

Labour & Trade Union Review

MAY 2002

No. 116

Price £1.20 (2 Euros)

Barak-Arafat Peace Deal

Tory Trickery On NHS Spending

Le PEN

EU ENLARGEMENT

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Terror in Palestine

The criticism of Israeli actions against the Palestinian Authority which has been expressed in sections of the British press in recent weeks is not well founded. It fails to appreciate the necessities of the situation and instead of engaging with the realities of the matter it indulges in a facile, and futile, demonising of General/Prime Minister Sharon.

Realistically considered, the practical distinction that can be made between mainstream Israeli politicians - politicians capable of affecting the course of events to any discernable extent - are negligible. All are involved in the same political predicament and are impelled by the same motives. They do what they must.

If it was entirely right for the state of Israel to be established - and its establishment is generally considered, in British liberal circles not only to have been a moral necessity - then what it is doing is can hardly be judged to be currently entirely wrong. For its development has been consistent with its establishment .

General/Prime Minister Sharon could assert with as much truth as Martin Luther: I can do nothing else. And if he didn't do, somebody else would.

The state of Israel was established by a great many people like Sharon, doing the kind of thing that Sharon has done in Jenin, but on a much larger scale. And the Israeli state as established in 1948 was never regarded by the main forces of the Zionist movement which established it as anything but "work in progress".

The Jewish nationalist claim that was given diplomatic legitimacy by the British Government in the week of the Bolshevik Revolution (Balfour

Declaration, November 1917) and by the League of Nations a couple of years later, was not a claim on Galilee or Tel Aviv. It was a claim on Palestine. And it was neither the claim of occupants to the country they occupied nor a claim to an empty land. It was a claim by an international political movement to ownership of a country occupied by another people. Its realisation therefore required that the actual inhabitants of Palestine at the time of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate should be superseded, by one means or another, by a new settler population.

What is going on today in relations between Jews and Arabs is what has been going on ever since the early 1920s. Jews are displacing Arabs and seizing their property.

That is what the project of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine always implied to anybody who cared to think about it realistically. It is what was done on a massive scale during and after the setting-up of the state in 1947/48. And it is what has been going on ever since the Jewish conquest of the whole of Palestine thirty-five years ago, in furtherance of the aim of carrying the Israeli state into the historical heartland of Jewish existence.

The Jewish claim to Palestine, accepted by the British Government and the League of Nations, is strictly theocratic. Recognition of its validity is the outstanding residue of Christian fundamentalism in the era of secular "human right".

When Balfour was asked in the early 1920s to show how the Declaration which bears his name was compatible with the principles of democracy and the rights of nations which Britain had preached during the Great War, his reply was that the validity of the Jewish claim did not rest on the general ground on which other peoples had to make their claims.

If the Jewish claim to be acting in accordance with a source of right not accessible to others is accepted - and it was accepted by the British Government and the League of Nations, and by the United Nations General Assembly in

1947 (by all the Christian states and none of the non-Christians) - further discussion of the matter becomes redundant. And the ground for condemning Jewish action beyond the 1967 borders of Israel disappears.

If on the other hand ordinary standards of democracy and national rights are evoked for the purpose of condemning Sharon, then the whole moral position under which the state of Israel was established dissolves and the Zionist movement from 1919 onwards must be seen as a brutal campaign of colonial conquest in which the rules of civilised conduct proclaimed in the general declarations of the League of Nations and the United Nations have been broken continuously.

It is abhorrent to those rules that the territory occupied by one people should be allocated to another people to make it their own through military conquest and ethnic cleansing. The worldview under which the right to do that sort of thing is legitimated was held to have been repudiated by the formation of the League of Nations in 1919. It was reasserted by the German state twenty years later, but was repudiated once again, and even more vehemently, in 1945. But the Zionist movement was given an exemption from the United Nations Charter, as it had been from that of the League of Nations. In each instance it was given a specific right to do what all others were forbidden to do.

If we do not accept the theocratic dimension within which effective Zionism was conducted, but understand Middle Eastern affairs within the natural order, how is it possible to avoid the conclusion that the major post-1918 precedent for Zionism was Nazism?

In Hitler's view, the German state was entitled to do what it had the power to do. And Sharon's tanks as they set about their work of destruction in Jenin, broadcast to the Arab inhabitants the message that Israeli power was overwhelming.

