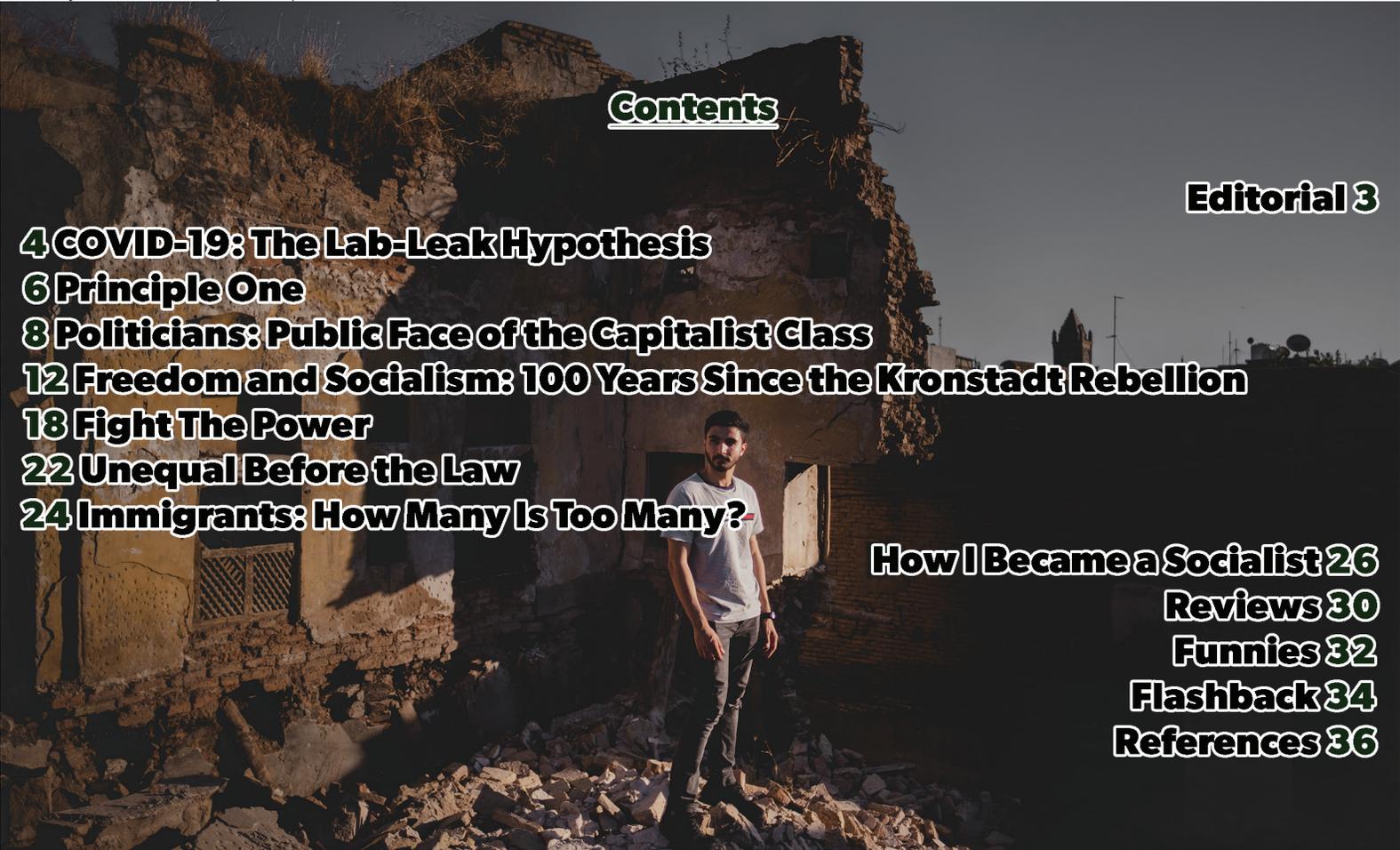


World Socialist

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FREE

BE REALISTIC: DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE.





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Introduction

The *World Socialist* is the official quarterly publication of the World Socialist Party of the United States, featuring regular contributions from other parties in the World Socialist Movement.



Founded in 1916 — 12 years after our first sister party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain — the WSPUS still stands for the original conception of socialism and firmly against its reformist and state capitalist perversions. We understand that socialism is nothing less than a moneyless, commodityless, wageless, classless, leaderless, stateless, global society. All natural resources would be owned in common, with production being directly for use and products being distributed according to need. It can only be established democratically by an absolute majority of citizens who understand and want its establishment.

We hope this journal will illuminate many of our current problems, their causes, and — more importantly — their solutions.

Editorial

After former President Donald Trump incited a failed insurrection on January 6 at the US Capitol building, now President Joe Biden's election victory was certified, and he was subsequently inaugurated on January 20. Much of the US's mainstream media then let out a collective sigh of relief that our political climate might finally return to "normal." Many "progressives" knew exactly what this "normal" would look like, but — fearing what another four years of Trump might spell for the country — they decided their best bet was to put all their chips on the possibility of pushing Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. left. While some may have genuinely been naive enough to believe that strategy could have a modicum of success, my guess is that most of

these "progressives" knew that this tactic was a pipe dream and merely used it as a red herring to lure in some of the more realistic voters. That much can be inferred from the fact that any talk of pushing Biden left promptly stopped after his presidential election was confirmed.

I have to be honest and say I'm somewhat surprised to see their collective grift be discarded so quickly. AOC went from crying about kids in cages less than six months ago to now calling them "influx facilities," insisting that there's some kind of marked difference between them now and what they were before Biden's inauguration, even while officials still aren't letting reporters see them.

While Biden's made no progress for migrant children, he's wasted no time making progress for the military-industrial complex. Aside from launching airstrikes against Iran-backed militias in Syria, Biden's also proposed a \$753 billion budget for the Pentagon — a 1.5% increase from Trump's last year and the largest so far in US history.

With no prospect of Biden making any concessions for the working class, we can only hope that, come the next election, workers refuse to give another capitalist puppet the mandate to rule. Only by pledging our vote strictly to socialists can we finally hop off the capitalist merry-go-round and establish a world socialist commonwealth.

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COVID-19: The Lab-Leak Hypothesis

BY STEPHEN SHENFIELD

Could the COVID pandemic have been caused by an accidental lab leak?

On January 4 *New York Magazine*^[1] published a major piece of investigative journalism by Nicholson Baker exploring the 'lab-leak hypothesis' — the possibility that the coronavirus began the jump from bat to man not at a wildlife market but in a research lab. This hypothesis should not be confused with the right-wing 'conspiracy theory' that the virus was released deliberately and 'we are already at war with China' — a view as dangerous as it is farfetched. What Baker has in mind is an *accidental* or at least an *unauthorized* leak.

For a few weeks Chinese scientists were able to publish fairly informative reports of their investigations into the origin of the pandemic in open scientific journals. The first such reports were consistent with the wildlife-market hypothesis (there was a cluster of early cases associated with the Huanan Seafood Market) but were followed by articles that cast doubt on that hypothesis. Then the party leadership prohibited all further investigation and imposed the wildlife-market hypothesis as the unquestionable official version. This in itself is grounds for suspicion.



Photo by National Cancer Institute on Unsplash

It is highly unlikely that anyone will now ever know how the pandemic began. Nevertheless, if we wish to prepare for and ideally prevent future pandemics it remains important to distinguish plausible from implausible explanations. Baker makes a cogent case for placing the lab-leak hypothesis in the 'plausible' category.

One data set not used by Baker is the geographical distribution of bat species in China, which has been studied in a joint project^[2] of the University of Bristol (UK) and East Normal China University (Shanghai). It turns out that Hubei Province, of which Wuhan is the capital, has only a few bat habitats — caves in the mountain ranges that straddle its borders. It is poorer in bats not only than the provinces of southern China but also than neighboring provinces of central China. The only bats in Wuhan and its environs are probably those in the city's microbiology labs, brought there from distant provinces like Yunnan in China's far south.

A Long History of Lab Leaks

Although reliable information on the subject is sparse, there appears to be a long history of outbreaks of human and animal disease caused by leaks from labs.

In his *Lab 257*^[3] (William Morrow, 2004), Michael Christopher Carroll has told the story of the government microbiological research center on Plum Island (in Long Island Sound). Disease outbreaks that he attributes to leaks from this facility include tick-borne Lyme disease, mosquito-borne West Nile and Rift Valley fevers, and foot-and-mouth disease in cattle. The first director of the center established strict safety procedures, but his successors were less conscientious — refusing, for instance, to allocate money to replace old filters.

The defector Ken Alibek describes other incidents from the Soviet biological warfare program, such as a large-scale accidental release of anthrax in 1979 from a facility near Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) in the Urals in (*Biohazard*, publ.

Delta, 2000).^[4]

We lack comparable information about China, but inspections by American experts at Wuhan's Institute of Virology suggest that in China too safety precautions are far from adequate.

Civilian & Military Research

Scientists at civilian and military labs conduct the same sort of research. They collect, observe, and experiment with natural pathogens and apply genetic engineering to create new strains for study. It is common for them to work together and co-author scholarly articles. The risks they incur are also therefore the same.

What we find here is a variety of official rationales for very similar activity. The purpose of defensive military research is supposedly to prepare for possible future outbreaks resulting from biological warfare attacks. The purpose of civilian research is to prepare for possible future outbreaks with other causes. And the purpose of offensive military research is to develop new biological weapons. But this is merely a matter of labels. Any lab research with pathogens has the potential for medical, defensive, or offensive use.

Given the impossibility of drawing an objective distinction between civilian and military or between defensive and offensive research, the risk of lab leaks — and with it the

threat of biological warfare — can be eliminated only by halting all lab research with live pathogens. This would make it more difficult to develop vaccines, but the price may be worth paying. This is not to deny that such a global agreement may not be attainable within a world system of rival capitalist states.

Biological Warfare: A Real Possibility?

There have been some instances of the use of biological weapons, though they are not widely known.

The earliest case seems to be the use of tularemia (rabbit fever) by the Red Army against German troops near Stalingrad in 1942.

The North Korean and Chinese governments accused the United States of using biological weapons in the Korean War. It was alleged that US forces spread smallpox during their retreat down the peninsula in late 1950, infecting over 3,500 people, 10% of whom died. It was also alleged that in early 1952 American planes dropped infected insects and voles and spore-carrying feathers over North Korea and Manchuria. At the time the US government dismissed the allegations as 'communist propaganda,' but a later study by Canadian historians strongly suggests that they were true.^[5]

Han Hing Quang in his memoir^[6] (p. 51) mentions that the French

air-dropped infected insects during their war against the Vietminh. In 1953 at Dap Da an 'emergency response team' of Overseas Chinese youth 'worked with local residents ... to catch germ-infected insects dropped by French planes.'

