

Reviews

Graham Greene

Bernard Diederich, with a Foreword by Pico Iyer and an Introduction by Richard Green, *Seeds of Fiction – Graham Greene’s Adventures in Haiti and Cenral America 1954–1983*, Peter Owen Publishers, London 2012, hardback ISBN 9780720614886, £20

There are two requirements to enjoy this book: you have to like Graham Greene as a novelist, and/or be interested in the fairly recent history of Central America and the Caribbean. If you meet the requirements, you will enjoy *Seeds of Fiction*; it’s an interesting read. If not, forget it.

The prose plods a bit, but improves as the book progresses, or did I just get used to it? (I read it in fits and starts as I am on the run with children from local hoodlums in Honduras who threatened to hurt them if I didn’t pay up some money. It’s like something out of a Graham Greene novel.)

Greene himself divided his work into ‘entertainments’ and the more serious ‘literary’ stuff. He was having us on, of course: all his work is entertaining, otherwise we wouldn’t still be reading him, and it all has its serious side, which is what entertains us. I am not sure whether a Greene novel based on my present situation would have been classed by him as ‘an entertainment’ or not. I don’t find it entertaining, I can assure you, nor do my children.

The first half of *Seeds of Fiction* is about Haiti. Graham Greene did much to publicise the terror and horror of the Duvalier regimes with his novel *The Comedians*, later made into a film with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. (They were scared enough to hire bodyguards for their children after incurring Duvalier’s displeasure.) But this first half is a bit overdone. It describes a trip along the Dominican-Haitian border that was uncomfortable and some risks were taken, but they were few. It’s like writing about an unpleasant drunk lurching into your picnic as if it were the trenches. Graham Greene took few risk*: he was a spoiled, rich and famous writer. He travelled widely, stayed usually in the best hotels, ate high cuisine, and drank lots of high quality alcohol. Why not? What fame really brought him was access to interesting people such as General Torritos of Panama and his aide and confidante, Martinez (‘Chuchu’), Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega, and Tomás Borge. Greene’s friendship with Torritos comes over loud and clear; the General comes across as easily the most interesting and likeable person in the book.

Greene wasn't much of a husband, and a pretty useless father, it seems, but we forgive our artists their sins if they move us, excite us, 'entertain' us. In *Seeds of Fiction*, Graham Greene comes across as a well-off, English, middle class, liberal gent who had a remarkable gift and hit the big time. Though he scorned many of the trappings of wealth, except good food, posh hotels and expensive wine, and looking out on the millionaires' yachts in the south of France, he seems to have lived quite simply. What also comes across is his amazing stamina and energy. Here I am just a year off 70, reasonably fit and healthy, and I am knackered by a 50-mile journey, admittedly on bumpy roads and slow, crowded buses. Because I am on the run, I have travelled more in two months than in two years. Graham Greene was globetrotting until he was 84, when leukaemia finally overtook him and he died, age 86.

Bernard Diederich is not a great writer. He was a journalist for *Time* magazine, which I detest for its awful style and politics. You can no more expect a journalist to write well than you can a doctor to provide health, a lawyer justice, or a priest spirituality. Still, *Seeds of Fiction* is a great read if you are interested in Graham Greene and Central America.

Nigel Potter

* One exception was when he accused the French judiciary of corruption and confronted the local mafia in Nice. I would have said that was risky and it took courage to do so.

What's wrong with our milk?

Keith Woodward, *Devil in the Milk: Illness, Health and Politics – A1 and A2 Milk*, Craig Potton Publishing, New Zealand 2007, 258 pages, hardback ISBN 9781877333705, £26.95

I must confess at the start that I have always loved milk. I was born in March 1918, when German U boats were sinking the Atlantic grain convoys and there was a serious milk shortage. We lived in Woodbrooke, a suburb of Birmingham, and my aunt Fran had to scour the local farms to get milk for my mother and me. Thereafter, aged three, I collected our milk in a jug filled from a churn that came to our house in a horse-drawn cart. For sixty years or so we always had Guernsey milk from Jersey cows, with cream on the top, until all milk was homogenized, pasteurised and cartonned, and you did not know what cows it came from. This book is

about two breeds of cows that produce different types of milk, so-called A1 and A2. Most European, American and Australasian milk is A1; most Asian and African milk A2. Human breast milk, Jersey milk, and the milk from goats, yaks, camels and sheep is A2. The difference lies in the different forms of casein in each milk type, and the ways these are digested.

