

## “POST-FACT” or the IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM?

*The rule of the capitalist minority is best served when it can provide the majority with improvements to their standard of living over time. When this is no longer possible the legitimacy of its rule is brought into question as is the case now. At least in the developed capitalist countries, whole sections of the working class have seen their standards of living decline, life become not only harder but more insecure while their hopes for the future are shattered. This growing disaffection has a material basis, the growing alienation and despair precipitated by globalisation and tax dodging by the 1% who are the principal beneficiaries of this development. Economic hardship for the majority has bred suspicion of experts and their facts together with scepticism of the official media. The liberal intelligentsia who seek to maintain their monopoly over the dissemination of these “facts”, patronisingly dismiss this rejection of their ideas as: “the triumph of personal opinions over facts”.*

*The relationship between subjective and objective reality was addressed by Marx and Engels a hundred and fifty years ago. They demolished the idealistic view of history and thought. Their new view, historical materialism, may be summed up as follows: “it is being that determines consciousness, not consciousness that determines being”. Simply put, a growing majority of society are rejecting the liberal intelligentsia because their being, in other words the condition of their daily lives, does not correspond to the reality described by the liberal media. It is this disconnect that confirms the accuracy of Marx and Engel’s understanding of how thought emerges. The fact that the despairing many may be reaching for solutions including religious solutions that harm their interests, is the subject of another discussion. This article deals with the transition from religion to idealism to materialism and the lessons this provides for the present day where communities are breaking down as economic blight sets in.*

### THE LEGACY OF MARX AND ENGELS.

The theories developed by these two intellectual giants extend beyond their critique of political economy. Notably it includes the transition from idealism to materialism. In other words, how the brain produces thought. These analyses and conclusions are to be found in several letters, articles, pamphlets and books either written jointly or independently, notably;

*The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism.  
Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right.  
Theses on Feuerbach  
The German Ideology  
The Peasant War in Germany  
Anti-Duhring  
Dialectics of Nature  
Socialism Utopian and Scientific.*

Religious thought had dominated society for millennia. In the words of Engels: “All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men’s minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.” (Anti-Duhring.) He goes on to say that these forces are supplemented with social forces as society develops congealing into a single universal god. Religion continued to dominate thought in societies based on agriculture.

The world was originally interpreted in an ideal way. The idea preceded matter. The idea shapes matter. God created the universe, its worlds and everything in it. With the emergence of civilisation,

philosophy tried to emerge from the chrysalis of religion, but though it occasionally developed remarkable wings it remained ensnared by the chrysalis, unable to shake free, unable to develop a grounded theory. The understandings philosophy developed of the world were partial even when it adopted an anti-religious tinge, especially against the established orthodoxy, often seen as thoroughly corrupted by earthly pleasures and vices.

The essential condition for eclipsing religious thought would be the emergence of the first industrial society in human history – capitalism – for only through industry, which is the systematic amplification of labour power through the control and application of natural forces (steam, electricity, internal combustion, pneumatics etc.) would mastery of nature be assured. No wonder therefore, that materialism first emerged in England, home to the industrial revolution which was to change (wo)mankind forever.

Marx and Engels did not invent materialism. Instead they freed materialism from the last vestiges of idealism, and gave it its final form, treating history as a practical question, the subject of unprejudiced investigation focussing on how and when (wo)man transform the world by their labour and how they are in turn transformed by their changing world. And finally, that recorded history is the history of the class struggle, itself a reflection of the development of the forces of production to which corresponds new classes together with new political, legal, cultural relations and superstructures. How later, the forces of production outgrow these relations and superstructures requiring their replacement by more advanced forms. This contradictory historical process only ends with the dissolution of classes, the pre-condition for which is the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

Hence thought does not have an independent existence. In short: there is no external truth, only the reality of existence, and just as there is no eternal truth, there is just changing reality. A person who today lives with running water, electric lighting, motorised transport, television and the internet thinks differently and acts differently to a peasant fetching water from the river, shitting in a hole, freezing in winter and making do with a flickering fire. When the dominant mode of transport was walking, married couples typically lived within three miles of each other, with the advent of the bicycle twenty-five miles and finally the motor car, three hundred miles. The revolutionising of production leads to a cultural transformation in society at whose heart is new ways of thinking and equally important, imagining.

