

**THE**  
**WORD**

Special Issue #12, December 2016.

**THE RICH**  
**MUST BE**  
**STOPPED**

## THE PETERLOO PROJECT

Starting in September of 2015 the project was put together on the Peter Loo Facebook page and then in the "Together against the Tories" Facebook group. The idea is to create a popular and entertaining socialist hub with the involvement of as many people as possible from the left of the socialist movement in Britain.

As the project has proceeded it has become increasingly clear that the media in the UK is run for and by big business and as such will always need to oppose socialist values to keep such a position. The project was then crowdfunded to raise the money to be able to print and distribute this newspaper as a prelude to a whole cross-platform media fight-back.

THE  
WORD

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# WE DON'T **Deloitte.** HAVE A DEBT PROBLEM WE HAVE A TAX AVOIDANCE PROBLEM

Tax avoidance and evasion is not exceptional; it is the norm. There is a world wide industry involving the top 4 accountancy firms, the big banks and scores of tax avoidance firms such as Mossack Fonseca. This industry caters for tax avoidance, tax evasion, criminal money and money laundering without discrimination. These firms work in a world of secrecy operating in tax havens with secrecy laws. They operate so successfully that most people have never heard of them, despite the estimated \$21-32 trillion dollars stashed away in these tax havens. The data breach from

Mossack Fonseca is only the tip of the iceberg. There are 10 other similar firms operating in tax havens that are as large or larger and there are hundreds of smaller firms also.

In the UK alone there is an estimated £120 billion per years of tax dodging escaping HMRC. On top of the £120 billion is revenue and capital that flows out of the country into the tax havens to allow it to earned at zero tax rates. This situation is so bad that the USA is considering a tax holiday for tax avoided funds held abroad so that American multinationals can return as much as \$1 trillion dollars. What

these figures reveal is that we do not have a national debt problem; We have a tax dodging problem. In fact much of this tax haven money comes back to the UK to fund our national debt because it doesn't do much for the owner stuck in a tax haven so it is lent to our governments to finance the national debt.

Austerity is the wrong choice. Raising tax rates is probably the wrong choice too, given that a large part of taxes are avoided. Making sure the multinationals and the super rich pay the taxes that they are supposed to should be the governments role.

### The Big 4 Accounting Firms Prop up Tax Avoidance

During the banking crisis, the top 4 accountancy firms signed off the accounts of the banks that failed, declaring those banks to be solvent. Yet those banks collapsed causing the banking crisis. Yet no one has sued those banks for misrepresenting the financial status of the crashed banks. No government has prosecuted those top 4 accountancy firms. Ask yourself, "why not?"

**Other firms of a similar size that operate in a similar manner to Mossack Fonseca are Appleby (Bermuda), Bedell (Jersey), Carey Olsen (Channel Islands), Conyers Dill & Pearman (Bermuda), Harneys (British Virgin Islands), Maples and Calder (Cayman Islands), Mourant-Ozannes (Channel Islands), Ogier (Jersey) and Walkers (Cayman Islands).**





These are the top 4 accountancy firms

- DELOITTE LLP
- PRICE WATERHOUSE COOPERS
- KPMG
- ERNST & YOUNG

These are the same accountancy firms that are involved in setting up the tax havens around the world. At least one of them is always present when a country is setting up the laws for the tax haven.

There is nobody overseeing and scrutinising the work of these accounting firms. The opposite is true. Former directors from these 4 accountancy firms are being employed to regulate these firms. These big 4 are being used by the EU as advisers when the EU is creating its new tax laws. These big 4 are being appointed to regulate the accountancy regulations frameworks in the EU and the United States.

More and more large multimillion pound firms are utilising their services to reduced their tax expenditure.

Sweetheart deals by multinationals who negotiate very low tax rates is the norm and has happened in Ireland with Apple, Holland with Starbucks and the UK with Google. To name just a few examples.

These large firms employ PR lobbyists to persuade governments to adjust the tax laws so that they can exploit the loop holes so created, bringing a lie to the idea that they are just using full advantage of the tax system. They are

lobbying government officials to maintain the secrecy of tax havens and maintain tax loop holes or creating new loop holes.

### The Global Nature of Tax Avoidance

In the UK as elsewhere, the ever increasing billions and now trillions of tax avoidance that is ending up abroad means that the social and welfare programs that we could easily afford 30 years through taxation have now become unaffordable. While our government pays lip

service to the tax avoidance issue we are left with a stark choice of either raising taxes on middle and low income earners or austerity cuts to our vital welfare and infrastructure spending. This leads to low economic growth and a huge ever increasing national debt.

According to James S. Henry (former chief economist of McKinsey & Co. now of the tax justice network) in 2010 there was an estimated \$21-\$32 trillion in tax havens around the world through more than 20 million shell companies.

Globalisation of trade facilitates tax avoidance. The advantage of being a multinational lies more in the tax avoidance advantages rather than economy of scale.

One way to tackle tax avoidance is to increase minimum wage of employees so that much more of the profit stays in the country the profit is made. Wages would be properly taxed as PAYE, benefiting the employee and the Government's finances.

Holland has the most tax treaties in the world and has very low tax rates on intellectual property. This has led to 91 out of the richest 100 companies in the world to let their revenue flow through the Netherlands. 11 Trillion Euros per year is funneled through the Netherlands in the forms of investments, loans, royalties, interest. This staggering amount is 20 times the GDP of the Netherlands. TMF group, AMICORP, ATC CORPORATE SERVICE, IN-

TERTRUST are some of the trust companies that operate these tax avoidance funnels.

The bankers, tax lawyers and accountants make these tax avoidance schemes work.

0.14% of the world's population control (about 10 million people) own 95% of the offshore wealth. They are usually stateless and operate their financial affairs invisibly. They can purchase property and expensive cars for instance using a financial leasing system set up in the Cayman islands and have the keys delivered to their door the next day.

### Third World Countries Suffer the Most

These tax avoidance systems operate at their most brutal in third world countries such as those in Africa. Where minerals are extracted by multinationals who then sell their products at a very low price to

minimise profit, paying little or no tax in those countries. These minerals are then bought by a holding company in a tax haven which can then make a large profit and pay a very small of even no tax at all in the tax haven. This leaves the third world country impoverished and its government forced to tax the population heavily to raise vital government funds. These third world countries do not need overseas aid. They need an end to tax avoidance, which would raise 5 times the amount compared to overseas aid. Again third world countries do not have a debt problem. They have a tax avoidance problem.

### Some proposed solutions are:

1. Direct rule of tax havens.
2. Do not award government contracts to firms involved in tax avoidance
3. Reverse the Conservative governments policy that created a territorial tax system
4. Double the number of tax inspectors in HMRC and use the extra staff to chase down firms indulging in tax avoidance.
5. Increase minimum wage levels.
6. Set up and enforce strict anti-lobbying laws.
7. Set up laws to prevent the revolving door culture
8. Citizens to boycott firms that avoid paying taxes in the UK
9. Name and Shame large tax avoiders
10. Keep better track and audit the thousands of unchecked and unaudited Limited Companies that are set up, declare themselves dormant and liquidated each year.

### Here are a Few of the Biggest Tax Avoiders in the UK:

- Google
- Apple
- Amazon
- Starbucks
- Microsoft
- Facebook
- Hewlett Packard
- Twitter
- Boots
- Kellogs
- Topshop
- Manchester United
- Daily Mail
- Vodafone
- Astrazeneca
- GlaxoSmithKline
- British American Tobacco
- Johnnie Walker
- HMV
- PFIZER

# PRESS RELEASE

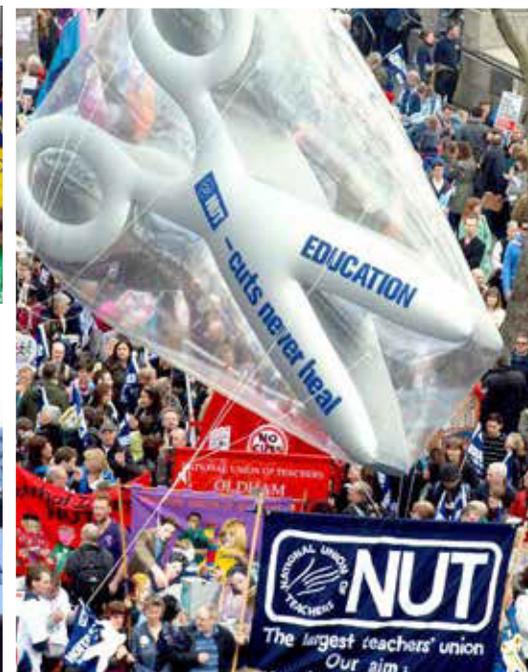
## RE FINANCIAL CUTS TO SCHOOLS

England's schools are now experiencing the largest real terms cuts in funding in more than a generation according to two teachers' unions. The forecast for cuts in spending to schools has been prepared by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

NUT research based on published school funding data for 2016/17 and 2014/15 shows that 83% of schools are worse off in real terms since the Conservative Government took office. These schools are already being forced to make cuts as their funding has not been increased sufficiently to cover inflation and cost increases including National Insurance and teachers' pension contributions.

The NUT and ATL estimate that 92% of schools could face cuts in their funding per pupil in real terms over the next four years and by 2020. (Their forecast relates to a formula they have devised based on the Government's own spending plans and school data, Institute for Fiscal Studies projections for the cost of inflation and other cost increases, and the new funding formula proposed by the influential f40 campaign group of local authorities.)

The schoolcuts.org.uk website, a new interactive map launched by NUT and ATL, spells out the impact of the Government's current funding policy. The website can be used by entering a postcode and immediately seeing the impact on all schools in that area. By 2020 it is predicted that average budget cuts could be 6.5% in primary schools and 9% in secondary schools. The average real terms loss for primary schools would be £96,481, or £401 per pupil. The average real terms loss for secondary schools would



be £290,228, or £365 per pupil.

On the website, the NUT and ATL publish a list of the 100 MPs whose constituencies are likely to face the most severe cuts where it is striking that of these, 86% are Labour MPs and that some of these constituencies contain the most socially deprived areas of the country.

Margery Thorogood, member of the National Union of Teachers and Secretary of Slough and District Trades Council, has investigated the website to look at the impact of these cuts on our schools. As predicted in the list of 100 constituencies, Slough will fare badly. Its overall budget change by 2020 will be a cut of 11 per cent which will result in the following - a cut of £12,822,607 funding to schools, a reduction of £548 per pupil funding and the loss of 344 teachers. In Windsor and Maidenhead, there will be a cut of £3,560,625 funding to schools, a reduction of £195 per pupil funding

and the loss of 95 teachers.

She has found that within the 2 boroughs, there are some diverse and extreme examples although all schools will suffer financially. In Slough, schools across the entire age range will be adversely affected. There are examples of infant schools' budgets being cut by 14 per cent, of primary schools' budgets by 13 per cent and of secondaries' budgets by 14 per cent and 15 per cent. In Windsor and Maidenhead, there are also some extreme examples; for example, a first school's budget being cut by 13 per cent, two primary schools' budgets by 11 per cent and a secondary school's budget by 7 per cent.

She spells out the reality of this data for individual schools and individual pupils. For example, an Infant school in Slough suffering a cut in funding of 13 per cent will lose funding to the tune of £269,529, a reduction in pupil funding of £535

and the loss of 7 teachers. In Windsor and Maidenhead, a primary school suffering a cut in funding of 11 per cent will lose funding to the tune of £134,685, a reduction in pupil funding of £443 and the loss of 3 teachers. The impact of such cuts will be devastating.

The NUT and ATL are calling on the Government to take immediate action to inject much needed money into an already beleaguered system and protect schools from rising inflation. It is the only sensible solution to a crisis already underway and which is set to get harder for schools to cope with. If these cuts are actioned, schools will lose resources including staffing and pupils will suffer.

Margery Thorogood, on behalf of Slough and District Trades Council, endorses the call from the NUT and the ATL to join the campaign to maintain and increase funding in our schools and to ensure our young people

get the opportunities they need and deserve. She urges readers to visit the website schoolcuts.org.uk to join the campaign. Further she asks readers to email their MP to let them know what's happening in schools in their area and ask them to take action.

The NUT and ATL have called upon the Government to urgently address the pressing issue of school funding and reverse its policy of cutting funding per pupil in real terms. Local people need to know what is happening to the schools of their local communities and to support this campaign for the future of their children's education.

(sent by) Margery Thorogood  
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## Rocket Science And Learning

By Cliff Jones December 2016

1. Take a tube, pointed at one end and open at the other.
2. Stuff it full of propellant.
3. Light it at the open end.
4. And, the difficult bit, point it where you want it to go.

Exchange children for tubes and there you have it: government education policy.

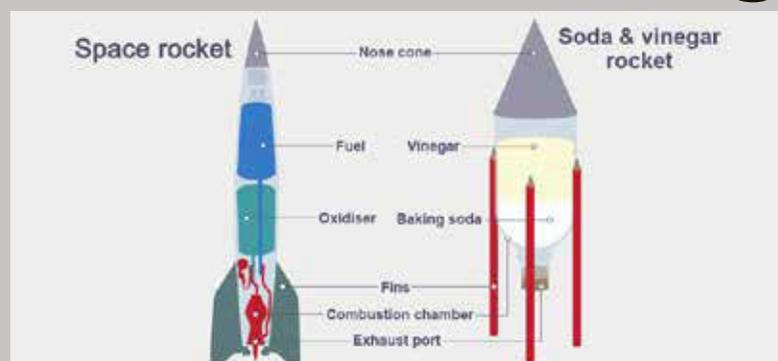
We can argue about 2 and 4.

What kind of propellant do we

want? Fast burning or slow? So hot that it destroys the container or something that retains the integrity of the container?

Who shall control the guidance system? Will there be a pilot or remote control? Who gets to decide the direction? How long will the fuel last? What happens when something goes wrong? What might we mean by 'wrong'?

We often hear the phrase 'Its not rocket science', implying that by comparison most other things are relatively simple. At



base, however, rocket science is very simple. Education is not so straightforward. You can mass

produce rockets and standardise their manufacture.

Incidentally, the word 'stand-

ard' is used a lot in education so it might be worth remembering what it means. Shall we standardise all learners?

The biggest difference in education is that the human rockets, big and little, broad and narrow, tall and short can speak for themselves. They can make decisions about what kind of fuel, how much at any one time, the direction of travel and when to pause on the journey; if, that is, they are allowed to. As for test firings!

Schooling is what we do to horses and if certain politicians get their way education will be preparation for taking an oath of allegiance.

# A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS REPORT



By Kitty S Jones

*There is an important link between human needs and human rights that the Conservatives have dismally and persistently failed to recognise*

The United Nations (UN) inquiry into the allegations many of us made regarding the systematic abuse of the human rights of disabled people in the UK has exposed the multiple

injustices of targeted cuts and the disproportionate burden of austerity heaped on sick and disabled people, their carers and their families, evidencing and detailing the effects of a range of policy measures affecting them that have been introduced since 2010. These include the bedroom tax and cuts to disability benefits and to funds to support independence and social care.

The report concludes that the overall effect of what is now an es-

entially punitive welfare regime, which has been based almost entirely on unevicenced political claims and assumptions, has had an extremely detrimental and regressive effect on the rights of disabled people to live independently, to meet their basic needs, to seek and stay in work, and to be able to live an ordinary life as citizens.

The UN report documented multiple violations of disabled people's rights, including the way

that they are politically portrayed as being lazy and a "burden on taxpayers", the harm to health caused by unfair assessments, the cuts to legal aid and curtailed access to justice, the imposition of the bedroom tax and the ending of the Independent Living Fund.

I have written a lengthy article about the unsurprising but nonetheless disquieting report findings and recommendations.

Predictably, the government re-

sponded to the damning contents of the report by denying a "causal link" between their policies and the evidenced accounts of the consequences being presented to them. Yet the government has never monitored the cumulative impact of their policies and successive cuts on disabled people, and they told the UN rapporteurs that it was "not possible

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or practical" to carry out an impact assessment on how reforms would affect disabled people. The UN disagreed, and stated that with the evidence and data already available, the government could have done this.

The UN has called on the government to carry out a cumulative impact assessment. The government has refused to comply with any of the recommendations the UN has made. However, that means they cannot legitimately claim that there is "no causal link demonstrated" regarding the austerity measures and psychological distress, severe hardship, deteriorating health and death, as they have persistently refused to investigate the associations that academics, charities, disabled people's organisations, individual campaigners and opposition MPs have consistently demonstrated. Denial isn't empirical evidence or any kind of proof that your claims are valid. Nor does withholding evidence of correlation disprove causality.

It was also noted that the government failed to listen to the concerns of disabled people it had claimed to involve in policy-making processes. Disabled people and their representative organisations "were not meaningfully taken into account in the decision-making and had little or no influence on policy decisions."

The implication is that disabled people have not been democratically included. The government has persisted in treating us as objects of policies, rather than seeing us as democratic subjects and citizens.

Also of note: "The [individual] impact assessments conducted by the State party prior to the implementation of several measures of its welfare reform expressly foresaw an adverse impact on persons with disabilities."

"The State party has not conducted a comprehensive human rights-based cumulative impact assessment even though reliable sources have indicated it is feasible."

The UN stated that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) failed to properly investigate people's deaths after their social security payments were stopped. It was noted that the government had made no "attempts at objective, thorough, open and impartial investigation(s)" to look at the alleged 90 deaths a month, despite being aware that there was widespread public concern about this.

Among other concerns, the committee said the UK government had used rhetoric to stigmatise disabled people, negatively influencing public perceptions. The report says that disabled people "have been... negatively portrayed as being dependent or making a living out of benefits; committing fraud as benefit claimants; being lazy and putting a burden on taxpayers, who are paying 'money for nothing'. Persons with disabilities continue to experience

increasing hostility, aggressive behaviour and sometimes attacks to their personal integrity."

The committee said it found no evidence to support any of these ideas, especially the idea that disabled claimants were committing benefit fraud.

The committee was very critical of the legal aid cuts, which have created a significant barrier for people challenging benefits decisions and holding the government accountable:

"Evidence indicates that legal aid to challenge administrative decisions ending or curtailing their benefits before first-tier tribunals has been restricted. Legal aid for cases before those tribunals has also been curtailed. Similarly, access to review by an independent and impartial tribunal has been restricted by the introduction of mandatory reconsideration procedures before the same administrative entity that has ruled on benefits."

I was pleased to see the United Nations report highlight a fundamental prejudice that informed the very basis of the "functional capacity approach" of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), as well as commenting on the major flaws of the assessment process itself. The WCA is based on the assumption that a health condition or disability should not automatically be regarded as a "barrier" to work and that work itself can have health benefits. However, these assumptions have been controversial from the outset.

The WCA places focus entirely on how we as individuals experience our illness and impairments. As such, this approach does not permit us to place our experiences of disadvantage in the context of how organisations, institutions, policy-makers and wider society interact with us. Despite the government claiming that they take a social model approach, eligibility for benefits and services is still being determined by assessment of how much our own bodies are affected by illness and impairment rather than the disabling social, cultural and political barriers that we experience.

The report said: Work Capability Assessments do not take into account the "support persons with disabilities need to perform a job or the complex nature of some impairments and conditions"

The inquiry also found that welfare assessors displayed a "lack of awareness and limited knowledge of disability rights and specific needs", and disabled people experienced distress, "anxiety and psychological strain" as a result of this flawed process, and the financial insecurity that it generates.

"The committee observes that measures have caused financial hardship to persons with disabilities resulting in arrears, debts, evictions and cuts to essentials such as housing and food," the report said.

The government's own research, published in June 2016, revealed that one of the cornerstones of their austerity campaign - that

cutting social security means recipients will be more likely to find work - is fundamentally flawed.

Researchers found that cutting unemployed people's benefits had the opposite effect to what is being claimed - something that many of us have also previously argued. The study, carried out by Oxford City Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, found unemployed people become less likely to get a job when benefits are cut. Instead of looking for work, they are forced to devote their energies to surviving day-to-day. For every £1 in benefits cut per week, a person's chance of getting a job drops by 2 per cent.

The government can no longer justify its narrative about benefit cuts, claiming that they are "incentives" to "support" people into work.

Beyond the rhetoric - the hidden agenda

There is a wider agenda driving the welfare "reforms" and it is important to consider the hidden ideological dimension and the language references and signposts to that, as well as the superficial narratives and semantic shifts being deployed as a PR exercise, techniques of neutralisation and gaslighting to obscure political intentions and the consequences of policies.

The UN report effectively exposed the justification narratives presented by the government for their welfare "reforms" as unfounded and unsupported by empirical evidence. This report is just the beginning: it arms us with an invaluable weapon with which to continue our campaigning, and shape future challenges and debate to government policies and social injustice.

The Conservatives have an ideological commitment to a "small state" and this is fuelled by privatisation and an ever-expanding neoliberal competitive "market place." The market place and private profit opportunities have been conflated with citizens' interests and needs.

The welfare "reforms" have presented the opportunity to promote and deliver private income protection provision via profit-making companies operating in free markets. Insurance companies and right-wing think tanks have been attempting to steer governments in this direction for many years.

For example, Matthew Oakley, a senior researcher at the Social Market Foundation, and government advisor, recently published a report entitled "Closing the gap: creating a framework for tackling the disability employment gap in the UK", in which he suggests considering a "role that a form of privately-run social insurance could play in both increasing benefit generosity and improving the support that individuals get to manage their conditions and move back to work."

Oakley also proposes abolishing the ESA Support Group. To meet extra living costs because of disability, Oakley says that existing spending on PIP and the Support Group element of ESA should be

brought together to finance a new extra costs benefit. Eligibility for this benefit should be determined on the basis of need, with an assessment replacing the WCA and PIP assessment. The Conservative definition of "the basis of need" seems to be an ever-shrinking category.