So, what is wrong with A1 milk? Woodward has chapters on heart disease, diabetes, autism, schizophrenia and some human allergies. In relation to each of these diseases, Woodward shows that there is a suspicious association of their prevalence with consumption of A1 milk, even when it is pasteurised. The evidence comes from inter-country human comparisons and from tests on rats, mice and rabbits. None of it is finally conclusive with any of the illnesses, because there are nearly always, in each case, other factors to take into account. But I have to say that the evidence is strong enough to convince me. I am too old to suffer now from diabetes, autism or schizophrenia, but I do have heart problems, and some skin allergies. As a result of reading this book, I have switched to buying Jersey or goat's milk and goat's cheese and yoghurt. I have obviously been lucky in that I have drunk mainly Jersey milk throughout my life.

Keith Woodward is an agricultural scientist, Professor of Farm Management and Agribusiness at Lincoln University in New Zealand, and has worked on agricultural development and research problems in some 20 Asian and Pacific countries. New Zealand is one of the largest dairy producing and exporting countries in the world, and most of the book is concerned with the argument in New Zealand about the two types of milk. Most of New Zealand's milk and dairy products come from A1 cows. Switching to A2 herds would take time and prove extremely expensive. An A2 corporation was established in New Zealand and Australia, but it has struggled to survive financially. The most extraordinary part of this book lies in the chapters which reveal the extent to which the New Zealand dairy industry has been prepared to go to challenge the evidence about A2 milk in relation to A1 milk, and even to suppress information that it holds and obstruct A2 distribution. It is regrettably true that some scientists whose funding depended on the dairy industry can be shown to have been complicit in some of these deceptions. It is perfectly legal to advertise your own product, but not to vilify your competitor's, so that there are major and expensive legal issues involved in questioning A1 milk.

This book was first published in New Zealand in 2007, and I do not know how the argument has gone there since then. According to the commendations on the book's cover, Keith Woodford's argument has the support of at least two leading New Zealand professors, respectively of

Medicine and Biochemistry. I have not found comments from UK scientists.

Nearly all the milk in the UK is from A1 cows. Google refers to the questions raised about A1 milk affecting heart disease, diabetes, autism and schizophrenia, but offers no scientific evidence, only anecdotal – stories from people in the UK who have switched to A2 products, with information about places where you can find A2 products. I will let everyone know the results of my switches when I have watched them for some time.

Michael Barratt Brown

Locked Up

Alexandra Hall, *Border Watch: Cultures of Immigration, Detention and Control*, Pluto Press 2012, 216 pages ISBN 9780745327235, £19.99

The three-headed giant United Kingdom Border Agency has fallen down. A £1 billion-a-year organisation with a backlog of more than 300,000 cases will finally be dismantled, with the prospect of bigger and better things to come. But in a recession that has dipped more times than we can count, with borders harder to police and more economic migrants on the move than decades prior, with citizens increasingly less tolerant of newcomers and seeking refuge in the arms of UKIP, what will Theresa May come up with?

Is there such a balance to be had between secure borders with a limited, selective intake of migrants and consideration for human rights? In the constant quest for an ethical securitisation of migration, the United Kingdom and many more Western countries have failed to live up to their own principles of equal opportunity and freedom for all. The latter, in particular, has been disfigured and ignored by allowing immigration detention centres to function in the land where aspects of modern democracy were born. Every year, thousands of people whose legal status is habitually rephrased are held against their will, without being convicted, until decisions are made in a burdened and politicised bureaucracy. Thousands of children have been harmed by this system.

This peculiar contemporary phenomenon is closely observed by Alexandra Hall, in her work from Pluto Press titled *Border Watch: Cultures of Immigration, Detention and Control*. The cleverly construed study looks at the Möbius strip-like security climate, and how it infringes on the rights of the detainees and affects the daily lives of the detention officers. This ethnographic study was conducted in 2002 and 2003 at a

detention centre that was cunningly renamed by the author as 'Locksdon' Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) and placed particular focus on the role played by the officers, who, through their embedded vigilance and sense of duty, generated, reinforced and questioned the regime.

The detention centre is transformed into the ultimate metaphor of the border zone, a no-man's-land where seemingly innocent people (or not able to be convicted due to lack of evidence or information) are held for unlimited periods of time, caught between the country they have fled, and the country they will most likely be forced to leave. Hall associates their fragile legal status to what Agamben famously dubbed in philosophy as 'bare life', describing the liminal position of the detainee who has lost all political representation and citizenship status, and thus has become simply a body, to be manoeuvred, controlled and ultimately silenced. Often, prison spaces have been looked at to demonstrate the 'bare life' status of a person, but detention centres seem to resemble closest this particular theory, because a detainee, unlike a convict, will have protection from no one; no country will claim him as a belonging part, and he will be subject to systematic objectification, a peon in intra-national bio-political warfare.

