

The Libertarian

Communist

A Discussion Bulletin:

In Opposition to the Rule of Capital in all its forms and for
Anti State, Non Market Communism

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The Capital System:



Saudi Arabia used UK made Armoured Vehicles in Bahrain

War Without End

The purpose of The Libertarian Communist is to promote discussion amongst the Anti-State, Non Market sector irrespective of whether individuals or groups consider themselves as Anarchist, Communist or Socialist as all such titles are in need of further qualification. If you have disagreements with an article in this or any other issue, wish to offer comment or want to contribute something else to the discussion then please get in touch. If any article focuses on a particular group then that group has, as a matter of course, the right to reply. So please get in touch with your article, letters and comments. You can do this by contacting libcom.bulletin@yahoo.co.uk or writing to Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, England, BH12 1BQ

This issue is divided into two parts, this is partly due to production difficulties and the related cause of it being a belated issue. This extended issue will cover two normal issues. The next issue will be January 2015 which gives time for the editor, me, to take a break and hopefully come back refreshed and ready for action, ha, ha.

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Andy Cox

We begin this issue with the sad news of the death of our friend and comrade Andy Cox. Andy was a member of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) South West Regional Branch (SWRB) and this is where I met him and got to know him. Andy was not the sort of person to just go along with the mainstream of the party and developed his own ideas about how things might be improved to enable socialist ideas to be put forward in an easy and straightforward way. To these ends via the SWRB he presented a discussion paper to the Party's conference a few years ago. One of the main ideas was to simplify the entrance questionnaire to three main areas of agreement. Whilst by this time I had left the party, I believe the ideas in that document could have provided a basis of discussion but as far as I am aware due to a lack of understanding it received little support. This discussion paper and other ideas Andy developed on how socialism could operate can be found on his website <http://socialistmatters.webs.com/>. Hopefully some of these ideas can be further developed so Andy's work can be continued.

We will much miss Andy as a friend and can ill afford to lose such comrades. We send our condolences to all members of Andy's family and close friends and dedicate this issue of The Libertarian Communist to him.

Ray Carr (Editor)

Strange Bedfellows

As this issue is being put together the situation in Iraq seems to be spiralling out of control that is if it was under control in the first place. As world capitalism attempts to solve one crisis it simply lays the ground for another crisis further down the road. There has been comment in some parts of the capitalist media that it was a mistake to remove Saddam Hussein as whatever else was wrong with him he kept the Sunni and Shia factions under control. However most of these commentators did not oppose the war when it was taking place. On the other side Blair claims that the fault lay with not taking the conflict further or is he just looking to make yet more money from further engagements on the lecture tour. As one conflict is replaced by another mortal enemies call a truce and try to make a pact to further common interests. Thus the USA have attempted to unite with Iran in order to defeat ISIS. It has been reported that a senior American diplomat has recently met in Vienna with his counterpart in Iran to see whether the countries could work together to create a more stable government in Iraq. However Iran backs Assad in Syria whilst the U.S supports the opposition, they are united only by their common opposition to ISIS. Whatever the outcome any solution, if there is one, will lay the ground for a further war in the near future and the victims will be the same as they are now, those who wish to live their lives in peace: **unfortunately the continuation of the capital system offers no such prospect.**

Letters

The letters below refer to Michel Prigent's article and notes in issue 26 pages 2-4

I would have thought that anyone who contributes to this publication would be someone that takes the same attitude toward the Second World War as toward the 1914-1918 war. Imagine my surprise then to see truly 'ghastly' verbiage from Michel Prigent, who not only expresses support for one of the two sides in the later carnage but takes actual pride in doing so. Perhaps he would be so kind as to indulge our curiosity by starting from 1914 and telling us which side he takes in which wars, and why. (No doubt Kosovo will be a particular headache for him. Support for 'national determination'? Or support for 'anti-imperialism'?)

In my day, someone with a maximalist mouth but who under such battle-cries as 'lesser-of-the-two-evils', 'the more progressive side', 'anti-fascism!' etc supported a side in wars among capitalist states, such a person was called a leftist. **ZJW**

Reply by Michel Prigent

Dear Lib Com,
That attack on me probably comes from Stewart Home or his friend Fabian Tompsett...
Here is my response...
The Second World War is different from the First World War... You could not stay neutral in the

Second World War...The concentration camps were there!

The creep who hides behind these initials will regret his remarks. The curse of history has been thrown on him! **Michel**

The Capital System and War: Ricardo Monde

The capital system and hypocrisy are certainly no strangers but when it comes to armed conflict resulting in death and destruction on a massive scale the relationship reaches its high point. Such an example is Remembrance Day held each November. There can surely be no greater hypocrisy than dressing up millions of people in military uniform and sending them out to kill their fellow humans in some other part of the world, people they have never met, let alone have any argument with and then to yearly hold religious services (forgetting the thou shall not kill bit), minute of silence, the wearing of poppies and so on to remember those who died during the conflicts. Many of those sent out to murder in the service of their national state end up dead or if they survive may well bear the physical or/and mental scars of the devastating effects of the process of legalised murder known as war. The only remembrance worthwhile would be to ensure that such events never take place again but this is not possible while we are entrapped in a social system where such conflict is not just inevitable but another form of carrying out business. This year there are planned events to commemorate a hundred years since the outbreak of World War 1 (WW1) and such

commemorations need to be critiqued and turned into an analysis of the true nature of war and its causes. Having concentrated thus far on the sufferings of those on the front line it must be added that, especially in more modern wars, from World War 2 onwards, the death and destruction is in no way limited to that area as civilians bear the brunt of bombing raids and the like.

As part of their state countries normally have something like a department of defence, the present writer, does not know of any country that has a department of attack. So it could be argued that all departments of defence can be abolished since no other country is going to attack them and the billions spent on armaments could be diverted to more positive areas such as health and renewable energy or whatever. Of course what departments of defence exist for is to protect not the civilians of the country in general but the interests of the state and the main function of accumulating capital. In short what is being the dominant interests in that country probably in alliance with certain other countries and those dominant interests are likely to include the defence and likely expansion of access to trade routes resources and spheres of influence. Their enemies will be opposing countries and their allies who will be intent on defending and expanding their own economic opportunities: thus conflict ensues.

There are of course movements who campaign against war. In Britain the most famous of these was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). On the positive front, and in particular when they were a mass movement they were able to mobilise hundreds of thousands in demonstrations and highlight the futility of two power blocs each having the capability to destroy the planet several times over. On the negative side the campaign was too often side-tracked into a debate of whether (at that time) the U.S or the Soviet Union were to blame for the proliferation of the arms race. As CND was a leftward movement many within it laid the blame at the feet of the U.S but such a movement needed to be independent of either side. Secondly CND was concentrating on one particular type of weapon and horrific as nuclear weapons are, the world would hardly have been safe if nuclear weapons had been abolished whilst conventional ones remained stacked up by two opposing forces. The main weakness of CND was they were opposing war without opposing the world wide system which was the root cause of all modern warfare. This same

critique applies to the current anti-war movement, Stop the War Coalition. Yes they definitely do a job and highlight the devastating impact of war and their anti-war campaigns should not be underestimated but why does their name have in its title "**the**"? Does this infer that there are wars they would not oppose? In a similar way the organisation Campaign Against the Arms Trade provides very useful and detailed information about that trade in death and destruction but it is a pity they fail to recognise the capital system as the root cause. Like all similar reformist movements they concentrate on a single issue and believe it can be solved without tackling the capital accumulation system itself. What is needed is a more overall movement that brings together issues that are of fundamental importance in the world today, of which war is definitely one, and offers a critique not of certain aspects of the capital system but of the fundamentals of the system itself.

Capitalism as the Cause of Modern warfare

Modern apologists for the capitalist system will never admit that war is part and parcel of the system with value expansion as its aim. In the past there did seem to be at least a hint of honesty. In recent years a variety of causes are brought out to account for the almost endless state of war that the world finds itself in. Wars, some argue are the result of human nature, when all else fails that concept can be relied upon to provide an explanation about some hideous aspect of capitalism. Another favourite is that wars are fought for reasons of right and justice such as to remove evil dictators or preserve freedom, liberty and democracy. One is reminded of a speech by former U.S President John F Kennedy when he argued that the U.S would oppose any enemy and support any friend in the interests of liberty and freedom. This did not mean that Kennedy himself or members of his government were going to do the fighting themselves, that would be left to the so-called lower ranks of the population of the U.S. What he meant by preserving liberty and freedom was making sure that a minority would be free and at liberty to be able to continue to exploit people, land and resources around the world in the interests of capital accumulation.

From the perspective of Britain and its allies the official reasons for World War 1 (WW1 which sought to encourage people to sign up and risk their lives was that it was necessary to contain German militarism and make the world safe for democracy. According to the film *Reds*, when

the American Socialist John Reed was asked to explain the reason for WW1, he stood up and said "Profits" and he also asked if it was to defend democracy "where is the dammed democracy" Reed's explanations and questions are certainly nearer the truth. The major point is that already in 1914 and certainly in the world we live in today the world is divided up into nation states and power blocs each seeking to protect its current spheres of influence and develop new ones in order to increase their market for commodities. **Petersen [1972:29]** notes that with the advent of capitalism whilst territory remained an important issue what was more important was spheres of influence, the right to exploit underdeveloped countries commercially and industrially and in the main wars were fought to expand and develop shares in foreign markets. Likewise **Faulkner [2013:15]** argues that the basis of the 1914-18 war was military competition between opposing groups of nation states who represented the interests of rival blocks of capital competing in world markets. The same author points out that Britain was able to portray Germany as the aggressor because its empire and position as a world economic power was already well established and its position was therefore protecting the status quo. On the other hand Germany was attempting to challenge Britain's dominant position and seeking to overturn the status quo **[ibid]**.

Around the time of WW1 some apologists for capitalism admitted what war was all about. **Petersen [op.cit:34]** cites an American paper at the time, the New York Sun which stated at the outbreak of WW1: "In the present developed or over developed system an economic war is waged all the time. The markets of the world are the prize." It added: "It [war] is the obvious way of settling ... the economic conflicts of nations". Speaking of that war in 1919 President Wilson made the following admission: "who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? ... The real reason the war we have just finished took place was that Germany was afraid her commercial rivals were going to get the better of her, and the reason why some nations went into the war against Germany was that they thought Germany would get the commercial advantage of them. The seed of the jealousy, the seed of the deep-seated hatred, was hot successful commercial and industrial rivalry." **[Quoted in ibid: 34-5]**

The Second World War (WW2) has become entwined with a war against the brutality of

fascism and this relates to a discussion point we will turn our attention to below when looking at so called just wars that some argue we have no choice but involve ourselves with. However we firstly have to examine similar features that were at the root cause of WW1 that also rear their head in the lead up to the 1939-45 conflict. **Heartfield, [2011:45]** noted that the British Treasury looked upon the export trade as – "the fourth arm of our defence". Britain's international trade, a pamphlet sponsored by Churchill noted was suffering from German competition. That pamphlet then continued in a more aggressive style – "it is not competition, it is simply brute force, compelling the creditor to order in Germany if he wants to get his money back". The policies of economic protectionism carried out by the Nazi regime affected the U.S as well as Britain. Between 1933 and 1938 the German share of U.S exports had declined from 8.4 billion to 3.4 billion whilst those to Britain had risen and this was not unrelated to Roosevelt support going to Britain **[ibid]**.

There are other economic considerations. The 1930s saw the rapid industrialisation of Japan which had a detrimental effect on both Britain and the U.S as they were struggling to cope with the depression. Alarm spread in the West as Japanese goods flooded into foreign markets from 1931 and from 1932 tariffs and quotas were used against goods from Japan. Meanwhile by 1940 Germany had become the world leader in aluminium production, producing 300,000 tons a year with the U.S struggling to keep pace but having plans to produce 450,000 tons a year by 1942 **[ibid:46]** Heartfield adds: "Before long the trading war would turn into armed competition. The American slogan of the day was – 'If goods can't cross borders, soldiers will'. Just as trade war led to a shooting war, war itself was a means of controlling trade". **[ibid]**

If WW2 was seen by some as a war against fascism it did not stop trading between so-called democracies and fascist countries. Throughout WW2 both Britain and the U.S traded with the fascist regime in Spain, supplying much needed oil to Franco. Whilst Spain technically remained neutral it supplied Nazi Germany with wolfram or tungsten which was used in precision engineering and armament production. There was disagreement between Britain and the U.S over supplying oil to Spain which led to the U.S purchasing Spanish wolfram. Whilst this prevented it getting into the hands of Hitler it aided fascism in Spain **[ibid: 51]**

The Case of a Just War

Are there wars where opponents of the capital system have to take sides because the facts seem to show that one side has right and justice on their side? Perhaps WW2 was an example of this issue. Was it a war fought to defeat Fascism and stop horrific atrocities such as the extermination of Jewish people? Many on the left, some anarchists and others generally critical of the capital system were willing to support the 1939-45 world war due to the horrific nature of the Nazi regime. Many still argue that it was right to take this stand. It cannot be denied that the atrocities committed by the Nazis against Jewish people, without taking into account any other atrocity, was an act of pure barbarism. But that accepted, if we are, even momentarily, to cast aside our opposition to war we would have to be sure that the war was being fought for the right reasons and conducted in a manner which corresponded to that aim. Sadly that is almost impossible given the nature of a social system where human needs are secondary to capital accumulation. So let's examine WW2 in this context.

Whilst, it could be argued, that the Nazis took barbaric acts to new heights the regimes who fought against them were hardly free from similar atrocities. As Heartfield notes the massacre of defenceless civilians was carried out by all sides in WW2 and the most severe acts of oppression based on race were taught well in advance by the likes of the British Empire and America **[ibid: 4]**. It is often a fact that in the case of war acts in support of humanity and violent aggression against humanity are carried out by the same side.

