to the aid of unconscious techniques, were intended to unleash a rousingly irresistible wave of outrage against an enemy capable of any infamous action.

Since the end of the Cold War, a further qualitative change has also been having an impact, not just concerning the active and essential role which public relations has to play at the start of a war or during its course. The production of indignation no longer serves only to strengthen the armed forces and to demoralise the enemy's. Thanks to TVs, mobile phones, computers and social media, spontaneous or artificially produced indignation can count on an unprecedentedly close-knit and pervasive dissemination; and the strongest country at the level of communication technology can make use of it to destabilise the enemy country from the inside.

In the Vietnam War the United States experienced the dramatic impression on public opinion of the TV-transmitted images of battles and bombed towns and villages. Consequently the strategies, particularly those of the USA, became subjected to a question of the sort: what can happen, if one targets a country which is also completely defenceless at a multimedia level, and bombards it with a barrage of (also artificially produced) images, suited to stoking up the indignation of public opinion in the interior, as well as also at the international level?

That is a question to which we shall try to respond later in the book *see below*. Meanwhile two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the monopolist control exercised by big finance on the means of production of thoughts, and particularly of emotions, plays a much bigger role in domestic politics today than in Marx's time. Secondly, we should pay attention to the dominant power relationships today: the military apparatus erected by the USA is monstrous and of a power which has never existed previously. That is well known, and the countries which live under the duress of the continual threat of bombardment, war and invasion give proper attention to this fact, as also do the peace movements. Less well known is another factor, which however is closely connected with the first: it is the appalling power of the multimedia fireworks, it is the terror of the outrage on which the White House can draw, when it plans or carries out its military interventions. Before the bombers take off with their deadly loads, an intensive disinformation plan is already under way, which is intended to isolate the enemy so far as possible and stimulate a global wave of moral indignation against it. Similar considerations are valid for operations, which aim at destabilising the enemy (or potential enemy) country and promoting within it the regime change which Washington desires.

■ This article is a translation of excerpts from the author's 2017 book *Wenn die Like fehlt: Gesellschaft des Spetakels, Krise, Krieg (If the Left is Absent: Society of spectacle, crisis and war)*, which were published in *Marxistische Blätter,* 6-2017, pp 30-39, "with kind permission" of the publisher PapyRossa. The translation here is by the *CR* Editor, and permission to publish has in turn been granted by *Marxistische Blätter. Wenn die Linke fehlt* is a translation by Christa Herterich of the Italian original, *la sinistra assente – Crisi, società dello spettacolo, guerra*, published in 2014 by Carocci editore, Rome.

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CARL HARPER
THE GIG ECONOMY

"MACHINES AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS MUST SERVE TO EASE THE WORK OF ALL AND NOT TO ENABLE A FEW TO GROW RICH AT THE EXPENSE OF MILLIONS AND TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE".[1]

FANTASTICALLY, THIS warning about the possible effects of technological advancements is not attributed to a modern economist such as Paul Mason or Thomas Piketty. It precedes 1960s Italian-inspired autonomist Marxists, such as Antonio Negri, and even predates the 1930s American-inspired 'occupy' movements, by over 25 years in fact.

Those were the observations of Vladimir Lenin, taken from a pamphlet entitled *To The Rural Poor,* published as far back as 1903. Yet today, those mechanical and technological advances have failed to free workers from work which creates surplus value for capitalist employers. They have acted as a catalyst in complicating labour practices and the relationship between work, pay and society.

Due to the internet, millions of workers in the UK and hundreds of millions worldwide are now being paid for work which they have not obtained through the 'traditional' forms of employment – being directly employed and paid by an employer for work carried out etc – but instead through online companies and the use of platforms. This is cutting across all the traditional and also relatively recent sectors of industry – manufacturing, services, transport, telecommunications. All now rely on information technology, data and the internet for their highly digitised, technological and 'sophisticated' modern business models.

Essentially platforms simply act as online intermediaries, as a form of digital infrastructure. These create a base from which an entire business model can be created and deployed. The work-specific platforms, such as Upwork and TaskRabbit, are online and mobile 'marketplaces' that match freelance labour with local demand, allowing consumers to find immediate help with jobs or even everyday tasks, including cleaning, moving, delivery and handyman work.

One obvious consequence of using digital platforms is that those companies are free from almost all actual infrastructure or physical assets such as factories, warehouses, offices etc. Uber, the world's largest taxi firm, owns no cars. Facebook, the world's most popular media company, creates no content. Alibaba, the world's most valuable retailer, carries no stock. And Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no property.

As a result, growing numbers of workers are moved out of concentrated places of work – decimating trade union collective bargaining and organisation – and into the digital 'marketplace'. And the companies who own the platforms also avoid large concentrations of workers. Facebook has only around 25,000 workers worldwide. Messaging service WhatsApp employed just over 50 people when it was sold for around $19bn. And before its sale for around £1bn,

‘A systematic change in the economic model is being created, removing pay beyond a specific task, reducing any ‘fixed cost’ on the part of the capitalist, and thereby increasing the profits.’

photo- and video-sharing networking service Instagram had just 13 workers!

People have argued that companies stripping away what were once contracted workers and relieving themselves of assets (employment infrastructure) are in some way liberating for workers. But, as Lenin warned could happen, rather than the creation of millions of ‘micro-entrepreneurs’, we have seen sustained economic inequality over the past two centuries as the concentration of wealth-producing capital has ended up in the hands of an already wealthy few. Workers are left with insecure work, low pay and non-existent workers’ rights.

SO CAN REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST IDEAS PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO THESE PROBLEMS? AFTER ALL, AT 150 YEARS OLD, DAS KAPITAL IS EVEN OLDER THAN LENIN’S PAMPHLET.

For Marxists, truth is concrete and absolute. Although old slogans cannot always be applied in a new situation, consistent application of Marxist methods and ideas – defending an independent working class approach – enables us to work through the changes in labour power and the means of production.

Fundamentally the means of production – the ‘instruments of labour’ (tools, factories, infrastructure etc) and the ‘subjects of labour’ (natural resources and raw materials) – largely remain in the private ownership of some of the wealthiest individuals and corporations. In fact, the modern-day ‘digital platforms’ or fully-automated (so-called ‘lights out’) factory models, are ever more increasingly monopolised and in the possession of an ever-decreasing number of people.

Rather than trying to recalibrate Marx’s writings to grasp this apparently new world, we should approach it by looking at its fundamental make-up. It is true that terms such as ‘platforms’ and ‘gig’ economy were not coined by Marx. But Marxism, by stripping down those terms to their essential basis, can help those looking for an alternative to a ruthless, exploitative capitalist system.

Undoubtedly the ‘tech sector’ is revolutionising many of our everyday interactions, activities and jobs. Nevertheless, it must be observed that it is still relatively small in its own right – despite being highly profitable, in pure economic terms it is still only an emerging industry. In the US it accounts for around 7% of value added, employing just 2.5% of the population, around the same as in agriculture. In Britain, manufacturing still employs 3 times more people than the tech sector. However the changes are disproportionately damaging as large numbers of workers from the shrinking ‘traditional’ sectors are left without employment opportunities within the new sectors.

For instance, the so-called ‘gig’ economy has created a monumental shift, from careers in the ’70s and jobs in the ’90s, to the ‘tasks’ or ‘gigs’ of today for a growing number of people. A systematic change in the economic model is being created, removing pay beyond a specific task, reducing any ‘fixed cost’ on the part of the capitalist, and thereby increasing the profits. Whilst not indicative of a complete national or global economic shift as yet, it has plunged hundreds of thousands of people into poverty and misery.

