

Reviews

Keep Space for Peace

Bård Wormdal, *The Satellite War: How new installations in the Arctic areas transform the war*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011, 212 pages, ISBN 9781479187072, £6.24

Among other things, *The Satellite War*, written and published independently by Norwegian journalist Bård Wormdal, deals with Norwegian double standards on security policy in the Arctic. It is written by a journalist and so has a journalistic style which is engaging and informative. Although not all the statements and claims are supplied with references for substantiation, it certainly paints a believable (if not desirable) picture of the current state of the art in ‘sophisticated’ high tech warfare directed through satellite technology, as well as giving some insights into how investigative journalists go about their business. Above all, it provides some new (to me anyway) and important information on how the increasing militarisation of space is presenting challenges to existing treaties and agreements, and how we need always to be vigilant to ensure that their principles are not eroded.

The Satellite War begins with a Foreword explaining the author’s entry into the subject through the Vardø radar controversy. In 1998, a Raytheon Have Stare ‘high-resolution X-band tracking and imaging radar with a 27-metre mechanical dish antenna’, which had been operational at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California since 1995, was quietly dismantled and moved to northern Norway. In California it had been used in early development tests of the US National Missile Defense (NMD) programme, and in Norway it was reassembled by the US and Norway under the project name ‘Globus II’ at Vardø, just 40 miles from the Russian border. The US and Norway claimed that the radar would be used to monitor space debris, but Russian and US experts demonstrated how its principal use would be to collect detailed intelligence data on Russia’s long-range ballistic missiles.

In June 2000, two years before George W Bush unilaterally withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic-Missile (ABM) Treaty, the Norwegian intelligence agency actually admitted that the US did intend to use Vardø as a basis for missile defence purposes. The US was therefore violating the ABM Treaty, which did not allow the deployment of such a radar outside US territory. In 2005, Bård together with Pål Sommer-Erichson made a

documentary programme for Norwegian television on Vardø which uncovered its true role. From the lessons learned from this exercise and with encouragement from a Norwegian military journalist, Bård then became familiar with, and took on, the issue of Svalbard.

Svalbard is a remote archipelago in the far north that belongs to Norway under the 1920 Treaty of Svalbard between Norway and Russia. The Treaty strictly forbids military operations of any kind from being carried out there, but there was some concern that the activities of a satellite station were violating this agreement.

Kongsberg Satellite Services (KSAT, a commercial Norwegian company, 50% owned by the state) runs a satellite receiving station known as SvalSat in Svalbard. KSAT has other uniquely positioned ground stations at Tromsø in Norway and in the Antarctic (TrollSat). Together, these stations download information for all 14 daily transits of polar orbiting satellites. Bård shows how SvalSat downloads images of the earth that are used for intelligence and military activities. For example, during the Libyan war of 2011, Landsat images were sold by the Italian company e-GEOS to the Italian Armed Forces; satellite images were sold to the US Armed Forces during the war in Afghanistan; and images of North Korean installations have also been sold to the US. These were downloaded from different satellites, all using SvalSat as a ground station. Bård also reveals how the Pentagon has paid for fibre optic cables to be laid from the station to the mainland to enable the transfer of the huge amounts of data that satellite images generate. Bård's book provides conclusive evidence of treaty violations and shows how this evidence is usually denied, evaded or ignored by the Norwegian government.

Bård goes on to describe how one of the other KSAT stations – TrollSat, established at the other end of the world, in Antarctica – can serve low Earth orbit satellites. Operations control is carried out from Tromsø and satellites using TrollSat include Radarsat, GeoEye and WorldView, which serve commercial and military customers, and the station is also used by Galileo, the European satellite global navigational positioning system. As Bård points out, the 1961 Antarctic Treaty states that

‘Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord ...’

The Treaty also forbids ‘any measures of a military nature’, but the Norwegian government and its NATO allies deny or ignore all the evidence laid out in Bård's book.

Before the Norwegian government fell in 2013, Jonas Gahr Støre of the

Labour Party, who was Foreign Minister from 2005 to 2012, assured the Norwegian parliament that Norway follows the Svalbard Treaty in a strict manner. The problem is that it is not always easy to find out what kind of data is being transmitted through satellite receiving stations. However, a major clue must be who the final end-user is – it should not be too difficult, surely, to ensure that these details are made available to the relevant authorities for monitoring? However, governments tend to turn a blind eye to situations that may conflict with the interests of their military or military alliances (Norway is a member of NATO), or of large corporations.

The Satellite War is a useful book, although perhaps not as polished as it might have been if a separate publisher had been involved. However, as a seasoned journalist, Bård describes well some of the quite complex technological aspects of the use of space by the military. He obviously recognises the importance of what is happening – that satellite information of use to the military is handled by a number of different companies/organisations performing a range of functions, from satellite data collection and transmission, to data collection via ground-based receiving stations, to eventual dissemination and delivery to a final destination (customer). At each stage the exact nature of the data may or may not be known by those handling it. The data has become a commodity bought and sold at the various stages of its collection and transmission. It is the final customer who transforms it into information and very often that customer may be the military. This story is an excellent illustration of the major problem of the ‘dual use’ of satellite-related technology. It is not surprising that, as well as offering cost savings, dual use systems are becoming quite common, enabling the military to act as a consumer, leaving many of the technical concerns to commercial companies who can charge for their facilities.

That *The Satellite War* has been published and is so inexpensive points to the author’s desire to distribute this information as widely and as quickly as possible. Bård spoke at a recent meeting of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, in Kiruna, Sweden. The audience consisted of a number of international activists concerned about the increasing militarisation of space and included a large number from Scandinavian countries. Very few of those assembled knew much about the Norwegian government’s contribution to the use of space and ground-based components to plan for and execute wars. It seems that it is up to concerned citizens of Norway, and of the world, to demand that the responsibilities set out in treaties and agreements are taken seriously and that any existing violations be immediately stopped.

Dave Webb

Chernobyl's continuing relevance

Zhores A Medvedev, *The Legacy of Chernobyl*, first published by Basil Blackwell in 1990, new edition published in 2011 by Spokesman, 376 pages, paperback ISBN 9780851248035, £19.95

Zhores Medvedev was born in Tiflis (now Tbilisi), Georgia, in the USSR in 1925. In 1938, his father, a professor at a military academy with the rank of Brigadier Commissar, was arrested, charged and sentenced to eight years in a labour camp on account of his support for the dissident Soviet politician Bukharin. He died in 1941. At the age of 17, Zhores was drafted into the Red Army and took part in the fighting at the Taman front and was wounded. He was demobilised by the end of 1943, and studied agrochemistry at an agricultural academy. Stalin's endorsement of Lysenko's genetic 'pseudoscience' and the purges of dissenting biologists as 'agents of imperialism' were contemporary hazards. In 1950, with a PhD in the sexual biology of plants, Medvedev began a career as a scientist, becoming a respected Senior Research Scientist at the Agrochemistry and Biochemistry Department of Timiryazev Academy and, from 1963, as the head of the Laboratory of Molecular Radiobiology at the Obninsk Institute of Medical Radiology.

Medvedev's 1969 publication in the United States of *The Rise and Fall of Trofim D. Lysenko* led to his dismissal from work and to his short detention in Kaluga psychiatric hospital in 1970. In 1971, after protests by many scientists and others including Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, he was released and, in 1972, after the publication of *A Question of Madness*, with his twin brother Roy, about this experience, he was invited to work for one year in London at the Genetics Division of the National Institute for Medical Research. While there he was stripped of his Soviet citizenship and his passport was confiscated. He was allowed to remain in Britain, having been granted UK citizenship in 1984. His Soviet Citizenship was restored by decree of President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990.

This review of *The Legacy of Chernobyl* would be less intelligible without knowledge of the experience of the author summarized above, which more than explains his aversion to the secrecy and totalitarian human rights abuses of Stalin's USSR. In 1976, he was the first to report, in *New Scientist* magazine, about the disaster at the Kyshtym nuclear reprocessing plant, which occurred in 1957. In 1979 in the UK and USA, he published *Nuclear Disaster In The Urals* about Kyshtym. It is not surprising that his preface to the second edition of *The Legacy of Chernobyl* begins with a three page discussion of his findings under the title *Kyshtym – Chernobyl –*

Fukushima. His suspicions of the suppression of information about the possibility of nuclear explosions of spent fuel stores and of reactors out of control are well supported and of international significance. That Zhores Medvedev is not alone in having these concerns was examined by this reviewer in *Spokesman 115* under the title 'Nuclear Explosions'.

In the first chapter of *The Legacy of Chernobyl* the author makes clear his belief that the Soviet nuclear establishment was generally successful in promoting a cover-up story about the testing at the Chernobyl No 4 RBMK reactor (high-power boiling channel type) of a new safety device by negligent and incompetent operators and administrators. The story distracted world opinion from the larger issues of the safety of nuclear reactors including their vulnerability to meltdown for no greater reason than the failure of external power supplies. The engineers and operators were arrested, charged with criminal negligence and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

The young foreman operator of the reactor, engineer Leonid Toptunov, who was also prosecuted, had only limited experience. He died within two weeks of the explosion from acute radiation sickness. He is largely exonerated by Medvedev because the operators knew nothing about patent defects in the design of the reactor control rods and the reactor's 'positive void coefficient' – the potential for a rapid increase in core reactivity when steam bubbles form.