War itself is an act of barbarism and WW2 witnessed the killing of around 60 million soldiers and civilians, whilst others died of hunger. People in their tens of millions, Heartfield notes, were, under military orders: "*put in the line of fire, dragooned from one end of the world to another in miserable and terrifying ways*" **[ibid: 3]**. Millions more were enslaved and forced to work in mines, factories and plantations at gunpoint **[ibid]**. Meanwhile, Heartfield states – "*Generals became Kings and arms manufacturers became rich as Croesus*" **[ibid: 5]**

Further to the above WW2 did not oversee the establishment of democracy. In the Far East and North Africa it resulted in the restoration of colonial overlords who had been previously overthrown **[ibid: 445]**. Eastern and Southern

Europe remained under the control of military dictatorships and in parts of Western Europe where people had struggled to free themselves they were disarmed and subject to military rule. Places such as Vietnam, Korea and Indonesia were invaded once more and subject to European rule **[ibid: 3]**

In addition to the above Heartfield argues that in official propaganda against the Nazi regime the atrocities against the Jewish people were played down **[ibid: 445]**. The British Ministry of Information in their war propaganda left out the Nazis treatment of the Jews- "*A certain amount of horror is needed but it must deal with the treatment of indisputably innocent people ... Not with Jews*" **[ibid: 306]** In 1939 a white paper was published which omitted these same atrocities due to – "*a reluctance to identify in any way with the Jewish plight or connect the British war effort with the Jews*" **[ibid]**. A similar approach was taken in the U.S where reports of the Holocaust that were beginning to surface were suppressed not only by the State Department but even by the American Jewish Congress **[ibid]**. **(See Heartfield Footnotes 16, 17, 18 on page 526)** As Heartfield suggests it was only after the war that preventing the persecution of Jewish people became an allied war aim but it was not the reason for going to war in the first place **[ibid]**. Neither does it make sense to argue that Chamberlain declared war on Germany in September 1939 to defend Poland. If so would they have left them to the mercy of the Soviet Union at the end of the war? **[Ibid: 83]**

The Reason for Arms Production

Arms (weapons used to kill people, on mass, where need be) are produced like all production under capitalism, from basics such as food to means of transport and so on, as commodities, produced for sale with the intention of expanding the value of the capital of the companies that produce them. It matters not to companies (institutions who incarnate capital) whether the weapons sold are used to murder the so-called guilty or the absolute innocent, it is not their business to bother with such idealistic concepts. Armament companies do not cause war but they are part and parcel of the process. **Petersen, [op:cit: 35]** wrote that: "*The armament industry is a factor in the general set up in making for war, it is a special factor as its prosperity is dependent on war,*

actually in progress or potentially imminent". The same author refers to an article in The New York Times which focused on an agreement between certain American and foreign arms makers to divide world markets which provided for the sharing of arms secrets and profits, it went on to state: *Under this system American submarine patents reached the British Admiralty and then fell into the hands of the German Government with the result that allied ships were sunk by U-boats equipped with British-American design. In most instances the various governments involved consented to the arrangements*". [ibid: 36] At the time of WW1 there were five arms manufacturers Vickers LTD, Armstrong, Whitworth and CO LTD, John Brown and CO LTD, Commell, Laird and CO LTD and Nobel Dynamite Trust, they supplied weapons to all sides. The German company Krupp supplied weapons to around 52 countries prior to the outbreak of the 1914-18 conflict and many of the Krupp made guns were used against the German workers, turned soldiers, who were responsible for producing them [ibid: 38].

The same was true for WW2. For the years 1942-3 it has been shown that in the U.S a quarter of companies involved with war contracts made profits of 15%, whilst one third made between 15 and 30%. By the end of WW2 it was reported that that U.S companies had made profits of \$52 billion, after taxation, the productive power of their plants had increased by one half and they had accumulated capital reserves of \$85 billion [Heartfield, op.cit: 36]. During the course of the war some came to question the profits of U.S corporations. Harry Stimson, the war secretary answered such questions in the following way: *"If you are going to prepare for war in a capitalist country you have to let business make money out of the process or business won't work"*. [ibid] After all, we could argue, what else was the war about? In December 1938 Hawker Siddeley, the British aircraft manufacturer announced record dividend figures. The Inland Revenue were asked by the treasury to investigate cases of war profiteering and it was discovered that the Society of British Aircraft Producers were yielding an average profit of 10%, and 20% on privately invested capital. It was estimated that the following years would show even higher returns. On such findings the Air Minister called for the immediate introduction of an excess profit duty but the move was rejected by the

treasury on the grounds that it would be a shock to business confidence [ibid].

The Situation Today

If the situation has changed today it is only for the worse. Whilst governments talk more than ever about war to defend democracy and to liberate populations, remember Iraq that was a war to liberate the people of Iraq, at least when the case for it being because they had weapons of mass destruction was found to be the biggest case ever of being economical with the truth. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (**CATAT**) produces a mass of evidence to dispel the myth that wars are fought to defend or establish democracy or for reasons connected to human rights. In the UK vast sums of money are spent on promoting the sales of arms much of it to some of the world's most authoritarian and unstable regimes. Weapons sold by the UK have been used against those protesting for democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. In September 2011 the UK Government was involved in organising a massive arms fair in London. Fourteen authoritarian regimes were invited to view the weaponry on display. In September 2013 another vast arms fair took place, in East London. It hosted 1500 arms companies and 30,000 arms buyers and sellers and once again on the invite list was a roll call of authoritarian regimes and human rights abusers {www.caat.org.uk}.

A democracy index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit viewed Saudi Arabia, in 2012 as coming 163rd out of a total of 167 countries. It was seen as being more authoritarian than Burma, Iran and Turkmenistan and only Syria, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and North Korea were seen as being worse. Despite this a deal was agreed, some years ago, to provide to Saudi Arabia with 200 Tactica armoured vehicles and these were used by Saudi troops to help suppress pro-democracy protests in Bahrain in March 2011 [ibid: see also Jane's Defence Weekly, 23 March 2011].

There are close links between government and arms companies with the former having a role in promoting arms fairs and promoting weapon sales. In fact the government in the UK has a special department in this regard, the UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation (UKTIDSO). UKTIDSO apart from its role in arms fairs organises the presence and itinerary of overseas military delegations and plays a key role in promoting UK arms producers at arms fairs abroad, even providing serving members of the UK armed forces to

demonstrate the weaponry of arms companies. CATAT notes that UKTIDSO exists purely to help arms companies sell weapons to other countries and works on behalf of private arms companies to promote weapon sales to regimes which are repressive and unstable. It has little regard to how the weapons sold will be used.

So arms companies have much influence and direct links with the government. This goes so far as to include employing former government ministers and civil servants. CATAT notes that one example of this close link between arms companies and government was the case of Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles who when British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia was involved in persuading the Fraud Office to drop its investigation into the BAE-Saudi arms deal. When he left the Foreign Office he was handed a job with BAE Systems. However these links go deeper and research by The Guardian (15/10/2012) discovered that senior military officers and MoD officials gained approval for 3,572 jobs in arms companies since 1996 [**ibid**]

The whole case is neatly summed up with a brief look at BAE Systems. It is the third largest arms producer and provides most types of weapons such as fighter aircraft, warships, armoured vehicles and small arms ammunition. Around 95% of its sales are military and it is not fussy who it sells weapons to. CATAT note that in the mid- 2000s BAE's sought to profit by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and this led to it purchasing two major U.S armoured vehicle producers. As the next large scale opportunity would seem to be with "Cyber and Intelligence" BAE has purchased a number of cyber security companies around its "home markets" [**ibid**]

The major fact in this discussion is that the capital system and war are inseparable. There can be few better ways to finish this article than with a quote from Robert Kurz. In **Beneath Contempt** under a heading entitled **The Left, the war and Capitalist ontology** he wrote the following: "*AFTER THE WAR is before the war, because capitalism means in its essence, aggression, destruction and self-destruction. The end of the Cold War did not bring the peace dividend (the idea already an illusion about the character of the economic terror), but an historical thrust of global barbarism, social decay and brutal world- police world-order-wars under the command of the last world power, the USA.*

References

- 1) James Heartfield: Unpatriotic History of the Second World War. Zero Books 2012

- 2) Arnold Petersen: War.. Why? New York Labor News 1972
- 3) Neil Faulkner: No Glory: The Real History of The First World War: Stop the War Coalition 2013
- 4) Robert Kurz: Beneath Contempt, pages 39-48 in No Revolution Anywhere: Chronos Publications 2012

Ukraine's Maidan: Democratic Movement or Nationalist Mobilization? Stefan (June 2014)

Introduction

It is conventional wisdom in the West to describe the 'Maidan' that brought to power the current regime in Kiev as an anti-authoritarian mass movement guided by democratic 'European' values [**1**]. While not denying the presence of such themes in the Maidan, I wish to argue that the Maidan was and is *primarily* a mobilization on behalf of a specific variant of Ukrainian nationalism. This article approaches from a broader perspective issues that I raised in April 2014 in my essay 'Ukraine: Popular Uprising or Fascist Coup?' [**2**], which had the more specific purpose of assessing the role played by fascist or semi-fascist radical Ukrainian nationalists (mostly associated with the Banderite tradition) in the overthrow of the Yanukovich government.

This article has two secondary purposes. I wish to present evidence that considerable numbers of Western journalists and academic experts have been deliberately misrepresenting the nature of the 'Maidan'. I also want to comment on recent manipulation of the 'Jewish question' by the radical Ukrainian nationalists.

Statement of the 41: Umland attacks Umland

I start with a 'collective statement' issued on February 6, 2014 over the signatures of 41 'experts on Ukrainian nationalism' working in Ukraine and various Western countries [**3**]. The experts appeal to commentators on events in Ukraine not to claim that the Maidan 'is being infiltrated, driven or taken over by radically ethnocentrist groups' or that 'ultra-nationalist actors and ideas are at the core or helm of the Ukrainian protests' because these claims are false and provide grist for the mill of Russian imperialist propaganda against Ukraine.

The argumentation supposedly proving the falsity of the 'claims' is decidedly weak. The 'proof' boils down to the point that the Maidan is

politically diverse – a point that no one denies. However, diversity is quite consistent with a scenario in which one element in that diversity acquires a preponderant influence. Indeed, Andreas Umland, who not only signed the statement but coordinated the whole initiative, bore witness to precisely that scenario in a report that he posted on the internet exactly one month before the publication of the Statement of the 41 – describing, for instance, how a Banderite slogan became the main motto of the Maidan [4]. By organizing the Statement, Umland was in fact attacking himself (among others).

Of course, Umland like anyone else has a right to change his mind, but he should openly acknowledge that he has changed his mind and provide a clear explanation of what led him to do so, especially on a matter of such importance.

The extreme weakness of the substantive argumentation in the Statement makes me suspect that the main concern of the signatories is not to provide grist for Russian propaganda. They seek not to determine where the truth may lie but rather to deal with the phenomenon of the Ukrainian radical nationalists in such a way as to do the least harm to the cause with which they sympathize. It is understandable that experts, like other people, will have political sympathies and antipathies, but when they speak and write *as experts* it is their duty to set political commitments aside and strive for the greatest possible objectivity. The signatories of the Statement have betrayed that duty.

The large number of signatories may create a misleading impression of consensus among 'the experts'. In fact, quite a few experts did not sign the Statement, including well-known writers on contemporary Ukrainian nationalism like Andrew Wilson and Dominique Arel. Finally, about a quarter of the signatories are historians specializing in Ukrainian nationalism before and during World War Two; they are not necessarily well informed on current affairs.

Walking past armed men without seeing them

Descending for a moment into the grubbier world of mass journalism, I checked how the two main British television broadcasters, BBC and ITV, reported – or, rather, avoided reporting – the Right Sector (RS) massacre of anti-Maidan protestors in Odessa on May 2. When the RS burned their tents, the protestors took refuge in the trade union building, which was then set on fire. Some died in the fire,

while others were strangled, knifed or otherwise murdered upon escaping from the building. There is video evidence of the RS systematically setting the fire: we see RS girls around a big table in the courtyard preparing Molotov cocktails and passing them to the boys for throwing [5].

The BBC, quoting a source identified only as Serhiy, concludes that Molotov cocktails were thrown by both sides, although it is unclear where those supposedly thrown from inside the building could have come from [6]. Not satisfied with merely obscuring the truth, ITV goes further and blames the victims for their own deaths: 'pro-Russian activists were killed ... as they were setting fire to a building' [7].

On another occasion, freelance journalist Graham W. Phillips berated ITV's Europe editor James Mates for his deliberate distortions. On his site he writes: 'I watched James Mates walk past a mass of masked pro-Ukrainian men at a march, with gloves concealing weapons. He then described it as a peaceful Ukrainian march, before pulling out all the negative terminology for the Russian side.' On a video we hear Phillips try to argue with Mates, who complains at Phillips 'having a go at me personally' and tells him to 'go away' [8]. Presumably Mates is following instructions from above and does not feel it fair to call him to account. One reason why we cannot draw a clear line separating 'Banderites' from mainstream nationalists is the success of the Banderites in gradually infiltrating the Bandera cult into the Orange mainstream. In 2009 a postal stamp was issued to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Bandera's birth, and in January 2010 President Yushchenko posthumously awarded Bandera the title of Hero of Ukraine [9].