In addition to ‘gigs’ for workers to carry out tasks, we have also seen the rise of the ‘sharing economy’, which usually manifests as ‘apps’ for a way to ‘share’ goods and services. If you want a place to stay, or you have a spare room or even a home, there is Airbnb, which offers that space to users, for example. But as things stand, these are not driven by any form of communist or communal ideology but by profit for businesses with huge capital backing founded on exploitation and private ownership of the marketplace, *ie* the app or platform. This type of market is only feasible while private ownership still exists, another aspect of capitalism which traditional Marxism addresses.

Platforms are essentially the latest (and potentially final) stage of capitalism. Capitalism has always developed, and Marx recognised and wrote about its ability to regenerate itself:

> “By maturing the material conditions, and the combination on a social scale of the processes of production, it matures the contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist form of production, and thereby provides, along with the elements for the formation of a new society, the forces for exploding the old one”.[2]

Initially, capitalism developed into what has been called the ‘Fordist’ model: a manufacturer producing vast quantities of homogenous goods, owning and participating directly in the majority of the process up to the final sale, coupled with mass consumption. This evolved to a post-Fordist model: the individualisation and customisation of products based on data provided by consumers. Then we came to the ‘lean business’ models where, if an element of of a business is not profitable, it would simply be cut off. Nike, for instance, concentrates almost entirely on advertising and branding and has outsourced (highly exploitatively) almost everything else.

As Marx pointed out, each development was the result of

the class antagonisms reaching a point where change was unavoidable. In essence platforms are just the latest stage. What evidence is there that this stage will not culminate in those class antagonisms forcing a change? Marx's prognosis is unassailable.

Interestingly, in his book *Platform Capitalism*,[3] Nick Srnicek excludes Apple from being defined as a platform. Although it is remarkably profitable in the tech sector, he describes it as being within what could be described as the post-Fordist model, selling luxury items expensively on the back of branding and advertising. Despite an apparent platform image, creating iTunes etc, Apple still gets 68% of its profits from goods such as iPhones. The exploitation of workers, outsourcing manufacturing to areas of cheap labour etc, therefore still forms the basis of its profit making.

Another relatively new capitalist term is 'networking', vital to these emerging forms of technological development. In essence, the more users per platform, the more valuable the platform itself. For example, if you want to be on social media, the chances are you'll end up on Facebook, as it has the most users, meaning it functions more effectively in its purpose of connecting users. This has effectively led to the monopolisation of social media. As we learned from Marx, the creation of monopolies and the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands is unavoidable within the capitalist system.

Car ride-hire platform Uber is so determined to hold a monopoly over the taxi industry that it was prepared to lose around $1bn per day fighting off competition from a similar form of company in China. Indeed, as a business model such firms are unsustainable unless they create a monopoly, but given the vast profits this monopolisation would create, these platforms attract huge sums of investment from venture capitalists.

Some platforms, such as Google, even offer many of their services for free, such as Gmail and Calendar. This initial loss gets people 'on board'; then, with a wider audience ensured, they raise advertising prices to a level where profits are restored. Amazon has been hugely successful in this area, offering its Fire and Kindle services at a loss but capturing users in its Amazon 'ecosystem'.

Online operation creates the conditions where firms like Facebook and Google can harvest data, to target advertising and information to individual users. As you would expect, given the large amounts of capital invested in these companies, no platform within a capitalist system is neutral. Users and providers, advertisements, news and information are brought together through algorithms which of course are increasingly politically motivated by the capitalist class. If unchallenged, the political ideology of the capitalists achieves dominance in people's lives.

SO HOW DO WE CHALLENGE THIS EFFECTIVELY?

Broadly speaking such technological advances can still only be used in two ways. They can open up a new society for the world's population, or continue with the savage reduction in the living standards of society.

Marx said the material basis for a new society exists, but in order to realise such a transformation the capitalist class must be completely removed from all levels of power. As in Marx's day, the only way to do that in 2018 is through a socialist revolution, mobilising the 'traditional' industrial proletariat and the so-called 'precariat' – those in highly precarious jobs across different sectors created by modern capitalism such as those in the 'gig' economy. At bottom, they are still exploited and robbed of their 'surplus value', whether in a factory or signed up to a platform, to create profits which are siphoned off by the capitalists.

We cannot deny that there is a change in the make-up of the proletariat, particularly in the service and tech sector. But these changes are simply cosmetic, modernised in line with the technologies and goods available to people today. Even with this 'white-collar' proletariat, it is important to point out that the development of these layers is not a hindering factor to socialist change. These layers are equally liable to feel the pressure of the class struggle, arguably more so in a globally connected world, and they will resort to the traditional methods of the working class to which there is no viable alternative, like joining trade unions, organising strikes and protests, and with the correct political leadership going on to carry out the revolution needed to prize power from the hands of the capitalists. Strikes and movements have already taken place in this new sector, such as those by Deliveroo workers who took action over proposed changes to their structure which would have seen them receiving a payment of just £3.75 for each delivery in place of a £7 an hour and £1 for each delivery.

Rather than capitalist monopoly platforms, capitalist monopoly networks, and indeed any form of capitalist economic model, Marxists should be planning and mobilising for democratically run, publicly owned platforms and networks. Rather than ruthlessly searching for profits at any cost to humankind, a socialist economic system would use the data and technology available to improve the lives of ordinary people. Rather than automation leading to misery and impoverishment, it could free up people to progress society.

The starkest visualisation of the balance between working class opportunity and a furthering of capitalist domination can be highlighted using my final 'tech term'. So-called 'industrial clouds' are being created by large tech companies such as Siemens. These are enabling models for completely automated, integrated, interactable factories which can create identical or individual products without any human intervention.

Under capitalist control, workers are systematically laid off in droves, forced into insecure jobs or a welfare system under attack by the Tories, whilst the profits which are generated by automated production are pocketed. Under a socialist society, governed by the rules of Marxism, those workers would still be relieved of most of their work, but in a fundamentally different socio-economic environment.

Through democratically elected committees of workers, experts and consumers, the needs and wants of the majority of ordinary people could be delivered by such technologies and industries in a planned economy. Workers would be free to enjoy leisure and arts, and to carry out the vital work which new technologies are unable to completely fulfil, such as care and other services, without poverty and misery.

Another world is developing, that is undeniable. As with the era of Marx and Lenin, the interests that world serves, in today's technologically advanced digital epoch, will be determined solely by balance between the forces of the capitalists and the working class.

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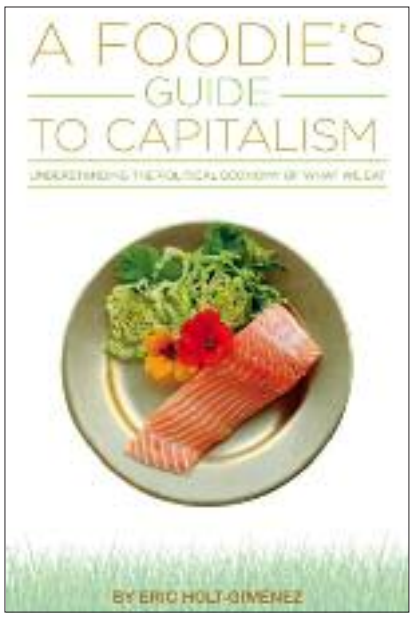
REVIEW



Understanding the political economy of what we eat

Review by Martin Levy

A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism by Eric Holt-Giménez
[Monthly Review Press, New York, 2017, 280 pp, pbk, £18.99. ISBN 978-1-5836765-9-2]

ERIC HOLT-GIMÉNEZ is the executive director of Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, and has written extensively on the global food crisis, the expansion of agrofuels, land issues and social movements for food justice and sovereignty. He previously worked as an agroecologist in Central America and Mexico for over 20 years.

