

A paper of Marxist polemic and Marxist unity



weekly **worker**



With only one week to go, a better than expected vote will help preserve Corbyn

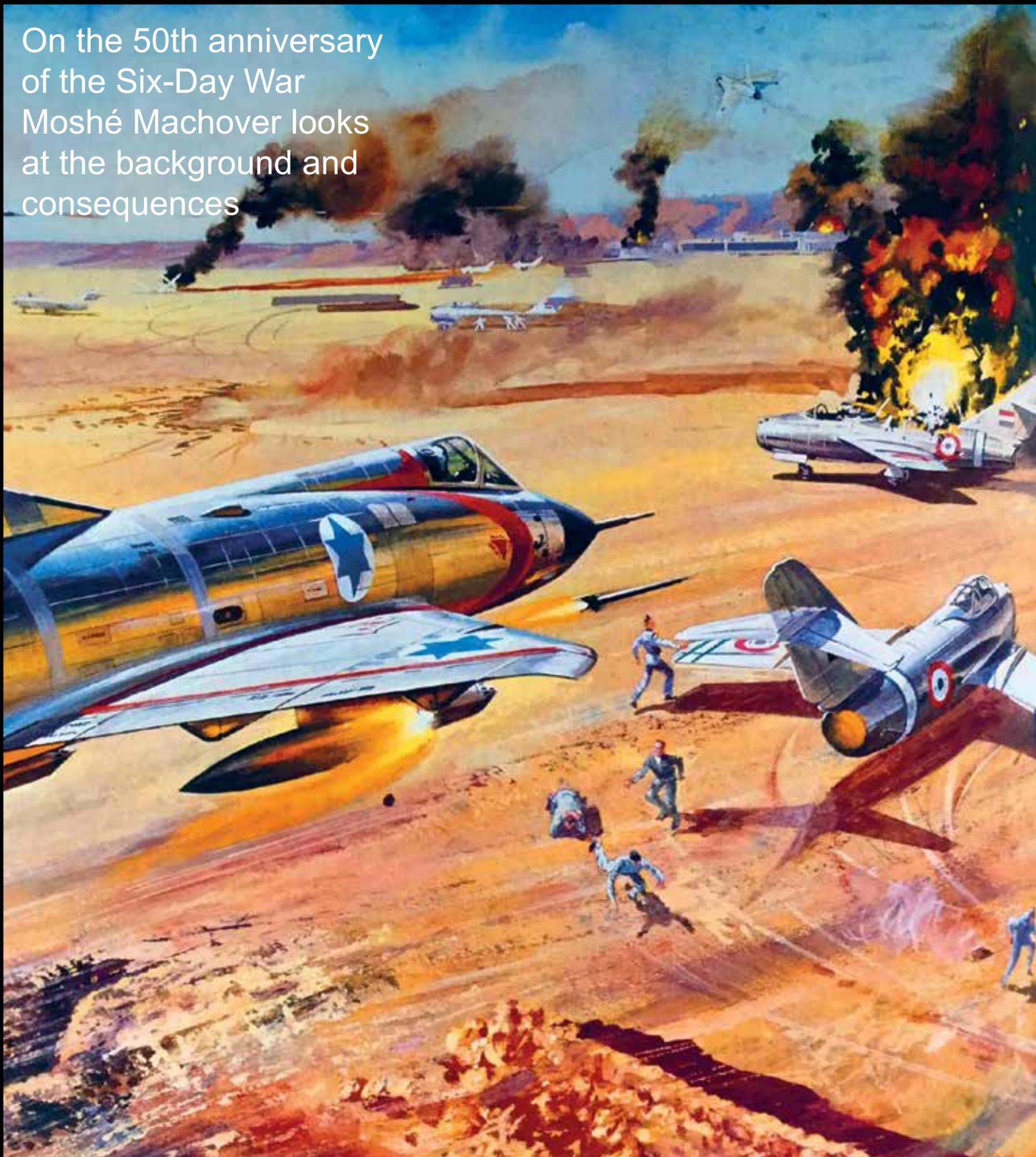
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Towards a Communist Party of the European Union

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On the 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War Moshé Machover looks at the background and consequences



LETTERS



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed

PCS differences

I note the mini-interview with delegate Hudson Leigh at the Public and Commercial Services union conference, but have to say it is unfair and also inaccurate in parts ('Fudging the Labour Party' *Weekly Worker* May 25).

Hudson has missed that the original intention of the standing orders committee was indeed to have a general debate between three motions on Labour, as he (and conference in the main) would have preferred. But, because the branch submitting motion E328 succeeded in getting it 'A-marked', the danger to the Socialist Party-dominated NEC was clear: we might end up passing a motion calling on PCS to write to all members recommending they vote Labour on June 8. So the SOC decided to have each motion debated one at a time.

The running order was revealing. The NEC's emergency motion A304 recommended branches be supplied with election campaign packs. This meant that activists had just two weeks to write to the NEC to get permission to campaign for a particular Labour candidate and to then do so.

Next was emergency motion A305 that had the strange and stilted wording, "Conference instructs the NEC to offer as much support to Labour candidates as is allowable under current PCS policy. This should include issuing correspondence to members highlighting how they will benefit from Labour's manifesto commitments." This is not actually a recommendation to vote Labour, but seems close.

It is important to note that A305 had a number of 'E-marked' motions included in it, which *did* instruct PCS to write to members urging them to vote Labour on June 8. Only in response to a question from a delegate did the president make it clear that the NEC will only act on the instruction in the leading A motion and not in any E motions grouped under it. That shocked me and a number of delegates, who now realised that the carriage of A305 would not result in PCS urging all members across Britain to vote Labour after all.

The only motion that would secure this was A328, which was limited to members in England and Wales (as Hudson states, this motion was

avoiding the Scottish question and surrendering to Scottish nationalism), but it would fall on the carriage of A305. The problem then was that time was fast running out and A328 was clearly not going to be debated.

The SOC had delivered what the NEC wanted - a debate that was not going to see conference pass *any* motion recommending a historic vote for Labour. If all three motions had been listed for a general debate, that outcome could have been the result, but the SOC craftily listed the motions to be debated one at a time, with the one I suspect conference would have endorsed being placed last.

I had spoken in the debate opposing A304 and supporting A305 (as we wrongly thought the E motions within it meant the policy would be to recommend that members vote Labour). I made the point that if Labour loses on June 8 we would not get another leader like Jeremy for a generation, nor would we get a manifesto like the current one for a long time. A PCS recommendation for a Labour vote would really be a significant boost to *Jeremy* - everyone knows that Labour-affiliated unions will recommend any Labour leader/policies to their members, but PCS, which is not affiliated, was only doing so whilst Jeremy is leader and on his manifesto.

It was not to be. We are all unclear why the SP, having decided not to stand Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates, could still not agree to support Labour under Corbyn. Mark Serwotka was disingenuous in his speech supporting A304 - he did not explain why PCS would not recommend that members vote Labour. Despite some delegates trying to make the situation clear, such is the high regard delegates have for Mark, they were happy to endorse a motion that was pretty useless in helping Labour win. Maybe most delegates are against PCS publicly calling for a vote for Corbyn's Labour, yet Jeremy got a standing ovation when he addressed conference in 2016.

I cannot understand why the SP are so opposed to urging a vote for Corbyn. Perhaps, as the *Weekly Worker* has continually argued, to do so would be an admission that their portrayal of Labour as a thoroughly bourgeois party is wrong. Interestingly, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty did not like the call to vote for *Corbyn's* Labour - they were

calling for a Labour vote, so clearly they are Labour loyalists, no matter who leads Labour or how rightwing their policies.

Hudson expressed surprise that no branch submitted a motion calling for PCS to affiliate to the Labour Party, stating this showed how painfully weak the left is. Hudson seems to be unaware that the NEC had carried out a recent consultation with branches on this question and two thirds stated they were dead against this. In PCS we respect consultations. We are well aware of how Momentum has been neutered and there is no point talking of affiliation until we see the state of the Labour Party after the general election.

I now turn to three other motions readers may be interested in. A72 was a reactionary motion calling upon PCS to disaffiliate from the Abortion Rights organisation. The two males supporting it argued it was not about whether abortion was right or wrong: PCS should not have a stance on an issue that is very divisive amongst our members, they said. Many female delegates were not having this and angrily opposed the motion, which was defeated.

A73 called upon PCS to affiliate to Stand Up To Racism, with the usual narrative about there being a "racist offensive against refugees, immigrants and Muslims" and "rising levels of Islamophobia". Phrases such as a welcoming refugees also appeared throughout the motion.

I spoke in opposition, having to first waste precious time stating my record of anti-racism (the presumption is that white delegates speaking against must be racist). I was opposing the persistent attempts to redefine racism to mean anyone concerned about the unprecedented levels of immigration we have seen in recent years. I made the point that 77% of Britons (and 34% of BME people) consistently say they feel there has been too much immigration. I said that under the Socialist Workers Party/SUTR redefinition of racism even Corbyn and the Labour Party are racist, as he has pledged to manage migration.

I stated this was really code for getting PCS to adopt a no-borders, no-immigration-controls position - I called upon supporters of the motion to come clean about this. The impressive leader of the National Galleries dispute, SWP member Candy Udwin, who spoke for the NEC, looked awkward and totally avoided my points. Like SPEW cannot admit they were wrong about the Labour Party, the SWP cannot admit that people concerned about the level and impact of immigration are not all racists. The motion was easily carried, of course, but I'd made my point.

A75 was a wide-ranging motion (most of it fully supportable), which mentioned that the Brexit vote had seen a huge rise in racism. Amongst a number of demands was "promoting the benefits of migration" and supporting "the free movement of workers". I got up to oppose, pointing out that all immigration and all cultures are not to be celebrated without question. I suggested we ask native Americans and aboriginal peoples what they thought of European mass immigration and the effects of the culture imposed on them.

I argued that freedom of movement of workers is the means by which bosses import cheap labour to undermine trade unions and the rate for the job. Having a limitless pool of cheap labour as competition is the enemy, not ally, of organised workers. I mentioned I was with Bob Crow and Arthur Scargill on this and it was not the case that all socialists support free movement.

Speaking for the NEC, Zita Holborne, a leading member of Black Activists Rising Against Cuts, dealt with none of these points in her brief reply and said absolutely nothing in defence of free movement of workers! Once again, conference overwhelmingly supported the motion despite hearing no answers

to the questions posed.

The easiest thing is to keep your head down, or else get up and support such motions. Few delegates that agree with your points will dare say so - such is the resentment shown to anyone daring to disagree with today's shibboleths: 'All immigration good, all refugees welcome - no checks'. A debate avoided by the left (and the *Weekly Worker*) is whether indigenous peoples have any rights over those coming into their country. There is the typical declaration of support for self-determination for a nation, but no support for indigenous people's rights to control immigration.

Industrially, PCS has survived the Tory government's various attempts to break PCS - whether by attacking facility time (delegates had to use annual leave to attend conference) or by forcing us to re-sign all members onto direct debit after having subscriptions from wages barred. Membership is finally rising again.

However, there still looks to be no united action with other unions over anything. Some may say everyone is waiting for June 8, but I doubt it. If Corbyn wins, but delays a public-sector pay rise, the unions will argue that any action will undermine Jeremy. I don't know why so many unions, having seen large membership increases in the run-up to the one-day united action over pensions in November 2011, still think doing nothing will encourage workers to join unions.

Dave Vincent
Manchester

Republican

All the odds predict Jeremy Corbyn is not going to be the next prime minister. However, there are only two ways the impossible can happen. First Scottish Labour wins back Scotland, and Corbyn confounds his critics in England and Wales. We then have a Labour majority in Westminster. Alternatively the Scottish National Party keeps Scotland from the Tories and Corbyn wins enough seats in England and Wales.

If the latter happens, Corbyn could become prime minister at the head of an anti-austerity coalition or, as the Tories call it, a "coalition of chaos". If we are talking realistically about a Corbyn government we have to take this seriously. The fact that Corbyn seems to be doing well means we have to take a view on a Labour-SNP government.

The Cameron Tories played the 'coalition of chaos' line against Ed Miliband and it worked then. So play it again, Sam. Either we will have a hard anti-working class Ukip-Tory government, led by a weak bully prepared to play the race card, or a Labour-SNP anti-austerity government. No matter what criticism we can have of these two capitalist parties, Labour and the SNP, a "coalition of chaos" means the likely Ukip-Tory government - the real merchants of chaos - has been defeated. It is definitely preferable from a working class perspective, not least in encouraging working class direct action.

The Labour manifesto has ruled out an anti-austerity coalition. Since the entire Labour Party knows Corbyn cannot win, then boxing yourself into a corner is no problem. But if Corbyn does well in England and Wales then Labour will have to get out of the hole it has dug for itself.

However the right wing of the Labour Party will prefer a Tory minority government than Corbyn, as PM, leading an anti-austerity coalition. We have to remember that Labour is an Anglo-British chauvinist party. The 2017 manifesto confirms this if that was ever in doubt. Labour has inevitably crashed on the rocks of the Scotland question in 2014 and 2015 and will continue to do so.

Now let us turn to the left. Labour Party Marxists says: "Organisations such as ... Left Unity are having a hard

time of things at the moment. Not only are they haemorrhaging members: there is profound political disorientation ...

"Having rejected any active involvement in the Labour Party at its 2016 conference, what remains of Left Unity is also reduced to issuing its own thoroughly unremarkable list: Another Europe, Stand Up to Racism, People's Assembly demo", etc ('Aim to be a party of extreme opposition, May 18).

The allegation is that LU's action programme is no more than supporting an eclectic mix of progressive campaigns. This is not true, or at least not the full picture. At present LU is critically supporting Labour in England and Wales in this election. The party has no position on what to do in Scotland - beyond, by implication, being anti-Tory.

In Scotland politics is now British unionism versus anti-unionism or the constitutional future of Scotland. Sitting on this fence is, like Theresa May, weak and wobbly. LU has less than a week to come off the fence. The party has decided not to have any executive committee meetings during the election because we are too busy out campaigning on the front line. So if we are stuck on the fence, we have no ladder to climb down off it.

Now the position of LPM has been clarified. It has two programmes, which I will call Number One and Number Two, to avoid all the ideological baggage of minimum, transitional and maximum and the war of words between Leninism, Stalinism and Trotskyism.

Number Two programme is a republican-communist programme. It is headed up by the demand for a British republic (or federal republic). It is a unionist programme because it does not include abolition of the Acts of Union except for Ireland. This programme would ensure "genuine equality for women, extending popular control over all aspects of society". The aim of this is "a federal republic", which will include "Irish unity, abolishing the monarchy, the second chamber and MI5, and disestablishing the Church of England". It sets the goal of communism as a "society which aims for a stateless, classless, moneyless society".

This programme is, like a tin can, to be kicked down the road. The CPGB is for "not taking power till it is in a position to realistically carry out its full [Number Two] minimum programme". This full programme needs "international coordination" and, since this is not realistic, "our task is to act as the party of extreme opposition. Hence our perspective of transforming the Labour Party."

The aim of turning Labour - a party opposed to republicanism and communism - into a republican communist party is truly revolutionary in its ambition. Therefore LPM turns to its Number One programme as the means of winning a "democratic republic", since "re-establishing socialism in the mainstream of politics means committing the Labour Party to achieving a 'democratic republic'". Hence LPM comes forward with a bold "Ten-point platform". These are:

1. Fight for rule changes.
2. We need a sovereign conference once again.
3. Scrap the hated compliance unit "and get back to the situation where people are automatically accepted for membership, unless there is a significant issue that comes up".
5. Securing new trade union affiliates ought to be a top priority.
6. Every constituency, ward and other such basic unit must be won and rebuilt by the left.
7. Our goal should be to transform the Labour Party.
8. Being an MP ought to be an honour, not a career ladder, not a way for university graduates to secure a lucrative living.
9. We must establish our own press, radio and TV.
10. Programmatically, we should adopt a new clause four. Not a return to the old, 1918, version, but "a commitment to working class rule and a society which

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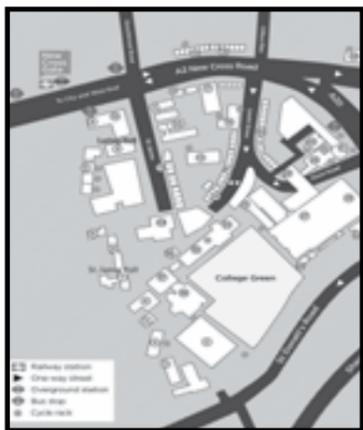
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ACTION

aims for a stateless, classless, moneyless society”.

