

# LIVING MARXISM



December 1991  
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Behind the sexual harassment row  
The truth about the Aids panic

# SEW

lies and more lies

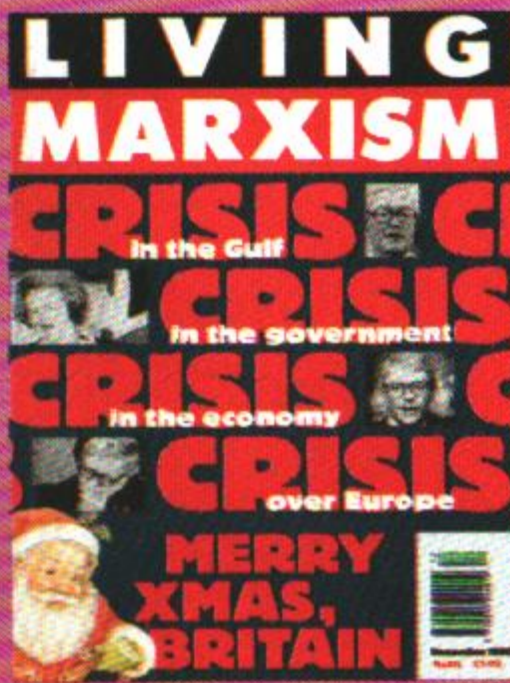
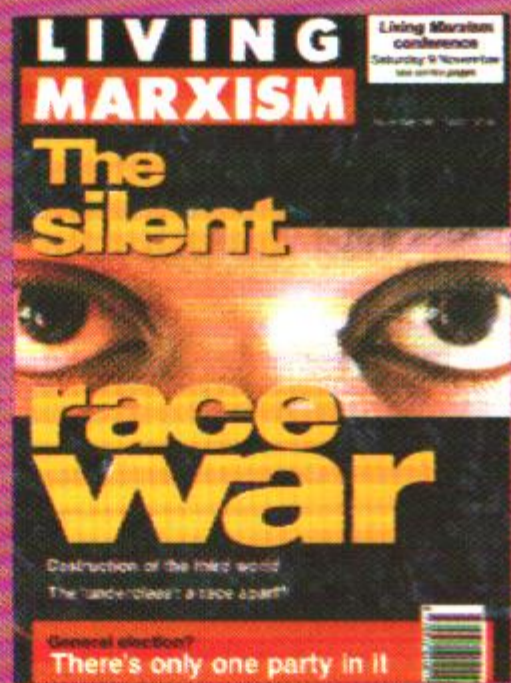
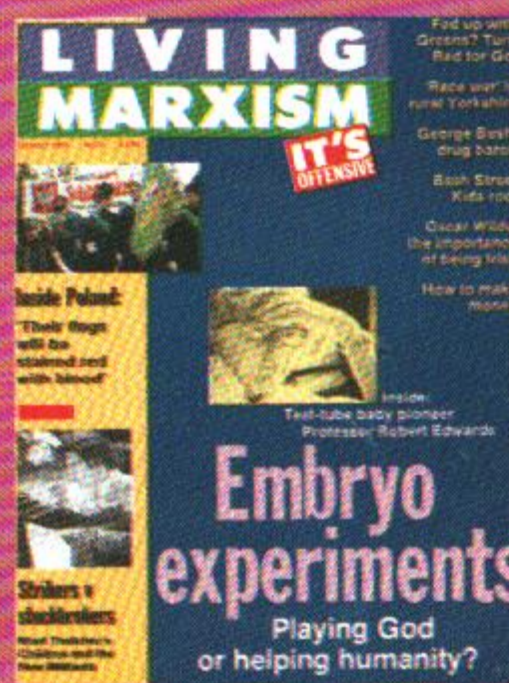
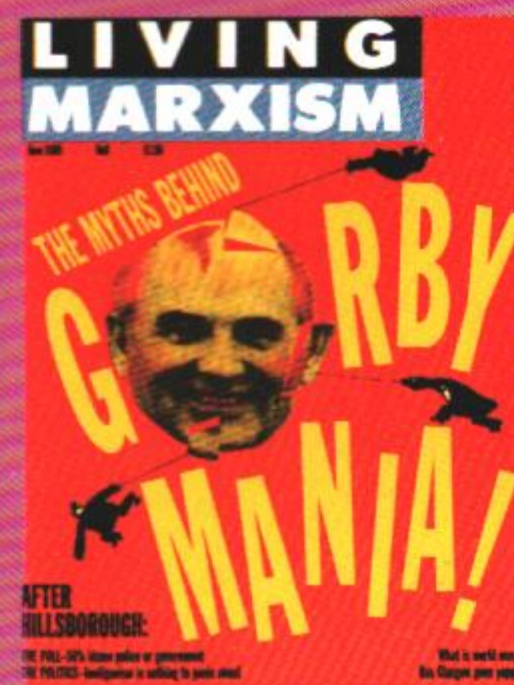
Race and nation in the new Germany • South Africa: minority rights or majority rule? • What's so good about Western civilisation?  
Plus: Books for Xmas • 'The Lovers' Guide' goes astray  
Bernard Manning, Toulouse-Lautrec and much more



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## Anti-racism begins at home

The rise of racism in Europe has not escaped the notice of radicals in Britain. Unfortunately, however, the significance of racism over here seems to have passed many of them by.

Anti-racists in Britain recently launched a campaign against racism in France, and picketed the German embassy to protest at attacks on immigrants there. At a time when the *British* government is launching a new crackdown on refugees and immigrants through its Asylum Bill, these initiatives appear wildly off-beam. Anti-racists in Britain would be far better off joining the campaign against the bill and picketing the home office.

The British campaigns focusing on European racism are not just diversions; they are dangerous. By endorsing the idea that racism is a peculiarly foreign (and especially German) disease, they can give a radical veneer to 'British is best' sentiments—precisely the sort of nationalist claptrap that is used to legitimise attacks on foreign immigrants here.

For *Living Marxism*, racism begins at home—and anti-racism must do likewise. That is why we sponsored the Silent Race War conference in London in November which attracted more than a thousand people. Look out for further anti-racist initiatives in the New Year.

In the meantime, Happy Xmas, as we atheistic, godless communists say.

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# editorial

# What's so good about Western civilisation?

**T**he civil war in Yugoslavia is a local power squabble between equally unattractive cliques of Stalinist-turned-nationalist politicians. Culturally and ethnically, the Serbian and Croatian peoples caught up in this conflict have far more in common than sets them apart. That is what you would have to conclude if you studied events in Yugoslavia in their own terms. Look again, however, through the prism provided by the Western media, and you will find a very different version of reality.

Here the Yugoslavian conflict is being

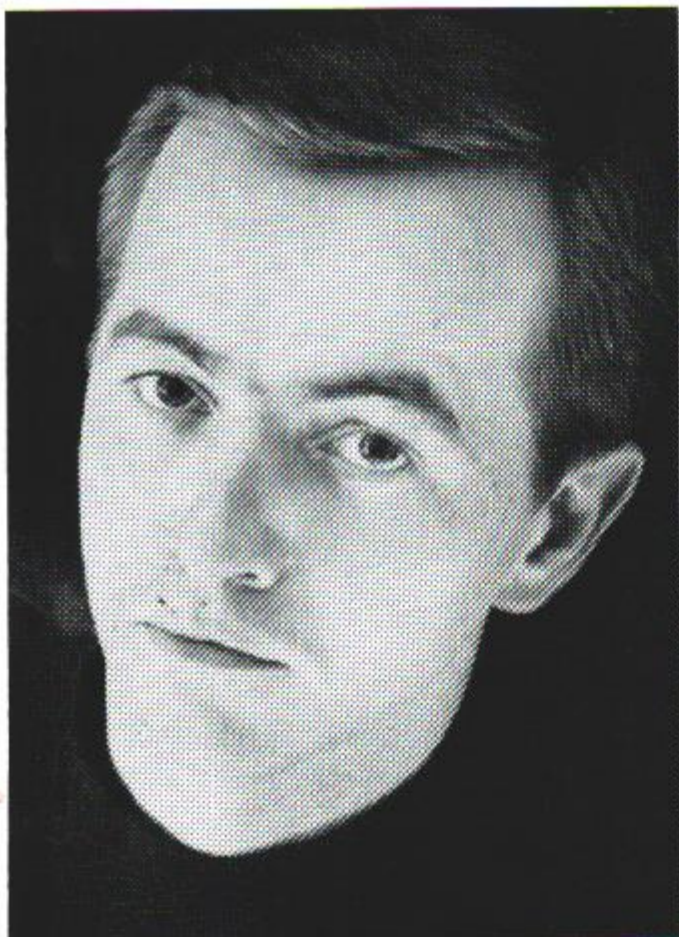
presented as an historic 'frontier war' between age-old enemies; West against East, Good versus Evil. On one side stands Croatia: cultured, democratic, and prosperous. On the other side skulks Serbia: barbaric, communist, and backward. Croatia is associated with Prince Charles and his concern to defend the city of Dubrovnik as a symbol of European civilisation. Serbia is linked to Saddam Hussein as a symbol of Eastern barbarism.

Western commentators have entirely removed the war from its immediate cause—the contest among rival sections of the old

Stalinist bureaucracy over who will make the most out of the new market economy. Instead, newspaper columnists and TV pundits project the Yugoslavian conflict back into the distant past, rewriting history to pretend that this is a continuation of a centuries-old battle between East and West. Croatia is now supposed to be the frontline of civilisation, what its leader, Franjo Tudjman, calls a 'Christian wall against the infidels'—even if the Eastern 'infidels' of Serbia are themselves Orthodox Christians.

● This rewriting of history is centred upon the Second World War. As allies of Nazi Germany, Croatian nationalists participated enthusiastically in the subjugation of the rest of Yugoslavia and in the systematic slaughter of at least half a million Serbs, Jews, gypsies and others. Now the Croatian fascists of the Ustashe regime are being rehabilitated as a part of an historic struggle for civilisation, while the communists and partisans who resisted them are categorised as another variant of Eastern barbarism.

The conflict in Yugoslavia is being used in a major propaganda campaign launched by the European right to promote the superiority of Western values. Its aim is to



editor  
**mick hume**

recreate a Cold War-style climate for the nineties by erecting an ideological iron curtain between the 'civilised' nations of the West and the 'barbarians' of the East and the third world.

Alongside the right's support for Croatia in its 'frontier war' goes the construction of a Fortress Europe against immigrants. Whatever differences Western European governments might display among themselves at December's EC summit, they are all united in their determination to draw a firm line between the West and the third world. The Tories' Asylum Bill is mirrored by crackdowns against refugees and immigrants in Continental countries.

● The European right's renewed emphasis on the virtues of Western civilisation is a response to the uncertainties of a changing world order. The end of the Cold War era and the collapse of the Soviet bloc has made international affairs unstable and unpredictable. It has also robbed right wingers of 'the communist threat', which served as their most powerful political tool through most of the century. They are now seeking new bearings for capitalist politics, a new focus through which to bolster the authority of the West and justify the continuation of Cold War institutions such as Nato. This is why the forces of conservatism want to divide the world into its civilised and barbaric parts, and to point the West's political and military weaponry at Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia or Saddam's Iraq.

● The campaign to redefine and defend Western civilisation may lack some of the immediate impact of classical Cold War politics. After all, it is hard to depict Serbian militiamen or African asylum-seekers as a credible substitute for the Red Army. But the European right does have a powerful political resource to call upon in its new campaign—racism.

● The emphasis on the superiority of the West is part of the new racism now emerging at the centre of Western politics. It is what *Living Marxism* has called the Silent Race War, because many of the assumptions behind it have not yet been spelt out. Nobody with any influence in the West is arguing openly for the need to keep the 'lower races' of the East and the third world in their place. Instead the talk is of the need to 'protect our culture', or 'uphold Western values'. But the underlying message is clear enough. This is the politics of racial superiority, wrapped in language so civilised that it could be used in the most sophisticated dinner party debate or quality newspaper editorial.

The campaign to promote Western

superiority has another big advantage for the right: it is a self-fulfilling argument. The Western powers which dominate the world economy are responsible for reducing much of the globe to a desperate state. The present social crisis in Eastern Europe, for example, is not caused by its backward culture. It is the result of the introduction of capitalism on the third world model—the only sort of market which the West can offer today. Having played a leading part in causing such devastation abroad, however, Western politicians then point to the ruins as proof of their own nations' superiority, and as evidence of the need to insulate the West from the barbarians.

This is the politics of racial superiority, wrapped in language civilised enough to be used in the most sophisticated dinner party debate

● Today the right can get an almost uncontested hearing for these ideas. Yet its apparently commonsense arguments are deeply flawed. It is one thing to sing the praises of Western civilisation by rewriting the past or praising old buildings. It is quite another to do so in relation to the present. Western capitalism is in an economic slump, its political parties have no solutions to offer, and its culture is frankly naff. The title of 'superior civilisation' does not sit easily upon Western shoulders in such circumstances.

● Unable to prove that it is superior on the basis of its own achievements, the West has to concentrate on demonstrating the *inferiority* of everybody else. This is why Western commentaries are filled with attempts to denigrate and demonise those selected as the enemies of civilisation, be they Serbians or black immigrants. To counter the right's campaign we need to turn things around, put the focus on to the West and what it stands for, and repose the question: what is so good about Western civilisation anyway?

The Western powers' record around the globe is hardly an advert for their civilised qualities. There is no need to reach back into the dark days of empire to find evidence of Western savagery against colonial peoples. There is plenty of evidence available from the Gulf War, fought just this year. The burnt remains of thousands of Iraqi conscripts,

bombed in cold blood as they fled down the road to Basra, formed a grisly monument to the latest Anglo-American civilising mission in the third world. If the West's latest propaganda campaign is pursued to its ultimate conclusion, Serbia may well suffer Iraq's fate of being blown off the map. All in all, it seems rather appropriate that Croatian fascism should be held up as a symbol of Western civilisation in the twentieth century.

At home, too, Western civilisation falls a long way short of its self-image. Life in the West may well be better than elsewhere, largely because of the ability of Western capitalism to exploit the rest of the globe. But life in the West is still nowhere near good

enough. In the inner-city ghettos, it is hell. And in the rest of society, it is purgatory: a system built on economic insecurity and dehumanisation, wrapped up in a moral code which demands that we subscribe to the reactionary values exemplified by the policemen and estate agents of the England rugby team. The vast majority of people have no cause to rally to the defence of 'civilised' Western capitalism. On the contrary, our interests lie in replacing it with a society under our control.

● It is only a couple of years since the right celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall and the creation of 'one world'. The fact that it is already trying to draw a new line between East and West is testimony to the fact that, even when it is given a free hand, capitalism cannot achieve global prosperity or stability. The campaign to promote the superiority of Western civilisation is a crude attempt to justify this state of affairs.

● In the months ahead, *Living Marxism* will be devoting a lot of attention to these issues. Whether the debate is about history or about today, we will not allow the right to go unchallenged in its intellectual efforts to make race a central theme of Western politics in the nineties.

# Letters

## Labour, Militant and Marxism

M Downie of Birmingham (letters, November) is quite wrong to assert that Militant have never said 'If you weren't inside the Labour Party, then you were outside the working class'. In fact this is quintessential Militant. For Militant, the Labour Party was the mass party of the working class and thus a focal point for their activity. There was little or no political life outside the Labour Party except work in the trade unions. Militant's internal documents, *British Perspectives*, always emphasised this point. The cause of their current dilemma is the realisation that they cannot effectively operate inside Kinnock's new Labour Party.

Downie is correct to state that class has more to do with the relationship with means of production than membership of any political party. But what's that got to do with anything? It's the politics you subscribe to, not where you come from, that really matters.

Finally, when comrade Downie criticises *Living Marxism* for being glossy, I wonder—is this inverse snobbery? There are plenty of ordinary workers, myself included, as well as 'educated campus revolutionaries', who enjoy and support *Living Marxism*. As an ex-Militant supporter with plenty of experience in the Labour Party let me say: this 'glossy mag' provides a refreshing change from the obsolescent stodge that now, more than ever, is the British left.

**Bob Pounder** Ashton-under-Lyne

M Downie of Birmingham misses the point when he defends the Militant against *Living Marxism*. Few of the Tendency's supporters would argue that being outside Labour meant you were no longer working class. Indeed, many find something positive in the debilitating experiences of 'traditional' working class life regardless of local people's Labourist affiliations. Hence their repetition even today of Derek Hatton's quote that 'kids in Liverpool think Trotsky was a bricklayer', due to Militant's brief tenure as the biggest slum landlord on the Mersey. This substitution of nostalgia for politics has led to their complete failure to relate to newer sections of the working class.

The argument that Frank Richards described as 'if you were not in the Labour Party then you were outside the working class' was Militant's shorthand way of dismissing

independent Marxist organisations as 'sects'. But it rested on the political error of conflating Labour's traditional electoral support among some 40 per cent of workers with the working class itself. Thus the 'entry tactic' became a mechanism for blurring the distinctions between Labour, its voters and its trade union paymasters on the one hand, and the working class on the other.

The entirely negative consequences of this are demonstrated by my own experiences of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), which Militant ran, and their involvement in the local government-based campaigns in the mid-eighties. Because the Labour Party and the working class were treated as interchangeable, LPYS supporters like myself were under orders to defend Leicester Labour council's 'caring cuts' once the fight against rate-capping had predictably caved in. Six years later Militant has continued to play this role, as can be seen from 'Real Labour' candidate Lesley Mahmood's preference for voluntary over compulsory redundancies. Downie and others like him would do well to consider exactly whose interests they are supposed to represent.

**Graham Bishop** Brighton

## Marxism doesn't work

It is astonishing that after 150 years of Marxism Mick Hume (July 1991) has to acknowledge that a practical alternative to capitalism is not yet available. What this really suggests is that Marxists over the years have been quite content to moan and groan about 'capitalism', by which they seem to mean everything that exists, but have offered precious little in the way of an alternative.

In the past, when bourgeois critics have pointed to alleged disastrous instances of socialism, Marxists have either denied that these were disasters or denied that these were instances of socialism. While it may be true that there has been no genuine socialism, it cannot be denied that many countries have tried to implement socialism and failed. This fact needs to be adequately explained by Marxists. The usual explanations are to do with industrial conditions not being right or with the revolution not spreading internationally and so on. But perhaps the real reason may be, as suggested by economic theory, that genuine socialism without a market in means of production and money is impossible because it is unable to perform

economic calculation. Thus, in practice, 'socialist' countries end up as state-regulated market economies which pretend to be centrally planned.

Rather than complaining about the crisis of capitalism, the RCP might do better to scrutinise Marxism. They might consider abandoning the absurd and hopelessly mistaken labour theory of value which, in any case, if true should imply competing workers' co-operatives, not socialism. Socialism would involve exploitation on account of the more productive workers being 'paid' less than their worth and the less productive being paid more than their worth. The labour theory of value was already outdated at about the time the first volume of *Capital* emerged in 1867, and had competitors as early as the sixteenth century, well before Adam Smith. So rather than lamenting the lack of a practical alternative to capitalism, Marxists should consider a practical alternative to Marxism itself.

**Kevin McFarlane** Milton Keynes

## Nimby Marxism

Andrew Calcutt ('Better the devil you know', November) jibes at Labour supporters in Essex for their 'altruism'. In Calcutt's vocabulary, 'altruism' seems to be a dirty word. To me it means the ability to look at day-to-day life from the point of view of what would benefit society as a whole. I would have thought that an awareness of the connection between individual action and the consequences of those actions for other people was the centrepiece of your approach to 'Realising the human potential' (September). Did I misread the earlier article or have you suddenly been converted to the Thatcherite, Majorite and Kinnockite notions of narrow self-interest and self-advancement?

How long before *Living Marxism* echoes other contemporary expressions of shop-keeper small-mindedness: 'not in my backyard' (nimby)? I fail to see how the narrow mentality which promotes nimby can have any connection with your avowed intention of changing the world.

**Geraldine Matthews** Colchester

## Green racism?

HJ Lang (letters, November) misses the point when he naively asks Western capitalists to help alleviate third world poverty. Capitalism

is *responsible* for such poverty. As the West sucks the lifeblood out of the third world, does Lang seriously believe that immigrants should stay put and starve?

Immigrants have to 'cling to the bottom rung of the Western capitalist ladder' in Britain and Europe because people like Lang, instead of fighting racism, actively pander to it. By joining in the racist chorus of 'send them back', Lang and the Greens help to create a climate where refugees are attacked and murdered, as happened recently in Germany. The families of those murdered refugees probably see little difference between the views of the Greens and those responsible for these crimes. How would Lang explain his party's policies on immigration to the families, I wonder?

**Lee Osborn** Newcastle

## The underclass debate

I found Frank Richards' article: 'The underclass: a race apart?' (November) compelling in its argument that a section of the working class was being separated and scapegoated for the ills of society. What I don't understand is why this question has to be subsumed under the question of race.

I accept that there are analogies to be made with previous social Darwinist theories, but they should remain as analogies. Even the most rabid of the right-wing commentators have not suggested that this 'underclass' is determined biologically or genetically.

The problem that I have with this line of argument is that you run the risk of confusing the issue of racial oppression as it exists now in British society—that is, as a real, material denial of rights and not the prejudices of reactionary journalists. It worries me that this diffusion and possible confusion is the result of the current inability to build an effective anti-racist movement, and will result in making it more difficult to do so in the future.

**LM reader** Nottingham

Whilst Frank Richards is right to stress, in his article on the underclass, that rioting is a social problem and not a moral one, I think his distinction between 'the social [and] the intangible moral' goes too far. If, as he suggests, morality is about the individual, then the right is entitled to argue about people's morals without considering social factors.

In fact a moral code is innately social; it can only operate within a group of people who perceive themselves to have common interests. Just as the conflictual nature of

imperialism requires the government to have a separate moral code for immigrants and foreigners, so British society is so riven with contradictions that a common morality cannot be sustained. Recognising a 'moral dimension' to rioting need not mean accusing rioters of being immoral. Instead, it should be taken as evidence of the compromised nature of Tory morality.

**Paul Johnson** Bristol

## Don't celebrate Columbus

Andy Clarkson's (letters, November) criticism of Toby Banks' review 'How the West was invented' is misplaced. In his 'eagerness' to defend progress Clarkson wants to celebrate capital's historic mission into the backward regions of the world, albeit noting Marx's comment about the bloody nature of the 'progress'. In doing so he appears not only to have misconstrued Banks' analysis but also to be looking at the present historiographical debates (Columbus and the western frontier) now raging in the USA, merely within the terms of the protagonists of that debate.

The current historiographical debates over Christopher Columbus' arrival in the 'New World', and the period of America's westward frontier expansion, have divided American academia. From the right, the argument is that both historical periods (even if bloody) should be causes for celebration as part of the progress of civilisation; on the revisionist left, that both periods cannot be simply seen in the light of progress because there was so much that was destructive to large sections of humanity (the native populations of the Americas).

This debate cannot be understood in and of itself: 'was it good or was it bad?' The political context in which this debate is taking place is an important consideration. Both historical discussions are not really centred on the past but the present. The discussions centre around the question of national identity; how the past has determined the American character as something unique, has given the USA the right to carry the banner of progress, freedom and democracy. As one conservative American historian, Gerald D Nash, put it: 'This debate is not solely an academic issue.... Rather, it has direct relevance to the self-image of all Americans. And, beyond our shores...it determines how Americans are perceived by millions of people around the world....'

Nash's ethnocentric interpretation of history—that the onward march of white

American civilisation is progressive and good for humanity even if it involves some bloodshed—has become the dominant one. In the context of the present political climate I think Mr Clarkson's reductionist view, that we also celebrate Columbus in the spirit of progress, is wrong. I take it that Mr Clarkson does not think that capital's present penetration into backward areas of the world is cause for celebration. The way that the past is closely associated with the present should not lead us to celebrations either, but to explanations. In today's climate, Toby Banks' conclusion that we should congratulate the organisers of the Washington exhibition on historical myth-making for emphasising the 'dripping with blood' side of capitalism's progress is an entirely correct one to make.

This is not the same thing as saying that we would go along with the romantic sentiments of the left about underdeveloped societies. We can leave that to Kevin Costner.

**Grant French** Oxford, Mississippi, USA

## Pavarotti: opera for the masses

Mark Reilly was spot on with his article 'Don't blame Big Lucy' (November). I agree that it is hard to find a singer (let alone a tenor) to match those of prewar opera. While it is true that Pavarotti is technically inferior to Domingo, opera has not—since Gigli—produced a singer of Pavarotti's charisma and mass appeal.

Gigli himself was immensely popular with working class people and it was perhaps for this reason that he also suffered at the hands of the critics. When Mascagni (the composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and a close friend of Gigli) was appointed the national composer by Mussolini, Gigli was also painted as a fascist supporter. Yet for his critics, his biggest crime was to refuse to take a pay-cut at the New York Met.

Gigli brought opera to the masses, and sang for them what they wanted to hear, especially the Italian songs. He gave his all to his art. Critics may have scoffed at his 'sobs' as phoney, but what is acting if not manufactured emotionalism? Like Caruso, Gigli sang for those in the balcony. But because Gigli sang opera (the highest form of bourgeois art) as it was supposed to be sung, he was slandered. Pavarotti is now sharing the same fall from grace. For all my reservations about Big Lucy, it is hard not to admire an artist who, in his own words, will do anything to popularise his art.

**LM reader** Leeds

**We welcome readers' views and criticisms.**

Please keep your letters as short as possible and send them to The Editor, *Living Marxism*, BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX, or fax them on (071) 377 0346



**Somehow they [the Iraqis] accept death more philosophically than we do.**

Major General Ken Perkins.

**First we are going to cut it off, then we are going to kill it.**

US military chief Colin Powell on dealing with the Iraqi army.

**I don't mean to be flippant, but there's no nice way to kill somebody in a war.**

Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams.

**We feel very comfortable that the attacked target was a legitimate target.**

Brigadier-General Richard Neal after the bombing of a Baghdad air-raid shelter.

**I'm going home, I'm going home—as soon as my BMW comes out of the shop.**

Kuwaiti exile.

**The US is not going to see the suffering of innocent women and children.**

George Bush goes blind while Iraqis starve after the Gulf War.

**This is a victory for the United Nations, for all mankind, for the rule of law, and for what is right.**

George Bush on the Gulf War.

**It's going to be a turkey shoot.**

US marines colonel, preparing to bomb an Iraqi column.

**As a nation we are rightly proud of our armed forces. That pride has been fully justified by their conduct in the Gulf War so far.**

The Queen broadcasting to the nation.

**Napalm was used and proved extremely effective.**

British defence secretary Tom King.

**If you hit a Saudi, it's your fault. If you hit a Korean, it's his fault. If you hit a Yemeni, go to the nearest police station to claim your prize.**

From the 'Riyadh highway code' circulating among British troops.

**The Chilean army certainly sees no reason to ask pardon for having fulfilled its patriotic duty.**

General Augusto Pinochet responding to a 1700-page report on human rights abuses during his 16-year dictatorship.

**I hope the sheets have been changed.**

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, on learning that the bed he used in Bulgaria had once been occupied by Colonel Gaddafi.

**The cultured world does not understand the**

**type of people who want to solve problems by either blowing up airplanes or by killing tourists. Regrettably, this is in the character of the Arab nation.**

Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek.

**A free-market economy is much more in keeping with the teachings of the Bible than communism.**

Evangelist Billy Graham.

**Jesus was a management expert too.**

Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey.

**Mitterrand has 100 lovers. One has Aids but he doesn't know which one. Bush has 100 bodyguards. One is a terrorist but he doesn't know which one. Gorbachev has 100 economic advisers. One is smart but he doesn't know which one.**

Gorbachev jokes at his own expense.

**Developing the mixed character of the national economy, we will also support private enterprise, granting it the necessary opportunities for developing production and the sphere of services.**

Statement by the leaders of the attempted Soviet coup, dubbed 'hardline communists' in the West.

**First you get cold feet, then your backbone dissolves.**

Comedian Yakov Smirnov describes the symptoms of Russian flu afflicting 'hardliners' behind the bungled coup.

**The decade of the 1990s will be the decade of Europe, not of Japan.**

German chancellor Helmut Kohl.

**We do not want to dominate anyone.**

Helmut Kohl.

**Organisers of strikes are breaking the law. Strikes interfere with Poland.**

Former Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.

**We can only envy the monarchy.**

Polish president Lech Walesa on his visit to Britain.

**Little yellow men who sit up all night thinking of ways to screw the Americans and the Europeans.**

France's Socialist premier Edith Cresson on the Japanese.

**The French working man sees on the landing of his council flat an immigrant father with four wives and a score of children, making 50 000 francs on welfare, without a job of course. If you add to that the noise and the smell, the French worker goes crazy.**

Former French premier Jacques Chirac on Arab immigrants.

**I'm very young and if it goes wrong I can always do something else.**

John Major on his future prospects.

**I don't worry too much about opinion polls.**

John Major.

