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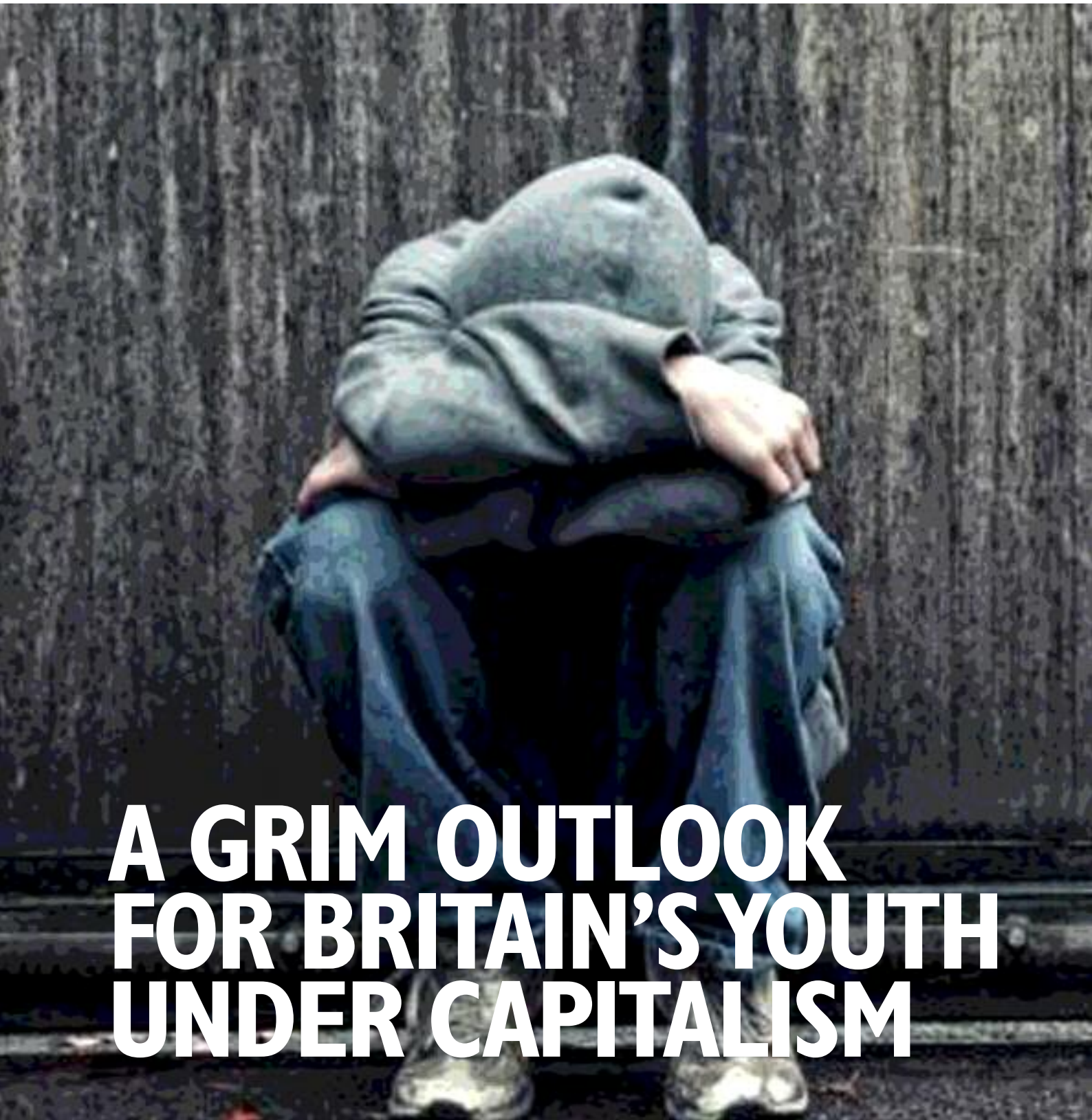

A GRIM OUTLOOK FOR BRITAIN'S YOUTH UNDER CAPITALISM

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Picture above: Bhagat Singh: Indian revolutionary executed by the British colonial authorities for taking up arms against British imperialism.

Speaking in 1931 in solidarity the Communist Party of Great Britain said: "The history of this case, of which we do not come across any example in relation to the political cases, reflects the symptoms of callousness and cruelty which is the outcome of bloated desire of the imperialist government of Britain so that fear can be instilled in the hearts of the repressed people."

CONTENTS

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MARTIN LEVY
EDITORIAL

28 September 2019

200 years ago, on 16 August 1819, the Peterloo Massacre took place. A peaceful crowd of 60,000-80,000 working people had gathered in St Peter's Fields, Manchester, to demand Parliamentary reform. The local magistrates unleashed the Manchester Yeomanry, and then the Hussars. It was carnage. 18 people died, and nearly 700 were injured.

Terrible as the Massacre was, its legacy was the long struggle for democracy which continues to this day. By stages the franchise was widened, but it was 1918 before it was extended to all men and some women (only those over 30), and it was only in 1928 that all women gained the same voting rights as men.

Even today, some votes are more valuable than others: the first-past-the-post system means that the composition of the House of Commons does not fully represent the votes cast. There is also no requirement on MPs who change parties to step down; and of course we have an unelected House of Lords, a hereditary head of state and Privy Council Orders. On top of that there are the restrictions on our democracy imposed by membership of the European Union.

Nowadays the ruling class generally does not need to use massive force to defend its privileges. There have been occasions when, feeling threatened, it has done so: 100 years after Peterloo, that was the case in the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Massacre in colonial India, the background to which is eloquently described by Professor KL Tuteja in this issue of CR. It was also the case, though less violently, during the 1984-5 Miners' Strike. But usually the ruling class rules by a combination of ideology, targeted legal coercion against certain forms of activity - particularly by trades unions - and manipulation of the Parliamentary system itself.

It is worth bearing all this in mind when considering the brouhaha about Boris Johnson's advice to the monarch to prorogue Parliament. This journal has no time for that right-wing chancer and demagogue, and his ilk. However, the ruling class ideological offensive over the last 3 years about 'hard' and 'soft' Brexits, coupled with the determination of the majority of MPs not to respect the EU referendum result, gave him the opportunity to promote his career by presenting himself as an anti-establishment 'man of the people', determined to 'get the job done' - and to fight an election on the basis of delivering Brexit or of Parliament frustrating it.

There are dangers for Labour in its opposition to a 'no-deal' Brexit and calling for a referendum on any negotiated agreement, with 'remain' as an option. Elected to government, it would certainly face restrictions in implementing its radical programme, due to conflict with EU regulations; the Supreme Court, which has clipped Johnson's wings, could so easily rule against Labour. But Labour's position on Brexit has also reduced its chances of winning the general election when it comes - already it has lost votes in some 'leave'-voting areas where it has seats, and it seems unlikely to make significant advances in Tory 'leave'-voting areas.

It is therefore essential that Labour comes out fighting on the key progressive domestic policies decided at its recent conference. Rejuvenating its appeal among young voters will be crucial - and, as Johnnie Hunter points out in the cover feature in this edition of CR, there is indeed a bleak outlook for Britain's youth under capitalism. There are key issues here for the trade union movement to take up as well.

But international issues will also be important, particularly those arising out of Britain's 'special relationship' with the USA. As I write, there is an imminent risk of US-backed war on Iran; and the US economic blockade against Venezuela has gained a military extension, with false allegations from Colombia that Venezuela is preparing to attack it, and the activation of the Cold War-era Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.

Among the traditional weaknesses of the British labour movement are pragmatism, and a lack of understanding of philosophy, state and imperialism. Thus for many years it regarded defence of the British Empire as important, and today there is no clear understanding of the role of NATO and the nature of the EU as an imperialist alliance. Thus, Labour conference passed good motions on Yemen and Palestine, but Emily Thornberry's negative comments about Venezuela displayed an effective pandering to US imperialism.

Ms Thornberry needs to learn some dialectics, in particular Hegel's "The truth is the whole", which is the theme of Domenico Losurdo's article here, his contribution to a symposium in 2012 marking the 85th anniversary of the birth of the great German Marxist philosopher Hans Heinz Holz. As Cuban contributor Isabel Monal attests here, Hans Heinz's service was enormous: in particular, after the downfall of the Soviet Union, he was able to help Cuba extract itself, theoretically and, ideologically, from the conservative and anti-Marxist wave that had deluged the world.

The US blockade against Venezuela is of course also directed against Cuba. They cannot do the same with China, due to the size of its economy and its place in the world. Lie Jie's article here on a new era, environment and requirements for Marxism, makes the interesting claim of "socialism taking hold of, creating and utilising the power of capital". Capital is a social relation characteristic of a society of mass commodity production and the rule of the law of value. Can it continue to exist under socialism?

We complete our issue with an article by Lars Ulrik Thomsen promoting national sovereignty as the road to socialism, Cyprian Fernandes' review of the autobiography of Kenyan liberation hero Fitz de Souza, John Foster's review of Marxist economist Michael Roberts' *Marx 200* (a different *Marx 200* from that reviewed in *CR*92), **Soul Food** on American worker-poet Fred Voss, and Phil Katz looking forward to the Communist Party's centenary celebrations in 2020.

JOHNNIE HUNTER
A GRIM OUTLOOK FOR BRITAINS YOUTH

Banksy image in London

From any perspective the outlook for Britain's youth under capitalism is grim, not even taking into account the unfolding climate crisis that will engulf the world during their lifetimes.

THE *Communist Manifesto* summarises the interconnected nature of the struggle for short-term goals and the long-term struggle for socialism and the role of the communists:

> "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."[1]

The fight for economic and social-democratic advances in the short term is the key vehicle by which we build the militant institutions of our class – principally trade unions – educated class consciousness, and support for socialism among Britain's working people.

A failure to understand; a failure to act

It might seem trite to point out that a failure to understand the "immediate aims" and "momentary interests" of our working class will necessarily preclude any attempt to fight for those aims, never mind any attempt to develop that "movement of the present" into the class-orientated and militant "movement of the future". Trite, but tragically this a genuine, ongoing and fundamental failing of Britain's left and labour movement today. How do we know?

The trade union movement has been in a period of decline and now stagnation in Britain since the mid-1980s. Recent years have seen some modest gains, union membership having increased by 103,000 between 2017 and 2018 to 6.35m.[2] However, beneath this comforting headline there are longer-term issues which remain unaddressed.

Principally, union membership is decreasing among young workers and workers in the private sector. In 2018, 23.1% of members were aged between 16 and 34, whereas in 1995 the figure was around one third. Public sector membership grew by 149,000 in 2017-18, but in the private sector it declined by 47,000 following a fall of 70,000 the year before.

These problems are in part interrelated, in that young workers are more likely to work in the private sector and especially in the so-called 'gig economy'. Many sections of the private sector are almost entirely devoid of trade union organisation. But this isn't the whole story: it must also be recognised that a majority of young people do not understand the history or contemporary purpose of the labour movement, and the labour movement has failed to maintain its relevance to the majority of the youth.

The experience of the previous generation of leftists and trade unionists in Britain was radically different. The media often trumpet the hackneyed declaration that 'this will be the first generation worse off than their parents', and in many ways this is true. Many of the expectations of the previous generation now seem out of reach. The prospects for further and higher education, a decent home (whether a council tenancy or owner-occupied), a skilled and secure job and a rewarding community life have been steadily eroded.

The trade union movement's continuing focus on relatively more secure and better-paid public sector workers, to the exclusion of precarious workers in the private sector, is a practical demonstration of a failure to grasp these new realities. More broadly, the left itself has failed to fight effectively on many of these fundamental issues, leaving room for the right wing to capitalise on the situation, or for dejection and apathy to seep into our communities.

Only by understanding the needs of the time can we win victories today and build the movement of tomorrow. How better to do so than by looking at the challenges faced at each and every stage of life by working class youth in Britain?

The early years

Where a child is born, and the conditions they are raised in, do much to determine the future trajectory of their entire life. 30% of children, 4.1 million, were living in poverty in Britain in 2017-2018.[3] The number is expected to increase to 5.2 million by 2022. 70% of children in poverty come from working families; while 45% of children from ethnic minority families are in poverty, compared with 26% from white families. The effects of child poverty during early years and later in life are manifold – poor mental and physical health, academic underachievement, stigma and bullying and poor employment prospects.

Children who have lived in persistent poverty during their first 7 years have cognitive development scores on average 20% below those of children who have never experienced poverty.[4] In England and Wales in 2015, only 33% of children receiving free school meals obtained five or more good GCSEs, compared with 61% of other children.

One eighth of 5-19 year-olds in England have at least one mental disorder, with emotional disorders being the most prevalent (8.1%).[5] Children in low-income households are twice as likely to suffer as those from families with the highest incomes; and almost a third of children and young people with a parent receiving disability benefits have a mental disorder.[6] Those from the most deprived areas in the country will live on average 19-20 years less than those from the least deprived.

The response of any humane government in this context would be investment in education, healthcare and social services. Instead, since 2010 under successive Tory governments, we have seen the biggest public sector cuts since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of NHS jobs have been slashed and 1 in 4 local authority jobs lost.[7]

Where to next?

Regardless of whether the youth of the working class go on to further education or enter the world of work, the common themes are uncertainty, precarity and hardship.

The world of work

11.6% of 16-24 year olds are unemployed compared to 3.9% for the whole population.[8] Those in work face endemic low pay. 1 in 5 young people are paid less than the minimum wage,[9] and 78% of 18-21 year-olds earn less than the government's National 'Living' Wage (not to be confused with the real Living Wage).[10] Discrimination according to age means that young workers are legally paid significantly less. As at April 2019, the hourly rates by age are as follows: 25 and over, £8.21; 21-24, £7.70; 18-20, £6.15; under 18, £4.35; and apprentices, £3.90.

USDAW is one of the very few trade unions to have successfully championed this issue, having won a significant concession from Tesco that all staff are paid the same hourly rates, regardless of age.

There are over 900,000 workers on zero-hours contracts in Britain, comprising 2.9% of those in work. 36% of them are aged 16-24.[11] Very recent research by the TUC indicates that the gig economy continues to expand apace:[12] an estimated 4.7 million workers have undertaken such work in some form; and up to 1 in 10 working-age adults are now using gig economy platforms, up from 1 in 20 in 2016. Gig economy workers face a double hit of poverty wages plus no guarantee of earnings, and weaker employment rights (holiday, sick pay, protection from dismissal etc), often as a result of bogus self-employment. Young people are far more likely to be forced into this new, exploitative and precarious form of work: 31.5% of workers using gig economy platforms are aged 16-24 and a further 28.7% are aged 25-34.

Apprenticeships

As noted above, those undertaking apprenticeships will be subjected to the deplorable poverty wage of £3.90 an hour. However research by the TUC found that, of the 900,000 apprentices in England, 135,000 weren't even being paid that.[13] Freedom of Information requests have revealed that, between January 2016 and June 2017, the government had prosecuted fewer than 5 employers for failure to pay the apprenticeship minimum wage. Most companies only pay 10% of training costs with the government subsidising the other 90%. The vast majority of apprentices have no guarantee of a job on completion of their apprenticeship.

It is little wonder then that apprenticeship uptake has entered a period of decline. The number of starts in England was down from 509,000 in 2015/16 to 376,000 in 2017/18.[14] Wales figures tell a similar story, having fallen by almost 20% in November 2018 – January 2019 compared to the same period in 2017/18.

Elevation through learning?

For working class students lucky enough to be in a position to attend university, after overcoming the hurdles of poverty and underfunded public services, the barriers to getting to university and succeeding there are substantial.

White young people in receipt of free school meals are the group least likely, next to those from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds, to enter higher education.[15] More than half of universities in England have fewer than 5% of these white working-class students in their intakes. Of these, over 70% attend less prestigious 'post-1992' universities.

Once a working-class student reaches further or higher education, this will only be the start of their problems. Research by the National Union of Students published last year revealed a damningly unequal playing field.[16] Students from working-class backgrounds face a 'poverty premium', often paying higher costs in order to access post-16 education. They are most likely to be employed part-time in a job that requires more than the recommended 15 hours per week (couple this with poverty pay and the increased likelihood of working in the gig economy). Average student expenditure routinely exceeds the income available through student support. Hall charges routinely exceed what is affordable, given the maintenance loan available to students. According to *Which?*, the average parent is forced to subsidise students to a tune of £360 a month during their time at university.[17]

The result of all this is unsurprising. Dropout rates are highest among working class students. One third of part-time students, and 10.3% of black students, leave before their second year of study.[15]

The media enjoy posing the question – is it still worth going to university? Most people would agree that it is. Learning is a lifelong gain, regardless of economic advantage, but it is unsurprising that some young people in Britain are questioning whether it is. The average graduate debt after a 3-year degree is £50,000.[18] The median salary for graduates in England is £34,000 (shrinking to £25,500 for black graduates), with non-graduates earning £24,000 on average.[19]

Housing

The recent period has seen a sharp and accelerating return to Victorian values in housing with young people feeling the effects most acutely.

For the vast majority of young people, council or social housing (independent of their family) is not a realistic option, since the majority of councils and housing associations are struggling to allocate accommodation to those with priority status. Therefore they are forced into the private rented sector, which has expanded massively since the 2008 financial crisis. The number of households in the sector has increased from 2.8m in 2007 to 4.5m in 2017.[20] 25-34 year-olds make up 35% of these households with 16-24 year-olds accounting for about a further 10%. Private renters spend on average 46% of their income on rent compared with 18% from mortgage-payers.

For most young people home ownership is an increasingly unattainable dream. Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that in 2016 only 60% of 25-34 year-olds in England would have been able to borrow enough to buy one of the cheapest home in their area – even if they had saved a 10% deposit (by no means a given).[21] In London the figure was around one third. In 1996, across the whole country, it was 90%.

Research by Santander, one of Britain's biggest mortgage lenders found that 70% of young people do not believe they will ever own their own home.[22] Santander's own figures indicate that less than 25% of 18-34 year-olds will be in a position to buy a home by the year 2026. The sharpest fall in first-time buyer homeownership has been among those on 'middle-incomes', £20,000-30,000. Of young new buyers, two thirds reported having household incomes of more than £40,000.

Meanwhile mortgages of all sizes are readily provided to private landlords to increase their buy-to-let portfolios. Research indicates that 40% of council houses sold under the right to buy are now held by private landlords[23].

What are the results of all this? Millions of young people denied their independence. High rents and house prices mean that in 2018 there were 3.4 million 20-34 year-olds still living with their parents, up from 2.4 million in 2003.[24] Those who are able to leave home – or are obliged to, like many university students – are often living in substandard accommodation. Even

the right-wing press is increasingly full of stories of slum-standard, overcrowded accommodation – especially in London. To compound matters these young workers and students are paying a massive proportion of their incomes in rent, meaning they are unable fully to enjoy cultural or leisure activities.

A society in crisis

From any perspective the outlook for Britain's youth under capitalism is grim, not even taking into account the unfolding climate crisis that will engulf the world during their lifetimes.

The lives of young people are characterised by poverty and insecurity, regardless of the path they choose or, more accurately, are forced into. The options for many of those in work are poverty-pay apprenticeships, complete uncertainty in the gig economy or low-paid unfulfilling work with little chance of progression. Many of those attending college or university are forced to place additional financial pressure on their already strained families, and jeopardise their studies working long hours to support themselves, and all for an ultimately dubious financial gain. A life without comfort or dignity.