Relationship between the radical nationalists and the Orange mainstream

Despite the prominent role played by radical nationalist groups in the change of regime in Kiev, their social base remains narrow and confined to Galicia, so that in the course of time they may return to the margins of Ukrainian political life. However, an analysis of the nature of the Maidan must consider not only the relative size of these forces but also the relationship between them and the mainstream of the movement. What is perhaps most shocking is not the presence of ultra-rightists or even their numbers but the fact that (with few exceptions) they are broadly accepted as a legitimate part of the Maidan. Opinions differ concerning the value of their contribution, but

the great majority of Maidanites do not draw a sharp dividing line between themselves and the ultra-rightists, whom they regard as allies in the fight against the Russian and Russia-oriented enemies of the Maidan.

If we assume that the Maidan is an inherently democratic movement, then we are bound to find this very puzzling. However, once we abandon this assumption and view the Maidan primarily as a nationalist mobilization it makes perfect sense. Both ultra-rightists and the Orange mainstream – as represented, in particular, by the All-Ukraine Union 'Fatherland' (Batkivshchyna) – are Ukrainian nationalists in the narrow sense of seeking to create a single, culturally uniform, Ukrainian-speaking nation (as distinct from the looser concept of Ukraine as a culturally and linguistically diverse community). Both therefore have more or less intensely negative attitudes toward the Russian-speaking population living in southern and eastern Ukraine [10].

By waging a campaign of defamation against Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, the German historian who has done most to expose the dark side of the history of the Banderite movement, the *Svoboda* party gave him the reputation of 'an odious figure' [11].

A culture of mobilization

One would expect a democratic movement to overflow with substantive debate on a wide range of policy issues, with diverse opinions freely expressed and received with interest and respect. The impression that I have formed of the moral and intellectual atmosphere of the Maidan, on the basis of an admittedly limited exploration of relevant sources (speeches, articles, blogs, videos etc.), is quite different. The dominant values seem to be those of a camp of the 'forces of absolute good' mobilized against the 'forces of absolute evil' – unity and loyalty to the common cause. Differences (on policy toward the EU, for instance) are glossed over for the sake of unity. The vigorous expression of important differences, when it does occur, easily triggers violence [12].

Russian speakers in Ukraine are often pilloried as 'Sovoks' – people still influenced by Soviet patterns of thinking. It seems to me that this label can be applied with equal justification to Maidanites. One obvious example is an excessive inclination to explain events as results of conspiracy by enemy secret services (Russian secret services in the case of Maidanite discourse). Another example is the constant

repetition of set phrases, as in the old Soviet 'wooden language' (*langue de bois*).

The use made of one of these set phrases – 'Ukraine's European choice' – is reminiscent of the set phrase 'the socialist choice of the Soviet people', which Gorbachev used in the late 1980s in his attempt to place limits on perestroika. In both cases the word 'choice' is actually used to *deny* choice. The choice has supposedly already been made and cannot be reconsidered, whatever it may entail (for instance, the 'European choice' entails, among other austerity measures, cutting old age pensions by half).

Manipulation of the 'Jewish question'

Despite the efforts of helpful 'experts' and journalists, the presence of ultra-right forces in the Maidan and in the governing coalition is a serious PR problem for the new regime in Kiev and its Western backers. As these forces can neither be dispensed with (at least for the time being) nor completely hidden from sight, it is desirable that they should change their ideology and behavior in ways that will win them legitimacy and respectability in the eyes of world public opinion. The ultra-right leaders are themselves willing to take steps in this direction.

A fruitful area for this sort of manipulation is the 'Jewish question'. It seems that both Tiahnybok, leader of the *Svoboda* party, and Yarosh, leader of the Right Sector, have made a decision to eliminate anti-Semitism from their ideology and practice. Yarosh has promised the Israeli ambassador to Ukraine to do all he can to prevent attacks on Jews and to liaise on a special hotline regarding any incidents that do occur [13]. The RS now pose as protectors of Jews, even helping to clean up anti-Semitic graffiti. The history of World War Two is being rewritten to present Ukrainians and Jews as comrades-in-arms against Nazis and Soviets.

This policy decision has considerable PR potential. Not only does it promise to neutralize the enmity of world Jewish opinion; it also makes the charge of fascism much less credible to the popular mind, which identifies fascism with anti-Semitism.

In fact, this identification is historically and theoretically incorrect. Anti-Semitism is central to National-Socialism (Nazism) but not to fascism in general. In its early period, before the alliance with Hitler, the Mussolini regime was not anti-Semitic to any significant extent: it accepted Jews as members of the Italian fascist party and developed close relations with the

Revisionist wing of the Zionist movement (itself semi-fascist in orientation), even establishing a naval academy to train Revisionist youth. Historically anti-Semitism was part of Banderite ideology, but Poles and Russians were viewed as the main enemies; Jews were hated as perceived agents of the Poles and Russians. A radical Ukrainian nationalism in the Banderite tradition that is not anti-Semitic is at least conceivable.

In general, fascism does typically cultivate ideas of racial/ethnic separation, exclusiveness and superiority/inferiority, but the specific groups extolled and targeted vary from case to case. For the semi-fascist Ukrainian radical nationalists the main target of hatred is Russians – or, more broadly, residents of Ukraine who prefer to speak Russian and are oriented culturally (not necessarily politically) toward Russia. This ‘Russian-speaking population’ includes people of various ethnic origins, including quite a few Ukrainians and also Russian-speaking Jews (who will continue to be persecuted, but as Russian speakers not as Jews). These are the people whom the Banderites compare with insect pests (‘Colorado beetles’ [14]) and seek to ‘Ukrainianize’ – or, should that prove impossible, to imprison, sterilize or kill [15]. The latest proposal of this kind comes from the new defense minister Colonel General Mikhail Koval, who proposes to imprison the citizens of southeastern Ukraine in special ‘filtration camps’ and then forcibly resettle them in other parts of the country [16].

Notes

[1] Thus, experts Andreas Umland and Anton Shekhovtsov start a recent analysis by defining the Maidan as Ukraine’s ‘third post-Soviet anti-authoritarian movement’ following the ‘Ukraine without Kuchma!’ campaign of 2000-2001 and the Orange Revolution of 2004 (‘Ukrainian Right Radicals, European Integration and the Neo-Fascist Threat’ [in Russian], May 21, 2014 at <http://polit.ru/article/2014/05/21/ukraine>).

[2] This essay first appeared on Johnson’s Russia List on April 4. A slightly different version was published in Issue 26 of *The Libertarian Communist*. The most recent version is that on my own website at <http://www.stephenshenfield.net/themes/international-relations/164-ukraine-popular-uprising-or-fascist-coup>

[3] The statement was published in English and Ukrainian at <http://krvyvka.com/ua/articles/kvyvivskyy-evromaydan-tse-vyzvolna-ne-ekstremistska-masova-aktsiya-hromadvanskovi-nepokory>. Twenty-one signatories are based in Ukraine, six in the United States, three in Canada, five in Germany, five in other countries of Western and Central Europe, and one in Israel.

[4] Umland’s report, first published on January 6 on the site of the *Kyiv Post*, strongly influenced my own view of the situation, and I quote from it extensively in my earlier essay. Indicative of its content is the heading of the second section: ‘The Ethno-Centrist Slant of Ukraine’s Third Post-Soviet Mass Rebellion.’

[5] This can be viewed on the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4dJRnl-X8Q> (published on May 12) starting at 4.30 minutes. The pattern of events was much more complicated than this, but here I focus on this central sequence.

[6] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27275383>

[7]

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2014-05-07/russias-lavrov-blames-odessa-deaths-on-fascism/>

[8] <http://grahamwphillips.com/2014/06/13/why-the-western-world-is-on-ukraines-side-10-reasons/>

[9] The award was annulled a year later by President Yanukovich.

[10] A report has just appeared of Prime Minister Yatsenyuk referring to Russians in Eastern Ukraine as ‘subhumans’ (*nedocheloveki*).

[11] Source: private correspondence.

[12] This is only an impression based on a relatively small sample of sources. It may be exaggerated. I hope that others with more direct personal experience will comment.

[13] Anti-Semitic incidents can be expected to continue to occur because some rank-and-file ultra-rightists may not understand or accept the new policy of their leaders. In particular, the Right Sector encompasses not only Banderite groups but also straightforward neo-Nazis such as White Hammer and other neo-Nazi skinhead groups, whose anti-Semitism is more deeply entrenched.

[14] There were reports of some of the murderers in Odessa tweeting about how good it felt to kill ‘Colorado beetles’. Some anti-Maidanites regard the Banderites themselves as insect pests. For example, Sergei Shevchenko, head of the ‘House of Eternal Spring’ organization, recently declared: ‘We shall fight against all Nazism and national radicalism ... but let us not burn and destroy our home in order to rid it of cockroaches!’ (https://vk.com/serg_shevchenko?w=wall116888305_398%2Fall)

[15] Prominent *Svoboda* parliamentarian Iryna Farion wants speaking Russian to be made a criminal offense: Russian speakers are ‘degenerates’ and should be imprisoned (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 25, 2014).

In 2010 a pseudonymous contributor to the party’s official forum, alleged to be Tiahnybok himself, wrote: ‘To create a truly Ukrainian Ukraine in the cities of the East and South, ... we will need to ... physically liquidate all Russian-speaking intellectuals and all Ukrainophobes (shoot them quickly, without trial - they can be registered by any member of *Svoboda*), execute all members of anti-Ukrainian political parties’ (<http://grahamwphillips.com/2014/02/25/insane-ukraine>).

A member of *Svoboda* living in Crimea (before its annexation by Russia) argued that it is impossible to Ukrainianize the residents of the city of Sevastopol; they cannot be killed either, as that might trigger an armed conflict with Russia; he therefore proposes that they be sterilized (<http://www.nakanune.ru/news/2014/2/25/2342608>)

[16] Andrew Korybko, 'Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing in Ukraine', *Orientalreview.org*, June 18, 2014. The term 'filtration camp' was used for the internment camps used by the Russian army in Chechnya.

Pre-industrial workers had a shorter workweek than today's

from *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, by Juliet B. Schor

One of capitalism's most durable myths is that it has reduced human toil. This myth is typically defended by a comparison of the modern forty-hour week with its seventy- or eighty-hour counterpart in the nineteenth century. The implicit -- but rarely articulated -- assumption is that the eighty-hour standard has prevailed for centuries. The comparison conjures up the dreary life of medieval peasants, toiling steadily from dawn to dusk. We are asked to imagine the journeyman artisan in a cold, damp garret, rising even before the sun, laboring by candlelight late into the night.

These images are backward projections of modern work patterns. And they are false. Before capitalism, most people did not work very long hours at all. The tempo of life was slow, even leisurely; the pace of work relaxed. Our ancestors may not have been rich, but they had an abundance of leisure. When capitalism raised their incomes, it also took away their time. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that working hours in the mid-nineteenth century constitute the most prodigious work effort in the entire history of humankind.

Enough Said

This was sent in by email

D. like in dementia. D. comme dans demence

It was said on the ITN news yesterday [7 May 2014], that 800,000 people in Britain suffer from dementia. One man interviewed can't understand money anymore. . Yes, and the non-demented are as much demented: they believe in this mad society, totally subjected to money, destroyer of nature, destroyer of human relations, hyperproductivist, dominated by ideology (nationalist, anti-Semitic, pro-Ukraine, anti-Ukraine, islamist, militarist, neo-colonialist, productivist, primitivist...). In short, madness reigns undivided . The 800,000 demented who are spoken about are there to make believe to the others that they are not mad. Mistake.

A Liquid Asset of Two Fluids: Nicolas Holliman May 2014

Things have changed so much since the Victorians left us with a tremendous legacy of infrastructure that their systems of combined drainage can no longer deal with the quantity and complexity of today's effluents¹, the changed pattern of rainfall² and the demands of an increased population who have more A separation of rain and storm water from soil and wastewater drainage is long overdue. It is therefore

surprising that Thames Water plc's³ £4.2 billion Thames Tideway Tunnel⁴, now under construction, still follows the combined 'rule' and will be a conduit for a mixture of untreated soil and wastewater, rainwater and floodwater, all the way to Europe's largest sewage works at Beckton, where modernisation work is in progress.

Throughout the UK there are still many systems of combined drainage⁵, notably in coastal towns, and some of the problems associated with them surfaced in Wales, the South-west and Southern England during the January and February storms this year. Companies such as South Western Water plc have invested in better treatment at the point of discharge from coastal towns and this probably accounts for the fact that a record number of 538 beaches in the UK are now graded as excellent⁶. In most cases though, the combined drainage has been retained.

At times of heavy rainfall, overloaded sewers throughout the UK lead to a repetition of events that used to be even more common: discharges into local rivers that lead to 'fish kills', contaminated Mackerel in the North Sea, poisoned shellfish on the Lancashire and Welsh coasts, more plastic detritus in the oceans and condoms and tar on beaches and shorelines.

A straightforward separation of rainwater from all kinds of water borne wastes is not enough though. To deal with today's complex effluents - and because re-cycling is still not taken seriously - a more refined separation of soiled water, 'grey' water, industrial wastewater and restaurant or kitchen wastewater is better because it facilitates the recovery of waste heat and resources such as fats, and urea⁷. The equipment already exists to do this at the first point of discharge from buildings and a network of smaller pipes could connect to de-centralised treatment plants. As with many environmental problems though, the solution to problems caused by torrential rain and surface run-off is many

In the UK over 50 000 different chemicals are synthesised each week and many are discharged as effluent.

The increase in mass and volume of effluent overloads sewers, e.g. from sink macerators, and helps rats to thrive. Formerly this kitchen waste was used as a resource e.g. garden compost, pig feed, feed stock for glue manufacture.

² The author's research into rainfall patterns in West Yorkshire, starting with the c. 19th records from Manningham Park in Bradford, reveals changes, but at least one constant.

