

The Libertarian

Communist

A Discussion Bulletin:
In Opposition to the Rule of Capital in all its forms and for
Anti State, Non Market Communism

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The Capital System:



Saudi Arabia used UK made Armoured Vehicles in Bahrain

War Without End

The purpose of The Libertarian Communist is to promote discussion amongst the Anti-State, Non Market sector irrespective of whether individuals or groups consider themselves as Anarchist, Communist or Socialist as all such titles are in need of further qualification. If you have disagreements with an article in this or any other issue, wish to offer comment or want to contribute something else to the discussion then please get in touch. If any article focuses on a particular group then that group has, as a matter of course, the right to reply. So please get in touch with your article, letters and comments. You can do this by contacting libcom.bulletin@yahoo.co.uk or writing to Ray Carr, Flat 1, 99 Princess Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, England, BH12 1BQ

This issue is divided into two parts, this is partly due to production difficulties and the related cause of it being a belated issue. This extended issue will cover two normal issues. The next issue will be January 2015 which gives time for the editor, me, to take a break and hopefully come back refreshed and ready for action, ha, ha.

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Andy Cox

We begin this issue with the sad news of the death of our friend and comrade Andy Cox. Andy was a member of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) South West Regional Branch (SWRB) and this is where I met him and got to know him. Andy was not the sort of person to just go along with the mainstream of the party and developed his own ideas about how things might be improved to enable socialist ideas to be put forward in an easy and straightforward way. To these ends via the SWRB he presented a discussion paper to the Party's conference a few years ago. One of the main ideas was to simplify the entrance questionnaire to three main areas of agreement. Whilst by this time I had left the party, I believe the ideas in that document could have provided a basis of discussion but as far as I am aware due to a lack of understanding it received little support. This discussion paper and other ideas Andy developed on how socialism could operate can be found on his website <http://socialistmatters.webs.com/>. Hopefully some of these ideas can be further developed so Andy's work can be continued.

We will much miss Andy as a friend and can ill afford to lose such comrades. We send our condolences to all members of Andy's family and close friends and dedicate this issue of The Libertarian Communist to him.

Ray Carr (Editor)

Strange Bedfellows

As this issue is being put together the situation in Iraq seems to be spiralling out of control that is if it was under control in the first place. As world capitalism attempts to solve one crisis it simply lays the ground for another crisis further down the road. There has been comment in some parts of the capitalist media that it was a mistake to remove Saddam Hussein as whatever else was wrong with him he kept the Sunni and Shia factions under control. However most of these commentators did not oppose the war when it was taking place. On the other side Blair claims that the fault lay with not taking the conflict further or is he just looking to make yet more money from further engagements on the lecture tour. As one conflict is replaced by another mortal enemies call a truce and try to make a pact to further common interests. Thus the USA have attempted to unite with Iran in order to defeat ISIS. It has been reported that a senior American diplomat has recently met in Vienna with his counterpart in Iran to see whether the countries could work together to create a more stable government in Iraq. However Iran backs Assad in Syria whilst the U.S supports the opposition, they are united only by their common opposition to ISIS. Whatever the outcome any solution, if there is one, will lay the ground for a further war in the near future and the victims will be the same as they are now, those who wish to live their lives in peace: **unfortunately the continuation of the capital system offers no such prospect.**

Letters

The letters below refer to Michel Prigent's article and notes in issue 26 pages 2-4

I would have thought that anyone who contributes to this publication would be someone that takes the same attitude toward the Second World War as toward the 1914-1918 war. Imagine my surprise then to see truly 'ghastly' verbiage from Michel Prigent, who not only expresses support for one of the two sides in the later carnage but takes actual pride in doing so. Perhaps he would be so kind as to indulge our curiosity by starting from 1914 and telling us which side he takes in which wars, and why. (No doubt Kosovo will be a particular headache for him. Support for 'national determination'? Or support for 'anti-imperialism'?)

In my day, someone with a maximalist mouth but who under such battle-cries as 'lesser-of-the-two-evils', 'the more progressive side', 'anti-fascism!' etc supported a side in wars among capitalist states, such a person was called a leftist. **ZJW**

Reply by Michel Prigent

Dear Lib Com,
That attack on me probably comes from Stewart Home or his friend Fabian Tompsett...
Here is my response...
The Second World War is different from the First World War... You could not stay neutral in the

Second World War...The concentration camps were there!

The creep who hides behind these initials will regret his remarks. The curse of history has been thrown on him! **Michel**

The Capital System and War: Ricardo Monde

The capital system and hypocrisy are certainly no strangers but when it comes to armed conflict resulting in death and destruction on a massive scale the relationship reaches its high point. Such an example is Remembrance Day held each November. There can surely be no greater hypocrisy than dressing up millions of people in military uniform and sending them out to kill their fellow humans in some other part of the world, people they have never met, let alone have any argument with and then to yearly hold religious services (forgetting the thou shall not kill bit), minute of silence, the wearing of poppies and so on to remember those who died during the conflicts. Many of those sent out to murder in the service of their national state end up dead or if they survive may well bear the physical or/and mental scars of the devastating effects of the process of legalised murder known as war. The only remembrance worthwhile would be to ensure that such events never take place again but this is not possible while we are entrapped in a social system where such conflict is not just inevitable but another form of carrying out business. This year there are planned events to commemorate a hundred years since the outbreak of World War 1 (WW1) and such

commemorations need to be critiqued and turned into an analysis of the true nature of war and its causes. Having concentrated thus far on the sufferings of those on the front line it must be added that, especially in more modern wars, from World War 2 onwards, the death and destruction is in no way limited to that area as civilians bear the brunt of bombing raids and the like.

As part of their state countries normally have something like a department of defence, the present writer, does not know of any country that has a department of attack. So it could be argued that all departments of defence can be abolished since no other country is going to attack them and the billions spent on armaments could be diverted to more positive areas such as health and renewable energy or whatever. Of course what departments of defence exist for is to protect not the civilians of the country in general but the interests of the state and the main function of accumulating capital. In short what is being the dominant interests in that country probably in alliance with certain other countries and those dominant interests are likely to include the defence and likely expansion of access to trade routes resources and spheres of influence. Their enemies will be opposing countries and their allies who will be intent on defending and expanding their own economic opportunities: thus conflict ensues.

There are of course movements who campaign against war. In Britain the most famous of these was the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). On the positive front, and in particular when they were a mass movement they were able to mobilise hundreds of thousands in demonstrations and highlight the futility of two power blocs each having the capability to destroy the planet several times over. On the negative side the campaign was too often side-tracked into a debate of whether (at that time) the U.S or the Soviet Union were to blame for the proliferation of the arms race. As CND was a leftward movement many within it laid the blame at the feet of the U.S but such a movement needed to be independent of either side. Secondly CND was concentrating on one particular type of weapon and horrific as nuclear weapons are, the world would hardly have been safe if nuclear weapons had been abolished whilst conventional ones remained stacked up by two opposing forces. The main weakness of CND was they were opposing war without opposing the world wide system which was the root cause of all modern warfare. This same

critique applies to the current anti-war movement, Stop the War Coalition. Yes they definitely do a job and highlight the devastating impact of war and their anti-war campaigns should not be underestimated but why does their name have in its title **"the"**? Does this infer that there are wars they would not oppose? In a similar way the organisation Campaign Against the Arms Trade provides very useful and detailed information about that trade in death and destruction but it is a pity they fail to recognise the capital system as the root cause. Like all similar reformist movements they concentrate on a single issue and believe it can be solved without tackling the capital accumulation system itself. What is needed is a more overall movement that brings together issues that are of fundamental importance in the world today, of which war is definitely one, and offers a critique not of certain aspects of the capital system but of the fundamentals of the system itself.

