

# Demonised, Blamed, Negated, and Disappeared: The Victimisation of the Poor in the Globalised Economy

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**ABSTRACT** *The first version of this paper was presented by its first author, Dick Blackwell, at the Group Analytic conference “Trauma-Dream-Consciousness: Traumatised Groups-Healing-Identity” in Prague, November 2012. This conference was founded on the question as to how far the Nazi persecution of the Jews might have been anticipated, and it aimed to focus on contemporary minorities likely to become vulnerable to persecution. The first part of this article, until the section on the global political economy, is from the original paper and was written by Dick Blackwell. The article argues that the poor have become a minority who suffer from systemic victimisation with which we all become systemically compromised. We are all fallible and susceptible to both blatant and subtle forms of propaganda and can uncritically accept received versions of reality that are widely shared and endorsed. So in contexts of political oppression we too can become bystanders or collaborators. In our modern globalised world, the poor have increasingly become victimised in specific ways. They are not only impoverished but also blamed for it, while suffering from widespread denial of the reality of their poverty and of their own subjectivity, which negates their existence and denies them any voice. Copyright © 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

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We are all fallible and susceptible to both blatant and subtle forms of propaganda and, therefore, can uncritically accept received, shared, and widely endorsed versions of reality. Thus, in contexts of political oppression, we too can become bystanders or collaborators. In our modern globalized world, the poor have increasingly become victimized in specific ways. They are not only impoverished but also blamed for it, while suffering from widespread denial of the reality of their poverty and of their own subjectivity which negates their existence and denies them any voice.

Around 25 years ago, I (Dick) had a Czechoslovakian friend called Jiri. He was a sculptor who had come to the UK after the Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia in 1968, ending what was widely known (at least in the West) as the “Prague Spring”. That “Prague Spring” was seen as an embodiment of hope for a socialism with a human face; a socialism with individual liberty, artistic freedom, and democratic participation. How far we remain from realizing that dream!

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When giving the paper on which the first part of this article is based, in the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia was divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia on 1 January 1993), it seemed appropriate that I should bring back here my memory of one of Jiri's sculptures, where I suspect it originated. The sculpture was of a human head more than three times the normal size which had no top on it. It had holes for eyes, nostrils, and mouth, and it was empty inside like a large bucket; you could fill it up with whatever you chose. It was mounted on a wheelbarrow frame so that it could be wheeled around and pointed in whatever direction was desired.

It was a very powerful piece of art and I wanted to buy it from him at the time but I had a small flat with no garden and no room for it, as well as insufficient funds to offer him an appropriate price for it. Some years later when I had sufficient space and sufficient funds, I had lost touch with Jiri and despite making inquiries I was unable to locate him and try to buy the sculpture.

Over the years I have often thought of this image. Initially I thought of those who believed in and followed demagogues and ideologies in other countries. Then I thought it could apply much closer to home; to my own society and even to my own professional colleagues, but it took a little longer to realize that it could also apply to smaller groups of which I was a member. It was not just other people who could lose their critical faculties and have their heads filled with propaganda. It could happen to me too.

## COLONIALISM AND CONFORMITY IN OUR SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS

For more than 20 years I have worked with victims and survivors of torture and political violence. At a very early stage I found myself working with an African client who was regularly late for his sessions. I explained this to myself according to the saying reported by some close colleagues, "God gave watches to the English and time to the Africans". There was thus a cultural difference about the meaning of time. One day it occurred to me that back in Africa this man had been a businessman who had regularly travelled abroad. I realized that he must be as capable as me of turning up at the airport in time to catch his flight. So at some point, God must have given him a watch too! Perhaps there was an unconscious reason for his habitual lateness? Perhaps it had something to do with my also having been late for a session with him.

In the organization where I was doing this work, there was a very informal culture. Staff and clients shared a combined kitchen and waiting area. Then the organization had to move to another building where it became possible to have a separate waiting room for clients and a staff room for staff. There were also interpreters, what about them? Where were they supposed to go? Their work seemed to position them between the clients and the therapists. Their language and their culture were mainly the same as that of the clients. They were certainly, for the most part, "others" from the third world; former colonial subjects. So, they were given the existential identity of people, half way between clients and staff, who many of us were not sure what to do with. As I saw it they were quite obviously staff. They came in to do a job, facilitating the therapeutic process, and were part of the team. This view eventually prevailed but not without a struggle. This was a human rights organization.

