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**HISTORY & POLITICS SOCIETY**

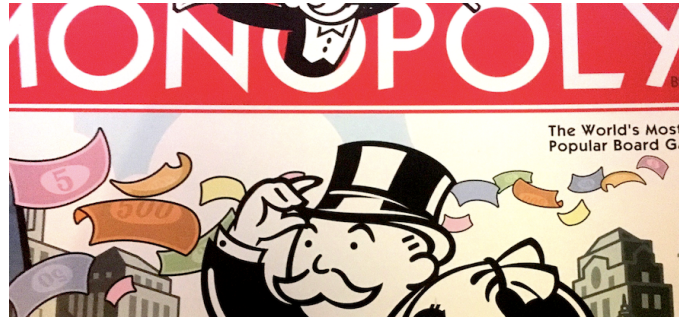
**JULY 2020 PUBLICATION**



## Counter Arguments To Capitalism

By Johnnie Willis-Bund

In the following article I will not be directly attacking capitalism, however I will instead addressing arguments often made in capitalism's favour (and hopefully showing that they hold very little water). I hope you find them interesting, and perhaps change your mind about the economic system you live under.



The first and most common argument for capitalism is also, I find, one of the weakest. It starts off, as most capitalist arguments do. “Oh sure, communism's a nice idea, BUT...” and then goes on like, “no one would have any incentive to work. The free market means your actions have consequences so you have to work hard.” This is a perversion of the truth. It's the reverse of the truth. In fact, under capitalism, people have less of an incentive to work, because their labour is alienated. This means, because the means of production are privately owned (and not by the workers who actually use them) the work you do and the profits of your labour get stolen by your boss. The very concept of profit itself depends on the fact that the labourers are underpaid. Don't you think that this alienation may disincentivize workers and that they would be more inclined to work hard if they were able to claim the values of their own labour (by owning the means of production). What capitalism does is exploits people into doing work for other people and never receiving the value of their labours because they have been coerced into becoming another cog in the machine of surplus value theft because they would starve otherwise. But of course, it's communism where hard working people don't get the reward they deserve, while under capitalism the sweatshop workers fairly get £3.45 for a 12 hour day.

The second argument I will address is the one I like to call the “I like stuff”. This is probably the most basic and easiest to debunk. The main this argument is that most things are only made because they are profitable. And therefore our needs are met and we have surplus luxuries. However this argument is broken down by two factors. Distribution and labour. Capitalism wasn't what created these products. Labour did. Not the idea or the investment but the labour. If you have the idea for how to make a chair, no amount of throwing money at a tree will get you one. For that you need labour. So capitalism isn't what gave you your stuff. The people who made it (workers) did. As for the question of distribution. Well, while it's true that we, at this upper middle class private school do have a surplus of stuff, for most of the world, this is just not the case. Capitalism is incredibly efficient when it comes to production, however not with distribution. So we have a situation, even in our own country where there are more homeless people in London than there are people in Norwich. And, at the same time, there are hundreds of thousands of peopleless homes in the UK that homeless people can't live in due to the housing market and private property. This situation is amplified in the agricultural industry. Right now we overproduce food on a large scale. We easily have enough to feed the entire population of the world however we still have mass famine. On the continent of Africa there are farmers growing food, in the middle of a famine, who are then unable to eat that food

because it is shipped of to Brazil for the bulls to eat that end up in your Burger King or Mcdonalds. None of these problems will be solved until it is profitable for the ruling classes to use these people as consumers and not human capital, which could be hundreds of years at the current rate of African development. There are some frankly imperialistic undertones to this and it is uncomfortable to think about when coming from a place of such privilege.

The third argument, and one I find most uncomfortable, which we touched upon earlier is the, “Under capitalism, people get what they deserve” and while we already showed that actually employers get what their employees deserve, phrasing the argument in this way, does lead to some frankly troubling assumptions capitalists have about human beings. That people aren’t fundamentally equal. Now, capitalists will say that in an ideal free market, people would only succeed or fail due to the choices that they make. However, why would they make these choices. People are just a product of their surroundings and the fact that they made a worse choice must be for reasons. People tend to act irrationally but in a way they think is rational and I doubt anyone is thinking to themselves, “Hmm. I know this is wrong but I shall do it anyway because I’m so evil.” This is ludicrous. So if you believe that people are born blank slates, as John Locke put forward in his book: *Immaculata*, then surroundings (things like sociology and culture) are the most important factors, in which case people shouldn’t be punished by what decisions they make to the extent the “free market” does. But I think capitalists have a different perspective. They believe people are naturally unequal. That we are born better and worse than each other. And capitalism is just the way we sift the weak from the strong. This is why many capitalists, especially American ones, detest any form of regulation or government intervention. They think it’s bureaucracy trying to fudge with the system. To place the wrong people on top of the hierarchy. This idea of some people being better than others is why capitalists are so vulnerable to reactionary ideologies such as Fascism. This may seem extreme but it’s not too much of a leap to having better people rising to the top through natural merit to that natural merit coming from your race. But what these Ayn Rand worshipers don’t understand is that if people are naturally better then they also don’t “deserve” to be at the top, at least through any means of their own. This is why when Objectivists say things like, “We support equal opportunity” they mean people should be treated equally so that the hierarchy can form naturally. However, if you just leave the market to do its thing it will naturally create inequality of opportunity. Due to inherited wealth, there could really only be one generations worth of a true meritocracy and that would mean we would need to restart human history from scratch with no colonialism or patriarchal values being instilled in our society. Yet it’s communism that’s unrealistic.

In conclusion, there are arguments for capitalism. Even Marx admitted that it was good for letting countries develop quickly. However does the good really outweigh harm: people only doing things for the profit motive, the commodification of art and other things that should have intrinsic value, capitalising off institutional racism and poverty, treating human beings as disposable, unnecessary hunger and homelessness and, of course, the largest existential threat facing humanity in the form of climate change. It would be a huge comfort to believe that capitalism was, in fact, good, but if capitalists want to do this, they will need to do better than these arguments that are riddled with holes, contradictions and logical fallacies. And perhaps you, the reader, will now think more critically about capitalist propaganda.