The secular justifications for the Action against Jenin and other towns was the suicide bombing of Israelis by Palestinians. If European Jews realising that they were destined for extinction, had determined to take as many Germans as possible with them, Dr Goebbels would have known how to present such

Labour & Trade Union Review

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activity to the German public as evidence of the sub-human characteristics of Jewry.

The enhancement of German power and German space was an existential absolute for Nazism. The enhancement of Jewish power and Jewish space is an absolute for Zionism, and whatever obstructs it is evil. And Jewish propaganda is no more committed to factual truth about the enemy than German propaganda was.

Palestinian activity has to do with survival in the face of the systematic Jewish expansion into Arab territory which has been encouraged by the Jewish state ever since the conquest of 1967. There are now approaching half-a-million Jewish settlers in that territory, and each settlement is an outpost of Israel, protected by the Israeli Army and largely funded from Israel. (Few of them are economically self-supporting, back-

to-nature communes.)

The relentless expansion of these settlements confronts Palestinian society with the prospect of extinction. Some Palestinians decide to take as many Jews as possible with them. The Israel state responds to attack on its settlers by reprisals against Palestinian families and villages on the *Sippaschaft* (kindred) principle applied by the Germans sixty years ago.

Jewish sources, defending the Israeli Action in Jenin and other Arab towns, have cited an appropriate precedent for it - the methods by which the British Government suppressed the Palestinian rebellion of 1936-8.

Britain held Palestine from 1918 to 1947 by right of conquest, and also by the terms of the League of Nations Mandate which was a kind of hypocritical gloss painted over the conquest. The Palestinians did not dispute the right of Britain to govern Palestine. What they disputed was Britain's right to give Palestine to the Jews. The rebellion was not directed against Britain as imperial governor of Palestinians. It was directed against Britain as the agent of mass Jewish colonisation preparatory to converting Palestine into a Jewish state.

The 1936 revolt had the same basic causes as the present Intifada: the squeezing out of the native population to make space - *Lebensraum* - for Jewish expansion. The Jews, (we cannot say the Israelis because it was not from Israel that we heard this argument), are indisputably in the right when they say that Sharon is only doing today what the British Government did in the late thirties. Britain crushed that revolt with great brutality and by use of reprisals against communities in which no account was taken of what this or that individual might or might not have done - a method previously used in the war of conquest against the Boer Republics in 1900 and in 1919-21 against the Irish who had voted to become independent, and later used in Malaya and Kenya in the late 1940s and the 1950s.

By far the greatest displacement of Palestinians was done in the summer of 1948, by the Jewish State itself, at the moment when Britain reneged on all its (self imposed) obligations to orderly government in Palestine (while launching a major military effort to break

the independence movement in Malaya. The United Nations General Assembly, in a motion adopted in November 1947, for which the Security Council undertook no responsibility, designated a territory consisting of 55% of Palestine to be the territory of the Jewish state, even though its Jews were still only a third of the Palestinian population despite the massive immigration of the preceding years. There was a bare Jewish majority in that territory. If the Arab minority of 49% had remained in place the Jewish State would scarcely have been functional. The Jewish military forces therefore availed of the chaos into which British irresponsibility threw the region to drive out hundreds of thousands of Arabs - and also to add a further 20% of Palestine to the 55% it had been awarded by the UN General Assembly, and that was ethnically cleansed too.

The Security Council, prevented by Britain from taking the matter in hand during the critical period in 1947/8 was allowed by Britain to adopt some "peace" resolutions late in 1948 - Britain then behaving as if it was an altruistically concerned third party. These resolutions asserted a right of return for the Arab refugees, but what Israel did was enact a Law of Return giving every Jew in the world citizen rights in Israel, while arguing the essentially racist case that the refugees, because they were Arabs, were none of its responsibility and should be taken into the Arab states (and the expansion of Israel beyond the border traced by the General Assembly in 1947 was also left an open question by the security council).

Benjamin Netanyahu, who seems to have acted as a spokesman for the Sharon Government as well as its critic, has stated categorically that there can be no return of the refugees to Israel. He did not bother to construct a legal argument on the matter. He simply said that, if the refugees were allowed to return, Israel would be swamped "swamped" by Arabs. He did not add: "as it was in 1948 when we got rid of them".