Alibek reveals that the Soviet leadership regarded biological weapons as a serious alternative to nuclear weapons in a future world war. Procedures were in place to load missiles with either type of weapon, the choice between them to be made when war was perceived as imminent. This arrangement was preserved even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, on the basis of an agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan. Given the close military relations between Russia and China, it is conceivable that biological weapons play a similar role in Chinese strategy.

So there are grounds for thinking that biological warfare was and remains a real possibility.

Conclusion

We — the human race — face a long series of epidemics and pandemics, some of which are bound to be even more devastating than Covid-19. If we are ever to escape this prospect, all the likely causes will have to be tackled simultaneously. But how plausible is it that this can be done in the absence of a united and democratic world community? ☹

Principle One

BY JORDAN LEVI

An explanation of the first of the WSM's Declaration of Principles.

One of the many things I love about the World Socialist Movement is how long it's been around. The Socialist Party of Great Britain was founded in 1904, so their website — spgb.net — has a wealth of material you can dig through to find party members' takes on different historical events, figures, and debates from the last 117 years. I dig around there pretty often when I'm bored and a few days before writing this article I was looking to see if anyone in the party had critiqued Vladimir Lenin's concept of dual power. While looking through the search results I came across the article 'After the Conquest of Power'^[1] (*Socialist Standard*, August 1955), which is about Clause 6 of the WSM's Declaration of Principles. I was trying to think of a good idea for another article to write for the next issue of the *World Socialist* anyway (I'd done some reading for one, but it didn't turn out to be as interesting as I'd thought), so I thought it'd be a good idea to write an article for the next few issues of *WS* explaining each of these principles for new members or sympathizers, starting with Principle 1, of course.

Principle 1 states that:

Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, facto-



Photo by Wesley Tingey on Unsplash

ries, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

I'll break this down bit by bit.

Society in this context, of course, refers to human civilization. While our species of hominids, *Homo Sapiens*, evolved about 300,000 years ago and began exhibiting the behavior of modern humans about 150,000 years ago, we were hunter-gatherers until the Neolithic or First Agricultural Revolution happened about 10,000 years ago, which is considered the dawn of what could properly be called civilization, being class or market society. In order for the human species to survive we, of course, need to reproduce and sustain ourselves by consuming natural resources, both personally and productively. Personal consumption, such as eating food, keeps us alive, while productive consumption, such as using metals to create eating uten-

sils, creates the products we use in our everyday lives. The machines, instruments, and materials used to produce, transport, and distribute those products are called means of production. The means of production, together with the social relations in which they're used, is called a mode of production.

I once saw a tweet from a right-libertarian who seemed to equate market society with capitalism by saying "there was no 'before capitalism,'" but Marxists distinguish between four different modes of production that have existed so far within Western society: the tribal and antique modes of production, as well as feudalism and capitalism.

The tribal mode of production practiced by hunter-gatherers, what Karl Marx called "primitive communism," was based on common ownership of the means of production and production directly for use. Think of how everything's owned within your household: everyone has personal property,

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but the important items are shared and, that being the case, no exchange is necessary to use them. Without a material surplus, tribal production was merely carried out for subsistence and society was more or less egalitarian. Once humans began practicing agriculture with grains, we could store a surplus for long periods of time, leading to the birth of private property from a group of citizens appropriating that surplus to trade for their benefit, rather than that of their entire tribe. This led to a distinction between citizens who owned the surplus and lived off it as opposed to those who worked to produce said surplus, creating a division of labor, classes, and thus class society.

So far, all modes of production following the Neolithic Revolution have upheld this distinction between a minority class of citizens that own natural resources along with the means of utilizing them and a majority class of citizens who are forced or coerced to work

for the owning class to survive. Antiquity had masters and slaves, feudalism had lords and serfs, and capitalism has capitalists and wage-workers. Some consider chattel slavery to be the only legitimate form of slavery, but wage slavery is obviously still slavery. An economic system which gives the majority of the population the options to either work, commit crime, mooch, or starve can't reasonably be considered anything other than implicit enslavement. All "civilized" modes of production have been based on the enslavement of the working class by the owning class. "Civilized" wealth has primarily been produced through slavery.

One more point to touch on.

A state claiming to own the means of production on behalf of the working class doesn't change this class relation, nor do worker's co-ops. In the first case, the state bureaucrats merely become the new master class — amounting to nothing more than state capital-

ism. The latter case can get more complicated, so it'd be too lengthy to discuss here, but as long as producers make products directly for exchange on the market — rather than directly to satisfy human needs — the producers must follow the dictates of the market. Each firm is free to organize production as it sees fit, but none can escape the need to compete against each other and be profitable. As long as workers compete, rather than cooperate; as long as they need wages to survive; as long as production's carried out directly for exchange rather than directly for use, workers will still be enslaved. Freedom from this class relation won't come from changing who privately owns the means of production, but from the means of production being commonly owned by everyone.

In the next issue we'll cover Principle Two, which deals with the class struggle. ☺

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Politicians: Public Face of the Capitalist Class

BY STEPHEN SHENFIELD

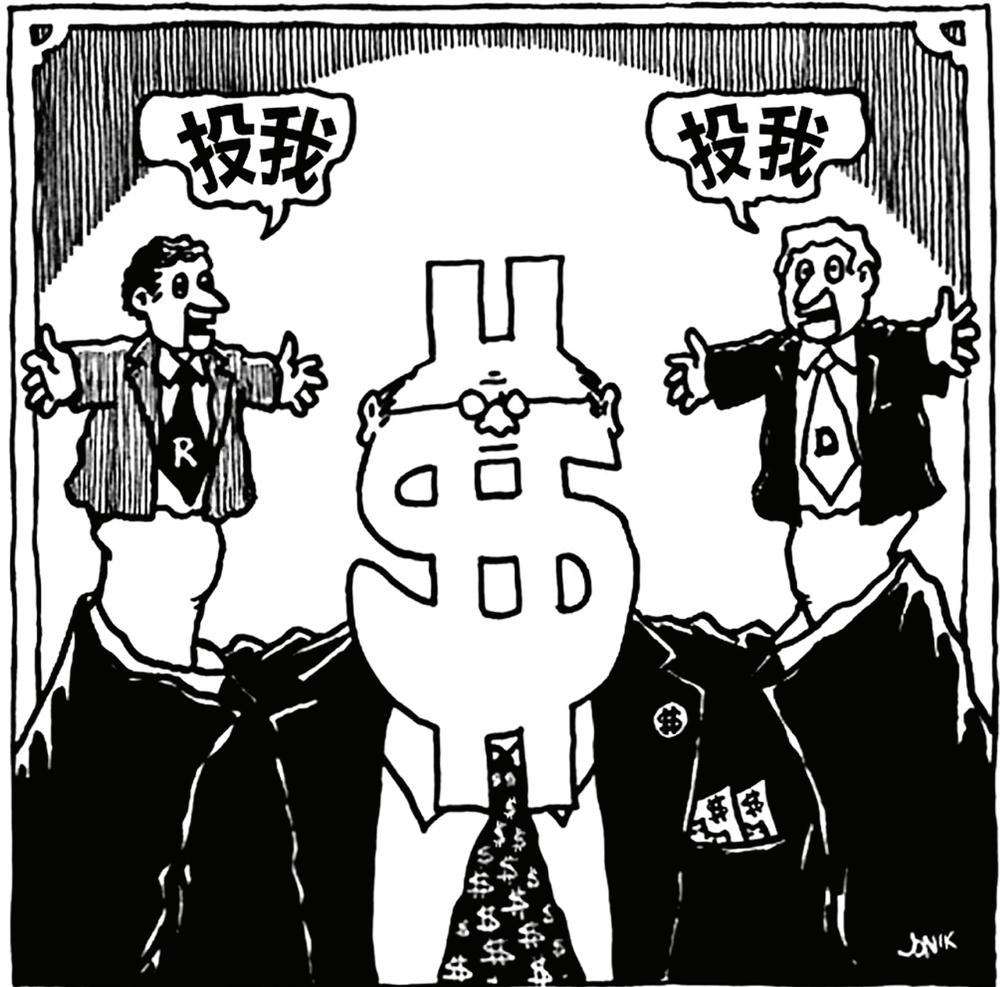
*Politicians are the
puppets of the
bourgeoisie.*

What are politicians for? What do they do?

At school we are taught that politicians are chosen by us, the voters, to represent us in the making of laws and in the government of our city, state, and country. This arrangement supposedly ensures that the views of the majority prevail — the essence of democracy (rule by the people).

This picture is not totally false, but it is also very far from the full truth. It does not account for the persistent divergence that researchers have found between policy outcomes and public opinion.^[1] For example, no mainstream politician favors ‘Medicare for All’ even though the scheme has the support of a clear majority of Americans — 69% according to one recent poll.^[2]

The main problem with this picture is what it *leaves out*. It leaves out the most powerful people in our society, who are not the politicians but the capitalist class — that is, the wealthy and those who represent their interests in the top management of big banks and corporations. (There is admittedly some overlap between the two groups —



Donald Trump, for instance.)

Almost all candidates for public office depend on capitalists for money — it is extremely expensive to stand for office — and for coverage in the capitalist-owned media. Capitalists play a crucial though largely hidden role in narrowing the range of choices offered to the voters.^[3] Capitalists exploit this dependence to exert a strong influence on the processes of lawmaking and government, either directly or through lobbyists and trade associations.

To understand the role played by politicians we must therefore examine the triangular relations between capitalists, politicians, and voters. The basic relationship

is that between the capitalist class and the mass of the population — the 1% and the 99%, to use the terms favored by the Occupy Wall Street movement. Apart from a few mavericks, however, capitalists prefer to remain in the shadows and deal with the public through hired intermediaries such as pollsters, specialists in Public Relations, and politicians. These people, and politicians in particular, are the *public face of the capitalist class* in the realm of public policy.

ALEC

One institution specifically designed to facilitate interaction between politicians and capitalists in public policy is the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Founded in 1973 by conservative

activist Paul Weyrich and a group of Republican state legislators, ALEC aims to 'make national policy by acting incrementally at the state level.'^[4] Through an array of 'task forces' — currently ten of them — ALEC prepares 'model bills' for the use of its members. State legislators belonging to ALEC need not know how to draft legislation: they can just select texts from ALEC's online library of model bills, introduce them in state legislatures, and push them through the legislative process into state law.

The internal structure of ALEC accurately reflects the division of labor between capitalists as the power behind the scenes and politicians as their public face. There are two boards of directors — a public board consisting solely of state legislators and a 'private enterprise board' consisting solely of representatives of big corporations. Only the identities of members of the public board are made public. Meetings of task forces are held in secret, so outsiders do not know how the legislators and corporate representatives on them interact.