Some years later, in this same human rights organization, it was my good fortune and privilege to find myself co-ordinating and supervising a team of psychotherapists and counsellors, some of whom were not Westerners. I came to discover that all of those who were not Westerners were at some point asked, in the staffroom, by colleagues who did not yet know them, if they were interpreters. In this way they were assigned, on the basis of their obvious non-Western status, to a category other than professional psychotherapist, counsellor, doctor or social worker.

This is the colonialism of the social unconscious, which we might also call “racism”. It emerges through individuals with the most impeccable liberal attitudes who would be horrified to realize what they were doing – that is perpetuating colonialism through the negation of the postcolonial subject by reminding them that they do not quite belong. This is the social unconscious; this is negation.

After publishing my book on counselling and psychotherapy with refugees (Blackwell, 2005), I was challenged by two colleagues, one Turk, one Iranian, both themselves political refugees. The first told me I had underestimated the impact of racism on refugees in the UK. I protested that I had talked about it but he insisted I was still underestimating it. The other colleague told me I had written about the experiences of the therapists as if they were all white Westerners. Both these criticisms were right. In the second case I had tried to emphasize the importance of the therapist’s political and cultural identity, yet I had failed to recognize how diverse those therapists’ identities were. It is worth wondering whether such challenges could have come from white Western colleagues or whether they were necessarily the product of the marginalizing experiences of people from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, or indeed of the experience of exile.

Around the same time, some 10 years ago, there was a covert coup in the organization and after a few years the new senior management began disappearing members of its own staff. Yet none of us registered what was happening until several colleagues had already disappeared. We were all caught out, empty headed and looking in the wrong direction; so convinced we were going the right way that we were unable for too long to see we had taken a wrong turning, a very wrong turning.

## THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

In 2007, Canadian journalist Naomi Klein published *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. She began by describing the experimental use of electro-shock in the 1950s by a Canadian psychiatrist Ewen Campbell who believed he could erase the mind and rewrite it with a more adaptive script. He also experimented with sensory deprivation to help empty the mind and received funding from the CIA which was interested in the use of shock tactics and other techniques that could disorientate prisoners and “enhance” interrogation. Klein then switched her attention to the development of the neo-liberal economic paradigm at the University of Chicago in the 1950s and ’60s under Milton Friedman. According to this paradigm *everything* must be left to market forces:

Governments must remove all rules and regulations standing in the way of the accumulation of profits ... they should sell off any assets they own that corporations could be running at a profit. And third, they should dramatically cut back funding of social programmes. (Klein, 2007, pp. 56–57)

The problem for the Chicago School, as this group was known, was where to find a government that would put such an extreme programme into practice and where to find a population that would accept it. Since “laissez-faire economics” had produced the great depression of the 1930s it had been superseded by a consensus around the Keynesian model exemplified by Roosevelt’s New Deal and the post-war reconstruction of Western Europe through the Marshall Plan.

The Chicago School focused, for some reason, on Chile, and, having been rebuffed by the University of Chile, found a home for their annex in the Catholic University of Chile. They were thus ideally placed when, after the coup d’état in 1973, General Pinochet found himself without

an economic policy and lacking the economic expertise to develop one, while violently committed to anti-communism and anti-socialism and more than ready to deploy violence and terrorism to remove any obstacles to the development of an anti-socialist economy. Just as the psychiatric experiments had sought to produce empty minds by electro-shock so that they could be re-programmed, so, argued Klein (2007), the shock of a military coup and the accompanying shock provided by death squads and torture, provided a *tabula rasa* for the implementation of an experiment in the pure form of neo-liberal economics. Milton Friedman himself was an early post-coup visitor to Chile, becoming an economic advisor to Pinochet. Chile was the first domino to fall in Latin America, followed by Argentina whose military coup and reign of terror began in March 1976, similarly paving the way for more neo-liberal economic measures.