One of the lamentable products of this situation in the recent period has been the surge in mental health problems among the youth. Suicide is the biggest cause of death in young men and women aged 20-34 in Britain.[25] Women and LGBT youth are even more likely to be suffering from mental health problems. All of this is especially damning when we note that 75% of all mental health problems in a person's life begin during childhood.[26]

Another product of the economic situation has been rising violent crime and anti-social behaviour among the youth. Overall, crime rose by 19% in England and Wales in the last year.[27] In the deprived inner cities, and in London in particular, youth involvement in epidemic level violent crime has received significant media coverage in 2019. 4,500 knife and offensive weapon offences were committed by children in 2017/2018, a 7% increase on the previous year, with levels increasing year on year since 2014.[28] Gangs involved in drug dealing and other forms of crime draw in those with no prospects and little chance of a future. Even younger school-aged children are initiated through participation in violent acts or running drugs across 'county lines'.

The fight for a dignified life

These screeds of statistics and dispassionate facts may provoke little emotion when considered in the abstract. Those who have been 'on the left' for many years can easily become numb to the scale of poverty and inequality in this country and its effect on our society. Some even presume that the facts are widely appreciated or understood, but this isn't the case. Monopoly-owned media and ruling class politicians purposely obscure the nature and scale of these problems and even more so their root causes. Those communities and groups of young workers and students most acutely affected by austerity and these other attacks on living standards fail to appreciate the scale or extent or how their own struggles relate to developments at a national level.

This is where the left and trade union movement can and must intervene. In the first instance we must properly understand the problems faced by the whole class and by particular sections of it. Only then can a movement fighting for those "immediate aims" be developed. Only then can those immediate aims be related to national and international political developments such as austerity and capitalist crisis. Only in this context can the case for socialism be made.

Elements of the trade union and working class movement have begun to mobilise better around the contemporary issues affecting the youth. There have been a number of exciting examples in the past few years in both Britain and abroad.

The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union has led dynamic campaigns with a view to unionising fast-food workers around the country, a notoriously difficult task given that the workers tend to be young, precariously employed and transitory. This is something which has never previously been achieved in Britain. One of the most visible successes of the BFAWU campaign so far has been in organising workers at McDonald's, the archetype of the fast-food chains, gaining significant traction in both local and national media.

The move by BFAWU in this sector was itself inspired by the "Fight For $15" campaign in the USA. BFAWU's progress has inspired other unions to enter the fray in a serious way. Unite has taken the lead in organising TGI Fridays workers in a 'fair tips' campaign. October 2018 saw joint strike action between staff at McDonalds, Wetherspoons (also organised by BFAWU) and TGI Fridays, an unprecedented move in the sector.

Young workers and trade unionists in Scotland have developed the "Better Than Zero" campaign aimed at organising zero-hours and precariously employed young workers in the hospitality sector. They too have won some impressive victories, largely through new media-savvy techniques aimed at shaming and disrupting exploitative employers. Social media campaigns, flash mobs and occupations have been just a few of the new tactics utilised. The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain has also received significant coverage for making inroads into major gig economy employers such as Deliveroo and Uber, with varying degrees of success.

These exciting developments haven't been restricted to workplace struggles. New tenants' unions and community organisations have been formed and are quickly gaining ground. ACORN, formed in Bristol in 2015, is "a national community organisation along the lines of a trade union; organising our communities and fighting for a better quality of life"[29]. Living Rent founded in 2014, organises in Scotland, and has quickly gained a growing and active membership, campaigning against exploitative landlord fees, illegal evictions and dilapidated homes. Both campaigns have been characterised by confrontational and direct tactics which have captured headlines and the enthusiasm of a youthful membership.

These first steps now tentatively being taken are extremely exciting and must be nurtured. Communists must lead and place themselves at the heart of these struggles and new developments. We must carry communist politics and a class analysis into these fights, winning the best of the movement and class to the struggle for socialism.

The Young Communist League and the Communist Party will shortly be publishing a new Youth Charter, summarising the communist demands to deliver a dignified life for the youth in modern Britain. This will be a powerful tool for our members to take into our schools, campuses, workplaces and communities.

The lives and problems of today's youth are radically different from those of the 1970s, '80s and '90s. New material realities require new methods of organising. The recent climate strikes and actions, led primarily by the youth, have palpably demonstrated that the young workers and students of Britain are passionate and can be mobilised in their millions. We need class-orientated organisations geared to fight those battles and become the movement of the future. Britain's communists can and must be the ones to deliver these innovations and the forms of organisation which will win a new generation to the struggle for peace and socialism in our lifetime.

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LARS ULRIK THOMSEN

In 2016, the British people voted to leave the EU but the result was not accepted by the EU's ruling circles. They have done everything to sabotage the result and reverse it. Lately the Labour Party has begun to sway and may support a new referendum. How can the labour movement tackle this difficult situation?

I have read the editorials in *CR* with great interest.[1] They give a good picture of the difficult conditions and the political confusion around Brexit. Could it be an opportunity to link the debate with Lenin's article on *The Right of Nations to Self-determination?*[2]

I think there are some important points that are worth highlighting in the current situation, eg that an analysis must always take place on the basis of a concrete assessment of the epoch we live in, and of the concrete economic and historical conditions in each country.[3]

With the present stage of imperialism there are some new features that need to be analysed, *ie* the internationalisation of production, and the shift to financial capitalism as the dominant factor in the economy. With the climate crisis, which I think is also a systemic crisis, there are some good motives to argue for a change in the system.

We live in the epoch of imperialism, *ie* the transition from capitalism to socialism.[4] The dialectic of history was temporarily interrupted by the counter-revolution in 1989, but the deeper *historical processes* continue unabated (the economic formation of society). This applies in particular to the social exploitation of the productive forces across borders.

A new development arose as a consequence of the financial crisis in 2008. We have entered a new phase in state monopoly capitalism, as financial capital has taken over control of production, the economy of the state and its politics. This phase is characterised by an enhanced version of austerity policies, where funds are moved from social and health areas to tax reduction on corporations and the wealthy, and to military armament.

Monopolisation of the economy was reinforced by the crisis in 2008, especially for IT, banks, the automobile industry, the chemical industry etc. Some of the mergers have been successful, while others were abandoned, in part because of trade union opposition due to potential loss of

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AS THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

their jobs.[5] How to characterise this period in the evolution of capitalism/imperialism?

There is growing frustration in the classes and layers affected by the cuts and austerity policies. Therefore, and partly due to the weakness of the left, we see a significant growth in right-wing populism. Ideologically, the ruling classes are unable to convince working people that capitalism is working for them. They are only able, through their control of the media, to control the debate and eliminate criticism.[6] Thus, bourgeois democracy is becoming more and more limited.

The subject of *national independence and national self-determination* is of growing importance for the labour movement internationally. Only by regaining this aim we can hope for a transition to socialism. This is also in accordance with the principles of the *Communist Manifesto* on the national transition to socialism.[7]

What kind of state are we dealing with and how has it evolved? The historical development over the past 150 years has meant a change in both production conditions and political power. This development takes place in a dialectical interaction with the working class and socialism.

The October Revolution was followed by a long period of reaction, which began in about 1920 in Italy, and spread to the rest of Europe. Reaction recurred after World War II, with the Cold War and atomic armament. The most recent reactionary period, which still continues, began in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In all three periods, anti-communism has been a key component of ruling class ideology, driving a wedge into the working class.

Capitalism has continued its own progress; developing *the state, production, economics, politics and culture*. But it cannot solve the most important questions at present. Capitalism is characterised not only by the principal contradiction between labour and capital, but by other major contradictions between:

- socialism and capitalism;
- national interests and those of financial capitalism;
- the imperialist powers;
- the accumulation of capital and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall;[8]
- capitalist production and the natural environment;
- and between productive forces and productive relations.

Together these contradictions are continually sharpening, and threaten the very existence of capitalism.

There is a similarity between the Danish referendum in 1992 about the Maastricht Treaty and the present situation of Brexit. In 1992 the Danish people voted *No* to the European Union, but the ruling class didn't take that for the answer. They launched a new referendum, with some minor changes, and this time they got a *Yes* vote.

In 2016, the British people voted for leaving the EU, but the result was not accepted by EU ruling circles. They have done everything to sabotage the result and make it reverse. Lately the Labour Party has begun to sway and may support a new referendum.

Formally we have a democracy, but in fact it is an oligarchy that rules, a minor class of monopoly capitalists with absolute power. When democracy is reduced or eliminated, it has major consequences for society, citizens lose self-respect and the belief that political action is useful.

This leads to a degeneration of society and the political parties, which are increasingly characterised by internal power struggles. The slogan of the bourgeoisie from 1789, *freedom, equality and brotherhood*,[9] is turned into its opposite, a repetition of the feudal state, but without princes and monarchs. This also characterises the entire structure of the EU, where parliamentarianism is separated from the executive, the European Commission.

Time is ripe for change!

Notes and references

1 Editorials, *Communist Review,* Nos 90, 91 and 92.
2 VI Lenin, in *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, Vol 20, pp 393-454.
3 *Ibid*, Section 2.
4 VI Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Ch V, in *Selected Works in 3 Volumes*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1963, pp 667-766.
5 Two examples were the planned mergers between Fiat-Chrysler and Renault, and between Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank, both of which were cancelled.
6 https://www.morriscreative.com/6-corporations-control-90-of-the-media-in-america/ .
7 K Marx and F Engels, Ch 2, in *Selected Works*, Vol 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, pp 98-137.
8 See M Roberts, HM Athens: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, in *CR*92, Summer 2019, pp 22-25.
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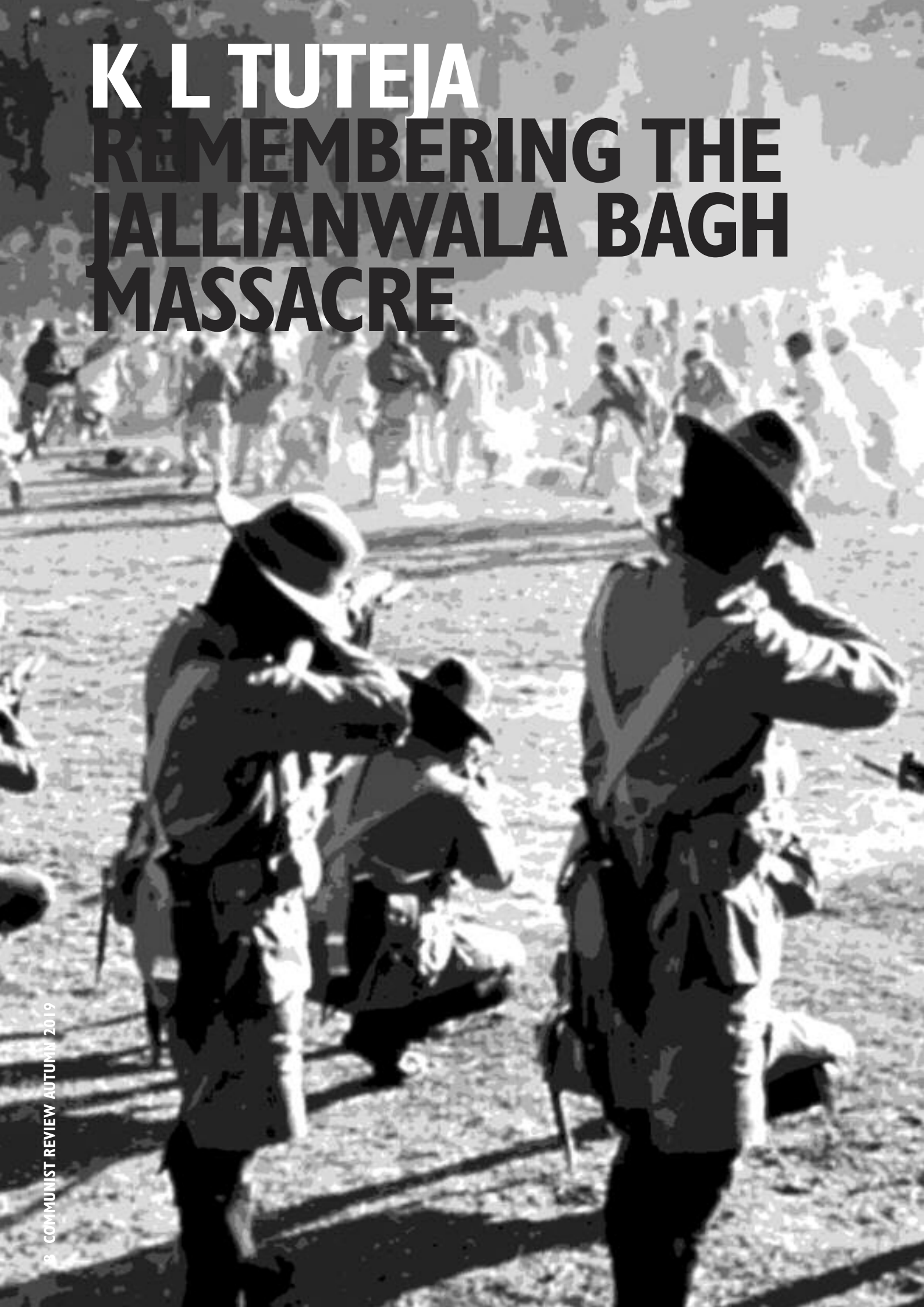
K L TUTEJA
REMEMBERING THE JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE



THE MASSACRE which gave a deep shock to the people of the Punjab and created reverberations in India took place on 13 April 1919 at a public meeting which was organised at Jallianwala Bagh in defiance of the official proclamation banning such gatherings. About twenty thousand persons were present at the meeting. They included some people belonging to the surrounding countryside who had come to Amritsar on that day, in connection with the *Baisakhi* festival. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer went along with soldiers to Jallianwala Bagh where the meeting was being held. Immediately after his arrival, Dyer ordered his troops to fire. No warning was given, nor was the crowd asked to disperse.

The firing continued for ten minutes; in all 1650 rounds were fired. Dyer ordered fire to be focused where the crowd was thickest, including the exits. He gave orders to stop firing only when his ammunition was virtually exhausted. According to an official account, 379 persons were killed and 1200 wounded. However the official figure is very much on the lower side; the number of casualties was actually much higher. The massacre invoked sharp criticism in both Britain and India. For instance Winston Churchill, who later became Prime Minister in Britain, called it "a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation".[1] In fact, such kinds of response indicate that even those who believed that the British government in India was based on justice were shocked and disturbed.

In India, a large number of people felt that it was a gruesome event unparalleled in history. The anguish caused by the massacre, and what the grim event signified to the people in India, was best reflected in Mahatma Gandhi's reaction when he wrote:

> "We do not want to punish Dyer. We have no desire for revenge. We want to change the system that produced Dyer."[2]

The massacre deeply influenced the subsequent course of anti-imperialist struggle in the country and contributed in its own way to the strengthening of the forces which posed a challenge to British rule in India.

Historical Background

Our object here is not limited to fixing the responsibility for the massacre on any individual or merely to resting with condemnation of the firing, but to make an attempt to understand the precise nature of the social phenomenon of which this particular event formed a part. My purpose is primarily to attend to the issues involved in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre when viewed as a part of the larger historical process taking place in the society and politics of the Punjab, as also in the larger domain of the anti-colonial struggle at the all-India level.

The year 1919 indeed was a landmark in modern Indian history. It saw the rise of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian politics and the advent of mass struggle under his leadership, which brought a major transformation in the Indian national movement. He launched the first all-India anti-colonial struggle, known as the Rowlatt *Satyagraha*, on April 6, 1919. This was spread in different parts of India but the Punjab was its major centre. It was during the course of this agitation that the tragic incident of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place. The history of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* may, however, be traced from 1917 when the government of India had appointed a committee headed by Justice Sydney Rowlatt to investigate "revolutionary crime" in the country and make recommendations for its suppression. On the recommendation of this committee, the government presented two Bills in the Imperial Legislative Council for suppression of "seditious" and "revolutionary" activities. The Imperial Council, despite strong opposition by its Indian members, passed the first Bill, which was named the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crime Act. The new legislation was enacted by the state with a view to curtailing the civil liberties of the common people. The Act indeed appeared draconian since it now authorised the police to search or arrest any Indian, without a warrant, or to confine suspects without trial for a renewable period of two years. Further, it laid down the trial of offenders by three high court judges in camera with no jury or right of appeal.

It was natural for the common people to detest the government's attempt to strengthen the hands of the police, considering its notoriety everywhere as a petty oppressor. Mahatma Gandhi described the Act as a "national wrong" since it was going to empower the government to take away from the Indian people their "God-given rights". In other words, Gandhi challenged the new legislation on moral grounds, stating that the government through the Rowlatt legislation was attempting to impose arbitrary checks on the civil liberties of the Indian people. In order to protest against it, he formed a *Satyagraha Sabha* and its members were asked to sign the pledge that they would refuse "civilly to obey" the Rowlatt Act. On March 26, Gandhi decided to broaden the movement by calling upon his countrymen to observe a day of *hartal*, demonstrating their opposition against the new legislation. He asked the Indian people "to undergo a 24-hour fast to put them in the right moral frame of mind and demonstrate the strength of their feelings on the matter." The *hartal* was originally fixed for March 30, but later on it was postponed to April 6. This agitation soon turned into a major mass movement against the British rule with the Punjab as one of its major centres.

The Punjab was made part of the British Empire in India after its annexation by the East India Company in 1849. Situated

Glosssary of terms

Baisakhi, also called *Vaisakhi*: a historical and religious festival in Hinduism and Sikhism.
Brahmo: an adherent of a religious movement from mid-19th century Bengal, originating in the Bengali Renaissance movement.
Brahmo Samaj: the societal component of Brahmoism.
civil lines: townships built all over the British Raj to house the senior civilian officers.
hartal: a mass shutdown and strike as a protest or mark or respect.
… *ki jai:* victory to …
Kuka: an austere sect within Sikhism, also known as *Namdhari.*
pleader: in India, a person who drafts pleadings and pleads in court on behalf of his or her client.
Presidencies: territories developed from the initial trading posts of the East India Company, which over the course of time became huge provinces, with each Presidency city as its capital.
Ram Navami: a spring Hindu festival that celebrates the birthday of the Lord Rama.
rishi: sage
sabha: an assembly, congregation or council
satyagraha, or holding onto the truth: the particular form of non-violent resistance initiated by Gandhi.
wali: guardian

in the north-west as the frontier province of the British Empire in India, the Punjab became a buffer between the Gangetic plains and Central Asia. Apart from its position as a frontier province, the Punjab also became crucial for the imperial system of control, because the British army had made its home in this province from the later half of the nineteenth century. Before the outbreak of the First World War, soldiers from the Punjab constituted three fifths of the total British army in India. The recruitment was made in maximum number from particular sections of Punjab society which were supposed to be imbued with strong "martial traditions". Ian Talbot has observed that actually the British policy of drawing recruits from the Punjab was based on "sound pragmatic grounds" but it was consciously enshrined in the mythology of "martial caste theory" which maintained that the "ethnic origins and racial characteristics of the main groups of the Punjabi recruits particularly fitted them for military service."[3]

In order to ensure a regular supply of manpower for recruitment, the government considered it essential to maintain its dominant hold over rural society. Any attempt to disturb its hegemony was perceived by the British officials as 'seditious' activity which needed to be ruthlessly suppressed. Already in this province, since the beginning of the colonial rule, a distinct ideology, described as "Punjab School Ideology", was developed which emphasised firm paternal rule by an elite of self-confident administrators who conceived their duty as that of bringing order and prosperity to a contented peasant society.[4] Apart from paternalism, it also embodied the necessity of taking firm action against the people, if they ever tried to pose a challenge to the authority of the British rule. In other words, the application of repressive methods whenever necessary constituted a major element of British administration in the Punjab.

