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The Danger Of Economic Inequality: Eight-Leaf Clovers Of The World Unite

By Alan Briskin  
San Francisco – California

Photography By Alan Briskin

On a bleak November day in 1847 two men trudged along Great Windmill Street in London. They breathed in air yellow from industrial waste and pondered the extremes of wealth and poverty. In the thick London fog they could barely see a foot ahead of themselves, but in their minds saw clearly an ever-increasing social division. They foresaw a swelling anger fracturing the world into warring factions. One of them wanted to show the world why society’s self destruction was inevitable. The other understood the rewards of affluence but felt compelled to challenge its privilege. So it was that Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx made their way into the Red Lion Pub in London.

Marx was never more alive than in a good intellectual battle. “This time we will have our way,” Engels wrote to Marx before they arrived. And have their way they did. The German Worker’s Educational Union, a front for the Communist League, voted to adopt “The Communist Manifesto” which Marx had read portions of out loud. However, what the group heard was in some doubt given Marx’s heavy accent. One recalled that when Marx mentioned “workers”, some heard “eight-leaf clovers”.

It appears the confusion over Marx’s words continues to haunt us. There remains an on-going debate as to whether capitalism is the saving innovation of human societies or an economic system that must be pulled out root and branch. Can capitalism become more conscious of its capacity to do good or must it be transformed into wholly different arrangements, a process more aligned with nature and human dignity?

Marx believed that the accumulation of financial capital came at the cost of extracting earth’s soil and in the abuse of the human soul. Now, climate change threatens our biosphere and the self-replicating nature of financial privilege has resulted in inequalities so vast that even the wealthiest are warning of catastrophes.

We must now re-consider what power means and what it can achieve. We must embrace power as a means to address our collective challenge, not as a victory for any particular ideology. And we can benefit from recognizing how easily misinterpretation and misunderstandings inhibit true dialogue. That “worker” became “eight-leaf clover” in the minds of Marx’s audience provides a useful lesson. We can and should live with the humility that our words take on different meanings and nuances depending on different audiences and contexts. And while there may be innumerable individual solutions for our collective ills, there is no collective agreement. We must go with caution and, as much as is possible, together.

Alan Briskin is co-author of The Power of Collective Wisdom.  

JL
Dr. Mentor Petrela

ALBENIA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

Born in Tirana, Mentor Petrela was inspired by his father, a professor of literature and philosophy, to study medicine. After graduating from the Faculty of Medicine at Tirana University, Dr. Petrela completed an internship in neurology and subsequently obtained a residency in neurosurgery with professors Houdart and Copenhignon at Lariboisière Hospital in Paris. He became interested in microsurgery, with a particular interest in aneurysms and cranial base. The Concours National des Universités of France nominated him Professor of Neurosurgery and Consultant, and he was elected an honorary member of the Société Française de Neurologie.

Dr. Petrela is actively involved in the day-to-day teaching of junior and mid-level neurological trainees at the Faculty of Medicine in Tirana and has written text books for students and postgraduates. In charge of the department of neurosurgery, he has developed functional endoscopic radiosurgery, endovascular and pediatric neurosurgery, and was elected Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. He has been invited to lecture by universities in Paris, Milan, New York and Geneva.
Dr. Engelbert Knosp

AUSTRIA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

After one semester of studying interior design, Dr. Engelbert Knosp realized that he would be better suited to medicine, and so he switched to the University of Vienna to train in that field. He was particularly fascinated by neurosurgery, in part because his father had died of a neurosurgical disease. While still a student, he worked at the Institute of Anatomy and then at the Department of Neurosurgery at the Vienna General Hospital. When the neurosurgical department at the Vienna Danube Hospital was opened, Dr. Knosp was appointed to the board.

In 1987 he was Assistant Professor and from 1989 to 1991 Associate Professor at the Department of Neurosurgery, Vienna Medical School. He then spent three years as Associate Professor and Vice-Director of the Department of Neurosurgery in Mainz, Germany before becoming Chief Physician at the Department of Neurosurgery, Donaupital Vienna. Since 2002, he has been Professor and Chairman as well as on the board of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Vienna General Hospital.