Much of Klein's (2007) analysis was not new. The *de facto* post Second World War takeover by the USA of the old European empires, exemplified in Vietnam, is well known, as is the problem of formal political independence from colonial powers in the context of the continuance of the colonial economic relationship. So too, the role in this postcolonial world of the imposition and reinforcement of the neo-liberal economic paradigm through the International Monetary Fund and World Bank "structural adjustment programmes" which essentially imposed the model as a condition of financial assistance for postcolonial economic development. We knew that Reaganomics and Thatcherism had advanced this paradigm in the USA and UK. It was also evident that the West had been highly successful in capitalizing on the break-up of the old Soviet Bloc to develop the same economic model with its many opportunities for Western capital. What Klein brought into sharper focus was the overall pattern of capitalizing on crises and social shocks in so many different places and the extent to which the impact of the tsunami in Thailand and Sri Lanka, the killing of Chinese protestors in Tiananmen Square, and the invasion of Iraq all provided further opportunities for multi-national capital investment and development at the expense of local populations and their economic interests. What has developed increasingly is a comprehensively global system of profiteering and domination perpetuated in the name of democracy and freedom but increasingly creating its own categories of victims.

More recently, Klein (2012) reported that in the wake of Hurricane Sandy there have been overtures by various proponents of neo-liberalism complaining about the requirement to pay more than minimal wages to workers on public works projects, and urging the privatization of the repair and reconstruction within "'free trade zones' in which normal regulations, licensing and taxes are suspended" (Retrieved from Internet). She also noted the preparations being made by big corporations to capitalize on climate change by taking over small farms that will not be able to cope with drought and heat stress, and small fishing enterprises that will not be able to cope with rising seas. Then there will be special protection and survival services marketed to the super rich, for example, five-star evacuation services from flood areas and back-up domestic power generators.

While threads of racism and other forms of discrimination run through this new empire, it is, in another sense quite indiscriminate about its victims. Because it is an economic system that essentially transfers wealth from the poor to the rich its victims are essentially the poor, wherever they are and whatever skin colour they have or whatever religion they believe in. Inevitably there are differences based on colour, ethnicity or religion that can be used to discriminate against some groups within the system pushing them towards the bottom. Additionally, the competition for scarce resources that is generated will encourage rivalries between identifiable groups whatever the basis of that identification may be. But, these differences are easier to recognize than the category of "poor". Because some poor people can escape from poverty and because others can

become poor, they are harder to recognize as a victimized group because of their shifting membership and identity.

## **EIGHT FEATURES OF THE GLOBAL NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

Here I identify and briefly describe eight features of the global neo-liberal economic system.

### **Fanaticism**

The neo-liberal paradigm is both fundamentalist and fanatical. It is based on what would appear to be a fanatical belief in the purity of the market which, if it was freed of all constraints, would balance itself out to the ultimate benefit of all. That means that if certain economic measures are not working; e.g., specific cuts in welfare programmes, deregulation of business, and privatization of state-run enterprises, the response is to do more of the same. The only conceivable reason that the model is not working is that there remain imperfections in the market. So further imperfections must be sought out and eradicated: more cuts, more deregulation, more privatization.

### **Redistribution of wealth**

Wealth is inexorably redistributed from the poor to the rich, which thereby produces a harmony of interest between proponents of the model and the rich and powerful. The rich and powerful will generally favour the model because it is in their economic interests to do so and the model will determine that they act according to the furtherance of their interests. For example, tax avoidance is encouraged through the absence of the state interference that might ensure the proper collection of taxes, and through the doctrine that taxes provide a disincentive to “enterprise” and wealth creation.

It is worth noting that since the UK economic crisis began in 2008, the richest 1,000 people in the UK have seen their wealth increase by £155 billion. The total government deficit for which “austerity” is being imposed is £119 billion. It is estimated that 19 US-owned multi-nationals are paying effectively 3% tax on their profits in the UK instead of the standard rate of 26%. Another estimate of the gap between tax owed and tax collected in the UK is £120 billion. In 2012, Starbucks had paid no corporation tax in the UK during the previous three years. Meanwhile an estimated one million children in the UK now live in homes without enough to eat and food banks are mushrooming across the country.