Do foodies need to understand capitalism? Yes, he says. Most people in the food movement are too busy trying to cope with the immediate problems of the food system, concentrating on just a few issues, rather than dealing with it as a whole. Furthermore, the combination of globalisation, the demise of the old left and the spread of new movements, while opening the left to issues of gender, environment, ethnicity and race, has in affluent countries produced a generation of somewhat class-blind activists with little interest in how the economic system actually works.

Yet it is the capitalist domination of the food system that is at the root of so many of its problems. The author not only exposes and explains that, but at the same time provides a basic introduction to Marxist economics of capitalism, as seen through the lens of the food system. It is largely directed to a North American audience, but there are lessons for all of us today.

Too often, food and agriculture have been left out of left-wing political discourse, as if peripheral to the class struggle. But actually, they are crucial. Family and peasant farmers need to be able to feed themselves and their families, while workers need nutritious diets too. However, capitalism needs a supply of landless labourers who have nothing to sell but their labour power – kept as low as possible by reducing food costs – while seeing opportunities for profiteering not only in the food system but in enclosing, buying and selling agricultural land. This also links with today's environmental crisis and Marx's comments about the "metabolic rift" between humanity and the environment.

In 'How Our Capitalist System Came to Be', Holt-Giménez starts by covering the same ground as Marx's historical description of "primitive accumulation" in *Capital*, while showing how Britain ceased to be self-sufficient in food production, with the diet shifting to items such as maize, sugar, rice and tea, imported from the colonies. Slavery was crucial to the establishment of this first global food regime. The second such regime started in the 1950s, when the massive agricultural overproduction in the advanced capitalist countries was used as 'food aid' to 'underdeveloped countries', in part to steer them away from the Soviet Union, but also to open up their grain markets, to the detriment of local farmers who could not compete. Former colonies now became dependent on the Global North for food, confirming the Western notion that they needed to be 'developed'.

The next stage, the 'Green Revolution', was a campaign to spread industrial agriculture into the Global South. New high-yielding dwarf hybrids of American wheat, together with new breeding techniques for rice and maize, and the general spread of irrigation, fertilisers and pesticides, are claimed to have saved a billion people from hunger. Actually, by displacing local varieties of the cereal crops, and because farmers needed capital to pay for the seeds, irrigation, fertiliser and pesticides, the Green Revolution created as many hungry people as it saved, driving people off the land into shanty-towns or into slash-and-burn of tropical forests. Anyone looking for reasons for the current migration crisis should start here.

Today we have a corporate food regime characterised by monopoly market power and mega-profits of agrifood corporations like Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, Coca-Cola, Tesco, Carrefour, Walmart and Amazon. They dominate Western government policies and determine the rules set by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Industrial agriculture has destroyed up to 75% of the world's agrobiodiversity, uses up to 80% of the planet's fresh water, and produces up to 20% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. The system can't be fixed: it needs to be replaced.

In Chapter 2, 'Food, A Special Commodity', Holt-Giménez again draws on Marx's *Capital*, discussing commodity, use value, exchange value, socially necessary labour time, surplus value – absolute and relative – and capital concentration. Food, he says, is a special commodity, because we can't live long without it – though capitalism treats it as just another commodity. Farm workers and food workers around the world are generally superexploited, as wages are too low to support them and their families at the average standard of living. Absolute surplus value is increased by extending the working day for migrant labourers at the same pay; relative surplus value is increased by technological change which has drastically reduced the growing time of animals on factory farms.

"Why is organic so expensive?" is the wrong question, says Holt-Giménez. It should be "Why isn't organic more expensive?", and the reason for that is that the exchange value of an organic commodity is

largely determined by the socially necessary labour time to produce the conventional equivalent. He points out that large-scale farming and low values of socially necessary labour time have nothing to do with sustainability, as even large mechanised organic farms use large amounts of petroleum, over-apply organic pesticides and fertilisers, and ship their products thousands of miles. Small commercial and peasants farmers don't actually compete with the capital-intensive farms but instead survive by finding niche markets.

It is in this chapter that we come to what seems to me the author's central objective (pp 70, 71, 80):

> "Though we are not likely to lose the commodity form of products any time soon, we can work to change the relation between use and exchange values, and we can work to change the terms of socially necessary labour time (and working conditions) to make a more sustainable and equitable system that reduces the exploitation of workers and does not pass off on society the social costs … that the producers ought to bear." "We will have to change the way we value the labour in our food …." "Substantive changes to the food system will affect the entire economic system. Perhaps this is precisely what we need."

This seems like a clear statement of the need for socialism.

Chapter 3, 'Land and Property', discusses private land, public land ('the commons') and the rest – "open access". The last, the author says, is actually a frontier, where resources are in dispute. These areas, eg the rainforests in Central America and Indonesia, are being grabbed, privatised, commodified, traded and speculated on in world markets. This speculation in land is a direct consequence of the massive corporate accumulation of capital, constantly seeking new areas for profitable investment. The result is that land throughout the world is becoming "financialised", more important as a financial asset than for agricultural production. When farmers operate land owned by international investors, their vision is short-term and their only incentive is to pump out more production, whatever the environmental consequences.

Holt-Giménez praises the attempts of indigenous communities and peasant farmers in Latin America to resist corporate land grabs, and points to the loss of the commons and the public sphere – that part of society where decisions are made by citizens engaged in political discussion and civic activity, and where public goods are shared. Any project for reconstructing public and common property must, he says, work to recapture and strengthen the public sphere.

In Chapter 4, 'Capitalism, Food and Agriculture', he points out that, while selling to farmers and trading in farm products can be pretty lucrative (eg as futures), farming itself presents certain obstacles to capitalist investment. First there are environmental risks, made worse by climate change; then there is the tendency to overproduction, which lowers prices, forcing farmers to produce more, which lowers prices still further. Then farmers can't simply cut their losses if they are losing money and move to an overseas 'free enterprise zone', nor can they withhold perishable products to drive up the cost. But most importantly, there is the disjuncture between labour time and production time, which means that the capitalist would have to invest up-front, and then wait for natural processes to take their course before realising a profit.

Capitalism gets round this by (a) specific contract farming, where the farmer takes the whole risk, and (b) by *appropriationism* and *substitutionism*. On the production side, capitalism appropriates on-farm, sustainable, labour processes by replacing them with synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and genetically-engineered seeds. On the distribution side, capitalism substitutes direct producer-consumer relations with a complex of buyers, packers and shippers, and breaks down farm products into basic ingredients to be reassembled into industrial products. Nonetheless, the food system still falls victim to capitalism's recurrent crises, requiring government subsidies, intervention to buy up excess produce, or encouragement to farmers to 'set aside' land.

It is in this chapter that the author expands on Marx's "metabolic rift" caused by urban concentration, where nutrients are not returned to the countryside. Nowadays, it is not just the depletion of soil fertility, requiring wholesale reliance on synthetic fertilisers, but the contamination of rivers, aquifers and streams by fertilisers, pesticides and the waste products of factory farming. Furthermore, agriculture, livestock and other related land uses (such as deforestation) are responsible for just under a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Quoting Fred Magdoff, the author advocates (p 135) a "rational agriculture", which

> "would be carried out by individual farmers or farmer associations (cooperatives) and have as its purpose to supply the entire population with a sufficient quantity, quality and variety of food while managing farms and fields in ways that are humane to animals and minimise ecological disturbances."

Rational agriculture, closely linked to agroecology – the science and practice of sustainable agriculture – reverses appropriationism and substitutionism by bringing the labour processes and producer-consumer relations back to the farm and community, intensifying production time rather than shortening it and reducing or reversing they metabolic rift by recycling and conserving nutrients, conserving water and fixing carbon. It requires the break-up of large industrial plantations and repopulation of the countryside.

