

LIVING MARXISM LM103 | UK £2.50 SEPTEMBER 1997 | US\$6 DM9 FF27 IR£2.50

# LM103

WHAT'S WRONG WITH  
LUNCH BREAK ABORTIONS?

The mag ITN wants to gag

## RWANDA INSIDE THE GENOCIDE TRIBUNAL



# SHOWTRIAL

UN-style

WHY BEING RAPED  
DID NOT RUIN MY LIFE



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the  
**TRUTH**  
is in  
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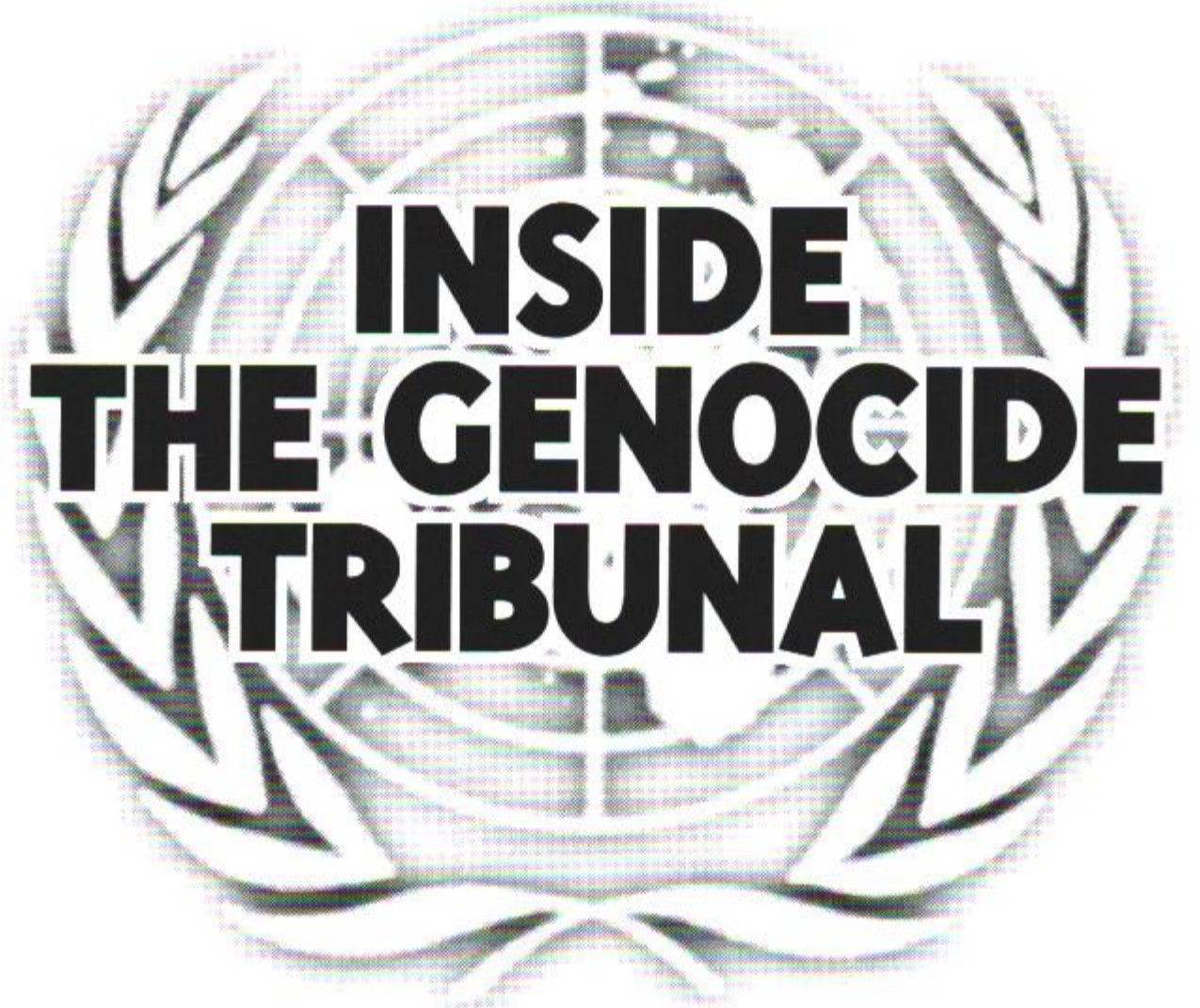
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# LM103

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# RWANDA



A special investigation into the injustice being perpetrated by the International Criminal Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, where Rwandans are on trial for genocide.

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*Barry Crawford*, Africa Direct

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# MICK HUME

Editor



# THE AGE OF THE ETHICALLY CORRECT DEATH SQUAD

MONDAY 12 MAY: FOREIGN SECRETARY Robin Cook announces New Labour's ethical, humanitarian foreign policy with the launch of his mission statement.

Thursday 10 July: the SAS puts Cook's fine words into practice by launching an undercover operation and shooting dead a Bosnian Serb, Simo Drljaca, accused of crimes against humanity.

Some cynical observers have expressed fears that the government will not really attempt to implement its new, high-minded foreign policy principles. The far bigger danger to freedom and democracy around the world, however, is that New Labour will try to do exactly what it says.

Cook's mission statement contains many of the buzzwords beloved of today's crusading foreign reporters and non-governmental organisations: New Labour has a 'moral responsibility' to ensure there is an 'ethical dimension' to foreign policy and so 'make Britain once again a force for good in the world'. It sounded rather like the gospel according to St Martin of Bell, the war correspondent-turned-MP whose maiden speech in parliament in May called for the government to take a stand against evil in the world and return to 'a diplomacy of honour'.

The Blair government has already put its money where its morals are by announcing a ban on the use and sale of landmines, extra funds for the War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague, and a review of the role of women and homosexuals in the British armed forces. The forces themselves appear to be on a similar ethical kick, trying to recruit young people to act as humanitarian missionaries in uniform.

A recent Royal Air Force advertisement updated the old recruitment slogan to read 'their country needs you', with pictures of warplanes dropping aid parcels rather than bombs.

Army recruitment adverts show British soldiers helping to clean up all kinds of natural disasters and human tragedies. One such ad asks the nation's youth to sign on, not as square-bashing squaddies, but as 'surrogate fathers' to the world's tragic children.

The assumption behind all of the changes is that foreign policy can no longer be about the narrow pursuit of dog-eat-dog self-interest. Instead the global role of a state such as Britain should be redefined so as to serve a higher ethical purpose, working alongside NGOs in pursuit of worthy, altruistic ends. The angelic Princess Diana is the perfect ambassador for the new

multi-billion pound defence contracts with the authoritarian rulers of Saudi Arabia.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that New Labour is merely paying lip service to a new approach to foreign policy. The soul-searching over Britain's proper role in the world is genuine enough; the trauma has reached the point where the foreign office can even criticise itself for 'appeasing' the Chinese regime during the handover of Hong Kong.

One general rule of life in the nineties is that public bodies tend to issue mission statements when they do not really know where they are going. The British foreign office is no exception.

IT TURNS OUT THAT A  
THE HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN POLICY  
AWAY WITH

regime, crying her way around the world's minefields wearing body armour supplied by the suitably-named Halo Trust, and assuring the media that she is not a 'political figure', she is just 'a humanitarian' who cares about the victims of evil.

Of course, as others have pointed out, when ethics clash with economic interests, hard-nosed realpolitik is likely to prevail in foreign policy. So, for example, New Labour's commitment to stop selling military equipment to repressive regimes quickly runs up against the fact that arms exports are one of British manufacturing's few remaining success stories (25 per cent of the world market). The government may well block the sale of some police vehicles to Indonesia, but is likely to find a suitably ethical excuse to maintain Britain's

Like many other established institutions, it has lost its bearings in the confused post-Cold War world, where it is searching for a coherent identity that could recreate the certainties of the old anti-Soviet days. Encouraged by the NGO-types, broadsheet journalists and other fashionable worthies who are a natural New Labour constituency, Tony Blair's government has latched on to the notion of a humanitarian foreign policy in the absence of anything else.

IN THE PROCESS, THE NEW LABOUR REGIME has found itself a rationale for intervening around the world in a new ethical, environmentally-friendly spirit of empire building.

The adoption of an ethical foreign policy involves an assumption of moral superiority on the part of New Labour. It is saying that Blair's

government, unlike the self-serving and sleazy Conservative regime it replaced, represents no special interests. Instead it is concerned with upholding the Greater Good around issues such as human rights and the environment.

There is, of course, only room for an exalted few on such moral high ground, from where they can look down on the rest of the world and pontificate on how to put it to rights. In that sense New Labour's ethical foreign policy represents a nineties' outlook that is every bit as elitist and repressive as old-fashioned imperialist ideologies. It is a world-view in which 'us' in Britain and the West represent, in Cook's words, a moral 'force for good in the world', whose mission is to save 'them' in the immoral societies of Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe, whether they want to be saved or not.

Take, for example, the campaign to ban landmines, fronted by Princess Diana with keen New Labour support. Why are people suddenly competing to see who can make the landmine problem appear most horrific? On the eve of Diana's August trip to Bosnia, the television news made the wild claim that there are a million mines buried in that former war-zone. The next day in the *Mirror*, Robin Cook claimed that there are in fact six million mines in Bosnia—which would be around one-and-a-half mines for every man, woman and child. Any advance on six million?

ever, the assumption is that the evil is to be found over there, in Angola or Bosnia, rather than in our own societies. That is one reason why attention is focused on the landmine, a cheap and inefficient anti-personnel device mainly used by the world's poor, instead of on the kind of hi-tech 'smart' weaponry which can destroy entire populations, but is the exclusive preserve of military powers like Britain (1997-98 defence budget: £21 billion). The mines are, as Cook has it, an 'insult to a civilised world'. The Cruise Missiles, on the other hand, are presumably crusaders for civilisation.

THE SAME ASSUMED DIVIDE BETWEEN the moral West and the immoral rest underpins every aspect of the ethical foreign policy. The proposal to restrict arms sales ultimately rests upon the notion that a mature, peace-loving nation like Britain should not be handing dangerous toys over to irresponsible and violent children elsewhere. What starts as an emphasis on cleaning up the global environment generally ends up as an attack on the polluters in the developing world. And Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy statement included a commitment to publish a sort of annual 'league table' of human rights abuses around the globe, to show which of the world's peoples are living up to the standards of behaviour which New Labour has set for them.

in another time. All the authorities need do is to brand their targets as evil men from societies in the relegation zone of the human rights league table, where the streets are paved with landmines, and they are assured of loud support, especially from what would once have been considered the liberal-left.

So it was that New Labour felt able to do what the Tories would not, sending in the SAS to snatch one Bosnian Serb and execute another. Even the revelation that Simo Drljaca had not been formally accused of any war crimes, but was the subject of a 'secret indictment', failed to shake the widespread support for the assault in Europe and America. The ethically correct death squad had arrived on the world stage, and everybody from army commanders to Amnesty International cheered and called for an encore.

So it is too that, in this atmosphere, the Western authorities can maintain their air of moral superiority and their international support while conducting the kind of showtrials which are described elsewhere in this issue of LM, in our investigation into the injustice being perpetrated by the Rwandan genocide tribunal.

Faced with the soft words and warm charms of the ethical foreign policy, much of the world seems to have lost its head—or a least its critical faculties. Princess Diana's romance with Dodi Fayed might have stirred up great controversy in the papers. But the same media cheers on her role in the anti-landmines crusade, which has reduced real human tragedies to just another pretext for some cheap tabloid sentimentality and salacious, human interest, photo stories.

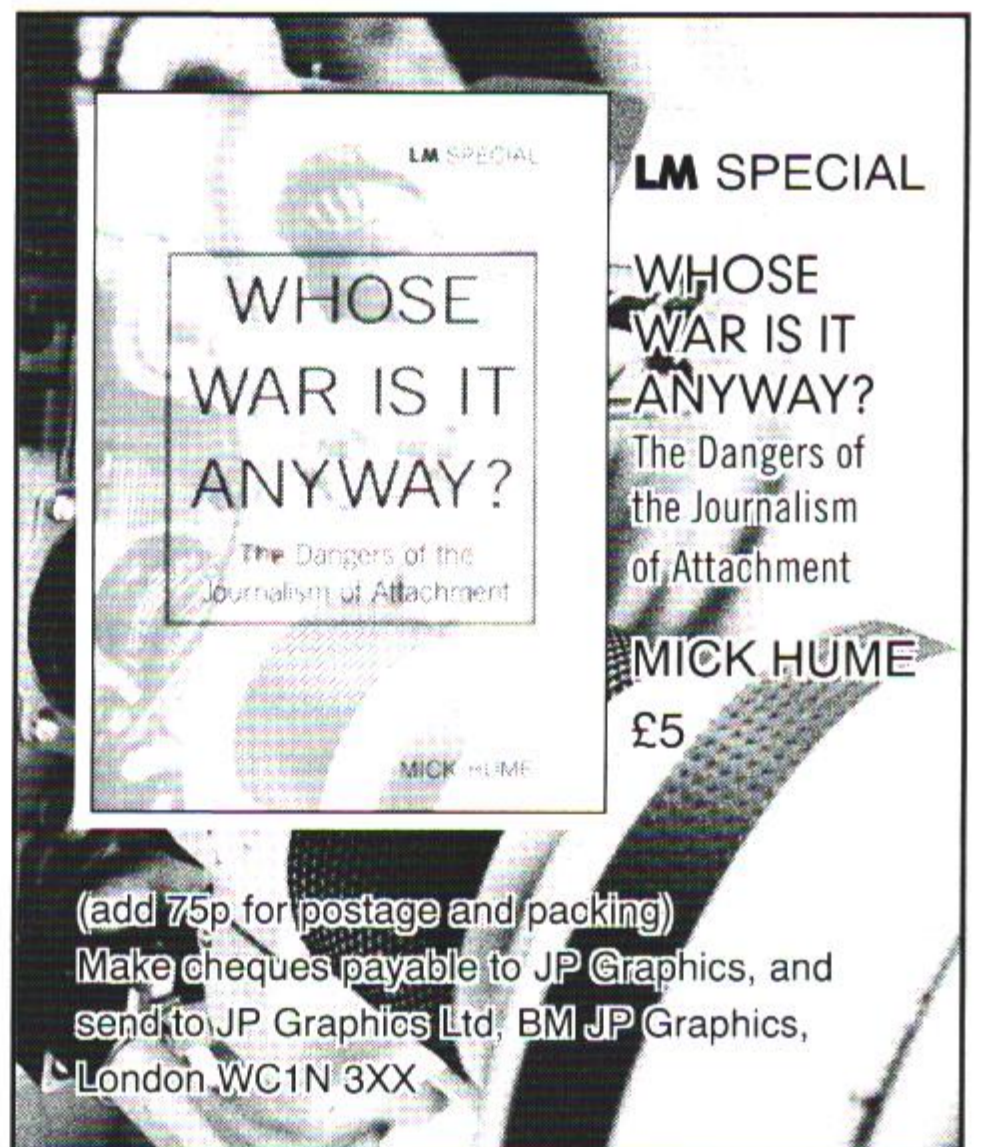
## GOVERNMENT ESPOUSING OF THE NINETIES CAN GET COMMITTING ATROCITIES

The notion that suffering around the world is caused by 'the evil of landmines' is childishly daft. There is no such thing as an 'evil' landmine, any more than there is a bad bullet or a naughty knife. They are just weapons; deadly yes, but demonic no. Take them away and those who have to fight will use something else. It is instructive that Cook's own ban on landmines only commits the British Army to destroy its stockpile by 2005, giving plenty of time for the armed forces to develop some alternative means of killing enemy soldiers and civilians.

What the hysterical campaign against landmines really symbolises is the fashionable trend to moralise conflicts, depicting what are struggles for social and political power as if they were fairy tale battles against the forces of evil. As

Whenever moralistic judgements are being handed down, the threat of corrective punishment is never far behind. From its assumed position on the high ground of humanitarianism, the New Labour government—like the Clinton administration in the USA—can feel free to hand out however severe a punishment it sees fit. Nobody can accuse Blair and Cook of fighting a war for oil profits, or as a party political stunt to win an election. These New Labour men are, after all, selfless crusaders for the Greater Good of humanity, summoning all the authority of a vengeful god with which to smite the wicked of the Earth.

It turns out that a government espousing the ethical, humanitarian foreign policy of the nineties can get away with committing atrocities which would have provoked public outrage



## PICTURES THE WORLD FORGOT

Atrocities committed by UN troops in Somalia are finally coming under scrutiny in the wake of charges against members of Belgian and Canadian regiments, and a government inquiry in Italy. Can we now expect a more questioning attitude towards any future 'humanitarian' interventions in the Third World?

The *Observer* published a photograph of UN peacekeepers roasting a Somali child alive above a blazing fire. Another photograph showed a UN peacekeeper forcing a small child to drink salt water and swallow his own vomit. Why are their political masters in the West not brought before a War Crimes Tribunal? Are the world policemen who set and enforce the law also above it?

In spite of a massive media presence in Somalia at the time, these atrocities went largely unreported. *Living Marxism* was an honourable exception, challenging the humanitarian credentials of Operation Restore Hope and publishing photographic evidence of atrocities in 1993, four years ahead of the *Observer*. At meetings and protests supported by *Living Marxism*, I saw film of UN troops firing live ammunition into crowds, and footage of terrified people fleeing as UN helicopter gunships shelled their homes and public buildings, including a hospital. British television journalists did not see fit to broadcast these pictures. Why not? I for one question the infallibility of Western journalists. I am reluctant to question their integrity in case I end up with a libel writ. Anyway, here's a few quid for your Off The Fence Fund.

**PAULINE HADAWAY** Belfast

## GENES AND INTELLIGENCE

In his response ('A fool's errand') to the article 'The sense we were born with?' (July/August), James Heartfield argues that intelligence is neither fixed nor 'a natural property of individual human beings'. This may be true, but it is irrelevant to the issue addressed in my interview with Professor Plomin: not whether intelligence is fixed or natural, but

whether genetics can have an impact on variations in cognitive ability.

The evidence for this is substantial and compelling. Numerous twin and adoption studies have now demonstrated an important association between familial inheritance and variation in cognitive performance. Indeed there is no trait in the behavioural or medical sciences for which substantial genetic influence is better documented. It was the enormous body of evidence implicating genes in cognition that has led several groups to begin searching for the underlying genes.

Heartfield continued by arguing IQ to be a 'bastard concept' unrelated to intelligence. IQ tests measure performance via an examination of spatial, verbal, mathematical and general logical skills. IQ results strongly intercorrelate with more 'traditional' measures of excellence including academic and job performance. If Heartfield wants to reject IQ as not being related to intelligence, then he will be rejecting many different techniques of assessment—not just those for the 'nerds in Mensa'.

Should Heartfield shake off his disbelief and examine the data, he will find a range of issues that are fascinating. Why, for example, does the variation in IQ become more closely associated with genes than environment during the course of a lifetime? Does this suggest a relation between genes and knowledge? Could the genes be working against environmental variation (selecting knowledge?), and, if so, how is this possible and what might be the implications? I may not have all the answers but I am not so foolish as to remain ignorant of the facts.

**DR STUART DERBYSHIRE**

Research Fellow,  
University of Pittsburgh Medical  
Centre, USA

## TRANSFORMING POLITICS

David from Kent (LM-mail, June) concluded from Frank Furedi's article ('Class politics cannot be rebuilt, regenerated or rescued today', May) that the end of class struggle, and disillusionment with human

potential, make arguments for change redundant at the present time. While I think David is right to be sceptical of any spontaneous reaction against the anti-political climate of today, it seems to me that he overlooks some very original opportunities in the here and now.

The failure of old working class movements often blinds people to the collapse of positive appeal for any mainstream project. (Tony Blair's 'landslide' took less votes than Major's victory in 1992.) The widespread acceptance of limitations, if left unchallenged, does have a very debilitating effect. But we should not assume from this that conservative ideas are confidently and convincingly held. They are the reflex reaction which reflects only a loss of confidence in any ideas or values.

Challenging this climate is like kicking in an open door, as few beyond Blair's clique have a stake in such a pathetic view of humanity. The paucity of ideas means that it is easier to get a hearing. And many people, who may not agree with all the ideas in *LM*, nevertheless feel uneasy with the lack of opposition or critical debate. Unprecedented political space has opened up for a 'common sense' challenge to this culture of limits. Contesting this new culture is a political project in itself, and one which can create an entirely new audience for transformative politics. But creating a hearing for such a project does require creativity, imagination, and the confidence to see where it takes us without spending too much time looking over our shoulders.

**TRACEY BROWN** Kent

Contrary to media myth (and Colin Whetstone, Letters, July/August), there are plenty of working class people in Chelsea, where I happen to live. Check out the World's End estate. Critiques of my postal address aside, all I was wondering was what Frank Furedi had to say to *anyone* beyond that The World is dire but You Can Do It! Do what? When? How?

**MIKE BELBIN** London SW3

## TAKING PRIDE

Des de Moor ('Almost ashamed of Pride', July/August) presents a crass and stereotyped image of the gay community. The faults he finds (obsession with health and safety, denial of class *et al*) are not our own special creation but reflect an outlook widespread throughout society. If we have Soho/Islington prejudices it is because they are fashionable; the same reason we have bleached floorboards.

Darling, if you do not like Pride, do not go at all. There should be no reason for you to hide at Pride.

**PAUL BRIGGS** London SE24

I appreciate Des de Moor's criticisms of the vacuity of the Pride march, but what is the point of adopting a 'coping strategy' or 'hiding in the cabaret tent'? If he is so disillusioned with the event, why does he bother turning up for it? I suppose it is a question of 'identity'!

**ANDREW COX** Cardiff

## WANKERS, SLEAZE AND LM

Neil Hamilton ("Wankers of the world unite" seems to be Martin Bell's slogan', July/August) owed his defeat in the general election no more to Martin Bell than David Mellor did to Sir James Goldsmith. You may recall that if Mr Mellor had had all of Goldsmith's votes, the poor fellow would have lost anyway.

The parallel between Hamilton and Mellor is not just the 'sleaze factor', but a fundamental hunger for publicity, any publicity! Just as Mellor lined himself up for radio and television appearances after the 'toe sucking affair', so too did Hamilton, wife in tow, appear on *Kilroy*, *Have I Got News For You*, and now in *Living Marxism!* The man has not got a bone of Marxism in him. In fact I would say that he and his lot are invertebrate! It is ironic that you should picture him holding up a copy of *LM* depicting Blair's 'authoritarianism'. But who was it who said that the rest of us peasants should 'get back to basics', while they took backhanders, and made women pregnant and dumped them, C Parkinson, T Yeo etc.

Martin Bell may now be in office because of a clever ploy by Labour. But maybe the people were just not prepared to be conned by the Mellors and Hamiltons of this world any more. Why is *LM* being sucked in by the bitter and twisted capitalist agenda? Have you forgotten the workers of the world?

**LUCIA KATSUMBE** *London E16*

## HUMANIST PREJUDICE?

Contrary to the cursory claim made by Dr Jennifer Cunningham ('Planet of the apes', June 1996), scientific reports in cognitive ethology, field primatology and interspecific communication are filled with examples of the capacity for 'conscious thought, voluntary control of behaviour and ability to learn in advance' of the nonhuman great apes. The alleged discontinuity between us and our closest living relatives has been challenged, as we have gradually discovered in them the presence of cross-modal perceptions, symbolic and linguistic abilities, the capacity for self-recognition in mirrors as well as for imitation and deliberate deception, not to mention planning ahead, toolmaking and the use of tools to make tools.

Dr Cunningham's argument would be that basic moral rights are to be granted on the basis of the possession of favoured characteristics. I am inclined to hold that Dr Cunningham has not realised the implications of such reasoning. There exist many unfortunate human beings—the profoundly intellectually disabled, the brain-damaged, the senile—who are permanently deprived of the characteristics that her argument identifies as a prerequisite for being granted basic moral rights. Consistency would therefore suggest that we withdraw the moral protection they presently enjoy, and recommend a policy of harvesting their organs for disabled-to-normal human transplants.

If we reject such a conclusion, it is because when it comes to humans, we do not grant or withhold fundamental rights on the basis of discredited forms of perfectionism. On the contrary, we strive to implement an even stricter

moral and legal protection for the vital interests of the less intellectually endowed and consequently more vulnerable individuals of our own species. The philosophers and scientists who have built up the collective case for the Great Ape Project argue that it is time to make our morality more consistent by beginning to extend our egalitarian stance to those nonhuman beings who most clearly demonstrate the possession of the qualities we deem relevant in ourselves. For such authors, the claim that our interests should come first, far from being an 'elementary point', is the legacy of a prejudice we should attempt to get rid of.

**DR PAOLA CAVALIERI**

Co-editor, *The Great Ape Project*, editor, *Etica & Animali*, Milan, Italy

## SPAIN: A PASSION FOR DEATH?

The murder of conservative councillor, Miguel Ángel Bianco, by ETA, the Basque Separatists, was the signal for an unleashing of emotional anguish expressed in demonstrations across Spain. Major demonstrations in Madrid and Barcelona were led by Julio Anguita of Izquierda Unida (United Left Coalition), José Marie Aznar and Francisco Álvarez Cascos of the governing Partido Popular, and two leading members of PSOE, Joaquín Almunia and ex-president Felipe González. The unions organised 10-minute silences. All of the above took place in the same week that 18 workers were burnt to death in the shipyards of Valencia, and demonstrations against the Nato summit were banned in the capital.

**GARETH KING** *Zaragoza, Spain*

## CHOCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

When Dolan Cummings ('The myth of addiction', May) used the example of 'chocolate addiction' to illustrate how we are seen as losing self-control and needing to be saved from ourselves, I felt like telling him to get a grip. That was before I saw a news item on my local Channel 11 tv station, which announced how researchers have developed the 'chocolate patch', similar to the nicotine patch, to be worn by chocoholics on the wrist. The patch releases a calming chocolate aroma. Thank heavens, we're saved!

**NATALIE BOYD** *Pennsylvania, USA*

# The what's NOT on guide



**ALCOPOOPERS:** JD Wetherspoon has banned the sale of alcopops in its 194 pubs. 'We simply do not want to be associated with the controversy', said chairman Tim Martin. Let's hope no other drinks become 'associated' with 'controversy' (lager louts, Mother's ruin, a rum do etc) or Wetherspoon's could be the first pub chain to go dry. **UNDERAGE DRINKING:** Schoolboys swigging cider behind the cricket pavilion could be in trouble with the law. Home office minister Alun Michael has announced the implementation from 1 August of the Confiscation of Alcohol Act, which empowers police to take alcohol away from under-18s drinking in public. Labour has also announced that 18 and 19-year olds will soon be required to show ID cards before purchasing alcohol. They may be New Labour; but young, never. **BANGED:** Fireworks will only be sold to over-18s and some bangers will be banned outright, the home office has announced. The New Labour government is also planning to outlaw replica guns as well as real ones. **SMOKING:** Health Secretary Frank Dobson described supermodels who light up on the catwalk as 'disgusting', and the Health Education Authority has criticised men's style magazines for publishing pictures which glamorise smoking. How long before picture editors start cutting the fags out of shots of James Dean and Steve McQueen? Meanwhile City firms are banning their

employees from having a ciggy *outside* their offices, and in the USA Hillary Clinton has criticised Julia Roberts for smoking too much in her new film *My Best Friend's Wedding*. Guests at the White House are now given sweets instead of cigarettes. **'NAZI' CHOCOLATE WRAPPER:** Swissair has withdrawn chocolate bars wrapped in gold foil, in the context of allegations that gold bought from the Nazis during the Second World War contained the melted-down fillings and jewellery of those slaughtered in the gas ovens. 'One or two passengers complained and we decided to withdraw the chocolate', said spokesman Jean-Claude Donzel. **SMALL IS NOT BEAUTIFUL:** After complaints that children had been frightened by 'newsreel style' footage in the 'have you ever noticed how protected you feel when you make yourself small?' advert for Volkswagen Polo, the Independent Television Commission declared that 'more cautious judgements should be made about the context in which potentially disturbing material should appear'. Apparently the same sort of material might have been acceptable if it had appeared in an advert for a charity. **OTTERLY UNNECESSARY:** As New Labour sets about banning everything, a *Guardian* leader-writer suggested that it is time to consider a ban on otter hunting, not realising that tailing Tarka was in fact banned two decades ago. Try to keep up, that man.