May's new director of policy, John Godfrey, is a keen advocate of what in his last job, at financial services giant Legal & General, he called "Beveridge 2.0": using technology to introduce new forms of "social insurance".

Godfrey told a campaigning group, the Financial Inclusion Commission, last year that the systems used to deliver "auto-enrolment", the scheme that ensures all low-income workers have a pension, could also be used to help the public insure themselves against "unexpected events".

"There is a clear lesson from auto-enrolment that if you have a plumbing network or an infrastructure that works, that auto-enrolment infrastructure could be used for other things which would encourage financial inclusion: things like, for example, life cover, income protection and effective and very genuine personal contributory benefits for things like unemployment and sickness," he said. "They can be delivered at good value if there is mass participation through either soft compulsion or good behavioural economics."

Note the context shift in the use of the term "inclusion", which was originally deemed a democratic right; now it's being discussed in terms of individual responsibility.

A report published by the Adam Smith Institute as far back as 1995 - "The Fortune Account" - also sets out proposals to replace "state welfare" with an insurance system "operated by financial institutions within the private sector".

Mo Stewart has spent eight years researching the influence of the US insurance giant Unum over successive UK governments, and how it led to the introduction of the "totally bogus" work capability assessment (WCA), which she says was designed to make it harder for sick and disabled people to claim out-of-work disability benefits. Stewart's book, "Cash Not Care: The Planned Demolition Of The UK Welfare State", was published in September 2016. She states that the assessment was modelled on methods used by the controversial company Unum to deny protection to sick and disabled people in the US who had taken out income protection policies.

She goes on to say that the WCA was "designed to remove as many as possible from access to [employment and support allowance] on route to the demolition of the welfare state", with out-of-work disability benefits to be replaced by insurance policies provided by private companies like Unum.

Stewart warns us that the UK is now close to adopting a US-style model.

The implications of the inquiry

findings for Conservative welfare policies

The government has announced further welfare measures which will affect disabled people including a four-year freeze for most working-age benefits, reductions in the Benefit Cap, changes to Tax Credits and to Universal Credit, and abolishing the "Work-Related Activity Component" for new ESA claims from 2017.

As noted in the UN report: "The State party continues its policy of reducing social benefits of persons with disabilities as reflected in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016."

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) says: "Adequate standard of living and social protection - This article affirms the rights of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family, and to social protection without discrimination on the basis of disability. This right includes access to assistance from the state with disability-related expenses for persons with disabilities and their families."

The report reiterated something that many of us have noted and discussed in detail previously: that there is no evidence of a causal relationship between a reduction in social security and an increase in employment amongst disabled and sick people. Nor does welfare "dependency" "disincentivise" people seeking employment more generally. These two assumptions are embedded in justifications of Conservative welfare policies, and are prejudices that have been around since the Thatcher administration.

Bearing in mind these are key assumptions underpinning current policies and the proposals set out in the recent work, health and disability green paper - for example, the recent decision to reduce the money paid to people who have been assessed as being unfit to work but able to undertake work related activity (those people in the Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group (WRAG)) is based on the same assumption - the Department for Work and Pensions has claimed that it will "remove the financial incentives that would otherwise discourage claimants from taking steps back to work".

Particularly important in the current context, and given the government's recent work, health and disability green paper, the UN report says that: "Given the barriers that still prevent the full participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market and mean higher unemployment rates for them, income-maintenance social security schemes are particularly important for persons with disabilities. Such schemes allow them to maintain their autonomy and freedom of control and choice of their living arrangements and day-to-day activities. Without an adequate lev-

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el of social protection, persons with disabilities run the risk of being isolated, segregated from the community and/or institutionalized.

State parties should find an adequate balance between providing an adequate level of income security for persons with disabilities through social security schemes and supporting their labour inclusion. The two sets of measures should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

Measures aimed at facilitating the inclusion in the labour market of beneficiaries of social security should include transitional arrangements to ensure income protection while they reach a certain threshold and sustainability in their wages. They should become eligible again without delay if they lose their jobs."

Although many of us have been discussing these issues for a few years, the inquiry has consolidated a lot of valuable evidence and provided a concise rebuttal of government justification narratives for cuts in support for disabled people, which we really needed to be presented to the government formally, from an independent, official and international witness.

Though the government has tended to dismiss much evidence to date of the harm that their policies are causing, such as that which has been presented through case studies by shadow ministers, as "anecdotal", it is rather more difficult to dismiss and ignore the substantial evidence presented as a result of rigorous international scrutiny.

The government response was founded on denials, more misleading rhetoric and techniques of neutralisation, defensive arrogance, authoritarian scorn and contrived outrage, rather than being about stepping up to democratic accountability, reasoned discussion and rationality; no sign of civilised conscience and decent concern regarding the impact of the prejudice and discrimination that is being intentionally and systematically embedded in Conservative policies, aimed at disabled people, at all.

The government's response to the UN report bears little resemblance to the lived experiences of disabled people, despite claims to the contrary. The government has justified systematic cuts to disabled people's social security by claiming such cuts "incentivise" people to find work. The cuts are a form of punishment (apparently for our own "good") designed to bring about "behaviour change" and this approach is founded on the wrongly perceived attitudes of disabled people, who this government consistently describes as being "parked on benefits" with the "misperception that they can't work".

This does nothing at all to address the barriers disabled people face in finding and staying in work,

nor does it address the acknowledged prejudiced attitudes of employers and Conservative ministers. It's not long ago that Conservative welfare minister David Freud expressed the view that disabled people should work for less than the minimum wage. He wasn't the only one, either. Philip Davies expressed the same view, claiming that disabled people "are the most disadvantaged by the national minimum wage," so they should be "permitted" to work for less in order to "compete" in the labour market. Davies described criticism of his remarks that disabled people could work for less than minimum wage as "left-wing hysteria".

It seems that Conservatives believe that the only way of "helping" disabled people in any way is by simply taking money from them.

In their response to the UN report, the government say: "The United Kingdom is proud of its record in

"There is an important link between human needs and human rights"

supporting disabled people to lead more independent lives and participate more fully in society. More than 20 years ago the UK legislated to protect disabled people's rights. It now spends around £50 billion a year on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions, which is over £6 billion more than in 2010. That is around 5% of GDP, or over 6% of government spending. The UK spends more on disabled people and people with health conditions than the OECD average, and countries such as Germany, France and the USA."

That's definitely Conservatives being... conservative with the truth again.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) report on spending on benefits for disabled people says the actual spend is £36,063 billion but this is partly in benefits that are not counted as working age disability benefits: War Pensions, Attendance Allowance for over 65s, Statutory Sick Pay, Carer's Allowance, Industrial Injuries Benefits and the ILF which the government has closed.

The



total of those benefits not paid to working age disabled people is £7,908 billion.

That makes the actual spend on all working age benefits for disabled people £28,155 billion.

The IFS report says: "The spending on DLA/PIP is only half what it was in 1995-96. Spending across Great Britain on disability benefits in 2014-15 was £13.5 billion. At 0.8% of national income this is half the level of disability benefit spending when it was at its peak in 1995-96.

The overall number of individuals receiving disability benefits has fallen slightly since the mid-1990s. But this is in the presence of underlying demographic change that would have tended to push up the numbers receiving considerably - both overall population growth and the baby boomer generation reaching older working ages."

It's not clear if the spending figures include the massive costs of private companies that are contracted by the state, ironically, to cut welfare spending.

The National Audit Office (NAO) report earlier this year scrutinised public spending for parlia-

ment, and is independent of government. The report indicates how public services are being appropriated for purely private benefit.

The audit report in January concluded that the Department for Work and Pension's spending on contracts for disability benefit assessments is expected to double in 2016/17 compared with 2014/15. The government's flagship welfare-cut scheme will be actually spending more money on the assessments conducted by private companies than it is saving in reductions to the benefits bill.

From the report:

#### £1.6 billion

Estimated cost of contracted-out health and disability assessments over three years, 2015 to 2018

#### £0.4 billion

Latest expected reduction in annual disability benefit spending.

This summary reflects staggering economic incompetence, a flagrant, politically motivated waste of taxpayers' money and even worse, the higher spending has not created a competent or ethical

assessment framework, nor is it improving the lives of sick and disabled people. Private companies like Maximus are paid millions from our welfare budget, yet they are certainly not "helping the government" to serve even the most basic needs of sick and disabled people.

I will be challenging the government's response to the UN report fully in due course. It would be good to see some collaborative effort from disabled campaigners and activists in addressing the government as comprehensively as possible. If anyone is interested in working together on this, just contact me.

The UN committee will meet to discuss the government's comments and determine a response in Geneva, in March 2017.

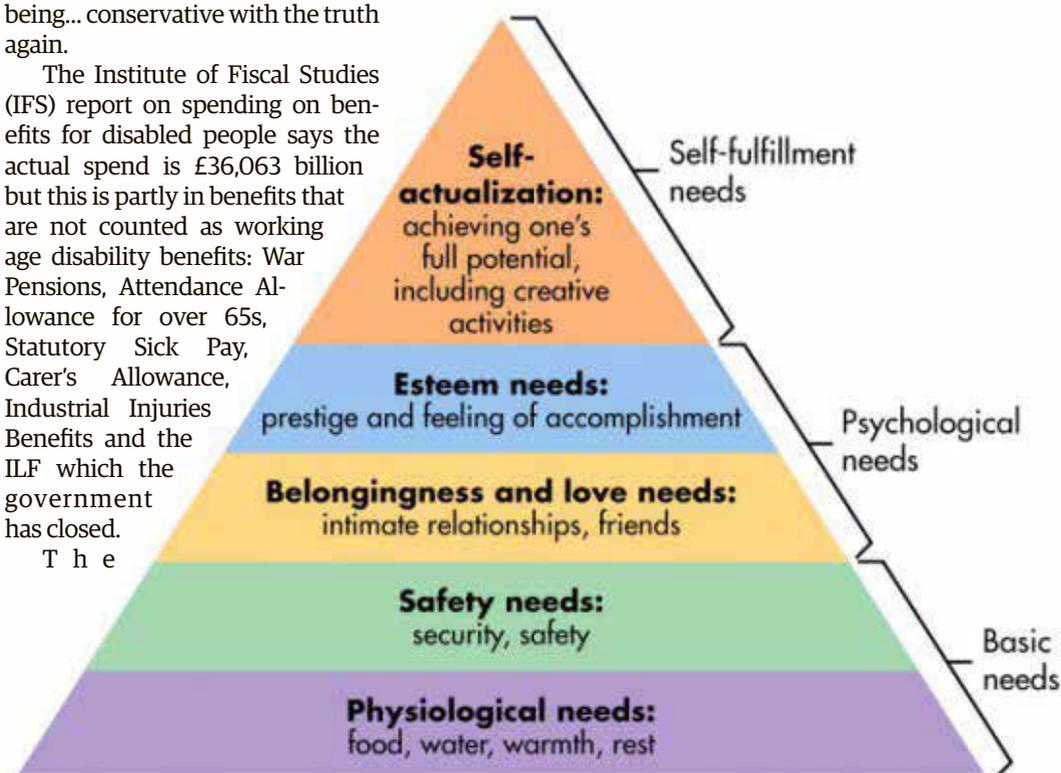
Meanwhile, it's crucial that we use the body of evidence collated by the UN and the conclusions drawn in the report effectively. For example, our responses to the consultation on the work, health and disability green paper must address the underpinning propositions and delve beneath the superficial rhetoric and glittering generalities, rather than permitting the DWP's weighted and somewhat leading questions to shape the outcome of the consultation.

We need to continue in coherently and collectively challenging the government's assumptions on which their proposals for work, health and disability policy are based, none of which are supported by a shred of solid empirical evidence.

#### Inquiry reports

1. Report of the Inquiry Concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

2. Observations of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the report of the Inquiry carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.



## Best facebook groups

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/519949641500248/>

{We support Jeremy Corbyn}  
This is one of the best forums for lively debate by democratic socialist Labour members.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/770925089714393/>

{THE WORD - supporters group}  
Come and discuss the paper. Voice your opinion. Volunteer to write articles, proof read, draw graphics and generally promote the paper.

<https://www.facebook.com/WatMedMedia/>

This is an NHS social media broadcast by doctors for patients. The doctors provide honest balanced reporting. They educate, entertain & inform via content designed to promote discussion.

## Best blogs

<http://breakingdownthnews.blogspot.co.uk/>

Blog by Ste Matthew Murray. He specialises in dissecting the news and political programs and presenting an alternative view of the same news.

<http://anotherangryvoice.blogspot.co.uk/>

This is a blog by a prolific writer Thomas G. Clark, with an independent and forthright Yorkshire voice who speaks about political, economic and philosophical issues.

<http://voxpolygonline.com/>

Mike Sivier has been a newspaper reporter for the best part of 20 years now. he switched to freelance work in 2007 in order to become a carer for his disabled girlfriend He is interested in politics, with an emphasis on people rather than the movement of money.

<https://skwawkbox.org/>

Written by a mature man with grown-up kids, who is politically-engaged socialist (member of the Labour and Co-operative Parties). He writes about some of the political big issues of the day. He hopes to provide some revolutionary truth to counteract the double-speak that politicians, 'leaders' and the media use to try to fool us. He says the best antidote for bad or deliberately misleading information is good information, which he provides.

## What Will Happen When Donald Trump Takes Over U.S. Drone & Targeted Assassination Program?

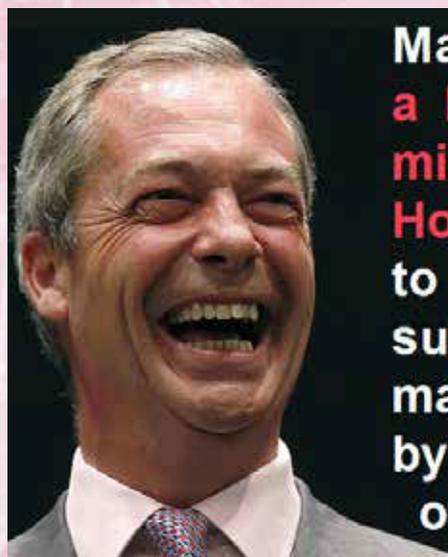
[https://www.democracynow.org/2016/12/27/what\\_will\\_happen\\_when\\_donald\\_trump](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/12/27/what_will_happen_when_donald_trump)

In Syracuse, New York, four people were arrested outside the Hancock Air National Guard Base on Friday at a nonviolent protest against the U.S. drone assassination program. Demonstrators marked the Christmas holiday by dressing as biblical figures and erecting a 20-foot-long nativity scene at the gates of the air base, which is home to the 174th Attack Wing of the National Guard's Reaper drone program. We turn now to look at what will happen when Donald Trump takes over Obama's drone war program.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP: As far as drones are concerned, yes, to take out terrorists—the only thing is, I want them to get it right. But to take out terrorists, yes, I would—I would think that that is something I would continue to do. As far as beyond that, I don't want to talk about it, because I do want to be unpredictable, in a sense. I don't want the enemy to know exactly where I'm coming from.

## Nigel Farage's warped, staggeringly hypocritical and defamatory bullshit

<http://anotherangryvoice.blogspot.co.uk/2016/12/nigel-farages-warped-staggeringly.html>



Man who did a deal with a bunch of anti-democratic misogynistic, extreme-right Holocaust deniers in order to save his party's EU subsidies accuses other man whose wife was killed by an extreme-right terrorist of "supporting extremism"!

Exactly how delusional would you have to be to cast a party that is 90% bankrolled by ex-Tory donors, stuffed full of failed, disgraced and defected Tories, and led by an ex-Tory party activist who describes the party he leads as the only one "keeping the flame of Thatcherism



alive" as the plucky anti-establishment outsiders who are going to stick up for the interests of ordinary working people? What kind of hopelessly gullible wishful thinking could lead people to believe such transparent nonsense?

ANOTHER ANGRY VOICE

# Best of

## Breaking News: Un Tells Israel To Leave Palestinian Land

<http://breakingdownthnews.blogspot.co.uk/2016/12/breaking-news-un-tells-israel-to-leave.html>

By STE MATTHEW MURRAY 19:39:00

The UN Security Council has passed a resolution demanding an end to the construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territories after the US abstained from voting.

The resolution was introduced to the UNSC by New Zealand, Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal on Friday, a day after Egypt withdrew reportedly under pressure from Israel and US President-elect Donald Trump.

## Voters will be required to show ID before they can vote, to prevent anyone fraudulently taking another person's ballot paper.

<http://voxpolygonline.com/2016/12/27/controversy-over-tory-plan-to-combat-voter-fraud-by-fraudulently-denying-people-their-democratic-right/>

This Writer has been an active participant in many elections, now - and the only instances of fraud I've seen have to do with postal votes not being sent to the voters.

Therefore I have to say that this is a waste of time and energy that takes the focus away from maladministration by the relevant authorities and puts it on people who do not deserve it.

Labour has made a similar point - that the demand for identification will hinder people who are per-

fectedly entitled to exercise their democratic right:

Cat Smith, Labour's shadow minister for voter engagement and youth affairs, said in a statement: "A year ago the Electoral Commission reported that 3.5 million electors - 75 percent of the electorate - would have no acceptable piece of photo ID. Under the Government's proposals, these voters would either be denied a vote entirely, or in other trial areas, required to produce multiple pieces of ID, 'one from group A, one from group B'.

## If Councillor Maroni Suspended For Standing Up To Racists, What Is @Uklabour For?

<https://skwawkbox.org/2016/12/27/if-cllrmaroni-suspended-for-standing-up-to-racists-what-is-uklabour-for/>

By SKWAWKBOX 27/12/2016

Bookmark the permalink.

At the beginning of this month, the SKWAWKBOX highlighted the by-election contest in Crewe between Labour candidate Natasha Maroni and a swaggering, worse-than-the-norm UKIP candidate who was absolutely convinced he would walk what he considered a two-horse race against an outclassed opponent.

Ms Maroni scored a stellar win for Labour, polling 3 times more votes than the nearest challenger and pushing the UKIP braggart into an embarrassing 3rd place in his supposed two-horse race.

Just weeks after that victory, Councillor Maroni faces the threat of suspension by her local council - for the 'crime' of having sworn at the blatant provocations of a shameless racist.

## Occupy, Strike, Resist: 3 Lessons from the Warwick Occupation

<http://novaramedia.com/2016/12/18/occupy-strike-resist-3-lessons-from-the-warwick-occupation/>

By Clare Hymer and Connor Woodman

@WarwickFreeEd

On Friday morning, it was announced that Warwick for Free Education (WFFE) - an activist group at the University of Warwick who have for the past fortnight occupied a £5.3 million

conference facility on campus - have won large concessions from the university on their demands. These demands - that the university oppose the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), agree to fair teaching conditions for hourly-paid academic staff, and scrap the protest injunction currently in place across War-

wick's campus - all speak to wider trends in the marketisation of UK higher education institutions, the casualisation of the labour market, and the repression of student protest. Like so many student occupations in recent years, the occupiers reimagined the space as one of collaborative political educa-

tion. Students and staff came together for a diverse range of open events, from talks on the border industry to direct action workshops and film screenings. Occupations have long been used by students as a tactic for forcing political and economic change, and while the occupiers at Warwick did not win their de-

mands outright, they won concessions from university management on all three, and one demand in full. Here are three key reasons why the occupation at Warwick worked.

1. The occupation was the product of two years of movement building.
2. There was solidarity between staff and students.
3. The occupiers used economic disruption as leverage.

## Best Websites

<http://www.thecanary.co/>

A formidable left wing news website with fresh and well written articles it is funded by online donations.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

The website of Amnesty International working to defend people's human rights all over the world. Promoting and protecting freedom of speech and working to stop torture and inhumane treatment of people.

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/>

Greenpeace fights to defend the natural world and promote peace by investigating, exposing and confronting environmental abuse, and championing environmentally responsible solutions.

<http://novaramedia.com/>

Novara Media examines the social and economic issues of the 21st century.

They provide political commentary and stories that you won't find in the mainstream media. The pluralist discussion can feed back into political action.

<http://www.democracynow.org/>

*Democracy Now!* is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program hosted by journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez. Pioneering the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., Democracy Now!

<https://off-guardian.org/>

Critical look at our allegedly liberal and free press.

<http://evolvepolitics.com/>

Evolve Politics is a truly independent, shared equity media outlet, providing incisive news reporting and investigative journalism that highlights and exposes injustice, inequality and unfairness within UK politics, and throughout society in general. It has come into existence to provide an alternative to the pro-establishment dominated media.

<http://thejusticegap.com/>

The site is run by Jon Robins (jon@thejusticegap.com; @JusticeGap). Jon is a journalist and has written about the law and justice for the national papers and specialist press for 15 years. Jon launched "thejusticegap" on October 6th 2011.



# WHERE THE HEAVIEST CUTS FALL

UN's highly critical report confirms UK government has systematically breached the human rights of disabled people



By Kitty S Jones

The United Nations (UN) has published a report following investigations into the allegations of “grave and systematic” abuses of the human rights of disabled people in the UK. Campaigners and disabled people’s groups contacted the UN, making formal complaints about violations of disabled people’s rights and raising serious concerns about the consequences of the welfare reforms for disabled people in 2012, which triggered the inquiry under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Many of us also made further submissions, supporting the inquiry with evidence. The report has been welcomed by disability campaigners, with many saying the findings come as no surprise.

The report said “The Committee is impressed by the amount of data collected by stakeholders who contributed to the inquiry.”

The highly critical report, published in Geneva, concludes that the rights of disabled people to live independently, to work, and to achieve an adequate standard of living have been detrimentally affected by austerity measures. The range of measures aimed at reducing public spending since 2010, including controversial changes such as the bedroom tax, and cuts to disability benefits and social care budgets, have disproportionately and adversely affected disabled people.

