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future

UNEQUAL BRITAIN

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THE SHARP TREMORS on the stock markets in Washington and London early in September are the result of fears that an economic "boom" which has benefited a small minority is about to turn into bust. When that happens, the vast majority will suffer from a drastic rise in unemployment and rising prices as the world economy dives into slump.

Pushing the economies of America and Britain to crisis point are vastly inflated stock markets and property prices. Shares in Internet companies like Yahoo and Amazon have soared – despite the fact they have never made a profit!

A few people have cashed in, creating ever-growing gaps between those who can profit from share and property speculation and the vast majority. They enjoy fewer rights than most other workers in

Europe, and work longer hours.

The get-rich-quick basis for the British economy lies behind the sensational increase in property prices in the south of England, while in the north people can't sell their houses for love nor money.

Prices in some parts of London have doubled in under two years. Deutsche Bank, one of the world's leading financial institutions, says prices will soar by another 30% by the end of next year.

London's skyline is littered with cranes as luxury flats are built in any space available. The *London Property News* reported with glee: "Some of the most stunning apartments in Docklands are now on the market, offering sensational views and highly-innovative architecture." Just in case you have the money, the paper added: "Prices range from £750,000 to £999,950."

Meanwhile, for ordinary Londoners, the housing crisis is the worst it has been for 30 years. The numbers of homeless households living in temporary accommodation has soared by 50% in two years, according to a London Housing Federation report.

Councils are spending £100 million a year on bed-and-breakfast and other emergency accommodation. There are 180,000 households on council waiting lists, while many more do not trouble to register; last year only 3,500 new homes for rent were built in the capital. The cost of private renting is beyond the reach of most people, as is buying a house for the first time. Meanwhile, the whole economy is on a precipice, driven to the edge by greedy speculators and a capitalist system which has run out of control. ■

NEW LABOUR - NEW MISERY

Just in case you missed what New Labour under President Blair was up to while you were on holiday, here is a sample of a few recent reactionary policies and decisions

- MORE THAN 1,000 disabled workers face losing their jobs because ministers have approved the closure of 18 factories run by Remploy. A government spokeswoman said it was "old fashioned" to suggest that workers should be "kept in these sorts of factories".
- 6,000 YOUNG PRISONERS are to be placed in adult jails, Home Office minister Paul Boateng announced. The League for Penal Reform said nine prisoners aged 17-20 have already committed suicide this year, and added: "If you put these young people in prison with adults, violence and self-harm will increase. Many of them will be terrified."
- ONE MILLION PEOPLE are to be forced to join company pension schemes. New Labour is re-introducing a regulation abandoned by the Tories in 1988, as part of the government's plans for withdrawing state support for retired people.
- HOME SECRETARY Jack Straw wants the police to keep DNA and fingerprint samples for "comparison" purposes, even those given voluntarily to help police enquiries. In the past these would have been destroyed. He also wants police equipped to take fingerprints on the street with an

electronic scanner. Police are also to be armed with plastic bullets, according to reports. These were withdrawn in the north of Ireland because they caused many deaths.

- MORE FROM the Straw front. People who refuse to hand over their key to uncode e-mails, face prison under a new Bill. Anyone who reveals that their e-mails are being intercepted by the police faces two years in prison.
- THE GOVERNMENT has announced further sites for the testing of GM crops next year, though shops like M&S are abandoning GM food in response to consumer fears. New Labour and the multi-nationals carry on regardless. ■

Public spending lowest for 40 years

PUBLIC SPENDING as a proportion of national income is lower than under the Thatcher government, and the smallest in relative terms for 40 years.

The Blair government is set to spend 39.4% of gross domestic product, compared to 43% for the 1979-90 Thatcher governments.

Blair himself has pledged to cut spending further by reducing income taxes and using private finance to fund public services like London Underground.

Meanwhile, the cost of using private money to build new hospitals is already causing financial problems for the planned University College Hospital in London.

The cost has soared from a projected £115m to nearly £320m. The NHS will have to pay the private owners £30m a year for 32 years once leasing and service charges are included. ■

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IMF to blame for *THE LOOTING OF RUSSIA*

THE LOOTING OF countless billions of dollars from Russia in a gigantic money-laundering scam is an inevitable outcome of the gruesome social experiment imposed on the country by the International Monetary Fund.

After pressing for the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991, the IMF sent in hordes of economic advisors to show how the country could become capitalist overnight through free-market economics.

All they succeeded in doing was creating a kind of wild-West capitalism, where looting of former state assets became the priority, alongside the plundering of the country's vast natural resources.

Far from creating a new economy, production in Russia has collapsed by more than 60% and the vast majority of the population live a hand-to-mouth existence.

As the ordinary people suffered from hyper-inflation and unpaid wages, a new élite emerged around President Boris Yeltsin who were only interested in getting rich quick by transferring assets overseas.

A study by the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Centre for the Study of International Economic Relations at the University of Western Ontario, published in May, suggested that up to \$70bn disappeared in 1992 and 1993 alone. The total capital flight from 1994-98 amounted to more than \$140bn and is currently running at over \$15bn a year.

