

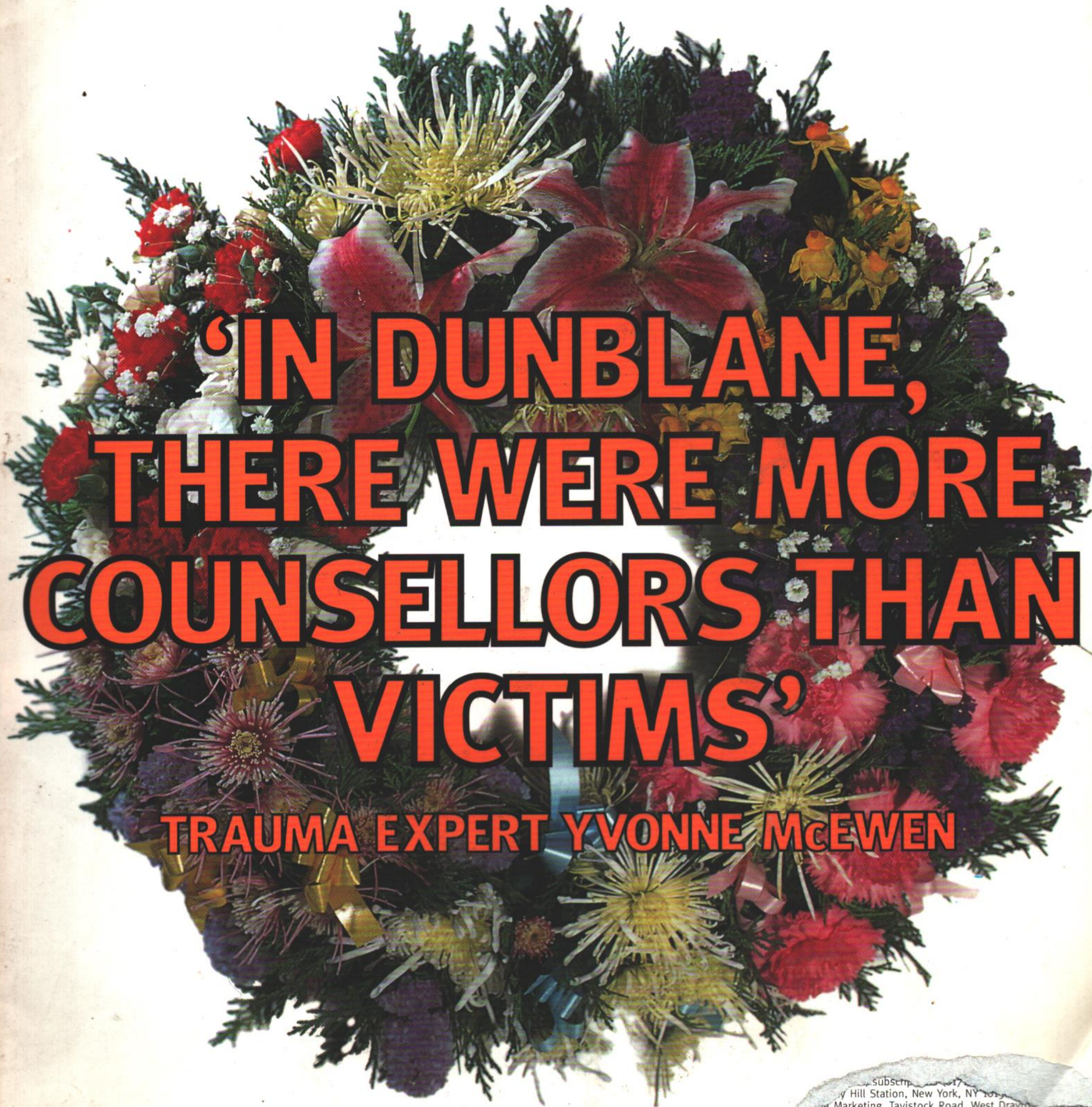
LIVING MARXISM LM99 | UK £2.50 APRIL 1997 | US\$6 DM9 FF27 IR£2.50

● **STAND UP FOR THE RIGHT TO BE OFFENSIVE**

● **SHOULD FAILED STUDENTS SUE?**

LM99

The mag ITN wants to gag



'IN DUNBLANE, THERE WERE MORE COUNSELLORS THAN VICTIMS'

TRAUMA EXPERT YVONNE McEWEN

● **SEND IN THE CLONES: IN DEFENCE OF DOLLY**



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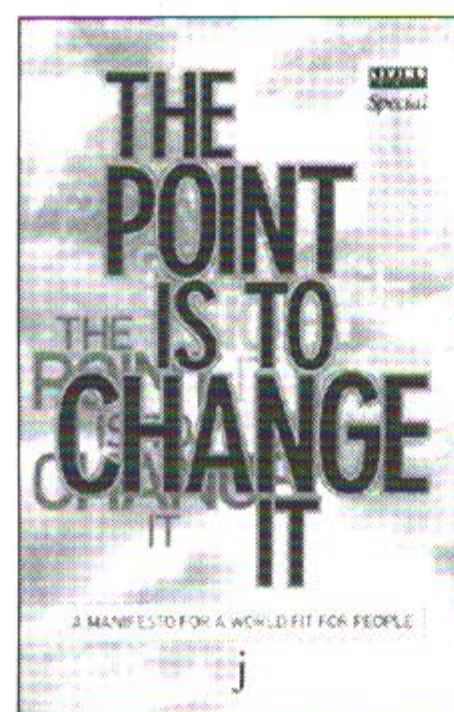
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As the general election campaign begins, everybody now seems to agree that there is no alternative. **THIS IS IT.**

THE POINT IS TO CHANGE IT

A MANIFESTO

FOR A WORLD FIT FOR PEOPLE



'Our reply to all of the pleas for caution and restraint is that until now humanity has only learned to crawl. We still live in a world that is not fit for people. Our problem is not that we are too ambitious, but that we continually hesitate about experimenting with new solutions. We need a revolution in outlook, so that we can continue to advance and give new scope to human creativity.'

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MICK HUME

Editor



STAND UP FOR THE RIGHT

ITN'S UNPRECEDENTED BID TO GAG *LM* magazine, and silence discussion of our story about its award-winning pictures of a Bosnian camp, is a sign of the censorious times (full story, p8). The attempt by a media giant to slap a gagging order on an outspoken magazine fits into a wider pattern of controlling public discussion. Today there appear to be broader and tighter rules than ever on what you can and cannot say.

In response to this troubling state of affairs, it is surely time that all of us who are concerned about the freedom of the press and the integrity of the truth should insist upon our right to go against the grain, to bust social taboos, to blaspheme in the face of all religiosity and outrage conventional opinion. In short, we ought to stand up for the right to be offensive.

Ours is a mistrustful age, when few seem confident that important issues can be satisfactorily resolved through open debate in the court of public controversy. Instead, most influential people want to impose some kind of limits on what can legitimately be said—and nobody seems keener to curtail public discussion than the liberal establishment, which fears the base instincts of 'the mob' more than it fears the censor.

The most effective way to get an opinion outlawed these days is to claim that it is 'offensive' either to 'decent people' in general or to some vulnerable minority, whether that be Christian filmgoers or bereaved parents. This obsession with sanitising society by banning offensive views reflects a patronising not-in-front-of-the-children attitude to public discussion.

The notion that 'You cannot say *that*' now informs many areas of public life. News journalists, for example, are expected to follow a new etiquette and only report the 'right' side of a story. Those who break the rules can expect to have their reports spiked before publication or rubbished afterwards.

Over the past year, the ritualised coverage of Dunblane has been particularly important in setting a worrying new standard for judging what is acceptable journalism. Nobody is supposed to say anything which could possibly be accused of offending the parents or otherwise taking the name of Dunblane in vain.

We have noted before how even such a respected TV journalist as Kate Adie was slammed by her BBC bosses for the 'inappropriate' tone of her Dunblane reports—that is, for reporting the hard facts of the story rather than indulging the passions of the morality play which the media wanted to stage on the back of that tragedy. Since then, things have gone further still. On the recent march against gun controls in London, one national newspaper reporter told an *LM* supporter that, although he would write it up as the biggest political demonstration of the year, he knew in advance that story would never see the light of day once 'the Adie factor' came into play in the editorial offices of his paper.

The entire media world seems to be being brought more closely under the control of the you-can't-say-that club. It is coming to something when a figure like Danny Baker, who was presumably hired by BBC Radio 5 Live as a controversial character, can be summarily sacked from his football phone-in show for being controversial. Baker's crime was not only

them, but to demand that the offender be sacked as an MP and so silenced for good.

Wherever you look these days, it seems that somebody is telling somebody else what they cannot say. There are booksellers who won't sell 'offensive' books about Bernard Manning, advertising authorities who won't authorise 'offensive' adverts in which Harry Enfield belches too loudly, and iron codes of conduct which seek to rule out all manner of 'offensive' behaviour everywhere from the classroom and the office to the football stadium and the mock-Irish pub.

One consequence of wrapping society in such a straitjacket is that debate is being restricted to an increasingly thin and barren patch of centre ground, where the terms of discussion are framed through the mainstream media. The narrow parameters of the general election debate were already in place long before John Major announced the date. The competing parties will be given plenty of scope to show who can be hardest on naughty children, wayward parents and public spending.

The battle between *LM* and ITN captures

to be offensive to that oppressed minority, the football referees community, but to repeatedly insist on air that he was not interested in hearing or broadcasting the 'other'—that is the official—side of the story. And that is a hanging offence in the nineties media.

IN THE SPHERE OF POLITICS, TOO, THERE are more moves afoot to outlaw unacceptably 'offensive' opinions. A Blair government is already committed to making 'Holocaust denial' illegal. Several motions submitted to the Easter conference of the National Union of Students called for the British National Party to be banned altogether, to prevent it broadcasting its far-right views during the general election campaign. And whenever a politician makes some risqué remarks—as with Tory David Evans' recent outburst of racist misogyny—their opponents are likely not just to roast

But anybody who wants to argue for more freedom, more pay or more roads need not even bother applying for airtime.

There is another side to the censorious atmosphere of you-can't-say-that. If you are within the bounds of fashionable opinion, on what is deemed to be the morally correct side of the fence, it appears that you can say more or less whatever you like, regardless of the facts. You can now get away with murder—or at least, with murdering the truth.

Look at the way in which the BBC recently broadcast a dramatised account of a child being sexually abused by every adult she came into contact with, and advertised it as 'a true story'. When evidence came to light suggesting that it was no such thing, those responsible simply shrugged off the accusations as offensive to the victims, and insisted that they were in the right. And since they were endorsing, rather than

TO BE OFFENSIVE

questioning, contemporary society's unhealthy and sensationalised obsession with child abuse, they got away with it. A similarly cavalier attitude to the facts is evident among many of those broadcasting the 'right' moral messages on everything from ecstasy to Aids.

WHICH BRINGS US TO BOSNIA, AND *LM* magazine's battle with ITN and its allies over Thomas Deichmann's story 'The Picture that Fooled the World'. To them, our coverage is deeply offensive simply because it goes beyond the rigid moral world-view which they imposed on the complexities of the Yugoslav civil war—a world-view in which the Serbs have always been the cause of evil, and Western intervention the source of salvation.

The smear campaign run against *LM* by the twinned *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers sums up this outlook well. They have made no attempt to examine or refute the hard evidence presented by Thomas Deichmann, which shows exactly how the pictures which ITN shot at Trnopolje camp on 5 August 1992 fooled the

broader issues at stake today. We have to be prepared to go against the grain to get at the truth as we understand it, and to speak as we find without fear of causing offence or being proscribed. More and more, that will mean coming into conflict with the dominant outlook of our you-can't-say-that era. Which is why we need to take a stand in defence of the right to be offensive.

Historically, if a few had not insisted upon their right to be offensive, humanity would still be somewhere in the caves. Every social or scientific advance worth having, from contraception and the railways to votes for women and legalised abortion, began by outraging the conventions of its time. Offending the existing prejudices of public opinion has always been the first step towards popularising a new outlook.

IN THE STULTIFYING ATMOSPHERE OF today, there is more reason than ever to stand up for the right to be offensive. As the non-debate of the election campaign demonstrates

world. Instead they have simply retorted that we could not wish to say such offensive things unless we had some evil ulterior motive.

The *Guardian* summarised our anti-interventionist stand on the Balkans—'According to *LM*, the West caused the war by intervening to promote its own interests'—with an air of incredulity, as if simply pointing out that we had opposed intervention against the Serbs was proof enough that we were mad, bad or both. The facts need not come into it. But, as my reply to their hatchet-job asked, suppose they were right to imply that I am a 'Communist-Fascist-Serbomaniac-Alien-From-the-X-Files'; what difference would any of that make to the truth about ITN's Trnopolje report, as revealed by the video tape and other compelling evidence which Thomas Deichmann has shown?

In many ways, the battle over *LM*'s story on ITN's Bosnian camp pictures captures the

by default, there is a crying need now for a proper discussion of possible alternatives for our stagnating society. Yet at the very moment when we need open minds, the insecure authorities are seeking to close down debate, control information and outlaw any opinion that can be branded 'extreme' or 'offensive'.

Upholding the right to be offensive also means refusing to outlaw things which we may not like. But then, haven't we got the confidence and the arguments to take on fringe racists and Holocaust apologists in the public arena? Or are we so pathetic that we need to hide behind the law and demand bans that can only play into the censors' hands?

If *LM* magazine has a mission, it is to publish and be damned—damned certain, that is, that nobody else's etiquette is going to dictate what we can or cannot say. The offence is fully intended.

LM

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the broader issues at stake today

The picture that fooled the world

I found your story on the ITN pictures from Trnopolje camp fascinating ('The picture that fooled the world', February). I know a lot about Yugoslavia. Yet it has been next to impossible to make one's voice heard above the propaganda racket. Only politically correct views are ever accepted.

I recall at the time something fishy about the TV pictures. The opening shot showed several men. It was summer and they were without shirts. Most of them had their bellies flopping over their belts. Then in less than a second, the camera zoomed in on one man who had ribs sticking out—and that was all we saw.

It would only need ITN to show what they have already put on TV, but slowly—frame by frame, and you would see what they have done.

JOE GERRATT
(e-mail)

What have Penny Marshall, Jeremy Irvin, Ed Vulliamy and ITN got to hide? The news blackout of the ITN libel case against *LM* clearly indicates that they are trying to hide something. They should show the film in full and respond fully to the specific issues that Thomas Deichmann raised in his article.

NURJAHAN MALI *Birmingham*

Thank you for being courageous and honest in spite of all the anti-Serbian hysteria.

MIRJANA PETROVIC
(e-mail)

The launch event of The Off the Fence Fund which I attended in London in March was the most exciting political meeting I have been to in donkey's years. Five hundred people, all won over by Thomas Deichmann's clear evidence, standing up (literally) for a free press by giving the *LM* editor, Mick Hume, a standing ovation. In an age when nobody seems willing to fight for anything much, it is good to be a part of something where people are moved and angry and sticking to their guns. Keep the faith and I am sure that the ITN bully boys and their libel orders can be beaten.

KATHY *London*

There is no doubt that the pictures and reports from Trnopolje helped galvanise world opinion against the Bosnian Serbs. Thank God they did. Until then, some of us reporting on the conflict (I made several trips on behalf of the *Sunday Times*) had difficulty in getting our newsdesks to give sufficient weight to the reports of atrocities that were beginning to emerge.

Thomas Deichmann's argument that the Trnopolje coverage created a false impression is utterly wrong and needs emphatic rebuttal. One can only wonder at his motives. It was not the barbed wire at Trnopolje which made the coverage so important—it was the emaciated state of some of those shown. Why were they in that state? Because they had been forced to flee their homes and deprived of food by their captors.

Frankly, I would not be in the least surprised to learn that some inmates had surrendered themselves to the camp authorities. In their homes, or on the street, they would have been in mortal danger from drugged and drunken paramilitaries and troops. But to pretend that they were entering anything other than captivity is a gross distortion of the facts. These camps were an integral part of an overall strategy of ethnic cleansing. There is no need to regard claims made by Bosnian Serb officials with the local Red Cross with anything more than the utmost contempt.

No one is claiming that the Bosnian Serbs were embarked on a Nazi style policy of extermination—although at times it looked perilously like it. No one would claim that the camps were death camps. What one can say with complete certainty is that the Bosnian Muslims and to a lesser extent the Bosnian Croats were subjected to appalling atrocities by the Bosnian Serbs. And any attempt to minimise that fact is despicable.

ANDREW JM HOGG *London SW6*

Loony Toons

In response to Dr Michael Fitzpatrick's ill-researched and somewhat nasty diatribe ('No balls', February), Kevin Keegan was and always will be an icon for the black

and white religious of Newcastle because he cared for the club and its following as much as we loved him. Facing miffed fans at the gates of St James' Park in the aftermath of the sale of Andy Cole was not something he had to do, nor something probably any other manager would have done. To underestimate Keegan's stress, scorned by Dr Fitzpatrick, would be to misunderstand his unique importance to Newcastle United.

A more noble professional than Kenny Dalglish does not exist. He took on an awesome responsibility when in the aftermath of Hillsborough he drove from funeral to funeral to pay his respects. Instead of collapsing into post-traumatic stress disorder, Dalglish, the team and the city rose up and won the FA Cup that same year. Dalglish resigned from Blackburn Rovers citing disillusionment with the club, not stress, and for Fitzpatrick to attribute the appointment at Newcastle of one of the most successful managers of all time to the maxim 'nothing succeeds like failure' is plainly absurd.

Why does Gascoigne belong to today's 'images of despondency and disillusionment', when players such as Greaves, who pissed his career up the wall following *stress* at being left out of the World Cup winning side, are conveniently forgotten, and George Best, genius and waster, apparently belongs to both eras?

SAM KENWORTHY
University of Kent at Canterbury

Dr Michael Fitzpatrick was a little hard on Kevin Keegan. After assembling a team costing millions, Keegan said he resigned because he felt he could take the team 'no further'; results at the time seemed to confirm this. Keegan never stated that stress was the reason. It was the media which focused on the 'stress' of managing a side like Newcastle United.

It seems that Keegan's departure was too much for some people. The *Guardian* reported that it 'led to a massive rise in calls to the local Samaritans'. When members of the Toon Army appear not to have the stomach for the

highs and lows of football, the discussion around 'stress' really does need to be questioned.

JON BRYAN
Newcastle upon Tyne

I agree with Dr Fitzpatrick's learned remarks, which I take as medical support for the proposition that we should forget all about this post-traumatic counselling bollocks and endorse the pull-yourself-together-man attitude advocated by Manchester United fans (and players!) singing 'Cheer up Kevin Keegan' when we won the Double last season (again) and Newcastle won nothing (ditto).

FRED THE RED *Manchester*

The air that I breathe

Keith McCabe wants 'the freedom that comes with an open road and a well-tuned engine' ('Car trouble', December/January). Unfortunately this is not a freedom that all of us can have. There is simply too little road space, and too many cars. His scorn at the preoccupation of environmentalists with PM_{10s} shows his disregard for those around him (particularly asthma sufferers).

As a cyclist I have no problem with 'autophobia'. The freedom of the open road is also a freedom to pollute the air that pedestrians and cyclists have to breathe. I note that Keith McCabe is a transport planner. Is he afraid that in the autophobic future there will be no roads left to plan? As for there being a need for 'someone to defend the Audi, the Volvo and the Renault', what about defending the right to breathable air?

ROB EWING
(e-mail)

Towering technology

While Penny Lewis' article in defence of Norman Foster's Millennium Tower ('Carry on stormin', Norman', March) was a useful fillip in the battle against low aspirations in architecture, there are some subtleties to the sustainability debate which are problematic to address by simply lauding technology. Paradoxically, it is the sustainability lobby who

promote technology most vociferously: the technology of energy management systems, of photovoltaics, of wind turbines, of heat exchangers etc. Ken Yean himself has been identified as promoting 'buildings with conscience'. The fact that everyone starts the discussion with a nod in the direction of sustainability means that the natural environment is prioritised every time. We have to try to reclaim the use of technology as a developmental model rather than a values-based social contract.

AUSTIN WILLIAMS

Newcastle upon Tyne

Holy Dunblane

The way I interpreted your coverage ('Thou shalt not take the name of Dunblane in vain', February) is that you object to the status of 'Dunblane' as a kind of sacred word which can only be spoken in a tone of respect. But what is so objectionable about that? Surely when society identifies new sacred words it brings people together by identifying important values and beliefs that are held in common.

JAMES DOWNEY Northampton

Carry on cloning

Many of the reports about the cloning of sheep bear more resemblance to an episode of the *X-Files* than a well-researched presentation of the facts. Nothing has been said about the enormous potential benefits of being able to produce high quality, disease resistant animals without the need for the genetic parents to be alive. Cloning animals, as I understand it, gives us the ability to reproduce an exact copy of an exemplary animal. Radically improving the quality and health of animals which end up as food is good news for us all.

DANIEL DELAHOYDE County Dublin

Half-baked nonsense

I am frequently motivated to read *LM* in defiance of the tendency for people to expose themselves only to those ideas consistent with their

pre-existing opinions. At least this was the case until I read the fulminating, half-baked nonsense offered by Ann Bradley in your December/January issue ('Aids or animals?').

For a professed Marxist to endorse (nay, eulogise) the pharmaceutical industry seems perverse. One does not expect the clear-sighted Marxist to fall so completely for the myth of the prejudice-free scientist. It is curious that even though the majority of left-wing sociologists are in the vanguard of scientific relativism, Bradley seems ignorant of this debate.

On exactly what grounds does Bradley exclude animals from the sphere of basic rights? Is the egocentricity and self-interest of man's perception of his position vis-à-vis the animal world to be tolerated? If Bradley wishes to invoke arguments for animal-based research she has chosen an unfortunate example. Chimpanzees, for example, have proven to be strikingly ineffective models for Aids (despite their biological similarity to us). Even in our closest evolutionary relative immune responses appear to be qualitatively different from our own.

JOHN C WALLER London W3

Minting it

I was taken aback by the price of one of the books, *A Labour Government—A Matter of Months?*, listed in James Heartfield's review of the literature on Tony Blair ('Reconstructed wanker', February). The price given was £960. Was this a misprint, or are your readers expected to mint their own money?

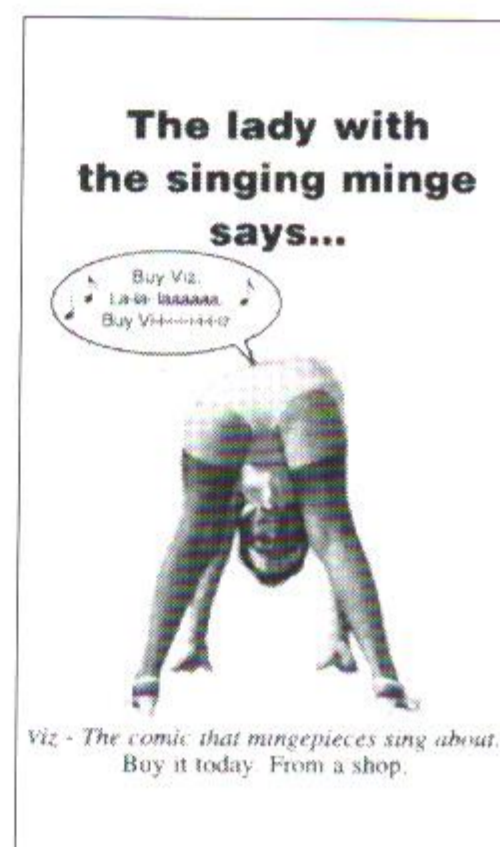
YASMIN THORPE Sheffield

* The price was right. As James Heartfield's review noted, the Henley Centre's 'cool assessment is addressed to capitalists—hence the price'. We would advise our readers that minting their own money is an ineffective way to bring down the market system.

The what's NOT on guide

GAGGED The Lady With The Singing Minge

The advertisement reads: 'The Lady With The Singing Minge says "Buy Viz. La-la-laaaaaa. Buy V-i-i-i-i-i-i-iz".' But you were not allowed to read it in the hip *NME*, which declined to run the unexpurgated advert for *Viz* comic, preferring a softer version featuring the lady with 'the talking arse'. What will the *NME* do if the all-girl rock bands Fanny or The Slits ever re-form? And why does it continue to publicise the exploits of offensive rock chick Courtney Love, the lady with the singing Hole? **NOT FOR SALE Knives and scissors** On display in Safeways supermarkets is a legal



The full text appeared in Q

notice. 'Offensive Weapons Act 1996. With effect from 1 January 1997 this Act comes into force and prohibits the sale of the following items to any person under 16 years: razor blades; knives including knives in cutlery sets, kitchen knives, Stanley knives, any kitchen set that includes knives, carving knife sets; scissors including manicure sets, sewing sets, secateurs; barbecue utensils; corkscrews; screwdriver sets and vegetable dicers.' Surely it is time for Richmal Crompton's Just William books to be banned for encouraging under 16s to play with contraband penknives. **OFF THE WALL Sun calendars** The Glasgow offices of a major news corporation are now bare of topless *Sun* calendars, after General Manager Colin Maclatchie acted upon a female employee's complaint that the pictures were offensive. The name of the company that banned Page 3? News International. And the publishers of the *Sun* and its 'offensive' calendars? Errr, News International. **CLOSEDOWN 'Swinging London' clubs** Barry Legg's private member's bill will empower local authorities to close down clubs where drugs are said to be sold or consumed. Wandsworth council is ahead of him, refusing to renew the license of Club UK and making other clubs in the South London borough close at 3am instead of 6am. 'This is supposed to be the coolest city in the world', said a spokesman for one local club, Sun City, 'yet they want us all tucked up in bed at midnight'. **OFF-AIR Danny Baker's** after-match football phone-in *The Baker Line* was dropped from Radio 5 Live after he was 'blatantly rude' to callers. Head of News and Current Affairs Tony Hall said that BBC management could not tolerate Baker suggesting that referees needed a good slap. No doubt all of the football fans who listen to Baker's shows were equally outraged by this slur against the breed they fondly call 'the bastard in the black'. **CUT SHORT Brass Eye** Fans of *Brass Eye*, the hoax current affairs show presented by Chris Morris, might have guessed something was amiss with the final programme in the series, when Channel 4 found time for an unscheduled animated film before the start of *ER*. Missing from the broadcast episode was a sketch about a musical based on the life of Peter Sutcliffe (stage name: the Yorkshire Ripper). Will *The Producers*, Mel Brooks' classic film about the musical 'Springtime for Hitler', be allowed on to TV screens again? **UNAVAILABLE? Lolita** Adrian Lyne's film of *Lolita* is slated for release in September. But there is still no UK distributor for the re-make of Vladimir Nabokov's story about Humbert Humbert and his sexual obsession with a 12-year old nymphet. The film's star Jeremy Irons said he would leave Britain if *Lolita* is not shown here. So long, luvvie!