The UN report of the findings of contraventions by the UK government to the rights of disabled people, which said much of what many of us have been writing and campaigning about for the past four years - since the controversial 2012 Welfare “Reform” Act and the targeted austerity programme - said nothing that many of us didn’t already know. But reading it personally was a surprisingly powerful emotional experience, despite the measured and emotionally-neutral language used throughout the report.

Whilst I am relieved on one level that most of our concerns, research, analysis and experiences were confirmed, and that the government was exposed for withholding evidence, and sometimes manufacturing it, and for excluding disabled people from any consultation regarding the cuts to their support, I am nonetheless still shocked that we live in a country that has permitted a government to treat sick and disabled people with such contempt and exclude us from full democratic citizenship and deny us basic human rights.

Members of the UN committee of 18 independent experts visited Britain in October 2015 and the report was based on more than 200



interviews and some 3,000 pages of documentary evidence.

The 22-page report condemned the radical and largely unmonitored welfare cuts and benefit caps and the social care cuts introduced as a major part of the Conservative’s austerity programme - the government claimed these cuts would make the welfare system “fairer and reduce benefit fraud.” The UN found no evidence of benefit fraud or fairness.

As anticipated, the UK government has rejected the UN report, saying in a formal response that its

produce evidence to substantiate their claims and denials, and there wasn’t a shred of concern for disabled people or remorse expressed about the distress and harm that their targeted austerity cuts have caused; there was just a refusal to be accountable and transparent, more denial and more gaslighting.

In their lengthy rebuttal, the Conservatives claimed that the UN inquiry was “too narrow in scope” and that the UK government did not plan to follow up on the recommendations any further.

*“I am ..... shocked that we live in a country that has permitted a government to treat sick and disabled people with such contempt”*

findings presented an “inaccurate picture” of life for disabled people in the UK: “While the government continues to improve and build on the support available to disabled people, it stands by and is proud of its record.”

The government went on to say: “As a strong parliamentary democracy, where the voices and opinions of disabled people are represented and listened to, the UK is a place where disabled people’s rights are respected, promoted and upheld.”

As a person who is disabled because of illness, and someone who has supported many other disabled people going through assessments, mandatory reviews and tribunals, I can say that our collective experiences indicate that we are NOT represented, nor have we been listened to. Our rights have clearly not been respected, promoted and upheld. The government has treated disabled people with contempt, excluding us from a reasonable standard of living that meets our basic needs, from equal opportunities, freedom from prejudice and discrimination, full democratic citizenship and human rights. Their response is telling. The government did not

### The inquiry findings

The conclusion of the UN inquiry: “The Committee considers that there is reliable evidence that the threshold of grave or systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities has been met in the State party.

The facts submitted by the source were disputed by the State party. The Committee engaged in a verification exercise in which the facts that appeared to be controversial were cross-checked with data collected from a variety of sources, including parliamentary inquiries, reports of the independent monitoring body of the Convention, official statistics, reports and data originating from other government departments or units, entity governments, research institutes, service providers, academic centres, independent experts, former government officers, grass-roots non-governmental organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities and individuals. In some cases, some State party’s statements were not supported by evidence collected

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by the investigation. In others, the State party indicated that no data were available. The findings below are based on a comprehensive analysis of data provided by various sources.

The Committee observes that various pieces of legislation related to recent welfare policies do not fully enforce the international human rights framework related to social protection and independent living. In connection thereto, it was observed that in the field of social protection, persons with disabilities have not been properly considered as right-holders and entitled to benefits with regard to their right to social protection. Similarly, while the Care Act 2014 reflects the principles of well-being of persons with disabilities and underlines the objective of personalization of support packages, it fails to properly acknowledge the elements of autonomy and control and choice, which are intrinsic to the right to independent living as referred to in article 19 of the Convention.

That conclusion is based on the following findings of systematic violations of the convention:

(a) The State party has implemented a policy aimed at reforming its welfare system and the reforms have been justified in the context of austerity measures to achieve fiscal and budgetary policy consolidation;

(b) The assumptions made under the policy include that: taxpayers need to be treated with fairness; large numbers of persons with disabilities have been relying and dependent on social benefits; persons are better off in work than on benefits; the dependency of persons with disabilities on benefits is in itself a disincentive to move them into employment; the number of persons with disabilities relying on social benefits was to be decreased; and tightening sanctions and conditionality of social benefits is a legitimate tool for incentivizing their moving into employment;

(c) The impact assessments conducted by the State party prior to the implementation of several measures of its welfare reform expressly foresaw an adverse impact on persons with disabilities;

(d) Several measures have disproportionately and adversely affected the rights of persons with disabilities;

(e) Measures resulting in reduction of support provided to meet the extra cost of disability, denial of reasonable accommodation in assessment procedures and realization of the right to employment have had a discriminatory effect on persons with disabilities;

(f) The core elements of the rights to independent living and being included in the community, an adequate standard of living and social protection and their right to

employment have been affected: persons with disabilities affected by policy changes have had their freedom of choice and control over their daily activities restricted, the extra cost of disability has been set aside and income protection has been curtailed as a result of benefit cuts, while the expected policy goal of achieving decent and stable employment is far from being attained;

(g) There is evidence that a large number of persons with disabilities have been affected (e.g. 13,900 persons with disabilities lost their Motability schemes and therefore their adapted cars, upon implementation of Personal Independence Payment, up to February 2016; 492,180 had been placed in the Employment and Support Allowance work-related activity group by the end of 2015; 41,792 Employment and Support Allowance work-related activity group sanctions were handed out up to March 2014);

(h) Evidence gathered nationally by Parliament, the independent monitoring framework, universities and research institutes and centres and independent experts, has documented adverse and disproportionate effects of measures on persons with disabilities;

(i) The State party has not conducted a comprehensive human rights-based cumulative impact assessment even though reliable sources have indicated it is feasible;

(j) The State party continues its policy of reducing social benefits of persons with disabilities as reflected in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

### Comments from the report

"Evidence indicates that legal aid to challenge administrative decisions ending or curtailing their benefits before first-tier tribunals has been restricted. Legal aid for cases before those tribunals has also been curtailed. Similarly, access to review by an independent and impartial tribunal has been restricted by the introduction of mandatory reconsideration procedures before the same administrative entity that has ruled on benefits."

Another observation: "The availability of support [for disabled people] is established on the basis of what is considered to be an affordable service in the market, rather than on the specific needs of the person concerned." Austerity measures were introduced and targeted disproportionately at disabled people at the same time that UK millionaires were awarded a tax cut of £107,000 each per year. What is considered "an affordable service" is entirely founded on ideologically driven political decision making and has no basis in economic necessity.

Critical comment about Con-

servative propaganda and scapegoating: "The roll out of those policies included the issuing of statements by high-ranking officers that the reform was aimed at making the welfare system fairer to taxpayers and more balanced and transparent and reducing benefit fraud. Persons with disabilities have been regularly portrayed negatively as being dependent or making a living out of benefits, committing fraud as benefit claimants, being lazy and putting a burden on taxpayers, who are paying "money for nothing". Although the State party produced evidence of formal efforts and public awareness campaigns to improve the image of persons with disabilities, the inquiry col-

lected evidence that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations who had participated in consultations launched by the State party, were not meaningfully taken into account in the decision-making and had little or no influence on policy decisions."

Particularly important in the current context of the government work, health and disability green paper, the UN says that: "Given the barriers that still prevent the full participation of persons with dis-

a certain threshold and sustainability in their wages. They should become eligible again without delay if they lose their jobs."

One of the recommendations is that the State party: "Take appropriate measures to combat any negative and discriminatory stereotypes or prejudice against persons with disabilities in public and the media, including that dependency on benefits is in itself a disincentive of employment; implement broad mass media campaigns, in consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, particularly those affected by the welfare reform, to promote them as full rights holders, in accordance with the Convention; and adopt meas-

## Where the heaviest cuts

# fall



### Average annual cuts per person by 2015-16

Image from *Counting the Cuts* - read the report here: <http://bit.ly/counting-cuts>

lected evidence that persons with disabilities continue to experience increasing hostility, aggressive behaviour and sometimes attacks to their personal integrity. The inquiry also found no substantiation of the alleged benefit fraud by persons with disabilities."

Importantly: "Public sector equality duty obliges State authorities to carry out impact assessments when they plan to introduce measures, including legislative measures, to ensure that groups with protected characteristics, among them persons with disabilities, are properly consulted and any adverse impact on them is properly justified. The State party submitted evidence that it has complied with domestic legal duties for all the intended changes to the welfare system. The inquiry collected evidence that a major piece of legislation of the welfare reform, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, was not thoroughly compliant with those requirements. Similarly, a court of law found that the decision to close

abilities in the labour market and mean higher unemployment rates for them, income-maintenance social security schemes are particularly important for persons with disabilities. Such schemes allow them to maintain their autonomy and freedom of control and choice of their living arrangements and day-to-day activities. Without an adequate level of social protection, persons with disabilities run the risk of being isolated, segregated from the community and/or institutionalized.

The State party should find an adequate balance between providing an adequate level of income security for persons with disabilities through social security schemes and supporting their labour inclusion. The two sets of measures should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory. Measures aimed at facilitating the inclusion in the labour market of beneficiaries of social security should include transitional arrangements to ensure income protection while they reach

ures to address complaints of harassment and hate crime by persons with disabilities, promptly investigate those allegations, hold the perpetrators accountable and provide fair and appropriate compensation to victims."

"[...] including that dependency on benefits is in itself a disincentive of employment." This also has implications for the recent green paper, which discusses at length "incentives" for addressing disabled people in the ESA support group being "parked" on benefits and "mistakenly perceiving" that they are too ill to work. The findings of the inquiry expose most of the Conservative's underpinning assumptions in the green paper, and in all their "interventions" aimed at disabled people, as utter tosh. (I will be including quotes from the UN report in my consultation responses to the work, health and disability green paper.)

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Most of the cuts to social security have been justified by that particular myth, and so have the increased, harsh welfare conditionality, the extremely punitive sanctions and exploitative workfare schemes, the endless pseudo psychological state "therapy" aimed at "behaviour change", attitude modification, nudging and coercion, and condescending character assassinations; and of course it's worth considering the lucrative contracts handed to profiteering private providers ironically costing us billions, whilst being contracted to take money from poor people to save the "taxpayer"

"The situation of persons with disabilities deemed "fit to work" is not monitored as such. Those who have re-entered the system by claiming the Job Seeker's Allowance to support them until they find work face stringent levels of conditions and sanctions, which do not take into account the specific barriers they face. The Committee was informed that, in some cases, sanctions had led to financial hardship for persons with disabilities, and particularly persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

The State party initially stated that it did not monitor deaths that occurred after assessments. Evidence gathered during the inquiry indicated that, in 2012 and 2015,

the present report, on the rights to independent living and to be included in the community, social protection and employment of persons with disabilities. The State party should ensure that such assessment is rights-based and meaningfully involves persons with disabilities and their representative organizations;

(b) Ensure that any intended measure of the welfare reform is rights-based, upholds the human rights model of disability and does not disproportionately and/or adversely affect the rights of persons with disabilities to independent living, an adequate standard of living and employment. To prevent adverse consequences, the State party should carry out human

relation to the extra cost of disability, that is compatible with an adequate standard of living and ensure their full inclusion and participation in society; and they have access and are supported in gaining employment in the open labour market on an equal basis with others;

(d) Ensure that public budgets take into account the rights of persons with disabilities, that sufficient budget allocations are made available to cover extra costs associated with living with a disability and that appropriate mitigation measures, with appropriate budget allocations, are in place for persons with disabilities affected by austerity measures;

(e) Introduce all adjustments

consideration to their views in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any legislation, policy or programme action related to the rights addressed in the present report;

(h) Take appropriate measures to combat any negative and discriminatory stereotypes or prejudice against persons with disabilities in public and the media, including that dependency on benefits is in itself a disincentive of employment; implement broad mass media campaigns, in consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, particularly those affected by the welfare reform, to promote them as full rights holders, in accordance with the Convention; and adopt measures to address complaints of harassment and hate crime from persons with disabilities, promptly investigate those allegations, hold the perpetrators accountable and provide fair and appropriate compensation to victims;

(i) Ensure that, in the implementation of legislation, policies and programmes, special attention is paid to persons with disabilities living with a low income or in poverty and persons with disabilities at higher risk of exclusion, such as persons with intellectual, psychosocial or multiple disabilities and women, children and older persons with disabilities. Those measures should be put in place within contributive and non-contributive regimes;

(j) Set up a mechanism and a system of human rights-based indicators to permanently monitor the impact of the different policies and programmes relating to the access and enjoyment by persons with disabilities of the right to social protection and an adequate standard of living, the right to live independently and be included in the community and the right to work, in close consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all regions and countries that constitute the State party;

(k) Respond to the present report within the time limit prescribed under the Optional Protocol, widely disseminate the Committee's findings and recommendations and provide appropriate follow-up to the recommendations of the present report, including during the consideration of the State party's initial report before the Committee.

### Inquiry reports

1. Report of the Inquiry Concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

2. Observations of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the report of the Inquiry carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.



money.

Further comment: "Evidence indicates several flaws in the processes related to the Employment and Support Allowance. In particular, the Committee notes that, despite several adjustments made to the Work Capability Assessment, the assessment has continued to be focused on a functional evaluation of skills and capabilities, and puts aside personal circumstances and needs, and barriers faced by persons with disabilities to return to employment, particularly those of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities. In the initial period covered by the present report, evidence indicates a significant percentage of assessments were overturned by tribunals."

such information was released by the Department of Work and Pensions following Freedom of Information requests. Additionally, information originated from official sources indicated that 33 deaths of claimants who died after being assessed were being examined. The State party claims that there is no causal link. The Committee is not aware of any attempts at objective, thorough, open and impartial investigation regarding those deaths by an independent body."

### Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Conduct a cumulative impact assessment of the measures adopted since 2010, referred to in

rights-based cumulative impact assessments of the whole range of intended measures that would have an impact on the rights of persons with disabilities;

(c) Ensure that: any intended legislation and/or policy measure respects the core elements of the rights analysed in the present report; persons with disabilities retain their autonomy, choice and control over their place of residence and with whom they live; they receive appropriate and individualized support, including through personal assistance, and have access to community-based services on an equal basis with others; they have access to security social schemes that ensure income protection, including in

necessary to make all information, communications, administrative and legal procedures in relation to social security entitlements, independent living schemes and employment/unemployment-related support services fully accessible to all persons with disabilities;

(f) Ensure access to justice, by providing appropriate legal advice and support, including through reasonable and procedural accommodation for persons with disabilities seeking redress and reparation for the alleged violation of their rights, as covered in the present report;

(g) Actively consult and engage with persons with disabilities through their representative organizations and give due con-

# VALIANT FOR TRUTH, A RESPONSE TO HOW THE ENGLISH ESTABLISHMENT FRAMED STEPHEN WARD

CLIFF JONES CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING - A FRESH LOOK AT THE PROFUMO AFFAIR

By Caroline Kennedy &  
Phillip Knightley

When it mattered few of those we might see as *dramatis personae* in a tragedy remained close friends with truth. If self-preservation was weighed against truth it usually won. This was the case not only for individuals but also for government and for those that served and mingled with government. By contrast, Stephen Ward, the tragic hero, remained true to his friends and to life itself. And for that devotion to truth and life he killed himself and cheated an *Establishment* that sought to project upon him its lies, deceptions, duplicity and incompetence. The injustice done to him remains. This book reminds and bestirs us.

With all his foolish faults, which included talking too much, the inability to manage his finances, trust in others and naïve faith in justice, this man who enhanced the lives of so many was the one whose destruction some of his friends would directly, indirectly, deliberately, unintentionally and, too late, regretfully, help government, the legal system, The Establishment, to bring about.

This is not simply a story about an excitingly racy half-hidden episode from a disappearing past. There are layers of meaning that, as they are revealed, demonstrate that truth, honesty and justice, though difficult to nail down, always matter. They certainly matter to the authors who deserve John Bunyan's appellation, Valiant For Truth.

The title includes that impressive word Establishment, multiplied by the word English. It recalls



books by authors such as Anthony Sampson who tried to discover where powerful people placed their fulcrum, how long was their lever, whose hands were allowed on it and how much force they exerted. In 2014 Owen Jones published yet another book on The

Establishment subtitled, *And how they get away with it.*

The notion of a powerful group, sometimes cohesive and clearly defined but often disparate and murky, cannot be thrown into the dustbin of history. Such groups

*'The judge was, although probably playing by the rules, so clearly intent upon a conviction that he might actually have been appearing for the prosecution.'*

have long-life chameleon-like qualities though, as Kennedy and Knightley show, their control over events is not always effortlessly certain. They work hard at getting away with it but while there remain authors combining high-level research skills, relevant experience and strong human values being part of The Establishment is no guarantee of immunity.

This book shines a light into the dark corners of The Establish-

ment of the early 1960s and, yes, the private networks of school, university, club and regiment do play a part in the tragedy, as do the secret world of spies, the appetite of the press for the salacious, the power to pressure witnesses and politicians' ruthless urge to survive; but the authors also convey a strong sense of Stephen Ward maintaining a standard of humanity higher than those in whom he mistakenly placed his trust. His was not the only tragedy. For some of those that distanced themselves from him at his lowest point their later lives were, as a consequence, far from content. But he stands out as a noble figure, undeserving of his fate.

Ward was a cultured man, combining eagerness for experience with an empathetic nature. Royalty and aristocracy were keen to cultivate this osteopath who not only banished their pain but, as an artist, also immortalised them. He certainly charmed but did not surprise his way into such society; he was invited and welcomed. To Stephen, I believe, there really was no distinction between an insider and an outsider world. He felt 'in' wherever he was; until the time when so many of those that had been glad to be his friends crossed to the other side of the road to watch him being scapegoated and attacked.

The legal charge that he lived on immoral earnings, that he pimped, was only ever credible in the minds of two kinds of establishment figures. The first group we might call the Cynical Fixers who decided that Ward must be sacrificed for their sake. His name was besmirched to save reputations and a false accusation was key to this. Those that had sought his company now shunned it. The security services that had played

upon his patriotism when they wished him to work for them allowed him to be characterised as a Walter Mitty fantasist.

John Profumo, Macmillan's Secretary of State for War, having 'mised' (lied to) the House of Commons about his relationship with Christine Keeler, was to be allowed a dignified departure from public life. A conviction against Stephen Ward, a contrived calumny, was necessary for the construction of an official narrative to serve The Establishment. Like so many fairy tales, this featured Stephen as a vile, wicked creature, source of all that was evil: the man who introduced a Keeler 'of easy virtue' to Profumo, a respected minister of the Crown: the man whose friendship with a Soviet spy endangered national security: the man with no morals. Once that narrative had been embedded in the public consciousness The Establishment intended to continue with business as before.

Profumo did gain his quiet dignified departure but Ward's suicide, despite strenuous and continuing (to this day) official efforts to suppress and distort evidence, ensured that business would not continue as before and the new narrative was not embedded, though official guilt has never been admitted. This book provides us with the evidence and the will to call again for an admission of official guilt.

The second group I think of as The Bemused. For me Lord Denning, the Master of the Rolls, belongs here. He remains noted throughout the world for the high quality of his legal judgments and his belief that justice should be a theme of law. Yet, when required to look into and report on 'The Profumo Affair', his values and expertise were

overwhelmed and he was out of his social and sexual depth. The Denning Report sold in huge numbers and was no doubt intended to play a large part in establishing the official narrative, but Denning made a simplistic judgment, Establishment Good: Ward Evil.

Unfortunately for The Establishment the Denning Report did not wash. Its sloppiness and antediluvian perceptions of social mores harmed the attempt to embed an official narrative. There were many factors involved, including Harold Macmillan's health, but the Conservative government was

now on the skids and destined to, narrowly, lose the next general election. Attempts to shore up The Establishment of the day merely confirmed perceptions of its irrelevant fuddy-duddiness.

The prosecuting counsel at Ward's trial we might allow as someone who was cynically doing his job, though hardly a noble one. The judge was, although probably playing by the rules, so clearly intent upon a conviction that he might actually have been appearing for the prosecution. Was he Cynic or Bemused? He was certainly biased and nasty.

Harold Macmillan would probably have preferred to be classified among The Bemused. But otherworldly bemusement was just one of the parts that the great political actor could play without rehearsal or script. He was never so innocent. Weaving tangled webs comes with the job, though we might yearn for politicians that can do better than become entangled in their own webs of deceit. The continuing disgrace is that, despite lively interest in the story, justice has yet to be done. More than fifty years ago various people were allotted parts to play. Some of them were expected to go on playing them without respite.

They were sentenced to stay in the story and we have done insufficient to release them.

Even today the names of Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice Davies raise eyebrows and provoke knowing smiles as part of Ward's story. The Establishment decided the roles they should have.

They were a source of uncomplicated fun for the rich, privileged and powerful but they also served as lightning rods when people in power and those that sustained that power felt the need to divert blame. The word prostitute was probably the most sticky label that could be applied to these young friends of Stephen but, despite its total inappropriateness, it was the insult of first resort used by politicians, police and lawyers seeking to simultaneously discredit them and yet make



use of their evidence under oath in order to 'get' Ward: to 'get' him for the innocent and unplanned part he played in bringing to the surface establishment lies, hypocrisy and fear of being found out.

I feel nostalgia for the days of unflappable Supermac created by the cartoonist Vicki. Today Harold Macmillan might, for a while, have been called a 'Teflon Prime Minister'. During the period on which this book concentrates his Teflon was, however, wearing off. Possibly he and his closest friends were encountering social pressures and changes for which they were ill prepared. It is, though, wrong to assume that sex was invented in the 1960s (that was Philip Larkin's sense of humour). Instead, perhaps, deference was diminishing. Stephen Ward, linking people of widely different backgrounds, was hardly the first to have crossed and mingled social (class) boundaries. His misfortune was to have done this at a time when too many political, governmental and social (establishment) arteries were clogged and in no fit state to cope with crises.

