

Labour Affairs

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Political parties and national debt

The size of the national debt is the topic of the moment.

Rachel Reeves found a difference of some £22 billion in the day-to-day spending announced by the Tories in the spring Budget in March 2024 and what they actually expected to spend. This implied a £22 billion increase in the national debt. Reeves called this a black hole even though it's an increase in national debt of only some 1% of GDP. She assumes that the term will induce horror in a confused electorate.

Lucy Powell, the leader of the House of Commons, referring to the means testing of the winter fuel payment, claimed, in a statement bordering on the hilarious, that "If we hadn't taken some of these tough decisions, we could have seen a run on the pound, interest rates going up and crashing the economy. It's something we were left with no alternative but to do."

The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) has produced a report talking about the ratio of national debt to Gross Domestic Product (the debt/GDP ratio) reaching 274% over the next 50 years. The ratio is currently just short of 100%.

The House of Lords economics committee has recently completed its report into the 'Sustainability of the National Debt' and produced a report entitled 'National debt: it's time for tough decisions'.

The premise of all these statements is that national debt is a bad thing. All the mainstream political parties accept this premise. Increased government spending unmatched by increased taxation will increase the national debt, as will reduced taxation unmatched by reduced government spending. This year the Tories reduced taxation by reducing the rate

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Beware the Warmongering Chihuahua

In February of this year 'Labour Affairs' pointed out that the Labour Party has historically been an imperialist party and continues to be so. Britain no longer has an empire but its political elite feel in their bones that they are heirs to an imperial tradition and need to go on acting as if the UK continues to be an imperial power. Labour, Liberals, Tories all share an imperial reflex so British foreign policy has a large degree of continuity. These days British imperialism takes the form of acting as a minor assistant and cheerleader for the Americans, who have a project of planetary domination, which involves in the long term the crushing of two powerful states, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.

The British public tends to go along with the political elite's imperialism because it belongs to its own residual imperial reflexes, but largely in a passive way. There are costs but they are largely hidden in increased taxation, poorer public services and higher energy bills. Moralising warmongering propaganda can temporarily arouse the public to a degree of virtue signalling such as flying the flag of the Banderite Ukrainian regime at the outset of the war in Ukraine in 2022. The big exceptions to this are the outbreaks of popular feeling against the Anglo-American aggression in Iraq in 2003 and support for the Israeli genocide that has been going on for the past year. In neither case has the government paid much attention to popular feeling as it did not correspond to their imperialist agenda.

Since Britain does not suffer the obvious consequences of war, such as large numbers of body bags, publicly grieving relatives or destroyed buildings, let alone invasion and plunder of the homeland, imperialism seems like an affordable luxury. Successive warmongering governments have

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of national insurance. They left the problem of reducing spending to the incoming Labour government. Hence, Reeves' £22 billion black hole and her insistence on the need to cut government spending to avoid increasing the national debt.

Even the unions buy into this narrative. The leader of Unite the Union, Sharon Graham, made an impassioned call to defend the winter fuel payment. But her call was weak because it accepted Reeves' premise that there is a 'black hole' that needs to be filled. The headline in Unite's paper said 'Don't make pensioners pay for a crisis they did not create'. Thereby accepting that there was some sort of crisis. But there was no crisis. Reeves could have continued to pay the winter fuel payment. Pensioners would have been better off. No one would have been worse off. National debt would have gone up a little.

This is the moment that a left-wing political party could establish itself in the minds of the electorate by making a serious challenge to the whole framing, by Rachel Reeves, of the problems that the new Labour administration faces.

Rachel Reeves uses the misleading 'household budget' analogy to frame her approach to

managing government spending. A household has income and expenditure. Expenditure cannot be greater than spending unless the household can borrow money from someone else. According to Reeves, it's the same for the UK government. The UK government must borrow from the private sector if it is to spend more than its income which comes from taxes, national insurance etc. And, of course, in this framing, there is always the possibility that the private sector may choose not to lend to the government.

This framing is entirely false. A household is a currency user. In contrast, the UK government is the monopoly issuer of the currency. This distinction between being a currency user and a currency issuer means that the UK government's budget bears no relation to a UK household budget. Understanding the distinction is crucial to taking correct decisions about government spending. Many things follow from the fact that the UK government is a currency issuer. A main consequence is that the UK government is not dependent in any way on the private sector to finance its spending. It will almost certainly depend on the private sector for the products and services that it wishes to buy, but it does not depend on the private sector for the funds to buy these products

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and services. As a currency issuer it has limitless funds. This does not mean it should spend without limit. Spending should not take place if it has inflationary consequences.

It is not the purpose of this editorial to go into the consequences of being a currency issuer rather than a currency user. We wish, rather, to draw attention to the fact that the political party that grasps the implications of that capability will greatly increase its chances of gaining the attention of the electorate.

All the political institutions, parties, unions, think tanks will wax lyrical about poverty, equality, justice, peace etc. But if they believe that the UK government's spending capability is essentially the same as that of a UK household, they will remain locked in the mentality of Rachel Reeves and conclude that since spending is greater than taxation then spending must be cut if an increase in the national debt is to be avoided. They will squabble with Reeves about what should be cut, but they will not disagree that spending needs to be cut. The electorate will be unimpressed.

There is some small evidence that Labour have begun to grasp how politically disastrous it has been to cut the winter fuel payment. There is no evidence that Labour understands that it was economically unnecessary. The household budget fairytale that informs Reeves' framing of her economic problems implies that spending cuts were necessary. Challenging that framing should be the main task of any political party that hopes to get the attention of the electorate as a party that might make a difference.

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taken pains never to describe the dangers of enemy action on British territory and this has not been difficult since those dangers have, until now, been remote. However, Britain's participation in the war against Russia in Ukraine may change that. The war in Ukraine has since 2022 been a proxy war, the Ukrainians providing the bulk of the cannon fodder and the US and other European countries contributing special forces, technical support and weaponry. Apart from the Morning Star, all the British press has been united in advocating an even more aggressive stance against Russia.

Britain is also active in promoting a warlike attitude in Europe. Ever since Johnson sabotaged the promising Turkish sponsored peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022 Britain has been pushing Europe for ever greater escalation. With Europe having no coherent policy that reflects its own interests, British warmongering has found its most willing allies in the Baltic states - states that it must be remembered were admitted to the EU mainly through British influence - together with the self-proclaimed formulator of EU foreign policy, Ursula Von Der Layen. The result is a dangerous mixture of nationally ingrained Russophobia and a powerful bureaucratic figure who is permitted to strut the European stage unfettered by any political accountability. There is currently no capacity among the governing circles in Europe to counter this drift towards war - a drift that is being propelled primarily by Britain. And surveying the prevailing political movement outside of those governing circles what is becoming increasingly obvious is that the main possibility for

countering this drift is coming from what is described by mainstream media as the 'far right', an epithet that includes left wing parties such as Germany's BSW. With war being the biggest danger to the working class of Europe the task that the left needs to set itself is how to ensure that such an outcome is best avoided. The public mood in the large European countries, particularly Germany, seems to be shifting towards a desire for peace. Unfortunately, in Britain there is very little sign of such a move.

With the failure of the proxy war, the US and its vassals have become increasingly desperate to find an approach that will delay the inevitable defeat of their Ukrainian proxies. The latest scheme is to fire British and French missiles deep into Russia. This can only be done with American technical assistance. The Russian government has made it clear that any such action will be regarded as an act of war by the US and the UK and that they feel entitled to take an appropriate response should such an action take place. Keir Starmer and David Lammy (our chief diplomat) have been lobbying the Americans hard for authorisation for British Storm Shadow missiles to be fired into Russia with American assistance. For them peace negotiations and an end to the slaughter or Ukrainians is an irritation which is denounced as appeasement. Only one party in the UK, the Worker's Party of Britain, has come out unequivocally against Britain taking part in the aggression against Russia.

The British government is thus engaged in a campaign to involve the UK in a war against Russia. The bulk of the British public are only dimly aware of this and, if they are, they can take assurance in the claims of the media that the Russians are bluffing and that attacks on Russia will be free

of consequences. The Russian Federation regards the NATO encroachment on Ukraine as an existential issue for its national security. The Russians have ample experience of the devastating effects of war on their own land and people and do not wish to experience them again. But they also know that to avoid repeating such a fate, they must be ready to take warlike measures to deter aggressors. Furthermore, the distributed nature of the assets of the imperial power and its vassals gives them plenty of targets and the Russians have, in some respects, far more advanced weaponry than anything possessed by the Americans and their allies, particularly in missile technology. They have plenty of options short of nuclear weapons, for hurting American or British interests, either in their homelands or in their bases abroad. The UK by contrast is a negligible military power, a chihuahua amongst Alsatians. A quite unjustified sense of impunity has led to a reckless policy of aggression against Russia, a country that does not threaten our interests in the least if it is left to mind its own affairs without outside interference.

The British people are unaware of the mortal danger into which they may be slipping should these two get their way. Starmer and Lammy are keen not to spell out the possible consequences of their actions to the British public. Britain needs to wake up and appreciate that attacks on British bases abroad or even British assets in the British Isles are a possible initial consequence of such a reckless foreign policy. Ultimately annihilation may be Britain's fate if Starmer and Lammy get their way.

More from the Labour Party Conference
Socialist Campaign Group Fringe

Unions Must Be The Opposition Warns NEU Leader

Daniel Kebede comments come after Labour leadership's targeting of dissent from its MPs

TRADE unions must become the most effective opposition if Labour keeps attacking the poorest, National Education Union leader Daniel Kebede said on Tuesday night.

Addressing a standing-room-only Socialist Campaign Group- Labour Assembly Against Austerity fringe meeting, Mr Kebede said Labour needed to reverse its decision to means- test the winter fuel allowance and roll out free school meals for all.

Lifting the two-child benefit cap was a "no-brainer" that would lift 300,000 children out of poverty at a stroke, he said. "What sort of government continues that [cap]? It's absolutely abhorrent."

The NEU general secretary said unions needed to challenge the government since "we are seeing what happens to dissent in the Labour Party, and it's absolutely disgraceful," referring to the suspension of the whip from rebels who voted to reduce child poverty.

And he called for the labour movement to mobilise on the streets against the far-right threat, in particular to counter Tommy Robinson's planned racist demonstration on October 26.

Suspended Labour MP John McDonnell defended his decision to defy the whip on child benefits: "I wasn't elected as a Labour MP to impoverish my constituents.

"You can't say you're ending austerity when you're depriving pensioners of the way to keep warm in winter."

Mr McDonnell also demanded an end to arms sales to Israel amid its horrific war in Gaza and mass bombing of Lebanon, now also killing hundreds of civilians.

Public & Commercial Services union general secretary Fran Heathcote said Labour claimed to aim for "the highest sustained growth in the G7.

"That will not be achieved unless you boost the income of workers. A strong economy requires consumers with disposable income.

"Above-inflation public- sector pay offers this year are welcome but don't go far enough," she stressed, calling for pay restoration after years of real-terms decline.

Richard Burgon, another MP suspended from the whip for standing up for children, said the party leadership needed to respect ordinary Labour members, who time and again had been right when leaders had been wrong.

Quoting Tony Benn, he urged the government to recognise that "the crisis we inherit when we come to power will be the occasion for fundamental change, and not the excuse for postponing it."