## WE WELCOME READERS' VIEWS AND CRITICISMS

Write to The Editor, *LM*, BM InformInc, London WC1N 3XX

fax (0171) 278 9844. Letters may be edited for clarity and length

# TABOOS

*The arrival of 10-minute abortions in Marie Stopes Clinics seems to have upset just about everybody—except Beth Adams*

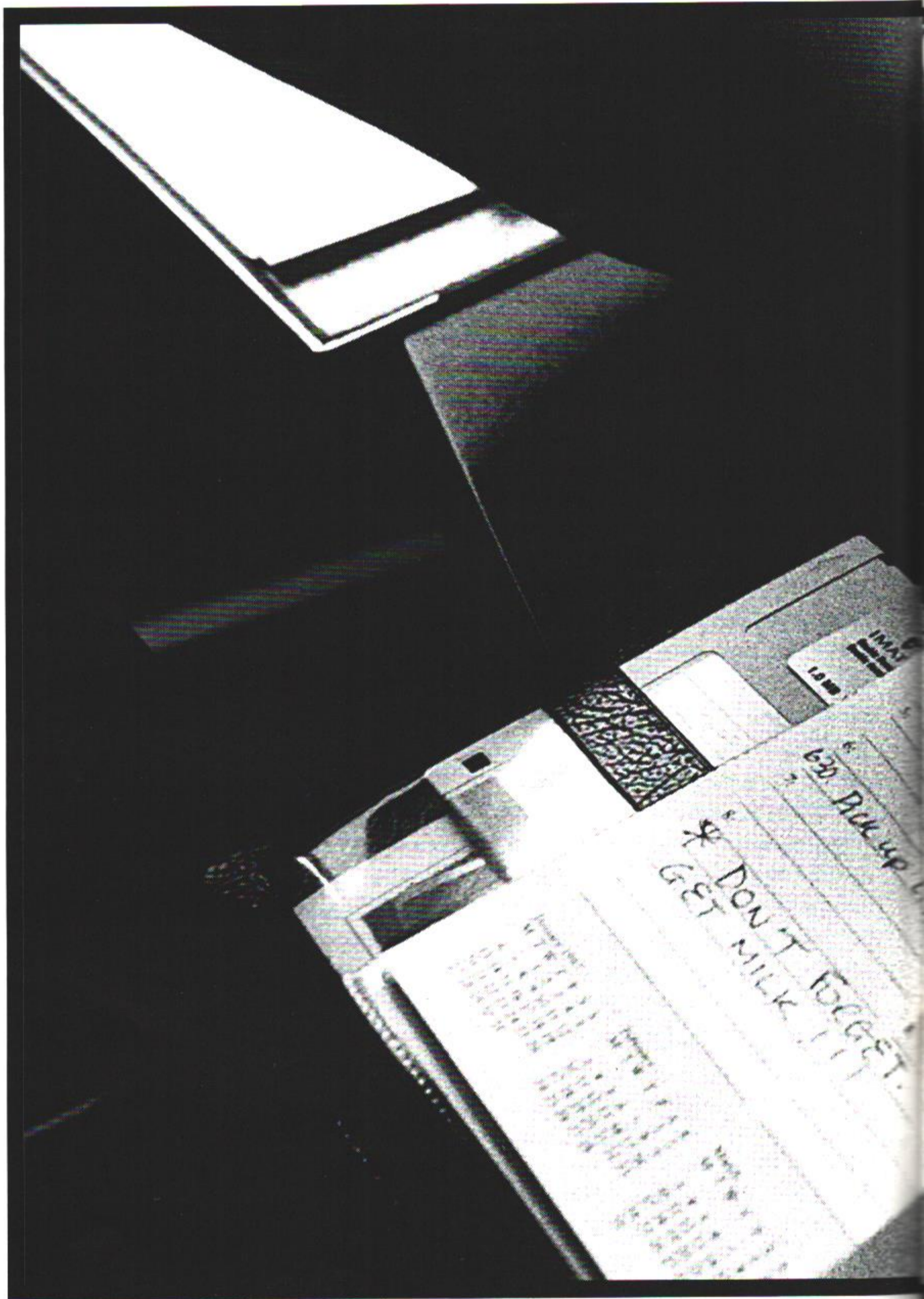
## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH LUNCH BREAK ABORTIONS?

**T**he announcement that Marie Stopes Clinics were to provide an abortion service so simple that a woman would be able to end her pregnancy during her lunch break was bound to provoke a torrent of abuse from those who oppose abortion. It was only to be expected that the spokeswoman for the anti-abortion charity Life would condemn the idea as 'sickening' and 'a trivialisation of abortion'. And Cardinal Hume's call for society to reflect on the inhumanity of such a service was equally predictable from the head of Britain's Roman Catholics.

On the other hand, you might have expected those who support legal abortion to raise a glass to Tim Black, Marie Stopes chief executive, for breaking a few taboos surrounding the issue. Yet most of them chose instead to join in the chorus of condemnation. New Labour's supposedly pro-choice minister for public health, Tessa Jowell, accused Black of trivialising both abortion and women's feelings. A spokeswoman for Britain's largest network of not-for-profit abortion clinics, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, trilled about the need for proper counselling and stated that they 'would never want to start drop-in abortions'. The National Abortion Campaign and Abortion Law Reform Association pretty much disappeared from public view, only surfacing under pressure to emphasise how seriously women take their abortion decisions.

### **It's a snip**

Black has a reputation for being blunt, outspoken and a man who likes to shock. He is, after all, the doctor who achieved notoriety for his clinic's vasectomy service when he agreed to perform 'the snip' on a man whose only pain-relief





was self-hypnosis. But his statement on this occasion was inoffensive and utterly worthy of support. His much reported comment was that a new technique introduced in Marie Stopes clinics had 'made early abortion a minor procedure that could quite easily be completed during a working woman's lunch time break'.

Black stressed that it was his intention simply to provide a service 'without drama or moral censure'. When pressed on Radio 4's *Today* programme as to whether he had any difficulty presenting early abortion as something as simple as having a tooth filled, he replied: 'No, we have no problem at all. Women do not lease their bodies from the state or even from the church. They own themselves and if they meet the criteria of the 1967 Abortion Act they have the right to the best service possible.'

Black's approach to abortion hits you like a breath of fresh air. For once early abortion is being presented as

the simple, straightforward procedure it actually is.

A woman seeking abortion at a Stopes day-care clinic must be less than 12 weeks pregnant and must comply with the legal requirements of the Abortion Act—that is, two doctors must agree that continuing the pregnancy will cause greater damage to her health than ending it. On arrival the woman changes into a loose-fitting t-shirt which she has brought with her and a nurse checks her medical history, pulse and blood pressure. About 20 minutes before treatment she will be offered a painkiller to help relieve the discomfort of the procedure.

### Like severe period pain

When the time comes for her treatment, the woman is taken into the treatment room where she settles into a chair similar to that you would expect to find in a dentist's surgery. The pregnancy is then terminated under local anaesthetic,

using a technique and instruments originally meant for use in developing countries where high-tech clinical back-up is non-existent. It is a minimally invasive procedure, in which a flexible cannula of just 5 or 6mm diameter is passed through the cervical opening into the uterine cavity. The cannula is attached to a manual vacuum pump and the 'products of conception' are sucked away. The whole procedure usually takes less than 10 minutes to perform.

Nobody, not even Tim Black, will claim that the procedure is pleasant. Usually the woman feels some cramping, like severe period pains, during and immediately after the procedure. But many women understandably find the speed and convenience preferable to the inconvenience and unpleasantness of a general anaesthetic or the hours of bleeding that occur with the abortion pill.

Day-care centres providing abortion under local anaesthetic have been operating for years in countries such as Spain, the Netherlands and the USA, where many practitioners ridicule the traditional British provision of abortion under general anaesthetic in the gynaecological wards of hospitals. There is a clinical consensus that early abortion is, in itself, so safe that a woman faces more risks from the general anaesthetic than she does from the procedures for which it has been used to anaesthetise her. Dutch doctors have for many years condemned the British preference for general anaesthetic, saying it exaggerates the procedure in women's minds and makes them worry more.

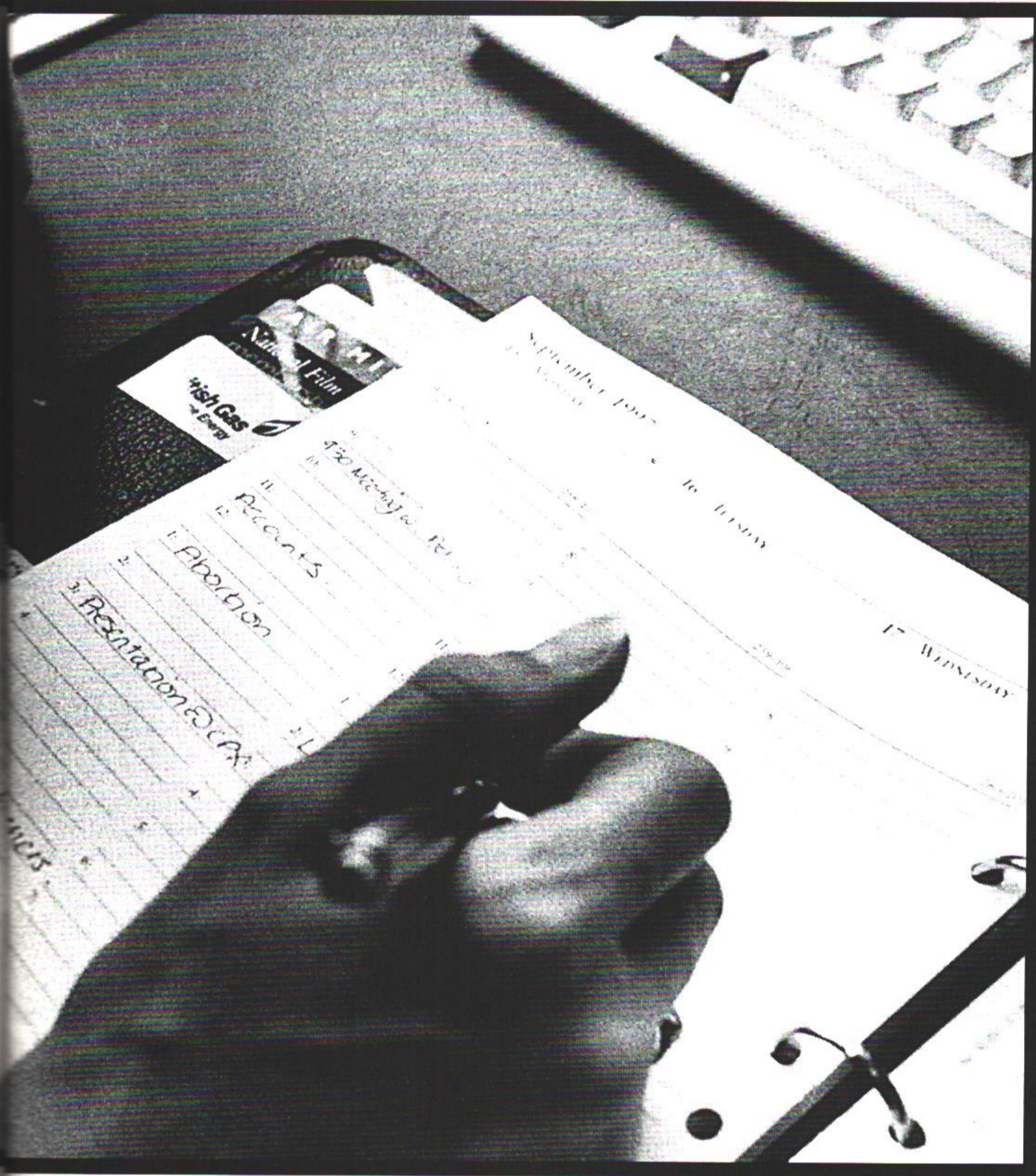
From a clinical point of view it is entirely appropriate to compare early abortion to a tooth extraction. In fact, it is probably safer. From the operating doctor's point of view there is nothing to diagnose, the issue is straightforward providing only that the gestation of the pregnancy has been accurately assessed. In the USA, where most abortions are performed outside hospital settings, a five year review of abortions performed within the first eight weeks of pregnancy showed the death rate was as low as 0.2 per 100 000 procedures—one in half a million—making it one of the safest operations known to medical science. Marie Stopes cites studies which show the risk of serious complications in early abortions as just 0.2 in a hundred.

### Safe and convenient

Nobody has suggested that the Marie Stopes service is unsafe. Indeed had there been any question of its safety we can rest assured the Department of Health, never known to be cavalier on matters relating to abortion, would have refused to licence the six day-care centres.

There have been some suggestions that, by so blatantly offering women abortion on request, the service is ►

PHOTO: DAVE CHAPMAN



## Many women do not want sympathy—just an abortion

◀ unlawful. But these allegations have been easily brushed aside. It is widely accepted that almost all of the 140 000 or so pregnancies terminated in the first trimester are ended simply because they are unwanted. These abortions are considered legal because the referring doctors do, in good faith, believe that it would damage the mental health of these women to force them to endure pregnancy and childbirth against their will. Black has not said that the new centres would offer abortion to any woman he would not have previously provided a service for, simply that—if she wishes it—the abortion can be carried out more conveniently than before.

It is this admittance of 'convenience' that has most provoked Black's critics within the pro-choice movement, most of whom appear to feel more at home with Nuala Scarisbrick of Life's insistence that abortion 'should not be trivialised'. Even the pro-choice movement seems to believe that abortion should not be too convenient or easy. Many have got themselves caught in a state of intellectual schizophrenia, arguing simultaneously that, on the one hand, women

always agonise over their abortion decision and never take it lightly, while on the other hand, the new Stopes system might rush the poor dears into decisions they will come to regret.

The defensiveness of the pro-choice movement and their irritation with Mr Black stems from their apparent belief that it is impossible to win public support for the principle of easily available abortion, so that the best you can do is to garner sympathy for the victims of unplanned pregnancy wracked by 'difficult decisions'.

### Economical too

Yet portraying women seeking abortion as victims in search of deliverance does women no favours at all. For some women abortion is a difficult, heart-searching decision—but not for all. For many it is entirely straightforward. Many women simply want to get back to a pre-pregnant state as quickly as possible with as little fuss as possible. They do not want sympathy or understanding. They do not want counselling or advice. They just want a safe and effective abortion procedure and they find it irritating that even those who

support their right to choose are inclined to present them as emotional cripples. Some women who have abortions may indeed come to regret their decision but, in a sense, that is what life is like. Some women who have children regret their decision. We make our choices and live with the consequences. It is not for somebody else to make those choices for us in advance.

Cynics have pointed out that Tim Black is more concerned about raising his share of the abortion market than he is about raising the issue of women's rights to abortion. It has been alleged that his love of the non-clinical setting and local anaesthetic is motivated by his sense of economy: abortions can be provided more cheaply this way. But who cares about any of that? Whatever his motivation, you have to admit that his high-profile provision of a lunch time abortion service has done more to 'normalise' abortion than any other recent action.

On this occasion the pro-choice movement could take a lesson from the doctor: stop apologising for abortion and demand the service that women need. ●

## FREE SPEECH BRANDED

by Jennie Bristow

On Friday 8 August, Edinburgh University sacked psychology lecturer Chris Brand. Last November, Brand had written something on his Internet site that was seen to condone child sex. Brand was suspended from his post, and eventually sacked when a university tribunal found him guilty of 'disgraceful conduct'.

Most of us would rightly find paedophilia, and attempts to condone child sex, repellent. But child sex is not the issue at stake here, and nor is the welfare of Chris Brand. What the witch-hunt against this lecturer shows is the extent to which freedom of speech in universities is now only allowed if you say the right thing: even when expressing your personal views.

The controversy over Chris Brand has not come out of the blue. In April 1996, he admitted to the national press that he saw

himself as a 'scientific racist', believing that racial inequality was an innate result of low IQ in ethnic groups. Brand's publishers immediately stopped the release of his new book, *The g Factor: General Intelligence and Its Implications*. The Student Representative Council of the University of Edinburgh and the *Student* newspaper demanded he be removed from his post. The university's principal, Sir Stewart Sutherland, launched an investigation into Brand's teaching practices.

When it was discovered that Brand was not only a racist, but supposedly condoned paedophilia as well, his days were numbered. Everything he said seemed to run counter to the accepted wisdom of what is right and wrong. But so what?

It has always been the case that some university lecturers develop theories that are

controversial, bigoted and above all wrong. The principle of academic freedom has, until now, given the lecturers the space to do this and students the space to disagree. As one of Chris Brand's former students Helene Guldberg argued in *LM* last year, she had spent her degree course in psychology arguing furiously with Brand, and generally defeating his case ('Why ban racist Brand?', June 1996).

To call for the removal of a lecturer on the basis of his political views, as the anti-racist campaigns against Brand did, is not only an attack on academic freedom and free speech. It also betrays a highly patronising attitude to university students. It assumes that students are too vulnerable and impressionable to cope with offensive ideas. The fact that students are adults, at college to test out ideas and think for themselves, is simply not considered.

But Brand was not sacked for what he taught his students. The fact that he was sacked for his views on child sex, aired on his own Internet site, shows that the

view of students as children has gone even further than restrictions on teaching practice.

On 9 August, the principal of Edinburgh University told the *Guardian* that it had been made clear to Brand that he 'had responsibilities to act with care, whether in a departmental, teaching or wider situation'. In other words, universities today not only restrict what you can teach as an academic: they also want to dictate your private beliefs as well. Why? Because you have a moral responsibility, in your professional and personal life, to teach your students to think the 'right' things.

Once upon a time, universities may have been places where students and academics were encouraged to think, to criticise and to develop new ideas. Now it seems that you can only survive in a university if you see your role as a vicar or childminder, constantly under scrutiny. Chris Brand may be the victim of this particular case, but the real loser in such a restrictive climate will be anybody with an original thought.

ANN BRADLEY

# The last straw in safer sex



It should come as no surprise to anybody that Jack Straw wants to make it a criminal offence for somebody with HIV knowingly to risk transmitting to somebody else.

Don't for one moment think that the mind-boggling legal complexities of drafting such a law would get in his way. You know, those complicated little details about how you would prove that somebody was acting with criminal irresponsibility while having sex. Or how you would prove that one person was in ignorance of the other's HIV status, or that the perpetrator of the supposed crime was in full knowledge of their own state of health.

Don't for one minute think that the small matter of how the government would define which infections it would

politicians used to agonise over whether laws were justifiable, or enforceable, are long gone. These days a problem is reported in the papers and legislation proposed. It does not even have to be a big problem. Nobody can seriously argue that hoards of HIV-infected maniacs are roaming the country recklessly exposing battalions of lovers to a possible lingering death. The issue has become a topic of discussion because a court in Cyprus jailed an HIV positive Cypriot for failing to inform his English lover that she risked her health by having sex without a condom.

You can understand why the woman was bitter. Although her actions seemed rather more like the fury of a woman scorned, she insists she was motivated by concern for the well-being of other

things that we and we alone must take responsibility for. The type of sexual relationship we have with our partners, including whether they do or do not use a condom, is just such a thing. When two people decide to have consensual sex, neither is a passive victim in need of protection by an all-powerful state. When somebody agrees to sex without a condom they are taking a calculated risk and the responsibility must be theirs. Try as I might I cannot visualise this Cyprus case as one involving criminal and victim—more a chancer and a naive fool who paid a high price for a passionate romance.

It does not take much insight to see where you end up when you start off down this litigious road. If you accept that the knowing transmission of an infection is an offence, how does society cope with people who consciously decide that under such circumstances they would rather not know? Once there are circumstances where the transmission of HIV is made a criminal offence, how long will it be before compulsory HIV testing creeps onto the agenda? Official disclaimer forms might follow so that those who choose not to use condoms can demonstrate that they have waived their right to prosecute.

The last thing couples need is the threat of the law sitting on the end of the bed prescribing what you must or must not discuss with your partner before you get your leg over. In so far as sex is risky it is a domain in which we need to watch out for ourselves. It infuriates me that Mr Straw feels that he should take any responsibility for what I—or my chosen partner—choose to do or not do in bed. It horrifies me to think that he is effectively considering making unprotected sex a criminal offence.

The tendency to see a new law as the obvious answer to any issue is not exclusive to New Labour. The Tories, remember, introduced laws to muzzle dangerous dogs and to ensure compulsory seat belt-wearing in the back of cars. But at least they generally stayed out of the bedroom. Straw and his colleagues show no such sense of decency.

## Some things we alone should take responsibility for

become criminal to spread will interfere with New Labour's desire to deliver retribution. Will they limit it to HIV? If they do they have to justify why not other sexually transmitted infections? If HIV is singled out because it kills, the government will have to justify why it is not including other infections that are potentially fatal. What about TB? What about flu, for that matter? HIV is relatively difficult to spread—even via unprotected sex (the high incidence of HIV negative partners still vexes the boffins who study the virus). Flu, on the other hand, is as easy to spread as gossip. A nurse working at a geriatric home while struggling to beat off flu symptoms is potentially more deadly than an HIV positive man who seduces a woman into sex without a condom.

For Jack Straw the little details and complexities don't matter. The days when

women who might fall prey to her Romeo's charms. It is futile to question motives—we seldom see ourselves as others do. But when I heard the news about how this HIV positive man with a young family and a short life expectancy had been given a custodial sentence, my response was along the lines of: 'Thank God it couldn't happen here.' Jack Straw's was obviously: 'My God, it couldn't happen here—we'd better do something about this.'

There are a number of reasons why it is wrong to allow the law to sniff its way into people's sexual relations in this way, and it is distressing that so few people seem to have twigged the broader consequences. The main problem is what it says about the way we see ourselves, our relationships and the state.

If we are to have any self-respect, then we have to accept that there are some



*Jennie Bristow follows New Labour's new broom through its first three months in government*

## KEEPING BRITAIN TIDY

**N**ew Labour, Clean Labour. New Britain, Clean Britain. The New Labour government began its term in office according to the three R's: regulation, regulation and regulation. The result already is that New Britain is a noticeably cleaner, tidier, more tightly controlled place than it was under John Major's messy Tories. As for freedom and democracy in this hygienic new world: judge for yourself.



**Cleaning up our lives.** Shooters and hunters will be the first to fall victim to the big mop, with handguns banned by the government and over 170 Labour back benchers calling for a ban on hunting. Smokers and drinkers, too, will find their filthy habits curtailed. New Labour plans bans on tobacco advertising and sports sponsorship, and looks set to raise the legal smoking age to 18.

On 17 July, the government announced new restrictions on the sale and marketing of alcopops—no bans, but enough to mark these out as the dirty drinks, polluting the nation's youth.

Driving was picked out as another filthy habit at the European Summit on the environment in June. The government announced that drivers with high polluting cars would face roadside checks and fines. Labour's

'green agenda', put forward on 6 June, includes fewer cars—to be enforced, presumably, by tax rises for motorists like the £400 annual tax we may have to pay to drive in London, an idea floated on 6 July. But if you do the decent thing and get on your bike, still you are not free of the regulatory brush. On 22 May, the government announced that cyclists who enjoy a bit of verbal 'road rage' may be forced to fit bells to stop them shouting.

Marriage is a messy business, and the government is out to clean the process up with the pre-nuptial counselling sessions it announced in July. Add that to the marriage guidance counselling, parenting classes and pre-divorce counselling already in place and you may find, to paraphrase princess Di, that there are half a dozen of you in your marriage—the wife, the husband, and the professionals you spend half of your time with. If you ignore their advice and break the nuclear family mould, you are in trouble. As announced on 1 June, single mothers are to be forced to accept whatever jobs are on offer. Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman has also told the Child Support Agency to chase more 'errant' fathers, and ordered it to be more 'aggressive' in collecting debts. Screw up once and you will pay and pay and pay.

And finally. Remember those bangers you used to buy as a kid? Under

plans announced by the government on 18 June, under-18s will not be able to buy any fireworks and the ones that were always the best fun—loud bangers—will be banned altogether.



**Cleaning up our children.** Tough new controls on youths may keep the kids off the streets and their parents in a permanent state of panic. The Queen's Speech of 13 May included plans for Home Secretary Jack Straw's curfews on under-10s. On 14 June, Tony Blair revealed proposals to make teenage criminals repair the damage to their victims' property. The next day, Education Secretary David Blunkett announced a crackdown on truancy, and on 26 June the government announced that all school children would be given a national identity number to track their educational performance from the age of four. Meanwhile, Straw will continue with the Tories' plans to build a network of secure units for offenders aged 12-14.

For those not-yet criminals, tougher regulations will be brought in on underage drinking, with a requirement for all young people to produce a 'Proof of Age' card when they want to buy alcohol (6 July), and on 14 July a spokesperson for the Department of Health announced that the age for smoking may be raised to 18.

Kids are likely to spend more time at school, either in homework classes or at summer camps. But home will be like school too, as their parents are told to read to them for a certain period of time per day. Even chips in schools will be regulated: on 11 June, David Blunkett went to 'war' on junk food in the dining hall.

Schooldays, remember children, are the best days of your lives.



#### Cleaning up the unemployed.

The government has admitted that the four options available to the young unemployed under its welfare to work programme—a job with one day's training, a six month stint in the voluntary sector, a six month career as a mobile litter bin on the 'Environmental Task Force' or a 12 month training course—may not be available to them before cutting off their benefits (11 July). To top it all, on 10 July Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman announced that benefit claimants will lose their automatic right to appeal. But the unemployed can take comfort in the announcement made on 27 May: that there will be a hotline for welfare to work participants being fobbed off with mundane tasks.

Expect an engaged tone.



#### Cleaning up the lottery. New

Labour wants the money used for other causes than wages and opera, like subsidising the cash-strapped health service. As yet another fuss broke out over the money received by Camelot's directors, on 3 June Heritage Secretary Chris Smith gave the 'fat cats' until the end of the week to concede some of their pay bonuses. By 7 June the government was floating ideas about making the National Lottery a non-profit organisation, and by 13 July the government had proposed extending National Lottery funding to

the environment, education and health. All very worthy, maybe. But what about money for fun?



#### Cleaning up the environment.

The new government wants to smell April fresh. On 17 May, it ordered a review of the UK's sea-dumping practices, as the *Guardian* explained, in an attempt to 'shed its Dirty Man of Europe tag'. On 9 June, Environment Minister Michael Meacher promised to take action on nuclear dumps, and the next day a backbench MP called for a government ban on flights carrying nuclear fuel from Sellafield to Cumbria.



#### Cleaning up food production.

The government wants to remove all those inner pollutants from our bodies and make some friends in the process. On 9 May, the government proposed to set up a Food and Health Commission, to restore food 'trust', and on 21 May more rules were introduced to enforce hygiene in abattoirs. On 1 July, Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham suggested that the government might take over old power stations to burn cattle waste, purging it of possible traces of BSE. Just to prove how clean British beef is, on 6 June Cunningham threatened to ban European beef, unless the EU imposed stricter controls on abattoirs. I suppose we should at least be grateful that compulsory vegetarianism is not on the order papers yet.



#### Cleaning up parliament.

On 8 May, the new government proposed banning foreign funding of political parties. Exactly one month later, Jack Straw announced that corrupt MPs would spend up to seven years in jail, a move backed by Lord Nolan, the white knight appointed to police our elected representatives.