I have to admit that I, too, was distracted from addressing more basic questions in 1989, and I recall that the then Director General of the Health and Safety Executive, when appraising the Chernobyl disaster at the Hinkley Point Public Inquiry that year, accepted that the tests conducted by senior Soviet engineers were reckless and the major cause of the disaster.

Medvedev describes the August 1986 Vienna meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) attended by more than 500 experts from 62 countries, which was informed by a Soviet preliminary report on the causes of the explosion. The International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group (INSAG) of the IAEA published only a summary report and Medvedev deplores the fact that no final definitive version of the accident has ever been made public. Academician Valery Legasov, head of the scientific team in the Soviet government commission, who was sent to Chernobyl on 26 April 1986, was given the task of presenting the Soviet report to the IAEA meeting in Vienna. In 1987, he began to dictate his memoirs about Chernobyl but only a small section in the form of a personal introduction has been published. Legasov committed suicide in April 1988.

The author's Index and his Notes and References occupy 30 pages of the book and his treatment of the material is detailed, diligent, objective and

scholarly. There is also a useful glossary of scientific terms and radiation measurements. Notwithstanding his concern for the lack of *glasnost* in government publications, Zhores Medvedev found sufficient facts in the literature to create a detailed appraisal of reactor design defects, the catastrophe, the attempts to manage the emergency, the emissions and the environmental effects on agriculture, and on local and global human health. He also deals with the Soviet nuclear energy programme at large and the history of nuclear accidents in the Soviet Union.

The book's 352 pages of fluent English are readable by laypersons. There is even the occasion for wry laughter as when the then director of Electricité de France, M Remy Carle, is quoted as responding to the criticism that the public were not consulted before France became reliant on nuclear electricity with 'You don't tell the frogs when you are draining the marsh'. Perhaps there is no person better qualified by experience, disposition and scholarship to write a book with the title *The Legacy of Chernobyl* than Zhores Medvedev.

Christopher Gifford

Orwellian

Robert Colls, *George Orwell: English Rebel*, Oxford University Press, 2013, 330 pages, hardback ISBN 9780199680801, £25

Another Orwell book? Despite his supposed wishes (Gordon Bowker, *TLS*, September 15, 2000, questions this), we have many biographies, plus countless books and articles on specifics. Also (largely ignored by Colls), a plethora of documentaries; films, (e.g. Ken Loach's 1995 *Land and Freedom*, inspired by Orwell's experiences in the Worker's Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) in Spain, foolishly dismissed as 'preposterous' by Jeremy Treglown (*Franco's Crypt*, 2013); interviews, e.g. one with Jacintha Buddicom, to whom Orwell proposed marriage, and other clips on YouTube.

His (and first wife Eileen O'Shaughnessy's) life apart, Colls's preoccupation is with Orwell's 'Englishness'. Not novel, being crisply analysed by Christopher Hitchens (*Why Orwell Matters*, 2002, pp.115-140), and in effect a sequel to Paul Ward's *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left 1881-1924* (cf. Norbert Grossman's review in *Victorian Studies* 43. 3, 2001, pp.536-538) of which Colls seems unaware, albeit hard to be sure what is and isn't known in a

book with 976 end-notes, no formal bibliography – the last chapter comports a spotty breathless round-up of names – and lacunose index.

This elides into cognate topics: was Orwell genuinely socialist or a conservative in disguise? Why so ambivalent towards the working class and its revolutionary potential? Was he deep down religious? How to explain the countless inconsistencies in his life and writings? Again, as Colls himself discloses, well-worn issues. Some is fuss over nothing. Orwell is clear enough:

‘I belong to the Left and must work with it. Every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism, and for democratic socialism as I understand it’ (cf. Philip Thody, *Cycnos* 11. 2 (2008), online, apparently also unknown to Colls).

Orwell’s ambivalence was matched by the workers’. I remember from my Nottingham Trotskyite days trying to flog Gerry Healy’s literature around a miners’ village and being refused by a wife saying ‘Oh, we’re not socialists. We’re Labour.’

Regarding the ‘inconsistencies’, one could take refuge in Whitman’s ‘Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself.’ But John Maynard Keynes’ (famously misattributed to Churchill by Mitt Romney) ‘When the facts change, I change my mind’ is the obvious answer.

Still, Orwell is forever with us. The *Morning Star* (February 21, 2013) thought it necessary to reprint Harry Pollitt’s tirade (*Daily Worker*, March 17, 1937) against *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In a letter to the *New Statesman* (November 8, 2013), one Edward Lee-Six boils him down to ‘a nationalist, reactionary, racist, imperialist’. Colls’ vision has renewed impetus from Ed Miliband’s speech on ‘Englishness’. Before that (2007), Billy Bragg’s *The Progressive Patriot* tackled the question of reconciling socialist views with pride (not chauvinism) in one’s country, an enduring and passionate theme in Orwell. You can hardly doubt the ‘Englishness’ of one who wrote in eloquent defence of British cooking and how to brew the perfect cup of tea; but neither taste excludes being a socialist.

What riled Orwell most about left-wing intellectuals was their blanket sneering at everything English (he distrusted Scots, ignored Irish and Welsh). His rich repertoire of disobliging epithets for them starred ‘Pansy’ (the homophobia is undeniable, unlike the ‘anti-Semitist’ allegations) and ‘Vegetarian’. Was the latter (I wonder) influenced by the Socialist Party of Great Britain’s belief that vegetarianism was a capitalist plot to weaken the workers’ physical strength, hence revolutionary potential (cf. Robert Barltrop, *The Movement* (1975), p.137)?

Spokesman readers will be glad to know that one thinker Orwell admired was Bertrand Russell, evidenced both in epistolary (Peter Davison, *George Orwell: a Life in Letters*, 2010, e.g. pp.304-305, to Andrew Gow: ‘Bertrand Russell is, of course, the chief star in the constellation’) and published (e.g. reviewing *Power: A New Social Analysis* in *Adelphi*, January 1939) plaudits. Russell reciprocated, defending (*World Review* 16, 1950, p.6) Orwell’s treatment of the Holocaust against some absurd claims that he never understood its significance.

Colls on Orwell’s Eton days, apart from missing Stephen Runciman’s disclosure of a shared interest in a practice of voodoo, might have noted that Orwell kept in affectionate touch with the aforementioned Gow, one of many Classics beaks, despite his schoolboy doggerel verse ‘Then up waddled Wog and he squeaked in Greek’ – Gow was once ludicrously thought the Cambridge spies’ ‘Fifth Man’.

A major virtue of Colls is his literary attention to Orwell’s novels, especially the early ones, which Orwell later despised – or affected to. I have space only for a few of the many glosses compiled about (sometimes against) Colls’ *minutiae*. Along with Hitchens, I am a rare admirer of *A Clergyman’s Daughter*, where Colls might have considered the influence of Brenda Sakeld, one of Orwell’s many woman friends, herself a clergyman’s daughter.

Apropos of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Gordon Comstock was NOT political, as his endless arguments with affluent Marxist Ravelston (based on friend Richard Rees) demonstrate, nor did he work in a ‘leftist bookshop’. If his *London Pleasures* poetry is bad, the reason is its parodying of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* – apart from his rejection of *Animal Farm*, the biggest publishing own-goal since the rejection of *Pride and Prejudice*, he had refused *Down and Out ...* And, Gordon’s famous aspidistra fetish is cribbed from Robert Tressell’s *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*.

The otherwise superb chapter on *Coming Up For Air* (my personal favourite) might have noted how Bowling on evocative memories echoes Proust’s Madeleine, and should have considered his reactions to the shouting-match between CPGB-ers (Communist Party of Great Britain) and a lone ‘Trot’.

Of the ‘Big Two’, as Colls, I give short thrift to *Animal Farm*, whilst for 1984 I modestly direct readers to my essay on the *ReadySteadyBook* website, though (unlike Colls) notice the evidence that its title was inspired by wife Eileen’s 1934 poem *End of the Century 1984*; ridicule Colls’ ‘Who would be called Winston Smith in 1949?’ – how could he miss the obvious

Churchill allusion, and what about John WINSTON Lennon?; and must condemn his acceptance of Sue Lonof's preposterous derivation of O'Brien's name from Latin *ob* and French *rien* ('Out of Nothing' – Lonof must have failed Latin). In fact, 'O'Brien' was the code name of Hugh O'Donnell, who supervised Special Branch's 12 years of spying on Orwell (ignored in Colls' single sentence, p.282 n.4, on this).

Novels apart, I instance a few of many questionable details. Hitler (p.156) WAS a corporal (Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Hubris: 1896-1936*, 1998, pp.91-96), and his father's real name WAS Schicklgruber. The (in its day highly controversial: questions in Parliament, one viewer dropping dead in horror, etc.) 1954 BBC televised *1984* (Peter Cushing, Yvonne Mitchell, André Morel) was not 'English High Camp' (p.228 – see it on YouTube). Colls' adducing Richmal Crompton's 'Just William' for Orwell's anti-Communism was a bonny idea, though he overlooks her infamous 'William and the Nasties' Jew-baiting yarn and other anti-Semitismisms (cf. Chaim Simons' 2006 online essay).