**Home is where you come to when you have nothing better to do.**

Margaret Thatcher interviewed in *Vanity Fair*.

**Read by morons.**

Education secretary Kenneth Clarke on the *Mirror* and its readers.

**In a democracy everyone has the right to be represented, including the jerks.**

Tory chairman Chris Patten after a bad night in the May local elections.



**Anyone who like me was educated at public school and served in the British army would be at home in a third world prison.**

Roger Cooper on his release from jail in Iran.

**So many people see only the benefits and comforts of having a lot of money. Not many take into consideration the enormous responsibilities.**

The Duchess of Westminster.

**Rising unemployment and the recession have been the price that we've had to pay to get inflation down. That is a price well worth paying.**

Norman Lamont, chancellor of the exchequer.

**Recovery will come early in 1991 (November 1990).**

**Recovery will come in the second half of the year (April 1991).**

**Of course it's difficult to forecast exactly when recovery will come (June 1991).**

**Recovery starts from the low-point of recession (July 1991).**

**We have to be patient.**

Norman Lamont wishes for the upturn.

**Ladies who normally buy four Ascot hats are economising with two.**

Hat designer Graham Smith counts the cost of recession.

**If we closed down a bank every time we had a fraud, we would have rather fewer banks than we have.**

Bank of England governor Robin Leigh-Pemberton.

**These people are free-riders on the system, directly exploiting the enterprise culture.**

Nicholas Ridley on one-parent families.

**They had been dragged out of some fish-tank in the dependency culture.**

Auberon Waugh about the studio audience on *Question Time*.

**If they're white, let them in.... Muslims and blacks, on the other hand, should be kept out as strictly as at present.**

Charles Moore in *The Spectator*.

**The only way to help is to stop them breeding...starving people don't breed very easily.**

Tory MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn speaking against aid for Bangladeshi flood victims.

**Afrikaner socialism.**

Tory minister Lynda Chalker on apartheid.

**No credible trade union believes in strike action.**

NUT general secretary Doug McAvoy.

**Both economically, politically and socially.**

Neil Kinnock.

**It is a function of the left to be sat upon.**

Ken Livingstone.

**I'd be more tempted to vote Tory because at least you're getting someone who is honest about the system they are putting forward.**

Former Militant Derek Hatton.

**Control the sphincter in infancy and you control the world in maturity.**

William Rees-Mogg on a variation of the British stiff upper lip.

**The English system isn't fit to judge an Irish dog show, never mind an Irish person.**

Paddy Hill of the Birmingham Six.

**Every single one of us feels absolutely gutted.**

West Midlands policeman involved in framing the Birmingham Six.

**But in all of my 63 years, the only bandits I have ever met are the type of thugs who shot my two sons.**

Peter John Caraher at an inquiry into the British Army killing of Fergal Caraher and the shooting of his brother Michael.

**No number of tanks or bullets or armies can overcome the spirit of a people determined to resist.... The lesson of this century is that countries put together artificially will fall apart.**

Margaret Thatcher, not talking about Northern Ireland.

**Space is out of this world.**

Helen Sharman, the first British astronaut.

**When you're getting into the mid-winter in England, you need a few of maybe the hard white men to carry the artistic black players through.**

Crystal Palace chairman Ron Noades.

**Barbie would never go out with Paul Gascoigne.**

Hayley Spicer, Barbie doll lookalike.

**Coping with the language shouldn't be a problem. I can't even speak English yet.**

Paul Gascoigne on playing abroad.

**Please let me go. I will not do it again.**

Sir Allan Green, Director of Public Prosecutions.

**I keep everything in my diary. One day my diary will keep me.**

Lindi St Clair, aka Miss Whiplash.

**I like dolphins. If dolphins were human, I'd be a dolphin.**

Jason Donovan.

**Some artists paint flowers. I paint what the flower is thinking.**

Sylvester Stallone.

**Too slow! Too fat! Too old! And too good for the Aussies!**

*The Sun* gets it half right on the rugby world cup final

**What they said in '91**

**Compiled by Andrew Calcutt**

The authorities now seem willing to promote concern about the sexual harassment of women at work—but only, believes Theresa Clarke, because such campaigns help to conceal the true causes of women's subordinate status



# Sexual harassment

**S**exual harassment has hardly been out of the headlines lately. It has been the subject of senate hearings in Washington, libel suits between doctors in the Midlands, and countless chat shows, radio phone-ins and press scoops.

Sexual harassment is a bad thing—on that even the European parliament can agree. Earlier this year, the European parliament passed a code of practice to prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace by 193 votes to nil with 26 abstentions. The code, launched at a conference in November, aims to provide a clear definition of 'sexual intimidation'. Suggestive remarks, 'offensive flirtation', pin-ups in the workplace, leering and touching are all in breach of the code.

The Euro-code is modelled on the US law which defines harassment as 'unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical sexual conduct where the response is used as the basis for an

employment decision...or where such behaviour creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment'.

Here in Britain, the Equal Opportunities Commission hopes to use the new code to press the government to make sexual harassment at work a criminal offence. Currently sex pests could only be prosecuted under the Sex Discrimination Act.

## Sexual innuendo

At some time most women will probably experience sexual harassment as defined by the European code and US legislation. When the *Guardian* published a survey in October showing that one in six women had been sexually harassed at work, the surprise was that the figure was so low. Leers, suggestive remarks and sexual innuendo are unpleasant facts of working life. Many women are cynical about the idea that legislation will change things. They have good reason to be sceptical.

Laws against sexual harassment have been in place in America since the early eighties. Back in 1981, a US court was willing to issue an injunction to restrain male employees from harassing female employees by continually making comments like 'Did you get any at the weekend?'. A decade on, however, there is no evidence that the law has made American women any less harassed. By the mid-eighties in Britain, the courts accepted that sexual harassment could contravene the Sex Discrimination Act. An employer is liable to pay damages if he does the harassing, or if he fails to take reasonable steps to prevent the harassment of an employee by her colleagues. But such legal changes don't seem to have made much difference over here either.

The lack of confidence in the official procedures means that, so far in Britain, only 97 industrial tribunal hearings have been initiated on the grounds of sexual harassment. Many women realise that, whatever the



PHOTO: Simon Norfolk

# is not the issue

rules say, they are likely to be the ones who suffer if they make an issue of their bosses' or colleagues' behaviour. A senior advisor to the Industrial Society recently reported that, if a woman applies for another job after fighting a sexual harassment case, 'the evidence seems to suggest the application has not a great chance of getting any further'.

There are many alternative suggestions about how to deal with sexual harassment. In response to the recent debate, one radical newspaper raised the traditional left-wing demand for it to be taken up by the trade unions—most of which already have paper policies against sexual harassment. A more common response is that women should band together to deal with the problem when it arises. And this is what often happens when women work with a man who is persistently offensive. Before they have been at work for very long many women will have compiled a retaliatory script of one-line ripostes and physical blocking

moves to curb the office wag or groper. No doubt we all have some vivid ideas of what to do with the little toe-rag who phoned Nick Ross to register his 'shock and dismay' at finding a complaint filed against him because he asked a female colleague to stand over a mirror to show her knickers to the lads.

## Sex and society

But in general, sexual harassment is not susceptible to trade union or other forms of collective action. In fact, whether you try the legalistic or the more militant approach to combating it, sexual harassment simply cannot be dealt with in its own terms.

It may be possible to intimidate a male colleague into thinking twice before he pinches his secretary's bum. But chauvinist attitudes and assumptions will soon re-emerge among male workers, because they are reproduced by the way in which society is organised. Replacing the page three pin-up with positive

images of women at work, or censoring smutty innuendo, will make little difference. In the final analysis, the way that women are treated at work reflects the broader role that they play in society.

Sexual harassment is just one consequence of women's subordinate position in the workplace. It is a part of the way that a boss exercises his authority. It is also a way for male colleagues to bolster their position by putting you in your place. Most of the sex-associated ways of treating women employees are so bound up with general patronising behaviour as to be indistinguishable. A woman may well feel that being told to stir her bosses' tea is just as insulting as a lewd joke or leer.

Women suffer abuse and inferior treatment in the workplace because they are not seen as 'proper' workers. A man is first and foremost a banker, a teacher, a factory worker or a journalist, but a woman is always a woman first, with a woman's responsibilities. She can never forget

### Only when women are equal to men will we be treated as equal

it, and neither can the people who work with her. The most fundamental problem faced by working women is that their position in the workplace is always undermined by their family responsibilities outside of it.

Women cannot escape the effects of family life, however ambitious they may be. Most women, willingly or accidentally, end up as mothers before they are out of their thirties. And as any mother knows, motherhood is not just about a few weeks maternity leave. If the children are sick, it means time off work to look after them. If they play up in the morning, you're late for work. You can't work overtime because you have to be home to make dinner. It is hard to make that important lunchtime meeting when you have to get the shopping.

#### 'Potential' mothers

Even if you don't have children now, as a woman you are automatically categorised as a 'potential' mother. However much you protest that the domestic life is not for you, your employer and colleagues will always be influenced by the expectation that you will end up in the family way. This assumption is not simply the product of prejudice. It reflects the fact that motherhood really is the primary role which women are allotted in our society. As such, it influences the treatment of women in every situation. At work a woman is seen as a matronly helper, the 'office mother'—or as sexually available, waiting for her man.

Sexual harassment is a symptom of the inferior position which women occupy in society. It is a consequence of their general exclusion from positions of influence, and their secondary role in the workplace. Until women achieve equality with men in and out of the workplace, all forms of derogatory treatment will continue to be reproduced regardless of what kind of calendar hangs on the office wall.

#### Unequal outsiders

The subordinate status of a woman in the labour market means that she will continue to be regarded as an unequal outsider by 'the boys' she works with, and consequently will continue to be the butt of their jokes. Since she spends most of her life servicing her employer's professional requirements during office hours, he may well feel encouraged to see if she is prepared to service his personal requirements out of them. All the legislation and charters in the world are unlikely to change this.

Campaigns and charters against sexual harassment are merely shadow boxing. They ignore the real problems while concentrating on the relatively trivial. Some people may accept that sexual harassment is not the root of women's problem, but feel that at least addressing this issue is better than nothing. In fact, the most that focusing on sexual harassment can do is to point the finger at a few guilty individuals while the social structures of women's subordination remain intact. In that sense the campaign against sexual harassment acts as a diversion from the central issues—and one which the authorities are happy to endorse.

Just as sexual harassment itself is a symptom of women's inferior status in the workplace, so the campaigns now centred upon it are a symptom of the decline of the women's movement.

Twenty years ago the women's liberation movement took up issues that materially affected women's position in society. They prioritised campaigns for equal pay and job opportunities, and demands that sought to free women from their domestic responsibilities. They called for free abortion and contraception on demand to give women some choice over whether or not to be mothers. They demanded free 24-hour nurseries to lighten the burden of childcare. Liberation meant liberation from home and family—freedom to compete equally on the labour market, to be involved in politics, or even just freedom to have a good time.

#### Oppression is the issue

Issues such as abortion rights, equal pay and childcare focus attention on why women have an unequal place in society. They expose the link between women's oppression and the capitalist form of social organisation. By contrast, the campaigns against sexual harassment throw the responsibility for women's subordination on to individual backward men. Such campaigns not only fail to address the central issues; they can even benefit the authorities responsible for keeping women down.

Anything that breaks the link between women's status and the way in which society is organised is a good issue for the establishment. It is obvious to all but the most diehard reactionary that women are denied equality. The question is, who or what is responsible for this? By agreeing that the problem is the attitude of individual men, the government and media can be seen to accommodate to the aspirations of ambitious women. The powers that

be can then present themselves as champions of equality on paper, while denying women equal rights in practice.

If the concept of oppression is removed from its social context and reduced to offensive looks and language it becomes meaningless. After all, if a man can oppress women simply through his sexual behaviour then surely the tables can be turned? The *News of the World* recently interviewed men who had been 'harassed and oppressed'. Ian, a 20-year old model and part-time barman who is frequently approached by women wanting to get their hands in his G-string, was a typical 'victim'.

#### The wrong target

If looks are at the root of oppression then those men who have the most opportunity to look and leer at the most women are presumably the most oppressive. This probably makes building labourers the most oppressive people in Britain—yet it is hard to see how much influence they have over the lives of most women. They may embarrass you for 30 seconds while you walk past the building site, but that's about it. As a woman at work you may feel most uncomfortable and alienated visiting the mail room with its page three pin-ups, but the men who work in there are not responsible for the fact that you're stuck in the typing pool on lousy wages. On the contrary, it is the management and the government, with all of their charters for women and anti-sexist language, who control our lives in that way.

Women have been forced to cope with sexual harassment at work for as long as capitalism has existed. It will continue to be a source of irritation and torment until women are freed of their domestic shackles to play a full role in society. Only when women *are* equal to men will we be *treated* as equal.

#### Problems for the 90s

The truth is that nothing can be gained for women by making sexual harassment a major issue. For every woman whose path to promotion is barred because she refuses the sexual advances of her boss, there are thousands who find their careers halted because of an unplanned pregnancy or lack of affordable childcare. For every woman who is upset by the puerile jokes of 'the lads', there are thousands whose lives are made a complete misery by pitiful pay and appalling working conditions. These are the problems we need to focus our energies on in the nineties.

# Raping the Missus

Women's groups celebrated in October when Lord Keith declared rape in marriage to be a crime. I can understand why. The rape in marriage law has existed as a legal insult to women since the infamous Lord Hale ruled, over two centuries ago, that 'by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife hath given up herself in this kind unto her husband which she cannot retract'.

Hale's judgment belonged to the days when it was legal for a man to beat his wife with a stick providing it was thinner than his thumb. Yet it has been continually confirmed by the law courts. As recently as 1985, high court judge Lord Justice O'Connor declared that a wife had an obligation to have sex with her husband from which 'she cannot unilaterally withdraw'.

The recognition that rape is rape, in or out of marriage, is long overdue. But I can't help feeling that of the judges, Lord Hale and Lord Justice O'Connor showed a more realistic appreciation of the true position of women in society than their reforming successor.

Lord Hale may have been a misogynist bastard, but he knew that in his day a married woman was no more than her husband's chattel. She had no rights, was not equal, and did not expect to be equal. Men were dominant, women were subordinate, and wives were for cooking, cleaning, having children and having sex. Sad but true.

And when Lord Justice O'Connor says that in modern society, a woman *cannot* withdraw from sex with her husband, most married women would concur. For many married women sex might not be accompanied by threats, coercion or violence, but if a woman is financially dependent on her husband, she's going to think twice before she denies the old man his oats.

Lord Keith's belief that criminalising rape in marriage solves problems for women is based on a rather bizarre view of women's lives today. Twentieth-century marriage, he argues, 'is a partnership of equals and no longer one in which the wife must be the subservient chattel of the husband'. Who is he trying to kid?

The subordination of women today doesn't have the brutal characteristics of the eighteenth century, but it exists nevertheless. Marriage can never be a 'partnership of equals' while women play an inferior role in society—discriminated against in employment, ghettoised in low-paid jobs, seen first and foremost as wives and mothers. Wives may no longer be seen as their husband's chattel, but they are a long way from independence.

Because women remain unequal in society and in the home, they will continue to be subject to unwanted sex. The new judgment will do nothing to stop rape in marriage.

Husbands have never forced sex on their wives because the law said they were entitled to their conjugal rights. And they won't stop because it's now illegal. Furthermore, a change in the law will do nothing to make it easier for wives raped by their husbands to escape the nightmare. It's not so easy to bring a prosecution against the man who shares your house, is father to your kids and on whom you are financially dependent.

How is a woman supposed to escape from her violent husband if she has no job, no money and a couple of children to care for? In theory councils are supposed to rehouse women escaping domestic violence, but a study carried out a couple of years ago by the Women's Aid Federation found that 43 per cent of women applying to local authorities were refused a new home. Many were turned down by local council officers who claimed that they had made themselves 'intentionally homeless'.

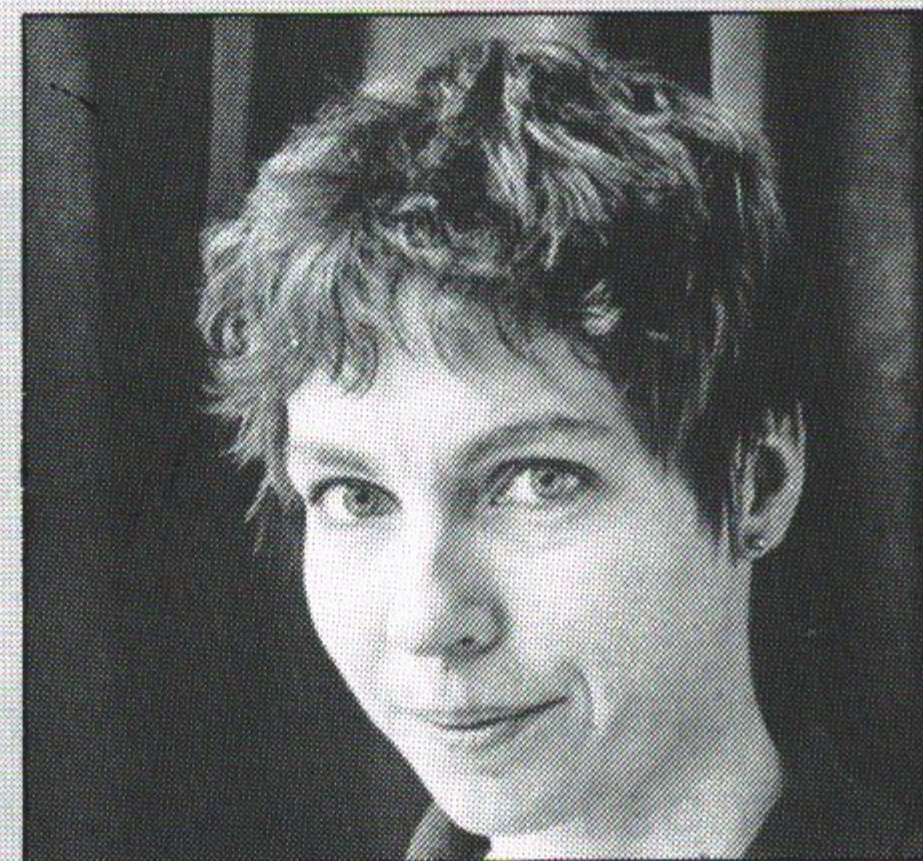
Even when councils do provide housing it is often so inadequate that women are forced to return to their husbands. A women's magazine recently carried the story of Carole Turner, who took her two-year old son and walked out on her husband when he beat her with a towel, pissed on her and then raped her. She lasted a week in a damp cockroach-infested bed and breakfast and then she 'begged him to take me back because I didn't think it was fair on my toddler'.

Even the rules governing state benefits make it hard for a woman to leave her husband. A married woman is in a Catch 22 situation. Before she can claim benefits in her own right she has to 'establish herself at a separate address'. But before she can move somewhere of her own she needs money to pay the rent.

This is the reality of women's lives in the 1990s. This is why men can, and some men do, brutalise and degrade women in marriage. The most degraded women have nowhere else to go and the changes in the law won't help a bit. Women will only be able to escape 'the rapist who pays the rent' when they have full legal and financial independence.

I welcome the change in the law because it makes it clearer where the problem lies. It is no longer possible to blame the brutalisation of women on archaic eighteenth century tradition. You have to blame it on life today.

On that happy note, Merry Xmas!



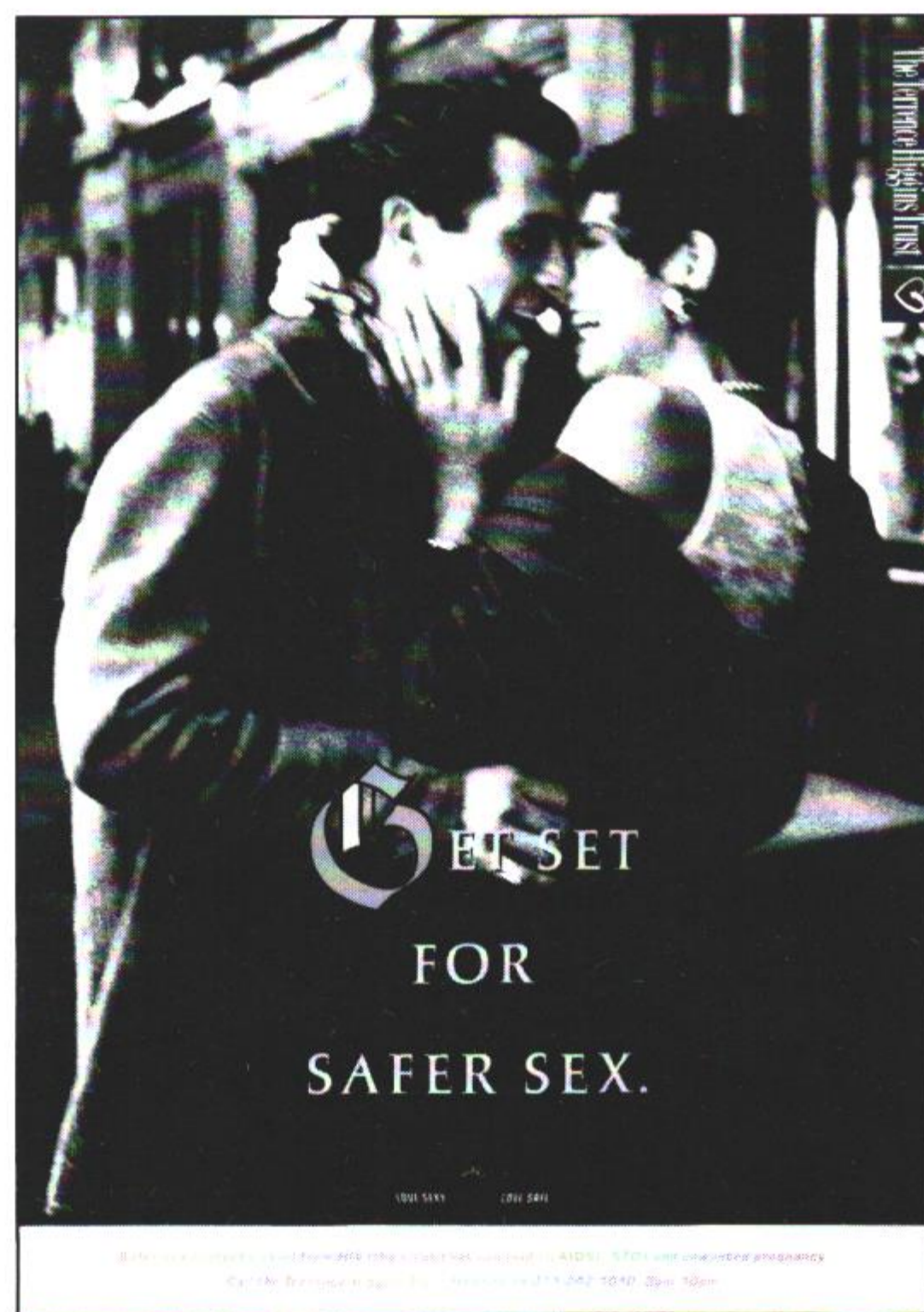
## Ann Bradley

# The new judgement will do nothing to stop rape in marriage

# The truth about

For more than five years we have heard dire warnings that Aids is about to spread like wildfire through the heterosexual population. Yet the rarely-published official figures reveal that, in Britain, the disease is still almost entirely confined to high-risk groups like gay men. Only 37 people who had no contact with high-risk groups have contracted the disease through heterosexual intercourse in the UK. So what have all the warnings been about?

Tessa Myers looks at the facts behind the scare stories, and identifies the cynical political motives behind the government's safer sex campaign



**F**ive years ago, in January 1987, the Tory government took the unprecedented step of delivering a special public health leaflet to 23m British households. Entitled *Aids: Don't Die of Ignorance*, the leaflet carried a grim warning: 'It is believed that...30 000 carry the virus. This number is rising and will continue to rise unless we all take precautions.'

## Moral panic

In March 1987 a book by an East London GP, Dr Michael Fitzpatrick, and a gay activist Don Milligan refuted the government's claims. *The Truth About the Aids Panic* (Junius Publications) argued that while HIV/Aids was a threat to certain high-risk groups—specifically gay men and intravenous drug users—there was no evidence that it would spread further in Britain. The authors argued that the government's high-profile concern with Aids was motivated by the desire to spread a moral panic, rather than to combat

the spread of the disease.

At the time, the publication of *The Truth About the Aids Panic* brought a storm of protest from the left, gay groups and radical doctors. It was labelled irresponsible and naive. Critics insisted that unless everybody changed their sexual habits and adopted safer sex practices, Aids would spread like wildfire. The authors of *The Truth About the Aids Panic* were accused of putting people's lives at risk to make a political point.

## Going down

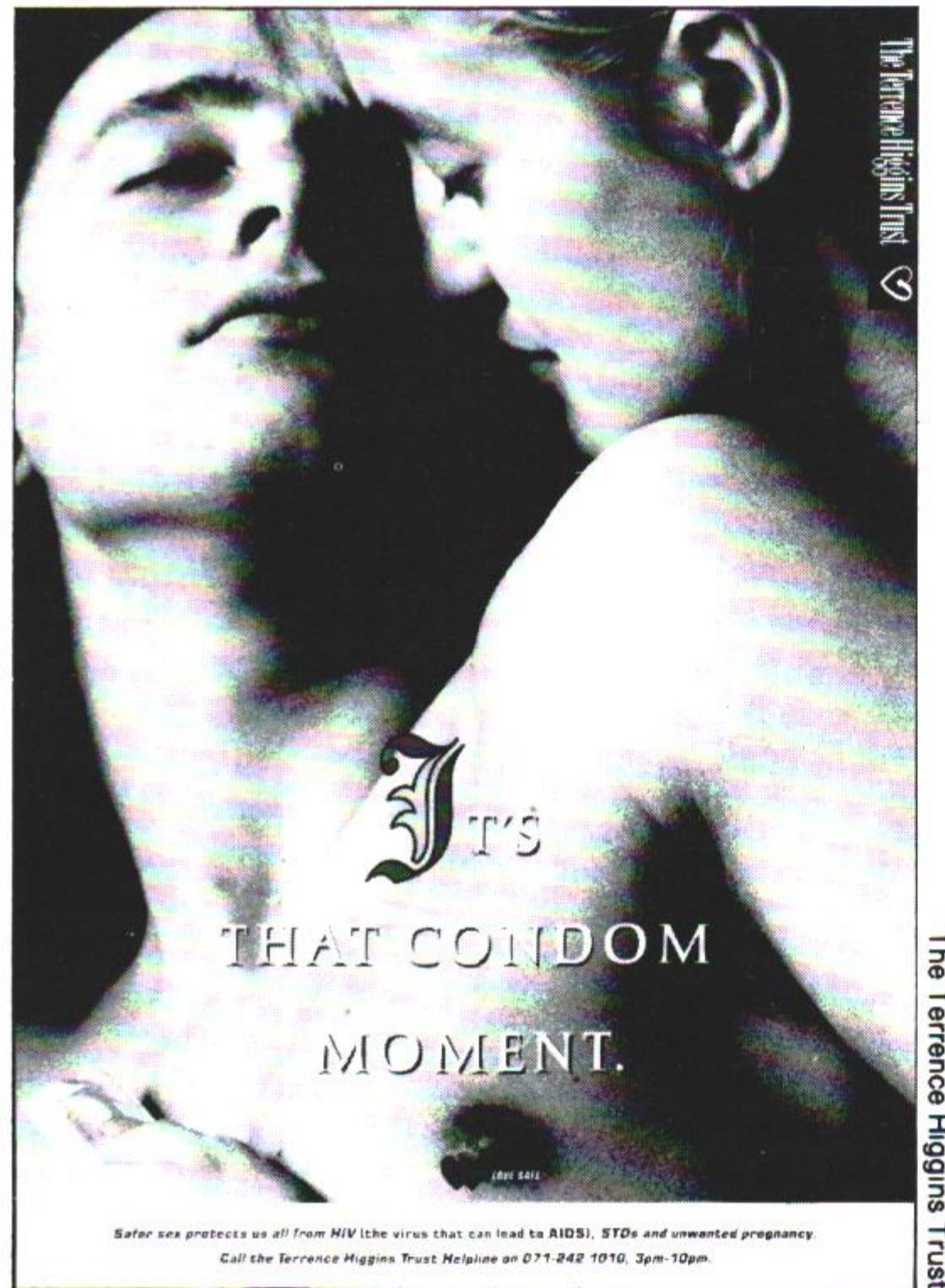
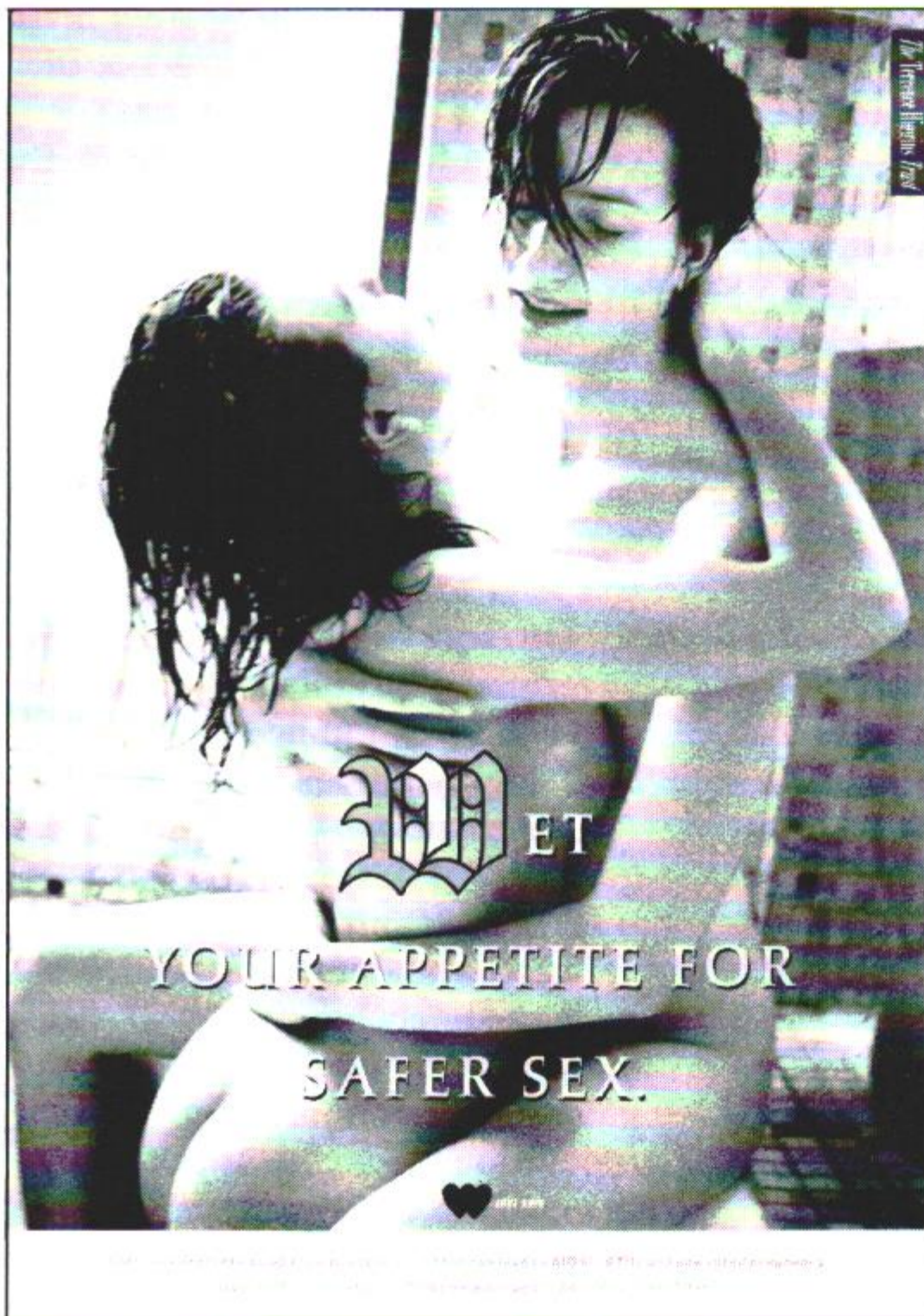
Five years on, official figures and epidemiological evidence bear out the analysis and projections presented in *The Truth About the Aids Panic*. The spread of HIV infection outside the known high-risk groups is negligible. But the panic continues.