ALEC has recently extended its activity down to the city/county level by setting up a new division named the American City County Exchange 'for local elected officials and the private sector.'^[5]

Of course, ALEC does not represent all local and state politicians — only those most subservient to the capitalist class. Nevertheless, it has an extensive presence and is very active. The Center for Media and Democracy has identified about a thousand current state legislators in all fifty states, mostly Republicans, 'known to be involved in' ALEC as

well as hundreds of ALEC's model bills and resolutions.^[6]

How Politicians Talk To Us

As we have seen, capitalists wish to conceal the extent of their influence from the general public. In general, they seek to minimize their presence as political actors in the public consciousness. That is why politicians, when they address the public, never so much as mention their close relations with capitalists. A taboo is placed on an essential aspect of their professional activity in order to sustain the pretense that the picture painted in civics textbooks corresponds to reality.

This also helps explain why communication between politicians and the public is so one-sided. They talk to the public. No opportunity is provided for open-ended dialogue. The only questions tolerated are those posed by establishment journalists who can be trusted to observe 'the rules of the game' — and politicians can evade even their questions with impunity if they wish. Members of the audience who interrupt politicians' speeches with comments or questions — 'hecklers' — are ignored or told off like naughty children. They are liable to be thrown out or even beaten up.

Perhaps fearing that they may inadvertently break a taboo, politicians are loath to talk in public at length about substantive policy matters. Consider the victory speeches of Harris and Biden on November 7. Harris spoke first. Most of her speech consisted of vague rhetoric and personal recognition of colleagues, friends, and relatives, but she did devote a few carefully cho-

sen words to policy issues (omitting healthcare, no doubt in deference to Biden's opposition to 'Medicare for All'). Biden said nothing at all about policy.

It is worth pondering why American politicians feel obliged to sacrifice their domestic privacy and put their whole family on public display, including young children or grandchildren — arguably a form of child abuse. Isn't this a desperate attempt to compensate for the alienation caused by their structural inability to relate to their fellow citizens in an open and honest way? They cannot reveal to voters the factors that shape and constrain their policy positions, but at least they can grant them the illusion of an intimate connection. What should be private is made public because what should by rights be public has to be kept private.

The ultimate function of the politician is to be like a buffer protecting the capitalist class from mass discontent. In order to be effective as a buffer he may sometimes find it necessary to give voice to the grievances of ordinary people, but this need not lead to any corrective action.

Barack Obama was a master at this double game. Campaigning in the mid-West, he thundered against regional companies such as Maytag and Exelon. And yet these same companies, confident that he would do nothing to harm their interests, gave him large donations. Speaking to audiences of workers, Obama denounced Maytag's decision in 2004 to close the refrigerator plant in Galesburg, Illinois, entailing the loss of 1,600 jobs to Mexico. But he never raised the

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issue with Maytag directors Henry and Lester Crown, despite his 'special relationship' with them.^[7] Later, as president, having bailed out the banks during the financial crisis of 2008, Obama expressed dissatisfaction that they were continuing to operate as before. When he met with the CEOs of fifteen top banks in spring 2009, they complained about his 'populist rhetoric'; his riposte was that his administration 'are the only ones standing between you and the pitchforks' — a vivid expression of the buffer metaphor.^[8] Obama never did do

anything to reform the banks.

What About Bernie?

Some politicians do not depend on capitalist donors but collect small donations from ordinary people. This occurs mostly at the local level, where campaigning does not require so much money. At the national level Bernie Sanders pursued this strategy with a measure of success in his bid for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. He broke the taboo and spoke openly in public about the dependence of his political rivals on 'the bil-

lionaire class.' I suspect that this, rather than any of his specific policy positions, is the main reason for the hatred that the political establishment has for Sanders.

However, when Biden won the nomination Sanders undertook to support him and stopped talking about this subject. Since then he too has observed the taboo. His silence has not sufficed to win him the trust of the establishment or a place in the new administration. ☹️

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IMAGINE

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Freedom and Socialism: 100 Years Since the Kronstadt Rebellion

BY STEPHEN SHENFIELD

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of one of the most notable revolts against Bolshevism

Introduction

A century has passed since sailors and workers on the Russian naval base of Kronstadt, situated on an island in the Baltic Sea, rose up against the dictatorship of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. On February 28, 1921, they passed a resolution demanding free elections to the soviets and restoration of suppressed political and economic freedoms. Their newspaper called for 'a third revolution of the working people.'

What made this event so remarkable? And why should socialists today commemorate it?

The sailors and workers of Kronstadt had responded enthusiastically to the first revolution of February 1917, which overthrew the tsar. They had played a crucial role in the second revolution of October 1917, conducted under the slogan of 'All power to the Soviets!' And they had fought in the front ranks of Trotsky's Red Army in the civil war against the Whites and the troops



of their British, American, and Japanese backers.

'The pride and glory of the revolution' — Trotsky called the Kronstadt men.

As the civil war drew to a close, however, the Kronstadt men contemplated the new system that they had helped establish — and did not like what they saw. It was a far cry from what they had expected and hoped for. Instead of emancipation, working people now faced oppression and exploitation by a new ruling class — the officials (then known as 'commissars') of the Bolshevik party-state. And so, concluded the Kronstadt men, a third revolution was needed.

The Bolshevik leaders demanded Kronstadt's surrender. Trotsky threatened to shoot the rebels 'like partridges' and sent troops against them across the ice, which was starting to melt and break up. Many drowned. The final assault came on March 17. Reprisals against the de-

feated rebels were merciless. A few escaped to Finland and obtained refuge there.

A Bit of Historical Background: St. Petersburg and Kronstadt

Our story begins around the year 1700, when Tsar Peter, seeking to bring Russia closer to Europe, decided to build a new capital on the Baltic coast. Here, among the islands and mosquito-ridden marshes where the River Neva flows into the Gulf of Finland, Peter built the city that as St. Petersburg or Petrograd has borne his name ever since, except for the period 1924–91 when it was called the City of Lenin, Leningrad.

Now when I say 'Peter built' I use the conventional shorthand of ruling-class history, which erases memory of the common people. Peter, of course, built nothing. He decided what to build. He supervised the work. The building was done by tens of thousands of serfs, driven each year in gangs to the

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site, where they soon died of exhaustion, exposure, starvation, or disease. The city's foundation, so it was said, was laid on their bones.

Twenty miles west of St. Petersburg lies Kotlin Island. Here 'Peter built' Kronstadt (German for 'Crown City') as a port and a heavily fortified naval base.

Fast forward to 1915. The base was now equipped with four state-of-the-art battleships. Their maintenance required highly skilled personnel. Most of Kronstadt's sailors, soldiers, and workers were literate and many had advanced training in various fields of technology. With education came self-respect. And yet almost all officers continued to treat their men as though they were

still serfs. Sailors were not provided with personal eating implements; the slop fed to them came in a pot for all members of a group, who therefore also had to share one another's diseases. Sailors and soldiers were punished harshly for petty offenses. They were banned from city parks. If they were walking along a street where only one side was sunny, they had to keep to the other side.

It was a perfect recipe for rebellion. The Kronstadt rank and file eagerly read clandestine revolutionary literature. They created conspiratorial networks that got broken up by the police but always reformed. Occasional mutinies were quickly put down with the aid of firing squads.

The ferment came to a head in February 1917 when news reached Kronstadt that the tsar had been overthrown. Sailors shot the cruelest officers, the ones they called 'dragons,' starting with Admiral Viren, the Commandant. A few officers who had won the trust of their men were confirmed in their posts by election. Others made themselves scarce or were imprisoned in Kronstadt's dungeons.

A council was elected — and then re-elected at three-month intervals — to run local affairs, assisted by specialized commissions. It was called the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Sailors' Deputies.

Here I need to explain some things about this institution — the Soviet.



What Is a Soviet?

The word 'Soviet' is usually associated with the system that took shape in Russia in the years following 1917. Russian officials called their new state Soviet Russia and then, from 1923, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union for short). Americans even came to refer to the citizens of the USSR as 'the Soviets.'

However, *soviet* is simply the Russian word for *council*. Soviets first appeared in Russia during the upheaval of 1905 as a form of grassroots democracy. The 'Council of Workers' Delegates' of a city consisted of elected representatives of workers employed at different factories in the city. Soviets reappeared in the revolution of February 1917, with delegates

representing soldiers and sailors as well as workers. They coexisted with the newly formed provisional government (to be exact, three successive coalition governments). In this system of 'dual power' relations between soviets and governments were partly cooperative and partly conflictual.

At various times between February and October 1917 Bolsheviks and other 'socialist' parties raised the demand: 'All power to the Soviets!' But for the Bolsheviks this was just a tactic. Their aim was to concentrate power in the hands of their own party. The revolution of October 1917 overthrew the provisional government and *seemed* to transfer power to the Soviets and their Congresses. However, the Bolshevik Party, renamed in March 1918 the Communist Party, did whatever

was necessary to bring the soviets fully under its own control — a goal achieved in the course of 1918. Where efforts to dominate a local soviet failed, the Bolsheviks disbanded it by force, instituted direct rule, and later installed a puppet soviet.

The Bolshevik leaders retained the soviets as a useful façade. The soviets enabled them to claim that the system was democratic — more democratic, indeed, than the capitalist-dominated parliamentary systems of Western countries. In reality, the 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' was no more 'soviet' than it was 'socialist.' 'Socialism' without democracy is not socialism at all.

Kronstadt gained more experience with the genuine form of 'soviet



power' than most places in Russia. Between the first and the second revolution, when Russia as a whole was under 'dual power,' the Kronstadt Soviet exercised full control over the base and the city of Kronstadt. The provisional government did have a representative in Kronstadt, but he was nominated by the Soviet and had no real influence. Even after October 1917 the Kronstadt Soviet remained in full local control for several months, until the Bolshevik leadership tightened central control in June 1918. So for 16 months Kronstadt enjoyed self-government as an autonomous 'Soviet democracy' (to use Israel Getzler's expression).

It was to this system that the Kronstadt rebels tried to return in 1921 when they demanded the restoration of freely elected soviets as supreme bodies of power. They made it clear that they wanted 'power to soviets and *not* to parties.' And so it was that both sides in the ensuing struggle, the Kronstadt men and the Bolsheviks, could claim to be fighting for 'Soviet power.'

Workers' councils also appeared around this time elsewhere in Europe, especially in Germany and northern Italy.

What Did the Rebels Fight Against?

How did writers for the Kronstadt newspaper describe the system that the rebels fought against?

The political answer is clear. They say they are fighting against 'the dictatorship of the party of Communists' — 'the Communist autocracy' — 'the commissarocracy' (rule of commissars).