Dr. Knosp has a strong belief in the concept of minimally invasive neurosurgery, which he has combined cerebral neurosurgery and skull base surgery with pituitary surgery.
Dr. Andrew Kaye

AUSTRALIA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

A graduate of The University of Melbourne, Dr. Andrew Kaye trained in Neurosurgery at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne. He undertook additional neurosurgery training in Oxford, London and at the Cleveland Clinic. Upon returning to Australia, he was appointed Neurosurgeon at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and commenced research into neuro-oncology at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research. He is currently the Head of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. For the past twelve years he has been the Chairman of the Board of Examiners for final year Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne.

Dr. Kaye’s main clinical and research interest involves neuro-oncology and cerebrovascular disease. In 2003 the American Association of Neurological Surgeons honored him with the Ronald Bittner Award for contributions to the treatment of brain tumors, and in 2006 he was awarded the Paul Bucy Award for his contribution to neurosurgery education. In 2013 he was the Honored Guest of the American Congress of Neurosurgery.

Dr. Kaye has authored and co-authored over 200 journal articles and book chapters as well as five books, including “Brain Tumors”, a text recognized as being the definitive work on the subject.
After receiving his MD, Dr. Jacques Brotchi went on to train in neurosurgery at the Neurosurgical Clinic at the University of Liège. He spent 19 years as a researcher at the Laboratory of Neuroanatomy, where he focused on histoenzymology of the peripheral and central nervous systems. Along with obtaining a Ph.D. in histoenzymology of focal epilepsies, he established a neurosurgical practice. Relocating to Brussels, Dr. Brotchi created the Department of Neurosurgery at Erasme University Hospital, where he was Chief of the Department. After attaining the positions of Professor and Chairman at the Free University of Brussels, as well as Director of the Laboratory of Experimental Neurosurgery, Dr. Brotchi is now Professor Emeritus of Neurosurgery and honorary Chairman of the department.

Dr. Brotchi has published more than 350 papers in international journals and has written 35 book chapters, with special emphasis on meningiomas, intramedullary spinal cord tumors and surgical approaches of pineal lesions.

In 2004, Dr. Brotchi entered politics and became a Belgium Senator. He is active in health issues, medical education and bioethics. The recipient of numerous awards, Dr. Brotchi was President of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies from 2005 to 2009. He is Vice-President of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium and has been elected President for 2015.
Dr. Evandro de Oliveira

BRAZIL

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
 TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

After obtaining his MD from the Faculty of Medicine at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, Dr. de Oliveira went on to do his neurosurgery residency at the Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery at the Universidad de la Republica, Faculty of Medicine, in Montevideo, Uruguay, where he also did a post-specialization in Neuroradiology. He received his Ph.D. in Functional Anatomy from the University of São Paulo, then moved on to Neurosurgery at the Hospital Beneficência Portuguesa and to the Faculty of Medicine at the University of São Paulo.

Currently Professor of Neurosurgery at the State University of Campinas, Director of the Institute of Neurological Sciences, and Director of the Microsurgery Laboratory at the Hospital Beneficência Portuguesa, he receives colleagues from around the country and abroad for training and continuing education courses.

Dr. de Oliveira has contributed to numerous national and international publications in the areas of neurosurgical approaches, neurosurgical microanatomy, cerebrovascular diseases, brain tumors, vascular neurosurgery and skull base surgery. He serves on several editorial boards of medical journals and his scientific contributions include authoring and editing books. He has been presented with honorary memberships in skull base and neurosurgical societies abroad.
Dr. James T. Rutka

Canada

By Susan Berger
Special Assignment
New York/San Francisco/Hong Kong/London/
Tokyo/Rome/Toronto

Educated at Princeton University and Queen's University
Medical School, Dr. James Rutka did an internship at
McGill University before entering the University of Toronto
Neurosurgery Training Program. His training included a
research fellowship at the Brain Tumor Research Center, the
University of California San Francisco, where he obtained his
Ph.D. in Experimental Pathology. Upon conclusion of his
neurosurgical residency, Dr. Rutka did a clinical fellowship in
microvascular neurosurgery at the University of Nagoya and a
post-doctoral research fellowship in molecular immunology at
Juntendo University, Tokyo.