Possibly the Cuban Missile Crisis was the greatest but we ought to remember that for Britain it came not long after Burgess, Maclean and, later, Philby were revealed as Soviet spies who fled to the USSR and the humiliating Suez fiasco when Macmillan's predecessor Anthony Eden tried and failed to rattle a rusty sabre. Harold Macmillan won the 1959 General Election with the slogan 'You've Never Had It So Good' (he was lucky that he called the election after a long hot summer and an April budget that put money into people's pockets) but his restoration of national self-confidence and his talk of Britain playing a weak, but wise, Greece to the powerful, though immature, Rome of the USA was beginning to look shaky at the point when John Profumo first set eyes on Christine Keeler and when Yvgeny Ivanov arrived in London to play the part of likeable, glamorous Soviet spy

in this drama.

The idea of Christine in bed with Profumo in Ward's flat, wheedling state secrets, letting him out by the back door as Ivanov arrived at the front to jump into a warm bed to hear those secrets was never credible, though cynical attempts were made to make it appear so. It was another part of the official narrative.

US Secretary of State Dean Acheson's remark near the end of 1962 that

Great Britain has lost an empire but not yet found a role

discomforted the English Establishment. It raised the question of what it was for. It certainly wished to self-perpetuate which, perhaps, led to a defensive cast of mind. We are not simply dealing with crusty old men in crusty old clubs drinking crusty old tawny while selecting a fine cigar before deciding the fate of The Empire. It is an attractive caricature not without some validity but, as the book shows, we are also dealing with police officers, journalists and members of the security services who probably never set foot in such clubs. They were not merely foot soldiers for The Establishment. They were a part of it: their values meshed. When it was decided that Stephen Ward must be the tallest lightning rod they allowed few moral constraints or respect for truth to hold them back.

Back then I saw events through media prisms. The official narrative looked laughable but, like many, I simply filed it away. If you did the same or if this story is new to you I recommend this impressive book. It not only lifts up stones of secrecy but it inspires us to challenge injustice, then and now.

Thanks to the authors for this up-dated book and for their ferociously forensic drive to lift so many stones.

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# POETRY CORNER

## **Cardboard Street**

**Look in your city  
 Your town or your street  
 Look for the cardboard  
 That rises at night  
 To shelter the homeless  
 On a cold windy night  
 From all walks of life  
 Theses box dwellers come  
 The sick in the mind  
 The frail and the weak  
 Cardboard and paper  
 Are homes they all keep?  
 Cornflake or Porridge  
 As long as it fits  
 Their bodies at night  
 In the parks or the streets  
 They line them with paper  
 As much as they find  
 And pray to their god  
 That the weather is kind  
 The drip of the rain  
 The roar of the wind  
 The sound of their heart-beat  
 When huddled within  
 Sleep is not easy  
 On a cold winters night  
 When the frost and the snow  
 Threaten frostbite.  
 Night air is bitter  
 When craving for sleep  
 Especially when raining  
 And the box starts to leak  
 The box is all-soggy  
 And falling apart  
 Time to move on  
 And find a new home  
 Of cardboard and paper  
 And a cold pavement stone  
 Peter Wicks**

## **Giants Stand in Rocks**

**Black white man  
 Speak with forked tongue  
 Fox CNN BBC twist  
 What is going on?  
 The apparatus of power  
 Is not for you  
 History has a lot to explain  
 To the nation of the Sioux  
 Earth is precious in value  
 But oil prices are greater  
 Results in a few pipelines  
 And decades of destruction later  
 We are of the tribe of little means  
 The collective power of have nots  
 We are many, diverse and united  
 Giants standing on rocks  
 IBBY**

## **Cui Bono**

**Did they die for them or did they die for us?  
 Did they die by being courageous or cause  
 they did not make a fuss?  
 Did they die there for a Better life or was it  
 better to live for that?  
 Did they die because no-one loved them or did  
 not care at all?  
 Did they die by being clever or because each  
 one was a fool?  
 Did they die because God told them or be-  
 cause God he isn't there?  
 Did they die because some cheated or be-  
 cause they played it fair?  
 Did they die because of evil ones who then  
 become our friends?  
 Did anyone here who sent them ever try and  
 make amends?  
 Did they die to do their duty and did this stop  
 all war?  
 Did this mean that they were right and that  
 we had no more?  
 Did their dying make it better and would their  
 living make it worse?  
 So question, question, question before you go  
 to war;  
 Always ask the question whose benefit is it  
 for?**

By STUART DYE

At this time of the year, on an annual basis, accusations of behaving like Ebenezer Scrooge are wrongly aimed at me for moaning about the appearance on our TV screens of ridiculously pretentious adverts for perfume and poncey spirit-based drinks. I am also told to “not be such a Scrooge” for rolling my eyes at the dispiriting prospect of a stack of plastic rubbish appearing in this house on Christmas Eve. Pleas that purchases of this junk should be kept to a minimum – because it is manufactured from petrochemicals, difficult to recycle, assembled by horribly exploited Far East labour, shipped halfway around the Earth in order to profit American toy giants and forgotten by its recipients by mid-January – provoke further accusations of Scroogery.

I hardly need add that my assertion, made every year, that “we don’t need Twiglets, Walnuts, After Eights or that many scented candles, no-one would consider buying them if it wasn’t bloody Christmas,” does nothing to prevent the name of Charles Dickens’ best-known curmudgeon from entering the conversation.

These accusations are misplaced. I have re-read A Christmas Carol and can confirm that Scrooge wasn’t subjected to ordeal by ghosts to warn him he would die a lonely and miserable death if he didn’t happily participate in an undignified, tawdry festival of rampant consumption and waste. Dickens’ message, delivered via the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge, is a comprehensive rejection of the pursuit of profit at the expense of humanity.

Which means it is extraordinarily hypocritical, a ‘humbag’ if you will, for anyone who votes for The Conservative Party (or its militant-outrider wing UKIP) to derive any joy from the story.

Tory government policies, enacted with relish and vigour by the likes of Iain Duncan-Smith and Damian Green, consist of a series of acts of what film maker Ken Loach correctly describes as “conscious cruelty” – policies that might have been drawn up by Scrooge himself: Cuts to disability payments, withdrawal of welfare payments from the dying and bullying of the unemployed by the DWP; foreign aid being turned into a vehicle for promoting freemarket big business; the ruination of local authorities’ capacity to provide care services; the removal of access to further and higher education; the callous lack of empathy for refugees; the resumption of the war on organised labour.

The results: child poverty; in-work poverty resulting from low pay and zero hours contracts; homelessness; unaffordable debt; ripoff rents and dependency on foodbanks. All against a background of tax cuts for the wealthy



and a national debt that increases despite spending cuts.

This brutality and contempt is summed up in the following well-known passage from A Christmas Carol’s Stave 1, when two gentlemen enter Scrooge’s office to ask him to make a donation for the poor. Feel free to skim over it if you know it by heart.

‘Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge, or Mr Marley?’

‘Mr Marley has been dead these seven years,’ Scrooge replied. ‘He died seven years ago this very night.’

‘We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner,’ said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word ‘liberality’ Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

‘At this festive season of the year, Mr Scrooge,’ said the gentleman, taking up a pen, ‘it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.’

‘Are there no prisons?’ asked Scrooge.

‘Plenty of prisons,’ said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

‘And the Union workhouses?’ demanded Scrooge. ‘Are they still in operation?’

‘They are. Still,’ returned the gentleman. ‘I wish I could say they were not.’

‘The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?’ said Scrooge.

‘Both very busy Sir.’

‘Oh! I was afraid from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course,’ said Scrooge. ‘I’m very glad to hear it.’

‘Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude,’ returned the gentleman, ‘a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?’

‘Nothing!’ Scrooge replied.

‘You wish to be anonymous?’

‘I wish to be left alone,’ said Scrooge. ‘Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned; they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.’

‘Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.’

‘If they would rather die,’ said Scrooge, ‘they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides – excuse me – I don’t know that.’

‘But you might know it,’ observed the gentleman.

‘It’s not my business,’ Scrooge returned. ‘It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!’

Nice. There you have it, complete with reference to the nonsense of Thomas Malthus about surplus population. The current popularity of Scrooge’s pre-ghost

views and lack of sympathy for those affected by poverty completely disqualify all right wingers from experiencing the feel-good buzz at the end of the story, when Scrooge becomes, finally, the generous, altruistic, considerate, loving, joyous human that Dickens hoped we might all aspire to be.

A Christmas Carol was written in 1843. Dickens, responding to a government report on the abuse of child labourers in industrial production, wanted to strike a ‘sledgehammer blow... on behalf of the Poor Man’s Child.’ It took decades of struggle, and eventually a social settlement conceded by the ruling class following the World Wars, to achieve government policies that improved workplace conditions and reduced poverty and inequality while facilitating economic growth. The decoupling of economic and social advances has been the Tories’ proudest achievement of the past 30 years. The benefits of economic growth now, as in Dickens’ day, once again accrue to the wealthy and we are back to justifying this by blaming the poor for their own misfortune.

At least the concept of philanthropic capitalism existed during the Victorian era. Firms like Cadbury’s, Rowntree’s and Clark’s Shoes looked after their workforces. Now we have private equity moguls and corporations driving down wages and standards while the profits are diverted away via complex tax avoidance schemes.

Before handing over Scrooge to the ghost of Christmas yet to come, the ghost of Christmas Present reveals two children, a boy and a girl, in wretched condition, from beneath his robe. ‘This boy is Ig-

norance. This girl is Want. Beware them both and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see written that which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.’ The Spirit’s words are wasted on the 21st Century Tory Party, Increasing levels of both poverty and ignorance suits its interests just fine.

Since 2010, when it was elected by its core support of selfish, altruism-free, ignorant, self-deluding bigots, the Conservative Party has presided over a huge increase in poverty and homelessness, while bending over backwards to protect and enhance the wealth of the wealthiest. You cannot read A Christmas Carol, or enjoy any of the film versions of the book, and then resume support for a political movement that strives to condemn the rest of us to a future that social reformers like Charles Dickens worked hard to consign to the past.

Over the Christmas period we will be treated to every film version of A Christmas Carol that has ever been made. From George C. Scott and Patrick Stewart in made-for-American-TV versions, to musicals starring Michael Caine (and The Muppets) and Albert Finney. From a CGI oddity with Jim Carrey to a grotesque Disney version starring Donald Duck (awful, but still more convincing than Finney). By far the best screening ever produced was made in 1951, directed by Brian Desmond Hurst and starring the incomparable Alistair Sim.

Tories, you are forbidden from guiltlessly viewing A Christmas Carol in any of its forms, except the musical with Albert Finney. That one’s so bad that watching it is the punishment you deserve.

# THE NEW SPACE RACE

## WHO OWNS THE MOON?

Since the 1980s, an American man named Dennis Hope has been selling plots of land on the moon. As of 2013, Hope claimed to have sold 611 million acres of lunar real estate, at a pre-tax price of \$19.95 per acre. His argument—dismissed by space law experts many times over the years—is that international treaties prohibiting any country from owning the moon don't apply to individuals. So Hope made his claim and then started selling deeds.

Profiles of Hope make for entertaining reading. But they also raise an interesting question: If he doesn't own the moon, who does? And if no one does, who gets to decide what happens there?

"We're nowhere near being ready to live on the moon," you might be thinking. And you would be right! But we're probably very close to being ready to extract resources from the moon, which means we need rules.

What are the rules of outer space right now?

In 1967, the United Nations passed the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies; today we refer to it as just the Outer Space Treaty. The agreement has been signed and ratified by 104 countries, and it was mostly intended to keep the United States and the Soviet Union from turning outer space into a battlefield.

The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space meets in 1963 (Photo via UN)

As such, the treaty has little to say about who can make money off natural resources in outer space. In fact, there's only one paragraph



that speaks to that concern. It says, "Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means."

So, no one can own anything in space?

It depends on who you ask. The language in the Outer Space Treaty says no country can exclusively claim any celestial body, but it doesn't explicitly prohibit countries or commercial actors from selling things—like minerals—obtained in space. It also doesn't say they can.

Enter the U.S. Government: In 2015, both houses of Congress

passed, and President Barack Obama signed, the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act. The law covers a number of issues, but the most buzzworthy provision is this paragraph:

"A United States citizen engaged in commercial recovery of an asteroid resource or a space resource under this chapter shall be entitled to any asteroid resource or space resource obtained, including to possess, own, transport, use, and sell the asteroid resource or space resource obtained in accordance with applicable law, including the international obligations of the United States."

In effect, the U.S. declared that while Americans can't claim ownership of planetary bodies, they can keep (and sell) what they find on those bodies.

What happens if other countries don't want U.S. companies mining the moon?

That's the big question space law advocates are mulling over. The Outer Space Treaty was an easy pass largely because the world was more interested in preventing the Cold War from leaking into space than establishing rules for minerals rights. Humans just weren't ready for space mining in 1967, but the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were ready for war.

But U.S.-based space companies are optimistic that the law won't lead to international um-



tion (and not just because we don't currently have a viable way to do it).

One proposal is likely to make potential Mars settlers a bit nervous: Let the settlers figure it out on their own.

"Rather than extend the ideas of the parent nation, corporation, or global order, colonists arriving on a liberated Mars would relinquish their former status as earthlings and embrace a new planetary citizenship as martians," Jacob Haqq-Misra proposed in the Boston Globe last year.

Such an approach would require Mars settlers to "fend for themselves to develop their own systems of conflict resolution, governance, currency, education, art, music, and spirituality — without depending upon any of the legal protections of Earth."

SpaceX is among those who want to colonize Mars (Photo via SpaceX)

It would also be a tougher sell to the Earth's governments, which currently operate under the mutual understanding that countries are responsible for what their citizens do in space.

It sounds like there are no solid answers to any of these questions

You are not wrong. But there is a general belief among space advocates that settling the solar system should be done with an eye toward peace and cooperation.

brage. For one thing, there's a lot of moon to go around, and more than 150 million asteroids in the inner solar system. That means the number of places from whence we can extract resources vastly outnumber our species' collective ability to extract them.

Asteroid Lutetia (Photo via NASA)

At the same time, the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act doesn't prohibit other countries from passing their own resource laws, and there's no reason to think the U.S. would object if they did. Bob Richards, the CEO of lunar mining company Moon Express, thinks the act is a first step to establish normal, peaceful mining policies that every country could adopt.

"The more that the world agrees that this is OK, the more that we have a chance to be a mature and responsible spacefaring species," Richards told Space News in 2015. "It really is a chance for us, as humans, to find a way to conquer a new frontier without conquering each other. It's a new opportunity for us to try to get things right."

What about colonization? And the rest of space?

Good questions, but the answers are far less clear. The Outer Space Treaty says no country can claim sovereignty, which makes colonizing Mars a murky proposi-



"As a civilized species, we should think about how not to do what we did in the 14th and 15th centuries," Dr. Ram S. Jakhu, director of the Institute of Air and Space Law at McGill University told me on a recent phone call.

"Europe went to new places, killed people, and destroyed the environment. But that was in keeping with what our species did 500 years ago. Are we more civilized now? We must have a different thinking for exploring space than we did for exploring our own planet."

Fingers crossed.



"You have a giant robot, we have a giant robot - we have a duty to the science fiction lovers of this world to fight them to the death."

... this was the invitation from the CEO of an American robotics company to their Japanese rivals to pitch their robot "Megabot" against the "Kuratas", another huge, gun-toting robot. The weigh-in: about 10,000 pounds, 15 foot of solid nuts and bolts.

### Flying metal drop-kick

Kogoro Kurata, CEO of Suidobashi Industry, wants their robots to have a "punch-up", like in the good-old days. Would that be Queensbury rules, Kogoro? or just good parenting? Anime and Megabot fans will be thrilled with the forthcoming clank-fest.

From here it looks like an embarrassing homage to the gods of war and death, indicative of a socio-economic trend where manpower and resources are wasted in the production of rich-boys' toys.

Secret negotiations for the robot-rumble continue.

Play today; tomorrow, for real. Must robots fight? With some advanced program tweaks Megabot could rob Kuratas or commit an indecent assault. Bad taste? you haven't seen anything yet.

At the fifth UN weapons review conference in Geneva last week the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) committed to the long-term monitoring and ethical evaluation of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).



# ROBOTS OF WAR

That's robots of war, to you and me.

### Double standards

Earlier in the year the CCW stated that it was their "view" (non-binding) that "lethal force shall never be delegated to autonomous weapons systems without the possibility of human intervention."

Yet, according to the New York Times, and in direct contradiction of the UN view, the Pentagon has issued a directive for the development of weapons capable of killing "without human oversight."

Elsewhere, the US is already attempting to subvert international law with its development of robot land-mines.

### A landmine -not

The US Department of Defence is developing landmine's that they want classed as intelligent robots: intelligent robots are not subject to landmine treaties.

Experimental models respond to potential targets through ground-vibration profiles and can jump over the target or into differ-

ent locations.

It wasn't me what done it, guv'nor

Make no mistake, and a good philosopher will tell you, there is no "artificial intelligence", no "autonomous" or "pilot-less" systems. The programmer is the pilot.

These phrases point to myths, feebly intriguing get-out clauses for our actions. There are only human operators and advanced methods of targeting. Our hand is in every robot outcome.

Which is one reason why arms manufacturers attempt to off-load national and individual responsibility for killing by developing "pilot-less drones" that rely on a supposed "artificial intelligence" (AI). But like the booby-trap, there is always a human operator who is fully responsible.

One of the first "pilot-less" weapon systems was the "Tomahawk" cruise missile which could hunt for Soviet ships "without direct human control." It was withdrawn in the early 1990s following a nuclear arms deal with Russia.

### Closer to home

Britain's "fire and forget" Brimstone missile, carried by the RAF's Tornado's, uses laser and microwave to target tanks and distinguish them from trucks and cars.

The Brimstone sends information to other missiles about target acquirement and elimination to minimise waste. Metre-accuracy is maintained through satellite positioning of both missile and target.

Mimicry does not entail Identity

It's early days for our robots of war.

But all robots are built to mimic our actions in our absence. That does not mean that robots have intentions or an identity, even if they wear lipstick or talk like a hero - that would be old-fashioned animism or voodoo, where objects or dolls become alive in some way.

The human race is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of the metal doll: the robot.

## In case you don't know what's happening in the Middle East.

By Joe Connor

President Assad (who is bad) is a nasty guy who got so nasty his people rebelled and the Rebels (who are good) started winning (Hurrah!).

But then some of the rebels turned a bit nasty and are now called Islamic State (who are definitely bad!) and some continued to support democracy (who are still good.)

So the Americans (who are questionably good) started bombing Islamic State (who are bad) and giving arms to the Syrian Rebels (who are good) so they could fight Assad (who is still bad) which was good.

By the way, there is a breakaway state in the north run by the Kurds who want to fight IS (which is a good thing) but the Turkish authorities think they are bad, so we have to say they are bad whilst



secretly thinking they're good and giving them guns to fight IS (which is good) but that is another matter.

Getting back to Syria..

So President Putin (who is bad, cos he invaded Crimea and the Ukraine and killed lots of folks including that nice Russian man in London with polonium poisoned sushih has decided to back Assad (who is still bad) by attacking IS (who are also bad) which is sort of a good thing?

But Putin (still bad) thinks the Syrian Rebels (who are good) are also bad, and so he bombs them too, much to the annoyance of the

Americans (who are good) who are busy backing and arming the rebels (who are also good).

Now Iran (who used to be bad, but now they have agreed not to build any nuclear weapons and bomb Israel are now good ) are going to provide ground troops to support Assad (still bad) as are the Russians (bad) who now have ground troops and aircraft in Syria.

So a Coalition of Assad (still bad) Putin (extra bad) and the Iranians (good, but in a bad sort of way) are going to attack IS (who are bad) which is a good thing, but also the Syrian Rebels (who are good) which is bad.

Now the British (obviously good, except that nice Mr Corbyn in the corduroy jacket, who is probably bad ) and the Americans (also good) cannot attack Assad (still bad) for fear of upsetting Putin (bad ) and Iran ( good / bad) and



now they have to accept that Assad might not be that bad after all compared to IS (who are super bad).

So Assad ( bad ) is now probably good, being better than IS (but let's face it, drinking your own wee is better than IS so no real choice there) and since Putin and Iran are also fighting IS that may now make them good.

America (still good) will find it hard to arm a group of rebels being attacked by the Russians for fear of upsetting Mr Putin (now good) and that nice mad Ayatollah in Iran (also good) and so they may be forced to say that the Rebels are now bad, or at the very least abandon them to their fate. This will lead most of them to flee to Turkey and on to Europe or join IS ( still the

only constantly bad group).

Sunni Muslims will also see the lack of action by Britain and America in support of their Sunni rebel brothers as something of a betrayal ( mmm.might have a point.) and hence we will be seen as bad.

So now we have America (now bad) and Britain (also bad) providing limited support to Sunni Rebels (bad) many of whom are looking to IS (Good / bad) for support against Assad (now good) who, along with Iran (also good) and Putin (also, now, unbelievably, good) are attempting to retake the country Assad used to run before all this started?

So, now that you fully understand everything, all your questions are answered.

# Jokes

Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. As they lay down for the night, Holmes said: "Watson, look up into the sky and tell me what you see".

Watson: "I see millions and millions of stars".

Holmes: "And what does that tell you?"

Watson: "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"

Holmes: "Somebody stole our tent."

A man enters a barber-shop for a shave. While the barber is foaming him up, he mentions the problems he has getting a close shave around the cheeks. "I have just the thing," says the barber, taking a small wooden ball from a nearby drawer. "Just place this between your cheek and gum."