The government's projections of HIV/Aids infection have never borne any relation to reality. A recent report *Economic Aspects of Aids and HIV infection in the UK*, written by

Dr Alastair Gray for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, documents how, from the start, the government has been forced to revise its estimates of HIV spread. In 1987, government figures calculated by the UK Institute of Actuaries' Aids Working Party predicted between 40 000 and 80 000 cases of Aids by the early 1990s. A year later, realising that this scenario was unrealistic, the department of health revised the figures downwards. A variety of different methods were used to make predictions but most attention focused on the Cox report's 'recommended basis for planning' which suggested that the annual number of *new* cases of Aids would rise to 3600 by 1992 (D Cox, R Anderson and H Hillier, *Epidemiological and Statistical Aspects of the Aids Epidemic*, 1988). Yet even these apparently more sober projections of HIV/Aids spread have proved to be wildly exaggerated.

The latest health department figures confirm that since 1982, when

# the Aids panic



the first three cases of Aids in Britain were confirmed, a *total* of 4777 people have contracted Aids. Of these, 3156 have died. Figures from the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre show that Aids is still not listed as a major cause of death in the UK. The chief medical officer's annual report for 1989 did not rank Aids among the five main causes of death for males or females of any age group.

## Women's trouble?

There has been growing publicity and concern about Aids as a killer of women. Yet Department of Health figures show that, up to September 1991, only 153 women have ever died of Aids in Britain. Each one of those deaths is a tragedy. But the fact remains that fewer women have died of Aids in nine years than have died of complications during pregnancy in the past four years. Yet nobody considers pregnancy to be a big threat to women's lives today, and nor should they.

Infection with HIV, the virus that can lead to Aids, is always far more prevalent than Aids itself. But government estimates of HIV infection have been as fanciful as their projected Aids figures. The Department of Health figures show that there are now in the region of 16 250 people registered as HIV positive (of whom less than 2000 are women). This is only just over half the number of cases that the government claimed *already existed* in 1987.

There is no evidence to suggest that HIV/Aids infection is spreading outside of the known high-risk groups.

The mode of HIV infection (through the exchange of blood and certain bodily fluids, usually during sexual intercourse), has made it relatively easy to identify certain groups of people who are especially at risk. Aids first emerged in the gay community, and homosexual and bisexual men are at risk. Intravenous drug users are at risk if they share needles. People receiving blood

transfusions or blood products that have become infected from contaminated products, and children born to infected mothers are also at risk. In parts of the third world like Africa, where malnutrition and general poor health may have helped the spread of the disease, HIV/Aids has taken hold within the heterosexual population. Despite the scare stories, however, this has not happened here.

## Four out of five

Vast quantities of health information material and condom adverts may claim that HIV/Aids can strike anywhere. But the evidence cited in Gray's study, reports by the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, and the Department of Health figures themselves, indicate that this is a gross distortion of the truth.

By far the largest group affected by Aids and HIV in the UK are homosexual and bisexual men, who make up nearly four out of five of the

total Aids cases (3925 out of 4777) according to the quarterly Aids figures released by the Department of Health at the end of October (DoH, H91/497). These same figures show that virtually all of the heterosexual Aids sufferers are either members of another high-risk group like intravenous drug users, or they are the sexual partners of somebody from a high-risk group, or they contracted the disease abroad.

Behind all of the scaremongering publicity, the truth is that there have only ever been 123 documented cases of heterosexual transmission of HIV in the UK, where neither partner is known to have had contact with a high-risk group. Of these people, 37 have developed Aids; 19 of them have died. Despite the publicity it has given to doom-laden predictions,

people have died after contracting Aids in this way.

On 7 November, a few days after the Department of Health published the above figures, the government's new chief medical officer, Kenneth Calman, made his first speech on Aids. He declared that HIV and Aids were spreading fast among Britain's heterosexual population, and warned that 'there is no cause for complacency whatsoever'. Perhaps he does not read his own department's statistics.

### Baseless claims

The media and Aids support groups periodically seize upon reports suggesting that HIV is spreading outside the high-risk groups. But closer investigation has shown such claims to be baseless. For example, results of anonymous HIV testing of women caused a flurry of alarm in May. The publication of figures based on 44 000 people attending 27 antenatal clinics and six clinics for sexually transmitted diseases prompted hysterical stories about how 'one woman in every 200' had tested HIV positive. But a closer look at the figures makes the alarm appear ill-founded. A few inner-London boroughs produced peculiarly high results; Newham in East London had antenatal figures of one in 220 and in Lambeth, South London, the figure was one in 262. But in other areas no cases of HIV were found at all. The figure nationally averaged out at just one in 16 000. As this study was based on the universal testing of women attending antenatal clinics, the results also seem to undermine the notion that HIV infection figures are kept low because of unreported cases.

### £200m

Follow-up studies published by doctors in medical journals have concluded that where women had picked up HIV infection, it had in almost all cases been through intravenous drug use, or intercourse with a partner in a high-risk category. Dr David Barlow at St Thomas' Hospital in South London has published results showing that most of his HIV positive patients were either injecting drug addicts or from African countries with a high Aids rate (*Lancet*, 26 September 1991). And a study of 75 HIV-infected women at the St Mary's and Central Middlesex Hospitals in London found that all but two fell into one of the high-risk categories. These two are still under investigation (*British Medical Journal*, 26 October 1991). Doctors from Berkshire carrying out a similar study

on HIV positive heterosexuals have concluded that there is 'no evidence for major spread of HIV into the general heterosexual population' (*Lancet*, 10 August 1991).

The one thing about Aids that does seem to have been spreading with epidemic-like speed has been government spending on the 'Aids industry'.

It seems curious that while the government has been steadily revising its projections of the incidence of HIV/Aids downwards, it has continued to revise spending on the disease upwards. According to Dr Gray's report, the £500 000 devoted to Aids in 1986 grew to £9.3m in 1987, £72m in 1988, £119.3m in 1989, £191.5m in 1990 and finally shot over the £200m mark this year. Why has a normally penny-pinching government decided to spend so much?

Dr Gray suggests that the government has allocated resources in response to public alarm and lobbying by pressure groups and Aids specialists. He claims that the government has taken too little trouble to ensure that the money was going to where it was needed. This seems a somewhat naive interpretation of events. The Tory government does not have a reputation for acceding to the demands of pressure groups (especially those representing gay men), or for responding to genuine health needs for that matter.

### Ideal vehicle

Contrary to Dr Gray's doubts, spending on Aids has been targeted exactly where the government intended: not into medical research but into high-profile scare campaigns. The campaigns warning against the heterosexual spread of Aids and promoting safer sex have turned into the most successful moral crusade in living memory. By combining the elements of sex, disease and death, the panic around Aids has provided an ideal vehicle with which the authorities can promote old-fashioned family values and endorse conservative attitudes.

Through the Aids panic the government has brought together the opposition parties, the medical establishment, the media, feminists and gay groups to speak with one voice: a voice that calls for moral restraint and conventional monogamous relationships. This fits neatly into the government's wider drive to bolster conventional family values, and to proscribe all departures from the sexual norm.

The official safe sex campaign was never specifically concerned to deal with the medical aspects of the

**TABLE 1 HIV Antibody positive: Patient characteristics Cumulative totals to end of September 1991**

Patient Characteristics	Gender			Total
	Male	Female	Unknown	
Homosexual & Bisexual	9587	—	—	9587
Intravenous Drug User (IVDU)	1465	684	30	2179
Homosexual IVDU	180	—	—	180
Haemophiliac & Recipients of blood	1338	82	3	1423
Heterosexual partner(s) of above	39	220	1	260
Heterosexual infected abroad	537	431	9	977
Heterosexual no evidence of infection abroad	57	64	2	123
Heterosexual under investigation	129	155	—	284
Child of infected mother	46	49	2	97
Not yet classified	887	163	88	1138
<b>Total</b>	<b>14265</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>16248</b>

forecasts and guesstimates about the heterosexual spread of Aids, the government seems strangely reluctant to publicise the hard fact that just 19



disease. In any other area of healthcare, preventative programmes are targeted with considerable precision under the guise of getting

**TABLE 2 Aids cases: Patient Characteristics**  
Cumulative totals to end of September 1991

Patient Characteristics	Male	Female	Total	Deaths
Homosexual & Bisexual	3925	—	3925	2475
Intravenous Drug User (IVDU)	161	62	223	120
Homosexual & Bisexual IVDU	79	—	79	52
Haemophiliac & Recipients of blood	297	46	343	246
Heterosexual partner(s) of above	14	29	43	25
Heterosexual infected abroad	206	101	307	155
Heterosexual no evidence of infection abroad	22	15	37	19
Child of infected mother	17	28	45	22
Unclassified	56	7	63	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>4777</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>5065</b>	<b>3156</b>

**SOURCE:** Official statistics on HIV infection and Aids in Britain are prepared by the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre and the Communicable Diseases Unit. They are published on a monthly and quarterly basis by the Department of Health.

the information to the 'people most at risk', but also with a view to saving money. Many times more women under the age of 50 die of breast cancer in a month than have died of Aids since its discovery, yet the Department of Health has resisted all demands to introduce screening programmes for younger women. The department claims that it would be uneconomical and would cause low-risk women unnecessary stress and trauma.

In the case of the Aids panic, by contrast, the object of the exercise would appear to be to create as much stress and trauma as possible among those not at risk. Take the newest bizarre element in the promotion of the Aids panic: Kenneth Clarke's decision to make Aids education a compulsory part of the national

school curriculum, while leaving the content of broader sex education to the discretion of school governors. In other words, teenagers have to be told that condoms and monogamy can prevent Aids, but not that condoms and the pill prevent unwanted pregnancies. Yet the number of teenage pregnancies has risen to more than 117 000 a year, while HIV infection hardly exists among schoolchildren. The government's education campaign is simply geared towards creating a moral climate in which sexual experimentation among the young is frowned upon.

Whether Clarke manages to convince the nation's youth of the threat of Aids remains to be seen. How much the safer sex campaigns influence people's behaviour tends to depend upon the extent to which they have contact with those affected by HIV/Aids. A 16-year old lad in a provincial town with no 'out' gay scene probably feels that he's as likely to catch leprosy as become infected with HIV. On the other hand, given the relatively small character of the gay scene even in Britain's biggest cities, an out gay man living in London probably has a network of friends with HIV. He has probably lost others to Aids already. For someone in that position, Aids seems a major threat.

### Little research

Aids undoubtedly remains a problem for gay men. The last five years of panic have seen little advance in medical research or treatment. While the government has spent hundreds of millions on Aids awareness, education, networking and safer sex campaigns, it has devoted negligible funds to the medical research required. The fact that only eight per cent of the government's huge Aids budget is spent on containing and preventing the disease adds weight to the argument that the campaign is cynically motivated. While some might find useful the exhortation to use a condom to 'protect the one you love', it seems pitifully inadequate advice for those at genuine risk of HIV infection. As *The Truth About the Aids Panic* pointed out in 1987, there is little need to preach to out gay men about the benefits of using a condom.

Gay men have never needed the authorities to advise them on their sexual conduct. The out gay scene was aware of reports of Aids in the US long before the Department of Health, and were already developing safer sex measures. For these people the government's sustained safe sex

campaign has been unnecessary. The majority of gay men, on the other hand, are not out. They are forced to pursue their lives in secret—in fear of ridicule, disgrace, eviction and the sack. In these circumstances, safer sex guidelines are pretty meaningless. The clandestine and chancy circumstances in which many gay men have to conduct their sexual encounters make it impossible to discuss openly each other's past sexual history, insist on condom use, or follow any of the other advice in the glossy leaflets.

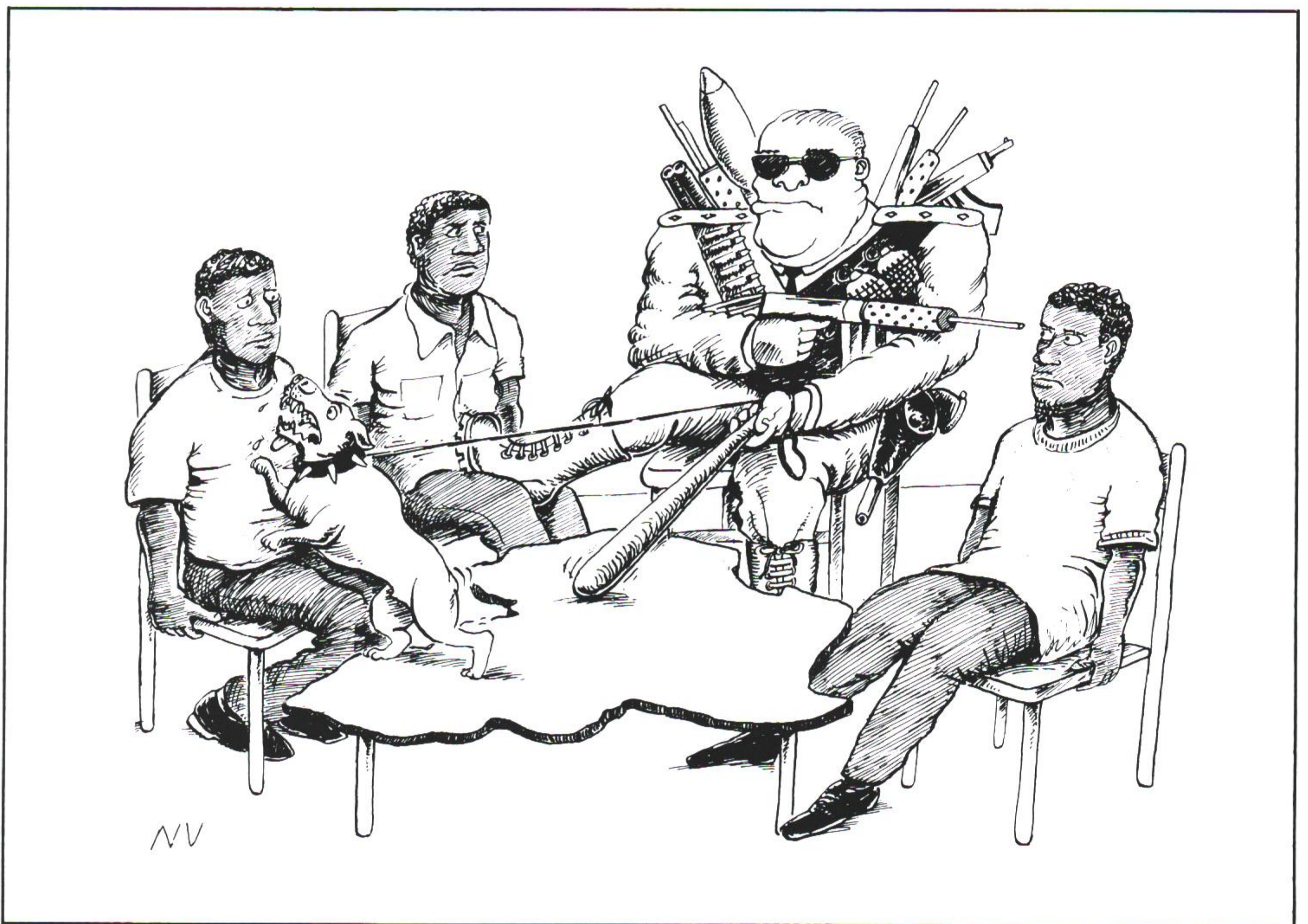
### For gay rights

It is difficult for a gay man to seek help or advice on medical matters when the exposure of his sexuality can ruin his life. Dr Gray reports the victimisation that the discovery of HIV can bring. From March 1986 to 1987, as the Aids panic began to take hold, the Terrence Higgins Trust (a leading Aids charity) dealt with around 200 legal complaints relating to discrimination in employment, housing or insurance. Not only do gay men suffer directly from the threat of Aids, they also suffer from the panic that's been created around it. As the disease has been portrayed as the greatest threat to modern civilisation, gay men (as the major sufferers) have also been branded a threat and victimised.

The problem of HIV/Aids among gay men cannot be successfully addressed while those who are most at risk are prevented from seeking help and advice because they fear the discovery of their sexual orientation. The climate of guilt, secrecy and fear that surrounds much homosexual activity in Britain creates the conditions in which HIV/Aids can continue to spread. The best way to combat the spread of Aids in this way is to challenge all acts of discrimination and abuse aimed at gay men.

### Make it medical

Bigots have seized on the fact that HIV/Aids is largely confined to high-risk groups to argue that the government should cut its Aids budget and transfer funding to projects affecting 'decent', 'good-living' people. We cannot concede an inch to that argument. Funding is needed to combat Aids. But if the government was serious about addressing the problems of the disease it would target its spending at research to find a cure rather than at propaganda about conservative morality. Aids needs to be addressed as a medical problem, instead of being used as a political vehicle for spreading moral panic and anti-homosexual prejudice. ●



South African president FW De Klerk has unveiled plans for a new constitution which would give blacks the vote for the first time but deny outright power to any one ethnic group. This obsession with minority rights, says Charles Longford, is designed to entrench the power of only one minority—the white capitalist class

**B**lack domination is as unacceptable as white domination. The National Party rejects both. Power domination spells catastrophe.' So spoke president FW De Klerk in September, addressing his party congress in the heartland of racist white South Africa, the Orange Free State town of Bloemfontein. The constitutional plans which De Klerk outlined involve black-white power-sharing arrangements, apparently to prevent domination by any single party or ethnic group.

De Klerk's constitution would set up a three-tier system of government in which the powers of the majority party would be decentralised and qualified by other parties. The recurring themes in the proposals are minority rights and the decentralisation of power:

- The president would be replaced by a collective presidency including the leaders of at least the three largest parties in the lower house of parliament. This collective body, building coalition government into the new South African constitution, would appoint ministers by consensus to a multi-party cabinet.

- The lower house of parliament would be elected by proportional representation, and a two-thirds majority of members would be required to pass any constitutional change. A smaller upper house would be filled on a regional basis. In each of the country's nine regions, the seats would be divided equally among all the parties which won more than a certain fixed proportion of the vote.

- At a local level, a similar tiered structure is envisaged but with even more permutations of PR and quota systems. Elections to local councils would be based upon two voters' rolls—one for residents and another restricted to home owners, lessees and rate-payers. The latter would elect half the council.

The proposals received a generally favourable response from political commentators and constitutional analysts. Although there are disagreements over details, there appears to be a consensus on the need to establish a framework for what professor Laurence Shlemmer, director of the Centre for Policy Studies at Witwatersrand University,

# Minority rights or majority rule?

terms 'conflict resolution in deeply divided societies'. Violence among races and ethnic groups over recent months has been used as a warning of what could result as the rigid social structures of the old South Africa are dismantled. De Klerk's 'participatory democracy' is being touted as an essential framework through which to manage change without chaos.

## Con trick

However, if we examine De Klerk's proposals a little more closely, and place them in the broader context of what is happening in South Africa, it becomes clear that they are nothing but a con. In his Bloemfontein speech, De Klerk emphasised that the National Party was 'breaking away from an obsession with colour'. However this new obsession with defending minority groups is an attempt to deny the basis of real democracy in South Africa—black majority rule.

The idea that South Africa's ruling National Party is now the champion of ethnic minorities and decentralised political power should at least provoke some scepticism. Since it came to power in 1948, the

party of apartheid has denied any semblance of democratic rights to the black population on the spurious grounds that there was not a black 'majority', but a complex myriad of ethnic minorities—Zulus, Basotho, Xhosas, etc, 'coloureds' (people of mixed race), Indians and, of course, whites. The apartheid regime excluded blacks from the benefits of South African citizenship, and presented this institutionalised racial oppression as an equitable policy of 'separate development' for different ethnic groups.

## Prison camps

The National Party argued that the way forward for democracy in South Africa was its 'homeland' policy. Each ethnic group would have its own country where it could exercise its own democratic rights. In reality, black homelands like KwaZulu and Transkei were little more than labour camps ruled by Pretoria's black stooges. The homelands policy forced the black majority to live in dire conditions on just 13 per cent of the land, and to travel to work for a pittance as migrant labourers in white South Africa. A highly centralised and

brutal state machine, which intervened in every corner of South African society on a scale far greater than any Stalinist regime in Eastern Europe, was necessary to maintain this 'democratic' arrangement.

## Repackaging apartheid

There is nothing natural about the diverse ethnicity which De Klerk goes on about today. It was a conscious creation of the apartheid regime. The conditions of poverty and deprivation produced by apartheid generated ethnic tensions and conflict. The 'divided society' which De Klerk points to, and which liberal commentators agree necessitates a peculiar constitutional framework, is the consequence of an apartheid policy that entrenched white minority rule.

De Klerk's proposals on minority rights simply repackage yesterday's apartheid arguments about the separate interests of ethnic groups and present them as today's democratic solution for South Africa. Indeed, some of the provisions of De Klerk's plans suggest that some of the old thinking still persists. For example, the nine geographical regions electing members to the

Democracy  
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majority rule

upper house of parliament will be gerrymandered in such a way as to ensure white voters are over-represented. The existence of two voters' rolls at local level will ensure that white property owners and middle class voters from other ethnic groups will neatly counterbalance the real majority of black working class residents.

### Not far enough

Not surprisingly many of De Klerk's opponents, including the African National Congress (ANC), have dismissed his draft constitution. Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, president of the London-based Anti-Apartheid Movement, scathingly described it as 'a recipe for white minority rule in a new form'. Such criticisms do not go far enough. De Klerk's plans are not simply a racist attempt to protect white political power; indeed, the National Party is reconciled to seeing black faces in government. De Klerk's aim is to protect the social power of a particular section of the white minority: the capitalist class.

Apartheid was never just an irrational racist system. It was the form that capitalist control of South Africa took in the past. The laws and practices of apartheid racially divided the working class, and ensured that white workers supported the authorities. The capitalists were left free to exploit the source of all their wealth and power—the black working class. De Klerk has proved that he is prepared to dismantle apartheid legislation. But he remains determined to protect that wealth and power through his programme of political reforms.

### Capital rules

In a capitalist society like South Africa, the power of the ruling class rests upon its ownership and control of society's productive resources. The fact that the majority in society own nothing but their ability to work ensures that the capitalists control their lives. So long as this class division remains intact, the capitalists will continue to exercise social power. That power can be protected through many different constitutional arrangements. De Klerk's constitutional proposals aim to end formal apartheid while denying the majority sufficient influence to impinge upon the real power of the capitalist class.

Ever since the apartheid regime was rocked by mass black resistance in the seventies and eighties, the South African ruling class has sought to rearrange the basis upon which they exercise their control. During the mid-eighties, for example, the

government of PW Botha introduced a new constitution which enfranchised 'coloureds' and Indians, and gave them token political representation in a new tricameral parliament. The Botha regime also set up township councils, in an attempt to create a black middle class with limited local power that could mediate between the masses and the state. The strategy flopped. Few bothered to vote in the sham elections. Black township councillors were treated as collaborators; many were 'necklaced' by militant black youth.

Botha had only succeeded in fanning the flames of a national revolt. The regime was forced to recognise that tinkering with the system was worse than doing nothing at all. A more thoroughgoing strategy was required. The collapse of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe finally tipped the scales in favour of far-reaching reform.

### No risks

Stalinist politics have long been influential within the resistance movement in South Africa. The South African Communist Party (SACP) is a close ally of the ANC, and many black workers have traditionally looked to the Soviet model of a state-run economy as the best alternative to apartheid. The demise of Stalinism in the East has changed all that, disorienting militants and prompting ANC/SACP leaders to endorse the market economy. Over the past couple of years, the South African ruling class has become increasingly confident of its ability to reform apartheid completely without endangering the future of capitalism in the country. The De Klerk regime feels relatively secure in the knowledge that the momentous political changes which it is pushing through no longer involve a risk to the socio-economic system.

### Winning arguments

Seen from this strategic perspective, the specifics of De Klerk's constitutional proposals are not all that important. The critical thing for the regime is to win public acceptance of the assumptions about minority rights upon which the plan is based. This is where the problems facing the liberation movement become clear. Because while ANC leaders have rejected De Klerk's plan, correctly recognising that he is trying something on, they have conceded the key assumptions behind it.

Two weeks after De Klerk announced his constitutional proposals, ANC president Nelson

Mandela addressed his party's Western Cape regional conference on the issue of minority rights. He told the overwhelmingly black representatives that 'coloured communities would like to see coloured representatives. That is not racialism, that is how nature works.... Those who think it is not important must look at Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union where states are breaking away to rule themselves' (*Sunday Tribune*, 29 September 1991). Mandela thus effectively accepted De Klerk's argument that 'natural' differences among ethnic groups must be reflected in any new political arrangements.

### Mythical tribalism

It is quite breathtaking that Mandela and the ANC should endorse the idea of 'natural ethnicity' at the moment when the myth of 'tribal warfare' has been thoroughly exposed by the 'Inkathagate' scandal. The recent revelations of the South African state's heavy involvement in promoting violence between supporters of Inkatha and the ANC have surely confirmed that the bloodshed was the work of the De Klerk regime, not of nature. Since Mandela appears to believe otherwise, however, he will find it hard to sustain opposition to the principle of a constitution which De Klerk claims will manage 'natural' tensions among ethnic minorities.

### Balance of forces

The way in which things are shifting in favour of the regime was illustrated when, just a fortnight after the ANC rejected the government's constitutional proposals, De Klerk the *provocateur* was allowed to pose as paternal peacemaker while Mandela and Inkatha leader chief Gatsha Buthelezi signed a token agreement. That the ANC can now concede such a role to the government which was behind Inkathagate reveals how the struggle for liberation has faltered.