#### (WO)MAN THE FABULOUS APE.

Marx and Engels spoke eloquently about the difference between (wo)man and their ape ancestors. We all have brains, and while all brains in common are defensive organs, that is they are attached via the senses to nature for the purposes of survival, the human brain is unique. An animal only sees what is and reacts to what is. The human brain sees not only what is, but arising from what is what could be. *“We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality”.* (Marx Volume 1, chapter 7, section 1 entitled The Labour-process or the Production of Use Values) At first this capacity for abstract thought was dominated by religious interpretation (awe of nature), later and at a higher stage by science (use of nature). Unfortunately, due to upbringing and circumstance this does not prevent science and religion being scrambled in the minds of some intellectuals today.

The question that arises is how did the human brain emerge and to answer this question we need to reach out to the conquests of modern science, observations that were unavailable to Marx and Engels

over a century ago. However, though Marx and Engels did not have access to these observations, and despite mistakes in detail, their understanding of the world has not in any way been undermined by recent scientific advances.

Religion hates time, for time is the real agent of change, not god. Religious dogma which takes its teachings from Genesis and Exodus would have us believe the world is no older than 10,000 years based on the chronology of the old testament or 20,000 years based on god's instruction that one thousand generations must obey his commandments. Science negates Genesis, both in terms of the actual unfolding of events and in the order in which matter connects and arranges itself. Whatever the case, religion in its raw state, must render history finite in order to provide it with a divine purpose and therefore symmetry, when in fact the universe is not only infinite in time and space but chaotic to the point of convulsion, as exemplified by the 5 mass extinctions during earth's turbulent 4.54-billion-year history (equal to 227 million generations of humans).

Before human history there was biological history and in terms of milestones, none is greater than "snowball earth" which occurred approximately 700 million years ago. Regardless as to the accuracy of this description it marks the great divide between the two biological gasses that composed our atmosphere – before carbon dioxide afterwards oxygen. Before snowball earth, the only life that existed was single cell anaerobic organisms which breathed in carbon dioxide CO<sub>2</sub>, reclaiming the carbon C for their cells and liberating the oxygen O<sub>2</sub> which accumulated in greater and greater densities in the atmosphere. Unlike Genesis, the planet at this stage was mostly slime, the by-product of trillions of tons of simple cells such as algae.

The dominant life that followed snowball earth was different. Instead of being anaerobic it was aerobic, it breathed in oxygen. Unlike carbon dioxide, oxygen is a highly reactive gas. As a result, the new aerobic cells were 15 times more energy efficient than the anaerobic cells which preceded them. They produced sufficient energy to not only repair and reproduce themselves (in common with anaerobic cells), but to build structures, to specialise and to provide cell to cell communication. In other words, sufficient energy to provide the scaffolding for multi-cellular life. Simple multi-cellular organisms arose and over millions of years they developed more complex functions, notably developing an internal feeding tube and circulation in order to feed their growing number of cells. Particular attention is paid to the mitochondria, originally an independent bacterium, later incorporated into animal and plant cells in a symbiotic relationship whereby the cells feed the mitochondria and the mitochondria powers the cell.

All living things are composed of cells. Eukaryotic cells form plant life, animal life, fungal and Protista (single nucleated cells) life. The greatest division of multi-cellular life took place with the division of plant life and animal life with plant life making possible the emergence of animal life through providing its nourishment. Although plant life existed before snowball earth, terrestrial plant life comes to dominate only after snowball earth about 700 million years ago. Animal life follows 170 million years later in what is now called the Cambrian Explosion.