### **Negating the poor**

Because the continuing poverty created by this system is potentially embarrassing and because cutting welfare programmes and other safety nets against poverty and destitution must be justified, the poor must be blamed for their poverty. Categories must be created and labelled such as “welfare scroungers”, “benefit fraud”, and “bogus asylum seekers” which can then be applied to all welfare claimants and asylum seekers. Others who work in low paid jobs or who are unemployed must be labelled as lacking in enterprise or initiative or in willingness to work hard. This echoes the language that used to be applied to colonial subjects and the poor of the third

world. Now affluent Western societies create their own third world in their own cities and treat the inhabitants like colonial subjects.

Additionally, the poor are blamed for economic problems suffered by wider sections of the population, because welfare payments and alleged welfare fraud is claimed to be such a drain on the economy and the “tax payer”.

But importantly, the poor are not just demonized as scapegoats, i.e., blamed for the plight of others. Nor are they just blamed for their own suffering, as in the classic case of blaming the victim. They are negated in so far as the true extent of their suffering from poverty is systematically overlooked, as is their existence as an inevitable product of the economic system. Instead they are constructed as people who are part of the great affluent society who have only to work or study a little harder in order to benefit from it just like the rest of us. Their actual existence and their actuality as human subjects disappears from public discourse and they are left without a voice. Effectively, they are disappeared as people and allowed to emerge back into view only as problems.

### **Defining reality**

The globalized economy defines reality. The paradigm is advanced as the “science” of economics. Through the doctrine of the “end of ideology” or the “end of history” it is claimed to have proven its superiority over all other models, particularly over those that seek to prioritize the welfare of *all* citizens and the care of a society’s weakest and most vulnerable members. It repeats the mantra of TINA, “there is no alternative!”, thereby undermining any hope for something better and discouraging any creative thought about possible alternatives.

In the context of this presumption about reality, the hegemonic ideology of the marketplace permeates much of Western society and its institutions. Competition and the creation of markets is assumed, frequently without question, to be the only path to increased efficiency. The ideas of measurable and predictable outcomes, often in the form of money – cost effectiveness – becomes the currency of education, healthcare, psychotherapy and psychotherapy research, and even the arts. The technology of cause and effect, order and control, diagnosis, treatment and cure, etc. permeate modern psychotherapy.

### **Unconscious resonance**

This system of political economy draws on and resonates with certain conscious, semi-conscious, and unconscious dynamics. The language of “shock therapy” for the economy invokes a medical model and encourages the acceptance of suffering on the understanding that “health” and vitality will be restored, as well as invoking the social type of the all-knowing doctor who knows how to diagnose and cure the patient.

The use of the term “austerity” invokes a sense of stoicism; a macho facing up to tough situations demanding heroic self-sacrifice. The idea of cuts and decisions to close services and effect “painful” solutions resonates with primitive sado-masochistic impulses and desires, while the existence of the super rich feeds fantasies of omnipotent power and inconceivable riches that may be gratified through unconscious identification.

Laub and Auerhahn (1993) suggested that in trauma the internal mother becomes a bystander. We suggest that the image of poverty resonates with images of maternal abandonment and annihilation, making it difficult to think about and engage with except in a rescuer role. It is therefore a ready defence to insist that the poor are responsible for their fate, thereby removing



them from the category of abandoned and helpless; or we may become rescuers campaigning against poverty, which also negates the poor as subjects; or we may promote and support organizations that rescue individuals from poverty and homelessness without significantly addressing the systemic nature of their poverty and deprivation.

Colonialism, and its relationship of colonizer (subject) to colonized (and thereby negated) object, resides in the social unconscious of all postcolonial societies. In the societies of former colonial powers, the poor fall readily into the category of the colonised.