It is well known that unlike the Presidency cities of Calcutta and Bombay, the growth of political consciousness in the colonial Punjab was much slower and was largely restricted to some urban areas, with Lahore as its major nerve centre. This phenomenon, it is generally believed, was largely the result of the conscious efforts made by the colonial government in keeping the Punjab politically backward, owing to its sensitive position for the Raj as a frontier province and also as a leading supplier of manpower for the British army in India. It was possibly a part of this strategy that the government had decided not to establish a legislative council in the Punjab as was done in other provinces under the Indian Councils Act of 1861. It was as late as 1897 when the government introduced a legislative system in this province, but its Indian members were not to be elected representatives nor were they given the "right of interpellation" (an occasion when questions are formally asked as of a government minister in parliament), which was criticised by the nationalist press and the leadership.[5]

The rise of nationalism in the Punjab began mainly in major urban centres, with educated middle classes taking the lead. Their ideas of modernity, progress and liberty gradually evolved in the new public sphere that was gradually coming up in urban areas.[6] In Lahore, the establishment of educational institutions and libraries, the formation of associations and debating societies (both of mundane and religious nature) and the sharp growth of the press and publications were of great significance in shaping the minds of the new middle classes in the Punjab.

As far as the press was concerned, the most notable development was the establishment of an English-language newspaper, *The Tribune*, by Dayal Singh Majithia in Lahore on 2 February 1881. In its first editorial *The Tribune* wrote about its objective:

> "The aim of *The Tribune* will be, as its name imparts, fairly and temperate to advocate the cause of the masses. In its columns, we shall seek to represent the public opinion of India, especially of Upper India, and what is more, we shall strive as lies within the compass of our humble abilities, to create and educate such opinion."

The Tribune indeed soon became very popular among the educated middle classes and also acquired the position of leading nationalist paper in north India. The new intelligentsia, in fact, living under the colonial rule "developed a common way of looking at society in part because of a common intellectual background, but more because of a common colonial experience." [7] The Punjabi intellectuals clearly understood that the British as a foreign power primarily ruled for their own economic benefit, and the interest of India had always remained secondary.

The first political organisation in the Punjab was the branch of the India Association at Lahore, which was established by Surendranath Banerjee during his visit to the province in 1877. This body was largely supported by Bengali migrants in the Punjab and some local *Brahmos* like Dayal Singh Majithia. The inaugural session of the Congress which was held at Bombay in 1885 was attended by only two representatives from the Punjab – Murli Dhar, a pleader from Ambala and Pandit Shiv Narain Agnihotri, a *Brahmo Samajist* from Lahore. In the pre-Jallianwala Bagh phase, the annual sessions of the Congress were held at Lahore three times, in 1893, 1900 and 1909, and each session was widely attended. It may however be added that that the social base of the Congress gradually widened in the Punjab, mainly in the urban areas. But the rise of anti-colonial consciousness was quite evident from the participation of masses in the Swadeshi movement, the agrarian movement of 1907 and the Ghadar movement.[8] However, the nationalist activities in the province were considerably curtailed during the period of World War I, largely because of the widespread repression by the Punjab government under its Lieutenant Governor, Michael O'Dwyer. But in 1917, the ban on political activities was lifted at the insistence of Montagu, the Secretary of State. The resurgence of nationalist consciousness was also evident from the fact that the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee extended an invitation to the Congress to hold its next annual session at Amritsar. *The Tribune* noted with satisfaction this resurgence and commented:[9]

> "Happily the tide has now turned as it was bound to turn. During the last few months, a considerable number of Congress Committees have come into existence, … and above all with readiness and enthusiasm with which the Punjab has invited the next session of the national assembly, this committee [provincial Congress] appears to have done valuable work."

In other words, there was groundswell of national sentiments in the Punjab, and this was possibly one of the major reasons for massive participation in Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in 1919.

Economic hardships mount

The economic hardship which the people had suffered during the war also served to heighten their anti-colonial consciousness. The first issue of common concern was the steep rise in the prices of essential commodities in the province. For instance there was a 100% price rise in the case of food grains between 1917 and 1919 but the wages of the artisans and workers increased by only 20-25%. It caused deep economic distress to the lower middle classes, artisans, workers and other fixed income groups living

in the cities. In particular in Amritsar, the artisans, including large sections of Kashmiri Muslims and petty shopkeepers, who formed the poorer sections of the urban society, were hit hard by the rise in prices. Besides, the professional and commercial middle classes in Punjab also strongly resented wartime taxes, and especially the recent amendments made in the income tax rules. Under the new rules, the tax collectors were empowered to do house-to-house surveys, which were perceived by the middle classes as a design on the part of the government to confiscate their property. The trouble for the merchant class was further aggravated because of the slump in the piece-goods trade. By this, the merchants in Amritsar, which was the major centre of the piece-goods trade in the Punjab, were seriously affected. Above all Michael O'Dwyer adopted a very hostile attitude towards the urban middle classes.

It is generally believed that the growing economic discontent in the province led to the growth of a strong anti-imperialist consciousness which indeed had influenced the decision to participate in the Rowlatt *Satyagraha*. However, to explain the large-scale participation of the urban people as a direct result of economic discontentment would not be correct. As a matter of fact, economic hardships served more the cause of strengthening the anti-colonial orientation which was gaining strength among the people in the Punjab. George Rudé, who made a study of popular uprisings in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, rightly contended that economic conditions would not be the "trigger" of a movement.[10] A real link between social, economic and political factors and an event has to be sought in the formation of "collective mentalities", or what Georges Lefebvre called the "collective frame of mind" at the popular level.[11] Therefore it is important to underline the primary significance of the crucial shifts which had been taking place in the mentalities of the urban people in the Punjab during this period.

How Rowlatt was perceived

An important aspect of the agitation was the meaning given to the Rowlatt legislation at the popular level in Punjab. The government always maintained that the new legislation was a temporary measure which aimed at preventing seditious crimes. Moreover, in order to remove the fears of the common people, it emphasised that this legislation was primarily directed against the political activists, and was not going to affect ordinary citizens in any manner. But the press and political leadership in Punjab very emphatically pronounced it as a coercive and undemocratic measure which would deprive the people of their civil liberties.

While speaking at public meetings, the leaders often expressed their meaning of Rowlatt legislation in metaphorical language, or recited poems to bring home to the people its unusually draconian character, which according to them would make the life of the common people miserable. It was natural for the common people to detest the government's attempt to strengthen the hands of the police "considering its notoriety everywhere as petty oppressors."[12] But more important was the apprehension which the people began to develop that the Rowlatt legislation was going to impose restrictions of a serious nature in their daily life.

In the official accounts, the popular meanings of the Rowlatt legislation were proclaimed as baseless "rumours" which had no substance in them. But the masses had come to think of these rumours as a true account of the real character of the controversial legislation. In fact the verbal exchanges which took place in bazaars and social gatherings played an important role in the construction of popular understanding concerning the Act. Moreover the popular discourse in the form of rumours contributed to evoking a comradeship response among the masses against those who were considered the oppressors. Finally, the spread of rumours among the economically weaker sections of society, including artisans, workers and petty shopkeepers, helped in creating a 'bond of community' against the colonial rule.

In the Punjab the protests against the Rowlatt Act started well before the movement was formally launched by Gandhi. For instance, mass meetings were held in Amritsar on March 23, 29 and 30, with "crowds of up to 45,000 people".[13] It is significant that Gandhi could not visit the Punjab before or during the course of the agitation. In other words, he was not directly involved in the movement and was not able to provide guidance or leadership to the participants in the Punjab. The activities of the *Satyagraha Sabha* formed by Gandhi did not receive much favourable response in the Punjab, and not more than a dozen people in this province signed the *Satyagraha* pledge.

Above all, Gandhi, as Ravinder Kumar writes, enjoyed a very "little power in Indian politics when he issued the call for a *hartal* on April 6, 1919."[14] Yet, as is well known, Gandhi's appeal evoked a massive response from the urban people in Amritsar and in other cities of the Punjab. What actually proved decisive was the popular perception of Gandhi's charisma and strength. By this time he already carried an image of a 'saviour' or 'messiah' for the common masses, which indeed deeply influenced the movement led by him. Sumit Sarkar has rightly observed that

> "varied sections of the Indian people seem to have fashioned their own images of Gandhi, particularly in earlier days when he was still to most people a distant, vaguely-glimpsed or heard-of tale of a holy man with miracle working powers."[15]

This deified image of Gandhi had already captured the popular imagination in the Punjab well before the commencement of the Rowlatt agitation. It is important to mention that, at the meetings organised to protest against the Rowlatt Bills, slogans such as "Gandhi *ki jai*" were invariably raised with enthusiasm by the crowd. Many a time, mass processions in the cities of the Punjab were headed by Gandhi's portrait.[16] Moreover, the common people invariably described Gandhi in religious metaphors like *'rishi'* and *'wali'* and he was often compared to the "coming of Christ to the coming of Muhammad to the coming of Krishna."[17] In one of the meetings, Maulivi Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, a local leader, remarked that Gandhi was ready to take "the sufferings and afflictions of the enemy [government] on his own head."[17] Further it was believed that Gandhi's infinite reserves of spiritual strength would eventually break the power of the bureaucracy and his new device of *Satyagraha* would ultimately relieve the people of the burden with which they were threatened.[18] They were perhaps convinced that, with Gandhi being their leader, there was no need to fear the colonial government. In short, Gandhi's defied image and the popular perception of his charisma further proved very effective in undermining the hegemony of British rule and in exposing its illegitimacy and lack of moral authority.

The *Satyagraha*

The *Satyagraha* started with a *hartal* which was observed on both the days, ie March 30 and April 6, in major cities of Punjab in a peaceful manner. However in Amritsar the local people got agitated when they came to know that their leaders, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satya Pal, had been arrested and deported to Dharmasala by the government. They were further upset by the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi at the Palwal railway

station. In protest, shops were immediately closed in old Amritsar city and people started moving in large numbers towards the civil lines where the British officials and their families lived.

It needs to be underscored here that the masses at this stage were absolutely peaceful and their activities were not determined by any instinct of hooliganism. But when they were forcefully prevented by the police at two of the bridges separating the civil lines from the city, they started stoning the policemen. The police on the other side immediately resorted to firing and, as a result, ten persons were killed and the number of those wounded was larger.

It was only after this incident of police firing and killing of their compatriots, on April 10, that the participants began to see all Britishers as their oppressors, and that the government offices and buildings assumed for them the character of symbols of the 'oppressive' colonial state. At this stage they assaulted Miss Sherwood, manager of the city missionary school, simply because she happened to be an Englishwoman. While assaulting her, some persons shouted *"Maro Angrez"* (A Britisher, kill her).[19] Similarly, when they attacked banks and other government offices in Amritsar, they said, "*Sarkari maal hai, loot lo*" (It is government property, take it away).[19] But these incidents by no means reflect endemic motives of loot or criminal instances. Instead the actions were motivated by growing hatred for the British rule and the strengthening of anti-imperial consciousness.

The killings of Europeans and destruction of official property on April 10 were viewed by the masses as their victory over the government. According to Miles Erwing, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar,

> "the people ... thought for some reason or other that the arm of the government was paralysed. The inaction of the police when the National Bank was burned lent some colour to the belief … that the government could do nothing."[20]

It was commonly believed that in Amritsar city, except Kotwali, the government had practically lost its control. Later Erwing, in his statement before the Hunter Committee (*qv*) also conceded this fact saying, "it was freely said that it might be the raj of Sarkar outside, but inside the city it was *Hindu-Musalman ki hakumat*" (Government might be ruling outside, but inside the city, it was rule of Hindus and Muslims).[20] In similar vein, the people were also found saying, "*Hun sada raj ho gaya*" (Now it is our rule).[19] All this made the British government believe that it had lost its hegemonic control and authority over the masses in the city.

This erosion of the ideological hegemony of colonial rule was perceived by the British officials as 'dangerous' and therefore they began to describe the Rowlatt agitation as a 'rebellion' against the state. In such a situation, the primary issue for the government was to restore 'order' and ensure safety of Europeans residing in Amritsar. It was with this purpose that Dyer along with a big contingent of soldiers was sent to Amritsar on April 11. He took over the control of the city from the civil authorities and along with his soldiers marched around the city. A proclamation was made stating that all meetings and gatherings were hereby prohibited and were to be dispersed under military law. But the urban masses were now hardly overawed by the repressive machinery of the colonial state. On the contrary, their morale was further boosted when, from the neighbouring towns of Lahore and Kasur, news trickled to them informing them that the mass agitation in these cities too had seriously undermined the authority of the colonial state. In such conditions the attitude of the masses became all the more defiant.

By now they seemed to have developed a firm belief that the threat given by Dyer of dispersing the public gatherings by use of military force was merely a 'bluff'.[21] Therefore some local people decided to organise a public meeting on April 13 at Jallianwala Bagh, defying the prohibitory orders. The urban masses responded to the call of the meeting and the common people assembled at the Bagh without any prominent leader amongst them. The majority of them, who were deeply imbued with deep anti-colonial consciousness, did not even bother when Dyer entered the Bagh and they continued with their meeting without showing any signs of fear or weakness. Even when the soldiers started firing, the people attending the meeting initially did not bother and some of the crowd said that the bullets were simply blank ("*Phokian, phokian*").[21] But within minutes hundreds of persons were found lying on the ground, killed or wounded.[22]

To suppress and instil fear among Indians

The role of General Dyer and the policy of the British government have been discussed in a number of writings. However it is necessary briefly to mention two points. First, the challenge to the colonial state by the Rowlatt agitation in Amritsar, Lahore and other cities since late March had considerably undermined its influence and authority in the Punjab. It was for this reason that the meeting held at Jallianwala Bagh was described by the Secretary, Government of India, as a "direct defiance and challenge to its authority".[23] But the important issue in the British attitude towards Indians was the syndrome of 'repression'. In fact the dangerous potential that the *Satyagraha* form of agitation had for the British Raj impelled the dominant section of the British officials to adopt the British policy of ruthless repression as the only visible response to the situation. Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh was to some extent in consonance with the existing framework of imperial control in the Punjab. It may be mentioned here that the system of administration in the Punjab since its annexation by the British embodied not only the paternalistic approach, but also the application of force, if necessary, against those elements who dared to undermine the hegemony of the colonial rule. In the past, the Punjab government had once blown from cannon more than 66 Kuka Sikhs for their alleged involvement in anti-government activities.

In other words, application of force (ie repression) against the 'rebels' was considered justified for the restoration of 'order' and 'peace' in the province. That is why a large number of Englishmen in Punjab and the official press approved Dyer's use of military force on civilians, since according to them it restored order and normalcy in the province. Secondly, it is significant to mention that after the Revolt of 1857, the notion of 'repression' as an effective preventive measure became a prominent feature of the thinking of British officials. The spectre of 1857 haunted the British officials so much that they feared that there might be cases of assault on British people living in India, and attack on government property, suddenly and unpredictably at any moment of time. It was on account of this fear that some of the British, after the incidents of April 10, had shifted their families to a safer place. The Revolt of 1857 was remembered by the British ruling classes for the use of excessive force, as the only effective measure in a situation of such an uprising. In other words, if the Revolt of 1857 was suppressed with use of brutal force, there was a rationale for adopting the same in any situation of feared uprising. This compulsive logic of resorting to repression to deal with what was perceived as a mass uprising was not recorded as part of the policy followed in India.

However, this 'unrecorded' way of dealing with a crisis continued to form a major part of the thinking of officials working in India till the second decade of the twentieth century. This offers a better explanation of the brutal use of force made by Dyer at Jallianwala Bagh, than all references to his abnormal psychology which looms large in the liberal versions of the colonialist apologia for what happened at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919.

Hindu-Muslim unity: a threat to the Britishers

Another important aspect was the Hindu-Muslim unity which manifested in many ways during the course of Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in the Punjab.[24] In almost all the protest meetings and demonstrations that were organised against the government, the masses often raised slogans like "Hindu-Muslim *ki jai*", symbolising the presence of inter-faith harmony among them. At one of the meetings Rambhuj Dutt Choudhary, a nationalist leader from Lahore, stressed that "Hindu-Muslim unity is the supreme need of the hour." The incident of *Ram Navami* on April 9 in Amritsar is well known, when a large number of Muslims participated in it as a national festival and fraternised with Hindus. Both the Hindus and Muslims expressed unity between the two communities by sharing the same water vessels. In Lahore, moreover, Swami Shraddhanand addressed a meeting of protestors held at a mosque without any protest by the Muslims on religious grounds. Besides, it is important to note that when on April 11 the protestors took over control of the old Amritsar city (except Kotwali), they were found saying that there was "Hindu-Musalaman *ki hukumat*" (government of the Hindus and Muslims) in the city. This strong presence of Hindu-Muslim unity during the course of agitation in a way reflected the legacy of the shared past of the common people belonging to different religious faiths who, till the late nineteenth century, amicably lived together separately.

Equally important was the fact that the dominant form of consciousness at this juncture in the Punjab was nationalist and communitarian at the same time. Gandhi recorded with deep satisfaction in his autobiography that "the Hindus and Musalmans seemed united as one man"[25] during the course of Rowlatt *Satyagraha*. In a similar vein, the Congress Punjab Inquiry Committee, appointed to look into the atrocities committed in Punjab, praised the fraternisation between the communities that was evident during the course of the agitation. Later, Swami Shraddhanand described the unity of Hindus and Muslims witnessed on *Ram Navami* day as a "veritable confluence of Ganga and Yamuna."[26] Lajpat Rai, after his return from abroad, stated at a public meeting that "the year 1919 would be remembered … for the fact that the Hindus and Mohammedans had united." He continued:

> "The Hindus and the Mohammedans were the inheritors of this common land, they belonged to one race, one country, the same sky was above and same sun over them."[27]

Lajpat Rai was confident that "the Hindu-Muslim entente has come to stay."[28]

Of course there seems to be an element of romanticisation of the manifestation of the Hindu-Muslim unity in the accounts given by the nationalist leadership, but as a social phenomenon it was an inevitable consequence of the communitarian-nationalist perspective which had gained ascendency at this time in the Punjab. But on the other hand the government tried to give an entirely different view of the Hindu-Muslim fraternity and belittled its significance. The Hunter Committee appointed by the government to look into the Punjab 'disturbances' reported that this was purely a temporary phenomenon and the efforts towards unity had been made simply in "political interest" – that is, to oppose the British government – and had no lasting significance, being a purely expedient move.[29]

Likewise, the upper class leadership in each community, which had not gone through the experience of communitarian-nationalist consciousness, was also of the opinion that the communitarian unity manifested during the agitation was not real and was a politically motivated expedient measure to oppose the government. For instance Raja Narendra Nath, a leader of the Punjab Hindu *Sabha*, described this manifestation of unity as "superficial".[30] In a similar vein, two Muslim upper-class leaders, Mian Mohammad Shafi and Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, contended that this unity was a temporary phenomenon because there were permanent differences between the people of two communities. Since these upper-class leaders did not share the communitarian-nationalist perspective, they were not prepared to accept that Hindus and Muslims would genuinely join hands in the nationalist struggle when its anti-imperialist character gained a sharper edge and became visibly consistent. They shared the official perspective of the colonial regime based on wresting concessions and gains from the colonial state, by putting special stress on the distinct position of their community as fundamentally opposed to the other.[31]

It is significant to mention that the above perspective of Hindu-Muslim relations held by upper- and middle-class collaborators from both the communities did not immediately leave much impact on the thinking of the common people, especially in the urban areas of the central Punjab. However, it is not denied that this very framework, based on the assumption that Hindus and Muslims were essentially 'enemies' of each other, did contribute later in widening the gulf between the two communities and at the same time in befuddling the nationalist perspective of a united struggle against colonial rule in India.

