

Reviews

Silvertown

John Tully, *Silvertown: The lost story of a strike that shook London and helped launch the modern labour movement*, Lawrence & Wishart, 2014, 288 pages, paperback ISBN 9781907103995, £17.99

When I saw *Silvertown*, the title of this book, and discovered that it was about industrial action in 1889, I immediately thought ‘great, I need to know more about the London Dock strike’. How wrong was I!

I live in the region where this major industrial battle was staged. I knew nothing of it, though I have travelled many times to Woolwich Arsenal and then linked onto the London Docklands Light Railway through the very area where this all took place. This story is about industrial unrest and then action against a commercial company that today would be described as a multinational.

Silvertown is named after the Silver family who eventually established a rubber factory in this area of East London. This company started out in 1852 as a waterproof clothing manufacturer and graduated to combining rubber and the much more workable and water-resistant gutta-percha, which enabled them to become world leaders in submarine telegraph cables. Silver’s as a brand eventually disappeared, which is probably why, despite the vastness of their enterprise, nothing of them except the name can be identified in Silvertown. There is no building left standing that relates to this dispute or to the people who undertook it, unlike the huge Tate and Lyle factory, which remains but was, apparently, much smaller. Silver’s became the British Tyre and Rubber Company, subsequently known as BTR Industries. In 1999, BTR merged with Siebe and became BTR Siebe PLC and was eventually renamed Invensys PLC. It remains a multinational.

Whilst the company has retained its world trading capability and undergone many name changes and acquired many additional industrial processes, the workers who decided to take them on in an industrial dispute have been largely forgotten. They were unable to grow, change, and live healthy lives, having been part of the industrial success. They were asking for a very moderate pay increase. As this dispute is virtually unknown and only referenced by this work, it is more than a little obvious that it was lost. That appears so glib, but when you get into the meat of this dispute you realise that the ‘unskilled’ workers of Silver’s asked for portions of a penny per hour in a pay rise; not the 100 pennies per pound

as today, but 12 pence to a shilling and 20 shillings to a pound. They also asked for a covered or dry area to eat their food during their break. Such demands for improvement were usually met with lies, misrepresentation and obfuscation from Silver's management.

This dispute was conducted against the backdrop of the very successful matchgirls' strike at Bryant & May in 1888, and the equally local London Docks dispute of 1889. Managements across London were increasingly concerned about the rising awareness of their 'unskilled' employees and this multinational company was determined not to become part of the trend. They were proactive in establishing companies to undermine the strike by providing non-unionised workers or 'scabs'. They manipulated the press with stories alleging hourly rates well in excess of real pay. Many people believed, and I was one, that the Thatcher government politicised the police. On reading this excellent exposé, it is clear that if anyone began that process, it was the managing director of Silver's, Matthew Gray. Indeed, Tully recounts:

'Gray proved to be a shrewd, intelligent businessman who was not afraid to take calculated risks to advance the company's interests. And his gambles were successful. He was also to prove a ruthless class warrior when the company's interests and those of the employing class as a whole demanded it.'

And whilst Gray was fighting for his class, so, too, were the members of a 'craft union', the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). They should, of course, have been fighting for their own class, the working class, but the leadership was ineffective and unable to identify the detrimental impacts of some of their more small-minded and counterproductive policies and rules. They failed to support their colleagues working in the same factory. They failed to grasp the bigger ideas of gaining political advantage by means of solidarity. The saddest aspect is that within the trades union movement today its membership and workers generally have still to understand this basic concept. It was this strike's failure that in part led some trades unionists to realize that direct action alone, known as 'syndicalism', would not work – there was a requirement to gain traction with the public by combining the syndicalist approach with a political one of storytelling, in order to gain the understanding and support of the wider public through the media. And, by so doing, workers apply much stronger and dynamic pressures on managements. 'So what?' you may say. Well, this understanding helped to drive the trades unions and working people to establish organisations which were, eventually, to become the Labour Party.