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/system/files/pdf-editions/MorningStar26092024.pdf>

Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance advances in Germany: are there lessons for the left?

The new party is growing and winning not only due to its refusal to beat the war drums over Ukraine, but because of its fearless scepticism of liberal orthodoxy from cancel culture to immigration, writes Nick Wright in the *Morning Star*.

A day before last Sunday's vote for a new parliament in the east German state of Brandenburg, opinion polls had the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the far-right AfD neck and neck.

The SPD finished up on 30.9 per cent, with the AfD on 29.2 per cent. The Christian Democrats slumped to 12.1 per cent, while the new Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance — Reason and Justice (BSW), on its first outing, won 13.5 per cent.

The gung-ho militarist Greens and Die Linke, from which BSW broke away over the latter's abandonment of its anti-war position, failed to meet the 5 per cent barrier and are predicted to lose representation.

Brandenburg is the German region that lies adjacent to Berlin and is a bit more prosperous than Saxony and Thuringia — the two other former East German states where the governing parties in the so-called “traffic light” coalition of the SPD, Green Party and the extravagantly neoliberal Free Democrats collectively collapsed into a single figure, and where the AfD and BSW both grew at the expense of the government parties.

The AfD faces its usual problem that no-one wants to enter a coalition with it and the whiff of fascism that always taints its politics — even when it is in congruence with popular opinion in opposition to the Nato drive to the east and financing for the Ukraine war — is heightened by the toxic reputation of its

Brandenburg leader Christoph Berndt, who plays word games with slogans from the Hitler era.

The BSW anticipated the Brandenburg election result with an undertaking that it would only enter a governing alliance with a party that favoured diplomatic action to end the Ukraine war.

The issue which exercised the political and media establishment in advance of the election was not so much the composition of a new Brandenburg regional government, where the national ruling coalition has little chance of constituting the local government and where even a mini version of Germany's traditional “grand coalition” of the SPD and the CDU looks unlikely to garner enough mandates, but rather the likely knock-on effect in national politics and the fate of Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

The Chancellor is held in such low regard that Dietmar Woidke, the Brandenburg SPD premier, refused to campaign with him.

Having long ago abandoned firstly his anti-capitalist student roots and later his general orientation towards constructive dialogue with China and Russia — the latter upon which Germany relied for cheap energy for its manufacturing economy — Scholz is now seen as both unprincipled and a loser.

The balance of opinion within the SPD is shifting towards nominating Defence Minister Boris Pistorius — the federal-level politician most committed to Nato's confrontation with Russia — as Chancellor of a new coalition.

Scholz himself opened the way for this shift with his newly adopted mantra that defence and security means confronting Russia on all fronts.

Anticipating Keir Starmer's pledge for a year-on-year commitment to finance the Ukraine war, Scholz told the Munich “security” conference last February: “Without security, everything else is nothing.”

Last week, the European Parliament voted to end restrictions on the use of Nato-supplied weapons on Russian territory in a move that has only ambivalent support in the US and which is regarded sceptically by the more thoughtful in its security, intelligence and military elite who see the consequences of a third world war.

The coalition of warmongers that enabled this dangerous drift in the European Union's military policy naturally included the usual suspects from the right and centre, but in today's conditions, now routinely involves the parties of the so-called “socialists and democrats” group.

But into this unsavoury band now enter elements of the fragmenting left in the parliament, including figures from the Finnish, Swedish and Danish “lefts.”

A clear indication of the ideological and political confusion of this “left” in the European Parliament was highlighted

when Euro deputy Carola Rakete voted with the war party.

Rakete is the conservationist, maritime specialist and Extinction Rebellion activist who captained the Dutch-flagged refugee rescue ship Sea Watch 3 and was arrested by Italy and charged, bizarrely, with trafficking for her work in rescuing migrant boat people.

Despite interventions by Lega's Matteo Salvini, who was then the Italian interior minister, and with a massive solidarity campaign, she was released and subsequently collected a chestful of honours

for her humanitarian efforts and bravery.

In July 2023, Die Linke nominated her as a German representative in the EU parliament, and she was elected on their ticket and, in line with the party's collapse before war fever, she voted for the war credits.

Her personal trajectory stands as a representative example of a European left that has taken a moral stand against the policies that the EU — as the mechanism for regulating capitalist exploitation — erects to manage the political effects of the flows of human labour that imperial war and climate change have generated.

Alongside this moral stand and her personal courage deployed in its service, she exemplifies a European left that cannot integrate its critique of the anti-human policies of the federal European project with a material analysis of its political and economic character.

In practice, while critically existing within the distinctive European capitalist order and often criticising elements of its functioning, such a left now risks a collapse into abstract moralising while it endorses the key foreign policy orientation of the imperial EU.

The collapse in Die Linke's vote shows that the electoral consequences are dire for such a left — especially in countries where proportional voting allows for a more exact correlation between political opinion and political choice.

However, the Brandenburg vote, taken in conjunction with the two earlier polls in the territory of the former socialist German state, demonstrates the extreme fluidity of public opinion.

The BSW took votes from right across the political spectrum. Not surprisingly, the great majority

(about 44,000) came from former Die Linke voters, but previous non-voters were mobilised in big numbers (41,000) in a way that echoes the way in which Labour's 2017 manifesto reached parts of the working class that are alienated from formal and consensus politics.

Neoliberal and liberal opinion originally suggested that BSW votes were likely to come from the far-right AfD constituency, but in fact just 16,000 came from this quarter. Another 14,000 came from the CDU, while the SPD lost 26,000 votes to BSW, even though its own vote was inflated by a big shift by voters anxious to stop the AfD from getting a majority.

Another 12,000 votes came from the local civic group Brandenburg United Civic Movements/Free Voters (BVB/Free Voters; (Brandenburger Vereinigte Bürgerbewegungen/ Freie Wähler).

The balance of 5,000 voters came from Greens, voters alienated by its somewhat unhinged support for confronting Russia on every issue allied to its moralising on sustainable lifestyle issues which have little purchase among the most exploited and the poorest.

But beyond this, the BSW party project is, to fashion a new working-class politic and a political narrative that disrupts the dominant ideology. Its programme spells this out in ways which will surprise people who take the mainstream media's account as gospel or who fall for the ultra-left designation of BSW as "red/brown."

"We want to revive democratic decision-making, expand democratic participation and protect personal freedom. We reject right-wing extremist, racist and violent ideologies of all kinds.

"Cancel culture, pressure to conform and the increasing narrowing of the spectrum of opinions are incompatible with the principles

of a free society. The same applies to the new political authoritarianism that presumes to educate people and regulate their lifestyle or language.

"We condemn attempts to comprehensively monitor and manipulate people by corporations, secret services and governments."

The BSW has tapped into an anti-war opinion that the Greens and Die Linke have abandoned, but it also challenges the strategy of the German employers — exemplified by Angela Merkel's policy of actively seeking skilled and professional workers from

Middle Eastern counties under sanctions or bombardment — in drawing migrants and refugees into the German labour market. It argues that: "Immigration and the coexistence of different cultures can be an enrichment. But that only applies as long as the influx is limited to a scale that does not overwhelm our country and its infrastructure and as long as integration is actively promoted and successful.

"We know that the price for increased competition for affordable housing, for low-paying jobs and for failed integration is paid primarily by those who are not on the sunny side of life.

"Anyone who is politically persecuted in their home country is entitled to asylum. But migration is not the solution to the problem of poverty in our world. Instead, we need fair global economic relations and a policy that strives to provide more prospects in people's home countries."

In a situation in which high energy costs — a consequence of the EU and Nato's sanctions policy against Russia — and the knock-on effects in manufacturing are deepening an economic, pay and jobs crisis, it is not surprising that the government parties take a hit.

Its unrelenting commitment to peace has wide support and not

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Labour conference: Unite general secretary Sharon Graham winter fuel allowance speech

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham today moved the motion on winter fuel allowance at Labour party conference. The full text of the speech is below:

"The nation wants food, work and homes... It wants a high and rising standard of living, security for all, against a rainy day..."

"Friends, that's a quote from the 1945 Labour Manifesto, written in the shadow of death, destruction and debt, caused by years of war.

"A manifesto of hope.

"Written at a time when our debt to GDP was 270 per cent. Nearly three times higher than it is now.

"Yet, no mention of cuts, no mention of austerity and certainly no mention of making everyday people pay.

"Labour then knew, that to make Britain more equal, they had to think and act differently.

"They knew to make it count. To make a real difference, Labour could not simply be better managers, they had to make lasting change.

"They promised: jobs, homes and education. And built a national health service on the back of crisis.

"Their story wasn't one of tightening belts or making some of the poorest in our society pay.

"Friends, people simply do not understand, I do not understand, how our new Labour government can cut the winter fuel allowance for pensioners and leave the super-rich untouched.

"This is not what people voted for.

It is the wrong decision and needs to be reversed.

"Friends, we are the sixth richest economy in the world. We have the money. Britain needs investment, not austerity mark two. We won't get any gold badge for shaving peanuts off our debt.

"These fiscal rules are self-imposed and the decision to keep them is hanging like a noose around our necks.

"Friends, our public services and British industry need investment now. It's no good having sympathy for workers at Grangemouth losing their jobs. They don't need pity. They need Labour to step up to the plate and not allow a billionaire, who buys a football club as a hobby, to throw these workers on the scrap heap.

"We cannot leave Britain at the whim of footloose corporations.

"Hoping for them to invest is a prayer not a plan.

"Yes, Britain is broken. Yes, the Tories have left a mess and yes, they are to blame.

"But Labour is now in Government, and we can't keep making everyday people pay. Friends, I keep hearing, 'a wealth tax is too difficult, would take too long'.

"I say absolute rubbish. We seem to be able to get workers paying their taxes in a matter of weeks!

"The system is rigged and the country knows it.

"Friends, let's hold up our heads and be proud to be Labour. Let

everyday people know - we are on their side. Let's put our arms around the working class and make lasting change.

"Solidarity, I move."

She was backed by Alan Tate, from the Communication Workers Union, who told conference his union had been "inundated with emails and calls from our retired members worried about choosing between heating and eating.

The *Morning Star* reports that following Sharon Graham's speech, two delegates spoke to defend the government and were received warmly:

Two constituency delegates were sent up to back the Starmer-Reeves line.

Pensioner Maggie Cosin from Dover and Deal, better known as a former party functionary as the right's "witch-finder-general," said she did not need the allowance and gave it to her local food-bank instead each year, which begged several questions. She tried to channel Nye Bevan by accusing critical delegates of having an "emotional spasm."

Ellie Emberson from Reading West, a Unite member seemingly deployed against her own union, said:

"Unless we stabilise the economy we cannot invest in the public services we love."

Alas, the record must show that a large majority of constituency delegates gave very warm support to these two speeches, which constituted the totality of the debate allowed on the issue.

A show of hands in the hall indicated a very tight vote, but the chair correctly declared the motion carried as it was clearly backed by nearly all affiliated unions, which a card vote would have revealed.

The vote is not binding and is unlikely that the government will change policy as a result, but the political embarrassment of being reproved by its own party not three months into office is considerable.

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just in the former socialist lander (states).