The power inflicted on the body is a recurring theme throughout the book, and it also closely resembles Foucault's study on the 'micro-physics of power', viewed as a self-fulfilling prophecy, a system not consciously developed by any one individual, but that operates within the machinery of society. Thus, detention officers, from an innate sense of duty and fear of the 'other', will try to control the bodies of the detainees in order to secure the environment. They, Hall argues, unknowingly reinforce a system of securitisation and view detainees as a mass of bodies, there to be fed, secured, controlled and labelled as 'worthy' or 'troublemakers'. Detainees' individual markers disappear and all that is left is the possible threat to the system and to the officers' lives and statuses. At the same time, detainees use their bodies as a form of protest against detention or deportation, by refusing food, attempting suicide, or getting into a physical altercation. Having being reduced to 'bare life', all they have left are their bodies, used as instruments of dissent or communication. However, that reinforces the officers' belief that they are no more than body-objects, as Hall calls them, there to be monitored, suspected of wrongful intent, and eventually moulded into a disciplined block.

At the core of the security regime, Hall identifies several binary distinctions between the two groups at Locksdon: between citizens/others, civility/incivility, legals/illegals, deserving/undeserving. On the basis of nation-ness or British-ness, which is the officers' claim to a citizenship, their

interpretation of a set style of beliefs and attitudes, the officers tend to exclude the detainees, the 'others'. The 'otherness' categorisation can be based on the way (different than 'us') detainees express themselves, how they walk, how they interact with one another, what clothes they wear, inside the detention centre; their personalities are often being constructed on evidence from their lives inside. What happened outside, who they were in their home countries, their innocence or proven malintent, bares little importance in the newly shaped environment of the detention centre, where the system generates the rules, and the officers apply them to the detainees. Cultural stereotypes are applied automatically in Locksdon, where Africans are believed to pose different security threats to those Jamaicans do, and Turks are expected to congregate differently to the Chinese; exceptions to the rule are not accounted for, because a destabilisation of the regime cannot be risked.

What is most admirable in Hall's study is her ability to portray the system with its errors and predicted behaviour in a way that does not blame or victimise the detention officers. They have a set way of understanding their duty, which is to secure the environment from a potential threat, from the 'unknown'. They do not see themselves as caretakers solely because disciplinary power and care do not mix; they are utensils of a system that does not allow provisions for grey areas. One is either legal or illegal, worthy or unworthy of citizenship, of becoming one of 'us'. However, Hall does permit for a multitude of officer personalities to stand out: some who fault the system, some who follow it blindly, and some who have become it. There is also complexity from a gender perspective and Hall closely studies relationships between male and female officers, as well as between virile young officers and less able ones. The capacity to inflict force upon a detainee's body is considered a 'masculine' endeavour, while the psychological monitoring of the detainees is considered 'feminine' and, eventually, less vital for the continuity of the regime.

All in all, the stories and snippets of thought from officers are very welcome and spice up an otherwise theoretical, content-heavy text. The officers come alive as humans capable of regret and doubt, jaded and insecure, and oftentimes wishing for a different solution. The day to day life at Locksdon, with its regular registration procedures and roll-checks, as well as its occasional security threats and changes of procedure, is portrayed brilliantly and effortlessly, making for a very interesting read about one of the most mind-boggling and secretive institutions in the country.

The author has delivered an exhaustive study of the culture of detention in the UK, in a tight and well-managed format with clockwork-like

precision, while touching on most of the theories existing in the field, and moving swiftly from angle to angle. It is an extremely well-researched work, reinforced by peer studies, as well as her own fieldwork. Unfortunately, with every chapter having a lengthy introduction and conclusion, and with extensive mapping of the paper throughout, the book reads too much like a dissertation paper and, if anything, stops the otherwise natural flow of the piece. However, many novices in the field of immigration studies might welcome the occasional break of thought to allow for some reiteration of purpose and refocus of the study.

Border Watch continues to map the theory of detention from where Foucault has left it, and it is bound to become a recommended read for future scholars and policy makers alike. It does not provide a cheat sheet that Theresa May could find handy, but it does ask questions rarely asked before and, as yet, unanswered: does freedom for the many translate into detention for the few? Is the price we pay for security too great to bare on our conscience? Is liberalism, in the way it was created by the modern society, a paradoxical entity?

Lucia Sweet

What about Ann Chapman?

Alexandros Nafpliotis, *Britain and the Greek Colonels: Accommodating the junta in the Cold War*, I.B. Tauris & Co, 2013, 320 pages, hardback ISBN 9781848859524, £54.50

Britain and the Greek Colonels examines British foreign policy towards the junta regime in Greece. The book's eight chapters follow chronological order: 1] The Labour Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1967-68: Setting the tone; 2] The Labour Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1969-70: a 'new era of relations'; 3] The Conservative Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1970: continuity vs. change; 4] The Conservative Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1971: messages, meetings and visits; 5] The Conservative Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1972: towards a new direction?; 6] The Conservatives Government's policy towards the Colonels, 1973: overtaken by events; 7] The Conservatives, the experiment that failed, and the hardliners coup, September-December 1973; 8] Conservatives, Labour and the junta, 1974: the endgame. The chapters are accompanied by introduction and conclusion and about 50 pages of acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, appendices,

etc; a fair amount of work by any standard.