On 10 June, the government paved the way for new anti-corruption legislation by announcing a review of the rights and privileges historically held by MPs. On 11 June, the new Register of Members' Interests showed a fall in the number of 'outside interests' held by MPs: not surprising, given the fate of those Labour MPs accused of sleaze before their parliamentary seats were even warm. But every time a rotten apple falls from the tree, a fine, upstanding, un-elected and unaccountable judge with 'no special interests' gains some more power.

The new, clean parliament will be free of the mudslinging of the old system (although some might have called this open debate). On 10 May, the government decided to 'reform' Prime Minister's Question Time: that is to sanitise it to allow fewer awkward questions. Meanwhile, on 8 June, the press announced that Tony Blair would attend local meetings where people could ask him questions directly, and on 13 July we learned that Blair is to set up a panel of 5000 voters to say what they thought of Labour policies. Who needs democratic accountability when you can have the political equivalents of *An Audience with...* and *Jukebox Jury*?



#### Cleaning up its own party.

New Labour's first three months revealed a government incapable of trusting even its own kind, which has placed new restrictions on what Labour MPs can and cannot do. Three days after the government's election, Blair proposed tighter controls on what cabinet ministers could say in public. This was followed by new gags on MPs, who now have to check any comments made to the press with the party press office.

Enjoy New Britain. And now please wash your hands.

'Sleaze' is said to be the new threat to public life. James Heartfield explains why the real meaning of the sleaze debate is the degradation of public life into a phoney war between good and evil

# THE CORRUPTION OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF CORRUPTION

The least thing was not done amiss,  
Or cross'd the Publick Business;  
But all the Rogues cried Brazen'ly,  
Good Gods, had we but Honesty!

Bernard Mandeville, *The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves Turn'd Honest*, 1705

**W**ith the publication of Sir Gordon Downey's report on the 'cash for questions' scandal, MPs breathed a sigh of relief that they had put the problem of parliamentary sleaze behind them. The determination of the New Labour government to raise standards in public life, running a whiter-than-white administration, would surely put an end to the damaging perception that Westminster is corrupt. To underscore that point Prime Minister Tony Blair published a beefed-up version of the *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*—the senior politicians very own code of conduct. A commitment to transparent government, it was argued, would mean an end to the secretive skulduggery, the off-the-record briefings, personal infighting and cover-ups that crippled the Conservative administration.

So how has the new policy fared?

Glasgow's Mohammed Sarwar, the country's first Muslim MP, has been accused of bribing an opponent and suspended from the Parliamentary Labour Party. Veteran left winger Bob Wareing has been found guilty of failing to register financial interests and suspended from the commons. Lord Simon, the former BP chairman and new Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe, was first revealed to have a conflict of interests—owning £2.25 million of BP shares—and then to have £1 million salted away in a Jersey-based tax avoidance scheme. Michael Levy, the pop-music impresario who raised £2 million for a special fund to pay for Tony Blair's personal campaign team during the general election, was rewarded with a peerage. 'Ethical' Foreign Secretary Robin Cook was revealed to be conducting an extra-marital affair with his personal assistant. Another cabinet minister Clare Short was allegedly having an affair with a fellow MP behind his wife's back.

MICHAEL BINDING SATAN, WILLIAM BLAKE, CIRCA 1805





Anybody who believes that  
**POLITICAL**  
**INFLUENCE**  
 is bought with bundles of  
 fivers is underestimating  
**THE REACH**  
 of the British establishment

Labour MP Gordon McMaster killed himself, denouncing fellow Scottish MPs for conducting a smear campaign against him, amid allegations that he was dying of Aids. The leaders of Doncaster council's ruling Labour group must have been grateful that their own suspension from the party, pending investigations into allegations of Lording it up at the council-owned racecourse, has been put in the shade by these weightier scandals.

Rumours of an end to sleaze, it would seem, have been greatly exaggerated. On 3 July, on the lawn of Westminster Abbey, members of parliament were being wined and dined at a private party. The party was organised by Apco the firm that has taken on former clients of Ian Greer Associates, lobbyists at the heart of the original 'cash-for-questions' scandal. The crowd was New Labour as much as it was Old Tory, cabinet ministers as well as ex-cabinet ministers. Weeks later they would all murmur in approval at the outcome of the Downey Inquiry, which concluded as the Lynskey Inquiry did in 1948, that lobbying companies have no legitimate role in government.

Sleaze, though, is a misnomer for the relationship between government and business. The charge of 'sleaze' suggests that politicians' willingness to do favours for business, and to enrich themselves in the process, is the exception. In fact it is the rule. The rationale of the sleaze inquiries under Lords Nolan and Downey is that corruption afflicts a few rotten apples in an otherwise healthy barrel. But the inordinate influence of business in government is built into the very structure of the British state, independent of party affiliation or personal predilection. Capitalist wealth has always enjoyed an intimate relationship with power in society.

Any politician who wants to get things done in the marketplace needs to work with business. Its old hostility to the capitalist class in abeyance, New Labour provides a striking example of the way that government and business are forced into ever-closer relations. Indeed New Labour has been precocious in its pursuit of leaders of industry. In 100 days the government has set up more than 50 task forces, reviews and advisory groups from the Numeracy Task Force through the Better Regulation Task Force to the Export Forum. What these new bodies have in common is the preponderance of businessmen sitting on them and often chairing them, from Barclays Bank executive Martin Baker (Tax and Benefits) to Pete Davis of the Prudential (Welfare to Work) (C Daniel, *New Statesman*, 1 August 1997). And all of these business roles in government are on top of the extensive quangocracy established by the last government and staffed by the great and the good.

The influence of big business on government is profoundly anti-democratic: wealth buys influence. The much-vaunted people's forums stage-managed by Tony Blair are just a rubber-stamp on this real consultation process. The

endorsement of the voters is a formality, compared to this ringing vote of confidence from the powers-that-be. And compared to this network of wealth and power, buying questions in the House of Commons is chicken-feed. Anybody who thinks that political influence is bought with bundles of fivers is underestimating the reach of the British establishment. But is this the corruption of the parliamentary system? No. It is the parliamentary system.

If you want to understand the real reason that 'sleaze' has become so widely reported, there is no point looking here. This network of industry and government has been with us for hundreds of years and there is nothing new, or 'scandalous' about it. Corruption in politics is one thing, but the new politics of corruption is something quite different altogether.

The politics of sleaze-busting, the high-profile campaigns to clean up government, are not inspired by particular instances of corruption or bribery alone. Those have always taken place. What needs to be explained is why now they have come to dominate public life. MPs and ministers have always had some dubious skeletons in their closets, whether they are business interests or sexual peccadilloes. But in themselves these things do not create the heightened sensitivity to sleaze and demand for sleaze-busting. As well as having the evidence, there has to be a public appetite for scandals (and sometimes the appetite means that you do not even need the evidence). Two inquiries into standards in 1974 after a housing kickback scandal involving architect John Poulson and Newcastle City Council Leader T Dan Smith were not even debated in the House of Commons at the time—though notably the same events were dramatised over 13 episodes of *Our Friends in the North* last year.

The preoccupation with sleaze, as opposed to mere instances of corruption, is a relatively recent phenomenon. But what the politics of sleaze lacks in lineage it makes up for in its scope. 'Sleaze' seems to have infected much of the Western world, and sleaze-busting has become close to the organising principle of the political process in countries as far apart as America, France and Italy.

In America the junk bonds scandal of the late eighties was followed by the Savings and Loan collapse—implicating President Bush's son. One off-shoot of the S&L collapse was the Manhattan District Attorney's successful investigation into corruption in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International—a bank that specialised in Third World investments and enriching its officials with other people's money. Since then President Clinton has been subject to investigation into corrupt business dealing and sexual harassment dating back to his days in Arkansas. Republican Congressional leader Newt Gingrich has been reprimanded for the entanglement of his business interests and his office.

In Italy in 1992 the ruling coalition of Christian Democrats and Bettino Craxi's Socialist Party was effectively swept aside by the judges. The 7000 Italian judges, about a third of whom were members of the leftish Magistratura Democratica, conducted a 'clean hands' campaign against 'Tangentopoli'—bribe city—embroiling establishment politicians in crippling, open-ended investigations. The first to gain by the magistrate's intervention was the rightist Forza Italia party which gained power briefly before the judges mired its leader Silvio Berlusconi in corruption charges, leaving the way open in 1996 for the former Stalinists of the Olive Coalition to take power.

Similar scandals have engulfed the Belgian government (accused of protecting a paedophile ring), the Irish (where the long-ruling Fianna Fail party has been accused of selling influence) and the Parisians (where the Gaullists have been accused of handing out hard-to-come-by flats). In most of these cases public sympathy has been with the investigators, sometimes brimming over into sporadic mass demonstrations, as in Belgium and Italy.

What has happened to the politicians? Have they suddenly





SAINT MICHAEL TRIUMPHANT OVER THE DEVIL WITH THE DONOR. ANTONIO JUAN BARTOLOMÉ BERMEJO, CIRCA 1460

descended into moral depravity? Of course not. The links between government and business, and sometimes even organised crime, have always been there in the background. The real change is in public perception. Once, identification with the state and the political system was sufficient to guarantee that the politicians' less reputable dealings remained in the background, unremarked upon. But the widespread disenchantment with politics in recent times has turned the spotlight on any hint of indiscretion. It is like the difference between an old friend and an untrustworthy associate: you may overlook and forgive a lot in an old friend, but pounce on the first failing of an unknown quantity. Since the eighties, with the exhaustion of the political programmes of both left and right, the major parties have forsaken the trust of the voters, becoming the devil you neither know nor trust.

But the debate over sleaze is much more than a symptom of popular disaffection. It is also a self-righting mechanism, employed by the elites to win back the voters' trust in the state. Within the preoccupation with corruption there are two processes intertwined, each pushed forward by the other. 'Sleaze' is about discrediting and delegitimising the old political order—and, at the same time, legitimising and winning authority for a new one.

The process of delegitimation is important because the authorities dread losing control of events altogether, and would sacrifice their grandmothers to hang onto power. For the Conservatives in this country it was a painful political lesson that all their friends in the press, business and the professions dropped them the moment that it became apparent that they could not deliver popular support. Conservative ruling parties from the US Republicans to Italy's Christian Democrats were also reduced to rumps amid sleaze scandals at different times in recent years. But more importantly, the various sleaze investigations and judicial rulings were a process of religitimating authority in new guises.

It is pointed that the major upsurge of public condemnation did not lead to the collapse of states and political systems, but, on the contrary, saved them. In America, Wall Street dumped the junk bond traders like Michael Milken in order to save the market's reputation overall. In Italy, the judges acted to 'bring a regime to judgement before its fall' according to Milan magistrate Pier Camillo Davigo. In miniature, the same process of kicking out the Old Guard can be seen in all kinds of institutions, whether it is 'corrupt' police officers being kicked out to make way for 'clean' ones, or even the renegotiation of local authority cleaning contracts to oust the 'cowboys'.

In the process of junking the old regimes, new sources of authority—authorities that are far from being open to popular pressure—are invigorated. This process is especially pointed in Britain. The judiciary, shaking off a reputation for antediluvian prejudices, has been reinvented as the arbiter of moral rectitude. For all the rhetoric about modernising government, Lords and Knights play a far greater role in parliament than they have for a decade, handing down judgements on the elected politicians from on high, as though they were the very word of God himself. Even the British press, long despised for scandal mongering and trivia, has been reinvented as a moral crusader against corruption. Today it is the quality press of the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and the *Times* that have become 'scandal sheets'—a role that, far from damaging them, has enhanced their reputation as a necessary check on the overweening power of the politicians.

For some Conservatives, like the handful of 'Real Socialists' inside and outside the Labour Party, the hope lives on that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible. But that is a mistake. The current preoccupation with sleaze is not an interruption to the ordinary political process of left versus right. On the contrary, 'sleaze' is the new political process.

Sleaze politics is not about privatisation policies, or welfare

When you are up on your  
**HIGH HORSE,**  
 the rest of us tend to  
**LOOK A LITTLE  
 BASE**



SAINT MICHAEL, CARLO CRIVELLI, CIRCA 1470

spending or any of the old political issues. Sleaze politics is about correct behaviour v corruption, public service v private greed, or, as we used to call it, Good v Evil.

Under sleaze politics, people are not expected to have a vested interest, or act from any obvious motivations, like what would make their lives better, but only from the very highest sense of self sacrifice and public duty. The high moral tone has become the defining style of all government statements and policies. Of course when you are up on your high horse, the rest of us tend to look a little base. Condemnation and moralising are what one comes to expect from a whiter-than-white government.

The publication of the revamped *Questions of Procedure for Ministers (QPM)* is indicative. This is a document first drafted for Clement Attlee's government in 1945, that originally had a wholly technical character, largely consisting of advice about radio interviews and studio debates ('don't'). Its current hallowed status—'the Bible of ministerial conduct'—is due to the fact that it is the only document with anything like constitutional status in the history of British government, since John Major declassified it. To those like Blair's government advisor and former Charter 88 activist Tony Wright MP, this makes *QPM* the Holy Grail of those who want to see a written constitution. In Blair's hands it has become the charter of political correctness, the mother of all codes of conduct.

The general climate of restriction and regulation in the country at large finds its highest expression in the process of government as a permanent anti-sleaze campaign. From top to bottom sleaze-busting has become the way that life is organised in the 1990s. And like all moral schemas this one has a tendency to reproduce the basic inequalities in society as if they were personal moral failings.

A morality that discourages self-advancement and encourages public service is easy to observe if you are already powerful or well-to-do. It is easy for Lord Simon to take the moral high ground and decline his minister's salary, or even give the profit made from selling his £2.25 million of shares to charity. After all, that still leaves quite a healthy lump sum. The magical operation of the sleaze morality means that he looks like he is doing us a favour when he takes on the onerous burden of ministerial office. For the rest of us who have to make our own living, public service is not an option.

In a telling *Guardian* editorial it was argued that 'sleaze' 'is not just about money', it is also about constitutional reform, proportional representation and so on (9 July 1997). Of course these constitutional questions have long been a hobby-horse for the chattering class of *Guardian* readers—but what did they have to do with 'sleaze'. The answer is nothing at all, except that any kind of policy proposal these days must be motivated in terms of fighting sleaze. That way the policy takes on a moral force it would otherwise lack. Reading the *Guardian* you get the idea that any kind of prejudice that they latch onto could become an extension of the politics of fighting 'sleaze'.

Moral rectitude is the government's self-image, and sleaze is its all-purpose bogey-man. That is not just rhetoric. It is the organising principle of the British state today. All political goals become reinterpreted in the terminology of sleaze. So Britain's foreign policy must be an 'ethical' foreign policy. Of course 'ethical' in this context means playing hard-ball with the 'unethical' Bosnian Serbs—even to the point of gunning down Simo Drljaca. The 'ethics' of political assassination is not something that is likely to be discussed.

On a more mundane level, the competition for influence in government is stripped of any semblance of difference over policy, and reduced to a largely artificial debate about 'character'. The degrading thing about this new politics of sleaze-busting is that it is much more open to petty personal rivalry and backbiting than the previous set-up. Indeed, when 'character' becomes the defining issue of politics, contestation is reduced entirely to a process of smear and innuendo.

Despite appearances, Labour's recent difficulties do not indicate a seething mass of sleaze beneath the holier-than-thou surface—as much as the charge of hypocrisy appeals. On the contrary, most of the so-called scandals are of a wholly trivial nature, that would be of little interest if the government had not made such a great play of being whiter-than-white. In fact these latest scandals are almost entirely driven by petty rivalries that only have any purchase because of the new climate.

The disciplined Labour MPs Bob Wareing and Mohammed Sarwar have been picked out for special attention simply because their faces do not fit. Wareing offended the front bench because of his Old Labour views, and his opposition to military intervention in the former Yugoslavia—an issue that his accusers tried, dishonestly, to construe as proof that he was in the pay of the Serbs. Here acting 'against sleaze' has become little more than a means of disciplining dissent in the ranks. Sarwar might well have fitted into the London Labour Party, but the millionaire Muslim businessman was just too exotic for the Scottish Labour mafia who have clearly fitted him up. Gordon McMaster's plaintive suicide note gives an insight into the vicious personal character of Scottish Labour's infighting—and its utter lack of political principal.

Tony Blair's response to McMaster's death is if anything even worse: an inquiry that will become an excuse for yet more allegations of improper behaviour. Such an inquiry is bound to become a part of the same petty infighting in turn, operating according to no higher principle than who can score points at somebody else's expense. As ever, this climate of moral condemnation is there to be manipulated by whoever is sufficiently ahead of the game to determine what is improper behaviour, who is sleazy. But like the young lady of Riga, who rode to town on a tiger, the preoccupation with sleaze can devour you as well as propelling you forward.

At the moment, New Labour has ridden the sleaze tiger with great success. Allegations of sleaze allowed Labour to distance itself from the Tories' record while adopting many of their market policies. But as these recent hiccups have shown, the perception of sleaze could just as easily turn on Labour. To Blair's irritation, the Conservatives have scored points manufacturing sleaze allegations against his administration in much the same way that he did against theirs.

Labour's protestations that the Foreign Secretary's extra-marital affair is a personal matter are entirely justified—except that it was the likes of Cook and Blair that did the most to reduce political debate to questions of personal character. And if that is all that is at issue, why should we not be interested in matrimonial betrayal. We will probably never know for certain how it was that details of Robin Cook's affair were leaked to the press, whether it was a case of Labour infighting or a rival outside of the party. What we can know for certain is that gossip about who is going out with who is likely to be a high point of debate in the new politics of sleaze.

Claire Fox (no relation) enjoyed a day out with the hunting fraternity at the Countryside Rally on 10 July

# GAMEKEEPERS TURNED POACHERS

I don't often go on demos with the former nanny to Princes William and Harry, so it was somewhat disconcerting to find myself alongside Tiggy Legge-Bourke amid an eclectic mix of celebrities, conservationists, sportsmen, huntsmen in full hunting dress, farmers and countryside workers. They had all converged on Hyde Park to oppose the Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill, put forward by Worcester's new Labour MP Mike Foster to bring about a ban on hunting.

While I could not say I felt at home, there was something uplifting about 100 000 people taking a stand against New Labour's bans and restrictions on personal freedom. But it was also very, very strange.

To see the Countryside Rally was to know that it means nothing to label yourself left wing or right wing today. Who would want to be seen dead with the 'left': a rather feeble counter-demonstration of 100 or so Hunt sabbers waving placards reading 'Hunt scum do it for fun'. (And fun is for fascists in these puritanical times.) To be left wing these days means to demand that the government bans hunting and regulates, intervenes in and criminalises many other areas of life. On the other hand, opposing the ban on hunting means hobnobbing with the kind of people you would normally only giggle at.

Despite the best intentions of the organisers to give a classless feel to the day, you knew that many of these people were from a different world. Many had rarely been to London except to visit the club or drop in on the Harrods sale. One told of the terror of travelling down on a packed coach and realising that none of them had ever travelled on the tube—where was it, and how did one get tickets? Lady Jane Benson, daughter of the Earl of Lonsdale and Joint Master of the Ullswater Hunt may have been 'just another t-shirt in the crowd', but the fact that she hunts much of the Lowther Estate, her family's 76 000 acres, made her an unlikely victim of oppression. The most stirring speech of the day in defence of freedom was given by Lady Mallalieu, a Labour peer dressed in a red frock coat who 'rides out with the Devon and Somerset Stag Hounds and the Bicester Hunt' and was the living embodiment of Baroness Tallyho.

Much of it felt like it had been transported from a different era. There was an un-nineties absence of political correctness, with one of the organisers encouraging my colleague to wear a badge 'on that lovely bosom of yours' while the *Daily Telegraph's* country writer RWF Poole

boomed through the microphone: 'I am pig sick of weirds with beards of both sexes assaulting me.' Meanwhile Lady Mallalieu finished her speech with a quote from *Henry V* addressing another militant minority: 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers' on the eve of that 'other great historic battle'—Agincourt.

Perhaps the most bizarre thing was the way the toffs attempted to dumb down their sport by appealing to a workerist populism. On the question of defending jobs, much use was made of traditional left-wing arguments, none of which quite washed. The clearest indication that the organisers of the Countryside Rally had

threatened among other things that country people would 'poison the water supply' in retaliation. Even the *Sun* never accused Arthur of going that far.

Despite the political confusions, incongruities and eccentricities, I enjoyed it. By contrast with the tired and shambolic rituals of traditional left-wing demos, it was well organised, fresh, and filled with an excitement that I have not seen for a long time. Speakers were listened to and cheered vigorously, chanting was spontaneous and there was real debate about the issues thrown up by the proposed ban.

The call for freedom expressed by many in



PHOTO: DAVE CHAPMAN

not quite got the workers bit right was the prominence given to Neil Greatrex, President of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM). The UDM, remember, was an organisation set up by the employers to destroy miners' trade unionism. Such is the political confusion of the 1990s that even Greatrex can sound like Arthur Scargill today. Greatrex's rather militant speech urging the crowd not to trust politicians because 'most of them lie more than a busload of poachers', and his wistful regret that 'I wish I'd got you lot behind me when they shut our pits down in 1992' led to resounding cheers from the crowd.

There was something of the Scargill in other speakers' calls to arms. Sam Butler, an estate agent, and one of the organisers of the marches issued the threat that 'if politicians ignore what has been happening here they do so at their peril'. David Jones, a professional huntsman warned that, 'This is the last peaceful march and the last peaceful rally' and was rewarded with wild applause. Auberon Waugh called the anti-hunting bill a 'declaration of war' and

Hyde Park was very contemporary, compelling and rare. For 100 000 people to object passionately to the 'odious interference' and the 'moralising intolerance' of the New Labour establishment was as refreshing as the recognition that legalisation should be informed by more than public distaste. There was an important kernel of truth here, and one which needs to be made more generally than in a debate about fox-hunting.

Unfortunately, the only thing I had in common with anybody at the rally was our mutual opposition to a government ban. The majority of those in Hyde Park wore their narrow-minded, bigoted and parochial views as proudly as their 'I was there...10th July 1997' badges, and were far more keen on turning the clock back than changing the world. That I would rather be defending freedom with real-life Ambridge than anywhere near a traditional lefty demo shows how much more narrow-minded, bigoted and parochial you have to be to call for the 'left-wing' bans that seem so popular in politics today. ●

*The campaign to make rape law more victim-friendly is doing neither justice nor women any favours, says Sally Millard*

# RAPE LAW ON TRIAL

The momentum for the reform of Britain's rape laws is growing. An Early Day Motion submitted to the House of Commons in June calls for sweeping changes to court procedures and there are demands for the creation of a new offence to deal with 'date rape'. The EDM has already been signed by over 100 MPs, and Home Secretary Jack Straw has made clear his commitment to overhauling the existing legal process.

Those demanding reform argue that rape is different from any other physical assault. They insist that it is a uniquely horrific crime for the victim, often leaving women emotionally scarred and traumatised. As a consequence, they say women who have been raped need special treatment from the police and criminal justice system. The reforms being proposed are all framed with this in mind. They are designed to make life easier for the main prosecution witness—the victim of the alleged rape—and by implication more difficult for the defendant.

One of the main charges levelled is that the experience of the trial for the complainant is like a 'second rape'. As Olive Braiden, director of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and a member of the newly launched Campaign to End Rape, argued recently: 'A trial for rape, in the experience of many victims, is something not very different; a second ordeal, replicating and often intensifying the trauma of the original abuse.' (from a paper given at the Rape and the Criminal Justice System Conference, 14 June 1997).

The most popular reforms under consideration are those which limit the ability of the accused to put forward a defence. These include proposals to restrict multiple cross-examination of the victim in cases where there is more than one defendant, and to prevent the accused rapist from conducting his own defence at trial. Both of these proposals follow high-profile rape trials which seem to confirm the view that the complainant in a rape trial has to put up with too much. In particular, the case of Julia Mason, cross-examined

by her attacker Ralston Edwards for six days, is highlighted to illustrate the need for reform.

We can all sympathise with women like Julia Mason. But denying the defendant the right properly to cross-examine the main witness to the alleged crime sets a dangerous precedent. It needs to be remembered that, as with any other trials, rape trials have more far-reaching consequences for the defendant than they do for the complainant. The outcome of the trial will determine whether the defendant walks out a free man, or is given a prison sentence, now mandatory in rape cases.

It is fundamental to the principles of justice that somebody accused of a crime should be able to contest the allegations against them and test the evidence used to indict them. In cases of multiple rape, each of the accused needs to be able to put forward a separate defence, even if this means that the alleged victim may have to answer the same questions more than once. It may be that not all of the individuals accused were involved in the crime, and a group defence would prevent this from being properly considered by the jury.

Similarly, justice demands that the defendant should be able to conduct an in-person defence. This is particularly important for individuals accused of rape. Because of the way that rape has been singled out as a uniquely horrific



AMOR AND PSYCHE, EDWARD MUNCH, 1907

crime for the victim, some lawyers now refuse to act for the defence in a rape trial. Sarah Maguire, founding member of the Lawyers' International Forum for Women's Human Rights, is now famous for her refusal to have anything to do with somebody accused of rape, despite the fact that they have been convicted of nothing. And rather than being attacked for undermining justice, her stance has been welcomed as a step forward for women.

As far as the Campaign to End Rape and others on the reform bandwagon are concerned, the defendant's rights are fair game, if undermining those rights encourages more women to report rape and gives them an easier time at court.

But are these reforms really so good for women? They are indicative of a trend to present women as victims, somehow unable to cope and in need of special protection and assistance. This does women no favours. If it is accepted that we cannot look after ourselves at a trial because we are far too traumatised, then it is surely only a small step to say that we cannot look after ourselves at all in the big bad world outside.

Experience suggests that most of us can cope quite adequately, with a rape trial or anything else. As Julia Mason said after Ralston Edwards had put her through the mill, 'if this was his way of trying to frighten me off, it wasn't going to work. It only strengthened my conviction that nothing on Earth was going to stop me seeing him go to jail' (*Sunday Times*, 25 August 1996).

But, for those demanding reform, that we do cope is of little importance. Their belief in the unique qualities of rape as a particularly traumatic crime, leads them to assume that women who suffer it must need special protection.

In fact, it would be far better for everybody if, rather than being singled out for special attention, rape was treated like any other assault. After all, as far as physical injury goes, being raped leaves less scars than being slashed with a knife. Rape is singled out as special not because of the physical damage, but because of the psychological scars the victims are said to bear. The irony is that, the more rape is treated as a special type of crime with a unique moral stigma attached, the more likely women are to feel traumatised by it. An atmosphere is created such that, if a woman does not appear distraught enough from the experience, she is likely to be treated as if there is something wrong with her and told that she must be in denial until she does submit to having her emotions interrogated by the counselling and victim support industry.

Increasingly, rape is no longer even discussed as a physical assault. One of the most radical reforms being put forward is to create a new offence of

'date rape', carrying a maximum five year prison sentence.

Motivating this new offence, Jill Saward, the Ealing vicarage rape victim who is also one of the main movers behind the Early Day Motion, said it would 'deal with all the grey areas where maybe a woman said "no" but everything else including the mood music were saying "yes"'. It would deal with those cases where consent had not been obtained, but where the sexual act was not premeditated and was not violent' (*Times*, 14 June 1997).

In other words, it would deal with all those cases where there had not actually been a rape. As the law stands, the prosecution in rape cases has to prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the complainant did not consent to sex or that the defendant was reckless in obtaining consent—in short, that there was active resistance by the alleged victim. Under these new proposals, resistance would no longer be an issue.

The current law does a reasonable job of reflecting our everyday relationships. It rightly carries the assumption that most of us do not wait for the word 'yes' before we make a sexual move. We become carried away with the music, mood and passion of the moment. However, if Saward is successful in promoting her new law, all this will change. Sex without actual consent will potentially become an act of assault, of date rape.