Capitalism as the Cause of Modern warfare

Modern apologists for the capitalist system will never admit that war is part and parcel of the system with value expansion as its aim. In the past there did seem to be at least a hint of honesty. In recent years a variety of causes are brought out to account for the almost endless state of war that the world finds itself in. Wars, some argue are the result of human nature, when all else fails that concept can be relied upon to provide an explanation about some hideous aspect of capitalism. Another favourite is that wars are fought for reasons of right and justice such as to remove evil dictators or preserve freedom, liberty and democracy. One is reminded of a speech by former U.S President John F Kennedy when he argued that the U.S would oppose any enemy and support any friend in the interests of liberty and freedom. This did not mean that Kennedy himself or members of his government were going to do the fighting themselves, that would be left to the so-called lower ranks of the population of the U.S. What he meant by preserving liberty and freedom was making sure that a minority would be free and at liberty to be able to continue to exploit people, land and resources around the world in the interests of capital accumulation.

From the perspective of Britain and its allies the official reasons for World War 1 (WW1 which sought to encourage people to sign up and risk their lives was that it was necessary to contain German militarism and make the world safe for democracy. According to the film *Reds*, when

the American Socialist John Reed was asked to explain the reason for WW1, he stood up and said "*Profits*" and he also asked if it was to defend democracy "*where is the dammed democracy*" Reed's explanations and questions are certainly nearer the truth. The major point is that already in 1914 and certainly in the world we live in today the world is divided up into nation states and power blocs each seeking to protect its current spheres of influence and develop new ones in order to increase their market for commodities. **Petersen [1972:29]** notes that with the advent of capitalism whilst territory remained an important issue what was more important was spheres of influence, the right to exploit underdeveloped countries commercially and industrially and in the main wars were fought to expand and develop shares in foreign markets. Likewise **Faulkner [2013:15]** argues that the basis of the 1914-18 war was military competition between opposing groups of nation states who represented the interests of rival blocks of capital competing in world markets. The same author points out that Britain was able to portray Germany as the aggressor because its empire and position as a world economic power was already well established and its position was therefore protecting the status quo. On the other hand Germany was attempting to challenge Britain's dominant position and seeking to overturn the status quo **[ibid]**.

Around the time of WW1 some apologists for capitalism admitted what war was all about. **Petersen [op.cit:34]** cites an American paper at the time, the New York Sun which stated at the outbreak of WW1: "*In the present developed or over developed system an economic war is waged all the time. The markets of the world are the prize.*" It added: "*It [war] is the obvious way of settling ... the economic conflicts of nations*". Speaking of that war in 1919 President Wilson made the following admission: "*who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? ... The real reason the war we have just finished took place was that Germany was afraid her commercial rivals were going to get the better of her, and the reason why some nations went into the war against Germany was that they thought Germany would get the commercial advantage of them. The seed of the jealousy, the seed of the deep-seated hatred, was hot successful commercial and industrial rivalry.*" **[Quoted in ibid: 34-5]**

The Second World War (WW2) has become entwined with a war against the brutality of

fascism and this relates to a discussion point we will turn our attention to below when looking at so called just wars that some argue we have no choice but involve ourselves with. However we firstly have to examine similar features that were at the root cause of WW1 that also rear their head in the lead up to the 1939-45 conflict. **Heartfield, [2011:45]** noted that the British Treasury looked upon the export trade as – "*the fourth arm of our defence*". Britain's international trade, a pamphlet sponsored by Churchill noted was suffering from German competition. That pamphlet then continued in a more aggressive style – "*it is not competition, it is simply brute force, compelling the creditor to order in Germany if he wants to get his money back*". The policies of economic protectionism carried out by the Nazi regime affected the U.S as well as Britain. Between 1933 and 1938 the German share of U.S exports had declined from 8.4 billion to 3.4 billion whilst those to Britain had risen and this was not unrelated to Roosevelt support going to Britain **[ibid]**.

There are other economic considerations. The 1930s saw the rapid industrialisation of Japan which had a detrimental effect on both Britain and the U.S as they were struggling to cope with the depression. Alarm spread in the West as Japanese goods flooded into foreign markets from 1931 and from 1932 tariffs and quotas were used against goods from Japan. Meanwhile by 1940 Germany had become the world leader in aluminium production, producing 300,000 tons a year with the U.S struggling to keep pace but having plans to produce 450,000 tons a year by 1942 **[ibid:46]** Heartfield adds: "*Before long the trading war would turn into armed competition. The American slogan of the day was – 'If goods can't cross borders, soldiers will'. Just as trade war led to a shooting war, war itself was a means of controlling trade*". **[ibid]**

If WW2 was seen by some as a war against fascism it did not stop trading between so-called democracies and fascist countries. Throughout WW2 both Britain and the U.S traded with the fascist regime in Spain, supplying much needed oil to Franco. Whilst Spain technically remained neutral it supplied Nazi Germany with wolfram or tungsten which was used in precision engineering and armament production. There was disagreement between Britain and the U.S over supplying oil to Spain which led to the U.S purchasing Spanish wolfram. Whilst this prevented it getting into the hands of Hitler it aided fascism in Spain **[ibid: 51]**

The Case of a Just War

Are there wars where opponents of the capital system have to take sides because the facts seem to show that one side has right and justice on their side? Perhaps WW2 was an example of this issue. Was it a war fought to defeat Fascism and stop horrific atrocities such as the extermination of Jewish people? Many on the left, some anarchists and others generally critical of the capital system were willing to support the 1939-45 world war due to the horrific nature of the Nazi regime. Many still argue that it was right to take this stand. It cannot be denied that the atrocities committed by the Nazis against Jewish people, without taking into account any other atrocity, was an act of pure barbarism. But that accepted, if we are, even momentarily, to cast aside our opposition to war we would have to be sure that the war was being fought for the right reasons and conducted in a manner which corresponded to that aim. Sadly that is almost impossible given the nature of a social system where human needs are secondary to capital accumulation. So let's examine WW2 in this context.

Whilst, it could be argued, that the Nazis took barbaric acts to new heights the regimes who fought against them were hardly free from similar atrocities. As Heartfield notes the massacre of defenceless civilians was carried out by all sides in WW2 and the most severe acts of oppression based on race were taught well in advance by the likes of the British Empire and America **[ibid: 4]**. It is often a fact that in the case of war acts in support of humanity and violent aggression against humanity are carried out by the same side.