I'd have included such titbits as 84-year-old retired pet-shop owner Cyril Doy telling biographer D. J. Taylor about seeing Orwell with friend Dennis Colling burying a Great War helmet and other things in a time-capsule on Southwold Common, the sort of story Orwell himself would have loved. Also, the sale of his Wallington cottage (next door to the original Manor Farm) for £395,000 – in 1936 Orwell paid 7/6d a week rent. Still, Colls offers a cornucopia of such anecdotes, so churlish to complain.

Despite its blemishes, Colls has written a highly entertaining book in the good plain jargon-free prose style so highly valued by its subject. Although offering little fresh biographical information – as said, the wealth lies in its literary emphases – to professional Orwellians, it has much for the general reader and student, and will ruffle a few ideological feathers which, as Orwell well knew, is always a good thing.

Barry Baldwin

Generous and just

Lawrence Goldman, *The Life of R. H. Tawney: Socialism and History*, Bloomsbury, 2013, 410 pages, hardback ISBN 9781780937045, £65

In reviewing this excellent new life of Tawney, I have a personal problem. Lawrence Goldman of St. Peter's College, Oxford, in writing this biography, has not only looked at Tawney's several well known books and

articles but also at much of his unpublished works. Yet there is not a mention of my father, who was at the same time active with Tawney in the Workers' Educational Association and Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, when Tawney was an academic adviser at the College. The neglect is mutual; I can find no reference to Tawney in my father's published works. His unpublished papers were unfortunately destroyed when Ruskin was taken over as a maternity home in the 1939-45 war. I can, however, remember my father recommending to me Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* and his book *Equality*, both of which I read at Oxford in my late teens. It seems to me to be worth while pursuing the reasons for this mutual neglect.

Both Tawney and my father devoted their lives to the cause of adult education, and saw in it not only an educational practice and programme but also a moral principle in recognising the value of every human being and of societies working together to nourish that value. Now that I have read Lawrence Goldman's book I realise that there are two elements in their lives that separate Tawney and my father: the first is that Tawney fought and was severely wounded as a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the First World War, whereas my father went to gaol as a conscientious objector; the second is that my father's moralism came from his Quaker background and upbringing, while Tawney's was basically Anglo-Catholic under the influence of Bishop Gore. It must be added that Tawney's thinking moved from a very personal moral conviction of his youth to a much stronger faith in the role of the state in re-forming society. My father's membership of the Independent Labour Party and then of the Labour Party required no such radical shift of political position. My father's God was 'that of God in every man' and had no acceptance of the authority of a church, even that of a Society of Friends, unlike like that of Tawney's mentor, Bishop Gore.

Interestingly, my father shared with Tawney a close relationship with William Temple, Archbishop first of York and then of Canterbury. Temple was for a time the President of the Workers' Educational Association, when both my father and Tawney were active members. Temple's wife was a Quaker and his mother also, and he was a close friend of the Rowntrees. He was no pacifist, but shared with Tawney and my father a moral view of his socialist convictions. Temple's nephew, Freddie, joined me in the Friends Ambulance Unit and became a bishop, retaining with his Quaker wife his pacifist conscience.

In the book which my father edited on *Great Democrats*, the author of the chapter on 'Christian Socialists', G. C. Binyon, refers to Charles Gore

of the Christian Social Union as the successor to the Christian Socialists, Kingsley, Maurice and Ludlow, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, but not to Tawney. That is perhaps not surprising because Tawney tended to keep his religion quiet in his promotion of the educational role of the Labour Party. But Goldman makes it clear that Tawney must be understood really as two people, or one person at two different stages of his life – a much more idealistic youth and a more realistic older man. That is not unusual in human beings, but Tawney had the very practical experience of serving on the Coal Industry Royal Commission in 1919, which brought him up face to face with the nature of the British state.

I found the middle chapter of the book – on ‘Socialism and Christianity’ – the most interesting, partly of course because of its relevance to what I learnt from my father. Goldman quotes Christopher Hill commenting that ‘Tawney’s Socialism wasn’t the state variety, the state ownership of industries and so on – but a very individual sort of Socialism’. For Tawney, redistribution of the national income was not what equality was about, but equality of respect and human dignity. Of course, money entered into the equation, but the pursuit of wealth *per se* was just as much to be condemned among the less well placed as among the well endowed. Our consumer societies today would be anathema to Tawney. For Tawney as for my father the triad of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity all had equal weight in advancing policies. Tawney saw the study of economics and economic calculations as the bane of political theory. He would find the present organisation of the world totally unacceptable. So do I! But rather surprisingly, Tawney appeals to tests of efficiency in judging organisational success. This is argued most strongly in a chapter on ‘The Condition of Efficiency’ in Tawney’s earliest work, *The Acquisitive Society*, in which policies are to be judged by their function and purpose. Tawney evidently had great difficulty in moving from recognition of individual moral purpose to its reconciliation in meeting social needs. The force of co-operative activity is hardly explored.

The chapter on education in Goldman emphasises the time and attention which Tawney gave in the 1920s and 1930s to the reform of education in England. As he recovered from his war wounds inflicted at the Battle of the Somme, it was to education that Tawney devoted his energies. He quite simply believed that socialism based on the free co-operation of individuals depended on the widest possible diffusion of education, and this included everything from the nursery school via primary and secondary to university provision. This not only involved him in adult education through the WEA, where he served for many years as the

President, but with Susan Isaacs in promoting nursery schools, in the political battles for raising the school leaving age from 11 to 16, and finally in the 1940s to a five-year term on the University Grants Committee, which distributed public funds for higher education. In his short book *Secondary Education for All* Tawney argued most powerfully that nothing less could serve to remember those who had died for their country in the Great War. In a succession of pamphlets and in his book *Equality* Tawney argued for an educational system that was both diverse, in recognising different talents, but also comprehensive in its provision. Tawney believed all his life in selection at the age of 11 for different types of secondary schooling, just so long as there was equal value in money and respect granted to each type.

The sheer range of Tawney's historical work is revealed in his articles in the *Economic History Review* on 'The Rise of the Gentry' in England to his studies of Chinese history, gathered together in his book, *Land and Labour in China*. I used this book quite systematically in extra-mural lectures, which Joseph Needham encouraged me to give in Essex. Much of Goldman's chapter on 'History' is given up to the argument on the gentry in English 16th Century history over which Tawney became engaged with Trevor Roper. I found myself siding entirely with Tawney, but partly because I had found Trevor Roper's dismissal of African history outside Egypt particularly unhelpful.

In Goldman's final chapter on 'Last Things 1945-62', there is a remarkable omission. As a result of some misunderstanding and of the intervention of Margaret Cole, Tawney did not undertake an authorised life of Sydney and Beatrice Webb. Goldman comments that this has deprived us of a full history of the Webbs. In fact, Royden Harrison wrote and published on behalf of the Passfield Trustees the first volume of an official history. Unfortunately, Royden died before the second volume was completed. Royden's notes and drafts have been worked on by a number of scholars. I did a chapter on Webb as a Government Minister and other chapters are being worked on. In his list of books and articles Goodman refers to an essay on the Webbs by Royden Harrison in Carl Levy's *Socialism and the Intelligentsia, 1880-1914*, but not to Harrison's major work.

It would be wrong to end this review without mentioning the fact that the University of Keele, though it was not founded by Tawney, arose from the legacy of his Extension Lectures in North Staffordshire and had as its first vice-chancellor A.D. Lindsay, one time Master of Balliol College and chairman of the governors of Ruskin College, and Princess Margaret as its

first chancellor. It stands as a major memorial to Tawney's life and work. Goodman's postscript to his book – 'Tawney Fifty Years on' – ends with a sentence that needs to be repeated about Tawney's teaching:

'As his students attested, it wasn't just his ethical message that inspired them, but the generous and just spirit in which it was conveyed, assisted by Tawney's remarkable use of uplifting language.'

Read Goodman's book and see!

Michael Barratt Brown

Lethal Sky

Medea Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, Verso, 2013, 224 pages, paperback ISBN 9781781680773, £10.99

The United States' relatively recent use and development of the drone, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), needs to be seen not just in its murderous deployment but also in the context of a continuum of ever-increasing government surveillance. The military drone began life as a surveillance vehicle but within a few short years has developed into an aggressive war-fighting machine. The UAV could be seen as one aspect of moves towards what some have called the 'surveillance state', the consequences of which range from extra-judicial executions to the monitoring of all phone and email communications. As *Spokesman* readers will know, the extent of such surveillance has recently been exposed by Edward Snowden and Bradley Manning, much to the chagrin of the British and United States' governments, the discomfiture of several Western allies, and the anger of many independent nations. The development of the armed UAV does mark a step change in military strategy and practice, and it clearly provides opportunities for the political élite to nullify possible anti-war and other protests, and also gives greater scope for military interventions around the globe.

This latter concern is particularly relevant to the United States, the globally dominant super-power, whose interests cannot always be defended successfully by the repressive forces of the local satraps and therefore deploys military forces. Obviously they will suffer casualties, and even with non-conscripted troops, this could potentially lead to vociferous public opposition. As *Drone Warfare* makes clear, the use of UAVs means zero casualties for the US, requires few inputs from the local

military, and dispenses with any necessity for diplomacy, judicial investigation and, of course, no embarrassing questions about treatment of prisoners. The 'suspect' for annihilation is a condemned man without any rights of defence, probably located in rugged contested territory and without independent film crews and journalists to record the mayhem. All this is another presentational plus for the inherent secrecy that surrounds all aspects of drone warfare.

