



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

Melbourne NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Next Meeting
Monday 2nd
September
7.30pm
Unitarian Church
110 Grey St,
East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051	PO Box k364	PO Box 1455	PO Box 5683	PO Box 6139	GPO Box 323	Box 381	PO Box 1082	PO Box 854	220a Adelaide Rd
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Vic. 3066	NSW 1240	WA 6951	Qld 4101	ACT 2604	Tas. 7001	SA 5006	NSW 2250	NSW 2640	New Zealand

Dear Comrades

23 September, 2018

Here we go again. Yet another example of the rottenness of privatisation and its evil twin, deregulation. This time, impacting on the most vulnerable human beings in our society, the frail elderly. Scott Morrison jumped in with a poorly framed Royal Commission before Four Corners One had unleashed community outrage, a great way to deflect the issue to the distant future when he'll no longer be around. God knows how many Royal Commissions are currently on the go - all costing an arm and a leg - and we wouldn't need half of them if governments actually governed and implemented earlier recommendations or applied common decency, a commodity in very short supply. And don't get me started on State Aid for the rich and religious. The sheer gall of Pentecostal ShitMo and his Xavier-educated minister to hand out **\$4.6 billion extra** to private schools without a brass razoo going to the 70% who attend state schools, already the most inequitable education system in the western world. And Xavier-educated opportunist Bill Shorten supports the scam. The shrinking number of 'regulatory' bodies still around to keep an eye on the growing army of shysters are weak and powerless, whether we're talking about banking, insurance, transport, education, health care, or any other entity that used to be in public hands, but now at the mercy of 'the market' to be plundered and looted. Costs continue to go through the roof while maintenance and services disappear down the plug hole. And when we run into trouble, we're foisted on to a foreign call centre. So it's hardly surprising that just about everyone you meet is fed up to the back teeth with the lack of accountability, at the rorts, and the way the rorters get away with their rorting. The problem is that desperate people driven to snapping point take their rage and frustration out on some poor sod who's way down the corporate food chain. And now we see idiots shoving needles into strawberries that has created a full-blown crisis that has morphed into terrorism? Like our police, who've morphed into machine-gun-toting black-gearred commandoes with armoured cars who can't be bothered dealing with 'normal' crime.

Foreign tax-dodging media mogul Rupert Murdoch is back on centre-stage since he helped turf out Malcolm Turnbull. Some seem shocked at Murdoch's behaviour when he's always been a war-mongering, right-wing bastard. You might remember his despicable role in smashing the miners and print-workers unions in the UK. In 1986, Murdoch shifted his UK operations out of Fleet Street to Wapping in East London to introduce 'new' technology and US-style labour contracts to provoke a dispute. **He sacked his entire printing workforce of 5,500 and replaced them with young, unemployed electricians to act as scabs, helped by 'mate' Sir Peter Abeles,** with a \$100 million a year delivery deal using his TNT trucks to keep the newspapers out of the hands of unionised distributors. Other newspapers followed suit. And our media changed forever.

Wapping saw some of the ugliest scenes ever witnessed in Britain. An extract from a speech given by the late Tony Benn in the House

of Commons on 8 May 1986: ***'I spent five hours at Wapping on Saturday night just two miles from this House and saw sights I hope never to see again...printworkers outside the Wapping works planned to receive a group of marchers from all over the country who had marched through Britain to show their support. The marchers were given a civic send-off at Glasgow. They came through Chesterfield and arrived at Wapping with 10,000 people...and were met by 1,700 police and dogs and razor-wire and surveillance cameras... there were six cavalry charges before stones were thrown...the director of news on BBC Television ordered those preparing the film for the nightly bulletin to transpose the order of the film to show that the missiles came before the police charged...police smashed a BBC camera because it was filming what they were doing and that wasn't shown on the BBC news either...people organising demonstrations should have doctors present and video cameras because otherwise they won't see the truth...'*** And that was then...

And now? The UK's *Daily Mail* journalist Peter Hitchens writes about the lack of publicity given to an extraordinary speech about Syria given in Westminster last week when **Foreign Minister Alistair Burt said that Britain would go to war without waiting for facts or without recalling Parliament. He was referring to plans being currently hatched in Washington to launch a massive attack on Damascus in response to a supposed atrocity that hadn't even happened, but which the Americans claimed to already have the 'evidence'.** The 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' lie all over again used to justify the catastrophic Iraq war, like the lie about mass rape and killings used to destroy Libya. Hitchens took time to read the official reports from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and found that the OPCW never even visited the site of the alleged gas attack in Khan Sheikhoun on April 2017 used as a pretext for an American missile attack on Syria. The OPCW never test samples their own inspectors do not get, because they cannot ensure their integrity. Next came the blaze of publicity about last April's gas attack on Douma, near Damascus. **This time, the OPCW actually got to the site and concluded that: 'no organophosphorus nerve agents were detected', and nor did Russia or Syria block access to the site.** But once again, it was bombs away by the US of A.

America's war against Assad is about to end in defeat, but a massive US attack could change that. The ducks are lining up, like they did in Europe in 1914. Saudi Arabia hates Iran and Iran hates the Saudis. Syria, which the West plans to obliterate, is close to Iran. Behind the Saudis stand the US, Britain, France and Israel. Behind Iran, stands Russia and possibly China. ***Propaganda always wins, if we allow it.***

Joan Coxsedge, Commentator-in-Chief, Melbourne ACFS (03) 9857 9249

The AGM is coming...November 12th, 2018.