His TV interviewers did not comment that the rhetoric of "swamping" had certain overtones which we usually hold to be unpleasant. Nor did they say that the refugees would only be returning to the properties from which they had been driven by brute force, and which had then been stolen.

It is reported that in the action in

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Ramallah the Israelis destroyed the land registry - a prudent precaution against the possibility that a Palestinian state may be unavoidable in the long run and that things might settle down to such an extent that legal redress could be called for.

Legal redress for acts of confiscation by states has been developed to such a degree by Jews that legal action against the Jewish state itself could hardly be warded off in the event of peace being allowed to break out.

In mid-April a large meeting of Jews was held in London under the auspice of the Austrian Embassy for the purpose of assisting in the making of claims on the Austrian state for things done between 1938 and 1945. (Nothing like this was ever done in the pre-Haider era!)

If the day is ever allowed to come when Palestinians will be able to make claims on Israel in the way that Jews make claims on Austria, Germany and even Switzerland, then the Jewish state will be in dire straits. The mode of development which the Zionists embarked upon in 1948, along with the fact that the heartland of Zion lay beyond the 1948 borders, produced the dynamism of Israeli politics in which all but one or two small parties participated.

The lie that the Arabs were not driven out by Jewish terror in 1948 but left by choice so that they would not have to live in the Jewish state, or in order to give Arab armies a clear line of fire against the Zionists, which was effectively circulated for many years by the Jewish propaganda, has now lost all credibility. It is conceded even by Israeli historians that terror was directed at the Palestinians to encourage them to leave. But it is argued that this was not done in accordance with a Government directive, but was left to the discretion of individual military commanders. And it is argued that the effect of Jewish terror was magnified by the publicity given to it by Arab radio - the implication apparently being that if the Arab states had wanted to keep the Palestinians in place despite the Jewish terror they would have not given publicity to the Jewish terror. It would be interesting how that played in Court as a defense in compensation cases.

What happened in 1948 was that Zionist organizations made effective use of the chaos deliberately brought about by British policy to accomplish a great clearing out of natives, which made the Jewish state functional. (According to one pro-Zionist source in the 1950s there were only 100,000 Arabs under the expanded Jewish state of 1949. There had been well over 400,000 in the smaller territory awarded to the Jewish State by the UN General Assembly in 1947) When things settled down, comparatively speaking, the Israeli Government was effusive in its expressions of concern for the well-being of the (drastically reduced) "Arab brothers".

C'est la vie, one might have said at one time. But the retrospectively, enforceable human rights activism of recent times, in which Jewish influence has played a notable part makes that no longer sayable. The standards which have

been established for the Jews as victims must, sooner or later be applied to the Jews as persecutors.

In days gone by situations which got completely out of hand could be consigned, legally and morally, to oblivion. It was a useful and suitable device. It recognized Aristotle's truth that man is a political animal whose public conduct is largely determined by the state structure in which he lives, and that law is always the construct of a particular state.

There was an effective grant of oblivion after 1798 for all that was done in Ireland in 1798, in recognition the fact that state affairs had not been conducted in a way that made orderly conduct a reasonable practical possibility. And what happened in Northern Ireland in 1967 was caused by a kind of informed oblivion.

But the ideology of human rights activism conducted in the light of eternity makes oblivion no long possible. The *de facto* oblivion granted after 1945 for actions done in the Baltic states and the Ukraine between 1939 and the early 1940s was revoked by legislation brought in by Mrs Thatcher and supported by the Labor Party. People in the areas were subjected to rapid fundamental changes changes of public order and world outlook between 1939 and 1941. A national state of no great consequence in the summer of 1939 becomes a Bolshevik state and part of the Soviet world order during the following winter, is liberated from the atheistic Bolshevik Tyranny a little over a year later, and three years after that it is liberated from its liberators by the Bolsheviks who have in the meantime become the main force of the United Nations. How was that ordinary decent citizen, who invariably takes his clue to right conduct from the established order of the state, to know what he should do in these circumstances? And if he might be reasonably expected to maintain a consistence of right conduct throughout, what need is there for states?

Some individuals who experienced the German advance of 1941 as liberation from Bolshevik tyranny later found refuge in Britain and, understanding that that era had been consigned to oblivion became ordinary decent citizens for forty years. Then the oblivion was invoked by

retrospective legislation and they were held accountable for things they were alleged to have done sixty years before in a catastrophic situation.