The *New York Times* has revealed that British and US authorities are investigating the source of \$10bn channelled through Russian accounts at the Bank of New York in 1998 and 1999. Both Barclays Bank and the Royal Bank of



*Russian miners
have to wait
months to get paid*

Scotland are also thought to have been used. The leakage of resources in the early 1990s came largely through the enormous difference between Russian and world market prices for commodities, which was exploited by those in charge of the country's industrial companies.

The break-neck privatisation of the economy easily outstripped regulatory efforts to catch up and stem capital flows. Natural resources were exported with little of the value recouped by the state in taxes or customs duties, and the foreign currency revenues earned were rarely repatriated.

Under a classic "transfer pricing" scheme – or "tolling" as it was dubbed in relation to aluminium exports – a Russian company sells its commodities at considerably below market price to an offshore group that it controls. That intermediary then sells them on at the international price, and the foreign currency proceeds never need enter Russia at all.

According to reliable figures, Russia's 15 largest companies – exporters of oil, gas, iron, aluminium and nickel – last year generated \$24bn in export earnings alone or 32 per cent of the country's total exports.

The IMF and other Western institutions knew that the loans were barely accounted for. But the main aim was to keep Yeltsin in power and the opposition out. Now that his power is slipping away, Washington is changing its tune.

Opposition to the IMF and Yeltsin during this period was hampered by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, led by Gennady Zyuganov, which was the largest force in parliament.

Their longing for the Stalinist past, mixed in with nationalism and anti-Semitism, proved a disastrous cocktail, playing into Yeltsin's hands and discrediting the idea of socialism.

As in 1917, however, Russia is the weakest link in the capitalist chain. In a period of developing global slump, the prospects for creating a prosperous Russian capitalist economy are small indeed. That is why the country is being looted of capital.

The renewal of the socialist project which began in 1917, free from the terrible distortions of Stalinism, and based on the possibilities provided by the new technological revolution, is as urgent for Russia as it is for the rest of the world. ■

A road map to the future

KARL MARX put forward the revolutionary idea that each class-based society in history develops within itself the conditions for the emergence of a new kind of social order.

In social, as in organic life, the new begins within the old as a fragile, tiny cell or tendency, but then takes on more and more features, grows larger and differentiates into a more complex organism until it can no longer coexist with the old, and must break free of it.

This profound idea, strongly inspired by Hegel's dialectical method of thinking, has become reality in today's globalised capitalist economy. Marx explained how the changes in the forces used in economic production come into conflict with the existing forms of property ownership and control.

He used this approach to explain how forms of capitalism had arisen from within the womb of feudalism, reaching a point where the two could no longer cohabit. To enable its continued development and satisfy their growing interests, the new class of capitalists overthrew the feudal landowners in social revolution.

The fundamental conflict in capitalist society is between the concentration of ownership of the productive forces in the hands of the capitalist class and the unbridled development of those very same forces, which include machinery, technology and last but not least, the working class.

The conflict between these two produces insoluble and repeated crises, because the ever-expanding productive forces are imprisoned

within the narrow confines of private ownership. This is the driving force for instability and economic slump.

Despite the fact that the means of production are privately owned, the productive process from its early days in manufacture compelled the capitalist system to adopt collaborative, social forms of labour and technique.

These were manifested in the division of labour, in the rise of the factory system and international market and are usually referred to by the term "socialisation". Thus from the start there was a coexistence (and conflict) of the private and the social.

Over the last 30 years, the increasingly globalised systems of production and distribution, driven on by new technology, together with the transformation of financial markets, have given rise to a qualitatively new forms of socialisation.

- The growth of vast transnational corporations (TNCs) through mergers and monopolies. Fifty-one of the world's largest 100 economies are corporations. The TNCs own 90% of all patents and account for 70% of world trade. They organise production on a global scale, using advanced planning and marketing techniques. Each sector is dominated by one or two companies.
- The dismantling in many sectors of hierarchical organisational structures and the introduction of horizontal team working by management and employees. Today's firm should function as a flexible "learning organisation",

according to latest managerial thinking.

- Instantaneous reciprocity between demand and supply to end wasted production and raw materials and labour (e.g. just-in-time production, supermarkets, airline ticketing systems).
- The rise of the service economy, "replacing" the production of things, showing the possibility of a non-manual labour society.
- A sizeable proportion of economy is now involved in mental labour, making information "products".
- The emergence of global financial markets, where money is used to make more money through the rapid movement of bonds, securities, derivatives and foreign currencies. Banks, national and central, are subordinate to the "socialisation" of finance.
- A socialisation of ownership, from private capitalists to individual shareholders, and then to corporate ownership by pension funds, unit trusts and insurance companies.

Information products are becoming cheaper to produce and are turned out in greater and greater quantities. This lowers the per unit rate of profit, and, with competition forcing prices down, creates an accelerating crisis for producers and the need to launch new models with ever greater frequency.

