



*Creating Socialism Magazine*

**SOCIALISM  
AND  
HUMANISM**

March 2026

*Migrant Mother - Dorothee Lange*

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# Socialism & Humanism

- Mike Stanton



**C**reating Socialism began as a Zoom group for socialists clinging to the wreckage after Starmer replaced Corbyn and started purging the left in the Labour Party. We had no idea what we were doing.

We just knew that we had to do something. Since then there have been some momentous world events: Covid, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Israel's genocide against Palestine, the rise of Trump and the release of the Epstein files, a US/Israeli war on Iran, etc., etc.

What have we learned?

Labour can no longer pretend to be a reformist party of the left. It is an unapologetic supporter of genocide in Palestine. The Labour government has given active support to Israel, supplying arms and intelligence, while criminalising the opposition to genocide in the UK and using anti-terror laws to arrest thousands of people for the crime of exercising their right to protest. The Epstein files have revealed the corruption at the heart of Labour. Mandelson is a symbol of all that is rotten within the party.



But...Mandelson ...is the fall guy, the rotten apple tossed out to hide the fact that the whole barrel should be condemned

We can rejoice at his downfall. But he is the fall guy, the rotten apple tossed out to hide the fact that the whole barrel should be condemned.

Finally, after five years of prevarication on the Corbynite left, Your Party has emerged to offer an electoral alternative to Labour. It may reject Labour's politics, but it is plagued by the same organisational defects. You cannot build a grassroots party from the top down. 800,000 people signified their support for the new party when it was proposed in July 2025. Months of delay and factional infighting have whittled that down to the 25,347 who voted in the elections for the central executive committee out of a total membership of 42,245.



Meanwhile the Greens' go from strength to strength. Since Polanski became leader last year their membership had grown from 65,000 to 200,000.

And after their stunning by-election victory in Gorton and Denton at the end of February the Greens added 15,000 new members in a week. Polanski is an able communicator who sounds like a socialist. Will his commitment be tested in office? It is too soon to tell. But it is the Greens and not Your Party that is making the running

in the fight to negate the threat from Reform UK and offer a left alternative to Labour.

On the world stage Trump's total disregard for international law has shown how ineffective the United Nations, the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice are when the USA decides that might is right. All the old certainties of a liberal world order have been destroyed.

Capitalism has revealed itself as a wolf in wolf's clothing. They are not pretending any more.

Very few world leaders have had the nerve and human decency to stand up to Trump but few have been as craven in their kowtowing as Starmer.



On the world stage Trump's total disregard for international law has shown how ineffective the United Nations, the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice are when the USA decides that might is right.

So, where does that leave socialists?

Of course we reject the compromised parties of the establishment – Labour, Tory and LibDem. But if we are waiting to be convinced by the Greens' recent conversion to socialism and are disappointed by Your Party's organisational mayhem, where do we turn?

More than a hundred years ago, when a powerful socialist movement with parties across Europe collapsed into national chauvinism at the onset of World War One, it seemed like the end. Socialists who did not capitulate or despair (some even committed suicide) went underground. They also went back to the ideas that had inspired their struggle for socialism in order to sustain their commitment.

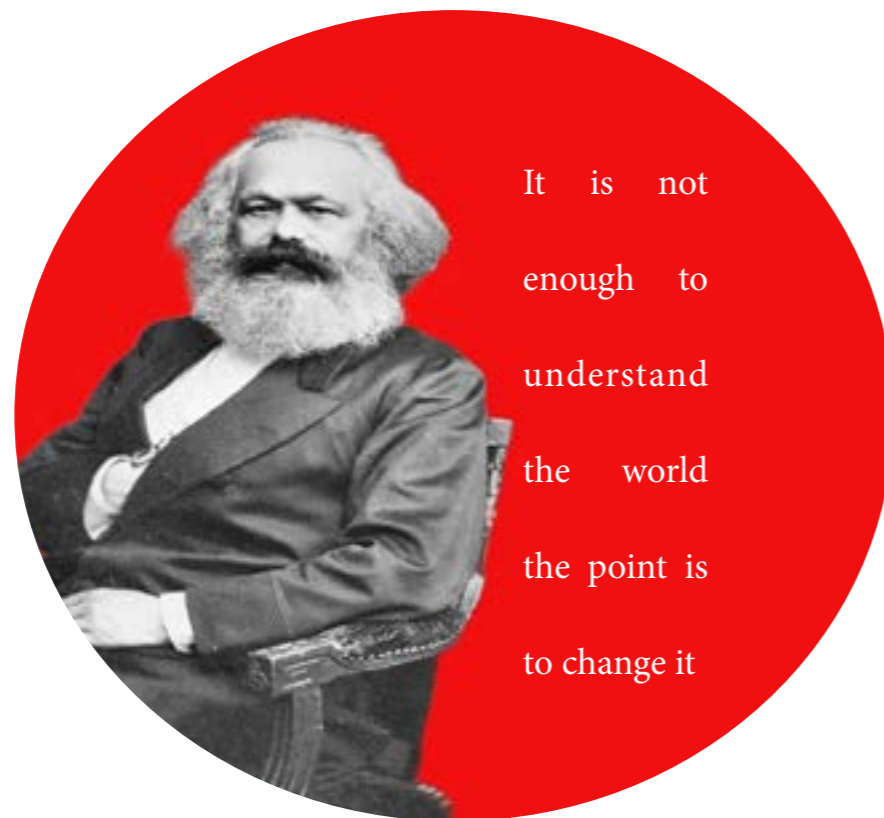
That is where we are now at Creating Socialism. And like those socialists from a century ago, we have to go back further, into the 19th century when modern industrial capitalism was emerging and the socialist movement that grew simultaneously with capitalism was trying to understand the nature of the beast.

Karl Marx did more than anyone to advance our understanding of capitalism as an economic system based on exploitation of the many and the accumulation of wealth and power by the few. He is best remembered now for his monumental three volume work, Capital, which explored the workings of capitalism with scientific rigour. But there was another

side to Marx which he shared with many socialists, both past and present.

It is summed up in his famous quote that it is not enough to understand the world, the point is to change it. But how to

change the world has been a point of contention ever since. The questions facing socialists have not changed over the years. Can capitalism be tamed, transformed, or do we need a revolution to destroy it? Even if we agree on what is to be done that still leaves the question of 'How?'



Some have taken the view that Marx's 'scientific socialism' has revealed 'iron laws of history' that prove the inevitability of socialism. Well, if that is the case, why are we bothering? Let us get on with our lives and let nature take its course. Others point to the failed experiment in Russia as proof of the impossibility of socialism and offer a limited prospect of taming capitalism's worst excesses without provoking the ruling class too much.

At Creating Socialism we remember that even in the natural sciences there are no iron laws. If we based ourselves solely on Victorian science we would have to disregard all the recent achievements in atomic physics, quantum mechanics, genetics and neurology. And you would not be able to read this over the internet. Scientific understanding has changed over the centuries because of our human activity. And it is the same with socialism.