This is the real practical action plan of LPM. The republican programme is for show and propaganda. Any militant or revolutionary republican socialist cannot take this too seriously. We need a republican Number One programme which takes into account the present political dynamics. It has to start from the reality of the 2014 Scottish referendum and the reality of the 2016 Tory EU referendum.

The republican Number One programme has to start from the vote for leaving the EU and be built on: 1. Democratic exit from the EU. 2. Repeal the Acts of Union. 3. For a parliament for England. 4. For local people's assemblies. 5 For a commonwealth of England. This is a programme to be developed for now and for after June 8. It will be relevant if we end up with a Tory government or if we have a Labour-SNP coalition. It does not box us into an Anglo-British chauvinist corner.

Steve Freeman
Left Unity and Rise

Obscene result

A friend of mine was surprised to learn that Islamic State hadn't existed before the Bush-Blair invasion of Iraq. Just so, they were Sunni Muslims who came together out of several insurgent groups in Iraq during 2006. The emotional and strategic justification for their actions is retaliation. As the IS command loses ground in Syria and Iraq, and with reference to dead children in Arab lands, they focus on the encouragement of supporters in the west to strike.

Since the British mandate in Palestine, the rulers of the modern west have intervened in the Middle East for their own purposes and with dire consequences, switching alliances when tactics demand, supporting Muslim fighters in Afghanistan, Bosnia or Syria, and decrying them in Paris and London, smearing Gaddafi as insane in the 1970s, approving a visit to him by Tony Blair in 2004, and then aiding the Libyan coup in 2011 with a Nato air offensive.

It is known that Salman Abedi, responsible for the recent atrocity in Manchester, had been part of the anti-Gaddafi Libyan Islamic Fighting Group rumoured to have connections with MI5. Perhaps something here explains his status of not being regarded as a threat on British soil, despite his visit to Syria, where he witnessed the casualties of drone attacks. In the UK there were warnings about Abedi made to the authorities by people at college with him, two community leaders and others from his mosque, but they all seem to have been ignored or downplayed.

Of course, Britain and the US continue to trade with the Saudi royals, those misogynist fundamentalists who support Sunni supremacy in the region; even Donald Trump now condemns Iran, the Shia state to which his original enemy of choice, IS, is also opposed.

The consequence of the west's endorsement of hard but 'friendly' regimes to protect the oil is that we have come to the point where a minority of Muslims will hit out at almost anyone. When imperialists intervene, the results will be obscene - for all of us.

Mike Belbin
email

Individuality

As people develop and then reach adulthood, in the perfectly normal way of things they search for individuality, meaning, direction, purpose; maybe what could be called a 'resonant substance' in life. For many of us this involves the selection of role models from amongst our co-habitants of the globe.

However, the society (and consequently its norms and values) under which we live usually have an even more powerful part to play in that multi-faceted process - in fact, for many youngsters ending up as the dominant one. Moreover, some of them will wholeheartedly embrace that societal

'messaging' they receive during this period; some will question it to the point of intelligently constructive rejection; whereas some react angrily or even self-destructively - in other words becoming downright deviant or delinquent.

The young man who forever will be remembered as the '2017 Manchester bomber' grew up and lived in a country plus bonded social system that not only officially and enthusiastically participated in, but heavily and remorselessly propagandised about, the virtues and indeed glories of invading, bombing, destroying, dismantling, overthrowing, and thus 'changing' existing regimes and governments and rulers around the world. All of that crap perpetrated purely for their own distorted, perverted and indeed evil state terrorist purposes. Of course, I'm referring to the multiple capitalist/imperialist 'coalitions of the willing' that invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, etc; previously Vietnam and Chile, amongst innumerable others.

In the case of this deeply confused, spiritually rambling, certainly wildly disorientated, but in absolute terms also the sadly 'lost' soul concerned - namely Salman Abedi - the most pertinent example of this type of murderous activity and brutal behaviour by a 'homeland' state was the UK's co-conspiratorial toppling of Gaddafi in Libya. Apparently that being the country his very own family hailed from, and thus for him no doubt representing personally central importance. In other words, quite understandably having a Libyan and therein Muslim background was a core element of both his emotional and spiritual 'heritage'.

So bearing all of these facts in mind, how can it come as any surprise whatsoever to anyone that this young man concerned ended up adopting precisely the same atrocious, abhorrent, even crazily revengeful perspectives and attitudes as British society itself operates quite routinely - those that ended up regurgitated as his own particular terrorist actions? How could he be expected to do anything other than absorb those deliberate and determined messages, as received from our loudly promoted and relentlessly marketed 'British way of life'?

Bruno Kretzschmar
email

Not us

Reading Will Brown's letter (May 25), I wondered if his enquiry about the CPGB's stance on the European Union had confused us with the Communist Party of Britain. The similarity of the two organisations' names lends itself to such cases of mistaken identity, but the CPGB and the CPB have quite different

positions on this issue and many others.

The CPB - a group associated with the *Morning Star* newspaper - has long advocated withdrawal from the EU, whereas the CPGB opposes such calls, as it reflects a 'socialism in one country', Stalinist approach to politics, which we reject.

Genuine communists are internationalists who strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class parties and organisations of all countries. As the experience of the Soviet Union demonstrated, socialism cannot be achieved by one state in isolation. The working class needs to be organised globally if it is to make progress.

We say: "Communists want not a quasi-democratic, confederal EU, but a united Europe under the rule of the working class. Abolish the EU commission. Abolish the council of ministers. Power to the EU parliament. For a democratically controlled European Central Bank. Towards indivisible European unity."

For more information on the CPGB's approach, see section 3.1.6 (Europe) of our *Draft programme* at <http://cpgb.org.uk/pages/programme>.

Steve Cooper
email

Made up

In 'The music inside ourselves' (May 25) we are presented with a glowing book review penned by Max Grierson, who introduces himself as a Marxist. The subject matter is a novel: *The noise of time* by Julian Barnes, who is not a Marxist - Grierson describes him as a "good cosmopolitan liberal". The novel in turn is a fictional biography of Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich. It concentrates on the times when his relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was most strained.

To put it another way, we have a bourgeois author making up a story about the darker periods of Soviet history, and receiving heaps of praise from a Marxist for being "spot on". As a communist since 1973, I've had to seriously redefine my Marxist politics, but this is not how I approach the crimes of the Soviet period. It is important to base an assessment on facts, taking on board the political issues inside and outside the party at that time. Praising second-hand fiction is not a good starting point - citations are, by definition, non-existent. In this case, Grierson also avoids citations when filling in 'the facts' in his review.

The Barnes novel may be a good read, but can the content be divorced from the cold war narrative it appears to be based on?

Vernon Price
email

Fighting fund

Overachievement!

"Post June 8, the *Weekly Worker* will be needed more than ever for its spot-on Marxist analysis of developments within the Labour Party and movement," writes ME in the note accompanying his PayPal resubscription. "I look forward to continuing to read it over the coming months."

You're right to highlight the centrality of the battle within Labour, comrade - it's going to be stepped up in exactly a week's time, I would predict! A pity that recognition hasn't yet dawned on all others on the left!

Anyway, another PayPal donor was comrade TT, who chipped in with a fiver - he was among last week's 2,585 online readers. But the big news is that our May fighting fund has come

to a successful conclusion - we easily exceeded our £1,750 target, finishing on £1,868. In other words, we didn't quite manage to make up for last month's £145 deficit, but we got damn close!

The biggest boost this week came in the shape of a €100 gift from an Italian subscriber, comrade AG - let's call that £87 - while PC sent in a £25 cheque from nearer home. There were also standing orders amounting to £120 from JT, DC, GT, SS, RL and VP.

The total for the week was a below-par £237, but I can't complain too much. ●

Robbie Rix

Fill in a standing order form (back page), donate via our website, or send cheques, payable to *Weekly Worker*

London Communist Forum

Sunday June 4, 5pm: Weekly political report from CPGB Provisional Central Committee, Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Followed by open discussion and reading group: study of August Nimitz's *Lenin's electoral strategy from Marx and Engels through the revolution of 1905*. This meeting: chapter 1, 'What Marx and Engels bequeathed' (continued)..

Organised by CPGB: www.cpgb.org.uk; and Labour Party Marxists: www.labourpartymarxists.org.uk.

Radical Anthropology Group

Tuesday June 6, 6.45pm: 'Katabasis: Stonehenge and Avebury lying machines for trial by underworld'. Speaker: Lionel Sims.

Organised by Radical Anthropology Group: <http://radicalanthropologygroup.org>.

Play Liar, liar!

Friday June 2, 4pm: Demonstration, BBC Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1. Radio broadcasters are refusing to play Captain Ska's track, which accuses Theresa May of being a 'Liar, liar'. Organised by People's Assembly: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk.

Stop the arms fair

Saturday June 3, 2pm: Protest meeting, Quaker Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton BN1.

Organised by Brighton Campaign Against the Arms Trade: www.caat.org.uk.

Artists for Spain

Thursday June 8, 7pm: Historical talk and exhibition, Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. Speaker: art historian Christine Lindey on the Artists International Association and the Spanish Civil War.

Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marxlibrary.org.uk.

Music for Palestine

Sunday June 11, 4pm: Concert, United Reformed Church, 83 Portsmouth Road, Guildford GU2.

Middle Eastern music performed by Sama.

Organised by West Surrey Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.westsurreypsc.org.uk.

Impact of the Russian Revolution

Thursday June 15, 2pm: Lecture, Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1. With professor Mary Davis and Tommy Hodgson. £5 waged, £3 unwaged.

Organised by Marx Memorial Library: www.marx-memorial-library.org.

Reimagining Rochdale

Saturday, June 17, 10am to 2pm: 'Pop-up', Rochdale town centre - exact location tbc. Rochdale today and its history in the cooperative movement.

Organised by Manchester Metropolitan University Cooperative Network, Rochdale Pioneers Museum: www.uk.coop/uniting-co-ops/events-calendar/cooperative-city-reimagining-rochdale.

Renewables are here

Saturday June 17, 10.15am to 5pm: Conference, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL. Anti-nuclear, pro-renewable event with high-profile speakers.

Organised by CND: www.cnduk.org.

Myths of war

Sunday June 18, 7pm: Live anti-war performance with Mark Rylance, Park Theatre, Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park, London N4.

Organised by Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk.

No to war

Sunday June 18, 6.30pm: Peace festival, All Saints Parish Church, Victoria Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Organised by Leamington Peace Festival: <http://peacefestival.org.uk>.

Peace pagoda

Sunday June 18, 10.30am: Cross-cultural peace ceremony, Brickhill Street, Willen, Milton Keynes MK15.

Organised by Peace Pagoda: <http://stopwar.org.uk/index.php/events/other-anti-war-events/2549-18-june-milton-keynes-peace-pagoda>.

Tension, Trump and the two Koreas

Wednesday June 21, 7.30pm: Public meeting, committee rooms 3 and 4, Council House, Birmingham B1. Speaker: Billy Hayes.

Organised by Birmingham Stop the War Coalition: www.facebook.com/BStWC.

Living on the edge

Monday June 26, 9am to 4.30pm: Conference, Congress House, London WC1. 'The rise of job insecurity in Britain.'

Organised by TUC: www.tuc.org.uk.

Social histories of the Russian Revolution

Thursday June 29, 6.30pm: Discussion meeting, Birkbeck, University of London, 26 Russell Square, London WC1. 'The working class and the first five-year plan, 1928-32'. Speaker: Don Filtzer.

Organised by Social Histories of the Russian Revolution: <https://socialhistories1917.wordpress.com>.

CPGB wills

Remember the CPGB and keep the struggle going. Put our party's name and address, together with the amount you wish to leave, in your will. If you need further help, do not hesitate to contact us.

LABOUR



Jeremy Corbyn has strengthened his hand

Prepare for after June 8

With only one week to go, a better Labour result than in 2015 might help persuade Jeremy Corbyn to stay on a leader, argues **David Shearer** of Labour Party Marxists

Recent opinion polls showing Labour narrowing the gap behind the Conservative Party have caused great excitement on the left and provoked a whole batch of scare stories from the right - not to mention a fall in the value of sterling, as investors worry about the possibility of a marginal increase in taxation on businesses under a Corbyn government.

For example, the May 30 Survation poll had the Tories on 43%, compared to Labour's 37%, with the Liberal Democrats on 8% and the UK Independence Party on 4%. The average of all recent polls has the Conservatives slightly higher and Labour slightly lower, on 44% and 36% respectively. But what really caused left optimists to go into overdrive was the May 31 YouGov poll, published in *The Times*, which claims to be "the first constituency-by-constituency estimate" of the likely results on June 8.

While YouGov admits that its projections are subject to a "wide margin of error", it finds that the Tories "could be in line to lose 20 seats and Labour gain nearly 30 in next week's general election", according to *The Times* commentary. That would mean Theresa May would be short of the 326 needed for an overall majority. YouGov's model has the Tories winning 310 seats, compared to Labour's 257 - a gain of 28. However, if you read on, you find that the projection "allows for big variations", with the Tories ending up with somewhere between 274 and 345 seats.

Meanwhile, a more conventional ICM poll, also published on May 30, has the Conservatives on 45%, with Labour on 33%, leading to an increased Tory majority of 76 - rather less optimistic for Labour. And a clear Tory victory is what the bookies predict - every one of them showing May as odds-on to be the

next prime minister.

Nevertheless, it seems pretty clear that the Conservative lead over Labour has narrowed considerably, with Labour's support in the polls now higher than its actual share of the vote in the 2015 general election, when it picked up 30.5%, compared to the Tories' 36.8%. The big losers are, of course, Ukip, whose share was 12.7% back then - two-thirds of its 2015 voters look set to desert it, mainly for the Tories. It is possible that a small proportion of Labour's increased showing comes from its former supporters who deserted it for Ukip in 2015 and are now returning to the fold, but it seems certain that the great majority of 2015 Ukip voters will now opt for the Tories.

By and large, Labour seems to be picking up support amongst the 'don't knows' and it also seems to be doing rather better among women voters, amongst whom the Tory lead is narrower, according to latest polls. And amongst young voters Labour is actually ahead.

However, we should realistically expect a Tory victory, as both Conservative and Labour figures are predicting - the latter usually in private or anonymously. For example, the same *Times* article quotes "a Labour figure in the Midlands", who says that, "while the Tory social care blunder had helped, Jeremy Corbyn's unpopularity continued to deter natural Labour voters and the party would be losing rather than gaining seats in the region".

Despite that, we should make it clear that a better result for Labour under Corbyn than was achieved under Ed Miliband - definitely a distinct possibility - would be excellent from the point of view of those fighting to transform Labour into a united front for the entire working class. It is evident that the reason why we cannot

win a majority at this time is not the personal and political shortcomings of Jeremy Corbyn, but the *sabotage* of his leadership carried out by the Labour right (such as the "Labour figure in the Midlands" mentioned above, no doubt).

An increase in the popular vote for Labour next week would put the right on the back foot and hopefully instil fresh confidence in the likes of Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott, who have been busy back-peddalling on previous long-held progressive positions in a futile attempt to appease the Parliamentary Labour Party and the right in general. Such an outcome would add momentum to the necessary fight to rid Labour of those saboteurs.

