

**Power sharing and scarcity:
determinative economic master narratives**

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Consider Thomas Carlyle on the glory of Scotland before John Knox:

In the history of Scotland I can find properly but one epoch: we may say it contains nothing of world interest but this reformation by John Knox. [It is] a poor barren country, full of continual broils, dissensions, massacings; a people in the last state of rudeness and destitution, little better than Ireland at this day.

Hungry fierce barons, not so much able to form any arrangement with each other how to divide what they fleeced from these poor drudges, but obliged, as the Columbian Republics are at this day, to make every alteration a revolution; no way of changing a ministry but by hanging ministers on gibbets: this is a historical spectacle of no very singular significance! (Thomas Carlyle, Friday 15th May 1840)¹

Writing in the 19th century about 16th century Scotland, Carlyle sums up the argument of the present essay about Africa today. We submit that peaceful power sharing, albeit with the ever present threat of the use of force, is preferable to persistent war and wrestling over the dubious spoils of corruption and plunder. Squabbling about loot grows no fruit.

If Africa is to survive, as Scotland eventually did after John Knox and others had educated its people, it must reform its methods of power sharing. Proper parliaments are the key to that. Only thus will Africa overcome economic scarcity. There is little economic development without peace, nor yet without proper government.

No one can rule without force, or the threat of force. In addition all rulers must share power. It is possible to rule without legitimacy, but no-one can rule without sharing power. Nor can anyone rule without money. The essential mechanisms of rule, therefore, are *force, power sharing, and money*.

Politics, in short, is about *death, cabals and taxes*. Legitimacy, on the other hand, is merely nice to have. Legitimacy is like love. It is wonderful to be in love, but without love, sex will do. *Illegitimate power remains power*. Consider any illegitimate, octogenarian tyrant who springs to mind.

Both force and power sharing cost money. Armies cost cash. Power sharing always involves money. Whether the transaction is corrupt or not, every power sharing deal has financial aspects to it, if only budgets and salaries. Political analysis begins with adding up the forces and following the money of those who share power. The polity cannot be separated from the economy. Their marriage cannot be put asunder. In the real world all of economics is endlessly intertwined with power, conspiracies, war, death and taxes.

This was the cardinal discovery of the Scottish enlightenment,² which followed the education of the people brought about by John Knox's reformation. Adam Smith taught us that "Hume was the first historian to deduce political effects from commercial and industrial causes".³ We would add, "and vice versa".

But "power sharing" has a tiny meaning and a great one. To "share power" means much more than to form a government of national unity for a "divided society" in a crisis. Power sharing is the endless assembling of the human tools of power for the time being. Power sharing is the negotiating of the identity of the set of temporary rulers, who are agreed on the present particular policy and current programmes of action. Even revolution and war are forms of power sharing. Power sharing is like sex: it goes on all the time, around the world.

Power sharing is the continuous constituting of the state in human form

¹ Thomas Carlyle, "The hero as priest", Lecture IV, Friday 15 May 1840, in *Lectures on heroes* (London, Chapman & Hall, 1888), 293.

² Is the couplet "Scottish enlightenment" a tautology?

³ David Hume, *History of Great Britain: the reigns of James I and Charles I* (ed. Duncan Forbes, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1754, 1970), Smith was wrong that Hume did it first: as we shall see below, Ibn Khaldun did it four hundred years earlier, in Arabic, which seems more difficult to us.

To elucidate the grand meaning of power sharing, consider Tolstoy's writing of how Europe shared its power with Napoleon. In France, "he is needed for a place that awaits him, and so, almost apart from his will, and despite his indecision, his lack of a plan, and all his mistakes, he is drawn into a conspiracy that aims at seizing power, and the conspiracy is crowned with success".⁴ Tolstoy continues:

In 1811 the group that had formed in France unites into one great group with the peoples of Central Europe. The strength of the justification of the man who stands at the head of the movement grows with the increased size of the group. During the ten-year preparatory period this man had formed relations with all the crowned heads of Europe. The discredited rulers of the world can oppose no reasonable ideal to the insensate Napoleonic ideal of glory and grandeur. One after another they hasten to display their insignificance before him...

It is not Napoleon who prepares himself for the accomplishment of his role, so much as all those around him who prepare him to take on the whole responsibility for what is happening and what has to happen. There is no step, no crime, and no petty fraud he commits, which in the mouths of those around him is not at once represented as a great deed. The most suitable fete the Germans can devise for him is a celebration of Jena and Austerlitz. Not only is he great, but so are his ancestors, his brothers, his stepsons and his brothers-in-law. Everything is done to deprive him of his reason and prepare him for his terrible part. And when he is ready, so too are the forces.⁵

This is the great meaning of power sharing: the long years of endless conspiracy by all those who should know better, who share their power to create the monster. Napoleon eventually marches on Moscow and burns it, only to see his armies decimated by general Winterovich. Defeated, he descendeth into Elba; yet he is miraculously resurrected. "All rapturously greet the man they cursed the day before and will curse again a month later".⁶ Once more France shares its power with Napoleon; once more he is destroyed, this time by general Bluecher and Wellington.

Elizabeth Longford writes: "Wellington and Bluecher could communicate only in the language of their common enemy – France. Bluecher repeatedly believed he was pregnant. 'Je sens un elephant la,' he said, pointing to his stomach. This last pregnancy seemed peculiarly ironical since the elephant, he believed, had been fathered on him by a French soldier."⁷

Wellington and Bluecher are unlikely bedfellows but they perforce must share power. Neither on his own can match Napoleon. One hundred and thirty years later the equally unlikely bedfellows, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, have to share power to defeat Hitler and Tojo.⁸ The great meaning of power sharing is titanic and often transnational.

The tiny meaning of "power sharing" concerns the political tie-break. When a society is supposedly very divided; when an electoral outcome is very close; or when one party has the armed forces and the other has the popular support; then calls are made for that form of power sharing known as a "government of national unity".⁹ Consider Ghana in 2008 to 2009 before the final election settled the matter; South Africa from 1984 to 1994 before the sunset clauses settled the matter; Zimbabwe at Lancaster House in 1980; and the unending inanities between Mugabe and Tsvangirai in 2008 to 2009. These are examples of tiny power sharing.

This tiny meaning of power sharing, while important in a particular instance of a state's history as a very temporary, momentary means to avoid war, is a trivial subset, conceptually, of the great meaning of power sharing. It seldom crisply resolves the issue of what the policies should be, except perhaps in a government of national unity in times of external war. It can even encourage civil war by rewarding violence with participation in government.¹⁰

⁴ Leo Tolstoy, *War and peace*, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude (London, Macmillan and OUP, 1942, 1943), 1231.

⁵ Leo Tolstoy, *War and peace*, 1232.

⁶ Leo Tolstoy, *War and peace*, 1234.

⁷ Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: the years of the sword* (New York, Harper & Row, 1969), 482.

⁸ Robin Edmonds, *The big three: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in peace and war* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991, 1992), passim.

⁹ Are all governments of national unity oxymoronic; or are they tautologous?