War itself is an act of barbarism and WW2 witnessed the killing of around 60 million soldiers and civilians, whilst others died of hunger. People in their tens of millions, Heartfield notes, were, under military orders: "*put in the line of fire, dragooned from one end of the world to another in miserable and terrifying ways*" **[ibid: 3]**. Millions more were enslaved and forced to work in mines, factories and plantations at gunpoint **[ibid]**. Meanwhile, Heartfield states – "*Generals became Kings and arms manufacturers became rich as Croesus*" **[ibid: 5]**

Further to the above WW2 did not oversee the establishment of democracy. In the Far East and North Africa it resulted in the restoration of colonial overlords who had been previously overthrown **[ibid: 445]**. Eastern and Southern

Europe remained under the control of military dictatorships and in parts of Western Europe where people had struggled to free themselves they were disarmed and subject to military rule. Places such as Vietnam, Korea and Indonesia were invaded once more and subject to European rule **[ibid: 3]**

In addition to the above Heartfield argues that in official propaganda against the Nazi regime the atrocities against the Jewish people were played down **[ibid: 445]**. The British Ministry of Information in their war propaganda left out the Nazis treatment of the Jews- "*A certain amount of horror is needed but it must deal with the treatment of indisputably innocent people ... Not with Jews*" **[ibid: 306]** In 1939 a white paper was published which omitted these same atrocities due to – "*a reluctance to identify in any way with the Jewish plight or connect the British war effort with the Jews*" **[ibid]**. A similar approach was taken in the U.S where reports of the Holocaust that were beginning to surface were suppressed not only by the State Department but even by the American Jewish Congress **[ibid]**. **(See Heartfield Footnotes 16, 17, 18 on page 526)** As Heartfield suggests it was only after the war that preventing the persecution of Jewish people became an allied war aim but it was not the reason for going to war in the first place **[ibid]**. Neither does it make sense to argue that Chamberlain declared war on Germany in September 1939 to defend Poland. If so would they have left them to the mercy of the Soviet Union at the end of the war? **[Ibid: 83]**

The Reason for Arms Production

Arms (weapons used to kill people, on mass, where need be) are produced like all production under capitalism, from basics such as food to means of transport and so on, as commodities, produced for sale with the intention of expanding the value of the capital of the companies that produce them. It matters not to companies (institutions who incarnate capital) whether the weapons sold are used to murder the so-called guilty or the absolute innocent, it is not their business to bother with such idealistic concepts. Armament companies do not cause war but they are part and parcel of the process. **Petersen, [op:cit: 35]** wrote that: "*The armament industry is a factor in the general set up in making for war, it is a special factor as its prosperity is dependent on war,*

actually in progress or potentially imminent". The same author refers to an article in The New York Times which focused on an agreement between certain American and foreign arms makers to divide world markets which provided for the sharing of arms secrets and profits, it went on to state: *Under this system American submarine patents reached the British Admiralty and then fell into the hands of the German Government with the result that allied ships were sunk by U-boats equipped with British-American design. In most instances the various governments involved consented to the arrangements*". **[ibid: 36]** At the time of WW1 there were five arms manufacturers Vickers LTD, Armstrong, Whitworth and CO LTD, John Brown and CO LTD, Commell, Laird and CO LTD and Nobel Dynamite Trust, they supplied weapons to all sides. The German company Krupp supplied weapons to around 52 countries prior to the outbreak of the 1914-18 conflict and many of the Krupp made guns were used against the German workers, turned soldiers, who were responsible for producing them **[ibid: 38]**.

The same was true for WW2. For the years 1942-3 it has been shown that in the U.S a quarter of companies involved with war contracts made profits of 15%, whilst one third made between 15 and 30%. By the end of WW2 it was reported that that U.S companies had made profits of \$52 billion, after taxation, the productive power of their plants had increased by one half and they had accumulated capital reserves of \$85 billion **[Heartfield, op.cit: 36]**. During the course of the war some came to question the profits of U.S corporations. Harry Stimson, the war secretary answered such questions in the following way: *"If you are going to prepare for war in a capitalist country you have to let business make money out of the process or business won't work"*. **[ibid]** After all, we could argue, what else was the war about? In December 1938 Hawker Siddeley, the British aircraft manufacturer announced record dividend figures. The Inland Revenue were asked by the treasury to investigate cases of war profiteering and it was discovered that the Society of British Aircraft Producers were yielding an average profit of 10%, and 20% on privately invested capital. It was estimated that the following years would show even higher returns. On such findings the Air Minister called for the immediate introduction of an excess profit duty but the move was rejected by the

treasury on the grounds that it would be a shock to business confidence **[ibid]**.

The Situation Today

If the situation has changed today it is only for the worse. Whilst governments talk more than ever about war to defend democracy and to liberate populations, remember Iraq that was a war to liberate the people of Iraq, at least when the case for it being because they had weapons of mass destruction was found to be the biggest case ever of being economical with the truth. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (**CATAT**) produces a mass of evidence to dispel the myth that wars are fought to defend or establish democracy or for reasons connected to human rights. In the UK vast sums of money are spent on promoting the sales of arms much of it to some of the world's most authoritarian and unstable regimes. Weapons sold by the UK have been used against those protesting for democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. In September 2011 the UK Government was involved in organising a massive arms fair in London. Fourteen authoritarian regimes were invited to view the weaponry on display. In September 2013 another vast arms fair took place, in East London. It hosted 1500 arms companies and 30,000 arms buyers and sellers and once again on the invite list was a roll call of authoritarian regimes and human rights abusers {www.caat.org.uk}.

A democracy index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit viewed Saudi Arabia, in 2012 as coming 163rd out of a total of 167 countries. It was seen as being more authoritarian than Burma, Iran and Turkmenistan and only Syria, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and North Korea were seen as being worse. Despite this a deal was agreed, some years ago, to provide to Saudi Arabia with 200 Tactica armoured vehicles and these were used by Saudi troops to help suppress pro-democracy protests in Bahrain in March 2011 **[ibid: see also Jane's Defence Weekly, 23 March 2011]**.

There are close links between government and arms companies with the former having a role in promoting arms fairs and promoting weapon sales. In fact the government in the UK has a special department in this regard, the UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation (UKTIDSO). UKTIDSO apart from its role in arms fairs organises the presence and itinerary of overseas military delegations and plays a key role in promoting UK arms producers at arms fairs abroad, even providing serving members of the UK armed forces to

demonstrate the weaponry of arms companies. CATAT notes that UKTIDSO exists purely to help arms companies sell weapons to other countries and works on behalf of private arms companies to promote weapon sales to regimes which are repressive and unstable. It has little regard to how the weapons sold will be used.

So arms companies have much influence and direct links with the government. This goes so far as to include employing former government ministers and civil servants. CATAT notes that one example of this close link between arms companies and government was the case of Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles who when British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia was involved in persuading the Fraud Office to drop its investigation into the BAE-Saudi arms deal. When he left the Foreign Office he was handed a job with BAE Systems. However these links go deeper and research by The Guardian (15/10/2012) discovered that senior military officers and MoD officials gained approval for 3,572 jobs in arms companies since 1996 [**ibid**]

The whole case is neatly summed up with a brief look at BAE Systems. It is the third largest arms producer and provides most types of weapons such as fighter aircraft, warships, armoured vehicles and small arms ammunition. Around 95% of its sales are military and it is not fussy who it sells weapons to. CATAT note that in the mid- 2000s BAE's sought to profit by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and this led to it purchasing two major U.S armoured vehicle producers. As the next large scale opportunity would seem to be with "Cyber and Intelligence" BAE has purchased a number of cyber security companies around its "home markets" [**ibid**]

The major fact in this discussion is that the capital system and war are inseparable. There can be few better ways to finish this article than with a quote from Robert Kurz. In **Beneath Contempt** under a heading entitled **The Left, the war and Capitalist ontology** he wrote the following: "*AFTER THE WAR is before the war, because capitalism means in its essence, aggression, destruction and self-destruction. The end of the Cold War did not bring the peace dividend (the idea already an illusion about the character of the economic terror), but an historical thrust of global barbarism, social decay and brutal world- police world-order-wars under the command of the last world power, the USA.*

References

- 1) James Heartfield: Unpatriotic History of the Second World War. Zero Books 2012

- 2) Arnold Petersen: War.. Why? New York Labor News 1972
- 3) Neil Faulkner: No Glory: The Real History of The First World War: Stop the War Coalition 2013
- 4) Robert Kurz: Beneath Contempt, pages 39-48 in No Revolution Anywhere: Chronos Publications 2012

Ukraine's Maidan: Democratic Movement or Nationalist Mobilization? Stefan (June 2014)

Introduction

It is conventional wisdom in the West to describe the 'Maidan' that brought to power the current regime in Kiev as an anti-authoritarian mass movement guided by democratic 'European' values [**1**]. While not denying the presence of such themes in the Maidan, I wish to argue that the Maidan was and is *primarily* a mobilization on behalf of a specific variant of Ukrainian nationalism. This article approaches from a broader perspective issues that I raised in April 2014 in my essay 'Ukraine: Popular Uprising or Fascist Coup?' [**2**], which had the more specific purpose of assessing the role played by fascist or semi-fascist radical Ukrainian nationalists (mostly associated with the Banderite tradition) in the overthrow of the Yanukovich government.