Retreats

Although Corbyn in particular generally comes over as confident and assured when being interviewed by the likes of Andrew Neale and Jeremy Paxman, his series of (often dishonest) retreats when questioned about his radical and leftwing past is highly embarrassing for left partisans.

For instance, in the May 26 BBC interview, Neale hit the nail on the head when he said of Corbyn's former position on Ireland: "You basically supported the armed struggle for a united Ireland, but, now you want to be prime minister, you have to distance yourself from that." Corbyn's response was simply to deny it: "I didn't support the IRA." Rather, as he told Paxman in the May 29 interview for Sky News and Channel 4, he was working behind the scenes calling for "peace and dialogue" - that was why he attended solidarity events with Irish republicans apparently.

True, he has insisted that the Manchester bombing can be linked to western foreign policy, but he no longer condemns all imperialist

military interventions for what they are, preferring nowadays to vaguely state that foreign policy "can become a breeding ground for terrorism". He told Andrew Neale that war should only be resorted to in "exceptional" circumstances and "we" certainly shouldn't "go in" to places like Iraq "without a plan". It would be much better to have a "stronger presence of UN diplomacy".

Neale pointed out that it was "only three years ago" when Corbyn called Nato "a dangerous Frankenstein organisation that should be wound up". But now he says we need to "work within Nato": Corbyn told him that under Labour "we" would be "a committed member in order to produce peace, justice and democracy".

It is the same with the renewal of Trident - Labour is "going to support that". True, Corbyn (almost) admitted that what he personally believes could still be different - when Neale read out to him some of his previous statements, he answered: "My position is well known." But, of course, because it is official policy, Corbyn's Labour is committed to renewing Britain's weapons of genocidal destruction.

And Corbyn is now insisting on "managed migration" - Labour would "not allow companies to bring in low-paid workers" to undercut wages, he told Paxman. Which meant that under his premiership immigration "would probably come down". After all, as he told Neale, "If we train people properly, the need to bring in skilled workers would obviously reduce."

However, in my opinion what he told Paxman in relation to the monarchy took the biscuit. The former *Newsnight* presenter asked Corbyn how he squared his record as a republican committed to the abolition of the monarchy with his duties as a possible prime minister.

Corbyn replied light-heartedly: "I get on very well with the queen!" And he added, in all seriousness: "I don't think she should be brought into political discussion".

Both interviewers confronted Corbyn with the realities of his leadership of the Labour Party. Paxman alleged, "You can't get your own politics into the manifesto", while Neale declared, "So many of your own MPs don't trust you." His response was basically to skirt round those allegations, making general points about Labour's 'democratic decision-making' and the need for unity.

Well, after June 8 the ante will be upped. Corbyn has stated that he will stay on as leader after a Labour defeat - let us hope he is as good as his word, on that at least. Labour's civil war will not be over and the right - although, as I say, dealt a blow if Labour achieves a better result than in 2015 - will still be on the lookout for fresh opportunities to dislodge him and return Labour to safe, Blairite territory.

We must be prepared for that. We need to step up the battle to defeat the right once and for all - to capture Labour for the working class through a thorough-going democratisation. We need to win all unions to affiliate and revitalise every party organisation behind a socialist clause four.

Our membership - at over 500,000 the largest of any party in western Europe - must be mobilised. It is good that Corbyn's election campaigning has drawn in thousands at mass rallies. Despite the opposition of groups like the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party in England and Wales, we need even more of those enthusiasts to join the fight where it really matters - in every Labour Party branch and constituency and in every trade union ●

Scandal fails to take hold

Jeremy Corbyn seems to have survived attacks on his historic links with Irish republicans, but his response was still weak, argues Paul Demarty



It had to happen eventually, and the shrinking of the poll gap between the Conservatives and Labour no doubt provided the occasion. So it has come to pass: the attack dogs of the rightwing press have 'discovered' that Jeremy Corbyn has historic links to the Provisional Irish Republican Army; so, indeed, do his closest allies, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott.

The peculiarity of the story is the way it *has not* really blown up; it is all very 'dog that didn't bark': there have been a few TV news roastings, sure, but not the sort of relentless smearing that characterises similar sorts of accusations (think of the American right's absurd relentlessness on matters such as the Obama administration's handling of the Benghazi embassy attack), and the news agenda has gone through a number of other flavours since.

It is also - to avail ourselves of another canine cliché - a bit 'dog bites man': who on earth can have been *surprised*, given everything else, that Corbyn and his close allies might have entertained Provo sympathies in the 1980s? They certainly opposed British army operations in the Six Counties, albeit with varying degrees of radicalism - it is not a huge step from there to admiration of the heroism of the hunger strikers (say), and then to the usual routine of fundraising and solidarity work ... The IRA's bombing campaign on the British mainland made it a harder thing to do than going dewy-eyed over the Sandinistas, of course, and the Irish question was deeply divisive - but friends were found in the British labour movement for republican militancy. Perhaps some of the youngest Corbynistas are naive enough to be shocked by this - but then they did not live through the bomb scares of the 1980s and 90s, and so are the very least likely to be appalled.

There is also the small matter of subsequent history. It is close

1986: Jeremy Corbyn invited Gerry Adams to the House of Commons and it was right to support the IRA against the British army.

to 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement saw the Provos commit to disarmament; 14 since they disarmed fully; and 10 since Sinn Féin entered into government with Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. That power-sharing deal finally collapsed last year - not because of the terrorist perfidy of Sinn Féin, but rather the ineptitude and corruption of the DUP under Arlene Foster. Northern Ireland, to be sure, is hardly the world's most stable and functional polity, yet it represents some kind of peace, even if only defined as the absence of war, and certainly could not function if today's SF was the same outfit that existed in 1984. *Tiocfaidh ár lá* - 'Our day will come' - goes the old slogan; we are sure they still say it, but can they truly take it seriously?

Yet the Tory reaction to these dubious revelations is such that we almost feel like we have fallen through a time warp and gone back three decades, to the age when Margaret Thatcher deemed it politic to ban republican voices from the airwaves. The editorial pages of *The Sun* takes the prize in this regard, claiming on the say-so of notorious informer Sean O'Callaghan that "innocent people were murdered specifically because Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell sucked up to the IRA" (our emphasis). The editorial unaccountably failed to note that O'Callaghan was a state agent and has subsequently traded entirely on the dubious prestige of the turncoat. But why bother, when there is Labourite blood to be spilled?

Even at the time, of course, such assertion of the taboo on 'talking to

terrorists' was entirely mendacious and hypocritical. Rare indeed is the war when no channels of communication at all exist between the opposing sides, and 'the Troubles' were not one of the exceptions on that point. SF old-timer Danny Morrison ruffled a few feathers by pointing out, on Twitter, that he and Gerry Adams had met a parliamentary 'fact finding' mission in 1977, which included then Tory back-bencher Willie Whitelaw, seven years before Jeremy made it to Belfast. It was a Tory government under John Major, meanwhile, that first began serious discussions as to a lasting peace in the Six Counties. Throughout this time, the government was absolutely not 'talking to terrorists', of course - except that it was.

The response of the Corbynistas has been uneven, to say the least. Diane Abbott attracted widespread ridicule for dismissing concerns about her record thus: "I had an Afro. It was 34 years ago. The hairstyle has gone and some of the views have gone. We have all moved on." Evidently some people haven't; but in any case this is an absurd defence. Either maintaining links with the IRA and SF was an error or it was not. If it was an error, you ought to account for it; and if it was not, you ought to denounce the idea that it was. To dismiss it as akin to a change of hairstyles is to demean the very practice of politics altogether.

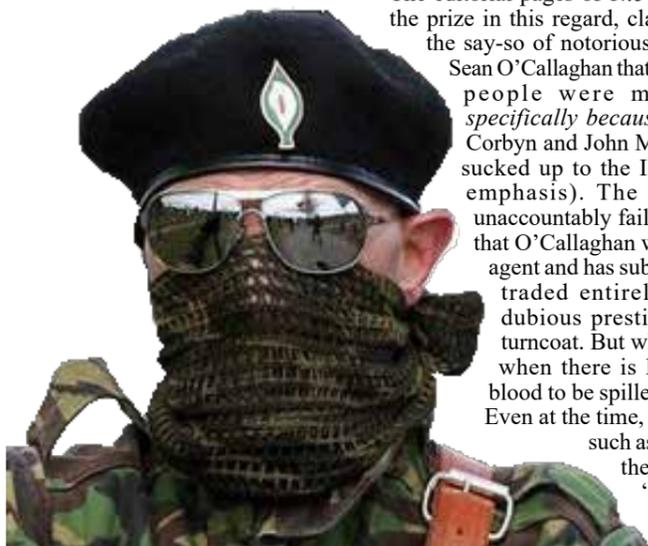
Jeremy Corbyn himself, meanwhile, has chosen to don the robes of Gandhi, and declare that it was all for peace. *The Sun's* little salvo on the subject ridicules this idea, saying instead that it was all because he and McDonnell "hate the west, hate Britain and longed for our defeat" (Ireland, apparently, no longer being part of the west, so far as Tony Gallagher and Rebekah Brooks are concerned). In fact Corbyn can certainly point to contributions, for better or worse, to the Good Friday Agreement; he was able to act as a

go-between for Tony Blair and Sinn Féin, ironing out some of the many bumps on the road. Yet this is still an evasion. If Corbyn had always been hostile to republican armed struggle, then what use would he have been as a go-between? He earned that power by supporting the nationalist cause earlier.

Now, as often in these past two years, one wishes that there was more willingness on the part of the left Labour leaders to actually stand on their records. Yes! Jeremy, John and Diane denounced Britain's war in Ireland, denounced the dawn raids, the beatings, the internment, the machine gun towers, the police brutality, the collusion, the idiotic idea that it was all a religious dispute, and the shameful, jingoistic nonsense that it was all the other side's fault - all down to the crypto-fascist fanaticism of the IRA. The very best that can be said for this great imperialist misadventure is that it gave us the dysfunctional sectarian arrangement that now governs from Stormont - less a political regime than a ceasefire with a parliamentary appendage. Jeremy, John and Diane have done the hard part, denouncing it *while it was still happening*, while 'our boys' were fully deployed, and while the war was spilling over onto the mainland. That ought to be a point of pride, not of evasion and hand-wringing.

Yet in the end it is down to the same illusion that has cast its spell over the Corbyn era - the idea that, if 'divisive' issues can be skirted over, then party unity can be maintained, the British people won to vote for a mildly anti-austerity Labour government and thus (with apologies to Bobby Sands) their day will come. Though the bourgeois press was unable to make much out of this one, it remains the case that this Corbyn strategy is plainly not working ●

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MIDDLE EAST**Israel and the Messiah's ass**

On the 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War Moshé Machover looks at the background and consequences

Much has been written about the sequence of events leading to the June 1967 Six-Day War: the series of missteps through which Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser stumbled into the fatal trap of a war he had not intend to fight.¹ The course of the war is also well documented: the crushing defeat of Egypt - sealed in the first few hours of the war, when virtually the entire Egyptian airforce was destroyed on the ground, like a badling of sitting ducks - followed by the defeat of Jordan and Syria, which subsequently got sucked into the war.²

As for the consequences of the war, to say that it "was a watershed moment in the history of the modern Middle East"³ is, like most clichés, evidently true. (This also applies to the cliché 'most clichés are true'...) Secular Arab nationalism was dealt a blow from which it has not recovered, while Israel emerged as a regional strongman, America's local enforcer. Indeed, due to the geopolitical and strategic centrality of the Middle East, the outcome of the war had a considerable global effect: the defeat of the USSR's main regional allies was a severe blow to its standing as a world power, contributed to its decline and presaged its demise.

In this, the 50th anniversary, much more is and will no doubt be written about all this: the lead-up to the war, its battles and aftermath. But here I would like to consider another aspect of that history: the pre-war roots of trends and developments that became manifest after June 1967. Like every major political crisis, the war was a moment of historical discontinuity: local, regional and to some extent even global reality took an abrupt turn. Yet, like every such crisis, it was also a juncture that amplified some pre-existing tendencies. That these were discernable in the preceding period - at least since 1956 - does not necessarily imply that the post-war shape of things could have been predicted with certainty. Rather, of the various alternatives that seemed possible before June 1967, the war selected some and suppressed others.

Global and regional roots

I cannot dwell here on the pre-1967 indications that the Soviet Union had entered a downward trend - which was to be its terminal decline - internally and internationally. Let me just mention the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, when Nikita Khrushchev was forced into a humiliating climbdown. The Brezhnev era, which started two years later, is generally recognised as one of stagnation, presaging ultimate collapse. Given this background, it could come as no surprise that the Soviet Union had to look on impotently, as its two Arab allies were thoroughly routed and their Soviet military hardware destroyed. This led directly within a few years to Egypt, the leading Arab country, leaving the Soviet orbit and becoming a US client.

While for the Soviet Union the war was but one in a series of steps, midway along its downhill slide, for the Arab world it was a calamity, marking the downfall of progressive - self-styled 'socialist' - secular Arab nationalism.

The decade following the Suez war of 1956 was one of euphoria in the Arab world, upswing of Arab nationalism and great personal prestige for Abdel Nasser. That war had ended very well for Egypt; the French and British imperialists and their Israeli co-conspirator had to withdraw empty-handed. But the euphoria was ill-founded. Egypt was only extricated from total defeat



Moshe Dayan: hawk

and loss of the recently nationalised Suez Canal thanks to the political intervention of the US. President Dwight Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, were incensed by the presumption of their subordinate French and British allies, who secretly plotted to re-establish their imperialist presence in the region.

Egypt's political success masked its economic, social and military backwardness. In purely military terms, the confrontation with Israel did not go at all well for it: Egypt's armed forces were no match for the Israeli onslaught and were badly thrashed. Besides, while for France and Britain the Suez war signalled the end of their imperialist hubris, Israel came out of it with a major strategic gain: it became a nuclear power - a reward paid by France to Shimon Peres for his pimping services in securing Israel's part in the dirty tripartite plot.⁴

As a matter of fact the progressiveness of Arab nationalism, even at its best, as personified by Abdel Nasser, was quite limited, its socialism fictitious, and even its secularity not all that radical. Based on the petty bourgeoisie and led by the military, it failed to modernise and industrialise the countries where it held power. Its professed aspiration to unite the Arab world politically - a historical imperative - came to nothing, as the United Arab Republic, a union of Egypt and Syria (1958-61), was a short-lived fiasco.

The fatal backwardness and stagnation of even the most 'progressive' Arab countries, which made their 1967 defeat a foregone conclusion, was mercilessly exposed by my late friend, Sadik al-Azm, in a devastating critique, published in 1968.⁵

I will say no more about the global and Arab regional pre-1967 roots of the war's outcome. The rest of this article will deal in some detail with the Israeli aspect of the 1967 transformation.

Israel-US relationship

There is a widespread belief that Israel became a regional junior partner of the US following the 1967 war. This is inaccurate: Israel's military prowess, displayed in that war, indeed confirmed its value as an American strategic asset, and cemented the US-Israel relationship, but this relationship had been developing since 1961, when France was forced to give up its colonial war in Algeria. Until then France was Israel's main imperialist patron and arms supplier.⁶ In 1955-56 France sold Israel a great deal of heavy military equipment, including 18 105mm artillery pieces and hundreds of AMX-13

tanks. The Israeli air force acquired French warplanes: first the Mystère II, and from summer 1956 the more advanced Mystère IV. An additional consignment of these transonic fighter-bombers were delivered a few days before the Suez war, in which they played a crucial role.⁷

The chief French motive for this relationship was the belief that the Algerian resistance depended on Egyptian help and would collapse if the Nasserite regime, which Israel regarded as its main enemy, were toppled. This motivated the Franco-Israeli Suez war conspiracy, which Britain's Eden government idiotically joined. But after France had lost its major imperialist position in the region - first in the 1956 Suez debacle and then in 1961 with Algeria's independence - the Franco-Israeli relationship was deprived of its *raison d'être*, and Israel sought and found a new patron.