According to the blurb,

‘Alexandros Nafpliotis’s book examines British foreign policy towards Greece, exposing a guiding principle of *pragmatism above all else*. This is the first systematic study of Britain and the Greek military junta of the early 1970s to be based on newly released National Archive documents, US and Greek sources, and personal interviews with leading actors. Comparing and contrasting the attitudes of both Labour and Conservative governments towards the Junta in Greece, Nafpliotis outlines a great degree of *continuity*, as well as showing where and *how moral and public relations issues were overcome* in order to facilitate a close relationship with the colonels.’ (our italics)

In addition to new National Archive documents, the book’s main primary sources are the Public Record Office and the London School of Economics Archives, the Archives of the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA), the Constantine Mitsotakis Archive in Athens, and the National Archives in Washington DC.

This is a most impressive list of sources, yet reservations about the book started early, before reading commenced in earnest, upon searching the index for the name ‘Chapman’ and not finding it. Certain it would appear there – anything between a passing reference to ‘the Chapman affair’ to a full presentation of its considerable impact on the press and public opinion in the UK (and, thus, their stance towards the Greek junta) – we were flabbergasted to find no reference to the British journalist, Ann Chapman, who was murdered in Athens in suspicious circumstances in 1971. She is missing from the contents. We didn’t expect ‘detective work’ in a book about international diplomacy, but the discovery of such a void made us apprehensive, to say the least, while the task to give the book a fair reading and appraisal remained intact. However, our initial disappointment reached new heights after finishing the book without encountering even an oblique reference to the young British journalist’s adventure and death in Greece; not even a passing note. Ann Chapman disappeared all over again, and this time with no explanation. And this happens 40 years later! Why?

One good excuse is the author’s age (the book is based on his doctoral dissertation). Unborn during the junta; otherwise, having lived through the uproar the Chapman affair created in the British press, and even in the then suppressed Greek press, Dr Nafpliotis could not possibly have failed to mention it. But one wonders: what about the interviews with leading actors? Should we believe that the name ‘Dorothy Ann Chapman’, or the

subject ‘Chapman Affair,’ does not appear in any of the files, nor did it come up during such conversations? Apparently, the affair is still considered too murky to be touched, even with a 10 foot pole, in a politically correct book published some 40 years later.

At least this enormous error of omission serves to underwrite the importance of continuing investigative work about this murder (committed by the junta, by a lone sex maniac – as the junta claimed at the time, or by others). In the meantime, one may feel a moral obligation to paraphrase the book’s subtitle: ‘Accommodating the junta in the Cold War, *and then for eternity, if need be*’...

A second cover note reads as follows:

‘Britain and the Greek Colonels is a comprehensive history of international diplomacy and *realpolitik* in the Cold War period and will be essential reading for students and scholars of Cold War history, the history of modern Greece and International Relations.’

Seen in this light (while forgetting, for a moment, the ‘disappearance’ of poor Ann Chapman from the annals of history), the praises of *Britain and the Greek Colonels* seem easy to sing. All the more so since the author himself volunteers an extensive upbeat appraisal of the book’s virtues:

‘This book is a significant addition to the historiography of the subject as it provides, for the first time, a comprehensive account of the British foreign policy towards the Greek military dictatorship, from the first traces of the junta to its eventual fall in 1974. By a study of primary and secondary sources from both the UK and Greece, this book attempts an analysis of relations between the two countries from various perspectives (diplomatic, economic, cultural and defence) and in the context of Britain’s transition from world to regional power. The extensive use of evidence, in the form of diplomatic documents from London, Athens, and (in some cases) Washington, and oral accounts, enhances the originality of this research, as the thoughts and motives behind foreign policy decisions are provided, and the inner workings of the diplomatic machinery of both countries are revealed for the first time. By critically assessing and expanding the scope of the existing literature, a more concrete image of Anglo-Greek relations at the time is provided.’

More specifically, this study claims that it was London’s weak position, both financially and internationally (in the general context of ‘marked British retreat’), that dictated its pragmatic policy towards the Greek military dictatorship, and proved Britain’s subordination to American interests. Both the Wilson and Heath Governments realized they needed exports to improve their finances, and that they were in a dependent

position *vis-à-vis* the United States, and opted for a ‘good working relationship’ with the Athens regime, by promoting trade and condoning Greece’s actions within NATO. According to the author:

‘The strategic importance of Greece for the Western Alliance, which was augmented during this period, mainly because of international and regional rivalries, was manipulated by the Colonels in order to enhance their status abroad and cultivate better relations with countries like Britain. These factors led to Whitehall’s pursuing a reactive policy after 1967 with a lesser influence on Greek affairs ...’ (p.242-243)

To complete this appraisal of *Britain and the Greek Colonels*, a statement from the book’s Introduction must be taken in earnest:

‘The aim of this book is to *cover* an existing gap in the literature, and provide the first *complete* account of British policy towards Greece, throughout the period of the Greek military dictatorship; that is from 1967 to 1974. This study is groundbreaking in the sense that it marks the first time that a *thorough* investigation of the entire period of relations has been undertaken, and the first time that evidence from *both* the UK and Greece (as well as from the US) is used ...’ (emphasis added).