³ As the largest water company in the UK and a supplier to over 9 million sitting ducks, Thames Water plc has been involved in some other surprising ventures. In the author's area the company delayed addressing concerns about unpalatable tap water; officially tested for leaks just once in 17 years; prevaricated for years over metering and only directly invited customers to opt for metered supply once - by letter in 2014. There was method in their environmental madness though because businesses sprang up dealing in under-sink water filters of dubious efficacy - some were little more than incubators for microbes. Other companies hawked their ionisers that are said to produce miracle, alkaline ionised water that deals with the 10500 chemical residues from prescription drugs, medicines and personal care products that end up at water treatment plants. The bottled water industry surged forward and Thames Water plc reaped a fortune from households in the social housing sector, some of which included frail and vulnerable people who felt compelled to stint on their use of water.

⁴ This was an opportunity to introduce co-axial drainage, which facilitates the separation of different effluents.

⁵ Combined systems existed and do still exist in other countries. When the author worked for Comision Gestora del Area Metropolitana de Barcelona almost none of the city's combined drainage was intercepted before it flowed into the Mediterranean Sea. Presumably this situation was rectified during preparations for the Barcelona Games of the 17th Olympiad of the Modern Era. In May 2014 Rio de Janeiro's surface waterways are still infested with sewage and Serbia's infrastructure was overwhelmed during its most intense period of spring rainfall for 100 years.

⁶ According to the Marine Conservation Society's commendable "Good Beach Guide" but not according to the E.U.'s higher standards for the quality of bathing water.

⁷ During the Victorian period urine was treated as a resource, collected separately and shipped to chemical works and leather tanneries. Gentlemen who are specific and point Percy in a socially responsible way would benefit all of society by engaging in a bit of discrete recycling, facilitated by the existing sanitary arrangements in gents' lavatories and conveniences for separating most urine from faecal matter and paper. Water would be used more sparingly as well.

solutions⁸, including green roofs and roof gardens⁹, detention basins, infiltration ditches, swales, underground storage, permeable hard surfaces, reflux valves and so on. Unsurprisingly, the £3.5 billion profit exacted recently from consumers for its shareholders¹⁰ and owners¹¹ by Thames Water plc was not channeled into these sustainable projects.

Without management systems in place for reliable water supply management (see Water Safety Plan, WHO¹²) a liquid asset quickly becomes a liquid liability of floodwater murk, sewage and wastewater combined. That silt and sediment in the floodwater, so problematic downstream (according to folk in Somerset), is a subtle reminder of the loss of soil fertility due to the upstream erosion of agricultural land and deforested uplands, while the sewage is a not so subtle reminder that water borne pathogens lurk.¹³

Instead of flowing to a combined drainage system, rainwater could remain the liquid asset that it is¹⁴: an essential for life, a fuel and a power source, but certainly not a problem downstream. Apart from turbines that use water flow and hydraulic rams¹⁵ that use water pressure, there is the possibility of 'splitting' the two fluids of H₂ and O¹⁶ to burn in a fuel cell to produce electricity, heat, and water as a 'waste' product. However these technologies require water that is free of chemicals, effluent and the etritus of floodwater. Industries such as agriculture¹⁷, aluminum¹⁸, brewing, food processing¹⁹ and oil refining²⁰ rely on clean water too.

⁸ The Alhambra in Spain and the ancient city of Rome demonstrate some artful and low-tech approaches to managing water resources.

Nicolas Holliman, "In Praise of Gargoyles" in: Plumbing Jnl. of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering, No. 4 (1992) p. 23

Nicolas Holliman, "Hey Fontanero!" in: op. cit. No. 4 (1990) p. 10

⁹ It is reputed that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon in antiquity were a water retention device for controlling the flooding of the Tigris as well as a series of roof gardens.

¹⁰ The pension funds of British Telecom plc and other large companies are majority shareholders and by their very nature they are future-orientated - for the benefit of pensioners. In respect of effective environmental management and public safety and health nearly everyone misses out, including pensioners, except perhaps the fund managers.

¹¹ Macquarie of Australia (90%), the Chinese Government (8%) and Qatar State.

Part ownership of Thames Water by a command economy such as the Chinese one, or Qatar State, contradicts the original, purported intention of privatisation.

When RWE, the German utility company that specialises in building nuclear power plants, owned Thames Water, a large number of the poorest consumers in the Thames Water area augmented its profits to £2 billion in two years because their housing circumstances were used as a pretext for preventing a switch to the lower, metered supply tariff. RWE simply worked in concert with its predecessors and this made it such an attractive short-term investment, with no commitment to the long-term *needs*.

¹² According to Prof. Jamie Bartram, author of the U.N. Water Safety Plan commissioned by W.H.O., such a plan can deliver major health benefits to industrialised *and* less industrialised societies but it cannot be sub-contracted because it relies so heavily on internal and local knowledge.

¹³ Diarrheal diseases account for the highest number of water related deaths (WHO), mainly of children, and an inestimable number of unreported cases of short and long-term illness.

In total mass, soil/wastewater is the main form of urban waste in the UK, followed by construction waste.

¹⁴ A rain-harvesting scheme for Phase 1 of the Redevelopment of Leeds General Infirmary's roof garden was another of the author's projects. Initiated by the Yorkshire branch of the British Heart Foundation, it is adjacent to the hospital's cardio-thoracic unit and serves as an outdoor gym for in- and out-patients.

¹⁵ Nicolas Holliman, "Clink, clink, clink ... clonk, clonk, clonk..." in: op. cit., No. 5 (1995) p. 10

¹⁶ To remove electrons from a molecule of water is difficult. In photosynthesis chlorophyll harnesses solar energy to achieve just this and a fuel cell uses power.

¹⁷ Agriculture is the major industrial consumer of clean water in the U.K. 14000 litres of water are needed to produce 1 kg of beef (Dept. Environmental Technology & Policy, Imperial College, London 9th May 2014).

¹⁸ One estimate is that the production of 1kg of aluminium (as foil of >99% purity) from an ingot requires 12.7 kg (litres) of process water and 33 kg (litres) of cooling water. Nicolas Holliman, "A Life-cycle Assessment of Aluminium Packaging" following the SETAC procedure, School of Engineering, Glasgow Caledonian University, Table 11, p. 61, 1991.

¹⁹ To produce 1 loaf of bread and a 100g bar of chocolate (excluding packaging) requires 240 litres and 2040 litres of water respectively.

²⁰ The exploitation of shale oil and gas has contaminated ground water and wells, which poses a threat to the brewing industry's use of aquifers. The oil industry itself needs clean, uncontaminated water too - 10 litres for every litre of petrol it refines.

Because any radical change in drainage and waste disposal is a major, infrastructural project, an approach to use tangentially is one informed by that eco-mantra: reduce, reuse and re-cycle.²¹ A reduction in the wastage, conspicuous consumption and exponential primary energy and power consumption, that is part and parcel of the growth model for modern national economies, would mitigate the problems of water pollution, CO₂²² and other 'greenhouse' gas emissions, waste heat, et cetera, and help to deal with the impact of extremes in weather such as torrential rainfall or periods of severe drought.²³

With this approach, the onus is on the home-maker as well as the careerist decision-maker/politician, because almost everything we produce and use in the way of goods and services ends up as domestic consumption in one form or another, including the things we intensely dislike or find abhorrent for environmental and social reasons. This tale of two fluids therefore requires a reference to the home, where millions of people can either willfully or unwittingly compound the problems of keeping our fresh and saltwater resources in a fit state for all living things. It may seem to be an innocent, private and safe environment that supports domestic and family life but viewed through the prism of conserving and protecting water, there are unresolved contradictions.

Starting with the human-ecological issues of cleanliness and hygiene, most household cleaning products and toiletries contain substances²⁴ that have an adverse effect on water courses, ground water, aquatic life, water treatment plants and human health. Then there is the growing trade devoted to over-engineered, 'statement' or 'designer' taps that promotes the look of the tap over and above its function or the quality of the water it delivers. The bog standard WC suite has fallen victim of the homage to appearance²⁵, which has become more important than its function, its technics for efficient use of water²⁶ or the condition of the above and below ground drainage systems that it is connected to. It should therefore come as no surprise that people tend to look for someone 'dirt cheap' who will 'make do' until their property is sold on rather than a qualified, knowledgeable person to work on water services and sanitation.²⁷

²¹ Instead of focusing on post-production the author would encourage a focus on pre-production and add re-formulate, in order to avoid some mistakes from the very beginning.

²² CO₂ emissions cause acidification of the oceans and this in turn suppresses marine life e.g. molluscs including shellfish, fish and oxygen producers such as algae.

²³ According to the Report of the UNO's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (I.P.C.C.), published in March 2014, the number of people in cities throughout the world who experience regular water shortages is expected to rise from the current figure of 150 million to 1 billion by 2050.

Little discussion takes place about the potential role of solar water stills for meeting water shortages even though British engineers experimented with them during the c. 19th, in Australia, Egypt and South America. If the author was able to improvise one for Prior Weston Primary School, on the edge of the City of London, it can be done anywhere in the U.K.

²⁴ e.g. Dyes used in products designed to aesthetically freshen up a WC flush but which interfere with bacterial breakdown at the sewage works; foaming agents that create banks of smelly foam on canals, rivers or coastal waters and harbour bacteria; 1,4-dioxane, Sodium lauryl sulphate, ethylene oxide, phthalates, parabens, petrolatum that are suspected of being health risks.

²⁵ The advertising and the image conscious market that persuades householders to throw out whole functioning bathrooms, kitchens and plumbing/sanitation systems and to 'modernise' generates more waste. The packaging around this equipment has become more sophisticated than ever before and further increases the waste that has to be dealt with. Nicolas Holliman, "EC Urges Action on Packaging", in: op. cit., No. 5 (1992) p. 22

²⁶ Aside from the anatomical evidence that most WC suites are too high for positive evacuation, the waterless WC will become important, if only because flushing toilets account for 23% of water consumed in buildings, but its cumbersome appearance is not likely to appeal to the image-obsessed consumers of today. People living on the coast may have to follow the solution adopted in Hong Kong and use piped seawater instead of mains water for flushing sanitary fittings. If they do, they will have to avoid the mistake made by the administration of Alcatraz prison where the seawater used for flushing damaged the prison's concrete structure, forcing its closure.

²⁷ In the U.K. context, dirt-cheap can readily translate to 'zilch'. All those television programmes about rogue traders that present one side of the story have given the public the impression that every tradesman is ipso facto a member of the criminal fraternity. When will the public hear about cowboy clients, some of whom are lawyers or employees of television companies that make films about rogue traders?

From late 1990 to April 1992 "The Guardian" Europe supplement printed weekly interviews with foreign journalists about their everyday life in a host European country, including their dealings with plumbing and heating engineers. When reporting on the U.K., they gave this group of tradesmen 'nul point'.

Nicolas Holliman, "Mein Plombier es Terrible!" in: op. cit., No. 2 (1992) p. 25

The social imperative to own one's home at all costs and move up the property ladder, which has its roots in the insecurity generated by low pay²⁸ and low state pensions, monetary devaluation, social control²⁹ and speculation, is a driving force behind these contradictions because it produces asset-rich/income-poor³⁰ households for whom it is tempting to forfeit standards of sanitation and jeopardise water quality standards for the sake of a couple of quid.³¹ For example, *against* the advice of the Environment Agency over 3000 new houses were built on flood plains in the England and Wales in 2013 - served by combined drainage and accompanied by the problems that that entails.

Over the decades complaints trickled in to South Western, Southern, Thames and Yorkshire Water about unpalatable tap water but here too we hit a flood of contradictions. Into drains and water courses, people continue to dump acids, colouring agents, aggressive detergents, paints, solvents, waste mineral oil³² and other substances that pollute *many times their own volume of water*. The residues of pharmaceutical products and drugs³³ end up at water treatment plants too, although some of these can be de-natured by boiling or through the cooking process. Yet a sizeable minority of the electorate voted for representatives who adopted the hastily and poorly conceived privatization of publicly owned water utilities, and in the process, banished trained teams of water-tasters and locally based 'turnkeys'. In the event of bursts, leaks or floods, when water quality was also compromised, these traditional 'turnkeys' would arrive on their bicycles within minutes to isolate the main valves. Re-structuring and modernising the industry has lengthened this response time to days, weeks and sometimes months.

Domestic consumers *may* consider themselves to be price 'sensitive', but if publicists can sneak an advertising slogan past them for bottled spring water, claiming it to be "...an affordable, portable, life-style beverage...", something really is awry. And eau dear, the result is that consumers now pay up to 600 times the cost of tap water per litre for their life-style beverage, which can contain higher levels of nitrates, organic material that festers in a sunlit shop window and levels of radioactivity that are not present in mains water³⁴. The same beneficiaries of exotic, bottled waters, that can be sourced from as far away as the Pacific islands, toss billions of 'empties' away each year³⁵ and fail to demand the best possible quality for tap water or the restoration of public drinking fountains that have fallen into a shameful state of disrepair.³⁶

To fathom how we got ourselves into this quagmire it is worth looking a bit deeper. Colourless, odourless, tasteless and ubiquitous, water can appear to be a fairly mundane molecule, not one of the most important on Earth, with some unique characteristics and properties and special functions in all biological systems. Perhaps all those facts about water³⁷, served up during rote learning that were intended to educate us, have also served to sanitise the science of water and to alienate us from the written word. Maybe the facts about water are so frequently quoted that they have lost

²⁸ The housing market has functioned a bit like a 'subsidy' to homeowners on low pay or low pensions, but not to those living in social housing.

²⁹ "The Housing Question" by Friedrich Engels includes a critique of home ownership as a form of social control.

³⁰ The commitment of a mortgage is one reason why the trade unions have not been enthusiastic about shorter working weeks and job-sharing.

³¹ This is common among first-time buyers, those committed to the 'spirit' of property and private landlords who turn a blind eye to infringements - as many a student will testify. The philosopher Mary Midgley has something relevant to say about this: philosophy is like plumbing, you only miss it when it's not working.