In 1962 Israel was allowed for the first time to purchase advanced US weapons: Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. In 1966, the year before the Six-Day War, US military aid to Israel rose sharply to \$90 million (originally in the form of a loan, which was later forgiven). This works out at about \$680 million in 2017 prices, and was more than twice the total in all the preceding years. Clearly, it marked a major upgrade of the relationship. Of course, it was much less than the current US military aid to Israel (mostly as a straight grant), which is measured in billions of dollars - but this hike was to come years later, beginning with the October ('Yom Kippur') 1973 war.⁸

So by 1967 Israel was already a firmly established US client; and - having learnt the lesson of Suez - it made sure to obtain Washington's green light before attacking Egypt on June 5. Indeed, recently released Israeli cabinet minutes reveal that the secret diplomatic negotiation this involved was what stayed prime minister Levi Eshkol's hand for a few days, tarnishing his public image as he appeared to hesitate and procrastinate. At a June 2 joint meeting of the cabinet's security committee and the army, chief of general staff (CGS) Yitzhak Rabin and general Ariel Sharon urged immediate action; the latter disparaged the diplomatic "rushing around, not to say pleading". Eshkol rejected this impatient badgering and pointed out that a US green light was vital because Israel was and would continue to be dependent on foreign military aid. He pointed out to Sharon that Israel's might had its limitations:

All that we have in the material might of our army has come from this 'rushing around'. Let us not forget this and let us not regard ourselves as Goliaths.

With bare knuckles, unarmed and unequipped, we are powerless.⁹

to intensify the struggle and not to compromise on our interests.¹⁰

Five 'Sinai's'

A central role during the Six-Day War, as well as in the post-war period, was played by Moshe Dayan. A charismatic figure, he represented the dominant hawkish wing in Israel's military and political elite. A couple of years after leading Israel's forces in the Suez war as CGS, he retired from the army and switched to a political career (a common move among Israeli generals), serving as minister of agriculture in the last government headed by Ben-Gurion (1959-64). From 1965 he was out of office, but in the tense days leading to the war Eshkol appointed this most prestigious and popular former military leader as minister of defence.

Given his leading role, it is well worth taking due note of Dayan's public statements - all the more so, as, unlike most politicians, he was often brutally frank. Had Abdel Nasser paid close attention to Dayan's past pronouncements, he might have avoided trapping himself into a war that he did not really intend to fight, but that Dayan had long been looking forward to.

On March 31 1957 - just a few days after Israel had completed its US-imposed withdrawal from all the territories it occupied (and wished to annex) in the Suez war - CGS Moshe Dayan addressed a meeting of the officers of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) northern command. In his speech, published in the Histadrut daily *Davar* on the third anniversary of the Suez war, he dealt with the lessons of the 'Sinai campaign' (Israel's official euphemism for its part in that war):

We must ask ourselves what, if anything, we have achieved regarding our general relations with the Arabs. In my opinion, the answer to this question lies less in what we achieved in the Sinai campaign itself and more in how the state of Israel will behave in the future, in the period after the Sinai War ... The question is who will draw the lesson from what ...

Will the lesson be for the Egyptians, the lesson of their defeat in Sinai; or will the lesson be for the state of Israel, the lesson of the withdrawal, and we will say that it was impossible to hold on to Sinai because the entire world opposed it, we had to withdraw, and therefore this path is not the right one? The question is whether the Egyptians will know that, even if Israel assumes that it would probably be forced to evacuate what it has conquered, it would nevertheless strike again in future if it is intolerably provoked. And most important: if the state of Israel says, 'We are ready, if we have to, to do a second, third, fifth round even if it ends in withdrawal' ...

If we throw up our hands, then the Sinai campaign will become a negative asset, a failure. But if we do not despair, then the Sinai campaign is a first-class achievement, a buttress of our security ... The Sinai campaign signifies that the state of Israel is prepared for any action for the sake of its vital needs - its survival, security and securing its rights. And if this means that if [another] Sinai campaign is required - then Sinai it will be, even in the face of serious political difficulties. And if tomorrow five 'Sinai's' will be required, then five 'Sinai's' it will be. If this is how we see matters, then the Sinai campaign will be a warning to the Arab countries, evidence of the state of Israel's ability and willingness

This became part of Israel's military doctrine. What it amounts to is readiness to use any challenge as an opportunity for asserting Israel's military dominance against any of its neighbours, especially Egypt, the leading Arab country. In the second half of May 1967, Abdel Nasser provided Israel with such an opportunity.

At the end of the Suez war, euphoric at Israel's swift military success, prime minister David Ben-Gurion announced the annexation of the Sinai peninsula and the creation of a much-expanded Third Kingdom of Israel,¹¹ before hastily eating his words under American pressure. But in any case, as implied by Dayan in his speech quoted above, the Sinai was not a high-priority target of Israel's expansionist ambitions, more a desired buffer between it and mainland Egypt.

'Empty' marketplace

Matters are very different when it comes to the parts of Palestine that Israel had failed to 'liberate' in the 1948 war, especially the West Bank. Ever since the end of that war, the hawkish wing of Israel's military and political elite had been itching to complete the 'liberation' of the whole of the country, which Zionist ideology regards as belonging to the Jewish people. As argued by Ilan Pappé,

The Israeli political and military elite regarded [the 1948 war] as a missed opportunity: a historical moment in which Israel could, and should, have occupied the whole of historical Palestine from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. The only reason they did not do so was because of an agreement they had with neighbouring Jordan. This collusion was negotiated during the last days of the British mandate and, when finalised, it limited the military participation of the Jordanian army in the general Arab war effort in 1948. In return, Jordan was allowed to annex areas of Palestine that became the West Bank. David Ben-Gurion, who kept the pre-1948 agreement intact, called the decision to allow Jordan to take the West Bank ... "a fatal historical mistake".

Ever since 1948, important sections of the Jewish cultural, military and political elites had been looking for an opportunity to rectify this mistake. From the mid-1960s onwards, they carefully planned how to create a greater Israel that would include the West Bank. There were several historical junctures in which they almost executed the plan, only to draw back at the very last moment. The most famous are 1958 and 1960, when David Ben-Gurion aborted the execution of the plan due to fears of international reaction in the first instance and for demographic reasons in the second (calculating that Israel could not incorporate such a large number of Palestinians). The best opportunity came with the 1967 war.

For further details I refer the reader to chapter 6 of Pappé's recent book, from which I have just quoted.¹²

Let me make here some additional remarks, supporting Pappé's assessment. After June 1963, when Ben-Gurion finally left office and his restraining authority was no longer effective, the hawkish faction became more assertive and there was frequent open discussion of the business left unfinished by

the 1948 war. Thus on January 31 1964, the evening newspaper *Ma'ariv* published a series of interviews on this topic with leading public figures, conducted by Ge'ulah Cohen, extreme rightwing nationalist politician and former terrorist.¹³ All interviewees shared the view that the existing borders of Israel (which had in fact never been finalised and were merely armistice lines established in 1949) fell short of the "entire homeland". While some accepted these borders as an inevitable compromise, others were not resigned to this reality. While Shimon Peres opined that "Israel can exist even within the present borders", Moshe Dayan asserted that "the present borders are an outcome of the [1948] war, not an achievement of [our] objective". And Aryeh Ben-Eliezer, a leader of Herut (forerunner of the Likud), was even more explicit: "Israel's existence depends on not giving up on the entire country."

A few months later, Yigal Allon - like Dayan a prestigious general turned politician and a prominent hawk - declared:

The country has remained divided and its borders distorted not due to lack of correct strategic planning or lack of military capability, but only because of political restraint, for which prime minister and defence minister D Ben-Gurion was responsible. Indeed, when [he] ordered our army to halt, we were at the peak of our victories in all the decisive fronts, from the Litani river in the north to the heart of the Sinai desert in the south-west. With just a few days of fighting it would have been possible to achieve the final defeat of the invading Arab armies and liberation of the country in its entirety.¹⁴

Allon, like Dayan, was in the June 1967 cabinet; and both pushed for implementing their hawkish line at the time of the war and in the following period.

They had to overcome some resistance by part of the old labour-Zionist guard, who had reservations about Israel incorporating areas populated by too many Arabs. A typical objection of this sort was voiced by Yosef Weitz, who had long been an advocate of ethnic cleansing, and was active in implementing it in 1947-49. But now, in 1967, he warned against holding on to the newly conquered territories, because "the majority of the inhabitants of the liberated [sic] territories have remained 'stuck' to their places - a fact that may undermine the very foundation of our state."¹⁵ Territorial expansion without ethnic cleansing was dangerous. This position was also shared by Ben-Gurion himself, now in retirement. In an interview filmed in 1968 (whose footage was rediscovered in 2016) he said that Israel should immediately relinquish most of the territories it had taken a year earlier in the Six-Day War, keeping only the Golan Heights (most of whose population had been ethnically cleansed) and east Jerusalem.¹⁶

A parenthetical remark: I must take this opportunity to correct an error of mine. In several articles I quoted an important speech made by Dayan in February 1973, in which he quoted approvingly a statement of Ben-Gurion dating from 1937, in which the latter had said:

Among ourselves [the Zionists] there can be no debate about the integrity of the land of Israel [ie, Palestine], and about our ties and right to the whole of the land... When a Zionist speaks about the integrity of the land, this can only mean colonisation [*hityashvut*] by the Jews of the land in its entirety.¹⁷

I was under the impression that Dayan was delivering a message *on behalf* of Ben-Gurion (who died later in 1973). But it is now clear that in fact Dayan was tacitly *reproaching* his old mentor for backsliding from his former doctrine.

Let me now return to May-June 1967. An important reason why the hawks, led by Dayan, were able to have their way and overcome whatever resistance they met is that they were supported by the prevailing mood of the Hebrew public, product of systematic indoctrination by the Zionist political and cultural establishment. This mood found an emblematic expression in a song composed (both music and lyrics) by Naomi Shemer for a musical festival held on Israel's 19th Day of Independence, on May 15 1967. She must have written it at least a few days earlier, before the Six-Day War was on the horizon. Entitled 'Jerusalem of gold', the song is imbued with yearning for the Old City, across the armistice line with Jordan. Remarkably, it describes the Old City as desolate, uninhabited:

... How the cisterns have dried
The market-place is empty
And no-one frequents the Temple Mount
In the Old City.

And in the caves in the mountain
Winds are howling
And no-one descends to the Dead Sea
By way of Jericho.

Jerusalem of gold
And of bronze, and of light
Behold I am a violin for all your songs.

But as I come to sing to you today,
And to adorn crowns to you
I am the smallest of the youngest of your children
And of the last poet.

For your name scorches the lips
Like the kiss of a seraph
If I forget thee, Jerusalem,
Which is all gold.¹⁸

Of course, this was a pack of lies or, as we say nowadays, alternative facts. The road to Jericho was busy with traffic, the Temple Mount thronging with worshippers, and the market-place bustling with shoppers. But they were Arabs - and, being natives, were non-existent to the exclusionary colonising vision.

Religious Zionism

Shemer's song soon became a hit, and was incessantly played on the radio during the following weeks, from the moment expectation of war began to mount.

On May 24 I was called up for duty in the reserve section of the Jerusalem brigade. As we were waiting to be kitted up, we were handed a duplicated sheet. On its verso side was printed... yes, you guessed it: Naomi Shemer's song. On the other, recto side, entitled "Battle page", was a message from the Jerusalem district commander, colonel Eliezer Amitai:

Soldiers and commanders!

This time we have not come for exercises or training. We have come to prove that all the exercises and training were worthwhile.

This time we have come to warn the nearby enemy that he should not dare to move. We have come to remind him that if he starts hostilities his own territory will be the battlefield.¹⁹

This time we have come to remind the enemy that if we will it - the [Wailing] Wall, Mount Scopus and even Jericho are ours.

Defenders of Jerusalem!

I am proud of those whom I have recently arrived to command. Your devotion, fitness and equipment instil in me, in the IDF supreme command, and in the inhabitants of Jerusalem trust that you can be relied upon.

The handful of fighters who defended the city with scant arms and who broke its siege in 1948 is succeeded by a generation trained and equipped to complete the task - if called to do so.

I realised at once that this was a significant

document, and made sure to keep my copy safe. It is still with me today, after all these years.

But, at that moment, something happened that astonished and alarmed me. My reserve unit was made up of a cross-section of the male Hebrew population of Jerusalem in the late 20s and 30s age group - excluding the ultra-orthodox, who are exempt from military service. As such, it included a fair proportion of religious men, mostly national-religious Zionists. These - unlike the black-garbed, long-bearded ultra-orthodox - did not differ in appearance from the rest of us, except for one tell-tale item of clothing: a knitted skullcap. The moment that group finished reading the colonel's message, they started jumping up and down, singing and dancing ecstatically. They clearly felt that their great era is about to dawn.

This surprised me, because at the time the religious Zionists, represented in the Knesset by the National-Religious Party,²⁰ were on the whole quite dovish. Or so they appeared to be, because of their moderate old political leadership, traditional allies of labour Zionism. After 1967, knitted-skullcap national-religious Zionism was to mutate and become ultra-hawkish, and the NRP was replaced by the extremist messianic Jewish Home party. But this mutation, like other post-1967 transformations, had germinated and taken root well before the Six-Day War.

Its main hotbed was a Jerusalem *yeshiva* (religious college), Mercaz HaRav Kook, founded in 1924.²¹ Its founder, rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), was a Zionist of a kind very rare in his day. While most Zionists were unbelievers, and most orthodox rabbis were adamant in opposing Zionism, AI Kook was a messianic Zionist theologian. According to his theology, Zionist colonisation of Palestine and the eventual founding of a Jewish state were part of a divine plan, culminating in the coming of the messiah. His sophisticated political doctrine advocated alliance with the secular Zionists, tolerating their godlessness.²² They should be humoured, even indulged: he compared them to the messiah's ass - a dumb brute but a divine instrument, bearing the saviour on its back.²³ This doctrine, in a cruder and more extreme form, was preached by his son and disciple, Zvi Yehuda Kook, who headed the *yeshiva* in the crucial years 1951-82. In that nest were hatched vipers such as Moshe Levinger, Hanan Porat and other main leaders of the post-1967 fanatic religious settlers. Many others were influenced by its theology - as no doubt were the ecstatic members of my reserve unit.

Over the 50 years since 1967, extremist religious Zionism has become the energising powerhouse of Israeli politics, particularly of the colonisation drive. While still a political minority, it is a determined one, whose messianic zeal cannot be matched by the pusillanimous pale and bankrupt secular Zionist opposition.

Marxists will not be surprised to find that an ideology that becomes dominant in a society is one best suited to its material reality. In the present case the material reality is military possession by Israel of adjacent colonisable territories - an almost irresistible attraction for a settler state that enjoys overwhelming advantage in the local and regional balance of power, as well as unstinting support by the global hegemonic empire.

Messianic religious Zionism provides the zeal needed for implanting colonising outposts in hostile ground stolen from its indigenous people. Moderate Zionists have no real intellectual or moral weapon against this ideology. Because, as AI Kook surely realised, it is not the case that his doctrine was a theologised version of secular Zionism; on the contrary, mainstream Zionism has always been a superficially secularised version of a messianic theology. This was from the very start of Zionist colonisation

the basis for claiming legitimacy for its project of taking possession of a populated land. This too is today the underlying logic of the claim that "Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people". A worldwide 'Jewish people' is fundamentally a religion-based concept; as Sa'adia Ga'on (882/892-942CE), one of the highest authorities of Judaism, put it, "Our people is a people only because of the Torah (religious law)".²⁴ And its claim over the 'Land of Israel' is based on nothing but theological cod-history.

In earlier phases of the Zionist project, when colonialism was supported even by large sections of international social democracy, 'leftwing' labour Zionism could provide adequate ideological cover for the 'pioneering' colonisers of Palestine. The messiah's silly ass could imagine it has no rider. But in the post-colonial era this would no longer do. Thus, in the public controversy that erupted in Israel after the Six-Day War, moderate, 'left' Zionists found themselves at a disadvantage faced with the hawkish annexationists.