Economic answers are less consistent. Often a contrast is drawn between 'Bolshevik socialism' and 'socialism of a different kind' — 'a new socialist structure' based on 'free development of the personality and free labor.' The society under construction by the Bolsheviks is often called 'barracks socialism' or 'barracks communism.' The term 'barracks communism' (German *Kasernenkommunismus*) was coined by Marx in response to an 1870 article by Sergei Nechayev (often viewed as a precursor of Lenin) that envisions a future society of strict regimentation and harsh discipline under the control of a secret committee. The 'barracks' to which the term refers are not army barracks but the workers' dormitories of early factories.

Elsewhere, however, writers cast doubt on whether the newly emerging society should be described as socialism of any kind. Indeed, one article is entitled 'Socialism in Quotation Marks' (No. 14, March 16). 'There has arisen a new communist serfdom' in which the peasant toils as a landless laborer for the state as the new landlord, while the worker is again a mere hireling under 'state capitalism' (No. 10, March 12). 'A new bureaucracy of commissars and officials [has] betrayed the ideas of socialism.' 'The counterrevolutionaries of the right' have been defeated, but the working people now find themselves under 'even greater enslavement' at the hands of 'the counterrevolutionaries of the left' (No. 6, March 8).

Did the Rebels Have a Chance?

The Kronstadt rebellion was not the only anti-Bolshevik popular

uprising at the time (i.e., not counting the White movement, led by officers of the old tsarist regime). An armed peasant uprising was underway in Tambov province, 300 miles southeast of Moscow. Nestor Makhno's 'insurrectionary army' in Ukraine was not yet defeated. And there had recently been strikes in Petrograd.

True, these movements were uncoordinated and largely isolated from one another. The Bolshevik regime had the advantages of better organization, discipline, ruthlessness, and control over a core area in central Russia.

Nevertheless, the outcome was not foreordained. Lenin and his colleagues themselves feared that they might be overthrown. That is why at the Tenth Party Congress, held at the same time as the Kronstadt rebellion, in an attempt to assuage peasant discontent, they announced the New Economic Policy. Confiscation of grain 'surpluses' was replaced by a tax in kind. Market relations were restored and private trade and enterprise legalized.

What Did They Fight For?

The rebels said they fought for 'the true power of the working people' — 'the power of the Soviets' — 'a Soviet Republic of Labor.' Beyond this it is very difficult to say anything very specific.

In No. 7 (March 9) we find an article by one S. Fokin, who argues that 'after the Communist dictatorship has been overthrown' the economy should be run by 'renewed and re-elected' trade unions. His proposals resemble those that the 'Workers' Opposition' put forward

within the ruling party but that were condemned by Lenin at the Tenth Congress. Fokin's article is marked 'by way of discussion,' indicating that the rebels had no agreed position on such matters.

Several articles came from people who had been members of the Bolshevik Party but had left and come over to the side of the rebels. There are hints that these writers shared an outlook distinct from that of those who had never been in the party. They beg readers not to blame rank-and-file party members or 'the party as such' but only the 'party higher-ups' who 'abuse the trust of the people' (articles by Kurashev and Dvoryan in No. 11, March 13). They are still loyal to the 'communist idea': 'The pure idea of communism remains in my soul, because any pure idea is the faith in a better future that no one has the power to destroy in a person' (Kurashev).

Lenin had a definite idea of what the rebels were fighting for, but one colored by his own power interests. In Lenin's view, the rebellion was part of an inchoate ('elemental') but powerful movement of 'petit bourgeois' commodity producers who sought freedom of trade and enterprise. The economic system to which the rebels aspired would initially be distinct from capitalism, as the land had only recently been divided up equally among peasant households (in 1917). In the course of time, however, it would inevitably generate capitalism as the peasantry became stratified into rich and poor.

However, the rebels themselves placed little emphasis on economic

issues. Their main concern was to democratize the political system. They did demand that small farmers and craftsmen should be free to produce and trade, but always subject to a prohibition on the employment of hired labor — a proviso intended to block the emergence of capitalism. Writers for the last issues of the Kronstadt newspaper did not welcome the New Economic Policy, as Lenin's interpretation of their views might lead us to expect. On the contrary, they ridiculed 'the trading house of Lenin, Trotsky, & Co.' and attacked the regime for its willingness to grant concessions to foreign capitalists.

Both the Bolsheviks and the Kronstadt rebels stood in principle for a classless society. But while the Bolsheviks saw the main threat to this ideal in the inequality that market relations would eventually generate, the rebels focused on the inequality already inherent in the 'rule of commissars.'

Apart from the question of what sort of society the Kronstadt rebels *wanted*, there is the question of what sort of society they could have realistically hoped for in the event of a victorious 'third revolution.' An answer to that question requires an analysis of the conditions then prevailing in Russia as well as of the country's international situation. It is well beyond the scope of this article.

Revenge of the Commissars

On March 18 the uprising was crushed. It was time for the 'commissarocracy' to exact revenge.

I have found only one source on this subject that I regard as at all reliable — Chapter 10 of Alexander

N. Yakovlev, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (2018). This author, a party ideologist and close colleague of Gorbachev during perestroika, had access to official archives. His figures are much higher than those in earlier accounts based on publicly available information. Those accounts refer to 'hundreds' of executions. Yakovlev found records of 2,103 death sentences, plus 6,459 sentences to terms of imprisonment. Even these are underestimates, covering only cases heard by four tribunals (apparently there were more) in the spring and summer of 1921. Nor do they include men murdered in the immediate aftermath of the fighting after laying down their arms.

Men were shot for having been a delegate to a conference, performing guard duty, making a 'malicious declaration' upon leaving the party, or just serving on board certain vessels whose crews had played an especially prominent role. Women were sent to labor camp for five years for giving medical aid to the wounded. Wives and children of sailors were exiled to remote areas where they had to register with the secret police.

Existing labor camps did not have room for so many new prisoners. On April 20 the Politburo discussed plans to set up new camps or 'disciplinary colonies' in the Far North.

Some of those initially imprisoned were released. However, the charges against them were not dismissed. Later they were all re-arrested. No case is known of any participant in the Kronstadt uprising surviving the Stalin era.

In 1922 the Soviet government

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announced an amnesty and invited sailors who had fled to Finland to return to Russia. There were some whose homesickness overrode their better judgment. They were arrested as soon as they reached Russia.

To Learn More...

The earliest source on the Kronstadt uprising appeared later in 1921 in Prague under the title *The Truth About Kronstadt: The Story of the Heroic Struggle of the People of Kronstadt Against the Communist Party Dictatorship*. It was published anonymously in Russian by the publishing house *Volya Rossii* (*Russia's Will or Russia's Freedom*), associated with the émigré branch of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs). Authorship is sometimes wrongly attributed to Stepan Petrichenko, who was chairman of the rebels' Provisional Revolutionary Committee (PRC) and was among those who escaped to Finland. Use was made of information provided by Petrichenko, but the book was prepared by journalists working for *Volya Rossii*.

The book has recently been reprinted as a Nabu Public Domain Reprint. It has also been digitized by the Internet Archive at <https://ia800907.us.archive.org/22/>

items/pravdaokronshtad00prag/pravdaokronshtad00prag.pdf and <http://www.archive.org/details/pravdaokronshtad00prag>.

In addition to a detailed account of events and a map of Kronstadt and its vicinity, *The Truth About Kronstadt* contains the full contents of all 14 issues of the newspaper published by the PRC from March 3 to 18, 1921 — *Izvestiya* (News) of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee. This material is invaluable for the light it sheds both on the politics of the uprising and on daily life at Kronstadt (rationing, recycling, nursing, snow clearing, etc.), not to mention the satirical poems.

In the 1990s Scott Zenkatsu Parker and Mary Huey made available a full English translation of *The Truth About Kronstadt* on the website of the University of Michigan at <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mhuey/>. It is also posted at http://www.theyliewedie.org/resources/biblio/en/Parker,_scott_Zenkatsu_-_Pravda_o_Kronshtadte.html and

The short book by the anarchist Ida Mett, *The Kronstadt Uprising*, has gone through several editions in various languages and become a classic. Mett gives a concise ac-

count of events and discusses their significance for libertarian socialists. The latest edition, with an introduction by Murray Bookchin, was published in 2017 by 'Theory and Practice.'

Turning to academic works, the one that I found most illuminating was Israel Getzler's book *Kronstadt 1917-1921: The Fate of a Soviet Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1983). Getzler provides a longer historical perspective than other authors, starting with a vivid portrayal of Kronstadt under the tsarist regime. He analyzes the formation of Kronstadt's 'soviet democracy' in February 1917 and its subsequent evolution as a political system, culminating in its suppression in March 1921.

Here I might mention the memoir about Kronstadt in 1917 written by the Bolshevik activist Fyodor Raskolnikov and available at <http://www.bolshevik.info/kronstadt-and-petrograd-in-1917/ii.-revolutionary-kronstadt.htm>.

Another useful academic work is Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt, 1921* (Princeton University Press, 1991). He appends translations of two important articles from the PRC newspaper. ☺

Fight The Power

BY JORDAN LEVI

Capitalist negligence creates another disaster

For those who don't know, I currently work at a call center where we mainly act as middlemen between towing companies and insurance customers needing roadside assistance. You get the occasional rude caller, but it's a pretty slow and easy job most of the year until things start to pick up in the winter time. Even winter isn't much busier the *entire* season, there's just crazy spikes that happen after snow storms that lead to us having back-to-back calls for more than a week sometimes. Aside from dispatching roadside assistance, we also handle after hours filing of auto accidents and property claims for a few different insurance companies. I usually file a few auto accident claims per night, but property claims are pretty rare, with the most common being a tree falling on a house or something due to extreme weather conditions.

A couple of snow storms happened around Valentine's Day, so calls picked up as usual, but I noticed something really strange almost instantly. These storms were happening across large parts of the US and there was a pretty even distribution of the increase in roadside calls, but I was getting an abnormally high amount of property claims — even by winter standards — and they were all coming from *one* insurance company in *one* state:



Photo by Hunter Gascon on Unsplash

Texas. I don't know if I'm legally allowed to say which company this was, but I'd guess that I usually file about 10 – 15 property claims per year for this company, but out of nowhere I was starting to file like 10 – 15 property claims per *night* for them. This probably happened for a week straight and *all* the claims were for the *same* reason: *water pipes bursting*.

After I'd gotten like 10 of these calls back-to-back the first day, I finally asked a customer what was happening, and they explained that the storms caused their power to go out across the state and water pipes everywhere were bursting from freezing up. That obviously didn't sound right to me because other states get even colder than Texas had gotten every year and I don't think I'd ever filed a claim for a water pipe bursting before this incident. Being the Marxist I am, my first guess was that Texas must've cheaped out on infrastructure, but I didn't have any evidence to back it up yet and didn't know where to

look to find any.