These trials were done as acts of justice for Jews, and Jewish influence went into the doing of them

Are we suddenly to switch back to the old order of accepting accomplished fact, and covering the doing of them with oblivion, when it is the actions of the Jewish State, and the actions of individuals connected with that state, that are in question?

And are we really expected to believe that the Arab population of Palestine was comprehensively displaced ("swamped" shall we say?) by an immigrant Jewish population in a very short space of time without any crime against humanity being committed?

P.S. The New Statesman questioned whether Jews in Britain had a problem about dual loyalty where Israel was concerned. The following week, having been subjected to intense Jewish influence, it found itself guilty of anti-Semitism.

A Jewish magazine was distributed at the Austrian meeting mentioned earlier - *AJR, Journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees*. It has no inhibitions about raising the question about Muslims which the *New Statesman* backed down on with regard to Jews. It asks whether British Muslims who went to the defense of Afghanistan are to be prosecuted for treason. (Did Britain declare war on Afghanistan?) And it comments that "Islamic teaching apparently places allegiance to the faith ahead of allegiance to one's country of residence". Isn't that what the *New Statesman* said about Jewry?

We welcome any comments on the above leading article.

Settlements

Readers might find the following website informative on the nature and scale of the Israeli superstructure in the PA area.

<http://www.opendemocracy.net>

Since the 1967 war, when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza strip, a colossal project of strategic, territorial and architectural planning has lain at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The landscape and the built environment became the arena of conflict. Jewish settlements - state-sponsored islands of

'territorial and personal democracy', manifestations of the Zionist pioneering ethos - were placed on hilltops overlooking the dense and rapidly changing fabric of the Palestinian cities and villages. 'First' and 'Third' Worlds spread out in a fragmented patchwork: a territorial ecosystem of externally alienated, internally homogenised enclaves located next to, within, above or below each other.

A new understanding of territory had to be developed to govern the West Bank. The Occupied Territories were no longer seen as a two-dimensional surface, but as a large three-dimensional volume, layered with strategic, religious and political strata.

New and intricate frontiers were invented, like the temporary borders later drawn up in the Oslo Interim Accord, under which the Palestinian Authority was given control over isolated territorial 'islands', but Israel retained control over the airspace above them and the sub-terrain beneath.

This process might be described as the 'politics of verticality'. It began as a set of ideas, policies, projects and regulations proposed by Israeli state-technocrats, generals, archaeologists, planners and road engineers since the occupation of the West Bank, severing the territory into different, discontinuous layers.

The writer Meron Benvenisti described the process as crashing "three-dimensional space into six dimensions - three Jewish and three Arab". Former US president Bill Clinton sincerely believed in a vertical solution to the problem of partitioning the Temple Mount. Settlement Masterplanners like Matityahu Drobes aimed to generate control from high points.

Ron Pundak, the architect of the Oslo Accords, described solutions for partitioning the West Bank with a three-dimensional matrix of roads and tunnels, still on the drawing board, as the only practical way to divide an undividable territory. And Gilead Sher, Israeli chief negotiator at Camp David (and a divorce lawyer) explained it to me as a way of enlarging the 'cake' before partitioning it.

The series will climax with Weizman's definitive new map of the West Bank patchwork, showing how Israeli and Palestinian settlements encircle one another. Prepared for the human rights organization B'tselem, and updating American intelligence maps, it will be an indispensable aid to understanding the intimacy of this conflict.

Le Pen - Le Futur?

Jack Lane

Le Pen's success can be directly related to the behaviour of the EU at the present time. The European project was originally set up to deal with common European issues. Nowadays it presumes to deal primarily with what it sees as world problems and invariably makes them worse causing more problems for Europe than it solves.

One of the Commission's working assumptions is that Europe will need about 50 million immigrants in the coming decades to cater for its needs. Even though it does not broadcast this very much, it is quite a realistic figure for a continent that plans to go on living off the rest of the world and which is determined to impoverish and if necessary wreck economies anywhere that do not toe the line in its globalisation plans.

But what proper plans are being made to cater for this movement of people into Europe? The movement of people from the land to the urban centres of Europe was catered for in a very civilised way by CAP and cost billions of Euros and was worth every penny. Yet this was a small issue compared to the movement of people involved in the future immigration into Europe but is there an equivalent to CAP being planned? Where is the Common Immigration Policy to oversee and cater for all the issues involved? It is nowhere to be seen except makeshift, hole in the corner policies that maximise problems. In its place we are more likely to have the Common Le Pen Policy across Europe.