## Trump: Should he be removed from office?

By Jonathan Evans, Third Year

Editor's note: this article was written well before the global Covid-19 pandemic.



When Trump came into office he wasn't the most popular with the people but with the election system being practically the same as Britain, Hilary Clinton won more of the popular vote by around 3,000,000 but in bigger states the vote is worth more than smaller states. (eg: Florida, Rhode Island). In the end Trump won the Electoral College vote by 304 to 227 and got into office. Many people have said he has done things that he shouldn't have done in the first place and I will look at where it has gone wrong and how he has been known to people as a demagogue.

Recently, Trump was impeached over allegations he improperly sought help from Ukraine to boost his chances of re-election. So what is impeachment? For impeachment to happen there are two stages. Firstly, the House of Representatives (equivalent to our House of Commons but with 435 people) have a vote on whether the President should be impeached. This did happen and Trump was formally impeached but this doesn't mean he is removed from office. The next stage is for the Senators (equivalent of our House of Lord but with only 100 people) to vote and for Trump to be completely removed from Office there has to be a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority in favour for Trump to be removed. It never really looked likely as no US President has ever been removed from Office. So why did this impeachment happen? I am going to explain what caused the trigger.

Since the 2016 election the Democrats have never really accepted the result and have always wanted Trump out. They have been waiting for Trump to make a mistake or something that comes under an impeachable offence. Under the US written Constitution there are only three ways that Trump could be impeached; "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanours". The Democrats accused Trump of high Crimes and Misdemeanours in relation to his dealings with Ukraine. They alleged Trump of trying to gain information about Biden's business in Ukraine. Mr Trump and his supporters had accused Mr Biden of abusing his power to pressure Ukraine to back away from a criminal investigation that could implicate his son, Hunter, who worked for a Ukrainian energy company. Many people said this allegation was false. Then Trump asked the Ukrainian President to investigate the Bidens and the accusation of the Democrats is that he made US support conditional on the investigation. Trump strongly denied any linkage between the two issues.

Although there was evidence that Trump had a conversation where he implied that there would be no military aid unless there was an investigation into the Bidens, the Republicans were able

to argue that this was not sufficient to impeach him. In a way the Democrats would have had a stronger case had they argued that the President's conduct amounted to treason. This is because the US wanted to help Ukraine to calm the threat of Russian aggression. This would mean that Trump is going against the interests of the American people and Western society.

Ultimately, impeachment is a highly political act so to succeed the Democrats would not only have to control both the House of Representatives and the Senate and have a two thirds majority in the Senate. In the end is it right for the politicians to decide whether to remove him from office or is it the people and only the American people that should decide whether Trump should stay in Office or not in American Presidential elections in November 2020.



## Norse Mythology

By Ruairi Tilley, Third Year

In this article I will be going over 2 aspects of Norse Mythology, 1:The Gods and the 9 worlds, 2:The myths themselves.

### 1:The Gods and the 9 worlds.

There were two main types of gods, the Aesir, from Asgard, and the Vanir, from Vanaheim. The Aesir were mainly war gods, with the main Aesir gods including, Odin, the king of the gods, Frigg, goddess of wisdom, Tyr god of bravery and single combat, and Thor, god of thunder and lightning(very very frightening), with Frigg and Odin being the power couple, as King and Queen of the gods. The Vanir were mainly gods of Nature, with the main Vanir gods being, Njord, god of crops and sailing, Frey, god of fertility and summer, Freyja, goddess of beauty and gold. The 9 worlds were called: Asgard, Helheim, Vanaheim, Jotunheim, Niflheim, Muspelheim, Midgard(earth), Alfheim and Svartalvheim. In Helheim, the goddess Hel lived In this world and she was the goddess of the dead, Helheim was also where all dead beings went. Jotunheim, where the Jotuns lived, Jotuns were giants. Niflheim, was where the ice giants lived, as it was really cold. Muspelheim was where the fire giants lived, the leader of these was Surt, also known as the ' Black One'. Alfheim was where the Alfs(elves) lived, there was no such thing as night in Alfheim. Svartalvheim was where the Svartalves, dark elves(dwarves related to the goddess Freya), and the dwarfs.



### 2:The myths themselves.

The myths are complete opposites to the modern stories of gods; in the modern stories they talk of kind, loving gods who are peaceful. The Norse stories of gods told of great prowess in battle, and betrayals to defeat the giants and sometimes other gods. One great tale of prowess in battle, tells of when Thor's hammer, the great Mjolnir, was stolen by a giant lord, who began to boast about his ability. He said that he would only give back Thor's hammer if he could marry the beautiful goddess Freyja. Freyja refused. All was lost. Until Loki had the idea to dress Thor as Freyja, by putting him in a wedding dress and covering his face with a veil, so the giants wouldn't realize it was him. When he went he ate 3 oxen and 10 fish, drinking many barrels of mead. When the giant got the hammer out to bless the mirror, Thor leapt up and massacred all of the giants, getting his hammer back. Another story, this time of deceit, when Loki was in Svartalvheim, the dwarves were smithing, so he offered them a competition, 'we will both make gifts for the gods and whoever they like more wins', the dwarves then said that if they one they could have his head, Loki agreed. The gods liked the dwarves more, with their gifts including Thor's hammer and Frey's spear. They then went to cut Loki's head off, he then reminded them that to do that they would have to cut his neck, and they were only allowed to touch his head. They heeded this and sewed his mouth shut.

## Do newspapers really tell the truth?

A brief overview by Dhruv Hegde, Third Year

Many newspapers have a view and will support different governments and political parties. They also create hype around certain things such as the Coronavirus. This means that they can sway the mood of the population and hijack their views. In this article I will highlight which UK newspapers support which parties and how they stir up the population.