³² The National Rivers Authority attribute over 20% of yearly pollution incidents to the dumping, surface runoff and spillage of mineral oil.

³³ Fieldwork by the European Union Drugs Monitoring Agency, reported on the BBC R4 "Today" programme (28th May 2014), reveals that the soil/wastewater of 42 European cities contains cocaine and other narcotics. London's sewage heads the league table and contains up to 711mg of cocaine/1000 people/day. It is not clear whether residues in urine and faecal matter, or the surreptitious disposal of drugs at the start of any police raid, or both, are the source. The unit of dilution used by the agency is not a conventional one but it does indicate that Tuesday is the critical day of the week and this in turn indicates that excretion is the causative link.

³⁴ Albeit, below the upper legal limit of 10 Becquerels/litre set by W.H.O.

³⁵ Nicolas Holliman, "The Use of Refillable Containers in the UK", London: Waste Watch Ltd., 1996, pp. 35-40, "The Bottled Water Industry" Section 5.

A more recent estimate from 2013 puts the total for the UK at billions of bottles each year.

³⁶ Nicolas Holliman, "Toasting Adam's Ale" in: op.cit., No. 3 (1993) p. 18

³⁷ e.g. the quantity of water on Earth is finite; it increases in volume when it freezes; pure water is tasteless and does not conduct electricity; its specific heat is high; it is not compressible even though it is a molecule of two gases; it is almost a universal solvent. "Water is the softest thing, yet it can penetrate mountains and earth. This shows clearly the principle of softness overcoming hardness." (Laozi c. 6th Chinese philosopher) e.g. 70% of the ecosphere is estimated to be water, which adds up to an estimated 1.5 billion km³, but only 0.001% of this is directly useable as freshwater and the rest is seawater.

their power. Then there is ye olde adage that used to circulate throughout the sludge of local, party politics: "There are no votes in sewage." To avoid a surface critique that creates ripples rather than waves, some reference to nihilism is needed too. It plays its part because it is cultivated by the realities of abstract labour and the abstract labour class.

Concerning mains, fresh water and effluents there is another point to consider in relation to the public's apparent lack of interest in a real liquid asset of two fluids. The transport of water or effluent is not visible to the majority who live in urban areas - just like so many environmental pollution problems.³⁸ Perhaps sections of infrastructure should be made transparent - literally - with glass equipment. This is not too fanciful because UK taxpayers have already paid for glass drainage in nuclear power stations, for precisely this reason - transparency.

The reverence for water sources promoted by ancient authorities was very likely a ploy to ensure their safekeeping and to encourage vigilance. After all, if you pray to the River God you are more likely to closely observe the river in all its godly and devilish 'moods'.³⁹ In our society though, we have relinquished direct control over our water, and its quality, and following commoditization and privatisations, the modern contradictory relationship with water developed. This is one in which people know water is important yet behave otherwise and entrust the wrong people with its future, because of the social alienation arising from the commoditization of our shared natural world and its resources⁴⁰.

Nor does it help the conservation project if people are told that water is a 'natural' monopoly⁴¹ and that any other view is mere sentiment, because this 'reality' is used to explain away a lot, including the loss of a diversity of water suppliers. On the other hand it would strengthen the project if the more evolved environmentalists amongst us acquainted themselves with the complexities of the big "social question" and side-stepped the gagging order imposed unofficially by careerism, job security and so on.

For those who are fully conversant with this, but know little about biology, there is a lot to be gained by following the kids and starting with some pond life studies. Initially, the maximum level of technology that is required is a pocket lens, but marvels of the aquatic world await anyone who progresses to using a microscope. During this destructive phase of the capitalist system a foray into observational science provides a bonus of pleasure that serves as an antidote to the draining effort of coping with the assaults on our key liquid asset. For some though, ignorance is bliss, until such times as the ecological 'boomerang' comes around and hits them in the back of the neck.

³⁸ Where streams and small rivers have been covered over unnecessarily or wantonly, native, remediating, aquatic plants could be re-established on their banks once they have been restored to *public view*. This would provide free improvements to the quality of water and amenity.

³⁹ The Vikings were one of many groups who revered their streams and lakes and established sites of worship nearby.

⁴⁰ The privatisation of the seabed was recommended to Margaret Thatcher's government by one monetarist professor on the grounds that it would lead to the more efficient use of resources, including the marine reserves and underwater national parks. The government plan to privatise publicly owned forests and woodlands was abandoned temporarily, following widespread opposition in 2013.

⁴¹ This begs the question: What defines 'unnatural' monopolies if companies are becoming less competitive as they get bigger through amalgamations, cartels, mergers, price rings, takeovers et cetera?

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From The Bullet
Socialist Project • E-Bulletin No. 979
May 5, 2014

Hungary: A Black Hole on Europe’s Map

An interview with G. M. Tamás by Jaroslav Fiala (A2 magazine)

Jaroslav Fiala (JF): In the past you have written on post-fascism. In recent years, the growing rise of nationalist and racist forces has taken place across Europe. What is your explanation for this phenomenon?

G. M. Tamás (GMT): The whole nature of European politics has changed after 1989: the two hegemonic blocs had disintegrated, after the Soviet threat which forced the internal compromise in the West resulting in the welfare state and the toleration of large West European communist parties and communist-influenced trade unions, ceased to exist. So did cease to exist the Western pressure which had set certain limits to Stalinist and post-Stalinist dictatorship. The Cold War equilibrium was over.

The more or less ‘proletarian’ counter-power together with the ‘adversary culture’ from academic Marxism to *avant-garde* cultural practices is gone, too. The [compromesso storico](#) – the key to the flowering of Europe from the 1960s to the 1980s – has become both unnecessary and impossible. The new states and their élites had to realise that old-style religion and nationalism is ineffectual, their foundations have crumbled, the Army and the Church are not the forces they used to

be. Social integration, mass mobilization are now indirect, mediated through the media, if at all. A sense of integration for passive and isolated citizens can be offered only by political passions that can be exercised privately, without organization, without ideology proper, in an exclusively negative way. So explanations for social discontent can be understood chiefly as the result of ‘heterogeneous’ elements (in the sense of Georges Bataille), ‘outsiders,’ ‘foreigners,’ ‘immigrants,’ ‘gays,’ non-participants (welfare cheats, layabouts, the underclass in general). This does not need mass mobilization as in ‘classical’ fascism because it does not concern any parts of the ruling class or state élites, while fascism and National Socialism, of course, did. This is an authoritarian radicalism based not on hatred, but on contempt. The hyperactive passivity of old fascism gives way to the passive passivity of post-fascism.

JF: Let’s focus on Hungary. The election showed a rightward, extremist shift, again. What is happening to your country?

GMT: It’s a difficult question – and the most important one. First of all, this was [another election](#) where genuine right-wing and pseudo-left parties had a contest. The ‘left’ coalition combined elements of human rights liberalism, pro-European business liberalism and a very vulgar ‘left’ populism, with obviously unrealistic promises. These elements went very badly together. Viktor Orbán and his national conservatives simply refused to present a programme or an election manifesto at all. Their only slogan was “We’ll continue!” Their policy is a combination of

handouts to the middle class and to the middle class only, and of a very severe 'law and order' routine against everyone else. It's a simple and straightforward politics of repression: censorship of the media called 'national unity' (that is, no audible dissent), strongly chauvinist national education at all levels, a cult of 'hard work' persecuting the unemployed, especially the Roma poor, a *macho* talk of will, force, determination, action, 'follow-the-leader,' virility. A new national identity rooted in football and based on extreme right football supporters' groups, contempt for intellectuals and a generalized hatred against all foreigners (both against our neighbours in the 'successor states' and against the treacherous, decadent West, not to speak of our coloured brethren).

The left has been presented – following the oldest recipe – as the agents of 'abroad,' *le parti de l'étranger*. At the same time, the governing party has lost hundreds of thousands of votes that went in part to the overt fascists. The malcontent just leave the country in droves. London is today the third largest Hungarian city. The general mood is glum, there is an atmosphere of suspicion and loathing. There is xenophobia and ethnicism without the slightest trace of national pride.

JF: How would you describe [Viktor Orbán](#) and his party Fidesz? Before 1989 you were friends...

GMT: Actually, we were friends up to the mid-1990s. Mr Orbán is a very able, very ruthless, totally unprincipled and pragmatic politician, a cunning tactician and a shameless demagogue. He keeps contradicting himself and affirms the opposite of what he has trumpeted a week ago, but since he doesn't give interviews and is never subjected to critical, let alone hostile questioning (the new House rules in Parliament make him almost exempt of any obligation to debate and to convince), he doesn't have to account for any of these. There was not a single TV debate between Fidesz and the opposition. His rhetoric is outrageously simplified: he's fighting the cosmopolitan powers of international finance and those of international leftist subversion to keep the Nation safe, reduce the cost of living and give back to Hungary its ancestral might, you know, a brave little David struggling with Goliath, and so on. The worst enemy can be recognized by his or her accusing the national conservative Hungarian government of anti-Semitism which

does not exist, it is all a malevolent Jewish invention.

JF: Why is Orbán's Fidesz so popular? It seems that the party expropriated many anti-capitalist elements. Basically, it says: if you are against the socio-economic system, vote for us.

GMT: It is the usual right-wing anti-capitalism of the 1930s: it makes a difference between productive and parasitic capital. Mr Orbán makes special deals with Western industrial companies that are fully or partly tax-exempt and are attracted by the extremely low Hungarian wages, but declares war against banks and against global financial institutions such as the IMF. The decorative refurbishment of Budapest (in a very poor taste, I might add) is paid for by the EU, the anti-Hungarian monster. Mr Orbán is, like many before him, the champion of the national bourgeoisie, he is by now himself a very rich man.

Like the radical right everywhere, Fidesz is opposed to anybody it deems 'unproductive' from bankers to intellectuals to the unemployed to the old-age pensioners and to university students. 'Unproductive' equals 'parasitic' equals 'subversive.' By their ambivalent, semi-anti-capitalist talk they have managed to become the system itself and also the opposition to the system. As it is mostly the middle class who vote, there are about two million people who would fall for this propaganda done very skilfully by the Fidesz PR and indoctrination machine (a combination of Thatcherism and Putinism), undergirded by Mr Orbán's relentless activity and continuous initiatives in every regard.

Also people are getting restless. Mr Orbán has acquired tyrannical traits of late that might be, sooner or later, his undoing. (He seems to believe that he is actually governing Transylvania and Vojvodina as well, the *fantaisiste* Szekler flag is fluttering on the Budapest Parliament building, Hungarian government representatives are holding assemblies and participating in public ceremonies in Romania, without even paying courtesy calls on the local authorities. The official term is 'reunification of the nation across the borders.' This is nonsense, but extremely dangerous nonsense.)

JF: Is the influence of anti-communism significant? If so, how does the Hungarian right use it?

GMT: It is the old extreme-right formula: communism and liberalism are identical. They are inventions of rootless, misanthropic, mysterious circles, opposed to human nature and to the natural order. 'We,' true Hungarians, are conservative pragmatists, serving our own interests only, defined by a sober look at our own people and at our own country. We are no ideologists, we are looking for simple things, such as dignity, pride, well-being, a simple but comfortable life and we cherish tradition, be it the tradition of kings or peasants. And so on. And, of course, although this is only suggested, not stated, both communism and liberalism speak with a slightly Semitic accent.

JF: The election showed growing support for racist, anti-Semitic Jobbik as well. It seems this party has a lot of supporters among young people. Why?

GMT: The strength of Jobbik is its unsentimental, clear hatred of the Roma and its open wish to see them thwarted or, better, expelled. It's based on 'moral panic' like the old anti-Black racism of the antebellum American South: crime, proliferation of sensual, oversexed savages etc. Also it appeals to the young middle class by its anti-establishment stance. It sees history from the point of the view of the Axis, rejects all democratic bromides and does not respect the obligatory good manners of politics between, say, 1945 and 2000. This seems rebellious and original. They are using the symbols of the old Arrow-Cross party, hated and despised even by the more mainstream fascist tendencies, and which was known by its lunatic cruelty. This is the ultimate non-PC statement.

JF: How does Jobbik operate? Is it like the Golden Dawn in Greece (e. g. organizing 'riot police,' militias, services for the poor etc.)?

GMT: They are not doing anything for the poor, except promising that they will rid them of the Roma, but as to the rest, it's rather identical in method. The serial murder of six Roma executed by extreme right militants now in custody did not cause great revulsion. Instead, there are speculations how the Judeo-Bolshevik or Judeo-Liberal cabal has

organized the assassinations in order to slander our people. In this climate, Jobbik has no difficult job. After the elections, the centre-left parties have propounded a 'constructive dialogue' or 'debate' with Jobbik. The fascist party cannot be kept in quarantine, declared the leadership of the Hungarian Socialist Party. In the national elections, the fascists were on the second place, now it is predicted that at the European elections they will reach the second position. In the local elections in the autumn, they might acquire 70-80 mayoralties in the provinces, pollsters say. In the new Hungarian Parliament, the select committee on culture and education will be presided by a fascist.

JF: There is a lot of hatred against Roma people in Hungary. Are there also activists defending them? Or is the civil society rather weak and passive?

GMT: There are such groups, of course, immensely unpopular. Civil society is not wholly passive, but it simply isn't anti-racist. This might change, though, although at the moment even the centre-left has abandoned the topic and is beginning to talk, too, of 'public security in the countryside,' the acceptable translation of 'Gypsy crime.'

JF: How about the Hungarian left? Why did it fail in obtaining support?