BSW leaders have calculated that their intervention has blunted the growth of the AfD. They make a sharp distinction between refugee policy and migration policy and argue that when housing and social and health services are under strain, then an "open doors" immigration policy is an unsustainable policy.

This challenges the dominant neoliberal and liberal political discourse in Germany and disrupts illusions about the foreign policy of the EU. Whether it is the foundation of a revived challenge to the rule of capital in the one European country where two social systems once existed side by side is an open question.

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/system/files/pdf-editions/MorningStar26092024.pdf>

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M. Williams

Immigration – the Left’s Suicidal Unrealism

Good News from Germany

China Now Allows Less Capitalism

Snippets

Drowning Japanese and Central Europeans Best Ignored?

How Ukraine Invented Itself

China’s Excellent Science

End homelessness and save money

Class Issues

Immigration – the Left’s Suicidal Unrealism

Social justice is never free. And it is unjust to dump most of the cost on those who are already stretched.

A world centre for refugees would have been a good idea – just not in Rwanda. If the elite hadn’t started a war by encouraging pro-Western Ukrainians to purge themselves of everything Russian or Soviet, Siberia might have been a good choice.

It was just that for hundreds of thousands of Jews in World War Two:

“During World War II, large numbers of Polish and Soviet Jews fled eastwards from German-occupied Europe or were deported by the Soviet Union. The majority of exiled Polish Jews lived in various labor camps and labor colonies in Central Asia and Siberia for the duration of the war. At the end of the war, Jews displaced in the Soviet Union were the largest group of surviving European Jews, as most of those left behind died in the Holocaust.”¹

One book I read had a Jewish woman returning from Siberia and thinking she’d had a tough war, until she met other Jewish women who had survived as forced labour for the Nazis. Their comment was “*you still have children? Ours have all been murdered.*”

For modern ‘displaced persons’, what we have now are dishonest liberal policies that hold that everyone is much the same, except that some must have a lot more money. More income and much more ownership. And it is also essential that individual wealth be passed on to offspring who have not earned it. But the advantage of being born into a country which modernised itself should be freely shared with people from all over the world.

The arrival of new populations with different social habits will strain any society. Make it different, but perhaps more interesting.

Being radical-minded, indifferent to ‘race’, always employed, and with a well-off family who could help me during setbacks, I always took a positive view towards immigrants. But I recognise also that others are suffering.

Immigrants from much poorer societies work for lower wages. People grandly say that none of those born here would do those jobs at those wages. Missing the point that if those jobs really had to be done, employers would offer a decent wage.

The left had already paid a price for the best thing that Labour under Blair actually did. Equal opportunities for women and for non-white individuals are also a loss of white privilege and male privilege. A cost for those with the modest good luck to be one or both. It can be justified as simple fairness, but it is silly to pretend that no one was a loser.

The common habit among leftists is to pretend and to evade.

Definitely worth mentioning that the main loss has been the draining of wealth from ordinary people and towards a global elite

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exile_of_Jews_in_the_Soviet_interior_during_World_War_II

of multi-millionaires. An estimated 20 million with a total wealth of 80 trillion dollars.² It's best to talk about them rather than billionaires: less than 3000, and a total net wealth of \$14.2 trillion.³

The super-rich have a much bigger share of wealth than they had before the 1980s. More than in the year 2000, when 7.2 million owned a mere 27 trillion.

But total wealth creation was at least as good before the super-rich were given extra powers.

And you can say all that without pretending that massive immigration is not *also* a problem for ordinary workers in rich countries.

And that may have been a right-wing strategy all along.

Did the centre-right intentionally leave issues unresolved, while stoking fears? All to gain votes that allow the channelling of more money to the multi-millionaire class? There has certainly been a remarkable lack of solutions. Also accusations of having too few government officials to clear a backlog of asylum seekers.⁴

The same in the USA. Republicans vote down sensible schemes for limiting illegal immigration.

Good News from Germany

By talking sense about immigration, Sahra

Wagenknecht's new party has won between 11.8% and 15.8% in three recent regional elections.⁵

She gives a coherent account of what's gone wrong:

"Racism must always be combated, not just avoided, but combated. But to point to real social shortages—demand outstripping capacity—is not xenophobic. These are just facts. For instance, there is a housing shortage of 700,000 units in Germany. There are tens of thousands of teaching jobs unfilled. Of course the sudden arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers fleeing wars—a million in 2015, mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan; a million from Ukraine in 2022—produces a huge surge in demand, which is not met by any rise in capacity. That creates intense competition for scarce resources, and that does fuel xenophobia. That's not fair for the new arrivals, but it is also not fair for the German families who need affordable housing, or whose children go to schools where the teachers are completely overwhelmed because half the class don't speak German. And this is always in the poorer residential areas, where people are already under stress.

"It doesn't help to deny or gloss over these problems. That's what the other parties

tried to do, and in the end, it simply strengthened the AfD. Migration will always take place in an open world, and often it can be enriching for both sides. But it's essential that the scale of it doesn't get out of hand and that sudden surges of migration are kept in check...

"If you consider people only as factors of production, and society just as an economy defended by a police force, this need not bother you a lot. We want to avoid a spiral of mutual distrust and hostility...

"The Greens' approach to environmental policy is economically punishing for most people. They are in favour of high CO₂ prices, making fossil fuels more expensive in order to create an incentive to get off them. That may work for well-to-do people who can afford to buy an electric car, but if you don't have much money, it just means you're worse off. The Greens radiate arrogance towards poorer people and are therefore hated by a large part of the population. That's something the AfD plays on—it thrives on hatred of the Greens, or rather of the policies the Greens pursue...

"*Die Linke* itself had changed. It now wants to be greener than the Greens and copies their model. Identity politics predominates and social issues have been pushed to one side.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-net-worth_individual

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World%27s_Billionaires#2024

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/aug/30/james-cleverly-accused-aggravating-uk-asylum-backlog-crisis>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%BCndnis_Sahra_Wagenknecht#Election_results

Die Linke used to be quite successful—in 2009, it got 12 per cent, over 5 million votes—but by 2021 the vote had fallen below the 5 per cent bar, with only 2.2 million votes. Those privileged discourses, if I may call them that, are popular in metropolitan academic circles, but they're not popular with the ordinary people who used to vote left. You drive them away...

"Left-wing parties were traditionally anchored in the working class, even if they were led by intellectuals. But their electorate has changed. Piketty traces this in great detail in *Capital and Ideology*. A new, university-educated, professional class has expanded massively over the last thirty years, relatively unscathed by neoliberalism because it has a good income and rising asset wealth, and doesn't necessarily depend upon the welfare state. Young people who have grown up inside this milieu have never known social fear or hardship, because they were protected from the outset. This is now the main milieu of the Greens, people who are relatively well off, who are concerned about the climate—which speaks in their favour—but who aim to solve the problem through individual consumer decisions. People who have never had to go without, preaching renunciation to those for whom going without is part of everyday life...

"Marx used to be a major influence on me and I still find his analyses of capitalist crises and property relations very useful. I'm not in favour of

total nationalization or central planning, but I'm interested in exploring third options, between private property and state ownership—foundations or stewardships, for example, that prevent a firm from being plundered by shareholders."⁶

The racists have advanced, which our media notes with hoots of alarm. But they almost ignore the emergence of a new opposition on the left.

Both *Die Linke* and the Greens have lost heavily. Greens deservedly lost all their seats in Thuringia and Brandenburg.

China Now Allows Less Capitalism

"As China celebrates Deng Xiaoping's legacy, the country is again at a crossroads

"Deng and his 'true heir' Xi Jinping differ in strategies and approaches, but closer examination reveals many core similarities...

"Both Deng and Xi embarked on a zealous mission to restore China to its position as a great world power, and they shared a conviction that the Communist Party is indispensable to achieving that goal.

"Deng was the first to warn that China must chart its own reform path and not blindly copy the Western model. He sneered at Mikhail Gorbachev's 'perestroika' reforms in the Soviet Union, even as they were widely praised in the West.

"*'My father thinks Gorbachev is an idiot,'* Deng's younger son, Deng Zhifang, once told a friend.

"By dismantling the

⁶ <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii146/articles/sahra-wagenknecht-condition-of-germany>

Communist Party's power structure, *'he [Gorbachev] will lose the power to fix the problems before people kick him out'*, the younger Deng recalled his father predicting, ahead of the Soviet Union's eventual collapse in 1991...

"The cardinal principles required Chinese leaders to adhere to the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, the party's leadership, and Mao Zedong's Thought and Marxism-Leninism principles – the same message that Xi likes to stress...

"A developing country like China would not rise if its people had no national dignity or the country lost its independence," Xi said. 'We should not belittle ourselves, forget our heritage or betray the motherland.'...

"When Deng and his colleagues emerged from the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the party and the country were on the brink of collapse. The decade-long anarchy had left the party's structure fragmented and ideologically divided.

"Deng realised that his first task was to pull the party out of a quagmire of ideological infighting and shift the focus to economic growth. He opted for collective leadership – a consensus-building mechanism that gave the different factions seats at the table...

"The principle of collective leadership was designed to revitalise the party, as well as to prevent any faction from total domination.

"While it proved useful, its shortcomings gradually

become apparent. The striving for superficial unity eventually led to extreme caution, inertia and a breakdown of party discipline.

"Later party chiefs would increasingly struggle to assemble a support team of their own choosing or to carry out reform programmes that would upset entrenched interest groups.

"This was most apparent under former president Hu Jintao, who expanded the powerful Politburo Standing Committee's membership to nine to accommodate conflicting factional demands.

"The decision-making body was half-jokingly referred to as the 'nine dragons ruling the rainfall', in reference to an idiom observing that when power is shared, no one is powerful enough to effect a downpour.

"With no strong leadership at the top and responsibility spread across the team, party discipline broke down, breeding rampant corruption as well as abuses of power and even insubordination.

"Xi responded to the crisis by launching the largest anti-corruption campaign in the party's history and a drive to recentralise power. In the process, the unwritten rules – such as the exemption from prosecution of former top leaders – were shattered...

"Xi's move to recentralise power was based on his view that the party was in danger of losing its cohesion and being hijacked by powerful interest groups, in a repeat of Gorbachev's Soviet Union...

"Deng's reforms transformed China in just 30 years ... from one of the poorest countries to the world's second-largest economy."⁷

At the time, most experts in the West assumed that Deng was lying to his own people, and 'truthing' with them. Not a very smart assumption. Part of the mental fog caused by electoral politics that rewards liars.

But this Chinese account is inaccurate about what existed when Deng took over. There was factionalism, but the economy was growing faster than the USA. Mao's China was still poor, but making excellent progress.⁸

China in 2024 is in danger of falling below their target of 5% growth. But certain to get more than 4%, which would be an amazing success anywhere else.

China continues to grow faster than any of the developed Western economies. The main rival is India, which grows with much cheaper labour. Has gross inequalities, and an intensification of radical-right Hindu values.

The *Financial Times* insists that China must lose its grand advance into high technology if it treats its entrepreneurs as mere ordinary humans.⁹ I am content to watch and wait. I expect this warning of China's immanent doom to be as false as those made regularly for the past 10 or 15 years.

Snippets

Drowning Japanese and Central Europeans Best Ignored?