Over the next few days I noticed the public start to catch wind of this happening, and I'm not able to scroll back far enough on my Twitter page to double-check (apparently you can only see up to 3,200 tweets on your profile), but I believe I was on my way to work on the night of February 17th when I saw a tweet with a map that showed Texas's power grid was separate from the other two in the country. That made me feel like my first guess might have more merit than I initially thought, but I didn't throw it out there until later. After I clocked into work and got two more of those pipe bursting claims back-to-back, I finally decided to tweet my question of how much capitalist "economy" might have to do with this.^[1]

Quick detour from the story, but this'll tie back into it, just stick with me.

I don't pay for cable because I'd

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probably only use it to occasionally watch awards shows anyway, but after I got a Roku TV for my room a few months ago I wondered if there were any radical or at least “progressive” channels I could watch on it with my Wi-Fi and, after digging around on Wikipedia, I found out about Free Speech TV. Everything on there’s solidly from a “progressive” liberal perspective, but it’s the closest thing I’ve been able to find to socialist programming, so it’s better than nothing. I only watched it here and there until I bought a pretty cheap stationary bike two months ago and started riding it every morning after work to lose weight. The Thom Hartmann Program starts airing around the same time I start riding it, so I’ve been watching it every weekday ever since. Again, he’s solidly a “progressive” liberal, but he knows his stuff, and it’s entertaining watching him debate conservatives and unironic reactionaries from time to time.

Anyway, the next morning after I tweeted that I was riding my stationary bike while watching Thom Hartmann, as usual lately, and I heard him mention to someone who called in that experts warned Texas’s power grid operator multiple times to “winterize” its grid due to global warming, but didn’t do so, favoring giving more profits to their shareholders instead. I felt anger at their negligence, amusement at their stupidity, and vindication that my instinct was correct right away, but didn’t want to take this at face value until I’d done some reading myself.

Well, I’ve done the reading now and Thom Hartmann was *right*. Climate change has weakened the

Arctic’s polar jet stream, allowing the cold air from the polar vortex — which is usually held back by that jet stream — to travel south, causing freezing temperatures in places that rarely experience them.^[2] This was almost certainly the cause of two previous snowstorms which led to similar power crises for Texas in 1989 and 2011. I don’t remember hearing about this happening in 2011, but it might be because I was tucked away in Alturas, California at that time, completely disconnected from regular society’s discourse. Anyway, experts issued reports after each incident calling for the winterization of Texas’s power grid,^{[3][4]} but — rather than make this mandatory — the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) decided to make it a voluntary guideline, which — predictably — wasn’t widely adopted.

To understand why Texas’s power grid isn’t weatherized while the rest of the country’s is, you have to understand one thing: Texas isolated its power grid from the rest of the country solely to avoid federal regulation.^[5] Texas is the *only* state in the contiguous United States with an independent power grid, and it has the *only* major U.S. power grid that doesn’t have a capacity market — a system that pays operators to be on standby to supply extra power during extreme conditions.^[6] Instead, it relies on a wholesale market, where free market pricing serves to incentivize generators to provide daily power and to make investments to ensure reliability in peak periods. This system relies on the theory that power plants should make high profits when energy demand and prices are high, providing them ample money to make investments

in improvements like winterization, for example.

But they obviously didn’t do that. Why? They didn’t do it because corporations have a contractual obligation to their shareholders to maximize profits. Corporations by and large won’t voluntarily spend more money than they’re required to for any reason.

Still, it begs the question of how much money winterizing Texas’s power grid would cost. The same report from 2011 estimated a price of \$125 million to \$1.75 billion for 50,000 gas wells,^[7] so going off Texas’s 2019 count of almost 123,000 gas wells, the grand total could run anywhere from \$307.5 million to \$4.305 billion. I’m not sure where to find it online, but I’m willing to bet Texas’s power companies have collectively paid their shareholders much more in dividends than even the high-end of that estimate over the past decade.

So, how much could the damage caused from Texas not winterizing its power grid end up costing them? One firm projects anywhere from \$195 billion to \$295 billion.^[8] This factors in the potential long term economic cost of everything from temporarily closed stores and factories to vegetable and citrus crops likely being destroyed for several seasons to come, but it doesn’t account for the very real non-monetary costs of the blackouts.

At least 15 million Texans may have been left without power during the crisis.^[9] Loss of power led to water pipes freezing across the state, disrupting water service for over 12 million people.^[10] Some residents

resorted to using charcoal grills to provide heat indoors, with Judge Lina Hidalgo saying at least 300 calls regarding carbon monoxide poisoning had been received by various agencies in Harris County.^[11] People were collecting water from the San Antonio River Walk with trash cans,^[12] an activity for which they would normally receive a fine. At least 70 people died as a direct cause of the crisis,^[13] with about 1,000 COVID-19 vaccines destroyed from the cold,^[14] which could possibly lead to even more deaths indirectly. Some residents could possibly catch infections from not following the directive to boil any water coming from affected facilities before drinking it.

It should come as no surprise that the blackouts hit minority ZIP codes the hardest.^[15] What *did* surprise me, but probably shouldn't have, was that — on top of *all* the stress this crisis was already causing people — the price of electricity spiked more than 17,900% from about \$50/mwh to \$9,000/mwh, which is the system cap,^[16] meaning these parasites *absolutely* would've charged more if they could've. At least one customer's looking at their power bill being more than \$8,000.^[17]

For the cherry on top, Republicans just couldn't help but jump at another chance to go full mask off and expose themselves as the idiotic, heartless individualists they truly are. Both a former and the current Governor of Texas attempted to blame wind turbines for the disas-

ter, even though renewable energy sources only contributed to 13% of the power outages.^[18] In true DARVO fashion, the former Mayor of Colorado City, TX — Tim Boyd — posted a status on Facebook saying it's "not the local government's responsibility to support you during trying times like this! Sink or swim, it's your choice!"^[19] He posted another Facebook status later that day, doubling down on his position and stating that he'd already turned in his resignation letter. Social and mainstream media ate Senator Ted Cruz alive for booking a seemingly hasty flight to Cancún for him and his family to escape the weather.^[20] After seeing the backlash, he returned the next day and tried to save face by posting pictures of himself passing out packs of water bottles to Texans in need and expressing outrage about the egregious power bills while calling for regulatory action, but critics were quick to point out Cruz's past defense of private companies over governance.^[21]

While I agree that these politicians should be criticized for their words and actions, I also think that, after a disaster like this, it's much more important to ask ourselves: 1) what should be done about it now?, and — if possible — 2) how can we prevent it from happening again in the future? Many would call for a class action lawsuit against ERCOT, but they've already cited their "sovereign immunity" defense, which has been upheld in court before.^[22] Most would probably call for more regulation and, while it'd be foolish

to act as though it never helps, it'd be just as foolish to ignore numerous previous examples of regulatory capture and think it couldn't happen again.^[23] Some might instead see nationalization of Texas's power grid as the best solution, ignoring the fact that nationalized industries still operate under the same market forces as privatized industries, giving both the same market incentives, leading to the same profit prioritization.^[24] I'd call all three of these "solutions" band-aids because there's only one way to permanently prevent a situation like this from ever happening again.

The engine of capitalism is private property and the fuel is profit. As long as a small group of individuals privately own the means of production and use them to extract profit for themselves at the expense of the community, the economic interests of that class of individuals will inherently be opposed to those of the community. If we want everyone's economic interests to be in alignment, then we need to establish an economic system based on common ownership of the means of production and production for use: socialism. Under socialism, the cost of weatherizing our power grid wouldn't be an issue because nothing would cost money. While we may not be able to prevent disasters altogether, it'd be much easier to adequately prepare for them without the useless and oftentimes harmful influence of a greedy minority. ☺



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Unequal Before the Law

BY STEPHEN SHENFIELD

The rich are above the law

The founders of the US Constitution accepted social inequality in many spheres, but they did insist on equality in one sphere. All citizens must be *equal before the law*. That is, the law must apply equally to all. No one must enjoy legal immunity, not even — indeed, especially not — those chosen to govern the country. For otherwise the new republic would have a *government of men* instead of a *government of laws* — the fundamental principle cherished by the founders.

No doubt legal equality was always something of a myth. Rarely has effective legal protection been available to non-whites or to strikers, for instance. Nevertheless, until recent decades the powerful could not be sure of immunity. The boss of a big city political machine could be struck down by the courts and end up in jail. But this is no longer so. Legal immunity for the political and corporate elite is now deeply entrenched.

If the President Does It, It Cannot Be Illegal

In his book *With Liberty and Justice for Some: How the Law Is Used to Destroy Equality and Protect the Powerful* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2011), Glenn Greenwald explains how this was achieved. The story begins with Richard Nixon, who first declared that ‘if the pres-



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ident does it, it cannot be illegal.’ A series of presidents established the practice by which each new occupant of the office thwarts any investigation or prosecution of crimes committed by his predecessor — even when this requires breaking campaign promises, as in the case of Obama’s refusal to do anything about the use of torture by the Bush administration.

Immunity was extended from the political to the corporate elite when plaintiffs sued telecommunications companies for illegally tapping their customers’ telephone conversations and e-mail messages and sharing them with the National Security Agency. Not only were the court actions blocked, but Congress was lobbied and bribed to legalize *retroactively* what the companies had done. (It is extremely rare for crimes to be legalized retroactively.)

No charges were ever filed against the banks whose abuses led to the financial crisis of 2008 — not even

for the fraudulent foreclosures that dispossessed mortgage holders and evicted them from their homes.

Members of the elite have often been accused of sexually abusing minors. Greenwald does not deal with crimes of this sort. I have commented on the matter twice on my personal website: [here](#)^[1] and [here](#).^[2]

Look To the Future?

A favorite rationale is that ‘we should look forward to the future, not dwell on the past.’ As Greenwald points out, consistent application of this rationale would eliminate the whole system of criminal and civil justice, for reacting to what happened in the past is the business of all law enforcement and court procedure.

Such forgiveness, obviously, is not meant for ordinary people. Indeed,

the lack of accountability for elites goes hand-in-hand with a lack of

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mercy for everyone else. As our politicians increasingly claim the right to commit crimes with impunity, they impose increasingly severe punishments on ordinary Americans who have broken even minor laws (p. 222).

Laws have been passed setting 'mandatory minimum' sentences for specific crimes, depriving judges of much of their discretion and preventing them from taking due account of mitigating circumstances.

One way to highlight the contrast between 'the law for the rich' and 'the law for the poor' is to compare cases of similar crimes committed by individuals near the top and the bottom of our society. Take the following pair of cases of unarmed theft:

First case: Richard Lynn Scott

As CEO of the Hospital Corporation of America, Richard Lynn Scott masterminded schemes to defraud Medicare of an estimated \$7 billion. Without admitting guilt, he settled all civil claims against him by coughing up \$1.7 billion, about a quarter of the amount he had stolen. He was not charged with any crime.

