

## OUR HISTORY

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## William Mellor - Direct Action (1920)

**A** member of the Oxford University Fabian Society, Mellor became secretary to the Fabian Research committee in 1913. He was a contributor to the *Daily Herald* and a leader of the Guild Socialist movement, serving as secretary to the National Guilds League. He was involved in the Shop Stewards' movement and acted as an unofficial adviser to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Jailed as a conscientious objector, after the war he was industrial editor of the *Herald*, becoming editor in 1926. Briefly a member of the Communist Party on its foundation, he soon returned to the ILP. In the 1930's, he was a member of the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda and then in the Socialist League. Mellor was a good speaker and propagandist but tended to be domineering and temperamental. He twice tried unsuccessfully to enter Parliament. At one time he had a relationship with ILP member Barbara Betts, later known as Barbara Castle. Many of his writings were collaborations with G D H Cole.

"The struggle of the classes has two sides: it is a struggle for social equality, for the abolition of all economic distinctions between man and man, and it is a struggle for the right of every individual to express himself in the work he does, for the right to labour not for the benefit of an employer, but for the wellbeing and happiness of one's fellows. The struggle finds its expression on the economic field, for on that field is to be found the basis of all life. Bread and butter are the fundamentals of all existence, and a world in which supplies of bread and butter are unfairly distributed is a world marked by social injustice and social inequality. This fundamental economic inequal-

ity affects every sphere of life, and eventuates in a world whose people are sharply divided in morality, in methods of life, in outlook and in speech. It produces within society, two classes – the one leisured and cultured, free from economic care and worry; the other condemned to a life-long struggle to sustain animal existence, living the drab existence of a beast of burden. It produces a race of masters and a race of slaves. More and more as Capitalism develops the segregation of these classes is affected, and the continued free development of 'big business can only end in the absolute division of mankind into machine-minders and machine-owners. Such a world is the apotheosis of Capitalism and the burial-ground of freedom."

"Fortunately for the world there is no free and unhindered development of Capitalism. The wage-slaves are everywhere questioning the divine right of their masters. They are seeking for a new basis of life, and blunderingly, but surely, are working for a change that shall destroy for ever that power of man over man that springs from the possession of property. The underworld is in a state of unrest, and it is striving to throw off the chains that weigh it down. That throwing off is in process the world over and in no country is Capitalism left unchallenged. The world is in revolt, and the weapons used to consummate that revolt are economic. Direct Action is the watchword of both those who defend and those who attack...My hopes lie with all the countless millions the world over who are striving to create out of the chaos of the old a new world, free from injustice, economic slavery and unmerited suffering."

## LETTER

## Wishful thinking on nuclear power

**I** am angry at the suggestion from Nigel Doggett in the last *Chartist*, that there should be a 'debate' about the suitability of nuclear power as a means of decarbonisation.

The UK's supposed nuclear build programme is a fantasy that serves now only to distract attention from the Government's lack of measures to boost renewable energy and energy efficiency. The only scheduled nuclear project, Hinkley C, has no serious chance of being started short of a commercial suicide wish on behalf of Electricite de France (EDF). EDF is reeling from the continuing losses associated with the other two plant of the same model planned for Hinkley C (the EPR) that are not been delivered. Its

own employee shareholders are pleading with the company not to go ahead with Hinkley C because of fears that will finally destroy EDF. EDF is mainly owned by the French Government but has 13 per cent of shares owned by private sources. Rating agencies are threatening to downgrade EDF if the Hinkley project goes ahead.

This disastrous commercial scene is caused by the simple fact that the safety criteria needed for nuclear power plant make the technology so costly and difficult to deliver that it has become mission impossible under modern regulatory requirements. Indeed in the world as a whole nuclear power production has actually declined compared to 20 years ago.

The sad fact is that there is so much wishful thinking about nuclear power in the male-dominated engineering establishment in the UK that we turn wistfully to unlikely solutions to deliver nuclear power. No, nuclear power won't work in some other guise, whether it be small, modular, Chinese or chocolate flavoured. Small nuclear reactors will not be cheaper than large ones - why were nuclear, power plant scaled up over time anyway? The Chinese, of course, whose own nuclear programme is stalling, will not deliver on the terms we want.

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