Manufacturers desperate to make profit are linking apparently free products to service contracts (computers, mobile telephones,

This article is a contribution to the debate inside and outside the Movement for a Socialist Future, about how socialism can be achieved. Paul Feldman and Corinna Lotz show that the seeds of a new form of society are growing within globalised capitalism.

etc). Competitive edge is improved by making IT products more and more user-friendly.

All this creates a population of more than 100 million digitally-literate people who can communicate in a way that transcends states and governments, not only in the wealthier countries, but also countries such as India, the second most populous in the world.

New structures such as the Internet have arisen, which are not profit-driven and did not originate from a capitalist firm's desire to compete with its rivals. These structures demonstrate the concrete possibility of organising society in an entirely different way.

The Internet began as an academic communication system run on a non-profit basis, which allowed different computer systems to "talk" to each other. Through collaborative free association it has established a world-wide standard for a global communication system used for a thousand different purposes by countless millions of people, anarchic and out of control.

What we see here is a tendency towards the abolition of capitalism from within, which Marx noted. Writing about the emergence of shareholding companies and monopolies in Volume III of *Capital*, he insisted: "This is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself, hence a self-dissolving contradiction, which *prima facie* represents a mere phase of transition to a new form of production.

"It manifests itself as such a contradiction in its effects. It establishes a monopoly in certain

spheres and thereby requires state interference. It reproduces a new financial aristocracy, a new variety of parasites in the shape of promoters, speculators and simply nominal directors...It is private production without the control of private property."

Capitalism itself, in its need to overcome its internal crisis – including the tendency of the rate of profit to fall – thus creates "counter-capitalist" forms. Embryonic socialist forms therefore come out of the system which tend towards its own abolition. Private property is being eroded and undermined at its very core.

As many have pointed out, the new technology of globalised capital has meant changes which have undermined traditional labour organisations, broken down forms of social protection developed by the workers' movement and led to increased exploitation in factories, offices, shops and call centres.

Commentators point to these facts to claim that capitalism has established a new, supreme form of control, a "new world order". Socialism, they say, is no longer possible, and only imaginable as a quaint utopian pipe dream.

But these observations about the new shape of capitalism miss out the most fundamental changes of all. Private ownership and control of the means of production is increasingly outstripped by the changes in the forms of production, the features of which we have outlined above.

Writers such as Alex Brummer of *The Guardian*, when studying today's world economy, believe that the capitalist system only survived the collapse of the Russian economy in 1998, and its "domino effect" on emerging markets from the Far East to Latin America, due to "America's love-affair with the cyber-world and the extra-productivity and wealth that has generated".

If this is the case, then it follows that the world economy cannot possibly survive a crash of the "virtual economy and financial markets".

The mushrooming value of e-commerce and Internet shares over the past months is recognised by experts in the history of capitalist markets as no more than an illusory "bubble.com".

Exactly when and how the bubble will burst cannot be predicted. But it is certain that the trillions of dollars being recycled through the world's financial markets every day do not generate new value. They themselves are an expression of the underlying instability of the entire system.

The mass use of information technology, its increasing cheapness and availability means that countless millions of ordinary people can now have access to ideas and information which previously was the prerogative of the few, with revolutionary implications.

Capitalism cannot, of course, abolish itself. The development of ideas and concepts which can release the power of the masses and transform the socialisation of the system into socialism itself, is the key to the future. ■

ASYLUM BILL fuels racist attacks

THE ATTACKS on refugees living in Dover in August were fuelled by a racist press and the populist, right-wing New Labour government which has repeatedly targeted asylum seekers in speeches and legislation.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, panders to the far-right Tory press like the *Daily Mail*, with lurid tales of "bogus" asylum seekers who want to come to Britain to live off state benefits.

Straw attacks "bogus" travellers for their alleged criminal activity, and refugees fleeing war, terror, starvation and absolute poverty, are fair game for the authoritarian New Labour regime.

When New Labour won the 1997 election, it inherited racist Tory legislation of the previous year. This removed benefits from refugees – including entitlement to shelter – who do not apply for asylum at their port of entry, and from applicants who had been refused asylum pending appeal.

As a result, many refugees have ended up destitute, cared for by churches and charities or working for a pittance without proper papers.

Not satisfied with these draconian laws, in 1998 Straw published proposals for a new Asylum Bill, which is now before parliament and which will:

- forbid asylum seekers to work and fine employers who employ them;
- introduce vouchers for asylum seekers to use instead of cash, in exchange for basic goods to survive on;



What is refugee status?

A REFUGEE, or asylum seeker, is a person who flees from their home country who has, according to a United Nations' 1951 Convention "a well founded fear of persecution", on account of a "person's race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion".

Nations like the UK, which have signed the UN's 1951 convention and 1967 protocol are obliged to receive and formally recognise refugees fleeing persecution.

The Refugee Council estimates that there are 13 million refugees in the world today. Not all will apply for asylum in other countries. The UN has calculated that some 450,000 persons applied for asylum in the 29 industrialised countries in 1998.