The man places the ball in his mouth and the barber proceeds with the closest shave the man has ever experienced. After a few strokes the client asks, "What if I swallow it?"

"No problem," says the barber. "Just bring it back tomorrow like everyone else does."

A little old lady answered a knock on the door one day, only to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner. "Good morning," said the young man. "If I could take a couple of minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners."

"Go away!" said the old lady. "I haven't got any money!" and she proceeded to close the door.

Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed it wide open. "Don't be too hasty!" he said. "Not until you have at least seen my demonstration." And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her hallway carpet. "If this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this fresh horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder."

The old lady stepped back and said, "Well I hope you've got a damned good appetite, because they cut off my electricity this morning!"

Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks.

## REAL NEWSPAPER HEADLINES (AND NOT ALL FROM THE SUN)

- Never Withhold Herpes Infection from Loved One
- Miners Refuse to Work after Death
- Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
- Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents
- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Prostitutes Appeal to Pope
- Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands
- Lung Cancer in Women Mushrooms
- Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Axe
- Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told
- Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
- War Dims Hope for Peace
- Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
- Stolen Painting Found by Tree
- Killer Sentenced to Die for Second Time in 10 Years
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
- Man Struck By Lightning Faces Battery Charge
- New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
- Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
- Princess Diana Was Alive Hours Before She Died

# QUIZ!

1. With a population of over 1 Million, which is the largest of the US State Capitals?
2. Known as the first celebrity chef, who is the youngest chef ever to be awarded three Michelin stars?
3. Who in 1668 became the first English Poet Laureate?
4. What was the name of the character played by Martin Freeman in TV's "The Office"?
5. What songs with "Tears" in the title were UK top ten hits for the following artists. [a] Marianne Faithfull (1964), [b] Bitty McLean (1993), [c] Donna Summer & Barbara Striesand (1979), [d] Kylie Minogue (1990) and [e] Smokey Robinson & the Miracles (1970)?
6. Of which African nation is Kigali the capital?
7. How many points are awarded for "A Safety" in American Football?
8. As at November 2016 who have been the five hosts of TV's "Countdown"?
9. In which decade was the Panama Canal opened?
10. With which three counties do you associate The Three Counties Show and the Three Choirs Festival?
11. Which river flows through the city of Leicester?
12. What are the Norse equivalent of Adam and Eve, the first people on Earth?
13. What do the following sporting abbreviations represent, [a] UFC, [b] NBA, [c] IOC, [d] DRS (Cricket) and [e] DRS (Motor Racing)?
14. Who is the only US President who has served two non-consecutive terms?
15. What name is given to a person who studies place names?
16. Who played the roles of Crockett and Tubbs in the 2006 movie of "Miami Vice"?
17. Which SEVEN English Kings feature as Shakespeare title characters?
18. On which British Motorway would you find Clackett's Lane and Cobham services?
19. Who were the three members of the Jimi Hendrix Experience?
20. Which Alpine ski resort hosted the first Winter Olympics in 1924?

## ANSWERS

1. Phoenix (Arizona).
2. Marco Pierre White.
3. Joh Dryden.
4. Tim Canterbury.
5. [a] "As Tears Go By" reached no 9, [b] "It Keeps Raining (Tears from Eyes)", no 2, [c] "No More Tears (Enough is Enough)", no 3, [d] "Tears on my Pillow", no 1 and [e] "The Tears of a Clown", no 1.
6. Rwanda.
7. Two.
8. 1910's (1914).
9. Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.
10. River Soar.
11. Ask and Embla.
12. [a] Ultimate Fighting Championship, [b] National Basketball Association, [c] International Olympic Committee, [d] Decision Review System (3rd Umpire) and [e] Drag Reduction System.
13. Grover Cleveland.
14. Toponymist.
15. Jamie Foxx & Colin Farrell.
16. Henry IV (Parts 1&2), Henry V, Henry VI (Parts 1,2&3), Henry VIII, King John, Richard II and Richard III.
17. M25.
18. Jimi Hendrix, Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding.
19. Chamonix.



# Jamaican chicken

Salted caramel, the flavour of the moment. It pops up in culinary forms varying from expensive artisan macarons to high end chocolate bars to supermarket ice cream. Chewy salted caramel however is not so common and I've only seen home-made versions at farmer's markets, where it tends to cost a fair bit. Making your own, on the other hand, is inexpensive once you've bought a sugar thermometer. This recipe is foolproof - no pans of burnt sugar here - and will make you very popular (if you share it!). Be warned, though, this is the crack cocaine of sweets and addiction is fairly inevitable.

## Ingredients

One and a half cups caster sugar  
Half cup of golden syrup (called corn syrup in America)  
1 cup double/heavy cream  
4oz butter  
2tsp sea salt

You will also need a heavy based pan, a sugar thermometer, a 10 x 10 inch baking tin (or similar size) and a non-stick silicon baking sheet.

## Method

First off, grease your tin and the silicon sheet. Line the tin with a sheet. Next is the foolproof bit with regards to caramelising the sugar;



with a wooden spoon, very thoroughly mix together the sugar and golden syrup in the pan you're going to cook it in. Put the pan over a very low heat and watch it carefully. It will tolerate a gentle stir or two once it begins to melt at the edges but mixing the sugar with the golden syrup means it really shouldn't need to be stirred more than once. You can swirl it a few times once it gets going.

In the meantime put the butter and cream into another pan and slowly melt the butter.

Once the sugar has all liquidised keep it on a low heat until it turns a dark golden brown - about

the colour of a good tawny port. Stir one of the teaspoons of sea salt into the cream and butter mixture and then pour it onto the caramelised sugar and golden syrup, but stand back a bit because it will bubble up quite high.

Pop your sugar thermometer in and continue cooking on the lowest heat until it gets to 125 degrees centigrade then pour it into your prepared tin. Wait five minutes and scatter the second teaspoon of salt over the surface. Allow to completely cool, cut into pieces and wrap in squares of parchment or greaseproof paper.



## Salted caramel

I love authentic Jamaican recipes, especially for chicken. The chicken holds a place of special significance in all West Indian cooking. There are so many beautiful dishes made in Jamaica and by the West Indian diaspora using this humble bird and each one is stunningly delicious.

This particular dish sings in the mouth - the butter soft flesh that falls apart, the rich flavour-some sauce and the spice dusted outer coating on the fried chicken breast, leg or thigh (all work equally well, in fact, I would say you really need your chicken on the bone for this dish, even if it's only a part-boned breast. It holds the flesh together throughout the long slow cooking).

People will have varying versions of the spice mix and others may prefer to finely chop the onion, garlic, tomato and coriander rather than blend it but the end result will still taste pretty similar, i.e gorgeous.

## Ingredients

4 chicken breasts (part-boned) or 12 chicken thighs/drumsticks

1 tsp each ground coriander/cumin/garam masala/paprika/turmeric/chilli (or to taste)

1 onion  
1/2 bulb garlic

1 tomato  
Big handful coriander  
1 1/2 pints chicken stock  
Oil/Salt



## Method

Combine all the spices in a large bowl and toss the skinned chicken pieces in them to coat thoroughly (see above). In a non-stick pan over a medium heat seal all the chicken pieces using a light or neutral oil such as groundnut oil. While they are browning peel your onion and garlic and then blend them to a pulp along with the tomato and coriander. If there is any spice mix left in the bowl add that, too.

When all the chicken pieces are browned and set aside use the oil left in the pan to fry the wet onion/garlic/tomato/coriander/left over spice mix. You will find it brings up any spices stuck to the pan. This is good. No point wasting flavour in the same way you wouldn't waste it on a roasting pan when making gravy.

When you have cooked off the paste put the chicken pieces back in the pan, add the stock and cook, tightly covered, on a gentle simmer for about 3 hours. Check the seasoning and serve.

Serves 4.

## Government and politics EXAM

By Cliff Jones, December 2016

There are no correct answers but reasoned responses are encouraged

1. What are governments for? Should they enable people to live safe, mutually supportive and fulfilled lives? Should they prevent people being subject to or dependent upon exploitation?

2. Should governments be dependent upon fair and properly arrived at public approval?

3. How might governments maintain public respect for organizations such as the police or the armed forces?

4. What can happen when a government uses force, falsehood, deception or compulsion to achieve its objectives?

5. Should governments be impartial? What can make them partial?

6. Should governments listen before they resort to force for any reason?

7. Politics is the inclusive discussion of and arrival at public values. What can happen if discussion is exclusive?

8. What is the role of the judiciary?

9. Should governments be accountable to the people or the people accountable to the government?

10. Are we subjects or citizens? What is the difference?



# Snoopers Charter

## Big Sister Is Watching

### SNOOPERS LIST OF AGENCIES THAT CAN NOW ASK FOR UK CITIZENS

The full list of agencies that can now ask for UK citizens' browsing history, which is laid out in Schedule 4 of the Bill and was collected by Chris Yiu, is below:

- Metropolitan Police Service
- City of London Police
- Police forces maintained under section 2 of the Police Act 1996
- Police Service of Scotland
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- British Transport Police
- Ministry of Defence Police
- Royal Navy Police
- Royal Military Police
- Royal Air Force Police
- Security Service
- Secret Intelligence Service
- GCHQ
- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Health
- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- National Crime Agency
- HM Revenue & Customs
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- NHS trusts and foundation trusts in England that provide ambulance services
- Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Criminal Cases Review Commission
- Department for Communities in Northern Ireland
- Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland
- Department of Justice in Northern Ireland
- Financial Conduct Authority
- Fire and rescue authorities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Food Standards Agency
- Food Standards Scotland
- Gambling Commission
- Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
- Health and Safety Executive
- Independent Police Complaints Commissioner
- Information Commissioner
- NHS Business Services Authority
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board
- Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Regional Business Services Organisation
- Office of Communications
- Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
- Scottish Ambulance Service Board
- Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission
- Serious Fraud Office
- Welsh Ambulance Services National Health Service Trust

## Top 5 Facebook predictions for 2017

### Corbyn elected PM

May is enjoying a honeymoon period. But she is an untested leader. Brexit could see that collapse in the blink of an eye. BREXIT does not mean BREXIT. What May defines as BREXIT does not match the BREXIT that people voted for. When her supporters find out Tory support will collapse. A vote of no-confidence in the government will force a

### Street riots as economy crashes

UK austerity policy has been a singular failure on all fronts. Deficit has not been closed. The debt is on course to reach £2 trillion. Wages have collapsed. Strikes are likely to flare up all over and there might be another banking crisis. Economic turbulence will increase the current economic depression.

### WW3 starts

Syrian war in Aleppo has foiled the west's policy of toppling Assad and replacing him with a split warring nation as found in Libya and Iraq. Us will re-pivot back to Asia and Ukraine to fight the growing anti-west alliance that opposes US dominance.

### Police state

New laws on government spying look ominous for people who oppose the government. The media is out of control with fake news. Right wing attacks and Terrorist attacks or the reporting of these will increase giving May the opportunity to declare a state of national emergency and marshal law.

### Organised crime skyrockets

With growing poverty and ever decreasing police numbers the conditions are ripe for organised crime to take hold.

# BBC NEWS

## THE BROKEN BBC

### From Public Service to Corporate Power



By Gavin Lewis

**Topics:** Media, Political Economy

**Places:** Europe, United Kingdom

Gavin Lewis is a British freelance writer and academic who has taught critical theory, film, and cultural studies at several UK universities.

In the face of austerity cuts to state infrastructure provision, the British Broadcasting Corporation has recently generated something of a moral panic about the future of public sector broadcasting—mobilizing both its own news channel and its friends in the corporate media around the issue. Yet in the midst of this ongoing existential crisis, few have asked: What is it we are being asked to defend? One exception was an Australian expatriate named Doug Carey, who, as an outsider beyond vested interests and a stranger to degraded UK norms, was equipped to make the following emperor’s-new-clothes

critique in a September 2014 letter to the Guardian:

As a recent arrival from Australia, I had such high hopes of British TV. We received many wonderful programmes in Oz from the BBC. Since being here for three months, I wonder where they have gone. Endless repeats, rubbish house programmes and idiotic antique shows. To be reduced to watching Alas Smith and Jones on some other network is pathetic. What’s happened to British TV?!

Carey’s was far from an arbitrary impression. In the same year, the corporation’s BBC2 channel celebrated “Fifty Years of Comedy.” Watching this, it was almost impossible to fail to notice just how much of its top comedy talent—The Fast Show (1994–1997, winner of BAF-TA and Royal Television Society awards), Harry Enfield’s Television

Programme (1990–1998), Shooting Stars (1993–1997), and shows that demonstrated its public-service commitment to ethnic diversity, Goodness Gracious Me (1998–2001, Royal Television Society award), The Real McCoy (1991–1996), and more—had been allowed to hemorrhage from the corporation, all at roughly the same time toward the end of the ‘90s. In the years following, budgeting and formulaic, micro-managerial standardization saw the bulk of the BBC’s comedy output regress to a cheap 1950s What’s My Line panel show model, punctuated only by a few “prestige” productions.

At the same time, the BBC’s curatorship of major film seasons—celebrating different auteurs, stars,

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directors, national cinemas, experimental styles—also imploded, never to be restored to its previous rigor, and independent drama production all but collapsed. However, the abandonment of traditional fully-funded public service provision, particularly in its drama production, has largely been camouflaged, especially for international viewers, by the further adoption of post-Fordist managerial production techniques applied to a handful of flagship productions, designed for an expanded global sales distribution. As in car manufacturing, what is provided is a limitedly resourced primary product, altered for different consumption demands, by add-on and take-off parts. For instance, the BBC's *Dr. Who* (usually one series split into two half seasons), and *Sherlock* (three episodes per year), use many of the same writers, share some of the same actors, and often even, draw on the same musical palette. These few high-profile productions are not constructed exclusively or even primarily for audiences in the UK, where televised product marketing is prohibited on BBC channels; their running times and scene lengths are structured for the insertion of advertising breaks in foreign markets. This restricted production model hardly represents diversity, much less a thorough, consistent and specifically British public service provision.

Where, then, did the resources of public service broadcasting go, and what happened at the end of the 1990s? In 1997, the BBC invested heavily in the newly created News24 Channel. In *No News Is Bad News: Radio, Television and the Public* (2014) Michael Bromley notes the corporation "was heavily criticized for the development and subsequent cost of BBC News 24, which is available 24 hours a day," and which diverted funds and resources away from other, established channels and programs.<sup>2</sup> But the cost and burden to the rest of the network is not the only issue. The evidence increasingly suggests that this investment signaled the BBC's metamorphosis from a rounded, albeit unaccountable, public service provider, to a full-blown corporate state broadcaster and propagandist. The continued existence of the BBC and other national public service broadcasters owes much to the concept of the public sphere, explored by Jürgen Habermas and other socio-media

theorists.<sup>3</sup> This idea posits the need for democracies to maintain a protected, universally accessible neutral space, where social diversity and open debate can be expressed free from vested interests.

Whatever the logic or feasibility of that model, it is fair to say that BBC News24 in no way achieves any ideal of a discursive space free from market motives. Instead it repeats and mirrors existing institutional power dynamics. Formally, the channel is a twin of Rupert Murdoch's Sky News. Its editorial values are so identical that viewers get exactly the same hierarchy of news stories, at the same time of day, and predominantly from the same ideological viewpoint. The channels even screen their weather reports simultaneously, and each have "newspaper preview" segments, also broadcast at the same time. Like Sky, the BBC is happy to define itself in relation to the right-wing press but almost never allows comparison with the diversity of other national public sector-based global news broadcasters—France 24, or Russia Today (RT), for example—to throw the validity of the "new" BBC project into question. The BBC's "newspaper preview" also almost exclusively features guest commentators from the oligarchic print media, rather than representatives of civil society, thereby ensuring further ideological conformity and continuity. This hegemonic homogenization with the right-wing press is even more dubious given, as Goldsmith's College professor James Curran has pointed out, "according to the 2010 Eurobarometer survey, the British public was the least disposed to trust its press, out of a total of 27 European countries."<sup>4</sup> A more recent poll by YouGov ranked the British press as the most "right-wing" and "biased" in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, are the broader characteristics of the new BBC, and how representative is it? In its ideological assumptions and structural representations, News24 is resolutely pro-business and



pro-market. A definitive study led by Mike Berry of Cardiff University notes that "on BBC News at Six, business representatives outnumbered trade union spokespersons by more than five to one (11 vs 2) in 2007 and by 19 to one in 2012. On the issues of immigration and the EU in 2012, out of 806 source appearances, not one was allocated to a representative of organized labor." When covering the 2008–2009 banking crisis, "opinion was almost completely dominated by stockbrokers, investment bankers, hedge fund managers and other City voices. Civil society voices or commentators who questioned the benefits of having such a large finance sector were almost completely absent from coverage."<sup>6</sup>

The corporation's journalists pursue this pro-business, free-market ideology to the point of blatant hypocrisy and even self-destruction. In February 2014, a BBC journalist cross-examined then-Labour leader Ed Miliband about the lack of privatization plans in the Party's public-sector proposals. This is a common theme in BBC news interviews. In the previous week, *Hard Talk* presenter Stephen Sucker berated the Indian finance minister for subsidizing the country's farmers. Though editorially critical of other, less well-paid workers receiving public sector incomes, the issue of BBC funding and its own journalists' ample salaries, similarly supported by taxes and public spending, seems to present no quandary to its reporters.

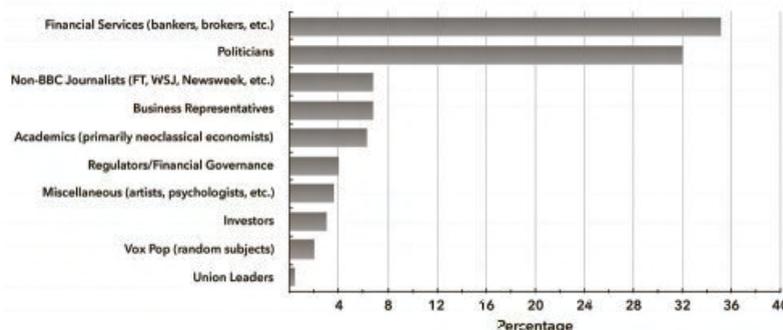


Chart 1. Interview Sources Discussing the Banking Crisis on BBC's *Today* Program, September 15–October 20, 2008<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, none of this accords with the ideal of a public sphere separate and free from vested interests. Nor is this ideological positioning some accident compensated for by the diversity of representation in other parts of the network. The larger consequence of the invention of News24 is that, again, diversity of provision has been throttled by the imposition of a post-Fordist, core-and-periphery management structure. The BBC's other channels either take their bulletin newsfeed from the main news channel, or have their output homogenized around the editorial dictates and demands of the core control location. Here Mike Berry's graphic analysis of the BBC Radio 4 program *Today's* coverage of the collapse of Lehman Brothers shows the same ideological imbalance of the TV news channel (Chart 1).

The new, pro-business BBC may well be guilty of playing fast and loose with the obligations of its charter, which requires "impartiality" and "forbids" the service from carrying advertising.<sup>8</sup> However, even more worrying is its bond with state power and its willingness to embrace racism in the maintenance of this relationship. There is insufficient space here to fully discuss the wholesale institutional racism of BBC news coverage, where massive indigenous civilian casualties are edited from public consciousness, the Black Lives Matter and Muslim Lives Matter campaigns are ignored, and the Mark Duggan race riots are written off as outbursts of mere greed. Whenever possible, News24 does not represent the deaths of civilians—in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere—at the hands of British and American invading forces. It covers these "shock and awe" adventures as a sort of exciting fireworks display. With great solemnity, the channel covers the returned caskets of dead UK soldiers, but Iraqi war dead are not represented, either visually, as corpses, or in casualty statistics.

Protests against the killing of

civilians are given similarly little representation. For example, in Afghanistan, demonstrations around the killing of local children by occupying western militaries had reached such a pitch that, after the 2011 incident in which nine children were bombed and killed, even Western satrap President Karzai was forced to publicly embarrass General Petraeus by stating, "On behalf of the people of Afghanistan, I want you to stop the killings of civilians," and rejecting his subsequent apology as "not enough."<sup>9</sup> This story was buried in the BBC teletext service. Instead the corporation prioritized over the deaths of Afghan children a story about a Muslim protester convicted for the symbolic gesture of burning plastic poppies (an offence against public order). In 2013, an English soldier named Lee Rigby was attacked and killed on the streets of London by two Nigerian-British converts to Islam. If such a thing had happened forty years ago, during the BBC's Vietnam War journalistic heyday, thoroughness would have mandated that eventually some attention be given to the activities of the soldier's regiment in Afghanistan, recording both the indigenous and regimental casualties it generated.

But not in our era, and not on the new BBC News24 Channel. Similarly, BBC's coverage of the 2014 withdrawal of British troops featured a report from an Afghan graveyard. Viewers were told that graveyards here were full of war victims, killed by the Soviets, the Northern Alliance, the Taliban, and social unrest. No mention was made, though, of the deadly consequences of the British-American invasion. It is hard to view this as anything other than a deliberate manifestation of corporate state hegemony, designed to produce a very particular and apparently partially successful outcome. Noam Chomsky and colleagues recently made the following public observations about British war coverage:

In May 2013 the reputable polling company CoMres asked a representative sample of the British public the following question: "How many Iraqis, both combatants and civilians, do you think have died as a consequence of the war that began in Iraq in 2003?" According to 59% of the respondents, fewer than 10,000 Iraqis died as a result of the war. The results are especially shocking because...the latest scientific estimate of the death toll

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1. Doug Carey, letter to the *Guardian*, September 17, 2014, <http://guardian.co.uk>.