Consider the despicable role the EU has played in world affairs in recent weeks alone which has clearly disenchanted many in Europe itself and helped Le Pen.

A few weeks ago Blair was discussing with Bush the practicalities of the next war on Iraq totally indifferent to his fellow EU members because he was secure in the knowledge that whatever

was decided they would follow. Blair also tried his best to make his own arrangements with Bush about the tariffs on steel exports to the US ignoring any common EU approach. Blair and Bush treated the EU with contempt and quite rightly so.

These war plans were upset by Israel who insisted on destroying all the Palestinian infrastructure paid for by the EU, and the Palestinian Authority itself and it then refused to let the EU representatives, Mr Solana and his colleagues, meet Arafat. All was accepted without a murmur. Mr Solana and his cronies are the same people who are always keen to jump up and down and lay down the law by all means possible to other people who they claim are misbehaving. Their behaviour shows them to be classic bullies who are always easily identified by being the first to succumb to another bully.

What makes their behaviour even more despicable is that they considered and rejected recognising the Palestinian Authority a few weeks ago. An act that would have been of real benefit to the Palestinians and not cost a penny or a life.

The EU has become the chief source of mischief in the world and is unsettling the development of the EU and there is growing contempt for it within Europe as well as abroad. In the absence of a continuing development of a European demos which is now a pipedream there is an inevitable and necessary development of European nationalisms. Le Pen is a foretaste of that.

Of course there should be no real cause for concern by the EU establishment about Le Pen because if by any chance he won the France presidency they can simply demand that the election is held again. After all, that is what they have arrogantly demanded of Ireland who rejected the Nice Treaty in a referendum and the Irish establishment being very 'European' has not the self respect to tell them to get stuffed and listen to the people there.

Barak Arafat and that Peace Deal

Peter Whitelegg

As one survey's the wreckage of the Jenin refugee camp it has become very difficult to assess the events that led to Israel's incursion into Palestinian territory. According to the Western media the incursions into Palestinian territory were a direct response to the "terrorist" attacks by fanatical Palestinians. After Sept 11th Israel has felt justified in calling any response by Palestinians for some form of self-determination terrorism. The other general point one would get from the media and our elected representatives is that the Palestinians are to a large part responsible for the current situation (if not wholly responsible), as it was they who rejected a very generous peace plan put on the table at Camp David two years ago by Ehud Barak.

This then is the generally held view. In the parliamentary debate on the Middle East crisis on 16th April 2002, in a reply to Jack Straw (Foreign Secretary), John Maples (Stratford upon Avon) asserted

"The Foreign Secretary is outlining a solution that we would all, of course, welcome [a peace plan]. After Chairman Arafat's comprehensive rejection of Barak's offer at Camp David, and the Clinton-Barak offer at Tabu, however, does the right Hon gentleman really think Arafat would accept such an offer."

This then is the generally held and disseminated view. The Palestinians were offered very generous terms two years ago at Camp David, and refused them. Israel therefore had no option but to take the action it did.

But was Camp David and the peace deal that simple? Was there a definite proposal and if so what was on the table.

Different Views

According to Robert Mally (Special

Assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli Affairs) who was present at the Camp David negotiations the situation was not so clear-cut.

Each side came to the negotiations at Camp David with very different views of the process and what they wanted, or expected, from the final peace plan. Barak came to the talks with a deep antipathy towards the concept of gradual steps that lay at the heart of the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. In his view, Israel's withdrawal of forces from parts of the West Bank and the Gaza strip had forced Israel to pay a heavy price without getting anything in return, and without knowing the final extent of Palestinian demands. He was sure that the Palestinians would make an historic agreement only if all other possibilities had been explored and found unappealing.

Barak's team was also convinced that Israeli society would endorse an historic compromise if it brought quiet normalcy to the country. To do this it was necessary to minimise any political friction. Yitzhak Rabin had paid a heavy price for antagonising the far right and failing to bring along its members during the Oslo process. Barak was determined not to make the same mistake. For a government that felt it had considerable latitude concerning the final terms of any peace agreement, it was also extremely constrained on the steps that it could take to get there.

