

Essays on Imperialism and War

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2016- 2019

Chilcot and the Lie that Won't Die!

In January 1991 a US led coalition began carpet bombing Iraq. The latter's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait was, they said, the perfect cause, since all nations agree the aggressor must be repelled.

Dropping more tonnage in less than a month than was dropped by all powers combined in World War II, they massacred a large part of Iraq's conscript army and destroyed much of the infrastructure of the country. Coalition casualties were fewer than would have been expected in comparable military exercises outside of war.

Iraq's surrender did not end the 'war'. This 'aggressive' regional 'superpower' had to be 'contained'. Having used them against the Iraqis the 'allies' decided that weapons of mass destruction would be the new 'cause'. After all, this too is a 'principle' on which we all 'agree'.

While the coalition powers increased their arms sales to Iraq's neighbours, in violation of their own UN resolutions, Iraq's defences were dismantled and sanctions were imposed which were so wide ranging Iraq could no longer adequately feed or care for its people. During this twelve year period the combined effects of continual illegal bombing raids using intelligence supplied by 'weapons inspectors' and the 'United Nations' sanctions killed more than a million people with others dying slowly from the effects of the depleted uranium released into the atmosphere by allied bombs, tanks and shells.

The media in the allied countries reported a story of Iraqi 'intransigence'. In the war on 'Saddam', Iraq was rarely if ever referred to by its name or treated as a nation. In 2003 the invasion finally came. The warnings of some establishment figures that 'regime change' would unleash sectarian violence across the region came true and the WMDs were not found. The terrible lie - that the 'war' was about weapons of mass destruction - would be sustained now by the only narrative left ... the narrative of the 'mistake'.

With the publication on the 6th July of the Chilcot Report, the lie began the final stage of its journey to becoming official 'truth'. The war makers knew what objectives were being served by the terrorism inflicted on another poor country. Supported by historical precedent, the 'evidence' is substantial and easy to interpret; the opening of new 'markets', the reinforcing of outside political control.

Since they were not the reason for the war, it didn't matter what anyone believed or was told about WMD. And as the war makers had sought the disintegration of Iraq, why would it matter to them what happened after. We can assume that people who know they've made a 'mistake' try not to repeat it. After Libya and in light of the ongoing pursuit of regime change in Syria, we can assume that, like the WMD, the narrative of the 'mistake' doesn't actually need to be 'believed'.

8th July 2016

Infantile Disorder? Why the Left Must Let Go of Trump!

Most Americans who voted for Donald Trump are Republicans. On average they are richer than those who voted for Clinton and better off than the average American by \$17,000 per annum. Mostly, they are pro business, pro war and hostile to civil rights. According to a Huffington Post poll conducted at the end of 2016, a great majority believe racial minorities are advantaged over the white folks they see as 'ordinary' Americans.

In failing to empathise with the struggles of others they are rather detached from the idea of 'the people' and certainly from the concept of society and the idea that we must unite to change it. In fact they are rather if not exactly like those who voted for George Bush.

In its rise to 'orthodoxy', the 'alternative fact' that Trump is an outsider, a man of the people challenging the establishment has been assisted by the left. In what seems to have been the strategy of the left for eternity ... building a progressive 'consensus' ... we find the terrible delusion that sows the seeds of betrayal; that a 'decent' politics exists to which we can speak. In this, we fuel the real consensus, that no alternative exists to capitalism, at least not on the left. In legitimising the mother of all 'alternative facts' ... the idea of a benevolent social democracy under 'threat' ... the left repeatedly abandons its prime directive to challenge the ideological deceptions of western 'democracy'.

Left populism is marked by the fear driven idea that before we fight capitalism we must first secure the benefits of the system against 'fascism'. The motives are noble. It is entirely reasonable to seek to defend rights won often through struggle. It is natural to fear for the fate of the most vulnerable when the system appears to veer towards its extremes. Yet, if we never manage to reach beyond the limited posture imposed on us by the requirement to 'defend' what we have been allowed, are we really moving forward?