The technical development of the drone is briefly outlined, and the book explains that, whilst America's developmental input was paramount, it was greatly assisted by the recruitment of the former design chief of the Israeli Air Force, Abraham Karem. Karem resigned from his post with the Israeli Air Force and went to work in California where, with misplaced enthusiasm, he constructed UAVs in his garage at home. Establishing his own company, he was the designer of one of the most feared UAVs, the *Predator*, which no doubt made him a lot of money. The Israeli connection proved very helpful, not least because the new drones could be trialled on active service in Palestine.

The combination of the US 'war on terror' and the invasion of Iraq, coupled with increasing technical miniaturisation and ever more powerful micro-processing provided the stimulus and expertise necessary for drone expansion. Funds poured in from the US government to produce the sort of equipment demanded by the military. The *MQ-9 Reaper*, equipped with the aptly named *Hellfire* missile, and other equally destructive drones such as the *Predator*, the *Schiebal S-100*, and *RQ-4 Global Hawk* are seeing active service in Somalia, Yemen, and Afghanistan, but above all in Pakistan. Smaller drones can be attached to active army units in the field, but mostly they are controlled by operatives several thousand miles away. The U2 Spy Plane, that old actor in several Cold War dramas, has been superseded by the *R-Q Global Hawk* drone and surveillance satellites. In May 2013, the first controlled flight of an insect-sized UAV took place at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, for with miniaturisation comes the possibility to track 'terrorists' or any other less lethal malcontents through busy urban environments. No need for the surveillance techniques of the 'lamplighter' George Smiley variety found in the novels of John Le Carré.

Drone Warfare devotes a chapter to asking whether killing by drone (or to give it a more accurate description, assassination or execution) is in fact illegal under international law, and it provides powerful evidence to substantiate the claim. Coupled with this is the question of culpability, which is intimately related to the question of the command structure

governing use of this weapon. This is operationally the duty of the US Air Force, but with the CIA having overarching control, and the President having ultimate sanction. After 9/11 George W. Bush dispensed summarily with any inhibitions regarding assassinations where 'defence of the homeland' was concerned. This has allowed Obama to routinise killing by drones, although he must have been aware of the opinion of the *UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions* to the effect that these killings 'may well violate international law'.

Technically, the vital feature of the UAV is its lack of an onboard pilot. Importantly, therefore, there are no human physical restrictions as to how long it can be airborne, only technical limitations. This provides a new and sickening twist to the divorce between the perpetrator of violence and the victim. Carpet-bombing and the use of nuclear weapons against Japan have made us familiar with indiscriminate civilian deaths, but neither action could be perceived as a game. The violence meted out to the victims of drones is seen as an electronic image taken from several thousand feet. Although the clarity and degree of magnification of the target can be quite staggering, it still lacks the inhibiting resonance that ground warfare possesses. The controlling pilots, several thousand miles away in perfect safety, have been reported as saying, 'It is a lot like playing a video game' (*The Guardian*, 29 July 2013) or, as the book quotes a drone pilot based in Qatar, 'It's like a video game. It can get a bit bloodthirsty. But it's fucking cool' (page 86). Barbara Ehrenreich, in the book's foreword, tells us that in the *Iliad* the Greek warriors are contemptuous of the Trojan archers who release their arrows whilst hidden behind rocks and other vantage points – whatever would they make of today's joystick and push button warriors? In this context we should note that where armies in the past have confronted each other, combatants do not find it naturally easy to kill, nor should they. US Colonel S L A Marshall has noted in his military text book, *Men Against Fire*, that in World War Two no more than one in four frontline soldiers actually fired their weapons when in contact with the enemy. This book was written as a guide to US infantry training and over the years was instrumental in leading to a substantial increase in the firing figures, and by the time of the Vietnam War the lamentable figure of 25% was increased to 80%. With pilotless drones they have made it 100%! Not content with that, military researchers are working to develop a completely self-activating drone which, once launched, requires no ground control and is just programmed to seek and destroy.

One of the hopes with drone technology was that it would save a lot of money in comparison with manned aircraft, and the figures for their actual

manufacture seem to bear this out. To build a *Predator* drone costs \$5 million, which compares with a Lockheed Martin F-16 at \$55 million. The economics does not look so good when it comes to manning: a drone such as the *Global Hawk* needs 300 people to keep it functioning whereas the F-16 fighter needs less than 100 personnel. The enormous sums of money spent by aircraft manufacturers lobbying government, however, seem to have paid off. While most of US industry is still in the doldrums, the drone business is doing very well, thank you. Initially, a small company called General Atomics seemed to be the lead company in the manufacture of drones, but now all the aircraft companies have piled into the market, including the likes of Boeing and Lockheed Martin. It is therefore unsurprising to learn that the United States has more UAVs than all other nations put together. That is not to say other nations are not developing their own drones – far from it. Inevitably, like all weaponry, it is only a matter of time before all the major powers will have the capability to match each other's drone potential.

If the drone pilots may cover their uneasiness by comparisons with video games, the suffering caused to their potential victims is stark and all too real. The author describes the ever-present feeling of terror that all those living in the drone active areas feel, and deep resentment amongst the population. The constant whirr of the machines as they manoeuvre and hover produces acute feelings of apprehension and dread. The terrible effects of such exposure on children has been documented in Gaza and there is no reason to suppose that it is not just as bad in the target areas in Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan. Officially, the death toll from UAVs, according to US government sources, is around 5,000, but those opposed to the use of drones believe it to be much higher, and protest against their use is growing.

Drone Warfare details the developing international movement against drone assassinations and the first edition (this review is of the updated second edition) played a major role in provoking this very movement. The UK's participation in the American-led Afghanistan campaign dates from October 2007 with the purchase of three *Reapers*. The subsequent setting up of a drone hub at RAF Waddington, in July 2010, giving complete operational control to British personnel, makes the UK anti-war movement's prominence in protest activities essential. *Reprieve*, which campaigns for justice in many areas, is battling in the courts to halt the supply of UK manufactured parts for the US UAVs. The movement has recently gained a stunning success with the cancelling of a £1.2 million investment by Edinburgh University in a defence company making UAV

parts for export (*Guardian* 30/9/13). The Drone Campaign Network, the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Drone Wars UK and CND are actively striving to raise the UK public's awareness of drone killings.

Drone Warfare comprehensively informs the reader on the use of drones in the so-called 'war on terror' and is essential reading for those involved in the peace movement and beyond. It is clearly written, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to the research efforts of the author and her colleagues, whom she fulsomely praises. An index would be useful, and the book could say more about drones in general and their place in the developing 'surveillance society', but probably a separate book would be more appropriate. As the title makes clear, this book is about drone warfare, and on that matter it is hard-hitting, timely and focused.

John Daniels

Walmart's World?

Leo Panitch, Greg Albo and Vivek Chibber, *Registering Class: Socialist Register 2014*, Merlin Press, 2013, 352 pages, paperback ISBN 9780850366433, £16.95

The *Socialist Register 2014* is the 50th edition of the journal which was founded by Ralph Miliband and John Saville in 1964 to advance socialist analysis and discussion. It was an offshoot of the New Left, but reflected a different approach from that of the New Left Review editors, Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn. Over the years, it has produced a rich collection of contributions on socialist ideas.

The 2014 number focuses on the issue of class and argues that the power to achieve socialist change is dependent on the possibility of mobilising the working classes against current austerity policies, which are supported by the upper social echelons of our society. It examines in detail the restructuring of the capitalist class across the world and indicates that this will be continued in the 2015 volume, with the aim of showing what the working classes are up against. It discusses whether or not there is now a transnational capitalist class reflecting the development of multinational companies.

Following the period 1920-1970, when social inequality was diminished, inequality over the past four decades has soared throughout the world. Fewer than 100,000 people (0.001% of the world's population) now control 30% of the world's financial wealth. In Britain, 5% of adults

owned 40% of all marketable assets, but universal benefits are being undermined and austerity has reduced living standards for the mass of working people.

The contribution from Colin Leys spells out some very disturbing facts about Britain. The manufacturing sector of the economy shrank from 1945 onwards and only the discovery of North Sea oil and the development of the City of London as the world's largest centre for currency transactions and international business saved the country from a catastrophic fall in living standards.

The balance of payments deficit created by the decline of manufactured exports was offset by oil self-sufficiency and a positive trade balance achieved by the financial services sector. Working class living standards rose thanks to tax credits, a steep increase in household debt from 105% of income in 1997 to 170% in 2008, and women taking jobs.

However, the deficit on trade in goods rose to twice the size of the surplus on services. In 2006, the total deficit was £45 billion – 3% of Britain's GDP. The banking collapse led to massive public borrowing, quadrupling public debt from 36% to 150% in 2010/11. The impact on working people today is only too apparent.

As this volume makes clear, the opportunities for fighting against the trend are more limited than in the inter-war period. The contribution by Ann Gupta, 'The Walmart Working Class', outlines the difficulties faced by employees of Walmart, the retail enterprise which accounts for 13% of US retail trade and employs 1.3 million workers – 1% of the US workforce.