This is a detailed book written by an academic who not only knows his

subject and how to gather his research in a coherent way, but who also writes with an empathy and clear grasp of the desperations of these supposedly ordinary people who determined to take on a multinational British-based company at the centre of the British Empire and its establishment. These workers were opposed by all the British industrialists for fear of what might happen if another group of supposedly ‘unskilled’ workers won their dispute. Tully lays out all of the arguments and often refers to the modern day, reflecting actual successes of trades unionists born out of this alleged defeat. I take issue with him on the minor point that the Tony Blair New Labour government began the groundwork for neo-liberalism; I believe that began with Keith Joseph, a major player in the Thatcher Government. That aside, this is a thoroughly absorbing read where, despite the plethora of facts, an important story is told cogently and sympathetically, offering true insight into the appalling lives of working people. Abuses were perpetrated on them by senior managers who had the means to avoid such a dispute, the substantial company wealth to absorb such moderate requests without a problem, but their obsession with the company and making money left them indifferent and humourless, proud to be greedy, money-grabbing bastards at anyone’s expense.

Many of the new practices the Silver’s management brought to this dispute you will see being used today to oppose trades union industrial disputes. It is a shame, as I think Tully clearly demonstrates that the trades union movement is yet fully to realise the need for internationalism and solidarity across industrial disputes. Until that lesson is finally learnt, it is entirely possible there will continue to be variations on a theme established in *Silvertown*. This book, if read by trades unionists, could help in making that transition. It is an excellent read.

Dave Putson

‘Total Historian’

Asa Briggs, *Special Relationships: People and Places*, Frontline Books, 2012, 256 pages, hardback ISBN 9781848326675, £19.99; *Secret Days: Code-breaking at Bletchley Park*, Frontline Books, 2011, 256 pages, hardback ISBN 9781848326156, £19.99; *Loose Ends and Extras*, Frontline Books, 2014, 196 pages, hardback ISBN 9781848327733, £19.99

Asa and I are roughly coevals – he was born three years after me, and both of us come from a Northern English background. But Asa’s friendships far

exceed mine, both in number and eminence. Of the truly great, I knew through my father Harold Macmillan, Kingsley Martin and Douglas Cole. Beyond that, I had myself close friendships with some of Asa's friends; Thomas Hodgkin, Charles Carter, Raymond Williams, Kurt Vonnegut, Dudley Seers. But most of Asa's friends and associates in political, economic and educational institutions were operating at levels far above my experience, and apart from friendship with Paul Hogarth and Diana and Tom Poulton, and brief wartime connections with Benjamin Britten and Peter Peers, nothing to compare with Asa's artistic and musical associations.

Frankly, I found the first chapters of *Special Relationships* on family names and dates and places quite boring. It was only when in 'Institutions and Individuals' he came to the founding of the University of Sussex that I got really excited. Asa avoided the pattern of appointing the top staff and leaving it to them, and instead insisted on driving the development himself with schools, rather than departments, and with the sciences and technology linked to social studies, and not just by their history, Asa's own speciality. One innovation in which I was particularly interested through my connection with Robin Murray was Asa's creation at Sussex of an Institute of Development Studies (IDS), where Robin worked and I gave some lectures on imperialism for Dudley Sears, the director. I especially enjoyed staying on the campus and running on the hills above it. He introduced a common core course for all students, a practice I followed in founding the Northern College in Yorkshire for residential adult students. And Asa encouraged mature students to come to Brighton. He supported his drive at Brighton by establishing a planning committee, capable of challenging the University Grants Committee, which had thereafter to collect the necessary statistics for the development of the new universities, which followed the Robbins Report. But after Asa's establishment of Sussex University, his chief claim to fame must lie not so much in the universities and colleges, over which he presided, as in his role from its very beginning in the founding and creation of the Open University, working on its planning committee. Many other college heads and university experts at first derided this but, after Asa became Vice-chancellor, they had to accept it.

Much of Asa's strength lay in his combination of local history and academic range of knowledge and understanding. One can give many examples, in his comparison of Manchester and Birmingham cities, of the Rowntrees and the Cadburys, of John Lewis and other retailers, of literature and technology in the *Age of Improvement*, the title of one of his

most widely read books, which established him as what he liked to call himself, a ‘Total Historian’. It was from Kurt Vonnegut, one of my literary gurus, who gave Asa the word *karass* as the name for a set of people who, without knowing each other, think the same way and have the same hopes and fears. It is a sense that we must all have had at one time or another, that we are not alone. Some people see this as the ‘will of God’. I have no such belief. Asa’s chairmanship of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, a title Asa liked, was probably one of his most important centres of influence in his *karass*. The last lines of this book describe the ‘tree of knowledge’, explaining how one subject is connected with another. ‘That,’ he adds, ‘was my preoccupation in my fifteen years at Sussex, when I knew that the University was an acorn that would grow. And it has.’