¹⁰ Denis M. Tull, "The hidden costs of power sharing: Reproducing insurgent violence in Africa", *African Affairs*, 2005, vol.104, no. 416, pp.375 – 98;

The conventional political scientist's understanding of power sharing does not make so firm a distinction between tiny and great power sharing, but rather addresses the formal method. It is best summarised in the remarkable forty years' work by Arndt Lijphart¹¹ He argues that proportional representation, together with consensual, consociational, negotiated inclusions of as many points of view as possible, are essential in what he calls "divided societies". In short, political settlement in "divided societies" should come as close to a government of national unity as is practicable. The present author categorises this as tiny power sharing, noting that inclusion is not the only criterion for judging a system, and recalling that there are infinite ways to skin an onion.

Lijphart makes large claims for his version of power sharing: "In sum, power sharing has proven to be the only democratic model that appears to have much chance of being adopted in divided societies which in turn makes it unhelpful to ask constitution writers to consider alternatives."¹² It is possible that the category *divided society* is less useful in a world where *all* societies are divided, if only on the class lines which tend to be regrettably invisible in Lijphart's work. Anyway, clear policy decisions are often preferable to face-saving "all-inclusive" pretences. All too often tiny power sharing tends to yield a pseudo-government of national disunity, with policy so ambiguous as to be no policy at all.¹³ It puts power into limbo: consider, perhaps, the recent governments of Belgium.

We should recall that the Roman Catholic Church has abolished limbo, as being unproductive. The politics of fudge is too sweet to be useful. Present-day Zimbabwe is perhaps a prime example. The Zimbabwe dollar shows the true value of political fudge. Real decisions are surely preferable.

The great meaning of "power sharing" is central to all of political economy. It derives from the truism that no person can rule others alone. Political power is a shared thing. Political power demands more than ten fingers. Political power is 24/7/365, and 366 each leap year.

An individual sleeps or dies. Political power never sleeps, lest it be stolen by thieves in the night. Churchill slept at noon, in order to be awake for dawn attacks like a true soldier, yet sleep he did. Maggie Thatcher did her best, sleeping only three hours a night, but sleep she must.

So even Churchill and Thatcher had to decide on who was "one of us". True power sharing gets off the fence. It decides who actually rules and with what clear policies. Power sharing defines in and out; sets the pale; determines who *les autres* are. Power sharing enables Cicero's ultimate insult: "*Iste!*" "That man" is not "one of us"! Political power thus demands endless negotiation amongst the many actors, who constitute the state, as well as with, against and amongst the wolves at the door, the potential usurpers. But true power sharing does reach clear decisions which hold for the time being.

The present writer's Oxford mentor, Sammy Finer, phrased it as follows: *simple* power is "the capacity to achieve desired results".¹⁴ Simple power exists in a wide variety of contexts: mothers have power over husbands and babies; soap manufacturers have competing market powers to sell their concoctions; administrators have power to implement existing policy.

But *political* power arises from a *predicament*: What should the common agreed policy be, to be acted upon? This arises both in tyranny and in democracy, because all rulers need others to carry out their policy, to act. If "no man is an island", no person is the state. "Politics therefore connotes a special case in the exercise of power. The case is special because the case that gives rise to action - the *predicament* - is special. Its essence lies, we repeat, in the necessity for a number of actors to agree on a common policy, although initially each or some of them advance policies which preclude other policies which are being put forward."¹⁵

Stalin's hangman, Yagoda, for example, had to agree to Stalin's proposed policy before the Soviet state carried it out, because the actor was Yagoda, not Stalin. Stalin liked agreeable hangmen; yet even he had to get them to agree to act. Donald Rayfield writes:

<http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/104/416/375>.

¹¹ Arndt Lijphart, *Thinking about democracy: power sharing and majority rule in theory and practice* (London, Routledge, 2008). Articles originally published from 1969 to 2004, re-published as a book in 2008 with an introduction and conclusion, passim

http://books.google.co.za/books?id=YC_EvUn5inkC&dq=lijphart+power+sharing&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=ZfILYq_gxi&sig=ZlxFqpkhpzv7aPU7kPZViuUzdU4&hl=en&ei=dBi-Sc6yCtW4-QaHp7zJBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=5&ct=result#PPP6.M1.

¹² Arndt Lijphart, *Thinking about democracy*, chapter 5, originally published 2004, 77.

¹³ Ian S Spears, "Africa: the limits of power sharing", *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, pp. 123-136, abstract. http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.3spears.html.

¹⁴ S E Finer, *Comparative government* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970), 12-13.

¹⁵ S E Finer, *Comparative government*, 15.

“Stalin’s cronies were chosen on the same principle that a lion tamer chooses his lions. ‘The lion that is most amenable is the omega animal’, as Yann Martel’s hero remarks in the *Life of Pi*. Generally Stalin reciprocated the loyalty of his omega animals; they remained in post even if they lost wives, brothers and friends to the GULAG and the executioner.”¹⁶ But Yagoda too got his comeuppance in the end.

All politics, whether in the formation of a cabinet and in the choice of the top civil servants in a democracy, or in the corralling of the apparatchiks’ cabal in a dictatorship, requires this omega loyalty to the policy to be shared. If Michels’s *iron law of oligarchy* holds, power sharing is the formation of the club in which Oleg meets Archy. Napoleon would have lied had he said, as did Louis XIV, “*L’état c’est moi*.” Napoleon needed his bean counters, his assassins and Marshal Ney. He also needed all the weak kings of Europe who conspired to kiss his feet. Consider, too, a man called Adolph and his generals.

“HITLER:

‘You know that Fieldmarshal Kluge committed suicide. There are strong reasons to suspect that had he not committed suicide, he would have been arrested anyway. The trial at the People’s Court was interrupted yesterday.

I personally promoted him twice, gave him the highest decorations, gave him a large estate so he could have a permanent home, and gave him a large supplement to his pay as a Fieldmarshal

If it ever came out that Fieldmarshal Kluge intended not only to surrender the entire forces in the West but also intended himself to go over to the enemy, it might not lead to the complete demoralisation of the German people, but it would certainly foster a contempt for the Army’.

(3.35 PM, 31 August 1944, in conference with Keitel, Klebs and Westphal)¹⁷

Hitler, Charlie Chaplin’s *Great Dictator*, had not only to share power, status and decorations with his generals and state officials; he also had to bribe them with economic rewards well beyond the rate for the job. Worse, he had to keep them bribed. As soon as they received a better offer, all previous deals were off. This is much like the case of a Democratic Alliance leader leaving that party to become an ambassador in 21st century South Africa.

No person governs alone. Machiavelli wrote: “The first opinion that is formed of a ruler’s intelligence is based on the quality of the men he has around him ... The prince should pay the minister honour, enrich him, put him in his debt, share with him both honour and responsibilities.”¹⁸ All rulers must share power and money endlessly, if they are to continue to govern. Machiavelli went on to point out that if the Prince stops sweetening the minister or vice versa, “the result is always disastrous for both of them”.¹⁹ The case of Hitler and Fieldmarshal Kluge is merely one of millions of such cases in history. A minute’s thought might yield South African examples.