In 1998, Britain received 46,000 asylum applications. There is a backlog of 139,000 cases awaiting decision, some of them going back a decade or more.

- force asylum seekers to accept any housing they are given, dispersing them around the country;
- detain whole groups of asylum seekers for as long as the Home Office wants;
- aim to process asylum claims in six months, giving only one chance to appeal.

The aim is to stop refugees coming to Britain, by making it an unwelcoming place. This runs counter to the UN convention and contrasts with treatment by other European states.

Many organisations say the Bill panders to racism. The measures dispersing asylum seekers, forbidding them to work and

The following exchange, which took place at during a session of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Asylum Bill, reveals New Labour's reactionary position



Mike O'Brien (Home Office minister):

"Many asylum seekers come from communities where wealth may be stored in jewellery or other financial bonds - and it is right for us to take account of that wealth."

Diane Abbott (Labour MP): "Is the Minister suggesting that asylum seekers should sell jewellery, perhaps their wedding rings, as an alternative to the Government meeting its moral and international responsibilities to provide a reasonable level of support?"

O'Brien: "I certainly am suggesting that."

Unidentified Tory: "You'll be wanting the gold fillings out of their teeth next."

Abbott: "Is the Minister going to strip the rings from their fingers?"

introducing vouchers, been criticised by the Refugee Council, which says: "A system based on vouchers degrades and stigmatises asylum seekers by singling them out as different from the general population."

The vouchers scheme is particularly nasty. Shops are being told not to give change in cash, and there are already cases where stores have refused to accept them. Vouchers will be worth only 70% of Income Support, putting refugees well below the absolute poverty line. Many will wait 18 months or more for a decision on whether they can stay - far longer than Labour's proposed six-month waiting time.

The voucher scheme will also be more expensive, with a 300-strong unit set up at the Home Office to run the new system.

The wars in former Yugoslavia and the continued oppression of the Kurds helped produce more than

30,000 applications in the first six months of this year, almost double the total in the first six months of 1998. The vast majority take the short trip from Calais to Dover. It is a small town of 25,000 people, and currently houses about 1,000 asylum seekers, many of whom have been there for over a year. After mounting tension in August, 11 people were hurt as right wing extremists fought asylum seekers and the government admitted to "refugee dumping".

The situation was also exacerbated by the racist attitude of national and local media. An editorial in the *Folkstone Herald and Dover Express* last autumn bemoaned the invasion of "illegal immigrants, asylum-seekers, boot-leggers, drug-dealers, the scum of the Earth...We are left with the backdraft of a nation of human sewage, and no cash to wash it down the drain."

The position is made worse by the fact that New Labour - like the Tories before them - has starved local authorities of the resources to help asylum seekers with housing, education and other services. As a result, London councils have taken to dispersing refugees around the country.

Many now live in run-down bed-and-breakfast accommodation on the south coast, separated from from settled communities that already exist in other parts of Britain, and prey to racist attacks.

The belief that more refugees "flood" into Britain is a myth. Ten European countries take more refugees (on a per capita basis) than Britain does. Britain found a home for a mere 0.05% of the world's refugees in 1997, according to the Refugee Council.

However, throughout Western Europe, the trend over the last 20 years has been for more draconian immigration and asylum laws, a reaction to right-wing domestic pressures and to implement the EC's "Fortress Europe" policy.

A key factor in the desire of people to leave their countries is not only to escape persecution but also the increased poverty arising from globalisation and the growing inequality between the advanced capitalist countries and developing nations. People want a better life for themselves and especially for their children. But if they succeed in reaching Britain, they will be targeted by the Home Office, racist newspapers and New Labour ministers.

That is why socialists have a duty to oppose completely the Asylum Bill and the New Labour government that introduced it, and to fight for an end to all racist immigration laws. ■

For further information, see www.refugeecouncil.co.uk

books in the news

THE CURRENT CRISIS over the Good Friday agreement has a number of parallels in history. Sections of the British ruling class and their Unionist allies have thwarted the nationalist cause in Ireland many times before.

British imperialism's determination to retain a foothold in Ireland – which they first invaded in the 12th century – was the reason for the partition of Ireland, which took place through the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921.

Partition led directly to a bloody Civil War between those prepared to compromise and settle for the Irish Free State and those who rejected partition. A new book* deals with the events that led up to the conflict of 1922-23 and briefly with its aftermath.

Author Tim Pat Coogan has researched the Civil War for 30 years, and here focuses on the major political figures involved – Michael Collins, who signed the treaty with the British and Eamon de Valera, who initially rejected partition but eventually compromised to become the Free State's first President. Both were members of Sinn Fein, which had swept the board in the 1919 elections.

The book contains many great photographs of the heroic struggle of the Irish people against British rule, and of the Civil War itself.

While Coogan gives an extensive account of the events that led to the

The long road to a united Ireland

Review article by John Eden



Free State troops at a barricade during the Civil War

outbreak of Civil War, he explains it essentially as the result of personal political differences between Collins and de Valera. More significant, however, are the weaknesses of the nationalist outlook which still dog Sinn Fein to this day.