Not everybody on a march for Palestine or an anti-racist demo is a socialist. But we are all human and we want our freedom.

# Arben - a story of coming to the UK as a refugee

Olwyn Jones



When socialists come together we do not do so just because we are obeying economic laws. We do so on the basis of our humanity, our shared values, our sense of right and wrong, our morality. We are outraged by injustice, inhumanity and cruelty. And we are not alone. Not everybody on a picket line is a socialist. Not everybody on a march for Palestine or an anti-racist demo is a socialist. But we are all human and we want our freedom.

This harks back to that other side of Marx I referred to earlier. Socialists don't just want our own freedom. We want your freedom as well. We want everyone to be free: free from want, free from fear, free from hate, free to be ourselves. Marxism and freedom are not opposed to each other. They are essential to each other. Marxism without Humanism gave us the horrors perpetrated by Stalin, Mao Zedung and Pol Pot. One of the things we want to do at Creating Socialism is explore the possibilities of combining Marxism and Humanism in a way that Paul Foot expressed at the end of his pamphlet, [Why You Should Be a Socialist](#).

*We socialists are not fanatics or timeservers. We are socialists because we see the prospect which life holds out for all working people. We want the commitment of workers who laugh and love and want to end the wretchedness and despair which shuts love and laughter out of so many lives.*

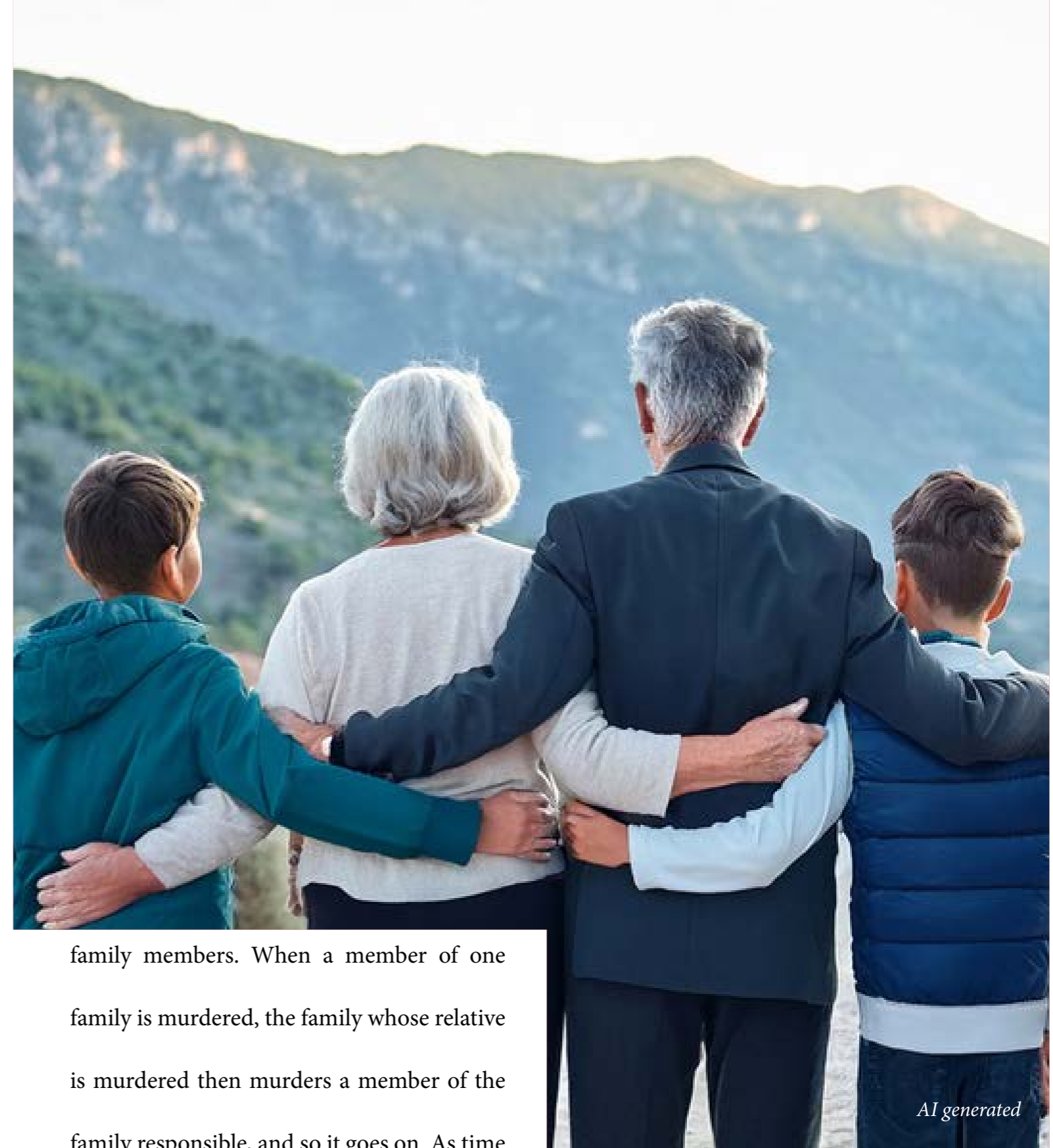
**A**rben is now a successful business man with a family, living in the south east of the UK. He has spent his adult life being a productive citizen of the UK and is happy that he has been able to contribute so much to society.

When we hear the rhetoric of many people today, they believe that people from other

countries arrive here to take 'our jobs' or to sit at home receiving benefits. In my experience, and having worked with asylum seekers in the past, this is definitely not how I view them, nor do I support the often negative perception of people who arrive on lorries or small inflatables.

These people are desperate to find a safe haven, many having been subjected to war, famine, imprisonment and torture. In addition climate change is having a huge impact on societies in the Global South, where they suffer from catastrophic flooding and adverse weather. These create an inhospitable environment, causing famine and other environmental crises.

Arben came here in 2000, aged 16 years. At that time his country was under UN administration, their security being safeguarded by NATO. Because of the war in Kosovo, the situation still felt fragile, and Arben and his family were fearful that he may be forced at some point to go into the military. He was also a potential victim of what is described as a 'blood feud', a common occurrence in that region. A blood feud is generational, it is a revenge killing, and often the younger teens are targeted. This is when families accuse another family of killing one of their



family members. When a member of one family is murdered, the family whose relative is murdered then murders a member of the family responsible, and so it goes on. As time passed, even if families weren't guilty, they could be targeted. This was a constant worry for parents.

Arben left behind his parents, two brothers and two sisters; they were very upset about him leaving as they were a close family.

These people are desperate to find a safe haven.



The reason Arben was sent away was because he was the youngest and most vulnerable, as it is usual for the youngest teen to be the victim of a blood feud, so the family were scared for his safety.