While photosynthesis dates back 3.4 billion years, it is the photosynthesis found in plant life that is crucial to the formation of animal life, for it alone is capable of concentrating sufficient sunlight to power multicellular animal life. Trees don't have to walk but animals do, and this locomotion requires a much higher energy input. To burn this food a higher oxygen input is also needed which is why our blood is red (iron based) rather than green (magnesium based).

If life is energy, rather than spirit, then the source of life is photosynthesis. Plants unlike animals draw their energy directly from the sun. The process is elegant. When we enter a building of any size today

we always encounter at least two different kinds of fire extinguishers, the first uses a gas - Carbon Dioxide or  $\text{CO}_2$  while the other contains a liquid - water or  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Both  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  are capable of extinguishing fire which is why they are used by plants to capture sunlight.

Plants thus use a gas ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) and a liquid ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) to produce a crystal within which sunlight is converted and trapped. This crystal is sugar and its formula is  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$ . It comprises the synthesis of 6 molecules of carbon dioxide and 6 of water. The reason that it is not written  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_{18}$  is that during the process of photosynthesis 6 atoms of oxygen ( $\text{O}_2$ ) are liberated, some of which will be used by the plant itself for its own respiration while the rest escapes into the atmosphere (during the day time), and it is this escape of oxygen over hundreds of millions of years that boosted oxygen levels in the atmosphere. We cannot depart from the plant world without recognising that plants use the sugars they manufacture, as opposed to the earlier use of pure carbon in single cell organisms, to build their structures and it is these structures that provide food for the animal and fungal world.

Hence science paints a picture diagrammatically opposed to the emergence of life as presented in Genesis. Genesis is mere speculation and its male authorship is revealed by the misogyny aimed at Eve who is born of Adam's rib. In reality, the natural purpose of sexual division is to control conception in accordance with the variation in seasons and its impact on food supply. If animals are born at the height of winter, rather than spring when food is bountiful, that specie would die out for lack of food. Hence sexual division, and thus regulated mating, is the essential pre-condition for harmonising reproduction with seasonal change.

(Wo)mankind, the subject of the Bible is a very recent addition to the animal world measured in earth time. If the age of the earth is reduced to 140 years, then (wo)man have only walked its surface for one second. Humans are unique, having specific characteristics that distinguish us from the world of the apes from which we ascend. All these attributes needed to be in place in order for us to emerge as an intelligent (apart from the world) species 50,000 years ago.

It begins with our large brain, twice the size of our nearest neighbours, the chimpanzees. The human time line spans 7million years during which time brain size increases three-fold. Much of this increase occurs over the last two million years with the emergence of homo erectus. With homo erectus, fire is used for the first time to cook food beginning two million years ago. This increases the range and availability of food while decreasing the time taken to eat making space for other tasks. Not only does it provide nutrient density, but the energy saved from not having to digest raw food is now available for brain development.

The brain is the fattiest organ in the body. Fat represents 60% of the dry matter found in the brain. Hence the final evolution of the modern brain requires not only fire but a diet rich in sea food. This sea food was found on the shores and in the waters of the northern rift valley lakes in Africa. Sea foods contain up to one hundred times the amount of long chain fatty acids (EPA and particularly DHA) than does the flesh of land animals. And it is these fatty acids that builds brains. (Note 1 &2.) Hence the last stage in the emergence of (wo)mankind, begins when a group of homo erectus learns to fish, becoming "aquatic apes". From this single group or band of homo erectus, arises the entire human race nearly 200,000 thousand years ago. This has been confirmed by the DNA trail formed by both maternal DNA and mitochondrial DNA. We all have a common ancestry, we are all African and we weren't born in a garden but on the shores of a lake.

The human brain can produce 20 watts of energy depending on activity. We have as many hair follicles as apes but because most of our hair is fine we appear hairless compared to them. This allows us to lose heat, not only when we are hunting, but also when we are thinking, it prevents our brains from

overheating. The lack of hair also has the advantage of freeing us from the time-consuming tedium of finding and digging out the parasites that so torture our fellow hairy apes.