WE WELCOME READERS' VIEWS AND CRITICISMS

Write to The Editor, LM, BM InformInc, London WC1N 3XX fax (0171) 278 9844.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length

THREATS, WRITS

ITN's desperate attempt to use the libel laws to gag *LM* magazine is setting new standards of censorship and scaremongering.

It is now clear that the issue at stake is not just the future of *LM* magazine. It is about the freedom of anybody to publish the truth as they understand it, instead of saying only that which will not offend the executives and lawyers of a mega-corporation.

ITN and its allies have gone further and further in their bid to suppress Thomas Deichmann's investigation into their award-winning pictures of a Bosnian camp, which was published in the February issue of *LM*. (For a summary of the story see over.)

- First ITN came for *LM* magazine. On 24 January ITN's high-powered lawyers, Biddle & Co, wrote to *LM* editor Mick Hume demanding that all copies of February's *LM* be 'pulped'. When Hume refused to comply, they issued writs for libel.

- Then ITN went for the rest of the media. They have threatened legal action against anybody who touches the story. On 20 February they issued a writ against the PR firm Two-Ten Communications (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Press Association) demanding damages and an apology in court, simply because the company had dared to distribute an *LM* press release announcing the publication of the February issue and the 'offending' article.

- Then ITN went for the print industry. On 24 February Biddle & Co wrote to the printers of *LM* magazine, Russell Press of Nottingham. It threatened them with possible legal action, not simply if they reprinted the alleged libel, but if they printed 'future issues of *LM*'.

The upshot of this campaign is that, even before the libel case ever gets to court, *LM* magazine cannot safely be printed anywhere in this country and faces the bank-breaking costs of a major legal battle.

Meanwhile the story of 'the pictures that fooled the world' has effectively been kept out of the

rest of the British media by ITN's blockade—sometimes with the willing connivance of the publication or programme concerned, other times at the point of a loaded libel writ.

Thomas Deichmann's story has been widely reported and debated in respected papers across Europe, including: in Germany, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Tagesspiegel*, *Freitag*, *Die Welt*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *Liepziger Volkszeitung* and *Konkret*; in Italy, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *L'Unita* and *Il Sole*; *Weltwoche* in Switzerland; *Wiener Standard* in Austria; Sweden's *Helsingborgs Dagblad*; and *De Groene Amsterdammer* in the Netherlands.



*LM*97 February and *LM*98 March

ITN's film

FIVE HUNDRED PACKED WESTMINSTER'S CHURCH HOUSE IN MARCH FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE OFF THE FENCE FUND TO DEFEND *LM* AGAINST ITN'S GAGGING ORDER. JOURNALIST THOMAS DEICHMANN (TOP LEFT) SHOWED THE ITN FOOTAGE THAT ITN DOESN'T WANT SEEN, WHILE GEORGE KENNEY, EX-US STATE DEPARTMENT (CENTRE RIGHT) EXPLAINED HOW THE PICTURES SPURRED AMERICAN INTERVENTION.

VOLUNTEERS QUEUED UP TO ANSWER *LM* EDITOR MICK HUME'S CALL TO DEFEND THE RIGHT TO TELL IT LIKE IT IS



AND VIDEOTAPE

Yet within Britain, the one country where the allegations made against ITN and its journalists ought to cause a national scandal, there has effectively been a conspiracy of silence. One exception to this is the 'liberal' *Guardian* group, which has put aside its own criticisms of the libel laws to launch a hysterical smear campaign against Deichmann and *LM*, with a nasty but nervous feature by Ed Vulliamy (*Observer*, 2 February) and a risible 'exposé' by a Vulliamy wannabe (*Guardian*, 12 March). It is a sure sign of how far things have gone when even a supposedly libelous scandal sheet like *Private Eye*

appears to come out in support of a libel action against *LM*.

There can be no doubt now that what ITN want is a crude gagging order, dressed up in the legal finery of a libel writ. Defamation is not the issue; if anybody has been defamed in this affair, it is Thomas Deichmann, who has been the subject of all kinds of lowlife character assassination.

Britain's libel laws are a system of censorship-for-hire, available to anybody so long as they have enough noughts at the end of their bank balance. ITN's pursuit of *LM* magazine is the latest example of how these laws can be used by a multi-million pound corporation in a bid to buy immunity from criticism through the courts.

What makes this case extraordinary, however, is that

this time the powerful body waving the gagging order is not McDonalds or John Major, but a major news organisation which prides itself on its global reputation for fearlessly reporting the truth.

ITN has already gone further than many media people could ever have imagined in its bid to gag *LM* and stop anybody else publishing embarrassing revelations about its award-winning pictures. Who knows how much further they will go? There is a powerful air of paranoia around the ITN bunker on the Gray's Inn Road, with staff being cross-examined and all enquiries about 'that' picture now being politically vetted by the press office.

Anybody who did not know better might think that they had something to hide.

This is not just *LM* magazine's battle. ITN's actions should alarm all who are concerned about the existence of a free press and of open discussion of controversial issues.

LM intends to fight every gagging order, libel writ and scare tactic that they might throw at us. We intend to stand by our story, and to stand by our principles. But we are going to need all the help that we can get.

Take a stand with *LM* in defence of the freedom of the press and the right to tell it like it is. Support the *LM* libel appeal, The Off the Fence Fund, in whatever way you can— see back cover advert for details. ●



THE PICTURE THAT FOOLED THE WORLD

This is a brief summary of Thomas Deichmann's revelations about the award-winning ITN pictures from Trnopolje camp. For the full story, see 'The Picture that Fooled the World' in the best-selling February issue of LM.



On 5 August 1992, a British news team led by Penny Marshall (ITN for *News at Ten*), with her cameraman Jeremy Irvin, and fellow reporters Ian Williams (ITN for *Channel 4 News*), and Ed Vulliamy (the *Guardian* newspaper) visited Trnopolje camp in the Bosnian Serb territory of northern Bosnia. They left with striking pictures of the emaciated Fikret Alic and other Bosnian Muslims apparently caged behind a barbed wire fence.

These pictures were broadcast around the world, and immediately became the defining image of the horrors of the war in Bosnia. In particular, the world media held up the picture of Fikret Alic behind the barbed wire as proof that the Bosnian Serbs were running a Nazi-style 'concentration camp', or even 'death camp', at Trnopolje. The impact of these images was to colour all subsequent coverage of the war, and to prove instrumental in persuading the American and British governments to adopt a more interventionist policy towards Bosnia.

But the image of Trnopolje as what British newspapers called 'Belsen '92' was misleading. Fikret Alic and the other Bosnian Muslims in the picture were not encircled by a barbed wire fence. There was no barbed wire fence surrounding Trnopolje camp. The barbed wire was only around a small compound next to the camp, and had been erected before the war to protect agricultural produce and machinery from thieves. Penny Marshall and her team got their famous pictures by filming the camp and the Bosnian Muslims from *inside* this compound, taking pictures through the compound fence of people who were actually standing *outside* the area fenced-in with barbed wire.

Whatever the British news team's intentions may have been, their pictures were falsely interpreted around the world as the first hard evidence of concentration camps and a 'Holocaust' in Bosnia. They became the pictures that fooled the world, the most potent symbol used to support a misleading interpretation not only of Trnopolje camp, but of the entire Yugoslav civil war.

Penny Marshall and Ian Williams have not called Trnopolje a concentration camp; nor did Ed Vulliamy at first, although he later seemed to remember that it was one after all. All three British journalists have expressed concern at the way in which others used their reports and pictures as 'proof' of a Nazi-style Holocaust.

Yet none of them has ever corrected the false interpretation placed upon those pictures, by telling the world the full story of that barbed wire fence and explaining how the famous Trnopolje pictures were actually taken. Why? Thomas Deichmann's question has been met by with libel writs, gagging orders, threats and slanderous insults, but no answers.

It is not the first time that ITN's coverage of recalls Eddie Veale

SANDY OF

The reports shown on ITN's bulletins on 6 August 1992 of the discovery of the Serb-run camps in northern Bosnia by ITN journalists were prepared and presented with the utmost professionalism and integrity, as would be expected of ITN.'

(ITN Statement on allegations in *LM* magazine, 23 January 1997)

Those seeking another example of 'the utmost professionalism and integrity...expected of ITN' might like to look back to one of ITN man Sandy Gall's famous reports from the frontline of the war in Afghanistan.

In February 1989, the Soviet armed forces were pulling out of Afghanistan after a 10-year occupation. The Western media confidently declared that the Soviet-backed Afghan government and its capital, Kabul, would now quickly fall to the Mujaheddin rebels. Several hundred international journalists descended on Peshawar, just across the Afghan border in Pakistan, to report what they expected to be the successful end of the Mujaheddin's war. Among them was the veteran ITN reporter Sandy Gall.

Gall was well-known for his crusading reports on the Mujaheddin's guerrilla war against the Soviet-backed government. Margaret Thatcher who, along with Ronald Reagan, was the most fervent supporter of the Afghan rebels, wrote the foreword to Gall's book *Afghanistan: Travels with the Mujaheddin*. In February 1989 Gall told the *Daily Mail*: 'I want to be there for the taking of Kabul. I want to go in with them for that. I see it as a mirror image of what happened in Saigon. I would like to be there.'

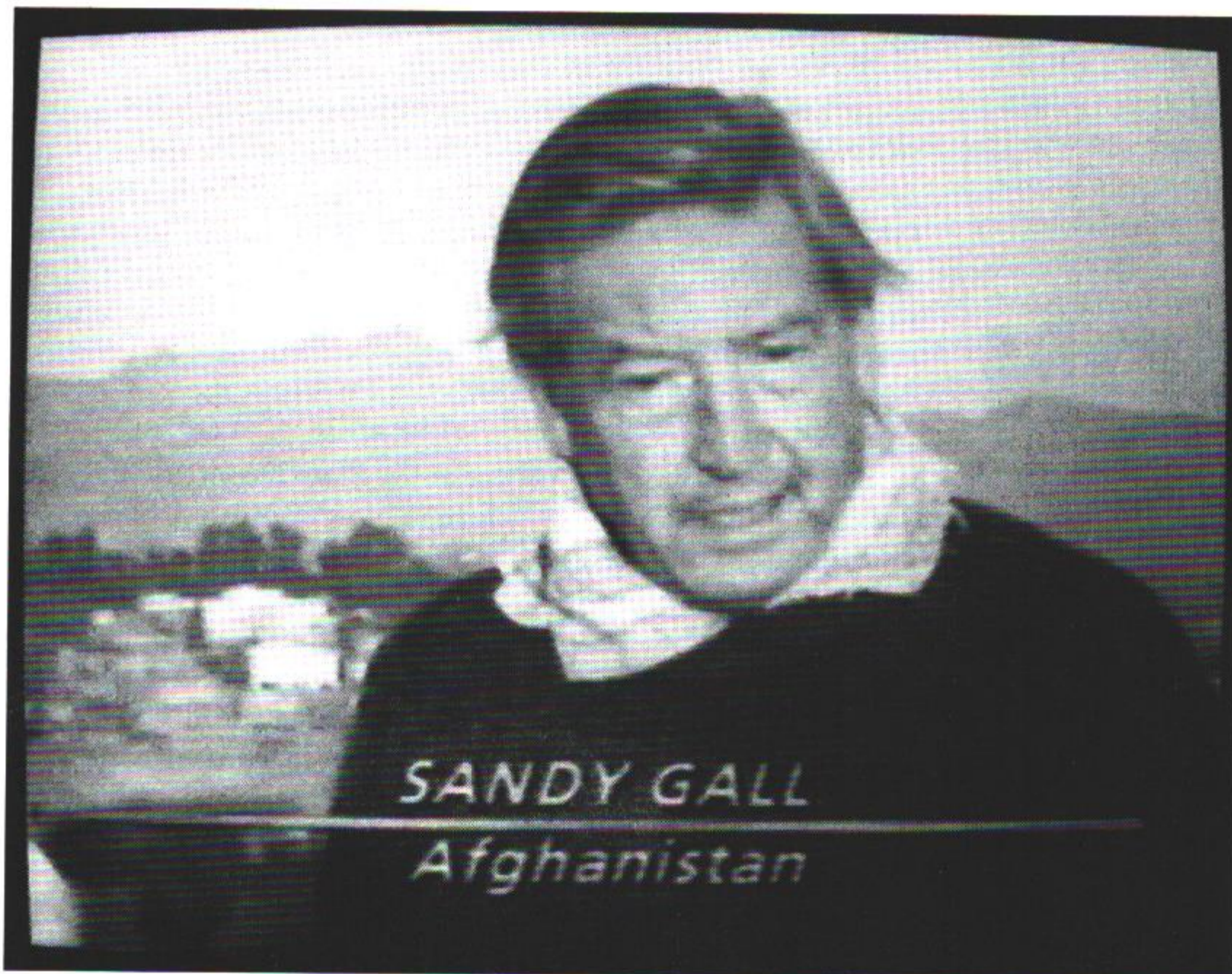
On 6 February 1989, ITN broadcast Sandy Gall's 'Afghan journal' on *News at Ten*. The item included what appeared to be hot news footage, shot by Gall's team, of Mujaheddin guerrillas successfully attacking a government post. Sandy Gall gave a running, present-tense commentary on the film: 'A British-made missile scores a direct hit on a post guarding the road...The heavy machine gun opens up...Then a tank fires back, just as it is hit. The Mujaheddin celebrate by expending a little surplus ammunition, proud of such dramatic proof of their success...Mujaheddin morale is correspondingly high. Here too, success breeds success.'

But Sandy Gall's 'dramatic proof' was not all that it seemed. A few months later, on 13 November 1989, Channel Four's *Bandung File* broadcast an investigation into Western media coverage of Afghanistan, and Gall's 'Afghan journal' in particular. The *Bandung File* revealed that at least a third of the footage used in Gall's 6 February report had not come from ITN cameras at all, but had been supplied on tape by a Peshawar-based news agency, the Afghan Media Resource Centre. Far from being Gall's eye-witness account of a Mujaheddin attack during the Soviet withdrawal of February 1989, this footage of guerillas in action had actually been shot at least three months earlier.

The Afghan Media Resource Centre, which supplied the footage, was no ordinary news agency. It had been set up with American government money to spread propaganda for the Mujaheddin. This was the public face of US support for the Afghan rebels, to go alongside covert military aid. The US Information Agency used money voted by Congress to pay for Mujaheddin supporters to be trained at the Boston University

a foreign war has been called into question,

AFGHANISTAN



Above: ITN's Sandy Gall
Right: The *Bandung File* reveals the origins of ITN's live action scenes—film shot by a US-backed Mujaheddin propaganda group months earlier



School of Journalism. Some of these trainees went back to run the Afghan Media Resource Centre.

The director of the Afghan Media Resource Centre, Haji Syed Daud, told the *Bandung File* that the 'young Mujaheddin' trained in Boston were supplying material for ITN, BBC and CNN among other news organisations. He confirmed that the centre had been helpful to Sandy Gall. 'When Mr Sandy Gall came to Peshawar, February, our video department help him, shooting footage for him, and also they gave him video footage from our archive, and also they [did some] editing, maybe rough editing, for Mr Sandy Gall.'

So Sandy Gall's 'Afghan journal', broadcast by ITN, had used old footage of unproven origin, supplied by an uncredited Mujaheddin propaganda source which was

financed by US government agencies. And this was what Gall presented as first-hand 'proof' of what was happening on the ground in Afghanistan. All done with 'the utmost professionalism and integrity', no doubt.

ITN's statement, issued in response to the *Bandung File*'s revelations, insisted that it was 'extremely proud' of its coverage of the Afghan war, and that it was 'against that background of journalistic excellence that the *Bandung File* has sought to highlight criticism of one small section of ITN's coverage. Nonetheless', ITN conceded, 'the criticism is valid':

'A small amount of footage included in Sandy Gall's report on February 6 was shot by the Afghan Media Resource Centre. That the Afghan Media Resource Centre make material available to television broadcasters is not in itself a matter which we regard as controversial. It should, however, as the *Bandung File* has suggested, have been clearly labelled as to its source. To have done so would have assisted the viewer in his or her understanding of the report as a whole.'

So it all was just a small technical oversight. That is one way of interpreting the Sandy Gall affair. Another way is to place this shameful episode in the context of media coverage of the Afghan war, and see it as symptomatic of a wider problem.

As the Soviet army withdrew, the massed ranks of the Western media arrived expecting to report one story and one story only: the historic victory of the Mujaheddin rebels and the fall of the Kabul government. As Sandy Gall had told the *Mail*, the press were looking for a re-run of the scenes which accompanied the final American withdrawal from Saigon, South Vietnam, in 1975—only this time with the Soviets being the ones humiliated.

Elaine Parnell, a respected producer with Worldwide Television News, gave the *Bandung File* an insight into the mindset of Western journalists at the time:

'Malnutrition [in Kabul] was completely hyped out of all proportion. There was in fact one child in the hospital suffering from malnutrition and this has become one of the most photographed children during the war. They started to imagine a Saigon situation, and they wanted to see a Saigon situation. They wanted to see Soviets climbing on the bottom of helicopters.'

'The British public has been fed a diet of Mujaheddin heroism. The story was simply painted in black and white terms. The Soviets invaded the country, they were the bad guys, the Mujaheddin were the good guys. The Soviets did invade, they were bad, the Mujaheddin were certainly brave. But the story was also a little more complicated than that. There was another side to the Mujaheddin that perhaps the Western public wouldn't find so palatable....But a lot of the time this was ignored because it didn't fit the image that the media was trying to portray.'

Western news teams always seemed to shoot their pictures from behind Mujaheddin lines, and often seemed—as in Sandy Gall's Afghan journal—to be reporting spectacular Mujaheddin successes, when in fact, as with any guerrilla war, most of their operations failed. One result of this attitude was to create a climate in which the experts confidently assured the world that the Kabul government would quickly crumble once the Soviets withdrew—a prediction which proved wildly inaccurate.

Some might have claimed that media misreporting from Afghanistan was simply a technical problem. Others saw more political factors at work. 'There was a rather obvious veil drawn over the question of who was supporting the Mujaheddin', Professor Fred Halliday of the London School of Economics told the *Bandung File*: 'I think Sandy Gall referred to "the backers of the Mujaheddin". That these backers of the Mujaheddin included the United Kingdom and the United States was not spelt out, indeed it was very rarely spelt out by any of those who supported the guerrillas or reported from the guerrilla side. And in that sense the political input into the Afghan war was bleached out.'

George Kenney resigned from the US State Department in August 1992, in protest at the Bush administration's policy towards the former Yugoslavia. This is his personal account of how the bogus interpretation which the world placed upon ITN's pictures of Trnopolje camp helped to put Washington on a war footing

HOW MEDIA MISINFORMATION LED TO BOSNIAN INTERVENTION



Was it inevitable that the West intervened militarily in Bosnia's civil war, taking sides against the Serbs, and then occupying the country? I doubt it. Was it right? No, not insofar as careful, objective, after-the-fact investigation of key media events was lacking.

The first turning point, that led straightaway to the introduction of Western troops, coincided with ITN's broadcast of images of what was widely assumed to be a concentration camp, at the Bosnian Serb-run Trnopolje refugee collection centre in August 1992. Now, in a stunning development, Thomas Deichmann has discovered that those ITN images 'fooled the world'.

To understand the impact that those misleading ITN pictures had, one must look at the atmosphere of July/August in Washington. Beginning with his 19 July articles on the Serb-run detention centres at Manjaca and Omarska, Roy Gutman of *Newsday* began filing a series of stories—based, he minimally acknowledged at that time, only on second and third-hand accounts—that culminated in his charge in several stories filed from 2-5 August that the Bosnian Serbs were operating 'Nazi-style' (his words) death camps for non-Serb prisoners of war.

As the Yugoslav desk officer at the State Department, I knew about these stories before they were printed, because Gutman had contacted the then US Consulate General in Zagreb to tell officials of his suspicions and ask for help in corroborating his findings. Specifically, he wanted US spy satellites to determine whether a 'death camp' was in operation. Nobody took this request seriously, but I knew such reports could create a public relations firestorm, so I made a special effort to keep the highest levels of the State Department's management, including Deputy Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger's office, informed of his work. I did not, however, think management paid much—or enough—attention before Gutman's story broke.

Among other tasks, I was responsible for drafting press materials, which mainly involved preparing State Department Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler for her daily noon press briefing. Tutwiler, who was Secretary James Baker's closest confidant and unofficially the second most influential person at State, felt that the USA should have been doing considerably more to stop, or at least suppress, the civil war in Bosnia. Alone among senior officials in her surreptitious dissent, she drew constant attention to the war's worst aspects, hoping to spur the administration to greater action if for no other reason than Baker's fear of bad press. At my initiative, she had already used the term 'ethnic cleansing' in mid-May to describe Bosnian Serb actions, introducing this previously unknown revilement into the vernacular. Frequent use of this sort of lurid language conditioned the press into a Pavlovian yearning for ever more shocking news of atrocities.

On Tuesday, 4 August Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Tom Niles was scheduled to give routine testimony to the House International Relations European Subcommittee, and in carrying out this obligation he badly erred, compounding public outcry about Gutman's 'death camps' report. Inexplicably, Niles decided to stonewall instead of earnestly declaring that we knew little, but took the matter seriously and were looking into it. The subcommittee responded poorly, with Niles particularly enraging its presiding member, Tom Lantos, a survivor of pro-Nazi Hungarian concentration camps.

Adding to public frustrations, Niles' comments appeared to differ from what Tutwiler's assistant Richard Boucher told the press pool at the State Department the day before—that the USA knew about the Gutman stories. Boucher had meant only that US officials read newspapers, but the leading papers unanimously (and mistakenly) reported that he said State had independent confirmation from its intelligence sources. Reporters, smelling a cover-up, launched into full-throated choruses of 'what did they know, and when did they know it?'

PHOTO: SIMON NORFOLK



More importantly, they asked, 'what is the USA going to do?'

The truth was, the State Department knew very little. The real scandal was that it did not want to know more, because whatever could have been learned might also have brought new obligations to do something (anything). But by early 1992 the White House had decided not to incur the least substantive responsibility for the Yugoslav crisis, in order to avoid a Vietnam-like slippery slope and messy foreign entanglements during an election. We did not know whether minor measures might have brought results, but had no will to experiment. Yugoslavia, in the US government's view, was Europe's problem; the State Department was determined it should stay that way.

In any case, by mid-week the State Department's public affairs officials were in a nuclear panic. The Yugoslav desk was asked, twice, to review its files about what we knew on 'death camps', and I gave Boucher a thick folder to photocopy of telegrams from my unofficial, personal file on Bosnia. There was not much information there—nothing confirming Gutman's story—and the State Department struggled to find words to get out of the hole it had dug for itself. We had to explain our limited knowledge and say something more than 'we do not like concentration camps', but less than 'we intend to invade Bosnia and shut them down'.

Sensing an opportunity to attack President George Bush, on 5 August then-candidate Bill Clinton renewed his call for the USA, through the United Nations, to bomb Bosnian Serb positions. The US Senate began consideration of a symbolic vote (eventually approved) to permit the use of force to ensure aid deliveries and access to the camps. Even high Vatican officials, speaking unofficially for the Pope, noted parallels between Nazi atrocities and Bosnian camps, and called for military intervention 'to hold back the hand of the aggressor'.

A kind of hysteria swept through the Washington press corps. Few outsiders believed State was trying to tell the truth. After I resigned over policy in late August, for example, senior Clinton campaign officials speedily approached me regarding

Defying reason and logic,
a myth of a
SERB PERPETRATED
HOLOCAUST
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wisdom

the camps issue, seeking advice on whether they should pursue spy satellite records which the administration allegedly ignored. I told them not to waste their time. And for years afterwards journalists continued to ask me about 'the cover-up'.

On Wednesday 5 August, in an effort to quell the burgeoning Boucher/Niles 'cover-up' story and regain control of the press, Deputy Secretary Eagleburger's office issued a clarification of the State Department's position, including an appeal for 'war crimes investigations' into reports of atrocities in Bosnian detention centres. Immune to his efforts, extremely harsh press criticism continued to mount from every quarter. On Thursday, President George Bush issued an

ill-prepared statement urging the United Nations Security Council to authorise the use of 'all necessary measures' to ensure relief deliveries, but stopped short of calling for the use of force to release prisoners. British and French officials responded that his statement was a reaction to political concerns in the USA. Meanwhile, further inflaming the public outcry, Serb forces stepped up their attacks on Sarajevo.

At almost exactly the moment of President Bush's call to arms, ITN's pictures first aired. I do not know whether senior State Department officials saw or learned of them that day, but I viewed them, to the best of my recollection, with a handful of colleagues on Friday morning or possibly early afternoon, in the office of European Bureau's chief of public affairs. We were unanimous, from our respective mid-to-mid-senior level vantage points, that the tape was ruinous for the Bush administration's hands-off policy and could not but result in significant US actions. The notion that 'we have got to do something' echoed down State's corridors.

At the start of the week possible critical policy shifts were dimly perceived and highly tentative, but by week's end ITN's graphic portrayal of what was interpreted as a 'Balkan Holocaust' probably ensured that those shifts became irreversible. Those shifts remain fundamental to policy to this day.

