

A VISION FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

It is important that we consider and analyse the implications of globalisation on Britain. Globalisation has been defined as the combined use of political, economic and military power to achieve economic, financial, trade and communications integration. In essence, it is the extension of finance capital beyond its previous boundaries to accumulate capital throughout the world with previously unimaginable speed and mobility.

This brings about an interconnected and interdependent world, with the free transfer of capital, goods and services across national frontiers. This process has been speeded up through developments in telecommunications, transport and the internet. It does not mean that the globe and its environment and people will be any better looked after. At the end of 2009 the global leaders proved incapable of coming to a basic climate agreement, which was repeated in 2015.

The question for us is whether globalisation represents a significant and fundamental change of direction within the ruling capitalist class and maybe a qualitative change from a national to an international capitalist class. Or have both of these elements always been present in Imperialism and are merely doing different things with different levels of power today? Do capitalist monopolies still require the protection of a 'home' nation state to represent and enforce their interests? Or is this now the role of the World Trade Organisation, a pan governmental entity with 164 members as of 2016, working to establish a set of rules to govern and supervise global trade?

In fact, capitalism no longer requires the restraining leash of national parliamentary democracies. These are fast becoming ciphers or memories. Even bourgeois democracy is at risk and defining fascism as the domination of the corporations and the incorporation of civil society and trade unions in the process is an increasingly relevant idea. As the market rules without democratic constraint we have a new politics. In Europe people are no longer citizens of their own country. Legally speaking they are citizens of a new European Union, a construct uniquely built on the economics of neoliberalism and the political rule of the market.

The vote of the British people to leave the EU reflects a revitalising socialist aspiration for national independence. Their decision dealt the mightiest recent political blow to world capitalism. The British people have escaped from the prison they were tricked into entering 40 years ago. For half of the period since 1917 British communists have been fighting EU membership. An important victory has been won. Yet as long as Britain remains dominated by finance capital and part of NATO it cannot be truly independent.

Globalisation has an impact on the ability of our class to organise to protect its jobs, industries, livelihoods and services. This has been aptly demonstrated in the worldwide

financial crisis of 2008 when capitalist monopolies required their own state apparatus to represent and enforce their interests. National Governments and Parliaments are an uncritical part of this, being substantially controlled by the international organisation of capital and the momentum of neoliberalism.

What has been the impact of the loss of the Soviet Union as a bulwark against imperialism? Russia has emerged as another imperialist entity with its rough and ready bourgeoisie linked to violence and gangsterism. We see a heightening of inter-imperialist conflicts once again.

Yet the class analysis that underpinned the creation of the Soviet Union is still feared by the capitalists. Why else would the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe debate in June 2006 call on member governments to undertake systematic campaigns of propaganda to expose the 'evils of communism and class struggle ideology'? This motion just failed to secure a two-thirds majority.

the role of the united states

History shows the United States has ruthlessly used its state power to reinforce corporate interests, for example in Iraq for oil supplies. In 2001 Dick Cheney, U.S. Vice President, recognised the imbalance between oil supply and demand as one that would inevitably undermine the U.S. economy, living standards and national security. His company Halliburton Oil benefited substantially from U.S. intervention in Iraq. The vision on its website was to be 'the preferred upstream service company for the development of global oil and gas assets'. Iraq had little choice in this. Halliburton's revenues were listed as over \$18 billion in 2008, and \$23.6 billion in 2015.

Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil have also all been identified as necessary future suppliers of oil. China and India are both viewed as potential rivals for these supplies. Some argue that we have already reached peak oil production and the tensions are mounting as a result.

The U.S. National Security Strategy (2002) took a world domination view that the use of U.S. economic, political and military power would 'bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world'. In addition, all countries are to be held to account by the U.S. on matters of terrorist Weapons of Mass Destruction. This, coupled with the U.S. development of missiles and defence programmes and their intention to strike anywhere, anytime to impose their will, means the threat of world war remains ever present.

The threat remained under Obama's presidency and has increased under Trump. U.S. difficulties have been exacerbated by the collapse of their financial institutions with a knock on effect around the world. The U.S. has been wounded by events and changed

its mood and tone, but its structural and global aspirations remain the same. Obama got the Nobel peace prize for sending 30,000 more troops into Afghanistan.

the role of Britain

Britain had the third highest number of companies in the global top 500 companies list, but of 34 of them only one was listed as involved in engineering, computing, aerospace and chemicals. This was BAE systems which produces armaments. BAE has a greater income from the U.S. Defence Department than the British Ministry of Defence.

In 2005 Britain was listed as the country with the highest index of 'transnationality' of any major economy. Our overseas holdings were increased from 29% of GDP (1981) to 160% of GDP (2002). One quarter of British capital is direct investment overseas in the U.S and a further quarter is spread beyond Europe but benefits from U.S. policies. Half of all the stock of British owned corporate assets abroad is in the EU and half of Britain's export earnings come from the EU. However, 80% of Britain's production is consumed domestically.

Britain's greater dependency on the finance sector means that it is hit relatively hard by the economic crisis. In 2009 it hastily convened a meeting of the G20 nations who agreed to clip the wings of their rogue elements like hedge fund companies and mafia money havens while leaving the main financial instruments and the neoliberal role of the IMF even better funded.

the EU – a problem for the US

For the U.S the EU has become problematic. Its combined economic strength has challenged U.S. markets in Europe and North and Latin America to a lesser degree and this together with Europe's increasingly integrated and autonomous military policy has led the U.S. to question EU direction. There have been open trade disputes over issues such as steel and export subsidies and competition over markets such as Spain in Latin America. These have been matched by U.S. penetration in Africa, traditionally dominated by European capital.