Humans have unique eyes. This is not due only to having a white sclera which allows us to communicate with eye movements, unlike apes where the sclera is pigmented and thus not prominent, but it increases our field of vision. Together with slow framing we take in more of the world than do animals, by this we refer to detail, complex objects and patterns. Some animals and birds can see further or nearer than we do, but what we can do which they can't, is see deeper. It is worth noting that it is possible to train the human eye to fast frame like animals. Fighter pilots can be trained to frame up to 200 fps, but as framing increases so detail is lost.

Our eyesight dominates the brain. Neurologists differ in their estimation of brain usage for the eyes but the range is 30% to 40% of total brain mass (equivalent to the brain size of most apes). This is more than double the mass devoted to all the other senses which have been downrated to allow the eyes to dominate, for it is through the eyes we assimilate the world. The relation between the eye and brain is complex with the brain often predicting what we are about to see, editing what we see or filling in the missing gaps based on previous experience and it is this evolutionary advantage that may provide the basis for abstract thought – for seeing what is not there both in space and in time.

The human voice. A common misconception is that we will be able to teach apes to talk. Unlike the human vocal cord which is located deep in the throat, in most apes it is located at the top of the throat. It is the deep location of our vocal cords that makes it physically possible to articulate hard notes, therefore consonants as well as vowels. Most apes can only articulate vowels. Without consonants, words cannot be constructed and without words complex communication is impossible. The human voice allows for the emergence of language to describe the world and each other. It is the essential connection between multiple brains allowing for unity of action, for collective learning, for co-ordinating work, for the passing on of knowledge and therefore the accumulation of knowledge. Whereas animal offspring **mimic** their parents, human offspring **learn** from their parents by means of language thus enabling intellectual development. Whereas animal activity is fixed, human activity is fluid, changeable. Whereas the offspring of animals usually learn to mimic their parents in months, children take multiple years of learning to match their parents.

Human hands. Unlike apes, most of the muscles that mobilise the hand are found in the arm making a hand that is unencumbered by muscle, therefore immensely dexterous. In addition, the fact that we have a mobile thumb that can touch every other finger allows for whole handed grasping and holding, thus extending the range of actions that can be used to manipulate nature. Without bipedalling, our hands would not have been freed from the tasks of locomotion. But long legged bipedal motion has additional advantages. Locomotion on two legs is three times more energy efficient than locomotion using four legs. (University of Arizona study.) Not only did standing up allow us to see further to spot prey, the energy efficiency it imparted allowed us to become superb hunters enabling us to run down much of our prey at which point our freed up hands could throw or use a weapon.

All these human features had to be present for (wo)man to emerge. If even one of these features was missing we would not have emerged as conscious beings, capable of escaping the domination of nature. Nature imposed the necessity to learn, our bodies provided the means to do so. Through the reproduction of our lives we learnt to construct tools, to communicate and to collaborate and through trial and error we learnt new and improved ways of doing things. Fifty thousand years ago all these attributes were in place, and forty thousand years after that we learnt to grow continuous agricultural surpluses through the cultivation and irrigation of grasses. The stage was set for the explosion in the productivity of labour that enabled the emergence of classes and civilisations. Within ten thousand

years agriculture would pass the baton over to industry – capitalism – and in turn capitalism would lay the material foundations for (wo)man to finally escape the clutches of nature by putting to an end classes and scarcity. (Note 1.)

The fable of the Garden of Eden was written to resolve a contradiction. How could it be that a perfect god would construct such an imperfect world where man could only live by the sweat of his brow. This contradiction is resolved as gods always do, by blaming man for his own downfall. No parent today would leave a hand grenade in their children's room knowing full well that it is only a matter of time before they pull out the pin, so it is inexplicable why god would tempt Adam and Eve with an apple knowing what the consequence would be. In reality, the Garden of Eden lies not behind us but in front of us. Behind us lies a world dominated by scarcity where survival was based on hard labour. In front of us lies a world shaped and rehabilitated by our industry where production is no longer for profit but in the service of society. There lies the Garden of Eden, where life is no longer mean but bountiful and where production no longer divides society but unites it, for only then can the conditions for the final emancipation of humanity from nature be realised.