In 2011 the voters of Florida rewarded Scott for his business acumen by electing him governor. This gave him the power to decide whether to pardon any of the small-time thieves languishing in the state's jails.

In 2019 Scott was elected to the US Senate.

Second case: Roy Brown

Roy Brown, a homeless black man in Shreveport, Louisiana, walked into a bank, pointed his finger at a teller from inside his jacket, and told her it was a robbery. She handed him three stacks of bills, but he took only a single \$100 bill and gave the rest back. Next day he turned himself in to the police and told them that he had needed the money for food and shelter. He pled guilty to first-degree robbery and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

To sum up. Brown stole \$100, Scott \$7 billion. Brown had mitigating circumstances: he stole much less than he could have; he turned himself in; he needed money for food and shelter. Scott had no mitigating circumstances. Brown was sentenced to 15 years. Scott was never even charged with a crime.

Now let us re-run the second case in our imagination to narrow the gap between the outcomes:

When Brown confessed his crime to the police officer, the response was: 'Well, that's no big deal. How much of the \$100 do you have left?' 'Twenty-five.' 'OK, we'll go and give that back to the bank. They'll lose 75, but they can afford it.' The bank manager agreed to write off the loss and no charges were filed. The next year Brown was elected mayor.

This, I remind you, is a daydream.

When we reach the point at which it is a plausible outcome, socialism will not be far off.

Hit and Run

There are degrees of legal immunity. Only a tiny elite enjoy complete immunity, but a larger group have partial immunity. The police and the courts treat them with special leniency in deference to their high social status.

Consider the case of Martin Erzing-er, who was driving in Colorado in July 2010 when he swerved, hit a bicyclist from behind, and sped away. The bicyclist received serious injuries to the brain, spinal cord, and knee. A few minutes later Er-zinger stopped in a parking lot and called an auto assistance service to report damage to his car and ask to be towed. He did not contact police or call an ambulance for the victim.

'Hit and run' is a felony in Colorado, but the district attorney charged Erzinger with a mere misdemeanor, which carries no jail time. He explained that he didn't want to disrupt Erzinger's professional work as a hedge fund manager 'overseeing over \$1 billion in assets for ultra-high net worth individuals' (Greenwald, pp. 101-103).

When corporate crime gives rise to court proceedings, the severest possible penalty is a fine or damages to be paid by the corporation. A CEO or other corporate officer cannot be penalized as an individual, however great his role in decisions to commit crimes. 🤔

Immigrants: How Many Is Too Many?

BY ALAN JOHNSTONE
(SPGB)

An examination of the overpopulation myth

The United States of America is victim of its own propaganda. Since being founded, the USA has always depicted itself as a beacon of democracy and liberty, a land of opportunity and hope where a person can accomplish rags to riches through hard work and initiative. For many the American Dream is viewed as a reality and can we be surprised that the Statue of Liberty's inscription is taken literally:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore.
Send these, the homeless, tem-
pest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

The impoverished peoples in countries south of the United States suffering deprivations unimaginable to the majority of Americans have sought escape from failed nation-states, crime ridden societies and the encroaching effects of climate change to achieve a better life for themselves and their children.

However, rather than a welcome, they meet with a wall, not just the physical one Trump tried to build but a wall of indifference and outright rejection. Political commentators declare that America can no longer af-



Photo by Nitish Meena on Unsplash

ford to accept any more newcomers, no matter how 'deserving' or contrary to international treaties it has signed up to. The present pandemic is even being used as justification to turn away the needy and the vulnerable. The change of president has brought a superficial change of policy at the southern border but it has not departed from being one of deterrence, albeit Biden's approach is 'softer' than Trump's draconian hard attitude. Biden remains attached to the belief that the solution is better management to slow down and reverse the flow of peoples wishing to make the USA their new home. He still does not treat the migration of hundreds of thousands of Central Americans as a genuine humanitarian crisis where the proper response would be to facilitate and expedite the reception of these desperate people. America has dealt with mass migrations in the past such as the Dustbowl and the Black exodus from the Southern states, not to mention the influx of European migrants arriving at Ellis Island. The United States is now far better placed to allocate the necessary resources.

A common argument made by the likes of Tucker Carlson and Sean Hannity, but even by some on the liberal left, is that the United States is full, that it is already an over-crowded country and no longer able to take any extra people. Such claims are providing 'intellectual' succor to the mass-murderer, Patrick Crusius, who targeted Hispanics and killed 23 at El Paso in Texas.

But just how many is too many?

Using 2019 figures and the present migrant bottleneck US state of Texas as an example:

There is approximately 7,268,730,000 people on the planet. The land-mass of Texas is 268,820 square miles (7,494,271,488,000 square feet).^[1] If we divide 7,494,271,488,000 square feet by 7,268,730,000 people, we get 1,031 square feet per person. This is enough space for everyone on earth to live in a town-house while altogether fitting on a landmass the size of Texas. And we're not even accounting for the average four-person family who would

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most likely share a home.

Of course, there are large tracts of Texas uninhabitable and we have not included the necessary space for the resources to support such a population. This is just to give an idea of how it isn't actual space that is lacking but to show that America is not running out of room any time soon.

Again, we can compare actual density of the United States by taking the example of New York City which is far and away the most populous city in the U.S., home to an estimated 8.5 million people in 2016.^[2] More people live in this one city than in the entire states of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, New Mexico, Vermont, and the District of Columbia combined. For sure, New York City is rather crammed, but it is certainly not an uncomfortable place to live in terms of space as many New Yorkers would affirm. Besides, many cities in other countries are far more densely populated.

New York City consists of five boroughs spanning five counties, the most densely populated of which is New York County. This county, which consists principally of the island of Manhattan, is far and away the most densely populated county in the U.S., housing 72,000 people per square mile. At that population density, the entire population of the United States could reside in the tiny State of Connecticut. Brooklyn has slightly less than half the population density of Manhattan. The top four most densely populated counties in America are all in New York City.

If all Americans lived at the same population density as the average population density of all five of New York City's boroughs (approximately 28,000 people per square mile),

we'd all fit comfortably in the combined area of Delaware and Maryland.

Or we can take the 10 million plus residents who call Los Angeles County home. If you are familiar with Los Angeles County, you know that life at this level of urbanization is not too uncomfortable nor unbearable, providing ample parks and open spaces. At a similar population density of Los Angeles County, the entire U.S. population could fit inside the state of New Mexico.

Again, in reality we would still need to figure in access to adequate water resources and would need much more land area to account for agricultural purposes, public services, transportation and, of course, sustainability and conservation. But, this is merely another thought experiment to demonstrate that if America has enough room to fit its entire population comfortably into an area the size of New Mexico, the US has enough space for far many more people from outside its borders unlike what the anti-immigration lobby assert.

If truth is to be said, the USA's fertility rate is falling below the replacement rate for the existing population and only because of immigration has an actual population decline been avoided and a future demographic problem averted. Rather than US politicians reacting with sanctions to turn away arrivals, for the health and wealth of the nation, they should be welcoming many more newcomers.

Numbers don't matter, the type of system matters. It is not overpopulation that is the problem but the chronic underproduction that is a built in feature of capitalism. The 'overpopulation problem' is really a misuse of resources problem. Cap-

italism, as a system of rationing via the market, is justified in people's minds by a belief in scarcity. 'There isn't enough to go round', so we must be restricted in what we are allowed to consume. It has become a cliché to speak of, 'this overcrowded country.'

We should not give the impression that everything is easy, that a massive expansion of available resources is a simple matter. For one thing, there maybe environmental implications. But a socialist society is the best-equipped to handle these implications and to strike a balance. Not only is capitalism in effect a system of artificial scarcity, it is also a system of organised waste. Socialist society will use the resources of the Earth to ensure that every man, woman and child is amply fed, clothed and sheltered. Capitalism cannot do this — it does not exist for this purpose.

I end by quoting the great American socialist Eugene V. Debs:^[3]

If Socialism, international, revolutionary Socialism, does not stand staunchly, unflinchingly, and uncompromisingly for the working class and for the exploited and oppressed masses of all lands, then it stands for none and its claim is a false pretense and its profession a delusion and a snare. Let those desert us who will because we refuse to shut the international door in the faces of their own brethren; we will be none the weaker but all the stronger for their going, for they evidently have no clear conception of the international solidarity, are wholly lacking in the revolutionary spirit, and have no proper place in the Socialist movement while they entertain such aristocratic notions of their own assumed superiority. ☺

How I Became a Socialist

BY JORDAN LEVI

A slow crawl toward socialist consciousness

I didn't become a genuine socialist until I'd started reading some of Karl Marx's books in the last half of 2018, but my upbringing made me sympathetic to the idea of socialism from a young age. For the first two months of my life my parents, my twin brother, and I were living in my grandma's garage. I haven't had the guts to ask why yet, but I understand there was a big fight that ended in us leaving. From then on we were chronically homeless, living either in families' garages when possible or in shelters or our car when not. I vividly remember my parents sleeping in the front seats of the car with two of my brothers sleeping in the backseats and me and my twin sleeping on the floor. I'd seen plenty of TV shows and movies where the characters had their own houses. I guess it was just childhood innocence, but it never occurred to me that my situation wasn't normal until either preschool or kindergarten: I knew *everybody* didn't have it like me, but I just assumed *most* people did since that's what I was used to. After I started making friends I realized that all of them were living in houses, apartments, or projects. Whenever I dared ask my parents to buy something for me they replied: 'We can't afford it.' I made the connection that the reason we hadn't had our own place yet was that my parents couldn't afford one, even though



Shot by Deja Smith (@Dejaarxvna)

most of the kids I was meeting had parents who could. That was one of the first instances when I can vaguely remember thinking: 'Why? Why can't my parents afford a home, if apparently most parents can? Why should anyone have to pay for a necessity?'

I don't vividly recall hearing the term 'socialist' or 'communist' until 4th or 5th grade, when we started learning a little about the Cold War and some of the major figures in black history. I quickly idolized Huey Newton, because he was also from Oakland, as well as Malcolm X. Reading that Huey advocated for communism while also hearing communism practically demonized for its association with Russia confused me, but Huey's takes on capitalism as unfair strongly resonated with me even then. He was probably the first person to give me a glimpse into why inequality existed.