Alas, an upbeat spirit and some hard work do not suffice when dealing with historiography, be it contemporary or only 40 years old. Some courage and determination to present all the aspects – even some daunting ones – are equally necessary, and much in demand, lately.

Theodore N Iliadis

Immiseration

John Bellamy Foster and Robert W McChesney, *The Endless Crisis – How Monopoly-Finance Capital Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the USA to China*, Monthly Review Press, 2012, 240 pages, hardback ISBN 9781583673133, £18.95

This is another book from the *Monthly Review* stable defending and extending the theoretical work of Baran and Sweezy, two redoubtable Marxist economists who along with Harry Magdoff kept the flame of Marxist economics alive in the United States through some pretty arduous domestic and international times. Readers may recall another title reviewed in *Spokesman III*, *The Great Financial Crisis: Causes and Consequences*, in which the idea of capitalist stagnation was explained

with particular reference to the present crisis. This new book takes on the task of defending and extending the same thesis on a broader theoretical basis, with additional material including substantial pieces on the international division of labour and China's political economy.

Overarching *The Endless Crisis* is the idea that what we are enduring globally is the high point of economic crisis, and that this crisis is a direct response to the long-term stagnation that has beset capitalism since the early 20th century. Whether it is bubble or bust, stagnation is the *normal* state of the world economy. Few of us would want to recall the placid 'normalcy' aspired to by Warren G. Harding's slogan in his 1920 presidential campaign, which was to be followed in a few years by the Wall Street Crash and the onset of world depression and war. Perhaps more apt for our times are the words of the singer Bruce Cockburn, quoted in the preface, 'the trouble with normal is it always gets worse'.

This assertion is amply explained in the first chapter where the relationship between economic stagnation and the proneness of monopoly-finance capital to bubbles and crises is demonstrated. The authors note that 'at least fifteen major episodes of financial disruption have occurred since 1970'. The existing form of capitalism, which according to the authors can be described as one of 'monopoly-finance capital', stems from a previous incarnation, namely that of monopoly capitalism, so effectively described and analysed by Baran and Sweezy. The authors maintain that stagnation is a consequence of over-production and under-consumption and that the failure to find sufficient opportunities for capital accumulation in productive industry has forced capital into speculative finance and indebtedness. Since the 1970s, a virtual wage freeze has been imposed on the workers, which again has forced up personal indebtedness and induced instability in the property market, amongst other harmful effects.

The Endless Crisis also sheds light on the development of the multinational company and its symbiotic relationship with the stagnation of the world economy. Briefly, and again allowance must be made for brevity, capitalism has mutated from its very early competitive form to monopoly capitalism and then into its present incarnation – monopoly-finance capital. The first form has been explained, even celebrated, by the likes of Adam Smith, Ricardo and Hume, with that old troublemaker, Karl Marx, laying bare the machinations of its workings and finding just about enough time to shine a light on the second and even the third form of the beast. The book illuminates the changes in capitalism, initially a highly competitive system, approaching those much loved heights of mainstream economists, 'the perfectly competitive market', through 'creative

destruction' into larger corporations and, finally, to the multinational companies that dominate world production and trade today. The levels, forms and intensity of competition varied historically, but with monopoly-finance capitalism competition has become more attenuated and orchestrated. These giant companies do engage in a largely oligopolistic competition that Schumpeter began to describe in the 1920s as 'corespective pricing' or 'multiple monopoly'. The book takes the reader through its further development by Kalecki, Steindl, Sweezy, Baran and others, at the same time contrasting it with orthodox economics stressing what they call the 'ambiguity of competition'. The growth of the domestic corporation and its development into the multinational company is documented, and although there are outward signs of corporate competition at the highest level, it takes on a muted form. There are relatively few periods of intense competition such as the recent spat between Apple and Samsung over tablet technology. The rough and tumble in such disputes soon settles down, and all parties recognise that a price war is the last thing they all want. The congruence between the ideological needs of monopoly-finance capital and the totally anachronistic classical economics, re-moulded by the neo-liberal economic paradigm, is explained.

The relationship between capital accumulation and financialisation, described in the text as the 'enigma of capital' (using David Harvey's prescient phrase), is discussed. Capital has always been a prerequisite for production, but now finance has thrown off its subordination and become, according to the authors, the centralising partner in the Triad (North America, European Union and Japan). For the authors, Keynes is essential to understanding financialisation through his challenging of Say's law, which famously stated that supply created its own demand. The text launches into an exposition of how this change, as Keynes feared, would result in speculation coming to dominate over the requirements of production.