For example, Amos Oz, worried by the demographic peril posed by a large Arab population, came out against the horrifying overtones accompanying the annexationist orgy. He described the arguments citing Jewish "historical" rights over the "entire Land of Israel" as "hallucinations of a myth". He went on to assert that territorial rights and political borders can only be based on the demographic principle: every people has a right over the territory it inhabits and in which it constitutes a majority. Any other principle is baseless.²⁵

An annexationist polemicist had no trouble pointing out the weakness of Oz's position:

This criterion - 'who inhabits this piece of land today' - can in no way be the sole criterion. Because if Amos Oz would apply it, and it alone, *Zionism has no justification at all*.

If Amos Oz approves of the borders within which we existed so far because they have a demographic rationale, he should ask himself whether that demographic situation that determined the borders had always existed or was created in a colonising process. Indeed, according to a demographic criterion we did not have, at the start of the realisation of Zionism, any right over this country! The entire right followed from hallucinations of a myth. This is what the anti-Zionists have always claimed. Nevertheless we were not prepared to accept a given demographic situation as the sole criterion. We did everything to alter the demographic situation. Is it permissible to do this? If it is not - there is no justification to our very existence here. If it is - there is nothing sacred about the borders determined by one specific military confrontation [ie, the 1948 war - MM], and it is permissible to alter the demographic reality in other zones as well.²⁶

I could cite many more illustrations showing how easy it was for the annexationists to win the intra-Zionist debate. Thus it has come to pass that, 50 years later, a leader of the messianic Jewish Home party, deputy speaker of the Knesset and member of the ruling coalition Bezalel Smotrich, made a public speech in which he offered Israel's Palestinian Arab subjects three options: leave the occupied territories, continue to live there with second-class status, or continue resisting, in which case "the Israel Defence Forces will know what to do". Asked if he intended to wipe out whole families, including women and children, Smotrich replied, "In war, as in war."²⁷

Professor Daniel Blatman rightly described Smotrich's kind offer as "chilling words that are liable to lead Israel into committing the horrific crime of genocide." He went on to say:

Smotrich's admiration for the biblical

genocidaire, Joshua bin Nun, leads him to adopt values that resemble those of the German SS. Naturally, he didn't take the trouble to make such comparisons, since someone who supports genocide doesn't try to understand the world view of the genocidaire who preceded him.²⁸

Comparison of Israeli politicians with the SS is strong stuff, but prof Blatman must know what he is talking about: he is described by *Ha'aretz* as a "historian of the holocaust and [sic] genocide at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem". And in any case it is odious to assume that genocide can only be committed by gentiles ●

Notes

1. A good overview is Avi Shlaim's 'Israel: poor little Samson' in A Shlaim and WR Louis (eds) *The 1967 Arab-Israeli war: origins and consequences* Cambridge 2012. Other essays in this collection provide important many-sided background material. The Wikipedia entry - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War - is heavily biased in favour of Israel's viewpoint; in particular, it omits to mention Israel's deliberate escalation of the border skirmishes with Syria during May 1967, which started the chain of events leading to the war. It is silent on the threat made by Israel's army chief of staff, general Yitzhak Rabin, in a newspaper interview on May 12, to occupy Damascus and overthrow the Syrian regime (see A Shlaim *op cit*).
2. The Wikipedia entry, despite its ideological bias, is a useful reference for the course of the war itself.
3. Blurb of A Shlaim and WR Louis *op cit*.
4. See A Shlaim, 'The protocol of Sèvres, 1956: anatomy of a war plot' *International Affairs*, 73:3 (1997), pp509-530. Reprinted in D Tal (ed) *The 1956 war: collusion and rivalry in the Middle East* London 2001, pp119-43.
5. English translation: *Self-criticism after the defeat* London 2011. See also R Khalidi, 'The 1967 war and the demise of Arab nationalism: chronicle of a death foretold' in A Shlaim and WR Louis *op cit*.
6. This relationship started before the creation of Israel, when France secretly assisted the Zionist underground terrorist activity against the British Mandate. See J Barr *A line in the sand: Britain, France and the struggle that shaped the Middle East* New York 2011.
7. See B Morris *Israel's border wars 1949-1956* Oxford 1993; and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dassault_Mystère_IV.
8. For data on US aid to Israel, see JM Sharp *US foreign aid to Israel* Congressional Research Service, December 22 2016: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>.
9. *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew) May 18 2017: www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.789980.
10. *Davar* (Histadrut daily) October 30 1959.
11. Message to the Israeli forces in Sharm al-Sheikh, broadcast on Israel radio November 6 1956; repeated the following day in a speech to the Knesset.
12. I Pappé *Ten myths about Israel* London 2017. Also see his more recent *The biggest prison on Earth: the history of the Israeli occupation* London 2017.
13. Her autobiography, *Woman of violence: memoirs of a young terrorist, 1943-1948*, was published in 1966.
14. *Lamerhav* (labour-Zionist daily paper) March 8 1964.
15. *Davar* September 19 1967.
16. *The Forward* July 26 2016: <http://tinyurl.com/m5wmev>.
17. *Ha'aretz* February 18 1973.
18. With additional verse celebrating the 'liberation' of the old city: http://israeliforever.org/interact/multimedia/yerushalayim_shel_zahav; <http://hebrewsongs.com/?song=yerushalayimshelzahav>. By the way, the song's title and refrain bear a passing (?) resemblance to a devotional composition by the 12th-century mystic and polymath, St Hildegard of Bingen: *O Ierusalem, aurea civitas, ornata regis purpura; o edificatio summe bonitatis que es lux nunquam obscurata*. See and listen: www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W2932_GBAY8403904.
19. In the event it was Israel that made the first move against Jordan: early on June 5 it destroyed not only the Egyptian airforce, but also all but one of Jordan's serviceable combat airplanes, as well as three Hunters on loan from Iraq. See www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/jordan/rjaf.htm.
20. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Religious_Party.
21. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercaz_HaRav_Kook.
22. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Isaac_Kook.
23. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Messiah's_Donkey; 'The Messiah's donkey: settlers fire on Palestinian villagers as the Israeli military watches': <http://tinyurl.com/ybd2njgb>.
24. Quoted by I Shahak, 'The Jewish religion and its attitude to non-Jews' *Khamsin* No8, 1981: <http://tinyurl.com/yak2wvpr>.
25. A Oz, 'The minister of defence and the Lebensraum' *Davar* August 22 1967.
26. A Renan *Davar* September 14 1967. Emphases in the original.
27. T Persico, 'Why religious Zionism is growing darker' *Ha'aretz* May 16 2017: www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.789226.
28. D Blatman, 'The Israeli lawmaker heralding genocide against Palestinians' *Ha'aretz* May 23 2017: www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.791115.

REVIEW

Collaboration that haunts Zionism

Paul Bogdanor Kasztner's crimes Routledge, 2016, pp335, £61.59

For years the Zionist movement defended Rudolf Kasztner - the leader of Zionism in Hungary during the Nazi occupation - against charges of collaboration with the Nazis. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust propaganda museum in Jerusalem, gave its stamp of approval to the efforts to rehabilitate him. Tommy Lapid, chairman of its board of directors, is on record as saying: "There was no man in the history of the Holocaust who saved more Jews and was subjected to more injustice than Israel Kasztner."¹

At first sight it is somewhat strange that Paul Bogdanor - who combines anti-communism and Zionism in equal measure - has written a book which accepts that Kasztner was a Nazi collaborator who deceived Hungary's Jews into boarding the deportation trains to Auschwitz with false information about being 'resettled' in a fictitious place called Kenyermeze. Why then this about-turn?

Bogdanor claims that he initially set out to clear Kasztner. He was "tired of seeing Kasztner's name come up repeatedly in anti-Zionist propaganda". Bogdanor now argues that "the anti-Zionist claim that 'Kasztner was part of a Zionist conspiracy with the Nazis to exterminate the Jews of Europe' is nonsense". He was "not acting on behalf of the Zionist movement: he betrayed it".²

In the above quotation we can see where Bogdanor is coming from. No anti-Zionist has ever alleged that there was a Zionist conspiracy with the Nazis to exterminate Europe's Jews - this kind of falsehood is Bogdanor's trademark. It is a straw man. The Zionist movement did, however, *collaborate* with the Nazis.

When I accused Bogdanor of being a columnist for David Horowitz's *Frontpage Mag*,³ he denied this, despite being listed as a columnist.⁴ He also contributed an article, 'Chomsky's war against Israel', to *The Anti-Chomsky reader*,⁵ edited by Horowitz, which is not surprising, since *Frontpage Mag* published Bogdanor's article, 'The top 100 Chomsky lies'. Bogdanor has an obsession with Jewish anti-Zionists - myself included.⁶

The reason why anything that Bogdanor writes should be treated with the utmost caution is his political and intellectual dishonesty. Bogdanor would defend the slaughter of the innocents if he thought that King Herod was a Zionist.

An example of Bogdanor's method is his criticism of Lenni Brenner, whom Ken Livingstone relied on when he said that Hitler supported Zionism. Bogdanor criticised Brenner's use of an interview with Adolf Eichmann by Wilhelm Sassen, a Dutch Nazi journalist.⁷ Bogdanor described this interview as a "transparently worthless source".⁸ Of course, just because a quotation is from a Nazi war criminal does not make it invalid, especially given that the interviews were conducted freely, long before his kidnapping.⁹ Otherwise one must eschew all Nazi sources: eg, *The Goebbels diaries*.

Bogdanor asked if I was unaware that "Nazi mass murderers - and Eichmann above all - were pathological liars".¹⁰ In reply I asked whether it is a principle that one never quotes or cites what Nazi murderers say? Perhaps one should not quote Nazi documents too? Sometimes even liars tell the truth. Or maybe Bogdanor is an exception to the rule?¹¹ His response was: "Just as citing a Nazi sympathiser comes naturally to one who treats Adolf Eichmann as a truth-teller, so reliance on Stalinists is only to be expected



Zionists persuaded people to take trains to Auschwitz

from a writer for the Communist Party of Great Britain."¹² Imagine my surprise when Bogdanor's book came out and there was a reference in the footnotes to Eichmann's interview for *Life* magazine!¹³

Bogdanor is obviously unaware that the Sassen interview with Eichmann was used extensively by the Israeli prosecution in the Eichmann trial. Eichmann's defence was that he was just following orders. The prosecution quoted from his interview: "I thought my orders through and participated in their implementation because I was an idealist."¹⁴ Eichmann was then cross-examined using the "efficient weapon of the memoir that Eichmann dictated to Sassen".¹⁵ Presumably the prosecutor in the Eichmann trial was unaware that he was quoting from a "transparently worthless source".

The Eichmann trial, which was held in Israel in 1961, was, according to Israeli historian and journalist Tom Segev, meant to "expunge the historical guilt that had been attached to the Mapai [Israeli Labour Party] leadership since the Kasztner trial".¹⁶

Kasztner in the dock

Ever since Kasztner had come to live in Palestine in early 1947, rumours had followed him. An inquiry in 1946 by the Jewish Agency, at the Zionist Congress in Basel, dismissed complaints brought by Moshe Krausz, who headed the Palestine Office in Budapest, for "lack of evidence".¹⁷

Bogdanor says the Labour Zionists "felt compelled to issue a statement praising Kasztner's 'tremendous work during the war'" (p264). It is difficult to see why Mapai felt under any such compulsion unless they felt that a failure to defend Kasztner would also rebound on their own record during the Holocaust. Nor does Bogdanor explain why "the Jewish Agency had unceremoniously fired Krausz from his post" (p270).

Kasztner, a senior official in Mapai, brought a libel action, at the insistence of the state, against Malchiel Gruenwald, a Hungarian Jew who had published a newsletter alleging that Kasztner was guilty of collaboration with the Nazis.

The first comprehensive account of what became known as the Kasztner trial was *Perfidy* by the Hollywood producer and screenwriter, Ben Hecht. Hecht was a supporter of the dissident Zionists, Peter Bergson and Shmuel Merlin of the Emergency Committee

to Save the Jews of Europe. Bergson and Merlin had incurred the wrath of the US Zionist leadership under Stephen Wise and Nahum Goldman because they insisted on rescuing Jews, whatever the destination, whereas it was a cardinal principle for the Zionist movement that rescue should be centred on Palestine only.

When Hecht's book came out he was demonised. My copy includes a 'review' article, 'Ben Hecht's *Kampf*', by Shlomo Katz published in *Midstream* magazine. Hecht was subject to the same personal attacks and denigration as Hannah Arendt, whose *Eichmann in Jerusalem* - a book based on her reports of the Eichmann trial for the *New Yorker* - had touched on exactly those subjects that the trial had been designed to avoid.¹⁸ Arendt described how

... the campaign (was) conducted with all the well-known means of image-making and opinion-manipulation ... [it was] as though the pieces written against the book (and more frequently against its author) "came out of a mimeographing machine" (Mary McCarthy) ... the clamour centred on the 'image' of a book which was never written, and touched upon subjects that often had not only not been mentioned by me, but had never occurred to me before.

The evidence accumulated against Kasztner, despite repeated attempts to exonerate him: for example, Gaylen Ross's film *Killing Kasztner: the Jew who dealt with the Nazis*¹⁹ or Motti Lerner's *Kasztner*, as well as Yechiam Weitz's *The man who was murdered twice* and Anna Porter's semi-fictional *Kasztner's train*.

The Holocaust historians at Yad Vashem, Israel's official "World Holocaust Memorial Center", led by Yehuda Bauer, have for years tried to exonerate Kasztner. Bauer wrote that

it seems to me there are not many people who [like Kasztner] saved many Jews in the Holocaust. There are certainly not many who saved for sure 1,684 Jews and contributed to the rescue of tens or hundreds of thousands.²⁰

The trial began on January 1 1954, presided over by Benjamin Halevi of the Jerusalem district court: On June 21 Halevi found that "when Kasztner received this present [a train out of Hungary for Kasztner's friends and the Zionist/Jewish elite] from the Nazis, he

had sold his soul to the German Satan."²¹ Halevi went on:

Eichmann did not want a second Warsaw. For this reason, the Nazis exerted themselves to mislead and bribe the Jewish leaders ...

The Nazi patronage of Kasztner, and their agreement to let him save 600 prominent Jews, were part of the plan to exterminate the Jews ... The opportunity of rescuing prominent people appealed to him greatly. He considered the rescue of the most important Jews as a great personal success and a success for Zionism.²²

On May 2 1944, 13 days before the trains started for Auschwitz, Kasztner had reached an agreement with Hermann Krumei, Eichmann's deputy in Hungary:

Kasztner possessed at that moment the first news about the preparation of the gas chambers in Auschwitz for Hungary's Jews ... [he could] warn the leaders and the masses about the real danger of the imminent total deportation facing Hungary's Jews, and immunise them against Nazi deceptions ... The other way opened for Kasztner by Krumei was the method of rescuing Jews by the Nazis themselves, with their help, according to agreement with the heads of the SS ...²³

Deceit

On April 24 Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Rosenberg, two Jewish escapees from Auschwitz, reached Slovakia. They described to the Jewish Council Auschwitz's purpose (which previously had been thought of only as a labour camp) and provided details of the gas chambers and crematoria, as well as an estimate of the numbers of those killed. On or around April 29 Kasztner was given a copy of their report - known as The Auschwitz Protocols - and one was sent to his counterpart in Switzerland, Nathan Schwab. Both Kasztner and Schwab took a decision to suppress them:

... Kasztner understood very well ... that the Prominents as a whole and his friends in Kluj in particular would not be rescued from the Holocaust if the mass heard a hint about the real purpose of the operation: to save the leaders from the Holocaust prepared for the people.