Chapter 5, 'Power and Privilege in the Food System', looks at issues of gender, race and class. There is a parallel here to Mary Davis's arguments in *Women & Class* that the oppression of women is essential to the maintenance of capitalist society. Superexploitation in the food system is also facilitated by the long history of racism, which derives from colonialism and imperialism, with the treatment of people of colour as inferior. Class means not just capitalist, wage workers and peasants, but even owner-farmers who are more like 'food serfs' or are highly leveraged. Holt-Giménez

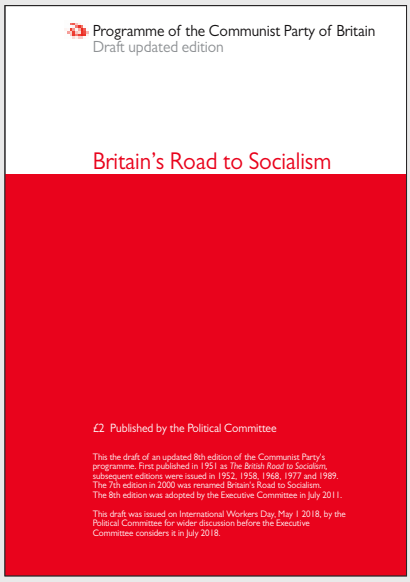
argues that these issues of race, gender and class provide the basis for building alliances to change the food system, which also means transforming capitalism.

Chapter 6, 'Food, Capitalism, Crises and Solutions', looks at the level of hunger in the world. The *Rome Declaration* of the 1996 World Food Summit aimed to cut the absolute number of hungry people from 840m to 420m by 2015. *The Millennium Declaration* in 2000 changed the goal to halving the proportion of hungry people in developing countries only, and moving the baseline to the year 1990, which allowed inclusion of China's impressive accomplishments of the 1990s – though China was not part of the *Millennium Declaration*. Because of population growth, this meant that the 'acceptable' number of hungry people rose to 591m. But then the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation misrepresented the true picture of world hunger, by only counting those whose caloric intake is inadequate to cover the needs of a sedentary lifestyle over one year – ignoring the needs of physical labour and those who go hungry 11 months out of 12. Holt-Giménez estimates that the true number of hungry people in the world today is between 1.5bn and 2.5bn, and rising.

Examining a number of neoliberal and reformist proposals coming out of the corporate food regime, the author criticises so-called 'sustainable intensification', 'climate-smart seeds' (pushed by Syngenta and the Gates Foundation, which plan to help smallholders by pushing most of them out of agriculture), biofortification ("nowhere … does anyone ask why farmers are nutrient poor"), fortification and nutritionism ("people are hungry because they cannot afford to buy food, not because science hasn't figured out what to feed them"), food waste ("turning food waste into a commodity or donating it to food banks does nothing to address the cause") and "the new agrifoods transition" (direct manipulation of DNA, "to make any kind of lifeform", and corporations investing in 'digital architecture', collecting and analysing massive amounts of satellite information about environment, soil etc, and selling it to farmers to allow inputs with precision). Against this he promotes agroecology as "a means and a barrier to the expansion of capitalist agriculture".

The conclusion of the book calls for "Changing Everything". Noting a division in the food movement between 'progressive' (= food justice) and 'radical' (= food sovereignty) approaches, he calls for tactical and strategic alliances to build a strong social movement, not only within the food movement but outside it.

Given the intended North American audience, and the global scope of this book, the application of its insights to socialist strategy in a single country like Britain will require some further consideration. Nonetheless this is highly recommended.



The draft of an updated 8th edition of the Communist Party's programme. First published in 1951 as *The British Road to Socialism,* subsequent editions were issued in 1952, 1958, 1968, 1977 and 1989.The 7th edition in 2000 was renamed *Britain's Road to Socialism.* The 8th edition was adopted by the Executive Committee in July 2011.

This draft was issued on International Workers Day, May 1 2018 and is available at www.communist-party.org.uk/shop

The Communist Party's 55th Congress will be held this year on Saturday and Sunday, November 17-18, at Ruskin House, Croydon.

Timetable

July 16: *EC draft resolutions, Congress agenda and rules amendments to be sent to Party organisations.*

October 5: d*eadline for submission of Branch, District and Nation resolutions and amendments to the EC resolution(s) and of nominations for the EC, Appeals Committee and auditors.*

November 3: *first meeting of Congress committees.*

Main issues for Congress

Priority will be given to the fight for left unity (including the role of the Morning Star), a left-led Labour government and a progressive EU exit settlement; the vital role of mass extra-parliamentary struggle for the left alternative to austerity, for working class economic and social gains, for collective bargaining and trade union power, for gender equality, against racism and xenophobia ; the working class, democratic and revolutionary case for progressive federalism; the dangerous international situation arising from an intensification of imperialist aggression, with the aims of encircling and containing Russia and China, reshaping and dominating the greater Middle East region and rolling back progress in Latin America; the need to reinvigorate the peace, anti-imperialist and women's movements; and the essential and urgent case for a bigger, dynamic and more influential Communist Party, rooted in local communities, workplaces and campaigning bodies, based on Marxism-Leninism, carrying forward the Communist Renewal process and assisting the development of the Young Communist League.

Each functioning District and Nation Committee of the Party is entitled to elect two full, voting delegates to the Congress. In addition, the EC will determine the basis on which it will allocate the total number of Branch delegates to each District and Nation in proportion to their membership at a particular point in time (Congress Standing Order no.2).

A fee will be payable for each delegate and the EC has decided to take into account the financial profile of each Party District and Nation when setting the fee level(s).

SOULFOOD

MIKE QUILLE

ARISE!

‘I’d never been to the Big Meeting in Durham until the early nineties but now I try to get there whenever I can. It’s an amazing spectacle and still incredibly moving, I think. There were a quarter of million people there last year,and it’s still regarded as the biggest trade union event in Europe...’

THIS EDITION of *Communist Review* focuses on issues around class. There are some fine essays on this topic at the **Culture Matters** web site (www.culturematters.org.uk), from Alain Badiou, Andy Croft and Alan Morrison among others. I have also explored the various relationships between poetry and class in many of my columns over the years – most recently by focusing on two great working class poets: Fran Lock from London, and Peter Raynard from the Midlands.

This time we go north, to look at some of the output of Paul Summers, another fine working class poet whose work always touches, explicitly or implicitly, in theme, expression, aesthetic and message, on class issues. Within the interview I did with Paul, I will also be presenting some of his poetry, including an extract from a major new poem by him which is due to be published as a pamphlet by **Culture Matters** on the day of the Durham Miners’ Gala, July 14.

Paul is from a long line of miners, and the poem was commissioned from him by **Culture Matters** with the aim of showing, as a poetical and political statement, the growing political importance of the socialist values and politics of the old mining communities, the women as well as the men, who struggled for a caring, collective and cooperative way of life through their sheer hard work, their trade unions, and their political affiliations. This heritage is celebrated and recreated annually at the Gala, one of the world’s biggest working-class cultural festivals, and you will see the brilliant way the poem links the processions at the Gala to the rebirth of a more class-conscious, socialist politics in the labour movement and the Labour Party.

MQ: TO START WITH, CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF? WHAT’S YOUR BACKGROUND, AND HOW DID YOU COME TO APPRECIATE AND WRITE POETRY?

PS: I was born in Blyth, Northumberland, in 1967. We lived in an old two-up two-down terrace in a place called Cowpen, half a mile west of Bates Pit (the last working pit out of the 10 or so that had existed in Blyth) where both my grandads had worked, and half a mile east of Bebside village, where my great- and great-great-grandads had settled in the 1850s to hew coals.