2. Michael Bromley, ed., *No News Is Bad News: Radio, Television and the Public* (London: Routledge, 2014).

3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

4. James Curran, letter to the *Guardian*, November 6, 2013.

5. Will Dahlgreen, "British Press 'Most Right-Wing' in Europe," YouGov UK, February 7, 2016, [yougov.co.uk](http://yougov.co.uk)

6. Mike Berry, "Hard Evidence: How Biased Is the BBC?" *The Conversation*, August 23, 2013, <http://theconversation.com>.

7. Adapted from Figure 1 in Mike Berry, "The *Today* Programme and the Banking Crisis," *Journalism* 14, no. 2 (2013): 257.

8. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), "The BBC's Editorial Values," <http://bbc.co.uk>.

9. Shah Marai, "Apology for Afghan Deaths 'Not Enough,'" *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), March 7, 2011. & Jon Kelly, "How Do You Insult Someone Legally?" *BBC News Magazine*, May 18, 2012.

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from the war is almost 500,000. This was published in PLOS Medicine. Two previous studies, also published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, suggest the death toll may possibly have been closer to a million... The CoMres poll is powerful evidence that the media misled the public about the consequences of the war.<sup>10</sup>

In the aftermath of the recent Paris killings, the BBC's Panorama current affairs show followed up with an edition called "The Battle for British Islam." While defending the free-speech right to offend of Charlie Hebdo, the BBC simultaneously condemned Muslim television news outlets for reporting civilian casualties at the hands of Western forces, which they described as "pandering to a Muslim victim narrative." By comparison, when white victims go unacknowledged, this is referred to as "genocide denial," often by the BBC itself. It is hardly surprising that, in the face of such monolithic misrepresentation, there is now a Muslim YouTube news channel called Voice of the Voiceless, and Muslim "voicelessness" has now become a prominent theme of Al Jazeera's coverage.

This coverage raises broader questions about the role the British license payer-funded News24 channel plays in representing U.S. global hegemony. Coverage of U.S. government actions and policy tend to be driven by a crude, skewed "good guy versus bad guy" narrative formula. Countries that the United States has designs on, or potential adversarial relationships with—any leftist Latin American country, or Russia, or Iran—are disproportionately subject to ongoing historical critiques and even speculative conspiracy theories. All this despite the disastrous legacy of U.S. foreign policy: just in recent years, the United States has invaded Iraq and Afghanistan; established torture centers; supported a coup d'état against Hugo Chávez of Venezuela; and financed the Egyptian army, which brought down its own democratically elected Muslim government and imprisoned international journalists. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland was even caught on tape attempting to handpick an unelected government for Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> But on BBC programs, it is Russia that is editorialized about and repeatedly accused of "meddling" in this instance in a country with a large ethnic Russian population—at the very least a more serviceable pretext for intervention than anything Nuland could offer.



The BBC's pro-American editorial technique is almost crassly simple, and primarily based upon double standards at the level of analysis and point of view. Foreigners can be editorialized about, and have their histories and patterns of behavior subjected to "joined-up" historical analysis. While the policy offences of Anglo-Saxon America are only ever reported as single, year-zero incident violations, with no similar ongoing relationship to previous transgressions. Then there is the issue of the point of view from which viewer identi-

fication is generated. Protests in countries that the United States doesn't like—as in the so-called Arab Spring—are covered from the point of view of demonstrators. By comparison, the Occupy movement, the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, and the whistleblowing of Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning are either ignored or treated as deserving of significant suspicion. Content coverage about Russia is often orientated around the issue of homophobic human rights abuses. But you won't similarly

hear that the United States, with only 5 percent of the world population, accounts for 25 percent of the world's prison population, often for profit in privatized jails, nor that a disproportionate number of these inmates, are black and Latino.<sup>12</sup> Given these editorial practices, and its treatment of indigenous casualties, if the current BBC was operating during the Vietnam War era, it is hard to imagine the viewing public would hear much of the My Lai Massacre or the identity of Martin Luther King, Jr. It is hardly surprising that the current U.S. civil

rights crisis is something of a shock to BBC News24 viewers, or that the corporation successfully places its infotainment product on U.S. cable and radio networks.

One of the problems of attempting to expose this sort of coverage is the historical construction of a narrative of "impartiality" that has long been attached to the BBC. Those nostalgic for some idealized past of public service provision, who hope that this analysis is hyperbolic or that claims of a BBC ideological agenda are over-egged, should be aware of a 2014 interview in the Guardian with former BBC World Service director Peter Horrocks. In it he demanded more funds for the BBC to fight a "global 'information war' with the Kremlin," and compared this campaign to "the overall national interest and things we spend on international influence, like military spending."<sup>13</sup> Sadly, this territorial imperialist agenda is far from an eccentric policy interpretation by a single former manager. Introducing the BBC's Future of Newsreport, James Harding linked the BBC's news provision to the notion of soft power: "If the UK wants the BBC to remain valued and respected, an ambassador of Britain's values and an agent of soft power in the world, then the BBC is going to have to commit to growing the World Service and the government will have to recognise this."<sup>14</sup> Director General Tony Hall also followed up this report by pushing for extra funding for foreign territorial interventions, "unveil[ing] proposals for a significant expansion of the BBC World Service, including potentially a satellite TV service for Russian speakers and a daily radio news programme for North Korea."<sup>15</sup>

The great irony is that editorially, Russia's RT (Russia Today) news service, despite its own significant problems with "impartiality" and nationalist narratives, shares many characteristics with the standards of the pre-News24 BBC. RT's Western-oriented programming accommodates independent, non-embedded, non-establishment, academic, and expert opinion. It also gives up space and editorial control to specialist contributors. At the mainstream end, this has included Larry King's Politicking, but also many counter-cultural shows, including, in Britain, pro-Palestinian MP George Gallo-way's Sputnik, Afshin Rattansi's Going Underground, in the United States, Abby Martin's Breaking the Set, Tyrel Ventura, Sean Stone, and Tabetha Wallace fronting Watching the Hawks and The Big Picture

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10. Noam Chomsky et al., "Poll on Deaths in Iraq Ignored by British Media," letter to the Guardian, December 4, 2013.

11. Doina Chiacu and Arshad Mohammed, "Leaked Audio Reveals Embarrassing U.S. Exchange on Ukraine, EU," Reuters, February 6, 2014, <http://reuters.com>.

12. Michele Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010).

13. Josh Halliday, "BBC World Service Fears Losing Information War as Russia Today Ramps Up Pressure," Guardian, December 21, 2014.

14. "Speech by James Harding, Director of BBC News and Current Affairs, to Launch Future of News Report," BBC Media Center, January 28, 2015.

15. Mark Sweeney, "BBC Plans TV and Radio Services for Russia and North Korea," Guardian, September 4, 2015.



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with Tom Hartmann. These are captioned prior to screening as not representing the station's own editorial voice. The micro-managed BBC does not do anything comparable. The BBC is a public network, established to ensure that the diversity of British democracy is represented. At a 2013 autumn conference, internationally renowned veteran filmmaker Ken Loach founded the Left Unity party, whose aim was to supersede the then neoliberal-captured Labour. Britons would have struggled to find significant coverage on their own BBC. However, it was featured on Russia's RT and a number of other global news outlets.

Along with a narrative of "impartiality," historical notions of the distinct and elevated "quality" of BBC journalism further obscure the ideological work of the corporation. But in fact, the BBC replicates some of the lowest reporting techniques of the corporate media. Public relations material masquerades as journalism. Advertising and political spin are passed off as "anonymous off-the-record-briefings" with unnamed government officials. This un-sourced and largely un-critiqued material is placed in the public domain by a reporter speaking directly to camera, usually from outside the insti-

tution whose spin is being disseminated free of charge. Obviously this "anonymous briefing" is not whistle-blowing, though source anonymity is manipulatively excused by this precedent. The treatment of the tragic death of weapons inspector David Kelly, who had cast doubt on the WMD case for the Iraq war, shows how this plays out. Prior to David Kelly's suicide, a Downing Street press officer untruthfully briefed the press corps that he was a deluded busybody, a "Walter Mitty character." This story was then repeated uncritically by reporters, usually speaking directly to camera from outside the Prime Minister's residence. Nothing happened to the original press officer—other than eventually receiving a peerage—because this process does not allow for him to be named on the record. Most of the BBC coverage of Downing Street and other sites of vested interests still operate upon this model.

Another method the BBC uses to cover its lack of actual supporting sources is to forgo direct-address to camera, and instead disseminate material through staged conversations and studio interviews with their own staff, which gives a false sense of discovering real material. Most first-year undergraduate essays would fail to pass if presented with this lack of substantiation. BBC interviews on

the ground also often still rely on the much discredited "noddy," an artificial reconstruction that takes place after an interview has been shot. Journalists then have the camera turned on themselves and theatrically act out a series of "nodding" and sometimes emotional reactions, to be subsequently edited into the finished segment. It's not unusual to see a BBC journalist give a manipulative, teary-eyed performance—all after an interview has been conducted—with someone whose language they do not understand, whose contribution had to be translated.

Another factor which fundamentally perverts the news agenda is BBC coverage of their own staff. In recent years, BBC personalities Jimmy Savile and Dave Lee Travis and presenter Stuart Hall (not the late academic) have been revealed to be serial sex criminals, often committing offenses on corporation property despite their acts being the subject of internal "canteen gossip." Which prompts the question: Just what allowed these staff members to get away with these practices under the noses of a major news organization? The BBC's *Newsnight* had been due to run an exposé of Savile in December 2011, but suddenly dropped the item. Presenter Jeremy Paxman told an enquiry into the scandal that the decision not to pursue the

story was a "policy judgment," and that he believed it "must have been a corporate decision."<sup>16</sup> The *Press Gazette*, followed by the *Guardian*, featured articles suggesting that a number of BBC journalists—including Meirion Jones, Liz MacKean, and Tom Giles—who had attempted to expose the alleged Savile cover-up, were tainted as "traitors" and "squeezed out" of the corporation as punishment, while others involved in suppressing the Savile story have kept their jobs.<sup>17</sup>

More recently, *Top Gear* presenter Jeremy Clarkson was caught on film using the word "nigger," after previously referring to a Southeast Asian man as a "slope." Clarkson and his team have habitually referred to people of other ethnicities as "lazy, smelly" or even in scatological terms. The thousands of complaints caused by these racist remarks and the outraged public statements of foreign ambassadors are frequently covered on other global news outlets, but are buried by *News24*. They also are not permitted to appear on BBC viewer response shows, such as *Newswatch* and *Points of View*. Indeed, the BBC hardly ever allows complaints of racism against it, of any sort, to be aired. However, it covers itself by featuring on its teletext service the press releases designed to overwrite these complaints. It may be unnecessary to note here that

the global export of *Top Gear* has been a major source of revenue for the corporation.

A regular feature of the show has been Clarkson and his two co-hosts driving across foreign landscapes in cars customized so as to cause maximum offense to locals. In May 2014, the *Observer* noted that in Argentina,

Clarkson and his team [were] accused of deliberately driving cars with license plates calculated to offend Argentinians because they referred to the 1982 Falklands conflict. The key plate in question, attached to a Porsche 928 driven by Clarkson, was H982 FKL...Two other high performance cars were said to carry plates with final digits close to the number of fatalities sustained by the Argentinian and British soldiers in the war. These plates, N269 KNG and EKH 646J, roughly coincided with the death tolls: 649 Argentinians and 258 Britons.<sup>18</sup>

Images of the three cars, also carried by the *Guardian*, appeared to lend weight to the three-car story.<sup>19</sup> In short order, other print media outlets produced images of a fourth number plate, reading "BE11 END," also taken on the trip.<sup>20</sup> However, tasteless insults directed at a country's war dead

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16. John Plunkett, "Jeremy Paxman: *Newsnight*'s Failure to Tackle Jimmy Savile Was 'Pathetic'," *Guardian*, February 22, 2013.

17. Dominic Ponsford, "Meirion Jones: 'Everyone on Right Side of the Savile Argument Has Been Forced Out of the BBC,'" *Press Gazette*, July 29, 2015; <http://pressgazette.co.uk>. Jasper Jackson, "BBC Forced Out Team Behind Savile Exposé, says ex-*Newsnight* Journalist," *Guardian*, July 29, 2015.

18. Vanessa Thorpe and Uki Goni, "Jeremy Clarkson Claims Falklands Protests Against *Top Gear* Were Orchestrated by the Government," *Guardian*, October 4, 2015.

19. Chris Johnston, "Jeremy Clarkson Feared Deaths in Argentina Number Plate Row," *Guardian*, October 4, 2014.

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are not really the issue here. Like the jettisoned Savile report, what this story demonstrates is an erosion of boundaries between marketing, light entertainment, and news content. Regardless of the weeks of public furor, the story was again largely buried in the teletext service, where the show's repeated rebuttal claimed this was all a "coincidence" generated by only "a single car number plate." Viewers who complained about the absent or misleading news coverage instead got responses from Top Gear's independent producer—a light entertainment sub-contractor. Even after the Argentine government made a formal complaint, and despite the many news reports and photographs, to this day, the

corporation has stuck to the "one number plate...coincidence" narrative. If the corporation is willing to embark on an Orwellian misrepresentation of reality simply to protect a light-entertainment asset, what if anything, can be trusted of its news output? Ironically, the following year, Clarkson punched a BBC line manager and was sacked anyway.

There is not the space here to explore further examples of the BBC "managing" its news agenda so as to negate public criticism, but the emblematic issue of personnel, class, and corporate ideology deserves further attention. The UK has in its postwar evolution attempted to develop policies of "equal opportunity," both in the culture of employment and in the legal rules applied to it. It was believed that class, race, gender, and

sexual orientation should not exclude people from employment, and that individual ability should be meritocratically recognized. Despite this, the BBC maintains a unique look and set of practices. The Director General—the peer Tony Hall—was appointed by invitation. There was no application or shortlist process to which black, minority ethnic, working-class, or female candidates were allowed access. The BBC's flagship show of political debate is called Question Time. It is marketed as a harsh scrutiny of politicians, but the reality is that it provides great career exposure. The show's service to the establishment earned a former presenter a peerage. Currently the host is David Dimbleby, son of the royal correspondent who gave his name to the BBC's Richard Dimbleby Lectures. Jonathan Dimbleby, brother

of David, presents an equivalent show on Radio 4, and does other journalism for the corporation, as does his former wife Bel Mooney. The reporter John Sergeant graduated from BBC journalism to presenting light entertainment for the corporation. His son Mike is now also a BBC journalist. Presenter and journalist Michael Buerk has similarly been followed into the corporation by his son Roland. The case of journalist Peter Snow and son Dan Snow is perhaps the most interesting. Just after leaving university, Dan Snow appeared on his father Peter's military-themed show about the Battles of El Alamein. They followed this collaboration with a short series called Battlefield Britain, and Dan Snow subsequently released a coffee-table military history book of the same title. Since then, the BBC has introduced

him on shows as the "historian Dan Snow." There are no records of him holding any postgraduate qualifications, in any discipline.

What this personnel snapshot reveals is an organization structured upon an almost hermetically sealed class system where, if not outright nepotism, certainly a family introduction seems to advance careers, or, failing that, it is beneficial to have gone to the same Oxbridge college as one's employers. Given what we can observe about the BBC's dependence on corporate and political power, we have to ask: Doesn't such a relationship positively demand an unaccountable elite labor-force to make it work? Doesn't this elitism tie into the misrepresentations of

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staff failings? And why should this elite labor-force find the actions of power questionable, when they are disproportionately rewarded by it? Over the last decade or so, BBC documentaries have predominantly regressed to right-wing “toff-histories” presented by the great and the good. But is this posh recruitment more worrying than the example of Dan Snow, where the organization actually conjured academic credibility out of the ether, on the back of a prestigious BBC family name? Increasingly this elite seems unable to relate to the lives of normal Britons, and probably unwilling to represent the challenging power dynamics of genuine cultural history. This makes it all too amenable to government-demanded historical revisionism.

In the run up to First World War Centenary commemorations, Tory minister Michael Gove put intense pressure on the BBC to present a rewritten, pro-establishment remembrance of the conflict that elided memories of “lions led by donkeys” critiques of British military leadership. Gove issued a number of press statements and penned an article for the right-wing Daily Mail: “The conflict has, for many, been seen through the fictional prism of dramas such as *Oh! What a Lovely War*, *The Monocled Mutineer* and *Blackadder*, as a misbegotten shambles—a series of catastrophic mistakes perpetrated by an out-of-touch elite. Even to this day there are Left-wing academics all too happy to feed those myths.”<sup>21</sup>

Apart from a couple of tut-tutting articles from BBC celebrities, Gove got exactly what he asked for. *Oh! What a Lovely War*, *The Monocled Mutineer* and *Blackadder* were all excluded from the broadcast schedules. Over the preceding decade, the BBC had given director Christian Carion’s romantic critique of the aristocratic waste of the Great War generation, *Joyeux Noel* (2005) an occasional screening, and BBC Films had previously produced a film version of *Regeneration* (1997), Booker Prize-winning novelist Pat Barker’s homage to Siegfried Sassoon, but these were also excluded, along with classics like *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Gallipoli* (1981). Instead the educational theme of the BBC coverage was, “Has history misjudged the generals of World War One?”<sup>22</sup> The BBC accompanied this with a season of shows celebrating the bravery of the British Tommy.<sup>23</sup> No mention of alienation, hostility to authority, or even the idea of a “lost generation.”

Contrary to Gove’s arguments, British people’s sense of World War

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## Why a two-year delay in arming Syria rebels?



15 March 2013 Last updated at 13:24

As Syrians mark the second anniversary of the start of the nation's unrest, the EU is set to discuss lifting its arms embargo to allow supplying rebels.

France has said it is ready to supply weapons to rebel forces fighting the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

But Chris Doyle, director of the Council for Arab British Understanding, said arming rebels in Syria is a strategy that is “fraught with danger”.

One, and their understandable anger about it, was not generated by some sort of left-wing conspiracy. It was born out of genuine social processes, oral histories of survivors, family memories passed down generations, and village and town hall memorials, plus the testimony of veterans on Remembrance Day. The massive spread of socialist and left-wing sensibilities after the First World War largely grew out of the alienation caused by this conflict, not the other way around.

It is offensive and ideologically manipulative deliberately to efface all of this—particularly the huge grassroots movements—from representation. Our sense of the era’s alienation was also generated by decades of cultural evolution and production. This includes the War poets and Lost Generation writers Erich Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and others. Such was the resonance of the alienated Lost Generation sensibility that it could still be found even in the 1950s Hollywood hardboiled films of Humphrey Bogart and Ava Gardner, some 30 years later. For the BBC to “disappear” this huge output of cultural production—even

its own film adaptation of the critically lauded *Regeneration*—is once again Orwellian. The following year the BBC followed this coverage with a tribute to the survivors of the Second World War—Britain’s Greatest Generation. Unsurprisingly, mention of the leftist popular front against Nazism was absent.

In July 2015 the corporation announced, “The BBC is to cut 1,000 jobs because of a £150m budget gap in its license fee income. An unexpected increase in the number of households saying they do not watch live TV and so do not pay for a license has been blamed for the shortfall.”<sup>24</sup> An increase in the number of households saying they do not watch TV might be unexpected within the world of media orthodoxies. However, even a casual reading of the political spectrum of British society tells a different story. For the political right—regardless of the corporation’s ideological function—the BBC is primarily of interest as a heritage industry producer and site of possible privatization. Young millennials tend to be uninterested in media monoliths, and prefer their media consumption through more localized technology. For the first

time in decades the BBC, having come completely unmoored from its public sphere function, is now also almost totally irrelevant to the interests of the British left and to the sociological lower half of society. There is also a growing consensus that the license fee is becoming indefensible. Even the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee reflected public hostility, stating, “the TV license does not have a long-term future.”<sup>25</sup>

Part of the problem for the BBC has been that in pursuing a service-to-power agenda, it has aligned itself with deeply undemocratic, unrepresentative forces and values. As in the United States, the political sphere in Britain has suffered from corporate and neoliberal entryism. This political formation was not historically a substantial part of the country’s postwar culture. Black and Muslim Britons have not been forming clubs to demand that their countries of origin be re-conquered and control of their natural resources appropriated. Working-class Britons have not been demanding that their jobs be exported to sweatshop economies, or that they should lose welfare, job protections, and educational

### Most watched/listened

- Jessie J shaves head for charity
- Hungary snow strands 10,000 drivers
- Plane crashes in Florida car park
- Gemma Massey on life as a porn star
- Five Minutes With: Katie Melua
- Council buildings sell for 50p each
- David Brent is back for Comic Relief
- US golfer falls into sinkhole

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21. Michael Gove, “Why Does the Left Insist on Belittling True British Heroes?” Daily Mail, January 2, 2014, <http://dailymail.co.uk>.

22. Gary Sheffield, “Has History Misjudged the Generals of World War One?” BBC iWonder, 2014; <http://bbc.co.uk>.

23. Lucy Williamson, “What Caused Verdun to Be the Longest Battle of WWI?” BBC iWonder, 2016.

24. “BBC to Cut More than 1,000 Jobs,” BBC News, July 2, 2015.

25. “No Long-Term Future for BBC Licence Fee, MPs Say,” BBC News, February 26, 2015.