Climate change is a complex business. A warmer atmosphere

⁷ <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3275339/china-celebrates-deng-xiaopings-legacy-country-again-crossroads>

⁸ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/recent-issues/2019-11-magazine/2019-11/>

⁹ <https://www.ft.com/content/1e9e7544-974c-4662-a901-d30c4ab56eb7> - pay site

holds more moisture. But we also have waves of cold air coming down from the arctic. Shifting jet streams no longer confine it there.

Europe's floods were caused by some of this cold air bumping into warm wet air that had been moving north:

"Immediate analyses of the central European floods suggested most of the water vapour came from the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea, both of which have grown hotter as a result of human-induced climate breakdown, resulting in more water evaporating into the air.

"On average, the intensity of heavy precipitation events increases by 7% for each degree of global warming,' she said. 'We now have 1.2C of global warming, which means that on average heavy precipitation events are 8% more intense.'"¹⁰

Denialists make a huge song-and-dance about small numbers of climate-warners who exaggerate the evidence. Ignore a far vaster mass of warners who were spot on. Or who actually underestimated the danger.

*

How Ukraine Invented Itself

"I'm Ukrainian but my first words were in Russian. In fact, all of my words were in Russian until I started school. Like many other Ukrainian families, mine used to be Ukrainian-speaking once, but was Russified over recent generations.

"Our bookshelves were filled with Russian literature. Our TV showed Russian and Ukrainian channels, which I didn't distinguish – both aired

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/16/climate-scientists-troubled-by-damage-from-floods-ravaging-central-europe>

mostly in Russian. Every new year we raised our glasses twice – first, on Moscow time, and an hour later, on Kyiv's."¹¹

That's a woman writing in *The Guardian*, and not acknowledging that Ukraine messed itself up by trusting Western advice. That it remained poor and very corrupt when Russia under Putin was recovering.

Historically, Ukrainians only escaped from Polish domination and raids by Turkish slave-takers because Moscow had an army that could win. Ukrainian uprisings involved massacres of Jews and Poles, and always lost.

A militant minority of Ukrainians who wanted to purge themselves of everything Russian showed no tolerance for those who wanted a balance. So the elected government of Crimea seceded and asked Russia to annex them.

The elected governments of the Donbass sought autonomy if a majority would vote for it. Kiev agreed, but used the time gained to build an army of conquest. Something like the Croat force that purged their Tito-defined territory of all Serbs.

We have a war, because far too many Ukrainians cannot see themselves as anything other than victims. Forgive themselves for their efforts to give Hitler victory in World War Two.

*

China's Excellent Science

«A team of [Western] scientists say it is 'beyond reasonable doubt' the Covid pandemic started with infected animals sold at a market, rather than a laboratory leak.»¹²

Had China wished to try germ warfare – something suspected of almost all the major powers– they

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/aug/24/ukrainian-russian-putin-independence-day>
¹² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy8095xjg4po>

could safely do it in the vastness of their dry lightly-populated west.

Yet the story will probably go on being told, just as many US citizens are keen to deny their grand achievement in putting humans on the moon. Anti-China policies are irrational.

“Loss of top science talent by the United States is a gain for China...

“Hundreds of scientists who had collaborated with institutions in China were put under investigation, their lives and careers turned upside down even if they weren't charged in the end. Others pleaded guilty just to end the nightmare. Nearly 90 per cent of those charged under the China Initiative were ethnic Chinese, including Chinese-Americans and immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries, according to a survey by the MIT Technology Review in 2021.

“The chilly atmosphere has caused hundreds of ethnic Chinese scientists to switch their academic affiliations from American universities to institutions in China, with some of them being leading researchers in their fields with an international reputation.”¹³

*

End homelessness and save money

“Manchester turns to ‘housing first’ scheme to eradicate rough sleeping

“Inspired by Finnish success story, mayor Andy Burnham says unconditional homes policy ‘saves public money’”¹⁴

¹³ <https://www.scmp.com/opinion/article/3275839/loss-top-science-talent-united-states-gain-china>

¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/sep/10/manchester-turns-to-housing-first-scheme-to-eradicate-rough-sleeping>

He rejects the shrink-the-state obsession that Thatcher began, and New Labour copied.

The failure of the liberal-left personal approach.

If you are the government of a modern society, then everything is potentially your problem. Saving in one area mostly causes expense elsewhere and in the longer run.

*

Class Issues

In Britain, the Labour membership wanted Corbyn. The bulk of the Parliamentary Party sabotaged him.

This included many former radicals – but what sort of radicalism?

With all of the quotas for MPs by gender and race, there was never a quota for class origin. Under Blair, John Prescott was one of the few with an ordinary origin, and not a very solid one. A steward and waiter in the Merchant Navy.

Also no quota for the job they did before becoming an MP. Overwhelmingly lawyers and journalists and people who went straight from student radicalism to working for existing politicians. What I call the Opinions Industry, because Truth can be whatever the powerful wish it to be.

Skilled university-educated technical workers whose jobs make them respect objective truths are almost absent.

*

Old newsnotes at the magazine websites. I also write regular blogs - <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/sep/10/manchester-turns-to-housing-first-scheme-to-eradicate-rough-sleeping>

The British 'Left' and the Workers Party of Britain

One alternative to the current political order

By Tim Pendry (WPB)

This last week has seen news that Jeremy Corbyn attended talks about the formation of a new political party The Collective.¹ In fact, Corbyn has not said anything about endorsing an initiative that was, in fact, announced before the election. What is really going on here is a lot of kite-flying from the liberal-left wing of the anti-Starmerite Left designed to build momentum for something that a relatively few Left activists and intellectuals want but which runs counter to the standard Trotskyite strategy of working within and not outside the Labour Party and the trades unions. It is an initiative designed to tap into the frustration of thousands of confused and desperate activists who feel defeated and who have found themselves supporting isolated independents, minor marginalised parties and the Greens.

This article is, however, not about The Collective, Corbynism or constitutionalist Trotskyism or the shattering and fragmentation of the Left activist movement (matters that we may return to later although this Substack would hope not to be drawn into the minutiae of just one part of a total political system). It is about an actually existing party of the Left that fought seats in the last General Election and garnered significant votes from a standing start - the Workers Party of Britain. There is an intense debate within that Party as we write on what its attitude should be to this latest attempt at rebuilding what, frankly, has been a failed approach to dealing with serious national problems. Should it be collaboration or resistance? There is no current statement on this from the WPB (after all, Corbyn has not, it seems, endorsed the 'new' initiative) and there will probably not be one until after this weekend's ruling National Members Council if then. However, it might be useful to strip away the 'spin' around The Collective and look at a pre-existing alternative model for Left organisation and how

it is progressing before anyone gets too excited about something that may never happen and, if it happens, may not deliver much worthwhile.

A great deal has happened on the British Left over the last year, including a General Election and riots in deprived working class areas. Back in the Autumn of 2023, I reviewed the political situation in a series of Blog pieces elsewhere that looked at all the alternatives to the existing dominant parties. The intention was (having studied the populist Right and various other independent challenges) to close with an analysis of the Left at that time but I never did this as I had promised. My researches led to a personal existential leap from analysing the world to acting in the world (which I do periodically). Instead of simply suggesting to others a solution to the problems set out in my initial posting in the series back in May 2023² and then waiting for comment before doing anything useful, I leapt into the political fray ... of which more later.

But let us step back a year and see where we were then, what happened and where we are now. The big question then was whether the Labour Party was moving towards a split (which I had doubted) because of discontent (on multiple fronts) with Starmer's right-wing leadership or whether the bulk of the 'Corbynista' Left, having found at least a temporary cause for unification over the issue of Palestine, would simply do what we would expect it to do and find an excuse to roll in with the Party regardless at the next General Election. We were half right in the latter respect but not because there was any will to change amongst the Corbynistas but because the Labour Right was confident enough to stamp it and its pretensions firmly into the ground. The Left was already fragmenting by the Autumn. It effectively collapsed (with one exception) in the run-up to and during the General Election.

The state of the Left as a whole (excluding the Workers Party of Britain) is too extensive a subject for this particular article but it is in disarray. The General Election expressed an already existing fragmentation as an emotional and panicked division into a number of factions and independents from within the dominant liberal-left opposition to neo-liberalism and so to 'Starmerism' in the Labour Party. Those with a stake in Labour hung on in the vain hope of post-election influence. The abstentions over the cutting of winter fuel allowance by 53 troubled Labour MPs are about the best we can expect - performative stuff that achieves nothing. Others already exuded by the Labour Right re-emerged as 'independents' or in abortive new pseudo-parties such as The Collective which incidentally had no material impact whatsoever on the General Election. Mostly the Left over-relied on events in Gaza with outraged activists merely speaking (outside the Muslim community) to other outraged activists. The bulk of the British working class were not going to put emotion and moral compass ahead of the cost of living and frustration with the inept and bankrupt Tories. Others fled to the Greens which has cynically adopted quasi-socialist policies to buttress what was, in fact, an anti-working class middle class environmentalist project.

Socialists and anti-imperialists were thus in disarray as the labour movement, even its most radical elements in the transport and public sectors, stuck with Starmer because he promised to deliver non-socialist but workerist benefits ... and, to be fair, Starmer appears to have delivered on those promises with significant pay rises. These seem to be paid for in part by anti-socialist cuts to benefits for the struggling non-unionised population and with more general austerity. The unions can also reasonably expect delivery of improved regulatory workers' rights. The unpalatable conclusion for the Left is that organised labour has been

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/sep/15/jeremy-corbyn-addresses-meeting-new-leftwing-party-collective>

² <https://positionreserved.blogspot.com/2023/05/alternatives-to-current-political-order.html>

incorporated into the progressive movement (along American lines) in return for moderating its demands away from socialism and foreign policy and in the direction of member rights and benefits. The working class is thus being split into its organised and non-organised elements with the very vulnerable and those on the margins of society being thrown to the wolves.

The collapse of the *original* Labour Representation Committee understanding between organised labour and socialist activism was always probable once the Labour Party had been captured by the political Right. The story of this is fascinating but for another time. Suffice it to say that the fault lay not with the trades unions who, after all, exist to protect the interests of their members but with socialist activists who theorised socialism and detached themselves from the working population both organised and unorganised. The narcissism of the bulk of the post-68 British Left with its graduate white collar base is at the root of the gifting of the labour movement to a centrism that cannot even be called social democratic, far now to the right of politicians like David Owen.

On the other hand, having chosen the route of rainbow urban 'socialism', Corbyn and his unstable 'faction' (for that is what it had become) have lacked the courage when it might have meant something to break with what was now a middle class progressive party (Labour) with more in common with the US Democrats and European 'socialists' (which are, of course, nothing of the kind) than its own history. The bulk of the Left went into the elections as a shattered group of activists fighting over the same territory, putting up competing candidates and drawing Labour votes away from London where it did not matter. Both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats (with the connivance of Labour) brilliantly gamed the First Past the Post system to gain a massive majority for a Starmer Government on a fifth of the possible vote and a third of the actual vote. In short, the Labour Government was constitutionally legitimate

with full access to the State's monopoly of force (subsequently deployed ruthlessly and sometimes unjustly against the street working class Right) but democratically illegitimate ... indeed, the logic of the situation with at least two thirds of the nation resentful of the result is that the United Kingdom can barely be called a democracy except rhetorically but then Ralph Miliband had described this state of affairs in his brilliant 'Capitalist Democracy in Britain' as far back as 1982.