On 13 August the UN Security Council passed Resolutions 770 and 771, which for the first time authorised the international use of force in Bosnia and promised to punish war criminals, the precursors of the current international occupation of Bosnia and the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague. On the 14th, the United Nations Human Rights Commission appointed former Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a highly pious Catholic, as Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Former Yugoslavia, a position from which he tended to target only Bosnian Serbs. And, on the 18th, Britain reversed itself and pledged to send 1800 soldiers to Bosnia for humanitarian aid operations, the first step towards what became by mid-September a UNSC approved, enlarged UN Protection Force mission in Bosnia—the seed that sprouted into IFOR and now SFOR.

Lost in the shuffle was any understanding of what was actually going on in the camps, who ran them, and why. Official Washington and the US press almost completely ignored an International Committee of the Red Cross report issued on 4 August, describing ICRC visits to 10 camps and their finding of blatant human rights violations by all sides. And though the Serbs did indeed, as the ICRC said, run more camps, it was not disproportionately more. In the rush to convict the Serbs in the court of public opinion, the press paid no more attention to other, later reports throughout the war, up to—and after—the Dayton agreement, of hellish Croat and Muslim run camps. Nor did the press understand that each side had strong incentives to hold at least some prisoners for exchanges.

Medieval xenophobes reincarnated as high-tech cowboys, Western opinion leaders fixated their fear and anger against the unknown. Defying reason and logic, a myth of a Serb perpetrated Holocaust, coupled with the refusal to even acknowledge atrocities against Serbs, became conventional wisdom. This was the first instance and future model for post-modern imperialistic intervention to determine the winner in a bloody civil war.

Washington loves to go to war in August. The florid atmosphere of August 1992, though not (yet) exactly a shooting match, comprised a more than satisfactory propaganda war, vaguely reassuring those who lost their bearings with the end of the Cold War, together with a new generation of journalists who needed a fraught, dirty conflict on which to cut their teeth. Bosnia made excellent sport.

It is no surprise, after all, that the temptation for news organisations to try to change policy, when they knew how easily they could, was overwhelming.

TABOOS

The furore over an NHS 'condoms-for-children report' reveals how all sides inflate the dangers of teenage sex, says Jennie Bristow

BLOWING UP CONDOMS

Report urges child access to condoms', stated the *Guardian* on 15 February. The *Daily Mail* put it more strongly—'Outrage over calls for condoms at 11'—and reported 'a key government adviser' saying that 'children as young as 11 should be given free sex advice'. As images of respectable politicians and health advisers promoting child promiscuity rush through the readers' minds, you realise that this would be truly shocking news. If it were true.

In fact the latest row over sex education, based on a report published in February by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, was an exercise in sensationalism. The report, 'Preventing and reducing the adverse effects of unintended teenage pregnancies' is, in truth, a straightforward and rather boring review of different methods of teaching young people about sex and contraception.

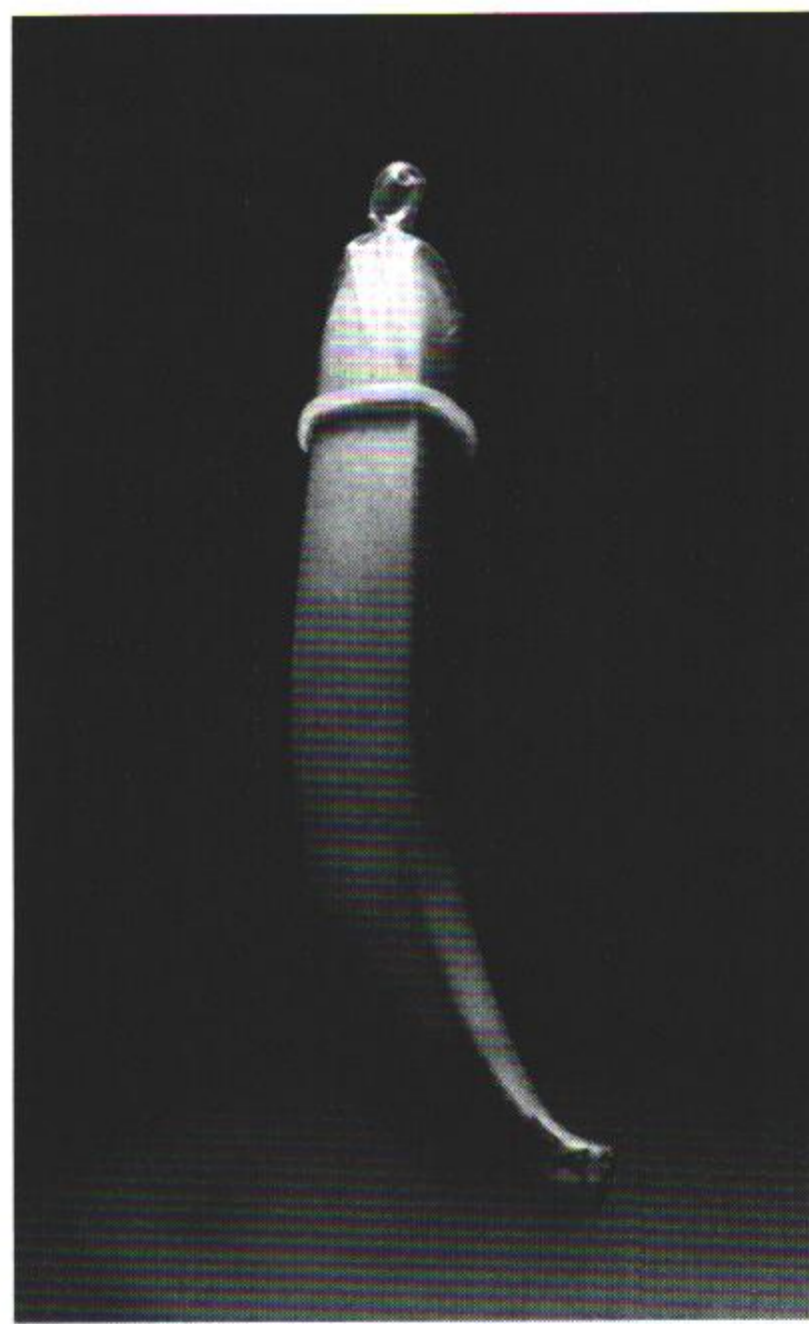
The report surveys Europe and America, to compare different educational approaches to the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and the provision of contraceptive services. Nowhere does it mention, even in passing, that condoms should be given to 11-year olds. This issue was only introduced into the discussion under media pressure. The report concludes that the most appropriate time to start sex education programmes is before teenagers lose their virginity, and that sex education is most effective when it is combined with easily accessible, confidential contraceptive services. In response to media queries about precisely at what age it might be sensible to start this process, the report's co-author, Trevor Sheldon, candidly stated that 'In some areas of Britain, some kids are sexually active at the age of 11'.

Once Sheldon had made this indisputably correct point of fact, the moral minority could let their imaginations do the rest. 'Preventing and reducing the adverse effects of unintended teenage pregnancies', with its emphasis on safe sex, metamorphosed into an unadulterated advert for under-age sex and the

corruption of innocents. The press were in such a frenzy to drag out the usual rent-a-moralist gang of politicians and family-values campaigners to denounce the 'evil' report, that it seems they all forgot to read the document, or to listen properly to its spokesman.

In fact, 'Preventing and reducing the adverse effects of unintended teenage pregnancy' is the last thing old-fashioned moralists should be railing against. Far from preaching immorality and promiscuity to children, the report is simply an argument for the most *effective* ways of telling young people to 'just say no' to sex.

Such is the strength of moral conservatism today that all sides of the sex education discussion share a common



assumption. This is clearly shown in the 'controversial' report's survey of different approaches to sex education. All of the sex education programmes accept that teenage sex is undesirable and potentially damaging, and all have the aim of trying to prevent young people having sex for as long as possible. The area of disagreement is limited to which

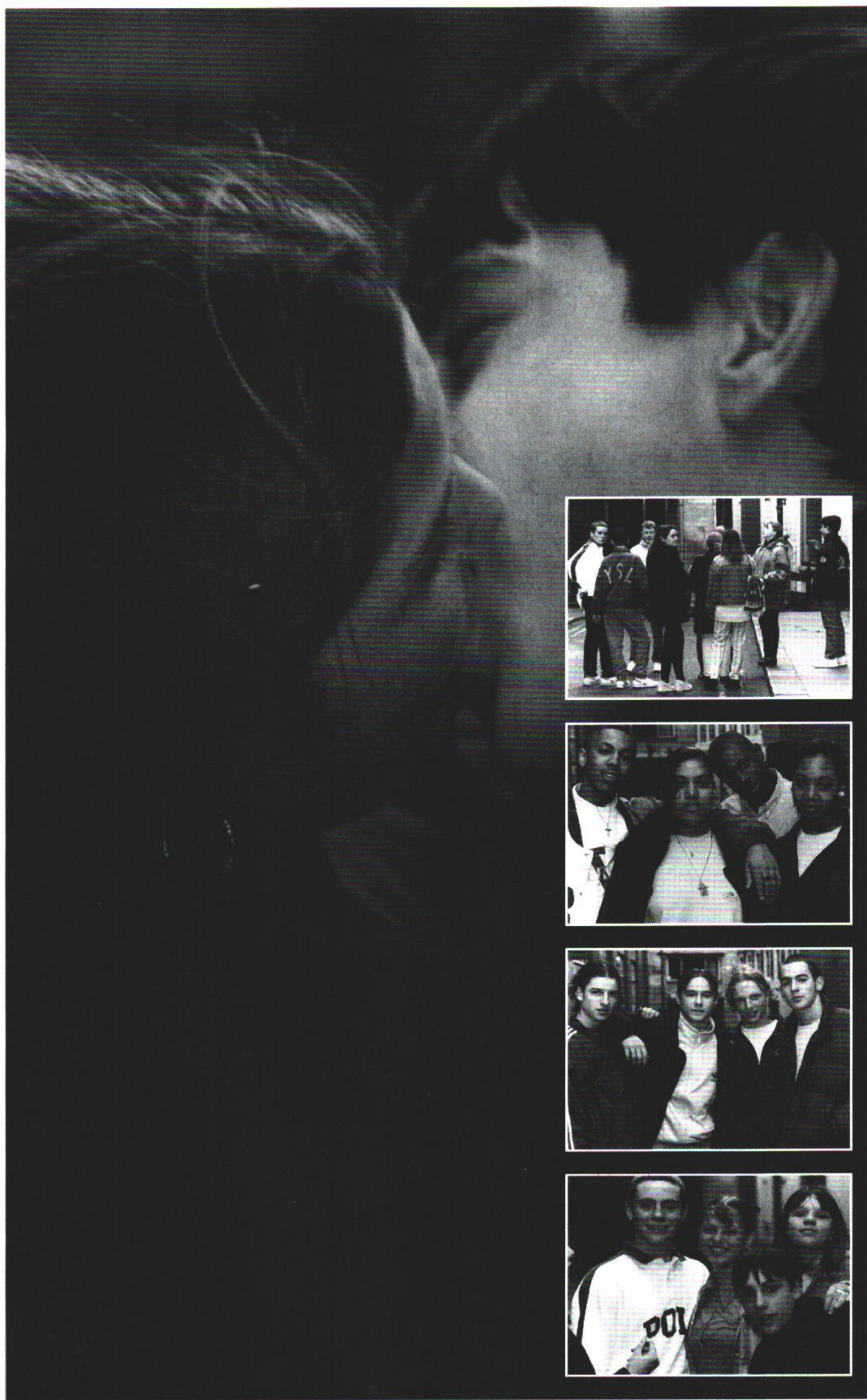
approach works. While the likes of professional moralist Victoria Gillick insist that young people must be taught that sex is a sin, providers of young people's services, such as Brook Advisory Centres, insist that this simply does not work.

All sides agree that an effective sex education programme should not just educate young people about sexuality and reproduction, it should seek to delay the age at which teenagers start to put theory into practice. The 'just say no' lobby (which advocates sex education policies based on encouraging young people to resist their sexual urges) and the liberal 'let it all hang out' brigade (who call for confidential contraceptive advice for all) are in complete agreement that young people should be dissuaded from having sex until they are ready for responsible, long-term relationships.

For example, the NHS Centre report criticises the self-consciously reactionary 'abstinence' programmes, originating in the USA, which insist that sex should be saved for holy matrimony. The report's complaint, however, is not that these schemes are prudish, but that they do not work in putting young people off sex. When compared to 'the usual sex education' programmes, the report notes, abstinence programmes 'were not found to have any additional effect on either delaying sexual activity or reducing pregnancy'.

Concluding that sex education programmes based on old-fashioned moralism will fail, the report draws on its findings from northern European countries to suggest that 'openness about sexuality' is an important component of effective education programmes, because it helps teach young people, in particular young girls, how to fend off sexual advances. The implication is that the trendy 'pass the condom round the classroom' lessons are more effective in fulfilling the moralists' aim of stigmatising casual sex among teenagers.

The shared agenda was demonstrated in an exchange between crusty Lady Olga Maitland and the head of the Family



PHOTOS: DAVE CHAPMAN

education is that sex is in some way harmful or damaging to young people, and that a successful programme is one which stops it. This is a contest to see who can do most to put young people off sex. 'Sexual health professionals' will use every available platform to reassure us that liberal sex education does not encourage teenage sex, and that there is no evidence to show that talking about sex with young people encourages them to do it.

But why should we assume that teenage sex is necessarily damaging? Teenage pregnancy may be an undesirable outcome—but that can be prevented by the effective use of contraceptives, and countered by the availability of abortion. Sexually transmitted infections can be harmful, but then youngsters enjoying their first inexperienced fumbings are at considerably less risk of contracting an STD than those with a longer and dodgier track record.

It is often said that young people who start to have sex in their mid-teens have lower self-esteem than those who delay. This may be true. But it does not follow that having sex is a *cause* of low self-esteem. And it is likely that just as older people with problems find solace in sex, so do younger people.

Yes, young people have limited emotional experience to deal with the heartache and drama that invariably goes with the making and breaking of relationships. It is also true that teenagers experience their emotions particularly intensely and take rejection hard—but that is the case whether they have had penetrative sex, a grope, or a snog behind the bike shed. Besides, we learn through our experiences, bitter and sweet alike. That is one reason why we are (one hopes) better at dealing with relationships in our twenties than in our teens. Those who are cosseted from the experiences of life for too long might well find their emotional adolescence running over into adulthood.

In the end, the row about sex education is a non-debate. Regardless of what the various experts do or don't teach, a lot of teenagers are always going to have sex. Ironically, if 'Preventing and reducing the effects of unintended teenage pregnancy' really had called for condoms for 11-year olds, it would have been one of the report's more sensible proposals. At the age of 11, nobody wants children, and Durex make a severe dent in your pocket money. It is unlikely that this proposal would prevent many pregnancies, however, as few 11-year olds are capable of fathering a child. But at least they would have something to stick over the exhaust pipe of their teacher's car after the sex education class was over. ●

Why should we assume that teenage sex is damaging?

Planning Association on Radio 4, on the same day as the press furore over the sex education report (*Today programme*, 15 February). Lady Olga insisted that 'The very best contraceptive is a very simple word: "No"'. Anne Weyman of the FPA countered that the most effective sex education programmes give young people the social skills to 'negotiate' and say 'no'.

Conspicuous by her absence was the sexual health professional supporting young people who want to negotiate their relationships and say 'yes' to sex. She does not exist.

Nobody, but nobody, argues that if teenagers want to have sex that is their business. The shared assumption at the base of all the arguments about sex

Students who fail are now taking legal action against their universities. Brendan O'Neill spoke to those on both sides of a dispute that threatens to drag higher education down further still

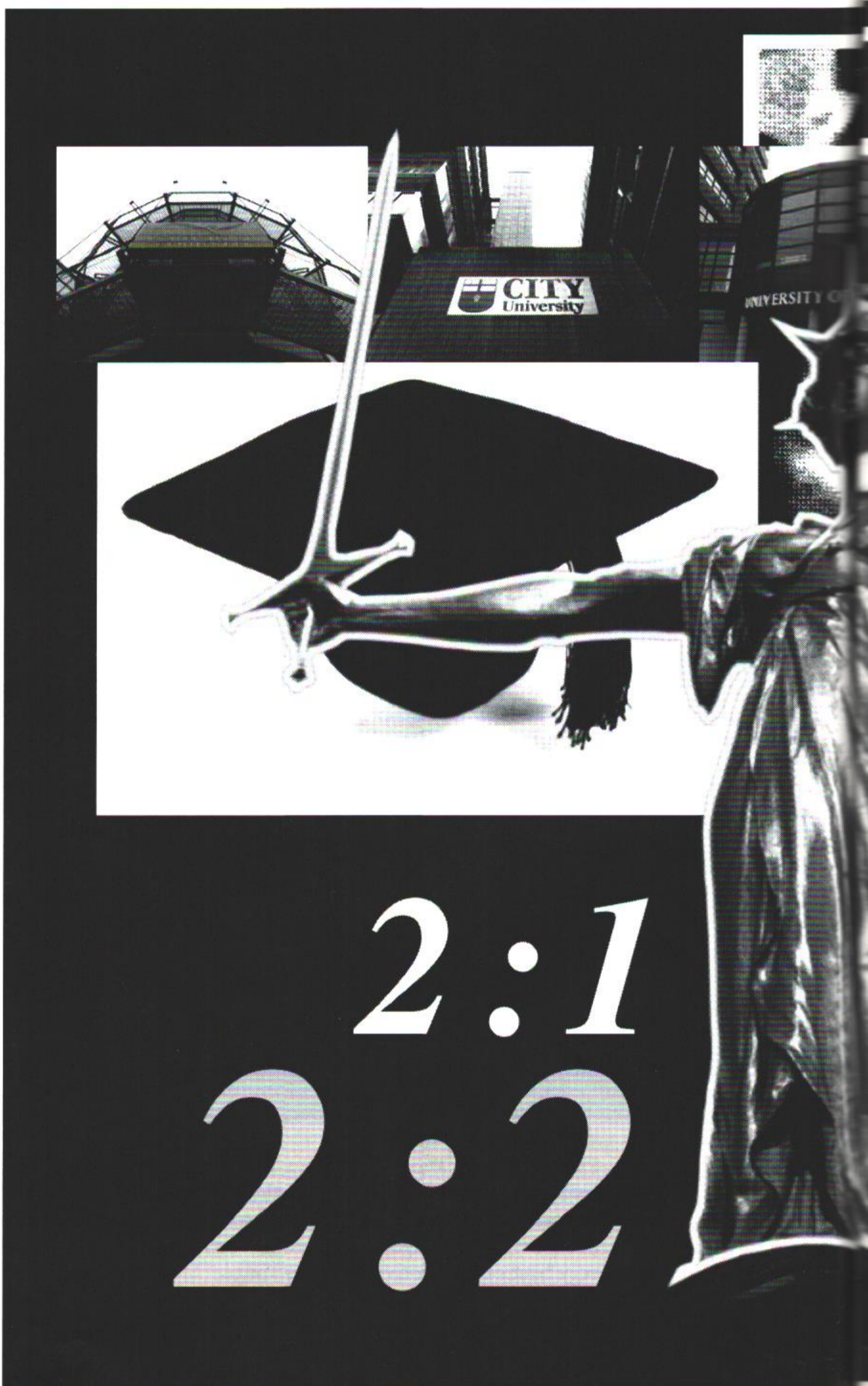
SHOULD FAILED STUDENTS SUE?

I went to college on the understanding that I would receive a good education and increase my chances of getting a job. But the opposite has happened. The teaching at the university was shoddy to say the least: lectures were cancelled at the last minute, there was hardly any contact time between students and lecturers. I worked to the best of my ability but I still failed my degree. Now I'm less likely to get a job than ever.'

Alison (not her real name) is taking legal action against her university for failing to live up to the promises made in its prospectus. She enrolled on a degree course three years ago on the understanding that it would be challenging, stimulating and 'educationally rewarding'. Instead Alison found herself struggling with second-rate teaching, poor library provision and very little contact time with lecturers. 'The university promised one thing and provided another. That's a breach of contract in my books.'

As a mature student Alison's main concern is that having nothing to show for her three years of study will seriously damage her job prospects. 'I have a young daughter to think about. I can't spend forever looking for work and then end up with a job that I could have got before even going to university.' Alison claims that the course she enrolled on was billed as 'vocational' and 'work-related'. 'It was supposed to prepare students for the world of work, but it has left me as an unemployed single mother. The university has a case to answer.'

Alison is not alone. More students are turning to the courts to challenge their university's failure to provide the education they require, claiming that they failed their degrees because of inadequate teaching and a lack of resources. Educational lawyers predict that growing numbers of dissatisfied students will demand compensation through the courts.



MONTAGE: DAVE CHAPMAN

A recent headline in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* screamed at universities: 'Flood warning: prepare to be sued by your students.'

(14 February 1997)

So do Britain's universities have a case to answer? 'There are two types of grievance among the students I've met', says Jaswinder Gill, a Southall solicitor regarded as a leading light on the issue of student complaints. 'There are those who are aggrieved at the mark awarded for their degree, so they go through the normal appeals mechanism at their university. But they feel that the appeals mechanism has also let them down so legal action becomes necessary. These cases can usually be resolved by way of a judicial review. The second, more

serious grievance is where students feel they have not received the service for which they paid.'

Consumer sovereignty

It is this 'more serious grievance' which has shaken Britain's universities. Colleges are now being issued with writs by former students who, like Alison, claim that they did not receive 'the service for which they paid'. Gill is currently representing three 'discontented' students who are suing a university in London. He hopes the cases will establish that a contractual relationship exists between college and student. 'Ultimately we want to establish that students are no different from consumers. If a consumer buys

a car for £5000 and then finds that he does not like the car, he expects to get his money back. Similarly if a student pays £5000 for fees and £5000 for maintenance, a vast amount of money, and then finds that he is not happy with the service, he should be able to do something about it.'

But are students really 'no different from consumers'? After all, students do not go to university to 'consume' information. They go to participate actively in the process of education. Surely if we see students as consumers, we risk absolving them of any responsibility to contribute fully to the educational process?

Gill responds: 'Yes, and it is always the case that the students I represent have worked to the best of their ability. If a student's academic performance is an issue then clearly that student may not have a genuine grievance. What I am talking about is the instances where universities clearly make mistakes, and students' education suffers as a result. We don't live in a perfect world, you know. I am arguing that a student is a consumer, no different to a consumer purchasing any other kind of product or service. Like other consumers I think that students should have recourse if a university fails in its obligation to provide a satisfactory course or full programme of study.'

Ivan Walker, an education lawyer at Lawfords & Co in Surrey, is concerned by the attempt to establish that students are just like consumers. 'Fundamentally I think that there is a contractual relationship between university and student', says Walker, 'but I think it is a bilateral one. If the object of the contract is to provide education then it requires the active participation of the students as well as ensuring that the university fulfils its obligations. Students must co-operate in the provision of education.'

Walker, who is representing universities and colleges against the students who sue, is suspicious about some of their legal claims. 'Some of them are simply aggrieved at the fact that they have failed. And sometimes the reason they have failed is simply that it is part of a university's function in life to pass some students and to fail others, that is what higher education is all about.'

Walker is currently looking into a case where a former BTEC student is taking legal action against her university on the grounds that her course was too theoretical. 'She says she thought the course was going to be very practical, and now she is demanding her fees back. The college has responded by saying that the course was as practical as the student expected, and that the only reason she left was because she couldn't cope.' It is easy to see how students



◆ could point the finger of blame at the poor teaching and lack of resources in a college to cover up for their own shortcomings.

Much of the debate on whether or not students should sue their colleges hinges on the question of what kind of relationship exists between the two. Is it the university's responsibility to impart as much information as the student needs to pass his exams? Or does the student also have a responsibility to contribute fully to his own learning process?

Dennis Farrington is an expert academic lawyer at Stirling University in Scotland. Last year he was commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Council to write a report on student grievances. 'There are many genuine grievances and legitimate complaints amongst students about academic standards and academic-related issues', says Farrington. 'Many students feel that universities are not delivering the goods.'

But Farrington does not think that this absolves students of their own obligation to strive to be the best they can. 'The relationship between university and student is not as straightforward as that between provider and consumer. I see the contract as a bilateral one. There are obligations on the institution to provide certain things, but there are also obligations on the student to participate fully: to attend lectures, to participate in seminars, to hand essays

in on time. It is a partnership approach, rather than a commercial consumer approach.'

What do the universities make of student grievances about academic-related issues? Vice-chancellors and principals throughout Britain are concerned that the growing trend for students to take legal action against their colleges will undermine the external examination system. University authorities hope that student grievances about university maladministration and mistakes can be dealt with by internal appeals mechanisms, with no need to resort to the law. But one thing that universities say they cannot accept is any ruling by a court of law on the issue of academic judgement.

'It is very important to remember that we are not talking about appeals against academic judgement: we are not prepared to accept that academic standards are subject to external consideration' says David Anderson-Evans, policy adviser at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in London. 'We have an external examiners system, and we believe that that system is appropriate and that it should be the final method of arbitration. Courts should not rule on academic matters.'

It is all very well for the likes of David Anderson-Evans to uphold the integrity of academic standards. But what he and the other vice-chancellors fail to appreciate is that the universities

only have themselves to blame for bringing this problem about. It is the degradation of academic standards within universities, the lowering of the level of higher education, that has led to a situation where students like Alison are loathe to accept that they have failed.

In the 1990s more young people than ever are going to university—one in three now attend a higher education establishment. But this massive increase in student numbers has not been met by an adequate increase in resources. As a result, student-staff ratios have increased from 8.5:1 in the 1980s to 20:1 today. The quality of education on offer has inevitably suffered.

The problem, however, is not only a lack of resources. There has been a degradation of the very concept of higher education and academic excellence. The Higher Education Quality Council's report into degree results illustrates the problem. The report found that, over the past 25 years, there has been an increase in the proportion of students awarded first class honours degrees, and a decline in third-class degrees, while upper second-class degrees have replaced lower seconds as the most common result.

In other words, despite the fact that students now have fewer educational resources, larger classes and less individual attention than ever, more and more of them are being awarded better degrees. This suggests a serious degradation of educational standards.

