

The Socialist Correspondent

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Translation: Freedom American-style

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Discussion, debate and authors' opinions: To encourage the broadest possible discussion and debate around the aims of exposing capitalism and promoting socialism, we hope our readers appreciate that not all the opinions expressed by individual authors are necessarily those of The Socialist Correspondent.

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The Socialist Correspondent

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War, spooks and lies in the name of Liberty

By **ALEX DAVIDSON**

Our front cover image of the United States' Statue of Liberty, with policemen peering out of each of her eyes, spying on the people and with a truncheon showing, may be from a different era but it is still pertinent today.

This 1960s Soviet image of America depicting itself as the 'Land of Freedom', whilst spying on its own people and ready to brutally crush dissent, captures the current situation.

Edward Snowden's revelations of PRISM, the programme which the US National Security Agency (NSA) used to tap directly into the servers of nine internet firms including Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Yahoo and Apple to track online communication shows the extent of today's surveillance. This worldwide eavesdropping captures data on a massive and unprecedented scale and is defended on the basis of the 'War on Terror'.

The police truncheon hanging out of the left eye could also be interpreted as a tear-drop falling from the eye of Liberty. This poignant image appears in the exhibition, "Propaganda: Power and Persuasion", currently running at the British Library in London and reviewed by Sarah Stephenson in this issue.

A Big Lie

The war against Syria was raised several notches when President Obama accepted, on deeply questionable evidence, that Syria had used chemical weapons and therefore the so-called red line had been crossed.

The claim that Syria had used Sarin is widely regarded as unproven by experts. Poisoning by Sarin has to be dealt with within a very short time-scale, minutes rather than hours, otherwise it is fatal. The people shown in pictures, alleged to be suffering from Sarin poisoning did not exhibit the symptoms associated with an attack of this kind.

This allegation against Syria is reminiscent of the allegation against Iraq about the possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction

(WMD). This allegation was ultimately disproven.

This kind of lie is nothing new. Sarah Stephenson, reviewing the exhibition, "Propaganda: Power and Persuasion" quotes from Hitler in 'Mein Kampf', "The great mass of people will more easily fall victim to a big lie than a small one." Bush and Blair were found to be liars, and complicit in the concoction of the evidence, but that did not stop the "War on Terror".

USA/Britain/France + Israel + Arab Royals + Jihadists

Israel was among the powerful lobby demanding that Obama should arm the so-called rebels in Syria because Assad had supposedly crossed the red line. Israel is militarily engaged in the action to effect regime change in Syria as Noah Tucker exposes in his article, "Imperialism's War against Syria".

The alleged discovery of the use of Sarin and the ensuing pressure for the United States to give greater military assistance to those trying to topple the Damascus regime coincided with the Syrian government forces making military gains.

Those forces aiming at regime change in Syria include the USA, Britain, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar - and they are using jihadists from many parts of the globe, including those associated with al-Qaida, to bring this about.

The role of the Arab Royals is examined by Salim Lon in "Arab Royals' war to crush Arab dissent". As he points out, the "Saudi Royals were particularly panicked when the Arab uprising spread to neighbouring Yemen and Bahrein".

He goes on to outline the Arab Royals' role in sabotaging efforts to initiate a dialogue between the Syrian government and the rebels by openly encouraging the rebels to refuse negotiations unless the Assad administration remove Assad and effectively surrender.

This alliance of Israel and the Arab Royals, if it became too public, is potentially very embarrassing to both.

Iran and North Korea: next on the list

The aim of regime change in Syria, if successful, will not bring peace to Syria nor will it be the end of this bloody and dangerous game. For the moment, Iran is out of the news, but it would soon be back on top of the list of demonised targets if Syria falls.

Whilst the USA is heavily involved in assisting those seeking regime change in Syria, and Iran is still on its agenda, its main military concentration is now on East Asia. Simon Korner in his "East Asia analysis: Korea and beyond", discusses the reasons for the return of the US as a "resident Asian power".

The US threat to North Korea is exemplified by the recent joint military exercises conducted by the US and South Korea and South Korea's preparation for invasion of the North. North Korea has been demonised like Saddam, Gadaffi, and Assad, but as North Korea has realised, the possession of nuclear arms may prevent, or at least, delay what happened to Iraq and Libya.



Imperialism's war against Syria

Israel's missile attack on Syria on 5th May 2013 brought into focus the composition of the international alliance against the Syrian Arab Republic.

By **NOAH TUCKER**

Alongside the former colonial powers, Britain and France, and the most war-mongering elements in the USA, the Zionist state of Israel is in a de-facto alliance with Islamist Jihadi fighters and their sponsors in the Arab Gulf Kingdoms, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Too open an acknowledgement of this alliance would, of course, cause embarrassment, especially to the Arab monarchies and the anti-government forces within Syria.

Hence the missile attack was followed by a media campaign which insisted that the Israeli assault - although it was deployed against dozens of targets in the suburbs of Damascus - was aimed purely at Syrian provision of weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

While Syria does of course assist Hezbollah - that support being among the reasons why the Zionist state is involved in the effort to bring about regime change in Syria - the overwhelming bulk of the military equipment, and all of the facilities and personnel, destroyed in that Israeli raid, would have been utilised by the Syrian government side against their foreign-sponsored opponents in the ongoing civil war.

That media campaign following the Israeli attack was, as usual, based on the concept of Israel as the victim, despite that the assault was an unprovoked act of war, and was the third such attack by Israel since March 2013 against the Syrian Arab Republic.

But the message of the campaign was belied by a parallel effort to build on the success of the Israeli raid - supposedly

exposing the weakness of Syria's air defences - to promote the viability of a direct US military assault on Syria.

The *Washington Post*⁽¹⁾ reported optimistically that the apparent Israeli strikes - following reports in recent weeks that Assad's forces probably deployed chemical weapons in unknown quantities - appeared to bolster the case of those who have long favoured direct U.S. support for the rebels.

US Republican Senator for Arizona John McCain said, "We need to have a game-changing action. And that is no American boots on the ground, establish a safe zone, and to protect it and to supply weapons to the right people in Syria who are fighting for, obviously, the things we believe in."

The impunity with which the Israelis apparently struck targets in Damascus, McCain said on 'Fox News Sunday', undercut the argument of the U.S. military that Syrian air defenses would pose a formidable impediment to imposition of a no-fly zone over rebel-held areas of Syria.

"The Israelis seem to be able to penetrate it rather easily," McCain said. The "red line" Obama drew, promising consequences for Assad if he used chemical weapons, "was apparently written in disappearing ink," he said.

As indicated by that report, there has indeed been a link between the issue of WMD allegations, the Israeli missile attacks, and the potential for direct US military involvement against Syria - though in a rather more complex way than Senator McCain suggested.

In contrast with the situation leading up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (which was, it should be recalled, also an action which was undertaken in large part, as explicitly set out by George W.

Bush's neo-conservative advisors, in order to enhance the power of Israel in the region), the current US president's alliance with the Israelis is an uneasy and in some respects a reluctant one.

Whereas Bush was gung-ho for war with Iraq and his team enthusiastically set about inventing pretexts for invasion, Obama is much less keen for direct US military involvement in Syria; a position which is bolstered by the Russian and Chinese refusal at the UN to countenance such action, and more recently also by concern at the domination of the 'rebel' side of the war in Syria by Jihadi forces associated with al-Qaida.

Hence, Israel has taken the role of promoting the

An oil refinery in Homs, Syria's third largest city.



Syria has produced heavy-grade oil from fields located in the northeast since the late 1960s. In the early 1980s, light-grade, low sulphur oil was discovered near Deir ez Zor in the east. Syria also produces 22 million cubic feet of gas per day.

Syrian WMD issue, in order to assist the US Republicans, and the more militarily aggressive forces among the Democrats, to pressurise the Presidency into 'doing something' on Syria.

This promotion began at a relatively early stage of the armed conflict in Syria - take for example this report in the *Wall Street Journal*⁽²⁾ on 27th August 2011: "We are very concerned about the status of Syria's WMD, including chemical weapons," Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Michael Oren, said in an interview. "Together with the U.S. administration, we are watching this situation very carefully."

Israel has historically held concerns about the fall of the Assad regime, which has largely kept the Syria-Israel border quiet for the past 40 years. Still, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has increasingly voiced support for democratic change in Damascus.

"We see a lot of opportunity emerging from the end of the Assad regime," Mr. Oren said. A senior U.S. official said Syria's suspected chemical weapons arsenal "is of great importance and ... under intense study." U.S. and Israeli officials won't disclose exactly how they are keeping tabs on Syrian weaponry. But in the past, the U.S. and Israel have tracked activities at Syrian military installations using satellites and human spies.

Notably, this *Wall Street Journal* article reported historical Israeli "concerns" about "the fall of the Assad regime", - even though the Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren made the unambiguous statement: "We see a lot of opportunity emerging from the end of the Assad regime".

The theme of the Israeli "concerns", or at least ambivalence, about the prospect of the defeat of the Syrian government is widespread in media commentary about the Syrian conflict.

It serves various and not always contiguous purposes, one of which is to provide cover for those nominally anti-zionist forces arrayed against the Syrian government; another is to allow an apparently pro-Israeli justification for those elements in the US establishment who sympathise with Obama's reluctance to commit American military forces to a more direct role in Syria (due to the power of the zionist lobby, those less bellicose elements would never dare to admit having a motivation which did not prioritise Israeli interests).

Irrespective, the Israeli authorities need to ensure that the US elite, and the constituency that can be mobilised by the zionist lobby, is clearly aware of Israel's interests as perceived by the Israeli

establishment itself. Hence Ambassador Oren's unambiguous statement: "We see a lot of opportunity emerging from the end of the Assad regime".

Indeed, the Israeli Ambassador to the USA had previously felt the need to take the *Wall Street Journal* to task for failing to convey the actual view of the Israeli government with regard to Syria.

The following letter was published by the *Wall Street Journal*⁽³⁾ on June 6th 2011:

For the second time, a recent Journal article ("Syrian Violence Tests U.S.," page one, June 3) asserts that Israel has expressed fears of instability in Syria if leader Bashar al-Assad is overthrown. I emphatically denied this the first time ("U.S. Seeks to Raise Heat on Syria," page one, April 25) and categorically deny it again. Israel has expressed no such concerns. Allied with Iran, Mr. Assad has helped supply 55,000 rockets to Hezbollah and 10,000 to Hamas, very likely established a clandestine nuclear arms program and profoundly destabilized the region. The violence he has unleashed on his own people demonstrating for freedoms confirms Israel's fears that the devil we know in Syria is worse than the devil we don't.

Ambassador Michael Oren
Israeli Embassy
Washington

Putting aside the hypocrisy of this claimed concern for the freedoms of Arab people, Michael Oren's position remains as the Israeli standpoint. As the then Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ehud Barak remarked in December 2012: "When the Assad family falls, it will be a major blow to the radical axis led by Iran ... it will weaken Hezbollah and the backing for Hamas and it will deprive the Iranians of a real stronghold in the Arab world ... this is something positive for Israel".

This was amplified on 2nd April 2013 by Israeli Defence Ministry spokesman Amos Gilad. An article published by the *Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre*⁽⁴⁾ said that senior Israel Defence Ministry official, Amos Gilad has said that although al-Qaida elements are gaining a foothold in Syria amidst the chaos of the country's civil war, the Syria-Iran-Hezbollah axis which preceded it was far more threatening. Speaking to the Israeli news website *Walla*, Gilad, who heads the Defence

Ministry's diplomatic defence bureau, said that al-Qaida operatives are increasingly active in Syria and are "waiting for the opportunity to take over the state."

The country's internal conflict has raged for the past two years as opposition forces look to topple President Assad's regime. Addressing the chaos in Syria, Gilad commented, "You can look now and see al-Qaida in Syria, economic lows, instability, the lack of one address, huge refugee problems ... This all presents new types of challenges that are not similar to the military challenge," which existed before the Syrian civil war.

However, he continued, "with all due respect to that threat, it is not the same threat as one posed by Iran, Syria and Hezbollah together, which is much more difficult," from Israel's perspective.

Syria had been a main conduit of arms to Hezbollah, which benefits significantly from Iranian weaponry, finance and training. Iran and Hezbollah are continuing to back Assad and Hezbollah are providing troops to bolster his rule. Gilad explained that the threat to the Assad regime "is a blow to Iran and Hezbollah together" and that "they admit it and are doing everything so Assad survives."

According to his mini-biography published by the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, an international lobby group for the Israeli security establishment, it stated that Maj.-Gen. (Res.) Amos Gilad is Director, Policy and Political-Military Affairs and Chair, Security Relations with Regional and Strategic Partners of the Ministry of Defense; former Coordinator of Government Operations in the Territories, former Head, Military Intelligence Production Division; former Spokesperson, Israeli Defense Forces; former Acting Military Secretary of the Prime Minister and Defense Minister.

The WMD challenge

Before giving further consideration to the question of Israel's motives in respect of Syria, it should be noted that Obama's 'red line' announcement was made in the context of pressure from the powerful axis which includes the US Republican Party and the Israeli authorities.

Republican presidential challenger Mitt Romney had even included in his campaigning itinerary a trip to Israel in late July 2012, during which he met with Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu and accused Obama of opening a "diplomatic distance" between the US and Israel, thus he accused Obama of "embolden[ing] Israel's adversaries".

Following which, in his statement in August, the President of the USA explicitly named the concerns of Israel, not

just those of the US, as a key factor in formulating the 'red line'.

As *Ynet*⁽⁵⁾ reported: Obama made an unscheduled appearance in the White House briefing room Monday and told reporters that the issue of Syria's unconventional weapons was of high concern to both the United States and its close ally, Israel.

"A red line for us is (if) we see a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around, or being utilized. That would change my calculus," Obama said. Obama further said that the US would consider the possibility of military involvement in Syria should unconventional weapons come into play in the Syrian civil war.

The use of such weapons of mass destruction, which Syria has, would widen the conflict considerably, he noted. "It doesn't just include Syria. It would concern allies in the region, including Israel, and it would concern us."

Consequently, it was left to Israel to determine how and when to make a credible allegation that Syrian government forces were using WMD. This turned out to be a somewhat challenging proposition.

Whereas the Israeli Jewish public, and the US establishment, can be relied on to endorse any pretext for aggressive military action by Israel; on this occasion, it was Western public opinion, on alert following the Iraq deception and debacle, and in the absence of credible humanitarian progress in Libya, which needed persuading sufficiently to override Obama's reluctance to allow the USA and NATO to directly deploy their own armed forces against Syria in the face of implacable opposition by the Russians.

Meanwhile, the ongoing flow of Jihadi fighters, recruited, paid and equipped by Saudi Arabia and Qatar (with financial assistance also from Britain, France and the USA), and assisted by the Turkish authorities to enter Syria, which initially had resulted in military gains for the anti-government side, was yielding diminishing returns.

The mass of people in the urban areas were not showing support for the 'rebels', and the latter began to suffer a series of military reverses which threatened, if the trend continued, to make the prospect of a Libya-style 'no fly zone' attack by NATO less and less viable.

It may be surmised that by mid April 2013, Israeli strategists had decided that the Zionist state had to play its hand, however poor it was, in order to help



push the USA over its 'red line'. Hence, as the *New York Times* reported on April 23rd, "Israel declared Tuesday that it had found evidence that the Syrian government repeatedly used chemical weapons last month, arguing that President Bashar al-Assad was testing how the United States and others would react and that it was time for Washington to overcome its deep reluctance to intervene in the Syrian civil war."