Dr. Rutka assumed his appointment in the Department of
Surgery, Division of Neurosurgery in 1990, and has been on
the surgical staff at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto
in the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery since that time. His
primary research and clinical interests relate to the science
and surgery of human brain tumors, and his recent clinical
interests have centered on the surgical treatment of epilepsy in
children.

Dr. Rutka was appointed Chairman of the Department of
Surgery, 2011 to present, at the University of Toronto. He
has received the Grass Award from the Society of Neurological
Surgeons and the Farber Award from the AANS/CNS Section
on Tumors for longstanding contributions to neuro-oncology
research. In 2010/11, Dr. Rutka served as the President of
the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. He also
became President of the World Academy of Neurological
Surgery and the American Academy of Neurological Surgery.
In 2014, he was appointed to the Order of Ontario, the
highest honor that can be bestowed upon a resident in the
province.
Dr. Juha Hernesniemi

FINLAND

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

The inspiration for Juha Hernesniemi to become a medical doctor came from his admiration of Dr. Einar Filip Palmén, a general practitioner who for 50 years on his own, treated 10,000 people living in a small rural area of Finland. As a schoolboy, Juha Hernesniemi worked in a factory in Germany, where he discovered that he had quick and skillful hands, and went on to study medicine in Zurich. During this time, he worked at the Brain Research Institute focusing on experimental neuroanatomy, learning both the value of research and the use of an operating microscope. Ultimately concluding that he did not want to continue in the field of research, he decided to become a neurosurgeon. After training in Helsinki, he earned a Ph.D. in head injuries.

Working in Uppsala, Sweden, where there were few neurosurgeons, Dr. Hernesniemi had the opportunity to operate on patients with aneurysms, AVMs, tumors and spinal problems, pioneering early aneurysm surgery in the Nordic countries. He went on to establish an aneurysm database in Eastern Finland.

Dr. Hernesniemi spent some time in Miami as a research and teaching fellow, which was important in his later appointment as a full professor and chairman in Helsinki. Under his direction, the number of operations and the budget of the hospital doubled.
Dr. Volker Seifert

Germany

By Susan Berger
Special Assignment
New York/San Francisco/Hong Kong/London/
Tokyo/Rome/Toronto

Educated at the Medical School at the Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf, Dr. Volker Seifert received his neurosurgical training at the Hannover Medical School, which included a research fellowship for laser microneurosurgery at Northwestern University in Chicago. After completing his residency, he was appointed Assistant Professor and staff member of the Department of Neurosurgery in Hannover. For his fellowships he specialized in vascular and skull base microsurgery.

Dr. Seifert's primary research and clinical interests are centered on vascular neurosurgery. His experimental research has focused on the origin of cerebral vasospasm after subarachnoid hemorrhage and this led to his Ph.D. thesis. In 1990 he received the Academic Research Prize of the German Society of Neurology for outstanding contributions to the field of Neurovascular Research.

After accepting positions at several Universities, in 1999 Dr. Seifert was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Geothe University in Frankfurt am Main. In 2001 he was also made Director of the Center of Clinical Neurosciences at the University Clinic Frankfurt am Main, which is regarded as one of the leading neurosurgical centers in Europe for complex neurovascular and brain tumor microsurgery. He has co-authored over 400 scientific publications on vascular neurosurgery, image-guided brain tumor surgery and skull base surgery, and is currently President of the German Society of Neurosurgery.

JL
Dr. Basant Misra

INDIA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

Dr. Basant Misra, currently Head, Department of Neurosurgery at P.D. Hinduja National Hospital and Medical Research Centre in Mumbai, did his neurosurgery residency at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. He received the Pfizer Gold Medal in Medicine and was a Pfizer Post Graduate Medical award winner. The British Medical Council awarded him a Commonwealth medical scholarship.

His many accomplishments include being the first neurosurgeon in India to do Awake Craniotomy for brain tumors, the first neurosurgeon in the world to do Image Guidance Aneurysm microsurgery, and the first neurosurgeon in South Asia to perform Gammaknife Radiosurgery. He pioneered skull base surgery and cerebrovascular surgery and was instrumental in improving the standard of neurosurgery in the Asia Australasian region, instituting many educational activities including seminars, workshops, and hands-on dissection courses.