Politics is nastier than business. The sanctity of contract does not extend as far as power sharing. All political agreements are infinitely renegotiable; and cash somehow changes hands more often than not. This creates the opportunity for the trap. A seemingly legitimate power sharing payment today becomes a corrupt bribe for prosecution tomorrow. The trap happens in every country on earth. Without commenting at all on the merits of the particular case, note that the following two stories from Japan epitomise the link between power sharing and money. They also illustrate the opportunity for the trap.

“Ozawa says aide’s arrest was an abuse
Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa denies his chief secretary knowingly accepted illicit donations from a contractor and accuses prosecutors of engaging in ‘wrongful exercise of authority’.”²⁰

¹⁶ Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and his hangmen: an authoritative portrait of a tyrant and those who served him* (London, Penguin, 2004, 2005), “Iagoda’s Rise”, 196.

¹⁷ Felix Gilbert (ed.), *Hitler directs his war* (New York, OUP, 1950), 101-102.

¹⁸ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The prince*, transl. George Bull (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1512, 1640, 1961), 124.

¹⁹ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The prince*, 125.

²⁰ <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090305a1.html>

DPJ's way out is to pick new boss

The Democratic Party of Japan can prevent the unfolding donation scandal from damaging its election chances if Ozawa quits his post, political experts say.²¹

"*Habeo capitem crinibus minimis.*"²² "I have his head by the short hairs." The bait is set; "the bleating of the kid excites the tiger";²³ the tiger eats; and bang! The tiger is shot dead at his table. *Skandel!* So sad. What a pity. "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*"²⁴ It is all set out in Rudyard Kipling's children's books.

Then again, morality begins at home. Just as the post-war German soldier was taught to obey *inner fruehling*, his own internal morality which must justify his disobeying manifestly illegal orders, any politician needs her own moral compass. Faced by the trap, the answer must be no. Shake the head, not the tempter's hand. Nevertheless, power sharing inevitably involves trust, even in dangerous precincts. Dieter Gerhard, the spy in the Apartheid navy,²⁵ taught the present writer while in prison: "Trust your granny, after she is dead. Trust no-one else." Gerhard perchance had reason to know this. Despite this, she who will rule must temporarily trust those with whom she shares power. There is no option. Chaka had to trust his granny, alive, or kill her.

All governments embody power sharing. Augustus Caesar with Agrippa and Mycaenas;²⁶ Eleanor of Aquitaine with her two kingly husbands, Louis and Henry, as well as with her two crowned sons, Richard and John;²⁷ Edward I Plantagenet,²⁸ Tamerlane,²⁹ Elizabeth of England;³⁰ Catherine of Russia;³¹ Louis Quatorze;³² Muhammad Ali of Egypt;³³ Napoleon;³⁴ Wellington;³⁵ Chaka; the Mings; the Tangs; the Kaisers; Hitler;³⁶ Stalin;³⁷ Beria;³⁸ Churchill;³⁹ Tojo;⁴⁰ Theodore Roosevelt;⁴¹ Nehru; Meir; Verwoerd; Thatcher;⁴² Mengistu; Major; Mugabe; Hirohito the God; and Mandela the Saint: *all of these perform shared power.*

We have all too quickly forgotten that Saint Nelson Mandela shared power deeply with Thabo Mbeki. Mandela was plainly the more saintly for it. The severe problems of Aids denial, Sarafina; Virodene; and Shaik's corruption all happened when Nelson Mandela was president. Mandela was *responsible* for them all as president, but, "Lo, MacCavity's not there!"

²¹ <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090305a2.html>

²² Rudyard Kipling, "A little prep", in *Stalky and Co* (London, Macmillan, 1929), 175.

²³ Rudyard Kipling, "The moral reformers", in *Stalky and Co*, 148.

²⁴ Rudyard Kipling, "In ambush", in *Stalky and Co*, 36.

²⁵ Remarkably, it would seem that Gerhard never lived. His name is absent from the index of Rear Admiral C H Bennett SAN (Retired) and Rear Admiral (Junior Grade) A G Soderland, *South Africa's Navy* (Simon's Town, SA Navy, August 2008), 229, whereas the names of many other apartheid era figures are present.

²⁶ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillius, *The twelve Caesars*, translated Robert Graves, Michael Grant (ed.), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957, 1989), 74, 95.

²⁷ Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the four kings* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard U P, 1950, 1976), passim.

²⁸ Agnes Mure Mackenzie, *The kingdom of Scotland: a short history* (Edinburgh, Chambers, 1940, 1948), 70-95.

²⁹ "The world will strive with hosts of men-at-arms to swarm unto the ensign I support", Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part I, Act II Scene ii, lines 13-14 (London, Arnold, 1967), 30.

³⁰ "Elizabeth had Cecil sworn as a member of her Council. 'This judgement have I of you, that you will not be corrupted by any manner of gift, and that you will be faithful to the State, and that without respect of my private will you will give me that counsel that you think best.'" JE Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (London, Cape, 1934), 62.

³¹ Tibor Szamuely, *The Russian tradition.*, Edited and with an introduction by Robert Conquest (London, Fontana, 1974, 1988), 153-155; 167-169.

³² "Saint-Simon worshipped the king in spite of himself, while detesting his policy of governing through the bourgeois ministers and of abasing the ancient aristocracy." Nancy Mitford, *The Sun King* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1966), 146.

³³ "Mehmet Ali's great strength lay in the devotion of the citizens of Cairo, who looked on him as their future deliverer from all their afflictions; and great numbers armed themselves, advising constantly of Mehmet Ali, and having the seyid 'Omar and the sheikhs at their head." Reginald Stuart Poole, "Egypt", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. (Edinburgh, Adam & Black, 1877), vol. VII, 762.

³⁴ Leo Tolstoy, *War and peace*, 1231-1234.

³⁵ Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: pillar of state* (Frogmore, Panther, 1972, 1975), 202-203.

³⁶ Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler myth: image and reality in the Third Reich* (New York, OUP, 1987), passim, illustrates that even Hitler, with his undoubted popular charismatic abilities, had always to assemble and reassemble a ruling coalition of actors.

³⁷ Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and his hangmen: an authoritative portrait of a tyrant and those who served him* (London, Penguin, 2004, 2005), passim.

³⁸ Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and his hangmen*, "Beria shares power", 379-395.

³⁹ John Colville, *The fringes of power: 10 Downing Street diaries 1939-1955* (New York, Norton, 1985), passim.

⁴⁰ Edwin P Hoyt, *Warlord: Tojo against the world* (New York, Cooper Square Press, 1993, 2001), "The limits of power", 89-96.

⁴¹ Kathleen Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: a strenuous life* (New York, Vintage, 2002, 2004), 202.

⁴² "The dedication of this volume [to Sir Keith Joseph] records a debt which is acknowledged but can never be repaid", Margaret Thatcher, *The path to power* (London, Harper Collins, 1995), xiv.

Thabo Mbeki shared his bed of nails, midnight-surfing the web with Essop Pahad; Kgalema Motlanthe has his *sotto voce* Ahmed Kathrada; Jacob Zuma might yet have his Ebrahim Ebrahim as his minister in the presidency. Perhaps, with the Cloetes and the Van der Bijls of 18th century Cape Town, Helen Zille speaks only to God. Time will tell. The four-term Democratic president Franklin D Roosevelt appointed two Republicans, Stimson and Knox, to head the War and Navy Departments; they in turn appointed those they trusted. "The top civilian staffs of the two principal departments for conducting the war were Republican in a Democratic administration."⁴³ Even Rumsfeld and Cheney shared power,⁴⁴ grumbling all the while. Barack Obama embedded Hilary Clinton, *mirabile dictu*. Power means sharing. There is no other way to govern, unless a human be invented who never sleeps and can be everywhere at once. Angelina Jolie can do all that; yet even she has Bad Pritt.