### **Crushing trade unions**

The paradigm has an anomaly; the one freedom that is not permitted in the “free market” is the freedom of workers to organize themselves and seek to advance their own interests collectively. Contrary to its proclaimed opposition to state interference in the marketplace, strong and extensive state intervention is required to limit or destroy trade unions. This ranges from highly restrictive anti-union legislation in the UK to what a Colombian refugee described to me as an unacknowledged genocide of trade unionists in Colombia. Not only are the rights of workers thus denied and destroyed, but so is the possibility that their specific interests as workers and as a “class” might be recognized and expressed.

### **Violence**

Globalization is developed and defended with extreme violence, as we see from the openness with which torture has become practised and justified and the indifference with which civilians have been slaughtered in the so called “war on terror”.

Fanon (1965) argued that the very essence of colonialism was violence. Globalization is effectively the continuation of colonialism in a new form (Blackwell, 2003). Not only are Western economic interests readily advanced through violence, but the economic system itself embodies and reflects that violence. More than 150 years ago, Marx (1978/1853) wrote of colonialism:

Has the bourgeoisie ever affected progress without dragging individuals and peoples through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation? ... [and] “The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies where it goes naked”. (p. 662)

Former Greek Finance Minister, Yanis Varoufakis pointed out recently that in the UK the implementation of “austerity” and the attempt to reduce state expenditure by cutting benefits to the poor, while cutting taxes for the rich, was effectively “class war”. Europe has recently seen the implicit violence of the assault on the Greek economy. Thus we see how the systematic disenfranchisement and impoverishment of the poor is a form of systemic violence, embedded in and enacted through the very structure of the economic system and the enforcement of its rules. The violence of the 2011 urban riots in the UK can be read as an enactment, or re-enactment, this violence, turned against the social order through which it is inflicted (Blackwell, 2015).

### **Destruction of hope**

Hope in the possibility of alternative political-economic forms is routinely crushed by a combination of a definition of reality in which there is no alternative, and the violent attack on

emergent alternative systems such as Cuba, Nicaragua, and, more recently, Venezuela. We may also add the implementation of the International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Programme in Africa and its impact on attempts at what 50 years ago was envisaged as African socialism. The current absence of successful alternatives confirms the view that there can be none and reinforces global compliance.

Such assaults on hope occur not only in what is often called the developing world or third world, but also in Western cities themselves where ghettos of poverty and deprivation are readily created and maintained. Indeed it can be argued that whereas the "third world" previously referred to a separate geographical entity from the Western world and the Eastern Bloc, we increasingly have the same division within most nations and societies. Political and economic elites in the "third world" now wield typically "first world" levels of wealth and power, while the lower classes and underclasses of "first world" nations become increasingly comparable to what Fanon (1965) called the "wretched of the earth". Urban ghettos in the West are significantly populated by the descendants of the formerly enslaved and colonized.

## **KIDS COMPANY**

Kids Company (or "Kids Co") was a UK organization based in London with branches in Bristol and Liverpool. At the time of writing it had just been forced to close, having lost its long-time, annually renewed government grant and failed to raise alternative funds.

It closed amid a public furore, with allegations of financial mismanagement, lack of evaluation, questionable value for money, criticisms by one or two ex-staff, a dissatisfied funder, criticism from Cabinet Office civil servants, and, finally, an allegation of sexual abuse, all swirling around in a media feeding frenzy. Few have questioned the extraordinary coincidence of all these happenings in the space of a few weeks.

Kids Co existed to address the needs of children and young people and their families in our urban ghettos. These are children who are offered little by the statutory provisions, of which they are inevitably sceptical and mistrustful. Some of them are children of drug-addicted mothers, lost fathers, rescued from isolation and meaninglessness by membership in violent gangs, often dealing drugs.

During the time of "compassionate conservatism" when the Conservative Party government governed only by the consent of the Liberal Democrats with whom they had formed a coalition (2010–2015), Kids Company was a flagship for a government initiative called the "Big Society". This involved the belief that private charitable initiatives could fill the gaps in welfare provision left by the shrinking state which, with the increasingly extreme commitment to neo-liberal economic ideology, was continuing to shrink ever more rapidly.