Apartheid might have gone, but democracy in South Africa will be meaningless unless it is black majority rule. This, after all, is what the decades of struggle and sacrifice have been all about. The black majority will be able to change nothing unless they are able not simply to vote, but to challenge the social power of the minority capitalist class. The issue of minority rights is being raised as a smokescreen to obscure this fact of political life in South Africa. ●

# Rugger off

Normally I would admire an institution that banned Royal British Legion collectors from its premises. But not in the case of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), which banned them from Twickenham during the World Cup. Supporters of the Legion hardly helped their cause by pointing out that without it there would be no Rugby World Cup: I can well believe that while Hitler was busy planning to invade Britain and ban rugby, the Legion was busy building underground pitches in Chislehurst Caves and hiding rugby balls and tins of dubbin. Yet, however much the Legion has defended rugby, ultimately it is the RFU that must take the blame for encouraging the dreadful game in the first place.

Thankfully, the RFU's incompetence has for decades ensured that the 'sport' has remained a semi-private affair, restricted to the most retarded elements of the middle class. The World Cup administration was of the usual standard. The sacred 'Twickers' has a row of cabbage allotments behind one stand but no floodlights, so half of the matches had to be played on weekday afternoons. The sponsorship deal lost millions in advertising revenue. Finally, nobody thought to register the name 'Rugby World Cup', so a sharp-eyed local travel agent copyrighted it.

Never mind, the press were keen to lend a hand hyping the 'rugby explosion'. But how? The 'World in Union' angle was a non-starter. Sir Douglas Bader brought the house down at a St George's Day luncheon when he promised that 'As long as I live, I'm buggered if I'm going to refer to the 25 as a 22 metre line'. He died soon afterwards, but the attitude lives on. Rugby is a major sport only in the white Commonwealth and a few Pacific islands unlucky enough to have been visited by the Royal Navy. The French only play it to beat the English. Planet Football it ain't.

Nevertheless, there was an attempt to evoke a 'rugby world' in which old values prevail—sportsmanship, the game being more important than the result, etc. But once it began to look as though England could actually win—using spoiling tactics—lofty ideals were forgotten and the patriotic bandwagon rolled. The final became 'the most important event since the 1966 World Cup' (offering the opportunity to bring out the twenty-fifth anniversary story of that event for the second time). It therefore became the second most important event since the Second World War. The *Sun* went back to the Battle of Agincourt—'Cry God for Will, England and St George'. The rest is history, as they say: England nobly lost the final, but played the right way and were heroes anyway.

Flying the flag is one thing—even small-bore rifle shooters can briefly become national heroes at

the Olympics—but selling rugby is another. Quite apart from its utter lack of merit as a game, there is the problem of image. It is true blue, through and through. Admittedly the public schoolboys are augmented by bulldogs of common stock who are quietly encouraged to display the 'fine disregard for the rules' which led Webb-Ellis to invent the game by cheating at football. An Australian journalist once described the British Lions as 'scum' practising 'organised violence' and noted that this may have been due to the high proportion of police officers in the pack. Off the pitch, though, they are models of deference, minding their manners and calling everyone 'chaps'. It is the toffs who are in charge.

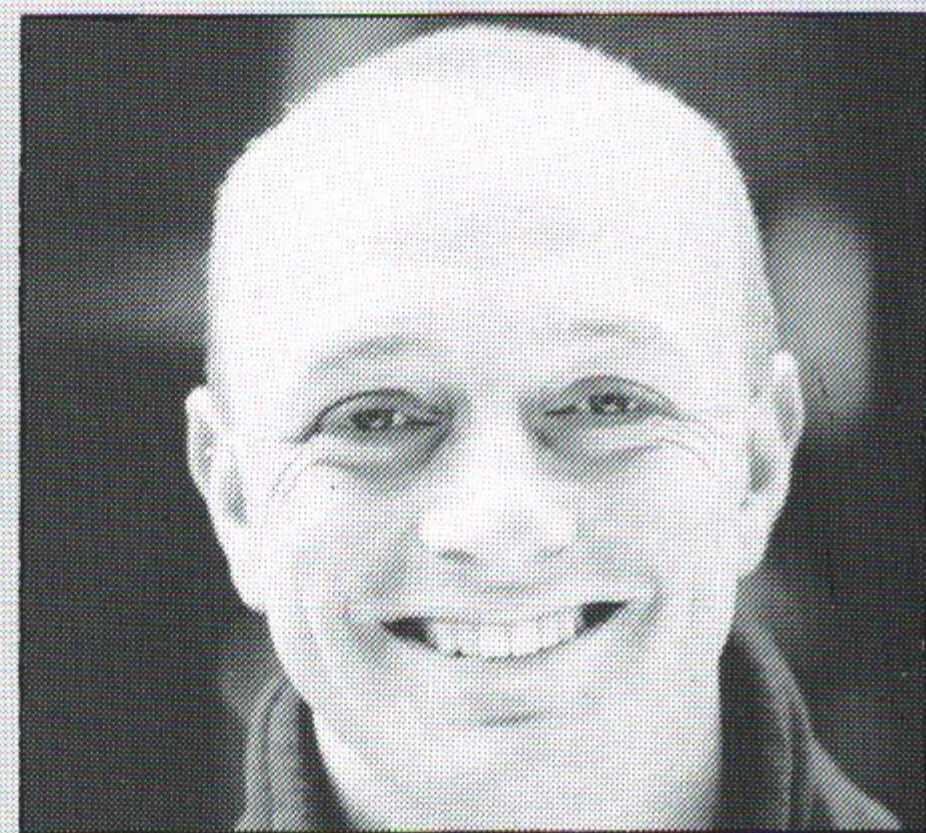
So the media had its work cut out passing the England players off as regular lads, for all its references to their 'streetwise' play. Most of them look as if they've got pokers up their arses and have nicknames like 'The Judge', and the rest are so hideous that they can't be shown on telly without their riot helmets on. In the first TV profile a hand-picked bunch of the solicitors and doctors appeared *en famille*. But the daughters were called Emily, Harriet, Sophie and Rebecca, and didn't really strike the right note. They were not shown again.

Rugby 'style' is a contradiction in terms, but there was an attempt to move beyond tweed jackets with leather elbow patches and records called 'Ankle Deep in Bitter' and 'Sinful Rugby Songs'. The rugby press today carries ads for 'ladies tanga briefs' with rugby motifs where once it offered 'MCP' (Male Chauvinist Pig) ties. The rugby shirt itself has become a fashion accessory, rather than a uniform for physics students. Even so, trying to present the rosy-cheeked 'Will' Carling and his players as sex symbols was pushing it a bit.

The sexuality of rugby is hard to market. One supporter was quoted as saying winning was better than sex, which is true, if by sex you mean being 'rogered' by a pissed-up 17-stone stockbroker while those of his pals who aren't running down the street naked are cheering him on from the next room.

Sex is treated as just one of many obligatory high jinks. When the England football coach shits in a teacup while sitting on top of a wardrobe he is expected to do the decent thing and resign. In rugby, it would be a necessary part of his qualification. An ability to straddle the aisle of the team bus and perform feats of 'stool retraction' is a bonus. What kind of woman is drawn to this sexual chemistry? Alison Holloway got into it when she found a mouldy pile of her boyfriend's forgotten kit. The crusty socks and rancid jockstrap were obviously irresistible—she's now one of ITV's World Cup reporters.

And talking of sniffing, it was good to see Frank Bough back in pullovers and jackets with poppies



## Toby Banks


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**When the England football coach shits in a teacup, he is expected to resign. In rugby, it would be part of his qualification**

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on. I still think he was misguided to dress up in a red basque and snort cocaine, even if it was for charity. I'm glad everybody seems to have forgotten the whole unfortunate business. After all, as Frank kept reminding us, it was vital that rugby showed itself in a good light. This is especially true in the case of studio expert Gareth Chilcott, who has no nose. (How does he smell? Ask Alison Holloway). Frank treated the studio team like an old pro working with animals, constantly anticipating disaster. When the Scotsman 'Garden Broon' looked likely to do something hilarious with his kilt, or somebody else was getting fidgety, he would smoothly turn to the window and say: 'It's getting very exciting out there, absolutely jam-packed with people enjoying the special car park atmosphere....'

And there among the picnic hampers and champagne, Range Rovers and Rolls-Royces, was the crowd. 'It looked like a football crowd', remarked the *Sunday Times*, 'but when it was over not a window was broken, not a face damaged and not a single old lady threatened'. Then the bomb went off. In my dream...



# The dangers of 'sustainable'

Calling on the West to develop the third world and protect its environment is like calling on a boa constrictor to cooperate with a rabbit, says John Gibson

**T**he concept of 'sustainable development' took off with the 1987 publication of *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland. The Brundtland Report aimed to put forward a synthesis of developmental and environmental perspectives: 'What is needed now is a new era of economic growth—growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable.' The title of the report was intended to express the idea that the whole world—'North' and 'South'—has a common interest in tackling these problems.

### Smash hit

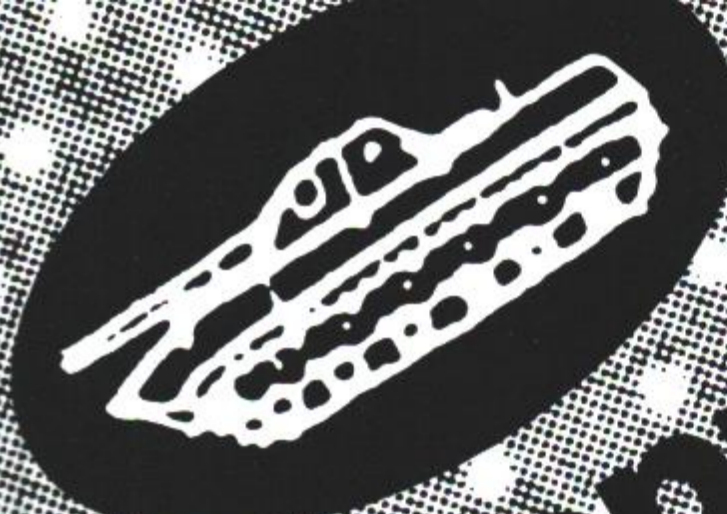
The notion of sustainable development scored an instant hit with Greens. Today, meetings of the G7 industrialised nations habitually endorse it. The 'Earth Summit', the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil next June, is being organised under the heading of sustainable development. A concept which began as the property of the Green and third world development movements has entered the vocabulary of mainstream politics.

As more politicians and institutions attach themselves to the idea of sustainable development, so arguments intensify about what its practical consequences should be. Greens have become concerned that governments are not taking sustainable development seriously, but are just carrying on business as usual under a new banner. The bickering as to what sustainable development means is obscuring the real problem. The whole concept is irredeemably flawed. It rests upon the misguided assumption that the capitalist system on a world scale is capable of sustained development and environmental concern.

### One worldism?

The Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Recognising the link between poverty and environmental degradation, the report called for a greater sharing of wealth among the nations of the world; long-term plans to eliminate world poverty; environmental protection; and an atmosphere of cooperation between 'North' and 'South' in which to implement these plans. The basic idea is that all nations of the world share an interest in adopting such an approach, since the current path of development is destructive in the present and threatens worse in the future.

Large sections of the Green movement have embraced the term as a way of trying to make themselves relevant to the disaster in the third world. The traditional emphasis of the Western Green movement on



# development?

conservation and no growth meant that they had nothing to offer the starving millions of the third world. As Ben Jackson puts it in his book for the World Development Movement:

'To many in the slums and villages of Asia, Africa and Latin America, environmentalism seems like an expensive luxury.... People in the third world were concerned with poverty and underdevelopment—not pollution and preserving the countryside.' (*Poverty and the Planet*, p2)

Environmentalists recognised the need to modify their traditional emphasis to avoid becoming marginalised. The concept of sustainable development fitted the bill.

The problem for environmentalists who advocate sustainable development is that Western governments have adopted the phrase without it making the slightest difference to what they do, or altering the human and natural environment in any part of the world. One group of environmentalists recently noted how the optimism which followed the Brundtland Report has proved false:

'It seemed that the idea of sustainable development had arrived. The UN approved it; its agencies adopted it; many governments set up commissions or committees charged with discovering how to make their policies fit it. Yet, four years on, no government in the world has made any major change in policy designed to convert the unsustainable to the sustainable.' (Johan Holmberg *et al*, *A Guide to Sustainable Development*, p4)

More fundamentalist Greens would say that sustainable development has failed because economic growth is incompatible with human and environmental well-being. But the real reason is that sustainable development is incompatible with capitalism.

The world economy in which we live has only one criterion for production: profit. If goods cannot be sold profitably, they are not produced. Thus there is an ever present tendency within capitalism towards recession and production

cutbacks. As the current economic slump confirms, growth of any kind, never mind 'sustainable' growth, is problematic for the profit system.

The idea of cooperation between the West and the third world is even more of a pipe-dream under capitalism. The major Western powers have long looked upon the third world as a source of cheap raw materials and labour. As we have argued in recent issues of *Living Marxism*, Western imperialism is now pushing the third world further to the margins of the international economy, and presiding over the virtual destruction of many third world societies.

## Fatal concessions

In response to this reality, environmentalist supporters of sustainable development have adopted two approaches, each of which involves a fatal concession to capitalism and imperialism. Ben Jackson and others in the development movement have chosen the path of utopianism, calling for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to promote traditional third world methods of production and local organisation. The Western financiers responsible for reducing the third world to rubble are thus cast in the role of potential saviours, and the backwardness which imperialism has built into third world economies is held up as a positive alternative. Jackson rubbishes the attempts of third world peoples to liberate themselves from Western control as 'social conflict and armed uprisings which so scar the whole region'. Strange, I thought it was the Western-backed government death squads and American helicopter gunships that did the scarring.

A second strand of environmentalism presents a more overtly capitalistic approach to sustainable development, and a frankly apologetic attitude towards Western policies. An example of this approach is provided by former Tory advisor David Pearce and his associates at the London Environmental Economics Centre.

Pearce's *Blueprint for a Green Economy*, and *Blueprint 2: Greening the World Economy*, set out an approach to sustainable development based on 'valuing' the environment. A project is justified if the value of man-made capital and the remaining 'natural capital' is greater than the value of the 'natural capital' before the project was undertaken.

Pearce *et al* claim that at least part of the value of 'natural capital' is simply 'existence value'. People are 'upset by damage to ecosystems'

(*Blueprint 2*), and are therefore willing to pay for their preservation. Their argument is that third world governments should be paid to maintain ecosystems to the value of their 'natural capital' as an alternative to using them up. This, claim Pearce's team, would be in harmony with the workings of the market system. Capitalism to the rescue.

## Profit and loss

This approach is irrational. Nature in itself has no value to capitalists. Their only interest is in using it. Even then, capitalists do not consider natural resources to have an inherent value. The cost of raw materials is accounted for by the labour taken to extract them. Capitalism is not going to pay to preserve unprofitable ecosystems when it could make a lot of money by using them up.

Amid all their talk of sustainable development and costing the environment, Pearce and Co are disguising the responsibility of Western capitalism for the social disaster in the third world. In *Blueprint 2* for example, R Kerry Tucker observes that 'opinions differ over the effect of structural and sector adjustment programmes on the poor in developing countries'. He is referring to a debate between the World Bank and the UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The World Bank claims that its structural adjustment programmes have improved the economic performance of key African states. The ECA disagrees. But as the *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1990) points out, and Tucker covers up, both agencies agree that the World Bank programmes have *made the poor poorer*. Poverty is all that imperialism can sustain in the third world.

## Moral cover

Sustainable development is not just a misguided idea. It is a dangerous one. 'Cooperation' between the Western capitalists and the third world can only be to the benefit of imperialism. Campaigning for such sustainable development under capitalism is like calling for cooperation between a boa and a rabbit.

Many supporters of sustainable development are very critical of particular Western policies. But by strengthening the illusion that the Western powers could play a progressive role in solving the problems of the third world, their campaigns can only provide imperialism with a moral cover for further interference in the affairs of third world peoples. ●

As violent attacks on foreigners become a fact of life in Germany, the British media are evoking the spectre of a neo-fascist revival. Joan Phillips travelled through east and west Germany to investigate what's behind the new racism

# The right's new racist agenda

**H**oyerswerda is less a town than a stretch of tower blocks, an ugly blot on the Saxon landscape that has never attracted much attention from anybody except the 67 000 who live there. Until 23 September, that is, when Hoyerswerda became infamous overnight.

That night, 230 foreign asylum-seekers were evacuated from Hoyerswerda under police escort after a mob of fascists attacked the block of flats where they were living and another one housing a hundred Vietnamese and African guest workers. Armed with Molotov cocktails, bricks, bottles, baseball bats and bicycle chains, the assailants smashed windows, set fire to buildings, dragged passing motorists from their cars and beat people.

## Media sensation

The events in Hoyerswerda were reported in sensationalist style by the German media. According to the press, the attacks were led by a core group of neo-Nazis but supported by up to 600 local people, who hurled

bricks through windows and cheered as neo-Nazis stoned the buses ferrying the foreigners out of town.

The media coverage reinforced the prevalent view that east Germany is a hotbed of unrestrained racism, while west Germany is an altogether more civilised place (in fact, all the statistics and surveys show that there are more racist attacks in west Germany and that west Germans are more racist). The people in Hoyerswerda that we spoke to saw things differently. Three workers standing in the rain at a hamburger kiosk near the scene of the attacks were furious at the way things had been presented in the media.

## Ossies in trees

'The story got taken up by the gutter press and blown out of all proportion', said Jurgen. 'Things were bad under the communists, but the lies they're telling now are worse. The Wessies [west Germans] are saying that we're a bunch of savages living in trees and that we don't know how to behave any better.' Others felt the same: 'They really found their

opportunity here, we were just fodder to feed the prejudices of their readers', said Grit, a young mother. 'The Wessies set out to present the town and the citizens in the worst possible light.' Wolfgang, a 40-year old electrician, said he was sickened by what happened and insisted the locals had not supported the attacks: 'There were lots of people looking on, but very few people applauded.'

No doubt some locals did applaud the attacks on foreigners. But it is equally certain that events in Hoyerswerda were sensationalised by the media and manipulated by the authorities. The official response to Hoyerswerda tells us more about what is creating a racist climate in Germany than the actions of the fascists.

## Flats für sie

The authorities in Saxony responded by making concessions to the view that foreigners are a problem. Rudolf Krause, interior minister for Saxony, suggested that the immigrants in Hoyerswerda had provoked the attacks: 'One must







# enda

PHOTO: Michael Kramer

Fortress  
Germany:  
an immigrant  
holding camp  
at Cottbus

admit that there are asylum-seekers who do not behave according to local customs or in a manner befitting our cultural level.' In Hoyerswerda, the authorities pinned a notice on the block of flats from which the asylum-seekers had been driven, telling local people 'These flats are being renovated *für sie*'. The message was clear: now that Hoyerswerda was '*ausländer frei*' (foreigner free), local people would be better off.

### Blame the victims

Meanwhile, the central German authorities seized the opportunity to press for tougher immigration controls, intimating that the problem of racist violence was caused by too many foreigners being let into Germany. Wolfgang Schäuble, federal interior minister, urged local state leaders to support tighter asylum laws. When local authorities claimed that they could no longer protect asylum homes, the government and opposition parties agreed a plan to move tens of thousands of immigrants into large reception camps at disused army

bases throughout Germany.

We visited one camp being prepared for use in Cottbus, north of Hoyerswerda near the Polish border. Located on the outskirts of the town, down a dirt track, the camp already resembled a fortress. The Red Army moved out in May, and in September those designated as a new invading army—refugees—started moving in; 700 are expected by the end of 1992.

### Ghetto solutions

Critics have accused the government of seeking a ghetto solution by herding refugees into camps—charges which were reinforced when Cottbus officials put barbed wire and a searchlight on the perimeter of the camp. These were later removed. Nevertheless, the new steel fencing and uniformed guards on the gate, designed to keep out unwelcome visitors rather than keep in the refugees, are a bleak statement on the lot of foreigners in modern Germany.

After Hoyerswerda, the government and opposition parties also agreed to speed up the

processing of refugee applications for asylum, to create the sort of 'fast track' to deportation which the Tories want to introduce in Britain. Under the new system, asylum requests will be examined by German judges on the spot. If applications are turned down, refugees will be deported within six weeks. Other measures agreed in the post-Hoyerswerda clampdown on foreigners included greater police powers to check the identity of asylum applicants, increased controls at Germany's borders with non-EC states, and the right to reject refugees who come via a third country where they could have stayed.

### Goodbye article 16?

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) wanted to go further, insisting that only a change in the German constitution—article 16 of which guarantees asylum for political refugees—would curb the influx of foreigners. So far, the CDU's coalition partners, the Free Democrats, and the opposition Social Democrats (SPD), have

denied the government the two thirds majority it needs to change the constitution. They accept the need to curb the immigrant influx, but argue that this can be done without constitutional changes.

The way events in Hoyerswerda were exploited suggests that the German government is deliberately politicising the immigration debate. It also suggests that the racist backlash in Germany is not primarily the work of neo-fascists, but the product of a systematic campaign by the authorities to target immigrants as a problem. When politicians of all parties unite to condemn the numbers flooding into Germany, creating a climate in which refugees are seen as pariahs, it is not surprising that asylum homes are seen as legitimate targets for fire-bombings.

## In Germany the immigrant remains permanently in the role of foreigner, somebody outside of German society

Just as it would be wrong to focus narrowly on the far-right, it would be a mistake to think that racism is a new problem in Germany. It is not the case that Germans have suddenly become more racist, or that the German government has only just started treating foreigners badly. Racism has deep roots in German society. Its strength derives from the way in which immigrants were absorbed into the West German labour market after the war.

From 1945, successive waves of immigrants were drawn into the country as a source of cheap labour. East Germans, Poles, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Yugoslavs and Turks were each received with hostility and suspicion. East European refugees were integrated and granted citizenship by a state which relied more than any other Western country on anti-communism to cohere a sense of national identity after the partition of Germany.

West Germany treated all other immigrants as aliens. The *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) system,

established in the fifties, defines immigrants as temporary workers with no rights to settle or participate in political life. The system's complex provisions ensure that the life of the immigrant worker is always insecure and subject to interference by the authorities.

### Forever outsiders

Unlike in Britain, where most immigrants were drawn from former colonies and given citizenship, in Germany the immigrant remains perpetually in the role of foreigner, somebody outside of German society. British racism is just as strong as German racism, but the segregation of the black population is nowhere near as stark. The Germans are afraid of ghettos, but have them in every big city. Even the Italians, who arrived in the fifties, have not assimilated. From the allocation of housing and employment to the denial of the right to vote, discrimination against foreigners is part of the German way of life.

The exclusion of immigrants from mainstream society manifests itself in ways which appear outlandish to a visitor from Britain, where blacks are far more integrated despite the racism they suffer. In the east end of London you can still see a pub called The Black Boy. But only in Hamburg have I seen so many statues of racist caricatures—black postboys, black dancers, black savages, black musicians—adorning hotel foyers, shop windows and middle class living rooms. I stood staring with my mouth open, but nobody else seemed to think there was anything strange.

### Not at home

There were other signs that Hamburg doesn't exactly make foreigners feel at home. Most blacks have had the experience of sitting in the tube and finding that nobody will sit next to them. 'In Germany, an entire carriage of people will get up when you sit down and move somewhere else', said James from Nigeria. The shop assistants certainly don't make you feel wanted. In Britain, most blacks know what it's like to go into a shop where the shop assistant or security guard refuses to take their eyes off you until you're going out the door. 'Here they announce your arrival over the Tannoy system when you go into a department store: "Everybody look out, there's a black man in the shop."', said James' friend Ike.

It is hard to imagine that a black person could ever feel comfortable even in a big city like Hamburg. And not just because if you happen to be in a group of more than three you're guaranteed to get stopped by the

police and asked for your papers. 'I could never live here', said Charles, an African who has lived in almost every country in Europe and found none as bad as Germany. 'Nowhere's as racist as this place, or at least nowhere *feels* this bad. You can feel the sense of difference radiating from people.'

So there is nothing new about racism in Germany. What is new is the way in which the issue is being politicised by the German authorities, and the confidence with which German politicians are going on the offensive in the immigration debate. Today, party leaders are making racist statements which they would have been embarrassed to whisper in private a few years ago.

### On the run

The reason for this is not difficult to fathom. For the first time since the Second World War, the German right does not feel constrained about what it says because the opposition is on the run. The liberal consensus which set the parameters of all political discussion in the post-Nazi period is breaking down. The right more or less has a free hand to set the agenda for discussion.

The defensiveness of liberal opinion is the result of the retreat of the left over many years. The politics of consensus which moulded the postwar period and which gave the left its identity have been exposed as a failure. The collapse of the Soviet bloc since 1989 has further discredited those parties which were associated with the tradition of state intervention. Even an anti-communist social democratic party like the SPD is not immune to the fallout; the right made major gains in recent elections in the former SPD stronghold of Bremen.

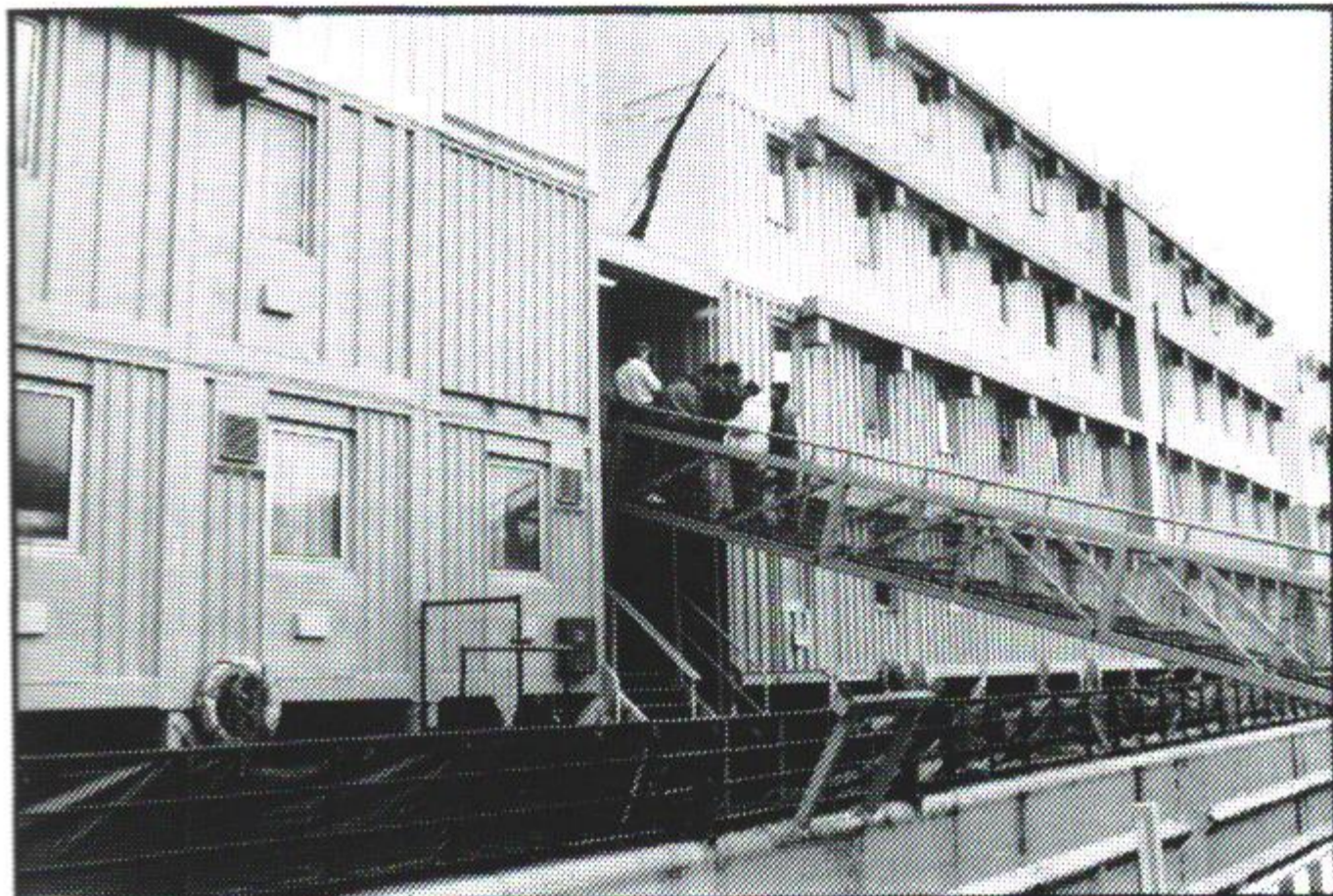
### Settling scores

The German right is now challenging the postwar political consensus, instinctively aware that it must settle old scores and rehabilitate its past if it is to forge a new identity and appropriate the future. The politicisation of race and immigration in Germany today is motivated not by an upsurge of xenophobia, but by the right's desire to weaken the politics of liberalism and establish a more reactionary political culture.