Essentially, the British army had been defeated in the south of Ireland by 1921, despite the notorious Black and Tans. Churchill and Lloyd George threatened to send an army to enforce partition, but were in no position to do so.

British imperialism was still recovering from the war, and faced massive unrest from a working class inspired by the Russian Revolution. This in turn had given a massive impetus to the struggle for national liberation in the rest of the British Empire.

But the narrow nationalist outlook of Sinn Fein and the IRA meant it could not see beyond Ireland to this changed world. Its middle-class leaders were unable and unwilling to seek allies in the Protestant working class of Ulster, and regarded them instead as inevitable enemies. This same weakness has led present-day Sinn Fein to negotiate with the British a power-sharing agreement that in effect recognises Northern Ireland and offers the working class very little.

Conditions in Ireland have changed considerably since the period of the Civil War. Economic development and investment in new industries in the south have underpinned the loss of control by the Roman Catholic hierarchy over the Irish working class. Easier access to jobs in the European Union has provided an escape route for the younger generation and broadened their outlook.

Meanwhile, in the north, the privileges of the Protestant workers are being whittled away, as the heavy industrial base they relied on has vanished. They feel isolated and weak. Some are even forced south of the border to find work.

On both sides, many young people want to break from the bloodshed and antiquated dogmas of the past. Economic and social conditions for united Irish workers against their real enemy – the capitalist class – are more developed than ever.

The Good Friday agreement cannot answer the historic question of a united Ireland. It will take a class-based, socialist approach to win both Catholic and Protestant workers to the ideal of an Ireland free from both Green and Orange Tories. ■

* *The Irish Civil War*. Tim Pat Coogan & George Morrison, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25

Gerry Healy **A revolutionary life**

by Corinna Lotz and
Paul Feldman

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380 pages paperback

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Missing the big picture about police racism

Clare Xanthos reviews
*The Case of Stephen
Lawrence* by Brian
Cathcart, Viking, £16.99

EARLY THIS YEAR the case of Stephen Lawrence – the young black man who was stabbed to death at a bus stop in South East London in April 1993 – reached its pinnacle in terms of media coverage. The case captured the public imagination in a way that marked it out from other race murders.

As Brian Cathcart reminds us, Stephen was a young man of impeccable character. In addition, the Lawrence family were regarded by the media as being particularly dignified; their incredible perseverance and determination in their quest for justice for their son is well known.

The case put the race issue back into the public consciousness in a similar way to the riots in the 1980s which generated the Scarman report of 1981; similarly the Lawrence case generated the MacPherson report.

It produced such strength of feeling that it has even served as a direct inspiration for the launch of a national civil rights movement. Michael Mansfield QC, barrister for the Lawrence family, and a key figure behind its launch, has spoken of a “feeling of motivation and hope” generated by the Lawrence case.

On the downside, there was the inevitable white backlash, particularly in the right-wing press and even in some liberal newspapers. The subsequent bombings of London’s minority communities suggested that the backlash was not limited to the media.



*The Lawrence family -
incredible perseverance and
determination*

In *The Case of Stephen Lawrence*, Cathcart stresses that the book is primarily an account of the events and not a commentary on the case. The first section traces the events surrounding the murder and immediately following the murder in some detail, covering a period of four months.

Section two surveys the period between July 1993 and March 1997; it examines the Lawrence family’s sense of betrayal, their private prosecution of the suspects, the subsequent collapse of the trial, and the inquest which had been deferred until February 1997.

The last section explores the investigation of the Metropolitan Police handling of the Lawrence case by the Kent police and the public inquiry into the case by Sir William Macpherson.

Cathcart gives an impressive, in-depth account of events, stage by stage, drawn from what must have been a formidable amount of

information. Particular areas of the book deserve special mention. For example, despite the book’s largely factual nature, there is a fascinating profile of the racist climate of the area in which the murder took place, in the district of Eltham and wider area of Greenwich.

His account of the police being cross-examined in the public inquiry also captures the atmosphere of these occasions very vividly: “During police evidence, and particularly when Kamlish or Mansfield (Lawrence barristers) were tying officers in knots, the audience was plainly absorbed by the spectacle and laughter or groans would greet some of the more unexpected answers.”

While the author emphasises that he has concentrated on the facts of the case rather than making a commentary, this is a fundamental weakness. It needs to be stressed that the Lawrence case, in particular, is as much about police racism as it is about a racist murder.

Cathcart, then, correctly examines the violence and racism which produced the infamous suspects; it was disappointing that he does not deem it equally necessary to explore the deeply-rooted racism for which the police are renowned.

The book goes into minute detail about how the case was mismanaged by the police at just about every level. Surely, this warrants some form of background/analysis of police relations with black people, the problem of police racism, and the part this played in the Lawrence case? The book is too long and heavily documented; it needs more analysis, with less preoccupation with factual material. The lack of discussion is further highlighted by the absence of a proper introduction or conclusion. ■

Saints and sinners

by Corinna Lotz

YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT to find surveillance cameras, razor wire and helicopters depicted at the National Gallery. But in a startling assembly of sculptures and large oils, Ana Maria Pacheco has given ancient themes a modern reality.