With the election of Jeremy Corbyn, many on the left have been persuaded to return to supporting a Labour Party detested by its traditional working class supporters of all

paces and entrenched in its support for the global project. The progressive alliance built around Corbynism has fuelled the further rightward drift by Greens, Trades Unionists, equality activists and even some on the 'far left' into the embrace of liberal identity politics and support for the free market European Union. Joining the 'Stop Trump' bandwagon, an idea driven by a startling extension of the regime change narrative to 'home', does nothing other than fuel the impression that we have no values and nothing to offer, beyond whatever is necessary to get rid of the 'bogeyman'. It matters less that left opposition is ignored by mainstream media than it matters when we are too easily misrepresented and mistaken by workers for the Clinton hugging establishment.

Trump's travel ban is not anti Muslim. Nor is it illegal. It is an extension of an existing policy aimed at destabilising poor countries earmarked for regime change. Neither as a policy for controlling 'immigration' or 'stopping terror' does the travel ban stack up. As an expression of the long standing policy of global financial hegemony, imposed by force, it makes perfect sense.

Adopting the fake memes of liberal capitalism, in particular the 'free movement', 'diversity' and 'tolerance' cosmetic used to promote the new financial colonialism, suggests we are forgetting once again our mission to unite with those millions around the world who are actively resisting the desecration of their communities by the multi national corpocracy. We must regain our self belief and the confidence to challenge the hegemonic ideology of the open market. We must reclaim our natural territory, the land of real politics where the reasons why people are poor or persecuted are understood. This means recognising and addressing the pervasive condition that has given birth to Trump, Farage and Le Pen; the pain inflicted on ordinary people by the neo liberal 'global' idea. If we submerge the issues in favour of talking 'Trump', playing to the idea that he is different instead of focusing on what is most dangerous, the direction of policy which is the same, we risk being perceived as nothing more than quislings.

7th February 2017

RED LINE! Imperialists Must NOT Take Syria.

'We are here faced by fascists ... and what we know about fascists is that they need to be defeated'. So declared Shadow Foreign Secretary, Hilary Benn, in December 2015. On this occasion it wasn't Syria or its government he was accusing but their 'Daesh' enemies. And when he cited article 51 of the UN Charter, the right to self defence, again he wasn't talking about Syria but 'our' right to defend ourselves from this 'deadly threat'.

If the concept of 'self defence' is different under 'democracy' from everywhere else so too the perception of 'great' oratory. In our Parliament great speeches are made not by those ashamed of war or shocked by its lies but by those for whom the ability to subjugate others is a source of pride. We should not get sidetracked by questions over whether Wednesday's sarin attack in Idlib was a false flag. Only one reason truly explains why they didn't wait for proof of the crime or the perpetrator; they don't care who did it! The focus of our attention should always be the familiar journey itself, well trodden historically with consequences for the people of the target countries which are equally predictable.

Like all US Presidents, and for that matter British Prime Ministers, Donald Trump is a 'war criminal'. No investigation is needed, they don't deny what they have done. According to the NGO 'Airwars', since his inauguration Trump has stepped up US attacks in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. Last month coalition airstrikes killed one thousand civilians, including, only a fortnight before Idlib, two hundred in Mosul with schools, hospitals and a mosque among the collateral damage.

The new President has made it clear he has no problem with war crimes. He would authorise torture and assassination and kill the families of suspected terrorists. If the fate of entire nations, most recently Libya, can be sealed without a ripple in the public conscience, no 'line' exists for the leaders of the 'free world'. So long as we see others as servants of our 'interests', the unverified atrocity stories that often precede our leaders attacks on sovereign states, including the Iraqi babies in incubators, the now discredited 'ethnic cleansing' of Milosevic, the 'genocide' that didn't happen in Kosovo and the 'massacres' being 'planned' by Gaddafi will do nothing more than 'confirm' our 'responsibility' to direct the lives of others.

When the US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, flourished photographs of Idlib's dead babies before telling the Security Council America had a right to 'respond' she knew the US is dropping white phosphorous on these countries as well as the depleted uranium with which in 1991 it poisoned the population of southern Iraq. Since she doesn't recognise 'subject' nations as 'sovereign', the people never acquire the right to be protected from 'us'. In June 2007, the former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Wesley Clark told 'Democracy Now' that the US has a list of seven countries to 'take out' among them Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran. Inside those countries, he said, it was actively fuelling, supporting and arming opposition groups.