The EU promotes policies in the interests of monopoly capitalism. Decision making powers have been transferred from a national level, privatisation is championed so is the free movement of capital and workers, with the aim of a single market, (economic and monetary union) and a shared military policy with EU forces and military strategy.

But has anything changed since Lenin in 1916 wrote of the purpose of imperialism “to promote monopoly capitalism, suppress socialism at home, exploit neo colonies and compete with rival powers, particularly the U.S?”

Past President of the ETUC, John Monks, has referred to the EU as ‘a transnational political space of 490 million citizens in 27-member states, with the best welfare systems, public services and employment standards anywhere in the world. Without a shot the EU brought democracy to former fascist countries and 10 former communist countries’. It is those very countries that are party to and leading the attack within the EU on independent nations like Cuba. It was the EU in its complicity with Germany that caused the destructive war to break up Yugoslavia and open markets and resources to the east as the Nazis had always wanted. Further afield Britain and France became embroiled in disastrous attempts at regime change in Libya, with catastrophic results. Britain continues to play a role in undermining the aspirations of people in the Middle East.

Latin America and the challenge to globalisation

In the rest of the world Latin America is at the forefront of the challenge to globalisation. Countries that demonstrate an alternative to the neoliberal agenda being pursued within the EU and U.S. and seek independence should be supported. China it should be noted, has not adopted an aggressive imperialist role within this new order. It has assisted Cuba and other Latin American countries.

The creation of ALBA, a coalition of Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua formed to promote social, political, and economic integration is a direct threat to that neo-liberal agenda. It contrasts sharply with CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) which excludes Cuba, and follows neoliberal policies, resulting in increased poverty for those countries which join it through the loss of their natural resources and redirection of their economy.

Cuba, because of its revolutionary stance has remained steadfast; whereas other progressive nations remain more vulnerable to US interference and multi-national influence; which may be explained by their tenuous hold on power through parliamentary elections.

In Britain we should not ignore the state’s previous participation in the overthrow of constitutionally elected Governments. For example, Britain was involved in Chile, during the coup against Allende in the 70s, where arms were sold to right wing groups seeking (successfully) to overthrow the Government. There is a potential for a repeat of this in Bolivia, where the Morales Government is acting to bring natural resources under its control. Colombia, said to be the most dangerous country in the world to be a Trade

Unionist, is another example where the British arms trade is used against a working class, with Labour politicians complicit in the continuing exports.

the role of the CIA

We cannot ignore the role of the CIA which has repeatedly intervened in the internal matters of independent nations, including Chile, Cuba, El Salvador and Nicaragua, where the CIA believed “American interests” were under threat. When interviewed, a former head of the CIA had no qualms in talking of the torture and terrorist attacks they made on people and countries who threatened those ‘interests’. He clearly indicated a willingness to repeat these actions.

Britain’s recent complicity in torture echoes its brutal imperialist aggression throughout the world and its stunting of growth of developing nations. The state’s conscience money is confined to international aid, which is always a pittance and generally superficial. An independent Britain with its resources under the control of its people would lay the basis of a new, genuinely ethical foreign policy and engagement with developing nations.

a united Ireland

Our nearest English-speaking neighbour is Ireland. It is one country and should be reunited. The false border of six northern counties should disappear. Courage to support the peace process is essential to this and there should be no return to sectarian violence and attacks on the remnants of British troops. The legacy of British occupation should be removed according to the terms of the Good Friday Agreement and a new relationship built between our countries. Both nations should be outside of the EU, both based on self-determination, and in economic and social cooperation as equals and ready to resist both U.S. and EU imperialism.

a new role for the military

Britain’s armed forces need transformation. Only during the Second World War did we begin to see what a politicised, people’s army could achieve. The nation mobilised in unity against fascism and it was the depth of political debate and aspiration that led to social progress after the war with demands on government to nationalise and socialise and make services and utilities public.

Since that time the services have reverted to their role in leading world reaction. A core cadre of the British services have been world experts in counter insurgency techniques and fighting national liberation forces. From the South African apartheid regime to some

of the most savage tyrants around the world, many have benefited from the dubious skills of the British forces, which were learned in bitter imperialist wars.

Our services still recruit their leaders from the public schools and coterie close to the royalty, and their regular soldiers from working class communities. Their combined courage and skill is not in doubt. What has to change is their role. They must become forces serving the people and defending Britain, not the mindless mercenaries of the state and imperialism. They must question the Establishment and the illegal commands of politicians prepared to send them to their deaths far from home on the basis of lies or in wars for natural resources and markets. In these acts they do not represent our people.

There can be no return either to the covert operations against trade unionists and workers in struggle. There needs to be a democratisation and politicisation throughout the services. The forces must start to serve the people against the interests of capital and defend our nation against any aggressor. There may be a developing role in training more civilians in genuine skills to defend the nation. In short the forces must move from being the heart of reaction to being at the forefront of progressive change. We currently have an aggressive policy masquerading as a defence policy. We increasingly need a genuine defence policy based on non aggression pacts. Our forces would be based here, ready to defend a homeland again. This should be the direction. Trident missiles are not needed in this and we should not have nuclear weapons as part of our arsenal.

There is a class history of fighting for independence and sovereignty both in Britain and internationally. The question we have now is how best to work to achieve this given the global situation in which we work and live and the class antagonisms that remain. We welcome a dialogue with all who wish to formulate a new international policy for the country - we have a world to win, but need to start where we are in Britain. A free nation is a people determining their own destiny unmolested by foreign intervention. This is real internationalism.

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