[New information on aviation accident](#)

During the process of investigating the accident that occurred near Havana's José Martí International Airport on May 18, 100% of the information in the technical parameters box and 90-95% of the audio have been recovered



[A despicable attack on the truth](#)

A destructive cyber attack on the Spanish Cubainformación TV website was condemned by the Union of Cuban Journalists and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples

[A government at the service of the population](#)

President Díaz-Canel tours sites of economic and social interest in Pinar del Río



[President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez offers exclusive interview with teleSUR](#)

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez' granted an exclusive interview in Havana with teleSUR's Patricia Villegas, which aired on Sunday



[How are the country's strategic sectors advancing?](#)

President Díaz-Canel toured key sites in the province of Pinar del Río, commenting that the objective of his regular visits to local areas and dialogue with the population is to help resolve problems at this level



[Díaz-Canel meets with the Prime Minister of Belize](#)

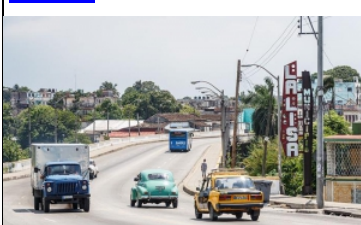
The President of the Councils of State and Ministers, met this Tuesday with the Right Honorable Dean Oliver Barrow, Prime Minister of Belize, who is currently visiting Cuba

[How is a pretext for a cold war manufactured?](#)

A pretext is all that is needed to start a conflict, something with which the United States has experience, from the Spanish-American War, to Vietnam, Iraq... but its latest efforts to vilify Cuba are unique



[Involving everyone in the commemoration of Havana's 500 years](#)



This priority was emphasized during a meeting of the national government group supporting the capital, led by Cuba's President

[Quality services and care must define public health institutions](#)

President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez emphasized quality and care during a meeting to examine the current situation in Cuba's public health system

[It is impossible to prove something that did not occur, and the U.S. knows it](#)

In exclusive statements to Granma, Carlos Fernández de Cossío, director for the United States at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, insists that the latest theory about microwaves cannot explain the variety and diversity of symptoms that the State Department claims its diplomats in Havana suffered, and with time will lose credibility



Why are changes proposed to the structure of the Cuban state and government?

One of the main proposals of the draft Constitution, which is currently undergoing a popular consultation process, is the restructuring and distribution of different positions within the Cuban state. Granma International shares some of the ideas that motivated this proposal

Author: [Alejandra García](#) | internet@granma.cu - september 4, 2018 11:09:35



The National Assembly retains its status as the supreme body of the state. **Photo:** Juvenal Balán

What are the main changes proposed in the draft Constitution, which is currently being debated in neighborhoods, workplaces and schools, regarding the structure of the Cuban state and government? What motivates this decision?

In a panel held at the headquarters of the Union of Cuban Journalists, Dr. Martha Prieto, vice president of the Cuban Society of Constitutional Law and tenured professor at the University of Havana, acknowledged that the proposed changes in the leadership structure of the island are among the most novel of the draft Constitution.

The new proposal separates the functions of the President of the Republic and those of the Prime Minister, which were previously merged into one, based on collegial decision making.

“Now, although he (the President) is the head of the Executive, he must also be a deputy, approved by the National Assembly of People’s Power (ANPP). This is a necessary measure, because it prevents Assembly-state leadership separation,” the jurist explained.

The President of the Republic comes from within the Assembly, which is a representation of the people, and he or she is accountable to this body, which can recall or remove him or her.

Meanwhile, the Council of State, a body of the ANPP that represents it in the period between sessions, puts its resolutions into effect and complies with all the other duties assigned by the Constitution, serving as the permanent representative and coordinator of the work of the National Assembly standing committees. The Assembly will decide all senior leadership positions, although some will be directly subordinated to the President of the Republic.

“The proposal, as can be seen, totally changes what exists now,” said Martha Prieto. “The Council of State becomes the permanent body of the Assembly: the eyes, ears, and those who will ensure all legislative activity on behalf and in representation of the Assembly.”

Today, our head of state is also the head of government, representing the entire apparatus, he is part of the representative body and, in addition, leads the executive/administrative sphere and the Council of Ministers, she continued.

The draft Constitution proposes a head of state who directs relations with other states, and issues relating to national security and defense. He or she must be a deputy elected by the Assembly, between 35 and 60 years of age when elected for the first period of his or her term, which may only be extended once, for a total of two terms of office.

Among the main functions of the President according to the draft text are to fulfill and ensure respect for the Constitution and the country’s laws, and represent the state and direct its general policy. His or her administration is accountable to the ANPP or the Council of State. The President will propose candidates for the positions of Prime Minister, President of the Supreme People’s Court, the Prosecutor General of the Republic, the Comptroller General of the Republic, the President of the National Electoral Council, members of the Council of Ministers, and Provincial Governors.



Empowering municipalities is one of the objectives of the new structure. **Photo:** Juvenal Balán

“He or she will objectively respond to the Assembly and will demand responsibility and accountability from the Council of Ministers,” Prieto noted.

Therefore, the position of Head of State will not resemble that which existed during the pre-revolutionary period, she added.

Regarding the figure of the Prime Minister, leader of the Council of Ministers, the expert assured that he or she will be responsible before the ANPP and the President of the Republic for the management of the Council of Ministers, and of its Executive Committee.

As such, he or she “must have become a deputy by popular vote, and then, on the proposal of the President, the Assembly appoints him/her Prime Minister.”

Another change being debated at the grassroots level is the disappearance of the Provincial Assembly, Prieto noted.

“If we want to enhance local autonomy,” she argued, “the Assembly at the provincial level cannot be too strong, as what will happen is what happens now, that although it is constitutionally foreseen that municipalities enjoy the powers to decide and have legal capacity, they can’t take or implement initiatives until the province approves them.”

Therefore, the new Magna Carta proposes Provincial Councils composed of the presidents of the municipal assemblies, who are delegates elected through popular vote.

These are essential changes that should also change the way we view the leadership of deputies, elected by the people on the basis of their merits and record. It will provide them with greater autonomy, Prieto stressed.