In many universities, today, there

STORM IN A MELTING POT

Can't students take—or make—a joke any more? In January, Bath University Student Union (BUSU) proudly unveiled its new healthy-options coffee bar, with a new name—'The Melting Pot'—and sign depicting a cartoon figure boiling in a cauldron above an open fire. The right-on ethos behind the new cafe was explained to me by Izzie Kerr, one of the BUSU executive members responsible for choosing the logo, as 'the melting together of all nations and all cultures'.

Yet within two weeks, the coffee shop had been brought to book by the Equal Opportunities Officer, Emma Howard. Following a complaint from a black student that the sign was 'culturally insensitive', Emma Howard demanded that the sign be changed.

'I took the problem to the Executive Committee to argue that it should be changed', says Howard, 'I lost the vote. I then argued that if the sign was not changed our

new equal opportunities policy would be a waste of time. We had another vote on whether the sign was a stereotypical image, and I won that vote. Then, according to the equal opps policy, the sign had to be changed'.

The immediate result of this squabble was that the sign had to be altered to depict a world melting slowly over a fire, costing the union around £400. But the implications of this kind of thing for the freedom of expression of future members of BUSU go some way beyond coffee shop logos.

The battle of the Melting Pot is really a test case for BUSU's new equal opps policy. It is a standard policy of the kind that is now familiar in student unions across Britain, outlawing a lengthy yet 'non-exhaustive' list of discriminations, that can make even the most innocent leaflet or piece of artwork open to misinterpretation. The broad scope for such policies to

dictate what can be seen and said became clear in the Bath case.

Following one complaint from one student who, let's face it, must have been pretty culturally over-sensitive, one equal opportunities officer has managed to determine the actions of a student union serving over 7500 students. The rest of the students had no involvement in the decision, and no opportunity to appeal. But they do have to put up with the consequences.

A flick through recent issues of the *Bath Sponge!*, the student union bulletin, reveals some disquiet about how far the equal opps policy can be taken. One student letter tells equal opps to 'get a proper job', while in another a piss-take 'predictorscope' foresees that, in October, the student union cafe 'gets in a stock of special disposable "Guy Forks". Equal Opportunities Committee object on the grounds of sexism' and by November, the cafe 'receives first consignment of "Girl Forks", and establishes a "His 'n Her" complimentary cutlery section'.

Emma Howard is the butt of the jokes, but to her the criticisms merely

is something close to a 'no-fail culture'. Many of the new examination and assessment methods make passing easier than ever before. The growth in modularisation, multiple-choice tests, 'open book' exams and continual assessment methods means that students are rarely challenged to excel. I could not believe my luck at the start of January when I received an exam paper that I would be taking a couple of weeks later—with a letter saying that books were not allowed into the exam, but notes taken from the books were fine.

Treason of the clerks

The degradation of educational standards means that, in most universities, there is no longer such a thing as academic excellence at the top or failure at the bottom (for a full analysis of these trends, see 'Degrading education', *LM*, November 1996). Higher education increasingly resembles a conveyor belt which is expected automatically to carry students from school to a low-paid clerical job. Little wonder, then, that students today simply assume that they will all pass and are so unwilling to accept that they have failed. Nor is it surprising that lawyers can get away with referring to students as 'ordinary consumers'.

Declining educational standards are a big problem—but is it any solution for students who fail their exams to take legal action against their colleges? What about a student's responsibility to work to the best of his or her ability? Alison is

adamant that she 'kept to her side of the bargain': 'I went to all my lectures, I read all the books, I wrote all my essays. I did everything that students are expected to do. It was the college who failed to do their job.' Alison says that among other things, the college failed to provide adequate teaching and adequate access to relevant literature. 'Surely those are basic requirements: that we should be taught well and should be able to get hold of the books on the reading list.'

Students across the country will sympathise with Alison's complaints about shoddy lecturing, crap libraries and uninspiring courses. Joe is currently in the final year of a Leisure Management degree at Thames Valley University in Ealing, the latest college in London to be served with a writ by a former student. Joe admits that studying there is often an uninspiring experience. 'We are only required to go into college for about 10 hours a week and those 10 hours are not exactly challenging. We sit in our lectures, take notes, go to the library if we have to, and then go home. It's more like having a part-time job than studying for a degree.'

But Joe thinks that taking legal action against the university would be something of a cop-out. 'Most of the time if students fail it's because they didn't work hard enough. There are always excuses about exams being unfair, and too much stress, and parents dying in plane crashes a week before your finals, but everyone know that students

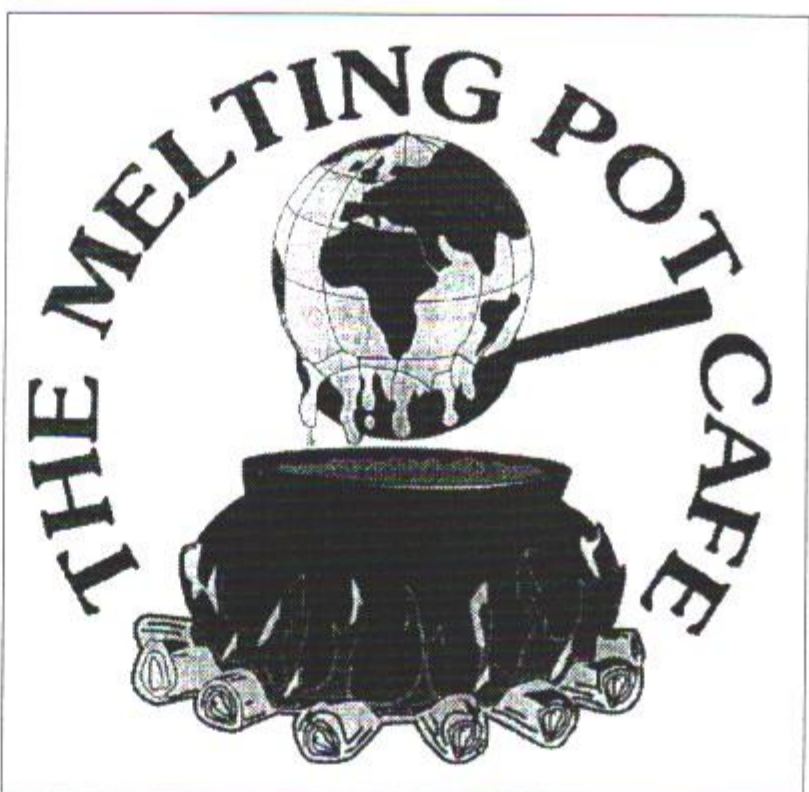
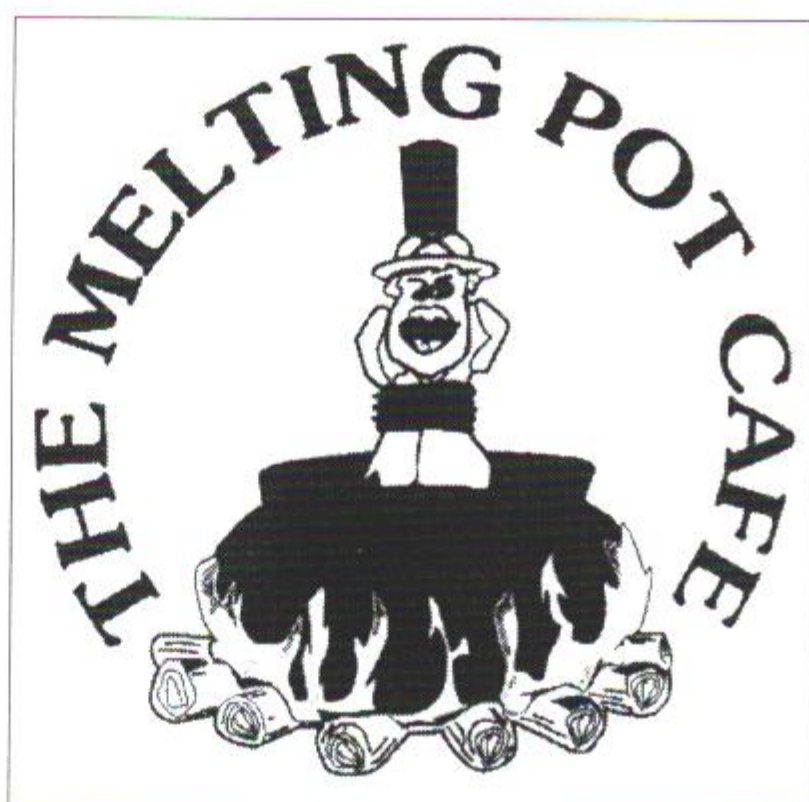
who fail are not up to scratch. Especially now, when degrees are easier than ever.'

There is no question that educational standards are declining. But it is hard to see how suing universities will make matters any better. Indeed, what could be more degrading of educational standards than attempting to establish in a court of law that students are nothing more than consumers? If the legal claims are successful, it can only accelerate the process by which students are being stripped of their responsibility to be critical and open-minded, and reduced to the level of school children who simply expect and are expected to 'consume' their lessons—that is, to swallow everything teacher says.

The fact is that students are much more than consumers and university is not the same as school. You do not go to university to be spoon-fed ideas and information. Higher education should demand that students work hard and contribute fully to their own learning. Far from being passive consumers, the best students seek actively to 'produce' new ideas and information, which can in turn be 'consumed' by the university.

I wish Alison all the best in her job-search, but I have to hope that the failed students' legal cases are unsuccessful. Establishing a legal precedent that students are consumers can only degrade higher education and the role of the student within it even further. And who will benefit from that?

The offending sign, before and after



prove how prejudiced everybody else is. 'They tend to be the white middle class students who are not affected by prejudice', she scoffs. 'If this case proves anything it proves that people are so reluctant to look at what they think.' The idea that some people may be worried about their freedom of expression, and that they have a right to object to the holy crusade of equal opps, is simply not a consideration.

The fact that a tyrannical equal opps policy can decide who says or does what within a student union is bad enough. The notion that nobody can object without being labelled a racist, fascist or simply one who 'does not understand' is even worse. As Izzie Kerr remarked wryly, 'It is hard, maybe, for us lucky ones'.

As proof that her critics cannot be taken seriously, Emma Howard cites a letter in the *Bath Sponge!* of 10 February, submitted by 'Mohammed al Fayed'. The writer complains that 'it is being suggested that the student population is not capable of differentiating between a shitty logo

and the black community', argues that 'the way towards racial harmony lies elsewhere than the hyper-PC attitude of the equal opps officers' and concludes with the instruction to Howard to 'grow up and stop insulting the student population at their own expense'.

Whoever 'Mohammed al Fayed' may be, he or she is right. It is insulting to students of all races to suggest that they are so stupid that they cannot see the humour in a logo. The issue is not one of racism, because no racism was involved in choosing the sign. It is an issue of free speech, and the ability of one person, through equal opps codes, to dictate what thousands of students at a university should be allowed to see and say.

Emma Howard would not agree. 'The person who wrote that letter was white', she sniffed. 'See what I mean?' Well no, not really. But who am I, as a white middle class non-cannibal, to comment?

Jennie Bristow

FUTURES

The breakthroughs in cloning are a spectacular scientific achievement with immense potential benefits, says John Gillott, and not an inch should be given to the panic-mongers.

SEND IN THE CLONES

Dolly', said the *Washington Post*, 'is the biggest story of the year, maybe of the decade, or even the century'. Some might contest the last claim, but the successful cloning of an adult sheep—to produce a carbon copy called Dolly—is certainly a staggering breakthrough, and the Edinburgh-based Roslin Institute team responsible ought to get the Nobel Prize. But the prizes might not follow. Instead of being showered with congratulations, team leader Ian Wilmut has instead been weighed under by what he called an 'atmosphere of criticism'.

Wilmut rightly lamented the fact that 'here we have a remarkable achievement, a world first, and there are people who seem to make a living out of spreading angst'. His team's work was

published in the leading science journal *Nature* on Thursday 27 February. But the story broke the Sunday beforehand, leading to near hysteria among the press and politicians.


US president Bill Clinton called for a national commission to review what the White House called the 'troubling implications' of cloning. In the UK, the issue was raised at Prime Minister's Question Time on the Tuesday. The Vatican called for a worldwide ban. Joseph Rotblat, the physicist recently awarded the Nobel Prize for peace after a lifelong campaign against nuclear weapons, argued that genetic engineering could pose a greater threat than the Bomb 'because of these dreadful developments that are taking place there'. And in an unprecedented move, a Harvard

academic e-mailed *Nature* to demand that they pull the article from their journal, because such material should not be in the public domain at all.

The cause of most of the unease was simple: the prospect of human cloning. While forswearing any interest in the idea, and pointing out that it would be illegal in the UK and many other places, Wilmut freely acknowledged that his work brought the possibility a lot closer. All of a sudden, science fiction was nearly scientific possibility; and despite attempts by Wilmut and others to focus on the benefits of what they had done, everybody was determined to discuss human cloning and its dangers.

American environmentalist Jeremy Rifkin compared the idea to child abuse, rape and murder. Andrew Marr, editor

THE SCIENCE OF THE LAMBS

 Cloning is the production of two or more genetically identical individuals. Identical twins are the result of natural cloning. One way of producing clones is to stimulate a fertilised egg to divide at an early stage of development, so artificially inducing the process that occurs in nature. Scientists have already done this in several species. In mammals, at most four clones can be made from a single fertilised egg this way. While the results are clones in the technical sense of being identical, they are not clones in the popular sense of being copies of an already born animal. The Roslin Institute team's new method of cloning means that unlimited copies can be made, which are clones in the popular sense of being identical to a born animal.

The Roslin team achieved cloning via what is called nuclear replacement.

At the early stages of embryonic development all cells are identical. But as development proceeds they begin to differentiate. The result is a range of different cells: skin cells, liver cells etc. A complex process leads to some genes being switched on and some off, depending on where the cell is and the function it is to perform. But the nucleus of each cell in the body (sperm and eggs excepted) continues to contain the full genetic complement. This is what makes nuclear replacement possible, by taking the nucleus from a cell of an adult and placing it in an egg that has had its nucleus removed. An electric shock to the egg then sets off development. Because the genetic instructions are provided by the new nucleus, the result is a replica of the original adult.

Sounds simple doesn't it? But there were plenty of technical and developmental problems to be overcome. The key to the Roslin team's success was managing to get the nucleus to ignore its history and, if you like, open itself up to being used as a template for a whole organism again rather than a specific cell. They did this by effectively starving the original cell, causing the nucleus in it to all but shut down. This enabled the nucleus-free egg to reprogram the new nucleus after it had been extracted and placed within it (see *Nature*, 27 February and *New Scientist*, 1 March). The further stages of the cloning process are still very difficult, largely because it is hard to synchronise the cell division cycles of the new nucleus and the host egg. Dolly was the only lamb born from 277 such attempts.

of the *Independent*, thought that the possibility of cloning was a 'human triumph that humbles mankind', by robbing us of the things that make us human. For Richard Nicholson, editor of the *Bulletin of Medical Ethics*, the moral of the story was the need to restrict research: 'This sort of experiment seems to be based on the notion that knowledge is more important than anything else. Is it the right way forward to allow such research, given the possibilities for misuse?'

How should scientists respond to this 'atmosphere of criticism' and the calls for restrictions? The most important point is not to be defensive. Thankfully, some have made a point of taking the argument to the critics. Raymond Baker, head of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, which runs the Roslin Institute, highlighted the achievement: 'As a piece of science, it is totally staggering. We should be proud it has been done in the UK for the first time....It will allow many of the mysteries of biology to be defined. Once you have done that, you can start talking about treating cancer.' Others have sought to refocus attention on the therapeutics that will flow through using the technology on animals. They point out that it is because we value humans highly that we are looking to use animals to develop products to save human lives. This, not the cloning of humans, is the main item on the scientific agenda.

But for the critics, such as the obsessive Dr Patrick Dixon who is acting as a collection point for any crank who

wants to be cloned (in order to illustrate the scale of the problem), this is all evasion. 'What can we do to stop human cloning?' they continue to shout. In response, some scientists have tried simply to dismiss the issue on the grounds that it will never happen. *Nature* rightly characterised this head in the sand response as 'a psychology of denial under stress', pointing out that human cloning could become possible at any time in the next decade. Many other scientists and ethicists are inclined to support legislation to ensure that human cloning and anything related is strictly illegal, as has already all-but happened in America. This manoeuvre smacks of just the defensiveness that needs to be avoided.

For people who suffer from a few very rare genetic conditions, cloning could provide the only way to have biologically-related offspring. Beyond this, there are no real circumstances in which cloning to produce a physical copy of an individual would be of any benefit. But that is no reason to let the critics set the agenda with their talk of the technology being worse than the atomic bomb. For the fact is that while cloning copies of people might not be of much use, it is not much of a problem either. The fantasies of dictators cloning identikit armies or creating lookalike dynasties are just that—fantasies.

People cannot be made to order. Genetics is very important for many kinds of disease, but people's personalities and the things they do are shaped by their upbringing and their experiences, not their genes. Rather than rushing to

support legislation, scientists and ethicists should lighten up. I liked Mark Steel's rejoinder to biological determinism: 'If a mad scientist cloned Mussolini and brought up his product in Surrey, he'd be sure to end up extremely disappointed, screaming: "Never mind taking up watercolours, when are you going to march on Rome you fat bald bastard!"' The bottom line is that cloning to make copies of people is a technology which cannot be abused that much. The *Times* struck the right note: 'there is no need for moral panic. Even if mis-used it does not match the threat posed by some other technologies. Cloning may make us feel uncomfortable, but it does not threaten the future of humanity.'

To rush to outlaw it would be to allow irrationalism to set the agenda. But prescription would also be fundamentally wrong for another reason: while copying humans is not of much use, the creation of cloned human embryos could be. This work should be allowed; and a case for it needs to be made publicly.

One important possible application is as a cure for some forms of cancer, such as ones affecting the blood. Suppose the cancer is due at least in part to defective genes, and that it affects not just the blood cells, but also the specialist stem cells that produce the blood cells. The situation might well be hopeless at the moment. But a combination of genetic modification and cloning by nuclear replacement might offer hope in the future.

First, a nucleus in the cell from another part of the body would be genetically modified, to remove the



PHOTO: MICHAEL KRAMER

The immediate applications, and the rationale for much private-sector funding of the work, will be in agriculture and the production of therapeutic products for humans. It will allow farmers to clone the most desirable stock. As for human-related products, the Roslin Institute has already created genetically modified sheep able to produce a human protein needed for treating cystic fibrosis. Others have been modified to produce blood clotting factors in their milk—useful for treating haemophiliacs. Cloning these animals will make such production more reliable. In the future, the same combination of genetic modification and cloning offers treatments for cancers. Other possible benefits include: animal organs genetically modified to be suitable for transplantation to humans; the modification of genes to cause the production of proteins by cells that could fight disease; and the production of animal disease models to help in biomedical research, for example

breeding mice with the genetic mutation that causes cystic fibrosis.

Industry is of course interested in these possibilities—and so should anybody be who is concerned to improve human well-being and health. But it is perhaps the possibilities opened up for basic scientific research that ought to command our attention. Repeated cloning of the same genetic line will give us invaluable insights into cell development and issues such as cancer and genetic effects on longevity. But that is just the beginning. Wilmut and colleagues have shown that the nucleus of a cell can be reprogrammed in the sense of wiping the slate clean, returning it to the beginning. That is a major discovery in itself. The next steps are likely to be more difficult, but even more fundamental. For if geneticists can begin to effect half-way changes, and then more specific manipulations aimed at turning individual genes on and off, we will have moved a big step closer to understanding and controlling the basics of life. ●

We should not view the instrumental use of embryos in the same light as the instrumental use of born humans

◆ abnormality which is responsible for the cancer. Then the nucleus would be used to produce an embryonic clone via nuclear replacement (see Science of the lambs). The marvellous process of embryonic development would then be allowed to proceed. After a while, cell

differentiation would occur and different kinds of stem cells would be produced—all free of the genetic defect on account of the genetic modification done earlier. The stem cells which produce blood could be cultured and transferred into the patient with blood cancer.

Unfortunately, this work would probably be illegal now on two counts: it might involve experimenting on embryos past the 14-day limit set by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act; and it involves nuclear replacement in humans.

However, many believe that the fact that such work is illegal is a good thing. They object to cloning not just because they fear armies of Saddam Hussein lookalikes, but also because they think that the instrumental use of human embryos devalues human life. This was Andrew Marr's point. In a commentary in *Nature*, Axel Kahn argued similarly: 'The creation of human clones with the sole aim of preparing spare cell lines would from a philosophical point of view be in obvious contradiction with an ethical principle expressed by Immanuel Kant: that of human dignity. This principle demands that an individual—and I would extend this to read human life—should never be thought of only as a means, but also as an end.' For Marr, Kahn and many others, it seems, it is better that we live in a genetically imperfect society in which some people die who might not otherwise, than that we live in one where embryos are used as a possible means to save lives.

In Monty Python's *Meaning of Life* a gang of surgeons/butchers knock on the door: 'We've come for your liver.' 'But I'm still using it!' responds the hapless 'owner' of the liver. Now that really would be using somebody as a means not an end. But contrary to what Marr, Kahn and others say, we should not view the instrumental use of embryos in the same light as the instrumental use of born humans. As John Harris points out in his book *Wonderwoman and Superman* (1992), we already use embryos in this way in IVF procedures—in which not all fertilised eggs are implanted—and yet we have not suddenly lost our sense of the proper way to treat humans (or at least we have not done so as a result of IVF technology). Harris adds: 'If it is acceptable to produce spare embryos in pursuit of successful pregnancy then it must be justifiable to produce them in pursuit of something plausibly of the same moral magnitude. Saving a life-in-being surely comes into that category.'

This seems to me to be a far more humane attitude than that of the critics. Nuclear replacement in humans might offer a way to help people who would otherwise be beyond help. To outlaw this now, or to restrict research, would be to allow the misplaced sentiments of some to interfere with benefits to others. ●



ILLUSTRATION: ALEX CAMERON

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE?

Britain is about to have a change of government for the first time in almost 18 years. Everybody I meet seems to agree that 'It's time for a change'. But what difference will it really make if we exchange Tony Blair's New Labour for John Major's Tories?

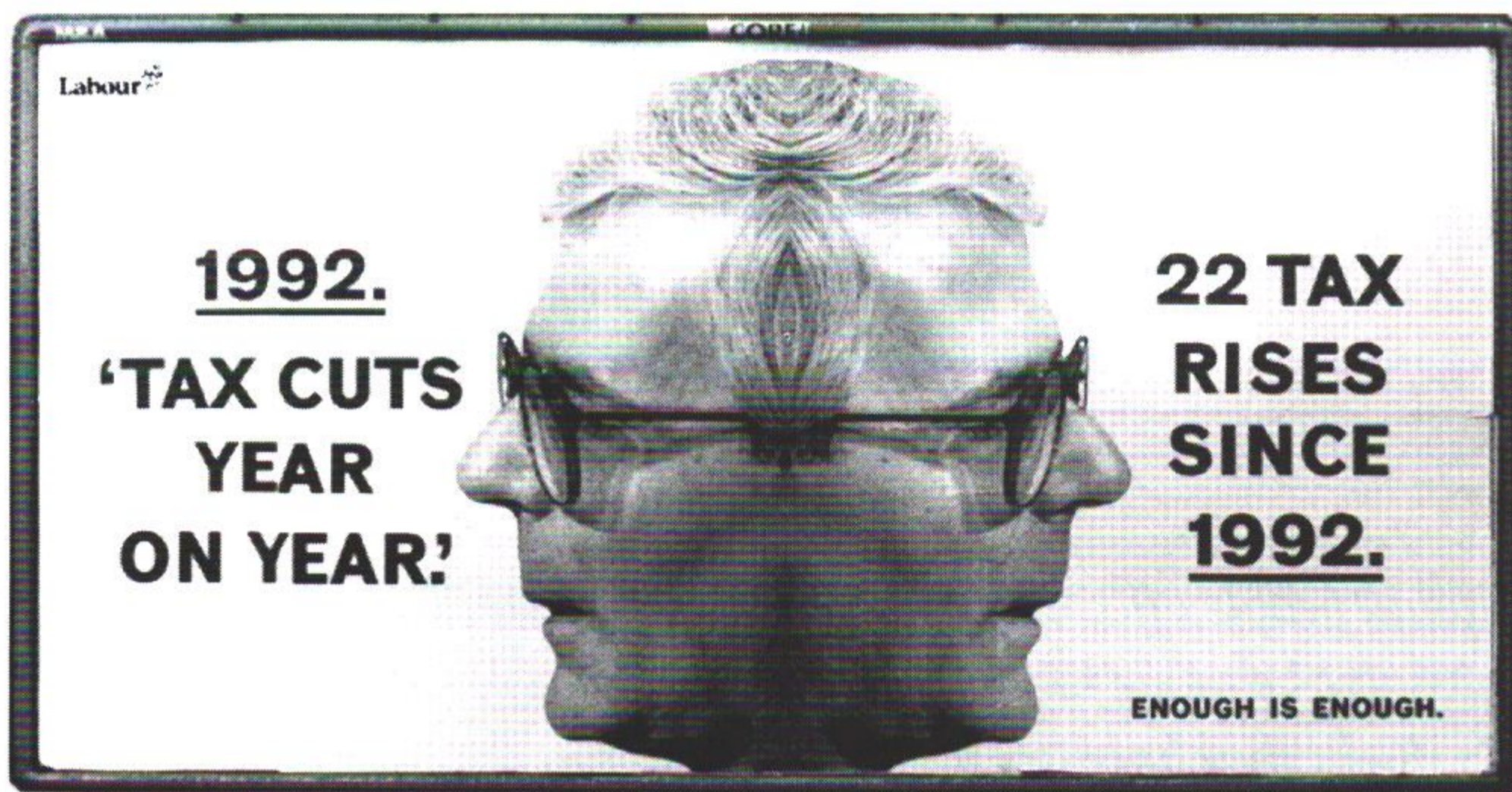
All of the major parties now agree that There Is No Alternative to the market, and that society has to be run according to the accountant's doctrine of prudence and restraint. Our needs and living standards cannot come before the lofty fiscal considerations of the Bank of England or the Bundesbank.

New Labour agrees with the Tories that austerity is the name of the game when it comes to public spending, public sector pay and pensions. Settling for less and acknowledging 'the limits to growth' are the new public policy virtues.