This article has two secondary purposes. I wish to present evidence that considerable numbers of Western journalists and academic experts have been deliberately misrepresenting the nature of the 'Maidan'. I also want to comment on recent manipulation of the 'Jewish question' by the radical Ukrainian nationalists.

Statement of the 41: Umland attacks Umland

I start with a 'collective statement' issued on February 6, 2014 over the signatures of 41 'experts on Ukrainian nationalism' working in Ukraine and various Western countries [**3**]. The experts appeal to commentators on events in Ukraine not to claim that the Maidan 'is being infiltrated, driven or taken over by radically ethnocentrist groups' or that 'ultra-nationalist actors and ideas are at the core or helm of the Ukrainian protests' because these claims are false and provide grist for the mill of Russian imperialist propaganda against Ukraine.

The argumentation supposedly proving the falsity of the 'claims' is decidedly weak. The 'proof' boils down to the point that the Maidan is

politically diverse – a point that no one denies. However, diversity is quite consistent with a scenario in which one element in that diversity acquires a preponderant influence. Indeed, Andreas Umland, who not only signed the statement but coordinated the whole initiative, bore witness to precisely that scenario in a report that he posted on the internet exactly one month before the publication of the Statement of the 41 – describing, for instance, how a Banderite slogan became the main motto of the Maidan [4]. By organizing the Statement, Umland was in fact attacking himself (among others).

Of course, Umland like anyone else has a right to change his mind, but he should openly acknowledge that he has changed his mind and provide a clear explanation of what led him to do so, especially on a matter of such importance.

The extreme weakness of the substantive argumentation in the Statement makes me suspect that the main concern of the signatories is not to provide grist for Russian propaganda. They seek not to determine where the truth may lie but rather to deal with the phenomenon of the Ukrainian radical nationalists in such a way as to do the least harm to the cause with which they sympathize. It is understandable that experts, like other people, will have political sympathies and antipathies, but when they speak and write *as experts* it is their duty to set political commitments aside and strive for the greatest possible objectivity. The signatories of the Statement have betrayed that duty.

The large number of signatories may create a misleading impression of consensus among 'the experts'. In fact, quite a few experts did not sign the Statement, including well-known writers on contemporary Ukrainian nationalism like Andrew Wilson and Dominique Arel. Finally, about a quarter of the signatories are historians specializing in Ukrainian nationalism before and during World War Two; they are not necessarily well informed on current affairs.

Walking past armed men without seeing them

Descending for a moment into the grubbier world of mass journalism, I checked how the two main British television broadcasters, BBC and ITV, reported – or, rather, avoided reporting – the Right Sector (RS) massacre of anti-Maidan protestors in Odessa on May 2. When the RS burned their tents, the protestors took refuge in the trade union building, which was then set on fire. Some died in the fire,

while others were strangled, knifed or otherwise murdered upon escaping from the building. There is video evidence of the RS systematically setting the fire: we see RS girls around a big table in the courtyard preparing Molotov cocktails and passing them to the boys for throwing [5].

The BBC, quoting a source identified only as Serhiy, concludes that Molotov cocktails were thrown by both sides, although it is unclear where those supposedly thrown from inside the building could have come from [6]. Not satisfied with merely obscuring the truth, ITV goes further and blames the victims for their own deaths: 'pro-Russian activists were killed ... as they were setting fire to a building' [7].

On another occasion, freelance journalist Graham W. Phillips berated ITV's Europe editor James Mates for his deliberate distortions. On his site he writes: 'I watched James Mates walk past a mass of masked pro-Ukrainian men at a march, with gloves concealing weapons. He then described it as a peaceful Ukrainian march, before pulling out all the negative terminology for the Russian side.' On a video we hear Phillips try to argue with Mates, who complains at Phillips 'having a go at me personally' and tells him to 'go away' [8]. Presumably Mates is following instructions from above and does not feel it fair to call him to account. One reason why we cannot draw a clear line separating 'Banderites' from mainstream nationalists is the success of the Banderites in gradually infiltrating the Bandera cult into the Orange mainstream. In 2009 a postal stamp was issued to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Bandera's birth, and in January 2010 President Yushchenko posthumously awarded Bandera the title of Hero of Ukraine [9].

Relationship between the radical nationalists and the Orange mainstream

Despite the prominent role played by radical nationalist groups in the change of regime in Kiev, their social base remains narrow and confined to Galicia, so that in the course of time they may return to the margins of Ukrainian political life. However, an analysis of the nature of the Maidan must consider not only the relative size of these forces but also the relationship between them and the mainstream of the movement. What is perhaps most shocking is not the presence of ultra-rightists or even their numbers but the fact that (with few exceptions) they are broadly accepted as a legitimate part of the Maidan. Opinions differ concerning the value of their contribution, but

the great majority of Maidanites do not draw a sharp dividing line between themselves and the ultra-rightists, whom they regard as allies in the fight against the Russian and Russia-oriented enemies of the Maidan.

If we assume that the Maidan is an inherently democratic movement, then we are bound to find this very puzzling. However, once we abandon this assumption and view the Maidan primarily as a nationalist mobilization it makes perfect sense. Both ultra-rightists and the Orange mainstream – as represented, in particular, by the All-Ukraine Union 'Fatherland' (Batkivshchyna) – are Ukrainian nationalists in the narrow sense of seeking to create a single, culturally uniform, Ukrainian-speaking nation (as distinct from the looser concept of Ukraine as a culturally and linguistically diverse community). Both therefore have more or less intensely negative attitudes toward the Russian-speaking population living in southern and eastern Ukraine **[10]**.

By waging a campaign of defamation against Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, the German historian who has done most to expose the dark side of the history of the Banderite movement, the *Svoboda* party gave him the reputation of 'an odious figure' **[11]**.

A culture of mobilization

One would expect a democratic movement to overflow with substantive debate on a wide range of policy issues, with diverse opinions freely expressed and received with interest and respect. The impression that I have formed of the moral and intellectual atmosphere of the Maidan, on the basis of an admittedly limited exploration of relevant sources (speeches, articles, blogs, videos etc.), is quite different. The dominant values seem to be those of a camp of the 'forces of absolute good' mobilized against the 'forces of absolute evil' – unity and loyalty to the common cause. Differences (on policy toward the EU, for instance) are glossed over for the sake of unity. The vigorous expression of important differences, when it does occur, easily triggers violence **[12]**.

Russian speakers in Ukraine are often pilloried as 'Sovoks' – people still influenced by Soviet patterns of thinking. It seems to me that this label can be applied with equal justification to Maidanites. One obvious example is an excessive inclination to explain events as results of conspiracy by enemy secret services (Russian secret services in the case of Maidanite discourse). Another example is the constant

repetition of set phrases, as in the old Soviet 'wooden language' (*langue de bois*).