The reality was that, in the words of its founder Camila Batmanghelidjh, Kids Company brought love to individuals and communities where, in the words of the song *Sympathy*, there was not enough love to go round (Brogan & Beebout, 1969). It provided not just services for individuals and families, but a community, a sort of extended family, to which people from deprived and chaotic communities could belong. People struggling to survive economically, to find any sense of identity or self-respect in situations where mothers might experience the need to deal drugs or sell their bodies in order to feed their children, could find both help and a haven. Most importantly, it provided hope in a context of despair. And, as the government's economic policies bit deeper into the lives of the poor, marginalized, and voiceless, Kids Company gave



voice to their existence and their needs through Batmanghelidjh's public criticism of government economic policies and the shortcomings of state provision.

To work with such communities requires active engagement and merging with them. To sit apart like a clinic, with the sort of clear boundaries that might be deemed appropriate in the National Health Service or in a private clinic, would be largely useless. Few members of these communities would attend under such conditions. The traditional blurred boundaries of the therapeutic community as proposed many years ago by Maxwell Jones amongst others, come closer to what is required. Elsewhere, I (Farideh) have described the kind of boundary flexibility needed to work with deprived and chaotic communities, and how the organization itself needs to function on the edge of chaos (Dizadji, 2014). My description of conducting the first part of a supervisory relationship on a street corner gives a flavour of the extent to which the normal boundaries of a supervisory relationship have to be extended. Indeed, for an uninformed observer it may appear that there are no boundaries. Yet they exist, as strong as ever, yet moved and operated in a different way. However, the organization, viewed from the outside, may appear chaotic, unstructured, and disorganized.

It is helpful here to think in terms of an agency with one foot in the "third world" and the other in the realms of standard psychotherapeutic and social work practice, which might be described as "bourgeois professionalism". It is necessary to have staff with street experience and street credibility. Such staff rarely have any professional training in psychotherapy, counselling or social work so they pick up skills on the job. They may be resistant to formal training or even supervision, because they live in a world where such procedures, theories, and structures make no sense, and, in many ways, they are right. Few psychotherapists, and even fewer psychotherapy trainings, have much idea about life in these communities and few areas of psychotherapy have yet begun to explore the racism, colonialism, and class prejudice embedded in the social unconscious of the profession, its institutions, and the wider society. In psychotherapy, as elsewhere, the poor remain negated; however, in this context, we can see why Dizadji's (2014) street corner supervision is a highly appropriate adaptation to the context and a way of siding with the poor and oppressed in their struggle to find some sort of sense of purpose and, if we may use the term, liberation.

In such a situation, the floor is unlikely to be spotlessly clean. If journalists go looking for complaints, allegations, and insinuations, they are not very accomplished muckrakers if they are unable to find any. Moreover, the sort of outcome evaluation and value for money accounting, increasingly beloved of funders and governments, is so transparently inappropriate, that attempts to implement it and to judge the organization accordingly are fraught with difficulty and unreliability. Necessarily, they tend to handicap the work and distort its shape and priorities. A muckraking campaign to take the organization down would not be hard to organize.

The reporting of the situation in the media, even by liberal broadsheets, became preoccupied with the pronouncements of Cabinet Office spokespeople and aggrieved former employees, measured against a mainstream discourse of what charities are supposed to do. Even on the positive side, one of the first voices to be raised in defence of Kids Company came from an eminent white male journalist whose daughter was a volunteer at Kids Company. Only much later was there any extensive engagement with the clients, while still the needs of the community as a community rather than a collection of individual clients are overlooked.

The last voices to be heard are always those of the poor, as UK community activist Bob Holman points out in his regular letters to the British press. It appears to be assumed that, if they allow

themselves to be poor and are unable to make money, then the poor must be in some way deficient and therefore unlikely to have anything intelligent or useful to say.

So the conventional wisdom persists and the marginal identities of the poor are enveloped in and colonised by mainstream assumptions: they can be referred to social services, they can talk to the Children's Commissioner on his help line. Having marginalized and demonized the poor the societal mainstream refuses to recognize their marginalization. So their mistrust and contempt for the state and its mainstream services remains unrecognized, as does their need for an engaged, flexible, and accommodating approach that, while it may require a compromise of traditional white middle-class professional boundaries can actually meet them where they are. If, at some point, in response to such negation, they take to the streets to express their alienation, desperation, despair, and rage, they will be further demonized as they were after the riots of 2011 (Blackwell, 2015).