The association with the heads of the SS, on which Kasztner placed the entire fate of the rescue, forced him to withhold his information about

the extermination plans from the majority of Hungary's Jews (p145).²⁴

Once Kasztner had agreed to be a partner of Eichmann, there was no way out: "Kasztner didn't want to destroy by his left hand what he built with his right ..."²⁵

Kasztner took no steps, as leader of the Jewish Agency Rescue Committee (Vaada),²⁶ to warn other Jewish communities, despite having access to a telephone and permits with which to travel.²⁷ The evidence given by survivors of the Hungarian Holocaust was that Kasztner and his friends went out of their way to deceive the Jews as to the destination of the trains. They were told they were going to be resettled in Kenyermeze.

Hecht quotes Levi Blum, who told of a 1948 celebration for Kasztner in Tel Aviv, given by those on the train, and how he confronted Kasztner:

I yelled at Kasztner, "You were a Quisling! You were a murderer! ... I know that you, Kasztner, are to blame for the Jews of Hungary going to Auschwitz. You knew what the Germans were doing to them. And you kept your mouth shut." Kasztner didn't answer me. I asked him, "Why did you distribute postcards from Jews supposed to be in Kenyermeze?"²⁸

Elie Wiesel, the Zionist activist, was deported with his family to Auschwitz. Their non-Jewish servant infiltrated the ghetto and begged them to come with her to a shelter she had prepared: "... we would surely have accepted her offer, had we known that 'destination unknown' meant Birkenau" (pp109-10). Kasztner did not merely suppress the Auschwitz Protocols. He, Vaada and the Jewish Council actively deceived Jews as to their destination. Both the Jewish leaders and the Zionists collaborated in the destruction of the Hungarian Jewish community.

Back to the aftermath of the 1954 trial. The Mapai (Labour Zionist) government submitted an immediate appeal to the supreme court against Halevi's verdict. Kasztner's representative, attorney general Chaim Cohen, outlined the basis for the appeal:

If in Kasztner's opinion, rightly or wrongly, he believed that one million Jews were hopelessly doomed, he was allowed not to inform them of their fate; and to concentrate on the saving of the few ... He was entitled to make a deal with the Nazis for the saving of a few hundreds and entitled not to warn the millions. In fact, if that's how he saw it, rightly or wrongly, that was his duty.

... But what does all this have to do with collaboration? ... It has always been our Zionist tradition to select the few out of the many in arranging the immigration to Palestine. Are we therefore to be called traitors?²⁹

In January 1958 the supreme court cleared Kasztner by a majority of four to one. Shimon Agranat gave the leading opinion for the majority. Kasztner "had the right to keep silent", said Agranat, and his decision to include a high number of Zionists on the train was "perfectly rational".³⁰

The supreme court did not challenge the facts found by the lower court. Rather it disagreed with the verdict on political grounds. All five judges upheld Halevi's verdict on the "criminal and perjurious way" in which Kasztner after the war had saved Nazi war criminal Kurt Becher,³¹ the personal

representative of Himmler in Hungary.

Kasztner was extremely proud that he had rescued the “prominent Jews”.³² There was no doubt that he was aware of the fate of those who were being deported. He boasted that he was the best informed about the perilous situation of the Jews at that time: “We had, as early as 1942, a complete picture of what had happened in the east to the Jews deported to Auschwitz and the other extermination camps.”³³

Chaim Cohen said:

The man Kasztner does not stand here as a private individual. He was a recognised representative, official or non-official, of the Jewish National Institutes in Palestine and of the Zionist Executive; and I come here in this court to defend the representative of our national institutions.³⁴

Bogdanor never explains why, if Kasztner was a lone individual, he was defended so avidly by the Zionist institutions, including its supreme court.

Bogdanor's motives

When Bogdanor says that his original intention was to write a book exonerating Kasztner we can believe him. The evidence is so damning against Kasztner that the first question to ask is why, for over 60 years, has the Zionist movement defended a war criminal who, Bogdanor admits, was a Nazi agent?

At the Nuremberg trials Kasztner had not merely given evidence on behalf of Kurt Becher of the Waffen SS, but also on behalf of SS general Hans Juttner and Herman Krumei - Eichmann's deputy in Hungary, who organised the mechanics of the deportations. Kasztner even tried to save Dieter Wisliceny, the butcher of Slovakian and Salonikan Jewry, from the gallows in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

Bogdanor pretends that Kasztner gave this testimony as a private individual. In fact he represented both the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress. Shoshana Barri concludes in her painstaking dissertation: “It is clear, however, that the Agency did know of the testimony's existence, since Kasztner's intervention on behalf of Becher at Nuremberg is mentioned in his July 1948 letter to Kaplan.”³⁵ Kasztner emphasised in his Nuremberg statement of August 4 1947 that “he was testifying not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress.”³⁶

Bogdanor argues, citing an interview in *Ha'aretz* of December 2 1994 (conducted by Gideon Raphael, who helped found Israel's foreign ministry), that both he and Eliahu Dobkin of the Jewish Agency had strongly objected to Kasztner testifying on behalf of the Jewish Agency. Dobkin, who was a signatory to Israel's Declaration of Independence, denied at the trial that he had even heard of Becher. Raphael in the same interview accepted that Dobkin's testimony at the Kasztner trial - ie, that he had never heard of Becher - was a lie. Barri refers to archival material of the Jewish Agency, which suggests that they knew of Kasztner's testimony on behalf of Becher.

Bogdanor asks why Kasztner changed his testimony between September 1945 - when he gave an affidavit condemning Becher, Krumei and company as cold-blooded killers - and January 1946, when he called them rescuers. Why did he again change his mind when he wrote a 300-page report for the Jewish Agency in the summer of 1946, before giving his testimony at Nuremberg in 1947? Bogdanor suggests that Kasztner was coming under pressure from Holocaust survivors arriving in Israel, who alleged that he was a collaborator. According to Bogdanor, the way to clear his name was to show that these Nazi war criminals had actually been going

around with Kasztner saving Jews from extermination. In other words the best way for Kasztner to prove he was not a collaborator was by testifying in favour of Nazi war criminals!

What this crackpot theory demonstrates is that Bogdanor will go to any lengths in order *not* to reach the most obvious answers. The reason that the Zionist leadership in Israel had no objection to Kasztner's testimony was because they knew that they too were equally guilty (pp254-59). After the war the Israeli state employed Nazi war criminals like Walter Rauff, the inventor of the gas truck. Clearly there was no principled objection to Kasztner's testifying on behalf of Nazi war criminals.³⁷

What is remarkable about Bogdanor's book is that it contains very little that was not already known. The primary evidence against Kasztner came from the survivors of the Hungarian Holocaust, who testified that they had been deliberately fed misinformation to persuade them that they should board the trains. Bogdanor tries to exonerate the Zionist movement by pretending that, but for Kasztner, the Zionist resistance and Hehalutz youth movement would have led an uprising and that the deportations would have been foiled. Randolph Braham, the historian of the Hungarian Holocaust, quotes Gyula Kádár, the former head of the Hungarian military intelligence service, as saying that “If [Hungary] had had as many ‘resistance fighters’ before March 19 1944 as it had in May 1945 and later, Hitler would not have risked the occupation of the country.”³⁸ According to Edmund Veessenmayer, Hitler's plenipotentiary in Hungary, “a day in Yugoslavia was more dangerous than a year in Hungary.”³⁹

Braham writes that “Like the claims of many other rescuers, the post-war accounts by their leaders are also sometimes self-serving and shrouded in myths.... One cannot possibly determine the exact number of Jews who were actually rescued by the Halutzim. Their rescue and relief operations, however relatively modest, were real. The myths lie in the leaders' basically self-aggrandizing post-war accounts that exaggerate both the scope and accomplishments of these operations.”

Braham specifically mentions Professor Yehudah Bauer's reliance on ‘self-serving testimonies’ that Jozsef Meir, of the left-Zionist Ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir, was involved “in sabotage and the derailing of trains” commenting caustically that “No corroboration for this claim has been found to date.”⁴⁰ Approximately 1,500 Hungarian Jews escaped across the Hungarian-Romanian border, the majority of whom “managed to save themselves without the aid of any rescue groups.”⁴¹ Braham quotes Gyula Kádár: “Had Hungary had as many mass rescuers during the German occupation period as were identified or self-proclaimed after the war, most of the Jews of Hungary would have survived the Holocaust.” Braham concludes that “there is a potential danger that the myths of rescue, if left unchallenged, may acquire a life of their own, threatening the integrity of the historical record of the Holocaust.”

The problem with Bogdanor's account of the Kasztner affair is that he has no integrity. His only concern is to exculpate a Zionist movement that even the most assiduous and devoted of Zionist historians - such as Shabtai Teveth, Ben Gurion's official biographer - raise serious questions about. Teveth titled the chapter on the Holocaust in his biography of Ben Gurion ‘Disaster means strength’, writing that “the war and the Holocaust were not in his power to control, but he again resolved to extract the greatest possible benefit from the catastrophe”. Teveth concluded: “If there was a line in Ben Gurion's mind between the beneficial disaster and an all-destroying catastrophe, it must have been a very

fine one.”⁴² Such subtleties entirely pass Bogdanor by.

Vaada, which was formed in January 1943, allegedly gave assistance to refugees from Poland, Vienna and other Nazi-occupied countries. One suspects that it mainly confined its assistance to Zionists. In his first chapter, ‘The underground’, Bogdanor leads us to believe that there was a veritable rescue organisation that saved up to 25,000 Jews. In fact most Jews who escaped to Hungary from Slovakia and other countries did so without any help from Vaada.

Rudolph Vrba gives us an insight into how Vaada operated, when he described how he fled as a boy of 17 across the border from Slovakia to Hungary. In Budapest he went to the headquarters of the Zionist organisation. After having told his story,

a stern-faced man in his middle-30s responded: “You are in Budapest illegally. Is that what you are trying to say?” “Yes.” “Don't you know you are breaking the law?” I nodded, wondering how a man with such a thick skull could hold down what seemed like a responsible position. “And you expect to get work here without documents?” “With false documents.”

At this point Vrba remarks that, if he had torn up the *Talmud* and jumped on it,

I do not think I could have shocked him more ... he roared: “Don't you realise that it's my duty to hand you over to the police?” Now it was my turn to gape. A Zionist handing a Jew over to fascist police? I thought I must be going mad. “Get out of here! Get out as fast as a bad wind!” I left, utterly bewildered. It was nearly three years before I realised just what [the National Hungarian Jewish Relief Action] and the men inside it represented.

Vrba was forced to make his way back to Slovakia. Caught at the border, he ended up in Majdanek concentration camp and then Auschwitz.⁴³

Time and again in his book Bogdanor betrays his primary motivation - to exonerate the Zionist movement at Kasztner's expense. When he mentions the leaders of the Central Jewish Council he describes these bourgeois worthies - led by Samu Stern, a friend of Hungarian regent Miklós Horthy - as “anti-Zionist personalities”. They were nothing of the kind. Their distinguishing feature was that they were *bourgeois* politically. As even Bogdanor mentions, Abwehr (Nazi intelligence) agents “offered Kasztner's committee control over the official Judenrat” (p19).

Bogdanor cites Alex Weissberg when accepting that “in the few days that followed the German invasion we became the leaders of Hungarian Jewry. Even Samu Stern deferred to their decisions” (p24). Bogdanor cites the testimony of Kasztner at the trial: “The Judenrat body handling the provincial towns was a Zionist body” (p101). Vaada had immunity passes and were able to use their own cars, had telephones and did not have to wear the yellow star.

Representative of Zionism

What then can be said in favour of Bogdanor's book? There can be little doubt now as to the role of Kasztner in betraying and deceiving the Jews of Hungary - not least in his home town of Cluj (Kolosvar), which was only two-three miles from the Romanian border. In falsely claiming that it was impossible to cross because the Nazis had increased their patrols, Kasztner actively helped send the Jews of that region to their death. It is a fact that most of those who attempted to cross that border actually succeeded.

Bogdanor's recounting of the testimony of the Hungarian Holocaust survivors in the Kasztner trial and how they were tricked into getting onto the trains is revealing (pp89-94), although most of this too is in *Perfidy*. But his suggestion that Kasztner acted as a lone wolf is unsustainable. He was one of a number of members of Vaada and all but one survived the Holocaust (pp52-56). The suggestion that “the Jewish Agency was being deceived by Kasztner” has no foundation. By his own account, the Jewish Agency ‘Rescue Committee’ had been transformed into “a client body of the most dangerous Nazis” in the SS (p59). Even Bogdanor is forced to admit, regarding Palestine, that there was a “disastrous aversion of the Labour Zionists to publicity in matters of rescue” (note 16, p85).⁴⁴ However, he never asks why this was the case.

Repeatedly the Jewish Agency executive in Jerusalem refused to take the Nazi threat to Hungarian Jewry seriously. Vanya Pomerantz, a member of the agency's Istanbul mission, informed them on May 25 1944 that 12,000 Jews a day would be deported, beginning the following week (in fact the deportations had already begun). Yitzhak Gruenbaum was alone in describing the Nazi ‘offer’ as a “satanic provocation”.⁴⁵ Bogdanor says that at their meeting of June 11 (and also May 25) Gruenbaum's colleagues, including Ben Gurion, were “confused” because of Nazi deception.

Given that over five million Jews had already been murdered by the Nazis, it was obvious that the Jews of Hungary were in mortal danger. It was not ‘confusion’, but indifference, that led the Jewish Agency executive initially to reject even a call on the Allies to bomb Auschwitz or the railway lines leading to the camp. They had a more important priority: building their racist state. The fact that it was the Swiss, not the Palestinian, press that broke the news of the deportations, which led to Horthy putting an end to them, speaks volumes. The Jewish Agency was content with private, routine pleas to the Allies. It undertook no propaganda campaign to put pressure on the Horthy regime.

It took the Czech government in exile and the Swiss press, at the end of June, in tandem with Pope Pius XII, King Gustav of Sweden and the American bombing of Budapest on July 2 1944, to halt the deportations to Auschwitz. Despite the Zionist axiom that Jews can only rely on other Jews, it is a fact that it was non-Jews, not the Zionists, who saved a quarter of a million Hungarian Jews. It was the Swedish count, Folke Bernadotte, who was responsible for negotiating with Himmler for the rescue of over 30,000 concentration camp inmates; and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg who was responsible for rescuing thousands of Jews in Budapest. Bernadotte's reward was to be murdered by pro-Nazi Zionist terrorists of the Stern Gang, with the knowledge and support of the Labour Zionist Haganah, in Jerusalem in September 1948 (pp130-31). Wallenberg died at the hands of the Stalinist criminals in Russia.

Bogdanor accepts that Kasztner had been “recruited as a collaborator by the Nazis” (p71), but this is, of course, exactly what anti-Zionists have maintained for years! And his conclusion - that Kasztner claimed false credit regarding the Jews sent to Strasshoff in Vienna (some 12,000-16,000 of whom survived, because the Nazis needed labour to dig anti-tank ditches) - is well known. I also agree with his conclusion regarding the Nazi offer of one million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks to be used against the Russians in the east - the so-called ‘Blood for Trucks’ deal.⁴⁶ It was clearly meant to distract from the deportations.