There is no clash of great ideas here. Instead the general election campaign is set to be about trivia, insults and sound bites, contested on an ever-narrower strip of centre ground. Such small-mindedness is all politicians are left with when all sides have ruled out in advance any change to 'the big picture'.

When this is what politics has been reduced to, what does the desire for a change of government represent? Of course we are all sick to death of the loathsome Conservatives. But what we need is a far-reaching change for the better. Instead we are being offered simply a change of personnel at the top, a new managerial team of suits who will pursue broadly the same approach.

The fact that a lot of people seem resigned to accepting such a minor turnover of executive staff as the best change possible indicates how the very concept of change has been belittled and trivialised. In different circumstances, the demand for change has been about transforming the way society is run, by taking the power to challenge the way in which wealth is produced and distributed. Now horizons are so low that it seems broadly accepted that the only



The problem is not that Major is two-faced, but that both parties are facing the same way

change possible is to put a few fresh faces (if fresh is the word for them) in high places.

If that is all that is at stake, then the 'change' which so many seem to be waiting for at the election will leave most of the important things untouched. But the trivialisation of what is seen as change has also helped to blind people to some very significant changes which are already happening—changes for the worse which are set to accelerate under New Labour.

With any idea of transforming society off the agenda, public debate has become much more narrowly focused on the need to change individual behaviour. Instead of improving our standards of living, politicians want to tell us how to live. Social policy has moved away from effecting social solutions towards altering the way people behave. One consequence of this has been an unprecedented extension of official and semi-official interference in everyday life. And far from criticising the authoritarian trend, New Labour is leading the way.

Labour's Jack Straw may be the Home Secretary in waiting but he is already making policy. For example, his proposal for a child curfew has prompted Tory Home Secretary Michael Howard to go a step further, targeting under-10s with special emphasis on controlling the parents. Both parents and children could be subjected to curfews, parents could also find themselves fined, electronically tagged and without a driving license. Jack Straw's repressive instincts are now driving government policy from the backseat; when he gets his hands on the wheel, look out.

It is the same story on every front. More and more areas of life are coming under scrutiny and being made subject to regulation. More and more police powers and restrictive laws are being introduced on the back of hysteria and moral panic.

Politicians fell over themselves to back the Firearms Bill. Except those, in New Labour, who wanted to make it even more draconian. There was all-round support for its ugly sister

the Offensive Weapons Act too. Now it is an offence for under 16 year olds to buy a sewing or manicure kit, and a man who cuts bundles of newspapers for a living has been jailed for possessing a knife.

The last 18 years of Tory rule has brought a pile of legislation restricting and curtailing our liberties. Today, policemen can hold anybody for seven days without a warrant. You can be arrested for joining a peaceful demonstration. The police have unprecedented powers to stop and search you wherever you are and whatever you are doing. If you do not answer police questions, a jury can be asked to infer from your silence that you are guilty.

New Labour has no plans to repeal any of these measures. In fact Blair promises 'zero tolerance' on the streets. New Labour proudly advocates even more bans, more interference and more clampdowns than the Conservative authors of the Criminal Justice Act and the Police Bill. Jack Straw has done the impossible and made Michael Howard look like a bleeding heart liberal.

Any changes after this election will be at the expense of our liberty. It will be more of the same but much worse. Yet this problem is not even being raised in the election debate.

The combination of a degraded sense of change and a blindness to what is really at stake is epitomised by the new voter registration campaigns, exhorting people—especially young people—to vote for the sake of voting. None of these patronising polling booth cheerleaders seem concerned that, when no alternatives are on offer, a vote means nothing.

Real politics, real change, real choice lies outside this charade. We need our own agenda. And if we want change for the better, we must be prepared to fight the changes for the worse. A sensible first step will be to boycott the election, by refusing to choose between a rock and a hard place.

Bruno Waterfield

'IN DUNBLANE, THE COUNSELLORS'

Should people affected by tragedies like the Dunblane massacre be made to undergo professional counselling? Or might they be better off if allowed to sort their lives out for themselves?

Trauma expert Yvonne McEwen, a consultant to Victim Support at Dunblane, recently caused shockwaves by accusing post-disaster counsellors of 'creating a monster'. She told Dr Jennifer Cunningham why she thinks the counselling industry often only makes matters worse



Coming from a coalmining family, Yvonne McEwen trained as a nurse before taking over the medical centre at Polkemmet Colliery, West Lothian. For 10 years she dealt with every type of underground injury and disaster; and she did a shift underground with the men every fortnight to appraise new hazards.

Since she left British Coal during the miners' strike in 1984, Yvonne McEwen has won an international reputation for her work in developing accident and emergency services and in dealing with trauma. She worked in Northern Ireland during the troubles, and was involved in the operations which followed the Lockerbie mid-air disaster, the Oklahoma bombing, and the Dunblane shootings. She has also helped to develop accident and emergency services in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. She currently holds five international visiting professorships.

When Yvonne McEwen was appointed by Abertay-Fife University Centre to head Britain's first Department of Trauma Management and Victim Assistance, the college authorities knew she had a reputation for forthrightness. Just how outspoken she is was made immediately obvious, when McEwen used the launch of the new department in January to fire a broadside at the 'counselling industry' which has flourished alongside every disaster of the past decade, accusing post-disaster counsellors of 'creating a monster'. What follows are Yvonne McEwen's personal opinions.

Jennifer Cunningham: What are your objections to counselling?

Yvonne McEwen: First of all, I think there is a high degree of professional arrogance: counsellors presume they have the skills to come in and involve themselves in other peoples' lives and that counselling is going to make that big a difference. You know yourself, you do not automatically like everyone you meet for the first time—and it is the same for people coming into counselling. You won't necessarily take to the person who is there to offer you counselling. People should not feel *obliged* to use a service. Yet a lot of people I have dealt with say that they did feel obligated and would have felt bad about refusing to use a service that had been set up on their behalf.

Secondly, I think there are a lot of arrogant assumptions about how people respond when they are faced with a traumatic situation or a crisis. In my experience, people want to get back to *basics*: they want their basic human needs and human rights met. And for some reason, in the whole business of victim support today, all these basic human needs and civil rights are pushed to the side, because people think that counselling is actually the antidote to what has happened. A woman in Northern Ireland summed things up for me when she asked: 'what use is Gestalt therapy to me when I have been bombed out of my home?'

Thirdly, my biggest objection is that counselling *negates* the role of the individual in coping with life's events. We all have a wonderful capacity for dealing with even the most heinous

THERE WERE MORE THAN VICTIMS'



things in life, if we are allowed to do so. I would argue that it is always best for the individual to draw on their own reserves, first and foremost. Counselling should not be the first port of call—having somebody in who makes you feel an even bigger victim than you already are by force of circumstance. People end up feeling worse about themselves when they think that they haven't been strong enough to cope with what has happened to them. People need to have information about the support systems that are available, but everybody should have the chance to apply their own personal coping strategies. And we have got to look at life this way: there are more survivors around than there are people who go under.

Jennifer Cunningham: You seem to be suggesting that counselling may make things worse.

Yvonne McEwen: There are good counsellors and there are bad counsellors—and when you get bad ones they are really bad. Not everybody goes into counselling because of altruism and caring. There are a lot of people living their lives vicariously and voyeuristically through other peoples' tragedies. I have a serious problem with that.

The other problem I see is the lack of regulation and accountability. There is very little regulation of who is counselling, of the qualifications, status and experience required for counselling. It is about time that there was a form of regulation of the *industry*—and I use that term deliberately, because it has become an industry, a growth industry associated with a lot of empire building, to the detriment of the people who it is allegedly looking after.

Jennifer Cunningham: You clearly regard counselling as quite intrusive and suggest it may even transgress peoples' civil rights.

Yvonne McEwen: Well, it is a very intrusive discipline. It can be intrusive to the person and their property, particularly when it is unwelcome or uninvited. I don't know why the laws on trespass aren't applied in cases like this. You have the civil liberty of *privacy* and you are entitled to be free from intrusion or invasion in your life. There is something wrong when people feel that ♦



◆ they have to forfeit this for the sake of keeping the professionals happy. We should have a bit more concern about peoples' rights than about professional obligation or desire to help.

Jennifer Cunningham: You mentioned that the Dunblane tragedy illustrated some of these problems.

Yvonne McEwen: In Dunblane, there were more counsellors than there were victims; and there were a lot of people vying for positions in victim supporting agencies. But Dunblane is only one example. In my experience of other incidents, the situation has been very similar. People have gone on a weekend training course, primarily to look at post-traumatic stress disorder. They have then set themselves up as debriefers and counsellors for a population, which it is assumed is going to be damaged by post-traumatic stress disorder. There is this invasion of people who have little or no experience of dealing with trauma—some of whom have told me that they have 'boned up on the literature'.

I do not personally believe in post-traumatic stress disorder. My argument is that when we define a condition or disease in medicine, we do a lot of epidemiological work first: we look at age distribution, which groups of people are affected, if there are predisposing factors, where it occurs in the world and so forth. There is no epidemiological work done on a lot of psychological injury. I have a problem with that, because in the absence of this information it is very difficult to know if a condition exists and to work out appropriate therapies. There is also the question of what the label post-traumatic stress disorder means at the personal level. People are not disordered or dysfunctional after disasters. They are suffering from a post-traumatic incident *reaction*, which is a perfectly natural response to an abnormal event.

Jennifer Cunningham: What kind of approach is required in dealing with trauma and disaster?

Yvonne McEwen: I think that if we are going to have the kind of team people need, it will have to involve individuals who have been through several of these exercises. And I don't just mean large scale disasters, but people who deal with trauma day to day. A credible support service needs to be very holistic and collaborative—not a variety of agencies and organisations vying for their place when something traumatic happens, each with its own agenda, own style of work and own type of training. How do members of the public know what is reputable, advisable, damaging, limiting or self-exhausting? They have to take these things in good faith.

If anything, I think we should allow a sensible period of time during which people can digest what's actually happened to them. Having put in place all the practical things they are likely to need to get through their ordeal, let them have time to think about where they are going. Most people want to have self-autonomy, make their own decisions and have honest, clear and concise information about their options. And if you address all these issues, they invariably don't need counselling. It is when people do not have their social, economic and legal needs addressed that they tend to become stuck.

Jennifer Cunningham: You have some experience of dealing with children involved in disasters and civil war. Do you concur with the view that children can be scarred for life as a result of such experiences?

Yvonne McEwen: I think that there are many people in Northern Ireland who might take exception to that view, people who were children in 1968 and who today lead very healthy and productive lives.

There has been a lot of nonsense written about children being permanently scarred. My experience of living and working in Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe and other parts of the world suggests that children have a fantastic capacity for recovery—much better than adults, because they don't understand the implications of what is happening. Their drama is here and now, and their concerns are immediate ones: why can't I take my toys, why won't I see my friends for the next few days, can I take my dog or my cat, where's the bird going to go? These are anxieties for children, no doubt about that, but they do not have the wider anxieties that adults have about the future. In fact, children often refer affectionately to their new circumstances because they are so novel—it is the novelty of the disruption to school, of having classes in something makeshift, living in something makeshift.

Children's powers of recovery are phenomenal—and that includes children who are critically ill in hospital, children involved in disasters, children in conflict zones and socially deprived areas. We did a follow-up study on children after the Lockerbie tragedy. We looked at things like truancy rates, educational attainment, violence and criminal activity rates among these children. There was no change in any of these post-Lockerbie—apart from an improvement in educational attainment.

Jennifer Cunningham: What kind of responses have you had to your critical comments about counselling?

Yvonne McEwen: A lot of professional people have indicated quietly that this was needing to be said, counselling is something that has got out of control—but there are a variety of reasons, both political and economic, why they can't speak up. Counselling professionals have not been terribly impressed and some people have been genuinely angered by my comments. However, I think if I were running a private counselling agency, charging £25 an hour for every distressed person who came through my door, I would regard such comments as a threat to my livelihood. That's being very cynical I know. But you have got to remember that a high proportion of this is not a social service, it has become a money-making industry. I personally am alarmed by the amount of money that is being made out of social distress.

The response from the public has been phenomenal. The telephone has never stopped ringing. People whose lives have been badly affected by a lot of this have offered to do whatever they can to help me get things changed, so that others don't have to experience what they did. A number of people have called to say that I'd spoken a great deal of common sense and they were glad to hear it.

'I AM ALARMED BY THE
AMOUNT OF MONEY
BEING MADE
OUT OF SOCIAL DISTRESS'

ANN BRADLEY

Guilty secrets



The pro-choice movement in the USA went into a tailspin in March, when the president of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers admitted that he had 'lied through his teeth' while presenting evidence to congress about a controversial late abortion technique.

Ron Fitzsimmons had argued, along with other defenders of abortion, that a gruesome-sounding technique called intact D&X—dubbed 'brain suction' or 'partial birth' abortion by opponents—was used only in very late abortions when a fetal abnormality had been detected. The pro-choice activists had suggested that only a few abortions were carried out by this method, perhaps 500 a year, on women whose health is most at-risk. When president Bill Clinton used his veto to block a bill which would have outlawed the technique, he held a press conference with women who were presented as typical of the 'hard cases' whose health and future fertility would

attract most public sympathy. Opinion polls have shown that the procedure is unacceptable to more than three quarters of the American public, and it must have seemed tactically astute to present the cases of good family women like Mary-Dorothy, a practising Catholic whose fetus was affected by severe hydrocephalus.

But the debacle that has followed shows one thing clearly: such opportunism does not work. Distorting the facts to fit your case is always an illegitimate and ineffective way of campaigning. Reality has an embarrassing tendency to reveal itself. But more importantly, making an argument in support of the facts is ultimately the only way to shift public opinion.

As this episode has shown, the pro-choice lobby has won some support for the few hard cases—but at the expense of doing nothing to soften public opposition to the rest. And 'the rest', it transpires, are the vast majority of women benefiting from the disputed abortion technique.

practices, such as intact D&X, may outlaw techniques that are critical to the lives and health of American women'. The college felt no need to mince its words in telling politicians to butt out of technical clinical decisions, stating that 'the intervention of legislative bodies into medical decision making is inappropriate, ill-advised and dangerous'.

Statements by medical bodies often reek of arrogance and contempt for public opinion. This one is no exception. But it has a significant virtue, lacking in the reams of literature produced by feminist campaigns. It tells it like it is and justifies why it needs to be so. It is a tragedy that abortion supporters failed to build support for a vitally important clinical principle, opting instead for a case with superficially more public appeal, but which ignored the issues at stake.

I have no time for public confessions, but I have some sympathy for Ron Fitzsimmons, who claims to have disassociated himself from the pro-choice case because it leaves exposed with no defence, doctors who carry out intact D&X routinely, on the grounds that they feel it to be in the best interests of the women they treat. In staying silent on the real situation facing such doctors, Fitzsimmons says, the pro-choice lobby has acted as though it has a 'guilty secret'. Doctors risking their reputations and livelihoods to relieve women's distress deserve better.

There is always a temptation in politics to avoid the difficult arguments. On this side of the Atlantic, abortion campaigners highlight teenage pregnancies, women in dire poverty, women with wanted pregnancies affected by abnormalities, but do not say much about the huge number of abortions performed for women who *could* cope with a child but simply do not want to. I have heard pro-choice activists dispute the anti-abortion descriptions of early suction abortion, arguing, somewhat creatively, that rather than being torn apart the intact embryo is 'gently sucked away'. They have obviously never seen one. Of course abortion is unpleasant, whichever method is used, but it is necessary. We can best make our case by explaining why it is necessary—starkly and honestly. In politics there is no such thing as a 'good lie'.

Of course abortion is unpleasant, but it is necessary

be put at risk if the practice were banned.

The truth, it now seems, is somewhat different. The procedure is much more widely used—both earlier in pregnancy and in 'elective' abortions, when the woman's health is not in jeopardy from the pregnancy.

The recent revelations have left congress baying for blood, with anti-abortionists on the rampage and pro-choice members understandably furious that they were incorrectly briefed. Some are now proposing a bill of their own to tighten the circumstances in which abortion can be provided. The media have been ripping into pro-choice campaigners in a hysterical feeding frenzy. This is one helluva mess.

It is obvious why the pro-choice campaign decided to fight their case on the basis of those tragic cases that could

Given that a pro-choice argument has not been put, it is hardly surprising that public opinion remains firmly against it.

There are those who would argue that trying to win support for the heart-wrenching cases was the only argument that *could* be put, the only one that *could* carry public opinion. Others would say that the pro-choice campaigns only argued what they thought to be the case and they were naive as to accepted clinical practice. Both arguments are wrong.

Earlier this year, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists made it clear that intact D&X was an appropriate method for abortions after 16 weeks gestation. They argued that legislation to prohibit the procedure must be opposed because, although other methods of abortion are available, 'the potential exists that legislation prohibiting specific medical

Shipbuilding is out, shopping is in. According to the experts, the old model of industrial production is a thing of the past and the economic future belongs to non-material services like music and high fashion. Dream on, says James Heartfield

CONSUMING PASSIONS



Cyberspace: surfed from Islington but made in Taiwan

PHOTO: CHRIS STOWERS/PANOS PICTURES

Britain, we are told these days, is the coolest place in the world. British pop music earns more than shipbuilding or electronic components—a staggering £2.5bn a year. Designers like John Galliano have taken over the French fashion houses and British fashion week recently celebrated their success. Artists like Damien Hirst are making London the centre of the art world. The experts assure us that a new kind of economy is emerging in which culture and taste create the dynamic, instead of the brute force of industry. Once the workshop of the world, they say, Britain today is its drawing board.

You do not have to take the patriotic twist too seriously to get the point. Behind all the boosting is a genuine proposition: that to succeed in today's global economy, you need a very different kind of product and a very different kind of work.



This is an idea that we are moving into a 'post-material' economy. Geoff Mulgan, director of the fashionable think-tank Demos, describes the new economic thinking: 'What has happened is a shift from a game with nature, about extracting resources, or making products to what Daniel Bell called a "game between persons".' (*Connexivity*, 1997, p88) The idea is that in the 'post-material' economy, services (a 'game between people') predominate over industrial production ('a game with nature').

Instead of being driven by technological advance, it is argued, this new service economy is driven by information and by culture. According to the American Labour Secretary Robert Reich, the future belongs not to industrial workers, but to 'symbolic analysts', people who have the skills to navigate the new world of communication. As he says, symbolic analysis could range from Madonna's semiotically wise pop songs to a lawyer's brief.

These are the advertising slogans for the post-material economy. Do they stand up to scrutiny?

The first thing to note is just how self-serving this assessment of the modern economy is. It is a description of the world of work in which the future belongs to writers, administrators and the intelligentsia—the very people who are writing the advertising copy. When Robert Reich coins a term 'symbolic analysts' that identifies his own number-crunching with Madonna's records, it is difficult not to suspect that there is a degree of vanity at work.

At my local launderette the attendant sees the world entirely in metaphors drawn from her own jaundiced experience of society. In her world-view a great river of corruption flows through London from the houses of parliament to Fleet Street—perhaps the subterranean river Fleet itself—carrying away the filthy business that would otherwise be visible. It is an understandable delusion that does nobody any harm. She after all is a laundry attendant and not a politician or a management consultant.

But what should we make of writers who imagine that the world is entirely governed by writing, or a think-tank that sees the country peopled entirely by people who work in think-tanks? The business pages of the Sunday papers prognosticate that work will take place at home, in the electronic cottage industry of the future, equipped with fax and Internet. Shouldn't these writers widen their circle of friends? It seems that more people are making a living writing about the electronic cottage than actually work in one. The overwhelming prejudice of the information age is that the narrow experience of those ideologues who draft economic theory is in fact the archetype of human activity.

In the early nineteenth century, when the German Principalities had more universities than industries, the massed ranks of German professors imagined that the physical and social worlds were a mere reflection of the Mind. Just as German idealism was the conceit of the professors, so the post-material information age is a conceit of the think-tanks, journalists, lawyers and accountants. The information age might be a good pitch for consultants who have nothing to sell but information, but it does not necessarily describe the world. The fantasy is that they are really worthy people, and not the self-serving parasites that most people think they are.

Is it true that jobs in industry are being replaced by service jobs—even if these were 'symbolic analyst' jobs? Comparing the difference between 1960 and 1990 illustrates the real trends behind the propaganda.

The absolute number of people working in industry globally has *increased* from 247 million to 381 million. But the changes are different according to which part of the world you are in.

In the developing countries, the poorest parts of the world, the increase is largest, from 88 million to 192 million. But as these countries contain a considerable part of the world's



PHOTOS: DAVE CHAPMAN

◆ population, this only represents a single percentage point increase in the industrial workforce from nine to 10 per cent of the working population. So even though these economies have increased the number of industrial workers in the world by more than one hundred million, that change does not represent a dynamic process of investment. Most people there are still either working at subsistence farming, in the army or are dependants.

In 26 dynamic industrialising economies—mostly countries in the Far East like Korea, Singapore and Malaysia—the increased proportion of industrial workers is much greater, growing from just 17 per cent of their working populations to 24 per cent in the 30 years to 1990. In absolute numbers, though, the change is not as great as in the developing world, being an increase of 21 million (12 million to 33 million). In other words, on a narrower basis of population, these ‘Tiger Economies’ have made a qualitative leap out of the developing world to something like comparability with the industrialised West.

In the advanced capitalist countries, too, there has been an absolute increase in the numbers of industrial workers, from 159 million to 189 million. But, here, unlike the rest of the world, there has been a relative decrease in the proportion of the workforce in industry, from 35 per cent to 33 per cent. In other words, the numbers in industry have increased over all, but not as much as employment in the service sector.

If we look at the changing workforce in the Group of Seven advanced capitalist economies (USA, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, UK and Canada) the picture is clearer. In these countries the proportion of the workforce in industry dropped from 37 per cent in 1960 to 28 per cent in 1994. In the same period the proportion working in services rose from 46 per cent to 67 per cent. For the advanced capitalist countries, then, it is true to say that industrial production has tended to give way to services.

Even here, though, it does not follow that a move into the service industries means a move up the wage scale, still less that work becomes a game. Not everybody that works in services is designing Web pages. In the USA the most rapidly growing employer is the supermarket chain Wal-Mart. Between 1978 and 1996, its workforce grew from 21 000 to 628 000—‘one in every 200 civilian jobs’ in America,

according to a company press release. In the same period the carworkers employed by Ford, General Motors and Chrysler shrank in number from 667 000 to 398 000. The main difference is in the pay. On the assembly line you earn \$18.81 an hour. Wal-Mart pay \$4.75. (D Barlett and J Steele, *America: Who Stole the Dream?*, 1996, p22)

Even among the advanced nations, the picture is mixed. Japan’s industrial workforce grew from 13 million in 1960 to nearly 22 million in 1994, an increase of 68 per cent. America’s grew by a more modest 20 per cent, but remained the largest in the world at almost 30 million. In the same period, though, Britain’s industrial workforce dropped by nearly half, to 6 million, while France and Italy lost around a fifth of their industrial workers.

The overall picture of changing employment is quite different from a simple growth of services. Only in three major countries, Britain, Italy and France has there been an actual decline in the numbers working in industry. Only here have service jobs replaced industrial jobs. Not surprisingly, these are the three countries whose scholars write most effectively on the transformation from industry to services: clearly one of the services that they have provided for the rest of the world is an economic theory derived from their own particular experiences. One of the difficulties in understanding the modern economy is that most economists are looking at the world through the prism of their own narrow experiences.

What is more, the very features that are now flagged up as positive are often more reflective of economic decay. The three countries that have seen the biggest change from industry to services have also seen a decline in their world standing. Most of these new jobs are less secure and worse paid—McJobs. In that light the growth of the service sector seems more like an attempt to stave off decline than the dynamic future of work.

The other implication hidden within the figures is that the relationship between the advanced countries and the rest of the world remains parasitic. New value is being created through rapid industrialisation in the Far East, and by the expansion of production in the developing world. But the advanced nations are dedicating a growing proportion of their resources to cultural life, or financial chicanery.

The idea that we are
LIVING IN A
'CONSUMER
SOCIETY'
 misses the point:
 before we consume,
SOMEBODY HAS TO
PRODUCE



The picture is one of a new division of labour in the world, where more and more of real production takes place outside of the West. The advanced nations are using their monopoly over capital to exploit that production, making money on loans, insurance and through portfolio investment. Meanwhile, the real work is done outside of the City and increasingly outside of the country.

When looking at the £2.5bn profits of the record industry, creative as the artists might be, it is the plastic and the aluminium where the profits are made. George Michael and The Artist might think their contracts onerous, but it is the humble labour of bauxite miners, Asian oil workers and plant operatives that is filling EMI's coffers.

One objection to the argument that material production is still important is made by the sociologist Ronald Inglehart. Inglehart has been surveying attitudes in Europe and America since 1971, asking the question are we more or less materialistic. Inglehart started by asking people which things are more important: maintaining order, fighting rising prices, giving people more say or protecting freedom of speech. The first two are reckoned to indicate a materialistic outlook, the last two, a 'post-materialistic' one.

Over the years, says Inglehart, more and more people elevate the post-material values over the material ones. With each generation post-material values are more important. In his latest research, Inglehart has extended his survey to include the former Soviet Bloc and the Third World (*Value Change in Global Perspective*, 1995, with P Abramson). Surprisingly, Inglehart reports that the gradual shift towards post-material values is uniform, and by no means an exclusively Western phenomenon.

Many development theorists working in the South would argue that Inglehart's findings come as no surprise. The vast majority of work done in Southern societies, they say, does not fit the narrow definition of industrial production. Domestic toil, especially in a subsistence economy, represents a considerable area of work, done principally by women, that does not show up in the statistics of Gross National Product.

Here, post-materialism seems like less of a yuppie eighties outlook and more of a caring nineties one. There are, however, some problems with Inglehart's research. For a start the aspirations that are considered to be post-material vary

from country to country in Inglehart's schema. So, for example, in China self-betterment is considered to be a forward-looking post-material value, while in Britain the self-same desire to get on is taken as a backward materialistic value. The contradictory desires of the aspirant Chinese and the English slackers are both arbitrarily cited as evidence of a growing post-materialism. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Inglehart is simply projecting his own preferences as the coming enlightenment.