Since the end of the Soviet Union, Russia and China have acquiesced at the UN in the desecration by NATO powers of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya as well as in numerous interventions and coups. The Western sponsored overthrow of an elected government in Ukraine may well have been the cause that ended Russia's policy of

appeasement. If, in Russia's defence of Syria, we might have hoped for an end to the Western programme of destabilisation and war and the refugee horrors it spawned, we got another false flag.

As in Libya, and as happened on Thursday, the 'coalition' will escalate at the merest suspicion that the war might be ended or government control restored. If they don't stop now, when Syria has the powerful support Iraq and Libya never got, it suggests they will never stop. This is the red line. If you haven't raged before, you must do so now. Syria must survive!

8th April 2017

For the Moneyed Not the Many: Labour's Real Manifesto

Usually people want justice and a fairer society. At present some of those people are feeling inspired. We have an opportunity to change Britain they say, if we could only unite behind a 'radical' 'New' Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn. Unite, in fact, behind its 2017 general election manifesto. Who wouldn't in today's harsh world feel a little excited at the prospect of a government that will roll back austerity, improve the quality of public services, place 'human rights' at the centre of its foreign policy and defend hard won social benefits and political rights?

No. Those on the radical left who are drifting again towards Labour are repeating the worst of our interminable mistakes; the result, empowering the pro capitalist 'consensus', is predictable and sets the wider struggle for a just world back beyond where we started. In our view, those following the Labour lead need to face the true nature of the 'hope' they have embraced. Offering no formula for the redistribution of economic wealth or political power, Labour's 2017 manifesto is a slick but transparent re-statement of the post 1945 ideology of the political class. None of the mainstream parties wants to enforce the dominance of either the private or the state sector over the other which means none favours fundamental change. They differ in how social or liberal or free they might like it to be, but none is interested in replacing capitalism's successful 'social' model (social democracy) with anything else.

According to its manifesto Labour 'understands that the creation of wealth is a collective endeavour between workers, entrepreneurs, investors and government'. In contrast, socialists understand that under capitalism governance is subordinated to the interests of the corporations and individuals who control resources. The effect of political change, while it can be worthwhile for a few, is largely cosmetic with no impact on the nature of the prevailing order. Labour's promise to the workers is not the fruits of their labour but 'partnership', the benefits of what it calls 'civil society'.

Under Corbyn's Labour, the 'power of finance' will be 'turned' by honest and open government to the 'public good', the citizen shaping 'the kinds of high streets, homes and amenities' he wants. This isn't the principle of universality, according to our needs: this is 'fair' competition under the protection of Labour's 'responsible economic management'.

It is in the arena of international affairs where dissent from the natural order is most dangerous. And it is here where Labour's record is most damning. In 'support' of 'global and regional security' Labour's partners will be NATO, the UN and EU 'allies'. Its promise of a foreign policy 'guided by the values of peace, universal rights and international law' recalls Blair's 1997 'ethical' foreign policy which promoted western 'interventionism'.

While invariably it shouts its commitment to overseas aid and 'development', Labour is nowhere near conceding even a little of the principle of equality with western powers for other sovereign states. As is the case with all its foreign policy manifestos, Labour's 'values' driven approach is code for the coercion of poor countries by powerful super states and global 'coalitions'. Committed to spending 2% of GDP on 'defence' and to maintaining our nuclear 'deterrent', Labour will beef up the armed forces for deployment in 'a range of roles'.

It's hard not to feel a little flutter at the prospect of a government that 'embraces ... the good that government can do' promises 'fairer corporate governance' and 'vigorous action against tax avoidance' as well as 'a new deal for ordinary working people'. Who wouldn't support a foreign policy based on 'an international order in which rules govern state conduct ... in a principled way'?

Welcome to 'Forward Together', the manifesto of the Conservative Party!

On behalf of the SLP National Executive Committee

24th July 2017

Salisbury: What is Really Going On?

In 2001, one week after the September 11 attacks on the US, five people in the United States died after coming into contact with letters containing anthrax spores. After an investigation spanning seven years, during which it resisted political pressure to 'find' a Middle Eastern link, the FBI identified a prime suspect. He was a top US biodefense researcher. Following his suicide, the FBI closed its file concluding he had mental health issues and had acted alone.