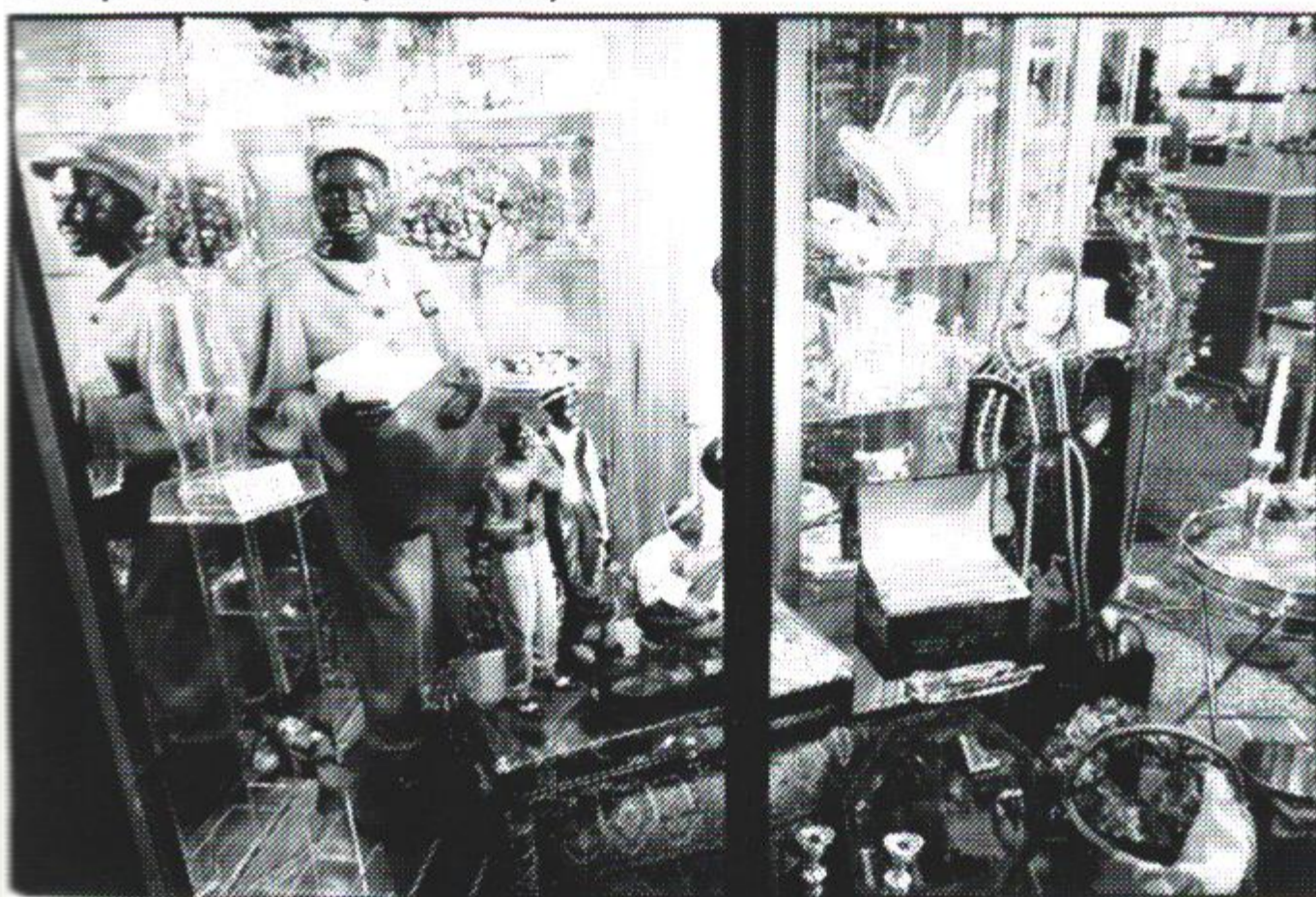
All the evidence suggests that it is succeeding. The left is offering only supine resistance to the right's offensive over immigration. The whole spectrum of liberal opinion, from the social democrats to the Greens, accepts that a comprehensive overhaul of immigration policy is required. The opposition parties have made so many concessions that it can

only be a matter of time before they give way on constitutional change too.

Even the language in which the left discusses the immigration issue can no longer be described as liberal. The SPD's immigration spokesman, Dr Cornelia Sonntag, appears to agree with the common refrain that the boat is full and no more immigrants should be allowed on board: 'It is not only the right who are reacting. A lot of Germans, including many SPD supporters, are afraid we shall be overwhelmed. The boat is full, they shout, we cannot accept any more. Our people are full of aggression against the foreigners. They will not listen to reason any more.'



Immigrants showing their papers before boarding a floating asylum home in the port of Hamburg (top). Symbols of a segregated society: black statues in a shop window (bottom)



PHOTOS: Michael Kramer

In SPD-run Hamburg, the city authorities are saying that the city is full and a boat is literally the best they can offer refugees. There are seven such boats housing some 2400 immigrants in the port of Hamburg, the lucky ones in specially constructed ships such as the *Göteborg* where living conditions are modern and clean, the unlucky ones in old tugs like the *Casa Marina*, which is cramped and squalid.

Another sign of the increasingly

illiberal times came in a sensationalist anti-immigrant article in *Der Spiegel*, a magazine which has always prided itself on its liberalism. Recently, the magazine carried a story about how Yugoslav gypsies had taken over a district of Hamburg, the Karolinenviertel, and subjected local people to a reign of terror. Gypsy children as young as 10 were apparently molesting women, beating pensioners, and terrorising local shops.

When the article hit the news stands, the people of Karolinenviertel were shocked to discover that it was talking about their neighbourhood. A woman who works in the local healthfood shop told us she couldn't believe what she was reading: 'They made it sound like you couldn't go on the streets without being attacked. If I'd read that article and hadn't lived here I would have thought this place was like the Bronx and would never set foot here.' Extensive enquiries among local shopkeepers and residents revealed that some gypsies had been dropping litter, making noise in the street, stealing fruit and making fun of old people. Hardly the stuff of a reign of terror.

### The boat's full

Many locals said they were disgusted that *Der Spiegel* had stooped as low as the gutter press. And it was not a one-off. Another recent issue of *Der Spiegel* carried a cartoon of the Ark with little men swarming like ants on to it, above the caption 'Is the boat full?'. With even the traditional standard bearer of liberal tolerance resorting to scaremongering of this sort, the right seems to be having things all its own way.

The narrow focus in Britain on the violence of a minority of German fascists obscures the far more important influence of the respectable racists in the German establishment. Immigration is being used as a political football by mainstream parties seeking to construct a new right-wing project. A new racist consensus which legitimises attacks on foreigners is the result.

So far, that consensus has not hardened into the sort of reaction that is capable of mobilising tens of thousands. It was notable that the fascist parties managed to attract only a few hundred people on demonstrations to celebrate the second anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November, outnumbered even by the isolated fragments of the German left. The majority of Germans are repulsed by the wave of violence being unleashed against foreigners. Yet the fears and

insecurities of many working class Germans, east and west, about what the future holds provide fertile ground for racism to become entrenched.

In a town like Hoyerswerda with a lot of social problems, it is not surprising that local people should feel resentment against foreigners when every single political party is saying that Germany cannot afford to take in any more refugees. As the town struggles to cope with the strains generated by reunification, foreigners are becoming scapegoats for local people dissatisfied with the present and fearful of the future.

### Germans first

Jurgen accused immigrants of having more rights than ordinary Germans and taking jobs from local people. Grit thought that foreigners had an easy life: 'They do nothing all day while we work and then have parties all night and make too much noise.' Katrin felt that foreigners were getting better treatment than ordinary east Germans. 'The foreigners were demanding too much. They were living in good quality apartments with inside toilets and central heating. Even my grandmother who has lived in Hoyerswerda for years hasn't got that.'

Even in the west, where workers are better off, people are worried about the future. Silke, a laundry worker in Hamburg, said that the German economy could not absorb everybody: 'If people keep pouring in here, we're bound to have problems. Foreigners are being given priority. If you go to a job centre or housing office, Germans always come last.'

### Boiling over?

In Wedding, a working class district in Berlin, Manuela said that foreigners were flooding into Germany because it is seen as a rich country: 'But lots of us Germans are not that well off. I'm having to pay 7.5 per cent solidarity tax to help the Ossies [east Germans]. But how can I give solidarity when I don't have anything myself? People feel the same way about foreigners.' Birgit, a 29-year old waitress, was emphatic: 'The politicians have messed up. The attacks are all their fault. They let all these people in and this is the result.' Eva, a 50-year old housewife, agreed: 'Those kids being attacked are the victims of a wrong government policy. They should never have been allowed in. If the law doesn't change, things are going to boil over here.'

Things could well boil over in Germany if the respectable racism of the mainstream right goes unchallenged. ●

Germany is using the campaign for Croatian independence to assert its authority in Europe—and to begin rewriting its own past. Rob Knight reports from Frankfurt

**T**he TV broadcast begins with a long shot of a mist-shrouded medieval town. Beethoven's pastoral symphony rises and swells as the camera zooms in on the ancient walls and buildings. Then it cuts rapidly through a succession of interior shots of church mosaics and other works of art. The voiceover begins: 'Croatia, cradle of Christianity.'

This is the news in Germany.

### Headline news

The crisis in Yugoslavia has dominated the German media for the past few months. Every evening the television carries long stories from inside Yugoslavia. Every morning the front pages of the newspapers are filled with news and analyses of the military situation. The media coverage far outweighs that in Britain, and its message is more explicit. In Germany the media has relentlessly pursued the cause of Croatian independence. According to the German media, and to the German politicians who appear in it, Croatia is an island of civilisation

and sanity beset by Serbian barbarians.

No opportunity is missed to ram home this point. Croatia is a Christian country threatened by communist atheism and Islamic fundamentalism. It is the cradle of Western civilisation. It is the home of many precious artistic and architectural treasures. In the German media, it is always the Serbian 'People's Army' (always in inverted commas) which breaks the ceasefires. The Serbian army is every day launching new and massive offensives against the Croats. The fact that the Croats themselves have taken every opportunity to raise the stakes against Serbia has been completely ignored here. The Serbs are always presented as the aggressors.

There is no mention here of the crude anti-Semitism of Croatia's president Franjo Tudjman. The fascist traditions of Croatian nationalism, the use by Croats today of the old fascist flag, and the overt fascism of the HoS militia, are studiously ignored. There is no sympathy shown

for the plight of the Serbian minority inside Croatia. Nor is there any discussion of what its position would be inside an independent Croatia, one of whose potential leaders has been quoted (although not in Germany) as saying that 'there cannot be Serbian citizens in Croatia' (*Guardian*, 7 October 1991). The level of disinformation is also high. It was recently revealed that dead bodies of Croats shown on television to elicit the anger of a German audience were in fact dead Serbs.

### Slobosaddam

The intensity of the propaganda campaign in Germany is close to that waged by Britain against Iraq during the Gulf War, with Croatia cast as Kuwait and Slobodan Milosevic as Saddam Hussein. The campaign has already achieved a greater anti-Serb consensus here than was the case with Iraq in Britain during the Gulf War, which is some achievement. There is simply no alternative view being put forward. The opposition Social Democrats' main criticism of chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrat government was that it took too long to intervene in Yugoslavia. Even the German far left has joined the consensus, voicing its support for Croatian self-determination.

The parallel with the Gulf War can be taken further. For the USA the Gulf War was an opportunity to try to maintain its position as the world's number one power. For the German authorities the Yugoslav

# Croatia: Germany's

crisis is also an opportunity. It gives them a chance to exercise their own growing power and authority in the world. Modern Germany has long been a strong economic power, but its political weight in Europe and the world has been stunted by the legacy of its defeat in the Second World War. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union have combined to bring about a dramatic change in Germany's position in Europe. From being a divided country on the edge of the

continent, it has become a united nation in the centre of a new Europe: a Europe in which Germany's own relative economic weight continues to grow, in which the USA's influence is receding, and where the Soviet bloc no longer acts as a barrier to German expansion eastwards.

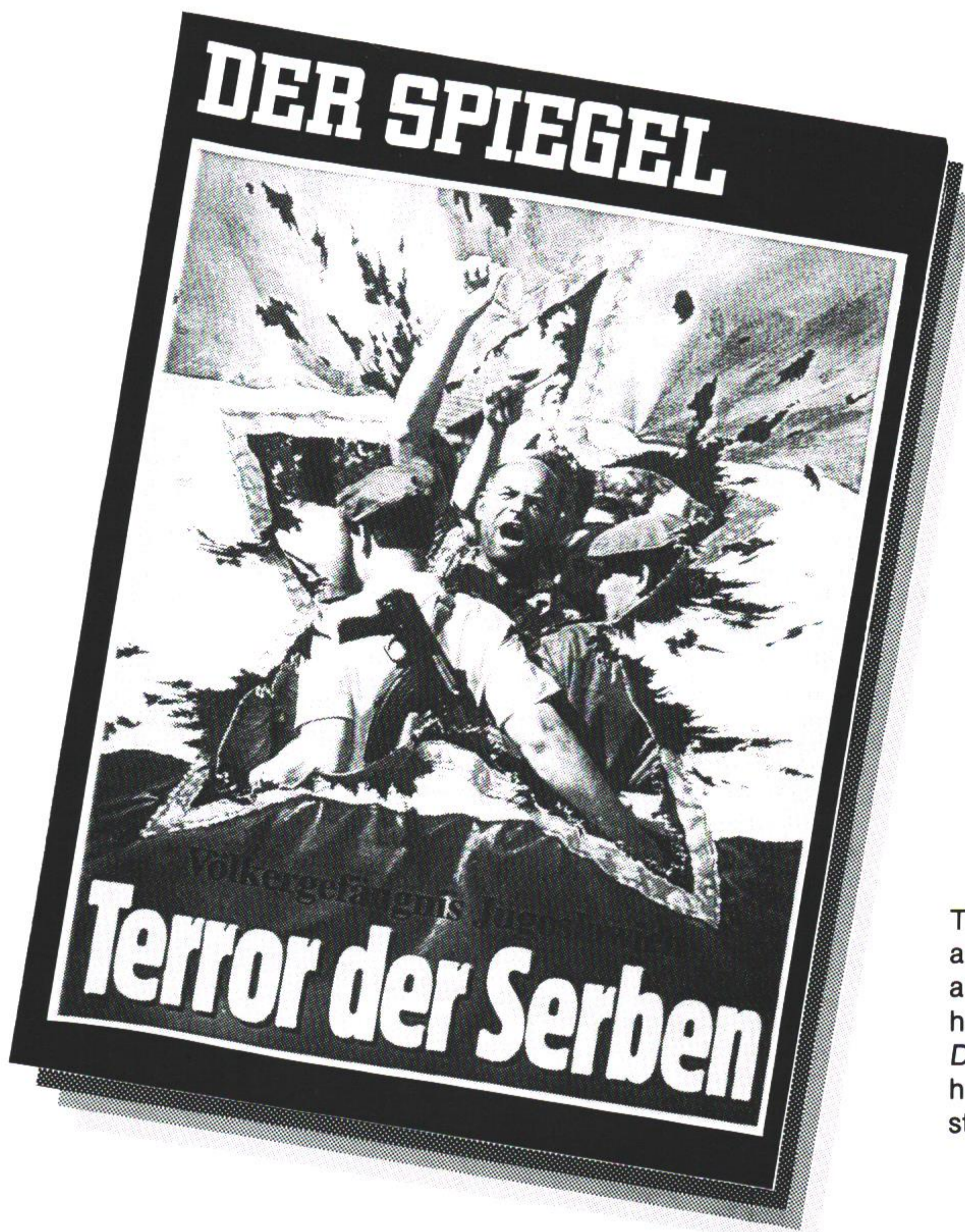
The crisis in Yugoslavia is the first opportunity for Germany to explore the possibilities of its new situation. It has used the issue to assert its dominance over its European partners, pressurising the

EC to intervene in Yugoslavia. It has succeeded in getting an unenthusiastic France, and an even less enthusiastic Britain, to back the idea of Croatian independence. It has established itself as the leading force in the campaign for Croatia, not just in Europe but also internationally through its intervention in the United Nations. Germany's leading role in pushing Croatian independence against the reluctance of its allies is now well understood, especially in Croatia. Croats in Germany have been giving out leaflets saying 'Thank you Germany, we will always remember. Europe, we will never forget'.

### EC cloak

The Yugoslav crisis is the first time since the war that Germany has given a lead on an issue outside its own borders. It offers a particularly useful opportunity for Germany to develop its foreign policy because the Croats have been begging for the West to intervene. Germany can begin to escape from the memory of its past expansion into Eastern Europe because there is such enthusiasm in Croatia for German intervention. And the Germans can do it under the cloak of the EC. They can thus both expand their influence in Eastern Europe, and assert their authority over their Western European allies/rivals at the same time.

The opposition Germany still faces in the West was indicated when the French foreign minister, Roland



The German media has adopted a strident anti-Serbian tone. So too has the usually liberal *Der Spiegel*, which headlined a recent cover story 'The terror of the Serbs'

# Gulf War?

Dumas, said in response to Germany's Croatian campaign that 'the next thing the Germans will demand will be the self-determination of Silesia and the Alsace' (*Der Spiegel*, 12 August 1991). But even these criticisms can be shrugged off by the German government as long as there remains a strong pro-Croat consensus both nationally and internationally.

The campaign to legitimise Croatian nationalism also helps Germany's rulers to achieve the more subtle and longer term objective of cleaning up their own past.

## Normalising fascist insignia in Croatia and legitimising Croatian fascism helps Germany exorcise the taint of Nazism

The Nazi legacy acts as a constant drag on the modern establishment's ability to develop a coherent German nationalism. The association of German nationalism with fascism has made it very difficult for German governments to pursue an active and assertive foreign policy. Since the end of the Second World War, the consensus here has been that Germany should concentrate on its internal affairs and let other countries make the running internationally. As recently as the Gulf War there were large demonstrations against Germany 'getting involved' overseas. However, Germany's changing position in the world means that it is now necessary for the authorities to change public opinion and to win support for a new expansionist role.

### Rewriting history

Intervening in Yugoslavia presents Germany with a good opportunity to proceed with rehabilitating its past. Croatia's close historical relationship to Germany means that it can act as a surrogate for the rewriting of German history. In legitimising present-day Croatian nationalism, German observers are also vindicating the wartime Croatian Hitlerites who formed a brutal

puppet government during the German occupation. Instead of fascist thugs, they are now being presented as freedom fighters against communism. The hidden agenda here is that this is increasingly how the German establishment wants to portray the Nazis, as patriots who wanted to fight communism and whose excesses were the product of their fear of communism.

### Past and present

Normalising fascist insignia in Croatia and legitimising Croatian fascism helps Germany to exorcise the taint of Nazism and give its future expansionist trajectory a clean bill of health. Of course, this is not being done openly. Nobody is saying that 'the Nazis were alright'. But the message that 'just because some Croats were Nazis in the past does not mean their nationalism can be criticised today', helps to accustom people to thinking in the same way about German history.

'For more than a thousand years Croats have been shaped by their allegiance to the Western, Latin, Christian world. Croatian striving for national independence originates in these traditions. The Serbs on the other hand have a concept of the state which is also rooted in a centuries-old allegiance to the Ottoman world and its preceding Eastern-Byzantine Empire.... The cultural mix between Serbs and Croats can only lead to chaos, due to their different background.' (*Criticon* 127, September 1991).

Comments like these in a prominent German magazine illustrate the third way in which the German right has exploited the Yugoslav conflict. It has used it to draw a line between those in the East who are 'like us', and who are deserving of German support, and the rest, who are barbaric and who deserve nothing. It is particularly important for German capitalism to do this today, because it is faced with impossible demands for economic assistance from the whole region to its east. It is also faced with the movement of people on a massive scale from these economically devastated areas.

By painting the Croats as essentially European and the Serbs as barbarians, Germany is making an artificial but crucial distinction in the minds of its own people. It is now possible to see a line being drawn across Eastern Europe. On the Western side are the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and the Ukraine. All of these countries have been the subjects of an intensive round of

German diplomacy in recent months. These at the moment constitute the deserving poor as far as the German establishment is concerned. They also represent a new sphere of influence for Germany, broadly corresponding to the old idea of *Mittel Europa*, of a Germanic-dominated central Europe. This point is made clear by the right-wing Euro-MP Otto Von Lambsdorff who has argued that the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy was 'a model for the construction of a European confederation' (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 August 1991).

### A new divide

By drawing this line the German authorities are not only carving out a sphere of influence for themselves in Eastern Europe. They are also making clear to their own people who should be considered Europeans and who should not. Together with the government-initiated debate on asylum seekers, the result has been that people from outside this immediate European region are being targeted as a problem facing all Germans. One immediate consequence has been the recent spate of racial violence against asylum seekers.

The new, more aggressive German foreign policy is the inevitable, if belated, product of Germany's economic dominance in Europe. It has been given greater urgency by the collapse of the Soviet Union this year. Now it is clearer than ever that Germany is the main power in the whole European land mass between the Atlantic and the Urals.

### Left out

At the moment when German imperialism is announcing its intentions to the world, the German left is in complete disarray. It has yet to take a firm stand against the government's anti-immigrant crackdown, and has shown no evidence that it understands what Germany is up to in Eastern Europe. The lack of opposition has enabled Germany's rulers to use the Yugoslav crisis to create a positive image for themselves at home. Far from being condemned for imperialist intervention, the German authorities have got away with claiming that 'we've learned from the past, now we are in favour of self-determination and freedom, that is why we are for Croatia'.

So long as Germany's intervention in Croatia and elsewhere remains unchallenged at home, German capitalists will have a free hand to carve out a new empire for themselves at the expense of all of the peoples in the region. ●

# Low opinion Poles

The results of October's Polish elections were a kick in the teeth for the Western champions of parliamentary democracy and the free market, says Amanda Macintosh

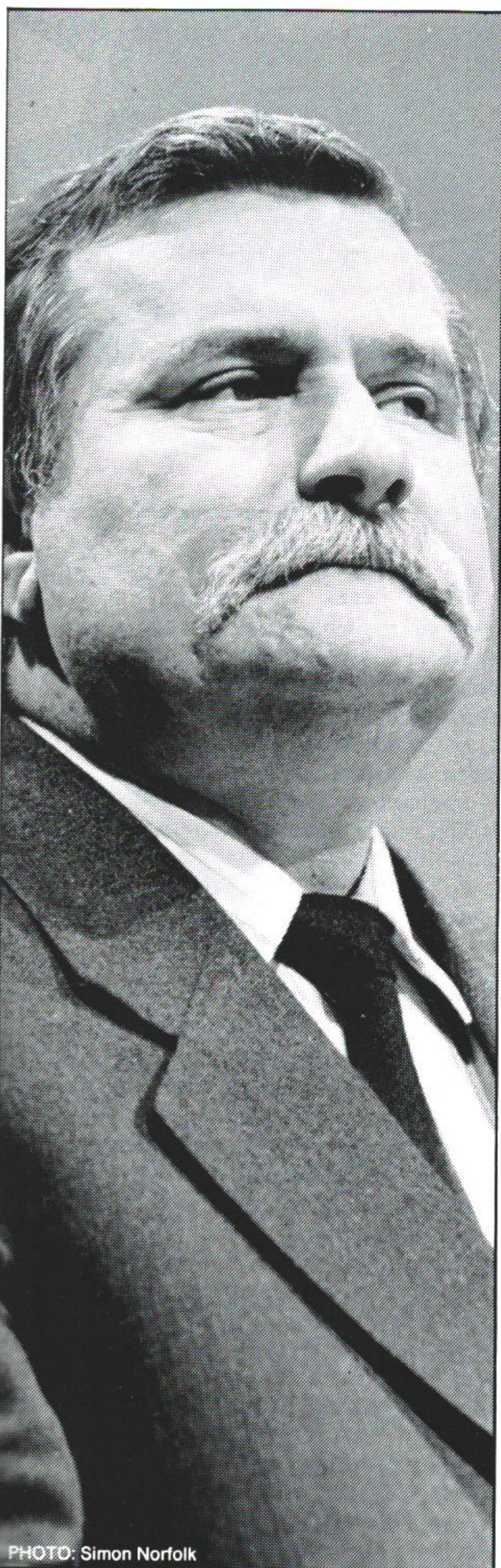


PHOTO: Simon Norfolk

The latest television hit in Poland is *The Polish Zoo*. Small furry animal puppets represent the most popular (and unpopular) public figures in sketches about Polish politics. *The Polish Zoo* touches a nerve—it is currently the most popular programme in Poland, watched by 50 per cent of the population, which is 10 per cent more than turned out to vote in the October election.

Poland's 'first free elections for 40 years' were supposed to be a high point for Western commentators. The benefits of Western-style parliamentary democracy were to be bestowed upon the grateful people of Poland after almost half a century of 'communist tyranny'. Instead, polling day turned out to be a high point of embarrassment for the authorities, East and West. It will be remembered as the European general election with the lowest turnout (so far) this century.

## Hangovers for all

The election was a shambles; 250 parties fielded 7900 candidates for 460 seats in the *sejm*—the influential lower house. No party won more than 12 per cent of the vote, so nobody could form a government. Much to the horror of the West, the rump of the old ruling Stalinist party, the Democratic Left Alliance, gained as much support as the post-Solidarity Democratic Union led by Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jacek Kuron.

Those who wanted to register a protest vote chose the Polish Beer Lovers Party (PPPP), who made a surprise impact at the polls. Compared to the other ineffective strategies for Poland's future on offer, the PPPP's solution to the problem of alcoholism appeared quite appealing. Every day in Poland, one million people are drunk on vodka. The suggestion from Janusz Rewinski, president of the PPPP, is that people should switch to beer. His slogan? 'It is better to go into Europe tipsy than in a drunken stupor.'

## Balcerowicz out

The party of outgoing premier Jan Krzysztof Bielecki suffered the indignity of coming sixth, with a miserable 7.9 per cent. This also meant the end for his finance minister Leszek Balcerowicz, the International Monetary Fund's favourite East European minister and the man most Poles love to hate. There were moves to set up a new governing alliance among the Catholic church-backed groups, the Polish Peasants Party, the Solidarity union and the extreme right-wing Confederation for an Independent Poland. Since anti-communism is all they have in common, the chances of such a government lasting a successful term in office are slim.

In the West, experts blamed the low turnout and inconclusive outcome on naivety and confusion

among Poles. According to this patronising view, the poor Polish people are not used to democracy and so could not deal with so much choice. The real reason for the lack of enthusiasm about the election, however, is the profound sense of public disenchantment with the results of two years of economic and social change in Poland.

In opinion polls, only two out of every 100 Poles say that they are happy with the economy, and three out of four have a bad or very bad view of it. The introduction of a market economy has brought mass unemployment and growing poverty. Now recession has caused many industries to collapse before the privatisation process even begins. For people struggling to make ends meet, the process of change offers no hope. Their standard of living has plummeted as the government has attempted to maintain a favourable rate of exchange for the zloty. In a household survey conducted in August, 86 per cent looked to the future with anxiety and fear. Only six out of every 1000 households still have any savings, making the government plan to offer shares to the people a cruel joke.

## Poland abstains

People are bitter about the broken promises of a new, more prosperous Poland. Many, particularly the poorest groups in small towns and rural areas, have now withdrawn their support for the process of change and turned away from politics altogether. The Polish people are not impressed by the claim that democracy will bring them changes for the better. The Western authorities might have tried to keep up the pretences, but Polish politicians are more realistic. Asked if he thought that *The Polish Zoo* was going to influence the results of the election, Bielecki said: 'I don't think the programme has any influence on the political atmosphere in Poland. Nothing does any longer.'

The election results showed that the people of Poland are not going to be conned by the magic word democracy; they are as unimpressed by the Democratic Union, led by former Solidarity officials, as they are by the Democratic Left Alliance, run by ex-Stalinists. Neither the old *nomenklatura* who ran the Soviet-style economy, nor the new *nomenklatura* associated with the capitalist market, enjoys any public confidence. Even the Roman Catholic church failed to mobilise its congregation to vote—the turnout for church-supported candidates was particularly low.

## A new Pilsudski?

All of the lectures about the market and parliamentary democracy delivered from the West to the people of Poland have been exposed as empty rhetoric. Did the Western pundits seriously think that, offered the opportunity, the Polish people would give unconditional support to their own poverty? Given the choice between voting to stand still and get poorer or to inch further towards the market and get poorer, 60 per cent of Polish people extracted themselves from the whole sordid process. Western-style democracy has failed to deliver to the people of Poland any real choice in their future.

No government can have a mandate to do anything in Poland today. There can only be a stalemate as parties which represent nobody squabble over the spoils of office. The immediate future looks bleak, and the prospect is for more instability and fragmentation.