In America the unions have been in retreat and the majority of workers are in branches of the economy not primarily concerned with production. The service sector, education and health have more union members than production and, as of 2009, half of all members were in the public sector, with two-thirds of these in local government. Unions are, in some cases, adopting strategies which encompass social needs in the community as well as workplace needs.

In Europe, with the exception of Greece where the left-wing party, SYRIZA, has overtaken PASOK, the traditional representative of the Left, there has been no marked shift to the Left within the social democratic parties. At the same time, most attempts to establish new Left organisations have failed despite the economic crisis. Slumps and recessions do not result in a boom for socialist ideas. On the contrary, there is some evidence that, to some extent, they promote right-wing or anti-political trends such as Marine le Pen in France, UKIP in Britain, Beppe

Grillo's MSS movement in Italy, and the Pirate Party in Germany.

Only the working class can emancipate itself, but it has undergone significant change. Heavy manual work is a minority occupation; women have become very much more important; migration has transnationalised workers. It is of little use to seek to go back to the past. The Stop the War Coalition showed it was possible to draw people together in a common movement. Socialists and the trade unions need to reach out and promote new projects like the People's Assembly. Launching new parties is not the way forward.

The 2014 volume of *Socialist Register* includes two contributions on Brazil which highlight the emergence of Brazilian-based multinationals on to the global challengers' list and give an account of the huge wave of workers' demonstrations which spread to the middle classes in June 2013. It points out that the press stoked the unrest but there was no demand for socialism. The conclusions illustrate the problems faced by the Left today. In Brazil it must support the Workers' Party (PT) President, Dilma Ronsseff, but develop initiatives to put pressure on the government to bring in more reforms.

The situation in Brazil illustrates the general problem of the Left across the globe. Although the case for socialism is an integral part of the message of the *Socialist Register*, we are living through difficult times. This volume charts many of the features of the present political, economic and social scene and discusses how the Left should react. It is, however, clear that there is no magic formula to overcome the forces ranged against us in the current situation.

Stan Newens

War-wolf

Matthew Beresford, *The White Devil: The Werewolf in European Culture*, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013, 262 pages, paperback ISBN 9781780231884, £16.95

Humankind has long had a turbulent relationship with nature. The wildness of the weather and the fury of the beasts struck fear into the hearts of our ancestors. They sought to protect themselves from these forces by building settlements within which to shelter. As time moved on and people began to feel more in control of their surroundings, they began to tell stories about the dark wilderness and the wild beasts in order to remind

themselves of the threat posed by the unknown, but also to highlight the respect that the natural world deserves.

One beast, in particular, that has been revered and feared for thousands of years is the wolf. The fierce yet intelligent character of the wolf was heralded by ancient civilisations as traits to be emulated. According to Matthew Beresford, prehistoric man copied the powerful and threatening behaviour of the wolf in order to survive and to find food. He would disguise himself as a wolf and, in some instances, invoke the spirit of the animal before heading out to hunt or before battle. It was during this period that the transformation of man-the-hunted to man-the-hunter was taking place.

In *The White Devil*, the author suggests that at first such a disguise would have been a hunting aid or part of a costume for ceremonial purposes, but that it eventually ‘became a symbol of authority or a tool that could be exploited to strike fear’. Throughout the book, Beresford, a consultant archaeologist based in Nottinghamshire, provides archaeological evidence for the many ritualistic ceremonies performed by prehistoric man in order to invoke animal spirits. He cites the example of an engraved rhinoceros bone discovered in 1928 at the Pin Hole Cave, Creswell Crags, Derbyshire, which appears to show a figure wearing a wolf-pelt headdress ‘in the act of dancing a ceremonial dance’.

More archaeological evidence of the worship of animals has been found throughout Europe. Human skeletons buried with teeth and coins with wolf engravings are, for Beresford, a key to understanding the evolution of the werewolf myth. This myth is rooted in the superstition that a human being can ‘change into a wolf, or is capable of assuming the form of a wolf while retaining human intelligence’. And it is this ‘transformation’ from human to wolf, rather than any real belief in the existence of actual werewolves, that is explored here.

The White Devil examines differing attitudes toward the wolf over centuries and tries to explain where the mythology of the werewolf has come from. According to Beresford, archaeological sites have shown that early man revered the wolf to such an extent that not only did he dress as one, but he also used salves and drinks to produce hallucinatory states in order that he might ‘become’ one. This desire to be like the wolf started to wane around the 10th century when the Vikings converted to Christianity. The author suggests that admiration for the wolf turned to disdain when prevailing cultural beliefs began to shift. As pagan values and ideologies diminished in the face of the powerful church, the wolf was condemned as wholly evil. The spread of Christianity brought with it hatred of the once admired creature and it became a ‘beast to be feared and not imitated’.

As the cultural relationship between wolf and man shifted from respect to derision, the stories that man could actually become a beast started the myth of the vicious werewolf. However, Beresford notes that as early as 2000 BC, in the Mesopotamian poem *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the werewolf is depicted:

‘You loved a shepherd, a herdsman, who endlessly put up cakes for you, and everyday slaughtered kids for you. You struck him, turned him into a wolf. His own boys drove him away, and his dog tore his hide to bits.’

Greek and Roman myths also included references to humans transforming into wolves and slaughtering loved ones like cattle. Even the Gods weren’t devoid of wolfish tendencies: Homer writes about a race of people known as ‘Lycians’ and their god ‘Lyncegenean Apollo’ (‘born of wolf’), whose mother disguised herself as a she-wolf.

It is the link between the Roman god of war, Mars, who had the wolf as his symbol, and the linguistic derivation of the term ‘werewolf’ that is most interesting. Sir Frederick Madden, in his ‘Note on the word werewolf’ (1831), discusses the word’s etymologies. *Were* is derived from the Latin *bellum* from which the French *guerre* and the Dutch *wer* originated. *Bellum* means ‘war’ so *werewolf* could actually mean *war-wolf*. In medieval times, however, the term *guerre* became synonymous with the physical transformation of man into beast. Beresford reports that the thirteenth century chronicler Gervaise of Tilbury writes:

‘we have frequently seen men in England transformed into wolves for the space of a lunar month, and such people are called “Gerulphs” by the French and “werewolves” by the English.’

Throughout history, the use of language and psychosomatic drugs psychologically fuses man with beast. This is borne out by the way the mythological werewolf creature is subsequently portrayed in literature. By the 1600s, lycanthropy was beginning to be understood in psychological terms as a mental melancholy rather than an actual physical metamorphosis of man into wolf. This is examined in John Webster’s play *The Duchess of Malfi*; the werewolf-like tendencies of Duke Ferdinand are described as a curse that drives the main character into madness. The Duke is possessed with ‘such melancholy humour’ that he imagines himself transformed into a wolf. Other examples of the werewolf in literature include Charles Perrault’s *Little Red Riding Hood*, also known by the Brothers Grimm as *Little Red Cap*. The idea of a man turning into a beast, for Beresford, is embodied in Robert Louis Stevenson’s novel *The Strange*

Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Even though this story isn't about werewolves *per se*, it explores man's capability to turn into a vicious beast.

The White Devil is a fascinating read, drawing on many different sources to present a succinct and *Twilight*-free understanding of the folklore that surrounds the werewolf. Unlike those susceptible to lycanthropic turns, it keeps the reader firmly within the realms of reality and reason.

Abi Rhodes

Slater Walker rides again

Shane Ross, *The Bankers: How the Banks Brought Ireland to Its Knees*, Penguin Ireland, 2009, 294 pages, paperback ISBN 9781844882168, £14.99

The creepies are now crawling out of the woodwork. *The Bankers* is a detailed analysis of what happened in Ireland, one of the European basket cases, followed now by austerity programmes. It is echoed by others, published more recently, such as *Citizen Quinn: A Man, An Empire and a Family* by Gavin Daly and Ian Kehoe, monitoring the greed and 'siege mentality' of an Irish entrepreneur who helped to wreck the economy. Another is *Making it Happen: Fred Goodwin, RBS and the Men Who Blew Up the British Economy* by Iain Martin, who describes, again, the greed and self-importance of someone who could not stop the acquisitiveness, pocketing the proceeds, with disastrous consequences.

What a story it is; intrigue, corruption, elitism, and the devil take the hindmost. All the protagonists walked away with Euro-millions. The Anglo Irish Bank, one of the largest banks in Ireland, lent billions to property developers, or rather speculators, and then went bust. *The Bankers* gives graphic accounts, and figures about the extent of the mayhem. Allied Irish Bank was also guilty of massive overcharging of customers. It was not the only one. The charge list includes the National Irish Bank, Irish Nationwide and others.

Shane Ross, a journalist and stock broker, who is now an independent member of the Dail Eireann, seems to know what he is talking about. In a nutshell, the story is about robber property developers, banks who creamed it and fuelled an extraordinary property boom, brokers and politicians, all a veritable pyramid of schemes dependent on each other to keep the scams going, the hype of property speculation, massive short-term profits, using share prices and enormous pay-offs. At one stage the head of one of the

banks took home more than the head of the US Federal Reserve. This was all based on fictitious capital with nothing underpinning it apart from hope and hype. Then the bubble burst; from ‘Celtic Tiger’ to paper tiger.