In no sense does an attempted political assassination, if that is what happened in Salisbury on 4th March, explain the narrative of Russian 'evil' dominating the corporate news media.

The UK is not opposed to political assassinations. It has a 'list' of people, including its own citizens, earmarked for 'targeted killing' by drone. It has connived in the murder of political leaders including Heads of State. It has supplied chemical agents used in assassinations. It refuses to condemn assassinations by allies.

The UK does not accept the principle of sovereignty. Since World War II it has 'intervened' violently in the affairs of other countries more than one hundred times. All these wars, waged from distance against poorer or weaker 'enemies', have been *attacks* on the principle of sovereignty. From Malaya, Kenya and Aden in the fifties to Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya today, military campaigns by superpowers like Britain are defined by suffering concentrated almost entirely among the indigenous people. Here, constant bloody wars against distant countries are accepted casually, if noticed at all, by a population 'primed' to believe in the exceptionalism of the British state.

The UK does not accept the principle of state accountability for political crimes. No UK Prime Minister has ever been held accountable to the international community for crimes committed in wars invariably unconnected to the defence of British territory or sovereignty. While Britain has armed, directed and supported numerous coups, terror campaigns and uprisings, the only leader doing time here for aiding an armed insurrection is an African, former Liberian President, Charles Taylor. If we were Pakistan, more than a thousand of whose citizens have been assassinated by the US outside the theatre of war, our outrage would be utterly pointless.

The media narrative that we are 'under attack' is not about the victims in Salisbury for whom justice, as in the anthrax case, can result only from an honest judicial process. We are once again being 'primed' to view the role of Britain in conflicts around the world as a 'benign' and disinterested response to the wickedness of others.

Almost daily, fabricated, exaggerated or misrepresented stories about Russia are afforded inexplicable airtime, played as 'evidence' of the unnatural or crazed nature of its 'regime' or society. The misuse of global institutions to punish or sanction Russia recalls the 'legal' torture inflicted on Iraq during the twelve years prior to invasion. In the targeting of a strong, rival power, we are hearing worrying echoes of the build up to recent wars of 'regime change' in Libya and Syria.

That they can fume, without irony, over a few Russian hackers and one small TV outlet 'interfering' in the political affairs of other countries, suggests it is here, not Russia, where the ability to identify propaganda has all but ceased to exist.

As 'reward' for its role in 'exposing' Russia as the 'source' of the Salisbury nerve agent, Porton Down, Britain's own secret chemical and biological weapons research centre will receive an extra £48 million in funding. This too was reported by our media without irony. Unlike the VX which poisoned Kim Jong Nam, the scientists at Porton Down have 'confirmed' that the weapon involved here is definitely not one of 'ours'.

It is not Russian 'responsibility' for a crime in Salisbury that is being denied. It is the directing role in conflict around the world of Britain and its NATO allies.

On behalf of the SLP National Executive Committee

18th March 2018

Back to Basics! There is No Left Case for the European Union

The announcement this week of the creation by Corbyn sympathisers of 'Left Against Brexit' is a salutary reminder of the dark places we come to inhabit when we are invited to lunch at the table of power.

There is nothing new in the arguments of so called left defenders of the European Union. The world inhabited by reformers is framed for them by the narratives of the powerful. 'Left' globalists believe the Brexit debate is what the capitalist media says it is: a struggle between a 'progressive' internationalist left and a 'nationalist' hard right. Having long since abandoned the class struggle, they are frightened too by any open expression of working class identity which they've placed in the 'bad' box marked 'xenophobia'.

When we choose to enter the world of the 'mainstream', very quickly we begin to imagine that the thoughts and interests of the privileged class or group are in fact our own. Once we accept a controlling narrative, in this case the narrative that all meaningful political discourse revolves around a conflict between the conservative and liberal wings of capitalism, then rather than being 'relevant' we are no longer engaged at all.