Polish president Lech Walesa, the lion in *The Polish Zoo*, emerges as the only possible winner. The former trade union leader is now angling for greater presidential powers to impose order, and force through market reforms. Walesa wants to rule by decree in the style of Poland's last pro-capitalist strongman, the prewar dictator Jozef Pilsudski. So much for democracy. ●

December 1941: Japan attacks the USA

# Harbouring

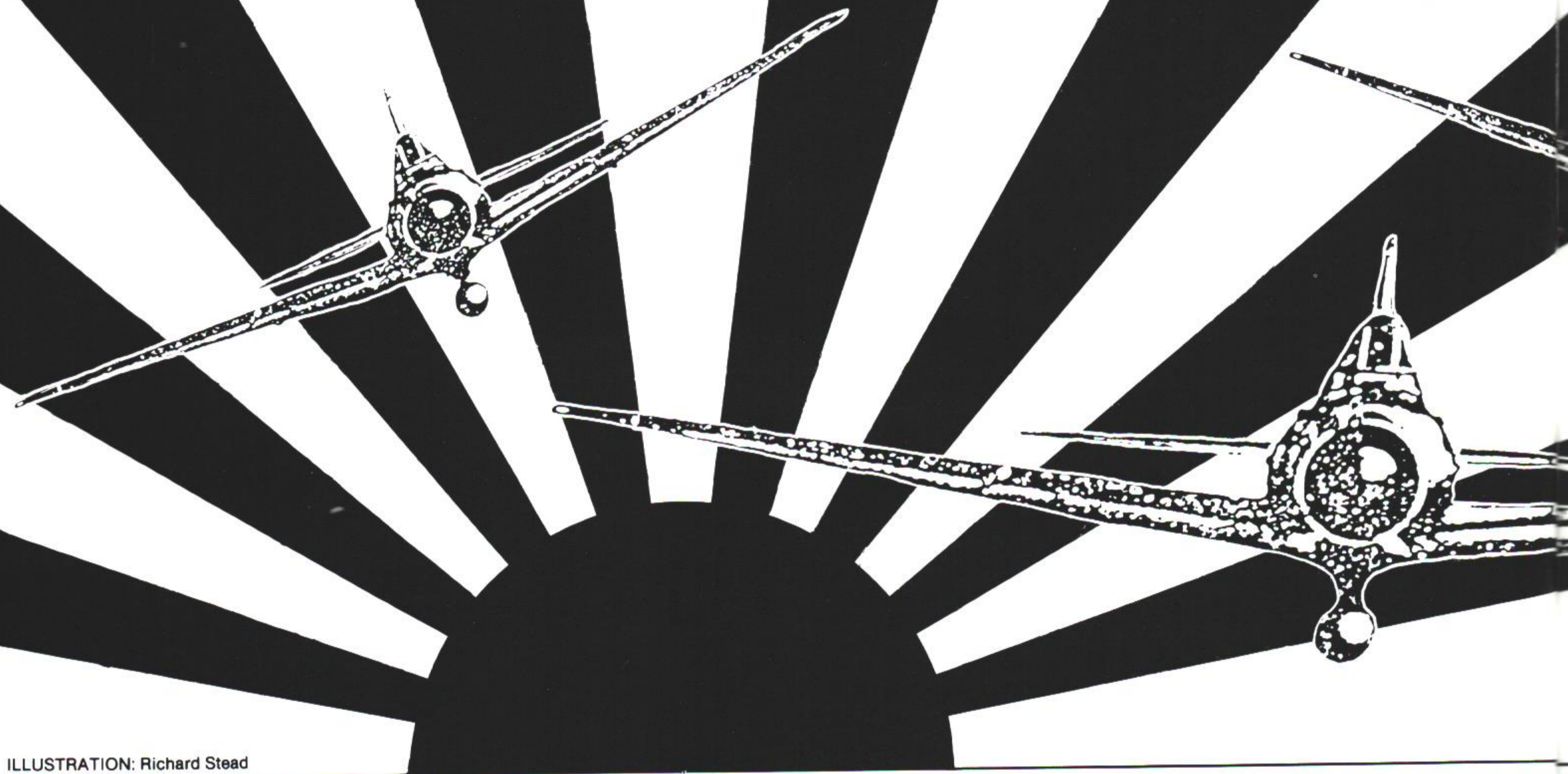


ILLUSTRATION: Richard Stead

Daniel Nassim explores the myths which surround the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the United States into the Second World War

**O**n 7 December 1941 Japanese aircraft attacked the headquarters of the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. Japan also invaded British and Dutch colonies and US-held islands around the Pacific. American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt told Congress it was 'a date which will live in infamy', and condemned Japan for its 'surprise offensive' and 'unprovoked and dastardly attack'.

## Top secret

To this day most people in America and Britain accept Roosevelt's characterisation of the Pearl Harbor attack as an unprovoked surprise assault which dragged an unwilling USA into the Second World War. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic have done their best to suppress any information which might suggest otherwise. Many important papers relating to the attack are still secret. A British book on the subject was banned by the government's D-notice committee in 1989. Winston Churchill's papers for the period are not to be released to the public until 2016. However, a cursory examination of the evidence which is

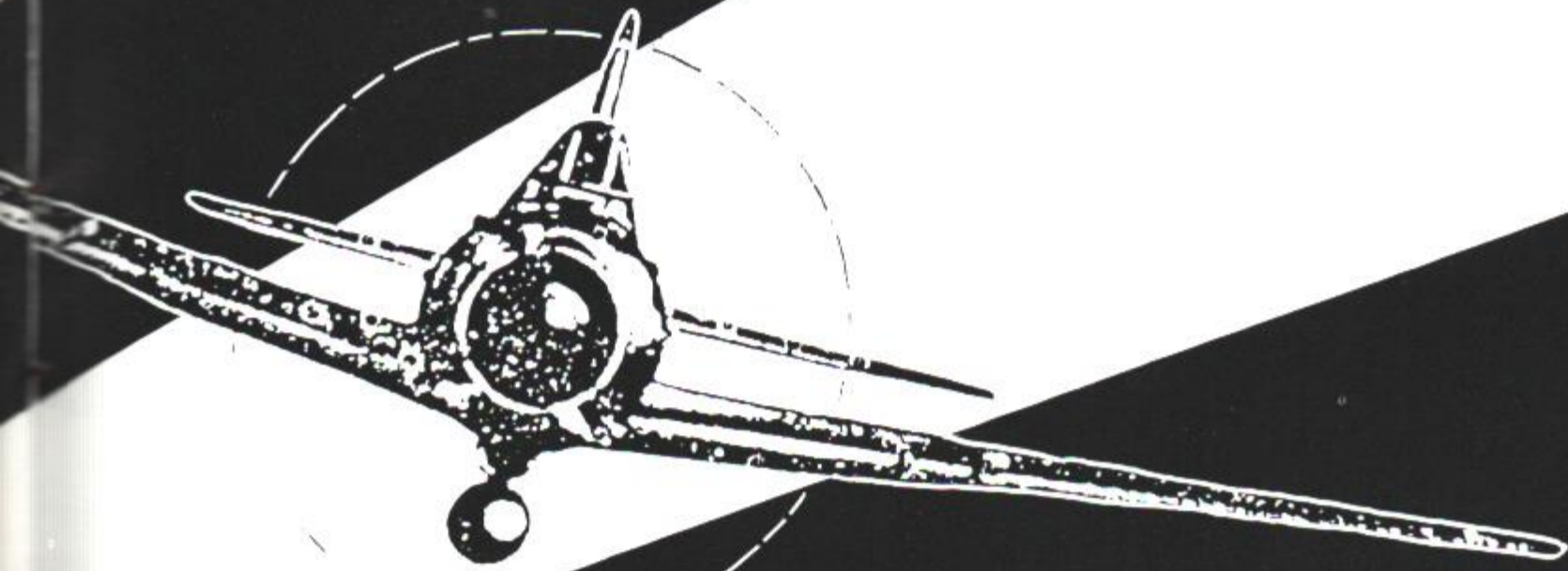
available shows that the truth is very different from the school-book history.

For a start, both American and British cryptographers had broken Japan's most secret communications codes. They often decoded and read diplomatic or military messages before their Japanese counterparts. It seems certain that US and British intelligence would have had some kind of forewarning about any attack.

The Americans and British were also well aware that the economic sanctions which they had already imposed against Japan could prompt military retaliation. As an industrial power with few natural resources, Japan was vulnerable to a blockade of raw materials. Many of its east Asian neighbours were colonies of Britain, France or the Netherlands. A US state department memo in December 1938 acknowledged the possibility 'that any attempt by the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands to cut off from Japan exports of oil would be met by Japan's forcibly taking over the Netherlands East Indies' (quoted in Irvine H Anderson, 'The 1941 De Facto Embargo on Oil to Japan:



# illusions



A Bureaucratic Reflex', *Pacific Historical Review*, May 1975).

Indeed the possible consequences of economic sanctions against Japan were recognised in the USA at least eight years before Pearl Harbor. After the Japanese attack on Manchuria in 1931, US secretary of state Henry Stimson had proposed economic sanctions and military action. But President Herbert Hoover warned his cabinet that sanctions 'are the roads to war' (quoted in Charles A Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*, 1948)

Despite this recognition, a series of trade measures were enacted against Japan. In July 1939, the Roosevelt administration abruptly notified the Japanese government that it intended to abrogate the Japanese-American Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. Exactly a year later, the USA introduced a licensing system for exports of petroleum and scrap iron to Japan.

## Fund freeze

In July 1941, the American government announced a freeze on all Japanese funds in the USA and the suspension of all trade. Britain

and the Netherlands, along with their colonies, quickly followed suit. Japan was left with about 18 months' reserves of petroleum. 'America provoked Japan to such an extent that the Japanese were forced to attack Pearl Harbor,' recalled Captain Oliver Lyttleton, production minister in Churchill's cabinet, in 1944: 'It is a travesty on history ever to say that America was forced into war.' (Quoted in John McKechney, 'The Pearl Harbor controversy', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 18, 1963)

## War moves

The 'complete surprise' thesis on Pearl Harbor is further exposed by the fact that there was already a public discussion of the possibility of war between Japan and the USA or Britain in the thirties. Lieutenant-Commander Ishimaru's *Japan Must Fight Britain* was translated into English and published in 1936. Its contents were sufficiently sensitive to be repudiated by the Japanese ministry of foreign affairs at the time. In the same year the *Oriental Economist*, an authoritative English language journal published in Tokyo, raised the possibility of an Anglo-American military alliance against

Japan. Such speculation became more frequent and heated in subsequent years.

Nor was the discussion of a possible war confined to the Japanese side. Sutherland Denlinger and Charles B Gary's *War in the Pacific* in 1936 examined the strategy of a theoretical Japanese-American war. From the mid-thirties there was a debate about whether the USA should fight against Japanese aggression in China.

Over the years since Pearl Harbor, some critics have suggested that the USA's lack of preparedness for a predictable attack on 7 December 1941 was due to a giant conspiracy by the Roosevelt administration. In this view, the president deliberately let the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor as a ploy to get the USA into the war. There is certainly evidence to support this argument.

## Conspiracy theories

Statements by several major players of the time point to a possible set-up. Shortly before Pearl Harbor, British prime minister Winston Churchill expressed his confidence that the USA would join the war in

the Far East. Perhaps most revealing of all is an entry in the diary of Henry Stimson, by now US secretary of war, for 25 November 1941. Stimson describes a top-level meeting at the White House where Roosevelt ignored the agenda and 'brought up entirely the relations with the Japanese':

'He brought up the event that we were likely to be attacked, perhaps [as soon as] next Monday, for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning, and the question was what should we do. The question was *how we should manoeuvre them into the position of firing the first shot* without allowing too much danger to ourselves.'

Roosevelt had repeatedly and publicly stated that America would not be the first to fire a shot in a war between the great powers. This pledge was a response to the isolationist sentiment still strong among the American public, who wanted no part of what they saw as a foreigners' war. A Gallup poll in 1941 showed that 80 per cent of Americans were unwilling to enter a war for the sake of Britain.

### US ambition

Roosevelt, however, was convinced that the USA would eventually have to enter the war to fulfil its global ambitions. From June 1940, his administration was sending military equipment to Britain. At a meeting in the Atlantic in August 1940, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to abide by common principles that came to be known as the 'Atlantic Charter'. It later emerged that the need to stop Japanese expansion in Asia had been a secret part of these discussions. At that time, however, Roosevelt could not make public his views. It was only after the bloodshed at Pearl Harbor, and the hysterical reaction to it in the US media, that the American public swung behind the president's war policies.

One final element lends credibility to the conspiracy thesis. All four of America's aircraft carriers in the Pacific—the crucial weapon in its naval armoury—were away from Pearl Harbor when the Japanese struck. Despite the apparent success of Japan's attack many of the ships that were destroyed or damaged, particularly the eight battleships, were already obsolescent.

The Roosevelt administration may well have known about the impending attack on Pearl Harbor. Yet ultimately it does not matter whether or not there was a conspiracy. The most important point to grasp is that Pearl Harbor,

or something like it, was inevitable; not simply because of the machinations of politicians, but because of the broader rivalries which drove the USA and Japan to go to war with one another.

After the First World War, the USA was in an uncertain position. Britain had clearly been displaced as the world's strongest power but the USA was a long way from achieving global hegemony. Its influence was still constricted by the old European empires, especially the British one, which maintained control over key areas of the world.

### Sun rising

On the other side of the Pacific, meanwhile, Japan was emerging as a leading power and America's most dynamic rival in the region. By 1919, when it attended the Paris Peace Conference, Japan was officially acknowledged as a great power. In subsequent years its manufacturing base continued to grow at an impressive rate—and so did its share of overseas markets. Japan's international trade increased almost two and a half times between 1913 and 1929. Japanese industry became increasingly dependent upon imported raw materials and fuel; in the twenties, imports of oil increased 20-fold and coal imports quadrupled.

The great capitalist slump of the thirties exacerbated tensions among the rival powers. In the USA, the Roosevelt administration took drastic measures to counteract the effects of the Depression. Under Roosevelt's New Deal the government militarised the entire economy, launched a rearmament programme and erected more protectionist barriers against foreign goods. To the dismay of its competitors, the Japanese economy continued to grow through much of the Depression. Between 1932 and 1941, mining and manufacturing production more than doubled. The competition between Japan and the USA reached crisis point.

### Old empires

Between the rising powers of the USA and Japan lay the old decaying powers of Europe—Britain, France and the Netherlands—each of which had substantial east Asian possessions. All of the old powers were losing the capacity to maintain control over their empires. The USA and Japan were both keen to expand their own spheres of influence by breaking up the old colonial blocs. When the rivalries among the European powers led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, their Asian possessions were even more starkly exposed to Japanese and American attentions.

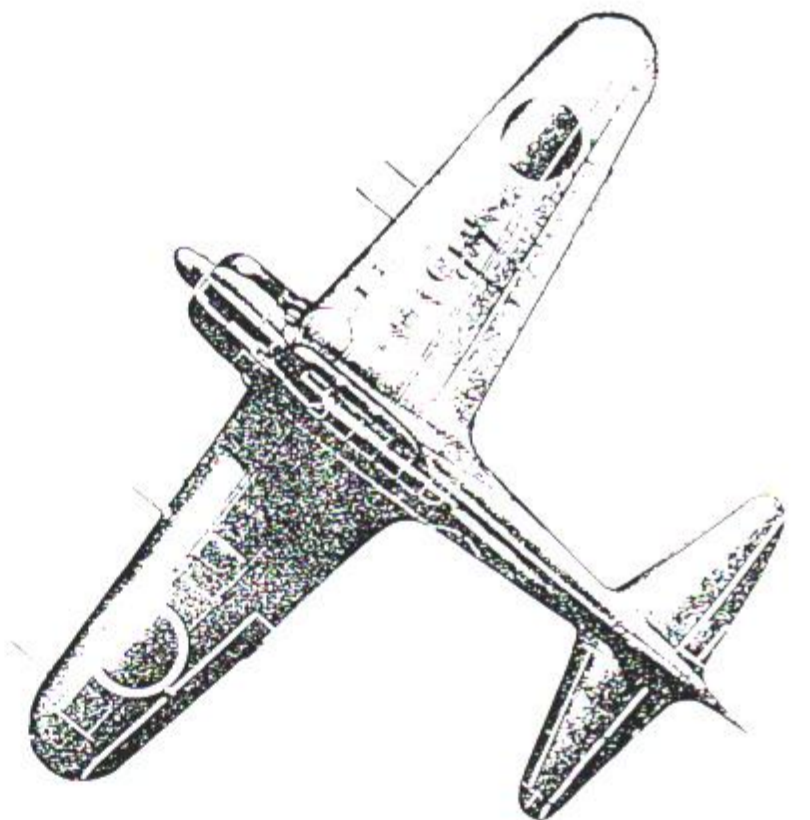
The war between the USA and Japan was both a conflict for control over east Asia and a broader struggle for influence in the world. From the American point of view, the Japanese expansion into China from 1931 was an aggressive act which allowed Japan to squeeze the USA out of important markets and disturbed the delicate balance of power in the Pacific. From the Japanese point of view, the invasion of China was a legitimate response to economic problems at home and growing protectionism in Britain and the USA. Only one view could finally prevail.

Japan and the USA were equally to blame for the shooting war that broke out on 7 December 1941. They were rival imperialist powers, driven into conflict by the economic forces unleashed by a global capitalist crisis. Japan's 'surprise, unprovoked' attack on Pearl Harbor was a continuation by other means of a conflict which, through sanctions and diplomatic threats, was already well under way long before the bombs started to drop. Millions of Asians were to die before that war ended in the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

### Capitalism and war

It is fair enough to remember 7 December 1941 as a date which should live in infamy—but not for the reasons Roosevelt intended. The real significance of Pearl Harbor is not as a warning against Japanese ruthlessness. It should stand as a stark reminder of the relationship between capitalism and war.

Understanding the truth about what caused Pearl Harbor and the war is not just a matter of setting the record straight. Today the economic and political rivalries among the capitalist powers of America, Japan and Europe are once more intensifying in the shadow of another slump. Whatever they eventually do to resolve their disputes, it should come as no surprise to anybody this time.



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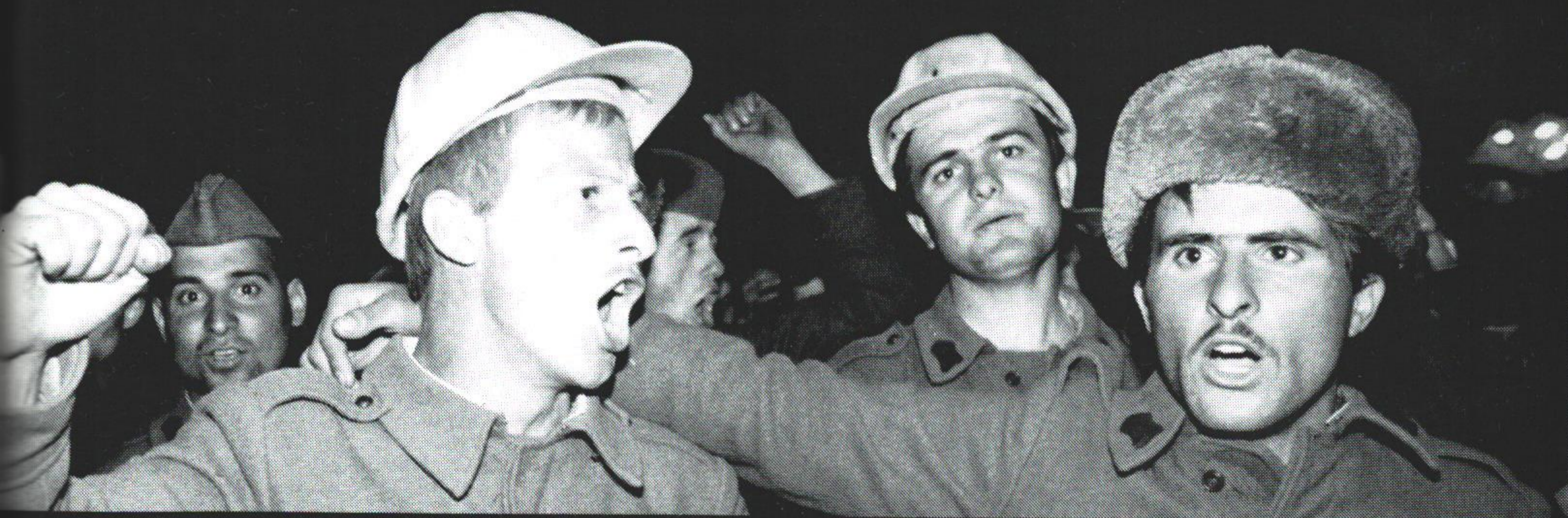
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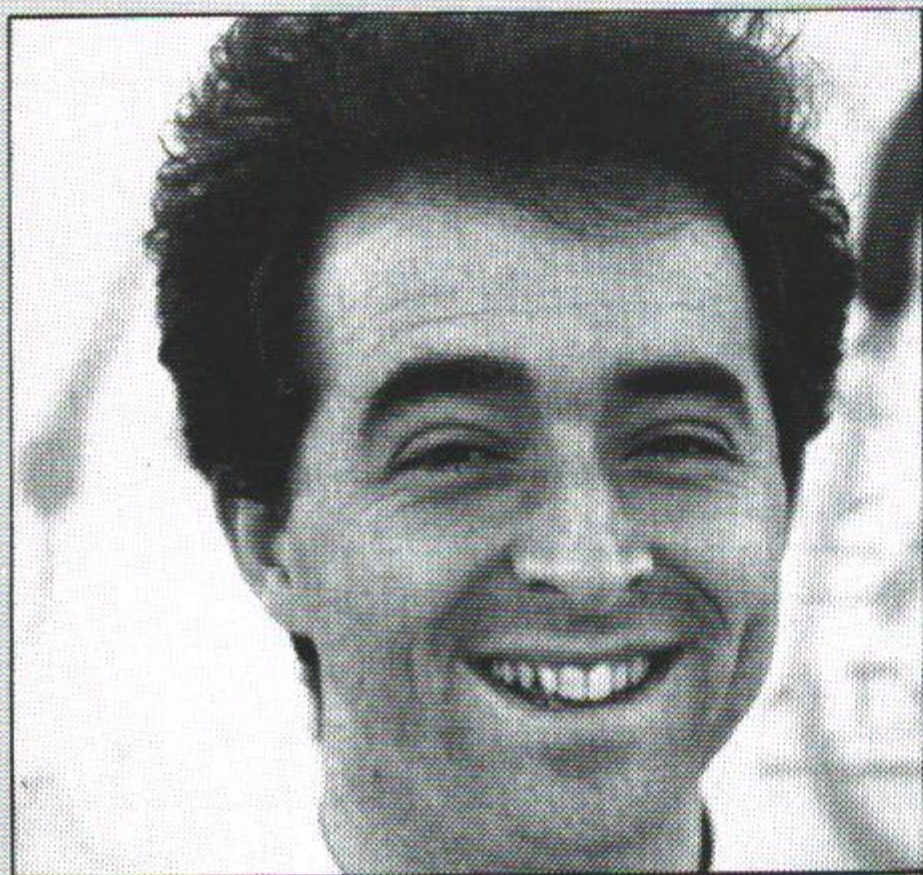
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## Frank Cottrell-Boyce on the ITV franchise auction

## The need to rope extra money in from elsewhere has given TV an identity crisis

# Cash and chaos

This was the legislation for which Thatcher apologised. Not the poll tax that brought her down. Not the inhumane, vindictive policies on state benefits and immigration. Not her shabby, self-serving little wars at home and abroad. But this. The ITV franchise auction.

On the day the new ITV franchises were announced, the directors of Central TV announced that they would hold one big party in three different cities (London, Birmingham and Nottingham). At Granada, red carpets unfurled and champagne popped spontaneously on every corridor. In a fit of partymania, the producer of *Coronation Street* invited all his writers on a cruise up the Manchester Ship Canal. The Grand Old Company had beaten Phil Redmond's Screaming Lord Sutch-style bid for power. 'At last', said Granada's director, 'normal service will be resumed'.

A distinguished old Granada employee turned to me and told me how relieved she was that she wasn't going to have to work for the Red Baron (Redmond's industry nickname—he got it by destroying more pilots than anyone else). It turned out that she thought Redmond might have got not only the right to broadcast but also the Granada building, the staff, the canteen, yea even unto The Street of streets itself. Now this is not the case, but if she didn't understand why she had been given the Dom Perignon, then who did? If the franchise auction was supposed to democratise and demystify TV, it didn't work. In fact, the auction did not work on any level, as poor Maggie—mystified and heartbroken—pointed out.

This is hardly surprising. The thinking behind the original legislation was not profound, although it was typical. Essentially it was this—I hate those bastards and I'm going to get them. Unleash the Market Forces! Previously, when franchises came up for renewal, companies applied with a portfolio of programming and business ideas to the IBA. They all agreed to pay a fixed fee to the treasury if they won. This time, instead of a fixed fee, there would be an auction. And the franchise would go to the highest bidder. Later this was modified with a 'quality threshold' over which all bidders had to hurdle before their bids would be considered. It was here that the perpetrator of *Brookside* fell.

Winning the franchise gives a company the right to broadcast programmes over a particular region of the country or, in the case of TV-AM, at a particular hour of the day. Companies with a franchise, therefore, can not only make but also broadcast TV programmes. This gives them an enormous amount of freedom and power. Redmond, for instance, has to sell *Brookside* to the drama department of Channel 4. If he had won the

franchise, he would have been able to broadcast it within his region without having to pitch it to anyone. Of course, beyond a certain level of budget, you might want to sell a programme to the other TV companies before making it. But you certainly have a flying start over most 'independent' companies who have to find a buyer for even the cheapest game show before making so much as a pilot. This freedom is what the bidders were bidding for.

In the end, it is difficult to make any sense of the auction. Granada won its franchise for £9 million, against NWTV's bid of £35m. Central—a big lucrative franchise—went for £2000, unopposed. TVS, on the other hand, lost their franchise because they bid too high (on the grounds that they wouldn't have enough money left for making programmes). Only one went to the highest bidder. TV-AM. This was bought out by Sunrise for £35m. Paradoxically it was this one—the only one that went the way Maggie intended—which caused Maggie to shed a tear. Carol Thatcher of course will be one of the employees now unemployed. In fact, it is hard to see how Sunrise could possibly make a profit out of TV-AM if they are paying the treasury that kind of money. The brutally profiteering Bruce Gyngel only got £17m a year out of it.

Although Yorkshire and Tyne Tees retained their franchises, they too bid very high. Granada and Central will no doubt make the most of this situation by making whatever programmes they like on the assumption that these companies will now buy more or less anything, having nothing left with which to develop programmes themselves. Where before, ITV was Byzantine; now it is simply chaotic. So why should we care?

We should care because television is important. On some issues during the Thatcher years, ITV was the only opposition the government had. Ireland, for instance, became a great non-subject in parliament, in the press and on the BBC. It was kept on the public agenda basically by *World in Action* (Granada), *First Tuesday* (Yorkshire) and above all *Death on the Rock*—the programme that cost Thames its franchise. Television has played a key role in the changes in the East. CNN's footage of Yeltsin climbing on to a tank turned out to be more powerful than the tanks themselves. On the other hand, Slobodan Milosevic deliberately scheduled his invasion of Croatia opposite the Moscow 'coup', hoping thus to escape the notice of the World Police. When it didn't work out like that, his troops started taking out TV crews before anything else.

We need to think clearly about the kind of TV we want. How we want access to the making of programmes organised. There is a lot of sympathy on the left for the independent sector which has



PHOTO: Thames Television

Oh my good Gawd, with Thames, makers of *Minder*, losing their franchise, where will Arthur's next nice little earner come from?

cornered the rhetoric of DIY TV. Just get hold of a camera, make your own programme and sell it. In fact, it takes a genius to make good TV on the cheap and most independents spend most of their time applying for money from Channel 4. Now Carlton too (winners of the Thames franchise) will operate as a 'publisher' broadcaster in the Channel 4 manner.

In fact this system has several disadvantages. An independent company will make one or two programmes in a year. If a project goes down then so does the company. The company will therefore do anything to get its own programme on the screen. They thus become vulnerable to the benign censorship which Channel 4 tends to operate—a scenario in which a commissioning editor will help you to get the programme on to the screen by pointing out the bits you won't get away with, leading you to collude in your own censorship.

In drama, the independent producer rarely meets face to face with people of real power (ie, money) and is therefore constantly having to second guess what the money men would like. This leads to blanding out, repetition and a fixation with big names and ultimately to programmes which nobody in their right mind would ever want to watch—look at *Gravy Train 2* (Channel 4), for one.

More importantly, no small independent could ever afford serious investigative journalism. Because when you embark on a piece of serious investigative journalism, you have to be prepared to come back and say that after your investigations, you found no story, no show.

