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Welcome to the first edition of the Social Science in the City newsletter...

...which will include information about events, reports on topical issues, updates on the latest research, working papers from academics and students, and the views of publics we engage with. We have had some very popular events over recent years and we are proud of our team and followers for pursuing a variety of important debates including, issues of restorative justice; the underlying emotions surrounding climate change; how automation will impact on the future of society; how austerity contributes to the potentially isolating aspects of motherhood, and the future of Europe.

There are many more great events coming up in 2016 and we would love for you to be a part of them. We also want readers of this newsletter to take an active role in its content. Please email ssc@uwe.ac.uk if you would like to make any contributions or have any suggestions.

Upcoming Events

- **Philosophy Natural Science and the Brain.** *Tuesday 15th March. 18:00-20:00. Hamilton House*
- **Women, racism and war: Gaza and the global war on terror.** *Thursday 24th March. 18:30-22:00. The Watershed*
- **What's troubling troubled families?** *Tuesday 26th April. 18:00-20:00. The Watershed*

Working Papers and Research Summaries

Reflections on a Revolution: In Conversation with Selwyn Strachan

By Dr Peter Clegg



On the 22nd May 2014 Social Science in the City hosted an event titled ‘Reflections on a Revolution – In Conversation with Selwyn Strachan’, providing an opportunity to discuss the origins and impact of the Revolution in Grenada; the events leading up to the US invasion; and the aftermath. Dr Peter Clegg provides a reflection and insight on the experience.

Thirty-two years ago on a small Caribbean island close to the South American mainland, two linked events brought the eyes of the world upon it. The island was Grenada, a former British colony that had been independent for just over a decade.

The first event – on 19 October 1983 – was the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, by a group of his erstwhile colleagues in the People’s Revolutionary Government (PRG).

The second – on 25 October – was the United States invasion to remove the rump of the PRG (now the Revolutionary Military Council), to secure the protection of several hundred US medical students studying on the island, and to return Grenada to democracy – no elections had been held since the PRG gained power through a Marxist-Leninist Revolution in March 1979.

The unprecedented act – at least in the English-speaking Caribbean – of the murder of the Prime Minister; the US invasion – the first significant overseas operation by the US since Vietnam; and the 1979 Marxist-Leninist Revolution – the first and only one to have taken place in the English-speaking Caribbean, are what make the study of this period of Grenadian and indeed Caribbean history so interesting. A key player throughout these events was Selwyn Strachan, and in May 2014

Reflections on a Revolution: In Conversation with Selwyn Strachan

Continued.



he came to Bristol to speak about his experiences at an event organised by UWE's Social Science in the City initiative.

The edited version of his Q&A has now been published in the Caribbean Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy, and is also available to read on the Social Science in the City website.

Selwyn "Sello" Strachan was born in 1947. He contested unsuccessfully then Prime Minister Eric Gairy's seat in the 1972 General Election. Soon after he became one of the founding members of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), which was to form the backbone of the PRG when it came to power..

A second unsuccessful run against Gairy came in 1976. In 1979, he edited the newspaper 'New Jewel', and in March became a key member of the PRG, as Minister for Communications, Works and Labour, and then later as Minister for National Mobilization.

In 1983 as the NJM/PRG came under increasing strain and splits emerged within the movement, Strachan and others favoured the idea of joint leadership between Bishop and his deputy Bernard Coard; an idea ultimately rejected by Bishop. This rejection led to Bishop's house arrest on the orders of the NJM's Central Committee, of which Strachan was part.

Soon after the Prime Minister was freed from house arrest by his supporters, and in an ensuing confrontation at Fort Rupert, Bishop and seven colleagues were shot and killed.

After the US invasion, Strachan was captured by US forces, and in December 1986 he was convicted for his alleged role in Bishop's death. However, in 2003 Amnesty International released a report strongly criticising the trials as "unjust" and "unfair". Notwithstanding, Strachan was initially sentenced to death, but this was later commuted. He was released from prison on 5 September 2009.

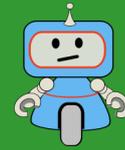
The transcript of Strachan's Q&A is an important first-hand account of this tumultuous period in Grenadian and Caribbean history. He reveals the harsh conditions under Gairy as the NJM was trying to establish itself; the great hopes that came with the revolution, the policy successes and failures; and the ultimate catastrophic failure of the leading revolutionary figures to deal with the challenges that faced them.



Selwyn Strachan

Automate Now? Robots, Jobs and Universal Basic Income

By Miguel Prado



On Wednesday 9th December 2015, Social Science in the City held the public debate “Automate Now? Robots, Jobs and Universal Basic Income” at the Watershed. The event was sold out and took place as part of the Bristol Festival of Ideas winter series.

On the panel philosophers Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (hereafter S&W) presented several arguments from their new book, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (Verso 2015). Their manifesto is a call for a post-capitalist economy capable of advancing living standards, liberating humanity from work and developing technologies that expand our freedoms. They faced a grilling from philosopher and event organiser Darian Meacham (UWE), roboticists Sabine Hauert (BRL/Bristol) and Matthew Studley (BRL/UWE), and Bristol Green Party mayoral candidate Tony Dyer.