It was a lovely old working-class community: we had all the romantic clichés of back doors left open, borrowing cups of sugar or coal from the neighbours, a washday chorus of gossip in the back lane, as well as the less romantic realities of the domestic violence, the alcoholism and the undercurrent of racism. I suppose it was quite an anachronistic place, on reflection; whenever I recount it to people now, it feels as though I was brought up in Beamish Museum[1] or on the set of *When The Boat Comes In*[2].

Most of the people in the street were old, retired miners, their wives or widows, and they were all good talkers, fond of a yarn or a song and a bit of reminiscence about ye olden days, the hardships they’d endured and the mischief they’d got up to. They were an oral historian’s dream. I was captivated by them, seduced by their stories, and I think that’s what sowed the seed of me being a yarner of sorts too.

Class, politics, social history and cultural identity were ever present, all wrapped up in their tales of extraordinary ordinariness. I think I decided quite early on that I fancied being a South East Northumbrian version of John Boy from *The Waltons,* documenting the place I lived in and the characters I shared it with. To a greater or lesser extent, I’ve just about succeeded in fulfilling my career model. I’m not sure that being a poet featured highly in that plan but it’s what I’ve found I’m probably best at, despite still occasionally dabbling in bits of prose and drama.

I had a great comprehensive education too, and was encouraged by a few ‘special’ teachers to take my writing seriously and to keep on being in love with history and peoples’ stories.

I was 17 in 1984, when the Miners’ Strike started. It brought politics with a capital ‘P’ to our front door. It highlighted both the unities and divisions within the community, in opinions, ideologies and realities. I remember the pragmatism of some of the older fellas, like my granda, saying that most pits were like men and if you got three score and ten years out of them you’d have been lucky.

I remember the ferocity of support for Scargill from many others who were fighting for their futures (or their children’s futures) and who could foresee the coming desolation of a town without industry or opportunity. I remember witnessing the heavy hand of the police state first-hand for the first time – waking up to find a long line of South Yorkshire SPG riot vans parked up along Cowpen Road, in readiness for any bother on the picket line.

I remember a few (slightly drunken) mates getting viciously beaten up by the coppers on the night that Scargill spoke at Croft Park, the home of the mighty Blyth Spartans. I remember the tales of hardship and suicidal depression you’d hear around the doors, the hate-filled stories of scabs and Tory vindictiveness, as well as the stories of incredible resolve, resilience and solidarity.

Anyhow, the strike was defeated and in a few years the

pit was closed. Blyth didn't fare too well for a decade or so after that. I think at some point in the late '80s we had the dubious honour of being voted the most depressing place in the country twice in a row, and being labelled as the heroin capital of the North.

Plenty to bear witness to, plenty to educate you in social injustice and existential torment, in defeat and optimism, in nihilism and hope, in grief and joy, in laughter and tears, plenty of complex stuff that a person could easily spend their entire creative life trying to unpick and make sense of.

MQ: CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR POETIC CAREER, WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE AND HOW THAT'S CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

PS: I'd left school at 17 and motivated no doubt by TV lawyer Petrocelli[3], I started to work as a trainee legal executive at a solicitors' office in Newcastle. It was a thoroughly Dickensian institution which paid us less than the dole for working from 8 till 5.30, and it fuelled my dislike of the upper classes, my hatred of privilege and my growing sense of social injustice. Luckily for me (in retrospect) I was sacked in 1987, for playing snooker when I should have been at Newcastle College doing my afternoon-release legal executive's course.

If nothing else my dismissal encouraged me to go and do my 'A' Levels and to start thinking about getting a degree. In the process of the former I met three literature lecturers/poets, Brendan Cleary, George Charlton and Tony Baynes. All three were interested in and supportive of my writing and at that moment that was the only motivation I needed. They introduced me to literary magazines and the work of other writers and they encouraged me to start submitting stuff myself.

By 1990 I'd had bits and bobs of stuff published and had, by a strange fluke of history, found myself co-organising the Morden Tower poetry readings[4] in Newcastle. The tragic suicide of my fellow co-organiser left me, the anxious rookie, at the helm. It was an interesting time – I met some great poets and my poetic education continued, and I made some long-lasting allies and friends. I also learned what a self-interested viper's nest the creative world could be, and how the world of literature was still fairly bourgeois and unwelcoming to a working-class man. All good lessons for a naïve, small-town boy.

I'd published a few little chapbooks through Brendan Cleary's Echo Room Press in the nineties, and picked up a couple of writers' awards from Northern Arts, but *the last bus* was my first proper collection. Iron Press published it on May 1 1998, and luckily it was well received and reviewed. It even got the title sequence from the book in that year's *Forward* poetry anthology, and a brief but favourable mention in the broadsheets.

the last bus was all about growing up in Blyth, all about the micro-universe of Cowpen, all about family, friends and acquaintances, all about love and loss. But it was also, by default, about the bigger stuff: about class, politics, identity and history, dead-set on exploring the tensions between romanticised and realistic representations of a working-class community. I was already tired of unquestioningly romantic *Geordierama*[5] versions of working class existence in the North East. the last bus created my version of Walton's Mountain, not pre-war Virginia but Thatcher-era, post-industrial Northumberland – and hopefully not just sentimental and eulogising. It was full of rage and love, the complexity of identity and familial relations. It was me trying to tell the truth, or my truth anyhow, to be authentic, to tell it how it was, warts and all.

The next few books just picked up the baton – any street, any town, 'all human life is here' (and worthy of poetry). In fact, I don't think I've veered that far from that way of thinking in the following 20 years of writing. The focus on community or geography might occasionally shift, town to city, macro to domestic, Britain to Australia and back, but the desire to report, document and interrogate people and place remains the same. My muses or motivations to write remain the same too: rage and outrage, confusion and bewilderment, love, rapture and grief, all of them demanding the need to bear witness.

MQ: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES AROUND POETRY AND POLITICS THAT I'D LIKE TO EXPLORE WITH YOU. WHAT ARE YOUR OWN POLITICAL BELIEFS, AND HOW DO THEY INFLUENCE YOUR CHOICE OF POETIC SUBJECT AND APPROACH?

PS: I like to think that I'm a compassionate socialist who isn't averse to most of the core values of communism. I'd very much like to see the end of capitalism and neoliberalism and for them to be replaced with a more equitable, just, democratic and sustainable model of society, free of class division, elites, patriarchy and hierarchies.

Much of my poetry is shaped by this political positioning and my experiences as a working class, comprehensively-educated bloke from the post-industrial North East of England. A reviewer once said that my work "wasn't political in the way Brecht or Neruda's was, but that it was full of politics nonetheless". My granda, who was fond of a proverb, used to say it was fine to wave the flag but a different thing altogether to hit people over the head with the flag-staff. I think I try and do precisely that.

I hope I authentically and empathically represent and document aspects of my community, I hope I display compassion and care. I hope the questions I occasionally pose on our behaviours are relevant ones, and that my frequent outrage is well placed. I hope that my bearing witness to the things which appal and enrage me occasionally impacts on other people's thinking.

I hope I occasionally encourage an intellectual or ideological response from people as well as an emotional one. I hope people find the beauty and tenderness in my poems which might re-energise them or keep a darkness at bay. I hope I model being a 'decent', compassionate person in my work. I don't think you'd have to work very hard to establish my politics – I hope you can see the flag even though I am not always whacking you with it.

MQ: WHAT'S YOUR VIEW ON THE HISTORY OF POETRY, AND ITS CLOSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION WITH POLITICALLY DOMINANT AND LEISURED CLASSES IN SOCIETY?