If we look closely at the funding of Kids Co, we see the extent to which it bent itself to meet the demands for standard forms of evaluation and record-keeping: a fact that seems to have been denied in suggestions about government concerns over value for money. We also see how much of this "evaluation" was inappropriate and irrelevant to the actual work. How does one evaluate the choice of a boy to choose to join an alternative family called Kids Co rather than a street gang? Or that of a woman who declines to sell her body? How can one even know such choices have been made? How can hope or despair be measured in a family or a community? How can love be measured? Oppressed people need opportunities to empower themselves, but how can such opportunity be measured?

This gives us an insight into the extent to which the market model of global neo-liberal capitalism insinuates itself into every corner of our societies. We find it in psychotherapy departments in our national health service, which is itself constantly being cut back and privatized. And we find it in the charity sector, often called the third sector. There is now a marketplace for funding. Charities must enter that marketplace on its terms not theirs. Often they must create special projects because funders like special projects, so they can see what their funding produces and monitor its impact, often in the belief that this impact can be measured in some way. So the whole structure of much charitable work becomes organized around limited term projects provided with specific funding which generates specific, limited term contracts for staff, often leading to chaotic staffing.

In this way, the charity world is effectively controlled and disciplined according to the values and assumptions of the neo-liberal market model. There is no need for direct managerial, governmental or administrative control as the funding market disciplines those seeking to obtain funding.

However, the insinuation of market values goes deeper. Discussion within charities of the funding market and its evaluative procedures requires the use of certain terms and concepts, that is, entry into the language of the neo-liberal economic discourse. Then, as one employee put it, referring to attempts to negotiate with his management in their terms, "Once you start to talk like that, then before you know it, you've started to think like that". Thus the charity world can become inducted, incorporated, marketized, and corporatized into the globalized model. In psychotherapeutic organizations the therapeutic relationship, once regarded as "sacred" by at least some practitioners, becomes infused with corporate values and assumptions. All things can be evaluated, mostly in terms of numbers; goals and outcomes become the primary focus; and homogenized methods supersede creativity, spontaneity and individuality. Mostly it is only in private therapy that it becomes possible to find meaningful alternative approaches. Psychotherapy clients and patients become commodified as does the therapy they are offered and the therapists who practice it.

Dehumanization becomes ubiquitous, both for the poor and those who would serve them or express solidarity with them.

We can draw attention to a further significant process. When an organization such as Kids Company emerges from the needs and desires of a community, it draws on that community's own resources in terms of its people and their perceptions, for example, streetwise kids grow up to become staff members. Then it is significantly incorporated, through government funding and propaganda, into the government's programme with its slogan about the "Big Society" – supposedly demonstrating the "human face of conservatism" and the alleged lack of any need for state intervention because voluntary efforts and the charity sector can fill the gaps. When the government wins a clear majority at the May 2015 elections and no longer needs its coalition with the Liberal Democrats, it can intensify its programme of "austerity" and has less need of the alibi of the "Big Society". With Kid's Company becoming increasingly critical of government policy, it becomes surplus to requirements and can therefore be dropped or, as some might say, taken down.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

At a recent workshop on oppressive processes in benign institutions, promoted jointly by the Institute for Group Analysis and the Centre for Psychotherapy and Human Rights, it was argued that the UK's National Health Service had become permeated by the hegemony of the economic system to the point where people ceased to exist as people but only as resources. (In UK organizations what used to be called personnel departments are now called human resources departments). It recalled for us a summary we once heard of Joseph Stalin's philosophy: "Wherever you have people, you will have problems; so the more people you get rid of, the less problems you will have". We can get rid of people in our own minds by consigning them or their humanity to a sort of internal Siberia.

In 1946 Martin Neimoller famously said:

When they came for the communists, I did not protest, because I was not a communist. When they came for the trade unionists I did not protest, because I was not a trade unionist. When they came for the Jews, I did not protest because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no-one left to protest.

We wonder now, when they are coming for the poor, will we fail to protest because we ourselves are not poor?

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