Thanks in large part to what might be objectively seen as the narcissism and ineptitude of what passes for the bulk of the Left in Britain with its peculiar obsessions with cultural matters and single issue campaigns, the strongest constitutional opposition to the new Government could come from only similar liberal-left creatures of the system (the Liberal Democrats and Greens) or the populist lower middle class Right which was successfully reaching out to resentful working class voters through Reform. A clinical view of the situation would probably say that a majority of the nation was still 'liberal' in some form or another with a third of the nation (probably much more in England) drawn to national populism.

The Left thus barely existed as a viable political force (with one notable exception which we will come to) because what passed for the Left had become less concerned with the condition of the working (and lower middle) class and far more concerned with the plight of faraway peoples and cultural issues - in other words, the British Left had become little more than what nineteenth century observers would have called 'radical'. Even the WPB (which as we shall see, does have a strategic rather than tactical orientation in favour of the British working class) was drawn into the morass of Middle East politics out of moral fervour and failed fully to connect with the working class. A lot of its natural vote 'crossed the floor' and backed Reform.

The word 'socialism' might be used frequently in our culture but it has become diffuse. There are small groups of truly socialist activists, of

course, and the odd intellectual but most Left position-taking has since become radical-liberal or progressive along American lines with 'socialism' being adopted not with any sense of ideological coherence but as either an almost traditionalist attempt to appropriate dying old Labour rituals and rhetoric or to challenge the Labour Right with a naughty word. Instead of a systematic critique of power and control along the lines of Tony Benn or even Karl Marx, what we were seeing in the twenty-first century was a mish-mash of single issue positions and identity politics without coherence, utopian and based on feelings like outrage and on slogans. Even demonstrations became ritualistic affairs with minimal impact on real power - a lesson that should have been learned from the failure of the massive anti-Iraq War demonstration of 2003.

The problem for such a Left aligned with Labour was not merely that it was 'persecuted' (which it was) by the right wing Labour machinery within the Party that it had dominated only a few years before but that it was weakened by its own 'internal contradictions' of which one of the most important were the differences of opinion over whether (as most Trotskyist-inspired activists but also romantics and utopians believed) socialism could be effected through 'one more heave' at some indeterminate period in the future within the existing structure or whether the attempt to do so would be futile and efforts should start immediately to build an alternative Left Party. Again, we refer the reader to Miliband's 'Capitalist Democracy in Britain' which has not been bettered for its clinical analysis of British liberal democracy which is only contingently liberal and only superficially democratic.

But what would Left mean under these conditions? No one was now seriously discussing whether there was any common ground left between the working and lower middle class on the one hand and cultural progressives and rainbow theoreticians on the other? The loyalists (to Labour) had always tended to triumph even if many of their followers quickly drifted into

voting Green (given that the Greens were mouthing their new set of left wing platitudes and policies) or into an indiscriminate backing for independents who mostly seemed to be more energised by events in the Middle East than in their own country. This was very rational for inner city Muslim activists but a poor strategy for engaging 'white' working class voters elsewhere. The fruit of all this is a Left divided between impotent Parliamentarians, impotent Corbynista activists, exiles in the Green Movement or the minor nationalist parties and impotent independents.

The General Election eventually proved the utter absurdity of the ideal of capturing the Labour Party for the Left. Although Jeremy Corbyn was returned as a rather weak and tired independent, the four other 'Left' independents were actually representatives of the South Asian Muslim interest - nothing wrong with that but it should not be considered wholly relevant to the creation of a national Left inclusive of all communities. The only serious (in ideological terms) socialist challenger to the system was the Workers Party of Britain³ (of which more later) but even it found itself over-relying on the mobilisation of the Muslim vote, found its strongest Leadership candidate (George Galloway) systematically attacked by some rather dark forces in order to ensure that he lost his seat and, in effect, failing to reach (due to lack of resources) the broader working class community. This latter was very obviously either sticking with Labour as an alternative to the bankrupt Tories or shifting into Reform territory and national populism. But at least the WPB proved itself not to be impotent as we shall see.

Another internal contradiction lies in the 'forgetting' of the whole period in which socialism and the labour movement had placed liberals and radicals as secondary to a mass movement that could claim at least half of the population as active supporters. This was the Labour Party that grew from the beginning of the twentieth century into Attlee's successful socialist experiment in the

late 1940s based on war economics and, although it went into slow decline after that, was destroyed by the arrival of progressive liberalism under Kinnock, then Blair, a decline now finalised in its most authoritarian and 'progressive' form under Starmer. The response of the bulk of the Left seems to have been to accept its defeat on socio-economic issues to all intents and purposes, abandon redistributionist strategies and shift into a concern with revisionist Marxist cultural politics along radicalised American progressive lines.

Livingstone had introduced the political strategy of the rainbow coalition in London in the 1980s. What was a successful strategy in one of the world's most prosperous and multicultural global cities had subsequently transmuted into a national dysfunctional identity politics that became alienating to many working people and which had then developed its own authoritarian tendencies. These tendencies eventually started to threaten traditional 'English liberties' (which had always had their place in British socialism). By the time we reach the current situation, the bulk of the Left represented little more than a performative radicalism which it was easy for centrists (including many Tories) to appropriate in a weak form in order to deflect the population from more serious issues surrounding distributional economics, loss of freedoms and both the creation of the Security State and of a more refined version of the 'imperial West' with its huge and costly military-industrial complex.

In this context, although small in the Autumn of 2023, the Workers Party of Britain [WPB] was different. It dealt with many of these issues even if at times imperfectly. First of all, it defied the progressive prioritisation of cultural politics and attacked identity politics in favour of an inclusive revival of class politics. Second, its policy platform which was developed throughout the Autumn in anticipation of a General Election, restored the primacy of redistributional economics and state planning (explicitly as socialism) and put forward a cogent anti-

imperialist critique that was linked to the existential survival of the British people in the hands of an increasingly unstable ruling regime that seemed not to know what it was doing. Events in the last few weeks indicate just how out of control the regimes of the West have become with material threats to our safety in the advocacy for long range missile attacks on Russian territory and the conspiracy of silence over the terroristic use of technology in civilian areas by an ally.

Having reviewed the situation in the light of my original concerns and studied all the alternative potential left-wing offers (given that I recognised that, in some respects, the populist Right were not always wrong in their critique of the total system), I found myself joining the WPB last Autumn as a result of my critique, in particular, of what NATO had become and the risks it posed to the lives and livelihoods of the British people. Since then, I have seen that the post-Cold War imperial structures emanating from Washington (in which London is often 'more royalist than the King') also threaten our fundamental freedoms to expression and to access to information. It is as someone essentially libertarian that I find myself in support of this particular collectivist Party. And, ironically, it is as a libertarian that I find myself supporting a Party that makes a safe home for working class social conservatives which I shall argue through on another occasion.

I had had some past dealings with George Galloway on political matters but most of my interaction was with the General Secretary and his group of largely Birmingham-based authentically working class Party Officers who soon impressed me with their coherence and intelligence. They welcomed my involvement. At the 2023 Party Congress I was elected by the members with their support to the ruling body of the Party, the National Members Council. Soon after, the NMC asked me to provide an independent draft of the Party Manifesto which was inclusive of Congress and NMC decisions, was in line with the Party's Ten Point Programme and which could be used as the basis for future campaigning. It

3 <https://workerspartybritain.org/>

was an exercise in political education designed to create greater coherence within the Party under conditions where the bulk of the Left seemed to be reliant on ad hoc statements and sentiments. It was also designed not to be a traditional 'package of measures' where possible but rather a general statement of principles which led inexorably to certain policies that were socialist and anti-imperialist and, above all, directed at the interests of the working classes. It was irrelevant if, on occasions, I might have personally demurred at this or that position because it was not an exercise in intellectual egoism but a genuine attempt to create a twenty-first century variant of socialism for British conditions.

The document was collectively amended in places and approved⁴ and later followed up with a Manifesto specific to Education co-developed with a colleague NMC Member. Once this was done, strategic policy discussion ended at least until the next Congress in 2025. However, once the General Election was called, we found an issue emerging that, while the WPB emphasised socio-economic issues, the bulk of the Left was still caught up in cultural priorities and so we set up an election unit based on Telegram (which is why we are disturbed at the real motivation for the arrest of Durov in Paris) that developed positions on these issues as they arose in real time in the political market place. These were then endorsed or sometimes amended at NMC level after the fact which gave us considerable flexibility in supporting our candidates. The speed of operation and the abandonment of committee decision-making followed the successful methodology of the Grassroots Alliance inside the Labour Party in the mid-1990s.

George Galloway was, of course, briefly MP for Rochdale prior to the General Election (although he lost the seat after a good fight in considerable part because of aggressive black propaganda from other ostensibly left wing organisations) so the success not of the policy but of the effective campaigning and organisation is not

in doubt. We have to remind the reader that the WPB in September 2023 was very small with its Congress filling half a large room in Birmingham. Partly due to Gaza but not only Gaza, membership rose rapidly. There was a new influx of highly professional political campaigners based in London so that, if the General Election had been called as expected this Autumn, the WPB would have had a cadre of candidates who had been fully vetted, improved organisational structures and raised funds for effective campaigning.

The unexpectedly sudden General Election caught the WPB not so much unawares but prematurely in mid-organisation. It needs understanding that it has no serious source of funding other than member contributions - no corporate sponsors, no union funds, no public money and certainly no foreign funds (which would be refused). It relies entirely on volunteer forces. It would also be untrue to say that campaigning went smoothly - there were errors that affected effectiveness although treated now as 'learning by doing' without a culture of blame. **Nevertheless, in less than six months, the WPB acquired over 210,000 national votes (well ahead of target), developed sufficient presence in around ten seats (reaching 29.3% of the vote in Birmingham Yardley) where it can be regarded as a serious challenger to the incumbent and became regarded as the sixth largest party in England by the BBC.** All this happened with an effective 'freeze out' by the national media. No left-wing rival (unless you count the Greens as a spurious alternative) achieved so much.

Looking at the situation in the early autumn of 2024, we can say that, while it is possible for liberal-left and progressive forces to coalesce in haphazard ways between the Greens, the Labour Left and the 'Corbynistas' and perhaps elements in the petty nationalist parties, much to the frustration of some Leftist intellectuals, the WPB has become the first and only serious socialist and anti-imperialist challenger to the prevailing order, extremely careful to oppose all forms of

revolutionary or street violence and willing to work with anyone who can deliver what it is promising to the working class. It defines this class (much to the frustration of some socialist theoreticians stuck in old nineteenth century categories) in extremely broad terms to include the aspirational small business owner often neglected by theoreticians. It does, nevertheless, have issues to resolve. It is best to be honest about these. One of the remarkable things about this Party is its openness to frank debate.

The first is the illusion that it is just George Galloway's Party as Reform is seen as the creature of Nigel Farage. This is incorrect. George is Leader by election and is Leader because he has the full confidence of the membership. His experience of the actuality of politics in and outside Parliament is invaluable. In NMC Meetings his advice is wise but also open to question and he adjusts his views in response to debate as the NMC adjusts its views to his experience of organisation and campaigning. Every Party is best served by having a degree of charismatic leadership and committee men and women and intellectuals generally cannot deliver that. He is a remarkable politician.