Barak's first steps were to discard a number of interim measures that Israel was formally committed to by various agreements. This included a third partial withdrawal of troops from the West Bank, the transfer to Palestinian control of three villages close to Jerusalem, and the release of Palestinians imprisoned for acts committed before the Oslo

accords. His objective was to carry the Israeli right and not appear to be a sucker to pressure from Palestinian demands. He was not about to cede territory while not knowing what the final settlement would entail. If a final settlement were agreed then all the interim measures would be implemented. If no settlement was forthcoming then Israel was no worse off. All was gambled on a final, definitive, settlement.

Barak believed that presenting all rewards in one comprehensive package was the best way to ensure the Israeli public backed any proposal in a national referendum. Barak was hedging his bets - a reluctance to make early concessions out of fear that a final deal may not succeed.

During this time Israeli settlements in the West Bank actually increased. New housing units were erected with all the civil infrastructure that entailed. Barak saw no reason to needlessly alienate the settlement constituency. Particularly, as he saw it, many of the settlements were in areas that Israel would permanently annex under any final settlement. At least under any final settlement that he would sign.

Barak's objective was now clear, an all or nothing approach. Arafat and his Palestinian negotiators had to be made to understand that there was no "third way", the "interim approach" was no longer a option, the only option was a long corridor that led to a settlement or confrontation. In setting out his plan Barak sought confirmation from the US and European allies for his strategy. He asked them to threaten Arafat with the consequences of his actions if no final settlement was forthcoming. Any failure in the negotiations would be laid firmly at the door of the Palestinians and relations would be downgraded.

Prior to the summit at Camp David, Barak was prepared to have his negotiators engage in preliminary discussions, which took place for several months prior to the talks. But for him these were not the means by which real tangible progress would be made. For him the only real way to ensure that any long lasting progress was made was with one high level, face to face, summit.

The Palestinians had viewed the election of Barak with mixed emotions. His immediate predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, had refused to implement several of Israel's signed obligations. Because of that and nothing else the election of Barak was cautiously welcomed. The defeat of Netanyahu also placed Tel Aviv back in Washington's good books. Something that Barak would use to his advantage.

For the Palestinians cautious optimism turned to quiet dismay. Barak's unwillingness to confront the settlers contributed to an atmosphere of distrust. Delays in addressing core Palestinian concerns - implementation of the Wye agreement (Barak chose to renegotiate) - the beginning of permanent status talks (Barak would not name a lead negotiator). From the point of view of the Palestinians, the Oslo Accords were a litany of promises made and then abandoned. Six years after the agreement there were more Israeli settlements, less freedom of movement and worse economic conditions. The Palestinians were by now doubtful of Israel's willingness to follow through on any of their signed obligations.

By now Arafat and his team of negotiators believed that they were being asked either to accept anything that the Israeli's put on the table or have the world turn against them. Barak's stated view that the failure of these talks would result in a situation far worse for the Palestinians only served to confirm Arafat's sense of impending doom.

Arafat, like Barak, also believed that permanent status talks were long overdue. But unlike Barak he believed that this was no reason to renege on the interim measures. For the Palestinians the two issues were interlocked. The interim measures, already agreed to, were part of the peace process and must be kept separate. The failure of Israel to

implement these measures cast doubt on the whole process.

Camp David

Both sides arrived at Camp David with very different views of the impending process. For Arafat this was high wire summitry, designed to maintain pressure on the Palestinian's and ensure that they signed a peace agreement. If they did not then in all likelihood they would be blamed. The fact that a summit was being held at all after Israel's refusal to implement the interim agreements was for Arafat highly suspicious.

On June 15th, during a final meeting with Clinton before Camp David, Arafat set forth his concerns: Barak had not implemented the prior agreements, there has been no progress in the negotiations and Israel was holding all the cards. Arafat told Secretary Albright that a summit under these conditions was tantamount to a disaster. It was quite likely that it would blow up in the Presidents face. If there was no summit at least there was some hope of progress.

In the end Arafat was given no choice but to attend, not to do so would have incurred the opprobrium of the USA, but he went more intent on surviving that on achieving a favourable outcome.

By now the relationship between the two parties was deteriorating. Barak was complaining that during the preliminary talks Palestinian negotiators had not moved an inch with the Israeli's not willing to move any further. Barak also warned Clinton that without a summit his government in its present form would be gone within a few weeks.