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES WITHIN THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

- The President will serve for a period of five years, and up to two consecutive terms, after which he/she cannot hold office again.
- The National Assembly retains its status as the supreme body of the state, which represents the sovereign will of the entire people.
- The President of the Republic will be the Head of State, while the Prime Minister will be in charge of the Government of the Republic. Both are required to be deputies of the National Assembly of People’s Power.
- The Council of State maintains its character as the permanent body of the National Assembly of People’s Power, with greater interaction with the Assembly since, among other aspects, the President, Vice President, and Secretary of the two bodies will be the same individuals.
- An important novelty in terms of state bodies is the establishment of a National Electoral Council, a permanent institution devoted to this area, while the inclusion of the Comptroller General’s Office in the Constitution has been achieved.
- In terms of local bodies, Provincial Assemblies of People’s Power are eliminated, and established is a Provincial Government composed of a Governor and a Council at this level.
- Municipalities acquire a greater role on the basis of recognition of their autonomy, which they exercise in accordance with national interests.
- The Municipal Administrative Council is reaffirmed as the body that directs Municipal Administration, under the leadership of a Superintendent, a term proposed to replace those of “president” and “chief” currently used.

Under siege: more democracy

Is Cuban democracy perfectible? It is, and one way to do so is through the consultation underway, without exclusions, which has opened space for the participation of Cubans living abroad, as well.

Faced with critical situations, dictatorships respond with more repression; revolutions respond with more democracy

Author: [Roel Sánchez](mailto:roel@granma.cu) | internet@granma.cu - september 21, 2018 14:09:31

“FOR us, like Venezuela and Nicaragua, it is clear that the siege is being tightened,” stated Raúl Castro this July 26, in Santiago de Cuba. The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba thus summarized the international panorama created by U.S. policies characterized by “disrespect, aggression, interventionism, and crude manipulation of the historical truth.”

Raúl spoke during the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the 1953 assault on the island’s second most important military garrison, in an effort to overthrow the dictator who enjoyed the support of the United States and did good business with that country’s mafia. John F. Kennedy saw it this way during his election campaign for the Presidency of the United States: “Perhaps (the) most disastrous of our failures, was the decision to give stature and support to one of the most bloody and repressive dictatorships in the long history of Latin American repression. Fulgencio Batista murdered 20,000 Cubans in 7 years - a greater proportion of the Cuban population than the proportion of Americans who died in both World Wars... Administration spokesmen publicly praised Batista - hailed him as a staunch ally and a good friend - at a time when Batista was murdering thousands, destroying the last vestiges of freedom, and stealing hundreds of millions of dollars from the Cuban people...”

However, this continuing hegemonic narrative presents the Cuban government as a dictatorship that put an end to the prosperous democracy that reigned on the island until 1959. A part of this story recognizes Batista’s bloody character only to legitimize what existed before, but the words of the President assassinated in a shadowy fashion in Dallas are not very amenable to this view of reality: “In 1953 the average Cuban family had an income of \$6 a week. Fifteen to twenty percent of the labor force was chronically unemployed. Only a third of the homes in the island even had running water, and in the years which preceded the Castro revolution this abysmal standard of living was driven still lower as population expansion out-distanced economic growth.”

The truth is that the elected governments that preceded Batista were characterized by corruption, gangsterism, sell-out politics, assassinations of trade union leaders, despite the 1940 Constitution with its advanced conceptions for the era, to a large degree promoted by the six Communist constituent assembly members, but never implemented.

The Constitution condemned vast landholdings and proposed regulating monopolies in commerce, industry, and agriculture, but according to Kennedy, at the time of the Revolution’s triumph, “U.S. companies owned about 40 percent of Cuban sugar lands - almost all the cattle ranches - 90 percent of the mines and mineral concessions - 80 percent of the utilities - and practically all the oil industry - and supplied two-thirds of Cuba’s imports.”

Interviewed by journalist Rosa Miriam Elizalde, the Communist Cuban intellectual Fernando Martínez Heredia described the situation prior to the coup by General Fulgencio Batista (1901-1973) this way: “When I was a boy, bourgeois democracy in Cuba governed very well, better than in many countries, and moreover an effort was being made to have the national budget approved by Congress. The President of the Republic had a Prime Minister, debates were broadcast on radio, new television got into politics, as well. (There was) freedom of expression in the Cuban neocolonial bourgeois republic - it was not a pseudo-republic. Freedom of expression was fairly broad then. Why? Because it served capitalist domination in Cuba. So everyone could say whatever they liked, but things continued essentially without change. That’s why, at a certain moment, all political parties favored a land reform, but only with the political-military victory of the revolutionaries could the land reform be carried out. This is a historical experience.”

Cuba’s Socialist Constitution of 1976, as opposed to that of 1940, was debated by the people and approved in a referendum. Leading its writers was Blas Roca, one of those Communist constituents, who was then the Party’s secretary general. He told journalist *Ciro Bianchi*, “In the constituent assembly, we were able to participate with six delegates, a minimal representation in the group of 76 that the Assembly included. Nonetheless, the party played an important role there, because we presented a problem and obliged the body to vote. You had to say



“yes” or “no” to the eight-hour work day, the 44-hour week; you had to say “yes” or “no” to a series of progressive measures like the distribution of land to campesinos, paid vacation, the right to education, the condemnation of racial discrimination. Since those who were there would later be candidates for Representative or Senator, they had to profess support for these measures to avoid alienating the electorate.

If these issues had not been put to a vote, those people would have made lovely speeches, they would have spoken loudly about the homeland and its heroes, but nothing more would have happened. Thanks to this, some advanced precepts were included in the 1940 Constitution. Of course, they were mocked later; of course they did nothing to put them into effect; of course the elimination of vast landholdings was not even attempted, but at least there was a legal program to fight for and to put pressure on the country, including representatives of other parties.”

By 1976, Cuba had already lived through 17 years of the U.S. blockade and aggression, while changing the conditions Kennedy had described so well as a candidate and later wanted to return to as President, but this did not prevent the Cuban Revolution from achieving - through broad debate - consensus on a new Constitution and the socialist institutionalization of the country, legitimized with the support of 97% of the electorate.