As growth slowed down in the 1970s and 1980s, and inflation and price increases hit pay packets, the working class became more combative. It was an unequal struggle which working people lost, resulting amongst other things in wages at a standstill, unemployment increasing, and corporations able to disburse manufacture and assembly of commodities around the globe, thus weakening further the position of the working class. The increase in foreign direct investment and the expansion of the reach of the multinationals resulted in a further internationalisation of capital. Much production capacity was moved to specific developing world

locales. In the developing world exploitative multinationals took advantage of rock bottom worker remuneration and often divided the various parts of the production and assembly of goods between nations. There developed a new international reserve army of labour throughout much of the Third World. Nation could be played off against nation in a vicious process of beggar-my-neighbour in terms of wages, local taxes and facilities. The compartmentalisation of manufacture and assembly between different countries, apart from the possibilities for transfer pricing and tax avoidance, means that nationalisation and control by the respective nations is made difficult. Within the chapter on the reserve army of labour is a spirited defence of Marx's ideas on 'immiseration'. By reference to its global nature, the new imperialism has led to (again using David Harvey's phraseology) 'accumulation by dispossession' involving millions of people. For the authors, Marx's theory of the pauperisation of a large slice of humanity has been vindicated if the reader is prepared to look at the facts and figures of global poverty.

In the final chapter on stagnation and the political economy of China many of the ideas *The Endless Crisis* has grappled with are used to contrast markedly with the rosy picture of China's advance as painted by some of the Western media. Assuredly, China has lifted millions of its citizens out of a simple agrarian existence, but the price has been great, as the authors point out. For those who think that China's high growth rate can drag the world economy out of recession and that China is, at least for a decade or two, immune from the boom and bust cycle, the final chapter will make disturbing reading. What with unstable property prices, a significant drop in export volume occasioned by the downturn in the Triad, a secondary banking system looking increasingly dodgy, mass protests and labour disputes, massive environmental destruction and the long-term decline in the labour surplus, China's difficulties are manifold. Its economy was unsurprisingly described by Wen Jiabo, the former Chinese premier, as 'unstable, unbalanced, unco-ordinated and ultimately unsustainable'. Interestingly, with the fall in the export market and the injection of a compensatory \$585 billion into China's domestic economy by the government, it failed to stop the fall in household consumption from 45.3% of GDP in 2001 to 33.8% in 2010. The government is trapped in the dilemma of having to maintain its edge against other developing countries in terms of wage rates, keeping them low to minimise competition from even poorer developing nations, thus damping down potential domestic demand.

The authors have provided many good reasons why we should accept

the stagnation and monopoly-finance capital thesis but, as they admit, it is not universally accepted, even by several notable Marxist and left-wing economists. Recently there has been a plenitude of highly informative radical books on the world economy provoked by the realisation that capitalism is in crisis and its mentors seem to have little in the way of an exit strategy except more of the same – making us all pay for their accumulated disasters. Much of the literature makes for essential reading and this book must come near the top of the pile. It is lucid, it makes some very telling points, and has a message that should resonate with a large audience and be a spur to action. The problem is – we need an international movement to combat an enemy that is way ahead of us when it comes to organising globally. The only thing that can alter the present unjust and cruel state of affairs is the intervention of ordinary working (and non-working) people. The last lines of the book state what is at stake in those resounding words of 1848:

‘the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or . . . the common ruin of the contending classes’.

John Daniels

Chronicle

Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce*, Manchester University Press, 2012, 228 pages, hardback ISBN 9780719088124, £60, paperback ISBN 9780719088131, £15.99

This book is a chronicle of the relationship of the British left with the Zionist movement, which aimed to establish a Jewish national state in Palestine.

The Labour Party’s attitude was first expressed in its *War Aims Memorandum* of 1917, before the Balfour Declaration in favour of a ‘Jewish home’ in Palestine in the same year. The *War Aims Memorandum* called for an end to Turkish rule over Palestine to facilitate the formation of a Free State to which Jewish people could go if they so wished. The *Daily Herald*, the *New Statesman*, the left-wing writer H. N. Brailsford and, in due course, Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour Prime Minister, all came out in favour of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Poale Zion, a party committed to this objective, succeeded in persuading the 1921 Labour Party Conference to support the idea ‘not upon the foundation of

capitalist exploitation but in the interest of Labour’.

However, the British Socialist Party, which formed the basis for the launch of the Communist Party in 1920, denounced Zionism as an attempt to use the Jews as a means of extending British imperialism to Palestine.