The second volume of this autobiography (*Secret Days: Code-breaking at Bletchley Park*) is about his time from 1943 to 1945, as a member of the team breaking the Axis military codes at Bletchley Park. The years that Asa spent as a cryptographer there obviously seemed to him to be of such importance as to deserve a whole volume. But the reason for such a volume lies in the largely unrecognised importance of its part in the defeat of Germany which Bletchley Park ensured. It was unrecognised because, until the 1980s, its very existence had been kept secret by all the several hundreds of people who were involved in one way or another, most of them having no idea what was going on there. Several histories have now appeared, but Asa adds the story of one particular building in the Park, Hut 6, and which German messages were decoded there and passed on to British and American Intelligence. I was particularly interested in the information they were able to give to Churchill to pass to Tito in Yugoslavia about German plans for offensives there. It is a fascinating and important story, not only because of the importance of the decoding, but also for all the characters Asa introduces. I knew only two – Ernest Barker, my friend Liz’s father, and Hugh Trevor Roper, Lord Dacre, of whom Asa disapproves almost as much as I did. What is surprising is the number of people involved from Oxford and Cambridge University colleges, not necessarily mathematicians – ten alone from Sidney Sussex, where Asa was a scholar.

Asa introduces this volume with material about his time in the Intelligence Corps at Wentworth Woodhouse, my next door neighbour to Wentworth Castle, when I was Principal of the Northern College there. The layout of all the buildings at Bletchley Park and their many occupants were not known to me; this takes up much of the volume. It was here, in this very mixed range of intellects, that Asa probably learnt his enthusiasm

for interdisciplinarity and the value of advance planning, which served him so well thereafter in all his university roles. Since the code-breaking activities were closed down, the buildings have gone through many uses, and it was not until 1991 that a Memorial Trust was formed. Even then its progress was chequered until the early years of the new century, when an official reopening took place, supported by Christopher Chataway and Stephen Fry, and presided over by the Duke of Kent. For 2012 a special celebration was planned to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Alan Turing, the leading cryptographer; and a model of his Colossus computer was constructed for the occasion. Asa's last words in this volume bear repetition: 'Meanwhile, interest in the remarkable personality of Alan Turing continues to grow everywhere.'

The third volume has a list of Asa's publications at the end. As with the other volumes, it has several pages of pictures. For 'what is the use of a book?' Asa quotes Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?' There is a particularly nice picture of Asa with his wife and children on page 85. This is a kind of tidying-up volume, which summarises Asa's development of 'cultural history' combining political, economic and social history with geography and dates. Thus, he wrote histories on such different fields as sport, health and retailing, as well as universities and the BBC, and called himself a scientist. He loves to think in threes and to read trilogies. As a member of the UGC he wished always to bridge the cultures and encourage interdisciplinary teamwork. The Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at Sussex was his instrument for much of this development. Asa did not exclude pictures and music from his cultural bridging, and the importance of wine in history and socialising. One of Asa's histories was of the Victoria Wine Company.

Along with this wide range of Asa's interests came a great number of his friends and associates. Some of them I knew well and could recognise Asa's importance in their lives: in science, Chris Freeman and J. D. Bernal (incorrectly called S. D. Bernal); in politics, Tony Benn and Harold Wilson; in music, Benjamin Britten and the Spooner sisters; among writers, Vera Brittain and Tolkien, and several academics, Douglas Cole, Eric Hobsbawm, Raymond Williams. One reference which I am sorry not to have found in his *Loose Ends and Extras* is the great kindness he showed me, when I founded Northern College, in agreeing for some years to chair the College Board of Academic Advisers. He chaired so many such advisory bodies.

The man who takes up all Asa's attention in the central chapter of this volume is John Reith, according to Asa 'Recalled and Reassessed', not

only as the first and most influential Director General of the BBC, indeed the BBC's creator, but as a very great man who was not, Asa argues, fully recognised in his day. Asa referred in a 1966 Memorial Lecture to what Reith had accomplished as a 'communications revolution'. Reith's subsequent career, after resigning from the BBC, was less interesting. The BBC remains his memorial.