In making the declaration - which went somewhat beyond recent suspicions expressed by Britain and France - Israeli officials argued that President Assad had repeatedly crossed what President Obama said last summer would be a "red line."

But Obama administration officials pushed back, saying they would not leap into the conflict on what they viewed as inconclusive evidence, even while working with allies on plans to secure the weapons if it appeared they were about to be used or handed to Hezbollah.

The declaration from Israel's senior military intelligence analyst was immediately questioned in Washington. In a

briefing in Tel Aviv, an Israeli military official was vague about the exact nature of the evidence, saying that it was drawn from an examination of photographs of victims and some "direct" findings that he would not specify.

Despite pressure from the Republicans, and some infighting within the administration, it became clear over the subsequent fortnight that the Obama presidency was not willing to enter a direct war against the Syrian Arab Republic based on the flimsy allegations presented of chemical weapons use by government forces in Syria.

It was then that Israel, assured that in this at least it would have the full support of Washington, launched its own military strikes on Syria. As *Channel 4* correspondent Alex Thompson⁽⁶⁾ noted in his blog: "...what is really interesting is the timing. For these attacks by Israel come after a significant few

weeks in which - in the central areas of the country, President Assad's forces have made some notable strategic gains against the various rebel forces. Alongside that, fighters from Hezbollah, coming in from Lebanon in the west to these central areas of fighting, have made a real impact on the ground. It appears Israel has noted that and - under the guise of wishing to prevent the flow of arms from Syria to Hezbollah - has decided to act unilaterally. Clearly there will be a degree of US greenlighting of all this - or at least enough for Israel to calculate that the dangerous gamble is worthwhile. But as I say, Israel was watching events closely on the ground and did not like one bit what they are showing ... this is the strategic truth of it on the ground which Israel has noted carefully. It is this picture which has moved them to act and to bomb Syria in what, indisputably, is an act of war by anybody's standards of definition."

But after over two years of fighting, the international axis for regime change has not yet overthrown the Syrian Arab Republic.

FOOTNOTES

1. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/reported-israeli-airstrikes-in-syria-could-accelerate-us-decision-making/2013/05/05/72c6eafc-b5c2-11e2-92f3-f291801936b8_singlePage.html?tid=obinsite
2. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904009304576532652538547620.html>
3. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303745304576364301892536230.html>
4. <http://www.bicom.org.uk/news-article/13169/>
5. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4270941,00.html>
6. <http://blogs.channel4.com/alex-thomsons-view/act-war-israel/4826>

Arab Royals' war to crush Arab dissent

The major contributing factor to the onset of Syria's civil war was the reaction of the Arab Royals to the popular revolts that toppled the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes in 2010, dubbed "the Arab Spring" by the Western media.

By **SALIM LON**

The Saudi Royals were particularly panicked when the Arab uprising spread to neighbouring Yemen and Bahrain.

The Arab street called for an end to autocratic rule in plain progressive terms, such as denouncing social inequality and corruption. There were no signs of Islamist or sectarian hateful demands during the mass protests.

The immediate response of the Saudi Royals and their satellite principedoms to the progressive revolts was to launch a religiously sectarian counter offensive across the Arab World. They set the Yemeni army on the Shia Houthis. They bankrolled and armed the Islamist militias against Gadhafi in Libya. They showered the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi fundamentalists in Egypt with huge financial resources, helping to stoke a bloody conflict with the large Coptic Christian minority. Saudi tanks rolled into Bahrain to back ruthless repression of the popular revolt in the island principedom, under the guise of countering Iranian influence. And to crown it all, they backed the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria on an openly sectarian platform against what they dubbed as an "apostate" Alawi regime allied to Iran.

You will be forgiven if you get a sense of retrograde déjà vu from the late 1970s. At the time, the Saudi Royals were terrified from the Iranian Revolution and the Leftist Revolution in Afghanistan. The US administration with the Saudis facilitated

the International Jihadi Brand, recruiting holly warriors from all corners of the Arab World to fight godless communism.

To counter the Iranian Revolution the



King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah Saud and inset: Qatar's new Emir, Sheikh Tamin bin Hamad Al Thani.

Saudis enlisted Saddam Hussein in a simultaneous sectarian war against the "Shia menace." We are still smarting from the effects of both these ill fated endeavours, that gave us Al Qaida et al. But hey, it also contributed to the collapse of the USSR and the gradual disintegration of Iraq. Now we can also look forward to an even bigger religious/sectarian conflict across the region.

The Saudi/Qatari cabal has been sabotaging any effort to initiate a dialogue between the Syrian government and the rebels. Both the Saudis and Qataris have openly encouraged the Syrian rebels to refuse negotiations, unless the Assad administration surrenders all power to the rebels, which makes a total mockery of the UN peace efforts.

The British Foreign Secretary William Hague has gained a formal approval from the EU to lift the "Syria Arms Embargo" in an attempt to gain a legal stamp of international approval for arming and training the Syrian rebels. This latest move by William Hague is purely a formality. The Saudis and Qataris have been openly supplying the rebels with British, French and American weapons, particularly into Islamist insurgents fighting in Syria, many of whom are Jihadi fighters from across the Arab World, countries of the former Soviet Union, South Asia and beyond.

Fanning the flames of the civil war by Western power has been done with the blessing of the Obama Administration, under the illusion that as long as American boots are not fighting on the ground in Syria, then a new "Iraq/Afghanistan debacle" can be averted.

In the meantime the Syrian conflict is rapidly spreading to neighbouring Lebanon and Iraq.



EGYPT: Protesters in Tahrir Square, Cairo.

TUNISIA: Protesters on Habib Bourguiba Ave, Tunis.

Tory party faces historic challenge

In politics, as in life, a glimpse of the way things really are is often revealed *en passant* as the French might say.

By **MARTIN S. GIBSON**

Take the disgraced MP for Newark in Nottinghamshire, Patrick Mercer. He resigned the Conservative Party Parliamentary whip after being trapped by the BBC in a TV sting operation by its *Panorama* programme - Cash for Questions Undercover - broadcast on 6 June 2013.

Panorama reporter, Daniel Foggo pretended to be a communications consultant acting on behalf of fictitious clients from Fiji. Foggo's 'clients' wanted Fiji's suspension from the Commonwealth to be lifted. Fiji has been suspended since the military coup there in 2006.

Foggo offered Mercer £24,000 if he would act as the bogus Fijian group's Parliamentary consultant. With alacrity Mercer - a former officer in the British Army, a journalist with the BBC and the Daily Telegraph and son of an Anglican Bishop - accepted what he said was their "generous" offer.

Among other things, he agreed to set up an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fiji which they would use to pursue the aim of getting Fiji back into the Commonwealth. Fiji's pariah state was not good for Fiji's sugar and tourism business, Mr Mercer was told.

In the course of the hour-long *Panorama* programme, Mr Mercer, who was sacked as shadow homeland security minister by David Cameron in 2007 over Mercer's alleged racist comments, revealed many Parliamentary insider insights including about his party's prospects in the upcoming General Election in May 2015.

In passing, as Mercer and Foggo discussed the Fiji APPG's longer term future, Mr Mercer revealed, "It is difficult to say this, but in two years time there ain't going to be any Conservatives back in power. You are aware of that?"

Taken aback Foggo hesitantly replies, "Yeah."

Mercer adds, "You need to be thinking about where this (the Fiji APPG) goes in two years time. And therefore we need to have some powerful and sensible Labour people on board." (BBC *Panorama*, 6 June 2013.) Out of the mouths of babes and corrupt Tory MPs!

Unintentionally, Mr Mercer gives us a nugget of insider insight that explains everything about why Tory backbench MPs are repeatedly refusing to toe the party line. They are revolting because they believe, if nothing changes soon, many will lose their seats come May 2015.

Most recently their revolts have been over gay marriage and especially the issue of a UK In-Out referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union.

They are the Thatcherite Tory backbenchers - some 80 to 100 strong depending on the issue - who have little time and little respect for their Prime Minister whom they regard as a social and political liberal who has, to their deep regret, led the party of Margaret Thatcher for the past eight years. According to Daniel Foggo, Mr Mercer is reported to have described David Cameron as an "arse" and "a most despicable creature without any redeemable features."

More generally they are the right-wing, nationalist, racist and Europhobic backbone of the British Conservative Party in England who never wanted the three year old Cameron-Clegg Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government. Many have stayed loyal these past difficult eight, "hug a tree and hug a hoodie" years under Cameron.

But many - too many of late for Cameron's comfort - have jumped ship and joined the United Kingdom Inde-

pendence Party (UKIP) and met up with many old Conservative friends.

In 2006, when he was still the fresh-faced and bountifully optimistic leader, Cameron said UKIP was full of "fruitcakes, loonies and closet racists." Pro-European and former Tory Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke MP called them "clowns." Today Cameron and Clarke are not so sanguine and Mr Mercer's gloom about his party's prospects in May 2015 is because, under Cameron, Mercer and his cohorts see things only getting worse for the Tories and better for UKIP.

UKIP's policies of withdrawal from the EU and opposition to immigration are winning hearts and minds in Tory heartlands. In 1993, when UKIP was formed, they were easily dismissed by the Tory party hierarchy. In 2006, when Cameron described them as "loonies", they were still not the knife at the Tory party's throat.

UKIP has 11 of the 73 UK seats in the European Parliament, three members in the House of Lords and one seat in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Its great 'failure' is that it has never won a seat in the House of Commons.

The 2013 English local election results strongly suggest that could change significantly come May 2015. It was the best result for any party outside the big three since the Second World War, coming fourth in the number of council seats won and third in terms of projected nationwide votes.

Currently UKIP claims a party membership of 27,500 and it can also claim to be a party of national significance.

The great Tory beast has been wounded and the buzzards and jackals are circling. And that wily old jackal-in-chief and Thatcher's old Europhobic ally, Rupert Murdoch, is leading the pack. Murdoch recently invited UKIP leader, Nigel Farage MEP, out for lunch to discuss the way forward for the forces of British Conservatism.

Murdoch has form when it comes to deserting the Tories over Europe. His *Sun* newspaper backed Tony Blair after Labour's leader pledged to keep the British pound and thus Britain out of the Eurozone. Farage is understood to



Patrick Mercer MP

have put it to Murdoch that UKIP would be willing to form an electoral pact with the Conservatives but only if they removed Cameron as leader.

No doubt the wily old jackal told Farage that the big Eurosceptic danger if UKIP hits the Tories too hard in 2015 is that they could end up with a pro-EU Labour government bolstered in Westminster by the pro-EU LibDems.

Successful and all as UKIP has been this last decade, Farage would much prefer to be back inside the Tory tent pissing out on immigrants and so-called welfare cheats and anyone else who is to the left of Margaret Thatcher. But Europe is Farage's deal breaker.

Farage and everyone else knows Cameron is pro-Europe - as much as any Tory party leader can be in the current Eurosceptic climate - and as long as he is leader nothing much is likely to change.

While UKIP and Tory Eurosceptics demand a referendum now, the pro-European Cameron is sticking to his promise to hold an In-Out referendum in 2017 if the Tories are returned with a majority and assuming he survives that long.

Farage knows Cameron's pledge of a referendum in 2017 is completely worthless for, like Patrick Mercer, he believes come May 2015 there "ain't going to be any Conservatives back in power."

Murdoch and his now rehabilitated News International media empire - which is to re-brand itself News UK - are flexing their muscles again and showing they can still put the fear of death into Britain's politicians.

Despite it being a whitewash, the Leveson Inquiry into the press and Lord Leveson's subsequent report and recommendations are still unacceptable to the powerful press barons who are likely to succeed in their opposition to Leveson's proposals or indeed any new and significant restrictions on how the British press operates.

The *Sunday Times* undercover cash-for-questions stings show the Murdoch press can still make political careers and break them, especially Conservative pro-European ones.

UKIP's electoral advance over two decades has been almost exclusively at the expense of the Tories, the first party of Britain's ruling class founded in 1834.

The formation of the Labour Party in 1900 and its rise to Parliamentary power in the 1920s was largely at the expense of the Liberal Party, the second party of Britain's ruling class founded in 1859.

Unlike the Liberals and Labour, which faced the SDP breakaway in the 1980s, the Conservative party has not faced, until now and until UKIP, such a life-threatening challenge from another con-



Nigel Farage MEP

servative party, a challenge from within its own right wing ranks as it were.

And what makes this threat so serious is because it is chiefly, but not exclusively now, about the great issue of what to do about Europe and Britain's place and role in the European Union.

Pro and anti-European Conservatives have been fighting each other for well over half a century. Edward Heath versus Enoch Powell in the 1970s. Margaret Thatcher versus half her cabinet in the 1980s. Her forced departure in 1990 had as much to do with Conservative infighting over Europe as it did with clashes of personality and her unpopularity in the country.

And now in the 21st century we have Cameron and half the Tory party at each others' throats exposing, almost every day, the longstanding and deep fissure over Europe within the British ruling class.

Today's political and economic European Union of 27 states began in 1952 as the post-war and largely Franco-German European Coal and Steel Community. In 1957, under the Treaty of Rome, the European Economic Community (EEC) was formed and was again dominated by France and West Germany as it was then.

Britain was always outside until 1973 when Edward Heath's Conservative government negotiated Britain's entry into the EEC or the Common Market.

Less than two years after Margaret Thatcher resigned another important and this time political development occurred: the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty which created a new European Union, a new single currency - the Euro - and the Eurozone.

Once again it was a Conservative Prime Minister, Thatcher's successor John Major, who led and negotiated Britain's acceptance of Maastricht and the establishment of the much more po-

litical EU that came into being in 1993.

This creation of a European super-state was regarded as nothing short of betrayal by many Eurosceptic Tories for whom it was the last straw, so they left and formed UKIP.

From six countries in 1952 the EU has expanded to 27 and gone far beyond the old EEC's economy-only writ. Today the institutions of the EU are profoundly political as well as economic and include:

- an EU Commission;
- an EU Commission President;
- a European Parliament with 754 elected members which sits in Brussels and Strasbourg;
- an EU Council;
- an EU Council President;
- a European Central Bank;
- a single currency, the Euro;
- a Eurozone of 17 countries;
- an EU Court of Justice;

and much more besides.

The EU of the 21st century is a very different political animal from the one that emerged in the 20th century from the rubble and the ashes of WWII. It is now one of the world's principal political and economic power blocs and bastions of capitalism and imperialism.

Much to British Conservatives' chagrin it is, and always has been, dominated by two of British colonialism and imperialism's greatest enemies, France and Germany.

Since the 1950s Britain's Conservatives have played hokey cokey with Europe disliking its multi-national, diverse, social democratic, liberal and left of centre dominated politics.

As long as it was an economic union, a common market, it was tolerable. But now that it has become a supranational political power in the world with Britain on the fringe of that power, it has become increasingly intolerable especially to many in the political party that for longer than any other managed the biggest empire the world has ever seen.

The fast emerging electoral challenge that is UKIP wants Britain to leave the EU, regain its national sovereignty, call a halt to what it sees as EU-inspired immigration and no doubt along the way regain some of its lost imperial power.

Many Conservatives agree with UKIP. But just as many don't and it is they who are in charge of what is still the first and the preferred party of British capitalism.

The question as to whether or not Britain's ruling class will prefer the Conservative party to remain in that position and to do so with the same sort of pro-Europeans at the helm will be answered in the weeks and months that lie ahead of the Tories' and UKIP's next big test in May 2015.