What is abundantly clear from Bogdanor's book is that the Zionist movement did indeed collaborate with the Nazis during the war and

obstructed the rescue attempts of others. This continues to haunt the Zionist movement today, Bogdanor notwithstanding ●

Tony Greenstein

Notes

1. *Ha'aretz* July 23 2007: www.haaretz.com/yad-vashem-hopes-kasztner-archive-will-end-vilification-1.226041.
2. www.timesofisrael.com/on-quest-to-clear-kasztner-historian-shocked-to-prove-nazi-collaboration.
3. ‘Why Ken Livingstone got it right over Nazi support for Zionism’, June 17 2016: http://azvsas.blogspot.co.uk/2016/06/why-ken-livingstone-got-it-right-over.html.
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6. ‘Tony Greenstein and the Nazi apologists’: www.paulbogdanor.com/antisemitism/greenstein/nazi.html.
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8. http://fathomjournal.org/an-antisemitic-hoax-lenni-brenner-on-zionist-collaboration-with-the-nazis.
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10. ‘Tony Greenstein's house of cards’: www.paulbogdanor.com/antisemitism/greenstein/tonygreenstein.pdf.
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13. Bogdanor, p27, note 1.
14. S Minerbi *The Eichmann trial diary* New York 2011, p144.
15. *Ibid* p152.
16. T Segev *The seventh million* New York 1993, p328.
17. *Ibid* p258.
18. *New Yorker* February 16 1963 and subsequent issues: www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/02/16/eichmann-in-jerusalem-i.
19. http://forward.com/culture/116718/kasztner-hero-or-devil.
20. ‘Israel Kasztner vs Hannah Szenes: who was really the hero during the Holocaust?’: www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.557024.
21. B Hecht *Perfidy* New London 1997, p180.
22. *Ibid* pp179-80.
23. Part of Akiva Orr's contribution to Jim Allen's book, *Perdition: a play in two acts* (London 1987), pp88-89.
24. *Ibid* pp91-92. In fact that information was sent to Schwab almost immediately. See F Baron, ‘The “myth” and reality of rescue from the Holocaust: the Karski-Koestler and Vrba-Wetzler reports’ *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies* No2 (2000), pp171-208.
25. A Orr, p90.
26. Porter confirms that Kasztner's job was co-funded by the US-based Joint Distribution Committee, a non-Zionist Jewish charity, along with the Jewish Agency. The latter had sought to set up a Relief and Rescue Committee in Budapest, only to find that one had already been established (A Porter *Kasztner's train* London 2009, p61). Akiva Orr describes Kasztner's Relief Committee as “affiliated” to the Jewish Agency Relief Committee in Palestine (in J Allen *Perdition: a play in two acts* London 1987, p81). Krausz was a member of the religious Zionist Mizrahi, whereas the Jewish Agency was controlled by Mapai. Randolph Braham says: “The Rescue Committee of Budapest was established early in 1942, under the auspices of the Rescue Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine” (*Patterns of Jewish leadership in Nazi Europe 1933-1945* p281, Jerusalem 1979).
27. B Hecht *Perfidy* New London 1997, pp113-15.
28. *Ibid* p109-10.
29. B Hecht *Perfidy* New London 1997, p195.
30. Lob p280.
31. B Hecht *Perfidy* New London 1997, p247.
32. H Arendt *Eichmann in Jerusalem* Old Saybrook 2011, p132; RL Braham *The politics of genocide - holocaust in Hungary* Hilberg 1981, p134.
33. RL Braham *The politics of genocide - holocaust in Hungary* Hilberg 1981, p881.
34. B Hecht *Perfidy* New London 1997, p268, note 159.
35. Kaplan was the Jewish Agency treasurer, as well as being Israel's first finance minister and deputy prime minister.
36. S Barri (Ishoni), ‘The question of Kasztner's testimonies on behalf of Nazi war criminals’ *Journal of Israeli History* 18: 2, 144 (1997).
37. www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/in-the-service-of-the-jewish-state-1.216923.
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39. *Ibid* p990.
40. *Ibid* pp37-39.
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42. S Teveth *The burning ground 1886-1948* Boston 1987, pp854, 851.
43. R Vrba *I cannot forgive* London 1964, pp27-28.
44. Citing Shabtai Beit-Zvi's *Post-Ugandan Zionism on trial* Tel Aviv 1991.
45. S Beit-Zvi *Post-Ugandan Zionism on trial* Tel Aviv 1991, p316 - citing Jewish Agency minutes of May 25 1944.
46. See ‘Zionist-Nazi collaboration and the Holocaust: a historical aberration?’ Lenni Brenner revisited’ *Holy Land Studies* 13.2 (2014), pp187-212.

TERRORISM

The Libyan connection

Those who voted for the bombing in 2011 must share some of the blame for incidents like Manchester, argues **Yassamine Mather**

From accounts in the British media the family of Salman Abedi, the Manchester suicide bomber who perpetrated the horrific attack on May 22, were part of a large community of Libyan exiles in Manchester and other UK cities, who fled Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorial rule in 1980s. Many amongst those who fled Libya were liberal democrats opposed to the strange brand of dictatorship in their country. However, a considerable number were Islamists and, both within Libya and certainly after they settled in the UK, they were influenced by Salafi jihadist ideology. Their mosques and Islamic centres, often financed by Saudi money, became recruiting grounds for al Qa'eda and its various offshoots.

A prominent Libyan opposition group known to have connections with Manchester was the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). It was founded by Libyans who had joined the mujahedin's fight against Soviet forces in Afghanistan and its declared aim was the establishment of an Islamic state in Libya. With Saudi encouragement, UK security forces - eager to play a role in Libya regime change from above - recruited from the group.

According to the website *Tracking Terrorism*,

After the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, LIFG was banned worldwide because of its affiliation with al Qa'eda, which the group has consistently denied, stating that it refused to join the global Islamic front bin Laden declared against the west in 1998. Members of the group participated in the Libyan civil war under the name, Libyan Islamic Movement ...¹

There were many other anti-Gaddafi armed militia groups financed by Middle Eastern countries, with connections to western security forces. Most of them faced a difficult period during the years when Tony Blair's government sought to make peace with Gaddafi. Throughout this period Saudi animosity against Libya persisted and the groups became even more dependent on funds from Riyadh, as well as the Emirates. After 9/11, as far as the security services were concerned, the LIFG - once an ally - became part of the 'enemy', as suddenly did all organisations connected with al Qa'eda.

But western policy towards Gaddafi changed again in 2011, when David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy joined with the US in an alliance to overthrow Gaddafi, and Islamist groups became allies once more. A number of anti-Gaddafi jihadist organisations, indoctrinated in Saudi-financed mosques, returned from Manchester to fight in Tripoli and the south of the country. According to the *Manchester Evening News*,

The city was such a hotbed of anti-Gaddafi feeling that when Benghazi rose up against the colonel's rule, his son, Saif, said it was the work of Libyans in the west - and included the Manchester community in a diatribe on state TV.²

In the same year a senior cleric at Didsbury Mosque, returning from Libya, claimed in an interview with the same paper that he had been captured and tortured by pro-Gaddafi forces before leaving the country and that he was only arrested because he had a British passport - the Libyan authorities accused him of



David Cameron and his Libyan friends

being a spy.

The Didsbury mosque denies any connection with al Qa'eda and IS, and no doubt most of those who pray there have no idea of the murky past of some of the other worshippers, who moved from being al Qa'eda sympathisers in Afghanistan to MI5 sources during the anti-Gaddafi years, who were later involved in regime change in Libya.

Coalition bombing

In the spring of 2011, Cameron, keen to keep up with two other 'pro-democracy' European leaders, Sarkozy and Silvio Berlusconi, asked the Commons to allow UK planes to bomb government positions in Libya. No fewer than 557 MPs, including the majority from Labour, voted with him, the 13 who voted against including Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

In 2016, following a parliamentary review of UK policy towards Libya in 2011, the chair of the foreign affairs committee, Crispin Blunt MP, summed up the findings as follows:

The committee accepts that, as the government response suggests, UK policy in Libya was initially driven by a desire to protect civilians. However, we do not accept that it understood the implications of this, which included collapse of the state, failure of stabilisation and the facilitation of Islamist extremism in Libya.³

So air raids by western air forces (including US, UK, French and Italian warplanes) were instrumental in deposing the Gaddafi regime. However, the groups that took control of the country posed more danger - for the Libyan people and the rest of the world - than the mad dictator they deposed.

According to the website *Middle East Eye*,

The British government operated an 'open door' policy that allowed Libyan exiles and British-Libyan

citizens to join the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi, even though some had been subject to counter-terrorism control orders, *Middle East Eye* can reveal. Several former rebel fighters now back in the UK told *MEE* that they had been able to travel to Libya with "no questions asked" ...⁴

The main group that initially benefited from the downfall of Gaddafi was the National Transitional Council, which was recognised by France as the sole representative of the Libyan people. NTC forces were supported by Nato air power.

However, its grip on power was very short-lived. In January 2012, protesters against the NTC stormed the organisation's Benghazi headquarters, demanding greater transparency, the sacking of all Gaddafi-era officials and that sharia law should be the source of the new constitution.

The Libyan Freedom and Democracy Campaign was a secular group that called for the separation of mosque and state, but it was completely sidelined by Islamists and did not have the kind of material and financial support enjoyed by them. Such Salafi jihadi groups dominated the post-Gaddafi era and the subsequent civil war, which has lasted for six years and is actually a battle between these forces.

The current battles represent an escalation of a long-standing conflict between supporters of Mufti Sheikh Sadeq al-Gheriani, based in Tripoli, and those of a rival brand of Salafism, inspired by Saudi sheikh Rabee al-Madkhali.

According to a report prepared for the European Council of Foreign Affairs, the latter group, "colloquially known as Madkhalis",

detest the Muslim Brotherhood and all forms of political Islam. As a result, many Madkhalis joined Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity in eastern Libya. Their critics suspect

they may be a Trojan horse for Saudi influence in Libya.⁵

Libyan volunteers, who fought in northern Syria as part of IS, set up the first branch of the jihadist group once they returned to their own country in 2014.

Libya has strategic and tactical importance for IS - there are rumours that senior members of its leadership are based there. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the organisation's leader, claims a number of provinces are part of his caliphate. Although the group is benefiting from the chaotic hell that is Libya, in recent months it has lost ground to the Mujahideen Shura Council, a coalition of competing jihadist groups, including LIFG.

Defeats in Syria, Iraq and Libya have meant that IS needed some successes to divert attention from events that have created disillusionment among and led to the desertion of many volunteers. One such 'success' is the dreadful crime committed in Manchester, taking the lives of teenage victims at a pop concert thousands of miles away. In my mind there is no doubt that the Labour MPs who voted for the bombing of Libya in 2011 must share some responsibility for that crime. Those who voted for the bombing in 2011 must take some of the blame not just for Manchester, but for the hell we are currently witnessing in Libya itself.

It is ironic that the atrocity came just two days after Donald Trump's speech at the Saudi-organised conference to form a coalition against 'terrorism', when he implied that Iran's Islamic Republic is the only terrorist force in the region. But, for their part, Iranian ministers have been quick to link the Manchester bombing to the terrorist incident that took the lives of 10 soldiers in Mirjaveh, in southern Iran. On May 23, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassemi said: "We believe that the roots and the ideological origin of the terrorist incidents in Iran's Mirjaveh and the UK's Manchester are one and the

same." The 10 soldiers were killed by the Jaish al-Adl group, which is allegedly funded by Saudi Arabia.

The *Kayhan* daily argued:

The United States, France and England have supported the takfiri terrorist groups in west Asia, and have led thousands of families to lose [their children], but these terrorists have now ... turned into pythons and are returning to the western countries, group by group ... the occasional attacks in France, England, Belgium and America are signs of this (May 24).

In summary, successive UK governments supported Libyan jihadists when they returned from Afghanistan and were needed to help implement regime change in Tripoli, but for a few years in the middle of all this, when Tony Blair was wooing Gaddafi, they became the enemy and that is when they consolidated their alliance with Saudi/Salafi forces. It is amazing that in 2011 the imperialists did not grasp how dangerous their former allies had become.

In the infamous words of Hillary Clinton:

You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them only to bite your neighbours. Eventually those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in the backyard!●

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Notes

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OBITUARY

The myth of 'human rights'

He was the public face of US foreign policy, but Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928-2017) was far from being an original thinker, says Mike Macnair

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who died on May 26, was the former 'national security advisor' (NSA) to president Jimmy Carter. Unlike his predecessor, Henry Kissinger (who is still alive, though older than Brzezinski), he was not a serious intellectual producer. Rather, his publications show him as a dedicated follower of media-intellectual fashions, whose only consistent idea was Polish aristocratic, nationalist hostility to Russia, presumably learnt in his childhood.

He was therefore probably not the architect of the turn in US policy to 'human rights' which took place under Carter, and associated US reorientations (in particular, replacement of third world, nationalist military regimes by corrupt, 'parliamentary' forms, and backing of guerrilla operations against various Soviet-supported regimes, including the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and Islamist mujahedin against the Daoud regime in Afghanistan). But he could be seen as a public face of this turn.¹

He may have had some substantive political effect in world politics - eg, over the Khomeini regime and 'Iran embassy hostages' in 1979-80 - by tipping the balance towards the 'hawks' in the debate in the Carter administration between those in the defence department who wanted to mount a rescue mission and state department doves, who wanted to try diplomacy. If so, his legacy is the incoherence of modern US policy in the Middle East, driven by the desire for revenge on states and regimes which have 'dissed' the US - most prominently Iran.

These issues, and the curious role of the NSA itself, make it worthwhile for this paper to comment briefly on his life and role.

Brzezinski was born in Warsaw on March 28 1928, the son of a Polish diplomat of *szlachta* (gentry) antecedents. His father was posted to Montreal as Polish consul-general in 1938 and brought his family with him. Brzezinski was therefore 11 when the Hitler-Stalin pact and invasion of Poland produced the partitioning of that country - old enough to remember the 'golden days' of a childhood when, in spite of the 1920s land reform, his family's class still largely ran an independent Poland, if under the tutelage of Britain and France.² He was 17 and about to start at McGill University, Montreal, when the Potsdam conference allocated Poland to the Soviet sphere of influence, and in his second year as a student at the time of Churchill's "iron curtain" speech. He did not take up US citizenship till 1958. With this background it is not surprising that he wrote a masters thesis at McGill on Soviet nationalities, and went on to do a PhD at Harvard on 'how Leninism leads to Stalinism' (already a yawnsville topic at that date).

In 1956 he published *The permanent purge: politics in Soviet totalitarianism* just in time for its core thesis that repeated purges were a necessary feature of the regime, to be falsified by Khrushchev's 'thaw'. With this background it is unsurprising that Harvard in 1959 gave tenure not to Brzezinski, but to Kissinger, whose first book - *A world restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace, 1812-1822* (1957) - remains a classic of international relations. Brzezinski went to Columbia (New York) instead, and became actively involved in the semi-academic, semi-business periphery of government policymaking - the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderberg group, and so on. In 1973 when David Rockefeller set up the Trilateral Commission as a 'non-governmental' Bilderberg, Brzezinski was its first director.

Brzezinski's political judgment in his published work continued to be weak: he argued in the later 1950s, on the basis of

the Polish and Hungarian events of 1956, for 'engagement' with eastern European regimes with a view to detaching them from the USSR (in this period, the Hungarian events had pretty much shut down any such aspirations for a while). In 1962 in *Ideology and power in Soviet politics* he denied the possibility of a Sino-Soviet split (two years after the split was already obvious to many observers).

With this track record, it is more or less inevitable to conclude that Brzezinski's continued treatment as a serious academic, and continued employment in policy think-tanks of one sort or another, reflected his 'hawkish' ideological commitments, rather than any serious usefulness of his analysis of international affairs.

NSA

Then in 1976 Jimmy Carter became president, and appointed Brzezinski as NSA. This job is a curious one, and the high-profile role of Brzezinski reflected the previous high-profile role in the same post of Henry Kissinger - who, unlike Brzezinski, went on to become secretary of state.³ The National Security Council (NSC) was created as a coordinating committee as part of the reorganisation of the US state apparatus with the onset of the cold war in 1947. The NSA started out as, essentially, the secretary of this committee.⁴

The people in post were mostly - and appropriately, given the nature of the job - intelligence or military types. This was true even of McGeorge Bundy, NSA under John F Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson 1961-66, and Walt Rostow, NSA under Johnson 1966-69; though they had immediately come from the academy, Bundy had served in military intelligence and Rostow in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the predecessor of the CIA) during World War II. Nixon's appointment of Kissinger was thus a novelty.

Kissinger had had some limited involvement with a subcommittee of NSC in the presidency of Dwight D Eisenhower, and some limited connections with the military-political quango RAND corporation, but he was not really a security apparatus insider, and backed liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller's unsuccessful campaigns for the presidential nomination in 1960, 1964 and 1968. It is possible that Nixon was genuinely looking for advice outside the intelligence/military establishment.