The second is that although the core of the Party is totally committed to the socialist and anti-imperialist vision that is centred on actual working class interests, as it grows new members arrive still imbued with more middle class cultural and single issue concerns. The next stage is one of mutual respect and an engagement with political education strategies to ensure that the ideological underpinnings of the Party can present a coherent framework for political action but also will permit a decent compromise on some of those progressive concerns which are humane and well within the ability of the Party to accommodate. The political reality is that any socialist or anti-imperialist project must willingly and even joyfully accept that British working and lower middle class cultures tend always to traditional liberalism in terms of community and personal interaction.

The late Bernard Crick was realistic in

⁴ <https://workerspartybritain.org/manifesto-britain-deserves-better>

drawing attention to the importance on the British Left of a tradition exemplified, rather eclectically, by a fusion of Robert Owen's co-operativism, the cultural vision of William Morris, Methodist 'conscience', Chartist democracy and a more humanist Marxism - to which I would add the curious literary Leftism that ran from Shelley to the late Michael Foot and which was libertarian, 'fraternal', egalitarian and fundamentally 'ethical'. It is this 'ethic' that helped drive so much of the outrage at the extreme behaviours of the Israeli Right in Gaza. It was simply just 'wrong'. This process of disciplined accommodation has started already with the extensive pages of working policy positions derived from exchanges with the Left and others during the General Election. These notes created a range of humane and compassionate positions on gender and lifestyle issues that will be shared (subject to further review) in future campaigning.

The third is lack of resources and the need to build organisation in anticipation of not only by-elections and the next general election but also council elections. Although I have had some experience of organisation (I ran the South East region for three weeks during the election to fill a gap and ran the afore-mentioned Grassroots Alliance in a similar collegial way back in the 1990s) this is not my territory. It is widely agreed that refining policy and worrying about presentation is less important now than attracting members, activists, good quality candidates, organisation, building war chests for specific campaigns and political education.

The fourth is that the WPB is a radical Party with policies completely antithetical to the position of the current regime. This should not be a concern in a truly free country especially as the WPB is specific in its opposition to extra-parliamentary, revolutionary or violent methods. It is, however, committed to free expression. It is now becoming ever more clear that a State that feels under existential threat and is only dubiously democratically legitimate is prepared to undertake increasingly authoritarian and unjust measures in order to deter dissent and is doing so in clear co-ordination with other States in the context of the threat of war. The arrest in Paris of Durov but also house searches in the US, extraditions, arrests of journalists at the border, draconian sentencing, sustained lawfare and attempts to censor or close social platforms are all signs of a panicking system attempting to frighten its own populations into compliance. The British State has accrued to itself alarming emergency powers. The WPB

has to ensure that the State's efforts do not frighten off supporters and activists and can be lawfully resisted. This is one area where its concerns match those of the legitimate democratic populist Right.

Another issue arises from a Leftist criticism that fails to understand the actual structure of the Party. There is no doubt that the WPB saw an influx of Muslim members because of widespread outrage at the British Government's support for the violent and disproportionate reaction of a neo-nationalist right-wing regime in Tel Aviv leading to deaths of Palestinians well in excess of 37,000⁵ at the time of writing. The story is that we have become RESPECT 2.0 (RESPECT being a defunct quasi-Trotskyist Party in alliance with Muslim interests) when nothing could be further from the truth. The WPB welcomes every Muslim (or indeed any other ethnic community member including members of the Jewish community) on the basis that they are workers and not part of a particular identity. The claim that this means petit-bourgeois small business elements in a workers party is meaningless because social conditions under neo-liberal globalisation mean that such elements have become working class. The WPB would like more small business supporters from all communities. The non-Muslim support for the people of Palestine was as strongly held as that of many Muslims. Jews with the same view are also welcome.

Nor does Muslim membership mean excessive social conservatism. There has been another profound misunderstanding here. The WPB's position supports private choices that harm no other. This means respect for all religions and none. The general rule is that there is no party line on such views. I am free to express my libertarian views as much as George Galloway is free to express his more socially conservative views. The WPB's members include Marxists, Catholics, Muslims, Social Libertarians and many other culturally very different people. Its concerns are primarily not with cultural struggle but with socio-economic struggle which is why it is so unnerving to the current regime. It unifies because it is centred on respect for private and family life and opposes the totalitarian attempt to impose the values of progressives on populations in a way that only breeds division and resentment. LGBTQ+ activists appear not to like the Party because of their interpretation of some of Galloway's socially conservative views but this fundamentally misunderstands the nature of the Party and the first line

⁵ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

of the Party's LGBTQ+ policy states clearly that "*The Workers Party stands firmly on the principle that all workers are equal, regardless of their identity.*"

The mistake people are making is to assume that when a WPB Member expresses a personal opinion on a cultural issue, they are expressing a political opinion or the opinion of the Party. They are not. People are so used to voting for individuals on their personality and not on their policies that politics under progressivism has become degraded into a celebrity show like 'Love Island'. Just as some people cannot understand the difference between fantasy and reality, we have been entrained to fail to see the difference between a person and a policy. It will take time for a culture on the Left based on everyone trooping into line on identity issues to return to a consideration of socio-economic oppressions and inequities and to understand that politics does not require forcing everyone to adopt a particular world view beyond the one outlined in the WPB's Ten Point Programme. The WPB simply wants the public sphere to retreat from the promotion of cultural politics in favour of effecting more material change.

None of these issues are truly problematic for the WPB because they are all recognised as issues. There is ample time to resolve them through external communications and internal political education. In my case, much of my job is done. It is a workers party for workers and run by workers and, while 'intellectuals' have a role to play, that role should be secondary to learning through doing as organisers and campaigners. What the WPB needs now (apart from more financial resources) is members, activists and good quality candidates and, allowing for the usual down time you have after an election, I feel reasonably confident that these will appear.

For the avoidance of doubt, this is a personal commentary on the current political situation as will be all future Substack articles. It should not be construed as an official communication from the Workers Party of Britain.

https://timpendry.substack.com/p/the-british-left-and-the-workers?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=1927504&post_id=149095483&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=4bhv75&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

The Left in Germany

This is the newsletter of Sahra Wagenknecht, MP. In it I inform you every week about my activities and current political topics.

Nordstream.

Two years ago today, an important artery of our prosperity was destroyed with the attack on Nord Stream. Who was behind this attack, the devastating consequences of which we are still feeling today? Why were the pipes not repaired immediately to minimise the damage? While the German government continues to remain silent, we are staying on the ball and presenting the chronology of events based on the available reports. Only a committee of enquiry, as called for by the BSW, can shed light on this.

Thank you, Brandenburg!

After Thuringia and Saxony, the BSW has now also entered the state parliament in Brandenburg with a double-digit result as the third strongest party. This is a historic success and my heartfelt thanks go to everyone who supported us and gave us their vote! There is no way around the BSW and that is a good thing. A majority, not only in Brandenburg, wants more diplomatic efforts instead of a dangerous escalation spiral in the Ukraine war, more social justice, less uncontrolled migration and investment in education and infrastructure. We take this seriously and will only participate in a state government that tangibly improves people's living conditions, sets an example for détente and peace and speaks out against the stationing of US missiles in Germany. On 'Hart aber Fair', I discuss the results of the state elections, why the issue

of war and peace is also relevant for a state government and why people did not vote for the BSW so that we can do 'business as usual'.

A new political start is needed

People have had enough of parties that exacerbate their problems instead of solving them. In the 'Die Welt' interview, I talk about political goals that we want to implement at state level and why we will only participate in a state government that also speaks out in foreign policy and speaks out in favour of more diplomacy and against the stationing of US medium-range missiles in Germany, which would make our country a target for Russian nuclear missiles.

The traffic lights coalition is finished

The traffic lights are finished. It's not just the election results and polls that show this, the government proves it every day with its crazy policies. On the one hand, it wants to subsidise luxury e-cars as company cars up to a list price of 95,000 euros - as an alleged climate policy feat - while on the other hand, the price of the Deutschlandticket (a rail rover ticket) is to be raised by nine euros next year to 58 euros. In my press statement for the BSW Group, I explain why this policy has nothing to do with climate protection, but a lot to do with ignorance towards the poor, why the traffic light system is also a total failure in foreign policy and why the FDP should remember its motto 'Better not to govern than to govern badly'.

It's not just the Green Party leadership that should resign

Of course, many people are

angry with the Greens because this party stands for a policy that only hits people in the pocket under the pretext of climate protection. I also consider the Greens to be an illiberal party that defames those who think differently and wants to narrow the spectrum of opinion in discussions about foreign policy issues, for example. On Markus Lanz, I discuss the change of leadership in the Greens, the BSW's conditions for government participation in Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony and why a U-turn in foreign policy is overdue, as more and more weapons are not helping Ukraine to win, but only prolonging the dying.

How long will this suffering continue?

The Wall Street Journal reports that over one million people have died or been wounded since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. These figures are staggering and more than bitter, because how many of these people could still be alive if the West had supported negotiations on a compromise peace between Russia and Ukraine in spring 2022? And the war does not end at Ukraine's borders: 1.18 million Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Germany and the burden on our society is increasing noticeably. When will the traffic lights finally wake up? Instead of continuing to supply weapons for an endless war, we need a policy that creates peace. This war must be ended through negotiations in order to stop the dying and enable millions of refugees to return to their homes.

Anglo Guilt for Hitler's Power – Part One

By Gwydion M. Williams

Unusual German Guilt?

A War to Reverse Previous Wars

Russia shall have Constantinople

The Necessity of a Mixed Economy

Unusual German Guilt?

That Germany became fascist and that Britain's imperial elite helped the anti-fascist cause was an accident of history. An accident that also wounded the British Empire; hurt it so badly that it lost its substance over the next few decades. That was not at all what the elite had been intending.

Churchill became a hero of anti-fascism, because he was behind the times. He failed to realise how much weaker the British Empire had become. That rather than the British Empire lasting a thousand years, the strain of a second world war would doom it.

Nazism was an extreme within a much larger centre-right imperial aberration. An aberration that the USA and the British Empire were very much part of. Britain had a National Government, though it later became essentially Tory. The USA had Roosevelt as a Left Authoritarian, and needing to tolerate racist Democrats from the south in order to govern. Churchill himself was more openly an admirer of Mussolini than most Tories,¹ though most approved of him until he joined Hitler's war against them.²

Genocide did not begin with Hitler, nor end with him. His power was possible only because everything had been thrown into doubt by the First World War. Few would dispute this if the question were put directly, though many evade it. Evade it because socialists cannot be blamed for the 1914 World War. Few socialists were enthusiasts before the war was actually declared. The more radical socialists were everywhere the main opponents.

The First World War was a war produced by just the mix that the New Right claim as a guarantor of peace.

Note also that all of those countries were committed to the spread of capitalism. All except Tsarist Russia had a press free to criticise the government, though the rich dominated the papers that most people read. They also had open elections for multi-party

parliaments, though not all adult males had a vote in the British Isles, and no women in most countries.³

Many saw the war as a failure of Christian civilisation. Or at least the forms of Christianity that actually dominated. And it's always seemed significant to me that both the Nazi swastika and the Soviet hammer-and-sickle could be seen as modified versions of the Christian cross.