Cyprus: meltdown and the EU bail-out

Running an economy based largely on offshore banking is a risky business. But there are countries that manage it such as the Turks & Caicos or the British Virgin Islands where their other main 'industry' is tourism. Cyprus tried it too and has come unstuck in a big way.

By LESLIE MASTERS

In Cyprus, the banking system expanded to about eight times the size of the rest of the economy, factoring in overseas debts, mainly Greek, and bank deposits.

The growth was fuelled largely by Russian money of allegedly dubious origin at one time accounting for about half of the deposits, encouraged by secrecy, low corporate taxes of about 10% and limited, if any, regulation.

This growth is exemplified by the so-called Laiki Bank (Cyprus Popular Bank). Until 1992, this was a Cypriot bank with overseas operations limited to London, with its relatively large Cypriot population.

By 2007, their operations had expanded to Greece, Eastern Europe, Russia, and as far afield as Australia, making them the second-largest bank in Cyprus after the corporate Bank of Cyprus, which has an even bigger reach.

The expansion of the banking sector certainly put money into the economy, whether it was the wages and salaries of the bank employees, the minimal taxes paid by the banks, or the money they invested in other areas of the economy.

But Cypriot banks had two major problems: they were tied into the Euro, and they had invested heavily in Greece.

They might have weathered the first, despite the shockwaves reverberating around the Eurozone. But the continuing collapse of the Greek economy fatally undermined them. Then they ran into a third problem after requesting a bailout from their Eurozone partners and the IMF – they got caught in the crossfire of the war between German and Russian capital.

The crisis spreading from the US financial sector struck Cyprus in 2009. The economy shrank by 1.67% overall, with tourism and shipping particularly

hard hit. This was followed by weak economic growth over the next three years and a significant decline in the commercial property market, and the meltdown of the Greek economy.

This led, in turn, to a rise in the amount of toxic debt in the hands of the Cypriot banks. State indebtedness also increased as the recession hit: the growth in unemployment led to a significant increase in welfare payments.

Even in 2011, the growing global and local economic difficulties had led to a heavy deprecation of the Cypriot banks: they suffered a "haircut" of up to 50%.

This meant that assets they held as collateral for loans were valued at half of their nominal value – so, for instance, shares with a nominal value of \$1 million would only be accepted as collateral against a loan of as little as \$500,000.

This led to fears of a collapse in the Cypriot banking system, and attempts by the government to raise money on the international markets to support the banks. Downgrading of Cypriot bonds made this more difficult.

The Laiki Bank was the first major Cypriot bank to suffer the effects of bloating. Having established itself as a global player from the 1990s onwards, the global meltdown, and, particularly, the collapse of the Greek economy, led to it being recapitalised by the Cypriot government (which acquired an 84% shareholding in the bank).

However, dealing with the problem of Greek indebtedness generally by this means was clearly not an option: the total exposure of the banks to Greece was €22 billion for 2011-2012 which was larger than the GDP for the same period of €19.5 billion (IMF figures), with government debt up to about 80% of GDP.

The deepening recession made mat-

ters worse – for the 2012-2013 period, the GDP fell to around €15 billion (figures from *The Guardian*). To shore up the banking system, the government called for a bailout from its Eurozone partners.

Previous experience indicated that the terms of any bailout would be harsh. Demetris Christafios (pictured below), the AKEL president who requested the



bailout, resigned when it became clear that the "Troika" – the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank – was going to demand deep cuts in state spending, requiring the dismantling of the improvements in welfare, pensions and other areas that his government had implemented, and exposing the working people of Cyprus to a savage austerity programme.

His replacement, the right-winger Nicos Anastasiades, had no such qualms when he agreed to two successive bailout plans that placed the responsibility for resolving the financial crisis squarely onto the Cypriot people.

And the Germans, major providers of bailout funds, had no qualms about using Cyprus as a battleground in the war of German capital against Russian, its biggest rivals in the East-European region.

More or less since wealthy Russians began depositing and investing money in Cyprus, there have been rumours that they were using that system to launder their money.

A lot of those allegations originated



2008: Demetris Christofias with the former President of Russia, Dimitry Medvedev.

from Germany, and were repeated during the bailout negotiations. And not just by the main political bastions of German capital, such as Angela Merkel's CDU - the German Greens also got in on the act. And in February, the Eurogroup (a committee of Eurozone finance ministers) instructed a firm of private investigators to report on the question. At the time, they stated that the report would determine just how much of the total bailout would have to be found by Cyprus itself.

"War" propaganda aside, there is considerable truth in the rumour - the so-called "Russian oligarchs" certainly did not acquire their wealth honestly, and the levels of corruption known to exist in the country mean that many of the "mini-oligarchs" haven't done so, either.

There are further clues from elsewhere. *The Guardian* recently reported on Russian financial activities in the USA (27 March). Much of the money is invested in property - but through so many dummy companies and other measures that the name of the real owner of the property rarely appears on any public document.

And Cyprus itself, a country with a population of less than 1 million (outside the area of Turkish occupation), and a domestic (non-finance) economy made up largely of small and medium-sized businesses, is by far the single largest foreign investor in Russia, with nearly half of all foreign investments there. Most of these "foreign" investments are actually Russian, financed from money deposited by Russians in Cypriot banks.

The particular weapon selected by the Germans in Cyprus was the levy on deposits in Cypriot banks. Merkel herself expressed considerable support for this idea, knowing that it would (in theory, at least) hit big Russian depositors

particularly hard.

Indeed, so keen was she on it that, when during the second set of negotiations the Cypriot government suggested "nationalising" state pension funds to raise some of Cyprus' contribution, she condemned it in a speech to the Bundestag as being completely unnecessary.

When the first agreement was reached, in mid-March, the bailout was set at €16 billion. Of this, €10 billion was to come from the "Troika" with the standard austerity conditions attached.

The remaining €6 billion was to come from those holding Cypriot bank accounts. Accounts containing less than €100,000 would be subjected to a levy of 6.75%; larger accounts would be levied at 9.9%.

Initially, this was mooted in terms of "savers" (depositors) - but it soon became clear that all bank accounts were to be levied, including current accounts. This would have punished not just every Cypriot worker for the failings of the banks, but pensioners and the unemployed, too, who paid their cheques into current accounts to access their money.

Anastasiades had told the Cypriot people, after his election, that he would bargain hard on their behalf. In fact, he showed himself to be thoroughly pusillanimous. In his first speech after election, he vehemently rejected any notion of the shareholders and depositors in Cypriot banks being made to contribute towards the bailout.

Not only did he renege on this, at least as far as the depositors were concerned - shareholders and bondholders in the banks would not be affected, but it was his suggestion that deposits under €100,000 be levied as well.

The Troika's negotiators had been quite happy with the levy falling only on the larger depositors i.e., in their eyes, mainly the Russians. Apparently, Anastasiades wanted the smaller depositors to suffer so that the Russians did not feel too aggrieved.

The extent to which the burden of this proposal would have fallen on the smaller account-holders can be gauged from the fact that, at the time, their money accounted for €30 billion of the €68 billion deposits in Cypriot banks.

This original agreement was rejected outright by the Cypriot legislature, and even Anastasiades' own party (Democ-

atic Rally, DISY) refused to support it: of its 20 MPs, 19 abstained and the other was "absent".

Supporters of Anastasiades and the "broad" levy in Cyprus subsequently accused the entire legislature of pandering to "populism" for refusing to go against the wishes of the majority of Cypriots who unsurprisingly objected vehemently to the deal.

A week later, a new bailout arrangement was agreed. This still involved a levy on account holders, but now the guarantee on accounts below €100,000 was respected - only those with larger accounts would be levied.

The amount needed to be found by Cyprus was also reduced, because the government undertook to restructure the two largest banks - Bank of Cyprus and Laiki - reducing the requirement for recapitalisation funds. Both banks had, in the meantime, taken measures to obtain further funds by selling their Greek subsidiaries to Greek banks.

The restructuring agreement involved splitting both banks, each into a "good" bank and a "bad" bank. Into the former would go all the accounts containing less than €100,000, while the larger accounts would go into the latter. The two "good" offshoots would be merged (as the Bank of Cyprus) and continue to operate normally.

The "bad" offshoots would effectively become holding funds, with the depositors losing around 40% of their funds to recapitalisation in exchange for shares in the banks. Since no-one was prepared to buy these shares, they were likely to be worthless scraps of paper for some time to come.

Subsequently, these account-holders were told that they could lose at least another 20% if the Bank needed further recapitalisation. This second levy would be



2009: Dimitris Christofias and Cyprus' first lady, Elsie Chiratou with Barack and Michelle Obama.

pooled in a non-interest bearing fund, with no guarantee of repayment.

On the surface of it, this new arrangement targeted primarily the rich - particularly rich Russians - and some commentators praised it for precisely that reason. Some of the larger accounts are indeed those of richish Russians and other foreign speculators taking advantage of the Cypriot tax haven.

But, while some of them are undoubtedly mini-oligarchs, few are real oligarchs. Indeed, the likes of Aleksandr Lebedev, owner of the *Independent* group of newspapers, and the

Evening Standard, estimated that their losses would be minimal. Lebedev put his at around \$10,000 - mainly because those that had large deposits in Cyprus had shifted them elsewhere when the need for a bailout was first mooted.

Many of these "larger" account holders are pensioners and small businesses. The levies on the latter will drive many to the wall, further worsening the economic situation in the country. In any case, the deal will withdraw several billion Euros from an economy already teetering on the brink of ruin.

The government had implemented various emergency measures during the bailout negotiations to prevent a run on the banks - which obviously missed their target - and afterwards pushed a bill through the legislature imposing strict capital controls.

These are actually in breach of EU law, which enforces the free flow of capital within the borders of the Union - but this is not the first "law" that has been ignored by the EC and the ECB when it suited them. These controls have already done significant damage to the economy, and primarily to those parts of it least able to cope.

The new deal did target the wealthier to a greater extent than the original, though this was almost incidental. The restructuring of the Laiki involved all lenders to the bank losing their money except the ECB, of course - their loans of €9 billion to the Laiki Bank will be transferred to the restructured Bank of Cyprus.

This was the first time in a Eurozone bailout that bondholders had been, even



tangentially, targeted. The biggest loser, though, will be the Cypriot state - the government's 84% stake in the bank was bought for €1.8 billion.

Other measures taken, which will certainly fall - initially - on the shoulders of the richer strata included an increase in corporate tax from 10% to 12.5%, and an increase in the tax on interest from 15% to 30%.

Incidentally, these were measures that had been resisted by the right during the Christafios presidency. As AKEL have pointed out (Statement of the Party's General Secretary, 3rd April, 2013), such measures are to be introduced in a context where the bailout agreement will force Cyprus deeper into recession - just when more investment and easier credit - both driven away by the higher taxes - will be most required.

In addition, the IMF demanded - in return for its €1 billion loan contribution to the bailout - the cutting of state pensions, privatisations, and "reform" of the welfare system. The latter while claiming that the poorest Cypriots would be protected from the worst of the cuts.

It also demanded that the state budget be in surplus by 2018, subjecting the Cypriot people to at least five years of grinding austerity. How much deeper that recession is likely to be is shown by the difference between the IMF's predictions of the degree to which the Cypriot GDP will fall by the end of 2013 (8.7%), and those of the Cypriot government (13%). But the IMF demands are predicated on their figure, and clearly take no account of the actual impact these measures will have.

Proposals by the Cypriot government to ameliorate the amount they need to find for their part of the bailout include a so-called Investor Solidarity Fund, to which all Cypriots will be encouraged to contribute, along with foreign investors. Also possibly going into this Fund will be the "nationalised" pension funds of state employees. Even if they do not, the funds will be nationalised anyway in return for government bonds.

Some of the ruling circles in Cyprus think that natural gas may come to their aid. It is believed that there may be considerable gas reserves in the waters around Cyprus.

A successful field was opened in 2011, containing what could be one-fifth of the suspected reserves which are estimated to be worth around €300 billion. But the existence and exploitability of the remainder have yet to be proven.

No other fields have been discovered, despite considerable efforts in that direction. There are also question marks over who owns this gas, with Egypt claiming some of the waters involved. The Turks, still in illegal occupation of northern Cyprus, have also staked a claim, with their Foreign Minister recently announcing that Cyprus' natural resources belong to all of its people. In addition, any gas pipeline out of Cyprus would almost certainly have to pass through indisputably Turkish territory.

Despite this, however, the Cypriot government has suggested linking the Investor Solidarity Fund to natural gas bonds, and "compensating" bank depositors with them, and that returns on those bonds could be paid within as lit-

tle as two years.

In fact, the gas reserves (whatever their size), and the corresponding revenues, are unlikely to start flowing for at least seven to ten years. All that can be hoped for in the meantime are payments for license fees by companies anxious to prospect for these gas reserves. And they will bring in millions, not billions.

The Cypriot government has also tried raising loans from other states - including, almost comically, Greece! This is tantamount to one beggar asking another for "the price of a cuppa, gov".

Russia was the other target for tapping up - during the second round of bailout negotiations, Anastasiades' then Finance Minister, Michael Sarris, spent much of the time in Moscow trying to renegotiate the terms of a €2.5 billion loan granted in 2011, and due for repayment by 2016. He also attempted to have the loan refinanced to the tune of a further €5 billion.

He failed, since the Russian government wasn't above playing the same game with the Cypriot people as the Germans. Both Putin and Medvedev had publicly expressed outrage about the levies to be imposed on Russian depositors in Cyprus.

More recently, they have expressed a willingness to look at easing the repayment terms of the original loan - but only if restrictions are lifted on the operations of the Cypriot subsidiary of the VTB, Russia's second largest bank, and if Russian interests in the island are protected in general.

And then came the third bombshell. Less than one month after the bailout deal was "finalised", Cypriots were told that they would have to find another €7 billion.

This was due to the discovery that the black hole in the banking sector was larger than expected. This was ascribed to the flight of capital from Cyprus which had been going on for months - since the need for a bailout was first mooted - possibly even since the 2011 buy-out of the Laiki Bank suggested that all was no longer well with the sector.

Clearly, German capital in particular scents total victory in Cyprus, and wants to clear the field completely, making the people and their economy pliable to its own requirements.

Throughout the bailout negotiations, AKEL maintained a demand that Cyprus solve its problems outside "the suffocating embrace of the Troika" (Statement of the Party's General Secretary, Andros Kyprianou, 3rd April 2013) and its "neoliberal" solutions that almost openly demand that any "help" is repaid at the expense of the working people

and the poor.

Outside of that suffocating embrace almost certainly means outside of the Eurozone, perhaps even outside of the European Union, since any actions necessary would likely contravene European law, not just the regulations surrounding the Euro.

That would certainly require regulation of the banking sector, even if Cyprus was to try and maintain itself as an offshore financial centre and tax haven - it was the lack of oversight and control that resulted in Cyprus becoming overexposed to Greek public and private sector debt, with little provision within the banks for ameliorating defaults.

Malta, with a similarly large banking sector, is nonetheless considered more secure, by none other than the European Commission itself. Part of the reason for that is that the Maltaese government ex-

... the situation in Cyprus demonstrates once again the truth of the conclusions drawn by Marx, Engels and Lenin - any workers' party that takes power within the context of capitalism is doomed to end up gaining no more than concessions to the workers from the ruling class.

ercises significant oversight of banks there, and has prevented the domestic banks from overexposing themselves to toxic foreign debts.

There is also a more rigid delineation between those banks that operate on the high-street, and those that operate in international markets. Nor does Malta's higher level of corporate tax (35%) deter investors.