There was a time when people of the left understood that under capitalism nationalism is the tool of a ruling elite whose interests are always and only economic; never did the 'outmoded' old left view any section of the ruling class as driven by a national interest. Equally, empire was understood as a vehicle for the plunder of

foreign markets. The old left would have viewed UKIP as it is, the party of the small business class, not, as it is viewed by liberals, as a party of outdated 'nationalism'. Speaking for the 'old' commerce against a new 'cultural' elite lured by the possibilities of multinational agency, UKIP's cause is not national identity; it is a supranational NATO lead in the old style by the USA. Equally, Donald Trump does not aspire to a financially independent USA. In common with his liberal rivals he views the USA as a financial empire for which reason his foreign policy follows theirs, threatening wars against Syria, Iran, Korea even China and Russia. Whether coming from 'left' or 'right', none of the 'official' arguments heard during the EU referendum campaign was founded on the defence of any greater good, whether national or international: all were marshalled in support of a privileged minority by people sharing a common set of values.

In its borderless market, the EU is the dream of the strong, bonded through NATO to the multi theatre warfare, both economic and military, that is necessary to protect and expand its access to the resources of national communities; no formula exists whereby it can be directed politically to act contrary to its economic imperative.

Obsessed with fighting the rightist 'conspiracy' to use Brexit to turn back the clock, the Corbyn movement has chosen the battleground of the rich over the cause of the people. 'Left Against Brexit' is the 'Empire Socialism' of today, recalling the early twentieth century Fabian idea that the 'left' could 'turn' the British Empire to the common economic good. In practice it meant Labour support for the suppression of 'backward', native liberation movements. The belief on the pro Labour left that 'we' must 'unite' against 'xenophobia' is today's manifestation of what Marx called false consciousness; the politics conditioned by money which leads us to view our enemies as our friends.

So long as the GNP of nations is tied to corporate financial power, globalism, not patriotism, will be the refuge of today's scoundrels. They will tell us that economic 'integration' will promote personal rights and opportunity: in fact, where he is a consumer rather than a producer, the individual has no identity beyond his usefulness as an accumulator of goods that have no collective worth. They will tell us it will extend political rights: when, ultimately, all national life is ruled by money interests, it won't matter whether 'progressives' win elections or whether they rule from Brussels or Washington; all avenues to real political change will be closed.

Since the de-regulation of banking says philosopher Peter Wilberg 'the class struggle has become an essentially national struggle of all peoples against ... the dominance of international finance capital and its puppet politicians'. Indeed, the potential of nations, representing communal living spaces, to override the control of the

commodity market was noted in the programme of the Russian Social Democrats as long ago as 1903.

The struggle between old 'nationalism' and new 'multiculturalism' is fake; no matter who 'wins', we end up in the same place, entrenched in the idea that capitalism is the only possibility. The tired politics of left 'progressivism', the taking of sides with one enemy of the people against another is the real dead end; the 'left' it has spawned sneers at the working class and feels entitled to brand as 'reactionary' oppressed nations or their leaders.

Yes, we need a re-aligned left, not resting comfortably in the echo chamber of the new 'liberal' elite but pitted firmly against its fraudulent, self serving rhetoric. As an active agency of 'business without borders', the EU cannot become an instrument of 'social change' except in the minds of those who have moved beyond the struggle to replace capitalism.

Socialist Labour rejects the world 'order' built by finance capital. There is no 'nationalism' for the left to fight, only models of empire. We call upon anti imperialist groups and those concerned with peace and social justice to join us in building a new, honest narrative on the EU and globalization. The territory of the left, and only the left, this great cause must begin as it did in the struggles against slavery and colonialism, with a vigorous defence of national self determination.

5th June 2018

Brothers in Arms: the EU and NATO

Among the native population of the US and Canada rates of suicide are so high, especially among the young, the community experiences what Ron Hutchcraft called 'serial grieving'. In Australia 95% of Aboriginals are directly affected by suicide; aborigines, among whom suicide was at one time so rare there is no word for it in their language, are six times more likely than White Australians to commit suicide; 80% of youth suicides are aboriginal. According to Jack Hicks the 'suicide transition' in these countries mirrors – roughly one generation later – the processes of 'active colonialism at the community level'.