Communists do not call for the suppression of religion which we recognise arises from specific conditions and constitutes a private relation. In the words of Marx: *"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world...It is the opium of the people."* (Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right). And this opium is no longer needed when as Engels puts it: *"...society, by taking possession of all means of production and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which confront them as an irresistible alien force...only then will the last alien force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason there will be nothing left to reflect."* (Anti-Duhring)

The separation of people from the means of production renders them powerless and it is this powerlessness, this insecurity, this isolation, this demoralisation and this desperation that is the source of "mental ill health" and religion. When the world controls us and we do not control the world, the world becomes a huge place and distance between people immense. That is the hell of capitalism and the source of its strength.

It is only when we build a society no longer divided by competition but united by co-operation, where we look after each other and celebrate each other that religion will be squeezed out of society. Religion cannot be legislated out of existence, it cannot be suppressed, that is the province of the various religions who take up arms against each other. The view of communists on religion is deliberately distorted by the capitalist class for obvious reasons. Religion will evaporate into the mists of time when the material conditions that make it necessary are ended and these conditions will only be humanised by the emergence of a communist society.

Capitalism always exhibits schizophrenic behaviour. While their priests are preaching about the holy spirit on Sundays, their secret police incarcerate their opponents in solitary confinement. And by solitary confinement we refer to "sensory deprivation", the kind started by Stalin and completed by the British with the introduction of "white sound" during their oppression of the Irish in the 1970s. This form of incarceration is not designed to extract information, it is too slow for that. It is designed to break people by cutting the brain off from its senses. And when this occurs the brain shrivels as neurons wither from lack of stimulation. And if endured for long enough it is permanent for the lost connections cannot be repaired and the person is reduced to a husk. The brain in effect loses mass, it shrinks. In case this example is seen to be too provocative and extreme, it should be noted that brains

also shrink due to chronic stress and that the brains of young people subject to systematic abuse, including sexual abuse, are undersized as well. (Note 2.)

Now it can be argued that mystics do their own sensory deprivation by cutting themselves off from the world. Except they don't. Their action may be misguided but it is elective not imposed. They are not cut off from the world, they resist the world. They are still subject to changes in light, temperature and air. And if they deprive themselves of food and oxygen altering brain chemistry and hallucinate then so be it. The fact of the matter is this, if the spirit within (wo)man was our essence, then cutting us off from the world would not be so damaging because life is internal. But life is external, we are a product of this world, we are of this world and when we become disconnected from our world, we become nothing, it is the descent into madness. (Notes 2 & 3.)

#### THE RISE OF RIGHT WING POPULISM.

As we move into the latter part of the second decade of the twenty first century, a time when we are not only mapping DNA but the brain itself, who would believe that religion continues to envelope society. We no longer philosophise about how the brain works and how the eyes see, that is replaced by science using the most sensitive instruments. Most of the functions in the brain and where they occur have been located and the intricate network joining the regions are being unravelled. So much so that neurologists can use electrodes to interrupt the communication between the two temporal lobes creating a religious experience and by switching off the superior parietal lobe they can invoke trance like states. (*EXPERIENCING GOD. The Neurology of the Spiritual Experience.* Scott Bidstrup) Science has even elaborated on near death experiences as the phenomenon induced by hypoxia which selectively closes down the brain, beginning with the higher most recent additions to the brain. In this regard, many high-altitude climbers suffering oxygen deprivation have previously described the sensation of having someone walking alongside them until they reached lower altitudes. The brain can be affected by nutrition too. The lack of vitamin Bs and zinc (as found in maize dominated African diets) can result in a malnourished people hearing voices and believing somebody even god is talking to them making them feted by the priests who live off their happy-clappy congregations.