Which reference to AKEL brings me to the final question: what was a Marxist party doing as the ruling party in a capitalist state?

In the wake of the 1848 revolutions in Europe, Marx and Engels both discussed this question separately. Marx dealt with France, where the workers shared in the revolutionary government formed in February 1848 (see *The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850*, or *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*).

Engels, meanwhile dealt with an earlier revolutionary period - the Peasant War in Germany (see the book of that

name) of the 16th century, in which the urban proletariat was involved virtually at the beginning of its movement in Germany.

Both arrived at similar conclusions: the workers would either be isolated and left impotent by their petty-bourgeois allies (France), or find themselves advancing, not their own interests but those of the more powerful classes initially allied to them, while wresting only meagre concessions to their own cause from the latter (Germany). Engels witnessed directly the same thing happening in Germany in 1848-1850.

In the early years of the 20th century, Lenin analysed the question further, and concluded that the participation of revolutionary workers parties in bourgeois governments represented a betrayal of the workers to their class enemies - again, he pointed to the fact that they would end up running the country for the capitalists, with only meagre gains for the workers to show for it.

Later, this conclusion was modified to suggest that such participation was appropriate if bourgeois democracy was under threat from fascism.

Inevitably, the dogmatists of the ultra-left have pronounced from their ivory towers that AKEL have betrayed the working people of Cyprus to finance capital.

Nonetheless, the situation in Cyprus demonstrates once again the truth of the conclusions drawn by Marx, Engels and Lenin - any workers' party that takes power within the context of capitalism is doomed to end up gaining no more than concessions to the workers from the ruling class.

Did AKEL make mistakes while they were in power? This is the real world, so the answer would have to be "inevitably". But they are the party on the ground, and it is up to them to decide what those mistakes were, and what lessons to draw from them.

But the "criticism" aimed at AKEL by the ultra-left "purists" has more to do with dogmas than with the real world.

Cyprus was, prior to the AKEL election victory, probably one of the few countries in Europe now where a Marxist party could hope to win a bourgeois-democratic election.

We have the conclusions of Marx, Engels and Lenin, as mentioned above, and history since (e.g., Chile) to demonstrate that socialism is not going to be won through success in bourgeois elections. Yet, at the same time, it is a given that - unless special circumstances prevail - Marxist parties should participate in such elections.

And what of Lenin's conclusions

relating to participation in a bourgeois government?

Cyprus is not the early 20th century Britain, France, or Germany that Lenin primarily had in mind. There, the revolutionary workers parties were minorities within the working class movement and, in the case of Britain, thoroughly dwarfed by their opportunist, social democratic rivals. The most that any revolutionary party could hope for would be places in a coalition cabinet alongside people for whom any notion of revolution was anathema.

But what of a country such as Cyprus, where victory is possible? That victory does not in itself indicate that the country in question has entered a revolutionary situation where an electoral victory could be used as a springboard for further, actually revolutionary action to overthrow capitalism.

That does not require that a majority of those who voted for the Marxists should support that revolutionary action, but it does require that the forces that do are strong enough to paralyse their enemies. No mean feat in a world where there is no longer a powerful community of socialist states. How many of the Cypriots who voted for Christofias for President and AKEL would have actually followed them if they had attempted to move forward in a revolutionary manner?

In any case, when Demetris Christofias won the presidential election in 2008, it was after the second-round run off against his main right-wing opponent. In the first round, Christofias

had gained around one-third of the votes, slightly fewer than the man he beat in the second round.

Furthermore, Christofias was supported not just by his own party, AKEL, but by the United Democrats, a liberal grouping with a leftist tilt just sufficient to encourage them to support Christofias in the 2008 presidential election, and to form an electoral grouping with AKEL in the 2011 parliamentary elections. During the second round of voting, other left, leftist, and left-leaning parties threw their weight behind him.

As to the legislative elections, AKEL did not form a majority in 2006 where they were joint largest party with 18 seats out of 56 - the legislature that was in place when Christofias was elected president - or in 2011, where they had 19 seats, 1 behind the largest party, the right-wing "Democratic Rally" of the current President, Anastasiades. It would take a seriously pathological optimist or an equally pathological liar to discern a revolutionary situation in this arrangement of forces.

So an AKEL man had won the presidential election. What should AKEL have done?

Were they supposed to descend into revolutionary adventurism and declare an immediate socialist revolution regardless of the circumstances?

Were they simply to turn their backs on the people that elected them, and leave them to the tender mercies of their class enemies?

Or were they to roll their sleeves up and make the best of a bad job, fully

aware of the filth they are likely to find themselves wading through? That AKEL were fully aware of this quagmire is clear from the Main Political Resolution adopted by their 21st Congress: (http://www.akel.org.cy/nqcontent.cfm?_id=7350&tt=graphic&lang=13).

The first option is that of "leaders" who neither have a connection to the workers' movement, nor care one way or another. The second is no act of leadership at all.

The third is real leadership, even if its only outcome is that of demonstrating for all to see that there is no solution to the fundamental problems of the working class within capitalism, no way to socialism through the bourgeois ballot box.

The fact that AKEL was not the majority party in the Cypriot legislature was an important factor in determining precisely what its government was capable of in the economic sphere.

Although the Resolution cited above dealt with the situation two years ago, its clauses show quite clearly that the representatives of the ruling class and of sectional interests were attempting to baulk Christofias and his minority government at every opportunity.

"More measures would have been taken [to improve the economy], such as the increase on corporate tax base on profits and on the taxation of large real estate based on property size, had narrow-minded and petty-party interests and pre-election expediencies on this issue too not prevailed that are leading the opposition and other forces to adopt a completely negative stand."

The Socialist Correspondent Conference

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- Britain: Austerity and Prospects for Change

Dirty tricks over housing in Duisburg

Duisburg is a city of 489,000 inhabitants in the Ruhr region of Germany. Renowned as the heartland of German coal and steel production, the Ruhr region is suffering from de-industrialisation and growing poverty. Duisburg's last coal mine closed in 2009.

By **PAT TURNBULL**

The Rhein Ruhr Hall opened in 1975, when West Germany was the front line and the shop window of capitalism. It hosted sporting events, TV shows, concerts, exhibitions and fairs.

But since March 2011 it has stood unused and increasingly derelict. It is claimed 30 million Euros are needed for its refurbishment. The huge swimming baths, under heritage protection, also stand empty. Duisburg has debts of 2.15 billion Euros.

Duisburg City Council is taking the view that the priority is getting money in and attracting young families and high earners - Agenda 2027 they call it.

Areas next to the water, like Duisburg Inner Harbour, the world's biggest inland harbour, are to be 'developed into prestigious locations'. There is talk of 'innovative concepts, with ecological extensions', a mixture of 'habitation, services and offices, gastronomy and green'. The poorer citizens in the north of the town are simply an embarrassment.

And so a third of Bruckhausen, an area in the north of Duisburg made up of solidly built and picturesque houses from the 'Gruenderzeit' (1900 - 1910), is scheduled for demolition. 262 buildings - 144 of them in Bruckhausen - are to be demolished to make way for a 'green belt' - a scheme decided on by Duisburg City Council in December 2007 as part of a ten-year-plan. By 2020 a total of 1620 people are scheduled to be moved out.

In a city largely destroyed by bombing in the Second World War, such old houses are a rarity. These homes are also cheaper than a lot of housing in Duisburg. And these demolitions threaten the rest of Bruckhausen.

Historians and architects have proposed a plan for the rebuilding and refurbishment of Bruckhausen. Campaigners even say 58 million Euros for refurbishment is in the city coffers, but is not being used - and the locals are not being told about it!

On the other side of the road is the giant Thyssen Krupp steel works, the largest in Europe. The view of Blast Furnace 4 looking down Diesel Street was a classic view of the Ruhr region, a feature of many films, the combination of traditional housing and a symbol of industry.

In 2007 the Rhenish Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments saw the 'denseness of historical buildings and their illustrative relation to the factory buildings' as reason enough to declare the majority of the district a historic protected area.

But now Blast Furnace 4 has been dismantled and the Thyssen Krupp building is a huge black square. The replacement furnaces, some further down the river, will have more than double the capacity. And Diesel Street itself is threatened with demolition.

The cost of the 'green belt' will be 72 million Euros. Thyssen are providing half the finance for the green belt; critics say they want to get rid of neighbours who could criticize the pollution they produce.

Others remark ironically that the air is the same as in Cologne - to get clean air you would have to destroy the whole Ruhr region! The European Union and North Rhine Westphalia regional council are providing the rest of the finance



- no money to meet Duisburg's debts, but money for what opponents describe as 'a ridiculous lawn project'.

Opponents of the scheme point out that Bruckhausen already has more green areas than many other parts of Duisburg. And to make way for the green belt, as well as houses, allotments have been torn up. One owner planted trees in the 1960s when she came to Germany from Turkey. She could not speak as she saw the bulldozer tear her trees down. The suspicion is that environmental arguments are being used for other purposes.

Many of the home owners in Bruckhausen are of Turkish origin, welcomed to the Ruhr decades ago as 'guest workers'. People not only have their homes here, but small businesses – cafes, pubs, travel agencies – so they are doubly affected. The traditional market is threatened – as the district is cleared, stall-holders are driven out through lack of custom.

Home-owners have carried out costly maintenance to their historic homes, protecting part of the German cultural heritage. Parts of Bruckhausen have been declared an 'urban renewal area', but the only effect has been to restrict the owners to selling their homes to Duisburg City and to prevent them from carrying out refurbishment and from re-renting them. The strategy is to force people out. Dirty tricks have been used. An old man who was determined to stay had his windows smashed several times and finally left when stones fell next to his head.

In a desperate move to force people out, the council claimed that they could force home-owners to accept an exchange rather than buying them out, but after a long and expensive legal struggle, it has been proved that forcible exchange does not exist in German law. Now appeals are going forward against compulsory purchase orders.

Campaigners are strengthened and heartened by the thought that if they win, people in other cities threatened in the same way will be protected. They are hoping for support from workers in the steel plant and from the trade unions.

Not far from Bruckhausen is Zinkhuettenplatz Estate: since October 2011 the 396 homes are threatened with demolition to make way for a car park. This car park will serve a Factory Outlet Centre – a large shopping centre – planned for the site of the Rhein Ruhr Hall nearby. This temple of shopping is the master plan of Dutch investor Roger Sevenheck.

Zinkhuettenplatz Estate was built by Thyssen for its workers, the first steel



1962: working in the Walsum mine in Duisburg. (Photo: Ludwig Wegmann)

workers' quarter built in West Germany. In the days when West Germany wanted to be seen to be doing something for its workers, the estate was designed by renowned architect Max Taut.

It is a model estate, about fifty years old, with huge areas of well-kept green lawn and trees, and well designed blocks of flats – no tower blocks. The internal design of the flats is good and they are well liked by their tenants. But the estate is now owned by housing company Immeo, and they are prepared to hand over the estate for demolition.

Many of the tenants in Zinkhuettenplatz have already been forced out, or bribed with offers of money to move, often into smaller and dearer flats. But 150 families remain and they say 'We are all staying!'

Many are over seventy, people who used to work at Thyssen steel works, who, as they say, helped to rebuild German industry after the Second World War, but are now surplus to requirements.

Doubts have been raised as to whether the investor even has the capital for the

Factory Outlet Centre. Opponents say it will threaten the town centre; environmental campaigners point out the increase in pollution from the resultant traffic. Local politicians promise new jobs – others fear poor working conditions and the loss of existing jobs in the stores in the inner city.

In Bruckhausen houses are torn down to create a 'green belt'; in Zinkhuettenplatz to create a polluting Factory Outlet Centre.

While houses which people can afford to live in are being sacrificed, the social report from the council says that 70,000 social homes will be needed in Duisburg in the future while the town has only 24,000.

Plans initiated under the previous CDU (conservative) mayor are being pursued by a so-called red-red-green coalition of Social-Democrats, Greens and the Left Party. There is a special anger that a left orientated alliance should be throwing tenants out of their homes against their will, and conducting a strategy of expulsion against working class and immigrant communities.

“Do not paint Nationalism Red”

How should socialists approach the question of whether or not to support Scottish independence?

By **STEPHEN LOW**

Put simply, by determining what will best serve the interests of the working class.

So let us attempt this, using as our yardstick not the blandishments foisted on us by the tax dodgers and millionaires of the *YES* campaign and its *Better Together* mirror image, but the ideas and concepts of classical socialist theory.

“The Social-Democratic Party’s recognition of the right of all nationalities to self-determination most certainly does not mean that Social-Democrats reject an independent appraisal of the advisability of the state secession of any nation in each separate case. Social-Democracy should, on the contrary, give its independent appraisal, taking into consideration the conditions of capitalist development and the oppression of the proletarians of various nations by the united bourgeoisie of all nationalities, as well as the general tasks of democracy, first of all and most of all the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.”⁽¹⁾

As Lenin makes clear, supporting the principle of the right of self determination for all nations does not translate into unqualified support for every petty bourgeois secessionist project that comes along.

Socialists are not, and should never be, nationalists. Our values, aims and concerns are humanist and global. The concerns of nationalists, by definition, are not. Nations are historical contingencies - they come and go - so supporting a drive for this or that state entity cannot be a matter of principle for socialists, only one of tactics and strategy.

There are of course situations where socialist support for particular national projects is more or less obvious. The freedom of colonies from imperial domination is one

such clear cut example, as are situations where national minorities seek to escape from oppression. But does Scotland fall into either of these categories?

Scotland is not a colony of England. The Union of 1707 was not an act of imperial conquest - it was an agreed merger between the ruling classes of two countries.

The Scots, shaken to the core by the failure of the Darien Scheme, gained a new source of capital and security via a partnership with a more established class.

The English turned a potential competitor - and source of challenge through alliances with European Absolutism - into a partner. For a developing capitalism it was a win-win situation. The capitalist class which then developed was British, not English, as was the blood soaked imperial project they then pursued.⁽²⁾

The contrast between Scotland and Ireland could not be more stark. Scotland after 1707 was subject to what was at the time the most rapid industrialisation process in history. Ireland which was a colony received underdevelopment and famine.

Marx and Engels (pictured below)



Karl Marx and Frederich Engels

certainly never viewed Scotland as an English Colony. They often discuss the status of Ireland outlining the mechanics of colonial exploitation, but despite frequently referencing Scottish conditions, the idea that the relationship with England is colonial is nowhere suggested.

Neither can it be argued that Scots are facing national oppression. That’s not to say people in Scotland are free. The merest glance at any of our cities is enough to show people are being oppressed: by poverty or racism, by unemployment and inadequate housing, blighted prospects and lack of opportunity.

In other words the oppression in Glasgow is exactly the same as that endured in Manchester, Liverpool or London. No one is oppressed for being Scottish.

But what of the key question, will independence increase our effectiveness in confronting capital?

The Scottish economy is highly integrated into the UK economy. Scotland does more trade with the rest of the UK than with the rest of the world. Ownership in the Scottish economy is largely at a UK level.

To take one significant example, Richard Leonard of the GMB writing for the Red Paper Collective points out “...the economic power owned by working people, but not controlled by working people in our pension and insurance funds is organised at the UK level with the largest UK pension funds ... all British wide in their membership and organisation. So if democratic reform of pension and insurance funds is, as I believe it should be, a significant element of a new left strategy to re-direct investment and provide for both popular socialised ownership and control in the economy it is at the UK level that reform will be at its most effective.”⁽³⁾

It might also be added that industrial decline on the Tyne and the Clyde have similar causes - and solutions. Suggesting that the former is an economic question yet the latter is a national one is ignoring the reality of class power.