These contrasting attitudes remained basically the same down to the post-Second World War period. The 1929 Arab rebellion against Jewish efforts to take over their land and exclude them from employment led to two commissions of enquiry, which were critical of Jewish policies. However, a White Paper drafted by Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb) and approved by the Labour Cabinet, which proposed to slow down Jewish immigration and restrict Jewish land holding, was dropped after an outburst of opposition from the British Labour and trade union movement, supported by British Jews.

In their enthusiasm for the *Kibbutzim* (Jewish agricultural co-operatives) and the Jewish trade union organisation, the *Histadrut*, Labour Party sympathisers – with rare exceptions – accepted the removal and exclusion of Palestinian workers from all agricultural and industrial enterprises and the boycotting of Arab goods.

When the Arabs rebelled, in 1936, British Labour leaders like Herbert Morrison and Arthur Creech Jones denounced them. The Communist Party, however, expressed support for them and, even within the Labour Party, Stafford Cripps and Michael Foot, who were on the left, opposed the refusal to recognise Arab rights. Alex Gossip and Lester Hutchinson spoke in favour of a Furnishing Trades resolution at the 1936 Labour Party Conference calling for unity of the Arab and Jewish peoples against British imperialism. However, this was defeated on the grounds that the Arabs were being manipulated by landowners and moneylenders opposed to the socialist ideas, represented by the Jewish population.

The Second World War and mass murder of European Jews by the Nazis generated immense sympathy for the victims of the holocaust. The fact that the Mufti of Jerusalem declared his support for Hitler hugely damaged concern for the Palestinians. The 1944 and 1945 Labour Party Conferences supported calls for a Jewish state and increased Jewish immigration, in complete disregard of the fact that Jews were still a minority of the population. In 1947, the USSR reversed its opposition to a Jewish state and the British Communist Party came out in its favour, as well.

Ernest Bevin’s policy, as Foreign Secretary, of restricting Jewish immigration met with almost complete condemnation on the British left and Richard Crossman, in particular, expressed a total lack of sympathy with Palestinian rights. The declaration by Ben Gurion in 1947, which

established Israel as a state, was welcomed in the Labour Party, and even the Communist Party attacked the Arab military response, resisting this as reactionary.

However, the hanging of two British sergeants by the Zionist terrorist organisation, *Irgun Zvei Leumi*, and their blowing up the Hotel David in Jerusalem with the loss of 91 lives caused an adverse reaction among the British public. News of 300,000 Arab refugees, whose numbers had swelled to 750,000 by 1949, and the report of the massacre of Arabs at Deir Yassin led the Labour Government to press the Israelis to allow the refugees to return and to efforts to raise funds to assist them.

In subsequent years, however, the Labour Party was overwhelmingly supportive of Israel and, even after condemning Anthony Eden's Suez expedition in 1956, held back on criticising the Israeli role. Two-thirds of Labour MPs were members of Labour Friends of Israel, and victory over the Arab forces in the Six Days War of 1967 was generally welcomed. As a Labour MP at that time, I condemned Israel's recourse to arms in response to President Nasser's attempt to close the straits of Tiran. I remember the impassioned support for Israel on the Labour benches and the unparalleled rough reception given to my colleague, Will Griffiths, MP, when he rose to his feet to criticise the Israeli action.

The British Left and Zionism explains how support for Israel within the Labour movement has subsequently eroded. The Labour Government opposed the idea of territorial aggrandisement and helped formulate UN Resolution 242, calling for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The Communist Party, while recalling the establishment of Israel with Soviet support, also called for withdrawal from the occupied territories. The New Left, which had come into existence after 1956, took a similar position and supported initiatives to back the Palestinians.

The Movement for Colonial Freedom, which became Liberation in 1970, also came out strongly in favour of Palestinian rights, although a number of Labour MPs withdrew their sponsorship over various manifestations of this.

The 1973 Yom Kippur War left more Labour MPs critical of Israel. The Labour Middle East Committee was formed with the support of 21 Labour MPs, and I was one who participated in a delegation led by David Watkins, MP, which visited the Middle East and met Yasser Arafat.

The author gives a step-by-step account of how Israel, in subsequent years, gradually lost Labour support, although under Blair's leadership the Government pursued pro-Israeli policies. In 1988 and 1989, however, the Labour Party Conference passed pro-Palestinian resolutions calling for

Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 frontiers.

Gerald Kaufman, who was never of the Labour Left, besides being Jewish, also took a line very critical of Israeli policies whilst a Labour spokesman on the Middle East and subsequently.

The author of this book, who is from a Hungarian Jewish family and whose father survived a concentration camp, is outraged at Israel's policies towards the Palestinians. He has done an excellent job in tracing the development of the approach to Zionism on the Left in Britain and his work deserves to be widely read.