Labour - The Guardian, The New Statesman, The Daily Mirror

Conservative - The Financial Times, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Sun, The Daily Mail, The Daily Express

Lib Dems - The Economist

Neutral? London Evening Standard

Here we can clearly see that the Conservative party has the most press backing.

The newspapers also tend to stir up the population by putting half-truths on their papers. For example, all newspapers will make a problem seem much bigger than it really is. Another thing that newspapers tend to do is put negative news on their papers as the reader will then take more interest in the news. We find negative news more compelling without even realising it. This is called the 'negativity bias', the term used for our hunger to hear negative news. This is what draws the reader in. Newspapers are a lot like books in the sense that they have to draw the reader in in order to gain their attention.



As a result I believe that it is better if you take in a wide range of views on a certain topic and create your own conclusion rather than theirs.

## **Queen Mary I: Bloody but brilliant**

By Asher Zamler

A 16th Century Puritan preacher by the name of John Foxe described the reign of Mary I as “A horrible and bloody time.” And it’s a verdict that’s stuck. For much of the past 450 years, Mary has been widely cast as a malevolent force in English history. She’s the cruel reactionary who burned Protestants at the Stake. And worst of all, she’s the jealous half-sister who plotted the future Elizabeth I’s downfall - almost denying English one of it’s greatest reigns.

The fact that Mary was able to secure the throne at all was a remarkable achievement. When her brother, the Protestant Edward VI, died on the 6th of July 1553, her future hung in the balance. Edward had disinherited his Catholic sister from the succession, and the powerful Duke of Northumberland - supported by a well-provisioned army - was preparing to make his move for the throne. When Northumberland had the Protestant Lady Jane Grey ( a relative of Mary’s) proclaimed queen on 10 July 1553, Mary found herself firmly on the back foot. But she soon turned the situation to her advantage, gathering a small but loyal group of followers around her, assembling a military force at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk, and turning up the pressure on her opponents. Northumberland soon crumbled and, on 1 October, Mary was crowned Queen of England. One art historian has described the queen’s gaze in the painting (by Anthonis Mor



on the left) as fanatical, gargoyle-like and frightening. But this is certainly not a characterisation that the diplomat Annibale Litolfi would have recognised. Having met Mary, he noted that she was “not at all ugly as in her portraits and that her lively expression, white skin and air of gratia, even rendered her beautiful.” As for the idea that she was dour and austere, this is belied by an anecdote relayed by Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, a servant of Philip of Spain, in which, we’re told that Mary laughed so hard at a joke that she spluttered for breath. This is a mere story but it offers us a glimpse of Mary’s fun-loving side.

Here was a woman who loved fashion, gambling, hunting, entertainments and chivalric pursuits. If the accusation that Mary I was incapable of humour is groundless, then so is the image of a queen hopelessly out of step with the desires of her people. Few doubt now that the majority of the population in England welcomed Mary’s restoration of traditional religion following the moves towards Reformation rolled out under her father and brother over the past two decades.

### **The blood on her hands**

One area in which I can’t excuse Mary is the campaign of persecution that earned her the title ‘Bloody Mary’. Her savage campdown on religious dissent claimed at least 284 victims over four years - the majority of whom were burned at the stake. At one time, historians sought to distance Mary from the persecution of Protestants, blaming it on the Spanish influence, embittered conservatives or unscrupulous counsellors. Such arguments are undermined by the fact that witnesses at the later trial of Bartolome Carranza, one of the architects of the Catholic



restoration, attested to the involvement in discussions with both him and Cardinal Reginald Pole concerning religious policy and theology. And there's little escaping the fact that the burning of dissenters was particularly intense in England compared to other countries. In fact, the only defence you could offer Mary is that she was far from the only European monarch to persecute 'rebels'. The Council of Blood in the Low countries claimed a thousand lives in just over seven years, while more than 200 Catholics were put to death under her sister Elizabeth I. In short, all rulers were under an obligation of intolerance and burning 'heretics' was a regular practice. Mary's campaign may have been brutal but my examples show it had the desired effect.



### **Female Powerhouse**

Mary died in 1558 before she could build on her early successes - and her accomplishments have been all but crushed under the weight of negative stereotypes. In fact, if you're searching for a neat emblem of where Mary stands in modern conversations on British rulers, then you need to look no further than the current British citizenship test. Her father, Henry VIII, features in 15 per cent

of questions on British history. As for Mary, she doesn't merit a single mention. What's more, while a street and a tube station have been named in her honour in Madrid, not a single major monument pays tribute to the former queen of England. This does her a huge disservice. It's high time that the real Mary I was written back into history' that we celebrated her role in running a highly efficient administration, in broadening England's global horizons, and in setting a precedent for her more fortunate and long-lived sister. Surely, we have to recognise that these stereotypes about her should be challenged and that she was not just 'bloody', but also wise and saintly.

## **Is Trump a total chump?**

By Konstantin Ebsen

Trump was elected on November 8th 2016, beating his opponent Hilary Clinton in the process. He had 304 electoral votes by the end of the night as opposed to Clinton who had 277, with Trump experiencing two defectors instead of Hilary's five.

One of the aspects of Trump that make him most eligible to be a total chump is the controversial nature of his comments, alongside with the frequency with which these comments are made. In recent times he has supplied the globe with an abundance of strange statements, with him telling the nation to drink bleach and disinfectant, as it will kill the Coronavirus. Furthermore, he made a tweet recently, which is a method of broadcasting his ideas he greatly enjoys, in which he stated "when the looting starts, the shooting starts". These recent tweets have not only been unhelpful, with the latter creating a greater disconnect within the country than there already is, but the first also having a very clear impact on the citizens of the USA, with the Maryland emergency management agency sending out an alert about injecting or ingesting disinfectant and bleach, after receiving one hundred calls a day after Trump's comment. These statements and tweets have been a part of Trump's personality long before he became president, however, they now have a clear and tangible effect upon the nation due to the great audience that he now has.