The manipulation of share prices was breathtaking, and nobody seemed to care – ‘predestined prosperity’ without any brakes on it, until the international ‘credit crunch’ of 2007-2008. They believed in the fantasy of everlasting growth. Cowan, the Finance Minister in 2007, said ‘the fundamentals remain sound’ – they were far from it. ‘We will continue to outperform our peers’ – they didn’t (p.120).

They blamed international markets, even ‘the weather’ on the speedy collapse of the housing market. It was nothing to do with the banks’ over-exposure to property markets. Possibly 20% of their balance sheets was in property. It was unsustainable.

At a celebratory dinner at a golf and country club, a banker whose bank had been rescued by the state (p.205) called for cuts in child benefit and for the revision of free non-means-tested medical support for the over-seventies. There we have it.

The more we get of these analyses, the better. It reminds me of revelations about Slater Walker plus the Secondary Banking Crisis in the City of London some decades ago. We need such well-researched analyses of the con-artists who get away with it while protected by the mantra of free markets and the utility of the financial ‘industry’. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Richard Minns

Mentor’s Courage

Beverley Naidoo, *Death of an Idealist: In Search of Neil Aggett*, Green Print, 2013, 492 pages, paperback ISBN 9781854251091, £15.95

The death of Nelson Mandela has brought forth an outpouring of love and affection for a man who has been credited with ending the apartheid regime and subsequently saving South Africa from civil war. The memorial services and celebrations of Madiba’s life may have elicited feelings of pride and joy from some involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, and a sense of how far the country has travelled on the long walk to freedom; for others, the pain of the past and the horrors of the apartheid regime have never been forgotten.

Detention was a key tool in the armoury of the apartheid state – a way

of silencing opponents who had frequently broken no laws. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for an inconceivable 27 years. In 1982 alone, according to the South African Council of Churches, the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Detainee Parents' Support Committee, 264 people were detained. Of these, 107 were school children and students, 30 were trade unionists and workers, and one was a young white doctor, Neil Aggett, who died in detention. Lieutenant Stephan Whitehead and Major Arthur Cronwright were identified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as two leaders of the security police team that tortured Aggett.

Aggett's sister, Jill Burger, has spent the last 32 years living with the knowledge that her brother paid the ultimate sacrifice for his opposition to the apartheid state. Beverley Naidoo's biography of her cousin, *Neil Aggett: The Death of an Idealist*, is a testimony to the bravery of those opposing the apartheid regime and, at the same time, a reminder of the brutality of the regime itself. Meticulously researched but always accessible, Naidoo's gentle prose tells the story of Neil, a quiet, natural introvert, a writer of poetry, from a conservative background, who as a young doctor,

‘... became aware that the problems of the patients I was dealing with were not only medical problems, but were basically social problems due to the people not getting enough wages, unemployment, and the poor conditions in the townships.’

Neil Aggett, 1st statement, John Vorster Square

Neil's unwillingness to ignore the social injustices that surrounded him led to a breakdown in his relationship with his father and his eschewing a life of privilege. Instead, he chose to work as a doctor and an unpaid trade union organiser, striving to empower black workers with a dedication and commitment that Naidoo highlights in the words of a union member and firm friend of Neil's, Israel Mogoatlhe. White people rarely visited the townships and those who did would be armed. Neil, however, chose to make himself vulnerable, attending meetings and caring for the sick and injured in Tembisa and Alexandra, places ‘where few white people ever set foot’. Israel describes how he and the other workers would be worried that Neil might be attacked on his way home, but Neil would remain calm and insist on staying till the meeting ended. ‘No Israel, we're here. Let's remain.’ Others believed he must have a gun:

‘But Israel knew that he didn't carry any gun and that his mentor's courage lay deep within him ... Israel's admiration was for someone whom he saw living out his principles.’

Living out his principles led to Neil Aggett's death after 70 days in detention in the notorious Johannesburg security police headquarters at John Vorster Square. There, on Friday 5th February 1982, after 62 hours of interrogation under torture, Neil was found hanging from the bars of the steel grille in his cell. Aged 28, he was the 51st person to die in detention and the first white person.

Beverley Naidoo's description of the aftermath of Neil's death is a moving account of how Neil's actions crossed racial and political barriers, bringing together Neil's family, activists and union members as they grieved for a man who was determined not to shut his eyes to injustice and, instead, to choose a lonely, difficult and, ultimately, deadly path to fight for freedom and democracy. His 'crimes' were to treat all those he met, black or white, as his equals and to refuse to claim his privileges as a member of the white élite. This was too dangerous and unsettling for those who had imprisoned Neil Aggett. The account of his torturers' failure to understand the dangerous choices Aggett made, and their determination to break this gentle man, have remained with me long after finishing this powerful description of a life cut tragically short.

There are constant reminders in Naidoo's book that, while Neil's death was a tragedy, it was not an isolated one. David Webster, a senior lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand who had supported a number of his students following their detention, became involved in Neil's funeral committee and we learn that,

'... this [involvement] may have been a significant marker on the road that would lead to his assassination seven years later by a covert government hit squad.'

Of the eight detainees who died at John Vorster Square between 1971 and 1990, only Neil was white. All 51 detainees who died in detention across South Africa prior to 5 Feb 1982 were Black South Africans. Neil's death was an aberration only in that he was not black. The author publishes letters sent to Neil's family by people who had suffered similar tragedies at the hands of the state. One letter from Victoria Mxenge, whose husband had survived imprisonment on Robben Island only to be murdered just a week before Neil's death, and who was herself to be assassinated three years later, before she was due to represent defendants in a treason trial, states simply:

'Neil was a man of deep compassion and a firm believer in justice for all people. Small wonder that he took up the cause for the underdog with such passion and tenacity. We all admire and revere your late son. He was a gentle and humane person, the epitome of a patriot. He was the kind of man whose death makes the rest of us feel that in some way we have lost a part of ourselves.'

Today, it would be easy to think the battles Neil Aggett fought have been won and that we can sit back and celebrate Mandela's life and read about Aggett's death in a world that is light years away from the one portrayed in Naidoo's biography.

Easy, except for the fact that no one has ever been prosecuted for Neil Aggett's 'induced suicide' or the many other suspicious deaths of anti-apartheid activists at the hands of the South African security services. Aggett's case is one of about 350 referred to the South African authorities since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's conclusion, but only one so far has resulted in a successful prosecution. Beverley Naidoo's biography has led to the foundation of the Neil Aggett Support Group, now determined to bring a private prosecution* against Lieutenant Stephan Whitehead, one of Neil's interrogators.

In the wake of the understandable desire to link the struggle of Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement with contemporary struggles for social justice and human rights around the world, Beverly Naidoo reminds us, through her account of Aggett's life, that oppression and resistance to oppression takes many forms, as does its memorialisation.

Aggett was not a member of the ANC. He worked as a trade union activist where his knowledge and organising skills could best be put to use. As one of the anti-apartheid movement's few white martyrs, it was to be expected that Aggett's death and legacy would be utilised by the ANC to bring media and political attention to the brutality of a regime for whom the killing of black activists was routine. For his surviving family and friends, the feelings of dispossession that followed Neil's highly politicised death combined with a deeper solidarity and a renewed determination to achieve Neil's goal of a non-racial South Africa.

This beautifully written, understated but devastating book reminds us that defending human rights can be demanding and costly. Beverley, Jill and other family members and friends will not let Neil be forgotten. It is a fitting tribute to a man whose sacrifice helped to bring about the non-racial South Africa Neil Aggett, tragically, would never see.

Esme Madill

*<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/22/south-africa-trade-unionist-neil-aggett-torture-prosecution>

Howl

Todd F. Tietchen, *The Cubalogues – Beat Writers in Revolutionary Havana*, University Press of Florida, 2010, 192 pages, hardback ISBN 97800813035208, £24.65

If you are really interested in intellectual history or are involved in the academic industry (in which case you can write another book about the book) you might enjoy this one, if you can wade through the turgid prose. *The Cubalogues* is supposed to be about the Beats in Cuba. It's not really. It's more about the Cold War years in the late 1950s and early 60s in the USA in which, of course, the Beats played their part. The link between them and Cuba is even more tenuous. When they left the USA, it was usually to go to Mexico or Morocco to look for drink, dope, boys and girls.

When the revolution in Cuba came along, the politicians and old-style liberals were very wary. But there was a certain idealistic enthusiasm in the air, which quickly turned to disillusion. The artistic spring was soon over and was replaced by suppression of the free press, and a really nasty homophobia. Allen Ginsberg went there in 1965 and was shocked by it. He had good reason to be: he was openly homosexual himself and had been busted in San Francisco on charges of obscenity for publishing his poem 'Howl'.

The American 'Fair Play for Cuba Committee' quickly dissolved itself when the Cubans began to nationalise; now, that was going too far! Already the revolution was losing its mythic status, if it ever had one. The FPFCC thought Cuba would be like its own American Revolution, which is about as mythic as you can get; it was more like the first civil war.