People recently have been stretching the facts to claim that Stalin was 100% responsible for World War Two – though no one has yet repudiated the common belief that Hitler was *also* 100% guilty. The reality is that the British Empire had allowed Hitler to turn Germany into a great military power. They made German aggression possible, when it was impossible in 1933.

Stalin making a non-aggression pact helped make it a war that began against France and Britain, whereas British diplomacy looks very much like it was aimed at enabling or even encouraging a German war just against the Soviet Union.

British public opinion wanted some sort of agreement with the Soviet Union that would make both Britain and the Soviets safe from a German attack. My reading of the politics of the time is that the British government covertly made sure it would not happen.

And for the First World War, the root cause of later disasters: whose fault was it that such a brutal war occurred at all?

The consensus now is that it was a tragic accident, and that consensus is wrong. Wars within Europe had happened continuously since the end of the French-Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. But the First World War was destructive in a way Europe had not seen since Germany's Thirty Years War.

As a Briton, it took me some time to accept that the main guilt for the destructiveness of the Great War lay with the British ruling class. Surely the general militarism was at fault? But you have to ask why the war continued when it had frozen into the horrors of Trench Warfare in the West. And where the ding-dong battles on the Eastern Front looked unlikely to reach any quick conclusion.

It's an awkward truth that Imperial Germany by 1915 was ready to call the war a stalemate. Have everyone go back to the borders they'd had when the war started.

An awkward truth that Britain's rulers would not accept any peace that failed to criminalise Germany

¹ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/why-churchill-admired-mussolini/>

² <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/problems-magazine-past-issues/mussolinis-links-to-the-british-centre-right/>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_women%27s_suffrage#1910s

for what had been a very ordinary power-political war.

An awkward truth that they also rejected France's wish at Versailles to break up United Germany, which had only existed since the 1870s. Which included strong regional differences. So though they insisted that Germany be treated as criminal, our rulers did not behave as if they believed this to be so.

They behaved as if they wanted Germany kept as a potential foe. That meant that France could only dominate Continental Europe for as long as the British Empire supported them.

None of this got through to the British public. We ordinary Britons might have accepted moderation for Germany. The Christmas Truce showed that the men on the Western Front did not hate each other. That they would have been happy to go home to a world much like the world before the war.

It was the elite who wanted Germany broken, after Germany had replaced France and Russia as the biggest rivals to Britain's global empire.

Drastic punishment of Germany with the Versailles Treaty is a contrast to the moderate treatment of France after the defeat of Napoleon. Moderation that caused a period of relative peace, which at the time suited Britain.

It also reversed many of Napoleon's populist and democratic reforms, but Britain's own parliament was not even loosely democratic until the 1880s.⁴ It had a House of Commons in which a majority of MPs could be freely chosen by a couple of hundred rich families till the reform of 1832. That reform gave voting power to the upper middle classes. It actually took

away the right to vote in those few constituencies where it had been 'potwallopers', men with a home large enough to boil a pot of their own fire.

Moderation for France under a restored monarchy worked for peace, though not as a long-term curb on democracy. France democratised rather faster than Britain, but had no wish for another major war. Not until Napoleon 3rd, who was Britain's ally in the Crimean War. Who helped Italian unification, which Britain also approved of.

Similar moderation worked in the aftermath of World War Two. Forgiveness for West Germany and Japan, and US support for Franco's Spain. In those days, the Soviet Union was a formidable rival, so any ally was forgivable. Many on the Anglo centre-right thought it regrettable that circumstances had forced them to destroy Nazi Germany and allow the Soviet Union to become much stronger. But at that time, no one could cover up the awkward fact that more than half of the German army had been destroyed on the Eastern Front.⁵ Only slowly did the media managed to shift credit by showing only the Western contribution.

Also covering up Western guilt. After the German surrender, the West helped Germans with varying degrees of guilt to escape. To South America mostly, but some to Canada, where Jews were less influential and the courts more under establishment control. Ukrainians who had been on Hitler's side for at least part of the war were mostly stashed in Canada.⁶ They were later used to polarise Ukraine, when Putin proved less friendly to US interests than Yeltsin had been.

5 <https://www.quora.com/q/mrgwydionmwilliams/Nazi-Germany-Was-Defeated-in-Russia>
6 <https://mrgwydionmwilliams.quora.com/Nazis-in-Canada-a-Previously-Neglected-Truth>

A War to Reverse Previous Wars

Who in 1914 had a positive wish to have a war, rather than another diplomatic settlement?

France wanted the portions of Alsace and Lorraine that Bismarck had taken in 1871, even though almost all of them had a German-speaking majority.⁷ Note that Woodrow Wilson broke his own principle of national self-determination by demanding that France get the entire territory.⁸

Tsarist Russia wanted Istanbul, originally Constantinople. This too ignored self-determination: the Tsars wanted it as heirs of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Republican France and Tsarist Russia became allies in 1892.⁹ This made no sense except to make it plausible that France could recover the German-speaking portions of Alsace and Lorraine. To make it easier for Russia and its allies to expand further at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, with Istanbul / Constantinople as the grand prize.

Serbia was a convenient excuse. One of a series of diplomatic crises in which war had seemed possible.

In 1914, had the British Empire stayed out of it, it would have been a Great European War. Almost certain to have been short, and it would have made Germany dominant within Continental Europe.

Britons were led to believe that the German violation of Belgian neutrality obliged the British Empire to join the war. There was also talk of 'gallant little Serbia': talk that remained normal in Britain until history was abruptly re-written after the Cold War

7 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Frankfurt_\(1871\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Frankfurt_(1871))

8 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/44-fascism-and-world-war-2/woodrow-wilsons-deceptive-14-points/>

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Russian_Alliance

4 <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/40-britain/665-2/>

ended.

Serbia was the immediate cause, but mostly a convenient excuse. And it has been left out of most recent Western summaries of causes, because the Serb claim to what was then known as Bosnia- Herzegovina was suddenly redefined as wicked. It wasn't only in the Soviet Union that 'you never knew what was going to happen yesterday'. History was revised when Yugoslavia began to break up, and the Serbian government was slow to abandon Tito's moderate socialism. Peaceful and prosperous Yugoslavia stopped being useful to either Upper London or the Mahon USA.

Upper London? I use an unfamiliar term, to avoid the confusion caused by the common habit of saying Britain for the elite's foreign policies. Very little that happens is the spontaneous wish of ordinary Britons. But from 1688, the British monarchy had to share power with an independent-minded elite who meshed together as a social group in the upper-class and governmental parts of London. Most of the elite have their main homes somewhere other than London, and most ordinary Londoners are pulled along with whatever Upper London decides. But it is mostly in London that elite wishes mesh into coherent politics.

The USA never has had such a connected elite. Regional elites meet and argue in the Washington-based Federal Government. They had a civil war when the Federal government under Lincoln promised to keep slavery out of the lands that the Federal government ruled directly. But both sides solidly supported White Racism,¹⁰ which is why it stayed solid till the 1960s, and still lingers. And they both wanted to dominate the New World: the continents of North and South America. But dreams of a World Hegemony came slowly, becoming more tempting when US wealth and power became comparable to Europe's Great Powers.

With the Munroe Doctrine, the USA tried to keep European powers out of their 'patch'. Intended to

stay out of whatever Europe might be doing. In a previous article, I detailed how Admiral Mahan helped the USA switch from Isolationism to Global Imperialism.¹¹

Without the US intervention, Germany would definitely have won World War One. They would have been a restraining force on Lenin, but also would not have encouraged a vicious civil war as the victorious allies did. They would have made a separate Ukraine, but also prevented the massacres of Jews and Poles that historically occurred whenever Ukrainian Nationalists were not dependent on outside support. And they would have kept intact Austria-Hungary, a state in which rival nationalities mostly kept the peace. Where Jews had a secure large share of middle-class jobs. Franz Kafka might have remained reasonably content in his career as a German Jew in the Worker's Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia. He was fluent in Czech, but culturally it was alien to him.

The USA in 1918 chose not to use its power to get a settlement fair to Germany. They went along with the continued starvation of Germany after the Armistice, to intimidate them into accepting the grossly unfair Versailles Treaty.

Russia shall have Constantinople

Upper London from the 1870s came to see Imperial Germany as a worse threat to British hegemony than long-standing rivals France and Russia.

"Great Britain saw nothing wrong with the strengthening of Prussia on the European continent, viewing France as its traditional rival in international affairs. Lord Palmerston, the head of the British cabinet in 1865, wrote: 'The current Prussia is too weak to be honest and independent in its actions. And, taking into account the interests of the future, it is highly desirable for Germany as a whole became

strong, so she was able to keep the ambitious and warlike nation, France, and Russia, which compress it from the West and the East'."¹²

This still left it uncertain who, if anyone, the British Empire should help. And actual policies don't even look intelligently amoral, in the light of later events. With the most intensely White Racist empire, Upper London undermined the racial hierarchy when they helped Japan humiliate Russia in their 1904-5 war. There may be a connection with the 1903-4 invasion of Tibet, a territory under loose Chinese rule that they thought could be added to make British India more secure. Selfish imperialism might have been better served by letting China be partitioned, which Germany was keen on, and by keeping Japan weak.

Upper London played a weak hand rather badly. Did not expect the length and destructiveness of the war that actually happened, but decided to stick with it anyway. They hoped to cripple Imperial Germany by giving France and Russia territories they wanted in Europe. Upper London secretly planned the Great War on just that basis.¹³

Note that Istanbul / Constantinople is in Europe, though the modern city has an extension into Anatolia. It and Eastern Thrace are the heritage of an Ottoman Turk expansion that took over from the older Seljuk Turk expansion into Anatolia. Tsarist Russia also wanted to give a chunk of Anatolia to the Armenians, who were claiming a Greater Armenia over territories where other mostly-Muslim peoples were the majority.

The British Empire had helped

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Prussian_War#Aftermath

¹³ <https://drpatwalsh.com/2015/01/23/lord-hankey-how-we-planned-the-great-war/> and <https://drpatwalsh.com/category/britains-great-war/>.

¹⁰ <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/m-articles-by-topic/52-usa/both-sides-were-racist-in-the-us-civil-war/>

¹¹ <https://labouraffairs.com/2024/07/06/britains-immoral-foreign-policy/>

save the Ottoman Empire when it might have been conveniently partitioned, as Poland had been partitioned at the end of the 18th century. But in World War One, they picked a quarrel with the Ottoman Empire, which had been reforming itself and tried to be friendly to Upper London.

Securing Palestine for Zionism was not a motive in 1914. That came later, when the war had bogged down.¹⁴

The promise of 'Tsargrad', Constantinople, was the motivation for Tsarist Russia to undertake a risky war against Imperial Germany. They anyway wanted to continue its long series of wars against the Ottomans. Wars that had reclaimed what's now Eastern Ukraine: a place settled by a mix of Ukrainians and Russians. And took over Crimea, which had been the base for Muslim slave raiders who had made much of that territory uninhabitable.

In the 1870s, when Russia seemed the main rival, Jingoism had included the refrain:

We've fought the Bear before,
and while we're Britons true,
The Russians shall not have
Constantinople!