Government is a steering, a balancing of human social systems. This cannot be done today without *handlangers, luistervinke, impimpi*, shamans, priests, actuaries, enforcers, executioners, executives, thugs, human resources practitioners, spies, spin doctors, assassins, bankers, lawyers and those faith-based forecasters we name economists. Power, by definition, has to be shared with all these and more, if humans are to be governed. All power sails in a sea of anarchy; all legitimacy and all constitutions are the products of revolution and mayhem; all peace results from war. Following Lenin, all that is at issue regarding power is *who, whom?* Following the ancients, all that is at issue is *qui bono*, who benefits? This is Lenin's thesis in different words.

But be Lenin as he may, whether Sally does Solly or Solly does Sally, whether power is inherited, autocratic, bureaucratic, meritocratic, kleptocratic, democratically legitimated, divinely ordained or obtained by gross bodily harm, power is forever both ephemeral and shared. In war, as in peace, all governments share power; and they all pray endlessly that it lasts until tomorrow, just as an atheistic Karoo farmer prays for rain. When shall come the storm? The question "when?" destroys politics just as it destroys economics.⁴⁵ What is the time horizon? All power rots; all money rots. All we need ask is "when?"

So long as there is no international government; so long as there is anarchy between states; so long can there be no permanent local, municipal, domestic law in one state either. Just as there are *frontieres sans medecins*, so politics has few real frontiers. Many non-governmental organisations are financed by other countries' governments for governmental purposes, not all of them benign.

Things fall apart. Unannounced, and confused with the ordinary, war will fly in a window on a lazy September day. From confusion to fusion: the next nine-eleven will be nuclear, of course. No one knows where or when except the wolves, and they won't tell. But it is coming, as surely as the gentle rain. *He who takes to the nuke shall die by it*, as The Man did not say.

"I am become death, destroyer of worlds,"⁴⁶ in the words of the ultimately civilised nuclear incinerator of cities, J Robert Oppenheimer. As infinitely refined as weapons-grade uranium, the apotheosis of five thousand years of scientific progress, Anglo-American Judeo-Christian democracy is made Shiva incarnate by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Who, whom? Churchill's English-speaking peoples nuked; and because they nuked, they rule the planet. Now there is a South Sea bubble to pop, with or without ethical free informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and referral to professional health caregivers in case of distress.

"Who nukes whom?" as Vladimir Ilych did not say. The odds are still overwhelmingly on the English-speaking peoples nuking the others again. We, after all, have more nukes than the others; and we are the only ones with practice. See the eminently civilised American literatus Paul Fussell in his work, *Thank God for the atom bomb*. "I say that its purpose was political and military, sadistic and humanitarian, horrible and welcome. I observed that those who deplore the dropping of the bomb absolutely turn out to be largely too young to have been killed if it hadn't been used."⁴⁷

Did the Normans stop their expansion at Big Sur after the genocide of the Native North Americans in the 1880s; or did they stop in the Philippines in 1904 after the genocide there?⁴⁸

⁴³ Paul A Koistinen, *Arsenal of World War II: the political economy of American warfare, 1940-1945* (Lawrence, U P of Kansas, 2004), 500-501.

⁴⁴ George Tenet with Bill Harlow, *At the center of the storm: the CIA during America's time of crisis* (New York, Harper Perennial, 2007, 2008), 170.

⁴⁵ The idea of the destruction of economics by the question, "When?" was first introduced to the present author by Joan Robinson during an unusual lecture in Oxford, circa 1976.

⁴⁶ Peter Goodchild, *J Robert Oppenheimer: shatterer of worlds* (New York, Fromm, 1980, 1985), 162.

⁴⁷ Paul Fussell, *Thank God for the atom bomb and other essays* (New York, Ballantine, 1981, 1988), 28.

⁴⁸ Ed Cray, *General of the army: George C Marshall, soldier and statesman* (New York, Cooper Square, 1990, 2000), 33-34.

The Normans stopped after neither genocide; nor did they stop at Nagasaki. We English-speaking peoples, inheritors of Edward I Plantagenet, “with a violent greed”,⁴⁹ will drop the bomb again.

But we too will crumble, in the end. All political power comes to pass. Power cannot be stored forever, not even in plutonium. Nor, in the end and rendering unto Caesar, can there be any permanent money as a store of value over any significant time. This is the Law of the Inevitable Ephemerality of the Confederate Dollar.

All gold turns biblically to dross; all Rhodesian dollars become Zimbabwean; all Money Fiats are Ford Edsels. The only issue is when. Power sharing always has financial costs. The economic rewards are ever temporary. Power and money are always Hobbesian: “nasty, brutish and short”. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote to Gobineau in 1855 about the decadence of certain Asiatic powers, “a decadence which, as it has already delivered some, may deliver all of them to the domination of our little Europe, which so often trembled before them in the past”.⁵⁰

And so it came to pass; by the time of the Peace of Vereeniging, Europe had colonised all. Europe owned the “Asiatic” world in 1902. Yet within another fifty years Europe had eaten itself. Europe too was on its knees, this time praying before America and Asia. By April 1945, Stalin’s “Asiatic” Red Army was raping a completely inadequate revenge in Berlin for the untold German atrocities in the East.⁵¹ A few months later Stalin conquered Peking, Darien, Port Arthur, Southern Sakhalin, the Kuriles and half of Korea, in a lightning attack “which made Hitler’s Blitzkrieg look like a horse and cart operation”.⁵²

On 2 April 1945 Adolf Hitler predicted the Cold War: “[T]here will be only two powers in the world that can face each other on the basis of equal strength: the USA and Soviet Russia. The laws of history dictate that these two colossuses will test their strength, whether militarily, or just economically and ideologically.”⁵³ To defeat Stalin’s system, America recreated Western Europe more in America’s shape, stabilising it militarily and forcing peaceful power sharing. “Western Europe was able to make use of this unaccustomed stability to surge forward on a wave of economic development on a scale beyond anything that Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin could have conceived.”⁵⁴

It may be claimed that nuclear weapons brought about the first fifty years of peace in Europe since Adam and Eve. Equally it may be claimed that the only way to stop Europe fighting itself was for the Americans and the Soviets to occupy Europe with conventional forces for fifty years. In reality both were needed: the ever present threat of nuclear annihilation *and* almost complete occupation by foreign forces finally pacified Europe and brought prosperity.

The lesson for Africa of the first fifty years of peace in Europe in five thousand years is that successful peaceful power sharing helps to eliminate scarcity. Fewer people starve in peace than in war. At the end of those fifty years of Western European peace, the West won the Cold War. Stalin’s system was crushed. At the same time apartheid was found to be no longer useful to the West; and apartheid too was therefore destroyed. Apartheid and its pass laws were Britain and America’s quaint forced labour system for the ultra-cheap mining of Cold War minerals (gold, diamonds, coal and, above all, uranium).⁵⁵ For this reason apartheid was exactly co-terminus with the Cold War. The Berlin Wall fell; and Nelson Mandela was released. Apartheid died with the Cold War which had caused it.