The use made of one of these set phrases – 'Ukraine's European choice' – is reminiscent of the set phrase 'the socialist choice of the Soviet people', which Gorbachev used in the late 1980s in his attempt to place limits on perestroika. In both cases the word 'choice' is actually used to *deny* choice. The choice has supposedly already been made and cannot be reconsidered, whatever it may entail (for instance, the 'European choice' entails, among other austerity measures, cutting old age pensions by half).

Manipulation of the 'Jewish question'

Despite the efforts of helpful 'experts' and journalists, the presence of ultra-right forces in the Maidan and in the governing coalition is a serious PR problem for the new regime in Kiev and its Western backers. As these forces can neither be dispensed with (at least for the time being) nor completely hidden from sight, it is desirable that they should change their ideology and behavior in ways that will win them legitimacy and respectability in the eyes of world public opinion. The ultra-right leaders are themselves willing to take steps in this direction.

A fruitful area for this sort of manipulation is the 'Jewish question'. It seems that both Tiahnybok, leader of the *Svoboda* party, and Yarosh, leader of the Right Sector, have made a decision to eliminate anti-Semitism from their ideology and practice. Yarosh has promised the Israeli ambassador to Ukraine to do all he can to prevent attacks on Jews and to liaise on a special hotline regarding any incidents that do occur **[13]**. The RS now pose as protectors of Jews, even helping to clean up anti-Semitic graffiti. The history of World War Two is being rewritten to present Ukrainians and Jews as comrades-in-arms against Nazis and Soviets.

This policy decision has considerable PR potential. Not only does it promise to neutralize the enmity of world Jewish opinion; it also makes the charge of fascism much less credible to the popular mind, which identifies fascism with anti-Semitism.

In fact, this identification is historically and theoretically incorrect. Anti-Semitism is central to National-Socialism (Nazism) but not to fascism in general. In its early period, before the alliance with Hitler, the Mussolini regime was not anti-Semitic to any significant extent: it accepted Jews as members of the Italian fascist party and developed close relations with the

Revisionist wing of the Zionist movement (itself semi-fascist in orientation), even establishing a naval academy to train Revisionist youth. Historically anti-Semitism was part of Banderite ideology, but Poles and Russians were viewed as the main enemies; Jews were hated as perceived agents of the Poles and Russians. A radical Ukrainian nationalism in the Banderite tradition that is not anti-Semitic is at least conceivable.

In general, fascism does typically cultivate ideas of racial/ethnic separation, exclusiveness and superiority/inferiority, but the specific groups extolled and targeted vary from case to case. For the semi-fascist Ukrainian radical nationalists the main target of hatred is Russians – or, more broadly, residents of Ukraine who prefer to speak Russian and are oriented culturally (not necessarily politically) toward Russia. This ‘Russian-speaking population’ includes people of various ethnic origins, including quite a few Ukrainians and also Russian-speaking Jews (who will continue to be persecuted, but as Russian speakers not as Jews). These are the people whom the Banderites compare with insect pests (‘Colorado beetles’ [14]) and seek to ‘Ukrainianize’ – or, should that prove impossible, to imprison, sterilize or kill [15]. The latest proposal of this kind comes from the new defense minister Colonel General Mikhail Koval, who proposes to imprison the citizens of southeastern Ukraine in special ‘filtration camps’ and then forcibly resettle them in other parts of the country [16].

Notes

[1] Thus, experts Andreas Umland and Anton Shekhovtsov start a recent analysis by defining the Maidan as Ukraine’s ‘third post-Soviet anti-authoritarian movement’ following the ‘Ukraine without Kuchma!’ campaign of 2000-2001 and the Orange Revolution of 2004 (‘Ukrainian Right Radicals, European Integration and the Neo-Fascist Threat’ [in Russian], May 21, 2014 at <http://polit.ru/article/2014/05/21/ukraine>).

[2] This essay first appeared on Johnson’s Russia List on April 4. A slightly different version was published in Issue 26 of *The Libertarian Communist*. The most recent version is that on my own website at <http://www.stephenshenfield.net/themes/international-relations/164-ukraine-popular-uprising-or-fascist-coup>

[3] The statement was published in English and Ukrainian at <http://krytyka.com/ua/articles/kyyivskyy-evromaydan-tse-vyzvolna-ne-ekstremistska-masova-aktsiya-hromadyanskoyi-nepokory>. Twenty-one signatories are based in Ukraine, six in the United States, three in Canada, five in Germany, five in other countries of Western and Central Europe, and one in Israel.

[4] Umland’s report, first published on January 6 on the site of the *Kyiv Post*, strongly influenced my own view of the situation, and I quote from it extensively in my earlier essay. Indicative of its content is the heading of the second section: ‘The Ethno-Centrist Slant of Ukraine’s Third Post-Soviet Mass Rebellion.’

[5] This can be viewed on the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4dJRnl-X8Q> (published on May 12) starting at 4.30 minutes. The pattern of events was much more complicated than this, but here I focus on this central sequence.

[6] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27275383>

[7]

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2014-05-07/russias-lavrov-blames-odessa-deaths-on-fascism/>

[8] <http://grahamwphillips.com/2014/06/13/why-the-western-world-is-on-ukraines-side-10-reasons/>

[9] The award was annulled a year later by President Yanukovich.

[10] A report has just appeared of Prime Minister Yatsenyuk referring to Russians in Eastern Ukraine as ‘subhumans’ (*nedocheloveki*).

[11] Source: private correspondence.

[12] This is only an impression based on a relatively small sample of sources. It may be exaggerated. I hope that others with more direct personal experience will comment.

[13] Anti-Semitic incidents can be expected to continue to occur because some rank-and-file ultra-rightists may not understand or accept the new policy of their leaders. In particular, the Right Sector encompasses not only Banderite groups but also straightforward neo-Nazis such as White Hammer and other neo-Nazi skinhead groups, whose anti-Semitism is more deeply entrenched.

[14] There were reports of some of the murderers in Odessa tweeting about how good it felt to kill ‘Colorado beetles’. Some anti-Maidanites regard the Banderites themselves as insect pests. For example, Sergei Shevchenko, head of the ‘House of Eternal Spring’ organization, recently declared: ‘We shall fight against all Nazism and national radicalism ... but let us not burn and destroy our home in order to rid it of cockroaches!’ (https://vk.com/serg_shevchenko?w=wall116888305_398%2Fall)

[15] Prominent *Svoboda* parliamentarian Iryna Farion wants speaking Russian to be made a criminal offense: Russian speakers are ‘degenerates’ and should be imprisoned (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, February 25, 2014).

In 2010 a pseudonymous contributor to the party’s official forum, alleged to be Tiahnybok himself, wrote: ‘To create a truly Ukrainian Ukraine in the cities of the East and South, ... we will need to ... physically liquidate all Russian-speaking intellectuals and all Ukrainophobes (shoot them quickly, without trial - they can be registered by any member of *Svoboda*), execute all members of anti-Ukrainian political parties’ (<http://grahamwphillips.com/2014/02/25/insane-ukraine>).

A member of *Svoboda* living in Crimea (before its annexation by Russia) argued that it is impossible to Ukrainianize the residents of the city of Sevastopol; they cannot be killed either, as that might trigger an armed conflict with Russia; he therefore proposes that they be sterilized(<http://www.nakanune.ru/news/2014/2/25/2342608>)

[16] Andrew Korybko, 'Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing in Ukraine', *Orientalreview.org*, June 18, 2014. The term 'filtration camp' was used for the internment camps used by the Russian army in Chechnya.