Arben arrived in the UK in 2000, and he came to the UK instead of another area because he has a cousin living here. He arrived by lorry from France; his family had paid traffickers to enable him to leave. Initially, when he first left home, he travelled from Kosovo to Albania, and then from Albania he went to Italy. This was September. In Italy he stayed in a makeshift tent for one week. It was a small encampment. He didn't receive any food, they had to try to buy food or beg help from others. He had no support. He was then taken by car to Calais, France,



*In Italy he stayed in a makeshift tent for a week - there was nowhere for children to be safe*

where he was living in another makeshift tent again for about three weeks. A child in Calais was likely to receive daily threats of violence, trafficking and exploitation. There was nowhere for children to be safe. Again trying to get food was difficult and the tension was unhealthy.

He then managed to hide aboard a lorry and came to England. The whole journey took a month. People were not friendly towards him, he felt very vulnerable as a child, it was all a frightening experience. He says it was “scary at the time but looking back it is even more scary”.

After Arben arrived in England, he immediately claimed asylum. He was then placed in a hotel, as, because he was over 16, he wasn't provided with foster parents but did come

under Section 20 of the 1989 Children's Act. So he was accepted as a child protected under the Act. He went to the local school and was even able to take some exams. He speaks four languages, including Greek and Polish.

Once he received refugee status, and after he had left school, he immediately enrolled in college to increase his understanding of written and spoken English. This wasn't a requirement at the time. He felt it would be better to become more proficient at English so that he wouldn't be hindered by the language barrier. He has worked ever since. He initially started work in a guest house and secured himself a rented flat. He continued working in hotels and saved

*He then managed to hide aboard a lorry and came to England.*



money, as his aim was to eventually have his own business. He met his wife, who is from Poland, when he was working at the hotel. He didn't have to apply for leave to remain, a process that took many years but returned to Kosovo and applied for a work visa and so could return to marry his wife.

He has had two restaurant businesses, the first was co-owned with a partner, the next owned outright by himself.



*Generated with AI*

Arben and his wife have two teenage children.

Both children are doing really well at school, his daughter is going to university next year.

Arben really does like living here and has a good standard of living; he is a home owner and employs eight people. Over the past two months he has experienced some hostility because he is an immigrant. He is worried for his family.

I was sitting on my own after we had talked, and looking around the restaurant.

I noticed how many older people were eating there. This is a very popular place to eat, and the food is of outstanding quality for the price, one of the most reasonable places in the town, and the warmth and hospitality shown to diners is really wonderful.

The thought crossed my mind regarding the prejudice and racism which is so prevalent in society today, and, as Arben mentioned in his recent experience, I wondered how many people who frequent this place will be voting for Farage in the future. As we are aware, hypocrisy knows no bounds. The fact you can meet a very kind person from another country would not stop hypocrites from taking advantage of that person yet at the same time wishing them gone.

# SHAME

by John Clements



**“If way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst” Thomas Hardy.**

**“It is nothing but unlearning, I find now” Richard Jefferies.**

I became ashamed to be English some time ago, but it was only relatively recently that I grew ashamed to be human.



**I** became ashamed to be English some time ago, but it was only relatively recently that I grew ashamed to be human. Being capable of feeling shame, having 'shame' in the lexicon of human feelings, is, of course, a credit. One must be aware of the idea of morality to feel shame, it is a human attribute. So why is the human world in the parlous state it is in if we are capable of knowing shame?

This question is immensely complex in detail, but quite simple in the broad sweep,

and it is the broad sweep I wish to consider.

But first, why did I come to feel ashamed to be English.

The received wisdom is that I should be proud of that phrase, that England is the best country in the world, just as Americans are told that America is the best country in the world. I say English, not British, for the other countries that make up the UK have, in many ways, different histories. I was quite routinely lied to in childhood even before the present 'post-truth' world, not by innately dishonest people, but by people, teachers and others, who had largely unthinkingly accepted the status quo. So I was taught about the Enclosure Acts as a universal good, allowing efficiency, improved productivity, a





**The Enclosure Act was probably the biggest, grandest larceny this country has ever known.**

rationalising of an antiquated system. Nothing was mentioned of probably the biggest, grandest larceny that this country has ever known. Or of the effect this had on vast numbers of poorer rural workers. It was meet that they should be sacrificed, not for the greater good, but for the good of the few, which is the norm in England, and most other countries. The displaced farm workers, perforce, had to move to the new industrial towns, where they were exploited in appalling working conditions, low pay and long hours. This applied to children as well. But the rich got richer by the process,

so, according to the awful class system, that was simply the way it should be.

This attitude extended out into another cause of shame, the British Empire. As superior people, the English had the right to take, exploit, plunder, subdue, anything it wanted to, and that proved to be large areas of the world. This grand larceny was supported by an arrogant belief that the English, as superior beings, must enforce their culture onto the primitive savages they chose to dominate in the name of God, helping

themselves to the spoils in the process. America, under Trump, is enthusiastic to help itself, by military might, to whatever it can get its hands on, minerals, oil, anything. This exploitation continues: the few rich in Britain, having exploited everyone else, are now massively rich, while many other people are struggling to get by, or are living in actual poverty. But this, in the lexicon of English hypocrisy, is simply right, it should be so, for, as we know, the rich are rich because they deserve to be, and the poor are struggling because they are lazy and feckless. This Victorian poor house mentality is still strong in England, encouraged and supported by the class and political systems, and the right-wing media, which in Britain is most of it. Those

who do not hold this view are vilified as socialists, a truly dirty word in this rabidly capitalist world.

We tell ourselves that we are marvellous, unthinkingly accept that we are the utter superior of all other forms of life, while hell bent on destroying everything for profit. We are in many ways unique. We are the only species to knowingly and determinedly, with vigour and commitment, set about our own destruction. Why is that? This is complex. It is my human intelligence and human consciousness that has brought me to this position.

I stress I am not speaking of individuals, some of whom are saint-like, but of the species as a whole, and saint-like it is certainly not. There are three catastrophic areas of human activity that will destroy us, if we do not change our behaviours. There are more, but I shall consider the three I believe are the most pressing and dangerous. We are destroying the Earth for short-term profit, it perforce is short term, for, if we carry on as we are, there will be no long-term. England is the most wildlife-depleted country



*When the richest man on Earth holds the view that empathy equates to weakness, we ought to know that our species has somewhere gone horribly wrong.*

in Europe. There are several reasons for this, but a major one is the way the English prioritise profit.

Even our areas that are protected for nature are under threat from the greed of ‘developers’. But this is detail. Across the whole world nature is under threat, from habitat destruction and the thus general depletion of numbers of animals, birds, fish, plants and everything else. This leads to extinctions. And it will lead to the extinction of the human race unless we learn respect for the creatures we share the Earth with. And we would deserve nothing less. Nature is not a ‘nice to have’, but an essential for the continuation of the human race. I have a vision of fields full of otherwise



### Melting ice caps

redundant people brushing pollen onto plants, for we have destroyed all the insect pollinators.