“Whatever dies was not mixed equally,” quoth John Donne. As ye sow, so shall ye reap? The last shall be first and the first shall be last. *Übermenschen* become *untermenschen*, as the night follows the day. The wheel turns. There are cycles. To everything there is a season, and a time and purpose under heaven. This is the only deterministic political economic master narrative.

Wise Kipling taught Great Britain to her considerable surprise, at the height of her splendour in 1897, that she too would wither and whimper:

⁴⁹ Agnes Mure Mackenzie, *The kingdom of Scotland*, 51.

⁵⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European revolution and correspondence with Gobineau*, edited and translated by John Lukacs (New York, Doubleday, 1959), 267.

⁵¹ Max Hastings, *Armageddon: the battle for Germany 1944-1945* (London, Pan Macmillan, 2004), 551-560.

⁵² Ian V Hogg, “The war Against Japan”, in S L Mayer (ed.), *The Russian war machine 1917 - 1945* (London, Bison, 1977), 242.

⁵³ Niall Ferguson, *The war of the world: history’s age of hatred* (London, Penguin, 2007), 591.

⁵⁴ Robin Edmonds, *The big three*, 464.

⁵⁵ As a teenager, the present author saw many passbooks in the Black Sash Advice Offices in Johannesburg, stamped by the labour officers for work in “mines and farms only”; see also Sheena Duncan, “Memorandum on the pass laws and influx control”, *Sash*, vol. 16, no. 8, February 1974, 12 and passim.

Far called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!⁵⁶

Like money, power and empires, economic theory and practice have a short half-life. Joan Robinson remarks: “It has generally been the fate of economics to run a losing race against the course of history, and never to have completed the analysis of one phase of economic development before another takes its place.”⁵⁷ She was speaking of the discipline, of course. Like other disciplines, economics is incarnate in human flesh, contrary to public rumour. Whether, with Keynes, in the long run economists are all dead, their dogmas die seasonally, like flies. The *Proverbs* are with us always; economics comes to pass.

These passings of Great Economics happen in the northern autumn. The South Sea bubble popped in October 1720; the Great Crash occurred in October 1929; the Thousand-Year Boom collapsed in October 2008. With each crash, the existing economics is shattered too. The ruling economics is the economics of the rulers. Economics justifies the current class’s rule, tolerating no heretics. Economics props up Prince Rupert.⁵⁸ As Paul McCartney’s frogs sing to his animated Rupert Bear, “We’ll all stand together!” It is possible that the ruling economics is first created by and then inflates each bubble. If so, then both bubble and dogma must pop together. The bubble and its economists lose their hot air in the same instant. “We’ll all pop together!” Not for nothing is the Eton College Prefects’ Club known as Pop.

Alexis de Tocqueville says this of politics: “Every government gives rise to its own sophists, who during the very time of its own mortal illness are busy proving that it is immortal.”⁵⁹ Just so with economics: the most recent collapse destroyed many favoured neo-classical economic mantras (although the *reputations* of economists are indestructible, much like those of estate agents in sub-prime housing areas?).

⁵⁶ Rudyard Kipling, “Recessional 1897”, *Rudyard Kipling’s verse: inclusive edition, 1885-1918* (London, Hodder & Stoughton), 377.

⁵⁷ Joan Robinson, *An essay on Marxian economics*, 2nd ed. (London, Macmillan, 1940, 1966, 1969), 92.

⁵⁸ Prince Rupert was the ineffective general of Charles I who was defeated by general Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell at Marston Moor and again at Naseby. See Lord Acton, *The Cambridge modern history*, edited by A W Ward, G W Prothero & Stanley Leathes, vol. IV, *The Thirty Years’ War* (Cambridge, CUP, 1906), 322 and 331-333. Cf. the delightful habit of British private soldiers, who have referred to their officers as “the Ruperts” ever since the time of Prince Rupert, in honour of his Cavalier incompetence. This has a special poignancy in South Africa, where the Rupert tobacco family has so far held on to its ill gotten apartheid and carcinogenic gains.

⁵⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European revolution*, 166.

Overheard in the Lubianka, 1938:
"No, no, not the whip! Anything but the whip!"
"Anything?"
No, no! The whip, the whip!

Overheard in the Washington Consensus, 1998:
"No, no, not nationalisation!"
Anything but nationalisation!"

Overheard in every cabinet and bank on earth, October 2008:
"Anything?"
"No, no! Nationalisation, nationalisation!"⁶⁰

"We told the Asians that they had to be willing to let banks and companies fail," said Jeffrey Garten, a professor at the Yale School of Management and a top official in the Clinton administration. "We warned that there was great moral hazard if governments just bailed them out ... And now," he said, "we are doing the polar opposite of our advice."⁶¹

Overheard in the Washington Consensus, 1998:
"Governments cannot create jobs."

Overheard at the inauguration of the 44th president of the United States, 2009:
"We will act ... to create new jobs."⁶²

Economic determinism, in the simplistic sense of the inevitability of the passing of capitalism and the coming of proletarian rule, was given a bad name in the Cold War. Like Apartheid, it crumbled into the dust of history with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In its turn, neo-classical economics crashed and burned in October 2008. Simplistic Nobel-Prize-winning econometric derivatives markets models collapsed and died as the bubble burst. Such models could not foretell the infanticide, the untimely ending of the Thousand Year Boom.

The essence of *fin de millennium* economics was the assumption of rational expectations married to the duty to exhibit capitalist revolutionary optimism. *It was rational to expect that United States housing prices would always go up!* On this rational expectation, for example, the risks of most of the world's insurance and banking systems were reinsured by the world's largest insurer, the American International Group (AIG). AIG was underpinned by mortgages on the United States housing market, whose prices would always go up. Entirely rationally, AIG won AAA credit ratings. In turn, triple A ratings could effectively be traded in secondary markets and they permitted previously unheard-of gearing ratios. AIG was given a license to print money, which flooded the world in the Thousand Year Boom.⁶³ Plantagenet greed, expressed in key performance indicators for bonus payments to insurers and bankers, thus demanded a leveraging of capital, which was only capital so long as United States housing prices continued to rise. AIG, a reinsurer with a duty to ultimate caution, was permitted by lax regulatory systems to take risks which would make even a wild investment banker blush. "Like everyone else on Wall Street, AIG operated on the belief that the underlying assets – housing – could only go up in price."⁶⁴ Magically, every risk on earth was rationally turned into a triple A credit rating!

In October 2008 it dawned on the world that United States house prices were going down. First the investment banks collapsed; then the other banks, the insurers and the re-

⁶⁰ For example, "Royal Bank of Scotland faces full state takeover", *Weekly Telegraph*, 22 January 2009, 1; and "Failure over crazy borrowing: deputy admits Bank of England underestimated boom time dangers", *Weekly Telegraph*, 24 December 2008, 1. Will Citibank Group or Bank of America have so little capital that they must be nationalised? See Eric Dash, "Growing worry on rescue takes a toll on banks", *New York Times*, 20 February 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/21/business/economy/21bank.html?>; see also Julia Werdigier. "Britain takes control of Lloyds in £260 billion bailout", *International Herald Tribune*, 6 March 2009, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2009/03/06/business/lloyds.php>.