Pre-industrial workers had a shorter workweek than today's

from *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, by Juliet B. Schor

One of capitalism's most durable myths is that it has reduced human toil. This myth is typically defended by a comparison of the modern forty-hour week with its seventy- or eighty-hour counterpart in the nineteenth century. The implicit -- but rarely articulated -- assumption is that the eighty-hour standard has prevailed for centuries. The comparison conjures up the dreary life of medieval peasants, toiling steadily from dawn to dusk. We are asked to imagine the journeyman artisan in a cold, damp garret, rising even before the sun, laboring by candlelight late into the night.

These images are backward projections of modern work patterns. And they are false. Before capitalism, most people did not work very long hours at all. The tempo of life was slow, even leisurely; the pace of work relaxed. Our ancestors may not have been rich, but they had an abundance of leisure. When capitalism raised their incomes, it also took away their time. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that working hours in the mid-nineteenth century constitute the most prodigious work effort in the entire history of humankind.

Enough Said

This was sent in by email

D. like in dementia. D. comme dans demence

It was said on the ITN news yesterday [7 May 2014], that 800,000 people in Britain suffer from dementia. One man interviewed can't understand money anymore. . Yes, and the non-demented are as much demented: they believe in this mad society, totally subjected to money, destroyer of nature, destroyer of human relations, hyperproductivist, dominated by ideology (nationalist, anti-Semitic, pro-Ukraine, anti-Ukraine, islamist, militarist, neo-colonialist, productivist, primitivist...). In short, madness reigns undivided . The 800,000 demented who are spoken about are there to make believe to the others that they are not mad. Mistake.

A Liquid Asset of Two Fluids: Nicolas Holliman May 2014

Things have changed so much since the Victorians left us with a tremendous legacy of infrastructure that their systems of combined drainage can no longer deal with the quantity and complexity of today's effluents¹, the changed pattern of rainfall² and the demands of an increased population who have more a separation of rain and storm water from soil and wastewater drainage is long overdue. It is therefore

surprising that Thames Water plc's³ £4.2 billion Thames Tideway Tunnel⁴, now under construction, still follows the combined 'rule' and will be a conduit for a mixture of untreated soil and wastewater, rainwater and floodwater, all the way to Europe's largest sewage works at Beckton, where modernisation work is in progress.

Throughout the UK there are still many systems of combined drainage⁵, notably in coastal towns, and some of the problems associated with them surfaced in Wales, the South-west and Southern England during the January and February storms this year. Companies such as South Western Water plc have invested in better treatment at the point of discharge from coastal towns and this probably accounts for the fact that a record number of 538 beaches in the UK are now graded as excellent⁶. In most cases though, the combined drainage has been retained.

At times of heavy rainfall, overloaded sewers throughout the UK lead to a repetition of events that used to be even more common: discharges into local rivers that lead to 'fish kills', contaminated Mackerel in the North Sea, poisoned shellfish on the Lancashire and Welsh coasts, more plastic detritus in the oceans and condoms and tar on beaches and shorelines.

A straightforward separation of rainwater from all kinds of water borne wastes is not enough though. To deal with today's complex effluents - and because re-cycling is still not taken seriously - a more refined separation of soiled water, 'grey' water, industrial wastewater and restaurant or kitchen wastewater is better because it facilitates the recovery of waste heat and resources such as fats, and urea⁷. The equipment already exists to do this at the first point of discharge from buildings and a network of smaller pipes could connect to de-centralised treatment plants. As with many environmental problems though, the solution to problems caused by torrential rain and surface run-off is many

In the UK over 50 000 different chemicals are synthesised each week and many are discharged as effluent.

The increase in mass and volume of effluent overloads sewers, e.g. from sink macerators, and helps rats to thrive. Formerly this kitchen waste was used as a resource e.g. garden compost, pig feed, feed stock for glue manufacture.

² The author's research into rainfall patterns in West Yorkshire, starting with the c. 19th records from Manningham Park in Bradford, reveals changes, but at least one constant.

³ As the largest water company in the UK and a supplier to over 9 million sitting ducks, Thames Water plc has been involved in some other surprising ventures. In the author's area the company delayed addressing concerns about unpalatable tap water; officially tested for leaks just once in 17 years; prevaricated for years over metering and only directly invited customers to opt for metered supply once - by letter in 2014. There was method in their environmental madness though because businesses sprang up dealing in under-sink water filters of dubious efficacy - some were little more than incubators for microbes. Other companies hawked their ionisers that are said to produce miracle, alkaline ionised water that deals with the 10500 chemical residues from prescription drugs, medicines and personal care products that end up at water treatment plants. The bottled water industry surged forward and Thames Water plc reaped a fortune from households in the social housing sector, some of which included frail and vulnerable people who felt compelled to stint on their use of water.

⁴ This was an opportunity to introduce co-axial drainage, which facilitates the separation of different effluents.

⁵ Combined systems existed and do still exist in other countries. When the author worked for Comision Gestora del Area Metropolitana de Barcelona almost none of the city's combined drainage was intercepted before it flowed into the Mediterranean Sea. Presumably this situation was rectified during preparations for the Barcelona Games of the 17th Olympiad of the Modern Era. In May 2014 Rio de Janeiro's surface waterways are still infested with sewage and Serbia's infrastructure was overwhelmed during its most intense period of spring rainfall for 100 years.

⁶ According to the Marine Conservation Society's commendable "Good Beach Guide" but not according to the E.U.'s higher standards for the quality of bathing water.

⁷ During the Victorian period urine was treated as a resource, collected separately and shipped to chemical works and leather tanneries. Gentlemen who are specific and point Percy in a socially responsible way would benefit all of society by engaging in a bit of discrete recycling, facilitated by the existing sanitary arrangements in gents' lavatories and conveniences for separating most urine from faecal matter and paper. Water would be used more sparingly as well.

solutions⁸, including green roofs and roof gardens⁹, detention basins, infiltration ditches, swales, underground storage, permeable hard surfaces, reflux valves and so on. Unsurprisingly, the £3.5 billion profit exacted recently from consumers for its shareholders¹⁰ and owners¹¹ by Thames Water plc was not channeled into these sustainable projects.

Without management systems in place for reliable water supply management (see Water Safety Plan, WHO¹²) a liquid asset quickly becomes a liquid liability of floodwater murk, sewage and wastewater combined. That silt and sediment in the floodwater, so problematic downstream (according to folk in Somerset), is a subtle reminder of the loss of soil fertility due to the upstream erosion of agricultural land and deforested uplands, while the sewage is a not so subtle reminder that water borne pathogens lurk.¹³

Instead of flowing to a combined drainage system, rainwater could remain the liquid asset that it is¹⁴: an essential for life, a fuel and a power source, but certainly not a problem downstream. Apart from turbines that use water flow and hydraulic rams¹⁵ that use water pressure, there is the possibility of 'splitting' the two fluids of H₂ and O¹⁶ to burn in a fuel cell to produce electricity, heat, and water as a 'waste' product. However these technologies require water that is free of chemicals, effluent and the etritus of floodwater. Industries such as agriculture¹⁷, aluminum¹⁸, brewing, food processing¹⁹ and oil refining²⁰ rely on clean water too.

⁸ The Alhambra in Spain and the ancient city of Rome demonstrate some artful and low-tech approaches to managing water resources.

Nicolas Holliman, "In Praise of Gargoyles" in: Plumbing Jnl. of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering, No. 4 (1992) p. 23

Nicolas Holliman, "Hey Fontanero!" in: op. cit. No. 4 (1990) p. 10

⁹ It is reputed that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon in antiquity were a water retention device for controlling the flooding of the Tigris as well as a series of roof gardens.