With 136 publications, Dr. Misra is a member of numerous editorial boards, including the Journal of Clinical Neurosciences (Australia), Neurology India, and Neurosurgery (USA). He is President Elect of the world Federation of Skull Base Societies.
Educated at Shinshu University, Dr. Kazuhiro Hongo entered the Shinshu University Neurosurgery Program in 1978. Upon completion of his neurosurgical training, he attended the University of Virginia, where he did research on cerebral vasospasm following subarachnoid hemorrhage.

Initially on staff at the Department of Neurosurgery, Shinshu University School of Medicine, Dr. Hongo moved to Aichi Medical University as Associate Professor. He later moved back to Shinshu University where he served as Associate Professor. In 2003 he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery, Shinshu University School of Medicine. His interests have centered on the surgical treatment of cerebrovascular diseases, skull base lesions and brainstem lesions, and he has been active in the development of surgery-assisting robotics.

In 2011 Dr. Hongo was appointed Vice-President of the Asian-Australian Society of Neurosurgeons. He is currently Director of Shinshu University Hospital. In 2008 he received the “Best Scientific Paper Award of the Year” from the Shinshu University School of Medicine, and received “Best Doctors in Japan” awards 2010/11 and 2012/13.
Dr. Hee Won Jung

KOREA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

Currently Professor of Neurosurgery at Seoul National University Hospital, Dr. Hee Won Jung received his M.D. from the Seoul National University College of Medicine and his M.S. and Ph.D. from the Seoul National University Graduate College of Medicine. He was President of Seoul National University, Boramae Hospital from 2005 to 2009 and President & CEO of Seoul National University Hospital from 2010 to 2013.

Dr. Jung’s specific scientific interests and research revolve around neuro-oncology, skull base surgery and image-guided surgery, which he established in Korea. He played an active role in the improvement of the outcome of microsurgical treatment of benign brain tumors and was instrumental in the establishment of the Korean Brain Tumor Society and the Korean Skull Base Society. He contributed to the enhancement of international relationships of Korean neurosurgeons and had great success in hosting the 15th World Congress of Neurosurgery in Seoul in 2013 as the Congress President.

He is currently Honorary President, World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, and has been President of the Korean Skull Base Society, the Korean Brain Tumor Society and the Korean Neurosurgical Society.
Dr. João Lobo Antunes

PORTUGAL

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

A graduate of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Lisbon, João Lobo Antunes was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship. He trained in neurosurgery at the Neurological Institute of New York, and went on to become Associate Professor at Columbia University.

Dr. Lobo Antunes' early research interests were on the anatomy and physiology of the hypothalamus-pituitary axis. This later led to a Ph.D. thesis on the neural control of reproduction in the female rhesus monkey. He was also an active member of the research team on visual neuropathology under the direction of William Dobelle.

Returning to Portugal as Professor and Chairman of Neurosurgery at the University of Lisbon, Dr. Lobo Antunes built a strong training and clinical program. He became very involved in international organizations and was Vice-President for Europe of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies and President of the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies, from which he was awarded its Medal of Honor.

In Portugal he founded the Institute of Molecular Medicine, was President of the National Council for Science and Technology, President of the Academy of Medicine, and is currently a member of the National State Council, an advisory body to the President of the Republic. He has published almost 200 papers on topics related to his specialty and ethics and culture, and has been awarded the Pessoa Prize, the most important national award.
Dr. Imad N. Kanaan

SAUDI ARABIA

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/LONDON/
TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

With 30 years of experience as a neurosurgeon, Dr. Imad Kanaan's expertise lies in the fields of micro-neurosurgery, skull base and vascular surgery, pituitary and endoscopic surgery as part of minimally invasive intervention. He is Chair of the Department of Neurosciences at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center, an institution for tertiary care in the region, and is Professor of Neurosurgery at the College of Medicine at Alfaisal University.

Dr. Kanaan has a strong interest in teaching, education and academia and has received national and international recognition through his contributions in scientific publications, presentations and memberships in numerous organizations. He has organized international conferences in the field of pediatric neurosurgery and skull base neurosurgery, and, collaborating with the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, has conducted a hands-on course in surgical approaches and endoscopy. He co-initiated the first neurosurgical fellowship program and the first neurosurgical residency training program in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, he is a Senior Member of the training committee for skull base surgery, Pan Arab Society.