Another Beat was outraged because workers in the sex industry were out of a job and they didn't seem to matter to anyone. Outrageous! They do matter, of course, but as the revolution was hunkering down after the Bay of Pigs and facing a blockade, it might have had other priorities. Cuba had been Uncle Sam's Caribbean brothel, often run by the mafia. Time for a change. Allen Ginsberg was impressed by the nationalisation programme and economic reforms. But he still felt the revolution was a failure. Castro had promised a 'humanistic revolution' and it wasn't. Did they know nothing of all those executions, including those organised by Dr Guevara, after the bearded ones entered Havana?

Shelley once said 'Poets are the ... legislators of the world', and that's the trouble; these people are full of their own self-importance. What Shelley said was romantic, hippy, Beat bullshit. But he was a young man who died at a very early age so he may be forgiven.

More to the point is W H Auden's remark, 'nothing I wrote in the thirties saved one Jew from Auschwitz'. I am sure Stalin would have agreed. He said: 'The Pope! How many divisions has HE got?' Poets and all other artists don't have divisions either, nor are they legislators of the world. But the funny thing is they DO have power. They have power to keep us going. I don't like poetry readings. They are often pompous and too intense. But I went to see Allen Ginsberg once. We were outside; I sat close to him and was spellbound. He was fantastic, full of fire and passion.

And there is a happy ending to our story. The Cuban Revolution has survived against all odds, faced up to the gringos and faced them off, and inspired millions of people all over Central and South America. Moreover, Havana now has its own Gay Day parades and is a centre of artistic excellence. When I was there I saw a ballet for a knock-down price that would have cost a fortune in London.

Allen Ginsberg got off his bust too. The good judge, clearing him of all obscenity charges, said:

'this poem is an important humanistic indictment of those elements in modern society destructive of the best qualities of human nature. Such elements are predominantly identified as materialism, conformity, and mechanisation leading towards war.'

W H Auden again:

'It is a sad fact about our culture that a poet can earn much more money writing or talking about his art than he can by practising it.'

Which is perhaps why there are so many academics and critics, and so few poets.

Rather than read *The Cubalogues*, I would have preferred to have gone back to the Beats themselves (and the Cuban greats such as Marti and Guillen), read 'Howl', and Kerouac's *On the Road*. He hated the Cuban Revolution. *The Cubalogues* has encouraged me to do so.

Nigel Potter

HOWL

By Allen Ginsberg

For Carl Solomon

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat
up smoking in the supernatural darkness of
cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities
contemplating jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the EI and
saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement
roofs illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes
hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy
among the scholars of war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy &
publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull,
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning
their money in wastebaskets and listening
to the Terror through the wall,
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through
Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in
Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their
torsos night after night
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol
and cock and endless balls, ...

These are the opening lines.

Hear online the poet's rhythmic recitation of his full text
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15308>

Eco-Socialism!

Daniel Tanuro, *Green Capitalism: Why it Can't Work*, Merlin Press, 2013, 224 pages, ISBN 9780850366464, £13.95

This is probably the most important book I have ever read and reviewed. It is no exaggeration to say that on the response to its argument depends nothing less than the very survival of the planet on which we have our being. Daniel Tanuro is an agricultural engineer who has written on eco-socialism from the point of view of a Marxist. But he has some criticism of traditional Marxism to make here. The title of the book is unduly negative; it should have added 'And what to do'. Indeed, Tanuro ends his book with a chapter on what can be done – 'Eco-socialism, the only option'. Much of *Green Capitalism* is concerned with the reasons for our failure as human beings to respond to the obvious warnings of disaster – how can it be that, in the words of no less an authority than the General Secretary of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, 'We have our feet glued to the accelerator and are hurtling towards the abyss'?

The strength of the argument in *Green Capitalism* comes from two sources: first, the careful collection and explanation of the internationally agreed scientists' statements on just what is happening to the planet earth, and of what is needed to protect its survival; second, the thorough dissection of the so-called carbon emission 'rights' claimed by the US and European Union, especially the claimed benefits of bio-fuels and nuclear power. The main targets of the world scientists' prescription are worth repeating:

'Developed countries must reduce their emissions by 25-40% by 2020 and between 80-95% by 2050 compared with 1990 levels. Developing countries by 15-30% by 2050.'

The real key to a solution, Tanuro insists, lies in the direct use of the sun's energy, through the introduction of photo-voltaic panels on every sun facing roof, combined with proper insulation of buildings. This essentially requires a decentralised organisation, and is therefore of no interest to centralised states and to the giant private business corporations which support them

That leaves us with a hard task. Socialism, whether of the Soviet or Social Democratic variety, involves a centralised form of organisation – planning from above. Decentralised organisations exist, such as trade unions, co-operatives, Facebook and Twitter, but compared with states and the giant multinational companies which produce the steel, petrochemicals, glass, cement and electricity and are the main emitters of CO², they are miniscule. These will have to be built on as part of a total rejection of profit-seeking capitalism, which failed completely in the financial crisis of 2008-9 and had to be rescued by the nation states, on which it still

depends. The states together could discard capitalism, but not by replacing it with state socialism. It is community socialism that Tanuro advocates, as necessarily integrated into ecology, and this will have to be built community by community with solar panels and insulation, until large state organisations and private corporations can be dispensed with. ‘Start now!’ is the message, but by community action and not so much by individual acts of energy saving within the capitalist system. A Global Fund would still need to be created to finance all the necessary adaptation.

An important element in this programme, as Tanuro sees it, must be in agriculture. Large-scale farming uses great quantities of energy in production and transport and in artificial fertiliser, and gains none of the benefits of diversification which occur in small-scale co-operatives using the leaves of trees as fertiliser and shade. A more labour intensive agriculture is recommended. An important start has been made here in the development of small scale farming co-operatives for Fairtrade production in coffee, cocoa, nuts, sugar, rubber, cotton and tropical fruits. The main problem here is the competition of giant companies such as Nestlé and Kraft, which advertise a tiny proportion of their products as Fairtrade, but the co-operatives are also suffering from the effects of climate change. The fatal separation of town and country is in part challenged by the growth of farmers’ markets in the main urban areas. The major threat to the environment still comes from the giant retailing companies, which take most of the value added in the price, have heavy energy-using transport costs, and throw away a large proportion of their produce.

Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green Party in England and Wales, sums it up, in recommending Tanuro’s work, when she says that we cannot simply green our current society built on the globalised, neoliberal economic system. We need a more thorough, more fundamental social transformation.

Michael Barratt Brown

The debt we owe to Greece

Christos Laskos and Euclid Tsakalotos, *Crucible of Resistance; Greece, the Eurozone and the World Economic Crisis*, Pluto Press, 2013, 192 pages, hardback ISBN 9780 7453 33816, £54, paperback ISBN 9780 7453 33809, £14

Neo-liberalism, free rein to financial institutions and, when it all goes wrong, debt mountains and austerity budgets. This scenario affected many countries, but Greece was regarded as exceptional. Many caricatures arose

of a lazy nation, living off others' credit. The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that Greece and its debt and financial crisis were not exceptional, but suited the European Union, International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Germany, to point the finger. The eventual bailout was coupled with the standard 'strategic adjustment programmes' which just made matters worse and gave rise to strikes, demonstrations and a new left-wing movement/political party which came from nowhere and now commands a significant presence in the Greek Parliament. Its name is SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left), whose head is now leader of the opposition in the Greek Parliament. There followed discussion with Spanish and Portuguese groups, two of the other alleged pariahs of the Eurozone.

Much of the data marshalled here reveals how ill-informed the mythology about Greece is. For example, Greece has the lowest figure in Europe for days off for workers; dependency on the state is also very low (so much for 'welfare spongers'). One of the highest levels of dependency is in holier-than-thou Germany.

The overarching challenge throughout is debt and financial crisis, followed by fiscal crisis.

'Slowing growth, exacerbated by the recent crisis and bank bailout, have raised public debt substantially. Government promises have become unaffordable in several industrial countries. Because governments need to borrow, they will try to renegotiate pensions and healthcare commitments while continuing to service debt.'

(p.100)

The problem is that there is no comprehensive explanation in the book. Crucially, WHY do governments 'need to borrow'? I shall return to this point.

Important in this is the role of 'hegemony', which helps to explain why the ideology of neo-liberalism has transfixed the West. The ideology has become accepted in many countries as peddled by the International Monetary Fund, European Union, European Central Bank, European Investment Bank, World Bank, 'free markets', individualism, minimal state, control of wages, privatisation of welfare (pensions and health), as in the above quote. Hegemony means it becomes part of the new economic culture without force of arms; until Greece came along. The hegemonic structure of finance, which pervades the system from top to bottom, becomes all pervasive. TINA – there is no alternative.

The problem becomes one of corruption, collusion and criminality, along with hypocrisy. This precarious structure must be bailed out when its greed gets disproportionate. For instance, I counted up twenty cases in twenty years of serious malfeasance in the UK, with France, Germany and Spain, and the

United States thrown in. The latest (autumn/winter 2013) round of fines on 13 banks for manipulating LIBOR and Euribor (the rates at which banks lend to each other), mis-selling and propagating toxic loans, amounted to £130 billion, with some of the most prestigious banks in the world implicated.