At critical moments, Cuba has always responded with more democracy. At the beginning of the 1990s, the country was heading into the worst economic juncture in its history, facing the impact of losing 75% of its foreign trade and a 34% drop in its GDP, as a result of the disappearance of its commercial relations with the USSR and Eastern Europe, to which Washington opportunistically reacted with a tightening of the blockade.

The Call to the Fourth Party Congress was discussed in thousands of meetings held not only by Party branches, but in all workplaces and schools, as well. Shortly thereafter, faced with the inescapable necessity, the 1993 National Assembly agreed on financial cutbacks and tens of thousands of Workers’ Parliaments were convoked to de-

bate the changes. These forums were held over subsequent months to consider the proposals, and measures were not implemented until the popular discussion was concluded in May of 1994, and several of the adjustments originally considered by the Assembly were abandoned as a result of objections from workers.

In 2007, when the impact of Fidel’s illness created uncertainty beyond Cuba’s borders, and the task began of continuing the Revolution without its founder leading the government, amidst threats from the U.S. administration of George W. Bush, discussions of the speech Raúl delivered July 26 in the city of Camagüey were held across the entire country. Proposals made laid the basis for elaborating the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines that were later submitted to the Sixth Party Congress and now - renovated during a similar debate prior to the Seventh Congress - guide the Cuban government’s work. The same occurred with the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model, one of the foundations of the proposed Constitution now under discussion since August 13.

Is Cuban democracy perfectible? It is, and one way to do so is through the consultation underway, without exclusions, which has opened space for the participation of Cubans living abroad, as well. Faced with critical situations, dictatorships respond with more repression; revolutions respond with more democracy, as occurred in Venezuela with the Constituent Assembly that put an end to the violence there overnight.

Try and tell U.S. citizens that they can directly nominate candidates to assemblies from which their representatives in Congress will emerge, without the intervention of money. Or the Spanish that they have the right to be consulted regarding what the Popular Party and the Socialist Workers’ Party agreed to in 2014, modifying the Constitution to comply with the anti-democratic European Central Bank, without citizen approval, and cutting social spending.

“We have been obliged to construct a parliament in a trench,” said poet Cintio Vitier, years ago. And Cuba persists in giving a voice to the majorities disregarded in the new School of the Americas.

Trump, Charlottesville, Chemnitz and the struggle

Posted in [Class struggle](#), [Europe](#), [Immigrants & Refugees](#), [Racism & Oppression](#)

By Fred Goldstein - September 4, 2018

Sept. 1 — To many progressives among the population, Donald Trump appears to be on the ropes. They are waiting for the establishment to take him down. There is great anticipation that the Democratic Party will make electoral gains and get the chance to further discredit him.

There is the mounting public evidence of Trump’s corruption. Many in his inner circle have pleaded guilty or been convicted of lying, money laundering, tax and/or bank fraud. There is his growing anxious rage expressed in his tweets against the Mueller investigation. There is also his isolation from



Anti-fascists confront racist march in Chemnitz, Germany, Sept. 1.

ruling-class society as illustrated by his exclusion from the week-long and highly publicized, super-patriotic, militaristic funeral ceremonies for John McCain.

But the fascist march in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017 and the recent fascist anti-immigrant riot in Chemnitz, Germany, show how illusory this view is that the defeat of Trump will solve the problem of racist reaction.

No one knows at this point how the struggle between Trump and his allies, on the one hand, and the anti-Trump forces in the ruling class on the other, will turn out. But it would be fatal for progressives and revolutionaries to rely on the reactionary ruling class to defeat Trump.

Moreover, while the political defeat of Trump is important, it will not be fundamental because it will not deal with the racist, misogynist, xenophobic, national chauvinist forces that Trump has conjured up and consolidated into a reactionary base. This base is not going to go away, whatever happens to Trump. The workers and the oppressed will still have to deal with this reactionary mass. What will be needed in the future is to defeat Trumpism, not just at the polls but on the ground.

Charlottesville — fascism shows its face

The world got a glimpse of the forces emerging around Trump at Charlottesville last year when the Klan and the Nazis united with other fascist forces in the “Unite the Right” armed torchlight parade through the University of Virginia campus in defense of a statue of Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the slavocracy during the Civil War.

One anti-fascist demonstrator was killed, a Black man was brutally beaten and many were injured as the police watched passively. Trump refused to denounce the fascists and finally said that there were good people “on both sides.”

Fortunately, the movement recovered from this assault and forced the removal of Confederate statues in many cities, from Louisiana to Texas. The Unite the Right forces received an important blow when the movement toppled a Confederate statue in Durham, N.C.

Because of the militant resistance, the “Unite the Right 2” rally in Washington, D.C. on the one-year anniversary of Charlottesville this Aug. 10 fell flat.

Pro-Confederate forces in high places

However, the degree to which the racist, pro-Confederate forces in the ruling class are dug in was shown by the reaction of the University of North Carolina administration

to the recent pulling down of a Confederate statue in Chapel Hill, N.C.

The statue of a Confederate soldier was pulled down by students after their campaign to have the authorities remove it went nowhere. After it was pulled down, the university and the board of governors decided it should be relocated on campus. Meanwhile, arrest warrants were issued for student demonstrators.

This incident illustrates how deeply embedded pro-Confederate sympathy is in the ruling class 150 years after the Civil War. Chapel Hill is supposed to be a liberal institution. States all over the South and elsewhere have passed laws forbidding the removal of a statue without the express consent of the state historical society, regardless of the sentiment of African Americans or progressive anti-racist sectors of the population. Liberal Ivy League colleges and universities in the North have refused to budge on this matter as well.

Racism and the face of fascism in the U.S.

The origin of this underlying racism which penetrates U.S. capitalist society goes back to the betrayal of the enslaved people after the Civil War by the victorious capitalist class of the North.