All of this is known, but religion continues to haunt (wo)mankind. The question as to the resurgence in fundamentalism - Jewish, Christian, Buddhist and Islamic- is not to be found in their teachings, which have been around for hundreds if not thousands of years, but has to be found outside religion. What is fuelling religion today is the increasingly hostile and alien conditions found in modern day society, especially the growth of globalisation.

Globalisation has had a twin effect. In the developed economies of North America and Europe (including Britain) whole communities and layers of the less skilled and educated working class have been left behind. Outside the developed economies whole countries have been left behind, particularly countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The capitalist class may boast that hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty, particularly in China, but at the same time the process has become more uneven. Hundreds of millions on the other side of the divide now live in countries and communities than are more economically deprived than ever before.

The second question that is thrown up is this: why has economic decline led to a right-wing resurgence, rather than a left-wing resurgence? There is no single answer but a combination of factors. Firstly, it results from the betrayals of workers by the traditional parties of the working class, secondly, the intervention of sections of the capitalist class who seeks to profit from this state of affairs and finally

the tendency for workers whose horizons have been reduced by acute competition in the labour market to grasp at easy solutions.

It does not matter if it is the Labour Party in the U.K., the Democratic Party in the U.S.A., the Socialists in France or the Social Democrats in Germany, they have all been cheerleaders for globalisation. If they wring their hands now about the inhumanity of globalisation, this is sheer hypocrisy. The programme of these “workers’ parties” have always been pro-capitalist and they have always been led by careerists who have seen these parties as elevators out of the working class. The best exemplar today is of course Tony Blair who has not only aspired to become a capitalist, but has now joined their rich list and who from day one had only one message, “globalisation is good, it is irreversible so get used to it”.

The side effect of these betrayals has been to boost the right in politics. It is only when workers feel excluded by their traditional parties that they look to right wing parties for political salvation. If workers rejected the Labour Party for UKIP this is only due to Labour ignoring these workers for decades while local Labour councillors and MPs voted for cut after cut and benefited from the corruption privatisation brought into being. The same is true for Donald Trump. The Republicans did not win the election, the Democratic Party lost it because they gerrymandered their primaries to select the establishment figure Hillary Clinton. The triumph of the right is always the political price paid for because of the inadequacies and opportunism of the political left.

Neither Trump nor Farage nor Le Pen are workers. All of them are capitalists who recognise they could plough the political ground by pretending to speak for the disposed and downtrodden. These political parrots are really hawks and workers will soon realise that they have sharp talons. Their words are designed to deceive and disarm, making it easier to attack workers. The last act of the Republican led Congress before recessing (after Trump was elected) was to stab coal workers in the back by limiting their lifetime healthcare. These were the same workers Trump promised to champion while he was on the stump. Trump’s cabinet is filled with billionaires and deca-millionaires, but there is not one representative from the working class. He has indeed drained the swamp, they are all in his cabinet.

The capitalists are able to intervene in the working class because desperate workers reach for easy solutions. To the most vulnerable workers, immigration controls are tempting because they appear to be the answer to scarce jobs and to provide a barrier to the undercutting of jobs. These workers are also tempted by calls for relocating jobs back to their own country, in other words rolling back globalisation. To these stressed workers, solidarity with workers in other countries where jobs would be lost is out of reach for the time being. Above all they succumb to the siren song of making their country great again. This is a religious reflex. Ground down by the very country they live in they turn around and worship it.

### **Our strategy.**

The first utopian socialists lived in a juvenile, still forming, capitalist society. As individuals in elevated and privileged positions in society, they could look beyond its horizons. Repelled by the brutality of capitalist exploitation they dreamed of a better society fit for human beings. But their ideas remained trapped in imagination, therefore ahistorical devoid of the means to achieve their goals. The new emerging working class had yet to find its voice.