MAY 1918: Revolutionary socialist, John MacLean conducting his own defence at his trial in Edinburgh. He was accused of sedition and sentenced to five years penal servitude. After a huge campaign for his early release he was freed from Peterhead prison in December 1918.



Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland, leader of the Scottish National Party and former banker.

If independence as such offers such little appeal for those whose focus is class - how about independence as offered? The distinction is important. The independence we get will be Alex Salmond's not John MacLean's (pictured). The SNP will both negotiate before, and govern after, independence.

The SNP, the odd populist flourish aside, are still thirled to neo-liberalism and the whip hand it gives capital. They have consistently welcomed the Corporation Tax cuts in George Osborne's budgets, and promised that Corporation Tax rates in Scotland will be lower than in England. A view Salmond has been assiduously promoting on visits to the US.

Simultaneously the SNP maintain that there will be no need for personal taxation to rise post independence. Unless one is - as Messrs Salmond and Swinney quite publicly are - a believer in the Laffer curves at the heart of Reaganomics, the future funding of public services begins to look a little shaky.

North of the Tweed will be a government with an economic strategy based on attracting jobs to Scotland based on low corporate tax rates. If successful the impact on the North of England is not difficult to imagine. It is of course quite possible that the rest of the UK might respond with business tax cuts of their own - hardly a gain for our class.

Also the fiscal transfer function of resources between areas will also be lost. Of course for some of the less grounded supporters of Independence, most particularly the Ultra Left, the nature and policies of the SNP hardly matter. Independence will either on its own unleash radical potential - or post independence the SNP will split prompting some sort

of realignment which it is assumed will benefit the left.

The confidence with which these assertions are made is in inverse proportion to the evidence for them. Since 1981 there have been 39 new states created in an era which no one (outside Latin America) is going to claim as one of great success for the left.

Equally the idea of an evaporating or self-destructing post-independence SNP is ahistoric. The pattern for movements and parties that have achieved state making projects is generally one of political dominance for years afterwards: India achieved independence in 1948 and has been governed by a still extant Congress for much of its existence, the ANC have continued post-apartheid, Mapai dominated Israeli politics for its first forty years, Tanzania, Gold Coast, Zambia and many others all point to the likelihood of a scenario where the SNP as they fully intend to will go on (and on).

Obviously it is not only the organisa-



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

tion of capital, and its supporters, that concerns socialists - but that of the working class.

The trade union movement is overwhelmingly organised at a UK level. The movement could, doubtless, cope with the setting up of an independent Scotland, but it is difficult to see how it makes life easier.

Not least as some, less class conscious to be sure, workers may wonder why they should make the effort to help people who found being in the same political entity as them so intolerable. This is assuming that Trade Unions continue to organise on an all UK basis and do not divide along national lines as some Left supporters of independence are already arguing for.⁽⁴⁾

Marx declared famously that the working class 'has no country'. But as he also said the proletariat, "must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word."⁽⁵⁾

The problem in Scotland is that independence is being pursued only in the bourgeois sense of the word. Rather than seeking a solution under the Saltire, socialists in Scotland and elsewhere would do better to remember Lenin's advice to Zinoviev and his comrades prior to the Baku congress: 'Do not paint nationalism red.'⁽⁶⁾

FOOTNOTES

1. Lenin, Theses on the National Question 1913.
2. See N. Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* London 2000 (Ch5) and *The Scottish Revolution 1692-1746*.
3. <http://redpaper.net/2012/09/01/who-owns-scotland-the-realities-of-economic-power>
4. The division of British into Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish Trade union movements may well provide an example of post-independence co-operation across national boundaries that might yet prove to be an international template for such co-operation on a much wider base." (*Scottish Socialist Voice*, Issue 396, 25th May 2012). The Chauvinism of small nations anyone?
5. Communist manifesto, ch2
6. M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*, Bombay 1964, p. 395

East Asia analysis: Korea and beyond

According to journalist Philip Stephens in the *Financial Times* (3 May 2013) the three most significant developments in east Asia are the rise of China, the nationalist turn taken by Japan and the “return of the US as a resident Asian power.”

By **SIMON KORNER**

While significant in themselves, the recent tensions over Korea should be seen against these deepening fault-lines in the region.

North Korea's rhetorical show of force has been represented in the West as a dangerous escalation of tension by the 'rogue state'.

But statements such as: “Wherever they are, we can attack the Americans... There's no limit to our attack ability” represent a defensive response to provocation rather than irrational sabre-rattling.

John Kerry's visit to South Korea, Japan and China earlier this year was timed to take place during military exercises with South Korea - which for the first time practiced invading North Korea, and deployed B52s and stealth bombers.

It was the trauma of the devastating Korean War (1950-53) - a war in which up to half a million North Korean soldiers and a fifth of the civilian population were killed, and in which the US came close to dropping the atom bomb - that shaped North Korea's defensive posture. The American threat has never diminished, despite a (failed) promise by the Clinton administration in the mid-1990s to help build a civil nuclear programme in North Korea, and a non-proliferation deal with the Bush administration, which the Americans scuppered by demanding over-intrusive on-site inspections.

The North has learnt from what happened to Iraq and Libya and elsewhere that a nuclear arsenal, however small, can help prevent an invasion.

The existential threat to North Korea comes not only from the US, with its aggressive pivot to Asia now more than a year old, but from an increasingly powerful and belligerent South Korea.

South Korea's new rightwing president, Park Guen-hye, the daughter of the country's former military dictator, has been outspoken about her desire for capitalist reunification.

The finance ministry has already drawn up detailed plans for a takeover of the North's industries, driven by the prospect of a supply of cheap labour to maximize profits for the South's big corporations.

On the military front, South Korea has asked for US nuclear weapons on its soil, and wants to develop its own plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment to build nuclear weapons. One general said recently that “pre-emptive attack against the North trying to use nuclear weapons ... is the right of self-defense.”

Japan, too, has threatened a pre-emptive ballistic missile strike against North Korea, according to the *Daily Mail* (April 29, 2013) and has good reason to avoid normalization of relations: when it

did so with South Korea in 1965, it paid out huge reparations for crimes committed during its occupation of the Korean peninsula from 1911 to 1945. Equivalent reparations to the North would top \$10 billion in current dollars - about a quarter of the North's estimated annual GDP.

The North is threatened economically as well as militarily. Japan and the US have vetoed the North's applications to join the Asian Development Bank, and the US has denied the North membership in the World Bank and IMF. The recent declaration by the IAEA that North Korea was in breach of nuclear safeguards means that the UN Security Council can impose yet more stringent economic sanctions.

China's rise

Underlying the escalating campaign against Korea are American and Japanese fears of displacement by China. China has already pushed Japan to third place in the world economic league table, and is set to overtake the USA by 2016.

According to American commentator Fran Shor (State of Nature 2011): “In manufacturing China has displaced the US in so many areas, including becoming the number one producer of steel and exporter of four-fifths of all of the textile products in the world and two-thirds of the world's copy machines, DVD players, and microwaves ovens.”

China's growth can be measured by the fact that it has overtaken the US to become the world's biggest energy consumer, its consumption almost 20% of the world's total.

It is already the largest consumer of essential metals (copper, zinc, platinum) in the world, and a huge oil importer, mainly from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Venezuela and Angola.

Its economy dominates east Asia. According to the rightwing thinktank, the Heritage Foundation: “from 1998 to 2010, China's share of ASEAN trade rose from 3.5 percent to 11.3 percent... Total direct investment inflows from China to ASEAN from 2003 to 2009 were more than twice those from India.”



1951: Two soldiers of the North Korean People's Army on board a US warship as Prisoners of War.

China's military power is also rising, with its first aircraft carrier (a reconfigured 1990 Russian carrier), a new stealth fighter and, according to the BBC, the deployment of "the world's first long-range ballistic missile capable of hitting a moving ship at sea." Western newspapers such as the *New York Times* have reported a "double-digit increase" in military spending.

While an exaggeration of China's power serves as a useful pretext for an American arms build-up in the region, there is no denying an increase in military strength and spending by China, which is now second in the world - between \$90-111 billion a year, with 2013 spending already at \$118 billion.

As Philip Stephens sums up: "A fair-minded assessment would say its ambition is to establish political and military, as well as economic, primacy in its own backyard."

Nevertheless, its defence spending is still less than 10% of America's, and it is unlikely to challenge America openly for some time to come, depending as it does on the US market for its goods, as the leading exporter of goods to that country, and being the biggest holder of U.S. foreign reserves, in the form of treasury bonds.

While such economic links are no guarantee of peace, they make armed conflict in the short to medium term less likely. Above all, China is technologically nowhere near as advanced as America, and will take years to catch up.

Japanese nationalism

A less well-documented phenomenon than China's rise, Japan's nationalist turn has been accelerating under the new prime minister, Abe, who has called for a "strong Japan" and a "strong military".

Senior political figures, such as the governor of Tokyo, are whipping up anti-Chinese feeling and urging rearmament.

The *Asia Times* online (April 30, 2013) reported a nationalist demonstration in alarming terms: "Tokyo's Ginza district was crowded with people waving Hinomaru rising-sun flags and jockeying for the best position to yell their insults and curses. The moment came when demonstrators from Okinawa Prefecture, including mayors, assembly members and labor unionists, marched by to protest the deployment of MV-22 Osprey transport aircraft to a U.S. military base in the southern prefecture. 'You traitors,' the roadside people screamed during the march on Jan. 27. 'Get out of Japan,' was another common cry."

The mayor of Osaka, Toru



2007: A missile being launched from the Japanese destroyer, JS Kongo.

Hashimoto, has also stirred up Chinese and South Korean feeling by declaring that the Japanese military's forced prostitution of up to 200,000 Korean and Chinese so-called 'comfort women' during the Second World War "was necessary to maintain discipline in the ranks" (*Evening Standard*, May 14, 2013).

These are more than symbolic gestures. One Japanese government source told the *Japan Times* recently that the country's foreign ministry had produced a secret report showing that it would take just 3-5 years for Japan to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Japan's strategic aim is to re-establish its military might after the 70 year low following its defeat by the USA in the Second World War. This involves encouraging the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam in their disputes with China, and intensified aggression of its own over the various islands it disputes with China for potentially lucrative offshore oil fields.

Abe has used North Korea as an excuse to change Japan's constitution away from 'self defence' to a far more aggressive doctrine of 'collective self-defence', allowing force to be used outside Japanese territory or waters. This goes with a steep rise in military spending.

An academic spokesman for Abe said: "With China's increasing military might and North Korea's threat, it's necessary for Japan to improve its deterrence to avoid any potential military clashes - Japan needs to strengthen its alliance with the United States and build the necessary legal infrastructure for closer cooperation."

It is its alliance with America that forms the cornerstone of Japan's nationalist strategy, allowing it to re-arm and confront China from behind the protective shield of US power.

Yet the contradictions of such a strat-

egy are clear. An *Asia Times* article commented: "Japan emerging as an independent force in Asia is bad news for the United States and its quest for relevance and control in the West Pacific." Japanese militarization will eventually lead it into conflict with the USA itself.

The return of the US as a 'resident Asian power'

Given Japanese re-armament, the US 'pivot' can be seen therefore as not only a means of containing China, but as part of a wider 'rebalancing' to ensure its hegemony remains unchallenged in future by Japan, as well as Russia.

The encirclement of China is thus not an end in itself but a key element in maintaining America as the world's supreme power. Its push to expand the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement complements this strategy, forcing open Asian economies such as the tightly controlled Japanese agriculture and healthcare markets, as well as challenging China.

In military terms, the central plank of the pivot is a huge anti-ballistic missile system, which will grow in size by 50% over the next four years - something planned long before the latest North Korean missile launch and nuclear test. The core of this system is the highly advanced X-band radar - made by Raytheon - being installed on a southern Japanese island, along with a second X-band radar already in place in the northern prefecture of Aomori.

According to the *Wall Street Journal* the X-band radar would allow the US to 'peer deeper' into China, as well as North Korea. A third X-band radar could soon be in place in the Philippines.

These preparations, ostensibly to counter the North Korean threat - along with a \$1 billion missile shield on the US west coast, though few believe North Korea could reach that far - are clearly aimed at China and Russia, and are in fact part of a first strike nuclear strategy.

According to journalist F.W. Engdahl: "With even a primitive missile defense shield, the US could launch a first strike attack against Russian or Chinese missile silos and submarine fleets with less fear of effective retaliation; the few remaining Russian or Chinese nuclear missiles would be unable to launch a response sufficiently destructive."

The enlarged missile defence system, based in the USA, Japan, South Korea, as well as Australia, will in turn push the Chinese into further military spending. A *Global Times* article warns: "If Japan, South Korea and Australia join the sys-

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The state of the State in South Africa

**10th Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture
Cape Town - 7 November 2012.**

By JOEL NETSHITENZHE
Executive Director, Mapungubwe Institute (MISTRA)

I wish first to thank the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust for this opportunity to join you and other partners as we acknowledge one of South Africa's sages of social science, Harold Wolpe, on this occasion of the 10th Memorial Lecture.

Along with many others of his generation, he contributed not only to the analysis of the social manifestations of apartheid colonialism. He was also an activist in the destruction and creation that revolution entails.

It is due to both these roles that the impact of his intellectual work was and remains that much more profound, because it combined the development of theoretical constructs and their testing and refinement in the crucible of struggle.

I was requested to reflect on The State of the State in South Africa today, an all-encompassing theme with sub-themes that would require lectures in their own right. To make my task easier, I have selected a few issues to illustrate the strategic challenges that South Africa faces as it strives to speed up social transformation.

Proceeding from the premise that we are all familiar with these issues, I will not seek to trace the evolution of the state as such – the Athenian and Spartan versions, the pre-colonial manifestations of social organisation as in the Mapungubwe and other African civilisations and the mfecane wars of nation-formation, or the rise of the colonial state in the geography today called South Africa. Nor will I attempt to interrogate the Weberian, micro-foundational and Marxist theories of the state and their utility.

For purposes of our discussion, I will merely draw from this tapestry, to extract some generalisations on the state of our state today; and the actions required to ensure that it plays an optimal role in leading the efforts to improve people's quality of life. Presumptive as this may

sound, I will draw inspiration from Harold Wolpe's methodology of approaching notions of social organisation and the state as being undergirded by class dynamics.

CONCEPT OF THE STATE AND CLASS DYNAMICS WITHIN THE COLONIAL STATE

Why is the state central to social organisation, at least during particular periods in the evolution of human society? It has been argued quite cogently that the very existence of the state arises out of the need to manage social conflict.

Friedrich Engels in his seminal work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* makes this assertion in the following manner: "The state is... by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, pp157-158)

But should we infer one-directional causality between the level of development of economic organisation and industry, on the one hand, and instruments of social organisation, on the other? As many would argue, forms

of social organisation can evolve and assume autonomous identities.

Indeed, Engels himself makes this qualification in his Letter to Bloch: "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure - ... political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form." (Friedrich Engels, Letter to J. Bloch in Königsberg, <http://www.marxists.org/...1890/letters...>)

I suppose that we are all in agreement that the evolution of the state in a unified South Africa bore all the hallmarks of a colonial imposition, promoting and protecting the material interests of the colonial settlers; and that the formation of the Union in 1910 represented racial solidarity founded on dispossession, exclusion and repression of the Black people.