GMT: Apart from being inept, uninspired, disunited and cowardly, the centre-left had no access to the main media (the internet reaches only the young middle class, solidly on the right) and failed to present an alternative. They fought a lukewarm campaign, in the style of 'more of the same, but better,' also they were mired in some really disgusting corruption affairs. Their slogans praising democracy were ineffectual, as 'democracy' means for most people impoverishment, foreign influence, inequality, unfair employment practices, in one word: failure. 'Democracy' makes people laugh and I must confess, I do understand them up to a point.

JF: Given the trajectory of development of post-communist countries after 1989, it seems that most of them are in deep trouble. What went wrong?

GMT: We are all pre-communist countries. But apart from this, Eastern Europe – and the

whole world – is in deep trouble. Capitalism, as we all know, is crisis-ridden, but the old consolations don't apply. Parliamentarism and 'the free press' are empty even where they are tolerated by the system better than in Hungary. The left liberal recipe of redistribution is undermined by racism, xenophobia, misogyny and the like. Poverty is on the increase, but equality is hated. Anti-capitalism, too, has reverted to its pre-Marxian moralistic, often nonsensical form. Radical critical thought floats in an empty space, as the old workers' movement is dead. A replacement for the industrial proletariat is unlikely to be found.

JF: Do you see any light at the end of the tunnel? Or are we simply walking toward more exploitation, authoritarianism and new forms of fascism?

GMT: I would be sorely tempted to say yes. But to say that would mean that we should give up thinking and feeling, and I am not prepared to propose quite that. There have been dark ages before. Our task is to keep our little lights alive and do our duty, regardless of failure, regardless of consequences. The continuity of a tradition opposed to exploitation and oppression is vital, even if we are only links in a chain, and will be probably – and justly – forgotten by a better age that might or might not come.

JF: You said that the sense of social integration can be offered only by political passions that can be exercised privately. Do you think this can be achieved only through new xenophobia? Are there any better political passions we could offer to isolated citizens today?

GMT: Passions can certainly be lived in other ways, too. And better passions may be on offer sometimes. Genuine social discontent also can be expressed by various versions of 'moral panic' but they won't amount to anything much as they cannot be sustained in the way that movements (based, after all, on personal, actual, physical, temporal togetherness and shared ideals) could.

JF: Could you say a little more about the differences between the 'classical' and new fascism? Are there any other contrasts or similarities?

GMT: 'Classical' fascist movements in all their variants have been the movements of war veterans, of soldiers, with military ideas of leadership, following and mobilization. But the age of mass armies is over. More important, fascism appeared amid the collapse of the Old Régime and was a reaction to socialism, to universalist and radical proletarian revolutions. This whole context has disappeared with the defeat of the Axis in 1945, with the cold war equilibrium and its demise, de-colonization and the end of the Soviet system in 1989. What survives, apart from nostalgia for the very worst, is the inability of late capitalism to integrate the 'heterogeneous.' The fundamental idea of modernity, civic equality through representation and public guarantees for private lives, is becoming increasingly unthinkable, witness the anti-immigrant policies of the most 'respectable' Western governments. Quite simply, the conceptual 'force' necessary for imagining a community *not* based on ethnicity or on common interest narrowly defined, is lacking.

JF: You also said that we are all 'pre-communist' countries. What does it mean (e.g. combination of reactionary politics, cowardly and moralistic left or other things)?

GMT: Well, of course, since there was no communism yet – at best, an egalitarian state capitalism with quite a few advances of civilization, beyond tuberculosis, syphilis, mass starvation and death from freezing – we are all pre-communist, even if there won't be any communism, ever. I don't think that the undeniable moral failures and sins of the contemporary left are in any sense decisive, however disappointing and saddening. Those are probably only consequences. There is no 'outside' to capitalism, as there was in the times of Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin. (In their case, large peasant societies, colonial or not. There isn't a revolutionary 'outside,' either.)

What kind of 'adversary culture' can be kept alive in the absence of a real adversary? Our little Marxist or anarchist conventicles express internal contradictions of late capitalism, but there is nothing outside the unified horizon of the system. It is for the first time that there is Marxist theory – actually, quite a number of excellent works and initiatives – without a Marxist movement. There have been socialists in the nineteenth century – sharply criticized by Lenin and Trotsky – who thought their work

was simply a preparation for crises that would be produced by history and not by their own activity. It was waiting for reality to create the opportunity for liberation and emancipation. Neither Mensheviks nor Bolsheviks were proven right ultimately. This is a period 'after history,' if we mean modern history engendered by the problems of bourgeois society. These problems are sometimes solved by decadence and obsolescence rather than by anything else, but they remain mostly unsolved. Contemporary reactionary political fashions and illiberal regimes show the deep discontent but are, naturally, making things only worse. This is the situation which we are asked – by events – to address. •

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THE HOUSING QUESTION:

"Value enters as subject."
Grundrisse, Karl Marx, written during the winter of 1857-8.
 [First published in 1939 in Moscow, in English in London in 1973, translated by Marin Nicolaus, Pelican Books].

"Gherkin in a pickle: iconic tower is bust. The City's iconic Gherkin tower has fallen into receivership after its owners failed to strike a restructuring deal over its mounting debt-pile, paving for a likely sale of the skyscraper"...
 CITY A.M. /25TH April 2014.

"In a pickle The Gherkin -yours for £550 millions".
 The Guardian /25 April 2014.

by Charles Williams...

Britain has become a society of renters, not owners, this reality was revealed recently. It probably came as a shock to many people. But those with their feet on the ground were probably not astonished... The prices of flats, houses has gone through through the roof. You will excuse the metaphor, but it illustrates the present situation or shall we call it shambles. Only the rich will afford to live in the centre of London. *The Evening Standard* [23rd of April 2014] recently drew up a price list on the Central Line, it makes grim reading. Grim Britain not so Great anymore. Here are some of the findings:

Zone 6, Average house prices:	
West Ruislip:	£385, 266
Zone 5, " "	
Ruislip Gardens:	£284, 395
" "	" "
South Ruislip:	£284, 395
" "	" "
Northolt :	£236, 284
Zone 4:	
Northolt:	£296, 059
Zone 3:	
Hanger Lane:	£482, 714
Ealing Broadway:	£604, 806
West Acton:	£482, 714
Zone 2	
Shepard's Bush:	£553, 926
Holland Park:	£2,440,205
Zone 1	
Notting Hill Gate:	£1,461, 160
Queensway:	£1,271,885
Bond Street:	£2,173,142
Liverpool Street:	£1,250, 833
Marble Arch:	£1,125,648
Tottenham Court Road:	£2,173, 142
Zone 2	
Mile End:	£275,069
Stratford	£240,413
Zone 4	
Chigwell:	£761,008
Zone 6	
Epping:	£369, 608
For more info see: Homesandproperty.co.uk/central line	

Investment firms have moved in, buying flats, houses, buildings lock, stock and barrel. These firms invest in *futures*. (1) Mortgage firms are also introducing new lending measures. In other words it will be more difficult for buyers to purchase the house of their dreams. The poor in London will be relegated to the faraway suburbs. This syndrome was introduced a few years ago when Garden Suburbs were set up to decongest the centres of towns and to get rid of inner city slums. This scheme was two-fold, first it helped to get rid of nasty slums which were ridden with diseases. But it also facilitated the resettlement of entire populations. People ended up living in new towns which had become dormitories complete with giant supermarkets, highways, but no soul...A new way of life (or slow death) was introduced after the Second World War.

A few people were concerned with this new development of the territory. A few names come to mind, like Lewis Mumford, Colin Ward and also those who belonged to the *Internationale Situationniste*. All were worried about the new conditions put forward by architects, town planners...

The *Housing Question* has always been on the agenda... Karl Marx wrote about it...We continue today with an update on the ghastly situation brought about by the crisis of the economy in 2014. The British coalition government will build token social housing units. But on the whole they favour the Estate Agents who push the *status quo*. It is not uncommon to see 6 Estate Agencies on a High street in Britain today, sometimes it reaches 12. An amazing sight, it makes you want to puke all over their windows. Housing is a real cash crop bonanza. The Estate Agents are the managers of the coming Housing Bubble. They remind you of sharks in a feeding-frenzy. It is horrific.

The Con/Libdem coalition favours the "innovative finance mechanisms", to get social housing built. But the proof will be in the buildings, not the speeches by Housing Ministers...

Recently one good thing has come out of the London Mayor, Boris Johnson. He now favours a tunnel to house the HS2 railway line from Euston to Camden Town and further. Hence many streets, buildings will be saved if that tunnel scheme is adopted. This is the only good thing coming from the present Mayor of London, but it is a start. To destroy streets,

buildings, means destroying people. Enough has been destroyed... [1]. It is important for the Mayor of London to stick to "I will do", and not "**I might do**". We will see if he sticks to the tunnel idea for HS2.

So let's come back to the Housing Question in Britain. It is dire. There are many empty buildings, houses, flats. Investors in futures can keep the places empty and wait for an upturn in the economy to flog the places at a high premium. Some people in the Coalition have called for a tax to be imposed on empty buildings, houses, flats. The owners of these places will no doubt will find some sleeping tenants or buyers in order to avoid this empty tax.

All this mess in the housing market started when Mrs Thatcher put forward the idea that people could buy their council homes. Many people went for it. We can remember those who did so when they protested with placards in London, which said that the GLC was not doing repairs to their homes. The GLC daleks met these tenants and told them: "You bought these homes, it is up to you to do the repairs"...

Often you can see places which were bought under that Thatcher's scheme. They are derelict. People can't afford the repairs.

A basic need like housing has never been a free possibility -apart from the times of insurrection, revolution, occupation, when people could live where they wanted-, but these periods are often short-lived. The reaction is never too far to make sure that the *status quo* prevails. Squatting was an interesting movement, it started during the Second World War, and then in the fifties, sixties and seventies it flourished.

Often squatters moved in and saved entire streets from demolition. It also alleviated the housing crisis. But today squatting is illegal hence the increased present housing crisis... The housing crisis is kept artificial, it could be solved overnight if empty buildings were used to house people. All governments from the left to the right have not built many social housing units...Those in power always invoke the lack of capital and yet if you help to build social housing, rents will be paid, hence it makes sense especially if the rents are not high. Money will come back so that it can be used to build more Housing Co-op Homes. If you are not in a housing coop or a housing association in London and elsewhere, you are in trouble. Homeless people are on the increase. In the old days people got arrested

in winter so that they could have a roof over their heads and a few meals a day. Maybe that trend will increase but there is one problem there, the prisons of Britain are full to the brink...

A few years ago Karl Marx quoted this document in the first volume of *Capital*: "Rents have become so heavy that very few labouring men can afford more than one room". Report of the Officer of Health of St Martin's in the Fields, 1865". And he continues: "There is almost no house property in London that is not overburdened with a number of middlemen. For the price of land in London is always very high in comparison with its yearly revenue, and therefore every buyer speculates on getting rid of it again at a 'jury price' (the expropriative valuation fixed by jurymen), or on the pocketing an 'extraordinary increase of the value arising from the proximity of some large-scale undertaking .As a result of this there is a regular trade in the purchase of 'fag-end of leases'. Gentlemen in this business may be fairly expected to do as they do - get all they can from the tenants while they have them, and leave as little as they can for their successors". *Capital*, volume 1, page 813/814/ Penguin Classics.

So the *Housing Question* is still with us. A basic human need is not fulfilled. Hence the mass crisis. But in modern capitalism many human basic needs are not the priority, the priority of the system is to get people working and being part of the automaton subject. Everything else is secondary.

(1) Liffe: short for London International Financial Futures Exchange, a financial institution which deals specifically in futures, 'stocks, or contracts for stocks, sold for future delivery'. (cf the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words/ Oxford University Press. 1991.*

(2) In Paris Les Halles veg/fruit/meat market was destroyed in 1971, when Georges Pompidou was President, the prime minister was Chaban-Delmas, helping him was Jacques Chirac who was nicknamed 'The Bulldozer'. Some people have said the heart of the Paris [Les Halles], was taken out when that market was abolished, they also said it was done as a kind of punishment for the May-June Mass occupations movement. The market had been there since 1173 when it was set up by King Phillippe Auguste II... Later in 1863 Victor Baltard set up the modern Halles market. Today it is known as 'Le Trou des Halles' [The Halles' hole]. For a long time gangs used to roam in the Hell's hole. Today it is quite a

posh place with boutiques... Gangs have moved elsewhere.

When it was the Halles' veg, fruit, meat market it was a lively place. you could buy cheaply there at all times of the day. You could also pick up a day's work if you needed to... Today all that is gone...

Written by Charles Williams on the 25 of April 2014 exclusively for *The Libertarian Communist* magazine.

Here are some additional points which relate to the housing situation in London.

Yahoo Finance UK/Dominic Lipinski/PA Wire - House prices in London have increased by 17% over the past year, according to ONS data

A penthouse has sold for £140million, annual prices are rising at a rate of 17% and billions of pounds of foreign money is pouring in.

Meanwhile, the average price of a home could be £560,000 by the end of next year, according to estimations by PWC.

A potential buyer was quoted

"It truly is a crazy time to be buying right now, the pressure to pay over the asking price is considerable, with agents playing on your insecurities. I found a friend to buy with and we decided to get a two-bedroom flat together. Looking at the market, this option also seemed to provide better value for money. I had been seeing one-bedroom apartments for £405,000 but was finding two-bedrooms of the same quality for only around 10% more .Around the start of April we started looking for a two-bedroom property and found somewhere that seemed to fit the bill. It was a nice place, about 10-years-old, in a fairly new development near Hackney Downs. It was on the market at £420,000.

Garages in people's houses in London are going for £750 grand.