Here it may be mentioned that Dyer in Amritsar and the Punjab government in general, even after the gruesome tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh, continued with the repressive policy by inflicting a number of cruelties on the common people in all those cities which witnessed large-scale mass upsurge during the course of the agitation. Michael O'Dwyer, as Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, later justified all these cruelties and the imposition of martial law on the grounds that these measures were necessary to restore law and order and to bring back normalcy – or in other words, to reassert the hegemonic colonial authority in the province. Mahatma Gandhi, as mentioned at the beginning, was deeply hurt by Dyer's killing of innocent people; but he was also critical of the incidents of violence in which Indians were involved. Gandhi's remonstrance was natural, eruption of such incidents in the wake of Rowlatt agitation being contrary to his creed of non-violence. He was compelled to do some introspection about his decision to launch the mass movement and came to the conclusion that it was a "'mistake which seemed to be of Himalayan magnitude."[32] Moreover, Gandhi was also convinced that "it was not possible for him to lead a *satyagraha* in future if he could not be certain that those who took part were committed to strict non-violence."

The massacre and subsequent incidents of oppression on the people of the Punjab were considered "unworthy of a civilised administration and symptomatic of the moral degradation of their inventors".[33] Rabindranath Tagore decided to renounce his knighthood in protest. Jawaharlal Nehru felt deeply hurt by those upper-class Britons who defended Dyer's action or took part in events organised in his honour both in India and Britain. He wrote:

"This cold-blooded approval of that deed shocked me greatly. It seemed absolutely immoral, indecent …. I realised more vividly than I had ever done before, how brutal and immoral imperialism was and how it had eaten into the souls of the British upper class."[34]

Bhagat Singh visited Jallianwala Bagh and picked up some sand from there. By doing this, he perhaps carried it not only as a symbol of British oppression on peaceful Indians but also of the supreme sacrifice made by them in their struggle against colonial rule.

Icon in independence struggle

The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was made an icon in the nationalist discourse in the subsequent course of the anti-colonial struggle. This was indeed a legitimate use of this exceptional moment of mass protest against the British regime and for liberation from its hegemonic stranglehold. About this, David Hardiman writes:

"The story of what had happened in the square on April 13, 1919 was told and retold all over India through prose poetry, picture and song that lamented the suffering of Amritsar while exhorting people to stand up and face the machine guns and cannons of the British without being cowed. 'Dyer' became a short hand term signifying the brutality of imperial rule in general."[35]

In other words the incident came to symbolise that a great sacrifice was made by the people for the cause of India's liberation. Here it is also necessary to see how the incident was perceived at the popular level throughout the country. The question is enormously difficult since it implies the discerning of sentiments of non-literates who formed the majority of the Indian people at that time. However, it can be said that the tragedy registered in popular consciousness as an example of brutal suppression by the colonial state. Further, it was viewed that Gandhi as Mahatma (a deified image) could alone protect them from such a repressive state. In other words, it was the experience as well as the fear of suppression which not only established a bond of unity, but also led the common people to identify themselves with the anti-colonial struggle spearheaded under the leadership of Gandhi. This is how, after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the elite and popular anti-colonial consciousness converged in India. Indeed it is an important after-effect of the massacre, the logic of which was already inherent in the initiative Gandhi had taken to give mass character to the national movement by involving the lower middle class groups as well as the peasantry and workers.

What happened at Jallianwala Bagh and in other urban centres of Punjab sharply revealed an important facet of the mass resistance which emerged as a part of the national movement under Gandhi's leadership at that particular stage. The common masses who participated in the movement did not strictly adhere to Gandhi's principle of *Satyagraha* because their ideas of opposing the British regime did not often tally with Gandhi's perspective. It is evident from the above study that once the fear of the mighty British rule was removed from the minds of the people through the influence of Gandhi's idea of offering resistance to the arbitrary authority of the colonial rule, they quickly experienced a sense of liberation and were filled with a confidence which impelled them to underestimate the power of the regime. This produced in them a strong desire to take on its might and overthrow it with one strong push. This overconfidence and impatience made them transgress the limits of the Gandhian idea of resistance, and they did not hesitate to resort to violent means in retaliation against the oppression being carried on by the colonial state. Gandhi's *Satyagraha Sabhas*, which were constituted especially to organise the Rowlatt agitation, and the Congress as a body, were not organisationally strong enough to provide effective leadership and carry on the movement strictly in accordance with Gandhi's aim and objectives. In such a situation, the masses were left to select their own course of action according to their spontaneous perceptions and understanding of the prevailing conditions. They often became turbulent in the sense that they worked under the psychology not merely of exposing the arbitrariness of the authority of the British regime but of immediately overthrowing it.

The divergence between Gandhi's perspective and the mindset which often governed mass upsurge conveyed the message to him that, in the absence of an adequate organisational network which could control and provide direction to the people from above, it would not be possible to carry on a sustained anti-imperialist struggle with his perspective of non-violent *Satyagraha*. Later on, when Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation movement in 1920, he decided to make use of the Congress organisation in an effective manner, and it was mainly for this purpose that the constitution of this all-India body was revised in 1920. A large number of local branches of the Congress were formed which became instruments of control from above for the nationalist leadership. They were now able to maintain strong linkages in a vertical manner to the lowest level of society in the villages. The new setup of the Congress proved immensely useful, not only in bringing large sections of Indian masses into the fold of the anti-imperialist struggle, but also in providing a network to control and guide their activities in accordance with their programme laid down at the national level. Gandhi's emphasis on a constructive programme for reforms in society, which emerged in concrete form in the 1920s, also slowly built up an extensive network of supporters at the grassroots level in different parts of the country.

It is an indisputable fact that Gandhi's charismatic leadership proved decisive in making the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* a popular upsurge against colonial rule. But his mode of mobilising the masses was at that stage largely emotive in character. It certainly produced results as large sections of people responded enthusiastically to his appeal. But this enthusiasm could neither gain sufficient momentum nor be sustained for long unless it was linked, as happened in the Punjab, with deep seated anti-imperialist consciousness which had grown out of the difficulties faced by the common people in their day-to-day material life. The disenchantment of different social classes and groups against the government had finally coalesced here with the sentiments aroused by the Rowlatt agitation. This provided real strength to the movement launched by Gandhi. The strong character of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* witnessed in Punjab was, in other words, the result of the emotive appeal made by Gandhi combining with the strong resentment which existed among the people on account of issues related to their social and economic life. This feature of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Punjab was not a product of a deliberate plan but an accidental coalescence of national fervour with the material interests of the people. After 1919, however, Gandhi and the Congress made some efforts to create such a linkage between the anti-imperialist sentiment, based on the issue of national dignity, and the specific material interests of different groups of society. But this linkage, as it was visualised and effected, did not prove to be adequately strong.

It is indisputable that the Rowlatt Act *Satyagraha* and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre proved to be a decisive turning point in the national movement, transforming it into a mass movement.

■ Article previously published in the quarterly theoretical journal of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the *Marxist*, Vol XXXV, No 1 (January-March 2019), pp 8-27, and reproduced here by permission. The original article included endnotes but the markers in the text were missing, and every effort has been expended to locate them here correctly, using end-reference 31 and other sources. Additional end-notes, the glossary and the index of persons have been provided by the Editor.

Index of Persons

Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925) was one of the earliest Indian nationalist leaders during the British Raj. He founded the Indian National Association, and later became a senior leader of the Indian National Congress.

Rambhuj Dutt Choudhary (1866-1923) was a lawyer, journalist and nationalist leader, close to revolutionaries like Sardar Ajit Singh (uncle of Bhagat Singh, *qv)* and Lala Lajpat Rai *(qv)*. He was a founder member of the Indian National Congress and attended all sessions until his death.

Saifuddin Kitchlew (1888-1963) was a Muslim barrister and Indian nationalist, and head of the Punjab Congress Committee at the time of the massacre. In 1924 he became general secretary of the All-India Congress Committee. He was a founding member of the Indian Youth Congress and promoted Hindu-Muslim unity. He was imprisoned for 14 years altogether under the Raj. In 1952, after he had left the Congress and helped found the All-India Peace Council, he was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize.

Dayal Singh Majithia (1848-98) was a banker and activist in progressive and social reform measures in the Punjab.

Jarwaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was an Indian independence activist, and subsequently the first prime minister of free India.

Dr Satya Pal (1884-1954) was one of the leaders of the anti-Rowlatt agitation in Amritsar, symbolising Hindu-Muslim unity. Participating in political activities in the Punjab during the Gandhi era, he became speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly after independence.

Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) was an Indian patriot, a founder of the India Home Rule League in New York. He was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1920, but died from a heart attack after being severely injured in a police attack on a non-violent march.

Swami Shraddhanand (1856-1926) was an Indian educationalist and a missionary for Arya Samaj, a monotheistic Hindu reform movement

Bhagat Singh was one of the most outstanding revolutionaries of India, martyred at the age of 23. His father and uncles were members of the Ghadar Party. He broke with Congress over non-violence and threw a bomb in the Central Assembly in Delhi in April 1929. He was convicted, and executed, for the 1928 assassination of assistant superintendent of police John Saunders, an event widely seen as retribution for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai (***qv***).

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was an Indian polymath, poet, musician and artist, the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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16 VN Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, Ludhiana, 1969, p 14.
17 *The Tribune*, 12 March 1919.
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20 *Report of the Disorders Enquiry (Hunter) Committee*, 1919-20: *Evidence*, Vol III, p 7.
21 Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh, op cit*, p 96.
22 *Report and Evidence of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*, p 70.
23 *Home Political File Franchise B*, No 513, January 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
24 Cited in Kumar, ed, *op cit*.
25 M K Gandhi, *The Study of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad, 1927, p 349.
26 Swami Shraddhanand, Speech at Amritsar Congress Session 1919, in AM Zaidi and S G Zaidi, *The Encyclopedia of Indian National Congress,* Vol 7, pp 456-469; the Yamuna (Jumna, Jamna) is the second largest tributary river of the Ganges (Ganga) –Ed.
27 *The Tribune*, 24 February 1920.
28 Lajpat Rai, *Letter to JC Wedgwood*, 26 April 26 1920, in B R Nanda, ed, *Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai,* Vol 9, New Delhi, 2007, p 35.
29 General O'Dwyer and his government believed that the Hindus and Muslims, who were essentially opposed to each other as 'warring creeds', temporarily joined hands or just formed a political alliance against the British during the anti-Rowlatt agitation. The Punjab government made a special reference to this aspect of Hindu-Muslim unity to underline the point that Hindus and Muslims had merely cooperated with each other in 1919 for organizing the 'rebellion'. See O'Dwyer's evidence in Datta, *Punjab Disturbances* Vol 1, *op cit*, pp124-233, and *Disorder Enquiry Committee Report*, *op cit*, p 29.
30 *Home Political File Franchise B*, No 1904, April 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
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LI JIE MARXISM: A NEW ERA, NEW ENVIRONMENT, AND NEW REQUIREMENTS

Workers conducting the successful rotation of a 14,000-metric-ton swivel bridge. China Daily

I. The market

Commodities and markets have long histories, both in China and abroad. However, it was the age of capitalism that expanded commodity production and the commodity economy nationwide and worldwide, bringing about unified domestic markets, regional markets, and economic globalisation.

Today, market economies, which boast the advantages of being integrated, accessible, and efficient, have become a platform for economic globalisation and regional economic integration, for international finance and trade, and for the global flow of capital, technology, talent, and information. This has led some people to regard market economies as exclusive products of capitalism. In their opinion, China must carry out capitalist privatisation and make up for the absence of capitalism if it is to develop a market economy. Should this really be the case?

In the 21st century, three major events have ended the reign of the capitalist market economy. First, since the overall initiation of China's second round of reform, the aim of which was to establish and develop a socialist market economy, China's unique approach to socialism has scored a massive success, turning China into the world's second largest economy. Second, emerging markets have experienced highly rapid economic growth, reshaping the world economic landscape and becoming new engines for world economic growth. Third, since the international financial crisis of 2008, Western capitalist countries, as represented by the US and the European Union, have descended into prolonged stagnation. The combination of these three events paved the way for the G20 Hangzhou Summit in September 2016 and the formation of the Hangzhou Consensus.[1]

This bears testimony to the saying 'all roads lead to Rome', and serves as proof that 'only the wearer knows if the shoes fit or not'. It shows that capitalism is not the only model a country can choose when establishing and developing a market economy. After having achieved national independence, all developing countries, including China, are perfectly capable of combining the general rules of the market economy with their own local realities, conditions, and features to independently establish and develop a market economy that is unified internally and open to the outside world. As a result, we can see that market economies can be both diverse and inclusive.

This represents a new landscape derived from the intrinsic logic of the market, and a landscape that is conducive to the revival and development of Marxism in the 21st century. More importantly, it has set a grand stage for the great renewal of the Chinese nation.

II. Capital

Much like commodities and the market, the history of money, transactions, loans, and employment also stretches back extremely far. However, once interwoven with the capitalist mode of production, these factors become a foundation for the multiplication of capital. Historically, capitalism has not only secured control over domestic markets by utilising the power of capital, but has also taken and constantly strengthened control over the world economy and the rules of its operation by drawing on the close integration of capital with scientific, technological, and industrial revolutions. So far, shifts in control over the world economy have only been realised through competition within the ranks of developed capitalist countries. Whoever has the most capital and financial resources has the final say – this is merely an economic manifestation of the logic that strong countries are bound to seek dominance.

Once the proletariat, who had nothing under capitalist rule, seizes state power through social revolution, a major step they must take is to expropriate the expropriators. This is only right and proper, because capital, as a form of social wealth, is ultimately created by the working people. However, what happens next? The responsibility of answering this long-standing question eventually fell on the shoulders of Chinese communists, who launched the reform and opening-up drive after a tortuous process of exploration.

The success of socialism with Chinese characteristics has proved that Chinese communists cannot overlook the power of capital if they are to achieve modernisation and national rejuvenation. Although capital is bound to class and social systems, the most important thing is who wields it, under which system it functions, and whom it serves. Socialism needs to, and has the capacity to, seize, create, and utilise the power of capital, just as capitalism has done so in the past.

The idea of socialism taking hold of, creating, and utilising the power of capital is a brand new one that we are facing in our efforts to uphold and develop Marxism. Generally speaking, there are three major issues that must be resolved here. First, domestically speaking, we need to ensure that communists are capable of controlling, utilising, and increasing capital without being taken captive by it. Second, internationally speaking, we need to ensure that socialist countries are not only able to handle foreign capital, cooperate with it, and invest globally, but also able to prevent financial risks and safeguard their own financial and capital security. Third, considering the aim of capital appreciation, we need to resolve inequalities in income distribution and misconduct in capital operation during the process of appreciation. This means avoiding the 'middle-income trap', expanding the middle-income group, gradually creating an olive-shaped pattern of distribution, and ultimately eradicating poverty and exploitation through shared development to achieve common prosperity. Only in this way can we fundamentally reverse the relationship between labour and capital, setting history straight by empowering labour to control capital rather than being enslaved by it. Such a miracle can only be created under socialism with Chinese characteristics.

This historic proposition must be resolved during the course of our efforts to develop Marxism for the 21st century and for contemporary China.

III. The rule of law

The transition from rule of man to rule of law is one of the overarching trends of our time.

This transition was first achieved through bourgeois revolution. Through this process, capitalism not only established its position of dominance over society, but also systematised its revolutionary theories against theology, clericalism, and feudal monarchy, and institutionalised those systems established after the revolution that were conducive to its own development. After several centuries of evolution, the capitalist discourse of social sciences and system of rule of law eventually took shape.

It was also during this process that two major changes took place: the theorisation of ideology and the cloaking of monopoly rule (namely bourgeois dictatorship). Through the theorisation of ideology, the bourgeoisie provided strong academic support for its national ideology, allowing it to assume the form of academic studies and academic discourse. This meant that such an ideology no longer displayed the attributes of a certain class on the exterior, but rather was able to exist, replicate, and spread worldwide in the form of 'universal values'. Through the

cloaking of dictatorship, the bourgeoisie transformed the will of the state into the 'social contract', namely the law. Reinterpreted as the rule of law, bourgeois dictatorship was rendered cloaked, flexible, and universal, assuming the sacred, non-partisan form of democratic elections, institutional arrangements, statutory procedures, and legal authorisation.

Socialist rule of law cannot mimic capitalist rule of law. Rather, it must balance the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the rule of law, and the position of the people as masters of the country. However, we still face the practical issue of transitioning from the rule of man to the rule of law. This will be a gradual, long-term process. In accordance with the guidelines laid out in the resolution of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, we must carry out a sustained and thorough effort to implement the rule of law comprehensively. This is also something that needs to be resolved through our efforts to develop Marxism for the 21st century and for contemporary China.

There are three key issues to be resolved as we advance the rule of law. First, we need to balance properly the relationship between upholding the leadership of the CPC and upholding the authority of the Constitution and our belief in the rule of law. The argument over whether greater authority rests with the CPC or the law is actually a false proposition; it is the relationship between power and the law that constitutes the true proposition to be addressed. Second, we need to balance the relationship between the rule of law and the people's democratic dictatorship. As one of the Four Cardinal Principles,[2] which represent the foundation of national governance, the people's democratic dictatorship has been written into the CPC Constitution and the Constitution of China. We must not waver from this principle. However, the people's democratic dictatorship should be realised through the application of law-based thinking and approaches rather than any other means. Third, we need to balance the relationship between the authority of the rule of law and the principal position of the people. Socialist rule of law should put the people first, and its aim should be to safeguard, develop, coordinate, and realise the interests of the people. This is the fundamental difference between socialist rule of law and capitalist rule of law.

IV. Sharing

A common wish of people around the world is that the fruits of material and non-material progress can be shared by all people and society as a whole, rather than being exclusively enjoyed by certain interest groups.

Against this backdrop, the difference between sharing under the socialist system and that under the capitalist system has become increasingly evident. Capitalist sharing aims to balance political, social, and other interests under the precondition that the vested interests of a minority of people are satisfied. Socialist sharing, in contrast, adopts a people-centred approach that aims to dismantle the barriers erected by entrenched interests through efforts comprehensively to deepen reform and implement new principles of development, such as shared development. To that end, multiple measures have been taken to provide stronger and more balanced welfare guarantees for both urban and rural residents, to step up the integrated development of urban and rural areas, to adjust unreasonable income distribution and expand the middle-income group, and to increase the household property income of rural residents and the low-income group. Socialist sharing embodies a great deal: the CPC's fundamental tenet of serving the people wholeheartedly; the inherent requirement that socialist modernisation is ultimately aimed at boosting and realising well-rounded development of individuals; and the principle that development is for the people, reliant on the people, and that its fruits are shared by the people.

Sharing is a principle and a requirement, but it is also a practical process whereby a society develops from a lower to a higher level. Sharing cannot be achieved overnight, so we should not whet people's appetite by promising them too much. But the promise of sharing cannot be an empty one. We need to ensure sharing under the precondition of respecting differences and diversity, rather than adopting an egalitarian approach or imposing a uniform, 'one-size-fits-all', standard across the board.

We need to find a way of achieving different levels of shared development at different stages of development, whilst ensuring that all social strata and groups, especially the low-income group, have a sense of happiness, gain and satisfaction during this process and that they are grateful to the CPC, the country, and the society and are willing to reciprocate. This is another topic that needs to be resolved through our efforts to develop Marxism for the 21st century and for contemporary China.

V. Coexistence

The major requirement of our time is that countries with different social systems and different social, historical, and cultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously and establish a community of shared future for humankind, as driven by the trend of peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation, so as to dismantle the international foundations of the centuries-old logic that a strong country is bound to seek dominance, and oppose global hegemony, cultural hegemony, terrorism, and extremism in all their forms.

This coexistence hinges on peaceful coexistence between socialist and capitalist countries. Despite emerging at different times, capitalism and socialism have essentially developed and coexisted in the same era as different social systems and ideologies that compete against one another while learning from one another. This has never been seen before in the history of social development. It is thus evident that the world has become more diverse since the emergence of capitalism, and that the time has passed when a single mode of production or social system can dominate the world. Therefore, we must abandon the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game[3] if we are to keep in step with the times.