There is one story of Reith's role as BBC Director General that I would want to question. According to Asa's account, when Reith objected to the portrayal of Ariel's genitalia in Eric Gill's statue of Prospero and Ariel above the entrance to the new Broadcasting House, Asa's version is that the ex-headmaster of Winchester School, who was designing slogans on the entrance, reassured him that there was 'no offence in it'. The alternative version I heard from Arthur Calder Marshall, who was at the BBC at the time: supposedly, the head master of Eton, Dr. Alington, was consulted and declared that the 'young man was uncommonly well-hung', and Eric Gill had to chop off two inches from Ariel's penis.

It would be wrong to end this long review with such a story. In fact, Asa ends his life story with his love of birds. Especially, he recalls, watching the cranes in China. There they are a symbol of longevity. As he writes, Asa is celebrating his 90th birthday and the sixtieth anniversary of his wedding to Susan, and considering what flowers to give her. In China, he remarks, chrysanthemums carry a message of long life. Asa has not only had a long life, but also a remarkably rich and useful one, for which many people will be profoundly grateful. In these three volumes we can get some picture of what his life meant for him, his family and his many friends, and with it a comprehensive story of the times in which we live.

Michael Barratt Brown

Scalding tank

Clare Druce, *Chickens' Lib: The Story of a Campaign*, Bluemoose Books, 2013, 334 pages, hardback ISBN 9780957549722, £18

The Chickens' Lib group, active in Britain between 1971 and 2010, played a conspicuous role in revealing the dark side of battery farming. Founders Clare Druce and Violet Spalding (and their collaborators) went to considerable lengths uncovering animal suffering and governmental apathy, and today the widespread awareness of battery farms and their deplorable conditions owes much to their work. Not limiting themselves to

the plight of chickens, they also busied themselves with farmed turkeys, quails and ostriches, to name but a few other causes. This book looks back over the group's history and provides a wealth of information that, though not for the fainthearted, remains of great importance.

Druce and co. rescued (legally) and rehabilitated birds from numerous battery farms. They petitioned authorities to face up to the grim realities of the systems in place, and to look into more humane approaches, with some success. A model for an 'enriched' cage has become much more commonplace, yet this is still a poor environment for the birds it contains. And while their efforts made an impact on European farming legislation, they so often faced a lack of will to enforce the laws. Unfortunately, this remains a stumbling block.

Beyond the obvious talking points of free range chickens and eggs, *Chickens' Lib* questions our deeper awareness of animal products. How often do we really think about poultry products that go unseen into household staples such as pasta and baby food, and where these have been sourced from; what kind of life the chickens have had, and indeed, what kind of death? Was the correct voltage administered to stun them before slaughter, or did they go to the feather-loosening scalding tank still conscious? Reading this book, you have to think back to the BNP's recent attempts to create strife over halal meat – their ignorance of standard non-halal slaughter practices, and how brutal these can be, seriously undermines their argument.

Chickens' Lib triumphs in its almost clinical precision relating the conditions in batteries, and of the animals kept there, but the writing is not entirely without emotion. Druce admits she tried to suppress the tendency to anthropomorphise, but there are points where it inevitably creeps in. It's understandable. The majority of people would empathise on some level with animals in distress; overly humanizing them is a heartfelt expression of this. The report about chickens living in an 'advanced culture' did seem like a bit of an overreach, but then again I know nothing about the intricacies of chicken social groups. My point is, even without the talk of hens' trusting eyes, revelations about the facilities *Chickens' Lib* visited – necrotising flesh on live birds, for one example – speak reams by themselves.

It does not get much cheerier, except when we hear about the group's comical side, which is weirdly incongruent with some of its hard-hitting demonstrations. As well as displaying pitiful ex-battery birds on Parliament Square, they have used chicken costumes and songs to get their views across. It was a risky tactic to embrace both approaches when – initially, at

least – they were not necessarily seen as credible by the bigwigs. Did the more light-hearted displays jeopardise some of their chances to be taken seriously? No publicity is bad publicity, so they say, and at any rate, one need only take a cursory glance through *Chickens' Lib* to see their true credentials – how much first-hand research Druce conducted, not to mention the countless academic and legislative papers she trawled for the truth. Her approach to presenting this is excellent, accessible even without prior knowledge, and while some sections are quite statistic-heavy, the information is to the point. In particular, her critique of familiar, seemingly positive terms such as ‘free range’ and ‘barn eggs’ is galling to all those who have ever believed these were the compassionate things to buy. Some ‘free range’ birds are rarely able to access the outdoors at all, as there are too many others to compete against on the way to the door of their enclosure. Likewise, some so-called ‘barns’, while fitted out differently to the most barren facilities, ‘may (legally) be so densely stocked that floor, platforms and perches are virtually obscured by the mass of birds ... likened to battery sheds minus the cages.’