However, within this racial solidarity, and indeed reflecting what Engels in the Letter to Bloch refers to as "an infinite series of parallelograms of forces", various secondary contradictions played themselves out. While issues of language and culture were an important veneer, the essence of these tensions was about how to narrow the divide between numbers and real power, between the statuses of a ruling political elite and a ruling class.

With the introduction of racially circumscribed "democracy", the Afrikaners, as the majority within the white community, ensured through corrective or affirmative action not only that their political dominance translated into general socio-economic benefits. They also sought to translate their position as the political ruling elite into becoming a full

part of the ruling class across South Africa, i.e. owners of the means of production beyond agriculture.

As this happened, and as is in the nature of the capitalist system, massive stratification also took place within the Afrikaner community, putting a strain on the nationalist project of mutual solidarity. Thus the supposed communal nationalist cause had to be re-invented and rationalised afresh.

In Die Calvinistiese Beskouing van die Arbeid in the Journal, *Koers* of October 1946, the point is made by the ideologues of Afrikaner Nationalism about the white lower classes that: "No one's task is too humble, because in the national economy we are all members of one body, in which there is indeed a head and a heart, but also the lesser members without which the body would be crippled. There is nothing wrong with the types of work we do ... it is all needed to serve the church, the volk and the state". (Quoted from Dan O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*)

One of the unique features that attach to this experience is that this political ruling elite had the possibility to use job reservation, land dispossession and other forms of racial discrimination and super-exploitation of Black people, to accord the white lower classes privileged status. This somewhat ameliorated the intra-communal tensions and delayed their acute manifestations which later took the form of the intense broedertwis of the

1970s and beyond. I hope (with apologies) that by now you appreciate where all this quasi-historical meandering is leading to!

TRAGEDY OR FARCE OR NEITHER?

In his observation on Hegel's remark "somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice" Karl Marx says Hegel "forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce". (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works>)

And so, to become more explicit: contained in this experience of the Afrikaner nationalist movement are three illuminating dynamics about:

- firstly, the conduct of a political elite that is not as such the ruling class, using political office to capture part of the commanding heights of the economy, and for a section of this elite to ascend to higher socio-economic status

- secondly, how such progress can also be facilitated by the extant ruling class courting the political masters by ceding some of its economic power

- thirdly, how advancement of a supposedly communal nationalism, within a capitalist socio-economic formation, may benefit all its adherents somewhat, but in fact also results in a small minority rising to the very top, and thus generating disquiet within the nationalist broad front.

In other words, if this truncated account of that experience does invoke familiar images about the present, it is

because there are instructive parallels. At the centre of this is the question of the capture of political power by a coalition of forces in a 'nationalist movement', its attempt within an unchanged (capitalist) socio-economic formation to use political power to re-order the distribution of income and wealth, and the stratification and tensions that ensue, as the elite within this political elite climb faster and higher in the economic stakes than the rest.

It can be argued that in the past 18 years, within an unchanged socio-economic formation, the Black political elite has been striving to use political power to re-order the distribution of income and wealth. It has been straining to use such power to ensure that the elite within the nationalist movement rises to become part of the ruling class, the owners of the means of production.

The established white ruling class has in turn been courting this elite in various ways. As in the past, it is a begrudging compliance, but they are doing it all the same. Stratification and inequality have intensified within the Black community; and the disquiet of the mass is manifesting on a grander scale than in the broedertwis, as reflected most recently in the Marikana tragedy and the ensuing mineworkers' revolt.

But it would be correct to pose the question: is such a characterisation not too simplistic! Even if we may be dealing with dynamics within one socio-economic formation, aren't there nuances? Is this an inevitable course of a national-

East Asia analysis: Korea and beyond

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tem, a vicious arms race in Asia may follow."

The recent Sino-Indian border dispute is all the more dangerous given the US strategy of drawing India into the anti-missile net and supplying it with the latest drones and fighter planes.

The US pivot to Asia also aims at dominating and disrupting China's maritime supply lines, particularly its oil imports, and beyond that, at controlling the almost half of all global trade that passes through the South China Sea.

To this end, the US has re-established its military base in Subic Bay in the Philippines for the first time in almost 20 years, and deployed 2,500 Marines to a base in northern Australia, part of a growing integration with that country's military.

The US's continuing presence in

Afghanistan gives it the potential to disrupt China's energy supplies – particularly important since late 2009, when an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan to Xinjiang in western China began operating, by-passing the vulnerable sea routes.

Multi-polarity

The US shift to east Asia will not go unchallenged. The recent agreement by the BRICS countries to establish a 'developing world' version of the IMF and World Bank represents an important marker.

Though the BRICS have yet to form any political or military arm, with China clearly unready to make such a move, the fact that another pole of power is forming, outside US control, is of crucial importance. The warming of relations between China and Russia – the best relations for 100 years according to Putin – marks another change.

In Moscow recently, the first foreign port of call of the new Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Putin declared that the two countries were working to "shape a new, more just world order... preventing the US from dominating."

The likely resumption of major arms exports from Russia to China, providing it with much needed technology, is also significant. Such challenges to US domination represent the growing confidence of emerging powers.

The relative decline of the American economy make it turn increasingly to military power to maintain its dominance, particularly since the 2008 economic crash and the failure in both Iraq and Afghanistan to achieve its stated war aims.

In this relatively weakened state, US imperialism is perhaps more dangerous than it has ever been, as it seeks to prevent its empire from further decline

ist cause within a capitalist socio-economic formation?

Without going into detail on the theorisation of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) which aims to create a National Democratic Society, it is critical to highlight the nuances, some of which may reflect qualitative contrasts.

The ANC and indeed the liberation movement at large argue that the purpose of struggle was to resolve the basic contradictions spawned by apartheid colonialism: national oppression, class super-exploitation and gender discrimination. It is a nationalism of the oppressed that trumps narrow confines to embrace non-racial equality.

The NDR, it is argued, should result in the building of: "... a society based on the best in human civilisation in terms of political and human freedoms, socio-economic rights, value systems and identity." (Building a National Democratic Society, ANC Strategy and Tactics, December 2007)

The economic system of a National Democratic Society would essentially be capitalist, "shorn of ... racial and gender exclusions ... and freed from barriers to entry and competition" and it will have "a mixed economy, with state, co-operative and other forms of social ownership, and private capital. The balance between social and private ownership of investment resources will be determined on the balance of evidence in relation to national development needs and the concrete tasks of the NDR at any point in time." (Ibid)

The ANC further emphasises that "[i]f there were to be any single measure of the civilising mission of the NDR, it would be how it treats the most vulnerable in our society." (Ibid)

We would all agree that the results of Census 2011 and other data do underline the progress that has been made in improving the quality of life of the overwhelming majority of South Africans over the 18 years of democracy.

One can quote instances such as the slight narrowing of the racial income gap, the extension of basic services to the majority of the population and a social wage unequalled in many parts of the world, the reduction of absolute poverty and the opening of access to opportunity undreamt of under apartheid colonialism. Yet we should also agree that the aggregates on the racial income gap conceal the income inequality within the Black community, amongst others.

There is need to drill deeper into the ebbs and flows of inequality trends within and among races, which the grand narrative of Census 2011 may not fully clarify. Extension of access to basic

services does not necessarily translate into quality of such services.

Unemployment remains a terrible blot on the humanity of our society. While the state has played an important role as an instrument of redistribution, its effectiveness in this regard is hampered by poor capacity, patronage and corruption.

These truths all South Africans are aware of; and there is consensus that the political economy as currently configured is unsustainable.

To use the metaphor of Colonialism of

... the national democratic state should urgently organise itself into an effective instrument of rapid growth and development, or consign itself to monumental irrelevance as the revolution strays from its course. For, without this, the state will be rejected as a mere dispensary of elite patronage, mocked as an instrument of pork-barrel regional or ethnic 'delivery', and attacked as a defender of super-exploitation.

a Special Type: the pace at which the state (and the new political elite) can address all these issues, as compared to the historical period referred to above, is also constrained by the reality that the current political elite cannot resort to, but should in fact eliminate, the super-exploitation of the masses in the 'internal colony'.

Such super-exploitation previously made it possible for the white political elite to buttress the living standards of the white lower classes in the 'internal metropolis'. Besides, the inherited impoverishment of the Black majority, compared to the 'poor white problem' of yesteryear, is that much more massive in terms of intensity and extensiveness.

IN SEARCH OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY

And so, in the maelstrom of a political elite striving to rise to the status of a ruling class, in intimate embrace or shadow-boxing with the established economic elite, and in the midst of mass disquiet and the tragedy of Marikana, we can be forgiven the temptation to invoke, quite extensively, Karl Marx's observations after the defeat of the 1871 Paris Commune: "During the subsequent regimes"[after the 1789 French Revolution – author], he says, "the government,

placed under parliamentary control ... became not only a hotbed of huge national debts and crushing taxes; with its irresistible allurements of place, pelf, and patronage, it became not only the bone of contention between the rival factions and adventurers of the ruling classes; but its political character changed simultaneously with the economic changes of society ... After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief ... The bourgeois republicans, who, in the name of the February Revolution, took the state power, used it for the June [1848] massacres, in order to convince the working class that "social" republic means the republic entrusting their social subjection, and in order to convince the royalist bulk of the bourgeois and landlord class that they might safely leave the cares and emoluments of government to the bourgeois "republicans"... Under its sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself. ...[F]inancial swindling celebrated cosmopolitan orgies; the misery of the masses was set off by a shameless display of gorgeous, meretricious and debased luxury. The state power, apparently soaring high above society and the very hotbed of all its corruptions." (Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, the Third Address, May 1871: *The Paris Commune*).

These observations by Marx, perhaps not entirely applicable to the state of our state today, do send a chilling reminder of what should not be; for the arrival of the worst in our body politic may not announce itself by knocking on the front door.

It is an injunction that the national democratic state should urgently organise itself into an effective instrument of rapid growth and development, or consign itself to monumental irrelevance as the revolution strays from its course. For, without this, the state will be rejected as a mere dispensary of elite patronage, mocked as an instrument of pork-barrel regional or ethnic 'delivery', and attacked as a defender of super-exploitation.

By avoiding this, we shall escape the fate that befell the pre-colonial Mapungubwe 'civilisation' which failed to negotiate the vicissitudes of environmental change; allowed social stratification to rend society apart; suffered marginalisation as new neighbouring 'civilisations' emerged and trade routes changed; and failed to contain the excesses of a debased leadership.

South African leaders of transformation believe that there is a way out of

pedestrian economic growth and development in which we are currently trapped. This is reflected, in part, in the expression of intent to build a developmental state, in the manner of the so-called Asian 'tigers' which have historically sustained high rates of growth and social inclusion over decades, and thus lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty.

Such a state, it is argued, should have the strategic orientation for development, premised on the political will of the leadership to stake their all on a developmental project. It should have the legitimacy to mobilise society behind a vision and programmes to attain set objectives. It should be optimally organised to meet its objectives; and it should have the technical capacity within the bureaucracy to bring its intentions to life.

We should however acknowledge that the trend in most of these states was to rely on the trickle-down economics of high growth rates. Further, in the earlier phases of the evolution of most of these polities, authoritarianism held sway.

In contradistinction to this, South Africans assert that ours should be a democratic developmental state; and that social policy should continue to feature prominently as part of speeding up the drive for social inclusion or "developmental citizenship".

The fact that the South African leadership is striving *a priori* to build a developmental state is itself a positive reflection on the commitment to deal with the social challenges we face.

In the words of Professor Linda Weiss, for South Africa to have set itself: "... the unusual and challenging goal of becoming a developmental state ... is a unique and noble enterprise: unique in so far as no state has ever self-consciously set out to become a Developmental State; and noble in so far as such a project draws inspiration from the experience of certain countries that achieved shared growth - growth with equity. Predatory states have appeared in abundance; developmental states are a much rarer breed" (Prof Linda Weiss of the University of Sydney, *Transformative Capacity and Developmental States: Lessons for South Africa*, 2010).

In terms of effort, two striking instances of progress deserve mention. Firstly, it is the adoption by Cabinet of the National Development Plan drafted by the National Planning Commission, and the commitment that where there may be conflict between current policies and programmes and the Plan, the latter will take precedence. This is reinforced by the fact that all political parties and most of society also support Vision 2030

and the Plan. Secondly, the setting up of formal Monitoring and Evaluation capacity and the performance agreements that attach to this have the potential to ensure accountability and thus the implementation of what has been decided upon. If there was any urgent challenge to address in this regard, it would be ensuring that these two initiatives are effectively operationalised and become truly embedded across all the spheres of government.

WILL AND CAPACITY

The question has been raised quite legitimately whether, beyond declarations, there is the will and the capacity to implement the National Development Plan!

In my view, perhaps subjectively as a member of the National Planning Commission, this question should be approached differently: so popular and so legitimate should the National Development Plan be, that in the election hustings in 2014, the basic question posed to all parties should be how their manifestos accord with Vision 2030, and what concretely they are going to do in the five years of their mandate to ensure that it is implemented.

And the performance of government should be monitored against that yardstick. In other words, while we should take Cabinet at its word, all of society should be the guardians of, and active participants in, ensuring that the Plan is implemented.

Besides this, let me reflect on a few critical actions that success in implementing a development plan requires, and how the South African state and society at large are faring.

The first one is about a social compact. Professor Thandika Mkandawire, elaborates this notion thus: "Social compacts refer to the institutionalisation of consultation and cooperation on economic policy involving representation from the state, capital, labour and other organisations of civil society. Social compacts have been used to address distributive and growth objectives of society at the micro-level; to improve labour management at the firm level and, as in the current usage of "social pacts" in Europe, to manage the distributional issues of macroeconomics policies...

"The proactive initiatives emerge when societies aim at a future objective that requires high levels of cooperation and trust... and is evoked when nations seek to embark on ambitious projects that require coordination and co-operation in both the political and economic spheres. Nation-building and economic development are good examples of such efforts... Social compacts play an im-

portant role in such situations to assure citizens that their current sacrifices will be duly and fairly rewarded in the future." (Mapungubwe Institute Inaugural Annual Lecture, Prof Mkandawire, London School of Economics and Political Science and Stockholm Institute for Future Studies, 29 March 2012).

As such, in our situation, a social compact will have to be pro-active and all-embracing, covering such issues as investment, employment and wage policy, interest rates, inflation and cost of living, competition policy, spatial issues and so on. It will require commitment on the part of all sectors of society to facilitate high economic growth and social inclusion, encompassing the totality of things required progressively to attain a decent standard of living for all.

This demands activism across all sectors, and preparedness on the part of the broad leadership to weigh trade-offs and to make choices for the common good. It requires the will and the acumen to eschew narrow self-interest; and leadership capacity to accept and communicate decisions that may not entirely be popular with one's own constituency.

It is therefore critical to avoid the danger of devaluing the notion of a social compact by confining it merely to immediate responses to a wave of strikes or even short-term measures to minimise the impact of the current global economic crisis.

This, in my view, is one of the weaknesses of the outcome of the recent High Level Dialogue on the Economy, besides the fact that it does not at all refer to Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan.

The second issue is about coherence in policy development and co-ordination. Researchers on developmental states do caution that we should not expect an artificial homogeneity within as large an organisation as the state.

In the words of Prof Linda Weiss: "The state is not a unitary structure like an orange where all the segments fit neatly together. As a complex of political institutions, states are actually quite messy configurations... As power structures, we say that they are polymorphous. So the state may well be free-market in one sphere (like finance), yet developmental in another (e.g. industry and technology), a promoter of free trade in some sectors (financial services), yet mercantilist in others (agriculture or textiles). (Linda Weiss, *Transformative Capacity and Developmental States: Lessons for South Africa*, 2010).