More importantly, opinion polls are of limited value when the clash of ideas has become muted. What they tend to measure is the extent to which the ideas of the dominant elites in society have been imposed more widely. Reading Inglehart's research, the desire that lies beneath his objective style of presentation is easily discernible: materialistic, bad; post-materialistic, good. The recalcitrant expectation of material success, of reward for your efforts, is something that Inglehart looks forward to seeing the back of. This is a view that the wealthy can live with.

For the development theorists, too, a post-materialistic assessment of Southern societies serves the apologists for underdevelopment better than it serves the Third World woman. Reckoning women's unpaid work as equally part of the Gross National Product as men's paid work is flattering, but it is not real help. Telling somebody that they are valuable might be good for self-esteem, but you cannot eat self-esteem. Southern people need real development, not a Tory-style rigging of the figures. It is no good counting up Bangladesh's subsistence farming and calling it production if it remains unpaid work.

What the elevation of post-material values represents is not simply a change in the work process, as the actual numbers of the growth of industrial workers demonstrates. The demotion of the 'game with nature'—industrial production—does not indicate a simple shift towards other kinds of working. Rather, it reflects the fact that the contest over production—the dispute between workers and employers over their respective share of the product—has been shut down. What the post-materialists are saying is not that production need not take place, but rather that it is a question of no real importance, a solely *technical* question.

In years gone by the realm of production was a highly contested one. Organised workers challenged the division ♦

ENOUGH IS A FEAST?

Not everybody celebrates consumption today. Campaigns like Enough maintain that we can enjoy a better life by having less. Andrew Calcutt still wants more than 'an equitable lifestyle'

'If we want to end global poverty and create a sustainable environment which is equitable for all six billion people on the planet—an equitable lifestyle—then we are going to have to start questioning the level of wealth which we, as members of the rich nations, assume as normal.'

'Equitable' is the key word in the vocabulary of Paul Fitzgerald, who describes himself as the 'spokesperson, not organiser' for Enough, the anti-consumerism campaign. Enough organises

No Shop Days in shopping malls, using 'satire and humour' in order 'not to alienate' people from its message: 'you've got to consume less.' Before Christmas, the campaign won media recognition when Enough activists dressed up as aliens to warn the good consumers of Manchester against the evils of Xmas shopping.

Fitzgerald believes that the bulk of the world's population will only escape poverty if 'the 20 per cent consuming 80 per cent of resources' learn to consume less. A lot less. Fitzgerald wants those

in the West to give up the expectation of a higher standard of living. 'That's got to become, not a taboo', he says, 'but something which is seen as anti-social, unless it's within fixed limits negotiated between everybody'.

'Living at the standard we are now is draining resources out of countries and is creating poverty', Fitzgerald claims, citing the example of Ethiopia. He rejects the 'traditional model' which envisaged 'impoverished nations' becoming wealthy like the West, on the grounds that 'everyone in the world continuing to increase their wealth would spell out environmental destruction'.

Why are the likes of Fitzgerald so sure that humanity is incapable of both increasing the production of wealth and coping with any problems thrown up, as people

have done in the past? The man from Enough dismisses this idea as waiting around for the future development of 'Star Trek technology', and insists that, on the basis of 'current technology or immediately predicted technology', we must settle for less.

But wealth in the West does not cause 'global poverty'. Indeed, the fact is that, if the Third World enjoyed access to the 'current technology' already employed in the West, it could feed the entire population of the globe five times over and still have time to watch *Star Trek* on satellite TV.

The arguments of people like Enough do not reflect the real state of the world, but their own state of mind; the jaded nineties cynicism which concedes that There Is No Alternative, that nothing can be done except to

♦ of the product, campaigning for higher wages and shorter hours. Employers sought to guarantee their profits by pushing in the other direction. With that kind of contest in society, the question of material production was always at the forefront of political life. Today, however, the contest over production is virtually at a standstill. The number of days work lost through strike action has fallen to a fraction of what it was 20 years ago. The defeat of the organised labour movement in the eighties means that the realm of production is one that can be pretty much taken for granted by today's social commentators.

For a post-materialist like Geoff Mulgan, the assumption that production will take place is now automatic: 'A sum of capital expands, the web of trading partners widens, the range of products diversifies.' But why does a sum of capital expand? Only because of the exploitation of labour in production. Nothing comes of nothing. Without the appropriation of all that which labour produces above its own means of subsistence, there would be no basis for the accumulation of capital.

Mulgan's account of the new post-materialist society pretends to a greater sensitivity to relations between people, as opposed to the merely technical relations of production. The irony of that claim is that the most important social relationship of all is precisely the one that Mulgan is oblivious to, the exchange between capital and labour. Imagining that production is simply a technical question, Mulgan turns a blind eye to the one human relation that shapes all the others. The exploitation of labour at work is the living premise of all the other activities that are celebrated under the rubric of post-material values. No cat-walk without a rag trade, no Britpop without a plastics industry, no Internet without an assembly line in Korea or Silicon Valley.

But because the question of production is closed, the 'game between people' is extraordinarily narrow in its remit. The only relations between people that count these days are relations of consumption. As consumers, of course, everybody is free to do what they want. The possibilities for self-creation are without limits. Any identity you choose is yours, off-the-peg, at a price.

It is often pointed out that the post-materialists are positively revolutionary in their attitudes to gender relations,

racial stereotypes or sexual orientation. Those conservative values are readily overthrown in the arena of playful self-creation. The one arena that is closed to such critical thinking is the arena of production itself. All kinds of cultural and personal relations are held to be negotiable, but the one relationship that is beyond challenge is the exploitation of labour at work. This is necessarily the case: it is the production of a surplus in the realm of production that has to pay for all the cultural experimentation celebrated.

Adopting the standpoint of the individual consumer is characteristic of today's limited economic thinking. Businessmen have long entertained the fantasy that money could be made without having to get involved in the messy business of production and exploitation. But it is only in today's conditions that this fantasy could be given its head.

The contemporary models for business all revolve around the desire to liberate making money from the dirty business of producing goods. Business gurus dream out loud about the office-less company or even the company without a workforce. The example of Visa, where a skeletal 'overseeing administrative organisation' handles over seven billion transactions a year, worth \$650bn dollars, is often cited. Visa's founding chief executive Dee Hock says this is 'the largest single block of purchasing power in the world economy'. But this purchasing power is only a 'block' in the sense that they all have Visa cards. The money is earned from a variety of sources, and spent just as variously. And of course the Visa organisation itself is only a small part of the service. Around 20 000 financial institutions handle Visa cards, whose staff must be considerable. Still greater must be the number of people creating the seven billion goods and services purchased. Visa's relationship to these myriad exchanges is essentially parasitic.

The idea that we are living in a 'consumer society' misses the point. It is, in the words of the American critic Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, 'the stupidity that consumption is just as productive as production' (*College Literature*, 21.3, 1994). Before we can consume, somebody has to produce.

During the post war boom years, the 'consumer society' idea took hold because of the expansion of leisure time and disposable incomes. Then it was assumed that production would just carry on growing. Today, the fact that the arena



share out the misery among the world's inhabitants—a kind of survival with equity.

If Fitzgerald is cynical, he is also naive. Talking about 'the end of multi-national corporations', he seems to think that this can be

brought about by equitable negotiations involving all six billion people on Planet Earth. As if simply being alive really makes you a stakeholder, and the people with all the power are going to volunteer to become as powerless as everybody else.

Fitzgerald declares that 'there aren't any really huge advantages in having an affluent lifestyle. 'It doesn't improve the quality of life', he says. Half-jokingly, he speaks highly of the seventies sitcom *The Good Life*, in which Tom and Barbara downshifted to subsistence farming in their Surbiton garden. 'I have a perfectly good life', he says, in which the highpoints seem to be 'going down the pub' and 'travelling a bit'.

Trouble is, Fitzgerald wants everybody to accept what he can 'get by on'. He berates me for

'not knuckling down' to the prospect of falling living standards. We must all 'bite the bullet' about living on less. But he does not want to square up to my question about exactly what we must do without. 'That's always going to be a tricky one', he concedes: 'Facts and figures don't exist in hard form yet, because there's so much avoidance of the issue.' A nice touch from one who is avoiding the question.

However, Fitzgerald is adamant that 'what we'd immediately want to see missing from a post-materialist society is the drive to ever-increasing consumption'. He thinks that we only want to consume more because we are not yet 'an educated public who are properly informed', which strikes me as the latest incarnation of the old elitist

crap about people not knowing what is good for them. Although Fitzgerald denies any puritanical intent, he clearly believes that the desire for what most of us would consider a good life is some kind of sordid fetish which must be repressed through re-education.

Fitzgerald maintains that Enough has a global perspective which is 'demolishing conventional thinking'. But his perspective is really that of an inhabitant of a Western capitalism which has lost faith in itself. Like many today he speaks wistfully of the past, particularly of the 'Coronation Street image of the shop-owner who gets to talk to people and trade is part of the social exchange'. Far from convention-busting, such a loss of faith in the future is the new orthodoxy. Enough is enough of all that. ●

No doubt SUCH 'ETHICAL' BUSINESSES AS THE Body Shop will be happy if we continue to patronise their overpriced goods

of production is not up for debate means that consumption seems to be the only avenue for self-expression. But the truth is that any identity organised around consumption will always be superficial, because it is derivative of something outside itself. Knowing about films, fashion or football is a good way to hold your own in a conversation, but nothing to write home about.

Frustration with the emphasis upon consumption is palpable. There are no end of critics of the consumer society. The tragedy is that these critics all accept the fatal premise that this *is* a consumer society. That means they end up sharing the same narrow conception as the apologists, that the arena of consumption is the only one in which you can act.

The *Big Issue* recently showcased a Shopping With Attitude section, where Body Shop entrepreneur Anita Roddick challenged:

'Who is reinventing society? Not government but big business. Who could reinvent society? Not government but consumers. Let's face it consumers are the people who hold the strongest hand.'

At one level this is incontrovertible. Since all people consume we can assume that the people who do hold the power are

consumers. But there are consumers and consumers. The people who own capital, who purchase and 'consume' the working capabilities of other people month in and month out, have considerable power. They tell us what we can and cannot do. 'Fellow consumer' Anita Roddick is one of them.

What about the rest of us? Could we mobilise our purchasing power to effect social change? Vigilante consumer Joanne Mallabar thinks so: 'This trolley is a lethal weapon. And I know how to use it' she writes. 'Supermarkets beware! I am issuing this threat as the self-appointed figurehead of the growing army of shoppers prepared to flex their muscle over moral and ethical issues down the local supermarket.'

Of course, this is a movement whose figurehead could only be self-appointed. Imagine trying to organise an election as you are elbowing your way to the front of the one-basket only queue at Sainsbury's. And what are the moral and ethical issues down the local supermarket? Are the mangetout pickers more or less exploited than the broccoli producers? Which products are not marked 'environmentally friendly' these days?

As consumers, no doubt we all wield enormous purchasing power. But the very condition of being individual consumers militates against any common programme of action. The minute you have a niche market for 'ethical' goods like tofu or herbal cigarettes, an equal and opposite niche market for unethical goods like Kangaroo meat and Havana cigars opens up. The very idea of 'ethical' shopping means that you can feel good about your choices without actually doing anything you would not otherwise do. Ethics, like tastes, are wholly personal choices, unyielding to any debate or reasoning. But no doubt such 'ethical' businesses as the Body Shop and the *Big Issue* will be happy if we continue to patronise their overpriced goods. This is a kind of 'post-materialism' whose outcome is all too material.

Far from being an arena of human liberation or ethical choice, the supermarket is just a dull necessity for most people. To envisage this as the stage of emancipation is to forswear any real influence in the world. The goal of escaping the domination of man by the conditions of production is a laudable one. But the one way of making sure that it never happens is to assert that we are already free. ●

With thanks to Phil Murphy.

Why does the capitalist West seem so uncertain about the future of the world's most dynamic free market? Norman Lewis and Sheila Parker, just back from the Far East, report on China's prospects post-Deng

NEW CHINA, NEW DANGER?

There is only one question worth asking about the death of Deng Xiaoping in February: how could they tell he was dead? Deng's death had been expected since he disappeared from public view more than three years ago. Yet when it came, many Western journalists and experts reacted with shock and anxiety, worrying about what the future might hold for China and the world. These fears say more about the West's loss of faith in the free market than about the realities of China's new capitalist society.

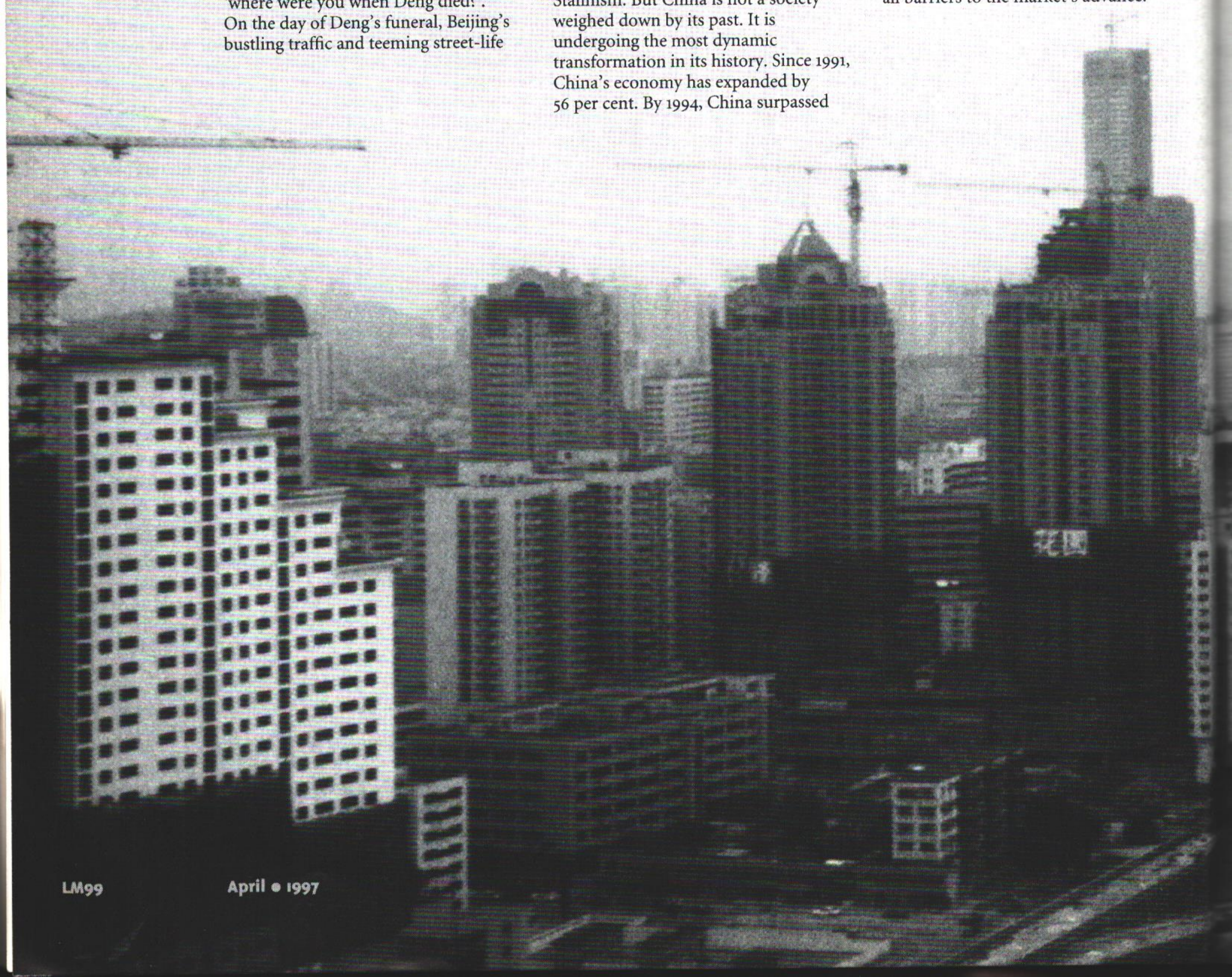
In China itself, nobody was asking 'where were you when Deng died?'. On the day of Deng's funeral, Beijing's bustling traffic and teeming street-life

carried on almost as normal. Nobody seemed to have told the people of Beijing that they ought to show some remorse, allow themselves to grieve, perhaps even seek some counselling. Of course, millions of people—even China's new breed of wide-boys touting ripped-off software on CD-ROMs in every Beijing street market—made a show of respecting the official moment of silence. But the moment and the entourage soon passed, and China went back to business as usual.

Western commentators like to present the China Deng left behind as hidebound by the enduring legacy of Stalinism. But China is not a society weighed down by its past. It is undergoing the most dynamic transformation in its history. Since 1991, China's economy has expanded by 56 per cent. By 1994, China surpassed

the \$100bn mark in exports—a feat accomplished by only nine other countries in history. Billions of dollars of inward investment have made China's cities hum with economic activity. The enormous problems which Western commentators love to highlight—growing inequality, unemployment and poverty—result not from the failures of China's past, but from the success of its introduction of a dog-eat-dog free-market economy.

Travelling in China today, you experience capitalist development of a kind long exhausted in the West—an unbridled dynamism which hurls aside all barriers to the market's advance.



The result is an uncertain world created in capitalism's own image—warts, smog, corruption and all.

The contrast between the West's 25-year-long recession-induced anxiety, and the East's more forward-looking optimism is immediately apparent. China's major cities of Beijing and Shanghai are like enormous building sites. In special economic zones like Shenzhen on the Hong Kong border, massive cranes dominate the horizon in every direction.

A German architect employed by the German electronics giant, Siemens, to design a company housing complex told us that Beijing's building boom has attracted the largest concentration of excavation, earth moving and construction machinery in world history. In the new economic zone of Pudong, Shanghai, a new Manhattan has taken shape in just five years. The buildings are not just big, but the architecture is also refreshingly bold and experimental. Shanghai already boasts some internationally-acclaimed architectural marvels: it has the world's second tallest television tower, and will house Asia's tallest building by 1999. These will be the 'cathedrals' of the

next century. As we scanned the city's horizon from the top floor of our hotel, we were told that Shanghai, in terms of geographical spread, is now five times the size of Los Angeles—the second city in the USA.

Of course, these cities are no Nirvanas. Many of the vast shopping malls are monuments to bad taste, while most shops peddle shoddy trash behind their glitzy exteriors. And beyond the shiny city centres, poverty abounds, as do down-and-outs and beggars (but thankfully, no sellers of the *Big Issue* yet).

In reality China's new cities are a chaotic, polluted anarchic mess. Transport systems and other infrastructural services lag way behind the expansion. Many of the new housing skyscrapers have been built on the cheap to squeeze as many people into as little space as possible. Like the landlords who built and controlled the slums of industrial Manchester in nineteenth-century England, the owners of these buildings are motivated by the desire to squeeze as much money as possible out of their investments. And this is what China's cities represent today: the dynamic chaos produced by the reckless pursuit of profit at all costs.

This was perhaps the most striking difference between Chinese and Western society. In China, nobody apologises for the market and the drive to make profits. Indeed, 'getting rich' has been a state philosophy for the past decade and a half. State-controlled

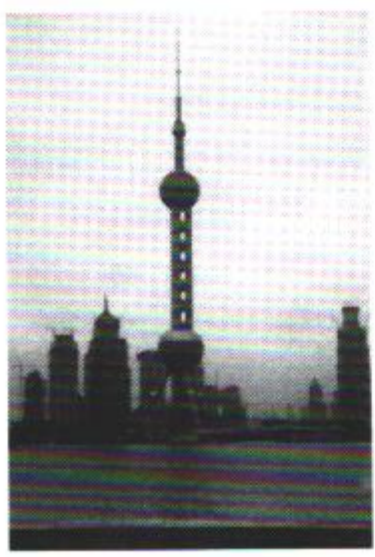
Chinese television plays its part in educating Chinese children in full-blooded market values. Watching an imported US cartoon, in which the amoral huckster Daffy Duck rips off untold wealth and runs off into the sunset yelling 'I'm rich! I'm rich! No more social welfare! OOH! I love money! I'm rich!'—we got the feeling that, in the new China, this was less of an ironic joke about American greed, and more of a thought-for-the-day expressing the official state philosophy.

The brazen celebration of money-making illustrates how Chinese society has embraced the market as the necessary advance of 'existing socialism'. An assistant professor at China's Academy for the Social Sciences suggested to us that, despite the growing social inequalities and tensions, the introduction of the market had brought more benefits than problems for China. For him, the key was that the Chinese masses were better off today than in the past, for which they had to thank Deng's market reforms and his 'implementation of Mao's goal of freeing the Chinese masses from starvation'.

The parasitic capitalists of the West are happy to make money from the productive energies which the new economy has unleashed in China. Yet at the same time, many in the West seem distinctly uncomfortable about the

Big is still beautiful
in Shenzhen





public worship of all-out profit-making in China these days. That unease lay behind many of the anxious commentaries which followed Deng's death in the American and European media. There could be no surer sign of the Western elites' loss of faith in the free market than their ambivalence towards the dynamic growth of capitalism in China.

The irony is
**WESTERN
 ELITES**
 now rely on China's
 Stalinist leaders to
 safeguard the market



Winning and losing:
 Pearl TV tower
 Shanghai (top);
 Hutong market, south
 of Tiananmen Square

Part of the West's worry, of course, is simply about the threat of competition from another emerging economic powerhouse in Asia. But there appears to be more to it than that. The vigour of Chinese capitalists today is the contemporary equivalent of the dynamic robber barons of nineteenth-century Europe and the USA. In the 1990s, however, such an energetic economy throws a very unflattering light on the stagnant system in the West.

The driven, he-who-dares-profits spirit of Chinese capitalism exposes the rather apologetic culture of low expectations which has been adopted in the West of late. Within the major developed economies, influential voices now rubbish the 'greed is good' mentality of the eighties, express doubts about the efficacy of growth, and emphasise the importance of limits, caution and restraint. The way in which the thrusting 'let's go' attitude of China's factories is conquering world markets makes these fashionable arguments look like bad excuses for the lack of an equally dynamic productive base in the West.

For various reasons, then, many in the West feel more discomfort than pride about the advance of the free market in China. This helps to explain why Western commentators often seize upon the problems of Chinese society with relish—for example emphasising the growing inequalities within Chinese society—and make dark predictions of problems ahead. These criticisms stop short, however, of blaming capitalism itself for the Chinese people's difficulties. Instead blame tends to be attached to the peculiarities of Chinese 'culture', or the legacies of China's Stalinist past—which is a bit rich, given the widening income differentials in societies like Britain and the USA during the free-market eighties.

In fact it is the new market, not the legacy of an ancient culture or more recent Stalinist past, which has loosened the cement that glues Chinese society together. When Deng introduced his economic reforms, the rhetorical emphasis upon the legacy of Mao ensured that the spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of the nation carried over into the new era. Taking responsibility by working hard and limiting your demands upon society represented the patriotic duty of every Chinese citizen. Millions policed themselves as they built modern China, creating a society united by its deprivation—a community of have-nots.

The problem, of course, was that with time the market and its driving demand for private accumulation introduced a new and divisive dynamic of competition and self-satisfying consumption. There are winners and losers, and the losers are not happy to continue to make sacrifices for somebody else's benefit.

Wherever you go in China, and whoever you speak to, it is clear that alongside the economic optimism, resentments and bitterness are bubbling away beneath the surface. No section of Chinese society is immune from the fall-out of the market reforms, up to and including the Chinese Communist Party and the state bureaucracy. A major discussion in the Chinese media now concerns state corruption, a practice that is having a corrosive impact on the country. Foreign businessmen complain about the difficulties of doing business in China, due to the myriad bribes and backhanders needed to negotiate a contract. The prospect of this unedifying scramble to make a quick buck tearing China apart has added to the West's fears for the future.

Despite the media rhetoric demanding democratic reform, in private, every Western leader is praying that the Chinese state and the People's Liberation Army can hold China together. Western business desperately

needs China and its market. One American businessman made the point to us that his corporation was losing money in China because of all the 'subsidies' necessary to get contracts. Asked for how long a non-profitable venture like this could go on, his reply was revealing: 'We have no choice. If we don't get in, someone else will. We have to hang on in there, no matter what. It's the long-term we have to consider and the stakes are high.' And if the muted reaction to the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 is anything to go by, not even brutal repression will deter Western corporations from 'hanging on in there' to make profits in China.

The huge irony which struck us upon returning to the UK was how, almost in spite of themselves, the Western elites now rely on China's Stalinist elite for the future of the market. This uncomfortable truth underlines the sense of unease about Deng's death and his legacy. Western commentators might be right to ask who can replace the historic figure of Deng in his role as facilitator of reform and conciliator of competing interests. But their discussion of the future represents a semi-conscious attempt to focus attention away from the real source of China's potential problems—the success of its market reforms—and their own loss of faith in the market's ability to deal with these problems. This is an incredible state of affairs.

The dynamism of China's productive market economy is the source of both its current success and its potential instability. It is the success of the market reforms, not the legacy of Deng's megalomania, that is widening the cracks in Chinese society and is ultimately likely to make more repression necessary for China's rulers to hold things together. By obscuring the central role of the market, Western commentators are providing an excuse for the failures of a system they no longer feel able to celebrate.

For all its dynamism in China, and the glimmer of fantastic possibilities and human achievements it provides, the market remains an irrational way to organise society. What summed it up for us was when one state-employed tourist guide announced with pride that the ownership of pet dogs, outlawed since the Revolution in 1948, was now to be allowed in Beijing—a city in which millions of people struggle to survive. It seems that the running dogs of capitalism really are the winners in China's new 'revolution'.

Norman Lewis is a lecturer and researcher in International Relations at the University of Sussex. Sheila Parker lectures on Modern China and China's Economic Reforms at the City Literary Institute.

DR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

Selling Aids awareness



If the arrival of spring provokes a stirring in the loins of the nation's youth, then it must be time for some health promotion in that expanding area of medical activity now known as 'sexual health'. And what better focus for raising awareness than an old-fashioned Aids scare?