¹⁰ The pension funds of British Telecom plc and other large companies are majority shareholders and by their very nature they are future-orientated - for the benefit of pensioners. In respect of effective environmental management and public safety and health nearly everyone misses out, including pensioners, except perhaps the fund managers.

¹¹ Macquarie of Australia (90%), the Chinese Government (8%) and Qatar State.

Part ownership of Thames Water by a command economy such as the Chinese one, or Qatar State, contradicts the original, purported intention of privatisation.

When RWE, the German utility company that specialises in building nuclear power plants, owned Thames Water, a large number of the poorest consumers in the Thames Water area augmented its profits to £2 billion in two years because their housing circumstances were used as a pretext for preventing a switch to the lower, metered supply tariff. RWE simply worked in concert with its predecessors and this made it such an attractive short-term investment, with no commitment to the long-term *needs*.

¹² According to Prof. Jamie Bartram, author of the U.N. Water Safety Plan commissioned by W.H.O., such a plan can deliver major health benefits to industrialised *and* less industrialised societies but it cannot be sub-contracted because it relies so heavily on internal and local knowledge.

¹³ Diarrheal diseases account for the highest number of water related deaths (WHO), mainly of children, and an inestimable number of unreported cases of short and long-term illness.

In total mass, soil/wastewater is the main form of urban waste in the UK, followed by construction waste.

¹⁴ A rain-harvesting scheme for Phase 1 of the Redevelopment of Leeds General Infirmary's roof garden was another of the author's projects. Initiated by the Yorkshire branch of the British Heart Foundation, it is adjacent to the hospital's cardio-thoracic unit and serves as an outdoor gym for in- and out-patients.

¹⁵ Nicolas Holliman, "Clink, clink, clink ... clonk, clonk, clonk..." in: op. cit., No. 5 (1995) p. 10

¹⁶ To remove electrons from a molecule of water is difficult. In photosynthesis chlorophyll harnesses solar energy to achieve just this and a fuel cell uses power.

¹⁷ Agriculture is the major industrial consumer of clean water in the U.K. 14000 litres of water are needed to produce 1 kg of beef (Dept. Environmental Technology & Policy, Imperial College, London 9th May 2014).

¹⁸ One estimate is that the production of 1kg of aluminium (as foil of >99% purity) from an ingot requires 12.7 kg (litres) of process water and 33 kg (litres) of cooling water. Nicolas Holliman, "A Life-cycle Assessment of Aluminium Packaging" following the SETAC procedure, School of Engineering, Glasgow Caledonian University, Table 11, p. 61, 1991.

¹⁹ To produce 1 loaf of bread and a 100g bar of chocolate (excluding packaging) requires 240 litres and 2040 litres of water respectively.

²⁰ The exploitation of shale oil and gas has contaminated ground water and wells, which poses a threat to the brewing industry's use of aquifers. The oil industry itself needs clean, uncontaminated water too - 10 litres for every litre of petrol it refines.

Because any radical change in drainage and waste disposal is a major, infrastructural project, an approach to use tangentially is one informed by that eco-mantra: reduce, reuse and re-cycle.²¹ A reduction in the wastage, conspicuous consumption and exponential primary energy and power consumption, that is part and parcel of the growth model for modern national economies, would mitigate the problems of water pollution, CO₂²² and other 'greenhouse' gas emissions, waste heat, et cetera, and help to deal with the impact of extremes in weather such as torrential rainfall or periods of severe drought.²³

With this approach, the onus is on the home-maker as well as the careerist decision-maker/politician, because almost everything we produce and use in the way of goods and services ends up as domestic consumption in one form or another, including the things we intensely dislike or find abhorrent for environmental and social reasons. This tale of two fluids therefore requires a reference to the home, where millions of people can either willfully or unwittingly compound the problems of keeping our fresh and saltwater resources in a fit state for all living things. It may seem to be an innocent, private and safe environment that supports domestic and family life but viewed through the prism of conserving and protecting water, there are unresolved contradictions.

Starting with the human-ecological issues of cleanliness and hygiene, most household cleaning products and toiletries contain substances²⁴ that have an adverse effect on water courses, ground water, aquatic life, water treatment plants and human health. Then there is the growing trade devoted to over-engineered, 'statement' or 'designer' taps that promotes the look of the tap over and above its function or the quality of the water it delivers. The bog standard WC suite has fallen victim of the homage to appearance²⁵, which has become more important than its function, its technics for efficient use of water²⁶ or the condition of the above and below ground drainage systems that it is connected to. It should therefore come as no surprise that people tend to look for someone 'dirt cheap' who will 'make do' until their property is sold on rather than a qualified, knowledgeable person to work on water services and sanitation.²⁷

²¹ Instead of focusing on post-production the author would encourage a focus on pre-production and add re-formulate, in order to avoid some mistakes from the very beginning.

²² CO₂ emissions cause acidification of the oceans and this in turn suppresses marine life e.g. molluscs including shellfish, fish and oxygen producers such as algae.

²³ According to the Report of the UNO's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (I.P.C.C.), published in March 2014, the number of people in cities throughout the world who experience regular water shortages is expected to rise from the current figure of 150 million to 1 billion by 2050.

Little discussion takes place about the potential role of solar water stills for meeting water shortages even though British engineers experimented with them during the c. 19th, in Australia, Egypt and South America. If the author was able to improvise one for Prior Weston Primary School, on the edge of the City of London, it can be done anywhere in the U.K.

²⁴ e.g. Dyes used in products designed to aesthetically freshen up a WC flush but which interfere with bacterial breakdown at the sewage works; foaming agents that create banks of smelly foam on canals, rivers or coastal waters and harbour bacteria; 1,4-dioxane, Sodium lauryl sulphate, ethylene oxide, phthalates, parabens, petrolatum that are suspected of being health risks.

²⁵ The advertising and the image conscious market that persuades householders to throw out whole functioning bathrooms, kitchens and plumbing/sanitation systems and to 'modernise' generates more waste. The packaging around this equipment has become more sophisticated than ever before and further increases the waste that has to be dealt with. Nicolas Holliman, "EC Urges Action on Packaging", in: op. cit., No. 5 (1992) p. 22

²⁶ Aside from the anatomical evidence that most WC suites are too high for positive evacuation, the waterless WC will become important, if only because flushing toilets account for 23% of water consumed in buildings, but its cumbersome appearance is not likely to appeal to the image-obsessed consumers of today. People living on the coast may have to follow the solution adopted in Hong Kong and use piped seawater instead of mains water for flushing sanitary fittings. If they do, they will have to avoid the mistake made by the administration of Alcatraz prison where the seawater used for flushing damaged the prison's concrete structure, forcing its closure.

²⁷ In the U.K. context, dirt-cheap can readily translate to 'zilch'. All those television programmes about rogue traders that present one side of the story have given the public the impression that every tradesman is ipso facto a member of the criminal fraternity. When will the public hear about cowboy clients, some of whom are lawyers or employees of television companies that make films about rogue traders?

From late 1990 to April 1992 "The Guardian" Europe supplement printed weekly interviews with foreign journalists about their everyday life in a host European country, including their dealings with plumbing and heating engineers. When reporting on the U.K., they gave this group of tradesmen 'nul point'.