⁶¹ David E Sanger, "Nationalization gets a new serious look: is the president prepared to nationalize a huge swath of the banking system?" *New York Times*, 26 January 2009, A1, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/26/business/economy/26banks.html?>

⁶² "In full: Barack Obama's inauguration speech", *The Times*, London, 21 January 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/us_elections/article5554819.ece.

⁶³ Joe Nocera, "Propping up a house of cards", *New York Times*, "Talking business", 27 February 2009, pdf version.

⁶⁴ Joe Nocera, "Propping up a house of cards".

insurers. AIG was in due course to report the largest quarterly loss in all of history.⁶⁵ Lending stopped. No bank could rationally trust a sister bank. This was perhaps an “economically determined master narrative”. The Law of Economic Gravity destroyed modern economics. What goes up must come down. Yes, it may go up again; but who knows when? As we might entirely rationally have expected, based on the interaction of gravity and US housing prices, modern economics was proven equal to astrology or the tea leaves of Madame Zwingli.

But politics and economics still intertwine in real history. We are left with the class-based works of the Classical Political Economists, running from Adam Smith, Ricardo, Hume and Malthus to the likes of Mill and Marx.⁶⁶ Why ever did we leave them? We will see that the only determinative narratives of classical political economy are those that ride in cycles: the four horsemen of the apocalypse. At the core of classical political economy are class analysis into masters and servants; population demography;⁶⁷ the division of labour; productivity, science and the machinery question; production and scarcity; politics and taxes; debt and war.

Central to Adam Smith are both class struggle and war: those two things which are ruthlessly censored from all modern economics text books. War trumps all, but it is as hidden in neo-classical economics as class struggle is.⁶⁸ By contrast, all good economic history notices the existence of war.⁶⁹ For that matter, had the economists of the recent bubble read economic history, they might have noticed the importance of *probity* in banking.⁷⁰ Why do economists not read economic history?

War and money are inextricably linked. There are ten million Confederate dollars on offer to anyone who disproves the centrality of war to economics. War destroys the value of the currency of the losers faster than the World Trade Centre disappeared on nine-eleven. War creates debt, faster than big bunnies make little bunnies. Adam Smith reminds us that the security of revenue of loan debt between states depends “upon the certainty or probability of the continuance of peace with the debtor nation. In case of a war the very first act of hostility of the debtor nation might be the forfeiture of the funds of its creditor.”⁷¹

Smith goes on to tell us that “War and the preparation for war are the two things which in modern times occasion the greater part of the expense of all great states.”⁷² Fittingly, the final (if perhaps least quoted) chapter of *Wealth of nations* is about public debt and war. Its thesis is that “*The want of parsimony in time of peace imposes the necessity of contracting debt in time of war.*”⁷³ This 1776 sentence of Adam Smith’s almost exactly reproduces Ibn Khaldun’s 1377 analysis of the death of dynasties, which we describe below.

In 2009, as the governments of the world donate trillions of borrowed dollars to toxic bankers, they should perhaps reread Adam Smith and ponder how they will finance the war that is to come. Sometime after the end of the Thousand Year Boom will come the end of the Thousand Year Peace as surely as humans are mortal and Cain killed Abel.

The externally suggested title of the present work speaks of “determinative economic master narratives”. Because the proper definition of the future is “that which we are not permitted to know” (*nescilicet*), and insofar as political economy gazes into what is to come, very little is economically predetermined. The moving finger, having writ, then insists, and promptly gets a repetitive stroke injury.

But we do know that all things move in particular waves.⁷⁴ What goes up must come down, and vice versa; and so on *ad infinitum*. All that matters is when. Those who know when, get rich; but no one stays rich forever. The only “determinative economic master narratives” of lasting quality are those of the *cycles* of political economy,⁷⁵ those which produce death by plague, famine and war; and yet life goes on anew. We are dealing with peristalsis. *Peristalsis*

⁶⁵ Joe Nocera, “Propping up a house of cards”,

⁶⁶ Joseph A Schumpeter, edited from manuscript by Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter, *History of economic analysis* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1954, 1967), remains the summative classic; see also Mark Blaug, *Economic theory in retrospect* (Cambridge, CUP, 1954, 1967).

⁶⁷ Joseph A Schumpeter, edited from manuscript by Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter, *History of economic analysis*, chapter 5.

⁶⁸ Anthony Giddens, “States and military power in social theory”, in Lawrence Freedman (ed.), *War* (Oxford, OUP, 1994), 112.

⁶⁹ David Landes, *The wealth and poverty of nations: why some are so rich and some are so poor* (London, Abacus, 1998, 1999), 171, 248, 257, 332, 340, 369, 376, 432, 482.

⁷⁰ David Landes, *The wealth and poverty of nations*, 261.

⁷¹ Adam Smith, *Wealth of nations* (New York, Collier, 1776, 1909), book V Chapter 11, 471.

⁷² Adam Smith, *Wealth of nations*, 472.

⁷³ Adam Smith, *Wealth of nations*, 551.

⁷⁴ “Particular waves” is a pun in physics.

⁷⁵ For Von Hayek’s linking of the Austrian theory of capital to the business cycle, see Mark Blaug, *Economic theory in retrospect* (Cambridge, CUP, 1954, 1967), 540-546.

is “the forcing onward by waves of contraction, as the alimentary canal and other organs do their contents”.⁷⁶ From peristalsis comes the phrase “economic analysis”. The end of all political economic peristalsis is death, which brings new life: a resurrection, so to speak.

The seven fat years and the seven lean years are biblical. The *cycles* of political economy, the inevitable growth of muscle which turns to fat which bursts as a bubble, were earliest and perhaps best described by Ibn Khaldun in 1377, as the Black Death swept away the Golden Age of Islam before his very eyes.⁷⁷ He saw this clearly as an economic growth process which becomes both political and military, as it burgeons, pops and wrecks the ruler. The bubble bursts; luxury can no longer be afforded; but the dynasty collapses also because it can no longer sustain war.

Early desert toughness produces sedentary city folk who get rich and forget true discipline. The boom matures, wealth abounds. Then:

Spendthrifts squander their income on luxuries. This becomes aggravated in later generations. Eventually all their income cannot pay for the luxuries they have become used to. They grow needy. When their rulers urge them to defray the costs of raids and wars, they cannot get around to it ... [The rulers then overtax.] They make the people too weak to keep their own affairs going, and their weakness then recoils upon the rulers and weakens them.

Importantly, writes Ibn Khaldun, this weakness is also military: the taxes are eventually insufficient to support the defence of the realm.⁷⁸ Ibn Khaldun suggests that this boom-to-bust cycle happens in three generations of forty years each.⁷⁹ The present writer’s Scottish grandfather had a favourite aphorism: “every third generation back to shirt sleeves.”