The demons of the Middle Ages are transformed into helicopter gun ships, heavy with bombs, while people crouch fearfully below. Pacheco bases her painting, called *Luz Eterna*, on the story of St Anthony. St Anthony was tormented by the Devil, who tempted him with naked women and demons.

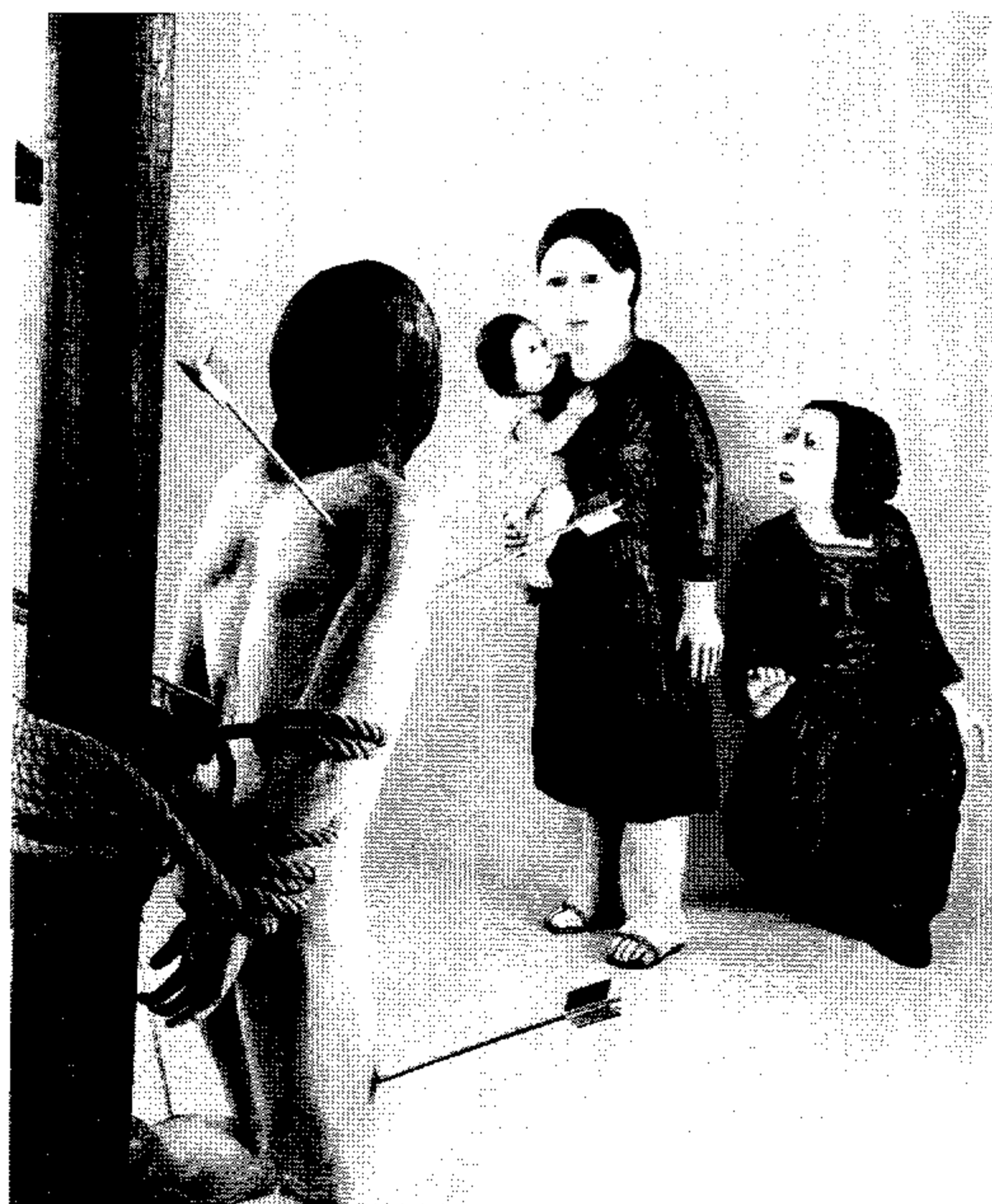
Luz Eterna forms the backdrop to a group of 19 carved figures called *Dark Night of the Soul*. A news photo of a murdered Brazilian bandit gave the artist the idea for this sculpture.

Visitors can walk amongst Pacheco's people, thus becoming spectators – and participants – in what is taking place. The focus of all the onlookers is a hooded man pierced through with golden arrows.

In the Christian tradition, a young man tortured in this way signifies Saint Sebastian. This saint was an early Christian martyr who was shot on the orders of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, but miraculously survived.

Many famous depictions of the saint, some of which can be seen in the National Gallery, show him standing, his sensuous pierced body appealing skywards for help from God.