It was Marx and Engels once again who recognised that the historical possibility of socialism was prepared by capitalism itself. This possibility had three legs. Firstly, Marx had to prove that capitalism was a crisis prone economic mode of production, therefore a limited mode of production and not the end point of economic development. This he did primarily through his critique of political economy –

*Das Kapital* which demonstrated that the contradictions lodged in this economy could only be resolved by ending the private ownership of the means of production. Secondly, they had to show that capitalism prepares the material pre-conditions for socialism through large scale industry and a world market. Finally, how capitalism creates the social conditions for socialism by bringing together millions of workers joined by common effort and integrated into a unified production and distribution process. It is this last condition that develops working class consciousness, the recognition of the antagonism between themselves and their bosses, the recognition that they must combine to resist the pressure from their bosses and that solidarity between them could prevent the bosses turning them against each other.

It is to the final point we turn our attention. Despite the decline of regions (within countries) and whole countries, the international working class has grown substantially during the period of globalisation. According to the latest International Labour Organisation tables (*Status in Employment*), the number of employees globally is 1,705 billion. Of these workers, only 301 million or 17.5% are employed in the USA/Canada, the EU and Japan. This is less than the 424 million employed in China alone.

However, just as industrialisation and commercialisation brings workers together and develops class consciousness so economic blight and unstable communities drives workers apart and disperses class consciousness. These are the desperate workers who have been left behind by globalisation which has increased their alienation and made them subject to political infiltration by anarchism or by capitalists like Trump and Farage. Marx had a word for this layer of the working class “the lumpen proletariat”. (The most detailed discussion on the process of lumpenisation by Marx is to be found in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*.)

We should not shy away from describing this phenomenon for what it is, for it potentially imperils the organised working class. Today’s lumpenisation is of course distinct to that described by Marx because many of those caught up in this economic blight were workers once and if not workers, had parents who were workers. They are therefore not as distinct a group as in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition, today’s knife grinders, those in the geek economy, these modern indentured urban peasants are not as isolated and as disconnected as before. Nonetheless, just as Louis Napoleon cultivated the lumpenproletariat as his power base, so too have Trump and Farage in order to tilt the balance in their favour, the former in the US election and the latter in the Brexit referendum. Both promised similar enticements to this section of society.

The rise of populism has recalled the 1930s. However, while there are parallels, the economic and political conditions are not as developed. Firstly, economic blight has not percolated throughout society as it did in the Weimar republic. Secondly, there is no organised socialist tendency within the working class feeding off a successful workers’ revolution in Russia. Thirdly, neither side has its storm troopers on the ground. Finally, the capitalist class presently does not need to mobilise the lumpenproletariat and the petty bourgeoisie to confront an aroused working class.

However, the pre-conditions for a fascist movement is in play. This is particularly true of the multi-millioned Christian Right in the United States. While it is opposed to big government, it is in the pocket of big business including non-Christian capitalists. Its ideology is conservative, it opposes change, it hankers back to an ideal and pioneering past, it is riddled with misogyny and racism, and it is opposed to working class organisations like unions. It is thoroughly reactionary. It hypocritically champions the book ends of life, anti-abortion on the one side and anti-euthanasia (voluntary) on the other while neglecting all that comes between, the three score plus ten years of poverty, homelessness and neglect.

Whether the lumpenised section of society will be consolidated and used by big business is not cast in stone. Everything depends on the more advanced sections of the working class. If they can be politicised and organised, if their new parties reach out to the lumpenised section of society, they can be wrenched from the grasp of big business. It is for these reasons that our focus must be on the advanced sections of the working class particularly unionised workers and not on the lumpens despite the fact most of them are the neediest in society. We are revolutionaries not charity workers.

We are also internationalists which means the most advanced workers and struggles may not be in our own countries. China now has the youngest and largest concentration of workers on the planet. It may turn out that China leads the way. Time will tell. The Copitalist Party of China (CCP) are terrified of their huge working class. And just as workers in the west detest the top 1% so in China the workers hate the princelings, the sons and daughters of high ranking CCP officials, Mafioso's who have enriched themselves through corruption and connection.