However, Trump does not come without redeeming qualities, as he frequently speaks about the strength of the US economy, making the comment that "our economy is the envy of the world. Perhaps the greatest economy we've had in the history of our country". This statement, though amongst rash statements Trump often makes, it is still largely true. Trump's current GDP growth doesn't have a higher peak than Obama did in his administration achieving a peak of 5.5% GDP growth, opposed to Trump's peak of 2.3%, however, if one chooses to only base the strength of an economy based on just GDP growth then Trump's statement is false, but, there are other determining factors. One of these factors is the soaring stock market during the Trump administration, argued to be due to the corporation tax cuts and US focused policies, however, the Dow Jones industrial average, something that follows the shares of the top 30 major American companies, has been rather volatile throughout 2019, largely due to the fears stemming from the trade confrontations between China and the US. Furthermore, the Dow Jones index was growing at a similar rate during Obama's administration. The final important claim Trump makes about the economy is the unemployment rate, which is the lowest it has been in fifty years, experiencing a low of 3.6% only being beaten by the low of 3.5% in 1969. The employment has also been at its lowest in minority groups, having hispanics, African Americans and Asians all having the lowest unemployment rate ever. To summarise, Trump's claims about the economy being the strongest aren't completely true, with the current economy not beating out the economic boom in the 1960s, however, the economy in recent times has been close to the highest, a respectable feat which a chump would seem unable to do. This is however, contrasted by the criticism that the economic growth has been spurred on by short-sighted policies that bring more harm than they do good. An example of this is Trump's great desire to weaken the dollar, with the aim to decrease the trade deficit, as Trump states that other countries are "unfairly devaluing" their currencies, making it tougher for America. Though these sound like issues which would be nicely solved by weakening the American dollar, however, according to Mr Baur, an economist, the intentional weakening of a currency is when

things begin to be very dangerous, and should instead be left to natural occurrence, especially as a weakening of the dollar is likely to happen in the near future naturally.

To summarise, Trump's comments made on TV and more importantly Twitter are most definitely considered to be non-presidential, making him absolutely eligible to be a chump in terms of his comment. However, the economic growth of the US is increasing (excluding the recent impacts of Covid-19), with most measurements of the economy being amongst the highest ever, though not the highest. For this reason, even with his comments being completely unhelpful and sometimes harmful, along with his economic policies being argued to be short-sighted, the economic growth during his term is remarkable making him though not the greatest president of all time, definitely not a chump.

## **Foot or Corbyn; Who was the worst labour leader?**

By Jasper Furniss

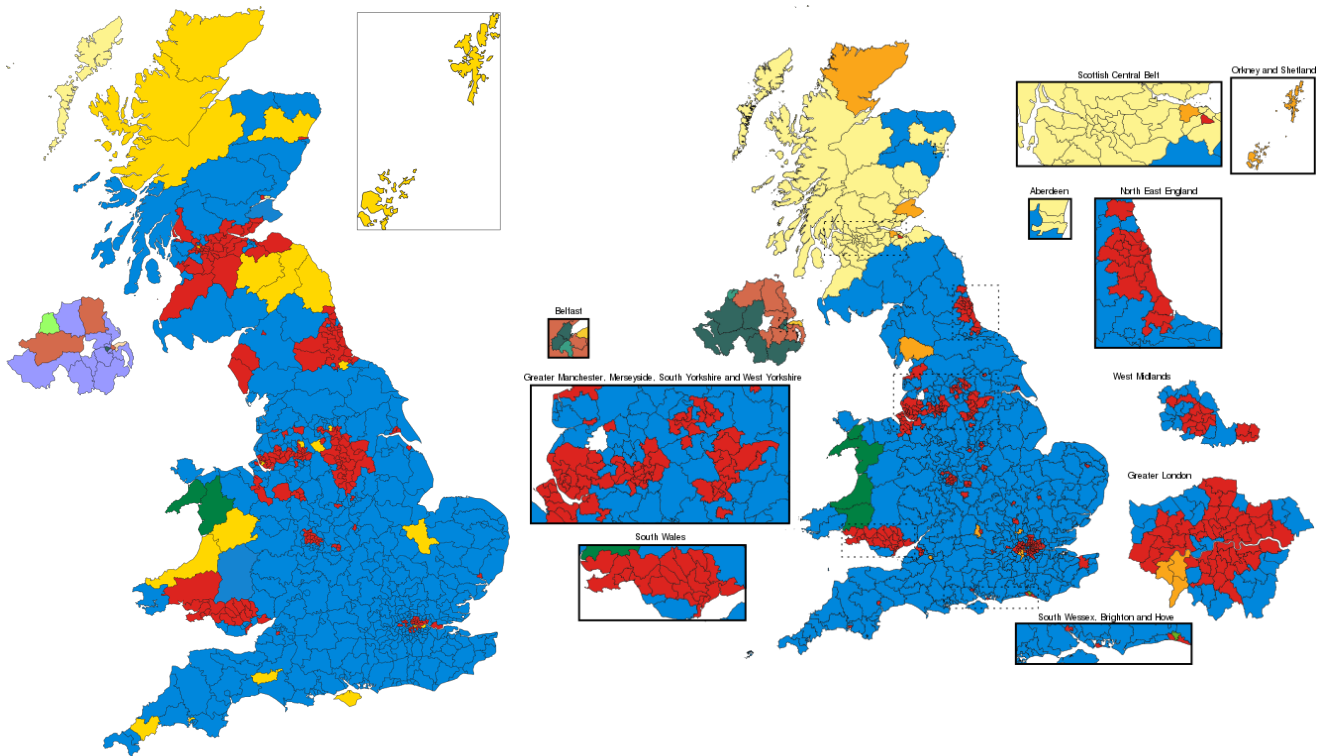
The Labour Party has suffered many horrendous losses, yet it has also had its share of heroics. The party said to represent the people of the United Kingdom, its leftist views have always been debated on and have won a lot of general elections. Yet in this article I am going to guide you through the worst times this party has seen, the most horrendous losses, the most mind-baffling defeats. In the end it boils down to two general elections and the people in charge, Foot vs Thatcher in 1983 and Corbyn vs Johnson in 2019.