The Northern armies occupied the Southern slave states. There was a period of Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877. Voting rights were granted for formerly enslaved peoples. Many African Americans were elected to various state and local offices. During the brief period of Reconstruction, a Freedmen’s Bureau was created and land ownership rights and other rights for African Americans, such as the right to sue, to serve on a jury, etc., were enforced by the U.S. military occupation forces.

This period of Reconstruction was ended abruptly in 1877 with the withdrawal of U.S. forces after the Hayes-Tilden Compromise, in which Rutherford B. Hayes was given the presidency in return for troop withdrawal from the South.

The political dominance of the South by the former slavocracy was restored. The formerly enslaved were resubjugated and pressed into a form of feudalism or land slavery called sharecropping. Lynching ran riot. Rigid racist segregation was enforced. The landowners once again ran the South and did so for 100 years.

There was no attempt by the Northern capitalist class to purge the South of racism and racist officials. There was no reeducation campaign among the white population. No resources were devoted to the anti-racist transformation of the South. The capitalists

of the North were quite content to build railroads and shipping lines and to create banks to profit from the land slavery of African Americans. Racism was not only enforced in the South with Ku Klux Klan violence and lynchings, Black Codes, Jim Crow segregation, poll taxes, etc., but it also prevailed in the North.

Chemnitz, fall of Berlin Wall, and end of denazification

Fascists, right wingers, and anti-immigrant racists of all sorts have been mobilized in this country by Donald Trump. He has fomented his anti-immigrant racism on a world stage. This anti-immigrant, right-wing trend has been reflected in Europe among fascist and pro-fascist forces as well. Indeed, Trump sounds much like the European right.

On Aug. 28, the world was treated to the ugly spectacle of a mob of thousands of Nazis and anti-immigrant sympathizers arriving from all over Germany and taking over the streets of the German city of Chemnitz and hunting down immigrants “like wolves,” as the New York Times put it on Aug. 31.

The mob formed after the capitalist press triggered the event with the headline “35-Year-Old Dies after Stabbing in the City.” The rumors were that the man who was stabbed was protecting a woman from sexual assault by immigrants. Even the police had to eventually declare that rumor false.

The following evening a reported 8,000 racists occupied the center of the city and hunted down anyone they suspected of being an immigrant. There were Nazi salutes with “Sieg Heils,” which are outlawed in Germany, and chants of “We’ll get you all.”

The German bourgeois publication *Der Spiegel* reported that “The police in Saxony likewise hit the headlines with predictable regularity when they, for example, prevent journalists from doing their jobs or fail to mobilize enough officers, thus forcing them to stand by passively as right-wing extremists rampage through the streets.” (*Der Spiegel*, Aug. 31)

Chemnitz was formerly called Karl-Marx-Stadt during the period of the German Democratic Republic, before the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and capitalism was restored as West Germany annexed the East in 1990. It is the third-largest city in the southeastern state of Saxony with a population of 250,000.

Denazification in socialist East Germany

After the Red Army occupied eastern Germany in 1945, the Communist Party was merged with the Social Democratic Party to become the Socialist Unity Party. In 1949

the GDR was established following the establishment of West Germany. The new government undertook a vigorous program of denazification, unlike what occurred in capitalist West Germany, or the Federal Republic.

In the capitalist West, high Nazi officials retained their pensions and got official jobs. “A total of 25 cabinet ministers, one president and one chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany — as postwar Germany is officially known — had been members of Nazi organizations.” (Der Spiegel, March 6, 2012) This list was finally forced into the public by the Left Party.

The GDR, under socialist leadership, took an entirely opposite approach. It was undoubtedly very difficult to construct a state and a society with a population that had lived under Hitler for 12 years. Nevertheless, the attempt was made.

For example, Bruno Bruni de la Motte, no socialist himself, wrote in the London Guardian on March 8, 2007: “I was born and grew up in the German Democratic Republic. Our school books dealt extensively with the Nazi period and what it did to the German nation and most of Europe.

“During the course of their schooling, all pupils were taken at least once to a concentration camp, where a former inmate would explain in graphic detail what took place. All concentration camps in the former GDR were maintained as commemorative places, ‘so that no one should forget.’ The government itself included a good proportion of those, including Jews, who had been forced to flee Hitler fascism or who had been interned.

“In the East, thousands of new teachers had to be found overnight, as those tainted by the Nazi ideology were not suitable to teach a new postwar generation, and this resulted

in schools having under-trained and inadequate teaching staff for some years; all lawyers were replaced, too....”

Nazism revived by capitalist Germany

De la Motte continued, “In [capitalist] West Germany thousands of leading Nazi army officers, judges who had sent Jews and leftists to their deaths, doctors who’d experimented on concentration camp victims, politicians and others, were left unscathed and continued in their professions.”

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the return to capitalism brought a quick shift. From the very outset there were demonstrations against immigrants. Naziism and right-wing politics resurfaced in the form of anti-immigrant racism and xenophobia.

It is no surprise that 29 years after the restoration of capitalist exploitation and with the creeping world economic crisis hitting Germany, including the youth and the petty bourgeoisie, the neo-fascist movement should take on the tone of a racist, anti-immigrant crusade.

In the U.S, even more than in Europe, racism in one form or another has always been the cutting edge of fascism and the face of political reaction.

Capitalist class never tried to root out racism

It is no accident that the KKK and Nazis rallied around Barry Goldwater in his run for president in 1964. It is no accident that Richard Nixon started his presidential campaign in 1972 with a racist “Southern strategy” to bring Southern Democrats into the Republican Party in the wake of the Civil Rights movement.

It should also be noted that in 1982 Ronald Reagan began his presidential campaign in Philadelphia, Miss., with Confederate flags flying — in a city where three civil rights

workers had been murdered in 1964 by the Klan during the voting rights campaign in the South. And Bill Clinton, besides passing racist legislation on mass incarceration, the death penalty and “terrorism,” during his election campaign showed his racism by going back to his state of Arkansas to witness the execution of a mentally disabled Black man.