But the public were conveniently shifted to the new viewpoint. Much like the sheep in *Animal Farm*, and much of what Orwell condemns was as much British as Soviet. A point Orwell himself evaded, having never entirely lost the imperial outlook that had led him to volunteer for the paramilitary police in what was then British Burma.

That wasn't the only shift. Upper London decided well before 1914 that wars in Europe could be waged against the entire population. It had never stopped happening in the wider world beyond Europe, viewed as

inhabited by inferior races unfit to govern themselves. People they genuinely supposed they were being kind to, even if the conquest itself was brutal. Or so viewed unless Britons might clear away the inferiors and farm the land itself, driving out or killing the natives. But for Europe, home of the superior White Race, things were supposed to be different.

Blockading a city and starving it out is probably as old as cities themselves. But for a wider region that normally fed itself, blockade could only hamper commerce. Sadly, both Britain and Germany became dependent on imported food when they industrialised. When the population grew massively.

It was Upper London, the rulers of the British Empire, who decided to apply starvation against whole countries rather than just a city. Eamon Dyas has done a series of books detailing just how this was done.¹⁵ And done subtly, so that a policy aimed at attacking the ordinary citizens of the enemy country was not seen as such by most of the British public.

The issue became unclear because Germany in both world wars used its submarines as a counter. Those submarines were re-labelled U-boats by British media: it made them seem even more foreign than they were. In the same spirit, the German Emperor was re-labelled Kaiser, and the German Realm renamed the Reich. Part of clever control of public opinion.

The British public saw only that Germany was trying to starve them, and sinking non-military vessels. It was overlooked that it only happened so because no merchant ship would challenge even a small surface warship.

Few Britons actually died as a result of the incomplete German blockade.

Vast numbers of Germans and other continental Europeans died because of the vastly more effective British blockade.

The Necessity of a Mixed Economy

I speak of Upper London. It is not physically upper, obviously. But it dominates socially. We suffered from the wars it started, though far less than Jews or Russians or Germans or many other peoples.

Britons were guilty – but not my sort of Britons. Not left-wing Britons, obviously. But also few in my social and cultural group. Technical and academic, and in my working life as a computer analyst I was part of a broader category of skilled workers who are often labelled middle class. They had to be tricked into an enthusiasm for wars they gained nothing from.

And it got worse under Thatcher, and her Tory and Labour heirs.

Upper London used to be a genuine ruling class. It took responsibility for the entire society, and felt that the 'lower orders' should be comfortable in their lesser lives. In the mid-19th century, it was Tories who did much of the basic welfare. This shifted, with the Liberals doing most of the social

Reform could not have been avoided. Industrialisation produced appalling conditions in British cities. Engels reported this to other Germans in an 1845 book, and probably influenced how industry was allowed to develop in Germany.

When an English translation was prepared decades later, Engels said:

"The state of things described in this book belongs to-day, in many respects, to the past, as far as England is concerned. Though not expressly stated in our recognised treatises, it

¹⁴ <https://drpatwalsh.com/2023/11/14/britain-the-destruction-of-the-ottoman-state-and-zionism/>

¹⁵ https://www.atholbooks-sales.org/searches/authorsearch_begin.php

is still a law of modern Political Economy that the larger the scale on which capitalistic production is carried on, the less can it support the petty devices of swindling and pilfering which characterise its early stages.

"Again, the repeated visitations of cholera, typhus, small-pox and other epidemics have shown the British bourgeois the urgent necessity of sanitation in his towns and cities, if he wishes to save himself and family from falling victims to such diseases. Accordingly, the most crying abuses described in this book have either disappeared or have been made less conspicuous.

"But while England has thus outgrown the juvenile state of capitalist exploitation described by me, other countries have only just attained it. France, Germany and especially America, are the formidable competitors who, at this moment – as foreseen by me in 1844 – are more and more breaking up England's industrial monopoly. Their manufactures are young as compared with those of England, but increasing at a far more rapid rate than the latter; and, curious enough, they have at this moment arrived at about the same phase of development as English manufacture in 1844."¹⁶

I don't think Engels was entirely right on this. Germany was indeed overtaking Britain, but it was in part doing so with an early version of the Mixed Economy. It had never let capitalism rampage in the way that Britain did. It preserved mediaeval Guilds, rather than rooting them out as Britain's rulers did.

As I explained earlier, the British Empire supported the French-Russian war against Germany because German industry was advancing in global trade.

Germany gets unfairly blamed

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Condition_of_the_Working_Class_in_England#English_editions

for the First World War, which began because Serbia wanted to take Bosnia away from Austria-Hungary. And more widely, because France wanted territory with a German-speaking majority, while Russia was keen to grab Constantinople and chunks of Anatolia.

The entire structure of global imperialism was damaged by the war lasting as long as it did. Both Bolshevism and various versions of fascism emerged as major forces, which was against previous trends.

It was also the victorious powers that made a political settlement that made a second World War almost unavoidable.

And they made a mess of the economy. Opposition by liberals to economic controls caused a 1930s slump much bigger than any previous slump. Liberal Europe failed to find a cure before the Second World War forced

them to expand the spending and power of the state. A process the Neo-liberals have tried to reverse, but not genuinely reversed.

Germany has remade its political traditions. The USA, Britain, and France never did, even though Britain and France gradually gave up their undemocratic empires and switched to the US pattern of indirect control and the occasional invasion. They expanded the same follies after the Soviet collapse, believing that pre-1914 capitalism had been correct all along.

But it has proved impossible to get back even to the Classical Capitalism that existed in the 1920s. What we have is a twisted version of the Mixed Economy. And a global Overclass that lacks the power to be a ruling class, but twists politics for its own selfish advantage.

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of state back in February and previously served as the top Asia official on President Biden's National Security Council.

To say that China poses the most significant challenge ever to a nation that has fought in two world wars and spent decades waging a world-threatening cold war says a lot about where these empire goons see things headed in the coming years.

In July the highest ranking US military officer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Q. Brown, said he was "fully confident" that the US would win a war with China over Taiwan,⁹ saying, "These will be major conflicts akin to what we saw in WWII, and so we've got to come to grips with that."

No one is more dangerous than warmongers who believe they can win an unwinnable war.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that the US empire is not run by rational actors is the way all facts show that a war with China could not be won¹⁰ and would destroy the economy and the ecosystem—and yet all facts also show they're preparing to wage this war anyway.

As we discussed recently,¹¹ Russia has already stated that it is prepared to join with China in a fight against western aggressions. The western power structure that is centralized around the United States is preparing to wage a global war against multiple nuclear-armed states. Revolution is becoming a matter of existential urgency for our entire species.

⁹ <https://news.antiwar.com/2024/07/25/top-us-general-fully-confident-the-us-would-beat-china-in-a-war-over-taiwan/>

¹⁰ https://original.antiwar.com/Megan_Russell/2024/08/14/the-us-is-preparing-for-an-unwinnable-war-against-china/

¹¹ <https://www.caitlinjohnst.one/p/genocide-in-the-foreground-world>

Europe Prepares For Hot War With Russia, US Readies For Hot War With China

By Caitlin Johnstone

Multiple empire managers have made separate public statements around the same time which, taken together, serve as a disturbing reminder of the dark things our rulers have planned for our future.

The US Navy chief has unveiled a plan to be ready for hot war with China by 2027 while the US deputy secretary of state calls China the “most significant challenge” the US has ever faced in its entire history, at the same time the EU’s defense chief says Europe must prepare to fight a hot war with Russia in the next few years.

In an article titled “EU’s Defense Chief Says Europe Must Be Ready To Fight Russia in 6–8 Years,”¹ Antiwar’s Dave DeCamp writes the following:

Andrius Kubilius, a former Lithuanian prime minister and the EU’s first defense commissioner, has said Europe must be ready to fight Russia within 6–8 years.²

“Defense ministers and NATO generals agree that Vladimir Putin could be ready for confrontation with NATO and the EU in 6–8 years,” Kubilius told *Reuters*.

“If we take these assessments seriously, then that is the time for us to properly prepare, and it is a short one. This means we have to take quick decisions, and ambitious decisions,” he added.

These comments come not long after we learned that NATO is developing multiple “land corridors” to rush troops to the frontline of a future hot war with

Russia in eastern Europe,³ while amassing hundreds of thousands of troops in preparation for such a conflict.

In another article titled “US Navy Chief Unveils Plan To Be Ready for War With China By 2027,”⁴ DeCamp writes:

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the highest ranking officer in the US Navy, unveiled a plan on Wednesday to be ready for a war with China by 2027 as the US military is preparing for a direct fight with Beijing despite the risk of nuclear war.⁵

The plan lays out goals to be reached by 2027, including making 80% of the naval force ready for combat deployments on short notice. Franchetti told *The Associated Press* she wants to increase combat readiness so “if the nation calls us, we can push the ‘go’ button, and we can surge our forces to be able to meet the call.”

DeCamp notes that while Franchetti says the US is preparing for war with China by 2027 because that is “the year that that President Xi told his forces to be ready to invade Taiwan,” we’ve never actually seen any evidence that this is the case. This widely repeated claim entered the mainstream narrative solely based on unsubstantiated assertions from the US intelligence cartel, not from any known statements by Xi Jinping himself.

As a side note, Franchetti is

the same official we discussed back in July⁶ who said that the AUKUS military alliance (which is geared toward roping Australia into a future US-driven military confrontation with China)⁷ will remain in place no matter who wins the presidential election. The fact that US warmongering will continue no matter who wins the presidential race is obvious to anyone who’s been paying attention, but it was very interesting to see a manager of the US war machine make such a frank admission in public.

Finally, in an article titled “Deputy Secretary of State: China Is the ‘Most Significant Challenge’ in US History,” DeCamp writes the following:

Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said on Wednesday that China is the “most significant challenge” the United States has ever faced.⁸

“There is a recognition that this is the most significant challenge in our history,” Campbell told the House Foreign Affairs Committee, according to *AFP*. “Frankly, the Cold War pales in comparison to the multifaceted challenges that China presents.”

Campbell is a long-time China hawk and has been pushing for more of a focus on the Asia Pacific since the Obama administration and is considered the architect of the so-called “Asia pivot.” He was confirmed as the deputy secretary

1 <https://news.antiwar.com/2024/09/19/eus-defense-official-says-europe-must-be-ready-to-fight-russia-in-6-8-years/>

2 <https://archive.vn/qMYL2>

3 <https://caitlinjohnstone.com.au/2024/06/18/the-us-is-preparing-for-wwiii-while-expanding-draft-registration/>

4 <https://news.antiwar.com/2024/09/18/us-navy-chief-unveils-plan-to-be-ready-for-war-with-china-by-2027/>

5 <https://apnews.com/article/navy-china-lessons-ukraine-houthis-327713f10c-4556467c14c0989f2a4e97>

6 <https://caitlinjohnstone.com.au/2024/07/26/us-presidential-races-hide-the-criminality-of-the-us-empire/>

7 <https://caitlinjohnstone.com.au/2023/08/29/only-idiots-believe-the-us-is-protecting-australia-from-china/>

8 <https://www.barrons.com/news/china-the-top-challenge-in-us-history-top-diplomat-says-988b0f50>

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