Picture the scene. The year is 1983 and the UK economy has been falling steadily for the last 4 years, ever since the Tories got in power. There are huge amounts of unemployment and the Tory leader is one of the most hated people in history - Margret Thatcher. This was a woman who, on the day that she died, the most played song on spotify was 'Ding-Dong the witch is dead'. Britain had just returned from the Falklands War, in a time where anti-war feeling was still running high. In response to this hard-right stance, Labour adopted a hard-left stance, a mistake. This meant that several respected MP's left Labour due to it's hard-left policies. They left to form a new party called the Social Democratic Party (SDP), with centre left views. This formed a coalition with the current Liberal Party, calling themselves The Alliance and splitting the left. In the end, after weeks of campaigning, the vote was put to the people. With a resounding majority, the Conservative Party picked 397 seats, the highest since 1935, and the first time since 1924 where the ruling party has increased their number of seats. Labour derailed to 209 seats, a shocking performance. Despite their overall majority, the Tories managed to lose a 700,000 votes, at the expense of Labour, whose votes fell by 9%. The newly formed alliance picked up 26% of the country's vote, yet only won 9 seats. Making seats to votes more directly proportionate was one of the Alliance's key plans, one adopted by the Liberal Democrat Party today.

As poor as that performance may have sounded, there is another, horrendous defeat that has left a stain on the Labour Party. I'm sure you all remember it, December 19. (By the way, if you don't remember it, you must be a very educated one year old!). To put it simply, the Conservative Party was in a terrible state. Having lost a stable leader in David Cameron back in 2016, they were taken over by Theresa May, who called a general election. This resulted in a hung parliament, which was turned into a majority by May buying out the DUP in Northern Ireland. The Tories were not doing great under May, and there was the demon hanging over their heads at all times; Brexit. Having voted to leave in 2016, the UK politics got shaken up. Onto early 2019, where May was failing to negotiate a Brexit deal. After a poor performance in the European elections, May was under extreme pressure, so resigned. Who did this leave the Tories to go for, the charismatic Brexiteer, Boris Johnson. This wasn't such a bad move, after all. It revoked the public's belief in Brexit, especially the North of England, who had strongly voted to leave. The labour party were doing alright, under activist Jeremy Corbyn, who had been gaining in the last election. Yet Labour made a huge blunder in their policies, proposing a second referendum on Brexit, hoping to win the middle classes. On the night of the election, as the results came in, it became apparent that Corbyn had made a big mistake following his heart not his head on his Brexit position. The Tories managed to pick up 365 seats, smashing through the area in the North of England dubbed as the 'red wall'. Corbyn's attempt to get the middle-class on his side had backfired spectacular, as the gamble had only

succeeded in losing the lower-class, and not picking up the middle-class. The SNP, however, took a lot of the Scottish seats back from labour, increasing their demand for a second referendum on Scottish independence, something which the Tories didn't support.

After reading about those two incredible failures of the Labour Party, I will leave it up to you to decide which was the worst. But, in my opinion, 1983 was a bigger and more painful defeat for the Labour Party. Both leaders resigned soon after the elections listed above. Below is a comparison map of the UK in those elections. 1983 and 2019 respectively.





## The Congo Genocide

By Jonathan Ochero

Politically, in simple words, Africa is a bit of a mess. Many countries are ravaged with disease, poverty, and political instability. And one country that seems to suffer from all of the above with surprising success, is the Democratic Republic of Congo. Now this country really should be one of the richest in the world. It's full of all the minerals you could think of- gold, cobalt, coltan, diamonds, tons of uranium, it is full of fertile land and it has a lot of oil. How in the world could this country be one of the poorest in the world? Turns out, the Democratic Republic of Congo is cursed by its natural wealth, as it's one of the reasons for the country's current state, another being... Well, let's just say the country's first contact with the Western world was... well Genocide.

For some reason the massive genocide that happened during the Congo's colonisation isn't discussed or remembered as much as other genocides, especially the Holocaust. I didn't even know about the Congo Genocide until last summer, and I was especially surprised that I hadn't heard of something as horrible and bloodcurdling as the miserable story of the Congo before in the news, or some kind of History or Political magazine, and I doubt any of you have heard of this event prior to learning about it in History (if you have). But now I want to give you the details that you weren't given. (At least, the ones my class weren't) I'm going to explain to you exactly what happened in the Congo (but a bit summarised, or we'll be here for years) starting on the 9th of April, 1835- the birth of a child named Leopold.



This child, this incredibly annoying thing that I really wish never existed, was the child of the king of the Belgians, King Leopold I, and his wife, Louise of Orléans. Little did anyone know that this child would grow up to be one of humankind's biggest murderers in History. Unlike his Father, Leopold was uninterested in the affairs of the country he would eventually come to rule, and he wasn't particularly fond of Belgium either. Compared to its neighbours, Belgium was like a shrivelled rotting piece of cheese, with nothing to fear, and nothing much to marvel at either. Whilst other European countries boasted empires that stretched from South East Asia to the Poles in Canada, and traded exotic goods like tea and spices, Belgium had nothing. And it wasn't really in any position to have anything either- it's a small country that had only existed for 5 years at the time of Leopold's birth, and is wedged right between two colossal European powers, who at the time had a huge presence- Germany and France. Now, colonising parts of Africa would mean competing with these two giants, as well as Britain, Portugal, and many other countries with military might several times the size of Belgium. And since France and Germany could very very easily eat up Belgium's borders without breaking much of a sweat, (which ended up happening in WW1 anyway) colonising Africa, or any other part of the world for that matter was deemed unrealistic, and at the least, very provocative. Despite being pretty much impossible for Belgium to colonise a colony, Leopold was determined. He was obsessed. He wanted a colony. And he was going to get one.