The greed processors which are destroying habitat and wild life are also essentially destroying our astonishingly well balanced and delicate climate. The rich and powerful deny this, saying it is a “con,” “fake news,” “a hoax,” for

they care nothing other than for themselves and their profit, and yet many who are gaining nothing from the destruction concur with the falsehoods, even though disastrous events of flood and fire and heat waves, and melting glaciers and ice shelves give the lie to their denials. And as a species we carry on our path of destruction. Still drilling for oil and gas, felling forests, still producing vast amounts of meat with its destructive effects, indeed, even cutting back on attempts to mitigate somewhat the effects of our insane behaviour.

Capitalism is essentially



We are still drilling for oil and gas



Pope Francis said “Capitalism is Evil”

destroying the Earth. When the last Pope announced that capitalism is evil, I concurred wholeheartedly. Capitalism is perhaps not the source of all evil, but it is a powerful expression of that evil, for it operates to exploit the many to benefit the very few, and that is not a civilised way to behave. Nature is predicated on violence, predators ripping their live prey apart, but natural balances have evolved to prevent over

predation. There is no natural balance curtailing human greed and destruction in the pursuit of feeding that greed, there are no natural balances curtailing human predation other than the ultimate one of our own destruction, and we are heading towards that at an ever-increasing speed.

As for violence, I can only deduce that we love killing each other, for we have done it throughout history, with enthusiasm and vigour and marching bands, and those who kill the most are festooned with medals in grand ceremonies. We create vast armies bristling with weapons, turning science against humanity to create ever more destructive and terrible means of killing, while telling ourselves that this is for the good, for protection against the ‘enemy’. And the ‘enemy’ is doing the same against ‘us’. And so we escalate towards universal destruction can do no other than feel shame

to belong to a species which has used its considerable ingenuity to create, for instance, the atom bomb, which is an obscenity on the Earth. I run a surreal encounter in my

head. “Hello dear, Have you had a good day at the office (lab)?” “Oh, yes dear, we are very close to developing a new bomb that will kill millions of people at a go.” “Really dear, how nice.” But of course such a conversation could never take place. The utter horror



of the bomb exists, we humans have created it, but have done so in secret, in darkness, where it belongs. And where it should remain. We have a choice, we either get rid of nuclear weapons, or they will get rid of us. It is only a matter of time. Already Putin is threatening their use.

And as for Trump, well, who can say? But in the insane world we have created, it is possible that Trump and Putin will unite to carve up Europe and Latin America between them. Already Trump is threatening to invade Greenland. But is that surprising from

a gun-soaked, violent country, predicated on genocide and slavery, where innocent people are openly shot in the street? And these ‘leaders’, these ruthless, nasty, greedy, people have nuclear weapons at their disposal. This does not lead to a sense of security. But the belief in the need for arms spending and development is so engrained into us at a societal level that we rarely question it, we accept that it is right to spend vast amounts of money on armaments when people are starving. If we weren’t so violent we wouldn’t need ‘defence’ spending. But



Forced displacement of Gaza Strip residents after intensive bombing by Israel - Jan 2025 -By Jaber Jihad Badwan, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=159486769>

it is accepted as entirely normal because we are such an aggressive species.

A little while ago I was listening, with my almost inevitable frustration, to Radio 4's Question Time, and heard a politician talk of "the glorious war dead of Ukraine." In my mind's eye I saw the limbs blown off, the gaping holes in bodies, the blood spurting, the agony.

Oh glorious dead indeed.

Oh glorious human race. We tell ourselves that at heart, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, we are decent, honest, honourable, peaceful, and compassionate, indeed even godlike, for are we not made in the image of God? We live in parallel 'realities', that which is happening and the story we tell ourselves is of our decency, in spite of vast military parades, with terrifying hardware and dehumanised automaton marching, ready for war. There seems to be an inexorable movement towards war on a vast scale, a world scale—the curse of nationalism.

There are always wars: the horror of the genocide in Gaza, the battering and death in Ukraine, Sudan, Trump and Netanyahu's recent attacks on Iran and elsewhere. As a species we perpetually make the same 'mistakes', prompted by greed and a lust for power. And it has brought us to the very edge of oblivion. Everything is in danger from humanity, including humanity itself.

And then we have AI with its threat of complete social breakdown. The rich technocrats, with their 'empathy is weakness' mentality are keen on AI, for they believe their impossible-to-imagine riches can become even more impossible to imagine. Considering history we see that virtually all technological innovation has resulted in large swathes of the population being seriously disadvantaged. The closing of mines and steel works simply left people to struggle in broken communities. Industrialisation itself destroyed the livelihoods of masses of skilled workers, but nothing will compare to what AI is about to bring upon us.



Cynon Valley Museum



This is a plea for honesty to see what we have done to the world and what we are doing to the world and to each other and to stop doing it.

No business is going to pay a human being a salary, a wage, and offer all sorts of benefits: paid holiday, pension contributions, sick pay, when it can simply get a robot, which does not need a holiday, which will never retire and which will not become sick, to do the work, 'free of charge', after capital outlay. The rate of redundancy is going to be vast, and in many areas of work, although in a consumerist system some will have to retain some spending power.

Decades ago I predicted that the fate of humanity was to 'evolve' into computers. I am probably wrong about that. What is far more likely is that we will simply be superseded by them, after the complete social breakdown as a consequence of their invention. What our intelligence has achieved in knowledge, say of the universe, is truly remarkable, but that intelligence has allowed us to express the very worst aspects of our species in absolute

horror, the efficiency of the gas chambers being merely one example. Our intellectual capacity seems to have far outpaced our moral development.