Alternatively, it might be speculated that Nixon was looking for an, as it were, 'Doctor Strangelove figure' to act as a lightning-conductor for criticism. Stanley Kubrick's and Peter Sellers' smash-hit movie, *Doctor Strangelove*, came out in 1964 and responded, as various books and movies of the time did, to the Cuban missile crisis - but in the form of humour. The actual villain of the piece is mad airforce general Jack D Ripper; but the film took its title from the president's German ex-Nazi, mad-scientist advisor on nuclear war, Doctor Strangelove. The character was imagined as an amalgam of three figures: ex-Nazi rocket scientist Wernher von Braun (as contemporaneously interpreted by Tom Lehrer in his song from the US version of *That was the week that was*); Herman Kahn, native-born New Jersey Jew, but think-the-unthinkable RAND game-theoretician of nuclear war; and Kahn's RAND colleague, John von Neumann.⁵ Von Braun's Germanness and ex-Nazism, and Kahn's cold-blooded analysis of the strategies of megadeaths, seem to be the major elements of the character. The result of the movie's success was to establish a trope of the middle-European mad-scientist, cold-blooded thinker of

geopolitics and strategy.

In this context Kissinger, who grew up in Bavaria and never lost his south German accent, could play the role of Nixon's 'Dr Strangelove' and thereby serve as a lightning-rod, drawing criticism away from the actual elite groups concerned in formulating policy, and the policy process itself. In contrast, McGeorge Bundy was a 'Boston Brahmin' - and his being more or less tagged with responsibility for the Bay of Pigs fiasco and for escalation in Vietnam took the blame to the core of the US establishment.

Kissinger was certainly willing to play the role - there are some very striking 'black humour' quotes from him from the period. And it seems likely that the administration *did* succeed in offloading some of the opprobrium of its more objectionable policies onto Kissinger. In the grand scheme of things, this was marginalised by the Watergate affair; but Nixon has gone down in history as a small-time political crook (as author of the US's 'China turn', however); while Kissinger has been and remains a hate figure for much of the left.

It is probable that Nixon actually got some useful advice on international relations from Kissinger, given that the man had thought seriously about objectionable policies onto Kissinger. In the grand scheme of things, this was marginalised by the Watergate affair; but Nixon has gone down in history as a small-time political crook (as author of the US's 'China turn', however); while Kissinger has been and remains a hate figure for much of the left.

Human rights

At the same time, the image of Carter's human rights policy as the 'bright side' of the Carter presidency, and Brzezinski's mujahedin, Iran hostage rescue and so on as the 'dark side', is completely misleading. This was, in fact, *one policy*. It was the abandonment of the old 1948-75 policy of protecting the 'status quo ante' and 'containing' communism, in favour of the defence of 'human rights' and *most prominently the rights of property, of free trade, and of freedom of religion*. It was the first step on the road to 'colour revolutions' and it was already a policy of 'humanitarian intervention'. The imagination of an important part of the left that the discourse of 'human rights' can be somehow forced to our purposes by using 'social rights' or, in a third version, 'green rights' of animals and the ecology,⁹ is completely delusive. The point of 'human rights' talk was to create the sovereignty of judges; and, in world affairs, of the US as judge among the peoples.

Hawk

There is a sense in which it is not unfair for Brzezinski to carry the can for this stuff. Unlike most of his predecessors, he did not do any active military service. But, on the other hand, he was a consistent 'hawk' - particularly against Russia. The two are perhaps related; those who have themselves done active service may be more willing to recognise the risks of military operations going wrong.

As I have said above, this came to a crunch in 1979-80 when a bunch of US diplomats in Tehran were taken hostage by students. Whether or not to attempt a military rescue was sharply debated between the diplomats and the generals; and between secretary of state Cyrus Vance and Brzezinski. Brzezinski won and Vance resigned. The military operation went ahead and was an ignominious failure.

The point was not that it was unthinkable to make deals with the new Iranian regime. In fact, the incoming Reagan administration *did* agree an arrangement with Tehran to get the hostages back. Indeed, the Reagan administration went on to make further deals with the regime in the Iran-Contra affair, to fund overseas terrorist operations which Congress refused to support.⁷

The point is rather that Brzezinski's position should be characterised as

szlachta politics, like those which led the Polish regime of the 1930s to refuse any sort of collective security arrangement that included Russia and to join Germany in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia - only to see Poland dismembered in its turn. It is characterised, on the one hand, by the aristocratic sense of entitlement and the inappropriate belief in the impossibility of military defeat - in 1930s Poland, the overemphasis on cavalry. It is also characterised, on the other hand, by the *ressentiment* of the dispossessed aristo - here aimed at Russia, but after 1980-81 to be aimed at Iran.

Brzezinski was still thinking in these terms in his later years. He opposed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 - because they should have been going after Iran. His 2016 article, 'Towards a global realignment', is marked by the sense of entitlement again, and by *ressentiment* against the European former colonial powers and Russia, setting up an imagined anti-colonial US, able to ensure Russia kept to its borders and bringing China on board as a junior partner without naval adventures.⁸ The argument is as ludicrous as his previous 'analyses'. It is thinking in terms like these which renders US operations in the Middle East into nothing but the infliction of destruction, and makes the US lead Georgia and Ukraine into failed nationalist military adventures against Russia at the expense of their own citizens. *Faciunt solitudinem et pacem appellat* - they make an emptiness and call it peace.

Human rights

At the same time, the image of Carter's human rights policy as the 'bright side' of the Carter presidency, and Brzezinski's mujahedin, Iran hostage rescue and so on as the 'dark side', is completely misleading. This was, in fact, *one policy*. It was the abandonment of the old 1948-75 policy of protecting the 'status quo ante' and 'containing' communism, in favour of the defence of 'human rights' and *most prominently the rights of property, of free trade, and of freedom of religion*. It was the first step on the road to 'colour revolutions' and it was already a policy of 'humanitarian intervention'. The imagination of an important part of the left that the discourse of 'human rights' can be somehow forced to our purposes by using 'social rights' or, in a third version, 'green rights' of animals and the ecology,⁹ is completely delusive. The point of 'human rights' talk was to create the sovereignty of judges; and, in world affairs, of the US as judge among the peoples.

Hopefully, the death of Brzezinski, by exposing to more public view the fact that *he was a human rights advocate too*, can help us to *begin* to escape from this mental trap ●

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Notes

1. The brief obituary in the *New York Times* on May 26 reflects the point.
2. E Wasson *Born to rule: aristocracy in the modern world* London 2006, chapter 9 (passage on Poland); L Jakubowska *Patrons of history: nobility, capital and political transitions in Poland* London 2012, chapter 2 (section titled 'Independent once more').
3. So did Colin Powell, NSA 1987-89 and secretary of state 2001-05, and Condoleezza Rice, NSA 2001-05 and secretary of state 2005-09.
4. Wikipedia 'National Security Advisor' has a convenient summary referencing deeper treatments.
5. Wikipedia 'Dr Strangelove' has references.
6. www.cartercenter.org.
7. Wikipedia's 'Iran-Contra affair' has a narrative and references.
8. *The American interest* Vol 11, No6: www.the-american-interest.com/2016/04/17/toward-a-global-realignment.
9. Eg, the section on 'Human rights' in P Clayton and J Heinzekehr *Organic Marxism* New York 2014, chapter 7 (a long way from being the best example of this approach, but I happen to have just read it).

What we fight for

■ Without organisation the working class is nothing; with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

■ There exists no real Communist Party today. There are many so-called 'parties' on the left. In reality they are confessional sects. Members who disagree with the prescribed 'line' are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

■ Communists operate according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to achieve unity in action and a common world outlook. As long as they support agreed actions, members should have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent factions.

■ Communists oppose all imperialist wars and occupations but constantly strive to bring to the fore the fundamental question - ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

■ Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of working class and progressive parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of national sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle, 'One state, one party'.

■ The working class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capital is weakened and lacks coordination.

■ Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is no dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

■ Capitalism in its ceaseless search for profit puts the future of humanity at risk. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and crisis. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally.

■ The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth and power to be taken away by a parliamentary vote.

■ We will use the most militant methods objective circumstances allow to achieve a federal republic of England, Scotland and Wales, a united, federal Ireland and a United States of Europe.

■ Communists favour industrial unions. Bureaucracy and class compromise must be fought and the trade unions transformed into schools for communism.

■ Communists are champions of the oppressed. Women's oppression, combating racism and chauvinism, and the struggle for peace and ecological sustainability are just as much working class questions as pay, trade union rights and demands for high-quality health, housing and education.

■ Socialism represents victory in the battle for democracy. It is the rule of the working class. Socialism is either democratic or, as with Stalin's Soviet Union, it turns into its opposite.

■ Socialism is the first stage of the worldwide transition to communism - a system which knows neither wars, exploitation, money, classes, states nor nations. Communism is general freedom and the real beginning of human history.

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What the hell do they mean by extremism?

Politics of failure

The government's response to the Manchester bombing is to promise further crackdowns on democratic rights, writes **Eddie Ford**

Following the deplorable bombing in Manchester, the government immediately launched Operation Temperer. In preparation since 2015, and authorised by a Cobra emergency meeting, this measure ostensibly aims to augment and free up armed police officers, so they can help with counter-terror operations. Thus 984 soldiers carrying SA-80 assault rifles, with a further 3,800 on standby, were deployed at various 'sensitive' sites and events, transport hubs and other crowded public places. Such a display was purely symbolic in nature, as it is hard to see how it could actually prevent a terrorist attack taking place.

Inevitably, there have been calls to strengthen the already draconian anti-terrorist legislation - more surveillance, house arrests, exclusions from the UK, etc. For example, home secretary Amber Rudd confirmed last week that temporary exclusion orders (TEOs) were now in use - which bar suspected jihadi fighters and others from returning to the UK for up to two years. The excluded person's travel documents are cancelled, and they will be allowed to return only if they agree to take part in 'deradicalisation' programmes, or liaise regularly with police. TEOs were introduced two years ago as part of the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act and, it seems, have only been used once before.

Of course, as almost anyone with actual expertise in this area knows, there is no need for more 'anti-terrorist' laws - with the current legislation you can do almost anything you want. Max Hill QC, the government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, grumbled in the pages of *The Daily Telegraph* that "more resources, not new laws, were needed" (May 27). But when has that ever stopped a politician in search of easy popularity? You hastily draw up a badly worded new law and then denounce anybody who opposes it, or appears insufficiently enthusiastic, for being 'soft on terrorism'. You know how the script goes.

Extremism?

One of the most likely outcomes is increased pressure on websites and internet service providers to remove 'extremist' content - an issue that was discussed at the latest G7 meeting in Taormina, Italy. Indeed, it appeared to be about the only thing the various leaders agreed on. The British prime minister claimed to be worried that, as Islamic State loses ground in its heartlands of Iraq and Syria, the threat from extremism is "evolving, rather than disappearing" - with the fight moving from "the battlefield to the internet".

May, along with others, argued that tech companies should be encouraged to develop tools which automatically identify and remove "harmful material", and allow them to inform the relevant authorities, so appropriate action can be taken. She also wants industry guidelines to be revised by the big tech companies to make absolutely clear what constitutes such harmful material,



Armed police and soldiers: propaganda

with those that fail to do so being "held to account".

A recent report by the Commons home affairs committee warned that there was "a great deal of evidence" that platforms like Google and Facebook were being used to spread "hate, abuse and extremism" - a trend that "continues to grow at an alarming rate, but it remains unchecked and, even where it is illegal, largely unpunished". Previously, the Tories had promised to impose new regulation on the internet. As some of our readers might recall, David Cameron, in his infinite wisdom, talked about banning secure encryption altogether in order to prevent terrorists from eluding the attention of the spooks - a proposal that was obviously technologically and economically illiterate (all online financial transactions use, and depend on, various forms of encryption to prevent a Wild West situation developing).

Anyhow, the G7 issued a final statement about online terrorism (as it were) - focusing on the role of companies like Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon, sometimes referred to collectively by the acronym, 'Gafa'. While being one of the most important technological achievements in the last decades, the statement noted, the internet has also "proven to be a powerful tool

for terrorist purposes". Therefore ISPs and social media companies must "substantially increase their efforts to address terrorist content". However, the G7 statement stopped short of calling for measures to penalise firms that failed to meet the necessary requirements, a senior French diplomat at Taormina stating that "the Gafas and the industry need to act quickly to detect and destroy content that calls for terrorism, hatred and radicalisation".

In the same vein, Brian Lord, a former GCHQ deputy director of intelligence and cyber operations, thinks that the UK government should fine social media companies that fail to take down 'extremist' content - arguing that ministers should consider a German-style system, where providers are fined millions of euros for failing to remove "fake news" from their sites. Lord told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme that social media is "here to stay and actually it's just as incumbent on the organisations themselves to adjust their approach to this, as well as the threat of fines". But, with most of the companies based in the United States, it is far from clear how the Trump administration would view such proposals.

Obviously, all this immediately raises an incredibly difficult and thorny question - what is the definition of

'extremism' (let alone 'fake news')? As we know, teachers are obliged under the government's Prevent strategy to report pupils who are showing signs of 'extremism' - but what the hell is that? Praying five times a day? Observing Ramadan? Believing that the *Koran* is literal? People who want to overthrow capitalism or want the working class to rule? Hate the monarchy? We still wait for an answer. With regards to Prevent, Amber Rudd naturally wants to give it a "facelift" - hardly surprising, given that the Commons home affairs committee has called the strategy a "toxic brand".

Many Muslims, quite understandably, regard Prevent as an intrusive, Big Brother-style system of surveillance that requires teachers to spy on their pupils, as if they were Stasi members. Stories of absurd and misplaced interventions by Prevent are legion. One Muslim student is said to have asked their physics teacher about nuclear fission and got themselves referred to a counter-terrorism team as a result, and a parliamentary inquiry heard - in an example of the law of unintended consequences - that some Muslim parents were afraid of discussing the negative effects of terrorism at home in case their children brought the issue up at school and their conversations were misunderstood.

Prevent aside, one can easily imagine

a definition of 'extremism' that includes all sorts of people - many of whom are not engaged in acts of violence. We certainly remember the cold war, with MI5 spying on Communist Party members for being 'extremists' and 'foreign agents', or the McCarthyite blacklist in 1950s Hollywood that denied employment to many actors, screenwriters, directors and musicians or forced them to use pseudonyms if they wanted to get their material performed. When the left and working class movement eventually revives, it is more than possible that such oppressive methods will be used again.

As for Theresa May's supposed ideological alternatives to terrorism and jihadist extremism, she is busily sponsoring various think-tanks, and other bodies, that promote the 'British way of life'. Again, what is that meant to be - the British empire or the slave trade? World War I or the capitalist system? Warm beer and old maids bicycling to holy communion? Or is it supposed to be about toleration? Not particularly noticeable, when it comes to British history - quite the opposite actually. What communists in particular do remember, however, is people who have been discriminated against for their rights - the working class, women, gays, etc. Maybe it is the free press? Something else that was fought for in the teeth of ruling class opposition.

There are countless examples of the British establishment's instinctive hostility to democratic rights and free speech, like wanting to ban the use of the word 'bloody' in the 1913 George Bernard Shaw play, *Pygmalion*, or the Penguin paperback edition of *Lady Chatterley's lover* - not the hardback edition, of course, as that was not read by the lower orders. Or Monty Python's *The life of Brian*, which was banned for decades by several local councils - only in 2008 did Torbay council finally allow the film to be shown without an X-rating certificate.¹

Nothing comes ready-made or handed down from above. There are two Britains, unofficial and official - and the skill of the latter is that it incorporates all these victories from below, which it first resisted ferociously ●

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Notes

1. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/3073308/Monty-Pythons-The-Life-Of-Brian-film-ban-lifted-after-28-years.html.

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