Leopold wasn't a fool. He was very aware of the facts I've already stated: Belgium was in no way fit to start colonising chunks in the most competitive colonising frenzy of all times- not if it meant being invaded from all sides. So instead of Belgium's parliament owning the potential colony, (similar to most countries in Europe, Belgium was not an absolute monarchy) Leopold wanted to rule the Colony directly. This was no easy feat, but by using his cunning, Leopold came up with a plan. Most of Africa had already been conquered by various European powers, but in the center of Africa was a gaping hole, completely unmapped, and free of any colonisers. The only thing that was known, was that a mighty river known as the Kongo river flowed through the dense rainforest that made this land impossible to explore. How Leopold managed to get control of this land is a story in itself, and I would highly recommend reading a book called *King Leopold's Ghost*, by Adam Hoschschild, the book that informed me of this event's happening, but he basically tricked world superpowers into thinking that he would bring trade and christianity to the region.

So let's fast forward a couple years to 1885, the year that Leopold declared the Congo as his 'personal possession'. And bare in mind, that this man is literally claiming the land, the homes, of millions of native Africans as his personal possession. We haven't even gotten to the grimey bits and I'm already getting incredibly disgusted. By this time everyone was hard at work in the colony known as the Congo Free State. (the most ironic name possible as this 'state' was really the land of the enslaved) The Congo was full of rubber plantations, and rubber was becoming an increasingly important raw material needed to fuel a rapidly developing western world. This led to the mass enslavement of millions of Congolese, who were forced to work in rubber plantations until they dropped. Congolese who resisted or failed to do what they were told were beaten with what was known as a 'chicotte', a whip made from hippo hide. Bear in mind that hippo skin is so tough, it can't be penetrated by the bite of a lion, a crocodile, or even the bullet of a gun. The chicotte was applied to the bare buttocks, and one stroke could leave permanent scars. 25 lashes could leave someone unconscious, and a hundred strokes, which was not an uncommon punishment, could kill a fully grown man. Women were raped, and were imprisoned as prostitutes, or were forced to work in fields. Even young girls were imprisoned, and beaten with the chicotte to death. Women were also used as tools to get men to cooperate- the wives of natives would be captured, to force the men to work for the Belgians, but often the women were still killed in front of their eyes, or taken off to be imprisoned and abused, whilst the men were put in chains and marched off to a post deep in the jungle, although many would die on the way due to fatigue.. People would be hung for the slightest offense, and some officers would shoot natives for some sick form of 'amusement'. One of the most horrible and infamous things that happened however, was the cutting of people's hands. Soldiers that worked for the Belgians (known as the Force publique) were paid 2 golden rods (the currency in the Free State) for every black they killed, and to show that they killed the person they'd have to bring their hand. This led to catastrophe. Soon thousands of Congolese were having their hands severed- soldiers would even cut two hands off one person to try and make as much profit as possible. Luckily, many journalists worked together to try and bring down Léopold and his awful reign of terror over the Congo. Eventually he had to hand over the Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo in 1908, and he died soon after of old age. However trouble in Congo didn't end there, and the now independent country is still very much unstable. The death toll from Léopold II's despicable régime is estimated at about 15 million people.

## The Spanish Flu and the Coronavirus - What has our society improved in this century?

Looking at the social issues of the 1910s V.s. 2010s

By Oskar Muller



### Preface

It may seem like a silly question; have we improved at all in the last 100 years? Of course, as a planet, we have. Notable improvements are shown in statistics like these: In 1910 74% of global population lived in extreme poverty - now 9.98% live in that condition ([Source](#)), in 1918 15.88% of the population was living in democracy - in 2015 55.8% live in democracy ([Source](#)) another example is how in the last 100 years the world population has grown from 1.8 billion to 7.7 billion - and as of yet a major crisis is yet to occur to wipe humans into extinction.

### However, where might our social politics be similar.

In the 1920s we saw the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, the Klu Klux Klan properly established themselves in America and Mussolini gains power in Rome. Will we ever see something similar to a revolution in the 2020s? I think the likes of a government overthrow look unlikely, however social rifts seem to be more prevalent than ever.



The reason for such supposed rifts is mainly because more people have access to a microphone, a keyboard and an audience. Not only are there huge advances in technology which mean that these sometimes ludicrous ideas get exercised by more people. There are just more people, if we

go off a made up statistic that 1 out of 100 people is susceptible to a crazy idea such as Nazism, scientology or the flat earth theory. Based on that ratio the 1920s the U.K. would have had 370,000 'revolutionaries'. The made up population of nutcases in the U.K. would now be 678,000. A huge increase, that number would probably be bigger with some reliable data collection - as there are more of these ideas floating around the internet than ever.

So overall a political change from the 1920s certainly has come to form a more centrist government, which has fuelled an ever more divisive right and left wing. So not necessarily a huge change; these groups still exist and their ideas still gain traction in certain areas. Yes mainstream politics has changed however the fringe has remained.

### **How are we different socially**

I would say the way in which we have improved is in our acceptance of giving everyone a voice. Now, many would argue in 2020 that we have given too many people a voice and that we have become too liberalised. Have we reached the point of no return on free speech?



Our freedom to do and say as we please in the U.K. has certainly given rise to these before mentioned more extreme views. Now are these views healthy? I think they are - it helps push the less extreme ideas through into the mainstream conversation. For example universal basic income has prompted the US government to, perhaps, hand out stimulus cheques. Perhaps Andrew Yang's "leftist" ideas have pushed through into the mainstream.