When I was in ninth grade I was surfing Youtube and came across

the 9/11 part of the documentary *Zeitgeist* that had come out the summer before. I decided to watch the rest. It completely blew my mind. I already identified as agnostic after I stopped going to church in seventh grade, but the first part of it hooked me because it gave me a more solid reason to be critical of religion rather than just not having proof. The last part of the documentary had a profound effect on me too because it was the first time I'd ever seen money be seriously criticized. The sequels also fascinated me because watching them introduced me to the idea of a world without money. I wondered before if that might solve many of the world's problems, but that was the first time I'd seen the idea promoted as a practical solution, so I became completely enamored by the concept of a 'resource-based economy.'

Fast forward to when I was in twelfth grade and in English class everybody was required to write a senior paper on whatever top-

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ic they wanted. I chose to write mine on social stratification. Doing research for that paper taught me about the lower degree of social mobility and higher degree of social problems America has when compared to other developed countries. I'd seen the Michael Moore documentary *Sicko* by then, so I knew that a lot of developed countries had healthcare that was free or dirt cheap, but I don't think I realized until doing the research that a lot of them had free or dirt cheap college too. Realizing how

backwards our system was led me to question why more people weren't pressuring our government to do the same thing.

I graduated from Modoc High School in June 2011 and I moved back to Las Vegas the month after for vocational school, since there weren't any colleges in Alturas, California. A couple of months later the Occupy Movement exploded, and the Las Vegas chapter had its first march in October. I think I went to two of them, but the whole time

I felt like an idiot because I knew marching wasn't getting our point across to anybody. A few times at meetings and while hanging out at the campsite I made the point that we might get better results if we gave speeches to persuade people, but all the older members dismissed me as young and naïve. One even told me: 'Go start your own organization then.' That experience led me to resent marching and leadership. A funny side note: I went through a sort of a 'conspiracist' phase after watching

Photo by Hans Isaacson on Unsplash



World Socialist

Zeitgeist, but I was growing out of it by the time I graduated because I realized that there wasn't any tangible proof to a lot of the stuff I'd read or watched. Some of the people who were apart of Occupy, though? Complete wackjobs. Don't get me wrong, most of the people there had their heads on straight, but there were a handful of seasoned adults who still thought there was some ominous group of Zionists out there who ran everything from the shadows and ate babies. Apparently they had never heard of the Taxil Hoax.

After Occupy Las Vegas disbanded in early 2012, I spent a couple of years bouncing around and making music while I tried to get my life in order. My attention wasn't anywhere near politics until Bernie Sanders started his presidential campaign in 2016. My homie Kyle showed me a video of him explaining his policies and I could barely believe what I was hearing. He was talking about so many progressive measures that I thought for a second that it was a joke. I asked myself: 'Why would an old, probably rich white guy advocate for all this? Why is he calling himself a socialist? Doesn't he know what happened in Russia?' But after I'd done some digging and realized he was deadass serious I was sold. He wasn't advocating for the 'resource-based economy' I had fallen in love with, but what he was proposing would obviously be a major improvement compared to how things were. I wasn't as big of a Bernie supporter as Kyle, but I was moderately involved in supporting him. I posted about him on social media, talked to people about him when I was at events, and even voted for him in the primaries. As you

can imagine, I was disappointed when he didn't win the democratic nomination. Over the next couple of years I'd still advocate for him to people here and there, but whenever people brought up the fact that the Nazis, Russia, and Venezuela also called themselves socialist I got stuck. I'd try to say it wasn't the same thing, but I didn't really know if that was true because I'd never read anything from any socialists. I just really liked Bernie's ideas and I couldn't understand how they could possibly be associated with the horrors that the Nazis caused.

The last straw for me came in June 2018, when a local Vegas rapper named Teej threw a release show for his new album *Spotlight* at 11th Street Records. My homegirl Jerrika introduced me to a girl named Beth and somehow our conversation led to the subject of socialism. She brought up Venezuela and I had it, I was done. I tried to use the same 'they're not the same thing' argument, but when she pressed me to explain the difference all I could do was speculate. I was doing research about immigration myths at this time, but I knew my defense of socialism didn't hold up, so when I was thinking it over afterward I decided that I had to put the immigration research on hold in order to educate myself on socialist theory so that either that situation wouldn't happen again or I would find out for myself that the entire idea of socialism was stupid.

I started by skimming through the Wikipedia page on socialism to decide where to start. Karl Marx immediately stuck out to me because in my experience he was always touted as the main influence on socialists, so I went to his page

and skimmed through it, too. *Capital*, Volume 1 stuck out to me in his bibliography because I'd heard it mentioned before and the Wikipedia page about it confirmed that it was a pretty important book, so I decided to start by reading that. Big mistake! For the love of god don't do that! I got like three pages into Chapter 1 and gave up: the language was just too sophisticated for me.

I tried not to think about it for a couple of months. I did my first tour as a musician that July and after I got back I just wanted to relax for a while. My conscience kept eating at me though, and eventually I decided I had no choice but to try again and start somewhere else. I skimmed through Karl Marx's bibliography on Wikipedia again and noticed that *The Communist Manifesto* seemed important and was also short, so I decided to read that first. I read the PDF version that's on marxists.org and a few things stuck out to me right away. A big one was that he mentioned that communism would abolish all private property and make it common property and that private property and personal property were different, because private property was used to generate profit and personal property wasn't, so personal property wouldn't be abolished in communist society. This obviously disproved the right-wing talking point that 'Communists want to take your toothbrush!' Other ideas that impressed me were that communism would abolish selling and buying, abolish classes, abolish the state, and abolish wages. In the principles of communism at the back of the PDF, it also said that money would be abolished, and that the revolution couldn't

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possibly happen in one country, it would have to be worldwide. All these criteria instantly sounded alarms in my head. Russia had all these things and Bernie wasn't talking about abolishing any of them – many of his proposals explicitly required that they all stay intact. After reading that I did some more skimming through Marx's bibliography and decided to read *Critique of the Gotha Program* next. That reinforced some of the earlier criteria and gave more insight into how a socialist society would be established and some of the differences between its lower and higher phases.

Having recognized the differences between what Marx, Lenin,

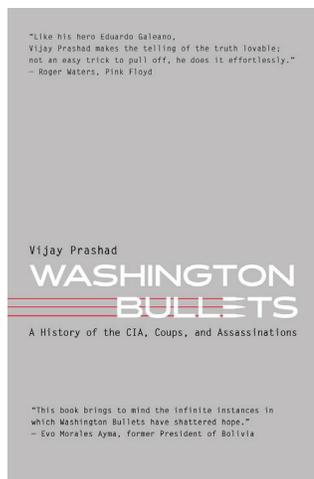
and Bernie were talking about, I naturally wondered why they all referred to their ideology as socialism. To get some insight on this, I skimmed through the Wikipedia page for socialism. Reading that led me to the page on Marxism, which led me to the page on orthodox Marxism, which has a section on impossibilism that led me to the Socialist Party of Great Britain's website. There I read through each section on the 'About Us' dropdown menu and was amazed. I'd never heard anyone refer to the USSR as state capitalist before, and that instantly shocked me because it made perfect sense. They also defined the DSA, and Bernie Sanders by association, as reformist and that was another game changer

for me. I spent a few days reading through some more articles on the website and the most recent issue of *The Socialist Standard* (October 2018) and was even more amazed to find out that they'd had the same message and goals since 1904. The fact that they'd stuck by the same principles while so many other people and groups faltered sold me. I knew their message was watertight, enough people just hadn't considered their perspective yet. I applied for membership in the American counterpart to the SPGB, the WSPUS, a few days later and got to work reading more of Marx's work to strengthen my knowledge of socialism from there. 📖

Photo by Ryan Hafey on Unsplash



Reviews



Washington Bullets by Vijay Prashad

The author — a left-wing scholar, journalist, and director of the Tri-continental Institute for Social Research — gives us a concise history of United States imperialism — its colonial origins, stages of development, and current manifestations.

Especially revealing are the vivid ‘inside’ accounts of how the American power elite, acting through the CIA, US embassies abroad, US armed forces, and other US (or, like the IMF, US-dominated) institutions, has repeatedly toppled insufficiently supine governments throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa. It is as though a single ‘manual for regime change’ has been used over and over again — in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Congo in 1961, Iraq in 1963, Brazil in 1964, Indonesia in 1965, Chile in 1973, and Bolivia in 1971 and again in 2019 with the overthrow of President Evo Morales, who contributes a preface to the book from his Argentine exile. The bloodiest of all these coups was Suharto’s seizure of power in Indonesia, followed by the murder of up to a million ethnic

Chinese and ‘communists’ with the aid of lists supplied by the CIA and Australian intelligence.

The ‘manual’ identifies the following stages:

- [1] Prepare public opinion by lobbying the Congress and corporate media.
- [2] Appoint an experienced agent to direct operations on the spot.
- [3] Groom senior military officers for a coup.
- [4] Undermine the economy (‘make the economy scream’).
- [5] Isolate the targeted government diplomatically.
- [6] Organize anti-government protests and strikes.
- [7] Give the green light to go ahead.
- [8] Afterward: deny involvement and foster amnesia.

No one can possibly read a book like this one, informed by recently opened archival records, and still believe that American politicians and officials have ever given a damn for democracy or human rights or felt anything but contempt for ordinary people and their needs and concerns. I was struck by the story of the public campaign in Japan to close the US military bases that dominate the island of Okinawa. Fueled by outrage at rapes and murders of local girls and women by American soldiers (at least 120 reported since 1972), the campaign brought a landslide election victory to the Democratic Party of Japan in 2009. However, when the new prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, announced that he was going to fulfill his promise to close the bases, the reaction from Obama was so harsh that the Japanese side ‘decided to keep no record of the

conversation.’ Hatoyama gave in and then resigned. This was the same Obama who in public spoke so eloquently of the importance of democracy.

The author does not support the theory that American power is in sharp decline and we are now living in a multipolar world. While he does not exclude the possibility that the international system may evolve along these lines, as yet he sees no evidence of the end of US dominance.

Like many other leftists, Vijay Prashad can be accused of a bias in favor of political forces that resist US domination. Castro, Che Guevara, and Ho Chi Minh appear only as heroic ‘leaders of the poor.’ He is not to be relied upon for an understanding of the ‘enemies’ of the United States. For that the reader must look elsewhere. But as an exposé of the global policy and outlook of the American capitalist power elite his book is highly recommended.

-STEPHEN SHENFIELD



Our Final Warning: Six Degrees of Climate Emergency by Mark Lynas

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This is an updated edition of the author's *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet* (2008). The basic format is the same — one chapter on the changes expected to result from each successive degree Centigrade of rise in the average global temperature. But everything has come closer, because many processes are developing faster than all but the newest climate models predict. In 2008 the world of one degree above the pre-industrial level still lay in the future. Now it is already upon us, with bleached coral reefs, dead zones of acidified ocean, retreating glaciers, melting ice sheets, spreading deserts, devastating droughts and wildfires, and — in certain regions — extremes of heat beyond what human beings and most other animals can tolerate. Other tragic impacts may already be too late to avert — in particular, loss of the Amazon rainforest, doomed to burn and leave behind at best an arid plain (savannah).