Step forward Dr Patrick Ngosa, a gynaecologist from Zambia, for a spell of tabloid exposure, the modern equivalent of the medieval stocks, in the cause of moralising the great British public. Even before Dr Ngosa was struck off the medical register by the General Medical Council in March, because he had delayed in getting an HIV test when he had reason to believe it might be positive, his story and been extensively reported and his photograph had featured in the newspapers.

Having identified the sinner, the next stage in promoting an Aids scare is for the health authorities responsible for hospitals in which the HIV-positive doctor has worked to alert his former patients, to set up a helpline and counselling services. Over the weekend, after the revelations about Dr Ngosa, some 5000 women phoned helplines at various hospitals in Essex and Gloucestershire.

To any rational observer, this must seem bizarre. For all practical purposes, the risk of acquiring HIV from a doctor, even in the course of surgery, is zero. The infamous Florida dentist who is supposed to have infected several of his patients has been the only case for so long that suspicions run high that he was doing something more than drilling their teeth. More than a dozen major investigations

Dr Ngosa has been subjected to the modern equivalent of the medieval stocks

The immediate effect of the allegations made against Dr Ngosa was that he forfeited any right to confidentiality. One remarkable feature of the speciality of sexual health is the efficiency with which it can transmit its patients' complete medical records into the public realm. In a case involving a doctor in Scotland there was some dispute whether this took 45 minutes or two hours (see *British Medical Journal*, 28 August 1993). 'Medical sources' were available to brief journalists on the details of Dr Ngosa's diagnosis, his work record and his family. The moralistic climate surrounding Aids apparently justifies violating the most elementary standards of confidentiality.

of thousands of patients of HIV-positive doctors in Britain have failed to reveal a single case of transmission.

Why go to the trouble of notifying somebody that they are at negligible risk of HIV? The only explanation is the desperate commitment of Britain's health promotion industry to maintain the public profile of one of its top products: Aids awareness. There is a nagging anxiety that, as the scale of the epidemic in Britain stubbornly refuses to conform to the nightmare scenarios of the late 1980s, the bottom might fall out of the Aids awareness market.

The figures of Aids cases up to the end of 1996 confirm that the vast majority

of Britain's total of less than 14 000 cases are still among gay men. The much vaunted heterosexual epidemic—of cases acquired in Britain (as distinct from those who became infected abroad, usually in Africa)—has reached a total of 181 people in 14 years. The slow rate of spread of the disease in Britain and the development of increasingly effective treatment regimes has led two specialist treatment units in London to close wards in recent months because of the lack of demand for beds.

The contrast between the high level of resources available for the care of people with Aids compared with patients with other diseases has become increasingly stark. In recent months the financial difficulties of health authorities in East London have made the routine process of getting my patients hospital appointments or admissions worse than ever. Yet patients with HIV or Aids continue to enjoy ready access to doctors, nurses, physiotherapy, counselling, respite care, whatever they require. I know GPs who have attended courses to learn about the esoteric drug regimes now used in delaying the progress of HIV disease. But they find that they get little opportunity to practice their skills because the few Aids patients on their lists prefer to continue to attend specialist centres where they receive a level of medical attention impossible to provide these days in general practice.

Around Christmas I enquired of a patient with Aids about his plans for the festive season. He treated me to a detailed review of the cuisine and entertainment on offer at each of London's Aids centres. In Ireland people used to say that if you wanted to find a good restaurant all you had to do was follow the local priest; in London you could do worse than follow somebody with Aids. You could also get aromatherapy and a massage as well as a quality meal, and if you're really in luck, a hug from Princess Diana.

I don't begrudge people with HIV and Aids their high level of care. I just wish the same abundance was available for people with less fashionable diseases.

One of the major areas of investment of Aids resources has been in the promotion of the gospel of safe sex. Every local health authority and council has special teams engaged in raising awareness of Aids through initiatives like World Aids Day in December, distributing red ribbons, organising publicity stunts, popularising condoms. At a time when the Aids epidemic appears to be stabilising at a relatively low level, this parasitic bureaucracy needs scare stories to maintain public anxieties and prolong its own existence. The unfortunate Dr Ngosa is simply the latest victim of the climate of fear around Aids that is manipulated by this cynical clique.

alt.culture.football

HORNBY

MODEL FOOTBALL

Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* mirrors the sanitisation of football. Alex Cameron reviews the film of the book; Ed Barrett (below right) looks at how both caught the mood of their times

Signs of the times

'We often pop down to the local chippie and get a fish and chip supper—my favourite—which we'll eat in front of the TV. When the kids are in bed I usually go to the Labour club for a pint of fed. I know most of the people there. It's very close-knit and down-to-earth, the way we like it.'

Tony Blair

'Blair's a bit too middle class to be leader of the Labour Party'

David Waites, chip-frier at Tony's 'local chippie', who says Blair stays in the car while the wife fetches his tea. Scampi, of course.

'You cannot possibly black people up. It's not politically correct or fair. We also want to avoid caricature.'

Wilfie Pyper, director

love-hate marriage to your team—the most working class consumer loyalty. Yet it was written by a middle class man whose slavish devotion to Arsenal stands in sharp contrast to his discerning attitude towards music and literature.

As Hornby acknowledges, the class divide was wide enough to prevent him from becoming truly part of what was in those days a semi-secret fraternity of football fans. So he played the role of a modern-day George Orwell, an outsider in a *demi-monde* ignored by serious writers. The result was part reportage, part autobiography, and a fully-fledged publishing phenomenon.

Fever Pitch has sold over 300 000 copies, inspired a new genre of (largely execrable) male confessional writing, and played a significant part in the rehabilitation of football as a respectable pastime. The book came out when other developments were already transforming the football industry. The fall-out from the Hillsborough disaster, the 'fanzine movement', supporters' associations, academic bodies like the Sir Norman Chester Football Research Centre, as well as an increase in public interest stimulated by England's performance in Italia '90, all contributed to a new atmosphere. *Fever Pitch* seemed to crystallise

'family friendly'. Whole families promenaded through shopping centres dressed in replica shirts. In Newcastle, they seem to have a by-law to enforce it. After the Heysel disaster in 1985, the *Sunday Times* described football as 'a slum sport watched by slum people in slum stadiums'. Today, according to Umbro Europe's chief executive, football is no longer a 'CzDE social-economic once a week excuse for a fight'.

Money has poured into the English game from television, sponsors and advertisers, all after lucrative ABC1 viewers. The Football Association now feels obliged to woo female spectators, while the official *England Magazine* seems more interested in multi-culturalism than football. Euro '96 was an orgy of squeaky-clean politically correct patriotism, with 'Three Lions' becoming 'the new national anthem', and, worst of all, the rugby song 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' crossing codes.

The film of *Fever Pitch* reflects the changes in football. In its reincarnation as a middle class 'romantic comedy', the vivid internal

a close second to real life. But where *Fever Pitch* the book is the cry of a boy on the margins looking for acceptance in the fraternity of the terraces, the movie is the cry of a boy-man still looking for acceptance, only this time he seems to hope that re-jigging *Fever Pitch* as a romance will make him even more of a favourite among the chattering classes.

Alex Cameron supports Celtic

Fever Pitch the movie is a love story rather than a film about football. Not so much the love of a fan for his team (Arsenal), more the love of middle class, mild-mannered Paul (Colin 'Mr Darcy' Firth) for Sarah (Ruth Gemmell), the new English teacher at a North London comprehensive. It is a romantic comedy for the nineties: football-mad bloke meets post-feminist woman. At the outset, she thinks he is a yob and he thinks she is a snob. As the plot thickens, the extremes of both personalities are tempered. Sarah learns to like football, Paul learns to love another person, and Bill Shankly's maxim about football being more important than life is gently reversed.

But if it is football you want, there are enough crowd scenes to get your heart palpating. Taste the panic as thousands try to pile through a narrow turnstile. Even in a cinema seat you can experience that intoxicating swollen-chest feeling marching to the ground in a sea of team colours.



PHOTOS: LAURIE SPARHAM

of the Belfast Opera House's production of Showboat. There is a shortage of black actors in Belfast. There would of course be nothing patronising or stereotypical about a real black person singing 'Old Man River'... Or, for that matter, about the new black Action Man. His name is Krunch and manufacturers Hasbro deny that he is a concession to political correctness. To prove the point, he is unsterotypically dressed as a boxer.

Following accusations of exploiting young fans, replica England football strips will now include a 'sell-by date' warning when the next redesign is due.

British Telecom is to instruct its staff as to which words they can allow in pager messages, after a caller complained about a BT operator who refused to type the words 'gay' and 'homosexual' on the grounds that they were 'offensive'.

There has been a disappointing response to an appeal to return several million dollars which fell out of an armoured van and onto the streets of Miami's poorest suburb: so far \$20 has been handed in.

Amid a seventies revival, the wardrobe department must have thought they had it easy when they advertised for extras in suitably dated gear. Unfortunately the crowd scenes show that the nineties view of the seventies is extremely stylised, with many punters looking more like Jarvis Cocker and Lenny Kravitz than the working class types who manned the terraces. That said, a well-chosen soundtrack and the occasional pair of carefully crafted sideburns manage to set the scene.

The climax comes with the legendary goal in the last minute of the last game of the 1988-9 season, which brought the Championship to Arsenal for the first time in nearly 20 years. For that moment I wished I was there, and I wished it was me and my team. No match for the real thing, but what an ending to a movie!

I can identify with the excitement generated by tens of thousands of people watching their fantasy being played out on the football field. I can identify with the feelings of loss and emptiness that follow defeat. And I can just about remember the swell of pride and confirmation that you are the best, when the title is won. But when I read the book I loathed the sad character (Hornby) who devoured the match facts, and I could not stand the anorak that went to watch Cambridge United—and cared.

With the film Hornby has left behind the trainspottiness of the book. Maybe he has learned to put football in its proper place—

ROMANCE, BUT NO PASSION

Actor Colin Firth, aka Mr Darcy of 'Darcymania' fame, is routinely described as one of Britain's sexiest men. Author Nick Hornby, by contrast, for all his talent and charm, is never going to trouble the scorers in a 'Mr Sex' contest. But Hornby, who adapted his book *Fever Pitch* for the big screen, is Mr Football Fan, and Firth, like many middle class men who are turning to football, wants a piece of him.

'I envy his passion', says Firth. 'It must be great to have something to identify with in that way, to feel obsessive about. I feel very rootless, from my upbringing out in the sticks.' This is similar to the explanation Hornby himself gives for his obsession with football. As a boy growing up in the Home Counties, he craved the 'authenticity' of North London. David Evans, who directed the film, felt the same way. He recalls how the book 'gave me the feeling—more strongly than anything else I'd ever read—that it was written by somebody like me and about somebody like me. Now I know that this feeling of intimacy is a common reaction'.

In *Fever Pitch* Hornby did not merely talk about 22 men kicking a ball about. He chronicled his own life through the prism of Arsenal. *Fever Pitch* was about being a fan, locked in a



this new atmosphere, providing a bridge into the game for a new middle class audience.

David Baddiel, co-presenter of *Fantasy Football League*, spoke a few years ago of 'no longer feeling ashamed of being a football fan'. In 1997 you are expected to feel slightly ashamed if you are *not* a football fan. Nowadays when people meet they do not say 'what do you do?', they say 'who do you support?'. The attraction that the rootless Hornby felt for the game has been generalised, and the yearning for community is focused on the spurious brotherhood (and now sisterhood) of football supporters.

So stadiums have been rebuilt with safety and crowd control in mind, and have become



Made In Britain TV drama starred the excellent Gary Oldman.



1981: *Escape to Victory*, director John Huston

Michael Caine, Pelé and Bobby Moore not only escape from their Nazi captors, but also beat them at football. If only life was this easy.



1979: *Yesterday's Hero*, director Neil Leifer

Ian 'Lovejoy' McShane as over the hill, bearded and boozed-up football star who redeems himself, scoring a last minute penalty to win the FA Cup against Manchester United. Rumour has it that George Best was the film's technical adviser.

Previous attempts to portray the beautiful game

FOOTBALL ON FILM



1996: *When Saturday Comes*, director Maria Giese

Sean Bean plays a Sheffield brewery worker plucked from obscurity to score the winning goal in an FA Cup tie against Manchester United. Like *Brassed Off*, a misguided, middle class idea of working class life.



Mondiali, director unknown

Italian porn spoof of the 1990 World Cup. The Italian FA hire two porn models in an attempt to exhaust the opposition. Excellent ball control and dribbling skills from



1995: *ID*, director Philip Davies

Laughable story of an undercover copper who first poses as a football hooligan but then 'goes native' among the savages.



1988: *The Firm*, director Alan Clarke

Loosely based on West Ham's Inter City Firm, famous for their 'nothing personal' calling cards, Alan Clarke's (*Scum*,

monologue of Hornby's book is lost, along with much of its passion. This too mirrors the new sanitised climate, in which stricter codes of conduct on and off the pitch have smoothed out most of the game's rough edges.

Hornby himself anticipated this in the book, when he pointed out that 'Part of the pleasure to be had in large football stadia is a mixture of the vicarious and the parasitical, because unless one stands on the North Bank, or the Kop, or the Stretford End, then one is relying on others to provide the atmosphere'. Which begs the question, what happens when there's no atmosphere for the new fans or pay-per-viewers to soak up?

Ed Barrett supports Crystal Palace

1972: *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, director Wim Wenders

Football goes angst in this tale of depression, insecurity and self-discovery. Expect a remake starring Gareth Southgate.



1939: *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery*, director Thorold Dickinson

Inspector Slade investigates the death of a footballer during a vital match. A lethal cocktail of illegal substances is suspected (no change there). The cast includes the Arsenal team and legendary manager Herbert Chapman. A reminder that even when players smoked nothing more sinister than a pipe at half-time, dodgy goings on were not unknown.

Carlton Brick supports Manchester United

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UNCOOL BRITANNIA?

Newsweek and *Vanity Fair* have decreed that London is swinging again. The Spice Girls hit the No 1 spot in the US pop charts with their debut single (Wannabe)—the first time this has happened since the four mop-tops from Liverpool. Closing in behind them is Leicester's Mark Morrison, whose *Return of the Mack* is a great success Stateside. The music industry in America thinks that Britain is where it's at—just like during the Beat Boom more than 30 years ago.

The album *Nu Yorican Soul* (Kenny Gonzales/Louis Vega) illustrates Britain's current status. Drawing on Salsa-influenced disco-funk from late seventies New York, this project was conceived, not in a New York barrio, but in downtown Southport-on-Sea by Gilles Peterson of the London-based Acid Jazz label Talking Loud. There is no House scene of any significance left in New York or Chicago. Top House DJs are waiting tables in NYC or trying to get a gig in London.

But if the Brits are on top of the world, they occupy this position by default—and only until the Americans get their second wind. The self-doubt racking the stagnant American music industry has prompted a desperate search for inspiration. The music moguls are looking backwards: Grammy

Signs of the times

'We don't travel to England and tell people how to behave. These meddlers are not welcome, and I won't be surprised if one or two of them get a bloody good hiding.'

Spokesman for Villanueva de la Vera, where the maltreatment of donkeys in the annual festival has become a focus for British animal welfare campaigners, who for some reason are complaining in particular on the distinctly un-PC grounds that the donkeys are 'ridden by the fattest man'.

And if that wasn't enough, St John's Ambulance staff have been told to lose weight, in order to dispel the 'fat man at a football match' image.

Comic Relief's 'kissing kits' have



MOD FOR II

'The idea for re-releasing *Quadrophenia*', says Will Clarke from the Feature Film Company, 'was partly to do with Britpop, part fashion, and how the nineties are about looking for ways to connect with what the sixties were supposed to be about, whether it's with drugs, dance clubs, or more prominently with guitar bands like Oasis and Ocean Colour Scene'.

The sixties are back again, and the Mods are on the march once more. Apart from the re-release of the film, original Mod band The Who are set to perform a stage version

of *Quadrophenia*, which tells the story of a sixties Mod who runs away from his London home. Meanwhile Mod-ish Birmingham band The Moody Blues have reformed, along with Mod-alikes The Monkees. Two of last year's top-selling new bands based themselves on the Mod sound; Ocean Colour Scene replayed the scrunched white soul of The Small Faces; while Kula Shaker revived the moment when Mod went psychedelic, along the lines of The Creation. That sixties band were the inspiration for the record label of the nineties, Creation, home to the most famous sixties soundalikes and Rubber Soleboys, Oasis.

Mod is a feelgood icon for a period everybody now feels good about. Ironic, considering that the original Mods were a kind of underground who wanted out of the dead-end society they thought they were living in. And a turnaround from the eighties when Norman Tebbit rubbished the sixties as 'that over-rated, third-rate decade'. Now the eighties are demonised and the sixties are looked upon as the last time Britain felt it was pulling together and going somewhere.

As Will Clarke put it, 'In the eighties such intense interest in sixties pop culture was inconceivable. Thatcherism was defined by opposing everything the sixties represented. Now we live in a retro society where we don't build on anything new but hold it up to what's gone before'.

Neil Davenport is a music journalist

a l t . c u l t u r e . f a s h i o n

YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE AWARE

Coverage of London Fashion Week in February suggested that young models are at risk in 'the cut-throat world of the catwalk'. Really?

Modelling at the Clothes Show Live just before Christmas was more like attending a school assembly. The first thing you saw was the stall devoted to eating disorders. All the gals were on their best behaviour, spreading the word on safe sex, breast cancer, the fur trade. You name it, the fashion industry and its models want you to be 'aware' of it.

I am relieved to say that, by night, not everybody continues to behave in such a saintly fashion. People still go to parties (chaperoned if under 18), some drink gin and slimline tonic, and yes, after long, hard shoots I have even been aware of a certain amount of fornication. But, come morning, it's back to awareness promotion and safety consciousness. Forget the flash lifestyle once associated with modelling. Nowadays agents are more likely to pressure you into counselling than topless work.

Kate Simmons is a student and part-time model

a l t . c u l t u r e . p o r n

OFF THE TOP SHELF

Porn has always had its knockers and the announcement that WH Smith's is clearing its top shelves of soft porn hardly raised an eye-

MEET THE WORLD FORUM

somewhere more discreet than WH Smith's. But rather than being upset at falling sales, the prudes at Smith's were probably only too pleased to find a commercial excuse for outlawing *Mayfair* and *Playboy*.

PENTHOUSE MAY 1997

my office whose job is to airbrush out offending arseholes. And they say there are no good jobs around.

Smith's clearly felt uncomfortable with the straightforward porn mag—they prefer the

been criticised by child protection groups for putting young people at risk. A message on the back of the kits reminds users that 'kissing is a consensual action. Respect your snogee's right to say no!'.
Prince Charles once again revealed himself to be a happening kind of guy while visiting a Tyneside community centre. Gavin Lovell performed the Elvis standard 'The Wonder of You', including the line 'you touch my hand and I'm a king'.
A delighted Prince then asked if he had written the song himself.

A new hymn book, Road Safety Service and Hymns, offers Christian verses aimed at coping with road rage and observing the highway code.

Animal liberationists raiding the University of Central Lancaster found no animals, but 'freed' hundreds of worms—which were not being used in experiments.
An insurance company is suing a Wisconsin psychiatrist for charging a patient a group fee, on the grounds that she had 120 different personalities—including a duck and, more seriously, Satan.



awards for The Beatles and dad rock's Eric Clapton show how far back they will go (imagine anybody in the sixties giving top awards to big band leaders from 30 years before). They are also going further afield for talent.

This is where the Brits come in. British product is being shipped in to fill the gap in a dead American music market, and the apparent pre-eminence of UK styles is more to do with the parlous state of American music today than any inherent creativity in Britain itself.

That said, there has been something of note going on in Britain's clubs—something which is now translating itself into the mainstream. Giants of rock such as David Bowie and U2 now depend on the creative juices of dance dons (Howie B, Danny Rampling and A Guy Called Gerald). Moreover, it is club-based material which is really registering Stateside. While Britpop guitar bands failed to conquer America, ex-Adamski vocalist Seal picked up three Grammy awards last year and provided the biggest-selling UK single in the American charts of 1996.

Even club culture shows signs of tiring, however. Eight years on from the 1989 'Summer of Love', and the House/Techno scene is still the biggest thing. Tighter regulation of events, dreary Handbag House and repetitive Anthem LPs show how stale the scene has become.

Moreover, club culture is becoming almost as nostalgic as the mainstream. The latest thing in the UK is a Soul revival, spearheaded by the DeAngelo-produced Mica Paris LP. In her wake are a dozen acts that would not be out of place at the Harlem Apollo. Maybe they will succeed in selling Soul back to black America. Meanwhile the sound with the most potential is still on the margins. Drum & Bass aka Jungle is the ingredient which could re-energise the music scene, but so far the industry has been too scared to run with it.

Rebop is a club DJ working in London and Barcelona

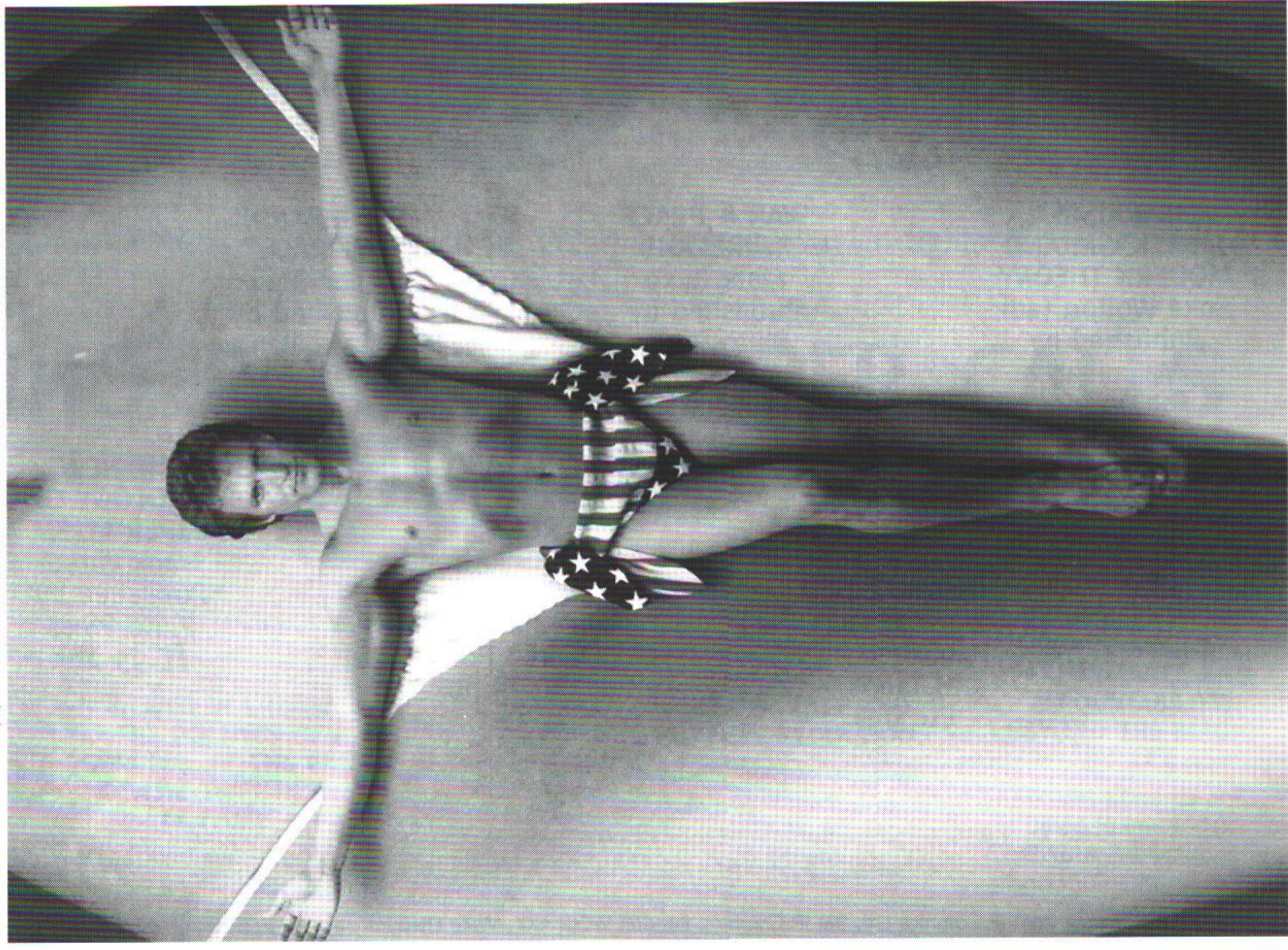
brow inside the porn business.

Smith's said that four soft-porn mags would be culled for commercial reasons, along with 269 other low-selling periodicals, because sales have dropped dramatically. There is probably some truth in this. If you want to buy a porn mag you might well prefer

Before each magazine went to press, Smith's and the other big retailer, John Menzies, insisted that they see proofs of each page to make sure there was nothing too rude. Smith's do not think it right to show an arsehole: you could show an arse but only with the hole removed. So there is a man in

'ironic' approach to tits taken by bastions of sophistication such as *Loaded*. Porn mags are no great thing, but they are harmless fun for some and the censoring of already tame publications I find a bit depressing.
Martin Hollingshead works for a soft porn publisher

PHOTO: COLUMBIA TRISTAR FILMS (UK)



IN LIKE FLYNT

The new film from Milos Forman, director of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, brings us another prankster-hero in porn merchant Larry Flynt (Woody Harrelson). As publisher of *Hustler* Flynt made millions of dollars and many enemies. At one point he was sentenced to 25 years for 'pandering to obscenity and organised crime'. 'All I'm guilty of is bad taste', he retorted. Outside a courtroom he was shot and paralysed from the waist down. He became addicted to painkillers, and was sent to a psychiatric institution after another court found him in contempt for refusing to reveal his sources.

There's more: televangelist Jerry Falwell sued Flynt in 1983 over a spoof Campari advert in *Hustler* which joked that the reverend screwed his mother. Flynt countered, was judged to have inflicted 'emotional distress', but took Falwell all the way to the Supreme Court which upheld the First (free speech) Amendment in Flynt's favour.