Nicolas Holliman, "Mein Plombier es Terrible!" in: op. cit., No. 2 (1992) p. 25

The social imperative to own one's home at all costs and move up the property ladder, which has its roots in the insecurity generated by low pay²⁸ and low state pensions, monetary devaluation, social control²⁹ and speculation, is a driving force behind these contradictions because it produces asset-rich/income-poor³⁰ households for whom it is tempting to forfeit standards of sanitation and jeopardise water quality standards for the sake of a couple of quid.³¹ For example, *against* the advice of the Environment Agency over 3000 new houses were built on flood plains in the England and Wales in 2013 - served by combined drainage and accompanied by the problems that that entails.

Over the decades complaints trickled in to South Western, Southern, Thames and Yorkshire Water about unpalatable tap water but here too we hit a flood of contradictions. Into drains and water courses, people continue to dump acids, colouring agents, aggressive detergents, paints, solvents, waste mineral oil³² and other substances that pollute *many times their own volume of water*. The residues of pharmaceutical products and drugs³³ end up at water treatment plants too, although some of these can be de-natured by boiling or through the cooking process. Yet a sizeable minority of the electorate voted for representatives who adopted the hastily and poorly conceived privatization of publicly owned water utilities, and in the process, banished trained teams of water-tasters and locally based 'turnkeys'. In the event of bursts, leaks or floods, when water quality was also compromised, these traditional 'turnkeys' would arrive on their bicycles within minutes to isolate the main valves. Re-structuring and modernising the industry has lengthened this response time to days, weeks and sometimes months.

Domestic consumers *may* consider themselves to be price 'sensitive', but if publicists can sneak an advertising slogan past them for bottled spring water, claiming it to be "...an affordable, portable, life-style beverage...", something really is awry. And eau dear, the result is that consumers now pay up to 600 times the cost of tap water per litre for their life-style beverage, which can contain higher levels of nitrates, organic material that festers in a sunlit shop window and levels of radioactivity that are not present in mains water³⁴. The same beneficiaries of exotic, bottled waters, that can be sourced from as far away as the Pacific islands, toss billions of 'empties' away each year³⁵ and fail to demand the best possible quality for tap water or the restoration of public drinking fountains that have fallen into a shameful state of disrepair.³⁶

To fathom how we got ourselves into this quagmire it is worth looking a bit deeper. Colourless, odourless, tasteless and ubiquitous, water can appear to be a fairly mundane molecule, not one of the most important on Earth, with some unique characteristics and properties and special functions in all biological systems. Perhaps all those facts about water³⁷, served up during rote learning that were intended to educate us, have also served to sanitise the science of water and to alienate us from the written word. Maybe the facts about water are so frequently quoted that they have lost

²⁸ The housing market has functioned a bit like a 'subsidy' to homeowners on low pay or low pensions, but not to those living in social housing.

²⁹ "The Housing Question" by Friedrich Engels includes a critique of home ownership as a form of social control.

³⁰ The commitment of a mortgage is one reason why the trade unions have not been enthusiastic about shorter working weeks and job-sharing.

³¹ This is common among first-time buyers, those committed to the 'spirit' of property and private landlords who turn a blind eye to infringements - as many a student will testify. The philosopher Mary Midgley has something relevant to say about this: philosophy is like plumbing, you only miss it when it's not working.

³² The National Rivers Authority attribute over 20% of yearly pollution incidents to the dumping, surface runoff and spillage of mineral oil.

³³ Fieldwork by the European Union Drugs Monitoring Agency, reported on the BBC R4 "Today" programme (28th May 2014), reveals that the soil/wastewater of 42 European cities contains cocaine and other narcotics. London's sewage heads the league table and contains up to 711mg of cocaine/1000 people/day. It is not clear whether residues in urine and faecal matter, or the surreptitious disposal of drugs at the start of any police raid, or both, are the source. The unit of dilution used by the agency is not a conventional one but it does indicate that Tuesday is the critical day of the week and this in turn indicates that excretion is the causative link.

³⁴ Albeit, below the upper legal limit of 10 Becquerels/litre set by W.H.O.

³⁵ Nicolas Holliman, "The Use of Refillable Containers in the UK", London: Waste Watch Ltd., 1996, pp. 35-40, "The Bottled Water Industry" Section 5.

A more recent estimate from 2013 puts the total for the UK at billions of bottles each year.

³⁶ Nicolas Holliman, "Toasting Adam's Ale" in: op.cit., No. 3 (1993) p. 18

³⁷ e.g. the quantity of water on Earth is finite; it increases in volume when it freezes; pure water is tasteless and does not conduct electricity; its specific heat is high; it is not compressible even though it is a molecule of two gases; it is almost a universal solvent. "Water is the softest thing, yet it can penetrate mountains and earth. This shows clearly the principle of softness overcoming hardness." (Laozi c. 6th Chinese philosopher) e.g. 70% of the ecosphere is estimated to be water, which adds up to an estimated 1.5 billion km³, but only 0.001% of this is directly useable as freshwater and the rest is seawater.

their power. Then there is ye olde adage that used to circulate throughout the sludge of local, party politics: "There are no votes in sewage." To avoid a surface critique that creates ripples rather than waves, some reference to nihilism is needed too. It plays its part because it is cultivated by the realities of abstract labour and the abstract labour class.

Concerning mains, fresh water and effluents there is another point to consider in relation to the public's apparent lack of interest in a real liquid asset of two fluids. The transport of water or effluent is not visible to the majority who live in urban areas - just like so many environmental pollution problems.³⁸ Perhaps sections of infrastructure should be made transparent - literally - with glass equipment. This is not too fanciful because UK taxpayers have already paid for glass drainage in nuclear power stations, for precisely this reason - transparency.

The reverence for water sources promoted by ancient authorities was very likely a ploy to ensure their safekeeping and to encourage vigilance. After all, if you pray to the River God you are more likely to closely observe the river in all its godly and devilish 'moods'.³⁹ In our society though, we have relinquished direct control over our water, and its quality, and following commoditization and privatisations, the modern contradictory relationship with water developed. This is one in which people know water is important yet behave otherwise and entrust the wrong people with its future, because of the social alienation arising from the commoditization of our shared natural world and its resources⁴⁰.

Nor does it help the conservation project if people are told that water is a 'natural' monopoly⁴¹ and that any other view is mere sentiment, because this 'reality' is used to explain away a lot, including the loss of a diversity of water suppliers. On the other hand it would strengthen the project if the more evolved environmentalists amongst us acquainted themselves with the complexities of the big "social question" and side-stepped the gagging order imposed unofficially by careerism, job security and so on.

For those who are fully conversant with this, but know little about biology, there is a lot to be gained by following the kids and starting with some pond life studies. Initially, the maximum level of technology that is required is a pocket lens, but marvels of the aquatic world await anyone who progresses to using a microscope. During this destructive phase of the capitalist system a foray into observational science provides a bonus of pleasure that serves as an antidote to the draining effort of coping with the assaults on our key liquid asset. For some though, ignorance is bliss, until such times as the ecological 'boomerang' comes around and hits them in the back of the neck.

³⁸ Where streams and small rivers have been covered over unnecessarily or wantonly, native, remediating, aquatic plants could be re-established on their banks once they have been restored to *public view*. This would provide free improvements to the quality of water and amenity.

³⁹ The Vikings were one of many groups who revered their streams and lakes and established sites of worship nearby.

⁴⁰ The privatisation of the seabed was recommended to Margaret Thatcher's government by one monetarist professor on the grounds that it would lead to the more efficient use of resources, including the marine reserves and underwater national parks. The government plan to privatise publicly owned forests and woodlands was abandoned temporarily, following widespread opposition in 2013.

⁴¹ This begs the question: What defines 'unnatural' monopolies if companies are becoming less competitive as they get bigger through amalgamations, cartels, mergers, price rings, takeovers et cetera?