This is not to say that big, franchised companies don't have their own disadvantages. They are big corporations and like all big corporations they tend to have no sense of purpose beyond growth. And, like all big corporations, they tend not to look kindly on innovation. They are structurally undemocratic (though it has to be said that Channel 4 is far more in hock to the middle brows of Oxbridge than the mainstream ITV companies). I am putting the case for neither side. I am saying that there has been no debate about the kind of TV we want. Only about who is going to own it. Similarly with the proposed fifth channel, the only debate has been about where to put it, as though it were the Olympic Games or a garden festival.

Beyond the immediate euphoria, there is a feeling of unease. Advertising revenue continues to fall. All the money that was handed over for franchises is money that goes out of programmes and into the treasury. The need to rope extra money in from elsewhere has given TV an identity crisis. Suddenly the industry is crawling with

refugee big names from theatre and film. The talisman of Sunday supplement prestige is replacing skill and imagination. This is particularly depressing because we have a good history of TV where our film industry is—at its most successful—unbearably twee and shallow, where our theatre is about as challenging and sharp as a Happy Eater menu. Channel 4—which was set up to be different—is at this moment producing a lavish adaptation of a Mary Wesley novel directed by Sir Peter Hall. It literally has Felicity Kendall in the cast. You will look back at the Sunday teatime BBC classic serials and wonder at their radical chic.

In the end, Central cancelled the big party and issued staff instead with three free drink vouchers to be redeemed at the bar at their leisure. The Granada cruise was a mistake too. The canal was full of stinking detritus and the weather was foul. Steaming towards Salford through the fog and the vapours in a barge full of old warriors—veterans of *Z-Cars* and *Family at War*, *Nearest and Dearest* and *Brass*—I was swamped by an elegiac, Arthurian feeling. A feeling that maybe a long enchanted subterranean sleep might well be the best career option just now.

# Sex, morality and videotape

In seasonal spirit, Carrie Bloom tuned into a new video entitled *The Lovers' Guide*, and discovered a conventional morality tale packaged as erotica

PHOTOS: Michael Kramer



It's that time of year again, the festive season. Wine flows, crackers are pulled and the mistletoe is well-hung. Call it goodwill to all men, it's the time of year when our thoughts turn to pursuits of the sexual kind. But before you embark on the round of wine bars and office parties perhaps you should take a look at a newly released video, *The Lovers' Guide*.

It promises to enhance your loving and sexual relationship and includes couples speaking 'frankly about their own love lives'. According to the promotional blurb, 'It is the first visual guide created specifically for adults and totally devoted to actually showing how to get the best out of love and sex'. Does it live up to its claims or is it just *The Joy of Sex* on videotape?

The video is divided into sections dedicated to arousal, pleasuring each other, fantasy and so on. It is visually explicit: oral sex, masturbation, the his 'n' hers stripper fantasy and a number of sexual positions and techniques (with the exception of anal sex) are covered. The participants are young, white, straight, reasonably fit and fairly attractive (just not my type). It is obvious that these people have central heating—no hiding under seven blankets and a duvet to hinder their ability.

All done in the name of medical research? After being billed as a production by couples who have been involved in long-term loving relationships (there are more wedding rings on show than genitals), it has now been



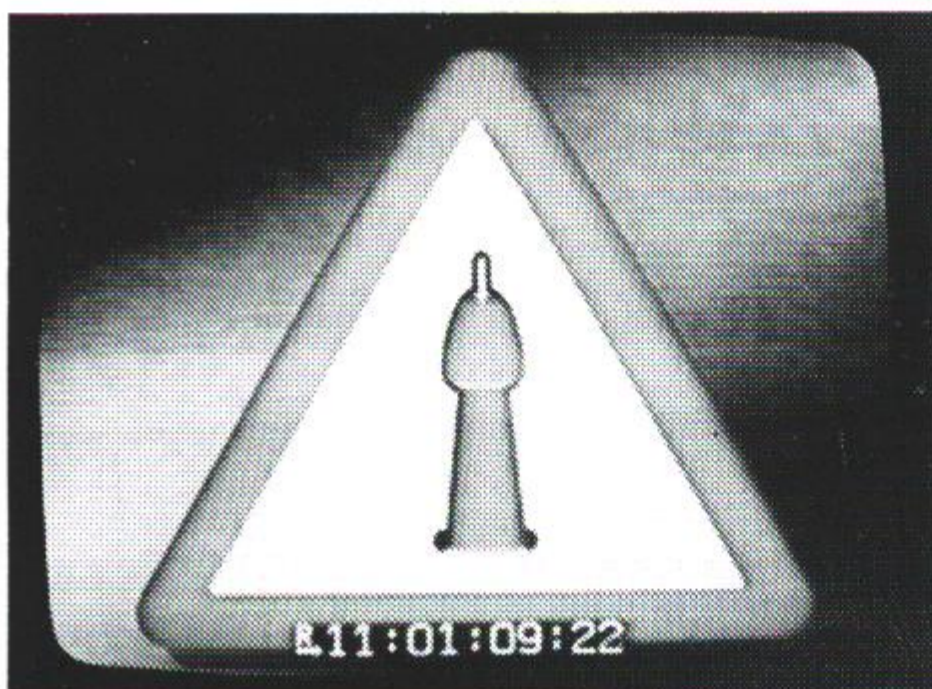
revealed that some of them are prostitutes. 'So what?', you may think, surely they will have the necessary experience.

Unfortunately, the central message of the video is not based on 'loveless copulation'. Again and again, we are told that the sex act 'can be an enduring high spot in any relationship...between committed lovers'. It is described as a touching of minds, with the most important ingredient being communication. One woman says, 'If you do it without talking then you're asking for trouble'. And I always thought it was bad manners to speak with your mouth full.

The video's maker, Dr Andrew Stanway, makes the point that sex is not a commodity in itself but a symbol of the whole relationship.

This man should know, he has six initials after his name (MB, MRCP) and of course the two in front of his name (Dr). That makes him an 'expert'. We are told he has three children, which means he's done it. So if you are frustrated with your sex life, this man reckons he can help. Call me a cynic, but I'm always suspicious of anyone who runs a psycho-sexual practice from their home in Surrey. One thing's for sure, he's going to make a lot of money out of this.

People will rent or buy this video for one of two reasons. If you do so hoping that it might bear some resemblance to a porn movie then you will be let down. The Nescafé Gold Blend



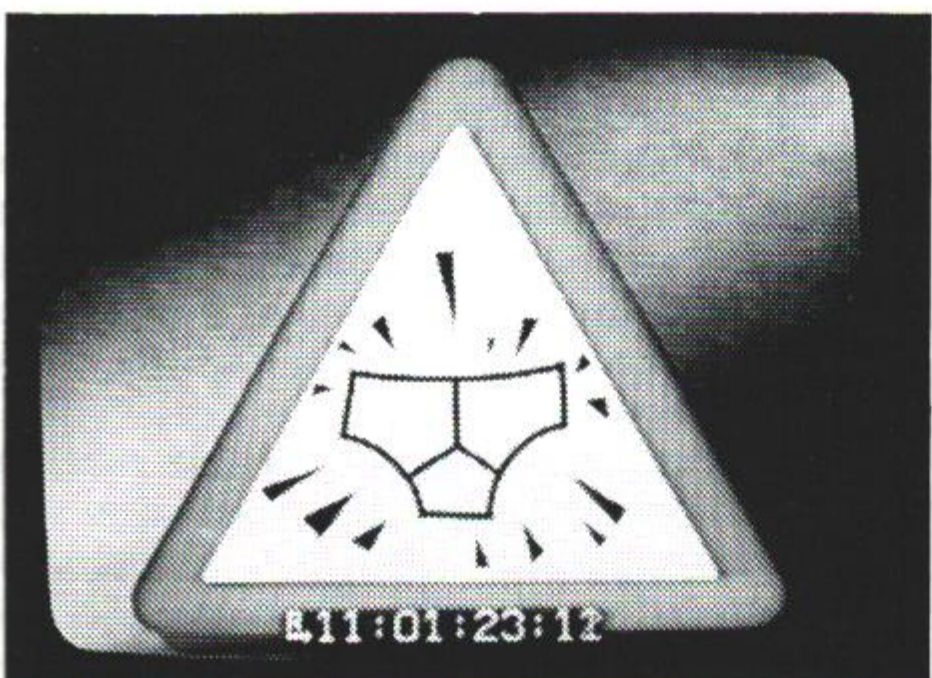
advert is more erotic than this. If you buy it for its therapeutic and scientific value then prepare to be disappointed. I'm not saying you won't learn anything, (indeed it's encouraging to know that 'Wendy' practices with a pencil to increase her muscle control) but will the things you learn really help?

The combination of explicit footage and moralistic voice-over leaves you feeling uncomfortable in your chair for the wrong reasons. When Doctor Andrew explains the importance of discovering your partner's genital geography and the camera switches to a wide-angle lens you do get the message; and I was intrigued when in his advice to men he says 'you'll reach something that feels like the tip of your nose, that's the cervix'.

The video ends with a display of road-sign graphics to illustrate handy tips for those who are sexually active: the wear-clean-pants-every-day tip for the boys and, for girls, the wipe-from-front-to-back-after-going-to-the-toilet tip. Radical stuff or what? This video may be eight inches long, smooth, hard and last for 63 minutes, but that's where any similarity with my personal idea of sexual therapy ends.

If your idea of sexual therapy doesn't involve a member of the opposite sex with whom you've had a long-term committed relationship, then I suggest saving the video rental money and doing some research of your own.

• *The Lovers' Guide* is distributed by Pickwick Video and is available from video rental shops



Yvette Guilbert, 1894 (detail), Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

# High art, low life?

A comprehensive exhibition of the work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec at London's Hayward Gallery has provoked fresh discussion about the life of the French artist. Helen West enters the fray

Most reviews of Toulouse-Lautrec's work amount to little more than moral judgments about how and where he chose to spend most of his adult life: in brothels. 'Toulouse-Lautrec was not a pleasant man' (the *Guardian*). 'The plot has a distinctly sleazy French tone' (the *London Evening*

*Standard*). None of this tells us much about the man who is widely accepted as the most gifted and innovative print-maker of the nineteenth century.

Henri Marie-Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec Monfa was born into an aristocratic family in November 1864. His parents were first



cousins, pursuing a tradition of intermarriage to protect the family fortune. He inherited a genetic disorder. In his early teens he fractured first his left thigh bone and then his right one. After these two accidents he grew no more than an inch, barely reaching five feet. Henri was a disappointment to his hunting/shooting/fishing father and pampered by his mother.

From an early age he painted the things he couldn't do but which surrounded him: sporting and hunting scenes, horses, dogs and so on. He started painting in earnest aged 18, and studied with Fernand Cormon for several years. Cormon's studio was in Montmartre, the centre of cloisonnism, a post-impressionist style from the French *cloisonné*—an enamelling procedure. This technique used abstract zones of colour, clearly defined by a dark outline, and took much of its style from Japanese woodcuts. These are the hallmarks of Lautrec's work.

Lautrec was only 36 when he died. His posthumous reputation dates from the later years he spent in Montmartre: rich kid gone wrong, rebel without a cause, dirty old man. In fact, his lifestyle was probably pretty much in keeping with the times. He wasn't the only man in France getting drunk and getting laid.

## Outcast Paris

What upset people most about Lautrec's art was that he represented a part of society which they did not want to recognise. He treated the prostitutes, pimps and patrons of the bars and clubs which he frequented without sentiment, but also without judgement. They were subject matter to him, they were also his friends. His crime was that he chose to live among them. 'I am pitching my camp in a brothel', he said. Lautrec reacted against the hypocrisy of his critics: 'All I hear is brothels! What of it? There's nowhere I feel more at home.'

I think Lautrec enjoyed championing the cause of social outcasts because he had chosen to be an outcast himself. His family certainly didn't approve. But more virulent in its disapproval was the press of the time. When Lautrec was interned in a sanatorium against his will in 1898, the newspapers went to town: 'The man himself, deformed, lame, grotesque, was that rare phenomenon, a symbol of his own work', said Alexandre Hepp in *Le Journal* (20 March 1898).

In reality, Lautrec's work was a product of his own experience and the life he chose for himself. His paintings evoke an intimacy that only someone sympathetic could capture. He said of the prostitute-client relationship, 'And you imagine you're talking about love? You're only talking about what happens between the sheets.... Love is something else.' His portraits of working girls together are sincere and touching. 'One is ugly oneself', said Lautrec, 'but life is beautiful'.

Lautrec's enthusiasm for the time is most obvious in his posters. In them, his portrayal of the artistes and customers of the Moulin Rouge is exceptional in every way. Graphically they were a first and have yet to be surpassed, technically they were masterpieces and they capture the moment vividly. Many have referred to the 'snapshot immediacy' of Lautrec's work.

He made the Moulin Rouge and its cabaret stars infamous. La Goulue (the Glutton, known as such because she had a habit of draining other people's glasses) and Valentin-le-Désossé (Valentin the Snakeman) are two of his subjects. But Jane Avril and Aristide Bruant are the most recognisable. Avril commented that, 'Without a doubt I owed him the fame I enjoyed from that very first moment his poster of me appeared'.

His posters caused a stir then and are memorable now because Lautrec's attempt to unify lettering and image into a whole produced some of the finest advertising ever seen. His influence today can be seen reproduced on wine labels, match boxes and the new Gaultier advertising in women's magazines.

## A place of sin

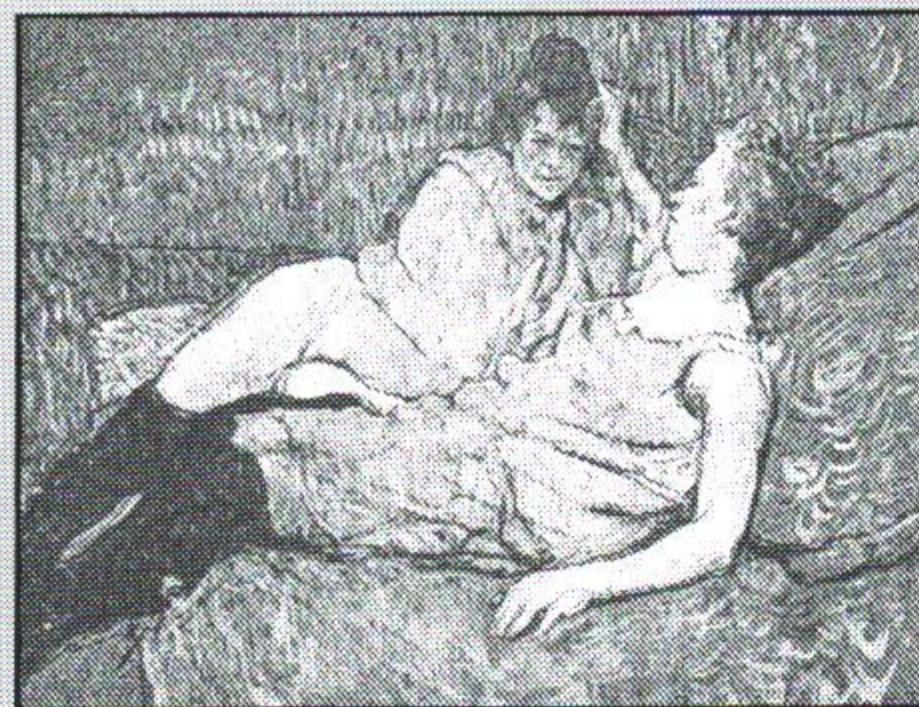
If you are tired of the 'high art, low life' discussion about a great artist who died 90 years ago, there are two available antidotes. The first is a new book. Edited by Herbert D Schimmel, and with a fine introduction by Gale Murray, *The Letters of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec* brings together for the first time all of the available correspondence of the artist. It allows you to judge for yourself what sort of man Lautrec was.

The other option is the exhibition itself. Go along to the Hayward and see more than 70 paintings and 100 drawings, prints and posters. They include caricatures, illustrations for books, theatre programmes and magazines, family portraits and hunting scenes at the Château du Bosc, as well as the paintings and posters of the Moulin Rouge and its stars.

In the sixties film *Can Can*, Shirley Maclaine plays a club owner always in trouble with society's moral guardians and the police for allowing the dance of the same name to take place in her club. She stages a ballet about Adam and Eve, retorting 'this is to show that we didn't invent sin in Montmartre, we just perfected it'.

• Toulouse-Lautrec is showing at the Hayward Gallery in London until 19 January

• *The Letters of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*, edited by Herbert D Schimmel, is published by Oxford University Press, £30 hbk



The Sofa, c.1894-5, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bernard Manning

# True blue

Toby Banks admits that nobody makes him laugh as much as obnoxious Bernard Manning

Half-way through the journey from her table to the Ladies, he spots her. His eyes narrow to two nasty little slits in his lizard face. 'I hope you piss yerself', he snaps. She stops and totters on her high heels for a moment, then presses unsteadily on. All eyes are on her as the booming commentary continues. 'And I'll get you on the way back, don't you fookin' worry.' She disappears into the toilet. 'That'll be the longest piss you ever had, I'll tell you that!', he calls after her. She's not seen again.

## 60 and going strong

'Manning the Mouth' is being outrageous again and everyone's tickled pink. It must be outrageous—they won't let him on the telly, will they? Well sometimes they do, but since he was 'discovered' 20-odd years ago on *The Comedians*, his TV appearances have been few and far between. Always entertaining, though. He called Rupert Everett a 'public school wanker'. Esther Rantzen sat fuming as Manning unleashed a torrent of racist gags. Hardcase comedienne Olga James bragged on the *Parkinson* show that she'd 'shut that Bernard Manning up'. He walked on and left her speechless with a sentence. He enjoyed that one ('She was fooked for the rest of the programme, weren't she?').

'Too blue isn't British', complained the *Sunday Mirror* in the seventies, but Britain has long since caught up. Today, Manning is a role model for dozens of young shockers—in a way, he was the first British underground comic—





and he is still a hard act to follow. Only this year he was up to his tricks on the *Wogan* show, turning the air blue in time-honoured fashion. Not bad for a man in his sixties.

When he's not being 'outrageous', he is usually being 'controversial', as the papers coyly refer to his pugnacious racism, sexism and general obnoxiousness. Manning has played the 'act they won't let you see' card as shrewdly as Max Miller courted notoriety with his 'blue book' a generation before. Word of mouth did the rest, as he slogged around the clubs and tapes of his act were passed around workplaces up and down the country.

### Onstage job

Whether or not Manning encourages it (and he denies it), he has certainly been singled out for special treatment over the years. In the sixties and seventies, most comics of his generation kept the 'blue material' and the 'nig-nog' jokes for the black tie supper club stag nights and the after dinner circuit, and made a killing doing 'family acts' for the telly. But did Bernard? Did he *fook!* You see, Bernard's a real job when he gets on that stage. A real bastard. A right *coont*. And he hates clean jokes: 'They're childish, aren't they? I tell it as a working man would talk. They shouldn't buy a ticket if they want to hear why the chicken crossed the road, or Rolf Harris, crap like that, *Jackanory* stuff.'

He's got no time for old British favourites. Mention of Arthur Askey's name has him

rolling his eyes heavenwards, and not from respect for the dead. He has no doubt about why his face didn't fit in the showbiz establishment, but it is also the key to his success: 'I drive a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow. I'm a millionaire. I have my own club. And it's all out of my blue stories putting arses on seats. I'm not a run-of-the-mill comic, I'm not a sheep. I'm a pioneer. There's a lot copying me these days, Jim Davidson, Chubby Brown, all getting a good living from Pioneer Bernard.'

### Swearing artist

He 'pioneered' the word 'fuck' in the sixties—a progression from earlier, milder words like 'bollocks'. These days 'fucks' are 10-a-penny—two in the *Daily Telegraph* in one week. Manning uses them, army-style, in every sentence. He's progressed to 'cunt' for purposes of emphasis, and progression is very much the way he views his development: 'You get better as you get older, same as Frank Sinatra. You mature.' The man's a swearing artist, able to make you laugh that little bit harder by slipping in the required expletive at just the right moment to make a nasty remark downright vicious.

Manning's act is based on a complete lack of respect for everything. He has no particular point to make; he's an instinctive comic, who will say anything for a laugh. These days it's his 'controversial' side that attracts the criticism—something he claims not to understand, and is notoriously evasive about,

disingenuously declaring that he 'picks on everybody'. But while this is true, there are two things you can be sure of—the pope's a Catholic and Manning's a racist.

### Proper gags

Often the racism is gratuitous. If there's a doctor, you can bet your life he'll be a 'Paki doctor'. Sometimes there's no joke at all, just abuse: a running joke about a Sikh in the front row ended up with Manning calling him a 'stupid fat cunt'.

The question is, can you make racist jokes and be funny? Manning can. And that's because most of the time the racism is irrelevant to the point of the joke. What's more, his whole act is so cynical that he inevitably hits on truths now and again. He may sympathise wholeheartedly with racist judges and violent policemen, but the jokes he tells about them would bring the house down at any right-on cabaret.

As for sexism, homophobia and all that (the stuff he says 'my old mum wouldn't understand'), Manning has a stock reply: 'I'm thick me, uneducated. I don't know what it means.' He's not one to analyse his own humour either, although he has strong opinions about others. Tommy Cooper was a favourite, and on today's circuit he rates Ricky Livid and Janice Long. Can women handle stand-up comedy, then? 'This one can. She doesn't talk about big boobs and little boobs and that. She's strong. She tells proper gags. Not like these alternative comedians, they're bollocks, these college boys, talking about their obsessions. Gags is what you want. You watch me tonight, son, I'll go on this stage and in three minutes they'll be fooking roaring, I promise you.'

### Manning's lair

The stage in question is a small strip of floor between a large electronic organ and the first row of closely-packed tables in Bernard Manning's World Famous Embassy Club. He's been turning the air blue in this converted warehouse on the Rochdale Road, just out of Manchester, for more than 30 years. The walls are lined with pictures of dinner-jacketed Manning shaking hands with the great and the good. Royalty too, although they get a right hammering in his act. There's Princess Anne ('an ugly bastard') and the Duke of Kent ('what a gormless bastard he was').

'And what about Prince Charles, worried about the kids not learning Shakespeare. Have you ever heard such fooking shit in your life? Can you imagine the bleeding plant pots coming home from school today?... "What light by yonder window breaks..." Sit down yer twat and eat your fookin' tea. I'll break the fooking window over your head, you little fookin' poof.'

### No mucking about

As he chats away in his lair, surrounded by his loyal staff—homely barmaids and tattooed lads—you see the secret of Bernard Manning's success. Reliability, no frills, and value for money: it made a million for Billy Butlin too. The pool tables are 30p a game, pies cost the same as in a chippy and it's pub prices all night at the bar. Manning appears on the dot and gives you non-stop gags and a couple of songs—no mucking about.

He's a very old-fashioned bloke, and he lets you know he's earned every penny of that million. Never had a holiday in 30 years, only been off sick once (with mumps), works all the hours God sends (two sets a night and always

drives back home, wherever he's working), and so on. His 90-year old mother still does the books. He describes himself as 'a good family man, one that wouldn't see anybody stuck'. A bit of a contrast to his image? 'Well, it's an act. We're called "acts". I wouldn't dream of swearing in front of my grandson, young Ben.'

The coach parties still come from all over Wales and the north, and the punters leave happy. There were plenty of delighted wincers and appreciative 'foo-ookin hells!' after some of the 'stronger' gags, and everybody tried

hard to be shocked. But nobody was, and the punters I spoke to at the club had all 'expected it to be a lot worse than it was'. 'Nothing you wouldn't hear at work,' said one, 'but he's a good comic.'

Manning was lying—they were roaring in well under three minutes. In that time he'd steamed into Fatima Whitbread, Ken Dodd, Scousers, Iraqis, the Irish, the police and Tony Adams, each joke more 'outrageous' than the last. 'They can't stop us laughing', he shouts. They certainly couldn't stop the moron

cackling into my cassette recorder—a voice I now recognise as my own.

He's made a lot of money for charity and made a lot of people laugh but, unlike the members of the Arthur Askey-Tarby school of comedy, he will never appear on the Royal Variety Show. His remaining ambition is more modest: 'I'd like to go live on *Antiques Roadshow* and say to some old woman, "You know what it's worth? *Fook all!* Not a fookin' carrot!'"



PHOTO: David Appleby

## Opinion

# I-I-Irish bands

Now living in London, Hugh Carter grew up in Limerick. He believes that the 'Irish' style of music now in vogue was invented in the pages of *New Musical Express* and imported into his homeland from Britain

What's interesting about Alan Parker's film *The Commitments* is that the band are all heavily influenced by black American soul, not Celtic mythology. All this Irish music with a capital I bears no relation to you if you live in a place like Kilbarrack, where the film is set. The kids in that working class district of North Dublin have never seen a farm and are far more likely to listen to soul than to some old boy from Connemara with a fiddle.

All that Irish culture thing means nothing to a city boy like me. If you live in rural Ireland it would be reinforced around you continually. But it doesn't exist in the urban centres like Cork or Waterford or Limerick. For all my friends in Limerick and Cork, it means nothing. The working class kids I grew up with were more interested in ska than diddy-dee.

Now there is all this raggie taggle rubbish, mixing fiddles and electric guitars, swimming with dolphins and talking Gaelic. Funny thing is that some of these Irish with a capital I bands have only a couple of Irish people in them—The Waterboys and The Pogues, for example. In fact, relocating to the West of Ireland is a very English hippy thing to do, and all these I-I-Irish bands are following an English fashion, 10 years late.

Among young Irish emigrants in London, very few of the urban crowd would identify with diddle-y-i behaviour, which comes from

the rural people who go to country and western sessions and the Stockwell Swan on Sunday mornings. Nowadays it is a very working class thing to identify with The Pogues, because of their larger-than-life image. But The Pogues only caught on in Ireland after they received critical acclaim in England.

I saw them in Limerick in 1985 and there were about 20 people there. Nobody wanted to know about fiddles and whistles. Shane MacGowan says he always thought highly of The Dubliners. So why did he spend his youth imitating The Sex Pistols? Because nobody under 40 would have touched The Dubliners with a barge-pole. The idea of getting pissed up and doing traditional music would have been seen as a sick joke, until it was promoted by *The New Musical Express*. That's when Traditional Ethnic Irish Music was exported from England and sold to the Irish.

The first people to buy into this were the middle classes, especially in Dublin. They will always partake in some dewy-eyed nostalgia. They talk about picking up the laid-back vibe in Dublin. They should pick up the North Dublin vibe of stealing a BMW and ramming a cop car!

Dublin is odd because the middle class is much bigger there and more influential. And the middle classes are very much into

pursuing these ideas of Celtic Ireland, its art and history and culture. Of course they don't want to touch the real national question of Ireland's continuing oppression by Britain and the connection with partition. They are much more into creating ideas about the national psyche.

So it's a very middle class Dublin thing to go down to the country for a couple of weeks and learn Irish. Hothouse Flowers are a classic example. They speak Gaelic and talk about being gypsies. They are the kind of people who can always afford to behave like that. The same is true of Something Happened.

The way I see it, middle class Dublin picked up on an artificial idea of what Irish music was supposed to be. The media promoted it and now it has filtered through to some working class kids who are getting into it. But it's worth considering that this nostalgic folksy stuff only found a hearing after almost everything else—punk, for example—had faded away.

My Bloody Valentine and Fatima Mansions would be the Irish bands I'm interested in because they are doing things which are in no way related to this false idea of Irish culture. My Bloody Valentine are an influence on most of the new British bands around, because of their use of guitars and melody. I like them because they don't fit into the artificial scheme of things.

# BOOKS FOR XMAS

Short of ideas about books to buy for Christmas? We asked some regular contributors to *Living Marxism* which book from this year's crop they would choose for somebody's Christmas stocking

**Kenan Malik chose**

**Miles, the Autobiography** by Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe  
Macmillan, £13.99 hbk, £9.95 pbk

'When I hear jazz musicians today playing all those same licks we used to play so long ago, I feel sad for them. I mean, it's like going to bed with a real old person who even smells real old.... I have to always be on the cutting edge of things because that's just the way I am and have always been.'

The death this year of Miles Davis robbed us of one of the most original and innovative figures in jazz. Louis Armstrong may have invented the solo, Charlie Parker may have defined the stylistic parameters of modern jazz, but it was Davis who gave jazz the 'cutting edge', who had the vision to redefine what jazz meant and to keep redefining it.

When Davis' autobiography was first published two years ago, the critics seized on the sordid elements of the tale—the sex, the drugs, the booze, the street gutter language. Davis' account is certainly gratuitously misogynistic, its treatment of other musicians is often abusive and its incessant foul language becomes wearing after a while. But what makes *Miles* outstanding is Davis' ability to explain what drove his music and gave it, in his words, its 'bold colours and spare lines'.

