

## Lessons from History: the Globalist 'Left' and the Embrace of Capital

With the drift of much of the left into the Labour Party, we have seen an increased volume recently of familiar comment about 'progressive alliances'. Lest we become seduced if not overwhelmed by this well meaning chicanery, we need to remind ourselves firstly of what distinguishes advocates of social democracy from socialists.

Yes, it wants change, but in a nutshell the non socialist left sees the roots of social injustice in political inequality. Socialists see it in the ownership of economic power.

It is for this reason that political orthodoxy, ranging from UKIP on the conservative right to some (though by no means all) of the Trotskyite left, focuses on personal identity, civil rights and 'freedom' at the expense of the core struggle of the dispossessed for economic power.

Since it shares its prognosis - we can be free so long as civil society can be subordinated - the embrace of capitalism is built into the DNA of social democracy. Often social democracy, by which we mean the left of the political consensus, shares the hostility of the right to any grassroots resistance which is not 'in tune' politically with a 'progressive' view of the world.

At the heart of the social democratic left's embrace of 'globalism', implicit in its support of or indifference to the EU, lies an inability or unwillingness to recognise capital not 'society' as the source of repression.

DiEM25 or the 'Manifesto on Democracy' launched by Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek Finance Minister and latterly embroiled in the country's Syriza nightmare, seeks a 'democratised' European Union accountable to the people (see Takis Fotopoulos). It assumes that a sovereign Parliament sharing power with devolved national assemblies and 'open' to scrutiny will transform a power bloc designed to remove political impediments to the flow of capital, into an instrument of 'international' justice. Its 'Advisory Panel' includes academic Noam Chomsky, filmmaker Ken Loach, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and Green Party Co Leader Caroline Lucas.

Within the lifetimes of most of us, we have witnessed a series of brutal wars waged by globalists on poor sovereign states as well as the open use of insurrection and terrorism against governments. The nations violated, destabilised or destroyed have differing forms of government, some were developing economies, some not, and some were or are socially progressive compared to neighbours. Some, most recently Ukraine, had western style elected leaders. What these countries shared, the only element they shared, was running economies not sufficiently 'open' to foreign capital; they retained (or retain) some degree of state control or national autonomy.

From the Blairites on the right to 'Trotskyists' on the left, social democrats view the right of self determination of these nations (but not ours) as incumbent in some degree upon the character of their political system. Learning nothing from Iraq or Libya, or indeed from an ignoble left history of failing to distinguish 'people's uprisings' from foreign sponsored

coups, left coalitions including 'Stop the War' determined that Syria's resistance could not be considered legitimate unless firstly it's people are 'supported' in overthrowing their 'reactionary' leaders.

While socialists resist the subordination of workers to the slavery of the borderless 'market', for social democrats globalism is good so long as those in government favour or implement open or 'progressive' policies.

It has never been more important for capitalism to bury the idea of socialism than it is today. For this reason, it is vitally important for us that the fallacy at the heart of globalism, that civil 'democracy' can liberate the poorest nations from imperialism or the poorest people from poverty, does not become the new political 'norm' for the left.

Kim Bryan, 13th June 2017

### Comments/Responses from Members

**Bill Ball (South East SLP)** says 'Why should a focus on personal identity, civil rights & freedom be at the expense of the struggle for economic power? I would have thought that these issues were a concomitant of that struggle. How would a revolutionary class pursue the economic struggle without addressing these issues? I would additionally suggest that there is more to the fight for socialism than just the fight for economic power. It is about winning & sustaining political power too. Unless we address issues such as civil rights, that fight will become more prolonged & difficult. I personally would not align Blairism & Trotskyism as you seem to in your article. Blairism is about maintaining a status quo & ensuring that a Labour administration is no threat to capital at any stage- or indeed any threat to big business at all. Trotskyism founders on the theory of Permanent Revolution. The assertion that a revolution cannot survive in a single country leads it down an internationalist road. Although I think this is rather different from the globalist approach that you cite. I am always vaguely surprised that Trotskyists cannot see that if socialism in one country cannot survive, then world revolution is, at worst, a non-starter. And at best, a desperate act of international revolutionary plate spinning. The Trots are blinkered by their own political contradictions. As you write, civil democracy cannot liberate us from imperialism or poverty. Only revolutionary struggle can do that. Only socialism can eradicate the cancers of war & poverty. But I perceive socialism as a stage & a process in an ongoing transformation of the world. When we fight the class war, we first examine the terrain of the battlefield. And we find ourselves fighting on many fronts for the ultimate victory. We should not dismiss those struggles that you appear to despise as a distraction'

**Kevin O'Connor (London SLP)** supports the SLPs position on globalism and the EU: 'I am really pleased that the SLP are supporting Takis Fotopoulos ideas. I have been a big fan of his anti globalist left, anti eu left ideas for many years'.

**Kathrine Jones (Wales SLP)** also supporting says the rejection of 'social democracy' in favour of socialism should be incorporated into a motion for the forthcoming party congress.