Unlike many other authors, Mark Lynas has the courage to explore the worst-case scenarios at 4-7 degrees that may occur if 'business as usual' continues for several more decades. In these possible futures most of the planet becomes uninhabitable, with the exception of widely scattered areas of relatively mild climate where survivors may find refuge. In the very worst case, with massive releases of methane from the thawed permafrost and the seabed, even these refuges may prove temporary as Earth turns into a second Venus.

I see no reason to question the science that the author uses to paint this grim picture (he tells us he has spent a year reading scientific pa-

pers to save us the trouble of doing so). Unfortunately, he does not analyze with equal clarity the social system that generates all these horrors. At one point, complaining about 'the people who profit from destroying the Amazon,' he suggests that 'climate models need an equation for human idiocy' (pp. 108-109). But profit-seeking is not idiocy — or at least not in the ordinary sense. It is what the system requires of those caught in its toils, however intelligent they may be.

The climate crisis demands a rethinking of all our cherished ideas. That applies to socialists as well as everyone else. We socialists have been accustomed to view the natural world in which we live as a potential cornucopia or 'horn of plenty'; socialism is the key that will unlock that potential and create a 'society of abundance.' And, indeed, until quite recently that view was justified. But the natural world is now undergoing a process of degradation. There is still enough food and fresh water to satisfy human needs. As Mark Lynas explains:

In the one-degree world, surpluses in one place tend to balance out deficits in another, and therefore even in bad years the world has enough food. The fact that over 800 million people remain hungry is down to poverty, not a shortage of overall supply. Synchronized harvest failures involving multiple regions ... have never happened (pp. 192-3).

But they WILL happen as global temperatures rise further. And then shortage will be for real and the vision of abundance will fade. Even if socialism has been established

in the meantime, it will have to make the best of an awful situation, supplementing naturally grown crops with nutrients manufactured in artificial environments.

- STEPHEN SHENFIELD



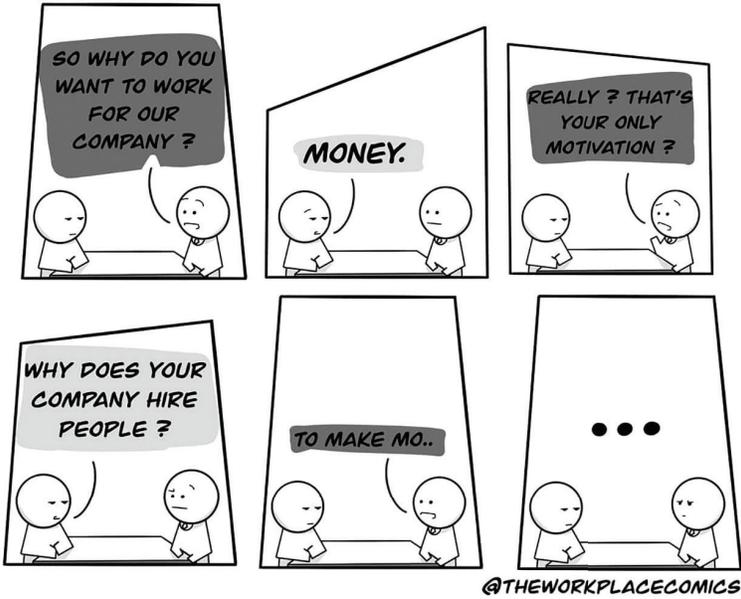
(My) Song of the Season *Tequila* by NENNY

It still trips me out that Hip Hop — a trend started by some teenage gangbangers in the South Bronx — became the most listened to music genre in America last decade, managing to touch every continent on the planet.

There's a Youtube channel called COLORS which has different singers and rappers from around the world come on and perform with one solid color in the background — presumably so you just focus on the music. The idea's genius already, but every artist they bring on is amazing, too. I watch a lot of them, but I actually came across this song after I saw this girl I follow on Snapchat dancing to it on her story. I used Shazam to find out what it was called (I refuse to give her the chance to say "I put you onto her!") and I couldn't stop playing it for a day straight. She speaks Portuguese, but I don't need to understand it to know it's a banger.

-JORDAN LEVI

Funnies



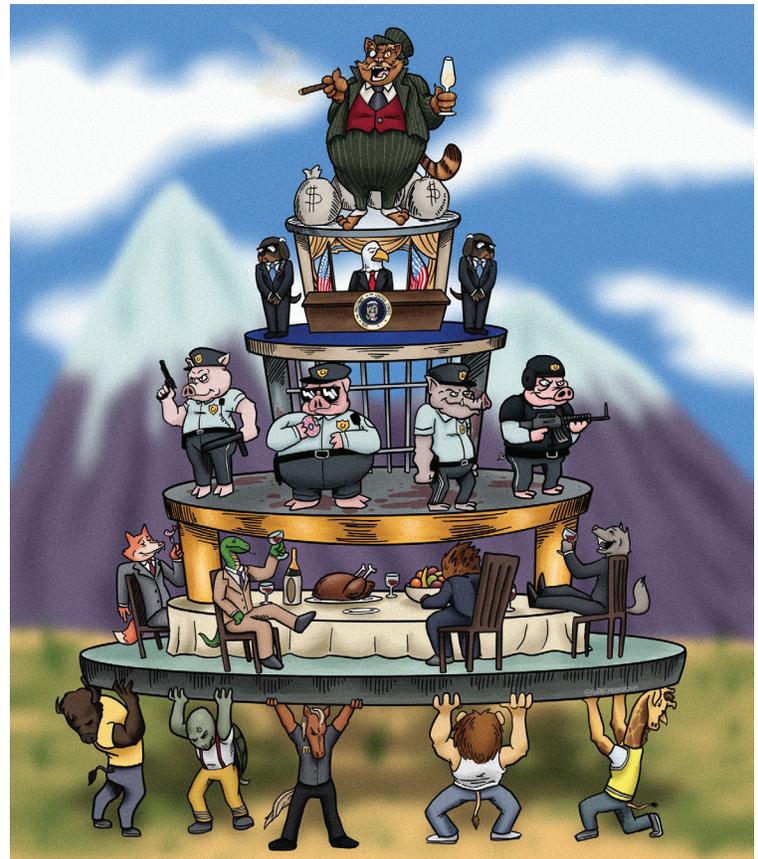
LOVE SCENERY?
@itboyperc

Oomf said prince Philip is older than India's independence and it just struck me that these aren't even colonizer descendants they're the og colonizers



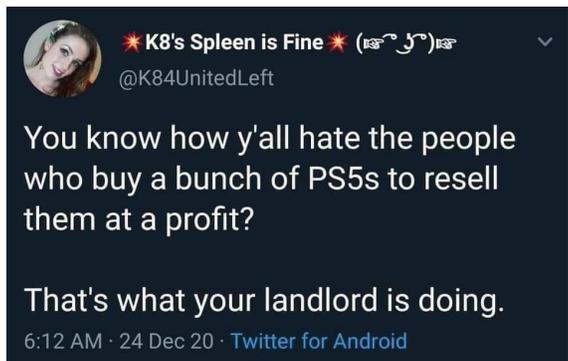
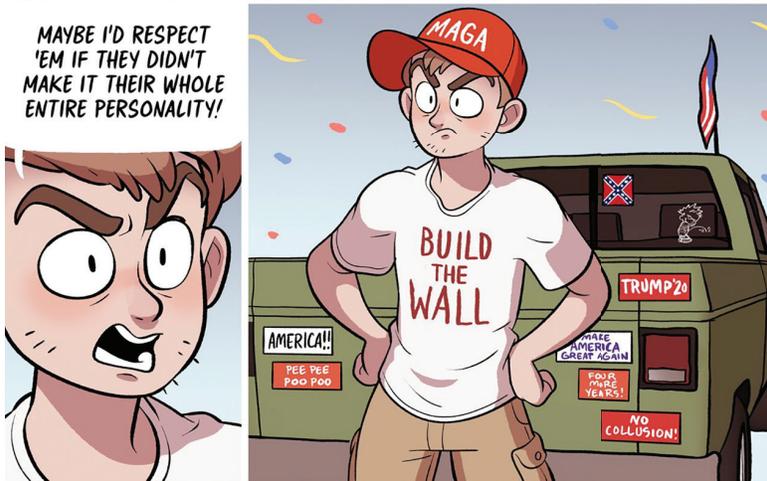
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11.9K Retweets 1,060 Quote Tweets 37.9K Likes



Shakieb Orgunwall
41 mins · 🗣️

Due to travel restrictions this year the United States had to organize coups at home.



Flashback

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD

SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE BUCKINGHAM EDITION OF MARCH 1951

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AN AFFAIR

PROGRAMME

WAGE OF A FEARFUL LIFE

BLACK WALLS AT THE PLUMBER OFFICE

HE BELIEVES

SPONGERS

MAKING CONTACTS

Answers to members' questions on membership

Monthly 3

(Socialist Standard, April 1951)

Amongst the critics of the Labour Party are many erstwhile staunch supporters whose votes help to put that party in power. It is not in the least unusual these days to hear Labour Party supporters vehemently denouncing the government for doing things that should have

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been left undone and not doing things that should be done. They will readily admit the shortcomings of Labour ministers and oppose the Labour Government's policy. They will agree that socialism is the only solution to working class problems, but—BUT—as it is not possible to establish immediately they intend to support the lesser of two evils, the Labour Party in preference to the Conservatives. "The lesser of two evils"—how often the workers have been hoodwinked by that notion! As though one capitalist political party was even a little bit preferable to another. As though there is anything to chose between them as far as the workers are concerned. As the Irishman is reputed to have said, "The only difference between them is that they are all alike." Looking back over the years of working class struggle, under all kinds of governments, should be

sufficient evidence that the workers' position is not altered whenever there is a change of government Giving the workers the choice of two political parties, each competing for the job of administering capitalism, is like giving the Christmas goose the choice of being roasted or boiled.

(...)
 If a man is robbed by two thieves, it is in his interest to regain his property, not to take sides with one thief or the other in their differences about the share-out of their loot, even if one of them has got a kind-looking face. When he tries to get his stolen property back he will soon find that the two robbers will sink their differences and gang up to prevent him recovering his goods. They will both be vicious and he must oppose the two of them or else find himself "between the devil and the deep blue sea."

Object

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

Declaration of Principles

The Companion Parties of Socialism hold that:

- 1.** Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.
- 2.** In society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3.** This antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4.** As in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
- 5.** This emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6.** As the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
- 7.** As political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8.** The companion parties of socialism, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to stand against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class of these countries to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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Thanks for reading!



“Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.” -Rosa Luxemburg