Davis rejected the sentimental approach to jazz. 'My father is rich, he didn't never pick no cotton and I didn't wake up this morning sad and start playing the blues', he told a stunned teacher at New York's prestigious Juilliard academy who was trying to explain black poverty as the genesis of the blues. He rejected too the philistinism—what he

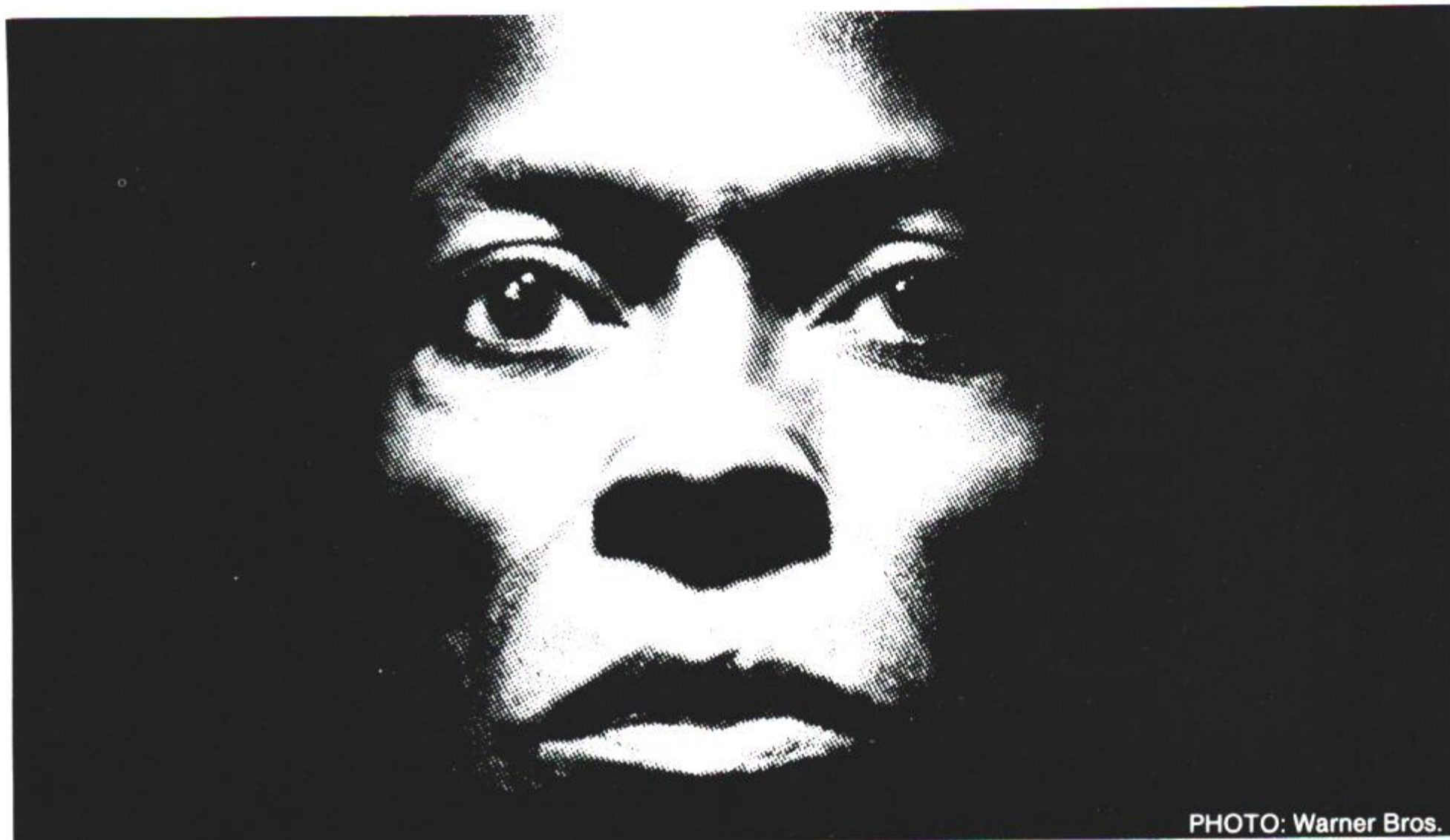


PHOTO: Warner Bros.

called 'the ghetto mentality'—that he felt constrained black jazz. Davis not only assimilated the works of modernist composers such as Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Ravel and Berg, but he continually challenged every preconception of what made jazz.

For Davis the essence of jazz was attitude: 'You've got to have style in whatever you do—writing, music, painting, fashion, boxing, anything.' In the fifties, Davis became the symbol of jazz as the hipster's music, the embodiment of the elegant outsider whose sole concern, in the words of one critic, 'was to keep the straight world at a distance'. White musicians such as Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Dave Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan all copied Davis' 'cool jazz'. 'All of a sudden', notes Davis sardonically, 'everybody seemed to want anger, coolness, hipness, and real clean, mean sophistication'.

Yet, as *Miles* shows, this image of coolness as cynical detachment was anathema to Davis. The jazz critic Geoff Dyer once noted of Chet Baker that 'he put nothing of himself into the music he played.... He left a song feeling bereft'. Davis, by contrast, put his all into his music. He may have lacked the fire of Charlie Parker or Dizzy Gillespie but his work was no less engaging and urgent for that.

'I have always wanted to reach as many people as I can through my music', Davis writes in his autobiography. 'I have never thought that the music called "jazz" was ever meant to reach just a small group of people, or become a museum thing locked under glass like all the other dead things that were once considered artistic.' Take a listen again this Christmas to 'Birth of the Cool' or 'Milestones' and you'll know what he means.

## Alistair Ward chose

### **Too Loud a Solitude** by Bohumil Hrabal Andre Deutsch, £9.99 hbk

The first English translation of Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude* came out earlier this year. It is a hilarious addition to the literary anatomy of bureaucratic imbecility that has so obsessed East European writers from the time of Gogol.

A tale of Czech functionaries drawing from their sterile occupations the obsessions and philosophies with which to combat the hopelessness of life in seventies Czechoslovakia, the novel becomes a hymn to the cellars and sewers of communist

Prague. Its anti-hero, Hanta, is the operator of a public waste disposal unit located in one of the basements of the city. Part garbage man and part censor, Hanta is a spiritual 'Good Soldier Schweik' who thrives upon the waste and dilapidation of society and draws his creative inspiration from the process of destruction.

Hanta's complete identification with his job can be seen as a comment upon the spiritual decay of Stalinism and its implication of the whole of society in a culture of corruption and inertia. But it is also a celebration of the profligacy of human invention, and the joys and burdens of the rich central European heritage.

Hanta skims from the literature in transit to his disposal unit an untutored education that serves as fodder for his drunken and picaresque forays into the history of thought. This intimate intellectual

life both invigorates and exhausts him. His private library, reclaimed from the waste and precariously perched above his bed, threatens to topple over and crush him.

The entire artistic baggage of the past weighs down on Hanta like history upon his country. The mouldering and mice-eaten books that swamp Hanta's cellar aptly symbolise the suffocating cultural legacy of a society cut off from its perceived rightful connection within the tradition of mainstream European experience. Bureaucratic banality and the pressures of contact with the sublime in European culture combine to seal Hanta's nemesis and conclude this unforgettable parable of a society condemned by history to a state of limbo on the margins of the West.



## John Gibson chose

### **Darwin** by Adrian Desmond and James Moore Michael Joseph, £20 hbk

Billed as the definitive biography of Charles Darwin, this book certainly doesn't disappoint. As an antidote to superficial counterpositions of science and religion, what better book to read over the Christmas break?

Darwin's theory did more than that of any other scientist to secularise the scientific enterprise. Yet Darwin the man had more time for worms than politics, and the death of his daughter Annie did more to undermine his faith in a personal God than did evolution. When German materialists came to see their hero, Darwin made sure the Reverend Brodie Innes was in attendance lest anyone got the wrong idea.

Darwin responded to a warm letter from an American feminist by asserting that women were intellectually inferior to men. Although he had relatively liberal views for a man of his position at the time, Darwin had no doubt that blacks were of a lower race than whites. He looked favourably upon the views of his cousin Francis Galton, inventor (in 1883) of the term 'eugenics'. Worth a quarter of a million pounds at his death and buried in Westminster Abbey, Darwin was very much a man of the establishment.

This biography does more than establish that Darwin held some of the prejudices one would expect of a Victorian gent. Desmond and Moore argue convincingly that Darwin sat on his own theory for 20 years—from 1839 to 1859, when *The Origin of the Species* was published—because he was fearful of the political reaction. Even though his own theory of natural evolution was based on analogies with Malthusian social doctrine which political radicals detested, evolution was the radicals' rallying cry against the old order. Darwin knew on which side his bread was buttered.

By the late 1850s, with the Chartists defeated and the working class quiescent, Darwin felt more comfortable publishing his theories. Victorian society was ready for evolution. Paradoxical as it may seem, however, chance mutation and natural

selection were never properly appreciated. And as time went by, Darwin himself retreated from the purity of his evolutionary mechanism, a mechanism strikingly confirmed by modern science. Desmond and Moore are at their weakest explaining this aspect of the development of Darwinism, so there's something to ponder over while appreciating the fine biographical detail of their study.

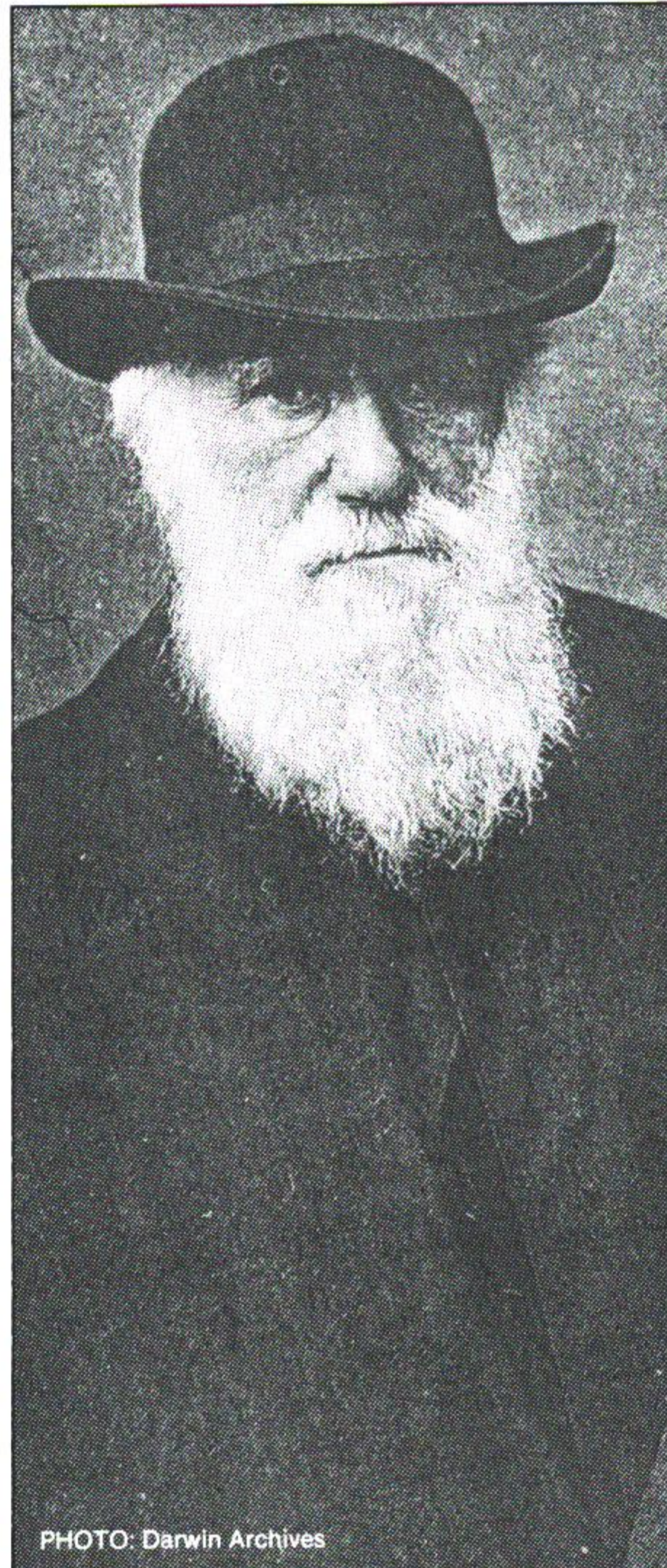


PHOTO: Darwin Archives

## Ann Bradley chose

### **Sex and Politics: the Family and Morality in the Thatcher Years** by Martin Durham Macmillan, £35 hbk, £10.99 pbk

Martin Durham's new book will come as a pleasant shock to anyone who has battled wearily through the obscure postmodern tracts that currently pass for feminist critique.

*Sex and Politics* is well researched, clearly written and highly readable. Durham examines the establishment's response to pressure from the moral right on the issues of abortion, contraception for the under-16s, embryo research, pornography and sex education. He concludes, correctly, that while the Tories and the moral campaigners share common values, their interests often diverge. This is why the government seems to 'offer so much' yet 'deliver so little' on moral issues. In other words, Durham explains why there are moral panics but not a consistent moral offensive.

Durham's examination of the 'moral campaigns' shows how they cannot be seen as simply Tory campaigns. He claims they have adapted to, and incorporated many aspects of feminist thought, particularly the fear of technology and scientific development. He also shows how the government, although pro-family, has at times worked against the 'moral lobby' on issues such as abortion, sex education and contraceptive provision.

*Sex and Politics* is a worthwhile read because, unlike so many contemporary books on 'women's issues', it addresses a problem that confronts society as well as political thinkers. The rise of anti-liberal thought and the demonisation of the 'permissive sixties' are issues that we are increasingly forced to deal with. Often these debates coalesce around discussions of the family and sexuality. Martin Durham's study of the moral lobby—the influences on them, and the influence they have—is a useful contribution to our understanding of the development of bourgeois thought and the tensions within it.

This book is worth a million discourses on the epistemology of feminisms. Take time out to read it.



**Kirsten Cale chose**

**The Addams Family Album**

by Charles Addams

Hamish Hamilton, £10.99 hbk

'Dearest...a myriad delightful little slugs have appeared, as if from nowhere, on the rotten stump in the belladonna patch and this morning I noticed snake eggs hatching by the pool....'

Welcome to the bleak world of cartoonist Charles Addams, where, behind the gate marked

'Beware of the Thing', lurk the lank-haired, vampish Morticia, her pug-nosed brilliantined spouse Gomez, the disturbed creature in the stairwell and various diabolical children, all pictured here in their full ghoulish glory. Forget the knockabout TV spin-offs, here is the sly black humour of the original Addams family.

In Addams' world, even the children have a certain grim appeal, especially the small boy who transmogrifies into a monster after imbibing the contents of his Chem-O-Kit, and the psychopathic Addams Junior. But best of all is the portly black-eyed Uncle Fester, who showers in scalding water, chuckles wickedly during tear-jerking movies, and

derives malicious pleasure from poisoning the neighbour's pets and waving overtaking cars into the path of oncoming lorries.

So, when family life is getting too much this Christmas, brick your sister up in the cellar, padlock Uncle Eimar in his cell, bolt the baby back into its pram, and take the Fester in your life to the movies.

*The Addams Family*, starring Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia and Christopher Lloyd, opens in London cinemas this month.



**James Heartfield chose**

**The Sixth Day**

by Primo Levi

Michael Joseph, £13.99 hbk,

Abacus, £4.99 pbk

When I was an art student I kept a dream diary, after the surrealists, writing down the night's imaginings as soon as I woke up so none would be forgotten. By-passing the subconscious censor that forgets most of what we dream led to one unexpected finding. Most of my dreams were not about social life. There were dreams of going to school with no trousers on, and even symbolic dreams of flying and so on, but by far the most common were dreams just about sensations.

Most of my dreaming life was spent walking upon deserts of broken rich tea biscuits, my nose full of the stench of rotting seaweed and salt water, with the sensation of gently running my thumb down a mile long razor blade. So much of experience is simply sensational that it is not

surprising that the subconscious should want to mull it over, though why the conscious mind should want to blot it out is less clear.

Primo Levi is the only author I know to integrate the world of sensation into that of human interaction. His posthumously published *The Sixth Day* features smells, feelings and observations, as central to its short stories as any human protagonist. Levi is probably best known for his writing on the Nazi death camps, of which he was a survivor. *If This is a Man* and *The Truce* are compelling, autobiographical works which overcome all mystification of the final solution without ever avoiding its human dimensions. Some of the scenes in these stories are drawn from Levi's wartime experiences and are the more lively for it.

However, for me it was always the other side of Levi's life that yielded the greatest returns for his writing. He was a research chemist who could make that experience live and sing with its triumphs and disasters. The worlds of trade, family and politics are recorded to the point of tedium in our novels. But science and technology are a closed book which Primo Levi first opened with *The Periodic Table*. Who can describe the heroic

isolation of a freak result in a record of the ingredients of a paint manufacturer and make it interesting? Levi did in the *The Periodic Table*. Now, in *The Sixth Day*, we return to fiction imbued with the life of research and technology.

That's not to say that *The Sixth Day* is like *Look and Learn*. Levi uses his careful skills of observation to sucker us into believing the absurd and horrific. Gothic tales of Nazi doctors' genetic experimentation acquire force from Levi's elegant report-like style. Technology becomes the moment of the imagination as we read of the possibilities of a perfect copier that reproduces objects in three dimensions, tempting its owner to reproduce his wife. A celestial scientific commission sits to consider the evolution of intelligence on the earth, opting for a kind of wise bird before providence intervenes. From the dry accumulation of observed facts we seem to be leaping suddenly into human judgments. Levi's strength is that he sidesteps the obvious route to the human, taking it by surprise from the vantage point of the natural sciences.

## Alan Harding chose

### Our Age: the Generation that Made Postwar Britain

by Noel Annan

Fontana, £7.99 pbk

The life of Noel Annan is a quintessential example of Britain's intellectual elite. He served on the Joint Intelligence Staff of the War Cabinet Office. He supervised the development of political parties in the British Zone in Germany. He was elected Provost of King's, Cambridge at the age of 39. He gave his name to a major review of the future of broadcasting in 1977.

The *Our Age* of the title refers to Annan's own generation: those who were educated at Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics between 1919 and 1951. The term was coined by the Oxford don Maurice Bowra who meant by it,

'those who make their times significant and form opinion'. It was an intellectual elite to which you graduated through birth, intelligence and connection, a process which Annan himself chronicled in his seminal article 'The Intellectual Aristocracy' (1956).

The story of *Our Age* is how this generation reacted against the inherited certainties of their fathers who came of age before the Great War. Annan documents a generation and a ruling class getting used to failure and decline and evolving an ethos through which it would continue to exercise power on new terms.

Let Annan himself give you a flavour of what this meant: 'The experience or memories of capitalism's cataclysm, the Depression of 1931, ate into our consciousness.... Collectivism seemed to be a way of making life safer for everyone and less susceptible to the roulette wheel of the market.' (p17) And a few pages later: 'The brave new world was to be a pluralist world. People should acknowledge that there was no single model

of belief and behaviour, such as that of the gentleman in bygone days. Freedom and tolerance demanded that each must find his own level and ideals.' (p19)

In the postwar world the authentic economic spirit of classical liberal laissez-faire became live and let live in social practice and social policy. Annan recognises that this concession to relativism was a hostage to fortune: 'No wonder the dons were so upset and looked so ridiculous when their own authority was challenged in the seventies by student militants.' (p20) He concludes his thought perhaps with the benefit of hindsight but still on a perceptive note. 'Did we never consider how trivial and insignificant our world was? Waugh, Leavis and Oakeshott, each in his own voice, taught our successors how to rough us up.' (p20)

You will find Annan's assumed air of superiority at the very least galling, but you will find his insider story of an epoch which has just ended compulsive reading.



## Charles Longford chose

### My Father's Glory and My Mother's Castle

by Marcel Pagnol

Picador, £6.99 pbk

If you feel, like I do, that Christmas in Britain is a thoroughly deplorable and depressing experience, best avoided or endured by inebriation, then getting away from it all for the price of a novel is an offer you cannot refuse. *My Father's Glory and My Mother's Castle* are two volumes of childhood memories by the author of the acclaimed films *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, which will transport you to the sun-baked Provençal countryside and evoke memories of your own youth.

Pagnol's lucid, humorous and warm recollections of the happy summer days he spent with his family while exploring the Provençal countryside evoke not only the natural beauty of this region of France but the essence of childhood itself. It is this which makes these two volumes such a literary treat. Pagnol's prose summons up the mystery, pain, wonder and adventure of the child's world.

Above all, Pagnol captures what he terms 'the wonderful gift of ubiquity' and its egocentricity. So, when deciding to run away from his family to avoid returning to the city, he asks himself what would happen to his 'beloved family' and what they would be doing in his absence. His answer expresses the universality of childhood: 'That was something I only vaguely thought of, for I was not at all certain that they could exist in my absence; or if they persisted in living on, it must be an unreal and, therefore, painless life.'

*My Father's Glory and My Mother's Castle* is an unembarrassed celebration of the optimism that springs from experimentation and discovery. Indulge yourself over Christmas.

## Andrew Calcutt chose

### Into the Badlands: a Journey through the American Dream

by John Williams

Paladin, £5.99 pbk

'It seems to me that crime writers are the most astute chroniclers of America today.' Thus John Williams introduces his journey across the United States to meet the men (and one woman) behind the best contemporary crime novels.

First stop Miami, Florida. Williams ignores the advice of bigoted Burt the taxi driver ('this car doesn't speak Spanish') and rents a room in South Miami Beach. Safely installed in a Spanish-speaking hotel, Williams goes out to meet campaigning newspaper columnist Carl Hiaasen, author of black comedy cocaine-and-corruption thrillers such as *Tourist Season* and *Skin Tight*. Another interviewee is James Hall, boatman, fisherman and the Ernest Hemingway of crime writing.

On to New Orleans, where Williams meets up with James Lee Burke, creator of laid-back cop Dave Robicheaux. Author and character have both fought a hard battle with the booze. Next stop New Mexico. Williams chats with Tony Hillerman, whose novels, featuring Native American policeman Jim Chee, are set among the 'Navajos [who] can't afford to think Green'. A short hop in an aeroplane and Williams is interviewing James Ellroy, who seems almost as over-the-edge as his Los Angeles novels. Williams is more *sympatico* with Gar Anthony Haywood, whose characters inhabit the same gangland as rappers NWA.

Williams keeps moving, introducing more cities and their crime-writing chroniclers. The bleak novels of Joe Gores portray San Francisco as a city with a love-hangover. James Crumley peoples the bars of Montana with tough-guy romantics in the Philip Marlowe mould. Marlowe would probably get short shrift from VI Warshawski, the female

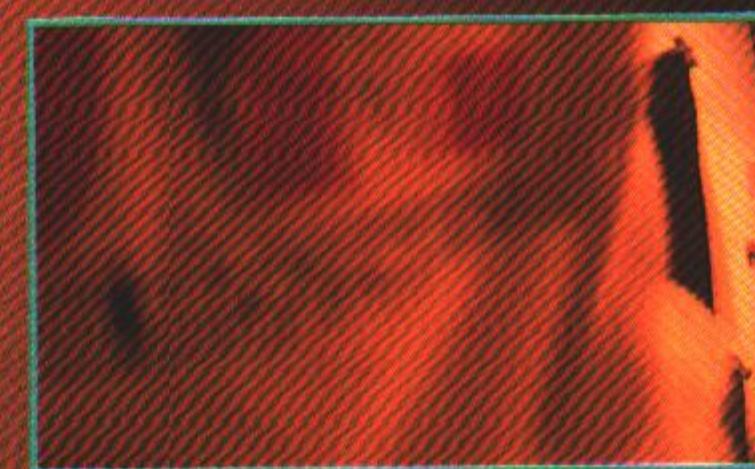
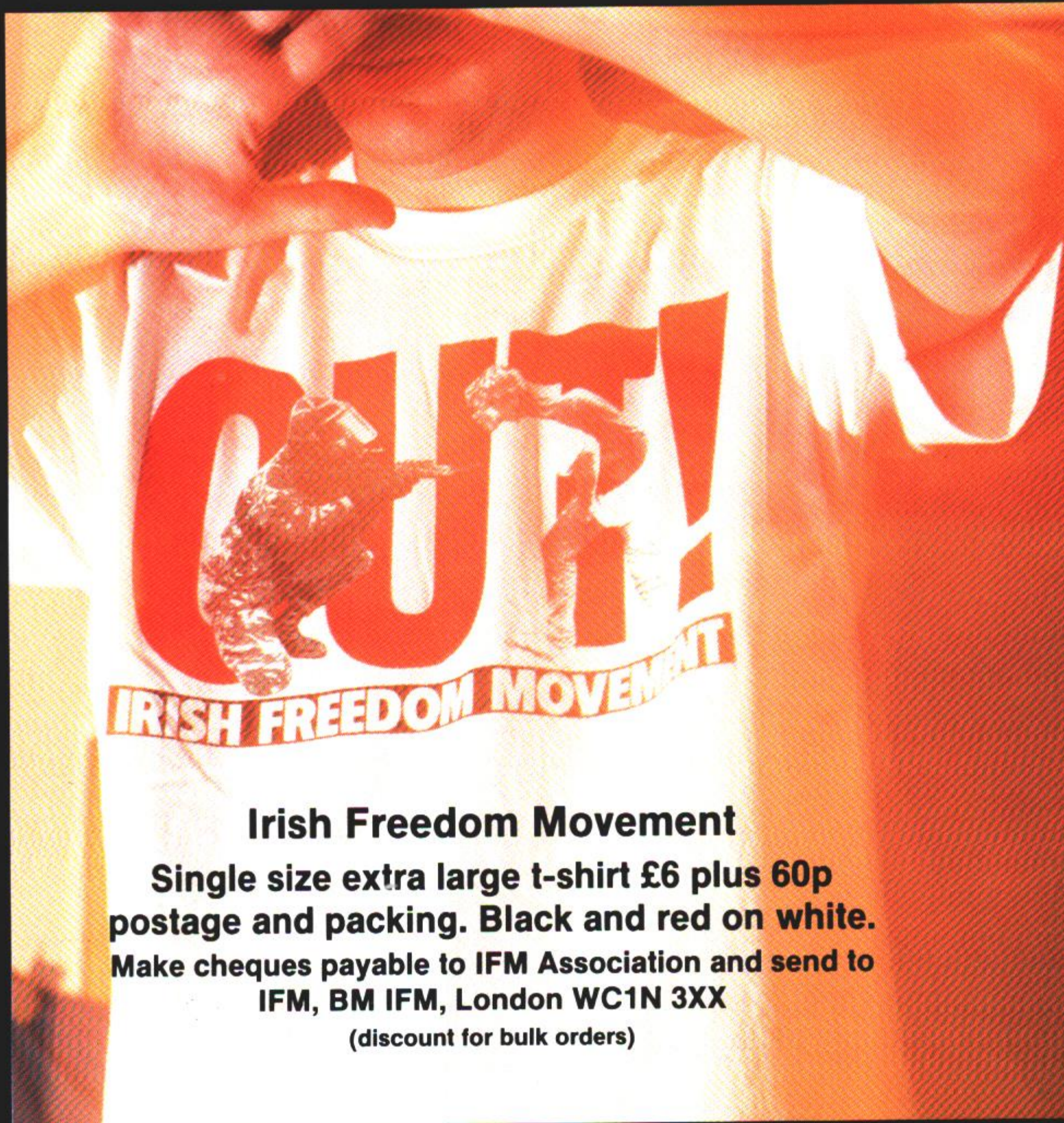
private eye created by Chicago feminist Sara Paretsky. The sharpest operator of them all is jazz-lover Elmore Leonard, known as 'the Dickens of Detroit'. Williams says of Leonard: 'if he played poker they'd call him Doc and you'd be ill-advised to compete.'

Boston lawyer and author George V Higgins (unlike Leonard, he doesn't like being categorised as a crime writer) comes across as a great manipulator, using patrician social graces to embarrass Williams. Now living in New York, Joseph Koenig is still coming down from the Haight-Ashbury high of 1967-68. Andrew Vachss knows the seediest side of the Big, Rotten Apple. His fiction combines radical social work with a survivalist ethos.

Williams has a good feel for the relationship between writer and subject matter. Subtitled 'A Journey through the American Dream', his literary peregrination also gives a sense of the question of race as the recurring nightmare of American society. Sometimes Williams lapses into diary-type meanderings of the after-that-I-cleaned-my-teeth variety; and occasionally he falls into the habits of an old-fashioned radical, championing authentic grassroots crime writing against the rarefied atmosphere of the avant garde. A more penetrating critical approach would recognise that both genres have their limitations—often self-inflicted.

However, *Badlands* is a highly enjoyable ride through the ghetto of crime-writing, and we must at least be grateful to Williams for answering a question that has puzzled a whole generation: whatever happened to the hippies who couldn't stomach re-entry into corporate America? Answer: they became some of the best crime writers in the United States.





### **Irish Freedom Movement**

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