In Alaska in the sixties, Greenland in the seventies, and Canada in the eighties, like the mining and steel communities here, the traditional fishing based industries on which the economy was built were undermined. Native peoples whose cultures developed over centuries have become strangers in their own land, not accounted by their fellow citizens as part of a collective space; what has been taken from them is the core component of human relations, home and a sense of belonging. Inuit are not the victims of environmental change, acts of nature or people moving; we have

always had those, but of an ideology grown from the tree of industrial capitalism; exceptionalism.

Assuming their responsibility to expand and to intervene in the lives of the unexceptional, exceptionalism is the everyday thinking framework of European based elites; subverting the principle of peaceful co existence, it is the single greatest obstacle in the world today to justice in the distribution of resources and life chances. The reality for those whose self determination is subverted ... loss of influence over the terms on which they live ... has been idealised historically in Eurocentric states as internationalism; a necessary progression for humanity, the bringing of technology, Christianity, western values, freedoms to people whose existence and culture is, in the very terminology of nation building, denied.

Today, dressed to suit our modern sensibilities, what Ramsay MacDonald called this 'worthy' ambition, is portrayed as openness, an interest in the lives of others, its ideal, the gift to humanity of a diverse and tolerant society; in this brave new world it doesn't matter what or who we are, for the wealthy it matters only what they want to be; the modern world is moulded for elite people to live their dreams.

It was never intended that the fine ideals of the UN Charter would be applied to their creators; the goals of global elitism are fully realized today in a world governed as a unipolar order but guaranteed by the military power of NATO. The Warsaw Pact was formed in May 1955, after NATO, signaling its true objectives, admitted into membership West Germany instead of the USSR; given its true direction, the end of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 produced no shift in NATO's thinking or policy. The 'maintaining peace in Europe' role with which NATO announced its creation in 1949 was repeated almost verbatim two years later in the Treaty of Paris which became the European Union.

Since 1991, without the USSR, NATO powers have intensified their nation 'building'; in Bosnia and Kosovo NATO funded armed insurrections breaking up the only genuinely non aligned sovereign state in Europe, Yugoslavia. Iraq, a nation bombed, disarmed, starved and vilified for a decade was finished off by a full scale invasion by NATO states and their 'allies'; the invasion of Afghanistan was followed by the destabilization of Libya and Syria through the familiar combination of mass bombing and the funding and arming of insurgencies. In the Ukraine another democratically elected leader was overthrown in a western orchestrated coup sparking a civil war in the east of the country. Currently NATO powers are waging proxy wars in Yemen and the Sudan and through political, economic or military pressure laying the groundwork for the subjugation of Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela and Iran. The victims are alike in one respect only; through maintaining some level of national control of their

economies, they act outside the parameters of the post war order constructed by 'great' powers.

In its objective to create a single market for goods, services and labour, a customs union and common policies on agriculture, transport and social welfare, the Treaty of Rome mirrors economically the military goals of NATO. Described in its constitution as an 'essential partner ... sharing common values' twenty two nations combine their membership of the EU with membership of NATO; the six non NATO members are included in all NATO-EU consultations and understandings including the 2002 European Security and Defence Policy which gives EU nations 'assured access' to NATO for military operations. On 8 July 2016 NATO and the EU agreed 'operational cooperation' on all core elements of foreign policy; migration, cyber security and defence.

The independence of Europe is as fake as the independence of the UK's nuclear deterrent. Inseparable as twin pillars of an imposed and therefore unaccountable world order, neither NATO or the EU can be redirected; as envisaged in the Maastricht treaty, the NATO powers of western Europe are the 'defence' component of the EU. In 2018, 95% of deaths in wars across the world, more than 100,000, have occurred in just four conflict zones, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen ... NATO's priority theatres. The leader of the NATO/EU/Western Alliance, the US, occupies just under 800 military bases in more than seventy countries across the world, used entirely to carry out attacks upon the territory of other sovereign states; in comparison the UK, France and Russia boast in total thirty bases.

No nation or empire in history, regardless of its ideology, has ever exhibited a fraction of this level of ambition or inflicted upon weaker nations a comparable brand of global destruction; certainly not China or Russia, far from it, both are becoming encircled by the US military. Brexit, wrote William Keegan in last week's Observer, is like being in the Premier League and wanting to be relegated; for elite people open borders is not about fellowship but status, the right of leadership in international affairs.