Dr. Kanaan received an award for the establishment and promotion of the Department of Neurosciences at King Faisal Specialist Hospital, as well as an award for the initiation of and contribution to epilepsy surgery.

JL
After graduating from Comenius University Medical School in Bratislava, Dr. Juraj Šteňo earned his Ph.D. at the Burdenko Neurosurgical Institute in Moscow. He completed residency training in general surgery and then neurosurgery at the University Department of Neurosurgery in Bratislava, where he started to work as a physician. He went on to become a University Professor, and is currently head of the department.

Dr. Šteňo has numerous areas of professional interest: surgery of tumors of the third cerebral ventricle (microsurgery and endoscopic surgery); microsurgical anatomy of the region of the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus (in which he developed a new classification of craniopharyngiomas with an emphasis on the tumor-hypothalamus relationships); microsurgical resection of tumors and vascular malformation of the brain stem (improved intraoperative mapping of the pyramidal tract by direct electrical stimulation inside the brain stem); and minimal invasive spinal surgery.

The author of many books and articles in neurosurgical journals, Dr. Šteňo has presented hundreds of scientific lectures at neurosurgical meetings, including at the World and the European Neurosurgical Congress, the annual meetings of the American Association of Neurological Surgery and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. He has been awarded the Pribina Cross First Class, a state award of the Slovak Republic, and has received a gold medal from Comenius University Medical School. He also received awards from the Slovak Medical Association for the best scientific publications of the Slovak Neurosurgical Society of the Year.
Dr. Miguel A. Arraez

Spain

By Susan Berger
Special Assignment
New York/San Francisco/Hong Kong/London/
Tokyo/Rome/Toronto

At present Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery at Carlos Haya University Hospital, Malaga and Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery at the Malaga School of Medicine at Malaga University, Dr. Miguel Arraez received his medical degree at the School of Medicine at Granada University. He completed his neurosurgery training at Virgen de las Nieves University Hospital (Granada) and earned a Ph.D. in neurosurgery at the Department of Pathology at Granada University.

Dr. Arraez’s main areas of interest are skull base surgery, pituitary, endoscopy and neuro-oncology. Twenty-five years ago, he created the first official multidisciplinary skull base team in the Spanish National Health system. He has also launched many international initiatives in neurosurgery in developing countries. As the head of one of the top neurosurgical centers in Spain, Dr. Arraez and his team are developing sophisticated intraoperative techniques for the resection of malignant brain tumors.

As an active participant of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, Dr. Arraez has held numerous positions such as the Co-ordinator of Committee Activities, Member of the Board of Trustees, and Treasurer. He has published peer-reviewed articles in national and international scientific journals, has authored several textbooks, and has lectured at many international institutions and universities.

JL
Dr. Robert Spetzler

UNITED STATES

BY SUSAN BERGER
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
NEW YORK/SAN FRANCISCO/HONG KONG/
LONDON/TOKYO/ROME/TORONTO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE DAMONTE

A graduate of Knox College in Illinois, Robert Spetzler received a Bachelor of Science in biology and chemistry before earning an M.D. at Northwestern University. He moved to the University of California at San Francisco, where he trained as a resident in the Department of Neurosurgery. It was here that he developed an interest in neurovascular surgery and academic neurosurgery.

After completing his residency, Dr. Spetzler joined the Department of Neurosurgery at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland as an Assistant Professor. Shortly thereafter he received his first major grant to develop a primate model of stroke that has since been used to test therapeutic treatments for stroke and cerebral ischemia. He was recruited to assume the J. N. Harber Chair of Neurological Surgery at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, and later became Director of the Institute. Under his leadership, the Institute has grown from a regional center to an internationally recognized center of excellence that attracts both visiting healthcare professionals and patient referrals from around the world.

Among Dr. Spetzler's contributions have been the development of theories on normal perfusion pressure breakthrough and how the size of arteriovenous malformations (AVMs) is related to their rupture, the development of a heuristic grading system for AVMs, advances in the surgical treatment of complex cerebrovascular lesions based on hypothermia, barbiturates and cardiac arrest, and the development of innovative surgical approaches for skull base surgery. His accomplishments underscore why Dr. Spetzler was chosen as the Honored Guest of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons – the youngest member ever to receive this honor.

JL