### **So in final conclusion, I believe our society has changed in the last 100 years in a few fundamental ways:**

- We are now more aware and accepting of divergent political views.
- Our governments are more Centrist
- Our political aims have become more streamlined into the yin and yang of right wing and left wing.



My original thinking was that politically we haven't changed a bit- we are more divided than ever. I am pleased to say that actually I am wrong, very wrong. There certainly is this illusion that we have a more divided society, but that is because we hear on social media of these extremist groups more often. And so our political landscape has certainly changed, but for the better with the two wings of division complementing the overall makeup of society.

## The Great Escapes from Colditz

By Nicholas Chan

Oflag IV-C or more colloquially known as Colditz due to its location at Colditz Castle is famous for being a German POW (prisoner of war) camp during WW2. However another reason for its fame is the ingenious and often comical escape attempts that were staged. In order to fully appreciate these escape attempts we must first understand what life was like in Colditz. The first prisoners who were to be housed arrived in November 1939, these were Polish officers who had been identified as possible escape risks. In 1940 captured RAF officers were transported there, they had all escaped from other Oflag (an abbreviation of the German word Offizierslager which means officers camp). The Laufen six was also a famous group who were also housed at Colditz, so named for the camp they had previously escaped from. The Nazis had to deal with a prison population comprised of the best of the best of escape artists, an extra challenge was that Colditz was a very large castle which made the running of the castle very difficult. By Christmas of 1940 there were 60 Polish officers, 12 Belgians, 50 French and 30 British. The Wermarcht in Colditz followed the Geneva convention, would be escapees were punished with solitary confinement instead of summary execution, principally the security guards recognised that it was the duty of the POWs to attempt escape and that it was theirs to stop them from doing so. Three of four roll calls were organised each day, if someone was discovered to have escaped police and train stations within a 40 km radius would have been alerted with members of the Hitler youth also out searching. Prisoners also often ate better than the guards as they could rely on Red Cross food parcels while the German soldiers only had Wehrmacht rations, these luxuries were often traded for currency which they hoped they could utilise in their escape, however many of these currencies were outdated, making them easier to recapture and harder to escape. Prisoners were also allowed to stage their own entertainment with a prisoners olympics involving football, volleyball, boxing and chess. British inmate John Wilkens said in a 1986 interview said "The British came in last place in every event cheerfully, to the dismay of the other participants who took the competition deadly seriously,". Plays were also staged examples being "Rope" and "The importance being earnest". Hauptmann Priem the first warden of Colditz even attended a Christmas themed version of Ballet nonsense. These plays also allowed the prisoners to attain tools that they would use to build sets. Prisoners also often played pranks on the guards.

Overall Colditz was an energetic and often curious prison which translated into their escape attempts.

### **1. The German Lady attempt.**

Ironically in this attempt it was actually the prisoners that foiled a potentially successful escape attempt. On June 5th 1941 while a few British prisoners were walking back from the park to the prison, they noticed that a lady had dropped her watch, however when alerted to it the lady kept on walking instead of retrieving the watch, this made the guards suspicious and upon inspection it was revealed that it was not a lady but French lieutenant Bouley dressed as a woman.





## 2. The Mattress attempt

A much more classical but still very much iconic escape attempt by “Peter” Allan (real name Anthony Murray Allen). In late 1940, Allan discovered that the Germans were planning on moving mattresses from the castle to another camp, he informed the French officers who would be carrying the mattresses that one would be slightly heavier. He proceeded to stuff his pockets with Reichsmarks, dress up as a member of the Hitler Youth and had himself sewn into one of the mattresses, he was loaded into the truck and unloaded in an empty house in town. After several hours when all he heard was silence, Allen proceeded to cut himself out of the mattress and escaping through the garden began the long walk to freedom. Along the road to Vienna via Stuttgart Allen was actually given a lift by a senior SS member, according to Allan "To be vulgar, I nearly needed a new pair of trousers." Allen had been aiming to reach Poland but had run out of money in Vienna, he decided to appeal to the American consulate as they had not yet joined the war, he was rebuffed and ultimately recaptured due to starvation and exhaustion.

3. **The Canteen tunnel attempt-** In 1941, British soldiers managed to gain access to drains and sewers which ran beneath the floors of the castle, the entrance however was a manhole cover in the middle of the canteen. They decided to extend the drain and exit in a grassy area which was overlooked from the canteen window from their they would escape. They identified the sentry who would be on guard that night and bribed him with 500 Reichsmarks. After one of them hid in the canteen and unlocked the door, the rest of the prisoners entered the canteen and entered the tunnel. However as Pat Reid (one of the British soldiers recalls) "I climbed out on to the grass and Rupert Barry, immediately behind me, started to follow. My shadow was cast on the wall of the Kommandantur, and at that moment I noticed a second shadow beside my own. It held a gun. I yelled to Rupert to get back as a voice behind me shouted, Hände hoch! Hände hoch!. I turned to face a German officer levelling his pistol at me." It turns out the bribed guard had sold out the group. The remaining soldiers comprised of British and Polish soldiers backed out into the canteen but were confronted by guards stationed there. In order to prevent the guards from getting any satisfaction, the British soldiers burst out laughing as they came out.
4. **The Red Cross tea chest attempt** Dominic Bruce who had ironically been nicknamed the “medium sized man” due to his small stature. This would later play a big part in his escape attempt from Colditz. On the 8th of September all POWs were told to pack up any excess belongings with a large number of boxes delivered to house and transport them to storage. Bruce seized his chance, placing himself, a file and 12m of rope made from bedsheets into one of the boxes. He was transported to the third floor of the German Kommandantur and made his escape that night by dangling himself out of the window with the bed rope. The following morning German guards entered the storeroom discovering the scene and a box where Bruce had inscribed "The air in Colditz no longer agrees with me. See you later!". He was recaptured a week later.
5. **The "Colditz Cock" glider attempt-** The most ambitious and possibly brilliant escape attempt of all time is the Colditz glider attempt. Bill Goldfinch and Jack Best assembled a two man glider in the lower attic of the prison chapel, an area which was obscured from the view of the guards, they planned to launch it from the roof with a pulley system of a falling metal bathtub full of concrete, with a runway built from tables. Lookouts and even an electric alarm system were established to warn builders of incoming guards. The materials of the glider were scavenged from around the castle. Unfortunately the war ended before the plan could be put into action.

