

understand why she was prepared to risk life and limb over such issues. She and her sister Verity had invaded a rugby game in Sydney and had been dragged from the field. (A two-year correspondence ensued between the two.) The Australian government let it be known that it would be best if the ACB cancelled the tour so it would not be seen as giving into protesters. The ACB agreed, and so began a worldwide process of boycotting South African sporting teams, and the eventual demise of apartheid.

In *Pitched Battle* Larry Writer provides a descriptive chronological account of these events. He combines contemporary documents, newspaper stories of events and interviews with the Rugby Seven, Meredith Burgmann and other AAM activists. It is a warts-and-all account of events. It doesn't shy away from some of the nefarious activities of protestors and the unprovoked violence by police and others against protestors. Its great strength is to capture the spirit of the times. *Pitched Battle* delves into a unique example of generational conflict which engulfed and subsequently changed Australia. Initially fuelled by opposition to Australia's involvement in the Viet Nam war, a significant proportion of the post-war baby boom generation were not prepared to defer to their elders and accept what they were told. They would stand up and be counted on what they regarded as matters of principle and conscience. Apartheid in South Africa was one such issue. And on this issue they were successful. They helped right one of the world's greatest wrongs.

## Reference

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## *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Democracy*

BY JERRY HARRIS (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2016), 285 pp., \$23.95.

Jerry Harris has written a powerful book for our times. We live in a period of multiple crises. A neoliberal globalisation that is undermining national economies and delegitimising nation states; the global displacement of millions by capitalism that has produced mass migrations worldwide; terrorist blowback from imperial wars; unstoppable capitalocenic climate change; an unresolved financial crisis that still looms over our heads. And over it all, the inability of the state to find a fix for any of this due to the crisis of democracy that Harris analyses in this sweeping study.

That crisis of democracy is not just due to political gridlock. It goes deeper. Political elites are no longer so much in the service of national capital. With globalisation they have become beholden to a transnational capitalist class (TCC) rooted in transnational corporations. Unlike the era of national capitalism where

the system enjoyed hegemonic legitimacy due to political democracy and growing economic well-being, global capitalism is facing a worldwide crisis of legitimacy in the face of spreading austerity and the naked political power of the 1 per cent (p. 98). That delegitimisation of political elites is expressed in the US presidential election result, in the Brexit vote in the UK, in the sweeping unpopularity of Mexico's president, and in so many other countries that have been drawn into global capitalism. This is because, as Harris shows, 'the new transnational capitalist class has little use for democracy, the social contract, or any sense of national responsibility' (p. 19).

The hegemonic bloc that the ruling class had constructed around Keynesianism in the post-second world war period has now dissolved as capital has leaped over national borders, in effect expelling the working class from its benefits. As Harris perceptively points out, 'neo-Keynesianism has been unable to mount an effective alternative, trapped by its own belief in a more "just" globalisation' (p. 50). As social tensions mount, coercion tends to replace consent as the main form of control.

Neoliberal corporate globalisation has transformed the working class worldwide into a precariat. Production has been restructured into global assembly lines. Investment has shifted away from production towards financial speculation. These changes have enabled the formation of the TCC – a self-conscious class that knows no national identity, moving between global cities, conferring in places like Davos, presiding over a global system of endless accumulation of capital. Governance of this system is through the market and the beginnings of a 'transnational state' (p. 96) being constructed in trade deals that establish a judicial apparatus independent of national states in investor-state resolution panels. In effect, these give sovereign power to transnational corporations in the new world order of global capital. Here we can see most vividly the crisis of democracy.

Harris postulates that a stable social order requires a balance between state, market and civil society. The market fundamentalism of neoliberalism gives all weight to the market. Today, neoliberalism is the dominant ideology embraced not only by the ruling class but also the subject classes. Thus the state is not seen as the instrument of a popular will serving its interest. Rather, its aim is to widen the market in service to individual 'freedom'. In practice this amounts to the freedom of corporate capital in the market and the freedom of consumers to buy what they offer. It is a freedom without political content. Social solidarity and collective action are seen as interfering with freedom. It is thus that Harris says 'We may be facing a time in which the bourgeois democratic revolution has run its course' (p. 51).

This reader would wish that Harris had explored more fully the political fallout in the countries of the global North from the increasing precariousness of the working class as a result of neoliberal globalisation. As what used to be called a 'labour aristocracy' faces the threat of downward mobility, we are seeing a popular rebellion against globalisation and a delegitimisation of states that have

promoted it. In the absence of a Left alternative, large sectors of this rebellion have moved to the Right. Witness the Brexit vote in the UK and the Trump phenomenon in the US where rejection of globalisation was often expressed in racist terms.

In our lifetimes the political elite has been able to successfully manage the political process so as to give us the illusion that it was democratic. In this managed democracy (as Shelton Wolin has called it), competing elites gave us candidates between which we voters got to choose. The result was that the winning candidate, who then ruled over us, enjoyed legitimacy. Elections were a contest between elites and a way of legitimating the rule of one section of the elite.

This year that system broke down in the face of the loss of its legitimacy. The Republican establishment lost control of the nominating process and ended up with a candidate they could hardly stomach. And it was only by blatant manipulation that the neoliberal New Democratic establishment was able to fend off a populist challenge to its chosen candidate. The outcome left voters the distasteful choice between two unpopular candidates and the deepening delegitimisation of a fundamentally undemocratic political system.

What we are seeing in this rebellion is blowback from neoliberal globalisation. This has been a long time brewing and will not end with an election. The neoliberal globalisation promoted by the political elite is a betrayal of the people, a betrayal of the nation. Policies that favoured corporations were one thing in the era of national capitalism. But now in the age of transnational corporations, they amount to the abandonment of the nation and undermine the legitimacy of the political system. Harris's critique of globalisation can serve well to illuminate how we have come to the impasse where our alternatives may be between socialism and barbarism.

The author finds hope in the global South where civil society is contesting its eclipse. His final chapter titled 'Democracy Beyond Capitalism' looks at popular struggles for a new protagonistic democracy. This is a rich survey of the ideas of Marta Harnecker and David Schweickart (economic democracy) as well as historical experiences in Argentina, Bolivia, Greece and especially Venezuela. It is here that Harris sees a Gramscian 'war of position' unfolding, where social movements as well as progressive governments are 'creating counter-hegemonic institutions based on working-class power that can contest with capitalist structures over a long period of time' (p. 259). Prominent among such institutions are co-operatives as key in a strategy to build 'a social and economic base for socialist transition' (p. 258). In the Chavez vision of a twenty-first century socialism, the state empowers workers by promoting protagonistic democracy within civil society through self-managed co-operatives and communal councils.

In conclusion, Harris suggests we are approaching the end of the national bourgeois democratic era and facing the challenge of constructing a post-liberal form of popular democracy that maintains the best revolutionary content of the liberal form, but goes beyond it to a broader and direct participatory

social system. This will require a new balance between state, market and a dense network of civil society institutions. Such a 'popular and protagonistic democracy is now on the historical agenda' (p. 54).

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