Fascism at the border

Right now ICE and the Border Patrol are carrying out fascist measures against immigrants by deliberately separating families, as well as rounding up workers everywhere.

So the capitalist class has now had 150 years to root out racism and has not made any serious effort to do so. The capitalists have shown that they feel it is in their class interests to perpetuate racism.

They never instituted a thoroughgoing anti-racist educational campaign of making every student in school go to photo exhibits of lynchings to be narrated by families or neighbors of victims. Slave quarters were not preserved as exhibits for mandatory visits so no one would ever forget. And importantly, compensation was not paid to the victims of slavery nor were they given the lands of the plantation owners for whom they labored.

In short the capitalist ruling class has always preserved racism rather than destroy it, just as the German ruling class has never made a determined effort to root out Nazism.

The revolutionary forces in the U.S. must organize for struggle against the revived, concentrated racist base that has been fostered by Trump. The progressives, revolutionaries and advanced workers must also be prepared for struggle after Trump, because anti-immigrant and anti-Black racism is a lethal weapon the bosses keep in reserve for times of crisis.

Nike’s choice of Kaepernick signals POC and youth power

Posted in [Racism & Oppression](#)

By M. Matsemela-Ali Odom - September 17, 2018

Nike announced on Sept. 3 that former National Football League star Colin Kaepernick would be the face of the company’s 30th anniversary “Just Do It” campaign. In the ensuing media coverage, it was revealed that Kaepernick had never lost his endorsement from the athletic apparel titan and had remained on Nike’s payroll even after being closed out of the NFL.

Nike blasted out a broadside meme featuring Kaepernick’s face and the quote, “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.” Also announced was that Kaepernick had trademarked #IMWITHKAP and planned to produce a line of apparel.

The news caught Kaepernick’s supporters and detractors equally by surprise and reinvigorated the public debate over Kaepernick’s public protests against racism during the U.S. national anthem in 2016.

Nike’s endorsement of Kaepernick’s civil disobedience is not without historical precedent. In 1944, Swedish economist and sociologist Gunnar Myrdal argued that the U.S. had a particular dilemma. Its old racist capitalist order could not stand. Civil disobedience, decolonization, the persistence of Jim Crow discrimination in the U.S. despite the defeat of European fascism in World War II — all this made visible the contradictions in U.S. political structures that claimed to be for “democracy” and “equality.”

As a result, the U.S. government and corporations began to put forward liberal policy reforms in matters of race in an effort to win over African Americans, as well as the hearts and minds of people in Africa and other parts of the decolonizing world. The desegregation of the military and of professional baseball; the Supreme Court ruling against school segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which

overtured its “separate but equal” Plessy v. Ferguson ruling of 1896; U.S. state-sponsored global tours of jazz musicians and basketball players; and even Coca-Cola’s endorsement of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1964 — all reflected this turn toward “racial liberalism.”



Colin Kaepernick kneels during U.S. national anthem at NFL game.

Visible in a 1954 film by Black-owned Johnson Publishing Co., in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Commerce, “The Secret of Selling to the Negro Market,” the discernible goal was to acquire Black consent to the U.S. Cold War liberal order.

But the result was the contrary. Racial liberal reforms amid continued racist violence, segregation and class oppression produced decades of Black revolt.

Owners push, players fight back

Now, in 2018, there is Nike’s Kaepernick campaign, concluded after a spring and summer of heightened conflict between NFL players and owners.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell announced a new policy in May that would sanction players who did not stand for the national anthem, as Kaepernick had refused to do during 2016.

With the even more punitive belligerence of Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, it seemed the NFL owners had triumphed over the players. Yet some owners, such as the New York Jets’s Christopher Johnson, began to break with the decision as player dissent increased. Johnson, for instance, promised to pay the fines of his players and not punish any dissenters. The most defiant NFL player was Tennessee Titans All-Pro defensive end Jurrell Casey, who promised continued protest.

The NFL Players Association filed a grievance against the policy on July 10, asserting that the NFL acted “without consultation with the NFLPA, [which] is inconsistent with the collective bargaining agreement and infringes on player rights. On July 19 the NFLPA agreed to a “standstill agreement” with the NFL.

The NFLPA’s resistance underscores the divide by race between workers and owners in the NFL. Seventy percent of players are Black. But only one-fourth of the head coaches are Black. There are no Black owners. NFL viewership mirrors U.S. demographics with 75 percent white viewers and 15 percent Black viewers.

Yet for Nike, undoubtedly the top NFL sponsor, the numbers and the economics are quite different.

In March, Nike extended its contract with the NFL for an undisclosed amount of money, though it’s known to have exceeded the previous \$1.1 billion agreement. In 2016, Fortune magazine reported that people of color comprised 52 percent of Nike consumers and Black people 21 percent. Forbes recently noted that over two-thirds of Nike consumers are under 35 years old.

People of color and youth back Kaepernick

For the past two years, it has been constantly reported that the vast majority of young people and people of color support Kaepernick, with his largest support among Black youth.

Nike’s campaign sparked an immediate backlash from many parts of conservative white “America.” Some people publicly burned their Nike shoes — sometimes with the shoes still on their feet! Some stores have proposed Nike liquidation sales; a handful of small colleges have abandoned their contracts with the shoe giant. On Sept. 4, these reactionary protesters and conservative columnists rejoiced in the news that Nike’s stock had dropped 3 percent.

However, since then the company’s online sales have risen 31 percent, suggesting Nike’s cost-benefit analysis of its sales ploy was accurate. As for Kaepernick, he launched a line of #IMWITHKAP football jerseys retailing at \$180 each, with all the proceeds going to his nonprofit foundation, Know Your Rights.