PS: Poetry may have been genuinely popular in the British Isles at several moments of history, when an oral tradition was dominant amongst largely illiterate societies – whether it was a population transfixed by the retelling of a Viking saga or the romans[6] of the troubadours and minstrels, by folklore and song, or the doggerel of the music hall and the gin-house balladeers, or by Kipling's imperial jingoism. Oral transmission popularised poetry and made the form more accessible to all classes, not just the book-owning, forelock tugging, velvet-suited elites.

This all seems to have changed with the advent of modernism, when for one reason or another, poetry seems to have retrenched itself as a 'difficult' or 'high' art and retreated back into the confines of its ivory towers (or redbrick university towers). And the upper classes asserted a new set of conventions to make the canon more exclusive and impenetrable, and by turns less human and engaging.

This position wasn't really challenged in Britain until the '60s, when a generation of baby-boomer, working-class, grammar-school kids started to introduce poetic narratives and styles that were more familiar and engaging to the broader population. This coincided with the Beat movement in the US, May '68 in Paris and the Summer of Love in America. Poetry had a brief renaissance, existing happily alongside the words of Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and their like. Even then though, the reach of poetry into the world of the working classes was minuscule in comparison to the gin-house days.

Since then, you could argue there has been a painfully slow democratisation of the form. As Sean O'Brien suggested in *The Deregulated Muse,* the last thirty or forty years have undoubtedly seen a more diverse range of voices appear, denting the glass ceilings of gender, class, race and sexuality, and there are probably more physical and virtual platforms for dissemination than ever before. However, it's still a long way from reaching mainstream status, where it's readily consumed by the masses.

Despite the perennial broadsheet hype suggesting that poetry is the new rock and roll, book sales and audiences suggest the contrary. It's still a fairly marginalised art form with a limited reach, and limited opportunity for it to be a sustainable way of making a living, unless you find a niche in academia or socially engaged activities.

Some of the indie presses are trying their damnedest to increase this diversity and readership but mostly they do it without resource or capacity to impact on the already flooded cultural arena.

The premier publishing houses still have limited-sized lists and equally limited marketing capacity, and generally speaking they are still, in my opinion, fairly bourgeois and unchallenging in their choices of poets to champion.

Then we have the various splits and factions within the poetry world itself: around aesthetics, regional identities, our various sociological classifications and identities, the ascendancy of stage and page, the academic and the 'popular', the 'majors' and the 'minors', the left and the right, the 'art for art's sake' mob and the politically engaged creative utilitarians.

We poets are a very disunited and disjointed village, and fragmentation, as anyone familiar with leftist politics will tell you, has never been a strength in terms of furthering your message or realising change.

MQ: HOW DO YOU THINK POETRY CAN CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MAKING A BETTER (MORE JUST) WORLD?

PS: We as poets can bear witness to and challenge atrocity and social injustice at every level we find it; we can be moral arbiters and polemicists, agitators and rabble-rousers. We can flag up the experience of the marginalised and forgotten. We can be conduits for the telling and re-telling of histories, and the dissemination of alternative ideas and ideologies.

We can remind people of the things we share, our commonalities, as well as celebrating our differences. We can validate experiences and create a sense of universal interest. We can celebrate beauty, compassion and altruism. We can provide a space of sanctuary, delight or quiet grieving. We can make people laugh as well as move them to tears. We can remind each other of our humanity and of the responsibility that goes with enacting and facilitating that humanity. We can encourage broader participation, be brave enough to take our work into non-traditional environments, we can be educators and facilitators, we can organise events and publish.

We can collaborate, collectivise and work cross-form. We can actually start to think like cultural democrats and political activists, rather than wallowing in our garrets or talking only to our respective choirs. We can do whatever our motivations, confidence and energy levels allow us. We can all be subversives if we understand what and whom we are fighting against.

fish quay fugues

i. doggerland

the old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters. (Antonio Gramsci)

& the way will be perilous;
black ice & shark-eyed smiles,
several heaps of hogmanay vomit,
a vacant pizza-box draped with hoar,
its palimpsest of feast & greed,
bleak litany of the new & old,
dog-shit & fag-ends & crumbling roads,
the hours' lash, the pains of labour,
the endless cycle of peddled fact.
& then the sanctuary of frozen sand;
its confluence of salt & wind-whipped crows,
the hymn of a sea cathedral hollow.
kick off your shoes my love & walk;
due east, towards the burgeoning sun.
plough on through the grave mounds
of haddock-frames & listless kelp,
tread slowly on the pebble field,
avoid the triggers of its toad-back traps;
then walk & wade & catch your breath,
beyond the bar where codling lurk,
let swell becalm your troubled blood,
squeeze shut your jaded eyes & dream;
the rapture of tectonic plates entwined
in acts of violence & of love, the red raw
ooze of magma's birthing, each push,
each jolt, each breathless force exerted
sees citadels emergent from these waves,
a glimpse of doggerland's trembling plains,
its strongholds of hope re-rendered
now un-drowned, their beacons still charged,
their gates agape, their monsters slain;
each edifice an altar awaiting our faith.

MQ: CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HOW YOU WROTE THIS POEM AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU?

PS: *doggerland* is from a new sequence of poems I'm working on called the *fish quay fugues*. The poems document the flights of my imagination as I walk by the river.

Walking has become part of my creative practice. I walk every day, rain, hail or shine. Usually it's the same route:

from my house in North Shields down the bank to the River Tyne at the Fish Quay, then eastwards towards the Spanish Battery Prow, onto the Haven Beach at Tynemouth, then back home to Shields via Collingwood's Monument, Knott's Flats and Northumberland Park.

At low tide I walk out on the rocks in a vain search for sea-borne archaeological treasures, and at high tide along the promenade. It's become a form of meditation, sometimes a head-clearing exercising, sometimes a thought-refining process. Lots of creative ideas are polished and there is much philosophising en route.

I have spent, and continue to spend, a great chunk of my life trying to negotiate with myself over a position of continued optimism for humankind and for the arrival of some sort of socialist utopia: the great and ponderous dialectic between hope and despondency. History proves that I am more than capable of the latter path, the path of perpetual moping, angry cynicism or even nihilism, but it's not a version of myself I'm particularly attracted to. It doesn't seem like a very sustainable model for your general wellbeing or that of those around you.

So, I continue to dredge my psyche for a semblance of hope. I do this even though, throughout my adult life, it has often seemed as if we have stumbled from one period of Brechtian "dark times" to another, without any real or sustained recourse to any 'light times'. I do this even though reality tells me I have experienced lots of ideological defeats and disappointments and very few victories.

Now that I am a decade into being a parent, I feel even more of an obligation to be hopeful, at least within my outward-looking face. Otherwise, the prospects of my children's futures are just too difficult to contemplate. It is because of this that I genuinely feel we must remain stubbornly optimistic, we must remain robustly hopeful that the 'glorious day' will come, equality and peace will prevail and that all the evils of capitalism will be kicked into touch for good.

I think these new poems are all addressing this nagging question of hope and despair, and generally speaking – up to now anyway – they are leaning towards optimism, even if that optimism is slightly metaphysical.

It strikes me that both optimism and hope may both be forms of necessary denial: essential parts of the toolkit of any forward-looking socialist trying to keep the red flag flying and the black dog at bay.

arise!