The consequence of such a law change will be to denigrate the experience of those women who have been at the receiving end of a violent sexual assault, by putting such attacks on a par with a regrettable drink-fuelled fling. At the same time it will degrade our sexual relationships, turning them all into potential rapes.

There is a clear attempt being made to use the law to impose a new moral code in the bedroom. No more spontaneity or romance; if we want to be sure that the sex is consenting, we would be advised to get a form signed in triplicate (and preferably witnessed by Jill Saward) in advance of the encounter.

A practical effect of the proposed new law is that the burden of proof in a rape case would shift from the prosecution to the defence. The defendant would have to prove that he obtained a positive 'yes' in order for the encounter not to be legally defined as rape. A legal precedent will be set which undermines the basic assumption that we are innocent until proven guilty by the prosecution.

In the past, feminist campaigns argued that if women say no, we mean no. But the proposed new law implies that we cannot even communicate effectively. If we say nothing, we might actually mean no, and if we want to say no, we might be unable to make this understood. So we need more law to help us little women out.

Those of us who prefer to be treated as capable adults, rather than as emotional wrecks in need of special guidance, need to ensure that the changes to the rape laws do not get introduced without a proper debate about all of the consequences. ●

*Libby was raped but refuses to see herself either as rape victim or as rape survivor. She told Sara Hinchliffe why*

## 'AREN'T I ALLOWED TO BE ALL RIGHT?'

**L**ibby is a vibrant, outgoing 24 year old biology student. She loves talking, her boyfriend, her course and her life. She's a completely normal young woman with a lot going for her. But according to the experts, she shouldn't be. Libby was viciously gang raped when she was 16, lost her virginity, forced to have oral and anal sex, beaten black and blue, and left pregnant.

Reluctantly she had a termination. Her attackers were never caught. Three years later she was sexually assaulted by an acquaintance who was later imprisoned for eight years for a series of rapes.

According to the literature on rape trauma syndrome, Libby's experiences should have damaged her for life. For Judith Rowland, being damaged is inescapable: 'Rape trauma syndrome consists of what have been found to be clusters of symptoms, following certain patterns and phases, suffered, to a greater or lesser degree, by virtually all women who have been victims of rape.' (*Rape: The Ultimate Violation*, 1986, pxiii)

Instead of suffering the symptoms of lifelong trauma that the experts would lead you to expect, however, Libby is just angry. And she is angriest about the way in which raped women are treated by those who are supposed to be most sympathetic—counsellors and health professionals. The problems she experienced following the assault were due, she insists, to the way these people and others treated her.

For Libby, rape was certainly a terribly traumatic experience: 'at the time all I wanted to do was pretend it hadn't happened.' Yet her main worry was about the impact the attack had on her family: 'I felt really angry more than anything. I don't actually remember, but I didn't feel guilty. I felt very guilty about getting pregnant, and mum having to go through all this stuff, but about the actual rape, I never felt it was my fault.'

The nuns at her school reported the attack to the police when Libby realised

she was pregnant and decided she wanted an abortion, two months after the attack. Libby was unable to identify her attackers; and was more worried about her family finding out that she had been raped. 'I thought so much about what it would do to my mum and I was sure it would break my mum's heart, kill her. In hindsight it probably did affect her more at the time than it did me. With having a younger sister at home I thought she might never let her out.' Her delay in telling anybody she had been raped affected her father's response and made her feel guilty about the rape for the first time: 'He said "Well did they catch them?" and I said no because I didn't say anything to anyone for ages. And he said "So they're still out there doing it to someone else?", and it was really weird because all the time when I had told people all the focus had been on me — are you all right, are you all right—and this cloud of guilt came down and I was just absolutely mortified when he said it.'

Did she ever feel like a victim? 'Every time I saw my mum, I'd see this pained look in her eyes, always so concerned about me and so worried. I suppose it is the ultimate nightmare that can happen to your kids. She was a fantastic mum to my sister, she didn't lock her away, she was great, she was great with both of us.' Libby did go off the rails for a while after the attack, taking drugs and running away: 'I could say yeah I went haywire, but I might have done it anyway' she says, matter of factly. Her response was determined—'I never felt stronger than I did then in my life. I felt absolutely that I was invincible and that, you know, I wasn't going to let this affect me. They were the fucked-up ones, I was perfectly all right'.

She has found that men treat her differently: 'Either they really want to look after you, take care of you in a totally different way even though they have known you years as a right feisty old cow, or else they get really defensive.' She went off oral sex for

a while after she was raped, but 'I could say that was because of rape or because blokes have cheesy dicks'. Sex isn't a problem with her long-standing boyfriend, she grins.

Libby gets really animated when talking about the effect the 'rape industry' has had on her life. 'That *Cosmo* stuff winds me up—you're not allowed to get over it.' She is most furious about her treatment by a local family planning clinic. She had gone to a new clinic for her contraceptive injection, and had had to answer the usual questions about her sexual history, including pregnancies. The sniffy reaction of the nurse to her pregnancy and abortion at 16 pushed Libby to tell her that she had been raped. 'The woman instantly changed totally—she started saying that there was a counselling clinic; I said "no thanks, I'm fine, it was six years ago". "What? Don't you think you need to come, don't you think you're in denial?"' Libby was outraged: 'Aren't I allowed to be all right? Am I a traitor to the female sex because I don't want counselling? It would make me feel bloody awful! She was telling me I was fucked up. I told her that people like her were worse than the people who did it to me in the first place.'

When Libby returned for her next injection three months later she was accidentally handed her notes, which indicated that she was in denial and in severe need of counselling. 'Yes, I'm in denial that I have a problem', she insists. 'Isn't that a good thing?' That experience was one of the few times Libby felt like a victim, 'because it was a no-win situation'.

Some raped women see rape as something that affects their whole personality and self-confidence. One victim told Sue Lees that 'I think torture is the only thing you can equate it with. If you've been tortured you come out very shaky and unsure of your personality and you've had something subjected on you against your will and it takes a lot to reconstruct your strength and your confidence' (*Carnal Knowledge*, 1997, p16).

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But Libby is very reluctant to see being raped as something that has shaped her life. 'If I was really honest it hasn't had any more effect on me than when I was run over by a car. Two months after, I had it out of my system, apart from being pregnant. It gives you a very easy excuse—you can make it shape your life or you can shape your life how you want it to happen. What happened to me was half an hour of my life which shouldn't have an effect on the rest of my life. You can only use rape to make excuses, not to do things. It's better to ignore it and get on with life.'

According to Libby, you can put even the most traumatic experiences behind you—'all the problems I have ever had from it have been people telling me I should have a problem, or from other people having a problem with it, from the anaesthetist at the hospital to the woman at the clinic'. Perhaps it is her anger at the way her experience has followed her around that has given her the basis to get over it.

My time spent discussing life and rape with Libby makes me reluctant to see her as an especially unusual person—a woman with hidden reserves of strength who has done something extraordinary in getting over being raped. She is very like most of the women I know; there is nothing terribly unusual about her—unless you call a healthy desire to get on with life unusual.

Libby makes a final plea for rape to be discussed differently. 'Rape is always discussed with such hysteria. It's never discussed sensibly, logically, rationally. There are too many emotions involved. It is such a taboo thing to talk about. Even the police didn't want the details. The way I look at it, I got beaten up and there were a couple of dicks involved.' Perhaps this is a more healthy way for women to look at rape; perhaps it is the way we frame rape as different from any other crime that makes it so traumatic. Taking out the emotion might be a good start to allowing us some of that rational debate.

*Barry Crawford of Africa Direct introduces a special investigation into the injustice being perpetrated by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.*

*In the pages that follow, legal experts from the USA and Canada outline their case against the genocide tribunal*

# SHOW TRIAL, UN-STYLE

**T**he first three trials are underway at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania. The defendants—Georges Anderson Nderubumwe Rutuganda, Jean Paul Akayesu and Clement Kayishema—are the first of many Rwandan Hutus to be charged with committing the most serious of all crimes: genocide.

The tribunal was set up by the United Nations Security Council, with the strong support of many Western non-governmental organisations. Its declared aim is to punish those responsible for committing genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and so aid a process of national reconciliation and peace. The tribunal judges have boasted of applying the highest standards of international law and justice.

Yet, for all its support and claims of lofty aims and standards, key questions about the tribunal remain unanswered.

Why, if it claims to be upholding international law, was the tribunal set up by the UN Security Council in what former US attorney general Ramsey Clark describes on p30 as a flagrant defiance of the UN Charter?

Why, if it is concerned to discover the truth behind the bloodshed in Rwanda, is the tribunal only investigating the events of 1994? As John Philpot of the American Association of Jurists points out on p28, this avoids any investigation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front's US/British-backed invasion of Rwanda in October 1990, and the years of war which followed until the Tutsi-run RPF replaced the old Hutu-dominated regime in July 1994. It also rules out investigations into attacks upon Hutu refugees by the new Rwandan government, in particular its massacre at Kibeho in April 1995. The tribunal is not even looking fully into what did happen in 1994; it has ruled out any investigation into who shot down the plane carrying the presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi in April 1994—the fatal attack which is often claimed to have been the signal for the genocide to commence.

Why, if the tribunal's concern is justice, is it employing all of the practises which Arusha investigator Phil Taylor and John Philpot describe over the page: using international snatch squads to apprehend

people in various countries, sometimes without indictments, and bundle them off to Arusha; denying the accused the right to defence lawyers of their own choosing, while imposing lawyers whom the accused have rejected; allowing hearsay and other uncorroborated evidence?

And why, if the UN Security Council wants to end crimes against humanity, has Rwanda been singled out for a genocide tribunal when no such court sat in judgement on any of the bloody wars waged by the UNSC's permanent members—the USA, Britain, France, Russia and China—or their allies over the past half century?

The tribunal is clearly not what it claims to be. Something else is going here. It is a showtrial, staged by the powers who run the UN.

Despite the trappings of a legal process in Arusha, the tribunal's central verdict was passed before the judges ever sat down. The tribunal is based on a presupposition that the Hutu majority in Rwanda are guilty of committing genocide against the Tutsi minority, a verdict first handed down by human rights organisations and later officially endorsed by the UN Security Council.





ILLUSTRATION: COLUM LEITH

expert witnesses so far speaks Kinyarwanda, the language of all Rwandans. Not one of them was there when the alleged genocidal acts were committed. Yet they play a crucial role in creating the right atmosphere in court.

That atmosphere is key to the real function of the tribunal: as a vehicle for a moral crusade against evil in Africa. The genocidal Hutu 'extremist' is branded as evil personified. Once the existence of this evil force is established, the specifics of individual guilt become a secondary matter, as all Hutus are demonised and people are charged with genocide for membership of Hutu organisations rather than for anything they might have done.

In the world-view which influences the tribunal proceedings, Hutu intellectuals are evil masterminds; Hutu peasants are zombies who will kill on command. This demonisation is not expressed in the old racist language about African savages. It is conducted in the West's politically correct language of the nineties, with liberal lawyers and NGO workers accusing Hutus of extremism and neo-fascism and drawing casual parallels with the Nazi Holocaust.

The tragic consequences of the demonisation process are obvious to anybody willing to look. Rwanda continues to be a living hell. Over 120 000 are in grim, overcrowded jails awaiting trial. So far 61 have received the death penalty, some after a trial lasting a few hours without any sign of defence lawyers or defence witnesses. These outrages are committed by legal authorities which have been both trained and praised by the UN. Outside the prisons and detention centres, Rwandan society is more bitter and polarised than ever. And there is a disturbing absence of young Hutu men in the communes.

The fall-out from the demonisation process now being ratified by the tribunal has spread beyond Rwanda's borders. Rwandan Hutu refugees in the eastern region of what was then Zaire and is now the Democratic Republic of Congo were largely shunned by Western human rights organisations and aid agencies, who insisted that many were extremists guilty of genocide. The result was to set up the Hutu refugee camps for invasion by the Rwandan government-based rebels in Zaire, who slaughtered many and drove the rest of the refugees back towards Rwanda with impunity. Evidently, atrocities committed against Rwandans who have been tarred with the broad 'genocide' brush are not so shocking to the international community and its tribunal.

In Kenya, President Moi has finally succumbed to relentless pressure to allow the tribunal and Rwandan courts a free hand in obtaining the extradition of genocide suspects. Mass arrests have followed, as forces commanded by the Western powers once again trample across the borders of formally independent African states—only this time with the support of the liberal voices who would have been loud critics of old-fashioned colonialism in Africa.

In the end, it seems to me the Arusha showtrials say rather more about the state of Western societies than they reveal about Rwanda. The crusade to punish evil Africans serves to boost the morale of those who are increasingly troubled by the sense of moral drift at home. Western lawyers, aid workers, journalists and others have seized upon the righteous mission against 'genocidaires' in the Dark Continent to fill themselves with a new moral certainty. Africa is paying a heavy price for getting caught up in the West's latest crusade.

That such appalling denials of democratic rights and witch-hunts can be carried out in the name of human rights ought to serve as a warning to all who endorse Western policy on Rwanda and the tribunal. If they pass unopposed, what is to stop similar travesties happening elsewhere? John Philpot rightly asks: where will the human rights mafia strike next? ●

A cool and properly contextualised analysis of the tragedy which unfolded in Rwanda in 1994 would suggest that, far from being a uniquely horrific campaign of genocide, the massacres were in fact the final bloody struggle for power in a drawn-out, brutal but all-too-familiar African civil war—a war, moreover, which the intervention of the USA, Britain, France and Belgium did much to bring about. (For a full analysis, see Africa Direct's 'Submission to the United Nations Tribunal on Rwanda', February 1995).

Instead, the hysteria over an alleged genocide has obscured the real causes of the conflict, and particularly the central role of Great Power diplomacy, so removing any trace of culpability from Washington and other Western capitals. The tribunal is a showtrial to convince the world that the war in Rwanda was the work of some evil Rwandan leaders and their mindless accomplices—the majority of Hutu peasants.

As Phil Taylor has observed, the courtroom testimonies of witnesses and expert witnesses alike in Arusha have failed to substantiate the central charge that the accused conspired to plot and execute genocide. Not one of the prosecution's

The published transcript of Africa Direct's conference 'The Great Genocide Debate', which took place in central London on 27 July 1997, is available priced £5 (add £1.50 p&p), orders via e-mail: [africadirect@easynet.co.uk](mailto:africadirect@easynet.co.uk), or fax (0171) 691 7063

*Phil Taylor has acted as both defence investigator and legal observer at the genocide tribunal in Arusha, and does not like what he has seen and heard*

# 'WHERE THE DEVIL DO THESE PEOPLE GET THEIR MORAL AUTHORITY?'

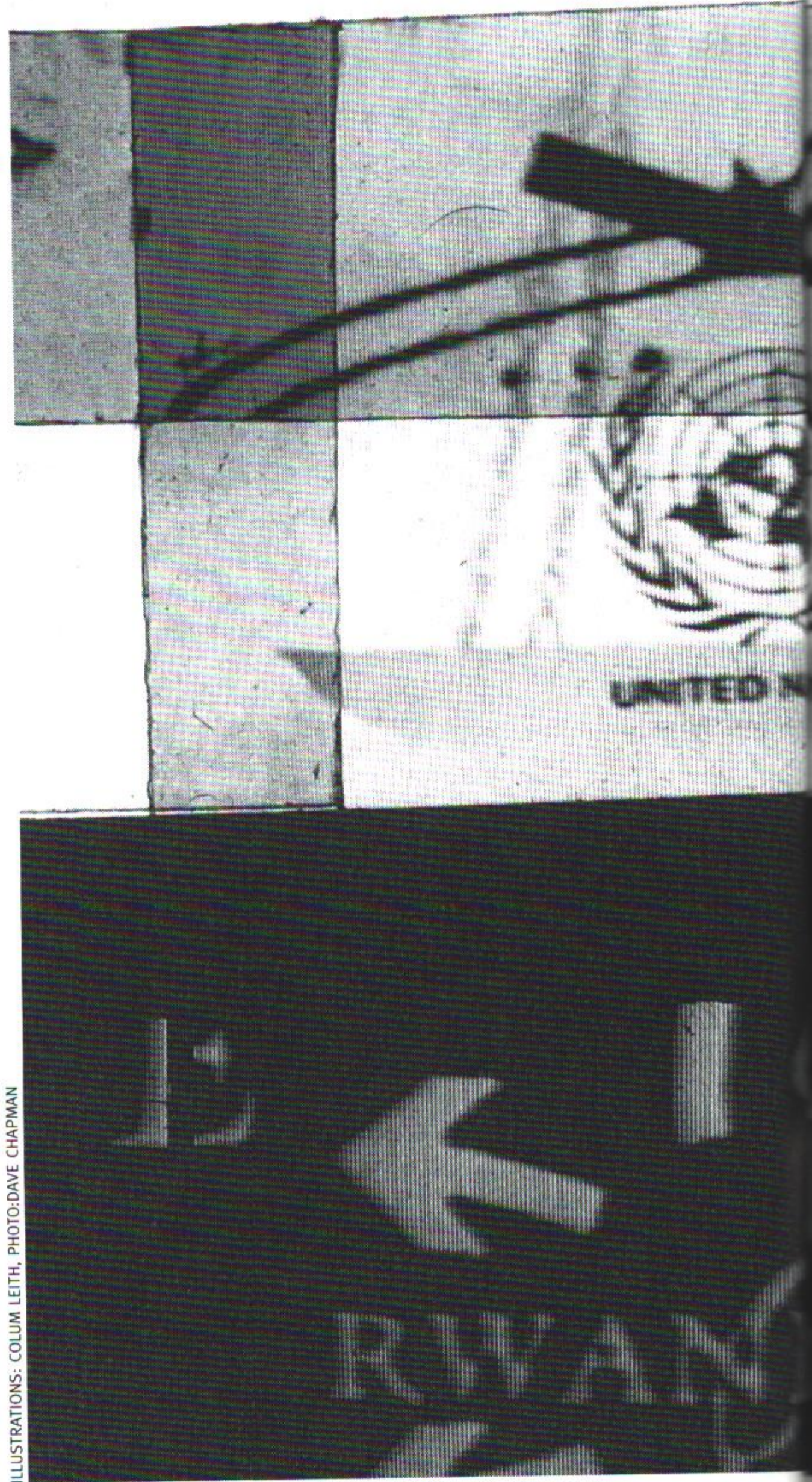
I got to be an observer at the International War Crimes Tribunal, in Arusha, quite by accident. I was hired by a lawyer in Toronto to work as an investigator for the defence. I arrived there and I was ready to do what I always do, go to the prison and see the client to hear his story, to ask him what he would like me to do in the way of investigation, where his witnesses are etc. I did not get to go. I was not allowed to see our client for seven months. Our client had seen several people testify against him before I ever saw him. I have seen him now, but only with a prison guard present. This is improper, in the sense that the defence must be able to prepare before and during the trial to rebut witnesses.

I spent those seven months as an observer, seeing what the tribunal is all about. I have been there from day one, gavel to gavel, in the matter of the Bourgmestre of Taba Commune, Jean Paul Akayesu. It has been a very interesting exercise. In my account of the proceedings, I will characterise the language used, I am not claiming to be absolutely precise.

Inside the courtroom you see an army of people, rows of translators and investigators; and then at the prosecution bench you see at least four prosecutors, and directly in front of you you see three judges with a row of people called the Court Registrar and the Registrar's Assistants, who basically drive the court process. And then on the left hand side you see two guards, one prisoner, and usually one defence lawyer. The crime is genocide and there he sits with one lawyer.

The opening day was extremely interesting for all who think that War Crimes Tribunals are a great idea. It was a performance. All the media were there. It was a full house. Of course it is an empty house now. The President of the Court, Judge Kama from Senegal, announced that 'This is a historical occasion'—it was the first time since Nuremberg that such a body was called together, all of humanity was watching, the highest standards of justice were about to come to a region of the world that did not have the best reputation for that sort of thing, and the history books were going to be full of what they did today.

I heard the word 'history' so much that I almost got a rash. Then Mr Prosecutor got up and said 'I too am proud to be part of such a process, and it is a dream for Africa. At long last standards of justice are going to be applied—and we are going to sort out good and evil—to do the right thing', and again that 'I am part of history and very proud of it'.



ILLUSTRATIONS: COLUM LEITH, PHOTO: DAVE CHAPMAN



Then the light went on over at the microphone of the accused. The judge is a fair-minded man, so he said 'Does Mr Akayesu want to say something?'. Akayesu stood up and he said 'I just wonder, could I have a lawyer of my own choice please?'. And the judge said 'Sit down. Today we are not going to talk about that. What we are talking about today is making history'.

Akayesu had two lawyers there that day and they had just arrived. Did they know Mr Akayesu? No. Never seen him before in their lives. They were what we call Duty Counsel. He said 'I do not want these people, I don't know them'. He is accused of genocide, about as good as you can get for heinous crimes. He faces the rest of his life in prison, and he has two lawyers that he does not know.

**The tribunal has** established the principle that if the accused is indigent [poor], it will choose who represents him. The court, not the accused, will name the defence lawyers. The accused can only have an opinion; and you know how nice it is when someone wants your opinion, particularly when they will make the decision.

When one of the main accused, Colonel Bagosora, fought successfully to fire his counsel who had not even been in touch with him, the counsel told the judges 'I was appointed by the Registrar not by Mr Bagosora. I have been in touch with the Registrar's office consistently'. The Registrar's office is not accused of genocide.

He faces the rest of his  
**LIFE IN PRISON**  
and he has two lawyers  
that he does not know

Though Bagosora was able to dismiss his lawyer, the registrar still retained the power to appoint his successor.

Jean Paul Akayesu also went through this exercise with the court. When the judges said that they would consider his request to have a lawyer of his own choice in due course, he said he would defend himself. Now, people love to see a demon. They have come to court to glare at him and to hate him because they hear he is the embodiment of evil. Unfortunately, he gets up and talks and begins to question the witnesses and becomes a human being again. This became a problem for the court. For about a week he did his best to defend himself, and being an educated man, frankly I think he did rather well. Then the judges decided that, since he was defined as without funds he could not choose his own lawyer. Instead, the two court-appointed lawyers would formally and officially represent him. 'And by the way', they said, 'Since we have decided on the issue of representation that you can no longer defend yourself, sit down'.

The issue of racism behind the scenes is hotly debated in Arusha. The Registrar's Office suggested that I could not be a defence investigator because I was not from Africa. My response is 'That is how you feel, but it's none of your business'. If Mr Rutuganda wants to have an investigator all the way from Canada that is what he wishes to have. They have tried to play a kind of a race card. Almost every prosecution investigator is white and many of them, frankly, are from Canada. And they say to Mr Rutuganda, 'We have got an army of investigators from our system, we are going to nail you to the wall, but we think you ought to find a nice

African investigator'. Well, he is a smart man, he understands that you fight fire with fire. He knows that a lot of the presuppositions of the counsels and prosecutors against him are going to come from a legal system that he does not know. So he wants people from that same system to combat the others.

Who asked the court to choose the lawyers for the accused and to cover it up by saying 'Well, you see, we are very pro-African'? There are many wonderful lawyers from all over the world, including Africa, who want to go there and be defence lawyers. The rules of the tribunal have been interpreted to mean that the Registrar will choose. Anybody who wants to see due process knows that whether you like it or not the accused should have somebody representing him that he believes in. At the end of the line it has got to be the accused who has this right.

In Arusha, hearsay evidence is allowed a great deal of the time. This, too, is extremely dangerous. People come into court and they say 'Jean Paul Akayesu incited a crowd on 19 April, he told them that the Tutsi were evil and they had to kill all the Tutsis'. Then the witnesses were asked, 'Were you there?'. 'No, no I wasn't there. But my friend was there, and my friend said he said so and so.' It is ridiculous that this kind of hearsay testimony is before the court.

This leads us to another problem with the evidence. The witnesses report that, well, he did not really say Tutsi, he said we have to fight Inkotanyi—which means something about collaborators with the Rwandan Patriotic Front—and he said we have to fight the Inyenzi—which means cockroach in Kinyarwanda. 'But we know what he meant.' All the time I keep hearing about racist propaganda, how the Hutu extremists said go and kill all the Tutsis. But you get into court, and somebody has actually to stand up and swear, and they tell you he said 'Inkotanyi', he said 'Inyenzi'.

Now it is time for the experts to appear. So Alison Desforges shows up, an American who is an expert on Rwanda. Of course, she does not speak the language but that is not really necessary when you are an expert. She was asked 'Ms Desforges do you speak Kinyarwandese?' ('Kinyarwandese' is deliberately wrong, it's what she was actually asked by the examiner), and she said, 'Well I can order bananas but I can't speak to talk philosophy'. She was asked what these words mean. She said they were code words, that were often used to mean Tutsi. She is an expert on the inner psyche of the Rwandese mind so she knows what they actually meant. You have to be very smart to catch people with their codes.

**Then they brought** in a Rwandan language expert. The prosecutor said 'There is evidence that on 19 April 1994, the accused told the crowd to fight the Inkotanyi and kill the Inyenzi. The word Inyenzi means cockroach but does it not also mean Tutsi?'. The linguist said 'I don't know. Inyenzi was a term developed in 1963, when the first group of Tutsi exile guerrillas called themselves Inyenzi. So the speaker might have meant that.' The Prosecutor asked, 'Could it not be that one of the meanings of the word Inkotanyi might be Tutsi?'. He replied 'You would have to know the context, and who was present, to know whether or not he said it to mean Tutsi and whether or not it was understood to mean Tutsi'.

The prosecutor got very frustrated with him, after all he was a prosecution witness, and said 'Perhaps you could take off your academic, linguist hat for a moment and speak to us as a Rwandan. If you were at a meeting on 19 April 1994 and you heard the speaker say 'Inyenzi' or 'Inkotanyi' is it not possible that you would have thought that he meant Tutsis?'. And the linguist said 'Well, I was not there. This is 1997 and that was 1994 and had I been there and had I heard it, were you to ask me what I had heard when I was there, I might be able to help you'. There was a kind of sigh in the room. Even the judges began to look out of the window. And then he said 'I don't think I can help you very much, maybe you could ask ▶



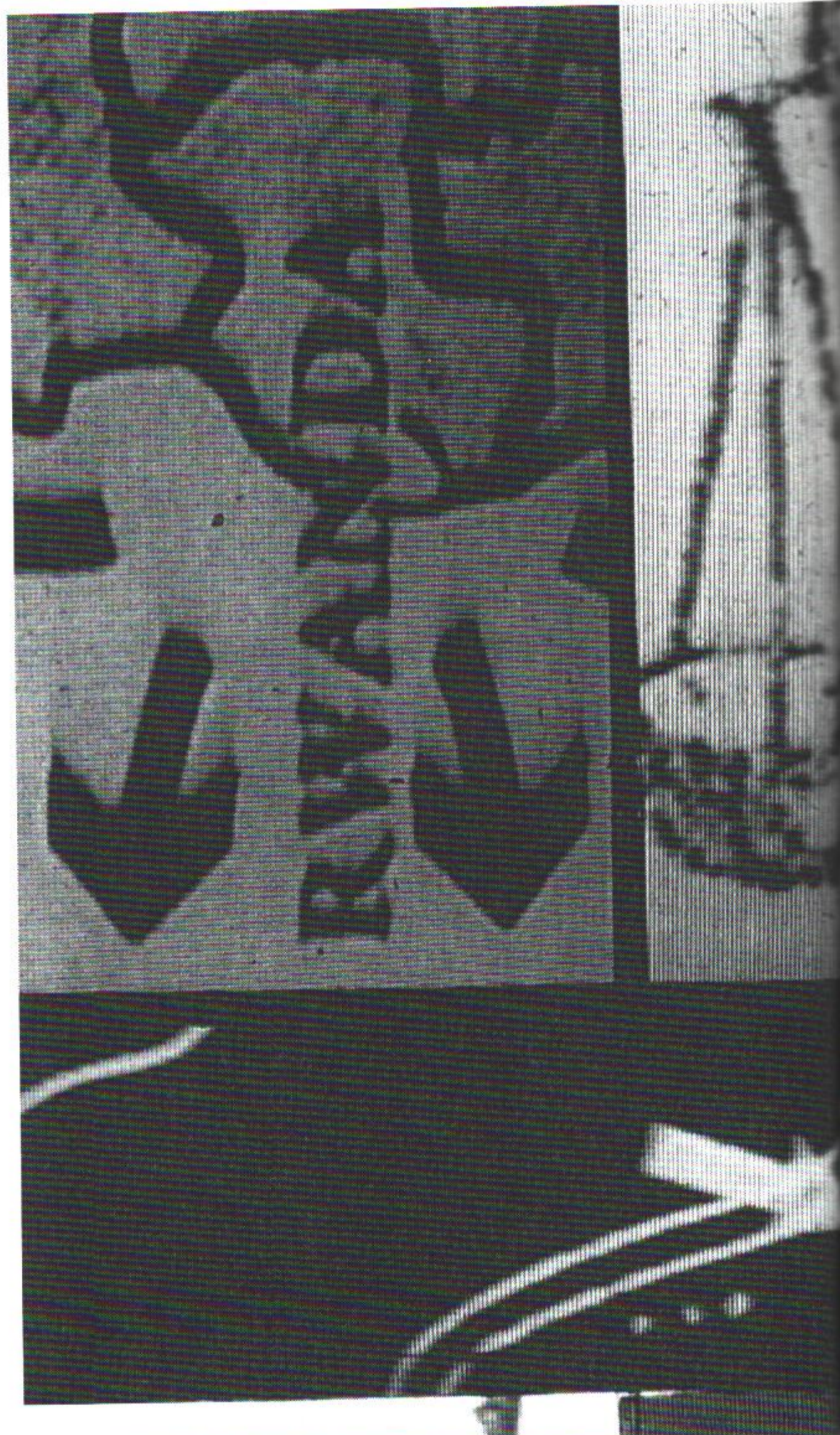
◀ me some more questions'. And they said 'That's fine, you have been very helpful'. In other words go away.