Sympathy with the Jewish people, who suffered inhuman persecution over centuries, culminating in the holocaust, naturally generated support on the Left in Britain for the idea of a Jewish home. Today, however, there is increasing recognition that the elementary human and democratic rights of the Palestinians have been trampled underfoot in the ensuing process. Implicit in this book is the message that we need to redress the balance in the interests of the Jewish and Palestinian peoples alike. Without a just settlement that fully restores Palestinian rights and reverses the loss of territory since 1967, there will never be peace in the Middle East.

Stan Newens

Democratic Defecit

John le Carré, *Our Kind of Traitor*, Viking 2010, 320 pages, hardback ISBN 978-0670919017, £18.99, Penguin paperback ISBN 9780141049168, £7.99

Somewhat belatedly, *The Spokesman* received a copy of *Our Kind of Traitor*, John le Carré's pacy spy thriller, published in September 2010. It finally arrived in 2013, in the days following the long delayed opening of the inquest into the death of Alexander Litvinenko in 2006. Mr Litvinenko was poisoned with polonium-210, not once, perhaps, but twice, according to theories recounted by Zhores Medvedev (see *Spokesman* 96). The second attempt, in a London hotel, killed him. There followed a great falling out between the UK and Russian authorities, as Her Majesty's Government seemed to try to pin the blame on the Kremlin for his death. Apparently, Mr Litvinenko was paid from a variety of sources, including the UK's Secret Intelligence Service or MI6. His contacts extended to Israel and Turkey, where he first sought asylum, as well as Russia and beyond. Now, his widow, the *Financial Times* and others are contesting

HMG's Public Interest Certificates, which prevent some evidence at the INMG being presented in open court. It is claimed that both governments wish to limit the damage to UK-Russian relations. That would be a turn-up for the books!

How does this relate to Le Carré's thriller? Dima (short for Dmitri) is the world's premier money launderer, but is about to be 'whacked' by 'the Prince', supreme chief of Russia's seven gangs engaged in organised crime. Dima wants asylum in England with his extended family, and recruits a young British couple as go-betweens with SIS. Enter Hector Meredith, defender of the Service, himself something of an outsider during the New Labour years, post-Iraq and the dodgy dossiers; not the Service's finest hour.

As ever, le Carré is remarkably topical, albeit for a review that is a couple of years late. For one thing, the Russian gangs make some of their considerable money from illicit trade in contaminated meat from Bulgaria, labelled as prime Italian beef. Russian children and the elderly died as a result.

Closer to home, Ashley Longrigg, erstwhile deputy chief of SIS, has been elected to Parliament in what seems to be a safe Labour seat, and aspires to become something in the Treasury team. He is being courted by the Russian gangs who, via Cyprus (surprise, surprise!), wish to set up their own bank in the City of London, which will be generously capitalised with well-laundered cash. Public relations for this deal are in the hands of Giles de Salis (ex-Royal Navy); should anything go wrong, there's a bent brief, Bunny, on hand in Mayfair.

How many Members of Parliament are there from the intelligence services? Shouldn't we be told? In his autobiography, *A Fortunate Life*, Lord Ashdown acknowledged his commitment to stay *shtumm* about his secret service life, after Ming Campbell, in 2007, had been rather more candid in telling the *Evening Standard* that Paddy had been 'in the more shadowy side of Foreign Office activity'. Paddy was leader of the Liberal Democrats; once again a party of government. His successor, Charles Kennedy, was removed from the leadership not long after he spoke from the platform at London's largest public demonstration in modern times, in February 2003, against the coming war on Iraq. These are men of some influence in public life. Is it a case of once a spook, always a spook? How does this background impact on their lives as public representatives?

And what about Parliamentarians who are paid by lobbyists? Le Carré writes of '30 MPs taking the oligarch money'. Is that pure speculation?

What of corruption in the Secret Intelligence Service itself? Is it

immune to ‘pecuniary temptation’, as Shaw described the pull of filthy lucre in other circumstances? Hardly, as the dramatic conclusion to this tail of derring-do suggests. Those who try to clean the Augean stables may perish in the effort. Told with characteristic *élan*, *Our Kind of Traitor* is a riveting good read. In its own way, it is also a caution to democracy.

Anthony Lane

TATE

Bridget Riley and Patrick Caulfield have dazzling shows at Tate Britain this summer. In this issue of *The Spokesman* we feature paintings by both artists which are currently on show there. Meanwhile, David Shrigley is on the four-person short list for this year’s Turner Prize, following his solo exhibition at Hayward Gallery, *David Shrigley: Brain Activity*.

Credits:

David Shrigley (page 2)

I’m Dead 2010

© David Shrigley, courtesy Collection Hamilton Corporate Finance Limited, Image courtesy Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.

Patrick Caulfield (page 36)

Pottery 1969

Oil on canvas

support: 2134 x 1524 mm

Presented by Mrs H.K. Morton through the Contemporary Art Society 1969 © The estate of Patrick Caulfield