For some conservatives and some progressives, the Nike campaign is a commercial ploy or a capitalist appropriation of grassroots struggle. Certainly Nike’s endorsement of Kaepernick’s civil disobedience does not obscure the company’s history of oppressive labor practices in globalization, nor its silence amidst public outcry over the authenticity of Nike’s clothing line, Jordan Brand, named after National Basketball Association great Michael Jordan.

Yet Kaepernick is a worker, and his rebellion has been defined as part of the workers’ struggle. Kaepernick’s collusion lawsuit against NFL owners, for denying him employment, has been allowed to proceed in the courts. The new Nike contract emphatically disrupts the NFL owners’ argument that Kaepernick’s value and skill have decreased over the past two years.

Professional sports has been a useful space for racial, class and intersectional struggle in the U.S. For instance, arguably the most profound solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement has been from members of the Women’s National Basketball Association. Top NBA players such as LeBron James have also voiced support for BLM. For the second year in a row, the NBA champions, the Golden State Warriors, have declined to attend a meeting with Trump at the White House.

In the week preceding Nike’s announcement about Kaepernick, a Republican official called kneeling football players “baboons,” and Serena Williams was banned from wearing an outfit inspired by the Afro-Futurist, superhero film “Black Panther” at the French Open. Yet, when Colin Kaepernick and 49er Eric Reid, who has been outspoken in defense of Kaepernick, attended a Williams’s match at the U.S. Tennis Open, they were greeted with a standing ovation.

Nike’s endorsement of Kaepernick is recognition of the growing power of young people and people of color. Notwithstanding the doubts of many progressives and radicals, the past suggests this concession signals an amplification and strengthening in social movements.

History shows that moments of reform following oppressive rule often preface radical change. Because, instead of being co-opted, activists also recognize their power and begin to demand more control.

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE. THE REPORTERS ARE MISSING

20 September 2018

The death of Robert Parry earlier this year felt like a farewell to the age of the reporter. Parry was "a trailblazer for independent journalism", wrote Seymour Hersh, with whom he shared much in common.

Hersh revealed the My Lai massacre in Vietnam and the secret bombing of Cambodia, Parry exposed Iran-Contra, a drugs and gun-running conspiracy that led to the White House. In 2016, they separately produced compelling evidence that the Assad government in Syria had not used chemical weapons. They were not forgiven. Driven from the "mainstream", Hersh must publish his work outside the United States. Parry set up his own independent news website Consortium News, where, in a final piece following a stroke, he referred to journalism's veneration of "approved opinions" while "unapproved evidence is brushed aside or disparaged regardless of its quality."

Although journalism was always a loose extension of establishment power, something has changed in recent years. Dissent tolerated when I joined a national newspaper in Britain in the 1960s has regressed to a metaphoric underground as liberal capitalism moves towards a form of corporate dictatorship. This is a seismic shift, with journalists policing the new "groupthink", as Parry called it, dispensing its myths and distractions, pursuing its enemies.

Witness the witch-hunts against refugees and immigrants, the wilful abandonment by the "MeToo" zealots of our oldest freedom, presumption of innocence, the anti-Russia racism and anti-Brexit hysteria, the growing anti-China campaign and the suppression of a warning of world war.

With many if not most independent journalists barred or ejected from the "mainstream", a corner of the Internet has become a vital source of disclosure and evidence-based analysis: true journalism. Sites such as wikileaks.org, consortiumnews.com,

ZNet zcomm.org, wsws.org, truthdig.com, globalresearch.org, counterpunch.org and informationclearinghouse.com are required reading for those trying to make sense of a world in which science and technology advance wondrously while political and economic life in the fearful "democracies" regress behind a media facade of narcissistic spectacle.

In Britain, just one website offers consistently independent media criticism. This is the remarkable Media Lens - remarkable partly because its founders and editors as well as its only writers, David Edwards and David Cromwell, since 2001 have concentrated their gaze not on the usual suspects, the Tory press, but the paragons of reputable liberal journalism: the BBC, the Guardian, Channel 4 News.

Their method is simple. Meticulous in their research, they are respectful and polite when they ask why a journalist why he or she produced such a one-sided report, or failed to disclose essential facts or promoted discredited myths.

The replies they receive are often defensive, at times abusive; some are hysterical, as if they have pushed back a screen on a protected species. I would say Media Lens has shattered a silence about corporate journalism. Like Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in *Manufacturing Consent*, they represent a Fifth Estate that deconstructs and demystifies the media's power.

What is especially interesting about them is that neither is a journalist. David Edwards is a former teacher, David Cromwell is an oceanographer. Yet, their understanding of the morality of journalism - a term rarely used; let's call it true objectivity - is a bracing quality of their online Media Lens dispatches.

I think their work is heroic and I would place a copy of their just published book, *Propaganda Blitz*, in

every journalism school that services the corporate system, as they all do. Take the chapter, *Dismantling the National Health Service*, in which Edwards and Cromwell describe the critical part played by journalists in the crisis facing Britain's pioneering health service.

The NHS crisis is the product of a political and media construct known as "austerity", with its deceitful, weasel language of "efficiency savings" (the BBC term for slashing public expenditure) and "hard choices" (the wilful destruction of the premises of civilised life in modern Britain). "Austerity" is an invention. Britain is a rich country with a debt owed by its crooked banks, not its people. The resources that would comfortably fund the National Health Service have been stolen in broad daylight by the few allowed to avoid and evade billions in taxes.

Using a vocabulary of corporate euphemisms, the publicly-funded Health Service is being deliberately run down by free market fanatics, to justify its selling-off. The Labour Party of Jeremy Corbyn may appear to oppose this, but is it? The answer is very likely no. Little of any of this is alluded to in the media, let alone explained.

Edwards and Cromwell have dissected the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, whose innocuous title belies its dire consequences. Unknown to most of the population, the Act ends the legal obligation of British governments to provide universal free health care: the bedrock on which the NHS was set up following the Second World War. Private companies can now insinuate themselves into the NHS, piece by piece.