The relationship between capitalism and socialism is no longer a question of who will destroy whom. For years, Western countries have attempted to defeat or transform socialist countries. Though they brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, leading to a temporary low tide in the world socialist movement, they have failed to prevent the robust development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This is a testimony to the great vitality of socialism. Socialism and capitalism are becoming increasingly evenly matched in strength in today's complex international landscape, which comprises one major power and multiple poles. This is not attributable to a hot or cold war, but rather to the long-term peaceful development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and to the achievements of China's reform and opening up, which have shattered the 'end of socialism' theory that emerged after the end of the Cold War. It represents an objective outcome that has emerged as China has moved towards the centre of the world stage, based on its peaceful development and remarkably enhanced overall national strength. Therefore, the eventual replacement of capitalism by socialism will take place over a long historical

process which includes several stages. One of the most important stages will see socialist countries draw on their own reform and opening-up initiatives to enable socialism genuinely to match capitalism globally, thus breaking through Western countries' long-term strategic blockade and containment of socialist countries.

Generally speaking, there are four major issues that must be addressed with regard to the coexistence of socialism and capitalism. First, a socialist country needs to remain confident in its path, theories, system, and culture. If you do not believe in yourself, how can you possibly expect others to have faith in you? Second, a socialist country needs to be self-reliant. It needs to seize the initiative firmly in its own hands, and never rely on others with regard to its sovereignty, security, development, and innovation of the nation. Third, a socialist country needs to open up fully to the outside world, and engage in comprehensive interaction and mutual learning. Fourth, a socialist country needs to enhance its capacity for international communication and improve its international image. The key to the success of these efforts lies in finding a way for socialist countries, which have long been at a disadvantage, to remain firmly committed not only to reform and opening up but also to upholding and developing their own form of socialism with national characteristics.

Through our summary of five key terms (the market, capital, the rule of law, sharing, and coexistence), we can conclude that Marxism will definitely embrace its revival as we move ever closer to realising the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation. In China lies the hope and foundation for the great development of Marxism, the hallmarks of which are the innovative progress of Marxism for the 21st century and for contemporary China, as well as the establishment of a framework for philosophy, social sciences, and discourse under its guidance that displays Chinese character and style.

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Notes and References

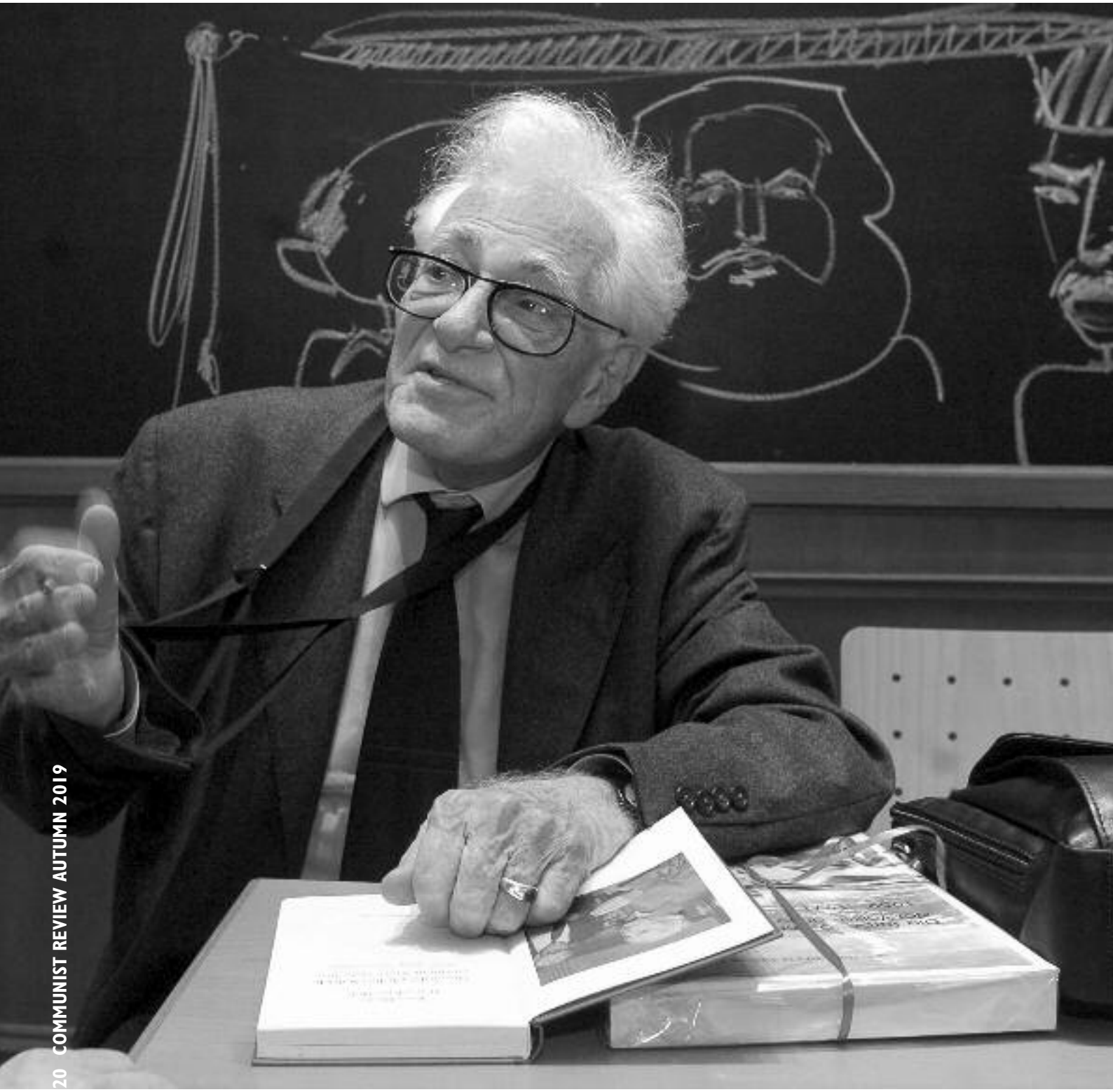
1 The Hangzhou Consensus is a package of policies and actions adopted at the G20 Summit in Hangzhou in 2016, and based on a vision for growth, integration, openness and inclusiveness –*Ed.*

2 The Four Cardinal Principles, enunciated by Deng Xiaoping in 1979, consist in upholding (1) China's socialist path, (2) the people's democratic dictatorship, (3) the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and (4) Mao Zedong Thought and Marxism-Leninism –*Ed.*

3 In game theory, a 'zero-sum game' is a situation in which each participant's gain or loss is exactly balanced by the losses or gains of the other participants–*Ed.*

THE LEGACY OF HANS HEINZ HOLZ

TWO ARTICLES FROM THE SYMPOSIUM, 'THE UNITY OF POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM', IN BERLIN ON 25 FEBRUARY 2012, THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH.



DOMENICO LOSURDO

THE UNITY OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

I WOULD LIKE to start with a personal reminiscence: I got to know Hans Heinz and his wife Sylvia in February 1985 at a conference on Lukács, which I had organised in Urbino and to which I had invited Hans Heinz. Immediately we became friends. Why? Not just because of his well-known amiability, or his intellectual brilliance; no, there was immediately a mutual philosophical-political accord.

I am an Italian and therefore have the history of the party of Gramsci and Togliatti in my background. Two years after the October Revolution, Togliatti wrote in the journal *L'Ordine Nuovo*, which was published by Antonio Gramsci, "Marx is in direct line the son of Hegel." And a couple of years later Togliatti wrote: "There are different ways to become a Marxist, but for me the best is the way of Marx."

The young man, who was called Karl Marx, was the great revolutionary and philosopher because he critically assimilated Hegel's philosophy – and that could be, and ought to be, our way. Hans Heinz naturally was in full agreement with that. He had also written about it, citing Lenin at the same time, where the latter spoke of the three sources of Marxism. Holz emphasised that Lenin spoke not only of three sources, but also of three component parts, of Marxism. Hegel, the Hegelian philosophy, the Hegelian method, is also a component part of Marxism, and hence the theme of my contribution – the unity of philosophy and politics.

Why is Hegelian philosophy so important for revolutionary theory and praxis? What I will say is in part my own thoughts and in part those of Hans Heinz. I have metabolised something of his thoughts. Why is Hegel, the Hegelian philosophy, so important?

I start with a famous quotation from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: "The true is the whole."[1] This claim is not banal. I remember quite well that, in the Hegel Society, which was led by Hans Heinz and myself, there were colleagues, famous professors, in particular former Marxists, who thought quite differently. For them the whole was the idea of totality, *ie* totalitarianism. That was simply the response. And I would like to explain why this response is false.

In order to make this contribution a bit more lively, I would like to tell you about a journey, a real journey – one undertaken by Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous liberal author. At the beginning of the 1830s he visited the United States and analysed the 'rule of law', the government of laws in the white community. Well, on the one hand he notes that the president was elected by the people, but on the other he does explain quite well what the situation of the Black people was. They are, he says, mostly slaves, and even those who are not slaves are exposed to a cruel oppression. And the Indians, de Tocqueville says quite clearly, are in the process of being exterminated. We must accept that there is an intellectual honesty on de Tocqueville's part. Yet the title and subject of his book, his major publication, is *Democracy in America;* and he explains in one chapter why he speaks of democracy, although the Indians and the Blacks are so terribly oppressed:

> "These arguments [that means the fate of the Indians and the Blacks –*DL*] are not a component of the problem of democracy. They relate only to America, not to democracy, and I only want to conceptualise the picture of democracy."[2]

For de Tocqueville it is quite clear: slavery and the annihilation of the native Americans were not components of democracy.

Now we can better understand Hegel's thesis, "The true is the whole." We cannot grasp the concept of democracy without including the situation of the colonial peoples. And in this way Hegel's thesis is not the justification of totalitarianism, as the Popperians[3] say; on the contrary it is the exposure of the totalitarianism, of the total power, which is exercised in terms of the situation of the colonial peoples.

Up to now I have spoken of the 19th century, but what can we say about the 20th? In this case I would like to describe, not a real journey, but an imaginary one. However, before that I need to tell you about another real journey. Around the same time as de Tocqueville, but independently from him, another French citizen also visited the USA. His name was Victor Schœlcher. He is not so well-known as de Tocqueville, but he is a great personality. He is the French citizen who, after the 1848 revolution, finally abolished slavery in the French colonies. He too visited the United States at the beginning of the 1830s and beheld the good situation of the white community. But he also saw the fate of the Blacks and the Indians, and came to a quite different conclusion from de Tocqueville's. He wrote:

> "In the United States there is the worst despotism that we can imagine."

I don't want to say just now who was right, de Tocqueville or Schœlcher. Schœlcher was no Marxist, and Marx was at that time an unknown young man. Schœlcher was not familiar with Hegel but he, so to speak, also agreed that we have to understand the true as the whole. That means that he also included the situation of the Indians and the Blacks in his consideration.

And now we come to the 20th century. In this case we can imagine a sort of de Tocqueville *redivivus*. The de Tocqueville of the 20th century undertakes a journey – a world journey in

the 20th century. In the USA, in France, there is the government of laws, there is constitutional legal order. But he would be silent about the colonies – for example Algeria, the French colony – about the situation in Latin America, about the wars against the independence movements – for example in Vietnam. He would be silent about the fact that, still in the second half of the 20th century, Afro-Americans were used for medical experiments. In the 1990s, Clinton was obliged to apologise for that.

Certainly, if we start out from the standpoint that we must understand the 20th century by abstracting totally from the colonies and from the people of colonial origin, then we can talk about the 'Free World', the famous 'Free World'! But if a Victor Schœlcher, a Schœlcher *redivivus*, had been able to visit this world in the 20th century, then he would also have called our attention to the situation of the colonial peoples, and his conclusion would simply be in opposition. The so-called 'Free World' is the world of the worst colonial oppression. Only in this way can it be understood why Hegel's key thesis is "The true is the whole."

Let's talk again about the 19th century. De Tocqueville compares the French Revolution with the American Revolution. The American Revolution was not so complicated as the French, and de Tocqueville speaks often and readily of "insanity" in relation to the French Revolution. The Jacobins were "insane" and the protagonists of the 1848 revolution were also "insane". According to French historian Hyppolite Taine, certainly a student of de Tocqueville, the protagonists of the Paris Commune were still more insane.

By relying on Hegel we can easily understand that, for example, the social conflict in the USA was deactivated by the non-existence of a really landless proletariat – because the nonproprietors were soon proprietors, in that they conquered the territory of the Indians, and decimated and exterminated them. Also, the social conflict of the workers was not so clear, because the workers were the slaves bound in chains.

Whereas de Tocqueville speaks of insanity, Hegel brings into play the category of contradiction, of objective contradiction, and that naturally goes also for the October Revolution. We cannot understand the complexity of the October Revolution, if we do not analyse the material situation. Hegel says, for example, that the USA had no great power as neighbour, it was threatened by no great power.[4] However, revolutionary France was immediately threatened and attacked by counter-revolutionary powers. And obviously that is also the history of the Soviet Union. "The true is the whole" always applies.

But how can we understand the reality which we can observe? There are various approaches, and I speak now of the present. Samuel P Huntington, the famous author of the book, *Clash of Cultures*, calls the US wars in the Persian Gulf oil wars, and he says quite openly:[5]

> "In the Gulf Wars the question in play was whether the oil reserves there would be controlled by the pro-Western governments of Saudi Arabia or by independent and anti-Western governments. …
>
> Fortunately [that is Huntington's conclusion – *DL*] the Persian Gulf has now become an American sea."

After the war against Yugoslavia one could read in the US daily paper *International Herald Tribune* this commentary:

> "The 'lesson' of the Kosovo war … is that … NATO can and will do anything necessary to defend Western vital interests."[6]

What is that from Hegel's point of view? We could say that would, for Hegel, be common empiricism. And from Huntington's point of view: it is obviously something good that the Persian Gulf is becoming an American sea – even if that has cost several wars and so many lives. He indicates no philosophical arguments, since it is for him a matter of course. Bush Junior would have been able to say that the USA is the nation chosen by God, which is called to rule the world. That is certainly also the opinion of the current US president.[7] That is common empiricism: it needs to cite no arguments and it feels no need to justify its imperial claims to power.

But let us now deal with a very famous philosopher, Jürgen Habermas[8], whom Hans Heinz did not rate very highly. What attitude does Habermas adopt? Indeed, he does not want to speak of oil or geopolitics. He maintains that the Balkans were not important for NATO, as they have no oil. However, he forgets that the Balkans have played a very important role in the two world wars. And what does he maintain? That this war, the NATO attack on Yugoslavia, was only unleashed by universal need, to defend human rights in Yugoslavia.

Hegel understood things like that. Naturally he didn't speak of the war on Yugoslavia, but rather he distinguished between the then current empiricism and what he called absolute empiricism. Absolute empiricism is the attitude of those who think only of expressing universal truths, forgetting material interests.[9] They brag of being only the representatives of universalism, but they are the worst positivists, because this absolute empiricism (that is Hegel's category) disguises as universality the miserable material interests of a dominant power. That is dialectics. Through dialectics we can criticise, on the one hand, current empiricism and, on the other, absolute empiricism. The latter is now quite widespread on the left too. I have cited Jürgen Habermas, but since I am an Italian, I would also like to cite Norberto Bobbio[10]. He also sees only universalism at play in NATO's war, and has always kept material interests secret.

We must fight against this world. And how can we fight against it? Here I would like to cite another section from Hegel, one which Hans Heinz often emphasised. Hegel speaks of the determinate negation, which is the real negation: the actual change of existence promotes determinate negation and not indeterminate negation. What is this determinate negation?

Nowadays French philosopher Michel Foucault[11] has been much taken up in left-wing circles. He wrote a book, which speaks of the microphysics of power.[12] He says that power is not only political power, it is everywhere; power relations are to be found everywhere, they are relations of force and force is to be found everywhere. In this way there is no longer any determinate negation. Everything is power, everything is force, and revolutionary praxis no longer has any significance, because we cannot question everything at the same time. This attitude makes itself out to be quite new, but it is indeed not so new.

As an historian I have studied the Christian movement in America in the first decades of the 19th century. A remarkable movement. It was against the violence of slavery. It was against the violence of war. It was devoutly Christian. But a few wanted to radicalise further this denial of force and said: a conference about the abolition of slavery is force. Why? Because, in order to carry out the conference, we need a security service. This security service must uphold discipline, must for example block troublemakers. That is also force. In this way both slavery and a conference against slavery are force. It is clear that this leads to powerlessness.

Hegel argued quite differently. In order to explain his thoughts, I would like next to exemplify the criticism which he

directs at Christianity. He speaks of the commandment of brotherly love and says: What does this commandment of brotherly love mean? It can have a rational significance, but it can also be full of contradictions. If this commandment demands that I must love all people of the world without distinction, then it is full of contradictions, because love signifies a particular intensity of feeling. And if I experience this particular feeling for all, then the particular intensity of the feeling gets lost. We could also explain it a bit more simply. I can say, although my experiences are limited, that I know no man who has seduced a woman by saying to her, I love you in the way that I love all men and women of the world.

That means that there are concepts which cannot be generalised. And that goes not only for love, but for hatred also. If I say that all is force, that I must hate all relationships, then that simply signifies that I hate no-one at all, hate no relationship. Hegel explained very well that a real negation cannot be conceived without it being a determinate negation. And that was a very important Hegel lesson for Hans Heinz Holz, who often insisted on this line of thought.

As revolutionaries we must therefore actually see what we have to combat today, which relationships we have to abhor. Those are naturally the imperialist relationships of power, the capitalist relationships of exploitation. These are what we must detest; these are the relationships which we must change radically by determinate negation. But how can we change these relationships? Here I would like to cite Hegel once again.

I believe that it is a great service of Hegel that he takes quite seriously both the so-called 'formal freedom' and the so-called 'negative freedom'. But there is another freedom which he also takes seriously, as I would now like to explain. He speaks, for example, of feudal Poland.[13] In the Polish parliament formal freedom was well developed: every baron was able to exercise the veto, and Hegel praises this formal freedom. But he adds: in feudal Poland the "freedom of the barons" requires the "absolute servitude" of the "nation"; on the one hand, freedom, and on the other the absolute thraldom of the serfs and the whole nation. This freedom of the barons prevents the "freeing of those living in bondage" and therefore – according to Hegel – "the people ... everywhere became free through the suppression of the barons." Naturally these barons then polemicised against the despotism, against the suppression of their freedom. But Hegel adds: in this case "despotism" can have a positive meaning. That is a very important approach, because – I would like to recap – Hegel does not undervalue the formal freedom of the barons. But if this formal freedom means the absolute thraldom of the serfs and the nation, as in this case, then we see a contradiction and must abolish the absolute thraldom of the serfs and the nation, even if that means the suppression of the barons. And Hegel does not stand alone with this attitude.

In this connection I would like to cite a great liberal author – Adam Smith. He is perhaps the single liberal author whom I really rate. If we hear of him, it is generally the talk of the market and so on. But Adam Smith also said and wrote something else. In his lectures on jurisprudence he took a stand on slavery.[14]

This was in the middle[15] of the 18th century. There was slavery in the English colonies in America, but there was also self-government of the white community, which extolled itself as free government. However, Adam Smith maintains that, where slavery is present, "no humane person will wish for freedom", because this so-called free government is only the self-government of the slave-owners, and these slave-owners will never abolish slavery. Therefore – Smith remarks – it is easier for a "despotic government" to force the slave-owners to abolish slavery, and in this case a person who loves humanity will prefer despotic government. Thus Adam Smith expressed himself at that time in favour of despotic government. He was no Leninist, no 'Stalinist', but here he says that if we unfortunately must choose between the freedom of the slave owner and the freedom of the great mass of the slaves, then we take a stand for the freedom of the slaves. And here as well Adam Smith in no way wants to undervalue the formal freedom. No, he has a great esteem for formal freedom, only he says that in a certain situation in which the conflict of freedoms arises and is present, we are forced to make painful decisions.