## The weird and bizarre designs of The Second World War

By Warwick Jones

WW2 is not exactly known for strange weapons. Most of the weapons we hear about normally were perfectly fine such as the mighty Bismark, the dreaded Tiger or the heroic spitfire. However, some weapons were completely insane, from super-tanks to suicide bomber dogs. These are 5 of the weirdest and most bizarre weapons of WW2.

### Ratte



The  
Nazi

The P.1000 Ratte was a Super-tank which was being developed in 1942-1943 before the project was scrapped by Albert Speer. The tank would have weighed a colossal 1000 Tonnes and been 39 metres long, 10 metres high and 14 metres wide. Due to its immense weight if the Ratte was ever built it would have crushed most roads and collapsed every bridge it tried to cross however, the designers hoped that its height would allow it to stay above the water and drive through any river. The Tank's main armament would have been a dual 28 cm SK C/34 naval gun turret with an additional 128 mm anti-tank gun of the type used in the *Jagdtiger* or *Maus*, two 15 mm Mauser MG 151/15 autocannons, and eight 20 mm Flak 38 anti-aircraft guns. Despite this devastating array of weapons in practicality the Ratte would have been an awful weapon for Germany, not only would it drain their war economy, but it would have been simply bombed into oblivion by the Allied air force. As such it is no wonder that Speer scrapped the project in 1943.

### Maus

The Maus was a German super-heavy tank which was built in 1944. 5 were ordered but only one was ever fully constructed before the test grounds were seized by the Red army. The Maus remains the heaviest and most armored tank ever built and was meant to act as a breakthrough weapon, smashing through enemy lines whilst taking almost no damage itself. Although one was completed in 1944 it never saw action as the engineers were worried about the engine failing due to the power



required to move the tank. As such it stayed in testing until late into the war, when the tank was ordered to a secondary site for protection, alongside incomplete second tank. The incomplete Maus was captured by Soviet forces and was soon followed by the completed one, The tank had been defeated by Soviet infantry placing blasting charges on the turret and detonating the

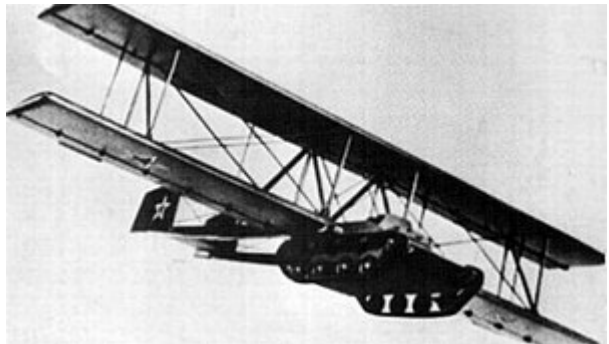
ammunition inside. The turret of the completed maus was fitted to the hull of the incomplete one and was driven back to Russia for testing. After the tests finished in 1946 the tank was sent to the Kubinka Tank museum where it can be seen today.

Anti-Tank Dog



Anti-Tank dogs were used by the soviet union in 1941-1942 during operation Barbarossa. They were fitted with AT Mines which would detonate when the large stick which was strapped to the mine touched a tank. The dogs were trained to find food under tanks and it initially seemed like a good idea to the soviets. However, they made a fatal blunder. They trained the dogs using their own diesel powered tanks but German tanks used gasoline. As such the Dogs often went after the familiar smell of diesel and destroyed the tanks they were meant to support. The program saw a dramatic reduction in use after 1942 but remained operational until 1996.

Antonov A-40



The Antalov A-40 was a soviet flying tank which was scrapped immediately after its first and only test flight on september 2nd 1942. The tank was designed as a continuation of the soviet aerial tank deployment program which had seen success against the Wehrmacht during operation Barbarossa. Unlike the existing strategy of parachuting light tanks from the undersides of bombers and the crew jumping separately, Soviet designer Oleg Antonov wanted to make a tank with a detachable glider strapped to it so it landed with the crew and be immediately battle-ready. A prototype was made and was to be towed by a bomber before being released. However, in order to get the tank to even be able to leave the ground, all of its guns, ammo and most of its fuel was removed. Even with this, the bomber was forced to ditch the Antonov well before reaching its target destination but the test pilot in the tank managed to

land it at a nearby airfield. After this failure the project was scrapped and the Antonov A-40 never flew again.

### The Bob Semple Tank

The Bob Semple tank was a tank designed by New Zealand minister of works Bob Semple to act as a rapid deployment vehicle to counter Japanese invasion. The “tank” was not really a tank at all, instead it was a hull which could be fitted on a tractor and used as cheap, disposable weapons. Bob Semple designed the tank by following instructions from an American postcard which advertised “tractor tanks”, Bob and his team did not even make any blueprints or official design manuals, 3 tanks were built and were all fitted with 6 Bren guns, with a crew of 8. The Tanks also lacked any ballistic protection so they fitted corrugated plates to the hull in the belief that they would deflect bullets. The design was promptly scrapped after the tank was subject to immense ridicule by the public. In the few tests that were conducted on the tank it was found to be, inadequately armored, extremely heavy (20–25 ton), unstable, restricted by tractor gearing to slow speeds, and had to stop to change gears. Furthermore, due to the shape of the underlying tractor and undue vibrations, shooting from the tank was both difficult and inevitably inaccurate. All of these limitations have often caused the Bob Semple Tank to be regarded as "the worst tank ever built".