The next question is why did Greece get into so much debt? The answer to this and all of the above about corruption is compatible with the neo-liberal culture (p.54). The hegemonic structure stretches beyond finance. A clue is given in a bar chart (p.98), which examines the structure of government expenditure by function, with Greece compared to EU15 in 2008. On health and education the EU spent more, but on defence Greece spends twice as much as the EU countries. Greece was the fourth largest conventional weapons importer in the world, benefiting arms manufacture in other countries including Germany and the US. The pressure to pile up the weapons, transport, submarines, tanks, planes, and artillery comes from NATO and Germany in particular, concerned about having a buffer state against Turkey, and other countries who may use Turkey as a transport route for hostility against the God-fearing Europeans. When German Chancellor Merkel met the Greek Prime Minister as the debt crisis was picking up speed, she promised to help with a bailout if Greece bought more German weapons. That is not the right solution but, like many neo-liberal solutions, it is contradictory and would aggravate an already precarious position.

We do not know who supplied the credit for all these armaments, but one may assume it is the usual banking suspects in this financial hegemony, now stretching to arms manufacturers. I have done work on Argentina where the same conditions apply (see *Spokesman 102*). One commentator at the launch of the book suggested capital has shifted from surplus value to interest, rent and debt.

The Guardian (20 April 2012, Helena Smith) reported

‘German “hypocrisy” over Greek military

Greek profligacy may be blamed for triggering the debt crisis that now threatens to tear the Eurozone apart, but if there is one area where Berlin is less excoriating of state largesse it is Athens’ extravagant taste for arms.

If there is one country that has benefited from the huge amounts Greece spends on Defence it is Germany [France not far behind]’ said an MP with the Coalition of the Radical Left party.

Just under 15% of Germany’s total arms exports (France 10%) go to Greece, its biggest market in Europe ... Greece has paid over \$2 billion [for armaments] that proved to be faulty and which it doesn’t even need. It owes another \$1 billion as part of the deal. That’s three times the amount Athens was asked to make in additional pension cuts to secure its latest EU aid package.’

Submarines, leopard tanks, howitzers, *Mirage* fighter planes and F16 jets, respectively from Germany, France and the US, have been purchased since the late 1990s. None of this is mentioned in the book, with the analysis wanting and the ideological/cultural hegemony more fundamental than one is given to understand. The hegemony is weakening as organisations such as SYRIZA in Greece gain increasing prominence. One right-wing Greek politician is reported as saying (shades of Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*):

‘We’ve got a really serious crisis on our hands. Shame to waste it.’

Richard Minns

Shelter and Want

Cathy Davis, *Finance for Housing: An Introduction*, Policy Press, 2013, 328 pages, ISBN 9781447306481, £26.99

This is a political economy analysis of housing finance and is essential reading for anyone wanting to understand its role in causing and sustaining the financial crisis. Don't be deterred by the title — it provides a clear guide to understanding the continuing crisis in the UK housing sector and the Coalition's policies in particular.

The book is well structured and very accessible with each chapter having 'boxes' or sections of text that add important analysis and summaries, but are effectively inclusive to the text. In addition, key issues are contained in 'reflections' followed by a list of suggested further reading at the end of each chapter.

Davis deals with right to buy, stock transfers, arms length management organisations, private finance, investment, house building, the bedroom tax, universal credit, help to buy, funding for new council housing and many more key issues. The origins, objectives, finance, state and private responsibility, impacts and consequences are tracked for each of these policies.

Equally important, she tracks political responsibility for policies and their implementation and shows how New Labour continued, and in many cases accelerated, the implementation of Tory housing policies. She demonstrates how neoliberal ideology and a belief in market forces have been pervasive in the owner occupied, council housing, housing association and private rented sectors.

The *Finance for Housing* analysis of the Coalition Government's housing policies provides a framework to understand recent trends and

developments and how they constitute ‘more of the same’. House prices increased an average 8.4% in 2013, although this masked wide variations between cities and regions (Jones, 2014). House prices in Manchester increased 21% and in some London Boroughs by 25%, but by only one or two percentage points in Newcastle and Glasgow.

2014 began with a 10% increase to 70% in the discount for council housing sales. The current £75,000 cap (£100,000 in London) will increase re Consumer Price Index. An earlier increase in discounts led to ‘... *over 13,400 hard-working tenants*’ buying their council home and further reducing the stock (DCLG, 2014).

Davis questions whether the era of individualism and owner-occupation has reached its limit. The large increase in household debt before 2008 ‘... *contributed to the depth of the recession in the UK*’ (Dolphin, 2013). The household debt to income ratio soared to 170% in 2008. The debt ratio fell to just over 140% in 2013 ‘... *but only because income increased. Unlike households in other countries with high levels of debt, households in the UK have not, in aggregate, reduced their nominal debt*’. It is forecast to rise again to over 160% by 2018 (ibid).

This is the context for the Coalition’s Help to Buy scheme which enables first-time buyers to purchase homes priced up to £600,000 with a 5% deposit. The government will advance up to 20% of price, allowing 80,000 buyers of new homes at a public cost of £3.5bn. It is almost certain to fuel soaring house prices. When house price increases provide the lead indicator of ‘economic recovery’ then the danger signs should be flashing.

The centre-right argues that Labour must ‘... *end its addiction to the central state*’ (Diamond and Kenny, 2014). But Labour and Tory housing policy in recent decades has been heavily dependent on central policies, particularly in expanding and supporting the housing market. As Davis emphasizes, we need ‘... *a more interventionist role for the state, with more publicly owned services and renewed emphasis on public spending and public service*’. The ‘localism’ and ‘community’ rhetoric is intended to reinforce the very policies that have created increasing inequality and poverty and the primacy of market forces.

The book includes a brief summary of important rent strikes dating back to the 1915 Glasgow ones and concluding with action against the Housing Finance Act 1972. The final section questions whether the housing system is sustainable? Davis identifies three new ways in which class divisions are emerging:

- *‘the poorest getting poorer, as a deliberate strategy;*
- *the restructuring of democratically controlled public services into the private realm;*

- *the growing extremes of wealth and poverty found in the UK, which are now concentrated in particular areas, pulling ideas of “society” apart.’*

She places the significant reduction in council housing, primarily a result of New Labour’s programme of stock transfers, in the context of Harvey’s ‘accumulation by dispossession’ and explains how privatisation and commodification, financialisation, the manipulation of crises, and state redistribution have been rampant in the housing sector.

It would have been appropriate to draw on the earlier tenants’ struggles and acknowledge the vital role of trade union and tenant organizing and action in addressing the fundamental issues and in shaping future housing policy, rather than simply referring to ‘the spirit of 1945’ and the post-war Labour Government of Clement Atlee.

Finance for Housing is highly recommended and should be read in conjunction with the earlier paperback and eBook by Davis and Wigfield, *Let’s Build The Houses – Quick!* (Spokesman Books, 2012).

Dexter Whitfield

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Sincerity is the new shocking

Jacky Klein, *Grayson Perry*, Thames & Hudson, 288 pages, updated 2013, ISBN 9780500290804, £24.95

This book made me laugh out loud. It started with the Westfield Vase, which appears towards the end. Grayson Perry made the pot with a map of Westfield on it. He writes, ‘Westfield shopping centre had just opened in Shepherd’s Bush, a sort of Death Star of consumerism landed in West London ... It’s an enormous sophisticated machine for selling stuff, none of which I would want to buy.’ He smashed the vase with a hammer, and then a ceramic restorer, Bouke de Vries, stuck it back together again using filler covered in good leaf. ‘The gold lines represent a kind of alternative map;

they are almost desire lines, but desire lines of destruction,' Perry writes.

Using gold leaf reflected the traditional mending with gold lacquer of ancient Chinese or Korean vases, which Perry had seen at the British Museum (a favourite place). 'I love that history of honouring important ceramics,' says Perry. 'As an object lover, it's great; this is veneration of the object at its most extreme. I wanted to combine that idea with something that really horrifies me.'

Such tensions permeate this uplifting collection. Fragile vases might be smashed or broken at any time. A new generation is sucked towards the Shepherd's Bush Death Star, but Perry characteristically goes in the opposite direction. There is real iconoclasm about his work, which subverts the form (icons, quilts, as well as ceramics) with outspoken content, often personal (*look mum, i'm a jet pilot*), often public (*dolls at dungeness, september 11th, 2001*). He does this with consummate skill; an artist with a manifest appreciation of his chosen media.

Beautifully printed in Singapore, this collection comes to life courtesy of the artist's outspoken commentaries on his own extensive output. We reproduce a handful in this issue of *The Spokesman*, by way of encouragement to track down Jacky Klein's reasonably priced volume. Somehow, it's hard to escape the recurring thought that Essex has another great artist to rank alongside John Constable.

Tony Simpson

* * *

In Praise of Shadows, 2005

Glazed ceramic, 80 x 50 (31½ x 19¾)

'I was asked to make a piece about Hans Christian Andersen, the Danish writer of fairytales, for an exhibition marking the two hundredth anniversary of his birth in Aarhus, Denmark. I chose one of his stories that I like very much, called 'The Shadow'. It's about a man whose shadow leaves him and goes off and has a life of its own. Then one night the guy is in his apartment and there's a knock at the door: his shadow's come back. Their roles are slowly reversed and the shadow ends up leading a successful life while the man slowly fades away ...'

Grayson Perry

See overleaf