This idea of Adam Smith is in fact confirmed by history, because later on Abraham Lincoln only guaranteed the freedom of the black slaves by at least abolishing for a certain period the self-government of the Southern states.

If this thought of Adam Smith appears, so to speak, isolated, it is with Hegel the guideline to his whole philosophy. I have already explained what Hegel thinks about Poland, but he speaks also of modern social conflicts. As is well known, Hegel does not want to question the right to property. But he says, if anyone is starving and at risk of dying of hunger, then in this case he has the "absolute right" to violate the property of another.[16] Thus far goes Hegel. Also, in this case he doesn't want to question the right to property. There is concordance: the property owner has a right to his property, to enjoy his property freely. But that person who is at risk of dying from hunger suffers in this case "total negation of his realised freedom". That is the situation of the slave, and the person who is at risk of starving is just a slave. This slave has the absolute right to avoid this death. Naturally Hegel says that dialectically, since we must bring about a social order, in which no-one starves any longer, and no-one any longer is at risk of dying of hunger or suffering terrible hunger.

The struggle to change the world is naturally a difficult struggle. And there are people who draw back from this difficult struggle, who would like to enjoy the inner life without being touched and befouled by reality. The attitude of these people is sharply criticised by Hegel in a famous chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the talk is of the "beautiful soul".[17] The "beautiful soul" is naturally an ironic phraseology. In this case Hegel wants to criticise the self-withdrawal from the world, this escape from history. The criticism of the "beautiful soul" is famous, all know it. However, it has not always been understood. Why was this criticism not always correctly understood? Sometimes it is interpreted as the expression of *realpolitik*.

But that is quite false, because Hegel criticises the approach of the "beautiful soul" in the name of logic and morals. Let us speak next of morals. Hegel uses really strong words. He says that this approach is "base" and characterised by "hypocrisy".

In order to explain this severe judgement of Hegel, I would like to bring forward an example. In this century or in the 19th century many people say that Abraham Lincoln, who led the American war against secession and who finally abolished slavery, conducted a horrible war. More than 500,000 people died in it. In order to win this war, Lincoln introduced universal conscription. Universal conscription is something terrible, it is the obligation to kill and the preparedness to be killed. When Lincoln introduced universal conscription in New York, the Irish immigrants rebelled and organised a revolt. And Lincoln arranged for this revolt to be suppressed by the army.

Anyone could draw the conclusion here, oh, I am morally much better than Lincoln, I have neither unleashed the war nor introduced universal conscription, and I have also not

suppressed any revolt. I am morally the best. I was naturally against slavery, but I have nothing to do with Lincoln's horrible measures. That is simply hypocrisy, of which Hegel speaks, since this much is clear: I also did not abolish slavery, which Lincoln did. If we tackle this problem logically, we must not – according to Hegel – compare beautiful intentions with actual facts. It is simply logically incorrect to make this comparison and – seen in moralistic terms – it is squalid, determined by hypocrisy. The "beautiful soul" – says Hegel – lives "in the inner moral conceit, in the enjoyment of being conscious of [one's] own superiority."

We can see that that is, first and foremost, a matter of morals. The "beautiful soul" is not criticised in the name of *realpolitik*. The consciousness of the "beautiful soul" lives in "setting itself up in this unreality and conceit of knowing well and better above the deeds it discredits, and wanting its words without deeds to be taken for superior kind of reality." For an understanding of the 20th century we must also take this criticism by Hegel into consideration.

Thereby we turn back to Hans Heinz Holz: only if we understand the Hegelian philosophy – as he always maintained – can we also understand the tragedy and the greatness of the October Revolution, and of the whole history which began with the October Revolution. I believe that we can regain pride in communism, if we ask ourselves what balance we can establish from the 20th century and from the communist movement in the 20th century.

Next we must admit that we have endured a defeat; that is quite clear and we must not forget it. But we must add that this awful defeat took place in Europe, not on a world scale: in Asia and Latin America the situation is somewhat different. We can say that readily. And even what concerns the West, what historical balance must we draw here?

Let us speak of democracy, because I take it very seriously. We must first factor in a minimal condition. The least prerequisite for democracy is the introduction of universal suffrage – one which abolishes discrimination against women, the poor and the colonial peoples. But going back a long way in the history of liberalism, so-called 'democracy' – in fact bourgeois democracy – was characterised by precisely those three great discriminations – against women, people without property and the colonial peoples. And when were these three great discriminations abolished? Not before the 20th century, not before the October Revolution.

We can look first at discrimination against women. The Weimar Republic, and later the United States, abolished it. But that was after the Russian Revolution. In Italy and France, discrimination against women was not abrogated until after the Second World War, after the *Resistenza*, that means after the antifascist resistance struggle, in which the communists are well known to have played a great role.

Property-based discrimination[18] in the right to vote was also not completely abolished before the 20th century. In Britain it still existed before the October Revolution, and also in those countries where, according to appearance, it had already been annulled. Thus, for example, it was actually abolished in pre-fascist Italy for the Chamber of Deputies – but not for the Senate. And discrimination still applies to the upper house in Britain.

It is clear that abolition of the third discrimination, that against the colonial peoples, can only be understood in the wake of the anticolonial revolution. For a long time these peoples were treated as if they were incapable of building national independent states. Furthermore, if we consider the United States, it is well known that, even after the defeat of the Third Reich, blacks in America were still discriminated against and degraded, and often had no right to vote. And, as concerns the colonial struggle, we must not forget that neocolonialism is not dead.

In conclusion I would like once again to evoke Hans Heinz Holz. This common struggle – he naturally took an important place in it – was a political and also a philosophical struggle. In this struggle Hegel, the Hegelian philosophy, played an important role, and I believe that we must carry it on.

■ First published in German in *Die Welt begreifen – organisiert handeln (Understanding the World – Acting in an Organised Way)*, edition Ost, Berlin, 2013, pp 95-110, and reprinted here in English by permission of the publisher. Translation, English language sources of cited works, and additional endnotes, are by the *CR* editor.

Notes and References

1 GWF Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, A V Miller transl, Oxford University Press, 1977, p 11, §20.

2 A de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, JP Mayer, ed, Gallimard, Paris, 1951ff, Vol 1.1, p 331 –*DL*; the text has not been found in the English language edition, although the broad sentiment is present – *Ed.*

3 A reference to bourgeois philosopher Karl Popper and his supporters –*Ed.*

4 GWF Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 'Introduction: Geographical Basis of History', online at https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hi/introduction-lectures.htm#q.

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7 Obama at the time of writing –*Ed.*

8 Jürgen Habermas (b 1929) is a German philosopher and sociologist in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism, see Wikipedia –*Ed.*

9 See, for example, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *op cit*, p 144, §238 –*Ed.*

10 Norberto Bobbio (1909-2004): Italian philosopher of law and political sciences; he claimed to be a socialist but was opposed to what he regarded as anti-democratic and authoritarian elements in most of Marxism, see Wikipedia –*Ed.*

11 Michel Foucault (1926-84): French philosopher whose thoughts have influenced a wide range of academics and activist groups, see Wikipedia –*Ed.*

12 The author states that the words "microphysics of power" are in the title, but this appears to be incorrect. Foucault first used the term in *Psychiatric Power* lectures (1973-4) and developed it in later books –*Ed.*

13 GWF Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte (Lectures on the Philosophy of World History)*, G Lasson ed, Meiner, Leipzig, 1930, pp 902-3 –*DL*; see also VI Lenin, *Conspectus of Hegel's Book Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, in *Collected Works*, Vol 38, p 313, online at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/misc/x03.htm –*Ed.*

14 A Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1762-63), Liberty Classics, Indianapolis, 1982, pp 182 and 452-3 –*DL*; online at http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/eBooks/BOOKS/Smith/Jurisprudence%20Smith.pdf –*Ed.*

15 Losurdo incorrectly says "at the end" –*Ed.*

16 GWF Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, S W Dyde transl, Battoche Books, Kitchener, Ontario, 2001, pp 109-110, §127.

17 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *op cit*, p 383ff, §§632-671, but especially pp 399-403 (§§658-666).

18 Losurdo uses (and may well have originated) the German expression *Zensusdiskriminierung* –*Ed.*

ISABEL MONAL
HOLZ AND REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

Havana, 22 February 2012

WHEN *Marx Ahora* saw the light of day in 1996, its first issue was able to incorporate an article by Hans Heinz Holz. Since then, his texts have appeared regularly in the pages of our Cuban journal for Marxism, and have thereby revealed a broad spectrum of the most relevant questions for us. In this way Cuban scholars have gained access to the thinker of rank, which he was, and could for the first time acquire knowledge and understanding of his work.

At that time our country had not been able to extract itself completely, at the theoretical and ideological level, from the conservative and anti-Marxist wave which engulfed the world after the fall of Eastern European socialism and the disappearance of the USSR. The fact that in these years we were able to build on the contributions of Hans Heinz Holz, presented an inestimable support for our endeavours to emphasise the validity of the world-view founded by Marx and Engels, and to maintain it in our realms of life and activity.

Holz's support for our work is indeed inestimable, since we have to be aware that we were dealing with one of the best-known and most esteemed Marxist philosophers worldwide. His substantial corpus of work, of undeniable theoretical thoroughness, presents a most valuable resource for the further development of Marxism and Leninism in Cuba. The Holzian philosophy and its highly developed interpretation of Marx, as regards both reflection and creativity, provided an inestimable contribution to our struggle against the vulgar and dogmatic forms of Marxism on the one side, and against its voluntaristic and subjective forms on the other. In short, his texts present to our Caribbean island a strong point of reference for all those who have devoted themselves to the continual revitalisation and enrichment of Marx's legacy.

His significance for Cuba has been expressed both in his publications in *Marx Ahora*, and in a booklet which was published a few years ago under the title *Theory and Practice*, and in which his contributions appearing up till then in our journal were collected. This book found an active uptake among university lecturers and their students, and proved itself to be a source of knowledge and inspiration for their own work.

Only recently, Ponencia, the publishing house to which *Marx Ahora* is affiliated, printed a collection of texts by Hans Heinz on the Frankfurt School, thanks to generous support from Sylvia and Hans Heinz themselves. This compact book, *Miseria de la dialectica negative (Poverty of negative dialectics)*, will shortly be available to Cuban readers. We are convinced that it will provide an important pillar of support in the debates and philosophical battles, above all if we bring to mind the mythical aura – in the sense of a 'true Western Marxism' – which the Frankfurt School has been able to develop around itself, and which makes it so difficult and laborious to debunk it. Holz has shown us how this is possible, if we use the weapon of dialectics in a unified and reflective way.

For my journal, and for myself, the fact that we could count on his cooperation, insight and encouragement was a privilege and a basis for feeling proud. Hans Heinz Holz will always be present among us, in our future struggles and efforts in the continuing battle for the emancipation of the exploited.

■ First published in German in *Die Welt begreifen – organisiert handeln (Understanding the World – Acting in an Organised Way)*, edition Ost, Berlin, 2013, pp 131-133, and reprinted here in English by permission of the publisher. Translation is by the *CR* editor.

BOOK REVIEWS
FLY-ON-THE-WALL REVELATIONS

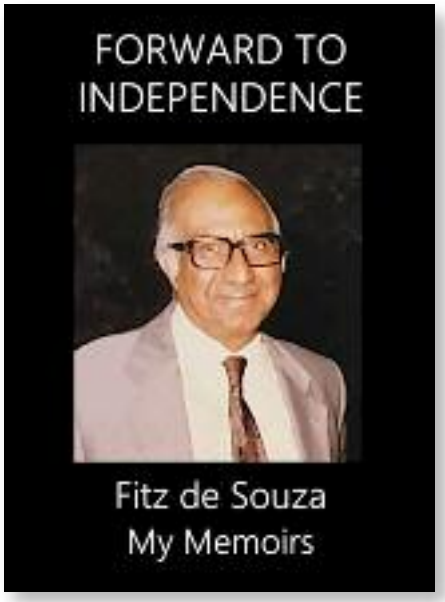
Forward to Independence: My Memoirs
By Fitz de Souza
[Independently published, 2019, available on amazon.co.uk: pbk, 338 pp, ISBN 978-1-0931-46882, £9.80;
Kindle edition, 436 pp,
ASIN B07R6FNYF1, £2.30.]

Review by Cyprian Fernandes

THE LONG, long-awaited memoirs of veteran Kenyan politician Fitz de Souza are finally out and the book is quite brilliant. Born into a family of Goan migrants, this former lawyer and deputy speaker of the Kenya Parliament – a rather quiet man in the sometimes loud circus of politics – was Jomo Kenyatta's right-hand man from the first days of the negotiations for freedom with the British Government, until Kenya's independence on 12 December 1963, and for the rest of Kenyatta's life. The President of Kenya paid great heed to the legal, political, social and societal deliberation provided by Fitz de Souza. Not only Kenyatta, but politicians of every ilk sought out his wisdom. Like his mentor Pio Gama Pinto[1], Fitz worked better behind the scenes but he was not afraid to speak his mind at international conferences or at local political rallies.

His accounts of his ancestors, his own path taken in schooling and finding his calling to law are all filled with charm, laughter and very special resolve. However, it is Fitz's fly-on-the-wall, eyewitness revelations that serve history best.

The colonial propaganda machine had been frighteningly successful in demonising Kenyatta and the Mau Mau[2]. In his memoir, Fitz once and for all smashes this character assassination. He writes:



"Kenyatta would tell me many times, 'Fitz, I am not the leader of Mau Mau, I do not believe in violence. I believe you can achieve your goals without violence. But in any political party there are always some who believe you have to go further, you have to fight, and I know who they are – they are my friends, they are in this party, they are with us all the time. But I am not going to do the job for the British Government and expose them and fight against them."

When asked by the British to condemn those who practised violence, Kenyatta would do so, but only in general terms, never naming names:

> "'The British would like us [Africans] to fight with each other and make this into a semi-civil war; they killing our supporters and we killing their supporters, and I am not going to allow that at all. I know what I want and they know what they want, our objectives are the same ….'"

It seemed then that the only disagreement between Kenyatta and those who supported the Mau Mau was the means to those objectives:

> "'They think I am too mild, and I think they are picking on something that is not necessary and *cr*eating too much pain and suffering.'"

Fitz reveals for the first time how the land settler fund was established by the British Government to buy out white farmers who were leaving Kenya after independence:

> "As the discussions at 1962 Lancaster House Constitutional Conference wore on, it was clear that a major remaining stumbling block was the European settler community. The British Government told us plainly: the only way they could give us independence was if we could promise the farmers that we would pay them for their land, buy them out in other words. They had calculated the value of £36 million. That sounds like nothing today but was a fortune in 1962. I said, but we don't have the money. No, they said, we'll give you the money. Good God, I said, we could never afford to pay it back. They said, who's asking for it back? We don't want it back, we want to give it to you, and every year we'll write a bit off until the whole lot is written off. We don't want the British here to say we called you Mau Mau, and now we're giving you money! You must buy the land from the European farmers on a 'willing buyer and willing seller' basis. So when they are willing to sell, you buy. Thus would come into being the Land Settlement Board, under Chairman Norman Feather of the Standard Bank, with the British Consular General and Moi[3], appointed to the post by Kenyatta, as committee members."

Fitz deftly tries to explain why Kenyatta was so adamant that the Kikuyu should be among the first to share in the spoils of Uhuru:

"Kenyatta had recognised the very strong loyalties that lay beneath the surface of Kenyan politics a long time ago, and in his view, the country had to be ruled by a coalition of tribes, under whatever collective party name. He felt that through this process the Kikuyu would dominate, and would say as much in political meetings, his rhetoric along the lines that if you have fought for the independence of Kenya, you have planted a tree and watered it with your blood, so who should receive the fruits of that tree? As expected, the answer would come: 'He who fought for them.' And if you slaughtered a cow for a feast, which person should have the best parts? 'He who slaughtered the cow.' Very many people agreed. Having worked so hard for freedom, been imprisoned for nine years and given decades of his life to his nation's struggle, Kenyatta felt it was his right to have the best. Few could question his industry and commitment, and without him, it was unlikely the national movement would have taken off. So many Africans had emerged from detention with nothing, having lost businesses, property, social position and support. It was only to be expected that they would endorse Kenyatta and seek something for themselves now."

Fitz often found himself, sometimes unwittingly, slap-bang in the middle of various conspiracies, both good and bad. Kenyans may not know this, but once upon a time, Charles Njonjoi[4] touted Tom Mboya[5] for President. Here is Fitz's eye witness account.

"What Tom saw in Charles Njonjo was an opportunity … he realised that Charles's bearing, outward intelligence and ability to express himself could be used for political gain. He also assumed that Charles had no ambitions. When Charles called me to have tea with him one day at the Queen's Hotel (in Nairobi), I arrived to find Tom there also. 'Fitz, I have something very serious to say to you,' announced Charles. 'Tell your friend not to back that old man as President of Kenya.' By 'my friend' I knew he meant Pio, and the 'old man' was Kenyatta. 'Why?' I asked. 'Because,' replied Charles in his lordly tone, 'he is totally incompetent, he's senile.' 'But who could you put in his place?' 'He's sitting right here, Tom is the man.' Exactly who had first latched onto whom was hard to say, but both men had now shown their hand, to me at least. Charles clearly saw Tom as likely to be the next leader of the country, and perhaps a place for himself in a future Government. Charles's use of the word 'President' was not accidental. Kenyatta had spoken to me about how he saw leadership. He believed strongly that just as you could not have two chiefs in one household, a country could not have two leaders. On the 1st of June 1964 he amended the constitution, and on the 12th of December, one year after independence, Kenya was declared a republic, with the office of Prime Minister replaced by that of President, a position Kenyatta automatically assumed, making him Head of State, Head of the Government and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. [Oginga] Odinga was appointed Vice-President. One of the senior figures in the rival KADU party, Moi, whose fellow Kalenjins occupied much of the prime Rift Valley land, was promoted to Minister for Home Affairs. At the same time, KADU was dissolved and merged with KANU. There was now no clear official opposition."

Thanks to Fitz's memoirs, we can now read exactly what happened on that fateful day in February 1965 when Pio Gama Pinto clashed with Kenyatta in the corridors of Parliament House, Nairobi. Fitz writes:

"It was on an afternoon in February, as I was taking a break for tea outside the Parliament building, that I heard someone calling my name. 'Mr de Souza, come quickly please!' Turning around I saw that a few tables away an altercation had broken out between Pio and Kenyatta. Both men were gesticulating and swearing, and as their voices rose, everyone on the veranda could hear. Tom was standing nearby, now joined by several onlookers. Pio, his face contorted with anger was shouting, 'I'll fix you!' Kenyatta, equally incensed, was shouting back at him.

I knew immediately what they were arguing about: the English farms, which Pio claimed Kenyatta was grabbing. Running up behind Pio, I put both my arms around him, trying to restrain him and calm him down. When Kenyatta had gone we sat down. I warned him not to shout at Kenyatta again, as Kikuyus rarely forgive someone who becomes their enemy.