But all scholars of developmentalism do correctly argue that, precisely because states are "messy configurations", one of

the most critical and necessary attributes of a developmental state is a central institution, a pilot agency, with the strategic capacities, leverages and authority to drive economic policy and ensure its implementation.

One of the weaknesses in the South African state currently is the multiplicity of centres from which economic policy is driven - Economic Development, Trade and Industry, National Treasury, Public Enterprises and so on - with each actually believing that it is the ultimate authority.

As such, we run the danger of re-living the words of Alexei Tolstoy in his epic work, *Ordeal*: "The hurricane of events roared and the sea of humanity swayed. Everyone considered himself commander, and flourishing his pistol directed that the helm be turned now to port and now to starboard. All this was illusion ... The illusions were born of brief glimpses of the mirage." (Alexei Tolstoy: *ORDEAL*, quoted from *Denga*, *African Communist* 105, 1986).

The third issue is the balancing act by the state in providing societal leadership: what Peter Evans refers to as "embedded autonomy" (Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, 1995). On the one hand, the state should be so networked across society as to be able to exercise ideational leadership or what Antonio Gramsci refers to as 'hegemony'.

On the other hand, the state should be buttressed by a professional bureaucracy which is insulated from undue political interference and patronage. The state as a whole should have the will to break logjams in the interactions among various sectors of society - to prevent narrow sectoral interests paralysing the capacity of society to move forward. In a society such as ours with wide social fissures, deadlocks among social partners should be expected.

While the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NED-LAC) was set up primarily to resolve critical issues among these partners, it has become fossilised in its approach: each constituency pursues frozen mandates; representation has been juniorised and the interactions technocratic. Paralysis around interventions to deal with youth marginalisation, and a youth wage subsidy in particular, reflects this malaise. And the state is too indecisive to act autonomously of the interest groups, even if it meant running extensive pilot projects on the youth wage subsidy, in two or three provinces - the better to address concerns that currently are discussed only in theoretical terms.

At the same time, informal forums of

interaction such as the Working Groups of government and a variety of other social partners have been jettisoned, worsening levels of mistrust across society.

The last issue is about the state's sources of legality and legitimacy. On the face of it, issues of legality and legitimacy should not arise in the context of our state, given the generations of rights that the Constitution proffers, the separation of powers and the institutions to protect and enforce these rights.

But in the context of the Marikana tragedy and the ensuing mineworkers' revolt, we may need to drill deeper to assess whether, unsighted, there aren't worms eating into the very edifice of the state colossus. And so, beyond the constitutional and formal legalities, we need to examine the sturdiness of the system of rule of law in relation to the most ordinary of citizens all the way to the highest echelons of society.

When strikers and demonstrators carry weapons and in fact murder others with impunity; and when an impression is created that court orders are not honoured, we need to ponder whether the 'threat of threat', combined with civilised and intelligent conduct, that should underpin state hegemony is not in fact hollow - ready to unravel in insidious but profoundly destructive ways.

We need to examine how the intent and capacity to provide services by all spheres of government impact on the legitimacy of the state. Needless to say, because of the levels of poverty and inequality in our society, an unavoidable feature of our nation for a long time to come will be the inflammable tinder ever ready to catch fire.

In some cases it may not be actual 'delivery' that douses the fires of expectation; but the evidence of general progress and the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Where, as in the Marikana informal settlement, the social wage is virtually non-existent - with both the state and the mine-owners seemingly having washed their hands - the lack of hope is the spark that sets the tinder alight.

We need to examine whether our theoretical distinction between government and the state, as well between the state and societal leaders, do matter in terms of the legitimacy of the state and the broader socio-economic formation.

Unethical conduct by leaders in government, business, the trade union movement and the rest of civil society; impressions of lack of respect for public resources; and the ostentation of the elite delegitimise not only the party political and societal leadership; but also the state.

We need to do all this appreciating that ours is essentially a capitalist system,

with a state that seeks, through developmental programmes, to bridge deep and wide fissures inherited from the system of internal colonialism.

As the ruling elite, quite naturally, seeks to raise itself and those in its courtyard to the position of the ruling class, failure more effectively to socialise the benefits of economic growth has the potential to unleash a conflagration a million-times more destructive than the broedertwis of yesteryear.

The reconfiguration of this capitalist system should entail more than just the racial dimension at elite level, the so-called black economic empowerment to which 'economic transformation' is usually reduced.

The time has come, in addition to all the other programmes of economic transformation, for the political ruling elite and the ruling class, together to contribute to forging a stakeholder capitalism in which the working class is a real beneficiary.

I will not delve into various aspects of economic transformation, ranging from the structure of the economy, efficiency and cost of infrastructure, skills training, the multifaceted role of the state and so on.

I wish merely to emphasise that, at the core of the ownership component of economic empowerment programmes going forward, in mining, manufacturing, services and other industries, should be meaningful employee share-ownership schemes (ESOPs) and community participation, which should be emphasised above all other ownership elements of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). This should be part of our contemplation on the place and role of labour: "die beskouing van die arbeid" of the current age.

CONCLUSION

This then is the central message: the state of the South African state and its legitimacy cannot be divorced from the state and legitimacy of the socio-economic system that it manages, and the conduct of the elite beneficiaries of this system. The question therefore is whether the real, ascendant and aspirant ruling class is capable of behaving as more than just a class in itself; but also as a class for itself!

As accomplished scholars have suggested, this perhaps is one of the crucial questions of political economics that researchers in Africa need to interrogate. (Prof Mkandawire: 2012 Mapungubwe Institute Lecture, including reference to Colin Leys, 1996 #3637: 179). For contained within it lies one of the decisive determinants of the success or otherwise of Africa's development project.

Bolivarian revolution under fierce attack

This article is based on the speech by **FRIEDA PARK** delivered at the 2013 May Day rally in Irvine, Scotland.

We meet at a critical time for the development of progressive forces in Latin America and across the world. When I've spoken here before it has been to celebrate the astonishing achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela.

These were the achievements of the Venezuelan people and their political and social organisations, but the revolution also owes much to its leader Hugo Chavez, whose loss is undoubtedly a terrible blow and to whom I want to pay tribute.

He was an astute and principled politician on the side of the poor and those opposing imperialism throughout the world. Did you see the picture of the young man posting his picture on the apartheid wall in Palestine?

Chavez was described in the media here as controversial and divisive. This makes it sound as though matters are evenly split. But Hugo Chavez was on the side of the working-class and dispossessed, what the Occupy movement called the 99%, it is curious that that is described as "controversial" and if it is divisive then I know which side I am on.

Conversely another divisive politician also died recently, only her side of the divide was the 1%. Thatcher came from relatively humble origins and clawed her way to the top of the Tory Party and into the political establishment.

Chavez came from even humbler origins and stayed true to his roots. Thatcher died alone apart from the staff of the Ritz hotel. Chavez died with his family and the prayers and good wishes

of millions of Venezuelans and others throughout the world.

Whilst the revolution owes him much, nevertheless Hugo Chavez did not create the revolutionary movement out of nothing. It is 20 years since he first came to prominence as the leader of a failed military rebellion against the reactionary government of the time.

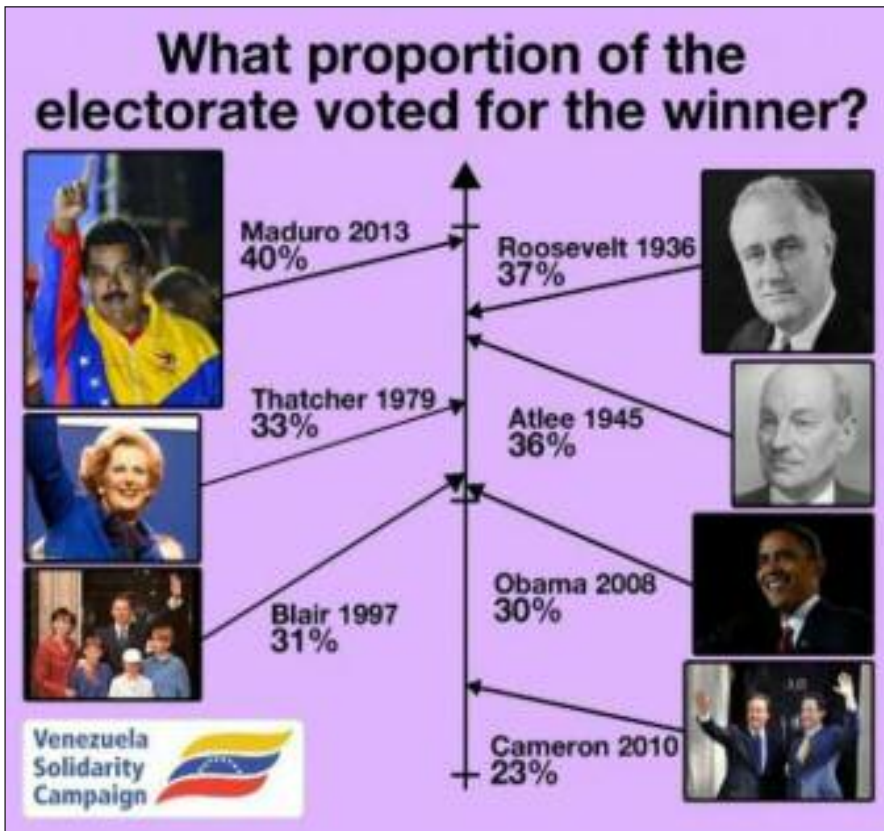
This was not an isolated adventurist action as Chávez subsequent electoral victories demonstrated. He and others had for some time developed a clandestine leftist movement within the armed forces which they wished to ally to popular anger at the suffering caused by the imposition of neo-liberal economic policies at the behest of the United States.

Indeed three years before the attempted coup an estimated 3,000 people were massacred during a spontaneous up-rising in Caracas known as the Caracazo. After serving 2 years in prison following his failed rebellion, Chávez continued the struggle politically, developing a new movement and broad alliances across the left and in popular organisations, leading ultimately to his victory in the presidential election of December 1998.

In only 14 years Chavez and the people of Venezuela have transformed the country from one run in the interest of the oligarchs to one where even the right opposition have to pay lip service to maintaining the gains achieved during those years.

The result of the Presidential election in Venezuela was of course far closer than predicted, yet by any other standards it would still be a convincing victory. There was a huge turnout and Maduro won with a clear majority of the vote - 50.8%. In fact 40% of the entire electorate voted for Maduro. Any idea how many people voted for David Cameron at the last election in Britain?

The closeness of the result was ruthlessly exploited by the right opposition to try to destabilise the country acting against the democratic wishes of the Venezuelan people. This is to be ex-



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Amer Zahr

Comedic disobedience

From,
*This Week
In Palestine*



I'm a comedian. Why do I do what I do? I was raised by two educated Palestinian parents. They are both refugees, driven from Palestine.

By AMER ZAHR

They were educated by life, then by prestigious universities. I know this because their prestigious degrees were hanging on the wall above the staircase, a stark reminder as I walked down the stairs every day.

But why did I become a comedian? Like my parents, I attended a prestigious institution, the University of Michigan, where I obtained a BA, an MA, and a law degree.

I loved being in the midst of academic excellence and everything that came with it, the intellectual expression, the diverse backgrounds, and, most important to a Palestinian, the activism.

Being on a large, progressive campus was the ideal place for a loud Palestinian like me. I know, "loud Palestinian" sounds redundant. So what happened to me? How did this highly educated Palestinian child of highly educated Palestinian parents turn into a jokester? Well, when I was a law student at the University of Michigan, an Arab student group invited an Arab-American comedian to perform on campus. This was in 2003. September 11 was still fresh, and Arab-American comedians were just starting to be noticed.

The student group needed some volunteers to fill some time on the stage before the headlining comedian performed. I figured, why not? I have a few funny stories to tell, I always liked speaking in front of people (remember, "loud Palestinian"), and this seemed easy enough.

The night of the show came. I was confident. How hard could this be? I had led hundreds in demonstrations. I had been on national TV talking about Palestine. I had written a newspaper column read worldwide. The 200 people sitting in this room were no threat to me. I took the stage, cool, poised, and self-assured.

Then, I looked out into the audience.

Everyone was staring at me. And waiting. With high expectations. They were waiting for me to make them laugh.

For a few seconds, I froze. I had been trained my whole life to debate about Palestine. That's in every Palestinian's DNA. But now I was expected to make people laugh. And it had not struck me until that very moment that there was a possibility I might not succeed.

And failure here would not mean the on-going loss of my homeland (which I could handle just fine), but deep personal embarrassment (which I could not).

After snapping out of my trance, I told the following joke: "When I tell people my background, sometimes they say, 'Wow, you don't look Arab.' I just smile and say, 'Thank you.'" And they laughed. They actually laughed. On the outside, I nonchalantly made it seem like that was what I had expected the whole time. On the inside, I was euphoric. This was the best high I had ever experienced (and I experienced a few different highs). This felt amazing. This felt better than the liberation of Palestine.

Of course, I don't know what the liberation of Palestine feels like, but that's another story for another day. That first laugh got me hooked. For the next five years, as I found numerous other ventures to make money, I worked on the craft of comedy. I did shows for free. Sometimes I drove four hours just to get on a stage, to be in front of people, and to feel that high of their laughter.

And I realised something very important along the way. When you can make someone laugh, he listens to you. He sits there, listening, waiting for you to make him laugh again. I first thought that stand-up comedy was my drug, but I was wrong.

Laughter is the drug, and, as it turns out, I'm the drug dealer. If my product is good, my clients keep coming back. If it's bad, they never want me to talk to

them again. Being a Palestinian comedian takes on an even deeper character.

As Palestinians, we always have stories to tell. In fact, I always say Palestinian dads can't ever talk to anyone without saying, "In 1948..."

Also, when we Palestinians show that we can laugh at ourselves, not only do we find some comfort in our everyday lives, but we become more human to others. And this is an important part of our activist journey.

One of the largest challenges we face is the on-going Israeli campaign to dehumanise us. And nowhere does this happen more often and more powerfully than in the news and entertainment media.

Israel has had one major goal since 1948: to rid itself of us pesky Palestinians. And anytime we start to tell our story, Israel and her supporters fight back. In February 2010, I was performing at a private party for about 75 Arab-Americans in a restaurant outside of Detroit. One half was reserved for them while the other half still had regular customers, who were within earshot of my routine.

A few minutes into my act, I told the following joke: Sometimes I accidentally bring out the racist in people. Once, I was sitting in an airport bar because my flight was delayed, and this white guy was sitting next to me. We were both lonely, so we started chatting. He asked me, "What's your name?" I said, "Amer." He said, "That's an interesting name... where are you from." I said, "Well, I grew up in Philadelphia, but now I live in Michigan." He chuckled and said, "No, I mean, where are you from ... from." This is what white people say when they want to find out where you're REALLY from. So I said, "Oh, from from. Well, I'm from from Pales-

time. I'm Palestinian." He said, "Really?!" I said, "Yeah." He said, "REALLY?!?!" And I said, "Yeah, I didn't say I was a unicorn, I said I'm Palestinian ... we exist." He looked over both his shoulders, then turned back to me and said, "That's cool..." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I don't like Jewish people either." And so I got upset. I said, "Hey, that's racist! It's racist of you to assume I'm racist just because of my race. That's racist!" And he said, "Fine, man, calm down. You mean you don't hate all Jewish people?" And I said, "Well, I'm just sayin'..."