'they being dead yet speaketh'

so history is done,
the shafts capped,

the breathless heaps
erased or made-over:

a short-cut to asda,
a low gradient jog,

somewhere for the dog
to take a shit.

no monument
save memory,
save anecdote
& frail romance,

no rusted remnant,
no totem mark,

only nature to sing
their hymn.

a broken picket-line
of hunch-backed thistles,

a huddle of poppies
in a fly-tipped fridge,

summer's shrill birdsong
captive in a cage of gorse,

three score years & ten
of spoil beneath our feet,

our antecedents
rendered mute & obsolete,

our pasts & present
wedged asunder,

their marriage annulled
by devious progress.

history is done
the cynics proclaim,

they do not hear it
nagging in our veins,

they do not hear
the bitter wind

hiss its litany
of familiar names.

they do not hear
the whispered yakka

echo in the helix
of our complex genes.

they do not hear
the roll-call

of redundant lives,
of prospects slain

at altars of profit
& heinous spite.

history is done
the sages refrain,

they do not hear it
niggling in our veins.

MQ: CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHAT THE GALA AND MINING HISTORY MEAN TO YOU?

PS: As I implied earlier, my family has had a connection to coal-mining since the late 1700s. The Summers ancestors started out working in the bell-pits of North Northumberland then migrated southwards towards Newcastle and South East Northumberland as the process was more industrialised. Other branches of the family migrated eastwards from Cumbria or northwards from Cornwall into the Durham coalfield before they ultimately ended up in Blyth. My dad was the first man in his direct bloodline in over a hundred and fifty years never to work down the pit, choosing the relatively safety of the town gas yard and a fitter's apprenticeship instead. It's safe to say that coal, and the traditions that go with mining it, is firmly embedded in our genetic make-up.

As a Blyth boy I always went to the Northumberland Miners' Picnic at Attlee Park in Bedlington. We'd march from Blyth behind the Bates & Cambois Banner. It was similarly rousing but only a proportion of the scale of Durham by the time I can remember it. I've fond memories though, good rousing speakers, brass bands, abundant ice cream and candy floss. My mam had even been a Picnic Queen in the late fifties, representing West Sleekburn Colliery. The Picnic still exists today to a greater or lesser degree, and happens at Woodhorn Museum in Ashington in early June.

I'd never been to the Big Meeting in Durham until the early nineties but now I try to get there whenever I can. It's an amazing spectacle and still incredibly moving, I think. There were a quarter of million people there last year,and it's still regarded as the biggest trade union event in Europe – and that's despite the fact that we've got no deep mines left in either the Durham or Northumberland coalfields.

■ *Arise!* by Paul Summers will be published as a pamphlet on Gala Day by Culture Matters at £5 plus £1.50 p&p – see http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/shop-support. 10% of sales income will go to the Durham Miners' Association, towards the restoration of the Miners' Hall at Redhills in Durham, and its development into a cultural hub for the area.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Beamish is a world-famous open air museum near Stanley, Co Durham, "telling the story of life in North East England during the 1820s, 1900s and 1940s – see www.beamish.org.uk.

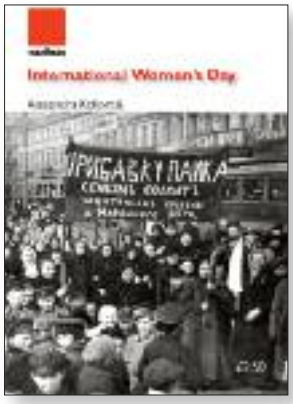
2 *When the Boat Comes In* was a BBC TV drama series (1976-81) set in North East England in the period after the First World War.

3 Petrocelli was the eponymous hero of a US legal drama series which ran for two seasons in the 1970s.

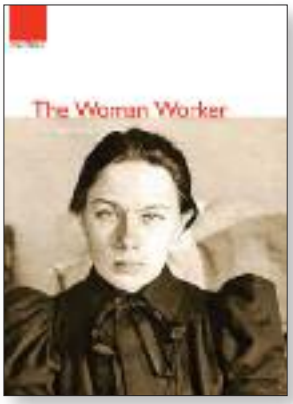
4 The Morden Tower is claimed to be "one of Britain's best-known literary landmarks. For the past 45 years, hundreds of poets have come from all over the world to give readings in this ancient turret-room on Newcastle's city walls"; see www.mordentower.org/.

5 *Geordierama* was, according to the BBC, "A north-eastern entertainment presenting a lighthearted guide to the comedy and music of Tyneside." First performed on the stage, it became a one-off radio show and toured for 17 years.

6 French for medieval romances.



International Women's Day is by Alexandra Kollontai, the only woman member of the Bolshevik central committee in 1917. Following the Russian revolution she served as Commissar of Welfare of the Soviet Republic and head of the Women's Section of the Bolshevik Party. She founded the Zhenotdel or 'Women's Department' in 1919 and led the campaign to improve women's living conditions, eradicate illiteracy and establish a new legal and social framework for women's liberation. £2.50 (plus £1.50)



The Woman Worker was N K Krupskaya's first pamphlet, written in Siberia where she had joined Lenin, following their arrest in 1896 and sentencing to three years exile. Krupskaya wrote it in 1899 under the pseudonym 'Sablina'. It was the first written work on the situation of women in Russia. The pamphlet was banned following the supression of the abortive 1905 revolution. Lenin and Krupskaya came to London in April 1902 where, in what is now the Marx Memorial Library, Lenin edited the Bolshevik illegal newspaper *Iskra*. £3.50 (plus £1.50 p&p)

The Empire and Ukraine sets the Ukraine crisis in its global and local context, and draws the lessons needed for the anti-war movement as great power conflict returns to Europe. Andrew Murray explores the essential links between the crises of contemporary capitalism and war. No political question is more important in. Murray's sharp polemics with those, on both right and left who seek to justify intervention have a particular relevance in public life and the labour movement.
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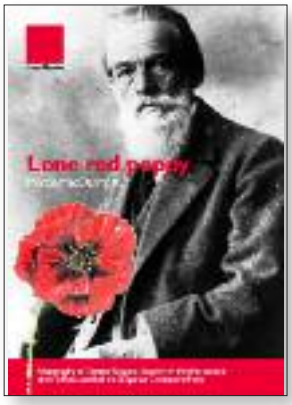

Lone red poppy by Mercia McDermott is the first substantial and authoritative account in English of the life of Dimiter Blagoev, founder of the first marxist circle in Russia and of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The book traces his personal and family story against the background of Bulgaria's struggle for a popular sovereignty and the rising workers' and revolutionary movements. The book has now been published in Bulgaria in translation.
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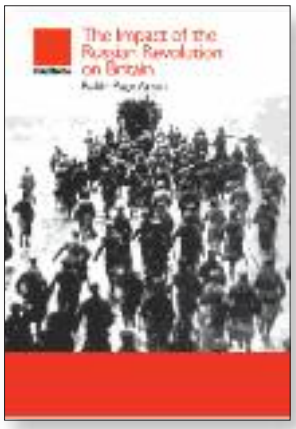

The Impact of the Russian Revolution on Britain documents the immediate and lasting effects on Britain of the events in Russia in 1917. Robin Page Arnot describes the varying reactions of Britain's press, its established political parties and its labour movement, from the February Revolution all the way through to the Wars of Intervention. He reveals just how much the British ruling class sought to destroy the world's first workers' state, and the struggles by Britain's working class to prevent that.
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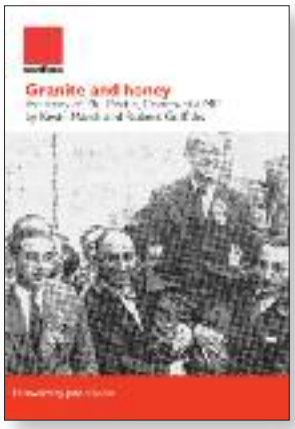

Granite and honey
This pioneering illustrated biography by Kevin Marsh and Robert Griffiths tells the story of Phil Piratin, elected Communist MP for Stepney Mile End in the post-war General Election that swept Labour to office on a radical manifesto. The book reprises the commanding role that Piratin played in the 1936 Battle of Cable Street including the story of his mole in the fascist organisation. The book recounts Piratin's tenacity as the MP who helped expose numerous colonial massacres, including the infamous Batang Kali case in Malaya.
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Once upon a time in Bulgaria is the illustrated account of Mercia MacDermott's experiences in post war Bulgaria. It is, by turns, touching, hilarious and deeply illuminating of the life, customs, history and politics of the country where she remains a widely-published and notable figure. Her book retells her experiences as a volunteer in the post-war student solidarity brigade, encounters with partisan leaders, literary figures,and Dimitrov and her life and work as a teacher, university lecturere, best-selling author, academic and literary figure.
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Join the Red Block on the march behind the CPB slogan

NHS NOT FOR SALE OR PROFIT CPB

SAVE OUR NHS

PRIVATISATION

THE NHS crisis is upon us. Ministers were warned that without extra cash and resources the winter would bring an avalanche of infections and a hospital-beds crisis.