Anyone who reads about this case will be told that there was this hateful racist propaganda. Maybe there was, but be very careful. There is no persuasive evidence that Akayesu said 'I want you to kill all the Tutsis'. We do not even know if he was at the 19 April meeting. Nobody is able to say what he did or what he said. What the experts are able to do, since they are brilliant at interpreting language, is to say he meant Tutsis based on hearsay evidence. That is the kind of ugly situation the tribunal is getting itself into.

Why are we not more sceptical in this world? My experience of working as an investigator for lawyers is that I hear all kinds of terrible things, I see front page pictures of evil men being dragged thorough the streets with handcuffs on. But when I get to court, nine times out of ten what I hear does not quite fit with what the front page told me.

**I do not** know how they qualify these expert witnesses to testify. For instance, a reporter and a photographer from a British newspaper and someone from *Médecins Sans Frontières* are testifying in the case of Jean Paul Akayesu. Their words will be weighed against him and he will be sentenced to life or not. He was the Bourgmestre of Taba Commune. None of the three had ever been to Taba Commune. None of the three had ever seen Mr Akayesu. None of the three claimed any knowledge of him. Instead they were atmosphere witnesses, giving shocking evidence on what it was like in Rwanda in 1994.

The person from *Médecins Sans Frontières* testified that he had seen horrendous things, that he went to a church where people had been massacred, and that he had employees who were murdered. I believe him, absolutely. He said that MSF does not believe in getting involved in court cases because they want to remain independent, but in this case because of the horrible things he had seen he had come here to testify. He was extremely righteous in his testimony, determined to give us a picture of great mayhem. But I would ask MSF, why do you want to go into a courtroom and give evidence about horrible crimes, when you say that you have never seen the



## THE RWANDAN IMPUNITY ISSUE: THE THEFT OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

*John Philpot, Secretary General of the American Association of Jurists*

The unpunished murder of thousands of people in Chile, Central America, Uruguay, Haiti, Panama, South Africa, Argentina and elsewhere during the liberation struggles of the sixties, seventies and eighties is a permanent blemish on these countries' history and a glaring impediment to the establishment of social justice, genuine independence and democracy. The failure to punish the murderers and torturers, all allies of the United States, is a threat to anyone who wants to continue the fully justified struggles of the past decades. Worse still, the unpunished murderers are 'respected' members and well-off actors in the new democratic regimes.

The campaign against impunity is a noble one which must be continued. The problem resides in that the anti-impunity campaign has been diverted, stolen and transformed into its opposite in the Great Lakes crisis: in

the name of the fight against the Culture of Impunity, the losing side in the war in Rwanda is being subjected to arbitrary and unjustified punishment.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up by the Security Council in November 1994 to judge the authors of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the calendar year 1994. Unlike the Nuremberg Tribunal, the ICTR Tribunal statute does not include the crime of planning war. The court is in many ways an appendage of the Rwandan Patriotic Front Government. In June 1997, judges and prosecutors travelled from the seat of the tribunal in Arusha Tanzania to Kigali, Rwanda to meet political leaders of the Rwandan Tutsi dominated dictatorship who had complained about the delays in tribunal proceedings.

Even if the UN Gersony report in

September 1994 denounced the murder of up to 30 000 Hutus by the RPF since July 1994, it is obvious that none of the RPF invaders will be charged in this court void of even the trappings of independence. This court cannot under its statute charge the authors of the massacres of thousands of Hutu refugees at Kibeho in April 1995 nor of the murders after 1 January 1995 of the tens or hundreds of thousands of Hutus described by the Prime Minister Faustin Twarimungu or Minister of the Interior Seth Sendashonga when they resigned in September 1995.

Individuals are spirited out of countries surrounding Rwanda to Arusha, Tanzania where the tribunal is based. Some are indicted and others held under simple suspicion without any extradition proceedings. Borders disappear again. Detainees are frequently deprived of the right to contact a lawyer. This procedure occurs under the leadership of one or more former Canadian lawyers parading as Security Council super-cops.

Even more worrisome are Rwandan internal criminal courts. Approximately 120 000 Hutu prisoners including children



# HILLARY CLINTON

## flew to Arusha to

# TALK ABOUT RAPE

## —nobody had accused

## Akayesu of rape

accused, you have never been in Taba Commune and have no knowledge about what went on there, but you are going to help them create the scene?

Do you know what is going to do the most damage to the accused? It is the evidence of the experts. The expert witness is the deadliest witness of all, because when you listen to the evidence of the eyewitnesses in Taba Commune I do not think you are very convinced that Mr Akayesu is a leader of a genocide. But when you let Alison Desforges come into the courtroom and spend two weeks telling the story about what happened (she does not know either by the way—she was not in Tabua), by the time that story is over you feel like convicting Mr Akayesu.

**Incidentally Alison Desforges** interrupted her testimony, because a dear friend of hers had passed away and she was so upset that she was not able to testify as an objective witness, she had to go to the funeral in Kigali. It was the funeral of a minister in the government of General Paul Kagame. I found

that a little troubling, her credentials are supposed to be those of a neutral human rights activist from the USA.

Where the devil do these people get their moral authority? They get it from the United Nations Security Council. They say that we are ending the Culture of Impunity. Apparently a conference somewhere produced this term. But although I had not heard about the Culture of Impunity, I grew up in it. In the United States we had slavery, we annihilated the Indians, we took over the land of Mexico, we dropped a bomb for their own good on the Japanese. But we have examined our conscience and forgiven ourselves. Of course such a privilege is not extended to Africans—they would just misuse it the way they did with their independence.

**Hillary Clinton** flew into Arusha to talk about the issue of rape as a war crime. They flew these very well paid investigators into Arusha to make up a conference to talk about this matter. She pointed out that her husband's administration had given \$675 000 for investigations of sexual crimes under the war crimes tribunal. As a result, in the Akayesu trial we suddenly started hearing about rape. Nobody had accused Akayesu of rape, or ordering rape, but he got caught up in the process.

Coinciding with the visit of Hillary Clinton, a woman came into the court and said she was raped in a field by a Hutu extremist and she knew who it was. She was asked what this had to do with Mr Akayesu. She confirmed that he was not present and that no-one had said he was involved, but she said he should have known—he was the bourgmestre and he should have done something. In Toronto people get raped without blaming it on the mayor. Hillary Clinton's conference was a sham that was folded up and went away as soon as she flew out of Arusha. It was simply a platform for Hillary. But at the tribunal it has had an impact because now we are getting all this evidence about rape as a war crime.

This is the reality of the Arusha set up. It is always teetering on the verge of complete farce. The accusation of genocide has very effectively eliminated the Hutu people, the Rwandan people in fact, from a political process. It has taken politics into the courtroom, and it has permitted a general ►

are detained on 'genocide' charges, only about 10 per cent of them having documented files. Under the new 'genocide law', a law of criminal procedure inspired by Canadian jurists and Peruvian President Fujimori's anti-terrorist legislation, these accused have no recourse against their prolonged detention without charge. This law provides for the reduction of the death penalty to prison terms based on the condition of confession and useful information on 'accomplices'. Rwanda and the Belgian NGO *Avocats Sans Frontières* are seeking the help of foreign lawyers to help implement this plea bargaining system and ensure convictions of more accused. The system bears no similarity to Canadian plea bargaining, in which the accused pleads guilty to charges reduced to correspond to the available evidence.

Trials of these Hutus accused will be held before minority Tutsi judges having received four months training under a program organised by Canada. Most trials last a few hours based on documentary evidence and the death penalty is the general result. The trials, broadcast on the radio, are held in an atmosphere of hysteria.

These legal lynchings have been praised by the United Nations Commission for Human Rights which underlined the progress made in Rwanda in the fight against impunity. Amnesty International is one of the few international organisations to criticise these trials in its 8 April report *Unfair Trials: Justice Denied*.

Parallel to this punishment reigns a terrible impunity. In eastern Zaire, a few hundred kilometres away, we have seen that thousands of Hutu refugees have been massacred by the US allies, the Ugandan and Rwandan armies. Not to mention the executions of the local populations by the same armies. The systematic murder of Catholic leaders such as Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa of Bukavu is reminiscent of the tactics of the Salvadorian death squads who murdered vocal critic and champion of the people Archbishop Romero in September 1980. Christophe Munzihirwa was himself an outspoken critic of the actions on the Hutu refugees by the Tutsi armies of the region. Moreover, no one is accused of the supreme crime of organising aggressive war in spite of two major invasions in six years: Rwanda in 1990 and Zaire in 1996.

The adoption of the slogan of the fight against impunity to justify war and aggression and US sponsored Tutsi dominance is little more than human rights demagoguery. Behind the thin veneer of respectability of the term impunity, we can read once again the history of the last 30 years: impunity is the rule and is reserved for the powerful allies of the United States whereas one-sided punishment is the sort reserved for the downtrodden peoples who stand in the way of Western sponsored hegemony. The problem is that this language enlists a lot of naive or not so naive opportunistic support. And human rights jabberwocky becomes an abstraction to truth and justice. Where will the human rights mafia strike again? ●

This is an edited section of a paper, entitled 'The Demise of International Law in the 1990s—Causes, Perspectives and Responsibility: The Example of the African Great Lakes Crisis', prepared for discussion at the eleventh Continental Conference of the Association of American Jurists, to be held in Guatemala City from 6-10 October 1997. It was given to Africa Direct by John Philpott

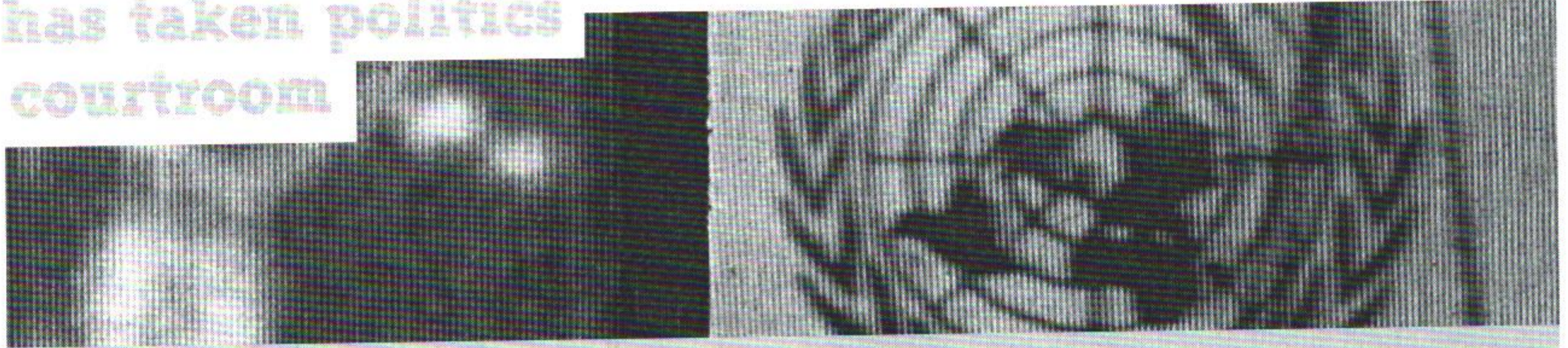
◀ who runs the government in Kigali and has more than 100 000 prisoners to be portrayed as a champion of justice in Central Africa.

I think there is a problem with people who are enthusiastic about the tribunal. I live on the defence side of the law. I am not much of an enthusiast for prosecutors. It seems to me

that the state is sufficiently powerful without the assistance of well-meaning liberals or anybody else. I have found that a lot of Canadians whom I know as defence lawyers are working as prosecutors in Arusha and they are very happy about it, very smug, very comfortable. And it bothers me because in Canada they are in defence lawyer associations and they sneer when the word prosecutor is mentioned, 'the Crown' etc. But they get over there into Arusha and they are suddenly enthusiastic about being prosecutors. I think that is a symptom of something that may be amiss in this whole exercise.

This is an edited version of a speech which Phil Taylor gave at the conference 'Rwanda: the great genocide debate', organised by Africa Direct in London in July.

## The accusation of GENOCIDE has taken politics into the courtroom



### A COURT CREATED FOR POLITICAL ENDS

Ramsey Clark, former United States Attorney General

The tribunal is not authorised under the UN Charter. The United Nations Security Council, comprised of five permanent and 10 elected member states, created both the Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia and the Tribunal for Rwanda, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter which confers political power designed to enable the Security Council to act politically to address war and threats of war.

There is no basis in the words of the UN Charter, or the history of its creation, or half a century of experience under it, to imply the Security Council has the power to create any court for any purpose. To use the extraordinary war powers authority of Chapter VII to create courts is contrary to the language and intent of the Charter, assaults the spirit of the judicial function by pairing it with military force and creates the appearance, and in these two cases the fact, that the court is created as an instrument of political policy for political ends.

The General Assembly is the proper UN organ to study and plan UN courts. No nation, or person, should be subject to

judgement and punishment by a court created by a power entirely foreign to it. The Security Council has not heretofore and cannot now usurp power under the UN Charter to create courts. If it can create an ad hoc criminal court with power to imprison and even execute people, what limit is there on its power under Chapter VII?

The stunningly egregious selection of conflicts in two nations by the Security Council, former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as the sole subject matter and jurisdiction of its unprecedented tribunals illuminates the politically discriminatory nature of the authorisations. During the Security Council's 50 years of inaction the world saw hundreds of breaches of the peace. Dozens of conflicts caused hundreds of thousands of deaths each, many of which involved Security Council members as direct combatants. These conflicts were ignored.

That both newly created tribunals were brought into existence with the strong support of the United States after the end of the Cold War,

and were circumscribed to address primarily parties to the respective conflicts opposed by the United States—Serbs in the case of former Yugoslavia and Hutus in the case of Rwanda—confirms the political motive and abuse of judicial power.

The most damning aspect of these ad hoc tribunals is the hostility and threatened breaches of peace they cause, compounded by their utter futility as instruments of peace or justice. There is a fatal flaw in the power of the tribunal that defeats any possibility of fair trial, or accurate fact finding. It does not have the power to secure evidence in Rwanda independently of the government of Rwanda and it could not compel the production of witnesses, or evidence from Rwanda if it did.

The Commission of Experts for Rwanda did not undertake investigations in Rwanda and lasted only three months. The tribunal is dependent on the government of Rwanda for any witnesses and evidence it needs its cases. The government is a major participant in the armed struggle and committed a major part of the slaughter of 1994. It has conquered the Hutus in Rwanda and continues its assaults on them in Rwanda and outside by direct violence and through its own tribunals. Witnesses permitted to testify by the government of Rwanda are

*ipso facto* unreliable. If not instructed to testify falsely, they cannot testify favourably for a defendant and return to Rwanda without facing death.

An accused in Arusha cannot investigate in Rwanda, cannot discuss the case with witnesses there without endangering them if they would talk, cannot secure their presence in Arusha to testify on their behalf and cannot enlist assistance from a powerless court for the purpose. The climate of fear among Hutus in Rwanda is omnipresent. A fair trial, a search for truth, is impossible under the circumstances.

If all the accused in Arusha were convicted it would add nothing to accountability for the hundreds of thousands of deaths, it will do nothing except provide further proof of the hypocrisy of employing tribunals to write history. The effect will deepen the bitterness and division between peoples who have experienced more than enough of that.

Ramsey Clark is currently fighting the first attempt to extradite a Rwandan Hutu from the USA to face trial in Arusha. This is an edited extract from his submission to the Texas courts, 'Memorandum in opposition to the request for surrender of Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana to the International Tribunal for Rwanda', March 1997

*Dave Chandler reports from Sarajevo on the reality behind all the West's talk of 'empowerment' and 'democratisation' around September's local polls in divided Bosnia*

# MORE DEMOCRATISERS, LESS DEMOCRACY

**T**he political parties are a new thing. People do not know how to cope and neither do the leaders—they have no political programme—people just follow the flock. It's the same with the independent parties. People vote for them just because they are the alternative.'

Jasna is the Senior Co-ordinator for Democratisation at the newly established Democratisation Branch of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Sarajevo. Jasna does not seem to think much of the three major nationalist parties in Bosnia—the Muslim SDA, the Serbian SDS and the Croatian HDZ. Nor does she seem to think much of the people (the 'flock') who support these

the OSCE Mission in Bosnia, led by US Ambassador Robert Frowick, has been charged with the task of bringing democracy to the region. Throughout this process, 'democracy' has been narrowly defined as support for the unitary Bosnian state imposed by the USA at Dayton. In order to uphold that fictional entity, the OSCE's democratisation programme has had to try to stop the divided peoples of Bosnia expressing their democratic choice by voting for the three nationalist parties. It has vetted political parties and their aims, disqualified candidates, monitored elections and coerced elected representatives into obedience before the political framework laid out by the international

The OSCE has more recently become aware of the tensions involved in imposing its version of democracy by diktat. As one Senior Democratisation Officer told me, 'the OSCE can't afford to look like a straightforward colonial organisation, saying "we don't like your leaders, we're going to do this, like it or not"'. So the Democratisation Branch is this year trying out a new approach, which it claims can build support for Dayton from the bottom of Bosnian society upwards, using the institutions of civil society.

Representatives of the Democratisation Branch told me that



parties. But then disdain for the elected and the electorate has underpinned the entire OSCE-run process of 'democratisation' in Bosnia. The new 'bottom-upwards' empowerment strategy now being tested by Jasna's democratisation team is no exception.

Since the signing of the Dayton Accord in November 1995,

community. Given the artificial nature of the Bosnian state, in which the leaders of the Muslims, Serbs and Croats could not even agree on the appointment of an ambassador to Washington (until made to under threat of Western sanctions), forcing the parties into line while making the process appear democratic has been no easy task for the OSCE.

they are now focusing their work at the grass-roots level. In no sense, however, is the focus on civil society proposed as an alternative to the existing top-downwards methods of OSCE control over Bosnia, but as a corollary to them. The consequence of both policies is to further restrict the ability of all the peoples of Bosnia to make free democratic choices.

The way the OSCE organised the municipal elections being held across Bosnia and Herzegovina on 13-14 September has brought the complementary nature of these two approaches into sharp relief. In the run-up to the elections the OSCE flexed its muscles: enforcing draconian censorship laws which prevent any media coverage seen ►

◀ as 'partisan, untrustworthy or possibly inflammatory'; forcing the media to publish OSCE material; and barring voters, candidates, registration officers and political parties on the basis of allegations ranging from infringing election regulations to abusing international monitors. Candidates of all three main nationalist parties have been struck off the lists due to allegations of electoral fraud and manipulation.

This heavy-handed approach to election monitoring follows the pattern set by previous internationally monitored elections in Bosnia, and shows that the OSCE has lost none of its commitment to dictating this process by force. But it was only when I spoke to the governance team at the Democratisation Branch that I became aware of the OSCE's own plans for election manipulation, orchestrated through the institutions of the 'grass roots'.

### Come begging

The OSCE fully expects the three main nationalist parties to renew their clear mandate of support regardless of international attempts to 'level the playing field'. Recognising that it can do nothing about this, the

at the national level, will have some influence at the local level'.

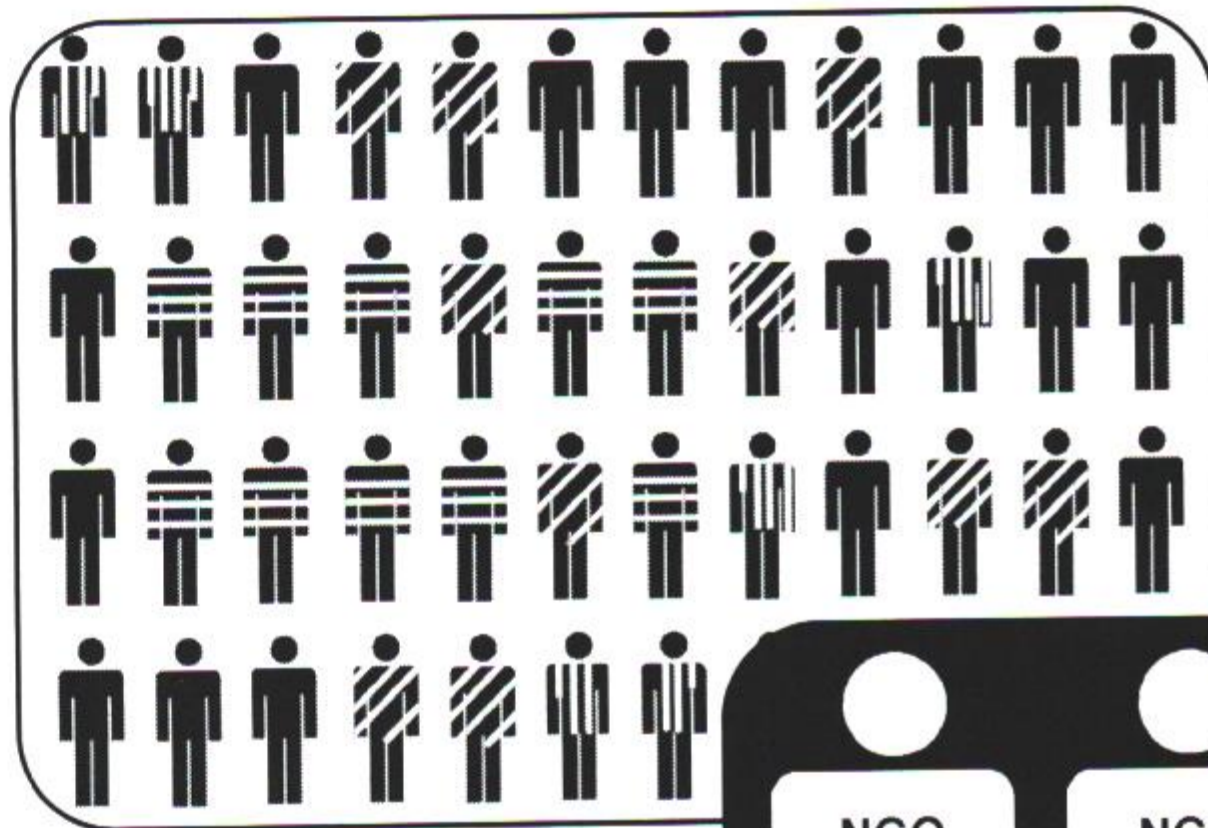
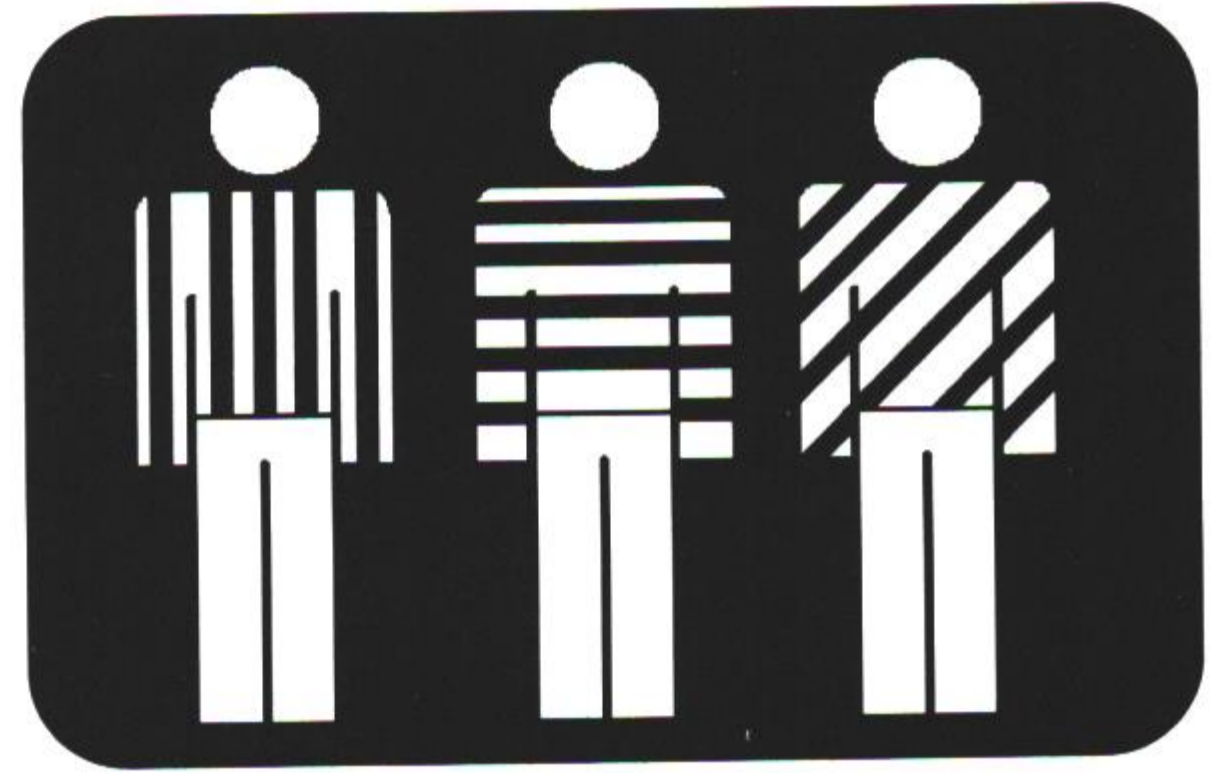
Darko informed me that new electoral rules were being developed by the OSCE to make the newly-elected local councils toe the line, and financial penalties will be imposed if the elected representatives fail to co-operate with each other and with Dayton. 'The Office of the High Representative can then use the weapon of funding to force co-operation. When people see money going into neighbouring areas for reconstruction they will have to come begging', he said, arguing that 'money is the only weapon we can use, although it is a tough weapon'.