In Le Monde [Sunday 22/Monday 23 June 2014], there is an article called:

A Londres , les gratte-ciel poussent le long de la Tamise. (In London, skyscrapers are growing all along the Thames).the

"A controversial project anticipates the construction of 236 towers of more than 20 storeys." Eric Albert, the author of the article says:" if London is going towards the skies, it is because the town is falling apart". And he adds: "Paris is still resisting the race towards going higher". Half the permits have already been agreed. (...) "Simon Jenkins, the president of the National Trust says: "The

town risks of being destroyed by the skyscrapers".

Comment: **these skyscrapers are high value blocks.**

The following was reported on the BBC TV news [23 June 2014].

Evictions have trebled in London in the private sector...

At an Annual General Meeting of the London Tenants' Federation a pamphlet was launched called: STAYING PUT/ AN ANTI-GENTRIFICATION HANDBOOK FOR COUNCIL ESTATES IN LONDON...It is available on line at : www.justspace.org.uk and at www.southwarknotes.wordpress.com

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[Interesting information via email](#)

In an article in *City A.M.* [24 June, 2014].

£110 bn for UK nuclear clean.

The bill for cleaning up the UK's nuclear waste has reached an estimated £110 bn, according to a new report from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

The figure represents a £6.6 m increase on bill quoted in last year's annual report, owing to the way the clean-up costs are calculated and a rise in the cost of the Sellafield plant in Cumbria. The NDA believes the actual cost of the UK nuclear clean up over a 100 year plus period could be anywhere between £88bn and £218.

As someone Commented

"Fucking joke and now George Monbiot and the green crew want more nuclear "because that's the affordable carbon-free option". For Fukushima's sake, we'll die from value either way"

+++++ The following article is from The Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT). We are presenting it in a edited (shortened) version due to length, A full length version can be obtained either from the ICT website or World in Common (WIC) where it was posted in March of this year. The reason for its inclusion is because we believe it present in clear terms the link between the threat to our planet and the social system which dominates us.

[Climate Change: The Alternative is Social Collapse or Socialism](#)

Towards the end of 2013 the spectre of ecological catastrophe, which now threatens humanity, again raised its head. Since the

start of the 2007/2008 crisis our rulers have managed to largely ignore the questions of global warming and ecological degradation of the planet. This is because other issues dominated the headlines and, in any case, they consider it too costly to deal with [1]. However, two recent events have brought the issue back into view.

The first was the publication, in September 2013, of the latest report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Assessment Report 5 (IPCC AR5). This is the first report since 2007 and shows how much the condition of the planet has deteriorated in the last 6 years, and it is clear that this deterioration is due to the activity of humans. The report marshals a wealth of scientific evidence which shows that, despite all the posturing and hot air produced by our leaders, they have totally failed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and are highly unlikely to limit temperature increase to the 2°C from pre-industrial times, during this century. This is the agreed threshold of temperature increase beyond which the process of global warming spirals out of human control and becomes self-perpetuating.

The second event was the November climate conference in Warsaw. This was the 19th such conference since the UN IPCC was set up and like all the others failed to achieve anything concrete. It ended with the usual unctuous words and the commitment to work towards a future conference in Paris in 2015 at which, it is hoped, as always, that some binding limits to carbon emissions could be agreed. Leading green groups such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, various NGOs and others [2] walked out of the conference claiming the developed world was effectively blocking progress towards either cutting emissions or providing help for those most impacted by climate change. There seems little reason to expect anything concrete to emerge from the future Paris conference.

While it is clear that capitalism, as an economic system, cannot lay the spectre of ecological collapse to rest, it is also clear that the environmental lobbies, such as Friends of the Earth, think that capitalism can solve these problems. For them it is simply a question, as their conference briefing says, of "making the world wake up to the need for urgent action." Reversing climate change could, they think, be achieved without any fundamental change to capitalism if only our

leaders would wake up. This is a common view amongst environmentalists; a view which sees capitalism moving towards sustainability and zero growth. This view has been considered in detail by an organisation launched by the Stockholm Environmental Institute called the "Global Scenario Group" which baptised it as the "New Sustainability Paradigm." They attempt to outline the theoretical basis of this scenario in a document entitled "The Great Transition" [3] and claim it is theoretically underpinned by the work of the 19th century economist, J S Mill. He argues that the capitalist economy must reach a stationary state where growth ceases. We argue that such a scenario completely ignores the way capitalism operates, and must operate, as a system and is therefore hopelessly utopian.

Ecological Collapse

Global warming, which has now become a threat to life on Earth in the longer term, is only the most publicised part of a general ecological degradation of the planet. This degradation stems from the way the capitalist system operates, the result of which is a continual and relentless demand for growth and reduction of production costs. The system's need for infinite growth and the finite resources of Earth stand in contradiction to each other. Successful operation of the system, which in the terms of capital means growth, or accumulation of capital, means that on the one hand nature is treated as a resource to be exploited ruthlessly, and on the other it is treated as a rubbish tip into which inexhaustible quantities of toxic trash can be dumped indefinitely.

The interchange which humanity has with nature has now become so unbalanced that we consume or deplete 25% more of nature's resources in a year, than the Earth's ecosystem can replace [4]. To make up the shortfall we simply use up the planet's reserves, a process that can only continue until they are exhausted. If this point is ever reached there will be a catastrophic collapse of civilisation. The capitalist system is like a juggernaut heading for a precipice; but a juggernaut with its own internal system of guidance which cannot be altered.

Global Warming

Anthropogenic, or human-made, global warming, is caused by emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The most significant of these is carbon dioxide, CO₂, which is produced by

burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. GHGs, because of their molecular structure, reflect back to Earth its own long wave radiation emissions. They thereby affect the balance of energy received from the Sun with that emitted from the planet and so obstruct Earth's cooling system. The temperature of the Earth then rises until a new state of energy balance is reached. The Earth has been in a state of energy imbalance since the late 70s which means it has been receiving more energy than it can emit. This creates a general rise in temperature and puts more energy into the atmosphere. The process whereby GHGs reflect radiation back to Earth is known as "radiative forcing."

The global economy is largely dependent on carbon for energy. Today according to the International Energy Agency 86% of the world's energy is supplied by fossil fuels which, in 2011, received state subsidies amounting to \$523bn! [5] The use of fossil fuels is also increasing faster than all other sources of energy combined. In the period 2000 to 2008 global energy use increased by 22% and 86% of that increase was supplied by fossil fuels and half of this was from coal, the dirtiest of all the fossil fuels [6]. The correlation between the growth of the economy and the growth in CO₂ emissions is fairly close. In the decade to 2007, for which figures are available, the global economy grew, on average, by 2.5%, in terms of GDP, and CO₂ emissions grew by 2.8%. There is a clear causal relationship between global capitalism's search for profitable accumulation and global warming. Even bourgeois commentators are no longer able to deny this, and it is for this reason that environmentalists aim to create a "no growth" capitalist economy.

As mentioned above global warming, which is caused by human interference with nature's carbon cycle, is only one of a host of degradations which capitalism is inflicting on the natural cycles of the planet. The "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment" concluded that out of the 24 natural ecological processes on which human survival depends, 15 are in decline or becoming unsustainable. Humanity's interchange with nature has become so profligate and destructive that within a few generations we may not be able to sustain life. When natural cycles do not regenerate the resources, capitalism simply uses up the Earth's reserves. When timber, for example, is not replaced more natural forest

are cut down thereby reducing the planet's reserves and in the process making the removal of atmospheric CO2 even more difficult; when water tables fall, aquifers are pumped to lower levels so using up historical ground-water which has accumulated over centuries; when topsoil erodes more forest lands are cleared; when fertility declines, and 40% of farmed soils are now degraded, artificial fertilisers and insecticides are used. These in their turn pollute ground-waters, rivers and wetlands killing aquatic life producing dead rivers and lakes, and so on. Insecticides and loss of habitat are killing off the world's bee population. A recent study found 35 different pesticides in the food store of honey bees [7]. At the same time wild insect pollinators are being killed off. Yet 75% of the crops we produce depend on insect pollination and this decimation of pollinators is already beginning to threaten food production. Chinese farmers are now pollinating certain crops by hand! [8] It must be clear to anyone with their eyes open that we face an urgent crisis yet the ruling representatives of capitalism have greeted all the above with indifference.

Capitalism's response – "drill and frack 24/7"

As the IPCC report shows, far from slowing down the emissions of GHGs, the rate at which they are released has accelerated. The response of our rulers to the melting of the Arctic sea ice is a fair example of capitalism's global response to these issues. As is well known the Arctic Circle is a sink, removing CO2 from the atmosphere, a sink which is equivalent to 10% of the total terrestrial sink, and in addition the Arctic ice reflects incoming radiation out of the atmosphere thereby reducing the heat received by the atmosphere. The ice sheet has been reduced from 10 million km² in 1982 to 7.1 million in 2012, a reduction of about 30% [9]. Furthermore scientists estimate that there are a further 200 billion tonnes of frozen GHGs trapped in the Arctic regions which could be released by this warming. In the longer term the Thermohaline Ocean currents (e.g. the Gulf Stream) which warm the northern hemisphere could be altered with incalculable consequences. However, the melting of the Arctic ice has been treated, not as an ecological disaster which requires urgent action, but as an opportunity to drill, recover and burn the oil and gas deposits of the area which were previously inaccessible. We are told these deposits represent 30% of global undiscovered gas and 13% of the

undiscovered oil and, of course, capital's economists have costed it all up and announced, with a smile, that it will bring in \$60bn of profit [10] The fact that such action can only make global warming worse is not even considered. Worldwide drilling and fracking [11], for ever more oil and gas are the order of the day, and as far as the general ecological crisis is concerned the response of Capital is "What have the future generations ever done for us?"

Since the IPCC was set up by the UN all its publications, which were supposed to be providing advice for governments, and all its international meetings have achieved nothing. The capitalist class, of course, appoint their top economists, rather than environmental scientists, to advise them on the ecological crisis. In the UK, for example, the economist Nicholas Sterne produced a report for the government in 2006 advising that CO2 concentration in the atmosphere should be limited to 550ppm, which he advised would be equivalent to a temperature rise of 3°C. He concluded that 1% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) needed to be spent annually to achieve this. However, to reduce emissions and temperature rise more than this would be too expensive. Such a temperature rise is, of course, beyond the 2°C threshold which climate scientists estimate would trigger runaway global warming. Sterne has subsequently admitted he was wrong on the temperature rise, and it would be 4°C, a rise which makes runaway global warming even more likely [12]. Similarly the US economist W. Nordhaus in a book called "The Climate Casino" has calculated that a 2°C rise in global temperature could be achieved if 1.5% of global GDP is spent on reducing GHG emissions. This cost could only be achieved if all the main polluters agreed and cooperated in limiting emissions. If only half the main polluters agreed the costs would rise to 3.5% of global GDP which would be prohibitively expensive and eliminate global growth.

What these economists do not appear to realise is that, while starting from the assumption that the ecological crisis can be solved within the capitalist system, their calculations, which show the required costs would be unsustainable, prove the opposite, namely that this crisis cannot be solved within capitalist relations of production. It is clear that the demands of the capitalist system, namely profits via cheap energy are being followed in preference to any strategy which

could ensure the long term survival of life on the planet. Why are we doing exactly the opposite of what rationality should dictate?

The capitalist imperative – “accumulate, accumulate!”

The capitalist system requires accumulation of capital. If capitals do not accumulate they will collapse, and there is therefore a general struggle for accumulation of capital, which means growth and expansion of markets, throughout the entire system. This drive for accumulation is derived from the internal functioning of the system and cannot be avoided. Capitalism is a productive system which produces for profit not for human needs. It is based on the separation of the working class from the means of production; a separation which enables the capitalist class to extract unpaid labour from the working class. This unpaid labour is converted into surplus value and forms the basis of capitalist profit. Technical developments and improvements in production increase productivity and tend to reduce the number workers in production. As the number of workers employed by a particular capital decreases the amount of unpaid labour extracted, and hence the capitalist system requires continuous profit, similarly decreases. This leads to a tendency for profit rates to fall.

The fall in profit rates in turn leads to increased competition between capitals. Capitals responds to this by converting part of the surplus value extracted from workers into fresh capital and accumulating it in order either, to introduce further technical improvements, or to increase the scale of production or both. This produces a circuit of continuously expanding reproduction with each circuit of production leading to an increase of capital. Although the rate of profit tends to fall, by increasing the scale of production, and selling more commodities, the mass of profit can be maintained. These tendencies which are felt initially at the level of the individual capitals, tend to generalise themselves over a whole economy and finally operate on a global scale as profit rates tend to average out. This results in capitalism's desperate struggle for growth. Capitalism has to “expand or die”, which is why all national economies measure their success in terms of growth. At present the global economy, measured by GDP, is growing at approximately 3% annually which means it will double in size every 24 years. This means

doubling the CO2 emissions and doubling demands on an ecosystem which is already overloaded by 25%. Only when the ecological problems start to affect profits will capitalists start to treat them seriously. This will occur when the ecological reserves have been used up and by then it will be too late to do anything about it.

This brief sketch of the dynamic behind capitalism's continual drive for growth shows that the forces propelling this drive come from the workings of the capitalist system itself, not from the immorality of the capitalist class. They are material forces, they are not ideological ones. Consequently the attempts of environmentalists to persuade the capitalist class to “wake up” and to adopt a zero growth economy, reflect a failure to understand the internal dynamics of capitalism, and are therefore futile. However, this is exactly what the most serious environmentalists are trying to do.