Pacheco's tall figure is lashed kneeling to a pole by real pieces of thick rope. Standing upright, he would be over eight feet tall. We cannot see his face, because his head is covered with a black hood. The powerful torso strains forward.



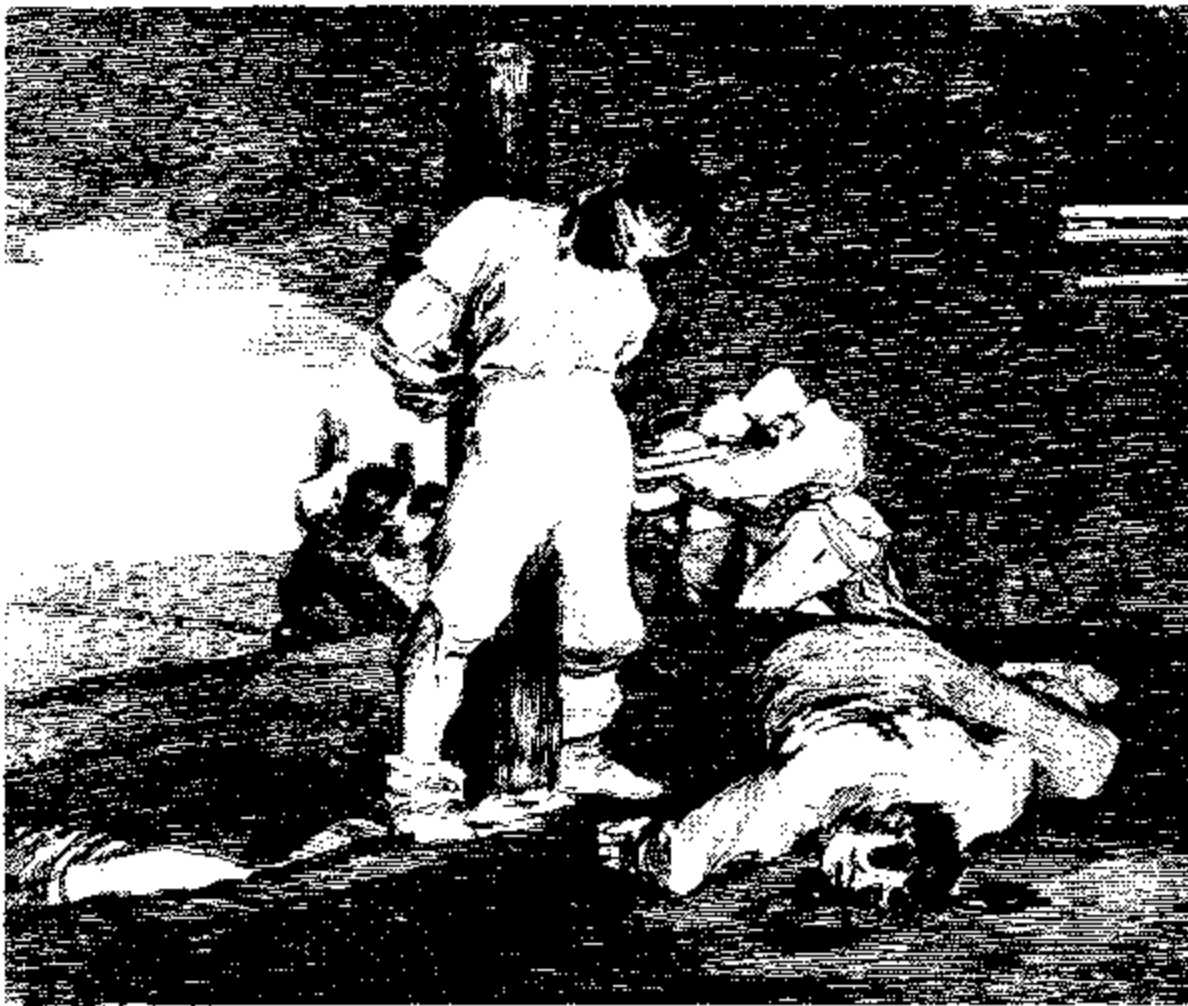
*New painting and sculpture by Ana Maria Pacheco
Sunley Room, National Gallery, Trafalgar Square
29 September 1999 - 9 January 2000.
Admission free Open 10-6pm daily. Late evening
Wednesday until 9pm
National Gallery Information 0171 747 2835
email: information@ng-london.org.uk
www.nationalgallery.org.uk*

But for the bloody penetration of the arrows, the body seems strong.

The sculptures are carved from oak (and sometimes lime wood) and decorated with a combination of sophisticated techniques. Afterwards gesso is rubbed into the wood, to give it a chalky white look. This is then worked over with diluted emulsion applied with

cotton buds. Thousands of small strokes – browns, yellows, maroons, violets, blues and greens – give the figure a pulsating feeling of flesh and blood, full of energy, despite its torment.