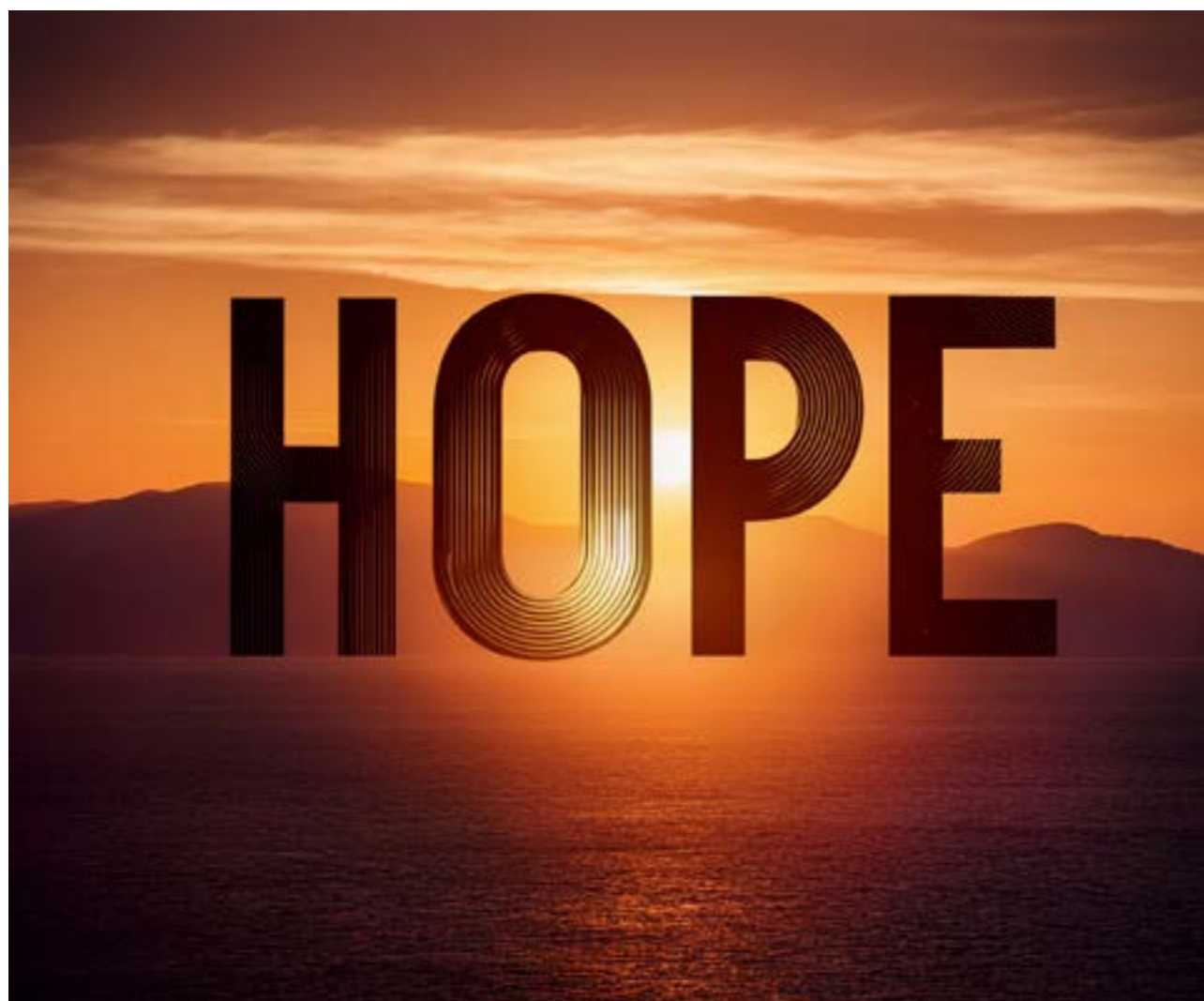
So where is the hope? Is there any hope? If I had to bet on whether or not humanity would destroy itself this century, I'd want odds in favour, for all the signs are pointing in that direction. Naive youth may offer some hope. The cynically greedy always decry youth as naive, for youth does pose a slight problem for them, not having yet been necessarily turned into more of the cynically greedy. Youth may see the possibility of a better world and strive towards it. Some may say this article is naive, refusing to accept the reality of capitalism, the end of history as Fukuyama naively claimed. If my words are naive, then it is from the naive old, an old man who refuses to accept or ignore the deeply dishonest and destructive nature of capitalist society. This is a plea for honesty, to see what we have done to the world, what we are doing to the world and each other, and to stop doing it.

Just before Christmas I had the great pleasure of watching my four-year-old grandson

be a camel. He was in his school's nativity play and was leading one of the three kings around the stage. Another little boy stood in line at the back, and I saw with growing alarm that the whole event was too much for him, the many rows of tiered parents looking down too terrifying, and his little sensitive soul could



not cope and he stood there with growing tears and sobs, overcome by the vastness and importance of the event. To my relief I saw him rescued by one of the teachers and he then sat by her, protected by her presence. He was clearly a very sensitive scrap of humanity. I returned my attention to the coming of the kings and the birth of Jesus. And then in admiration I saw that the quivering little soul had returned to his place on the stage and bravely stood there. It showed me the sensitivity and courage of humanity. It is our only hope.