New sustainability paradigm

J Porritt [13] in his latest book, *The World We Made*, describes the transformed world of 2050 through the eyes of a teacher who has lived through a complete change of lifestyle and the global economy in the period from the present to 2050. The “brave new world” is one where global warming and ecological degradation have been overcome or reversed and human society is in a harmonious relationship with nature. Yet the basic elements of capitalism remain in place. He describes how corporations have changed into B corporations or “benefit” corporations, committed to environmental targets and the good of society. Customer stock ownership schemes, cooperatives, community interest companies and social enterprises dominate the economy. Recycling, local food and local energy production are the norm. All this has been brought about by popular pressure. It was started by a protest movement in 2018 called “enough,” which appears to be a reincarnation of the “occupy” movements. “Enough” was sparked off by a World Bank report showing increased global inequality and a new explosive IPCC report. This movement led capitalists to see the errors of their ways, stop producing for profit, and accept the changes he describes. These changes are enforced by Government legislation. Capitalism has, he notes, “became something worth fighting for.”

The idea that capitalism can be reformed to become the charitable and green system envisaged by Porritt is fairly typical of the environmentalist movement. The clearest explanation of this position comes from the "Global Scenario Group" in their description of the "New Sustainability Paradigm." In this society the basic structures of capitalism remain intact but the distribution of the social product is changed to end inequality. Institutions of capitalism, such as multi-national corporations become social organizations. Lifestyles change and social structures are reformed while technical green advances are applied worldwide. The market becomes harnessed to sustainability.

The present world order is driven by the struggle for profit which leads to competition, nationalism and imperialism. These are the characteristics of capitalism. Yet all of these have been eliminated in the utopias described by the "Global Scenario Group" and by Porritt. On the one hand they admit that the present order of states, dominated by an economy exploiting the working class, struggling for profits, operating with relentless competition and backing all this up by imperialism, cannot possibly lead to their utopia, since it specifically excludes these things. On the other hand by excluding these key characteristics of capitalism they admit their utopia is in certain fundamental respects non-capitalist. Porritt is, in this sense, admitting his utopia is not achievable without a break from capitalism. Yet this is something he is not prepared to countenance. He maintains his utopia is a type of capitalism worth fighting for.

The whole scenario is shallow reformism, shot through with contradictions and quite unachievable.

A Communist Planet

Although previous societies have inflicted local environmental damage on the planet which sometimes was so severe that it led to their extinction, as possibly the case of the Easter Islanders, the present scale of degradation is of an entirely different order. It is global and affects everyone. As has been shown above the present destruction of the planet is rooted in the capitalist system of production and cannot be solved without a break with capitalism. The entire system of production based on wage labour and capital needs to be replaced with a system which produces for

human needs. The means of production need to be converted from capitalist class property to social property before an equitable system of distribution can be achieved. Instead of the present system in which workers are alienated from the means of production and from the products of their labour, a free association of producers producing for the needs of humanity, is required. Instead of the interchange with nature being determined by capitalist profit, this interchange needs to be collectively planned and regulated by all. Only after such changes can we achieve a balanced exchange with nature. We call a society of socialised property and freely associated producers, producing for human needs, "communism" though this has nothing whatsoever to do with the system of state capitalism which existed in the former Soviet Union. It will be a society which will inscribe on its banners:

From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs [14].

A society where the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all. Such a society will differentiate itself from capitalist in a myriad of ways, but the principal differences will be that it is a society without state, without money, where the mass of humanity participate in the planning and running of society. It will be a society without wage labour and commodity production and without classes.

The choice facing the world on the environmental front, as on the social front, is one of the ruin of civilisation or the construction of a communist world.

References

(1) The last climate change conference attended by world leaders was the Copenhagen conference of 2009, which like the previous 14 conferences achieved nothing whatsoever. Since then there have been 4 further conferences, in Cancun, Durban, Doha and the latest in Warsaw (capital city of one of the worst polluters in Europe!) have all been low key with world leaders keeping well away.

(2) Some other groups who walked out were WWF, Oxfam, Action Aid, Jubilee South, 350.org. In all 800 people walked out.

(3) See tellus.org

(4) The figure for 1999 calculated in a study by the US Academy of Sciences was 20%. The figure for 2009 given

is 25% see [books.google.co.uk's%20regenerative%20capacity&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/s%20regenerative%20capacity&f=false)

(5) See en.wikipedia.org

(6) See en.wikipedia.org

(7) *Financial Times* 9/11/13

(8) Apple and pear farmers in Szechuan China are now forced to use paint brushes to pollinate the flowers of their trees. *Financial Times* 9/11/2013.

(9) See *Financial Times* 12/04/2012

(10) *Financial Times* 25/01/2013

(11) The UK government has provided tax breaks for fracking and incentives for local authorities to encourage drilling.

(12) See Sterne's statement at the Davos summit January 2013

(13) See J Porritt "The World we made". Porritt was previously a leading member of both the Green Party and Friends of the Earth and founded the charity "Forum for the Future."

(14) Marx *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

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What's this life?

What's this life? When it's the violence of the alarm clock that drags you out of bed! When you spend hours and hours at work and commuting to work as well. When you are obliged to endure the chiefs, the noise of machines, the brightness of a screen, to be submitted, and profitable. When your body gets ruined, when back, stomach, joints, ears pains... recall you that your body is not a machine in which it could be possible to replace a faulty part by a new one. Our organs will be deficient forever, and then we will have to use medicines and other rubbishes that will destroy us a few more, that will ruin the rest of our existence... an existence of wage slave.

"The alien character of labour emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, LABOUR IS SHUNNED LIKE THE PLAGUE."

This is the reality that sometimes you hide to yourself: you publicly praise the merits of labour; you take pleasure in what you do, whereas deep down you know that labour destroys you and that you would like to live without this burden.

Really, that's odd! The dictatorship of the economy that obliges to sell yourselves to survive turns into a voluntary servitude: you proclaim that work is necessary! Then listen to your body and understand that capital makes you play a role, until to feel your body to fall into decay and to know that you will never make fully the most of life, until to die like your colleagues you knew so well and who died "following of extended sick leave".

Whether we work until we are 60, or 62 years old or much more, it's the labour itself that is called into question!

Today, in this demonstration you believe that things can change, that large numbers, noise, colours, and the pom-pom will be enough so that this law making our living conditions worse could be withdrawn. However this force of number is not a force, it's just hot air. "Our" union leaders and left politicians count us and count on us, because for them we are only masses to be manoeuvred in order to make their governmental comeback easier. We are just an ordinary stepping stone! Back in office, what would they change to this law? Nothing! Because this society governed by the profit dictatorially imposes the extension in working time, it imposes an always more increased exploitation of labour force. And because our riposte is not equal to the attacks we have to suffer, there is no reason so that the bourgeois don't continue in the way of austerity!

Bourgeois' program all over the world is clear:

You have to slave away always more, always longer, while shutting up!

My friend, my fellow, my comrade, my colleague from work, it's fatalism that one puts into your head. It's also to believe that you are not able to do anything but perhaps to go to the polls, and clearly to do nothing to make so that life changes radically. Let's not trust in any way those who speak in our name so that our exploitation is perpetuated. Let's not delegate our strength to them, because we know by experience that they are ready to sell us to the highest bidder; they are great buddies with the rulers.

You could be an active force that changes the world. Today while accepting the principles of this demonstration, you stay in the role of the one who never stops moaning, and who is always manipulated. Shout as much as you want! You delegate your force whereas the power is within you. Your power is sleeping and absorbed by the routine - subway, work, television, sleep-by the isolation and the withdrawal into yourself, by the belief that only some supreme saviours are able to save you, while you work yourself to death for a fucking wage. Fear, routine, and passivity govern our semblance of life.

So break your isolation! Let's meet each other! The big fear of the rulers, included the unions, it's that you

take responsibility for yourself instead of staying spectator and marvelling yourself at TV, what is the height of impotence. They are freaking out that you get organized with your pals while giving more strength to what you already make: from daily resistance (sabotage, pilferage, absenteeism, and breaking-off) to the organization of wildcat strikes and supporting other struggles. We are all in this world, but bitter paradox we are nothing today. Only sheep who march behind parties' and unions' leaders.

What can ensure the triumph of our demands is the organization of our autonomous force outside and against all the structures of the state! Outside and against the unions and political parties, whatever they are!

Proletarians contact: proletairesnavant@hotmail.fr

[Originally in French: Quelle est cette vie?]

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So you thought Slavery was a thing of the past?

According to walkfree.org in Uzbekistan every year over a million children and adults are forced into the cotton fields by their government to meet daily picking quotas during the harvest season. Doctors are dragged from their hospitals. Some colleges stand empty as teachers and students are forced to work the fields. Amongst the companies taking advantage of the modern slavery system are -- Daewoo International. Walkfree.org say that Daewoo has continued doing business in Uzbekistan even after publicly acknowledging that the Uzbek government uses forced labour to produce the cotton it buys and processes. The Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan is one of the largest producers of cotton globally. While the Uzbek authorities and companies like Daewoo continue to rake in the profits from the cotton trade, children and adults subjected to this state-orchestrated system of modern slavery miss out on education or their wages, and many citizens are threatened and beaten. For more information see.

[http://www.walkfree.org/daewoo-cotton/HomeEnglishSlavery Today](http://www.walkfree.org/daewoo-cotton/HomeEnglishSlaveryToday)

What is modern slavery?

One anti-slavery organisation states that according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) 20.9 million men, women and children around the world are in slavery. In the 21st century people are still sold like objects, forced to work for little or no pay and at the complete mercy of their 'employers'.

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist. Someone is in slavery if they are:

Forced to work - through mental or physical threat;

Owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;

Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property';

Physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

What types of slavery exist today?

Bonded labour affects millions of people around the world, with biggest numbers in South East Asia. People become bonded labourers by taking, or being tricked into taking, a loan for which they are unable to ever pay off. Some bonded labourers receive basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work, but due to penalties and exorbitant interest rates, no matter how hard they work they are never able to pay off the loan, which can even be passed down on to their children.

Child Slavery affects an estimated 5.5 million children around the world. Child slavery includes the worst form of child labour and child trafficking.

Early and forced marriage predominately affects women and girls who are married without choice, forced into lives of servitude often accompanied by physical violence and have no realistic choice of leaving the marriage.

Forced labour affects people who are illegally recruited by individuals, businesses or governments and forced to work - usually under the threat of violence or other penalties.

Descent-based slavery involves people who are either born into a 'slave' class or are from a 'group' that society views can be used for slave labour.

Trafficking involves the transport of any person from one area to another for the purpose of forcing them into slavery conditions. Trafficking involves transporting people between borders but can also affect

Many forms of slavery involve more than one element or form listed above. For example, trafficking often involves an advance payment for the trip and organising a promised job abroad which is borrowed from the traffickers. Once at the destination, the debt incurred serves as an element of controlling the victims as they are told they cannot leave the job until the debt is paid off. See www.antislavery.org

Anti-State, Non Market Sector Groups**Worldsocialistmovement/SPGB:**

worldsocialism.org/spgb: Postal address: 52 Clapham High Street London SW4 7UN.

Email spgb@worldsocialim.org

Promotional Material for the World Socialist Movement: See previous issues or contact veronica.clanchy@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01202 569826

"Role Modelling Socialist Behaviour: The Life and Letters of Isaac Rab. Further details can be obtained by contacting the address below.

World Socialist Party US (WSPUS) website: www.wspus.org
Postal address: World Socialist Party, Box 440247, Boston, MA02144

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<http://stephenshenfield.net> contains all issues of The Libertarian Communist and a host of useful articles for the ASNM sector.

Andy Cox's website looks at how socialism might be developed: <http://socialistmatters.webs.com/>. Please see the piece about Andy on page 2 of this issue.

World In Common: www.worldincommon.org
Email worldincommon@yahogroups.com

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www.libcom.org: now contains all back issues of this journal: <http://libcom.org/library/libertarian-communist>

The Commune

For workers' self-management and communism from below.
Website: www.thecommune.co.uk
Postal address: The Commune, Freedom book shop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E17QX

Comrades may be interested in the following links:

For Libertarian Communists in Russia and Belarus:
<http://wiki.avtonom.org/index.php>
"Eretik" (Heretic) is a left communist journal in Russian and English that appears both on the net and in print. This is produced by a group in Moldova.
See: <http://eretik-samizdat.blogspot.com/2012/immunity-of-rich-and-powerful.html>

A couple of places to purchase Literature and help support the ASNM sector.

"There is an Alternative!"

STIMULANTS: A collection of material highlighting an opposition to the Mantra that "There Is No Alternative" to how we live today. Journals, Pamphlets, Books, DVDs and Cds etc. available www.radicalbooks.co.uk

Libertarian Communist Literature has a selection of pamphlets and journals related to the anti-state, non-Market sector. Journals Include: **Black flag, Aufheben, Socialist Standard, Organise** and others. We have a variety of pamphlets and a few books.

If you are interested please contact the postal or email address on Page 2 with your details

The Libertarian Communist is now available from **Housemans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX** email shop@housemans.com
<http://www.housemans.com/>

And

News from Nowhere, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY tel 0151 708 7270, email nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk
<http://www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/>

Chronos Publications
BM Chronos, London WC1N 3XX

The Life and Death of Capitalism Series No.1

No Revolution Anywhere By Robert Kurz
Available now

The Substance of Capital by Robert Kurz (forthcoming)

Worth taking a look at

The Socialist Labour Party of America (www.slp.org), and the Marxist Internet Archive Library and Marx Myths and Legends www.marxmyths.org

Direct Action Industrial Unions

Industrial Workers of the World: www.iww.org Or P/O Box 7593, Glasgow, G42 2EX Email: rocsec@iww.org.uk.

Workers International Industrial Union.
www.wiiu.org or www.deleonism.org/wiiu.htm see the article on Industrial Unionism in issue 9

See Also
International Libertarian Socialist Alliance: Formerly called the World Libertarian Socialist Network

www.libertyandsocialism.org

The following are additions to the directory and well worth taking a look at:

www.theorvandpractice.org.uk

www.marxisthumanistinitiative.org

For information on issues related to Global Heating See:

<http://thinkprogress.org/climateissue/>