It is astounding to read how Druce’s attempts to alert officials so often fell on deaf ears, or else were met with limp promises to investigate her reports, always with the same results: confirmations that everything was fine at batteries she had visited and been disgusted by; glowing reports for facilities so vast that the legally-obliged checks on every individual animal could not possibly have been carried out. Her story exposes an approval system designed to green-light even the most shambolic operations in the pursuit of a profit.

It seems one of the biggest obstacles in toppling the battery system is its efficiency. Ethical concerns aside, there is little immediate, practical incentive for either the government or the public to support a reform of such a cost-effective system. According to Druce, however, the prices of ‘free range’ and battery eggs are not so different. She notes that during a campaign against Co-op battery eggs, in 1979, they ‘worked out that the price difference between a dozen free range eggs and the same number of battery eggs equated to the cost of a packet and a half of crisps or less than two and a half cigarettes’. A quick google suggests that the difference today is similar in many supermarkets. Her intended point is fine, if you live comfortably, but sadly many people in the UK are forced to live counting every penny. Couple that with misleading welfare labels that imply the animals have enjoyed a reasonable degree of freedom in their lives, and you can see how the ‘out of sight, out of mind’ attitude prevails.

Animal products are not essential to the diet, of course, but many choose

to eat them for their protein content. Chicken in particular has been touted as a lean meat, but Druce uncovers a different story. Described in the book is an investigation into the protein content of commercially-produced meat, in 2004, which found that chicken tested ‘contained more than twice as much fat as in 1940, a third more calories and a third *less* protein’. In terms of alternatives (i.e. for those who don’t want to go vegan), she puts in a word for burgeoning projects such as the development of in-vitro meat, but those wary of the lab-cultured and GM food scene will no doubt take some persuasion before this is an option, to say nothing of what it may cost to produce in its early stages. In general, there would need to be a major rethink of our attitude towards food before we as a nation, or in fact as a species, lose the taste for meat altogether.

We should take the interplay of these issues to mean that there is no easy solution. It isn’t economical for small, humanely-run farms to sell their produce at a rate competitive with battery eggs and meat. Until the better-sourced items do take a price dip, there is little hope that they will overtake their competitors on sales. For many people, it would be no small feat either to give up a part of their diet they enjoy so much. And let’s not even go into the Herculean labour of reforming the battery system from the inside.

Entitlement and apathy abound, but *Chickens’ Lib* at least encourages discussion on some things we are tacitly encouraged to take for granted.

Nicole Morris

Strength and subtlety

Adrian Jones & Chris Matthews, *Towns in Britain: Jones the Planner*, Five Leaves Publications, 2014, 324 pages, illustrated, paperback ISBN 9781907869822, £16.99

Towns in Britain starts in the English Midlands, and spreads across Britain. Nottingham, Leicester, Coventry get the treatment, before Adrian Jones the Planner and Chris Matthews, local historian and gifted designer, head off to Birmingham, Scotland and Wales. Bristol, Southampton, London and its environs precede a trio of revealing couplings, including Doncaster and Derby (railway towns), Huddersfield and Rochdale (Pennine towns), finishing with Lincoln and Exeter (cathedral cities).

Jones knows Nottingham well, with an insider’s access as the City Council’s Chief Planner for many years. Retirement from that position

affords an opportunity for outspoken commentary and analysis of Nottingham's 'psychosis'; is it a town or a city? The conurbation spreads across 8 local authority areas, dissipating energy as councils vie with each other. In 1991, Mrs Thatcher conferred 'unitary' status on the City of Nottingham, which cut it off from the surrounding Shire County and its ratepayers. The consequent paucity of funding was compounded by the requirement, among others, to build an education authority from scratch. The City has never really succeeded in doing so and, following Gove and Cameron's onslaught on state education, Nottingham's schools now suffer increasing fragmentation. The turrets of Nottingham High School, a 'free school' established 500 years ago by Henry VIII, look down the green slope of The Forest to the Djanogly Academy, where students dig their way out under the surrounding green wire fence in a bid for freedom. The Djanogly Learning Trust has been failing the children of Nottingham since the 1980s, when a City Technology College was established outside local authority auspices, again under Mrs Thatcher's provisions. Nevertheless, it was appointed lead partner in the ill-starred Nottingham University Academy of Science and Technology, which is struggling to find students, and took over another city primary school earlier in 2014, even though the DfE has 'paused' the Trust's expansion. Last year, a coroner's court found that Djanogly Academy failed in its duty of care towards a student who committed suicide. His prolonged absences from school had not been properly recorded, it seems; nor had they been followed up with contact home. Should such dubious enterprises be trusted with children and their education?