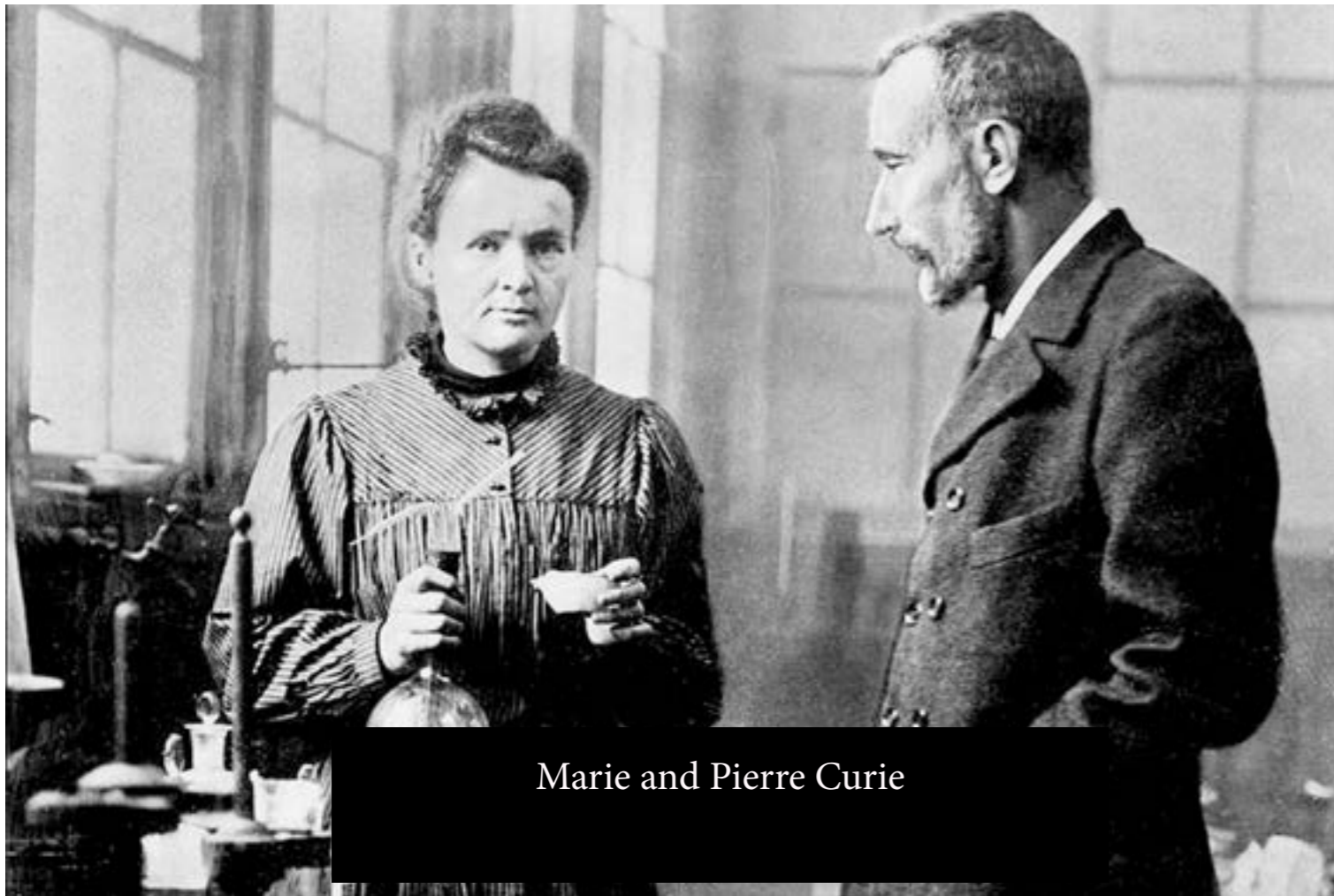
# Looking back in Time

## The Radium Girls

Jo Buchanan



**S**ometimes when human beings are faced with adversity, they find the courage, determination and resilience to fight for justice for themselves and to improve the lives of those who come after. Somehow the Radium Girls found the strength in the 1920s to bring lawsuits against the companies that employed them and ruined their lives. In some ways their fight is all too familiar, ordinary working people battling against rich corporations whose greed and negligence so often cause unnecessary suffering.



Marie and Pierre Curie

The young women were claiming compensation for themselves but they also wanted future workers to be protected. Their actions were an important step in the development of [occupational safety and health standards](#), including industrial safety and labour and compensation rights.

Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium in 1898. The discovery was applauded as radium could provide a cure for cancer and was also considered a source of beauty and vitality.

The Radium Girls became known as the Living Dead Women after the catastrophic results of their exposure to radium at work. The radium had extreme physical effects on the women and they endured early painful deaths.

The women initially took the work in radium dial factories full of optimism. They were well-paid skilled workers,



being in the top 5% of women workers, and, when America entered the First World War in 1917, their work was considered a patriotic contribution to the war effort. The women painted luminous numbers on watch, clock, and instrument panels on military equipment using radium-laced paint in [factories in New Jersey, Illinois, and Connecticut](#). These factories were owned by the United States Radium Corporation (USRC), the Radium Dial Company, and the Waterbury Clock Company. The watches, clocks and instruments all glowed in the dark.

It was important for soldiers to be able to have easy access to their watches, wristwatches rather than pocket watches, and for them to see the time in the dark.

The workers were instructed to create a fine point on their brushes and were told to “lip, dip, and paint”. This lip pointing as it was known was to create a fine point on the brushes they used to paint numbers on the dials. The paint was made from radium and zinc sulphide. Lip pointing meant that the workers ingested a small amount of radioactive material each time.

But the young women did not understand the dangers. In fact it took some time for people to realise how dangerous radium could be. However, the owners of the factories and the scientists familiar with the effects of radium carefully avoided any exposure to it themselves. Radium was appearing in commercial medicine, tonics and cosmetics. It was even promoted

as leading to good health, higher energy levels, a cure for illness and greater beauty. It was added to toothpaste, eye cream, make-up and drinking water. The bosses of the factories repeatedly told the girls that radium was good for their health, and they often left work dazzling from the radium on their clothes and with their nails, teeth and lips painted with radium.

From 1921, the women began to suffer from strange illnesses. These illnesses usually started with toothache and then their teeth fell out. Their mouths did not heal and abscesses developed, their bones became brittle and they became severely anaemic. Eventually they suffered from necrosis of the jaw as bones and tissues were starved of blood and died.

**Radium and Beauty**

HERE are the first toilet preparations to embody Actual Radium, an astonishing new force for betterment, applied as an aid to Beauty. Learn how the amazing Energy of Radium has proved a boon to the human skin. Learn what Radium actually means to Beauty and how its power is employed in "Rador" Preparations. Study our \$5,000 guarantee. Then turn to "Rador" Toilet Requisites. When you have used, enjoyed and tested them you will adopt them as your own first aid to Beauty.

PREHISTORIC woman first discovered her usage in some quiet jungle pool. Ever since Beauty has engaged the world's attention. Radium, though new to the world, is no less of abounding interest. Its marvels have amazed and thrilled us all. Who would have imagined that these two subjects would ever be joined in hand? Yet, and radiant beauties all their own, a product not for sale in any market. They are the first and only preparations for the toilet to contain Actual Radium—Nature's greatest aid to Beauty.

Every "Rador" Preparation is guaranteed, under \$5,000 penalty, to contain a definite amount of Actual Radium, and to retain its Radio-activity for at least twenty years. See Guarantee above.

**Rador Toilet Requisites**

"Rador" Toilet Requisites are necessarily higher in price. This must be expected in preparations containing the finest ingredients only, plus a definite

The first death was in 1922. Amelia Maggia died when she was only 25 years old. She had worked with radium for four years from 1917 to 1921. There were more deaths the following year. By 1924 the women and their doctors were suspecting that these strange illnesses were connected to their work. They tried to obtain help from the health and labour departments and [the Consumers League](#), which was concerned in particular with poor working women, but their representations were ignored by the companies. The USRC claimed that the women were suffering from syphilis. For over a year the company continued to reject evidence that the illnesses were connected to radium.

Radium scientists colluded with the cover-up as they had investments in radium companies. But the evidence that radium was behind the awful suffering of these young women was growing. Five surviving Radium Girls took two years to find a lawyer to represent them against the corporations, and in 1927 they managed to file a lawsuit against their previous employer. Despite their failing



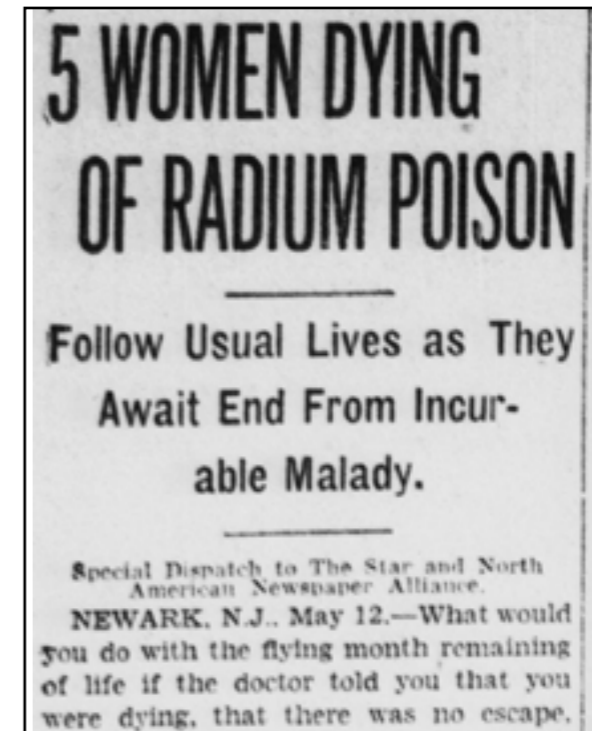
Amelia Maggia

health they found the courage to keep searching. The trial began in 1928 but by then all five women were too ill to raise their hands to take the oath in court. One was unable to sit up without a back brace and two were bedridden. They were clearly so

unwell they agreed to an out-of-court settlement.