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a largely disgraced class of political celebrities with name recognition. By contrast, grassroots voices were willfully throttled. In 2010 the SNP, along with the Welsh independence party, Plaid Cymru, complained of being excluded from debates, as subsequently has the Green Party.<sup>26</sup> In addition, thousands protested during the Scottish independence vote that the BBC was producing “‘Pravda-like’ propaganda,”—in its style if not in its politics—especially after an incident in which footage of the SNP’s leader was edited to give the false impression that he had been unable to answer a direct question at a press conference, reinforced by a misleading commentary claiming “he didn’t answer.”<sup>27</sup>

However, the BBC’s practice of forcing a distorted master narrative onto domestic political events has been most overt during its coverage of the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader. Given the prospect of an orthodox Labour leader heading the party again, hundreds of thousands of former supporters reenlisted once again and, augmented by newly joining young idealists, achieved record Party membership levels—eventually bringing Corbyn a 60 percent majority win. During the campaign it was not unusual to hear representatives of the BBC’s commentariat refer to each of the other candidates by their first names, while pejoratively using Corbyn’s last name only. As polling organizations started to predict that underdog Corbyn’s unexpected lead would translate to a win, voters from affiliated organizations, unions, and cooperatives were smeared for having enjoyed cheap concessionary membership rates—as if voting were a preserve of the rich? Corbyn and his supporters were also frequently referred to in McCarthyite terms as partisans of the “hard left” or “far left.” And there was repeated talk of organized “hard left” infiltration of a party that ironically had for most of its history stood for a collectivist socialism, with a corresponding constitution and base demographic. The continuous BBC practice of prefixing Corbyn’s name with the labels “hard left” or “leftwing” so incensed sections of the public that subsequent to the leadership election, a petition was presented demanding that Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron be equivalently prefixed as “rightwing.” By September 17, 2015, the Daily Mirror reported



that the petition had gained 65,000 signatures, and by September 21, the Independent was reporting a figure of 80,000.<sup>28</sup> The BBC put out a press release defending their position, but even in the face of this high-profile press attention, allowed no significant coverage of the petition to be carried on its news channel—mirroring the strategies carried out during the Scottish independence campaign, when political editor Nick Robinson gave interviews with the print media, condemning the alleged “intimidation” by protesters, despite the fact the BBC coverage was giving little indication that any protests had actually occurred.<sup>29</sup>

Contrary to the “hard left” spin, there was in fact very little in Corbyn’s policy agenda that diverged from Britain’s postwar political consensus. A criteria that describes Corbyn as “hard left” would also have to describe the interventionist Conservative postwar governments of Winston Churchill, Harold Macmillan, and Ted Heath as “leftwing” too, as well as every modern German government. This point didn’t escape some broader sections of the media: The Huffington Post’s Phil Jones wrote, “Thirty plus years of Thatcherism in various forms, including under Blair, has seen the BBC all but throw in the towel as a serious objective economic analyst.

Neoliberalism is the norm...a market interventionist like Harold Macmillan would now be regarded as a radical and a danger to the nation’s economic security.”<sup>30</sup> Some time after the election, these smears were revealed as widely inaccurate when even a survey of Labour members by the Guardian—which had opposed Corbyn—revealed that “there are few reports of attempted infiltration from hard-left groups.”<sup>31</sup>

Though Labour once again has both a leftist leader and base, its Members of Parliament were largely centrally selected by the previous Blairite neoliberal regime. These MPs not only have a very different sensibility to traditional Labour culture, but evidently are also not about to give up the corporate gravy train or the possibility of careerist advancement within the United States-led world order. This conflict is not dissimilar to grassroots attempts to expel the “Republicanrats” or “Thirdwayers” from the Democratic Party and to derail the campaign of Hillary Clinton, or other democratic political reclamation campaigns across the world. However, despite both the global nature of this political phenomenon and Britain’s longstanding investment in its public sphere, BBC coverage has not been remotely representative. The reporting has been relentlessly press release-driv-

en, generated from the perspective of this small cadre of rogue neoliberal MPs. This bias has been exacerbated by the fact that outside of marketing techniques, the BBC no longer undertakes broad social research or interviews with grassroots activists, or—regardless of the public service model—genuinely reflects socio-political diversity.

There is much to learn from the fall of the BBC and the corruption of its public sphere purpose. The new BBC has been able to perform its intensified service-to-power less than a generation after required undergraduate reading would have included Gramsci’s analysis of the relations of “State and Civil Society,” Louis Althusser’s critique of the Ideological State Apparatus, and Foucault’s theories about the “disciplinary regimes” of language. The current state of the BBC tells us a great deal about how the new anti-intellectual McCarthyism and constructed notions of “extremism” shore up ideological systems. Instead of being subjected to genuine external intellectual scrutiny, the BBC has been able to self-legitimize and self-credentialize—Dan Snow is far from the only example. A recent advocate beating the drum for the BBC on the Guardian columnist pages has been Roger Mosey. Why is he given semi-regular column space? He is

billed as master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, but this is a position he gained on the back of his status as a former BBC news editor.

Outside of corporate media hegemony, there is little intellectually to support the BBC. Sociologically, as demonstrated above, the BBC is even less sustainable. In this respect it mirrors the problematic recent history of the modern Labour Party. Both were formed to be socially representative, but instead have degenerated into providing technocratic service-to-power. An existential crisis was perhaps inevitable, but presumably those that profited from this process did not care about the future health of the institutions upon which they fed. However, the Labour Party was at least reliant on and could—to a limited extent—be influenced by voting. The BBC has no democratically elected positions of real power. It has allowed itself to forget the ideology that both brought it into being and which ratified its continued existence.<sup>32</sup> If it now finds itself increasingly irrelevant to its social base and at risk of extinction, then it only has itself to blame. Without a genuine, representative sociological and intellectual connection to the society it purportedly serves, it is not really public service broadcasting, but corporate propaganda, and in the long run, who will care if that survives?

26. “Trust Publishes Outcome of SNP/Plaid Cymru Appeal Relating to the BBC Prime Ministerial Debate,” BBC Trust, September 23, 2014; “Greens Are ‘Not a Major Party,’ Suggests Ofcom,” BBC News, January 8, 2015.

27. Alasdair Glennie, “Alex Salmond Reignites Row with Nick Robinson Over ‘Bias,’” Guardian, September 18, 2015. Stephen Naysmith, “Nick Robinson Tells BBC Scotland Colleagues: Sorry I’ve Become the Story,” Herald Scotland, September 17, 2014, <http://heraldscotland.com>.

28. Dan Bloom, “Petition for BBC to Call David Cameron ‘Right-Wing Prime Minister’ Backed by 65,000 People,” Mirror, September 17, 2015; Ian Burrell, “The BBC’s Refusal to Report the Dead Pig Allegations Against David Cameron Is Unacceptable,” Independent, September 21, 2015.

29. Stephen Naysmith, “Nick Robinson Tells BBC Scotland Colleagues”; Press Association, “BBC’s Nick Richardson Attacks ‘Bullying’ Over Scottish Referendum Coverage,” Guardian, August 21, 2015.

30. Phil Jones, “Nothing Particularly Moderate About the Labour ‘Moderates,’” Huffington Post UK, January 11, 2016, <http://huffingtonpost.co.uk>.

31. Ewen MacAskill, “Revealed: How Jeremy Corbyn Has Reshaped the Labour Party,” Guardian, January 13, 2016.

32. Tony Hall even refers to providing public services that the market cannot as a “market failure broadcaster”: Henry Austin, “BBC Director-General Tony Hall: The Tories Won’t Close Us Down,” Independent, June 21, 2015.

## Protesters at Rochdale Town Hall

Protesters stood on the steps of Rochdale Town Hall before Wednesday night's council meeting (14 December) to demonstrate against the 34% rise in councillors' allowance.

<http://www.rochdaleonline.co.uk/news-features/2/news-headlines/106924/shouts-of-disgraceful-as-councillors-vote-themselves-a-massive-34pc-increase>

As councillors arrived for the meeting, the protesters took up chanting 'They want 34%, we can't even pay our rent' and 'No ifs, no buts, no public service cuts'. A survey was also handed to councillors by Unite representatives asking if they had asked their local constituents if they believed they deserved a 34-51% pay rise and to justify this with evidence.

Whilst most councillors passed the demonstration by arriving through the front door, Council Leader Richard Farnell was accused of "snubbing the people" and "cowardice" after he was spotted avoiding the protest by entering the Town Hall through the back door.

Before the Council meeting commenced, Sam O'Brien, of Unison, said: "If the councillors vote for this then they will prove they are completely out of touch with the people they are supposed to serve. The idea that they could vote for such a huge rise whilst cutting services will strike most people as appalling.

"Council workers are being told that the council have to take tough choices that austerity will be permanently written into our contracts. Why is it an easy choice



# Public opposes massive rise in councillor's allowances with protest at Town Hall

to increase councillors' pay but everything else is tough: no wonder 75% of UNISON members recently voted to strike against the proposed cuts."

A council worker, who wished to remain nameless, said: "To pass this is immoral and puts council workers at risk of redundancy.

"We've had these never-ending cuts; we haven't had pay rises. Our wages have been frozen since austerity started, even with inflation, so in effect, our pay has gone backwards, but here they are giving 34% to councillors and the free food before each meeting, be it

planning or scrutiny.

"I used to work at a neighbouring council, who scrapped this earlier in the year to save money. They should cut councillors to two per ward to save money, but here we still have 60 fat cats who are stuffing their faces with allowances- I'm appalled."

Robert Mudd said: "This increase has been based on the average, which is false criteria. It should be based on the median or the modal value to make it more accurate."

Jeff Slough said: "The only thing I'd like to ask directly to Mr Farnell is to justify his £1,000 a week for

doing a voluntary role. It's ridiculous. I've nothing against legitimate expenses, if the business is within the Rochdale Borough."

Daniel Clayton said: "I'm here to oppose the increases from the Labour Council. They'll be putting through Conservative cuts if they accept. This says to people that austerity doesn't apply to members; it's just something to impose on the Borough on behalf of the Tories, and they're being rewarded for doing so."

Emma King said: "For the sake of their own position which they

hold, I hope they make the right decision, people are going mad. It will affect them very badly at the next election. For every person here, there are ten more who are discussing it but couldn't be here because of work or other commitments.

"At a time when the country have to tighten belts, it's preposterous to even be discussing such proposals, overdue or not. I hope they stand shoulder to shoulder with the community who they represent. The community will speak on their doorstep, and with their votes at the next election, if they make the wrong decision tonight."

## The Elephant In The Room

Year	% turnout	Con votes millions	Con %	Con seats	Lab votes millions	Lab %	Lab Seats	Lib votes millions	Lib %	Lib seats
1987	75.3	13.78	42.2	375	10.03	30.8	329	7.34	22.5	22
1992	77.7	14.09	41.9	336	11.56	34.4	271	5.99	17.8	20
1997	71.4	9.6	30.7	165	13.5	43.2	418	5.24	16.9	46
2001	59.4	8.54	31.7	166	10.7	40.7	412	4.81	18.3	52
2005	61.4	8.78	32.4	198	9.55	35.2	385	5.98	22	62
2010	65.1	10.7	36.11	306	8.6	29	258	6.8	23	55
2015	66.1	11.3	36.9	331	9.3	30.4	232	2.4	7.9	8

\* General Election Results 1987-2015



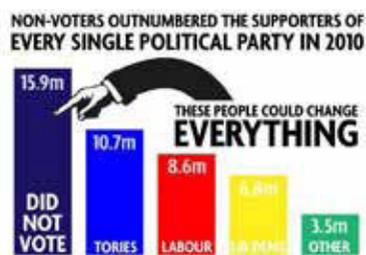
Our comrades on the Right of the Labour Party have a huge problem. Most of them refuse to accept that it is there - the standard response to an elephant in the room.

From 1997 to 2010, when the Right was indisputably in control of the Labour Party, the Labour vote dropped 36%.

The Right have no explanation of why they lost a third of Labour's voters. They do not recognise that these losses took place on their watch. They do not know why it happened. They do not know how

to put it right.

The standard responses are twofold. One is to blame Blair and Brown for being too Left wing. The other is to blame the Left for existing. Both absolve the Labour Right of any political responsibility for



the present situation.

One of the disastrous ideas of the Labour Right was that only active voters vote so we had to attract votes from the Tories. Using "triangulation" we had to position ourselves as Tory lite, tough on welfare claimants particularly the disabled and the unemployed. We would not be any different to the Tories except on points of detail. As Tory voters became sickened by the Tory Government they could safely switch to Labour.

There was no significant attempt to deny the need for austeri-

ty. There was no attempt to contest the neo liberal agenda. We did not deny that Labour had caused huge borrowing or point out that the money went to the bankers.

The Right tied our hands behind our backs and then complained that Labour continued to lose.

After 2015 the Right blamed Ed Miliband and our "Left" 2015 policies. In 2015 Ed Miliband actually increased Labour's vote but lost a net 26 seats.

Against the silence of the Right Jeremy Corbyn's anti austerity message stood out. Jeremy's

message has brought back to the Labour Party many Labour supporters. We have our highest ever membership.

The Right have no message that resonates with Labour supporters. The Right are still wriggling with badmouthing Jeremy, attacking his helpers, and procedural manoeuvres. Naturally the image of a divided party hurts our electoral support.

The way forward is not to change our policies to be Tory lite but to put forward policies that will attract support.



# HAPPY MULTICULTURALISM

*F\*\*K you Trump and Farage! SO What?*

**M**y family is 'multi-cultural'. I have a lot of children and grandchildren. White Christian cultural heritage Pakistani/White

Islamic cultural heritage, Sikh, Albanian. You call that HYBRID!

I have nine grandchildren, Jamaican Rasta cultural heritage, White Christian cultural heritage, British Muslim, Traveller, Sikh, Albanian, cultural heritages.

I have a foster son who is of Al-

banian Muslim and Catholic mixed cultural heritage and a niece that has lived with me most her life who is British Pakistani Muslim heritage.

My extended family are Irish Catholic British cultural heritage and White orthodox Christian Brit-

ish cultural heritage and another mixed Indian, Sikh/Pakistani Muslim cultural heritage.

I also ran my work life on this: So what? we are all red blood and happy an ethos and attitude that is so what?

For twenty years I set up and

ran a voluntary run centre for young adults that are newly arrived and for local young adults.

So what you might ask??

I have spent my twenty years as a 'happy' mother and 10 as a 'happy' grandmother saying the same



the educational and indeed social services systems,) were unhappily shocked but "They" spent most years of my life arguing with me that this family structure is abnormal and will cause conflict. I was very unhappy! I am causing unhappiness and unhappiness was on my family!

Indeed unhappiness and conflict had descended on us from an outside force and made us very uncomfortable and unhappy. The white British protestant side decided that a state of abnormality 'multiculturalism' had descended on my family and thus an investigation was conducted by the systems of 'they' where by years later no signs of emotional ill health were to be found and no signs of abnormality or unhappiness were found. We were very happy, but The State was unhappy so we had periods of unhappy conflict and even violence and riots. Yet and BUT conflict between and within then did indeed exist for us as a multi-cultural family, yet on the whole we were happy.

Secondly and an important BUT..... To this: "so what?" is that the 'what' clearly did become the 'so' and the 'so' made us very unhappy.

The 'what' and 'so' mattered to 'they'! and they were also unhappy.

Our Shared Experiences Didn't Made Us Happy - Not Integration

Another integral and important part of this story is that I ran a centre for years based on the 'multicultural' structure of my own family structure. The interest in my centre meant I was blessed enough to be adequately funded and watched over by various organisations: Home Office, Citizenship departments, and Refugee agencies, Save the Children, to name only a few. The Guardian were interested, the Radio interested, two TV episodes devoted to this multicultural happy mix of people that were achieving non-racially tense happy relationships and indeed doing 'useful and valuable' work in the community as well.

So what... you say?

I also once again asked myself that .... *SO WHAT?*

The Home Office visited me prior to developing a full citizenship programme and asked me to run one as a pilot. I duly did and they came for my report. I stated that INTEGRATION for community stability and happiness was a fallacy and that ORIENTATION was a more appropriate word and concept. They were not happy with that. Settlement I argued, comes from orientation and understanding of each others histories and reference points and is a move towards a shared history, a shared history by the embracing and recognition of all values by the whole, not integration into another's stable, already

existing, history. There is no experiential in that, no value laden ethos that would cause contentment, only a force feeding of another's culture and therefore restlessness and unhappiness. A truly important part of multiculturalism comes from shared points of reference; regardless, in the interim up to a full revolution or shift in consciousness, whether those references were from a 'false consciousness' point. I could not change capitalism and racism and sexism in one project but I could offer a point of reference so that the northern star is where everyone could find it and I could offer a chance to develop a shared set of experiences that would become their shared history. I was happy, the group was happy, the home office was unhappy.

I came to this need for sharedness by studies on reconstituted families thrust on me by social services (during my own unhappiness period brought on by them. Which, equally disturbing, once they had made me unhappy, felt they had to then find happiness for my family again and this made them thrust a lot of books in my direction). These books stated happiness in a reconstituted family can prevail by shared histories and memories which have a point of reference and that reference can only come in the future, by sharing a past history, we can share a conceptually similar future. The basic of this would consist of: "remember the holiday we all shared three years ago?" within a family structure and within a community structure: "remember the dry stone wall we all built three years ago?" this shared history: "let's revisit that holiday in memory and reminisce over the photos or lets revisit that wall and know we all shared that." By doing this it means we can be happy on those memories and decide to share more future memories now, to be accessed as a past, which is now, later and smile and be a happy family again.

This method actually became remarkably successful for my family and for the young adults from multi-cultural backgrounds in the centre. However, the Home Office decided to reduce its shared points of reference to predominantly systems and the knowing where to access them and a declaration to the Queen and a stabilising of its own happy system, which 'they' are happy with and has made the system happy since capitalism began possibly with Cromwell.

So what?

### Trevor Phillips Report Does Not Work Because It Did Not Touch and Interact

How does all this relate to Multiculturalism and happiness? Ahmed, argued that Trevor Phillips states that people living in multi-cultural communities are not happy because they do not mix. They are less trusting and there-



fore less happy.

Ahmed, quotes Trevor Phillips: that this evokes unhappy instances of community conflict or violence between communities by claiming: *this* is exactly what happens when people who look very different, and think they are very different, never touch and interact."

What may have been over looked in Phillips statement is the 'opportunities' for groups to interact. In a family you are forced to interact but in a community there is no need to. So I set up a centre offering an opportunity to interact and forced others to interact through working with social services so that for some individuals it was a requirement to interact at my centre. This covered the variable that some like to interact therefore you will have a positive outcome.

I did not have the Trevor Phillips report to hand but I did have the Handsworth riots, a dream of multiculturalism and a pot of regeneration money to test the theory.

It is this quote from Ahmed: "And yet of course to evoke 'happy multiculturalism' in the United Kingdom is to use a political language that is already dated. Multiculturalism is increasingly evoked as an unhappy object, as a sign of the failure of communities to 'happily integrate'. Multiculturalism has even been declared dead." That prompts my response.

Effectively 'They' the systems are stating, "we tried it and it didn't work". This ideology will then trickle down to the "they-you-me-us" into popular thought and we

will think: "it won't work! didn't work! Oh no! It didn't work!" similar to my initial panic at the beginning of the intrusion into my reconstituted family.

What reasons do 'they' give for this multiculturalism not working in my family?

Answer: Difference doesn't work.

What reasons does the Trevor Phillips report give?

Answer: Difference does not work.

### Wiping Out Others' Heritage and Replacing with British Values Causes Unhappiness

"Earlier multiculturalism was read as a sign of integration, but is now being read as a symptom of its failure. For example, in the reports on the 'race-riots' in the North of England in 2001, Multiculturalism is described as failing to deliver its promise of integration and harmony amongst others."

What is the outcome of this in a family if all people have to confirm to a set of values that were already there without sharing their values and creating a common history?

Answer: It's unhappiness and conflict of thought and often sibling and domestic violence.

What is an outcome of this in a multicultural society? Conflict, rivalry and riots.

Many studies on recent British riots state that riot is the outpouring of the unhappiness of one multi-cultural group with another. Yet riots might not be the unhappiness of one group of people because of the differences between them it could be declared as a group of people fighting with each other for resources and or against each other and or towards a system that withholds resources.

During the riots of (2005), where Asians were accused of raping a Jamaican girl ) I happened to be involved in steering groups and have the fabulous privilege, the respect as a community leader and researcher to work with many who were involved in those 'riots'. The main argument for rioting from them was



CONTINUED FROM  
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not 'race' but towards 'They' the system and the rioters argued that an unequal allocation of resources between them caused them to fight each other. Many of the arguments were that the area is deprived anyway so why burden us with more people so that we have to fight each other for the little resources we already have?

(not wholly, the now supposed myth of the rape and abuse of a girl)

There are two points I wish to make from this. I was respected only through a 'shared history' and its "remember when we were a happy community via that centre" and I have also lived raised a multicultural family in that deprived area thereby gaining respect as 'one of us' from at least four of the major communities. I was one with 'them' in this riot episode.

A riot was blamed for this lack of multiculturalism when in fact it was a lack of resources that made the multi-cultural groups fight for resources with each other. No one I interviewed mentioned the rape of the girl but stated 'they' (always the other):

"think they can take our homes, jobs, business of us, and we were unhappy about this!"

The girl, later barely mentioned, was another resource perhaps? But the girl is for feminist debate.

Surely then, this is a structural systems and allocation of resources issue and nothing what so ever to do with multiculturalism that caused this malaise in feeling?

### United and integrated against a common enemy

Let's look at the recent England riots. Though we still have to hear from the 'They' the systems peoples spokespersons, you have only to look at the West Midlands Police's 'wall of shame' to see the faces of those young adults look to some extent multicultural to me. I recently asked a number of young people that I know to have not only instigated certain uprisings but were involved in the general uprisings as well: "why were you so unhappy that you became so angry and you became destructive?"

They replied: "we realised that we shouldn't fight each other any more because it's not Daljit, Errol,



Mohammad, Trevor here that's our problem it's them robbing us so we went and took it back ...united i'nit mate."

So if we take this statement as even remotely indicative of a general state of mind, multiculturalism is working as a cultural group that is united against a system. Or multiculturalism now shares a common enemy. It is uniting the younger generations that after three generations of integration have found a reference point and a shared history to remember 'when'. That 'remember when' is now remember when we were little and we all played in the park together sat in class together and complained about the school dinners together happily?

"Well lets fight together!"