Darko calls this strategy 'sustainable multi-ethnic development', and presents it as more organic and people-friendly than central diktat: 'The idea is that you are not really using just top-down force which would produce conflict, but encouraging people at a local level to support pilot projects of return.' The reality, however, is another form of

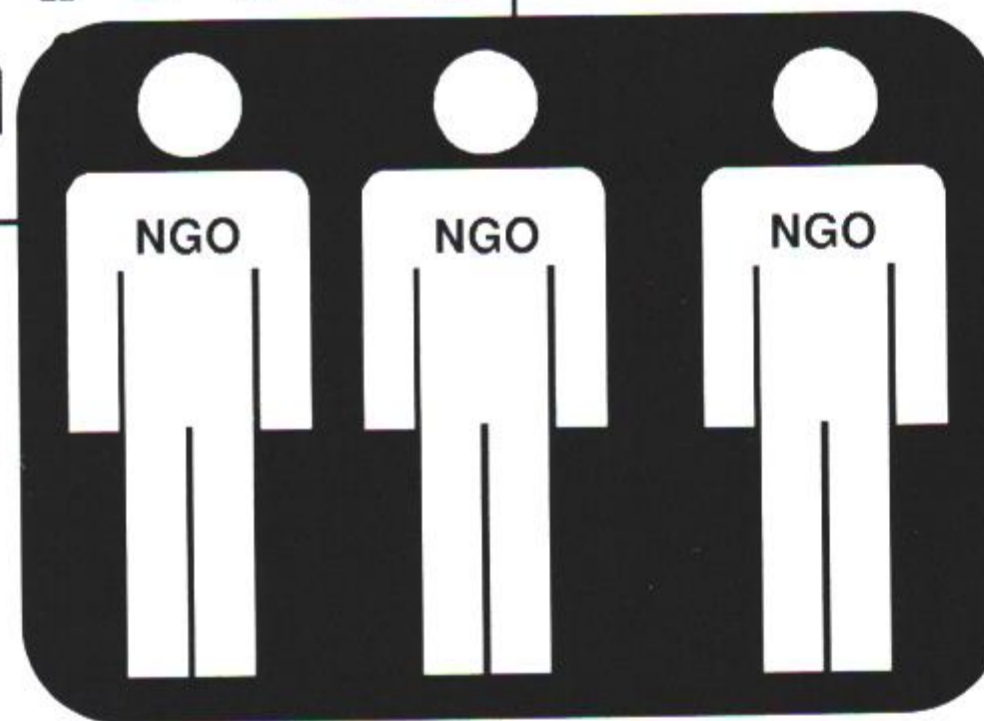
rule by blackmail and bribery. The Western powers have long used the carrot and stick approach of economic incentives and penalties to run Bosnia. As recently as August, Britain and the USA told the

powers. More importantly, by beefing up the importance of these local groups, the OSCE can further discredit the nationalist parties and justify its own role as 'democratiser' in the region.

The OSCE's Democratisation Branch puts particular emphasis on encouraging women and young people to be more active in citizen politics, which sounds progressive enough.



Democratisation Branch has turned its attention towards encouraging opposition to the main parties at the local level. Hoping for the success of opposition councillors voted in by displaced refugees, the governance team co-ordinated by Jim and Darko is planning to use the new layer of local politicians to take the enforcement of Dayton further. The OSCE Democratisation Officers have supported and trained displaced person groups that may be able to elect candidates across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. As Darko explained, 'it is the local governments that are more likely to promote inter-entity links as they have infrastructure and economic needs to be met. With displaced people voting, opposition parties, with no chance



Bosnian Serb entity of Republika Srpska that it would get no reconstruction aid unless all Bosnian Serbs accused of war crimes were handed over to the International Tribunal at The Hague.

By intervening at a local level, the OSCE hopes to gain an additional foothold in the politics of Bosnia. Opposition councillors voted in by displaced refugees may not have the same clout or support as the nationalist parties, but they can play a useful role as patsies for the major international

However this only gives a radical gloss to what is an essentially elitist approach; an elitism reflected in the negative attitude of the Democratisation Officers towards what they call 'majorities', otherwise known as the people who elect political parties.

Jasna, the Senior Co-ordinator for Democratisation, made clear to me her belief that NGOs are a superior alternative to political parties, precisely because they do not represent majority opinion. 'Political parties deal with majorities. It is important to address issues without thinking about minorities and majorities', she said, adding that the importance of NGOs is their ability to 'mobilise moral opinion, which can influence governments because they have to be sensitive to it, domestically and internationally'. In other words, the views of a few enlightened, unelected, unaccountable NGOs who appoint themselves as guardians of the moral high ground should carry more weight than the opinions of the majority in society. The OSCE's efforts to build up such a civil society include giving training and support to a variety of small citizen group NGOs—Circle 99, the Tuzla Citizens Forum, the Citizens Alternative Parliament and the Coalition for Return.

However popular these forums are in the Western press, they have major difficulties involving people in Bosnia. Sabine, the reporting officer of the Democratisation Branch told me that the central problem is 'how to encourage participation'. Zoran, the Co-ordinator for Dialogue and Reconciliation, explained that 'these groups are all run by intellectuals but they have very little influence. During the war they stayed aside



and withdrew from politics. They are a minority, but the cream of intellectual society, they have good relations with their colleagues across the inter-entity boundary line'. Nonetheless, 'people doubt they are good patriots'.

The first monthly report of the Democratisation Branch, published in February, outlined the 1997 strategy. It explains the tensions in the region arising as a result of the mentality of the peoples of Bosnia, and argues that 'the passive acceptance of prejudices must be overcome for real and psychological barriers to inter-ethnic reconciliation to be dismantled'. To the OSCE democratisers, it seems, the

being established in areas where the OSCE has been able to find individuals or small groups open to influence.

What all of this misses is that there are rational reasons why the different groups of people in Bosnia support nationalist parties that promise them some protection in the uncertain climate created by the collapse of the state, the war and international supervision. For the Bosnian Croats, receiving welfare and economic subsidies from Croatia and dual-citizenship rights, the idea of greater autonomy and closer links to the Western focused Croatian state makes a great deal of sense. For the Bosnian Serbs in Republika Srpska,

people who vote for the nationalist parties are deluded as a result of irrational fears of 'the other', war trauma,

The Political Party Development Officer, Adrian, confirmed that the nationalist parties have much deeper roots than the new NGOs: 'The Citizens Alternative Parliament, the Shadow Government and the Coalition for Return are basically the same 20 people when you scratch the surface. The nationalist parties are much closer to the average person than the elitist Sarajevans. The overqualified Yugoslavs are seen as elitist whereas the HDZ, SDS and SDA have members and supporters on the ground facing the same problems as you.'

Despite this, Adrian was positive about his attempts to get the OSCE's chosen groups to abandon electoral competition after the local polls and become NGOs instead. 'They have no chance as political parties', he said. 'Displaced persons groups would have much more influence as NGOs and lobby groups than as political parties with 0.001 per cent of the vote.'

As a piece of tactical advice to wannabe opposition parties wanting to curry favour with the international community, Adrian's point may well be right. But how can you have a strategy for 'democratisation' that depends upon building small, elitist groups of non-elected people into an opposition against parties supported by majorities with distinct political aims?

### Psychological barriers

What underlies the civil society approach to democratisation in Bosnia is neither a critique of top-down coercion by foreign powers, or a political alternative to the nationalist parties. The impetus for this approach comes from a disdain for democracy itself. Those who vote for the nationalist parties are deemed by the OSCE to be making the wrong choices: because they are not seen to be capable of making choices at all.

an ignorance of alternatives, or, even worse, the poisoned political climate of 'ethnic cleansing'.

Every project of the OSCE Democratisation Branch is informed by the assumption that the people, like children, cannot yet determine right from wrong. Psycho-social counselling groups have been established to deal with trauma as a barrier to reconciliation, media monitors explain the voting habits as a result of manipulative propaganda, cross-community fronts are set up to demonstrate that it must

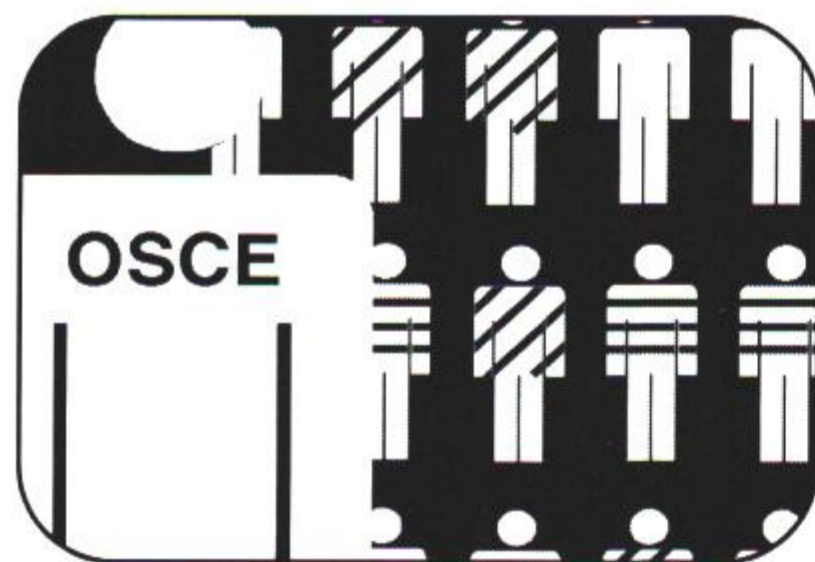
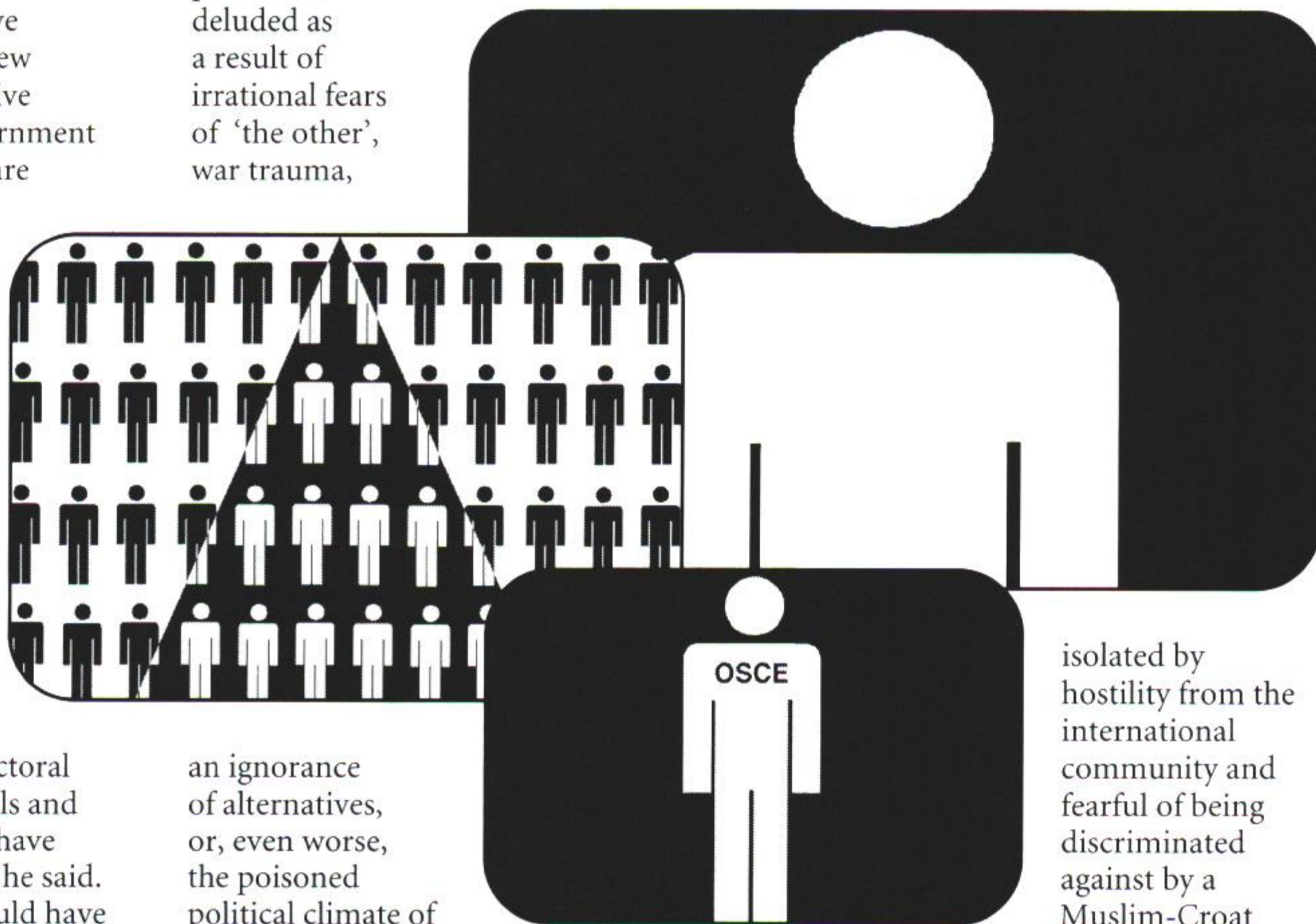
only be ignorance that prevented people from doing these things without the OSCE there as a facilitator. A whole 'democratisation' industry is

isolated by hostility from the international community and fearful of being discriminated against by a Muslim-Croat alliance, greater

autonomy and closer links to Serbia equally seems a rational option. Bosnian Muslims, on the other hand, emboldened by the diplomatic, economic and military support of the major powers seek to extend the geographic sphere of their control and secure more power over state institutions.

To me, it is Dayton and the international regulation necessitated by it that has failed the test of democracy, not the Bosnian peoples themselves. The OSCE may not like the nationalist parties, but it is the Dayton framework it enforces which has institutionalised inter-communal tensions and insecurities and so guaranteed that politics remain polarised along Muslim-Croat-Serb lines. The mentality and culture of the peoples of Bosnia cannot be blamed for the failure of democracy. The problem lies right at the heart of those organisations attempting to 'democratise' them whether they like it or not.

**THE NEW NGOS**  
'are basically all the same 20 people'



# FUTURES

*Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott says he is giving the water companies a hard time over leaks. Dominic Wood thinks Prescott's adoption of the environmental agenda is letting them off lightly*

## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

**T**he prospect of water shortages has become a major political concern in the 1990s. By the end of April 1997, Britain had experienced the driest two-year period in over two centuries. The wettest June since 1860 notwithstanding, many areas of the country still face the prospect of hose-pipe bans and other drought restrictions. Yet despite the historically dry conditions, the restrictions imposed on water use have remained unpopular because of the water companies' poor record on fixing leaky pipes. It is estimated that on average across the country 30 per cent of the water flow is lost through faulty pipelines.

Within days of New Labour's election victory, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott convened a 'water summit' at which he revealed a 10 point action plan. This was interpreted as an early indication that the Labour government intended to get tough with the privatised water companies. In particular, the press commented on the 'tough mandatory annual targets of leakage reduction' facing the water companies, and the fact that they must now 'offer a free leakage detection and repair service to domestic customers'. The media also reported the government's refusal to allow water companies to build new reservoirs until the leakage problem has been resolved.

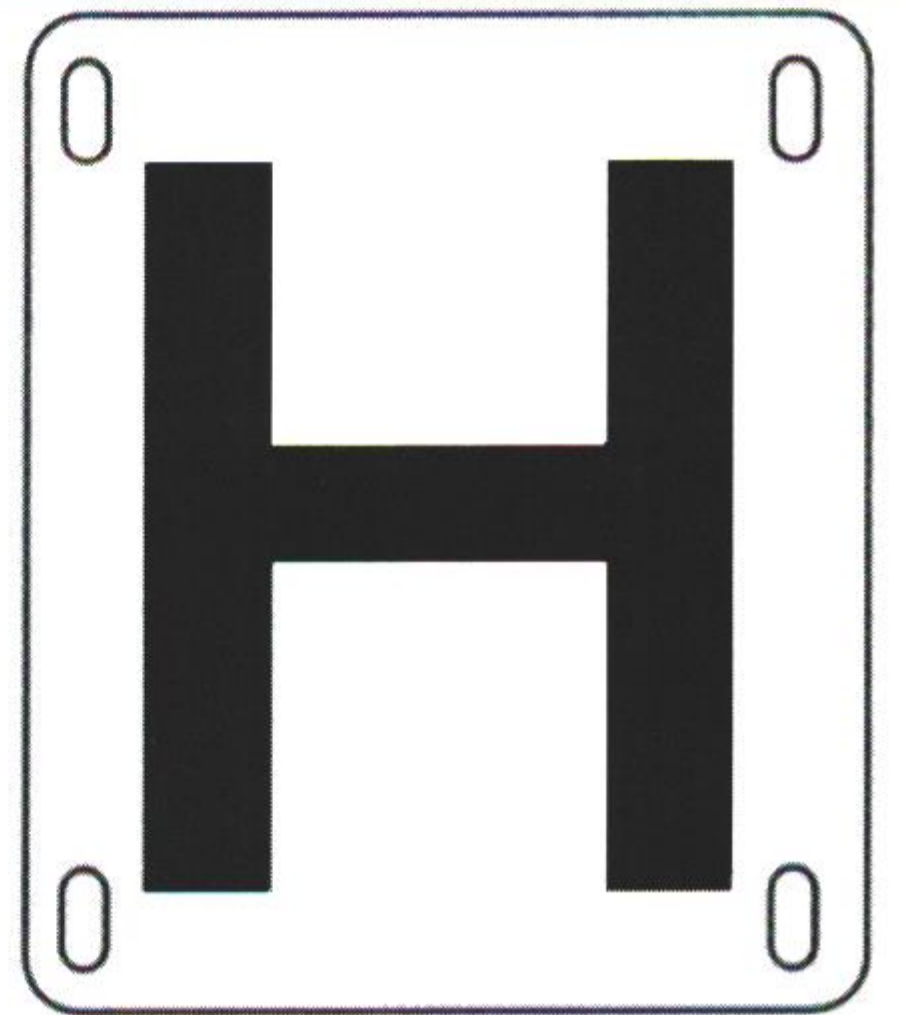
On closer inspection, however, Prescott's water plan is not all that it is cracked up to be. Water companies were already committed to making substantial reductions in losses through leaky pipes. Strict targets had been set by Ofwat, the government regulatory body, in 1996. Announcing the move from the existing five year targets to the new annual targets set at the summit, Ofwat made it clear that the new targets will 'build on company progress in meeting the mandatory leakage targets already in



place for this year'. What is more, most of the companies had already begun to meet the targets set in 1996. Thames Water, which has an exceptionally high leakage rate, was even forced to report to Ofwat every three months to ensure that its target was being met.

So did Prescott's action plan amount

to little more than 'crowd-pleasing bluster'? (*Economist*, 24 May 1997) The water companies certainly think so, claiming that they are the victims of a populist manoeuvre on the part of a new government. But perhaps with time the water companies will come to realise that the water summit and the 10 point



action plan actually let them off the hook. How? By turning water into an environmental issue.

The summit showed above all how the discussion about water has come to centre on the importance of environmental issues and the view that we all have a responsibility to conserve water.

The overriding theme running through the 10 point plan is the need for water companies to prioritise environmental and conservation concerns, and to ensure that we are all made aware of our responsibility to use water efficiently and sparingly.

For example, the government's opposition to the water companies' request to build new reservoirs is couched in environmental terms. Ed Gallagher, chief executive of the Environment Agency, argues that 'greater priority in the next planning round should be given to nature conservation'. He also agrees with the thrust of the action plan which emphasises everybody's responsibility for dealing with water shortages: 'we need to move away from solutions such as building new reservoirs towards the more efficient use of water both by the public and the water companies themselves.'

In order to get people to accept their responsibility, the action plan calls upon the water companies to extend their role in promoting the environmental message, ultimately by encouraging people to expect less from their water supply. Water companies must 'vigorously promote water efficiency by giving away water-saving aids', such as 'hippo-shaped' gadgets that update the 'brick in the cistern' approach to saving water.

By adopting the environmental agenda, Labour's action plan actually reduces the relative importance of leaky pipes. The problem is no longer presented as a simple case of a lack of investment in repairing leaks causing water shortages. Rather, spurious environmental issues such as climate change and rising consumption are presented as the problems which water companies must help to challenge by reducing consumption. Everybody agrees that pipes should be fixed, but this alone is seen as a token gesture against the greater

challenge of changes in the weather and an increasing demand for water.

The collection, treatment and distribution of water has been transformed from being a practical question of meeting the demand for water, into an environmental problem which challenges the way we live. A consequence of such an approach is to think that investment into fixing or replacing faulty pipes, or, God forbid, building new reservoirs or developing ways of using underground water, would be simply avoiding the inevitable reckoning with over-use. The debate has changed from being a relatively simple argument about the lack of money being spent by the water companies and the government on servicing our water supply, into a discussion about what we can do to alleviate the problem. How convenient for the companies—and the government.

But does the government have a point? Should we be worried about the threat of climate change and the rising consumption of water?

There is a degree of consensus within the scientific community that the average global temperature will rise over the next century as a result of human actions. But exactly how this will be manifested in each locality and how it will affect rainfall within each country is far from certain. The weather patterns in Britain do seem to be changing and becoming less predictable, as demonstrated by the recent pattern of drought-then-deluge.

But taken over a slightly longer period, before the two year drought, the rainfall in Britain overall had not altered significantly. According to figures produced by the Institute of Hydrology, based on data supplied by the Meteorological Office, in Britain as a whole the annual rainfall between 1981 and 1995 was on average five per cent higher than the ►

## Labour wants to take us back to the days of wartime rationing



◀ long term average (LTA—the 1961-1990 mean). There were only three years between 1981 and 1995 when annual rainfall over Britain fell below the LTA: in 1987 the annual rainfall was 98 per cent of the LTA; in 1989 it was 97 per cent, and in 1991 it was 95 per cent.

This picture is complicated by the regional variations where more severe shortfalls were recorded, and the situation since 1989 has been worse than the 1981-1995 average suggests. But even so, only Yorkshire and Northumbria have suffered a significant drop in rainfall since 1989. In Yorkshire, between 1989 and 1995, the average annual rainfall was approximately 7 per cent below the LTA and in Northumbria during the same period it fell by an average of 3.5 per cent a year. But as is noted in the Department of the Environment's 1996 paper, *Water Resources and Supply: Agenda for Action*, Britain is not drying up as a consequence of global warming:

'The present situation of water resources for public supply is that England and Wales as a whole are in a position of surplus based on the average demands for water experienced over the last five years.'

Just as the spectre of climate change is exaggerated, so too is concern about an escalating consumer demand. In 1996, the Department of the Environment estimated that the demand for water would increase by 18 per cent over the next 25 years. This increase is no problem: it could be met by leakage reductions by the year 2000. More importantly, improvements in technology mean that less water is needed in the home. Modern washing machines and dishwashers actually prove to be more water efficient than doing the same load by hand.

Water conservationist Barbara Chandler says that the most 'environmentally-friendly' washing machine will use around a third of the water used in a hand-wash, while the amount of water used by toilet flushes has been almost halved since the sixties despite the fact that flushes in the UK use twice as much water as those used in Europe and the USA (*London Evening Standard*, 23 April 1997). And the latest dishwashers can use as little as 15 litres of water a load compared with 40 litres if the equivalent was done by hand. Yet the efficiency drive that the Labour government's action plan promotes has

more to do with tips on saving water by either sharing baths or not having them at all, using a cup of water to brush our teeth rather than letting the tap run, and putting bricks or 'hippos' in our cisterns. Labour wants to take us back to the days of wartime rationing rather than forward into the next century of efficient, user-friendly technology.

The government has encouraged us to speculate over future changes in the climate and the demand for water and how this will affect our water supply. But if the problem can be clearly traced to faulty pipes and a general lack of investment, how relevant is it to hypothesise about the future? We are in danger of rendering ourselves incapacitated in the present because of fears about what tomorrow may, or may not, bring. This is not to dismiss future challenges or to reject planning ahead for the years to come. But whether we get more or less rain in the future, we need a better system of dealing with the rain that we do get, to ensure that it is collected, treated and distributed effectively to meet our demands.

Better management of our water supply should not, however, mean that we all have to account for every drop of water we use. We should not allow the debate about our water supply to turn basic acts, such as having a bath and flushing the toilet, into selfish *demands*. Why should we be made to feel *demanding* for carrying out the most rudimentary aspects of modern life?

Water has become a metaphor for our times, when limits and restraints are the order of the day. Water is one resource without which we cannot survive. Water shortages have been used to illustrate a view of the world in which a fragile natural order is being jeopardised by increasing human demands. The fact that more people quite rightly expect dishwashers, washing machines and power showers as a normal part of their lives is characterised as the problem facing the planet, and the way we live on it.

Labour's action plan reinforces the austere mood, and consequently the water companies face little real pressure to improve upon the service they provide. The focus on the environmental constraints affecting our water supplies absolves them of any real responsibility. As long as the focus is on every individual conserving water, and not on how the industry can develop new ways of meeting our needs, the water companies are not answerable for any restrictions to our water supply. ●

DR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

# A pig's heart: go for it!



The prominent left-wing barrister Michael Mansfield is concerned about the prospect of a pig's heart being transplanted into a human being. In a recent article, he warned that 'xenotransplantation is being propelled forward in order to build careers and produce profits—the two motivations that have done more than anything else to pervert advances in human health' (*Sunday Times*, 20 July). Mansfield is a vice-president of Doctors and Lawyers for Responsible Medicine, an organisation campaigning against all medical experimentation on animals.

Mansfield's particular objection to the advance of xenotransplantation seems strange in a society which has traditionally regarded the individual entrepreneur, motivated by the prospect of both fame and fortune, as a great force for progress. Familiar histories of medicine record the heroic achievements of the great men of science, whose success no doubt often brought material rewards as well as professional recognition.

Mansfield offers no evidence or example to support his claim that ambition and avarice have perverted medical advance. If we think of cases such as the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick or of the role of HIV in Aids by Gallo and Montagnier, both advances attended by intense personal rivalry and offering considerable commercial potential, it is difficult to see how either delayed the progress of research. Indeed, they may well have acted as a stimulus.

The undoubted popular resonance for Mansfield's outlook reveals the dramatic loss of confidence of modern capitalist society in the individualistic and entrepreneurial ideology which was once regarded as its driving force. Today members of society's elite feel obliged to find new ways to win approval for their activities. Thus Tony Blair and his ministers proclaim ethical policies and scientists declare their altruistic commitment to the welfare of humanity, or better still, to that of the planet.

Like popular criticisms of capitalist 'fat cats'—and overpaid barristers—Mansfield's critique of animal experimentation appears

radical, and is linked to the familiar themes of left-wing health activists about the virtues of preventive medicine and the need for measures to combat poverty. In fact, this approach reveals an inclination to question not merely capitalism, but any form of human agency.

It is clear that what drives Mansfield's opposition to pig heart transplantation is an objection in principle to the use of animals for human purposes. In common with many supporters of animal rights, he characterises as 'arrogant' the assumption of human superiority over animals which justifies both experimentation and transplantation. But to deny the superiority of humanity means in practice repudiating the distinctive contribution of human consciousness to making the world as we know it today—and its potential for remaking it in the future. Reducing humans to the status of animals amounts to the negation of human civilisation, past, present and future.

A bizarre but revealing feature of the transplantation controversy is the distinction drawn by some activists between the proposed use of pig hearts and the use of organs from monkeys (bone marrow from a baboon was transplanted into a man with Aids in the USA last year). While many reject all such techniques, some argue that pig transplants are acceptable, while those from baboons, which are genetically much closer to humans, are not. The fashionable use of the term 'primate', which includes both man and monkeys (sometimes 'non-human primates') reflects the trend to blur the distinction between humanity and the animal world. The projection of human characteristics onto a pig in the film *Babe* has not yet had the influence of the vast outpouring of books, films and television wildlife features which treat apes as 'our cousins'.