One hundred and twelve dial painters died as a result of their work.

Safety precautions



could have saved their lives. Only in 1938 was the matter settled when Catherine Wolfe Donohue, a dying radium worker, was successful when she sued the Radium Dial Company.

The Radium Girls' struggle and their suffering resulted in the introduction of safer working conditions for those who worked in the radium industry. They were issued with protective equipment and there was a ban on lip pointing. But their legacy extended beyond their own industry. This case was one of the first where a company was held responsible for the health and safety of its workers and it led to a number of reforms and the setting up of the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

[The memorial statue to the Radium](#) statue with a red homemade knitted

[Girls](#) stands in Ottawa, Illinois, a scarf, to keep her warm in winter.

reminder of the stories of these

young women and their families

who suffered so terribly. The statue

is dedicated not only to the Ottawa

dial-painters, but also to “dial-

painters who suffered

all over the United

States ... in recognition

of the tremendous

p e r s e v e r a n c e ,

dedication and sense

of justice the Radium

Girls exhibited in their

fight”. They will not be

forgotten. At Christmas

time, locals drape the



*“The end of politics is never truly over.”*

*— H. Wilson*

# CULTU

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NATALIE HAYNES



PANDORA'S JAR

WOMEN IN THE GREEK MYTHS

# Book Review

## Pandora's Jar -

## Natalie Haynes

By Mike Stanton

**P**andora's Jar by Natalie Haynes explores the treatment of women in Greek mythology and brings their side of the story to the fore.

Women were second class citizens in Ancient Greece, ahead of the slaves but a long way behind the men. The Myths were even worse. Women were kidnapped, raped and abandoned by gods and heroes alike. They often died a horrible death. So I was ready for a heavy dose of misogyny when I opened the book and Haynes does not hold back.



She also has surprises in store. This is not just a catalogue of victimhood, but also of resistance and revenge. Unlike Haynes, not many of us can read these stories in their many Greek versions or their Latin retellings. And there were many retellings in the 800 years that separated Homer's epic poetry from that of Virgil.

Most of us learned these myths in translation, sometime bowdlerised versions for children in which women were seduced or fell in love, but were never raped, or from more scholarly translations that began to appear from the Renaissance onwards.

The neo-classical revival of the 18th century led to fresh translations. These were usually upper class men who learned Greek and Latin at public school and then continued their studies at the great universities. It is no surprise that they approved of Athenian democracy and saw parallels with their own Houses of Parliament (in both systems women did not have the vote). And they found parallels between the Greeks' battles with "barbarians" and the "civilising mission" of the British Empire. As a consequence many of the

nuances of classical culture were lost as the stories became fixed in the national consciousness.

The long struggle of women, both for the vote and for the right to study and graduate on equal terms with men was only won in the twentieth century. Some were drawn to the classics and noticed how, for all their misogyny, women got a better deal in the originals than they did in the modern retellings. Haynes is one of a number of writers, mostly women, who are producing new translations or are reimagining these stories, placing women centre stage and giving voice to their perspective.

And not before time. The one-sided versions of the myths have pervaded not just our schools and colleges but also the entire range of popular culture. I will leave it to the reader to discover the delight for themselves of how the myth of Pandora's Box has informed our culture from 50s noir to Pulp Fiction; Twilight Zone to Star Trek; and unites Donna Summers and Aerosmith!



The book starts with Pandora and

\*Spoiler Alert\* guess what?

There is no box!

Erasmus mistranslated the Greek word for jar, 'pithos' as box. He may have confused it with 'puxos' which does mean box. Greek vases were narrow at the bases, unstable and easily broken. As Haynes points out, not the most secure vessels for holding all the troubles of the world. But the image of Pandora deliberately opening a box and unleashing those troubles on the



[Pandora](#)

[Dante Gabriel Rossetti](#)

[1871](#)

world is the image that has survived.

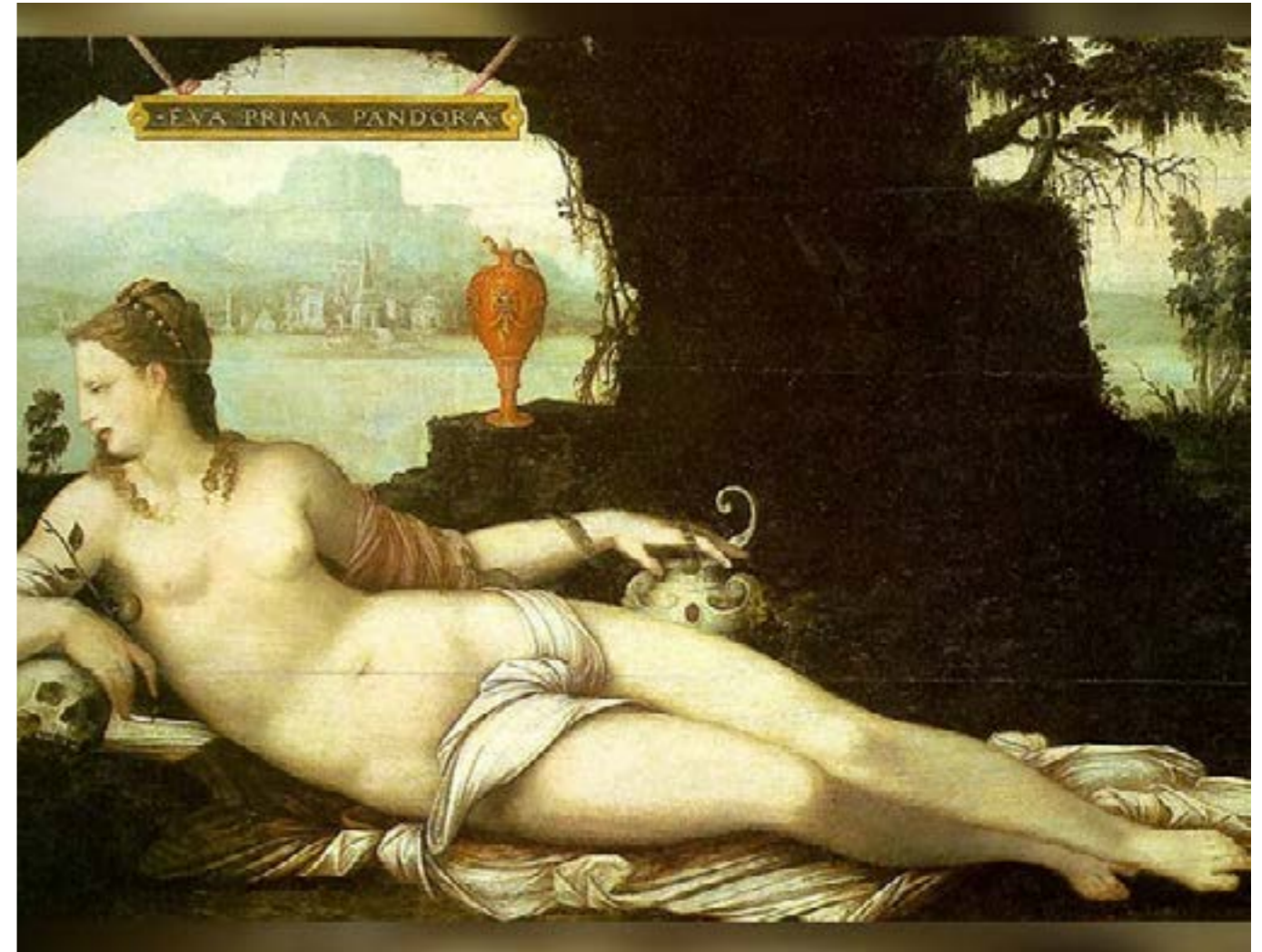
There are other images. For those of us who are somewhat challenged when it comes to close textual analysis of Ancient Greek Haynes provides detailed descriptions of the way the women in these myths have been depicted, from Greek pottery to modern painters. If I have a criticism it is that some of these descriptions are, of necessity, too detailed because there are very few actual illustrations in this book. Each chapter does open with a black and white illustration but if this was down to cost it is was a false economy. I note that Stephen Fry's trilogy: Mythos, Heroes and Troy have lavish colour illustrations. Fry is an entertaining writer. But he lacks the depth of knowledge and the insight that Haynes brings to the subject. I think she deserves better, like most of the women in her book!