Where, asks Edwards and Cromwell, was the BBC while this momentous Bill was making its way through Parliament? With a statutory commitment to "providing a breadth of view" and to properly inform the public of "matters of public policy", the BBC

never spelt out the threat posed to one of the nation's most cherished institutions. A BBC headline said: "Bill which gives power to GPs passes." This was pure state propaganda. There is a striking similarity with the BBC's coverage of Prime Minister Tony Blair's lawless invasion of Iraq in 2003, which left a million dead and many more dispossessed. A study by the University of Wales, Cardiff, found that the BBC reflected the government line "overwhelmingly" while relegating reports of civilian suffering. A Media Tenor study placed the BBC at the bottom of a league of western broadcasters in the time they gave to opponents of the invasion. The corporation's much-vaunted "principle" of impartiality was never a consideration.

One of the most telling chapters in Propaganda Blitz describes the smear campaigns mounted by journalists against dissenters, political mavericks and whistleblowers. The Guardian's campaign against the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is the most disturbing.

Assange, whose epic WikiLeaks disclosures brought fame, journalism prizes and largesse to the Guardian, was abandoned when he was no longer useful. He was then subjected to a vituperative - and cowardly - onslaught of a kind I have rarely known. With not a penny going to WikiLeaks, a hyped Guardian book led to a lucrative Hollywood movie deal. The book's authors, Luke Harding and David Leigh, gratuitously described Assange as a "damaged personality" and "callous". They also disclosed the secret password he had given the paper in confidence, which was designed to protect a digital file containing the US embassy cables.

With Assange now trapped in the Ecuadorean embassy, Harding, standing among the police outside, gloated on his blog that "Scotland Yard may get the last laugh".

The Guardian columnist Suzanne Moore wrote, "I bet Assange is stuffing himself full of flattened guinea

pigs. He really is the most massive turd."

Moore, who describes herself as a feminist, later complained that, after attacking Assange, she had suffered "vile abuse". Edwards and Cromwell wrote to her: "That's a real shame, sorry to hear that. But how would you describe calling someone 'the most massive turd'? Vile abuse?"

Moore replied that no, she would not, adding, "I would advise you to stop being so bloody patronising."

Her former Guardian colleague James Ball wrote, "It's difficult to imagine what Ecuador's London embassy smells like more than five and a half years after Julian Assange moved in." Such slow-witted viciousness appeared in a newspaper described by its editor, Katharine Viner, as "thoughtful and progressive". What is the root of this vindictiveness? Is it jealousy, a perverse recognition that Assange has achieved more journalistic firsts than his snipers can claim in a lifetime? Is it that he refuses to be "one of us" and shames those who have long sold out the independence of journalism?

Journalism students should study this to understand that the source of "fake news" is not only trollism, or the likes of Fox news, or Donald Trump, but a journalism self-anointed with a false respectability: a liberal journalism that claims to challenge corrupt state power but, in reality, courts and protects it, and colludes with it. The amorality of the years of Tony Blair, whom the Guardian has failed to rehabilitate, is its echo.

"[It is] an age in which people yearn for new ideas and fresh alternatives," wrote Katharine Viner. Her political writer Jonathan Freedland dismissed the yearning of young people who supported the modest policies of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn as "a form of narcissism".

"How did this man...", brayed the Guardian's Zoe Williams, "get on the ballot in the first place?" A choir of the paper's precocious windbags joined in, thereafter queuing to fall on their blunt swords when Corbyn came

close to winning the 2017 general election in spite of the media.

Complex stories are reported to a cult-like formula of bias, hearsay and omission: Brexit, Venezuela, Russia, Syria. On Syria, only the investigations of a group of independent journalists have countered this, revealing the network of Anglo-American backing of jihadists in Syria, including those related to ISIS.

Supported by a "psyops" campaign funded by the British Foreign Office and the US Agency of International Aid, the aim is to hoodwink the Western public and speed the overthrow the government in Damascus, regardless of the medieval alternative and the risk of war with Russia.

The Syria Campaign, set up by a New York PR agency, Purpose, funds a group known as the White Helmets, who claim falsely to be "Syria Civil Defence" and are seen uncritically on TV news and social media, apparently rescuing the victims of bombing, which they film and edit themselves, though viewers are unlikely to be told this. George Clooney is a fan.

The White Helmets are appendages to the jihadists with whom they share addresses. Their media-smart uniforms and equipment are supplied by their Western paymasters. That their exploits are not questioned by major news organisations is an indication of how deep the influence of state-backed PR now runs in the media. As Robert Fisk noted recently, no "mainstream" reporter reports Syria, from Syria.

In what is known as a hatchet job, a Guardian reporter based in San Francisco, Olivia Solon, who has never visited Syria, was allowed to smear the substantiated investigative work of journalists Vanessa Beeley and Eva Bartlett on the White Helmets as "propagated online by a network of anti-imperialist activists, conspiracy theorists and trolls with the support of the Russian government".

This abuse was published without permitting a single correction, let alone a right-of-reply. The Guardian

Comment page was blocked, as Edwards and Cromwell document. I saw the list of questions Solon sent to Beeley, which reads like a McCarthyite charge sheet - "Have you ever been invited to North Korea?" So much of the mainstream has descended to this level. Subjectivism is all; slogans and outrage are proof enough. What matters is the "perception".

When he was US commander in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus declared what he called "a war of perception... conducted continuously using the news media". What really mattered was not the facts but the way the story played in the United States. The undeclared enemy was, as always, an informed and critical public at home.

Nothing has changed. In the 1970s, I met Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's film-

maker, whose propaganda mesmerised the German public. She told me the "messages" of her films were dependent not on "orders from above", but on the "submissive void" of an uninformed public. "Did that include the liberal, educated bourgeoisie?" I asked. "Everyone," she said. "Propaganda always wins, if you allow it."

Propaganda Blitz by David Edwards and David Cromwell is published by Pluto.

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