The illusion that European institutions, emerged in the poisonous idea of entitlement, can be a force for good is destroying the ability of left leaning people to reach beyond this monolithic system to find a different dream. When the principle governing our lives is the service of a market without borders all ideas are overwhelmed by the financial interests that market creates; economic and military policy is fused in the service of those interests, with no capacity to serve the needs of the people. Limited in what we as socialists can achieve, rarely do opportunities arise for the power of that market to be disrupted; the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union is such an opportunity

Speech to 'Leave Now' Conference

Priory Rooms, Birmingham 27th October 2018

We Must Never Abandon Palestine!

On Friday 20th July 2018, a day after its parliament declared the supremacy of Jews in Palestine, and five months after its soldiers killed more than a hundred protesting civilians on the border, Israel launched another mass bombing of Gaza.

No matter what it says, Israel does not face the prospect of annihilation. Unlike Iraq, Libya or Syria, no great power, coveting its resources, is threatening the destruction of its civil society. Its opponents are not outside actors who cannot be called to account but 'enemies' from within whose aspirations are rudimentary. Naturally its excesses are criticised - this confers on Israel the status it seeks - but, unlike Syria, Israel has a voice, Israel is forgiven, Israel is 'understood'.

The elevated status of the Israeli state as an 'entitled' power, equivalent to its allies in the West, is the core reason peace across the territory, and the possibility of co-existence, is denied to those who live there.

Palestinian self-determination remains, for many outside the corridors of global power, their cause. For millions - and if we dig deep for all of us - the 'standard' is not 'exceptional' but very ordinary, the protection of laws and rights which should apply to the poor as they do the rich.

23rd July 2018

Macedonia: a Lesson in EU 'Democracy'

In agreeing yesterday, as a pre-condition of EU/NATO membership, to change its name, Macedonia's journey duplicates that of many small nations; for those of us living in the UK the process whereby the Macedonian people's belief in their right to own their national identity has resulted in an outcome predicated upon its opposite, is instructive.

In September 2018 Macedonia held a 'non-binding' referendum, in this case voting on whether to change name and join EU/NATO. While here our pro-EU politicians believed they would win the referendum, the Macedonians it appears did not fancy their chances. Aiming in true 'people's vote' style to fix the result by splitting the no-vote, they created a tariff; the vote would be invalid unless it reached a turnout of 50%. Hoping to get the unpopular measure through by default, with small numbers

of no voters taking the vote up to the threshold, the government was spurned, a 39% turnout handing victory to the no side.

Naturally the government decided the result did not 'mean' what it said. Having told the people before the referendum that an abstention would be regarded as a no vote it decided afterwards that an abstention was in fact a yes vote, in the sense that staying at home now conferred legitimacy on the massive yes delivered by those who turned out.

In a perfect illustration of how far the power of financial empires shifts the political narrative away from democracy, the broker of the Macedonian deal, the 'leftist' Greek PM, Tsipras - yes, the Tsipras elected on a mandate of defending the Greek people from EU imposed austerity – functioned in this case as the instrument of EU expansion.

Almost immediately after the 2016 UK referendum result, the political establishment, which regards all ideas in conflict with the West's right of expansionism as 'fascism', shifted to establish another Orwellian narrative, that some votes in the referendum were more equal than others.

No remainer, including left leaning sceptics who voted for an institution in which they do not believe, or those who voted on some other issue, to express solidarity with immigrants or to 'stop the Tories', or who believed scare stories put out by the remain side, or who think 'Europe' is defending us against the 'extremism' of everyone else was exposed to the idea that they didn't have the right to do what they did.

The appearance immediately after the vote of the concept of the 'soft' Brexit was the signal that leavers would be judged, and by a very different standard. While remain means remain, the Parliament that gave the people the decision will determine, in the manner of Macedonia, that what we meant by Brexit was really something else.

Unless we escape our slumber and rediscover the spirit of 2016, like the Greeks our democratic 'moment' will give way to its opposites; the new 'understanding' on which the second referendum will be predicated is not what the people want but what political power is willing to 'allow'.

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<https://nationalbolshevism.com/resources/>