Jones the Planner's take on Foster's Djanogly City Academy is that it is 'elegantly cool: a big statement for the area, if not one I approve of'. Personally speaking, I do approve the buildings, including the City Council's excellent new swimming pool and sports facilities behind the school. However, the kids are still trying to dig their way out, notwithstanding their bespoke surroundings. Could there be a more eloquent statement about the state of education in modern Britain?

This peroration is by way of making the point that *Towns in Britain* has a refreshingly positive and informed view of what local councils and local democracy can achieve in terms of creating liveable townscapes to support viable communities, about which the 'market' hasn't a clue

Adrian and Chris, as a combo, are knowledgeable, opinionated and humorous. One of many pictures (colour and black and white) encompasses in its caption two personal passions: paving and typography. Beneath a small picture of handsome brick and stone houses in Lincoln, it

reads: ‘Times New Roman – the strength and subtlety of the paving (Bailgate)’. I can hardly wait to take the train to Lincoln and promenade along Bailgate towards the Cathedral. For *Towns in Britain* is an excellent travelling companion. Just as Nikolaus Pevsner opened our eyes to what was good in the built landscape in his mammoth series, *Buildings of England*, so Jones the Planner and Chris Matthews assert the stories of modern townscapes. Doncaster looks much better with the benefit of their treatment, notwithstanding ‘St George’s juxta Tesco car park’. Definitely one of the best books of 2014, beautifully printed by Russell Press.

Tony Simpson

Financial Warfare

David Marquand, *Mammon’s Kingdom*, Allen Lane, 2014, 288 pages, hardback ISBN 9781846146725, £20

Stephen Graham, *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*, Verso, 2011, 432 pages, paperback ISBN 9781844677627, £14.99

Juan C. Zarate, *Treasury’s War*, Public Affairs, 2013, 488 pages, hardback ISBN 9781610391153, £34.50

It must be rare for three major books of Political Economy to be published in English at roughly the same time, which all warn readers of the current danger to their lives of developments in financial warfare. They need to be reviewed together, all 1,200 pages, which is a major task for a reviewer who makes it a principle to read right through the books he reviews, and make careful notes of the contents as he goes along. But the three books need to be treated seriously together because they make distinct and different points of great importance for our survival. So, I will do my best to encompass them in this one review. It’s written at the same time as the recent issue (no. 125) of *The Spokesman* bears the title ‘Rough Violence’ and is about the wars in Iraq, Ukraine and Palestine, all with a financial aspect of US dominance.

The first book is David Marquand’s latest work, *Mammon’s Kingdom*, which has the arresting sub-title, ‘An Essay on Britain, Now’. Note the comma! The book is in fact a well-researched historical survey of the evolution of British society over the last century as still ‘Mammon’s Kingdom’, in which the rule of finance predominates. In a quotation from R.H.Tawney, Marquand summarises it thus,

‘Britain had undergone no inner conversion ... she carried into the democratic

era, not only the institutions, but the social habits and mentality of the oldest and toughest plutocracy in the world.’

Hence the sub-title, ‘Britain, Now’. Marquand clearly distinguishes successive moves by various actors and writers over the years to establish a more collectivist spirit, drawing on the liberal tradition of John Stewart Mill and even the Conservative Edmund Burke, enshrined in the influence of Keynes and Beveridge, and the rise of Trade Unions and a Labour Party. The two world wars are shown by Marquand greatly reducing the inequalities between rich and poor, so that, in 1957, a Conservative Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, could claim that ordinary people ‘had never had it so good’.