A couple of minutes later, the manager of the restaurant tugged on my sleeve and told me, "Don't tell any more jokes about Jewish people. You offended some of my customers."

I smiled and assured him I would behave. I kept performing, and my crowd was having a good time. After about ten minutes, during which time I did not utter the word "Jew," the manager reappeared and asked me to step down.

"You've offended everyone," he told me. In shock, I asked, "Who?" He said, "Too many people." And my show came to an immediate end. See, a few Jewish customers were offended by the joke. But voicing their opinion was not enough. They would not stop complaining until I was removed from the stage, until I was silenced. Now that joke is not even about Jews. It is about how some white people try to associate with minorities in any way that they can.

And it is about how we, as Palestinians, sometimes cannot bring ourselves to say we are OK with Jews. The joke is offensive to white people and Palestinians, not to Jews.

But this is what it means to be Palestinian. You can live anywhere you want, except Palestine. And you can talk about anything you want, except Palestine. The few Jews I "offended" that night were not offended by my joke.

They were offended by my presence. They didn't even really hear the joke. They probably heard "Palestinian" and

"Jews" and said, "Hey, now wait a minute!"

Supporters of Israel are offended by the mere recital of some sort of Palestinian narrative. It makes them very uncomfortable. Any Palestinian in the room makes them uneasy. Talking about Israel and its policies makes them edgy.

Slaveholders didn't like talking about slavery, so it makes sense. Since 2009, I have performed in Palestine often. And whenever I do, I am reminded of how connected we all are, no matter how many corners of the world we inhabit.

And while I always knew we shouted, argued, and cried about the same things, I now know that we laugh at the same things too.

And that makes me happy. Amer Zahr is a Palestinian-American comedian, writer, speaker, and musician. He is originally from Nazareth. He can be reached at amer@amerzahr.com

See www.thisweekinpalestine.com/i179/pdfs/article/engaging_in_comedic.pdf

Bolivarian revolution under fierce attack

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pected as Capriles supported the coup against Chavez in 2002.

In organizing protests and ramping up the rhetoric Capriles not only demonstrated his anti-democratic credentials but was responsible for destruction and loss of life. He was and is attempting to destabilise the country, threatening the democratically elected government.

Immediately post the election right-wing national newspapers published a doctored photo claiming to show the government burning ballot papers and an opposition-aligned journalist falsely claimed that ballot boxes were being held by Cuban doctors - the first false accusation led to attacks on buildings of the country's independent National Electoral Council, the second on widespread attacks on the nation's health services.

The houses of the families of prominent politicians and of the head of the electoral council, as well as local headquarters of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), and the electoral councils have all been subjected to violence. Public health workers and buildings, state supermarkets, community media buildings and other social services built by the Chavez government have been attacked.

Whilst the violence has subsided and the election result has been recognized by the overwhelming majority of coun-

tries in the world, including, after a delay, by Britain (so thanks to all of you who lobbied William Hague about this) dangers in the short and long term remain. Worryingly the US remains ambivalent about the result.

The Venezuelan voting system is technically one of the most sophisticated in the world with crosschecking of the electronic ballots and routine sampling, in this instance of 54% of the votes cast.

Capriles wanted that sample increased to 100%: this was agreed by the National Electoral Commission and is currently being undertaken, but Capriles is now demanding a total re-count. Short of surrendering the democratic decision of the Venezuelan people there seems to be no way to satisfy his demands.

Venezuelan Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Samuel Moncada, said that this stance by the opposition is very similar to the situation before the 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela.

He said, "They are going to say that the CNE and the Supreme Court ignored them, and they are going to take it to the Organization of American States (OAS), but after all the legal mechanisms are exhausted they will try the illegal ones, like calling for a general strike. They will take all legal forms to the limit, like they did in 2002, and try to take the movement to its limit so that the Armed Forces will intervene."

Who are the democrats? Maduro and

the Venezuelan Socialist Party or Capriles and the oligarchs who are trying everything by fair means or foul to overturn the democratic decision of the people?

It often seems only too easy for the right to hang on to power, but harder for the left. The right is defending entrenched power economically and ideologically. They are quite prepared to use any means at all to maintain that power - intimidation, violence, media lies and creating economic instability. We need only remember the destabilisation in Chile before the coup against Allende.

Our task is to replace that vicious and entrenched privilege with a new society of solidarity, mutual support and equity. Given what we are up against this is no easy thing and is a process which is not going to be smooth.

In Venezuela much has been achieved, but there are also many things which are still a problem, for example high levels of crime. We are in a critical phase where we will encounter even more attacks of all kinds on the Bolivarian Revolution. To defend it we need to be united and not allow divisions to be created.

We must be clear about what is at stake in Venezuela and across Latin America and know which side we are on. So much has been gained, much has still to be achieved and with our whole-hearted support the Venezuelan people can continue to make progress in eradicating poverty and developing social security.

Propaganda: Power and Persuasion

The British Library's current exhibition (17th May – 17th September 2013) entitled "Propaganda: Power and Persuasion" examines how propaganda is used as a symbol of power and a means of persuasion.

By SARAH STEPHENSON

Through a wide-ranging array of artefacts and inter-active media this excellent exhibition provides a fascinating insight into how governments and national institutions use propaganda to justify their actions, build support for their objectives and influence the behaviour of populations.

Whilst recognising that propaganda is not a new phenomenon the exhibition nevertheless concentrates on the strategies and consequences of state propaganda from the early 20th century to the present day. The exhibition investigates propaganda through looking at six themes: Origins, Nation, Enemy, War, Health and Today.

Definitions of Propaganda

Before turning our attention to the themes of the exhibition it is appropriate to consider the word "propaganda". Naturally the term comes under intense scrutiny with many different definitions being displayed, discussed and illustrated throughout the exhibition.

The main point to note is that the term has taken on negative connotations since its introduction. This is due to people feeling that they have been manipulated by propaganda through being given selective and/or false information.

This feeling is understandable when proponents of propaganda are quoted as saying things such as: "The great mass of people will more easily fall victim to a big lie than a small one." Hitler ("Mein Kampf", 1925) and "The truth, nothing but the truth and, as near as possible, the whole truth." Sir John Reid (British Ministry of

Information, 1940).

Here is a representative sample of definitions of propaganda from various

decades of the 20th century:

- "Propaganda, conducted by the means which advertisers have found successful, is now one of the recognised methods of governments in all advanced countries, and is especially the method by which democratic opinion is created ... There are two quite different evils about propaganda as it is now practised. On the one hand, its appeal is generally to irrational causes of belief rather than

to serious argument; on the other hand, it gives an unfair advantage to those who can obtain publicity, whether through wealth or through power." - Bertrand Russell from the 1922 Conway Memorial Lecture "Free Thought and Official Propaganda"

- "Propaganda is an attempt, either unconsciously or as part of a systematic campaign by an individual or group holding certain beliefs or desiring certain ends, to influence others to adopt identical attitudes." - A.J. Mackenzie in "Propaganda Boom" (page 35) London: John Gifford (1938)

- "A statement by a government or political party which is believed to be insincere or untrue, and designed to impress the public at large rather than reach the truth or bring about a genuine understanding between opposing governments or parties." Florence Elliott & Michael Summerskill in Definition of "Propaganda" in "The Penguin Dictionary of Politics", London: Penguin (1957)

- "Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, opinions, and actions of specific target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels." Richard Alan Nelson "A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States" (pages 232-3), New York: Greenwood Press, 1996

Image 1 - *The Donkey Pope of Rome (1523)*



By Philipp Melanchthon, this is an example of allegorical Lutheran propaganda where the Pope is depicted as a combination of donkey and griffin with the Devil emerging from the donkey's rump. Crude in style and rude in intent such illustrations were intended to compliment the attacks of Martin Luther.

Image 2 - Napoleon in Coronation Robes (1805)



By Francois Gerard; Musee National du Chateau de Fontainebleau displaying Napoleon as he wished to be depicted exuding imperial power in robes of state in front of his throne crowned with two branches of gold laurel harking back to imperial Rome and holding the sceptre of Charlemagne in his right hand.

Image 3 - Rouget de Lisle singing La Marseillaise (1849)



By Isidore Pils: portrait of de Lisle singing the Marseillaise.

■ “Propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state.” Noam Chomsky “Media Control” (pages 20-1), 2nd edition, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002

■ “Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.” Definition of “Propaganda” in “Oxford Dictionaries”, oxforddictionaries.com (February 2013)

The Origins of Propaganda

Propaganda existed long before the word was coined. Arguably the greatest early exponent of successful propaganda was Alexander the Great who came to power as King of Macedon in 336 BC. Alexander’s deification as the son of Zeus is encapsulated in coins where his face replaced that of Hercules.

By having his image on coins, by naming conquered cities after him, by employing artists to portray him and his deeds in paintings, statues, and buildings, Alexander showed he appreciated an important point about propaganda, namely, that his image was a substitute for his actual presence thereby feeding the “cult of the personality”.

The actual origin of the word “propaganda” can be traced back to the Reformation when Catholicism lost its hold on Northern European countries. In 1627 Pope Urban VII set up the first propagandist institute charged with improving the dissemination of Roman Catholic doctrine. **Image 1** (See previous page).

But the word “propaganda” soon came to be applied to any organisation set up for the purpose of spreading a doctrine. Subsequently it was applied to the doctrine itself, and lastly to the methods employed in undertaking its dissemination.

The mobilisation of French society to support and export a revolution was the nearest thing to “total war” prior to the 20th century - a major political and propaganda success - leading to the American Revolutionary War (1775-83) and the publication of Thomas Paine’s “Rights of Man” (1791). Under Napoleon France became the first truly modern propaganda state, with Napoleon ranking as one of the most able self-propagandists in history.

He claimed that “three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets”, and accordingly in 1801 he closed down 64 out of 73 French newspapers. (This number had dwindled to four by 1810). At his imperial coronation in 1804 in Notre Dame Cathedral,

amidst great pomp and ceremony, he wrested the imperial crown from Pope Pius VII and placed it on his own head, a gesture indicating that he owed allegiance to no one. **Image 2.**

The Propaganda of Nationhood and Leadership

There are many types of propaganda asserting national identity such as anthems, flags, monuments, currency and stamps.

One of the most rousing national anthems in the Western tradition is France’s “La Marseillaise” which was composed in 1792 by an army officer, Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle, as a marching song. **Image 3.**

The simple tune and rousing words made it an infectious propaganda vehicle for the French Revolution. Famously it featured in the 1942 film “Casablanca” where it symbolised the defiant spirit of French resistance in World War II.

Perhaps the most striking symbol of nationhood is the national flag. In



Image 4
The Indian flag.

cess as the first human to journey into outer space when his Vostok spacecraft completed an orbit of the earth on 12th April 1961 was celebrated in many ways in the USSR including the striking of a 10 rouble coin in his image, whilst Buzz Aldrin is seen saluting the US flag on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission in 1969. **Images 5 and 6.**

At times a leader may come to personify a nation both at home and abroad. This can be particularly so in periods of war: in World War II Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin represented the allies whilst Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito represented the enemy's opposing ideologies of German Nazism, Italian Fascism and Japanese militarism.

Propaganda and the Enemy

Nations demonise other nations to persuade citizens to support their own country's interests or to influence neutral countries. This negative "atrocities" propaganda has spawned a host of stereotypes: the beastly Hun, the Prussian Bully, the Yellow Peril, the master race.

A state may turn against vulnerable elements of its own population to generate political capital or hide its own failings: such was the case with Nazi anti-Semitism. Similar tactics can be used by those opposed to the state to gain greater support for their cause.

Propaganda of this kind hinges on fear and hatred, or sympathy and solidarity. It often creates scapegoats and outsiders. Emotional appeals built on existing beliefs and prejudices will often be supported by highly selective facts and outright lies.

The Propaganda of War

States make most extensive use of prop-

times of war citizens are encouraged to "rally round the flag"; in times of national elation when winning at key sporting events such as the Olympics the national flag becomes a proud symbol of prowess.

Choosing a national flag is especially important at the birth of a nation. India is a case in point. Gandhi, who had first proposed a flag to the Indian National Congress in 1921, reputedly said, "It will be necessary for us Indians - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Parsis and all others to whom India is their home - to recognise a common flag to live and die for."

At Independence such a flag was adopted on 22 July 1947, made up of elements with specific meanings. The flag comprised a horizontal tricolour of saffron, white and green, with the Ashok Chakra, a 24-spoke wheel in navy blue at its centre. Saffron represents courage and sacrifice; white implies truth, peace and purity; green indicates prosperity;

and the Ashok Chakra symbolises the continuing progress of nation and the importance of justice in life. **Image 4.**

From an international perspective states seek to build positive perceptions and prestige by competing culturally, technologically and economically through world fairs and exhibitions.

In the 1937 Paris Exhibition Albert Speer, architect of the German pavilion, later revealed that he had secretly seen drawings of the Soviet pavilion, and he had designed the German pavilion to represent a bulwark against communism.

His imposing German pavilion was adorned by two 23-foot statues representing family and friendship topped by an enormous German eagle with the swastika in its claws. The Soviet Union erected an equally imposing pavilion topped by two workers brandishing the hammer and sickle.

In the 1960s the "space race" typified the vying for dominance between capitalism and socialism. Yuri Gagarin's suc-

Image 5 - Yuri Gagarin and his signature.



Image 6 - Buzz Aldrin's image is from NASA.



aganda during wartime to maintain morale among the armed forces, win support from neutral nations and persuade enemy combatants to surrender. **Image 7.**

One of the most enduring images of World War I is the distinctive recruitment poster of Lord Kitchener's heavily moustachioed face and intimidating finger exhorting people to participate in the war effort. **Image 8.**

The poster, deriving from a magazine cover, came to be regarded as a symbol of the national resolve and will to win: its message testified to the realisation of what would be required by way of human resources in an age of mass industrial warfare.

The USA produced a similar style of poster with Uncle Sam exhorting the American population; other recruitment posters were produced throughout the commonwealth.

Propaganda permeated the daily lives of millions during the world wars of the 20th century as governments recognised that civilian morale was vital for victory. Lessons learned were put to use during the Cold War in the second half of the century and, adapted for new media, can still be witnessed in conflicts today.

Propaganda and Health

Public information programmes help governments fulfil their responsibility to protect citizens from disease and environmental dangers.

Health campaigns may also be motivated by concerns for economic or military effectiveness, the cost of ill health to public finances, or pressure from campaign groups. **Image 9.**

Public health campaigns include healthy eating, exercising, driving carefully, sensible alcohol consumption, practising safe sex, anti-smoking and drug-taking. Such campaigns utilise methods similar to those more readily identified as propaganda. They use striking images and slogans, engender fear or exploit humour. Sometimes they demonise people or types of behaviour and habits.

Propaganda Today

The first decade of the 21st century has already witnessed increases in the volume and scale of propaganda used by governments and protest groups worldwide.

Digital technology has provided new routes for states to communicate but has also provided new ways for people to challenge and criticise state messages.

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, make everyone a potential propagandist as the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street protests testify.

Image 7 - British Empire Union poster (1919).



Encouraging a pro-British stance with a vignette of the martyr, Edith Cavell and the sinking of the Lusitania.

(Source US Library of Congress)

Image 8 - Your Country Needs You (1914)



By Alfred Leete

Image 9

US Government Agency WWII Anti-VD poster, circa 1942.