In the future they shall "remember when we all fought together", not each other.

Yet, maybe that's the point: unhappiness is now not caused by *them* but by 'They'. Us-me-you- I, are not fighting each other as social services found in their report about my family but we are unhappy about our multiculturalism being intruded upon and our lives are being made valueless or we are restricted by resources by the

'They'. Is this what is happening in the England riots?

We as a multicultural group have turned to fight, not against each other but against 'They'?

### Happy Endings, Sad Endings or Just Normal - So What?

Let's remember that I stated earlier that studies on reconstituted families show a reliance of a shared history as a point of reference for family cohesiveness therefore stability and happiness. If we take community and multi-cultural 'ism' as a shared family history, we can argue that 60 years of immigration and the cultural heritage it brings us to dismiss or share, is a fairly short time in history. It's been only three generations that mass immigration began. The first generation being the initial marriage of two families being bought together as a reconstituted family. The second generation was the having and the doing of shared experiences with the occasional infighting and outside state interference that happens within reconstituted and step families that brings tension and subsequent unhappiness. The third generation the current, is the one that shares those common family memories and becomes a family based on its shared memories and experiences and starts to be in a settled happiness by identity of itself and the group it belongs to. Multi-Cultural 'ness' is in a settled happiness and it looks around itself and states we are one and 'They' are not one with us. In other words multiculturalism isn't dead, it's growing up as a child grows into an adult and a group of individuals grow into a family, the society it lives in, it's structures and systems and imposed beliefs from the top down, is old, is dying.

For my own personal story there was no happy and no sad ending as I am still alive and still living with moments of happiness in my multicultural family. There were merely happy and sad moments. As individuals we experienced differing emotions and as a family have a shared history of those. Concerning the young adults in the centre ?? The same. Concerning the centre itself? Money ran out, resources were scarce it closed and those young adults hang out on the streets now. However, I know as my truth, those same young adults that once threw rocks at each other and called each other racist names shared a common identity, when they could no longer 'hang out' together in a warm place decided to hang out together on the street and then hang out together to throw rocks and shout names at the system 'They'. Race was not an issue here, the system imposing malaise on the 'family' by its interference and resources to share were causing the unhappiness. The centres 'family' were happy to be together but just not happy to be on the street hanging out. However, the unity was developed and is alive, still in family community mode. Uk wide? Those faces on the West Midlands police wall are to some extent, still very multi-cultural looking to me.

Is there a happy ending to this story of multiculturalism? Are there many happy endings in a family? We have to go back to all the philosophers to answer that. Is this argument functionalist? Marxist? Taken from an interactionist perspective? Does it involve psychology, systems and race and gender, yes, maybe? Is it a true his/her story taken from the perspective of an individual? most defiantly. Does it show multicultural 'ness' as a means to happiness? That depends

on whether you believe my story as valid for the whole of society.

*There happens to be a footnote to this story, Last year The BBC phoned me. They wanted to discuss my work at the centre and ask my views on how we can create a cohesive multi-cultural society and replicate my projects to see if they worked. The focus of this project was to be: British Muslim Boys and the end game was to integrate them into main stream society and stop them becoming terrorists so they do not feel disenfranchised*



## Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

*in the society and therefore don't blow the society up. I refused. I neither watched the documentary and don't even know when it was aired. I had no interest what so ever in it. My original project was to look into why the race riots happened and the BBC were looking into why certain groups are rioting against the state and the system. Looks like the age of race riots have been superseded by riots directly aimed at the state then? Maybe? who knows but from past experience a multi-cultural happiness and consensus can exist but only if tension is not imposed on us from the 'this is abnormal, can't be working as a multi-cultural family, social services worker comes knocking the door again, system'*

*Oh hang on! the door has knocked and The Phillips report has just arrived.*



# Why do Social Democrats still believe in Capitalism

**All of the contenders for Labour leadership other than Mr Corbyn have chosen to accept the austere ideology in full. When Labour supporters reject this move, they are not "moving left", they're refusing to follow a party elite that has decided to move sharply to the right.**

**Economist Paul Krugman  
August 2015**

*The left always held that capitalism was doomed and would be succeeded by socialism and eventually by communism. However, just about everything that happened since the 1917 Russian Revolution indicated that capitalism was the economic system par excellence, never to be supplanted; it is my belief that this is anything but true and I'll tell you why.*

By Charles Abrahams.

The socialist 'Stalinist' USSR was no workers' paradise; in contrast workers in the west seemed to fare better under capitalism; having a much higher standard of living, and liberal values espoused by many socialists were more evident in capitalist economies than would ever be realised under any totalitarian regime. It could be argued that the USSR wasn't particularly socialist, so its miserable failure should not invalidate aspirations of creating a state that would establish true socialist values.

Fans of capitalism would have us believe that it is fundamentally unassailable, which is not true. History has established that it goes through regular cycles of growth and decline in periods of roughly 45 - 50 years (see Nikolai Kondratiev's K-Wave.) After the Great Depression

of the '30s the US economy was rescued by President Roosevelt's New Deal and further boosted by huge industrial growth required during the Second World War. When it became clear that the Allies would win, many in government worried about what would happen when the troops returned to civilian life. It seemed almost inevitable that the economy would slump and once more descend into depression.

Consequently the 1943 Breton Woods agreement established the Marshall Plan for the economic salvation of the wrecked economies of Europe and Japan and also to enable the continued growth of the US economy. The plan, often portrayed as an act of great benevolence by the USA, was anything but. If the burgeoning capitalist economy of the USA was to maintain its phenomenal growth then it needed outlets for its goods. The only way possible was by lending a huge amount of money to those bankrupt economies, enabling them to buy goods that the US was only too ready to sell them. This system is known in economics as surplus redistribution where money acquired, in this case by the US, is loaned back to the nations buying their goods.

In 1973 the US abandoned the Gold Standard, where a dollar was the equivalent of thirty-five ounces

of gold. By financial sleight of hand the US was able to continue its system of surplus redistribution, but in reverse, even though its economy was no longer able to export goods as it had done but now instead imported them in vast quantities. Now surplus money earned by the productive economies of Germany and Japan was invested in major International Banks, notably those of Wall Street and London, and subsequently loaned out to their own domestic markets. The awful implication for manufacturing industries in the US and UK was that it led to their wholesale destruction in favour of products manufactured in third world countries. This began to emerge in the 1980s, and was accompanied by destructive social effects that would in due course be dismissed as "necessary collateral damage," necessary because they were considered the inevitable consequence of restructuring the economy by those who were to benefit from it, whether in the financial sector or as investors in industry and retail. They were also only too happy to see the financial benefits of relocating industry to cheaper economic areas such as China or India. Thus the neoliberal economic model was born and capitalism today is now a global force.<sup>1</sup>

*Left wing thinking always held that capitalism was doomed and would be succeeded by socialism and eventually by communism. However, just about everything that has happened since the 1917 Russian Revolution has suggested that capitalism is the economic system par excellence, never to be supplanted; it is my belief that this is anything but true and I'll tell you why.*

Continued.....

In the last instalment I described how surplus redistribution made the US strong when it had surplus money, and then once again when it didn't. I showed how global neoliberal capitalism was born out of the relocation of industry from Europe and the US to cheaper economic areas of the world

By Charles Abrahams.

Meanwhile the large majority of workers are just about getting by on stagnant wages and by taking out loans as a necessary supplement. Even so the apparent buoyancy of the economy had previously made many people believe that it was so robust that even the former Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown declared an end to "boom and bust." Even now after the 2008 financial debacle many still pin their hopes on a resurgence of capitalism despite evidence to the opposite that the system is quite literally bankrupt, and

Austerity.

There is a better solution, and it's time Labour's Social Democrats got behind the socialist policies of the Party Leadership. We need to restart the economy on new foundations - those of a modern day New Deal as proposed by the shadow chancellor John McDonnell. As the cost of borrowing money is ridiculously cheap the idea that the government could borrow £250 billion to invest in all the necessary infrastructure developments that would kick-start economic growth is a 'no brainer,' furthermore a proposed additional £250 billion could be raised from private investment as there exists according to Yanis Varoufakis, at least \$7trillion of uninvested money sloshing about doing nothing in the US and European financial system.

One big reason this money isn't being invested is due to a widespread lack of confidence that the value of money will either be stabilised or improved. But the proposed large scale investments by the shadow government would restore confidence, particularly as the economy begins to grow. These proposals are not particularly socialist but to listen to critics in right wing politics and their supporters in the mainstream media, you would be forgiven for thinking that they were extremely left wing instead of basic Keynesian economics. The more socialist aspects of



should there be a recurrence of what happened in 2008 then this time there will be no coming back from it. Yet despite everything, the only solution the current UK government has for correcting the economic imbalance is to make things worse by the disastrous policy known as

Labour's proposed Investment Bank would be in social investment in communities and cooperative enterprises that would restore social cohesion. However, these policies alone will not replace capitalism. That is a development I intend to discuss in a later article.<sup>1</sup>

By Charlie

Part I

Basic Universal Income is an income for everyone without discrimination or assessment of personal wealth. If everyone were to get a basic income then there would be huge benefits.

For a start it would relieve the stresses that people on low income suffer. Historically, under social democracy a social security system was designed to provide a safety net protecting against the worst effects of unemployment. With it came the stigma of dependency on what felt like charity, typecasting recipients as inferior to those not needing assistance. Furthermore, like any net it had the capacity to prevent people from not only falling but also rising up out of it. Lack of permanent regular employment was as stressful as trying to manage on a very low level of pay. It was hardly surprising that some people stuck in this poverty trap resorted to illegality as a way of supplementing their income.

UBI would in my opinion help reduce the sort of crime that people without economic security might resort to, because it would reduce stress and alienation from society caused by economic insecurity, thus conveying great social value. Moreover UBI brings economic security necessary for taking entrepreneurial risks like starting new business enterprises. It is particularly beneficial for people engaged in activities with an erratic income stream such as the arts or other speculative creative endeavours. The potential economic benefits in generating new forms of wealth are unknowable but you'd hope they were greater than zero and potentially substantial.

Paul Mason has estimated the UK's benefits bill as £160 billion a year, of which perhaps £30 billion is targeted at those unable to work, whether through illness, disability

# WHY WE NEED UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME



or maternity. The poorest recipients are pensioners, getting about £6,000 a year in basic pension. To give 51 million adults £6,000 a year, as UBI, would cost £306 billion, almost twice the current welfare bill, affordable if we abolished a range of tax exemptions and at the same time delivered cost-saving changes

to other public spending.

There are too few hours in the day for most people to achieve a satisfactory work life balance and maintain healthy relationships with friends and families, so an injection of 'liquidity' into the mechanism that allocates

that balance would be welcome. Whether you are a highly paid professional or a day-care worker you need to be able to exchange hours of work at full pay for hours of free time. Here Mason proposes that we in the UK set a basic income at £6,000 and hike the minimum wage to £18,000 for a

full working week.

There are sound economic reasons why UBI is desirable. Automation relentlessly erodes employment in unskilled and semi-skilled work and that threat (or promise) is now moving into the skilled sector as AI (artificial intelligence) gets ever closer. This will become even more so with the advance of androids. As income reduces it depresses the economy and inflation decreases. The problem for the economy is lack of investment and in future this will persist, getting worse. Larry Summers predicted that the economies of Europe and the US are in a period of 'secular stagnation' persisting for at least 25 years! Such a prospect of long term depression must have severe social implications. As the neoliberal economic model degrades, UBI has the potential to smooth over its harsher consequences by facilitating an otherwise unobtainable level of economic security for the majority of the population, and further enabling market growth that wouldn't exist otherwise.

*Basic Universal Income is an income for everyone without discrimination or assessment of personal wealth. Paul Mason proposes that we in the UK set a basic income at £6,000 and raise the minimum wage to £18,000 for a full working week.*

For me the benefit of UBI is a 'no brainer', but I can see that many people might object to it and that those objections would need to be overcome if it were ever going to become a political reality.

Why should everyone get this basic income, surely it would be better if it were targeted at the poorest in society?

Once UBI was means tested it would become a bureaucratic nightmare as to who should receive it, and the costs of managing this would inevitably be overly expensive.

Wouldn't it be just a scheme that promotes indolence?

I acknowledge that some people might use UBI as a free meal ticket, but isn't this the criticism of benefits generally? I think most people need to be productively engaged in some socially beneficial activity as it helps to bond social ties and is self-validating. Also indolence gets pretty boring after a time. While there might be objections to a free hand out in the form of UBI, ironically there

has been little or no objection to people living off unearned income in the form of share dividends or trust funds! Perhaps these objections spring from general misconceptions about capitalism.

The general view is that capitalism is almost wholly private money, and that all state benefits spring from state appropriation of this wealth. This gives the incorrect impression that the state is totally reliant on capital as a child is to its parent. In reality the relationship between public interests and capital is the exact reverse of this. Without the state, capitalism would not be possible; historically many foreign markets were secured by ruthless domination

by military force and the subsequent subjugation of labour by laws benefiting capital and which were enforced by the police. The subjugation of labour to the law is just as pertinent today as ever it was. In fact capitalism is totally dependent on the state for financial regulations without which it couldn't function.

Further, capitalism benefits greatly from developments in infrastructure paid for out of taxation; many research and development costs are solely paid for by the state, and many of its running costs are paid for through subsidised labour costs. So I would argue that it is all one big symbiotic interrelationship, so why not see

UBI as a dividend paid to us all as a natural consequence?

UBI would:

- Liberate people from bondage to wage slavery
- Remove many of the stresses of an insecure income and probably improve general mental wellbeing
- Enable entrepreneurial growth of small enterprises
- Possibly reduce random acts of petty criminality
- Provide the stimulation to economic growth that the current system is incapable of delivering.



The day we built the wall was an ordinary day.

The day we built the wall was a powdered soup and a tin of beans kind of day.

An ordinary day, as days go.

Just another, ordinary day, in which people were sanctioned, went to the food banks, buried the suicidal teens, the old, the no use, frozen and homeless dead.

It was 12 days before Christmas. I had been standing in shopping for Christmas queues, all day long, since about 8am actually. The job centre queue, the DWP queue and then the food bank queue. Then the shopping queue. God knows why. I had no money. I was educated, owned my home and worked daily. How can the workers be poor?

The first two queues were a waste of time. The last queue? Not too bad actually, thank you for asking.

In the food bank queue, I walked away with a carrier bag of pasta, butter, tin of beans, powdered soup, potatoes and a tin of custard. I was quite chuffed actually. My children, at least, would not think me a complete waste of space this Christmas.

Anyway I digress.

The day we built the wall... I was walking along the city street with my carrier bag in my hand. Thinking about food to feed my family and general stuff like that.

I remember thinking about food and walking through the town and noticing there was the usual hustle and bustle and chants of the 'buying' classes, who were chanting

'Here Here! Buy this, buy that, buy booze, buy a burger!'

The same, ordinary, buying routine as usual. Nothing unusual to report.

In fact, the day we built the wall was as as usual day as you could imagine. For example, the homeless were begging, the refugees were pleading and children were hungry and eyeing up pound land candy. The threat of terrorism was in the news, on bus stop posters and in our fear and people queued to buy and begged to eat. Yet I had a food bank bag so I was ok.

Myself, why? I was eyeing up and counting the contents of my food bank bag. Beans on Monday, powdered soup on Tuesday, pasta on Wednesday, fried potatoes chips on Thursday and custard on Friday. My own children would be fed! It was on that custard Friday moment that I heard a tapping sound. It was a faint tapping sound at first. A bit like tap shoes practising on the board walk. A sound like tap, taps, tappity, and tap.

Tap, tappity tap.

As I walked closer to the rhythm of tap, tappity tap the sound began to sound more like a tapping and a scraping. Tap scrape, tap scrape, tap, tap scrape.

I remember thinking: 'Ooooh a busker!'

Buskers always cheered me up.



# The Day We Built The Wall Around Westminster

I loved to watch the street buskers, singing dancing, performing. The buskers always bought dance and rhythm into my mundane drone, drone, and drone of my life.

Heightened by the tap, I wandered towards the new beat. Slowly at first, swaying my head, to the tip tap then my hips to the scrape shuffle, then I was full on free style dancing in a new beat. Well not so much dancing but a shoulder shuffle for sure. As I shuffled along to the Tap scrape, tap tap scrape. I came upon two children.

Two young children.

They appeared to have a bucket of mud, straw, water and bricks. They also appeared under fed for a UK winter existence. I had seen well fed children in the Capital mass channels on the TV and on the internet. Yet, these two children were not those types of TV kids. They were not blown up, not burnt as those in Syria or Palestine, not well fed or designer clothed as those on the UK adverts. They were neither nor or.... but they were skinny. I thought, 'How Curious?'

Curious? I thought again.

I watched for a few moments as they tap, tap scraped and tapped. Then my curiosity got the better of me. I was drawn into the rhythm of the brick on brick and watched vacantly as the children fed their emotion and absorbed the effort of the build to warm their bodies and bones and feed them. I watched perplexed for a while. I stared as the kids took a stone at a time, then some muddy straw from their bucket and continued to tap, tap and scrape. Neither of them looking at each other, me or their endeavour. After a while I became aware of a crowd that formed around. A crowd drawn in by the mystical sounds of 'tap, tap and scrape'. The crowd joined in and danced to that rhythm.

I also, wanted to dance! I wanted to be part of that dance! Soon I had taken a piece of bark and a stone and tap tapped and scrapped the rhythm and sway. Using this rhythm I also had placed one stone upon another. One stone upon another until I was lost in the rap-

ture... the requiem of freedom! And soon there was an orchestra!!! An orchestra heralding the new kingdom! Some made music with bark, some with stone, and some with straw and mud some with real plaster! It was a beautiful sound and all around people were dancing and singing and cheerful and not before long the wall was 10 meters high!!

Then 20 metres high, NAY! Even 50 and 100 metres high! We sang;

'Hark, the Herald workers bring, Glory to our new found thing'

We tap, tapped scraped all day and all night and the next and the day after! We put up food tents, shared our 'food bank' bags, we used some bark for heat and some for a trowel and on and on we sang to this beat!

Then! On the day the tinsel was placed on our wall...We fell to the floor because there it was! The tinsel!! We had built a wall around Westminster! And covered it with tinsel. Elated and exhausted we sat in silence for hours, in awe of our tinsel covered wall.

Unaware that the two children looked at all of us confused...

Then! From over the wall a faint voice could be heard, a sound, a plea: that sounded like; **'Let us free please,** we too are hungry and starving'.

Well! How dare they sir! We were a miffed to say the very least! Some of us debated! Some of fought each other! I kid you not! Some whispered: 'No way! No how, should we let them be free...they left us hungry, cold and walled us in, why should we listen to them?'

Others said: 'Let them rot what they done for us?'

Others more said: 'Remember when they did that to us?'

The debate raged on whilst they and us starved...we were so transfixed on the wall that both sides starved. I forgot my food bank bag and they continued to wait for workers.

That was the day we built the wall around Westminster.

The two children walked away, what they did after that no one cared to ask...

# SOCIALIST SONGS

## *"The Partisan"*

*When they poured  
across the border  
I was cautioned to surrender,  
this I could not do;  
I took my gun and vanished.  
I have changed my name so often,  
I've lost my wife and children  
but I have many friends,  
and some of them are with me.*

*An old woman gave us shelter,  
kept us hidden in the garret,  
then the soldiers came;  
she died without a whisper.*

*There were three of us this morning  
I'm the only one this evening  
but I must go on;  
the frontiers are my prison.  
Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing,  
through the graves the wind is  
blowing,*

*freedom soon will come;  
then we'll come from the shadows.*

*Les Allemands étaient chez moi  
(The Germans were at my home)  
ils m'ont dit "Résigne-toi"  
(They said, "Surrender,")  
mais je n'ai pas pu  
(this I could not do)  
j'ai repris mon arme  
(I took my weapon again)*

*J'ai changé cent fois de nom  
(I have changed names  
a hundred times)  
j'ai perdu femme et enfants  
(I have lost wife and children)  
mais j'ai tant d'amis  
(But I have so many friends)  
j'ai la France entière  
(I have all of France)*

"La Complainte du Partisan" ("The Partisan") is a song about the in. The song was written in 1943 in by and the music by Anna Marly.

The song was made famous by Leonard Cohen and has since been recorded by many other artists. It is a universal cry of resistance with echoes in the lyrics of "The Red Flag." Both songs tell us the will to resist oppression is so strong that no matter what threats are given and carried out by the oppressor the fight will go on. If you think about any just resistance, whether it be by the Vietnamese against the USA, Native Americans against the USA, Indians against the British Empire or Algerians against the French, the song would fit.





# SOCCER BALL

Bob Bradley became the first American to manage in the Premier League when the Swans appointed him at the start of October, but his stay lasted only 85 days before he was sacked on Tuesday evening, after only two wins in 11 games in charge.

The 58-year-old was ridiculed for his use of Americanisms and after he referred to a penalty kick as 'PK' and playing away from home as a 'road game' in the wake of a 3-0 defeat at Middlesbrough, it was used as a stick to beat him with.

Being lampooned on Sky's Soccer AM - who poked fun by using Americanisms in 'Brad Bobbley Soccer Camps' - also did him no favours

Bradley did not quite understand the nature of "British Soccer ball" In an interview with Talk-Sport, Bradley said: "I'm a little bit p\*\*\*\*d off. Well, Bob, so are we. It seems to us ordinary "Football" fans that the USA are not content with world military and economic hegemony but want control of the planets favourite sport. All seater stadiums, music blasted out when a team scores, assists, coaches, shoot outs...the list continues.

If the football league ever becomes the soccer league we will know the small modicum of independence from the USA has vanished completely. Oh, wait...what is the EFL? English football league! Let Football fans the world over climb over the great wall of Trump and sing as one, "You can stick your U.S Soccer up your..."