Dawood summarises the system as follows. “According to Ibn Khaldun all dynastic history moves in cycles. As it draws nearer to decay and disintegration, the dynasty shrinks inwards under the pressure of the challenging outsider and his group, until it finally collapses. Then the new dynasty proceeds upon the path of power, only to suffer the fate of its predecessor.”⁸⁰

The four horsemen ride tandem cycles: Plague and Death; Famine and Death; War and Death. *The 21st century cannot be exempt from these political economic determinative narratives.*

Niall Ferguson reminds us that the normal condition of *homo sapiens* is war. Humankind fought the industrialised *War of the World* for almost all of the 20th century. Death rode from Mafeking and Paardeberg in 1900 via Ypres in 1917 and Stalingrad in 1942, to the *Manhattan Plan* for the City of Hiroshima in 1945, to the *Fundamental Islamist Plan* for Manhattan in 2001. “The hundred years after 1900 were undoubtedly the bloodiest century in history, far more violent in relative as well as in absolute terms than in any previous era.”⁸¹

Yet Ferguson plays John the Baptist to Hilary Clinton’s Salome. His entire book is about the immense power of “the one who is to come after”, the war of the 21st century. Ferguson concludes:

We remain our own worst enemies. We shall avoid another century of conflict only if we understand the forces that caused the last one – the dark forces that conjure up ethnic conflict and imperial rivalry out of economic crisis, and so negate our common humanity. They are forces that stir within us still.⁸²

The Four Horsemen killed some hundreds of millions of people in the 20th century. At its end, riding on the backs of the long-suffering Chinese peasantry temporarily turned industrial proletarians, humanity finally created the Thousand Year Boom. It lasted from nine-eleven 2001 to ten-eleven 2008. Famine, malaria, TB and HIV-Aids had galloped about: very many people died in the late 20th century. Then the boom collapsed and more will die. All that remains is the fourth horseman, the *war of the 21st century*, to come.

⁷⁶ R H Poole (ed.), *The New Imperial Reference Dictionary* (London, Newnes, 1956), 808

⁷⁷ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history*, Translated F Rosenthal, Abridged N J Dawood (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1377, 1967), 132-138.

⁷⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 134.

⁷⁹ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 136-138.

⁸⁰ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history*, Translated F Rosenthal, Abridged N J Dawood (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1377, 1967), xii.

⁸¹ Niall Ferguson, *The war of the world: history’s age of hatred* (London, Penguin, 2007), xxxiv and 647.

⁸² Niall Ferguson, *The war of the world: history’s age of hatred* (London, Penguin, 2007).

We will need more than Marshall, Robbins, Keynes, Samuelson, Milton Friedman and rational expectations to tell us when the Thousand Year Peace will end; but end it will. Five thousand years of the cycles of history can be summarised in four words: *science; stupidity; sex; and war*. And the greatest of these is war. That is what we humans do: we kill each other. Among the earliest fossil records are human skulls with holes put there by other humans; we have neither learned nor changed since them.

At the end of the Cold War there were six billion people or six gigahumans; and seventy-two gigatons of equivalent high explosive in the nuclear weapons arsenals. Six gigahumans into seventy-two gigatons give twelve tons of equivalent high explosive for every human on earth. A gram of high explosive can kill a human. A ton is a million grams. Twelve tons can kill twelve million times. At the end of the Cold War there was enough nuclear gigatonnage to kill every human twelve million times; and humanity was overdue to have a Big Hot War. If we are very lucky it will not be nuclear; but war we will have.

Brecht's soldiers singing of the Thirty Years' War capture perfectly the 21st century unless we change our ways.

*Here's Mother Courage and her Wagon
Hey! Captain! Let them come and buy!
Beer by the keg; wine by the flagon:
Let your men drink before they die!*

*Dangers, surprises, devastations –
The war takes hold and will not quit.
But though it lasts three generations
We shall get nothing out of it.*

*Starvation, filth, and cold enslave us,
The army robs us of our pay.
Only a miracle can save us
And miracles have had their day.*

*Christians, Awake! The winter's gone!
The snows depart. The dead sleep on.
And though you may not long survive
Get out of bed and look alive!*⁸³

Ferguson tells us that the dark forces which cause war are conjured out of economic crisis. We have just had our economic crisis. Perhaps war is next. But war is politics by other means.⁸⁴ If power sharing by war has the potential of so many collateral casualties, can power sharing by politics tame the dark forces? That is what parliaments are really for: avoidance of war.

Politics takes place in a parliament. A parliament is a place where Churchill's Jaw Jaw takes place instead of War War. A parley is a temporary truce for talking. The word 'parley' derives from the Greek, *parabole*, meaning a comparison, simile, proverb, parallel, or a venture.⁸⁵ The *parables* have the same meaning. The constituent parts of the Greek word are *para*, meaning comparison with, and *bole*, a throw or shot.⁸⁶ Perhaps a parley was held to compare a throw of a spear by each army's champion? Fittingly, the mathematics of the flight of artillery shells and of nuclear ballistic missile warheads is based on parabolas.

Webster tells us the "Latin *parabola*, a comparison, later a word", moved to the Late Latin, *parabolare*, to speak, thence via the "Old French *paroler*", to the "French *parler*", finally to the English "*Parley*, to confer with an enemy on an exchange of prisoners, on a cessation of hostilities, or on the subject of peace".⁸⁷ The 1959 *Shorter Oxford* has parley as a noun: "A conference for debating the points in dispute; especially military, an informal conference with

⁸³ Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and her children, a chronicle of the Thirty Years' War*, translated by Eric Bentley (London, Methuen, 1949, 1955, 1962, 1967), scene 12, 81.

⁸⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On war*, Anatol Rappoport (ed.) (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1872, 1971), chapter 1, sections 2 and 11, pp 101 and 109.

⁸⁵ James Morwood & John Taylor, *The Pocket Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary* (Oxford, OUP, 2002), 242 and 65.

⁸⁶ James Morwood & John Taylor, *The Pocket Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary*, 242 and 65.

⁸⁷ Noel Webster, *Webster's Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (Cleveland and New York, World Publishing, 1940), ii, 1187.

an enemy under a truce, for the discussion of terms, etc, 1580".⁸⁸ By the 21st century, the *Concise Oxford* has "*parable*, a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson", coming via Old French, from ecclesiastic Latin, in the sense of "discourse, allegory", eventually from the Greek, "placing side by side, application, based on *ballein*, to throw".⁸⁹ In the *Concise Oxford*, *parley* and *parliament* are traced no further back than the French, meaning to speak. But the 1959 *Shorter Oxford* is clear. In 1610, *Parliament* meant *a military conference with an enemy under a truce*.⁹⁰ For this reason the government and the opposition, in the London House of Commons, are two sword lengths apart. Each side is ever ready to make a comparison of their power by force.

A parliament, then, is a place where power is shared by talking about whose force is the stronger; who can throw a spear or a missile the furthest. The metaphor used for this comparison in the Pretoria Hanging Prison in the 1980s was, "mine's longer than yours is!" Politics is never more subtle than this. A parliament is a place where decisions about power sharing are made, temporarily, by means of simple allegorical discourses about the relative powers of endlessly re-grouping politicians. In the end, all these speeches are parables of war; the speeches are made under temporary truces beneath the shadow of the guns. A parliament is a place for time out from war; to reverse Von Clausewitz, it is war by temporary other means: politics.