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine warned that A&E departments needed 2,200 more beds – and even before the latest crisis hit, waiting lists had topped four million.

Yet the government is driving further cuts in beds while urging hospitals to divert patients into alternative services which barely exist.

Social care is also enduring a cuts-driven crisis, but in Theresa May fumbled cabinet reshuffle she handed social care to her arrogant and serially incompetent health secretary, Jeremy Hunt.

Hospital flu admissions in the first week of 2018 were nearly double the number seen in 2010-11 during the swine-flu epidemic. After thousands of operations were cancelled Jeremy Hunt claimed to have made the "most extensive preparations ever" for the winter period.

More than 33,000 nurses left the NHS in 2017 - a rise of 20 per cent since 2012-13.

A Commons health select committee inquiry into the nursing workforce showed that NHS staff are struggling with poor access to continuing professional development, low pay and "a general sense of not feeling valued".

Nurses' pay has fallen by 14 per cent in real terms since 2010, while last year's abolition of NHS bursaries means nursing students are forced to pay £9,250 in tuition-fee loans.

The NHS in England is facing a new Tory onslaught involving drastic cuts, privatisation and yet another reorganisation.

The Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) combined with the Five Year Forward View (5YFV) will speed up privatisation, while driving through £22 billion in cuts.

The Tory plans are nakedly based on the US model where so-called Accountable Care Systems (ACS) control health services and award contracts to profit-making private-sector health and finance firms.

Even the Tory MP who chairs the Commons select committee has called for a delay to the new contract for Accountable Care Organisations. The model contracts propose using the notorious Special Purpose Vehicles – the mechanism which spearheaded private finance initiative (PFI) schemes.

It was the European Union model of privatised public services – driven by the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties – which led to Blair's 'New' Labour vastly expanding PFI.

As usual the latest plans are being hatched in secrecy with no consultation of patients or staff. There is no attempt to base the schemes on clinical evidence.

Driven by cuts, the plans will "rationalise' and centralise services and are already leading to closures.

For patients the plans mean worsened healthcare, longer waiting lists, delayed operations and a beds shortage which leaves the NHS unable to meet the inevitable winter crises.

Health unions warn that the workforce plans will blur professional roles while staff recruitment is frozen. 'Flexible' working will mean fewer staff doing more.

Our NHS is not for sale or profit. The Communist Party believes that our NHS must be publicly accountable, publicly funded and publicly run. Communists agree with health professionals that change should always be fully funded, clinically driven and evidence led.

#StopSTPs #SaveOurNHS ★

▲ Eight decades before the NHS came into being Karl Marx suffered from his liver, haemorrhoids, insomnia and boils.

"The bourgeoisie will remember my carbuncles until their dying day," he said in a letter to Friedrich Engels in 1867

Carillion and Capita signify a new crisis

CAPITALISM

AFTER THE 2008 banking crash and now the Carillion collapse who can doubt that capitalism is in crisis.

Bloated multinationals like Carillion are the product of an unholy alliance between the Tory Party and 'New' Labour which saw the banks deregulated, public services privatised and pricey PFI replace public investment in infrastructure projects. Public spending cuts and wage freeze led to a decade of austerity.

Carillion grew out of the takeover of construction firms to bid for public private partnerships. The firm functioned as a giant Ponzi scheme depending on a stream of contracts underwritten by the tax payer. But with tight profit margins in construction and projects like railways, hospitals and roads taking years to complete the firm looked increasingly at risk.

However dodgy the firm's finances were shareholders still got their dividends and bosses their bonuses. Now thousands of workers face losing their jobs and their pensions look at risk.

Complicit in the cover up of Carillion's chronic instability are pension regulators and KPMG and Price Waterhouse Cooper.

The Financial Conduct Authority is investigating profit warnings made by the company last year. The Pensions Regulator, kept quiet about the fact that Carillion paid out £80m in dividends and only put £47m into its pension scheme, in spite of its £580m deficit.

Carillion's shares are held by profit-hungry investment banks, asset management funds and private equity funds. These sharks bought or sold its shares by looking at its revenue and the amount of cash on its balance book. Executive pay and bonuses were linked to the ability to generate cash and support the share price.

So Carillion had to bid low to win contracts and keep expanding into more risky areas.

The government cannot rescue the firm because of the neoliberal "austerity" borrowing rules it follows and because state aid would fall foul of the free market EU rules.

The deepening capitalist crisis shows that popular power and thorough going socialist measures are needed to rebuild Britain's productive economy and break free from the EU big business club. ★

Jeremy Corbyn "The Morning Star is the most precious and only voice we have in the daily media" £1 weekdays, £1.50 at weekends. From newsagents or online at www.morningstaronline.co.uk

▲ Nazi Azov fighters, now incorporated into the Ukrainian army seen here displaying their NATO and nazi banners.

No to nazis in Ukraine

THE POLITICAL forces behind Azov trace their origins to the nazi collaborators and Ukrainian SS divisions who murdered thousands of Jewish and Polish people.

Following the EU/Nato-engineered right-wing coup in Ukraine the Communist Party faces a ban. Living standards plumet and the oligarchic regime continues to enrich itself.

Britain's Young Communist League has called a national day of action on 10 February 2018 in solidarity with the Communist Party and Komsomol (Young Communists) of Ukraine against state oppression and the rehabilitation of fascism.

The YCL has called for a demonstration outside the Ukrainian Embassy in London (60 Holland Park, W11 3SJ) from 1pm onwards on Saturday 10 February 2018.

Demonstrations are also being planned for Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester on the same day. Please contact office@ycl.org.uk if you are able to attend or want to organise a demonstration in your town or city. www.ycl.org.uk/intl/suru ★

***Unity!* is the Communist Party's mass distribution newspaper issued free in print, digital and online versions. Special editions are produced for labour movement events, peace, solidarity and People's Assembly Against Austerity demonstrations. Special editions are produced at trade union conferences and daily at the Trades Union Congress.**

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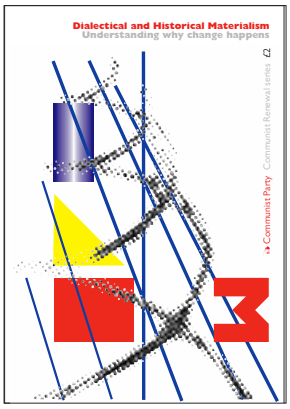

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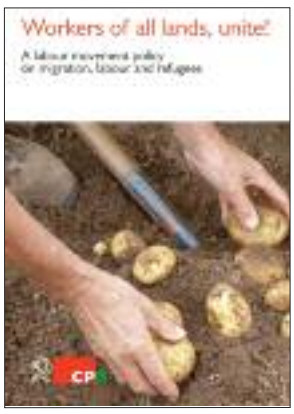

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