It is probable that the next two years belong to the right. However, the right, once in government always prove themselves just as inept and compromised as those they replace. Their popularity will sag as it has done in Norway. Unlike Hitler, whose party was organised militarily with sufficient party troops on the ground, they will not burn down their parliaments to avoid a future election they were likely to lose.

Once the right has shot itself in the electoral foot, it will be the turn of the left to assert itself. This will need to be a different left, no longer pro-capitalist. If it is a repeat of the previous, devious and impervious "workers" parties then there may be a coup after all, not from the fascists, but from the more predictable and reliable military. The economic euphoria around Trump is already ebbing. Now is not the time to be despondent. We need to use this interlude to improve our politics and programme and to prepare.

Brian Green.

#### Note 1.

It is of course the irony of ironies that the most inferior of foods – grains – made possible civilisation because it could be grown in abundance and could be stored.

#### Note 2.

In fact, during the last ten thousand years when agriculture dominated production and grains were the main source of food, we not only became much shorter but our brain sizes actually shrunk due to the absence of adequate fats and proteins. Brain sizes and body sizes only began to increase after the industrial revolution as it made more complex diets available to larger and larger layers of society.

#### Note 3.

Food plays a vital role in brain development and function. If the brain is not nourished within the first 250 days of life it will remain stunted for life. India alone has 61 million stunted children, or one third of the world's total. While attention is focused on obesity, less attention is focused on diet and the brain. The damage done to hundreds of millions by poor diet is arguably the worst legacy a socialist society will have to deal with as it emerges from capitalism.

#### Note 4.

We should be careful with the term “mental health”. Emotions are the echo of the real social relations we are immersed in. A person who is in a supportive relationship working in an interesting job is emotionally different to a person who is in an abusive relationship working in an oppressive workplace. The diagnoses of “mental health issues” to described people who feel depressed with their lives, who are demoralised and desperate is part of the medication process, the process of expanding the range of illnesses that doctors can treat and for which they can prescribe the drugs that pharmaceutical industry. It is treating the brain as a diseased organ not dissimilar to other bodily organs.

Treatment should be based, not on the taking of chemicals (except where there is an underlying organic condition) but on changing the conditions leading to emotional distress. *Capitalism is literally driving us mad.* At the heart of “mental health” problems lies powerlessness, and disempowerment is the hallmark of capitalism where a minority controls the majority through its ownership of the means of production and therefore of life. Ending the epidemic of “mental health” problems is a social question not a medical question for it requires the empowerment of society through removing the means of production from the hands of an oppressive minority and transferring it to the majority as the condition of its emancipation.

The rise in “mental health” issues is compounded by diet. Most of the modern diseases are caused by chronic inflammation. Our cell membranes are made from fat. Nature chose fats because lipids trap water, the stuff of life, and because fats are semi-permeable allowing things in and out of cells. Fats can be divided into anti-inflammatory fats and pro-inflammatory fats. When we eat the right fats and enough of them, the cell walls function properly. When we eat an inflammatory diet the cell walls become dysfunctional and disease follows. The predominant fat used by the food industry is deodorised, denatured omega 6 vegetable oils and spreads which are often stored in transparent plastic bottles allowing the light to further degrade them through a process called peroxidation. They are also found in processed food. These oils are toxic. Only cigarette smoke is as toxic.

These fats not only inflame our bodies they inflame our brains. An inflamed brain becomes not only dysfunctional but also less resilient, it is less able to absorb social insults. The combination of a hostile social environment and a poor diet injures the brain, and while tablets may calm our brains down, they cannot restore it to its past glory. Only transforming society can, which means not only a kinder society but a well-nourished society. Finally, we need to recognise the psychiatric profession for what it is, counter-revolutionary, whose purpose for being is to return sedated brains back to impossible situations, to chemically reconcile the irreconcilable. When society became too sophisticated for the hocus pocus of the priesthood, along came the psychiatrists.