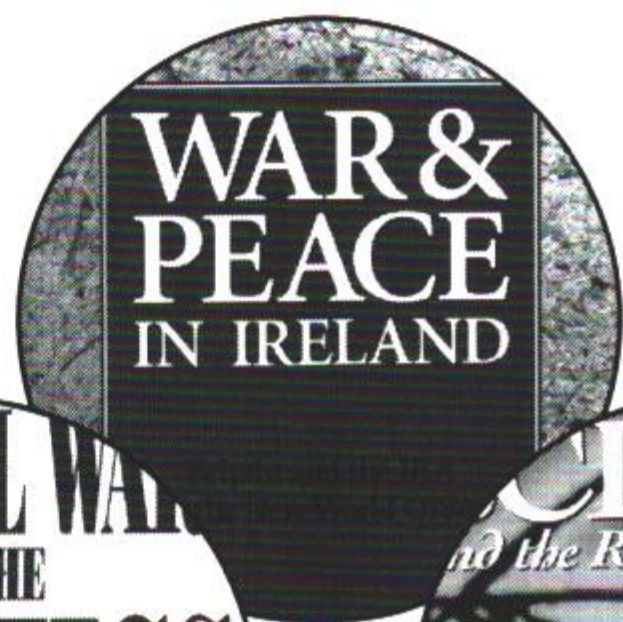
The People vs Larry Flynt is a great love story, with Grunge widow Courtney Love putting in a fine performance as Althea, a go-go dancer and the love of Flynt's life. It is a dazzling period piece, full of overblown seventies fashion, and a swashbuckling tale of the fight for free expression.

Predictably, there have been complaints from the anti-porn lobby. The Christian Right also complained about the original promo-poster which depicted a cruciform Harrelson nestling in a woman's crotch. The poster was withdrawn by the producers, which makes you wonder whether the people who made the movie would dare defend a real-life Flynt of the nineties. But it is good to see a Hollywood film which does not end up asking you to feel sorry for somebody.

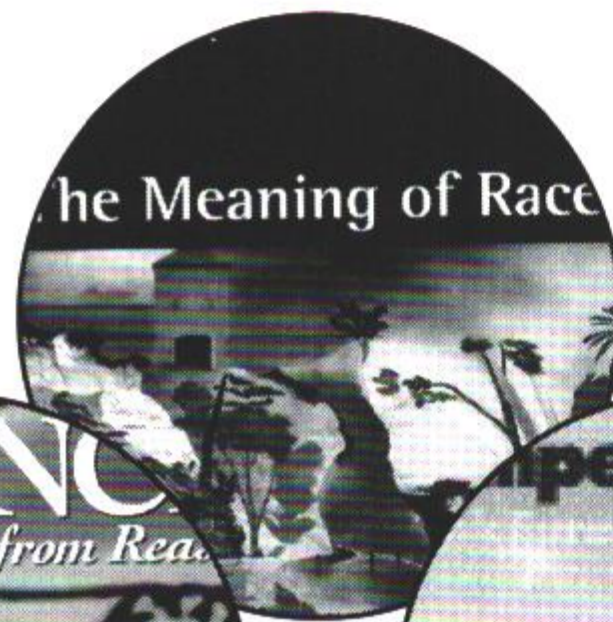
Krysia Rozanska works in the film industry



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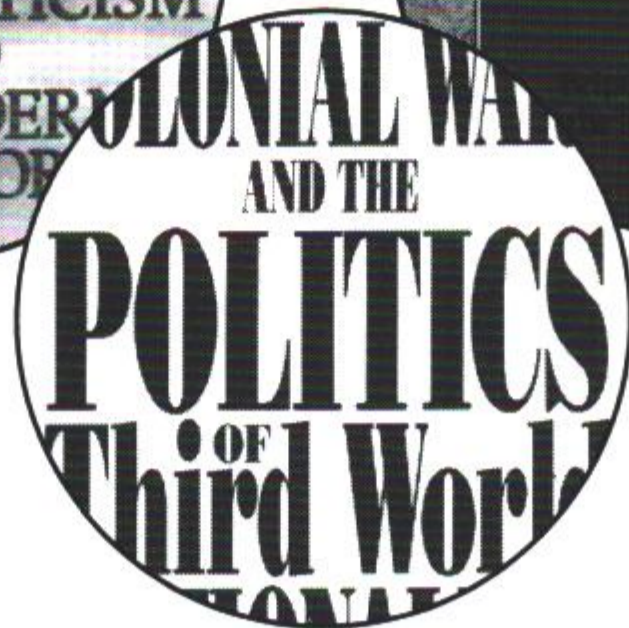
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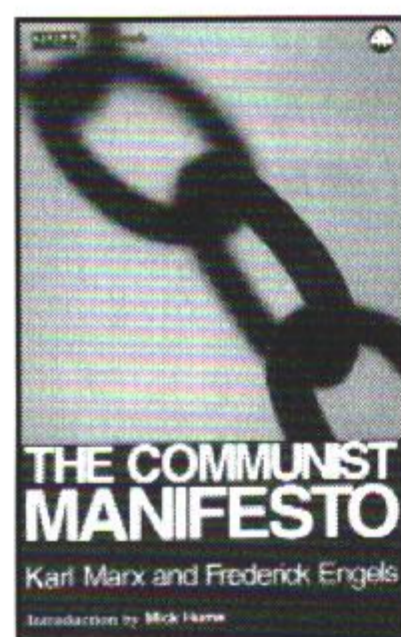


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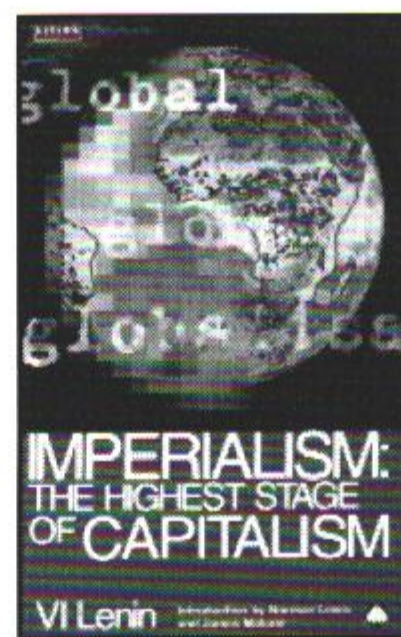


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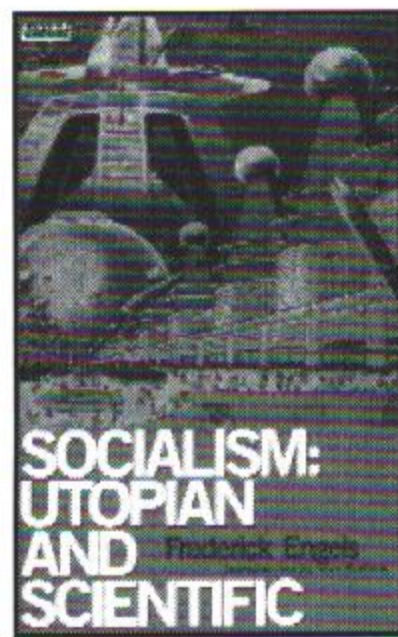
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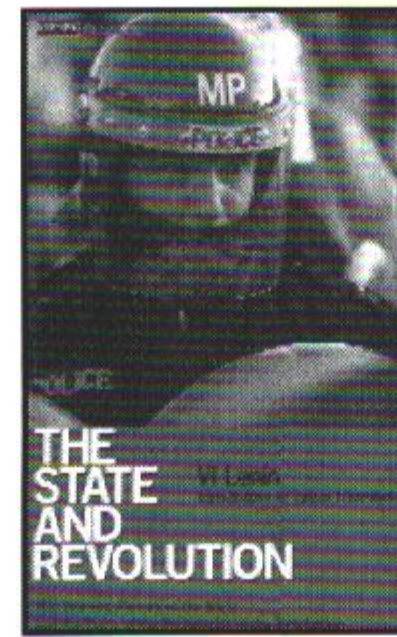
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READING

BETWEEN THE LINES

The global proliferation of NGOs has done much to undermine the sovereign rights of the peoples of the South, argues HELEN SEARLS

HE WHO PAYS THE PIPER CALLS THE TUNE

NGOS, STATES AND DONORS: TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT?

David Hulme and Michael Edwards (eds), Macmillan Press in association with Save the Children Fund, £9.99 pbk

WORLD IN CRISIS: THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY,

Médecins Sans Frontières, Routledge, £10.99 pbk

MICROFINANCE AND POVERTY REDUCTION,

Susan Johnson and Ben Rogaly, Oxfam (UK and Ireland), £8.95 pbk

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS— PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: BEYOND THE MAGIC BULLET,

Michael Edwards and David Hulme (eds), Earthscan Publications in association with Save the Children Fund, £9.95 pbk

'By any standards, the 1980s and 1990s have seen an explosion in the numbers of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grass roots organisations (GROs) active in relief and development. The number of development NGOs registered in the OECD countries of the industrialised 'North' has grown from 1600 in 1980 to 2970 in 1993, and over the same period the total spending of these NGOs has risen from \$2.8bn to \$5.7bn in current prices.' (*Non-Governmental Organisations—Performance and Accountability*, p3)

DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisations (NGOs) have come of age. Voluntary organisations and charities were once seen as do-gooders in sandals who held flag days, ran charity shops and knitted blankets for Third World babies; worthy, but of marginal significance. Today all that has changed. Gone are the days when NGOs were humoured or ignored. Charities like Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, Christian Aid, Action Aid, Cafod and the Red Cross are now

major international actors who have the ear of world leaders and play leading roles in the affairs of the South.

Every major aid donor now strives to establish NGO partnership forums. No international summit or conference is complete without an NGO consultative forum and a large entourage of NGO delegates and observers. 'Their high visibility at the 1992 UN Earth Summit at Rio was eclipsed by events at Beijing in 1995 where the NGO Forum got greater coverage than the official UN Women's Conference', write David Hulme and Michael Edwards (*NGOs, States and Donors*, p5).

The proliferation of NGOs has been widely welcomed. An examination of the role of such agencies, however, suggests that NGOs have altered North-South relations for the worse. NGOs may boast that they empower the poor and encourage democracy; their track record tells a different story. Far from being the harbingers of democracy, NGOs have done more than most to undermine the sovereign rights of the people of the South. Their omnipresence in the South has now made the

WHILE OTHERS ASSUME THAT THE PROLIFERATION IS DUE TO SOME INTRINSIC VIRTUE WITHIN NGOS, HULME AND EDWARDS UNDERSTAND THE 'RISE AND RISE' OF NGOS AS A DONOR-LED PHENOMENON

weaker nations of the world more permeable to Western influence and domination than at any time this century.

NGOs seem to offer solutions that fit into every political agenda. To the free marketeers, NGOs appear to be the perfect antidote to the strong nanny state. Others with more leftist leanings see NGOs as vehicles for achieving a better world.

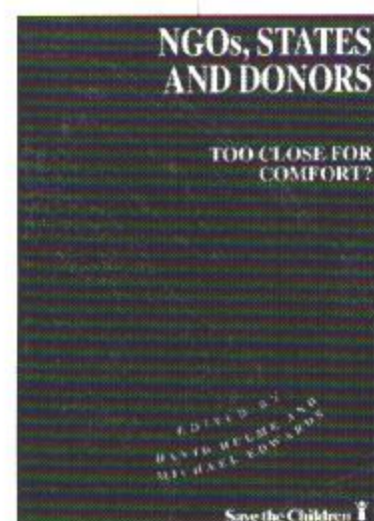
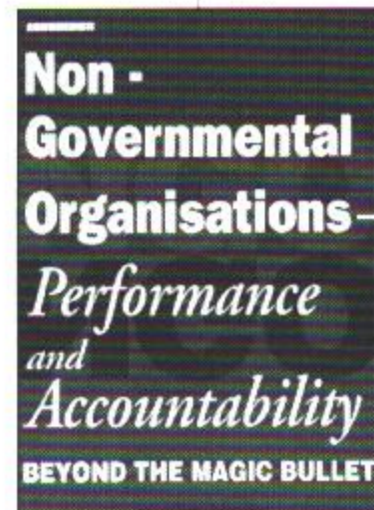
To their credit David Hulme and Michael Edwards have stood out against this uncritical consensus. Throughout the nineties their scholarly partnership has made space for a more sober and critical assessment of NGOs. This approach is developed further in their two most recent books—*Non-Governmental Organisations-Performance and Accountability*, and *NGOs, States and Donors*.

For Hulme and Edwards, the spectacular rise of NGOs is no accident. While others assume that the proliferation is due to some intrinsic virtue within NGOs, Hulme and Edwards understand the 'rise and rise' of NGOs as a *donor-led* phenomenon. NGO influence has risen as a result of a 'New Policy Agenda' adopted by major donor governments and international institutions.

The new agenda 'is driven by two basic sets of beliefs'. On the one hand there is a commitment to the market and a rejection of the old statist solutions. NGOs have become the '*preferred channel* for service-provision in *deliberate substitution for the state*'. On the other hand NGOs are seen as 'vehicles for "democratisation" and essential components for a thriving "civil society"'. They are 'supposed to act as a counterweight to state power—protecting human rights, opening up channels of communication and participation, providing training grounds for activists and promoting pluralism....NGOs are seen as the "favoured child" of official agencies and something of a panacea for the problems of development' (*NGOs-Performance and Accountability*, pp4-5).

IN IDENTIFYING THE RISE OF DEVELOPMENT NGOs, both North and South, as a donor-led phenomenon, Hulme and Edwards pose questions that are rarely addressed. In both volumes they set about exploring the awkward problem raised by Jan Pronk, the Deputy General of Unctad (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), who in 1982 warned that 'the corruption of the NGOs will be the political game in the years ahead'.

NGOs-Performance and Accountability focuses on the problem of accountability. Contributors explore to what extent large-scale donor funding has compromised NGOs and weakened links with their 'grassroots'. The book examines how NGOs have rarely been forced to account for themselves, and acknowledges that a more systematic and critical evaluation of NGO fieldwork is long overdue.



The second study, *NGOs, States and Donors* also explores broader aspects of the relationship between these three players; donors, NGOs and Southern governments. In their contribution, for example, Anthony Bebbington and Roger Riddell argue that 'moves by donors to support NGOs rather than government merely weaken government further. The argument that NGOs are a better alternative then becomes little more than a self-fulfilling prophecy' (p114). Others like Stephen Commins explore to what extent NGOs mute their criticisms of governments and international organisations for fear of biting the hand that feeds them.

Both collections present a useful, detailed picture of many of the dilemmas facing NGOs. It is difficult to disagree with the editors' conclusion that much of what has taken place in recent years could be viewed as the co-option of the NGOs. They suggest that NGOs have become 'the implementers of the New Policy Agenda' and add that 'if this is what is happening, then perhaps the best that can be hoped for is that the bubble will burst and NGOs and grass roots organisations may then return to their former position—smaller and less lauded' (*NGOs-Performance and Accountability*, p227).

Yet the interesting studies undertaken by Hulme and Edwards are ultimately unsatisfactory. Their enquiry is limited to the impact of the 'New Policy Agenda' on the corruption of NGOs. Most contributors, at best, are merely looking for NGOs that have fallen from grace. Rarely are they prepared to explore wider questions. Hulme and Edwards do not ask how the 'rise and rise' of NGOs has altered broader aspects of North-South relations. And disappointingly, they never ask why the New Policy Agenda should be so attractive to the 'donor community'.

This is a glaring omission. Why should the 'democratisation of the South' and the strengthening of civil society there necessarily be championed by the World Bank, the US State Department or the British Foreign Office? One contributor, Harry Blair, happily explains that the 'democratic pluralism initiative' became one of USAID's four main policy agendas in the Bush era. But why? The American state that napalmed South East Asia and (under President George Bush) bombed Iraq back into the Stone Age is hardly renowned for its concern for the rights of Third World people.

Either we believe that Western politicians have undergone a blinding conversion from their imperialistic traditions, or else the New Policy Agenda needs to be dissected further. Are there more instrumental motives involved? In short, what do the donors get out of pursuing this agenda?

It is a shame that this question is never asked even by the more critical thinkers in the development field. Because it is only by exploring the real motives behind Western governments' new preoccupation with NGOs

WHAT COULD BE BETTER FOR THE WEST THAN THE CLAIM THAT ITS CRUSADE AGAINST FUNDAMENTALISM IS NOT MOTIVATED BY ITS OWN CONCERNS, BUT RATHER REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF LOCAL WOMEN'S GROUPS?

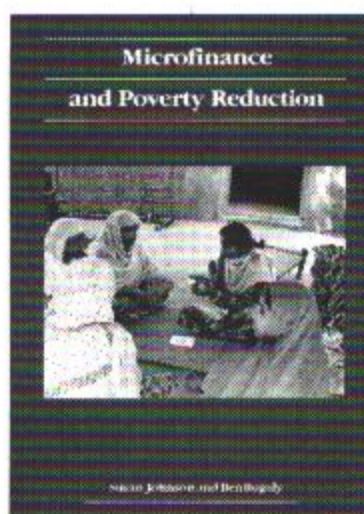
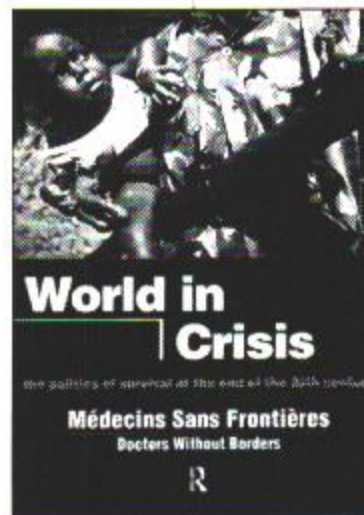
in the South that it becomes possible to tell the whole story behind the 'rise and rise' of NGOs.

A useful starting point is to look at why donors have favoured funding NGOs in recent years. In 1984 the OECD sent out a questionnaire on aid to Development Assistance Committee member governments (the major donor nations). In response, it was noted, 'almost all members explicitly mentioned the strengthening of partner NGOs in the developing countries as an important reason for co-operation with their own NGOs'. In other words, increased funding for Western-based NGOs was made conditional on their linking up with Southern partners. Towards the end of the eighties, governments and other donors went one stage further and began to fund indigenous NGOs directly. Today the direct funding of Southern NGOs is the policy of choice for many donors. This provides a clue as to the motives behind the new agenda.

Western governments are interested in helping to create 'indigenous' NGOs—or as they like to say, 'building capacity' or 'institutions' in the Third World—because they need Southern partners with whom they can do business. One reason is that Western donors are interested in creating what could be termed parallel structures to supersede the state within Third World nations. Once established, these organisations can play a decisive role in undermining the power and political legitimacy of Third World states. Western governments have also actively encouraged the creation of local NGOs as a means of legitimising Western involvement in the South. Most commentators recognise that the vast majority of Southern NGOs rely for their existence on external funding. Yet many still describe these institutions as indigenous to the South. The reality is somewhat different.

Bodies like the British Overseas Development Agency and USAID now finance the most diverse range of Southern organisations as a means of gaining influence in these societies. At times this verges on the absurd, as with the externally-funded folk band in Zimbabwe which only sings songs about the joys of birth control and small families—preoccupations of the aid agencies. More worrying is the way in which NGOs are playing a crucial role in creating a new class of professionals in Southern societies, who will look to the West for guidance.

Today, the West can engage a whole generation of aspirant Third World citizens through the work of the NGOs. There is now a significant body of local NGO professionals whose actions legitimise Western interference in the affairs of the South. In one of the most interesting contributions to the debate, Syed Hashemi describes how this process works in practice. He examines how local NGOs sought to draw donor nations into Bangladeshi conflicts:



'When women from Nijera Kori [a Bangladeshi NGO] had been involved in a violent conflict with shrimp cultivators in south Khulna, again it was the donors they turned to. The Dutch ambassador himself visited the area to give weight to the NGO cause. Even now in the continuing struggle against religious fundamentalism, NGOs are actively seeking donor intervention.' (NGOs—Performance and Accountability, p108-109)

This is every Western politician's dream. Interference in the affairs of the South now looks quite different than in the past. Western governments can now claim that, far from oppressing the peoples of the Third World, they are being invited into countries like Bangladesh to take a stand against oppressive government. What could be better for the West than to claim that its crusade against fundamentalism in the South was not motivated by its own political concerns, but rather reflected the needs of local women's groups? Few, it seems, have rumbled the fact that groups such as these are created and financed by Northern donors either directly or via Northern NGOs.

Western agencies, today, exercise tremendous influence in Southern societies. The strategy of directly funding Southern NGOs has established numerous points of contact between Western states and so called 'civil society' in the South. Whereas in the Cold War years Western governments had to rely on corrupt and desperate politicians as their main source of influence, in the South today there is a veritable army of worthy NGO volunteers prepared to dance to the Western policy makers' tunes.

One illustration of this is the impact that Western policy whims and fashions now have in the South. *Microfinance and Poverty Reduction*, Susan Johnson and Ben Rogaly's account of the current fashion for microcredit—credit extended in small amounts directly to individuals and concerns in the South, as opposed to credit extended to governments—is a timely illustration of this point. Less than five years ago nobody had even heard of microcredit. Today microcredit is everywhere. The recent summit on microcredit was endorsed by world leaders and some of the world's biggest corporations.

Every NGO operating in the South is trying to get in on the act. Johnson and Rogaly show that this cannot be put down to any spectacular results that microcredit has achieved in poverty alleviation; there have not really been any. It has more to do with the way in which the fashion for the small-scale austerity economics of 'sustainability' has pushed microcredit up the policy agenda within Western donor agencies.

A more startling illustration of the pervasive acceptance of Western politics can be found in Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) latest report, *World in Crisis*. MSF has

long embodied the 'New Policy Agenda'. From its inception MSF has proudly declared to the world that nonsense like sovereignty and the right to self-determination would be no obstacle to the gallant doctors. They would go anywhere and do anything to counter the dangerous influence of Southern governments.

In its previous report, published in 1995, MSF demanded that Western troops invade Rwanda. Their current report *World in Crisis* takes things one stage further. Such is MSF's desire to brush aside the state and to step in that they have resurrected the idea of UN trusteeship as a serious option (p12). MSF likes to pose as a fierce defender of human rights and democracy. However, its endorsement of the New Policy Agenda makes it a crusader for the opposite—a new colonialism. Democracy and pluralism for MSF mean creating the kind of societies where groups like them can operate with a free hand. For all the talk of empowerment and individual rights, the effect of the 'New Policy Agenda' is to deny the people of the South the right to run their own affairs. ●

READ ON READ ON READ ON READ ON READ ON

SLEAZE: THE CORRUPTION OF PARLIAMENT

David Leigh and Ed Vulliamy, Fourth Estate, £9.99 pbk

THE CORRUPTION OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF CORRUPTION

Michael Levi and David Nelken (eds), Blackwell, £12.99 pbk

Hold the front page: Parliament is corrupt. The *Guardian's* exposé of bribery involving former Conservative minister Neil Hamilton, lobbyists Ian Greer Associates and Mohamed Al Fayed gets a breathless book-length treatment in *Sleaze*, by house journalists David Leigh and Ed Vulliamy.

Larding the scandal on with a trowel, Leigh and Vulliamy do not hesitate to associate corruption with Ian Greer's homosexuality, Mohamed Al Fayed's racial origins, or even the machinations of the World Serb Conspiracy. Protesting too much that 'the ethics of homosexuals [do not] vary from those of others', the authors go on to explain why the 'stalwart traditions of beating and buggery' in private schools were an ideal meeting point between Greer and the Tory Party.

And maybe they were, but the recurring message is that corruption comes from outsiders—homosexuals, Egyptians and, lowest of the low, Serbs. The most gratuitous passages in the book are dedicated to a denunciation of Ian Greer's lobbying for the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. They are gratuitous because there is no indication that Neil Hamilton, the book's main target, ever acted for the Serbian government, and every indication that leading Conservatives were hostile to the

Serbian cause. Indeed the authors forget their own hostility to the Tories, to heap praise on Margaret Thatcher and Lady Olga Maitland for endorsing military intervention in the former Yugoslavia. If ever money was wasted it was Milosevic's attempt to curry favour in Britain. But the fact that the Serbian President's influence was negligible is secondary to Leigh and Vulliamy's contempt for the very 'soil [that] spawned Radovan Karadzic', the Bosnian Serb leader.

The criticisms of political corruption in *Sleaze* are not meant to expose the real processes of capitalist influence upon government, but to take the moral high ground against *this* government. Criticising corruption, as Michael Levi and David Nelken point out in *The Corruption of Politics*, can often be an 'attempt to relegitimize the rulers and/or specific political actors or criminal justice agencies'. The real failing of *Sleaze* is that it does not ask why the influence of business on government should have been celebrated in the eighties, but reviled in the nineties. As Levi and Nelken argue, 'to study corruption is an attempt to follow a moving target: the way that certain transactions move in and out of acceptable behaviour as the boundaries of what is legitimate are softened, reaffirmed or redrawn' (p3).

What *Sleaze* does illustrate is the way in which the Conservative Party's pro-business policy only helped keep the party together when it was directed against the organised labour movement, whose modest influence on government was the 'sleaze' of its day. But once the common enemy had been defeated, the party's openness to the influence of commerce only served to carry over the conflicts between business rivals into the party itself—with embarrassing results.

Long-standing rivals 'Tiny' Rowland of Lonrho plc and Mohamed Al Fayed have been attacking each other for years. But Al Fayed's use of lobbyist Ian Greer meant that the contest was now taking place within the ranks of the government, with Neil Hamilton and others acting for Al Fayed. When Hamilton became a minister at the Department of Trade and Industry, he was advised to cool his relations with the Egyptian owner of Harrods. Outraged Al Fayed first leaked and then gushed the story to the *Guardian*. The full extent of the *Guardian's* investigative reporting consisted of turning on a tape recorder while at lunch at Harrod's. Their target was a part of an already fatally wounded Tory administration, and their goal is to put in power a Labour government whose singular claim is that they listen to business.

The only heroic part of the story, the *Guardian's* opposition to Hamilton's playing of 'the grotesquely costly libel game', has been tarnished by Ed Vulliamy's support for ITN's libel action intended to silence this magazine.

James Heartfield

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