The greater part of Marquand’s book is, however, concerned with the re-establishment in the last thirty years, since Mrs Thatcher’s ‘Big Bang’, of money power in Britain, reducing the public realm to allow for the growth of market finance in ‘Mammon’s Kingdom’ with the domination of a tiny financial oligopoly. But, it was a risky enterprise. At the height of the boom, in 2008, Marquand estimates that British bank loans were the equivalent of five times the national output. Bank debts, not only at Northern Rock and Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), but also more widely, were out of control. The bankers were let off the hook by national bail-outs. The Conservative Party, returned to power in 2010, with the Liberal Democrats in coalition, could blame Labour over-spending for the crisis, not bankers’ greed. At one extreme there developed the super-rich 1 per cent; at the other end, the ‘worthless poor’. A ‘Working Class’ had ceased to exist in the UK, as Marquand puts it, by the end of the century. Yet, there is a very hopeful message in Marquand’s analysis, of the possibility of a ‘decent capitalism’, based on Amartya Sen’s concept of public reasoning. This he gets from noting the growing strength of protest movements, especially among the young, on educational issues, and in political groups like Compass and Ecocide. But, it requires the devolution of power in the UK from London. ‘We can’t go on as we are,’ Marquand concludes, with ‘Mammon’s Kingdom’.

This becomes only too clear in the next of my three books on financial warfare, *Cities under Siege*, with the sub-title, ‘the New Military Urbanism’. Finance has not only taken over state power, but has spread a new militarism throughout urban civilian life. One needs only to see what is happening in Gaza today to recognise this. But the background to this, Stephen Graham suggests, is the growth of city populations in the last century, until today a half of the world’s people live on about a quarter of

the world's land; and this has not made for peaceful co-existence. The growth has not been mainly in the richer 'developed' countries, but, apart from the USA, in the poorer 'developing' lands, not so much in China, where there is a policy of family limitation, but in India, the Middle East and parts of Africa. What is happening today in Syria and Iraq, in Uganda and Sudan? Military activity does not consist, any longer, in battles for other lands, but in the control of citizens; hence, the title of the book, *Cities under Siege*. Much of the evidence of the forms of urban warfare and counterinsurgency, and their links to financial power, which Graham reveals, is little known and quite surprising, even frightening. This is a war by the all-powerful – mainly financial – groups against political dissent, often interpreted as terrorist subversion of the established order.

Every form of high technology is shown by Graham in use in 'counter-terrorism', in effect challenging democratic dissent. But some forms of control, such as the prison system, rely on old-fashioned controls. The United States, with 5 per cent of the world's people, is quoted as having 24 per cent of the prisoners. Imperial rule over colonial territories was effected by quite direct military measures. The new forms of underground dissent have led to the development of counter-terrorist operations by governments which find their cities 'under siege'. Graham's whole story of high tech surveillance and control of an impoverished city underclass in revolt seemed to be wholly exaggerated, despite the evidence of the attack on the World Trade Centre and the underground bombing, but, as I read Graham's warnings, the news comes in of young English Jihadis returning from Syria and requiring new British Government counter measures. The wealth gap between the rich and the poor is much greater in the developing countries, and between the cities and the rural areas in the USA, than in Europe, and it is in this gap that Graham identifies the threat of urban revolt in the big cities. Some of this is exacerbated by racial difference, but Graham insists that it is not always true.

The response to this threat from the big cities that Graham shows is already being developed by the US and Israeli military and it is just mind boggling. It is a particular fact of today's military exercises that the closest co-operation is between US and Israeli forces. Drones, that is unmanned aircraft, are designed to fire, not only from the air, but also from the ground in cities at electronically identified targets. This is warfare without any risk to your own soldiers, depending on detailed surveillance of city areas. This is robotic warfare, what Graham calls 'robowar', and foresees becoming the norm in intercity battles, as the technology follows the money. Already, Graham can cite its use in Gaza and Iraq, and sees weapons biting their

targets like insects. It may seem like science fiction, but it seems real enough, though Graham warns against myths of precision in such plans. Some cities, believe it or not, are specially designed by the military for practising destructive measures; others are designed as safe havens for the families of the dominant military personnel, and children are taught the lesson with toy models, a more sophisticated version of the checkerboard games we used to play. And, as before, the dominant power is always in the North, and nothing is left for democratic decision making. Indeed, this conclusion of Graham's is the most worrying of all.

The total dependence of city dwellers on the infrastructure of water, drainage, transport, power, light and information services means that we are particularly vulnerable to their interruption. It gives striking workers great power, but the same goes for terrorists. The ability to single them out in the cities becomes essential to military strategy. But the result of such securitisation not only destroys democratic development but also results in what Graham calls 'dehumanising' societies in the South, which only provokes more violent response. We have only to see Isis in Iraq.