War occurs inside states as well as between them. A parliament is a place of temporary truce in a civil war as much as a truce with some outside enemy. *If peace is to prevail, power must be shared within and without the borders of a country*. In this sense, all politics must be peace making and peace keeping if war is to be avoided. The alternative to power sharing by politics is power sharing by war. Given the enormous destructive power of modern conventional warfare, let alone nuclear warfare, a profound, fundamental duty is placed on all politicians to share power peacefully.

This duty is unusually grave in Africa today, for a very special reason: the growth in the numbers of the African people. We saw above that one of the vital parts of classical political economy is population demography. The classic question, as the numbers of people grow, is always whether more people will live in that crowded, starving misery with which the name of Malthus will forever be linked, whether he deserves it or not. The other question is whether baby booms lead to wars. Africa's babies are booming!

⁸⁸ C T Onions (ed.), *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, OUP, 1959), 1434.

⁸⁹ Judy Pearsall, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, OUP, 2002), 1033.

⁹⁰ C T Onions (ed.), *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1434.

Africa's population will double in forty years. One billion people will become two billion people.⁹¹

In Nigeria 154 million people in 2009 will become 289 million in 2050;
82 million Ethiopians will become 183 million Ethiopians;
the 66 million people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will become 147 million; and
43 million Tanzanians will become 109 million Tanzanians.

So these four countries will be home to 728 million people in forty years' time; but in the already more urban and hence less baby-fertile South Africa, 50 million people will have become only 56 million people.⁹²

It will be objected that deaths from HIV-Aids and associated opportunistic pathogens such as tuberculosis will prevent these large population sizes from being achieved. The United Nations Population Division stands by its model. The UN cautions, however, that the model assumes that anti-retroviral treatment increases life expectancy, from 11.7 years after diagnosis without treatment, to 27.8 years with treatment; and that half of the worst hit countries will achieve 70% anti-retroviral treatment by 2015. The UN also notes that treatment costs depend on donor funding, which must be maintained or increased despite the downturn in the world economy.⁹³

It must be added that the United Nations does not model the effects of possible new viruses and other diseases; nor of possible increased levels of natural disaster; nor of possible future wars; nor of possible new famines. In other words, of the four horsemen the United Nations models only death by known pestilence. On the other hand it also does not model the effects of the progress of science. It may be possible, in the coming era, to defeat malaria by eliminating the plasmodium parasite from the anopheles mosquito, to give but one example. Equally, new crops may increase the productivity of land and farm labour. Science matters as never before. Nevertheless it is plain that death by sudden new plagues, famines and wars must be expected if not modelled.

In Plague Time

*Adieu, farewell earth's bliss,
This world uncertain is;
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys;
None from his darts can fly.
I am sick, I must die
Lord, have mercy on us
(Thomas Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600)⁹⁴*

Nonetheless, to repeat: according to our best available data: *there will be two billion Africans alive within forty years*. Will this population expansion produce starvation or riches; peace or war? It all turns on the ability of African politicians to share power without war; and to arrive at the correct policy for prosperity, which amongst other things must involve science; urbanisation; and the education of the African people.

The fascination of the classical political economists with population demography led them to profound debates on whether there would be increasing or decreasing returns to scale; and from there to how fast science and technology might be used by capitalists to change the nature of the forces of production ("choice of technique", in econo-speak).⁹⁵ These debates are as cogent as ever.⁹⁶

⁹¹ United Nations, Economic and social affairs, population division, *World population prospects: the 2008 revision: selected tables* (New York, UN, March 2009), p. 1, "Table 1.1 Population of the world", http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008_text.

⁹² United Nations, Economic and social affairs, population division, *World population prospects: the 2008 revision*, pp 6-10, "Table A2, Total population by country", http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008_text

⁹³ United Nations, Economic and social affairs, population division, *World population prospects: press release: world population to exceed 9 billion by 2050* (New York, UN, Noon, 11 March 2009), <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/pressrelease.pdf>.

⁹⁴ E K Chambers, *The Oxford book of sixteenth century verse* (London, OUP, 1932, 1955), 429

⁹⁵ Joseph A Schumpeter, edited from manuscript by Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter, *History of economic analysis*, chapter 5; on "choice of technique", see Renfrew Christie, "Why does capital need energy?", in Petter Nore & Terisa Turner (eds), *Oil and class struggle* (London, Zed Press 1980), chapter 2, 10-25; Renfrew Christie,

Will Africa in 2050 be as miserably poor as China in the Boxer rebellion, or as rich as the new Chinese middle classes today, a hundred years later? The only way two billion people will live comfortably and peacefully in Africa in forty years' time is if they are scientific, educated and if they mostly live in properly built cities. Proper cities take advantage of increasing returns to increasing scale, so as to deliver the essentials of life at lower unit costs; they also relieve pressure on a fragile countryside to enable better agricultural production. What is needed is investment in education, science and proper infrastructure, including urbanisation and agricultural renewal.

African politicians must share power peacefully so as to achieve these things. We have seen that the place in which power is shared without war is parliament, by definition of that word. The strengthening of African parliaments is therefore a top priority. In short: power must be peacefully shared in Africa so that the people are educated. "The education of the people must be the basis of government." This is not a new idea.

In December 1788, prior to destroying the fifth Chinese invasion of his country in the eight and a half centuries since liberation, Nguyen Hue proclaimed himself emperor of Vietnam. He took the name of the current period, Quang Trung.⁹⁷ "He agreed to accept office, inaugurating a new era, following the example of past kings, making the education of the people the basis of government."⁹⁸

Two hundred years earlier, Scotland's John Knox might have approved. Two hundred and ten years later, Scotland's prime minister of England, Gordon Brown, addressed a joint meeting of both houses of the United States' Congress. Gordon Brown argued that "Britain and America will lead if they tap into the talents of the people; release the genius of the scientists; and set free the drive of the engineers So we must educate our way out of the downturn, invest and invent our way out of the downturn, and retool and re-skill our way out of the downturn."⁹⁹ John Knox might have approved; Quang Trung might have approved; and the Classical Political Economists might have approved. The United States' Congress approved. It gave Scotland's Gordon Brown nineteen standing ovations.

Unlike Congress, we have an unfortunate duty to academic scepticism. Whether Mr Brown intends to do as he says, will try to do as he says, or will be able to do as he says is another matter. But he, or his speech writer, did get the words right.

True power sharing shares power also with the people, whether in Africa or anywhere else on earth.

*Make the education of the people the basis of government.*¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁶ Maurice Dobb, *Theories of value and distribution since Adam Smith: ideology and economic theory* (Cambridge, CUP, 1973, 1979), passim.

⁹⁷ Thomas Hodgkin, *Vietnam: the revolutionary path* (London, Macmillan, 1981), 87-88.

⁹⁸ Thomas Hodgkin, *Vietnam*, 89.

⁹⁹ Philip Webster, "Gordon Brown brings economic optimism to US Congress", *The Times*, 5 March 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_america/article.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Hodgkin, *Vietnam: the revolutionary path* (London, Macmillan, 1981), 89.

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