So here are the rest of the illustrations that Haynes discusses in the chapter on Pandora. The first one is interesting because it has an urn instead of a box and its title points to the parallels between Pandora and Eve, two women who are blamed for bringing evil into the world of men. Though Milton, in Paradise Lost, sticks up for Eve as being more beautiful than Pandora, even if she is equally blameworthy for the sins of the world.



*More lovely than Pandora, whom the Gods  
Endowed with all their gifts, and O too like  
In sad event, when to the unwiser Son  
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnar'd  
Mankind with her faire looks, to be aveng'd  
On him who had stole Joves authentic fire.*

Pandora was given many gifts by the gods before she was sent to earth. She was specifically created by the gods because Prometheus had tricked the gods and stolen



[Eva Prima Pandora by Jean Cousin 1550 Louvre Collections](#)



Three hundred years later we have another jar, or rather a vase and it looks as if her husband, Epithemus, not Pandora has opened it. It was her gift to him, or rather the gift Zeus gave her to deliver to him.



And all the gods line up to give her gifts. Hermes, the winged messenger of the Gods who is to deliver her to earth places deception in her heart and lies in her mouth.



[Colour image of P6, The Opening of Pandora's Vase by Henry Howard. Unframed view, taken in 2010 for the Public Catalogue Foundation \(Art UK\) oil paintings project.](#)

Zeus's fire and given it to men. Remember Milton's words. Jove is the Latin form of Zeus.

*to be aveng'd*

*On him who had stole Joves authentic fire.*

But who wanted vengeance? Certainly not Pandora. She had only just been born, hammered from the earth. She was deliberately created as the instrument of Zeus' revenge.



[Pot in the Ashmolean Museum](#)



Other gods dress her in pretty clothes and give her garlands before Zeus gives her his gift, his vengeance on the mortal race of men. In modern times we could compare her to a young girl being groomed by terrorists. Yet, somehow all the blame has been laid at her

door. Pandora, she never stood a chance!

So that is Chapter 1. And nine equally cracking chapters to follow. I recommend Pandora's Jar. I bought it as a gift for a friend then had to buy another for myself. I first came across Natalie Haynes on the radio performing her comedy show ["Stand Up for the Classics."](#) Then I heard her speak at the Words by the Water Festival at Keswick where I bought her novel of Troy, "A Thousand Ships." That was in March 2020. It was the last public gathering I attended before the first Covid lockdown. I end with this video of Natalie Haynes introducing Pandora's Jar."

<https://youtu.be/-R141iRh0e4>



[Mixing bowl from the British Museum](#)



## Alive

To be alive on such a day  
When tree shadows dance  
Water shimmers  
The sun shines free  
Is to be alive.

[Fran Johnson](#)

To see clouds fly  
The windblown spray of joyful seas  
Hair streaked out in the breeze  
Is to be alive.

To hear the rasp of bees  
Insects hum  
The fleeting call of a thousand birds  
Is to be alive.

To taste a sun warmed strawberry  
Drink the scent of new mown grass  
To feel a swell of emotion rise  
Want to laugh and cry with the glut of it  
Is to be alive.



[Fran Johnson](#)

## Urban Opportunity

In a concrete jungle where nature had no part in planning  
Man-made curves have sharp edges,  
Windows are uniformly rectangular,  
Paths cross and houses are numbered.  
No Glebe Cottage or Laburnham Villas here  
To smile the memory or help discrimination.

In the concrete jungle, where nature's banished,  
Hidden underground the roots of rebellion gather.  
The cracks and fissures that appear  
Where the baking sun has broken through.

Seeds of opportunity take their chance,  
Impelled by unseen forces.  
The wild green pennant of a leaf, then leaves  
Pioneer their way to the light,  
Quietly blushing the ground.

No one in the sticks would harrow concrete,  
Blunt their blades on a blush, so the grass grows.  
Dragon flies appear, hovering ready to lay their seed.  
Humanity mirrors nature, mirrors humanity.  
The urge for life, growth, individuality and freedom  
Will not be extinguished.



Hope is not a single image. It's a gesture, a colour, a fragment of light, a moment that refuses to disappear. For this edition, we're inviting readers to show us what hope looks like to them—quietly or boldly, literally or abstractly, in people or landscapes or objects that carry meaning that maybe only you can see.

This is our theme, but not our definition. Your interpretation may be entirely different, and that difference is exactly what we want to publish.

Share your photographs with us by uploading to

<mailto:admin@creatingsocialism.com?Subject=Photos>

We'll feature a selection of the most compelling submissions in the next issue.

Let your lens decide what hope is.

# HOPE



by Marilyn Tyzack