The fact that baboons are genetically closer to humans makes them, in some ways, more suitable donors for organ transplants, though there are real scientific problems—including the risk of introducing potentially pathogenic viruses into the human population as well as the familiar difficulties caused by host rejection

—to be overcome. Yet, though monkeys are biologically closer to humans, in terms of their abilities they are much closer to pigs: they are equally incapable of the conscious purposive activity that is unique to human beings. This is what makes the gulf within the primates of much greater significance than that between the primates and other mammals.

In response to the irrational and reactionary clamour against animal experimentation it is important to reassert the humanist tradition of medical research. It is a sign of the benighted times in which we live that prejudices of the sort that have dogged human advance since the Enlightenment, and reached a particular intensity in the gloomy days of late Victorian England, should have once again gained influence in society. Some of the major advances in medicine over the past century, from the discovery and development of insulin and antibiotics to the modern treatments for HIV or to prevent tissue rejection after transplants, were the result of animal experimentation. Yet, in the USA and in Britain a powerful animal rights lobby has promoted ever tighter restrictions on the use of animals for medical research.

In response to Mansfield, we should point out that the lack of public recognition for medical research and the poor financial rewards for those engaged in it, not animal experimentation, are the real deterrents to medical advance. The activities of animal rights activists, supported by some academic commentators who tend to exaggerate the risks of xenotransplantation, have contributed to public anxieties and have provoked the authorities into more extensive measures of regulation—including a ban on any pig's heart transplant until some of the problems are resolved.

One group of people who have fewer reservations about the human use of animal organs is those who are waiting for kidney or heart transplants, of whom there are more than 6000 in Britain. The outcome of these procedures, which carried a very high mortality in the early days, has improved dramatically—largely as a result of experiments conducted on animals.

# a [t] [c] [u] [l] [t] [u] [r] [e] . safety

Signs  
of the  
times

**'I have been coming to golf tournaments for more than 30 years and I have never heard anything like it. Every word started with "F". It was absolutely disgusting.'**

An 'elderly fan' of Nick Faldo's, after the great man castigated representatives of Mizuno golf clubs, which he appeared to blame for his performance. Golf tournaments have been experiencing outbreaks of boorish behaviour from players and spectators alike.

**Not just golf, either. Viewers of Channel 4 Racing were shocked when a passing punter crept up behind colourful pundit John McCricker and shoved an ice cream cone in his face. It was described by a colleague as 'a particularly vicious attack'. Dangerous things, those 99s**

**Sleaze ain't what it used to be. Since losing his seat in the**

**P**hoenix was always little more than a summer camp for middle class Midlands sixth-formers. As for Reading, dull is the operative word. Glastonbury still has that certain something. But for how long?

It is not the commercialism that worries me. The food is better, the facilities improved (even if the flush toilets were a myth), and the sound in the dance tent was superb (well, it was at the time). It is not even that the environmentalists

and faux primitivists got on my wick. They all drop their litter anyway, and after four days in the mud even a crusty dream of civilisation. No, the problem was that Glastonbury is now swamped with advice about safety.

This year's programme warned that Glastonbury may not be a safe place to take drugs: 'the festival's combination of big crowds, noise, constant activity and an unfamiliar environment are the classic ingredients of a

hellish experience which could do you lasting psychological harm.' And there was me thinking that it was just those 'classic ingredients' that made the idea appealing in the first place.

How about a drink then? The *Festival Information News (Fine)* guide, which is handed out to all festival-goers, advised that 'drunkenness is anti-social'. Alcopops were banned because 'we believe they contribute to underage alcohol abuse'. And if you think that still

leaves music, nature and passion, think again. The *Fine* guide told us that 'prolonged exposure to high volume noise can cause severe hearing damage, cancer can be caused by the sun on unprotected skin and you highly risk HIV infection from unprotected sex—however good it may feel at the time. Your body is precious and vulnerable—shield it'.

They'll be turning down the volume next.

**Bruno Waterfield**

PHOTO: MICHAEL KRAMER



# LOVE IS THE ORDER!

Ecstasy expert Nicholas Saunders talked to Paul Bryan about chilling out with E

election, former Tory MP Robin Squire has been raking in the money by entering magazine puzzle competitions—a grand total of £20, to be precise. Surely an inquiry should be looking into the possibility of MPs wielding undue influence on the outcome of such competitions.

Peter Lilley, the former Social Security Secretary is also finding it hard to adjust to life in the slow lane. He recently bolted out of a cab outside the Royal Opera House, only to be called back by his wife. 'Peter, dear', she reminded him, 'you have to pay for a taxi'.

Meanwhile New Labour's new faces are taking to the perks of the job like ducks to water. One was seen boarding a train at Paddington after a serious session in the Strangers' Bar. Upon entering the carriage she looked aghast and said 'Oh my God, this doesn't seem to be first class!' and hurried off to assume her rightful free seat at the top end of the train.

# FREE WINDSOR

I cannot remember if it was 1972 or '73 but it was a gorgeous summer. We were four teenage lads on the run from straight-laced Blackpool. When we arrived at the free festival in Windsor Great Park I was struck by the fact that there was nothing there. For the first time in my life I felt I had left all civilisation behind.

We soon discovered that the festival was counting on common law rights to use the park, and no one had thought to ask permission. 'Great', we thought, 'this really is an alternative society'. Then, the next day, the police did set up a boundary around the festival, by searching everybody coming in or out for drugs.

The only rock group I can remember was Hawkwind, then performing with science fantasy author Michael Moorcock. I was amazed that I could stand right up next to these heroes of mine and dance around with them on the grass 'stage'. Of course, Hawkwind were not being paid for appearing.

There was no law and order but an informal utopian fellowship: 'peace brother', people helping others out, giving away free food and 'pot'. As young kids from Lancashire we were gobsmacked at seeing loads of people walking around in the nude with painted bodies. We drank beer, smoked grass and there were times when I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

At twilight, when people shouted that the 'pigs' were trying to steal the generator, we surrounded the machine, chanting the Edgar Broughton Band's anthem 'Out! Demons! Out!' until it started to rain and the police backed off.

My friends all got busted for drugs when they tried to go to town. Some people wanted to move the festival down to Virginia Water to get away from the cops. But we went off to the Marlborough Downs to search for ancient spirits. The following year we read that the police had pre-empted the festival by smashing up all the equipment and arresting everybody in sight. And that was the end of alternative Windsor.

**Aidan Campbell**

The dangers of Ecstasy have been grossly exaggerated', says Nicholas Saunders. 'Yes, Ecstasy is dangerous, just like horse riding, skiing and fishing are dangerous. The point is that people talk about Ecstasy as dangerous, implying that it is more dangerous than alternative activities which people might be doing if they were not taking Ecstasy. And that is a moot point.'

Middle-class and middle-aged, Saunders lacks the street credibility of Irvine Welsh. But his guides to Ecstasy (*E for Ecstasy, Ecstasy and the Dance Culture*, and his latest, *Ecstasy Reconsidered*) are as high on the hip-list as *Trainspotting*. With 200 000 hits a month, his website ([www.ecstasy.org](http://www.ecstasy.org)) attracts even more attention. Not bad for an ex-engineering student who dropped out to take acid more than 30 years ago.

Saunders believes some people have a financial interest in talking up the dangers of a drug like Ecstasy. 'A whole industry has grown up based on the government providing money to combat what they see as the terrible problem of people using illicit drugs. This industry consists of social workers and people in drug units giving advice, and they are in a very odd position. A lot of them are close to the ground and they know there isn't such a problem, but if they said that publicly they would lose their grants. They have to play a double-sided game. They put out pamphlets which have got to appeal to the people giving them grants by looking as if they are being tough on drugs, and at the same time they have got to make them acceptable to their clientele, which is kids who are not going to be fobbed off again with another ridiculous scare-story. What has happened is that these government-backed drugs campaigns, and they are nearly all government-backed, have moved on from what I think they would actually admit was a scare campaign to what they now call education. But the education is a biased thing usually done by telling half-truths.'

Saunders dismisses most supposedly scientific surveys on the effects of Ecstasy as 'complete rubbish, nothing more than a more subtle way of conducting the same old war on drugs: something's illegal, we don't want it so we will provide the evidence that will put people off'. He commends Manchester's Lifeline agency for commissioning 'proper research', while disagreeing with its preference for ▶



PHOTO: DAVE CHAPMAN

# alt.culture.film

## Signs of the times

A special mention this month to the public-spirited staff of McDonald's, who smelt alcohol on the breath of Mr Eugene Charlier and arranged for a car to pick him up. It was of course a police car, and Mr Charlier was convicted of driving while over the limit. Terry Foley of McDonald's declared himself pleased that his staff had 'acted so commendably'. Hear, hear.

Who said Tories are boring and fuddy-duddy? The Conservative Central Office Bookshop is doing a roaring trade in William and Ffion jigsaws—or 'engagement puzzles', to give them their proper title. The William Hague portrait puzzle is already a top-seller, but the forthcoming 'wedding puzzle' looks set to break all Tory jigsaw records. Phew!

When President Clinton was greeted by cheering crowds in Romania he will have been pleased to

◀ controlled events over free parties. He also has a good word for the 'more honest' Safer Dancing Campaign, while warning that it may be contributing to a new kind of dependency culture. 'This is looking at the negative side, but what I think they do is possibly create a false impression that everything can be made safe—and that is taking away individual responsibility.'

'I'm trying to give information which covers what people want to know, but one of the real problems is the great reluctance for people to take full responsibility for the experiences they have especially on drugs like LSD. If it gives them a bad time they will blame it on the pill rather than seeing that what a lot of these drugs do is put you in a different state of mind where you can go either way. It might put you in a blissful state, but opening you up to what is around you could equally put you in a bad state. But people are reluctant to blame the effect on the surroundings or what's inside them, and they prefer to say it's the chemical. So there are a lot of misunderstandings almost puritanical:

and rumours that go around, for instance that there's heroin or rat poison in pills which have never been found in a test.'

Critical of the current readiness to be spoon-fed advice, Saunders says that 'the most important thing for society is to increase individual responsibility and to reduce the way responsibility is laid on them, the authorities, as a sort of nanny state. If everyone is expecting to be looked after by them, people won't actually think about looking after themselves or their friends'. He would prefer people to find out for themselves 'about the drugs you are taking, rather than expecting someone else to pick up the bits and see you all right'.

For all his criticisms of obsessive nannying, however, Saunders can seem as concerned with safety and restraint as those whom he attacks. For instance, he recommends Ecstasy as a means of taking the aggression and arse-grabbing out of social situations. In *Ecstasy Reconsidered*, there are times when he sounds almost puritanical:

'Traditional alcohol-based events had an undertone of trying to score sexually through flirting and small talk. This was consciously rejected by rave culture where women found it a relief to be able to have fun without being hassled by men, and could also be attributed to MDMA [Ecstasy] as a sexual suppressant.'

Old-style hippie talk converges with modern notions about the hazards of machismo in this endorsement of Ecstasy as the new bromide. Was I off my head or was Saunders turning into a women's safety officer?

He also sees the nineties dance culture as a reaction to Thatcherite competitiveness. 'In the eighties there was a lot of selfishness. Get up and compete with people, make sure you get on top. And the reaction to that is a drug where you can open up and express warmth and love to your friends and feel you can enjoy yourself without being top dog. You get a group of friends, particularly beer drinkers, and they are in a little social group where

there is always the top dog and he's the wittiest, the slickest and the others look up to him. When they take E together that relationship dissolves and people are much more open and free and honest and uncompetitive.'

To me, this sounds like everyone dumbing-down to the lowest level. But, citing the example of a community called Centre Point in New Zealand which 'used to take Ecstasy together as a way of ironing out differences', Saunders emphasises the spiritual and placatory potential of Ecstasy. Football supporters and Catholic and Protestant youth in Northern Ireland had already felt the benefit, he claims. At this point the Brave New World of Aldous Huxley's fictional wonder-drug Soma flashed across my mind, and I began to wonder whether Saunders is so very far removed from the government-sponsored ethos that counsels safety over freedom.

• *Ecstasy Reconsidered*, written and published by Nicholas Saunders, distributed by Turnaround £9.95 pbk

Co-producer Jane Hamsher recalls the product-placement that landed Natural Born Killers in hot water

## THINGS GO CRAZY WITH COKE

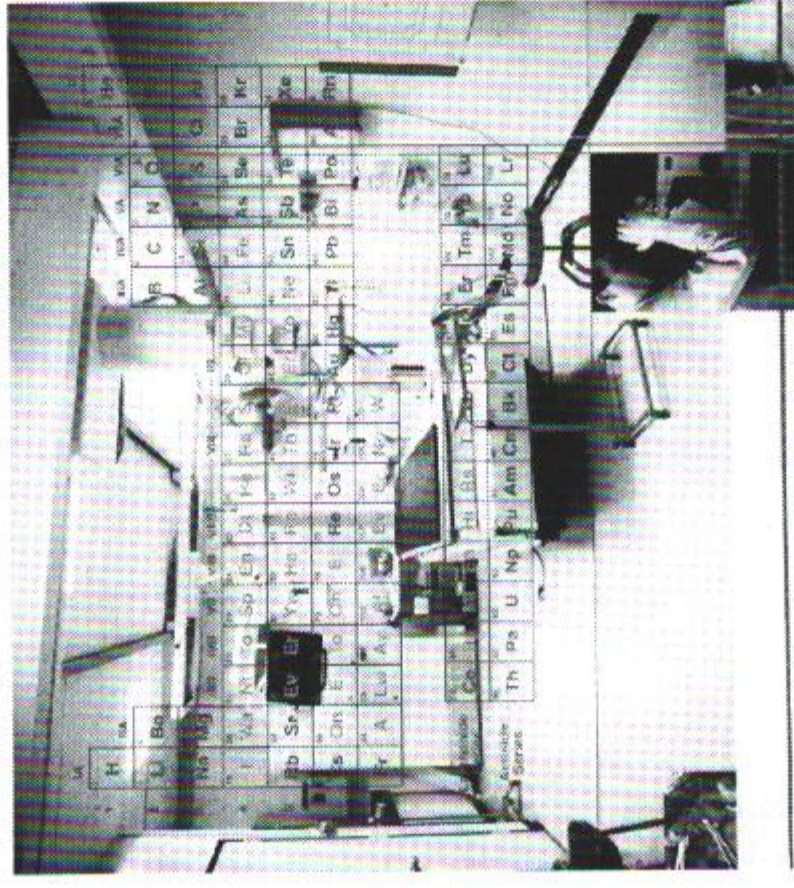
Two days before the opening, the other shoe dropped on a controversy that we should have seen coming from the start. A member of the press, *Variety's* Anita M Busch, had been to the cast and crew screening, and had wondered what Coca-Cola felt about its polar bear commercial appear-

carbonated sugar water every year, who essentially have nothing but a trademark and an image of being all-American and wholesome, are concerned about our insinuation that their advertising dollars are financing the production of violent, exploitive, socially debilitating

## alt.culture.art

I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now is the title of Damien Hirst's first book (Booth-Clibborn Editions, £59.95).

A compilation of 700 illustrations, inserts and pop-ups, with an accompanying essay by Gordon Bunn, it advertises itself as a collection of Hirst's 'iconoclastic work that challenges the boundaries of art, science, media and culture'.



## alt.culture.cooking





see the people's commitment to safe sex. As a member of the US news crew put it: 'Let's just say that those locals who could not afford balloons resorted to waving balloon-shaped substitutes.'

'Share a Smile Becky' is a new Barbie doll who sits in a pink wheelchair and wears a t-shirt with the Idea (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) logo on it. Unfortunately the designers of the official Barbie toy home are not as aware of the issues. Complaints have been flooding in to manufacturers Mattel about the house's lack of wheelchair access.

Following revelations that SAS trainees asked locals for food and directions during a 'behind enemy lines' exercise, news comes in of Pte Stewart Francis of 216 Para. Francis decided that he didn't fancy roughing it during a 'living on berries'-style exercise and booked himself into an award-winning local hotel. He phoned his mum to get her to pay the bill by credit card, and signed the visitors' book 'unbelievable'. The exercise was abandoned and a search party eventually tracked him down.

ing in the midst of the extremely violent and graphic *American Maniacs* sequence. Since the whole thing had been handled by Don [Murphy, co-producer] and Coke's West Coast product-placement office, it turned out that the executives in Atlanta were pretty much unaware that they had ever granted such permission. They had an emergency screening of the film for the Coca-Cola board of directors and collectively had a nervous collapse.

When the whole controversy started to break, however, all Don heard was that there was a reporter from *Variety* calling Oliver's [Stone, director] office, wanting to know how we'd gotten permission to use the commercial in the first place. Don called one of our publicists in a lather—'If anyone's going to get credit for this, it's going to be me!', he said emphatically.

The next call he got came from Azita. 'Don, I think you want to lie low on this one.' 'How come? I'm the one who pulled it off!' 'Well, Coke is furious', she said. 'They don't know how such a thing happened, and they've closed their Los Angeles product-placement office as a result, pulling all their people back to Atlanta so they can keep a closer watch on them. They're also demanding that we cut it out of the movie.'

Don hung up the phone in silence. 'What, are you surprised?', I said. 'The people who pump millions out of a few cents of

TV shows that care only about ratings at all costs? Gee, who would have thought.'

'Well that's not the only place in the movie where we used their stuff', he said defensively. 'Juliette's [Lewis] also holding a can of Diet Coke in her had when she visits Woody [Harrelson] in prison.'

'Yeah, and she's giving him a hand job with the other one', I said. 'I don't think that's what they have in mind when they say, "Things go better with Coke".'

The subversiveness of the use of the Coke commercial had always thrilled me, as I'm sure it had Oliver, and I knew it had happened only because of a horrific gaffe when nobody was looking. However, the sociological overtones of the appearance of a Coke commercial had never entered Don's mind—he just wanted to scam more free stuff.

He picked up the phone to call the publicist again. 'Remember what I told you a few minutes ago? Well, forget it.'

Taken with the author's permission from *Killer Instinct*, Jane Hamsler's book about the making of *Natural Born Killers*, published by Orion Media £16.99 hbk. © Jane and Don Productions 1997. Special Offer to *LM* readers, £11.99 plus £2.50 p&p. Credit card payments to (01903) 736736, cheques payable to Littlehampton Book Services, PO Box 53, Littlehampton BN17 7BU, quoting reference KI

## THE ROAD FROM MARRAKECH

This summer, I was dozing in a hotel room when an item on Sky News made me sit up and take notice. The story concerned the British government's funding of research into whether scrapie in sheep, the equivalent of BSE in cattle, could be transmitted to humans through the food chain. Too late for me, I thought, since I was in Morocco and the night before I had been eating briouats, deep-fried pastry parcels filled with creamy lamb's brains.

Moroccan food is currently enjoying the attentions of the style press in Britain. Momo, the Moroccan 'theme' restaurant patronised by Madonna, is apparently the hottest new eating place in the capital; and Londoners, if they can get a table, can now tuck into *tagines* (stews named after the earthenware dish in which they are cooked), couscous and *pastilla* (a pie containing pigeon, eggs, ground almonds and icing sugar).

Robert Carrier, the cookery writer and long-time resident of Marrakech, rates Moroccan cuisine among the highest in the world, alongside Chinese and even French cooking. But he points out that the best food is not to be had in restaurants; but rather in the home, where cooking is still considered an important part of life.

## 'MOST PEOPLE NEED THERAPY'

Actor-turned-director Gary Oldman says *Nil By Mouth* is a personal film based on his own upbringing, but it will not be judged as such. Instead, it will inevitably be seen as a Statement. In this case the Statement is, as Oldman himself said at Cannes, 'We are a lot sicker than we think we are. Most people need therapy.'

One of the ironies of these depoliticised times, in which the working class no longer exists as a political entity, is that everybody suddenly seems to be making films about working class people. Their plight is trumpeted from the rooftops, and the minutiae of their lives are picked over. But the result is not a message about inequality, injustice or any of the clichés of earlier social realism. Instead we

have a pointless parade of degraded human detritus: loan sharks preying on hard-up single mums, dealers exploiting junkies, gang warfare, petty crime, alcoholics beating up their wives and abusing their kids.

Seen in this context, *Nil By Mouth* is just another lowlife soap. Never mind that both Kathy Burke and Ray Winstone (revisiting the persona of Carling, the borsal 'Daddy' in *Scum*) turn in typically good performances. The film inevitably ends up confirming all the prejudices about a feckless, violent 'underclass' (the term now applied to most of the working class).

Oldman says his intention is to treat these people with respect and without sentimentality. Unfortunately, his attempts to give depth and character merely confirm the new stereotypes.

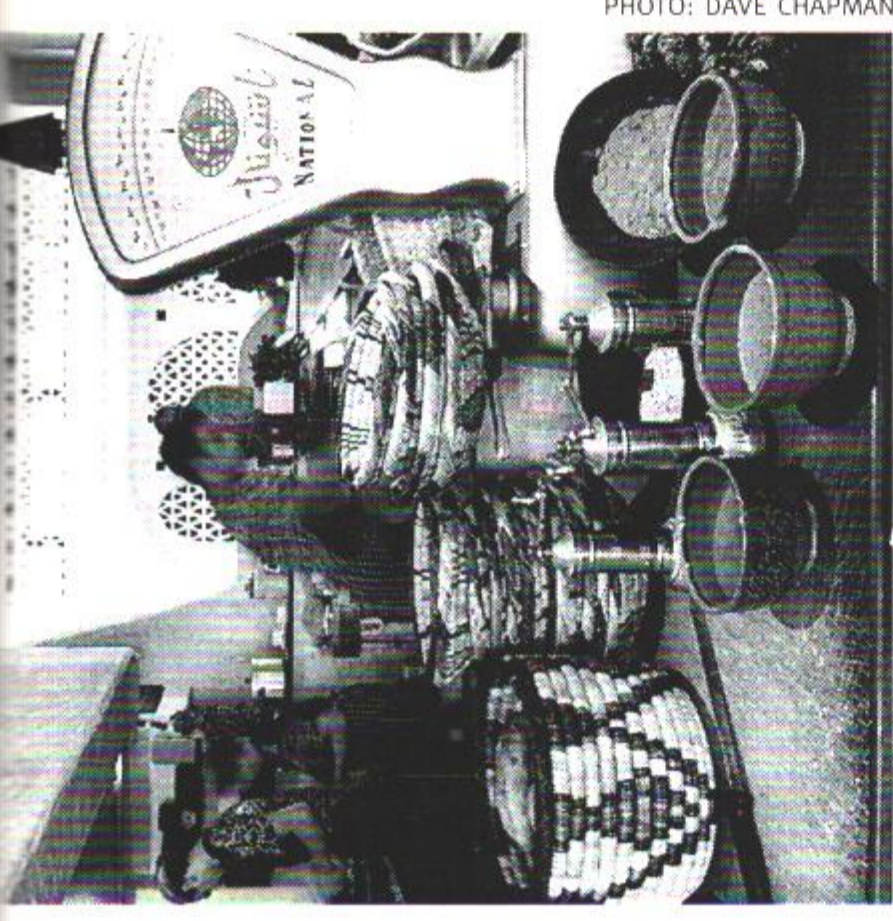


PHOTO: DAVE CHAPMAN

After a month in Morocco, I understand what he means. Designer restaurants, where they exist, are the preserve of the tourist or the ex-pat resident. The ordinary Moroccan city-dweller is far more likely to go to a cafe, where spicy sausages, burgers and kebabs of lamb or offal are ordered by weight and cooked in front of you over a charcoal grill; or in Marrakech, to a stall in the Djemma el Fna (the main square), where you can sample such delicacies as *poitrine de vache* (cow's udder). In smaller towns, the 'bring your own' custom is still the norm, whereby patrons take the ingredients with them and prepare their meal in a *tagine* over a small brazier.

Couscous, considered a staple of North Africa, is normally eaten only on Fridays. This labour-intensive dish, which involves steaming semolina grains in the vapour from a stew containing chicken or lamb, root vegetables, saffron, ginger, cumin and chilli, is eaten from the serving dish either with the fingers of the right hand or with flat bread baked in wood-fired ovens. Made properly, the grain takes on a delicate nutty flavour, far superior to the results obtained from following the recipe printed on supermarket semolina packets. Sweet mint tea, an infusion of Chinese green tea, fresh mint leaves and enough lump-sugar to guarantee instant dental decay, is served at the end of the meal as a *digestif*.

Although Moroccan restaurants in the West are by no means typical of eating out in Morocco itself, the opening of Momo and others like it adds weight to the claim that London is now the gastronomic capital of the world.

© Neil Haidar, BBC1's Masterchef 1996

Ed Barrett

This appeal was published in the major German weekly, Die Zeit, on 11 July 1997, signed by writers, academics and intellectuals as a declaration of support for free speech, and for LM in our battle against ITN's libel writs

# 'FÜR DAS FREIE WORT' IN DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

Information is used for political ends, it is used to wield power and influence. Information may help people, it may help them to better grasp the world around them. The very same information may also be used to manipulate and to deceive. It is therefore crucial to draw information from reliable sources and to clarify the context of every piece of information, so the general public may be able to grasp and judge their real meaning.

Images are most prone to manipulation precisely because they create the impression that we can understand a situation by looking at a picture. To enable people to look critically at the world, it is essential for good journalism to ensure that issues and their context are looked at without any prejudice. Today this kind of professional ethos is more and more often brushed aside when dealing with information. In fact, the way journalists deal with information, especially pictures, can often be called unprofessional, if not manipulative.

A particularly scandalous example of this trend was recently revealed by the German *Novo* journalist Thomas Deichmann. During his research on the war in Bosnia, Deichmann came across evidence which proved that a famous picture showing emaciated Muslims behind a barbed wire fence, first broadcast by British news giant ITN in August 1992, was a distortion of reality. This picture, was then generally taken as hard evidence for the existence of Serb-run 'concentration camps'. In reality though, it was not the Muslims who were encircled by a barbed wire fence, but the British journalists who had entered a neighbouring, fenced-in compound to film the Muslims from inside that compound through the barbed wire.

The fact that there were camps in former Yugoslavia run by all factions involved in the fighting and where conditions were frequently bad, makes it all the more important to avoid encouraging a false or one-sided emotional atmosphere.

More than any other footage, this picture has influenced the perception of the war in Bosnia. Quite a few commentators, though,

have not even tried to discuss the importance of Deichmann's revelations on the state of journalism today, but have merely lashed out at them with a flood of denunciations and insinuations, abandoning a rational discussion. And ITN, instead of responding to (or disproving) Deichmann's allegations, launched a libel writ against *LM* magazine, which co-operates with *Novo* and published Deichmann's findings. The only purpose of this libel writ, it would appear, is to prevent the exploration of the truth and to ruin *LM* magazine.

The British libel laws are generally held to be the most repressive in the Western world. They provide rich and powerful institutions and people with a mechanism with which to gag unpleasant critics. Libel writs are notorious for the enormous costs involved and in contrast to other European countries and the USA, in Britain the burden of proof is upon the defendant. The present case is a novelty in media history: for the first time a news corporation is trying to use such repressive laws to suppress news.

We think that in our time of social change, unbiased analysis of facts and the rational sharing of ideas are indispensable. We wish, therefore, to initiate a public debate on how to oppose the trend of information manipulation and narrow-mindedness. We are, furthermore, serious defenders of press freedom and freedom of speech and we will do everything to ensure that the attempted intimidation by ITN will not be successful.

Research, travel expenses, news conferences and PR-work have already cost *Novo* several thousand marks. To go on with its work the magazine needs more donations and supporters. In the law suit between ITN and *LM* magazine we want the better arguments to win—not the side with the more expensive lawyers. To achieve this, we are asking you to sign this appeal and to donate as much as possible. There is more at stake than freedom of information—we have to continually struggle for rational and unprejudiced discussion in scientific, cultural and political debates.