A peculiar invention of the rich North are inter-urban struggles with the South. One given a whole chapter by Graham is the car war of the armed Hummer vehicle. Short of driving in a tank, it is the safest method of urban travel. The Hummer's high petrol consumption puts even more pressure on dwindling oil supplies. The need for the North to control the oil states is increased, and the extraction of tar sands becomes more urgent. But, as Graham warns, these are severely limited options, leaving only completely revolutionary alternatives for the planet's survival.

In the meantime, we face a new kind of financial warfare from the USA, as Juan Zarate explains it in his large book, 488 pages, *Treasury's War*, published in the US in 2013. Zarate is a Senior Adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, and was the first ever Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for terrorist financing and financial crimes, from which this book derives. Zarate's work at the US Treasury began as a response to the 9/11 bombing in the USA in 2001. It was thought essential for the US authorities to find the sources and supply channels for Al Qaeda's funding. That much of it came from Arab Muslim donors was clear, and this led Zarate and his Treasury team to Saudi Arabia and delicate negotiation with the Saud royal family, and the uncovering of intelligence agencies like SWIFT (Society for World-wide Financial Telecommunication). One important source of funding and communication from Pakistan and Afghanistan was known as 'hawara', and this had to be dealt with.

Zarate rescued a team from a re-organisation of the Treasury, which could really build a response to the use of world-wide funds for terrorism. One of their first tasks was to deal with 'bad banks' operating illicit practices, in order to isolate rogue regimes. A particular task for Zarate's team became the tracing and isolation of Saddam Hussein's caches of money taken from Iraq via different 'bad banks' in Syria and elsewhere, in what Zarate calls Saddam's 'kleptocracy'.

At the same time, the team were giving support for Transparency International and the World Bank to help in the control of counterfeit dollars that North Korea was designing and using to pay for supplies. Zarate's team had to agree with the FBI and CIA to establish its monetary warfare role in relation to the Mafia, and had special difficulties questioning China's relations with North Korea and the gambling dens of Macau. The aim throughout was the exclusion of North Korea from the international banking system by US Treasury warnings to participants and freezing of assets in what was known as Section 311 of the US Patriot Act. In 2007, North Korea was let off the hook by Condoleezza Rice and President Bush.

The next Treasury target was Iran, whose illicit deals to counter UN sanctions on nuclear weapon development, according to Zarate, were proliferating with oil money. The aim here was to make business with Iran seem to be too risky in the USA itself as well as more widely in the Middle East. The Treasury team, now without Zarate, who had gone to the White House, stepped up its anti-money laundering and measures of isolation in an attempt to bring Iran's bid for independence to heel.

When Bush's term ended, Obama took over the same Treasury team dealing with terrorism as a new brand of 'coercive diplomacy' involving economic pressure on North Korea and Iran. North Korea's response was bellicose, with some support from China. Iran was more cautious, and Obama's US policy accepted this for a time, but continued Iranian nuclear preparation led the US to respond with increased financial pressures on banks, insurance and shipping companies, with UN Resolutions and European Union support. All this came to a head in 2012, with the threat to end all Iranian oil imports.

Before Leavey, the head of the anti-terrorist team, resigned, he managed one more financial freezing operation, against Libya, with terrorist support in Syria still a problem. Zarate sums up his story of the group's attack on the support being given to international terrorism by showing how the supporters had to adapt to the Treasury's measures against alleged rogue actors. One example cited by Zarate was Lebanon's Hezbollah's

management of the used car market in Africa to make money. Al Qaeda in Somalia managed a massive drug trafficking business. But most troublesome for the United States, America's enemies had learnt how to use the Treasury's weapons back against the US financial system itself.

Zarate's last chapter is called 'The Coming Financial Wars'. Coming after the Wall Street financial crisis of 2008-9, it engages with the threat to the international status of the US dollar as the world's currency, threatened by growing Chinese power. Winning over non-state interests, essentially the big corporations, became essential. But US predominance was ended, with US financial methods taken over by others, especially China with its monopoly market position, but also by Russia with its oil and gas resources. The US is weakened on all fronts with manifold cyber attacks, but maintaining US financial power remains a key objective for all those with a stake in that power.

Michael Barratt Brown



Tribunal Jurors Adhaf Soueif, Paul Laverty, Roger Waters, Richard Falk