Some recent studies (Osborne and Frey 2013) have purported to show that over the next two decades a very significant amount of jobs could be lost to automation, though the methodologies used do not account for new employment growth due to automation or

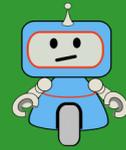
political resistance to automation. According to S&W, this does not need to be seen as a doomsday scenario. To the contrary the contemporary left needs to embrace this future if it is to transform the current shape of capitalism with a sustainable economic alternative.

S&W introduce a ‘plausible programme’ for ‘a world free of work’. Two of the key points of this program are the need for a universal basic income and the demand for full automation. The event coincided with the news from Finland, where KELA (the national social insurance provider) is conducting a study to explore the possibility of implementing a basic income program, along with the fact that several Dutch cities will introduce basic income next year, Tilburg, a city of 200,000 inhabitants close to the border with Belgium, will follow Utrecht’s initiative, and the cities of Groningen, Maastricht, Gouda, Enschede, Nijmegen and Wageningen are also considering it. Moreover, Switzerland is holding a referendum on the subject in 2016. These emerging issues provided a great backdrop for the debate.

The event was attended by a wide range of people from different age groups: students, researchers, educators, community activists and others interested in the social and political future and the notion of technology as a liberating

Automate Now? Robots, Jobs and Universal Basic Income

Continued.



tool. The questions about how susceptible are jobs to automation and whether machines will eliminate the need for human employment, raised different opinions between the panelists. In contrast with S&W's perspective in which extensive automation is fundamental for a post-work world, Sabine Hauert expressed her scepticism about a future where robots replace human employment on as large a scale as predicted by some. She argued that automation will spur the growth of many new jobs—including some entirely new job categories. Likewise, she and Matthew Studley also stressed the limitations of the advances in robotics when performing non-repetitive tasks completely autonomously. In any case, everyone seemed to agree with the fact that machines are already replacing human jobs, and Tony Dyer pointed out some of the concerns about the ethical limits to what work might be automated, particularly with regards to reproductive and care labour. S&W recognise that the full automation and elimination of care work will not be possible, suggesting instead that freeing up time from work is the way to find out how to organise that socially reproductive work in positive ways. Expressly, the abolition of work, as traditionally understood, lay the foundations for

rethinking care, domestic work, or even (as Dari-an Meacham interpolated about overcoming fetishism of work ethic) a post-work notion of another kinds of unwaged work such as 'playing', reading, etc.

We had interesting and valuable feedback from the audience. Participants of the panel were greatly engaged with their questions extending the debate until the end of the available time. After the event, the debate continued on Twitter and Facebook. You can see the debate in full on the UWE Philosophy & Post-Europe Project YouTube channel:

[Automate Now? Robots, Jobs and Universal Basic Income A Public Debate](#)



Mathew Studley and Tony Dyer in discussion at the debate

News

Psycho Social Conference 2016

Working in mental health forces people to walk a very thin line between the personal and the political. As public services deteriorate and more public sector workers have to address professional precarity we are faced with a choice about speaking up and taking up political positions at work. As part of this year's Psycho Social Conference we will address this issue by hosting an event at the Watershed on Thursday 30th June entitled "*Walk the Line*". Joining us will be guest speaker Dr Elizabeth Cotton from Middlesex University who will talk about the political landscape in mental health and the experience of supporting health workers on the frontline. Elizabeth is a leading authority in employment relations and precarious work, writing a bi-monthly online column for *the conversation* entitled [Battles on the NHS Frontline: Stories from the vanguard of health and social care](#) and also blogging at www.survivingwork.org. The question she will open up for discussion is: how can we position ourselves to talk and think about working life and organise ourselves to improve working conditions while still being human?



Dr Elizabeth Cotton

To register for this event please click [here](#)

Roberta Martin

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Roberta Martin who passed away in November of last year. Roberta, along with her husband John, was a great supporter of Social Science in the City during its early days at Tart Café on Gloucester Road, Bristol and provided thoughtful, considerate and valuable contributions to the discussions that took place there. Her melodious voice, bright mind and kindness will be sorely missed by everyone who knew her and we send our love and support to her friends and family.

Social Media

We are very active across social media so please follow us on Twitter [@socscieincity](#) and like us on [Facebook](#) to keep up to date with upcoming events and the latest news.

You can also receive initiations to all upcoming events by subscribing to our [mailing list](#).

Winter/Spring Event Calendar 2016

Philosophy, Natural Science, and the Brain: A Lecture by Catherine Malabou

Tuesday 15th March. 18:00-20:00. Hamilton House

Women, Racism and War: Gaza 2014 and the Global War on Terror

Thursday 24th March. 18:30-22:00. The Watershed

What's troubling troubled families?

Tuesday 26th April. 18:00 - 20:00. The Watershed

Tackling Female Genital Mutilation: International Norms, local activism, and identity of women and girls

Tuesday 10th May. 18:30-20:30. The Watershed.

Women who choose to remain childfree

Thursday 26th May. 19:00-21:00. The Watershed

Walk the Line

Thursday 30th June. 18:45-21:30. The Watershed

You can register for each event [here](#)

If you would like to contribute to future issues of the newsletter with relevant news stories or upcoming events, then please send them to ssc@uwe.ac.uk