'In the eyes of most Africans,' I said, 'you are just a Muhindi, you are perfectly dispensable, but he is not.' I reminded him how at almost every meeting Kenyatta would ask the same rhetorical question: if a man plants a tree, who has the right to claim the fruit of that tree when it has grown? Ask any African, I told him, and they will say that Kenyatta has been very little compensated for the sacrifices and hardship he has endured in the struggle for independence. 'If it comes to the push,' I said, 'there'll be two shots fired at you and no one will remember you in a year's time.' Pio shook his head, 'No, no, there would be a bloodbath.' I said, 'Pio, you are overestimating your position; maybe if you were a Kikuyu or a Luo, then yes, there would be a backlash, but you've nobody to support you; like me, you've no support in the Indian community and none outside it.'"

Fitz knew Pio's life was in danger because Tom Mboya told him so. He writes:

"One night Tom took me aside and mentioned again the concern on his side, and how Pio was increasingly seen as trouble, a left-wing firebrand out to oust Kenyatta.

'Once certain people realise that the possibility of Odinga succeeding Kenyatta is due to this one man,' he said, 'and that when the time comes, he can provide the necessary organisation to pull it off, then those same people will want to get rid of him. Take Pinto out, and the whole thing collapses like a pack of cards.' I wondered what exactly he meant by 'take out.' I said, 'Tom, Pinto is a good organiser yes, but it really wouldn't be as easy as that.' I asked, 'If it came to it, would you take any part in getting rid of him, whatever that means?' Tom said no, but there were people who would. He then told me earnestly to speak to Pio and to warn him that his life was in danger."

According to Fitz it was the Luo leader Oginga Odinga who picked up Pio and drove him to Mombasa. A few days later Joe Murumbi turned up at the house where Pio was staying. Joe was very, very confident that no harm would come to Pio because he would speak to Jomo Kenyatta.

Fitz writes:

"Pio took Joe's advice and returned

to Nairobi on the train. Pio arrived back home in Nairobi in the morning. That evening, JD Kali's driver, a Kikuyu called Ndegwa, stopped by the house. Ndegwa was also with the Special Branch and drove Kenyatta too. He asked if Pio had returned. Someone told him, yes, and he drove off. Also in the house at the time was a very close friend of Pio, an African called Cheche, who had been with him in detention. Cheche acted as Pio's bodyguard, and it was said he would die for him. When Pio was told about the caller, he said he knew who Ndegwa was and that he was trying to organise to kill him.

Perhaps the visit was a warning. If so, it did not deter Pio and he was soon busily compiling a list of farms and land which in his view had been stolen from the African people by the Government. … The expectation was for there to be an explosive result: a vote of no confidence against Kenyatta. I reminded Pio of Kenyatta's strength, of the sacrifices and struggles he had made and his firm belief that the fruits of independence should be his. I said, 'Pio, I think you have a lot of good things to say, but however much you say them, Kenyatta is not going to give up power or go away. He is a very courageous man and would fight to the death to stay leader if he had to. So don't try to attack him morally and not expect to get on his bad side, you are just wasting your time, it is not possible to remove him.'"

Pio was actually preparing the ground for the enactment by Parliament of a type of African socialism, the removal of Kenyatta and the coronation of his sworn enemy Oginga Odinga. It was never going to happen because Pio would be killed by the assassin's bullet:

"On the 25th of February [1965], I was in court in the middle of a case when one of my articled clerks came in looking for me. 'What are you doing here?' I asked him. 'Mr de Souza,' he whispered, 'I am very sorry to tell you that your friend is dead.' I knew immediately that he meant Pio. The English judge, a good friend, looked across the courtroom at me. I stood up and cleared my throat: 'I am very sorry, but due to an unfortunate occurrence, I have to leave. The judge said, 'I can see you are shocked. Is this about your friend Pio Pinto?' I nodded. He said, 'This court is adjourned.' I went straight to Pio's house.

Two police officers were there, the gate was closed and the car was in the driveway. Pio was inside, his body leaning to one side as if asleep at the wheel. Looking at him I suddenly thought, he's all right after all, and reaching in, touched his shoulder, saying, 'Pio, Pio.' Then I saw the bullet hole. It was true; Pio was dead. That night I cried and cried. I felt really shattered. Pio had been just 38 years old, but had done so much for the country, spent seven years on Manda Island, not even allowed to see his dying father. All he had ever wanted was justice and fairness for all. He did not deserve this fate. Pio's bodyguard Cheche came to see me later, crying, 'Our friend is dead, our friend is dead.' Through my day-to-day legal work, I had got to know one of the Nairobi CID officers, an Englishman. It wasn't long before he and I had a lead. A taxi driver described some men with guns being taken recently in specially hired Fiat cars to South C where it was said, they were to 'fix' some trade union people. Could they also have been sent to fix Pio?

The taxi driver took the CID officer and I around the streets and within a short time had identified a young African man in a red shirt. After being placed under arrest, the 22-year-old, Kisilu Mutua, admitted to shooting Pio. My mind was full of questions. On the day Pio was killed, the end of Lower Kabete Road had been blocked off and the traffic stopped. And why, when he was found in the car, obviously preparing to leave as usual that morning, was the gate to his driveway closed? Pio was a good runner, faster than the Maasai even, at one time predicted to run for Kenya in the Olympics.

If he had got out of the car, no one would have caught him. The roadblock and the closed gate had been no coincidence. I began asking around and challenging people to find the person or persons responsible. My father was worried. 'Fitz you must be careful,' he urged me, 'they might want to shoot you too.' I said, 'Look I've known Kenyatta for years, been his lawyer and helped him.' My father replied, 'People can forget things.' I could not, in any case, believe that Kenyatta would have wanted Pio dead.

About two weeks had gone by when, walking on the street past the Standard Bank in Nairobi one day, I heard someone behind me. I looked around and saw Bruce McKenzie[6] hurrying to catch up with me. His manner was friendly, chatting about general things, but I sensed something more, something he wanted to say. Bruce was a big man, with a strong handshake that overpowered you, and I felt that strength in him now. 'Fitz,' he said, 'I like you very much, you're a good friend.' I said, 'Bruce, have you been sent to talk to me about Pio.' He nodded. I said, 'To warn me, that if I carry on asking questions, the same is going happen to me?' Bruce said yes, this was the message he had been asked to give me. Then Mungai[7] came to see me. He was a mysterious figure, some hinted he had been a Mau Mau leader, others a Government spy. Telling me that I was now on a 'wanted list', he reached in his pocket and took out a pistol, complete with licence, advising me to keep it for protection.

I had been under threat before when Pio had been arrested and I had driven across the border to Uganda. The concern then was possible imprisonment. This was different. Pio was gone, and Bruce had come to tell me, on whose authority I did not know, that I could be next. Mungai had confirmed it. I had seen Pio's limp body carried from his car, the small hole in his body where the bullet had entered, witnessed [his wife] Emma's shock and grief. As the reality of the danger I was in hit me, I became very nervous. I took some valium, and not knowing what else to do booked into the Hilton Hotel. Nowhere in Nairobi was completely safe, but here at least there were people around, I could stay behind a locked door. How long for though? I would have to come out sometime. I thought carefully. I was getting married in a few months. Now there were not just my parents, my brother and sister and myself to think of, but also my future wife Romola – our future lives together and in time, probably a family of our own. After a few days, I let it be known that I was no longer pursuing my inquiries, checked out of the hotel and went home. I hid Mungai's pistol in a strongbox behind a loose brick in the wall and kept the key in my pocket. Still anxious and in shock, I decided to go to England and from there, seeking a complete change of scene, take a trip to Scandinavia. At that time permission was needed to take money out of the country, so I rang Kenyatta to ask if it could be arranged. Yes, yes, he said, and gave me the name of someone who could help. Talking to Kenyatta, he was clearly very distressed and crying over the phone. When I broached the question of who might be responsible he

said, 'Do you think I could possibly have murdered my own friend?' and said he had been equally shocked by what had happened. A couple of weeks later I returned for Pio's funeral. The mourners were mostly Africans and church people. Kenyatta, who was not expected to attend, sent an ivory carving in tribute. Joe Murumbi was full of remorse, blaming himself for persuading Pio to leave the beach house at Mombasa and come back to Nairobi that day. While Pio's alleged killer languished behind bars, sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment, there were whispered rumours that the 'powers that be' had organised the assassination, or the Kiambu Mafia,[8] CIA or foreign governments, and the riddle remained unanswered."

Before now, not many people knew of Fitz's attempts to save Pio Gama Pinto or that even Fitz's life was threatened. All this and more, Fitz kept to himself.

The deaths first of Pio and then later of Tom Mboya and JM Kariuki[9] destroyed Fitz as a politician and he quietly resigned from politics and focused on his law firm, business and other interests.

Notes and References

1 See review by C Fernandes of *Pio Gama Pinto, Kenya's Unsung Martyr 1927-1965*, in *CR*90, Winter 2018/2019, pp 23-26.

2 See S Durrani, *Mau Mau, The Revolutionary Force from from Kenya*: Part 1 in *CR*67, Spring 2013, pp 2-8; Part 2 in *CR*68, Summer 2013, pp 10-15; Part 3 in *CR*69, Autumn 2013, pp 8-13.

3 Daniel Arap Moi (b 1924) was Kenyan president from the death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 until 2002. An important theme of his government was anti-communism. The Kenya African National Union was made the only legally permitted party, and many of those campaigning for democracy were subjected to repression, including torture. For further background, see S Durrani, *Kenya Resists: Artists Challenge the Hawk in the Sky*, in *CR*91, Spring 2019, pp 15-19.

4 Charles Njonjo (b 1920) was the son of a paramount chief who was one of the foremost collaborators with British rule in India. With this background, Charles's upbringing was very pampered. He trained as a lawyer and then worked diligently for the colonial government as it went about atrocities in opposing the Mau Mau freedom fighters. He became Attorney General in independent Kenya and actively thwarted attempts by former freedom fighters for justice. He was a proponent of ties with white Rhodesia, apartheid South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique. He became Minister of Justice from 1978 but was forced to resign in the wake of the unsuccessful 1982 coup against then president Daniel Arap Moi.

5 Tom Mboya (1930-1969) was a trade unionist, educationalist, Pan-Africanist and independence activist, and held several key ministerial posts in independent Kenya. That he was seen as a possible contender for the presidency may have been the cause of his assassination.

6 Bruce McKenzie (1919-1978) was a South African-born Kenyan politician. He was Minister of Agriculture under Kenyatta, and is alleged to have been a British, South African or Israeli intelligence agent. He was involved in the kidnapping from Uganda of 5 alleged terrorists wanted by Israel, and in return was assassinated by Ugandan agents.

7 Njoroge Mungai (1926-2014) was a doctor, businessman and first cousin to Jomo Kenyatta. He held the offices of Minister of Health, Defence and Foreign Affairs, and successfully lobbied the Organisation of African Unity to supply arms to freedom fighters in apartheid South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique.

8 'Kiambu Mafia' was the term used to describe a small group of people from the then Kiambu District of Kenya, who had benefited financially and politically from parcels of land 'awarded' or 'sold' to them by the Kenyatta government.

9 See Durrani, *Kenya Resists, op cit.*

VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION AND DEBATE

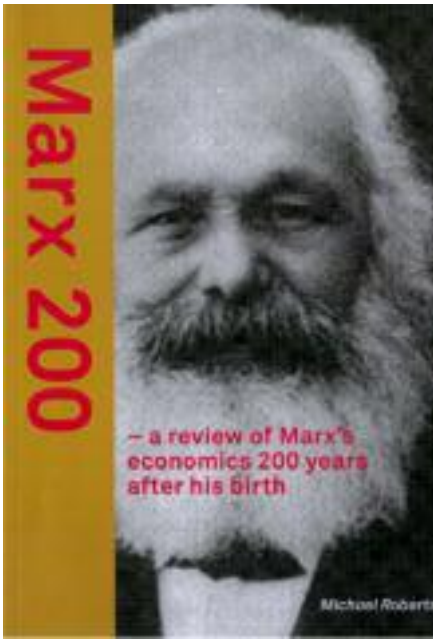
Marx 200: A review of Marx's economics 200 years after his birth
By Michael Roberts
[lulu.com, 2018, available from Amazon: pbk, 176 pp, ISBN 978-0244076252, £8.95 + delivery; Kindle edition, 178 pp, ASIN B07CBW5, £6.96.]

Review by John Foster

MICHAEL ROBERTS' book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of Marx's economics and in particular to our ability to relate Marx's analysis to the contemporary world. It is written clearly and without pretension. It challenges those who have sought to dispute the present-day relevance of Marx's work and explores in some depth such immediate and urgent issues as climate change, robotics and globalisation. Both for education and for interventions in contemporary debate the book supplies the Left with a valuable new resource.

It begins with a description of how Marx developed his analysis of capitalism, followed by a chapter detailing Marx's historic breakthrough in identifying and defining the role and nature of "abstract labour" within the capitalist mode of production as the basis for the distribution of the capitalist surplus. The third chapter discusses the nature of crises within capitalism and the role played in their precipitation by the tendency for the rate of profit to decline. The fourth chapter looks at critics of Marx from Bohm-Bawerk in 1896 to Paul Mason in 2018 and the fifth chapter applies Marx to the contemporary world. A final chapter provides a popular, illustrated summary.

Theoretically Roberts gives a central role, as a determinant in capitalism's actual historical development, to Marx's "tendency of the rate of profit to fall". Others have done so before, and



controversies as to the validity of this approach have formed a significant focus of contemporary Marxist debate – most notably around Andrew Kliman's *Reclaiming Marx's Capital*. Roberts, however, does so more accessibly and also more concretely. In particular he demonstrates the use of the "tendency" as a tool – not to prophesy the immediate or ultimate collapse of capitalism but to analyse, in terms of Marx's five potential offsetting factors, the options facing a capitalist ruling class at particular turning points. Roberts himself uses these countervailing factors – the ability, for instance, to export capital or to cheapen the cost of labour reproduction – for the concrete historical analysis of a series of crises over the past century.

Roberts also disposes of a great deal of current nonsense. He uses Mosley's work on the most recently recovered versions of Marx's handwritten drafts of all three volumes of *Capital* to show that Engels' transcription of Volume III was fully faithful to Marx's original. Engels did not simply make it up – as some recent commentators have suggested. Nor did Marx, as claimed by current critics such as Stedman Jones, fail to finish *Capital* because he had second thoughts about the labour theory of value. The drafts were indeed finished. But Marx never got round to completing the final editing because he died relatively unexpectedly at 65.

In his chapter on Marx's critics Roberts takes apart a series of commentators, past and present, revealing how little most of them know of Marx's works and how much they rely on false stereotypes. He focuses particularly on the 'under-consumptionists', from Hobson through Keynes to the post-Keynesians and, most recently, Thomas Piketty, who offer income redistribution to sustain a variety of social-democratic panaceas.

However, most important of all, Roberts demonstrates the flawed assumptions underlying the so-called 'transformation problem' raised in a series of critiques of Marx from Bohm-Bawerk to Paul Samuelson. This relates to Marx's claimed failure to explain how labour inputs can be related to actual prices and profit within different sectors of the economy with very different ratios of capital input. Roberts provides a clear rebuttal using, in particular, the neo-classical economist William Baumol. Marx's "transformation" (*Capital*, Vol 3, Ch 9) is not, Baumol explained, about individual prices. It is about how each individual capitalist gets a 'fair' share of the overall surplus proportionate to investment as a result of the market's conversion of surplus value into profit, interest and rent. "It takes from each [capital] according to its workforce and returns to each according to its total investment." And it is the capitalist market that does this. A fully competitive capitalist market transforms commodities into money in a way in which gives each capitalist a 'fair' share of the overall surplus.

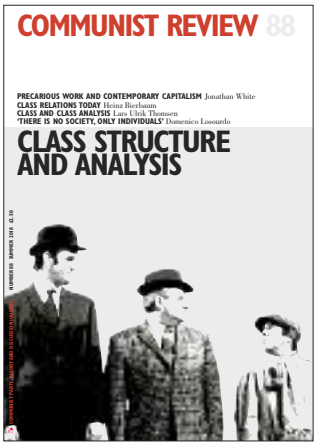
This, of course, raises the question as to what happens when the capitalist market is not fully competitive and it is perhaps here that Roberts fails to develop a fully satisfactory analysis, particularly regarding the political economy of the past century. Roberts certainly uses Lenin. He notes in particular Lenin's further development of Marx's highly perceptive comments on capital's tendency to concentration. Marx saw this as leading to the development of monopoly power over markets – hence prejudicing the determination of prices and the critical process by which the capitalist surplus is distributed. Lenin then used this to explain the origins of the new imperialism of the early twentieth century – when the major capitalist powers sought to offset resulting internal political and economic tensions by exporting capital to regions of the world where the rate of exploitation was higher.

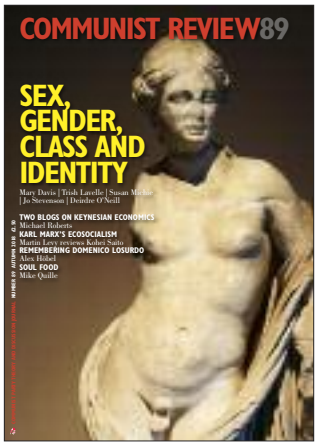
Roberts does cover this very well. But he does not follow the further development of this analysis by Eugene Varga and Maurice Dobb and its application to the crisis of the 1930s. This crisis, the first in which monopoly dominance fully encompassed the capitalist world, was one, they argued, which saw long-term and severe price dislocation preventing any 'normal' crisis resolution. For Roberts' argument this could have provided an important object lesson. For if, as Marx argued, it is the way prices of commodities reflect labour value that gives the capitalist seller 'fair' access to surplus value, then any distortion will profoundly affect capitalist market relations and the unfolding process of crisis resolution. In the 1930s it did – with all kinds of strange and sometimes grotesque politico-economic ramifications.

This omission is linked to two other areas in which there might have been further development. One concerns the more structured changes in the relationship between capitalist state power and the capitalist class, the increasing economic intervention by the state on terms set by the monopoly sector and the emergence of a new configuration of state power – state monopoly capitalism in its various forms and stages.

The other is a much more recent manifestation. This is touched upon but not fully developed. It is the way in which financialisation is profoundly altering the relationship between the ownership of capital and the production of commodities. Developing before the 2008 crisis, but grossly intensified by state responses to it, the disbursement of almost unlimited credit to banks has inflated asset prices and thereby empowered the investment companies handling the resources of the very, very rich. These investment vehicles now dominate corporate capital. But they do not do so in a direct way. They do so short term and piratically to extract maximum revenue. And they do so competitively with one another in order to secure their own access to the rapidly expanding wealth of the very rich. This shift would seem to represent a key change in the relationship between capital and its access to the capitalist 'surplus' (and hence the realisation of profit). And with the weakening of the linkage between investment in the production of commodities and the resulting access to the capitalist surplus there would seem to be significant implications for the future of capitalist production and productivity. These changes would not alter the underlying tendencies that Marx identified but would seem seriously to exacerbate them. A further exploration would have been valuable.