Furrowed details such as hair are gouged out with a chain saw. Then they are singed with a blow torch. The wood is heavily incised, with



Left and below left: *And there's nothing one can do about it and What courage!* two etchings by Goya; Above *Stormtroops advance under gas* etching and aquatint by Otto Dix



wonderful three dimensional patterns going deeply into the block. The charred black contrasts with the chalky white of the faces. The masque-like faces of her women have shining eyes, the irises made from onyx discs and real pearly teeth, given by dentists, a touch reminiscent of African masks.

Additional life is lent to the massive sculptures by the movement of the bodies. In one kneeling figure, the body twists around itself, a lifted hand suspended mid-air.

Pacheco has drawn much from her Brazilian roots and the Roman Catholic depictions of suffering. Her figures are reminiscent of those representing the Crucifixion, which are borne aloft during processions in Catholic countries.

But the feeling is contemporary. We sense the references to the horror of death squads, aerial bombardment, state surveillance and torture. We also feel the assertion of life, defiance and resistance to the warmongers. ■

The disasters of war

THE HORROR OF WAR on the European continent was recorded by three different men who lived centuries apart. They had no cameras, videos or film, but the devastation and suffering they set down on small pieces of paper is only too close to the present.

Jacques Callot saw the reality of the Thirty Years War which broke out in 1621. It turned his native land of Lorraine from one of the wealthiest areas of Europe into one of starvation and famine. Callot published his *Large Miseries of War* in Paris in 1633 and they rapidly became collectors' items.

Callot set the barbaric shootings and torture of his day into an epic social history, involving hundreds of troops and onlookers.

The Spanish artist, Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* confront the bestiality of man to man up front and without blinking. In his day, it was the Napoleonic troops who inflicted barbaric shootings on the people of Spain. Goya, however, not only showed the suffering, but also the powerful resistance of the people of Spain, including women.

Goya saw the devastation of the city of Saragossa by the French forces. He was in Madrid during the year of a famine when 20,000 people died of starvation. He made 82 etchings about the war, but they were never published in his lifetime.

Otto Dix was the only one of these three artists who actually served as a soldier. His series called *Der Krieg (War)* depicts the mass killings on the Front in World War II. He was haunted by his experience for a long time afterwards. In these images Dix reveals the harrowing effect of war on the individual soldier. Thousands of copies of a cheaper selection of the prints were sold during the 1920s in Weimar Germany. The German trade unions alone ordered 1,500 copies. As John Willett writes in the book accompanying the exhibition, has anything happened since then to make Dix's pictures irrelevant today? ■

Disasters of War: Callot, Goya, Dix Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1. until 26 September. Open daily 10am-6pm. Admission £5.20/£4.20. Children free. Free admission after 4.30pm daily. Tel 0891 600 140.

The power of the dollar in outer space

By Alistair Heron

THE ABUSE by the economically powerful nations of the rest of the world's economies no longer goes unnoticed. Practices such as logging in the South American rainforests, or the consequences of IMF economic restructuring plans are entering the mainstream of public consciousness.

Space, you might think, is surely beyond the crude rule of the dollar and space exploration there for everybody's educational benefit, like the ultimate science laboratory. But recent events show that this is not the case. One in particular that has received little exposure is the use of the Earth's gravitational pull to redirect a nuclear powered space probe. This process, known as a fly-by, has previously been done with other planets, but not with Earth.

Given our awareness of the damage that can be done by the impact of a comet, which can be witnessed nearly nightly on the surface of the moon, the consequences of the impact of a lump of plutonium can only be guessed at. Indeed it has been guessed at.

The American space agency NASA were obliged to submit a final environmental impact report which describes the consequences of "inadvertent re-entry". Despite an obvious attempt to put a gloss on the dangers, the possibilities described by NASA are horrifying. Radiation would be random and widespread affecting approximately five billion of the estimated seven to eight billion world population. The same report projects 2,300 fatal cancers as a direct result of such an accident. The reality may well be many times worse.


In a report from the US government's Interagency Nuclear Safety review panel, Dr. Earl Budin speaks of "several tens of thousands" of cancer deaths and this is still the opinion of a body that is prepared to support the American space programme as it stands.

The legality of NASA's *Cassini* plutonium space probe mission is doubtful. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 states that nations should avoid "harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies" as well as "adverse changes in the environment of the Earth".

The treaty also provides for liability against any nation causing damage to another by their "space devices". In arrogant and flagrant disregard of their obligations, both moral and legal, the US has sought to limit their liability to foreign nations to \$100 million dollars. Any damage caused on US soil however

will be covered by anything up to \$8.9 billion. This is no one-off gamble. Cassini is intended merely as the first in a long line of similar missions. A report from the US accounting office speaks of eight more missions in coming years; a NASA statement speaks of a further 13. America's trusted space agency has released many comforting statistics designed to ridicule the possibility of disaster. The truth of the matter to date is that the combined failure rate of US and Russian/Soviet nuclear space programs have is 12%.

The idea of whole races being contaminated by technology of which they are not even aware, and which is no benefit to them, is indefensible. Whatever the "odds" in this rather gruesome game, the longer this programme is allowed to continue the greater the chances of disaster. ■



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