.....  
PROF DR ULRICH ALBRECHT; PROF DR ASTRID ALBRECHT-HEIDE; ELMAR ALTVATER, UNIVERSITY LECTURER; LOTHAR BAIER, AUTHOR;  
MIRA BEHAM, WRITER; GEORG BENZ; DAVID BINDER, JOURNALIST (US CORRESPONDENT); KLAUS BITTERMANN, PUBLISHER;  
.....  
PROF PIERRE BOURDIEU, SOCIOLOGIST (COLLÈGE DE FRANCE); PETER BROCK, JOURNALIST (EDITOR IN CHIEF *THE REAL WASHINGTON*, USA);  
THEO CHRISTIANSEN, THEOLOGIAN; EDI CLIJSTERS, JOURNALIST (BELGIUM); DR HEINRICH COMES, LAWYER; CHRISTOPH DAMM, TRADE UNIONIST;  
.....  
PROF DR FRANK DEPPE; WOLFGANG EHMKE, TEACHER; RAIMUND FELLINGER, WRITERS' AGENT; DR HANS RUDI FISCHER, THERAPIST;  
MIRIAM FLEISCHMAN, TRANSLATOR (FRANCE); WOLFGANG FRÄMKE, EDUCATIONALIST; PROF DR PETER GLOTZ; DR NORBERT GREINACHER;  
.....  
JENS HAGEN, AUTHOR; PETER HANDKE, AUTHOR; ROLF HARTZUIKER, JOURNALIST (NETHERLANDS);  
.....  
DETLEF HENSCHKE, TRADE UNIONIST; LUTZ HERDEN, JOURNALIST (FREITAG); CHRISTINE HORN, JOURNALIST; PROF DR JORG HUFESCHMID;  
HUBERTUS JANSSEN, PRIEST; ELFRIEDE JELINEK, AUTHOR; GEORGE KENNEY, WRITER (USA); DIETRICH KITTNER, COMEDIAN; PROF DR REINHARD KÜHN;  
.....  
FELICIA LANGER, LAWYER AND WRITER (ALTERNATIVE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, 1990); MARTIN LETTMAYER, JOURNALIST; HERBERT LEUNINGER, PRIEST;  
PROF DR BIRGIT MAHNKOPE; MARIANNE MCGEEHAN; JAKOB MONETA, JOURNALIST; WOLF-DIETER NARR; CATARI NETH; DR JAN ÖBERG, (SWEDEN);  
.....  
GUDRUN PAUSEWANG, AUTHOR; ZARKO RADAKOVIC, TRANSLATOR; PROF DR DR HORST-EBERHARD RICHTER, PSYCHOANALYST;  
.....  
RENATE RIEMECK, UNIVERSITY LECTURER; PROF DR EBERHARD SCHMIDT;  
.....  
MARTIN SINGE, SECRETARY OF KOMITEE FÜR GRUNDRECHTE UND DEMOKRATIE; PETER SINGER, BIO-ETHICIST (AUSTRALIA);  
.....  
SÖREN SOMMELIUS, JOURNALIST (*HELSINGBORGS DAGBLAD*, SWEDEN); PROF DR MOMMSEN; ECKART SPOO;  
.....  
JOHANO STRASSER, AUTHOR (SECRETARY OF PEN); PROF DR GERHARD STUBY; KLAUS VACK, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST; PROF DR MARIE VEIT, THEOLOGIAN;  
.....  
WERNER VITT; HANS-JOCHEN VOGEL, PRIEST; ZELJKO VUKOVIC, WRITER  
.....

# READING

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Mike Fitzpatrick reviews some new attempts to explain why we live in a world of moral panics and witch-hunts

### THE SPIRIT OF SALEM GOES GLOBAL

#### CULTURE OF FEAR: RISK-TAKING AND THE MORALITY OF LOW EXPECTATION

Frank Furedi  
Cassell  
£11.99 pbk

#### LAST NIGHT IN PARADISE: SEX AND MORALS AT THE CENTURY'S END

Katie Roiphe  
Little Brown  
\$21.95 hbk

#### VICTIMS OF MEMORY: INCEST ACCUSATIONS AND SHATTERED LIVES

Mark Pendergrast  
Harper Collins  
£14.99 pbk

#### HYSTORIES: HYSTERICAL EPIDEMICS AND MODERN CULTURE

Elaine Showalter  
Picador  
£16.99 hbk

'SOCIAL DISORDER IN ANY AGE BREEDS...MYSTICAL suspicions' wrote Arthur Miller in the introduction to his classic 1953 play *The Crucible* (currently on release in a new film version) about the witchcraft trials in Salem, New England in 1692. For Miller, 'the witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward greater individual freedom'.

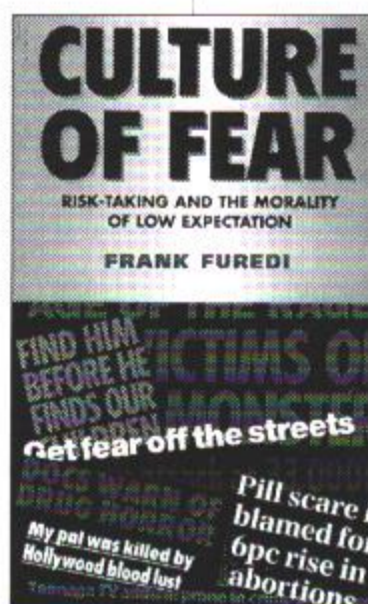
The story of Salem is one that recurs—sometimes implicitly, often explicitly—in accounts of our current moral malaise, particularly the trend towards demonising certain individuals (notably paedophiles) or in discovering demons literally at work (fomenting satanic ritual abuse). The books under review focus on different aspects of the contemporary climate of fear and anxiety, which frequently erupts into panics and modern forms of witch-hunting. The central theme is the quest for a new framework to replace the traditional values whose influence has been steadily eroded by the hectic social changes of recent decades. The dynamic underlying today's moral crisis is the same as in seventeenth century America—the changing relationship between the individual and society and society's need to find some means of regulating individual behaviour.

*Victims of Memory*, Mark Pendergrast's comprehensive critique of the 'recovered memory' movement in which individuals in the course of various psychotherapeutic techniques recall experiences of infantile sexual abuse, usually by fathers, deals with events which have many parallels with Salem. These are particularly striking in the associated trends

for people in therapy to recover memories of 'satanic ritual abuse' or to claim 'multiple personalities' which have become dissociated in response to past traumas.

The scale of the recovered memory movement in the USA, where it originated, may be gauged from the emergence of a rival 'false memory' association, which has been contacted by 17 000 families claiming untrue allegations of abuse. A number of controversial court cases have followed and, according to Pendergrast, 57 people are currently in prison in the USA as a result of false recovered memories. In a special supplement to the British edition, Pendergrast includes details of the development of the recovered memory movement in Britain, with its own activists and advocates, and its growing list of investigations, court cases and aggrieved opponents.

Pendergrast is a journalist who makes no secret of his personal interest: his own family is bitterly divided by his daughters' recovered memories of abuse, which are contested by himself and other family members. Yet he presents a remarkably dispassionate account of a truly terrifying and destructive phenomenon, revealing how the encounter between vulnerable individuals and plausible therapists has led to grotesque injustices. He discusses perceptively the growth of the cult of victimhood out of the involution of feminism and rightly excoriates the parasitic character of much of what passes for psychotherapy today (though whether this justifies the wholesale repudiation of Freud with which he and other critics of recovered memory identify is another matter). He surveys current debates about memory, revealing the absence ▶



## ROIPE IS PARTICULARLY PERCEPTIVE ON THE IMPACT OF AIDS ON THE YOUNG: 'THE EQUATION SEX CAN EQUAL DEATH HAS BEEN CHALKED INTO THEIR MINDS ALONG WITH THE MULTIPLICATION TABLES'

of scientific support for recovered memory and the likelihood of confabulation, particularly in response to some of the high pressure techniques used by therapists.

Pendergrast also challenges a prejudice that extends far beyond the recovered memory movement—the notion that sexual abuse is a peculiarly damaging form of trauma which inevitably leads to psychological damage which is not only life-long, but which is often also transmitted to the next generation. Citing evidence of researches among survivors of the Holocaust or Cambodian refugees, who have never 'forgotten' or 'repressed' memories of what happened to them, he rejects what he terms the 'grim psychological predestination' of the recovered memory movement. Indeed, he points to the danger that the inflation of false memories of abuse and the devaluation of incest by including 'emotional incest' or 'inappropriate glances' trivialises genuine abuse and might even lead to real cases being neglected.

IT IS WHEN PENDERGRAST MOVES FROM DESCRIBING the phenomenon of recovered memory to attempting to explain it—in the chapter 'Why now?'—that he runs into difficulties. His immediate response is that there are 'no simple answers', but 'several historical and cultural threads seem to have woven together'. His particular lack of feel for the fabric of British society is apparent when he invokes the impact of the 1973 decision to join the European Community as a parallel trauma to the American defeat in Vietnam, though the link between Vietnam and recovered memory is also obscure. Evidently despairing of producing an explanation, he offers an account of neurotic trends in American society over the past century, implying that, as a nation, it is uniquely susceptible to irrational movements. This does not, however, explain either the particular intensity of the phenomenon in the USA in the past decade or why the recovered memory movement has gathered momentum throughout the English-speaking world.

Turning to Elaine Showalter, sometime medical historian with links to the prestigious Wellcome Institute, we might expect a more profound or at least a more historical analysis. Yet, though *Hystories* widens the discussion to include chronic fatigue syndrome ('ME'), Gulf War syndrome and abduction by aliens (as well as dealing in some detail with recovered memory, multiple personality disorder and satanic ritual abuse), it does not take us much deeper.

Showalter's thesis is that all these modern epidemics are analogous to the occurrence of hysteria in the late nineteenth century: 'cultural symptoms of anxiety and stress.' This is undoubtedly a useful corrective to the quest, for example, for some toxin, pollutant or virus to explain the galaxy of symptoms experienced by veterans of the Gulf War or sufferers from ME. As Showalter writes, 'we must accept the interdependence between mind and body, and recognise hysterical symptoms as a universal psychopathology of everyday life before we can dismantle their stigmatising mythologies' (p12).

Showalter offers a lively critique of modern forms of hysteria, echoing Pendergrast's outrage at the irrationality and disregard for truth of some feminist campaigners. She also provides some entertaining literary diversions and illustrations. Yet, when it comes to explaining the remarkable proliferation of these phenomena in recent years, her recurrent theme is that such events tend to come around at the end of centuries:

'Like the witch-hunts of the 1690s, the mesmerism craze of the 1790s, or the hypnotic cures of the 1890s, the hysterical syndromes of the 1990s clearly speak to the hidden needs and fears of a culture.' (p203)

But what are these hidden needs and fears, and how do the hysterical syndromes speak to them? Why should such trends occur in decades beginning with the digit 9? All this is as clear as mud.

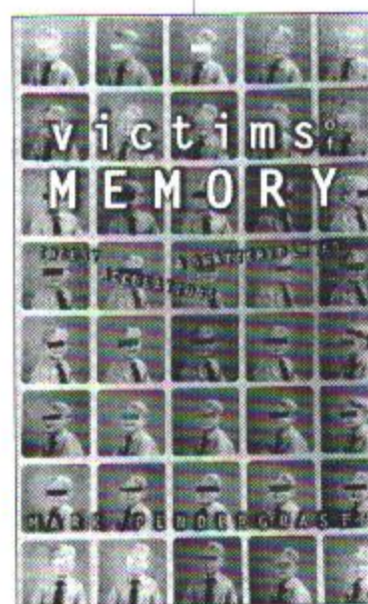
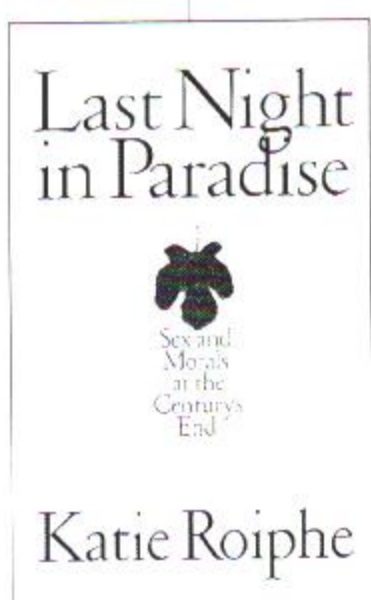
Though Katie Roiphe's *Last Night in Paradise* focuses more narrowly on the state of sexual morality in the era of Aids, she turns out to be a more acute interrogator of contemporary trends. From a younger generation of American commentators, she writes in a relaxed and unpretentious style, drawing on her experience of growing up in a liberal New York family in the 1970s (her older sister became HIV positive through drug abuse) and her observations of the impact of different manifestations of the Aids panic. She discusses a number of key cautionary tales and moral parables, such as the story of Alison Gertz (another middle class New Yorker who became *Esquire* magazine's woman of the year in 1989 when she became a symbol of the risk of heterosexual HIV transmission), that of the basketball star Magic Johnson who came out as HIV positive in 1991 (an event for Roiphe's generation she compares to that of the Kennedy assassination for her parents') and the response to Cyril Collard's 1993 film *Savage Nights* (which includes a scene truly shocking to modern American sensibilities—one which repudiates safe sex).

Roiphe's account is full of acute perceptions and sharp insights. She is particularly perceptive on the impact of Aids on the young: 'the equation sex can equal death has been chalked into their minds along with the multiplication tables.' (p152) Noting that sex education has 'less to do with education than it might appear', she exposes the moralistic content of the self-consciously non-judgmental propaganda of 'safe sex'. Teenagers, Roiphe writes, have become 'more thoughtful, more serious...like little 45-year olds'. While bemoaning the effect of the new gospel of caution and restraint in causing a collapse of 'imaginative possibility', she is well aware that 'anxiety doesn't change behaviour in a straightforward way'. As she puts it, 'fear incorporates itself into our lives in irrational, almost arbitrary ways' (p32).

One of Roiphe's most important insights is that, though Aids may have encouraged the quest for a new morality, it did not initiate it: she discerns 'a gradual build-up of anxiety' about sex over the past 25 years. In the course of the 1970s there emerged a growing critique of the values of 'permissiveness' that had been briefly celebrated in the 1960s, as the public mood became increasingly cynical and pessimistic. When herpes arrived in the early 1980s, Roiphe notes, 'the interpretive mechanisms' of the new morality were already in place. Yet public opinion was not quite ready for the full scale moral panic that was to greet Aids towards the end of the decade.

The key to the impact of Aids was that by the late 1980s people were only too ready to respond to the crusade for sexual restraint: 'the ardour lay in the discovery of a real and visible danger—an actual crisis to give form and meaning to our free-floating doubts and anxieties about sexual freedom.' (p25) The success of the Aids panic was that it connected with the 'deepest and most private feelings' of a disillusioned generation. For Roiphe, this is what explains the breathless eagerness of the Aids campaign, 'a joy taken in the discussion and controlling of risk that goes beyond the call of duty' and the extraordinary credulity of the public towards wildly inflated estimates of the dangers of heterosexual transmission—a credulity not, as we know, confined to the USA (p24).

Roiphe rightly regards the swing from the self-conscious permissiveness of the 1960s to the new puritanism of the 1990s as symptomatic of a 'larger malaise'. It is indeed striking, as she observes, that 'the idea that neither virginity nor sex is "liberating" seems to have occurred to relatively few of the public commentators of the past several decades' (p132). Yet her



## THE VERY UBIQUITY OF RISK SUGGESTS THAT AN EXPLANATION WILL NOT BE FOUND THROUGH EXAMINING ANY PARTICULAR RISK, BUT BY ASKING WHAT MAKES PEOPLE SO RESPONSIVE TO RISK AWARENESS

explanation of these events as the latest cycle of the 'perennial oscillation' of American society between extremes of reaction and liberation is ultimately as unsatisfactory as Pendergrast's diagnosis of recurrent American sexual neurosis or Showalter's *fin de siècle* thesis. As in the books reviewed above, the nature and character of the 'larger malaise' remain tantalisingly obscure.

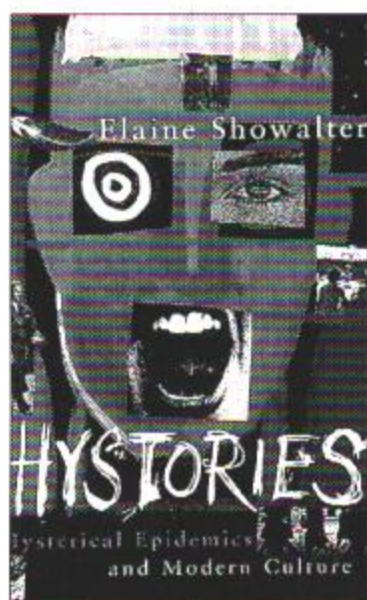
The strength of Frank Furedi's *Culture of Fear* is that it attempts to go beyond descriptions of the contemporary moral crisis to provide a social and historical answer to questions such as—why now? why in this form? and how can we respond to it? Well known to readers of *LM*, Furedi focuses on current preoccupations with risk—risks to health, risks to life, risks from strangers, risks from family members, risks from the environment, risks to the environment, risks at work, risk at home, risks of sporting and leisure activities, risks from science and technology, risks, in short, in every sphere of modern life. The very ubiquity of risk suggests that an explanation of the phenomenon will not be found through examining any particular risk, but rather by asking what is it makes people so responsive to the promotion of risk awareness. Why are people so willing to imagine the worst, so receptive to doomsday scenarios, so predisposed to panic?

The key to Furedi's explanation is 'the relentless process of individuation that has occurred in recent decades in Western societies' (p66). As he argues, this is only partly a result of the familiar trends towards greater job insecurity. A more significant factor is the 'transformation of institutions and relationships throughout society'. The decline of the old organisations of the labour movement indicates the breakdown of traditional working class solidarities, and parallel organisations in other sections of society have also disintegrated.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War at the close of the 1980s proved a critical turning point, destroying both ideological and organisational mechanisms of cohesion at international, national and local level. Both left and right lost not only their historic justification, but also their way of looking at the world and its future. Now the very notion of social change, of 'solutions' to the problems of the world, was discredited, people could only regard the future with apprehension. The vision of changing things according to grand human designs has been replaced by the acceptance of a much diminished role for human agency and an acceptance of the limits imposed by the existing state of the world. The growing awareness of risk and the associated clamour for caution and restraint in all areas of life parallels the diminished role of human subjectivity.

THE PROCESS OF INDIVIDUATION UNLEASHED BY the combination of economic dislocation and the weakening of social institutions is not, in itself, Furedi acknowledges, a novel phenomenon. In the past, however, when old institutions crumbled, they were replaced by new forms of solidarity: so trade unions, co-operatives and other collective arrangements emerged in response to the destructive impact of capitalist industrialisation. The current preoccupation of politicians with the problems of 'community' and with measures to create new networks reflects the weakness of new forms of solidarity. As Furedi notes, 'self-help groups, helplines and counselling are initiatives designed to compensate for the absence of more organic links between individuals' (p67).

In the past the private domestic sphere of the family also provided some respite from the corrosive individualism of the capitalist market-place. The crisis of the family today is one of the most significant manifestations of the process of individuation. Not only has family breakdown become commonplace,



but there is no longer any consensus about the conduct of relationships within the family, between husbands and wives, and particularly between parents and children. As a result, the family has become more a focus of anxiety and insecurity than a source of support for the individual and stability for society. As Furedi puts it, 'the family home is no longer portrayed as a refuge, but as a jungle, where children are at risk of abuse and where women are at risk of domestic violence' (p68).

The drive towards individuation has produced a unique sense of individual insecurity and vulnerability—a sensibility that is highly responsive to scares and panics. When established social roles and traditional modes of behaviour can no longer be taken for granted, people feel that they are losing control and develop a heightened awareness of dangers once accepted as part of everyday life. In this climate of confusion and uncertainty, people are receptive to the formulation of new guidelines and codes of practice offered as a means of containing and regulating risk. Out of this ferment, a new moral framework is emerging in which good and evil are redefined in terms of health and safety, on the one hand, and risk and danger, on the other.

Like Roiphe, Furedi notes the emergence of a new moral climate in the sphere of sexual relations. He argues further that 'the impact of these changes goes way beyond the realm of sexuality' to discredit experimentation in any form. His conclusion, that 'at least temporarily, the principle of caution has triumphed over the pioneering spirit of adventure and discovery', both exposes the fundamental flaw of the new morality, and suggests a line of attack against those who would impose the inquisition experienced in one parish in Salem three centuries ago on a global scale today.

READ ON READ ON READ ON READ ON READ ON READ ON

## WHY IS SEX FUN? THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Jared Diamond, *Weidenfeld and Nicholson*, £11.99 pbk

If you have ever wondered why men don't breastfeed babies, or why women's vaginas don't swell up and turn bright red when they want sex, or why men have penises three times longer than gorillas', on the average, then this is the book for you. Such fascinating trivia make Jared Diamond's new book a fun read for anybody who, like your reviewer, enjoys escaping for a quiet hour or two in front of TV nature documentaries, freed from the worry of thinking about anything more pressing.

Diamond, however, imagines that the natural evolution of the peculiar sexual functioning of *homo sapiens* is of compelling importance for anybody interested in human sexuality, hence the sub-title. Indeed he insists that 'we humans still carry the legacy of hundreds of millions of years of vertebrate evolution engraved deeply into our sexuality. Over that legacy, our art, language and culture have only recently added a veneer' (p154).

*Why Is Sex Fun?* is an object lesson in the wisdom of biologists who study biology and the foolishness of biologists who imagine that their conceptual tools have any purchase on the phenomena of human social organisation such as sexuality.

As long as Diamond sticks to the biology his rigorous and lucid explanations of Darwinian reasoning are intriguing if not always entirely plausible. Rational and informed speculation about the evolutionary origins of certain unique or unusual aspects of *homo sapiens*' reproductive process and capacity to copulate is an appropriate activity for the ►

evolutionary biologist. But as soon as he strays into the discussion of human 'sexuality', rigour is replaced by laughably stereotypical prejudice, and knowledge by embarrassing ignorance.

So why is sex fun? According to Diamond the fun of sex is a consequence of the evolution of concealed ovulation in the human female. From an evolutionary point of view, concealed ovulation carries a number of advantages under the probable conditions experienced by our very early ancestors. But lacking a clear oestrus period, when the female advertises ovulation to potential mates, human females must be constantly receptive to attempts to copulate and human males constantly willing to try it on if reproductive success is to be ensured. The pleasant *physical stimulation offered by sexual intercourse is natural selection's answer to the need for more or less continuous copulation.*

This is all very well but what has it got to do with fun? Obeying an instinctive urge to impregnate a female of the species and experiencing a pleasant sensation as a consequence is not the same thing as having fun (even though it may seem like it to many people). It has not occurred to Diamond that whatever our ancient ancestors did experience while they were out hunting and gathering and in copulating, it was not 'fun'. Indeed fun is something that our not so ancient ancestors regarded very differently to us. Before the eighteenth century, the forerunner of the modern English word 'fun' meant idiotic, moronic, and it has only gained its positive connotation since the time of Dr Johnson.

Surely Diamond can be forgiven for choosing to describe the always pleasurable aspects of sex under the modern term of fun? Well, perhaps, if he showed in other respects the slightest knowledge of human history. That even so trivial an experience as fun has a history, and a very recent one, that is quite independent of natural evolution, should serve as a warning to anybody who, like Diamond, seeks to deal with a rather more substantial human institution—the family.

In his fascinating, if unconvincing, speculation as to possible evolutionary causes of the female menopause, Diamond explains the important role of grandmothers in ensuring the survival of their grandchildren in primitive societies, implicitly describing extended family relationships. And yet when he discusses the role of men in hunter-gatherer societies Diamond writes of the 'nuclear family'. Diamond seems unaware of the contradiction, and unaware of the variety of family forms that existed in prehistoric societies or that the nuclear family has appeared only in very recent times.

Oblivious, he ploughs on to assert that modern-day norms of beauty are the same as those that applied in hunter-gatherer societies, when they are not even the same as they were a century ago. This fact is dismissed as 'no more than noise slightly complicating but not invalidating the main conclusion' (p150). And the main conclusion? 'That men at all places and times have on the average preferred well-nourished women with beautiful faces.' (p150) Diamond seems to be unaware of the concept of tautology.

The historical fact is that the same physical actions and sensations mean something quite different and are experienced quite differently in different times and places. In the study of sexuality these meanings and experiences are referred to as the erotic and their motivation as desire. But desire and eroticism do not make an appearance in Diamond's account of 'the evolution of human sexuality'.

Diamond persists in the quaint notion that the sexual behaviour of men and women is driven by the genetically programmed instinct to reproduce. He reproduces the tired old 'battle of the sexes' model in which the boys try to shag anything that moves so as to spread their genes far and wide,

while the girls try to trap their man to ensure he helps to look after the offspring that biology dictates she will have to nurture.

Meanwhile all around Jared Diamond millions of heterosexuals are spending the majority of their sex lives carefully avoiding reproduction, and millions more career women and homosexuals spend their entire lives eschewing it. Why? Perhaps industrial pollution has resulted in some extraordinary mass mutation in the human genome? Who knows? Such people are also missing from Jared Diamond's version of 'human sexuality'. It goes without saying that Diamond does not attempt an evolutionary account of adults who get a kick from wearing diapers.

Without indulging in any celebration of contemporary 'sexual diversity', it is clear that Diamond's idea of sex is like that of the Fonz from *Happy Days*, all horny faithless boys and romantic girls who want to trap their man. And, like the nuclear family, it was ever thus. Decades ago the Catholic scholar CS Lewis wrote *The Allegory of Love*, a learned account of the origins of the erotic tradition of Western Europe in medieval courtly love, a tradition that Diamond finds programmed in the genes. 'What we took for "nature"', Lewis writes, 'is really a special state of affairs, which will probably have an end, and certainly had a beginning in eleventh-century Provence'. Lewis' rich study of 'art, language and culture' points to the specific social conditions of the time that made possible the sexual world which Diamond vulgarises. But all that is just 'a veneer' to Diamond; a veneer, to somebody whose sexual imagination ends at producing as many babies as possible. But it is the veneer in which everything vital and distinctively human about sex, eroticism and romance, is to be found.

The silliness of the attempt to explain contemporary sexuality through natural selection is summed up by Diamond himself when concluding his discussion of the technological possibility of developing male breastfeeding. 'Perhaps our greatest distinction as a species is our capacity, unique among animals, to make counter-evolutionary choices.' (p65) He simply does not realise that we have been doing it for centuries.

Peter Ray

## THE SILENCING OF SOCIETY: THE TRUE COST OF THE LUST FOR NEWS

Kenneth Minogue, *Social Affairs Unit*, £8.95 pbk

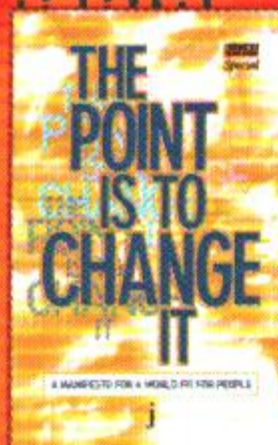
'The emergence of a media civilisation threatens Western resilience because it erodes the inner life, the alert subjectivity which scans and adjusts our responses to the world....To put the matter at its most extreme: what we seem to be seeing is a decline in subjectivity.'

Despite a very promising subject matter, and the occasional flash of insight, ultra-dry conservative Kenneth Minogue does not get to heart of the question in this right-wing think tank pamphlet. The process of trivialisation of the news, the way that the broadsheets have transformed themselves into scandal sheets is well worth investigating. Unfortunately Minogue has stunted on the research. He seems to think that studying the media means reading the papers—sporadically. His own semi-religious views of man's fall from grace fills the vacuum. It is our own appetite for sensation that is to blame according to Minogue. A laudable refusal to adopt the mainstream approach to social problems—ill-thought out legislation—leaves Minogue chiding his readers to exercise better judgement.

James Heartfield

# THE POINT IS TO CHANGE IT

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