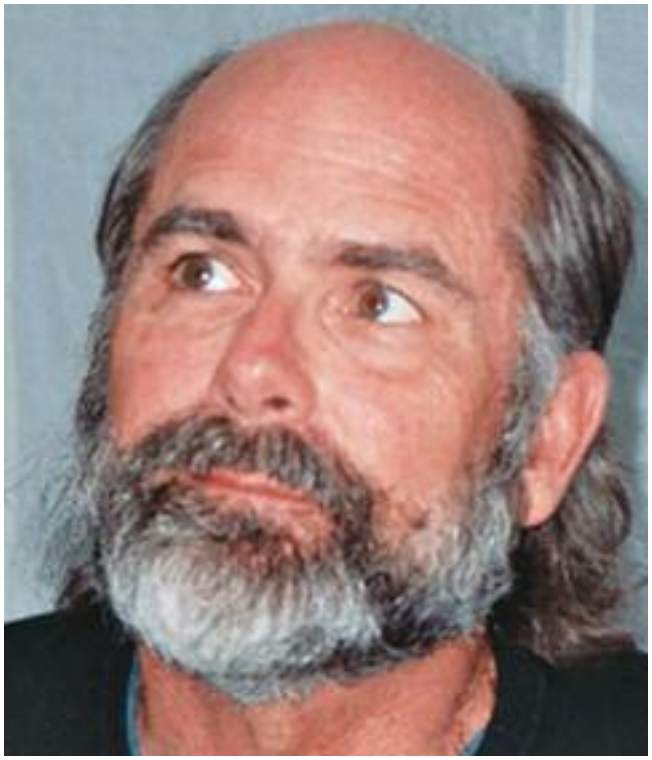
These are, however, minor criticisms in face of Michael Roberts's overall achievement of taking us back to the hard steel of Marx's original analysis and using it to demolish a host of 'critical' misinterpretations that have too long gone unchallenged.





MIKE QUILLE SOUL FOOD

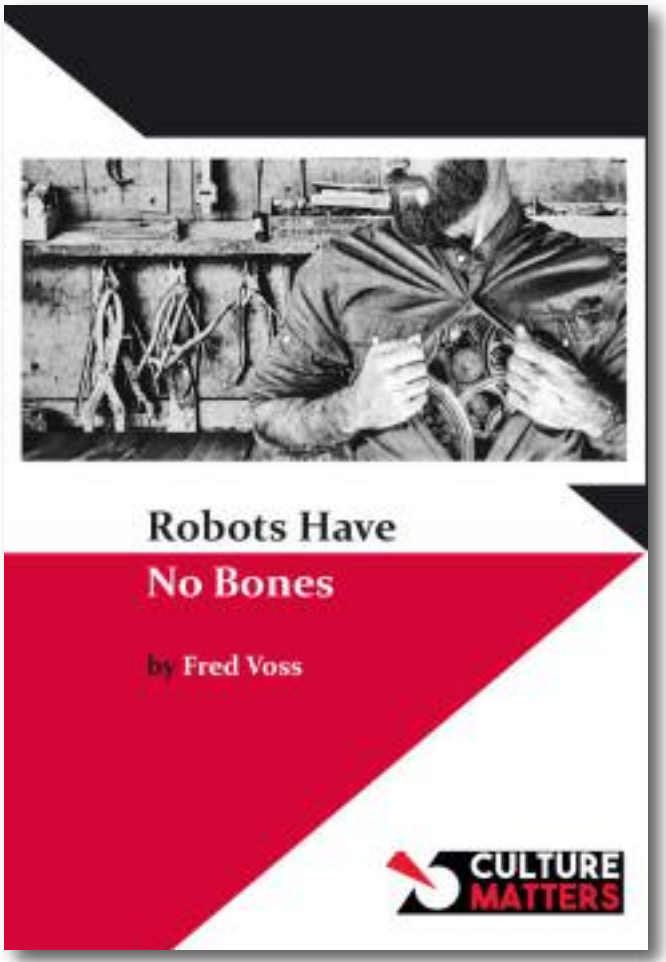
FRED VOSS: 'UNSTOPPABLE AS THE SUNLIGHT'



FRED VOSS is a very special kind of poet. For a start, he is a working man, a machinist in a metalworking shop in Long Beach, California. This is very uncommon in the poet class. What's more, none of his poetry is obscure, or needs decoding like a crossword puzzle in order to establish its meaning – it is simple, straightforward, honest and true. And his final, highly unusual, characteristic is that he writes in a politically conscious way about work.

Most of have to work for a living, and spend some of the best years of our lives in work which is all too often an unsatisfying mix of repetitive, stressful, boring, dangerous, and exploitative activities. Yet very little poetry is about work, the workplace, and fellow workers. Nearly all of Voss's poetry, however, is about those topics. Work was the dominant theme of his last collection, *The Earth and the Stars in the Palm of Our Hand*, and he returns to it again in his latest collection, *Robots Have No Bones*.

Throughout the book you can almost hear the pounding and grinding of the machines, smell the machine oil and the human sweat, suffer the ache and tiredness, and yet feel the



persevering, hopeful spirit that keeps him and his fellow workers going – including working at writing poems.

Here is one example:

Champions

It is 98 degrees inside this tin building and I sit
on a stool
like a boxer in his corner between rounds near the end of
a long
long fight
40 years
in the machine shops with the heat and the sweat and the
foremen and the machines

and the deadlines
and I am 65 years old today and I am tired after 9 and a half hours on this concrete floor I feel
in every one of my bones
it is hard to get up from this stool
and drop my 94th aircraft part of the day into the vise on the machine table and set the machine
cutting again
but Joe Louis got up
from his stool when the bell rang and he was old and tired and could barely make it
through the 15th round
John Garfield got up
and went on acting in his last movie as the House Un-American Activities Committee
turned the screws on him calling him a communist to wreck his career
and his heart gave out
every man in this shop
gets up
from his stool as his bones ache and the foremen scream and the raises never come and the timeclock ticks
away his life
Siegfried
slayed the dragon Columbus dared drop off the edge
of the world I
write this poem
because someone has to tell the story of these men who never stop getting up
from their stool to go to their machine as they grow old making this world
out of steel and aluminum
at 62 or 65 or 75 years of age
maybe grandchildren or great grandchildren depend on them
maybe they just go on
because it's what they do
but as the heat rises and the foremen scream and the machines pound and grind
that bell rings in their hearts
and they gather all the strength left inside them
and get up
from their stools one more time
because that is what champions
do.

The emphasis in this collection is on robotisation in the workplace, the process of replacing human labour with automated machines. As he has retrained in operating computer-controlled lathes, Voss can still keep his job, but the 'feel' of skilled manual labour, of working a machine by hand, has disappeared.

Here is the title poem:

Robots Have No Bones

Old men
run the manual machines in this machine shop
I left the manual machines and learned to run computer-controlled
machines
so I'd be skilled on the cutting edge of technology in case I got laid
off
and needed to find another job
but as I grow old I miss running those old machines
feeling
their handles in my palm their vibrating tool steel tables
against my thighs the smell
of their grease-blackened worm screws the trembling
of their steel blocks in their vises deep in my bones as I strained
every muscle in my body leaning on those handles moving cutters
through groaning steel
they say another wave of automation is coming
truck drivers
welders
riveters assemblers machinists replaced
by robots
and I stand at my computer machine clicking through its automatic
motions without me
and I look over at those old men with their warm hands around the
handles of the manual machines
it felt good
feeling the trembling of steel in my bones as I gripped a machine handle
and carved the steel down
into axle
so a car could roll a just-married couple laughing
toward their honeymoon
a brass oxygen valve block
so a deep sea diver could look at blue coral for half an hour deep
beneath the waves
it felt good
to feel the steel of skyscrapers bridges fire hydrants jackhammers
emergency ward door hinges
bulldozer teeth cane tips water faucets in my bones
as I made this world
it felt good
putting every muscle in my body into cutting valves for pipes so water
could flow down the parched throats
of children
the hub
of a wheelchair wheel so a painter could roll to a window and put his
last sunset
on canvas
and what will we have left
after the computers and the robots have taken over
and we pace in circles flexing
our useless hands
what will we have left
when we can no longer feel this world
in our bones
and hearts?

Voss's poetry is politically conscious. Whereas *Earth and Stars* was set in the hopeful if ultimately disappointing Obama years, these poems describe the politics of the workplace following Trump's incredible, surreal victory:

The Waterfall and the Song and the Hammer in the Hand

Too many of the white machinists in this shop like Trump
they are good men
with a tool steel square or a finely calibrated micrometer gripped
in their hands
or a newly-born granddaughter held
against their heartbeats
but they have been fooled by a con artist
in the White House
and I look over at the Indian milling machine operators from Guatemala
and El Salvador
some of them rode the tops of boxcars into this country
others
send money home to mothers living next to sacred rivers
I give them this country
they do not engrave their names across their molybdenum-steel wrenches
and hide them away in toolboxes locked
with chain and padlock like the white machinists
they leave them spread across workbenches for other machinists
to use
and tape pictures of beautiful waterfalls
to their toolboxes
and I look over at the Mexican tool grinders from East LA singing mariachi
they would rather fill the air with beautiful melody
than wave a red white and blue flag
I give them the future
the Gabrielino Indian turret lathe operator whose ancestors lived in this LA basin
a thousand years ago
standing straight with a truth in his heart Trump can never touch
I put my hope
in him
and any man who needs a job
a home
a dream
I put my hope in the waterfall
and the song
and the hammer in the hand
we white men took this country
with our guns and our trains and our law books
but it was never really ours
its waterfalls
its waves its condors
its skies its grass blades and sunsets
and seas its beauty
like a wide-open workbench covered with tool steel wrenches free for all
to use

So many of Voss's poems move like this one, like a sinuous river, widening out from narrow-minded, mean and tense workplaces, where workers are divided by ethnic background, to the imagined openness, beauty and sharing, unalienated nature of more egalitarian, communist environments.

The class conflict and class struggle needed to build such societies are always in the background of Voss's poems. Here we see it expressed with a kind of sad and angry irony:

Pacing Our Cages

2 or 3 times a day the men from the offices
pop out
onto our concrete factory floor in their stiff starched perfectly white spotless shirts and walk
in their expensive spotless shoes behind the CEO
up and down the aisles past our machines like a trail of school children
behind their school teacher
on a field trip to the zoo
peeking
around machine heads or 50-foot-tall steel I-beams
at us
like we were rare Canadian caribou
or endangered African mountain gorillas with our hands
actually on the handles of real-as-steel machines
the CEO has given a speech
to us machinists stating that it is his mission to make the office more effective
at solving the problems of the factory by bringing the office people out
onto the shop floor to see
what goes on
and we squirt cutting oil out of long-necked oil cans onto smoking steel we are cutting
and place our palms flat upon the sides of machines to make sure cutters
don't explode
in our faces and wait
for the CEO and the men from the offices to step up to our machines to ask us
what we need
to do our jobs better and faster
what we think
could help improve morale and efficiency and quality on the job
we wait for them to give us the dignity
and respect of asking us what tooling we need to do our job what suggestions
our 20 or 35 years of experience might enable us
to make
about running the factory better
but we see them staring at us
as the CEO talks
we see them jotting notes onto notepads and getting ready
to rearrange our workbenches
paint white lines onto our concrete floor
throw out tooling without even asking
if we need it
write us up
for going to lunch one minute early
and we put our gnarled leathery calloused hands onto tool holders and wrap them around heavy
stinking blocks of steel and sigh
and nod to ourselves
when you're a rare Canadian caribou
or an endangered African mountain gorilla
you don't really expect to be asked
questions.

But for Voss the class struggle is not one-dimensional. It embraces genuine equality, whatever your race, gender or place in the division of labour. Even the most menial of work

deserves to be honoured. And he illustrates how the oppression of women and people of colour is essential for the smooth running of the capitalist system:

Scrubwoman Morning

"Buenas Dias!"
I say to Lupe the janitor at 5.55 am as I walk
with my lunch pail and Stanley thermos and newspaper and water bottle
in my fists
she is 4' 10" tall
Guatemalan
her cart crammed with Simple Green cleaner and Boraxo soap and bleach and disinfectant
and wood-handled brushes and mops
I have finally said, "Buenas Dias!" to her instead of, "Good morning!"
after 2 years of passing her
in the concrete aisle as I head toward my machine
stocky
strong Lupe cleans our machine shop bathroom mirrors so we can wash our hands and smile
into them and still feel human after 10 or 12 hours of making hundreds
of identical washers or knobs or valves with our numbed hands
"Buenas Dias!"
she answers with a big smile glad
to hear me finally speak Spanish because for so many years she has spoken so much broken
English to white machinists who will not speak one word of Spanish
to her
as she scrubs and mops our bathroom floors to shine
filling soap dispensers and scrubbing our sink handles and faucets clean of every last speck
of steel dust and machine grease
so we can smile as we wash the decades of steel and brass and aluminum chips
and foreman screams and back-breaking deadlines off us
and feel clean as we walk out and sit in the gravel parking lot at lunch and listen
to birds sing
wash off the years without raises or one word of thanks from a manager the years
of blank rattling tin walls and underwater houses and 70-hour workweeks and broken-down cars as we try
to put children through college so they can grab onto some kind
of future
and I stop and look deeply into her big brown eyes and say, "Buenas Dias!"
to her one more time
hoping that after all that scrubbing Lupe has a true "Buenas Dias!" good morning
and her own future
shines bright
as the rising sun.

Robots is a memorable, inspiring collection of poems. As Peter Raynard says in his excellent Introduction:

> "However things turn out, the poetry of Fred Voss, like a machine press, has helped stamp in our minds the nature of capitalist work, and the way it dehumanises people. If nothing else, we should take hope in the strength of working-class people who remain undefeated in the fight with bosses, venal politicians, and the financial class whose avarice will one day see them eating themselves."

There is no better example in *Robots* of the strength of working-class people and working-class power, 'unstoppable as the sunlight', than the last poem.

Another Kind of Beauty

The young woman
stands at the Bridgeport mill
in the cold machine shop morning air she has pulled the hood of her jacket over
her head
baggy work pants and shirt big work boots cover
her body
only her face and hands stick out for us men machinists to see and they
are beautiful
but the razor-sharp cutter fits her hands
the cutter holder
in the machine spindle fits her palm as her fingers wrap around an Allen wrench
and tighten the holder's locknut
onto the cutter with all the muscle
in her arm and back
and she is not here for us to see her shapely body
or shiny long black beautiful hair
she is Rosa Parks firmly planting her black feet in the front of the bus
Norma Rae
defying the bosses standing up on her textile factory workbench holding the UNION sign
high above her head
for all the workers to see
Spartacus
leading the slave rebellion Emma Goldman
leading the suffragettes King
leading the freedom march out of Selma because we are all
human beings
unbeaten unbroken
her smile
unstoppable as the sunlight breaking through
a storm cloud
her hands
turning machine handles like she was born to turn them
the young woman is inevitable
as the Grand Canyon revolutionary
as Galileo's telescope beautiful
as Madam Curie accepting
the Nobel Prize and every dream that ever
came true.

The Earth and the Stars in the Palm of Our Hand and *Robots Have No Bones* are both published by **Culture Matters** and are available from http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/shop-support/our-publications.

PHIL KATZ 100 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of Great Britain, as the party was then called, was founded at a Unity Convention in London on the weekend of July 31 and August 1, 1920. The Convention, attended by some 160 delegates, opened at the Cannon Street Hotel on the bounds of the City of London, and transferred on the Sunday to the International Socialist Club in the East Road.

Communists, allies and supporters have formed an all-Britain organising committee to plan the celebration programme for the Party's centenary. The Communist Party design team is now putting its finishing touches to the design of a whole suite of new campaign materials, from films and lapel badges, to logos and a travelling exhibition (available for you to show locally, let us know about your event). There will even be collectors T-shirts awarded at special events. All will sport the special centenary livery.

The year-long programme will include politics, culture, struggle and internationalism. The centenary celebration reaches a high point with a cultural evening at the Rich Mix in London's Bethnal Green and an internationalist rally in London's Friend's Meeting House on Saturday 1 August. A Red Cyclathon will travel from Manchester to Newscastle, for the Friday event.

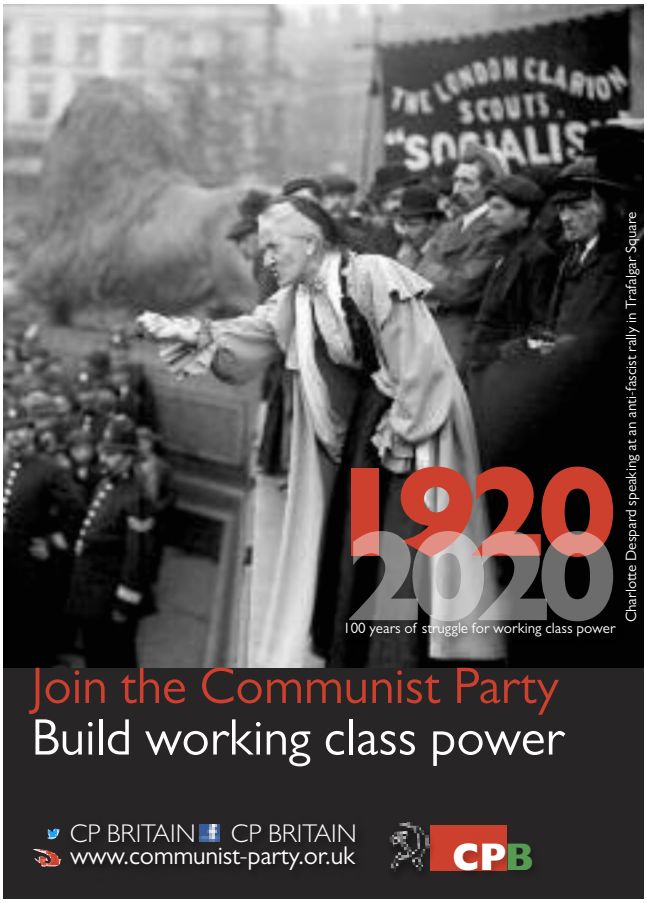
At other times there will be major events including rallies, a Jesse Eden/Kevin Halpin residential school for young trade union organisers, local commemorations of significant strikes and famous party figures. Expect awards galore through the year, to mark achievements such as the Charlotte Despard award, given to the oldest members in England, Scotland and Wales.

Expect too, celebrations of the Volunteers for Liberty, members who gave their lives as International Brigaders in the fight against fascism, and of the London Recruits, those who worked clandestinely against the apartheid regime in South Africa, which included many young communists. There will be seminars to study the contribution of black and minority ethnic members, women members and plenty of publishing, including reprints of historical documents; and even a national men's and women's boxing and anti-fascist martial arts competition in celebration of the workers sports movement and of Red Sports clubs, with the award of the Len Johnson prize, named after the famous revolutionary boxer.

The centenary gets into gear early in October 2019, and will be launched to coincide with the commemorations of the Russian Revolution, and with the simultaneous convening of new and prospective members schools in London, Manchester, Newcastle and Scotland. Soon after, the Party will collaborate with Manifesto Press to produce an edition of Marx and Engels' *j2*

, for the first time as a single volume in all the indigenous languages of Britain: English, Welsh, Cornish and Scots Gaelic.

Publishing plans also include *Reds,* an anthology of one hundred communists in Britain's history, which mirrors the famous *How I became a Socialist* pamphlet produced by Marxists in the nineteenth century. *Yours for the revolution*, a new biography of Tom Mann, jointly funded by unions in Britain and Australia, and a new history of the Communist Party, will follow. The latter, *Red Pasts, Red Futures*, a new history of the Communist Party, charts achievements and sets out a vision for the future.



To mark the contribution of British communists to India's independence, Indian communist leader Sitaram Yechury will speak at rallies in major cities, alongside Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths. Later in the year, there will be a major seminar on 'The Future of Work, Artificial Intelligence and Marxism' as a contribution to the International Labour Organisation 'Future of Work' project.

Local Party branches, district and nation committees as well as Party Commissions and Advisories are organising their own events and the programme is being added to each week. Cambridge is early off the mark with a Red Festival, which includes music and sports and a Red Film Festival in April.

Look on facebook.com/CPBritain for news of events in your area. If your parents, grandparents or great grandparents were Party members and you have memories to share, or ephemera such as photos or membership cards, let us know.

There will be a range of educational events where you will be able to find out more about the Party and Marxism in the British workers' movement. If you are new to politics and want to find out more, just contact us to get involved. We look forward to hearing from you.

ABOVE: Charlotte Despard speaking at an anti-fascist rally in Trafalgar Square, London.

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