At the same time Arafat wanted additional preparatory talks to ensure that the summit would not fail. He also requested the third Israeli withdrawal be implemented prior to the summit, a demand that, when turned down by the USA turned into a request that the USA "guarantee" the withdrawal even if Camp David failed. However, for Arafat, a request, volunteered by Clinton was to be all he would get, namely, the US would remain neutral in the event that the summit failed and not blame the Palestinians. By and large the

administration shared Arafat's views.

In the end Arafat's worse nightmare came true. There was no deal and he got the blame in no uncertain terms.

So what was on the negotiating table? Barak came into office pledging to retain Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal and undivided capital" and ended up appearing to agree to Palestinian sovereignty over most of the Arab of East Jerusalem. He also originally spoke of a Palestinian state covering roughly 80% of the West Bank, then gradually moved into the low 90s before settling in the mid 90s.

But none of these "offers" were ever presented in any coherent form. Barak was determined to keep the pressure on the Palestinians. He was unwilling to reveal his final position - even to the Americans, and then pay a heavy domestic political price and have the Palestinians use the concessions as a new starting point for further demands. Each Israeli position was presented as a red line, a line beyond which the Israeli's would go no further.

The shifts in Barak's positions can be explained by his "cost benefit" approach to the summit. His proposals were based not a firm analysis of what Israel could hold on to, but rather on a changing analysis of what it could obtain. In his view, faced with an attractive offer, and knowing what the consequences would be in the event of failure, the Palestinians would have no option but to agree. Each Palestinian "no" altered the Israeli assessment of what the Palestinians couldn't turn down.

None of these deals were ever stated in writing, but always conveyed orally. No maps were ever drawn up showing who would get what. In the end there was, strictly speaking, no offer. All "offers" were seen as "bases for negotiation" a precursor for further talks.

According to these bases Palestine would have sovereignty over 91% of the West Bank; Israel would annex 9% of the West Bank. In exchange Israel would hand over sovereignty over parts of pre 1967 Israel equivalent to 1% of the West Bank, but with no indication of where either would be. Arafat was also told that he would have sovereignty over the

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Notes On The News

By Gwydion M Williams

The Silence Of The Thunderers

The media in Britain was unanimous that the French Presidential Election would be a very dull affair. Polls showing Hard-Left and Hard-Right candidates quite close to the two main contenders seem not to have prompted any speculation about whether one of these outsider candidates could actually come second. It seemed to me quite possible, but I don't really follow French politics and I assumed the experts knew best.

Then came the dramatic news that Le Pen had come second. The mild resistance that Jospin's socialist government had offered to Anglo-Globalisation was undermined. And they are now under intense pressure to 'modernise' along New-Labour lines. So isn't it odd that the media ignored the possibility of a Le Pen victory ahead of the event? Especially since it's often been observed that Hard-Right candidates get more votes than there are voters who declare such an intention to the pollsters.

Had people realised what might have happened ahead of time, enough of Jospin's normal supporters would have rallied to him and he might well have won the presidency. Voting intentions for an assumed Jospin-Chirac second round were too close to call, and socialist control of both government and presidency might have happened under some more sensible voting system.

I don't know what the French media were up to, but they evidently did not warn voters any more than the English-language media did—and one assumes insights leak pretty freely, nowadays. But of course, media people are among the beneficiaries of Anglo-Globalism, while the owners of media are among its keenest enthusiasts.

The Times in 19th century Britain got a reputation as an independent force, a 'Thunderer' that could demand reforms. Except that it was always basically a servant of commercial interests—

newspapers depend on advertising revenue, and commercial television is dependant on it. So of course it reflects the business point of view—and even when it doesn't, I'd say that 'Campaigning Journalism' is a rather futile business.

The 'Thunderer' gave its readers the wrong advice and boosted the 19th century British complacency that made its 20th century decline inevitable. Back in the 1960s, the 'Thunderer' itself was swallowed by a press lord with barely a whimper.

The cruder US pattern of muck-raking journalism is still going strong—but what does it do to public life? Much muck raked into the light of day does not improve public life, it might have been less harmful left where it was.

The biggest success of the pre-Thatcher era was the discrediting of Reginald Maudling, who was driven to resignation in 1972 over his connection with some fairly benign corruption that was exposed by Paul Foot and by *Private Eye*. Had this not happened, he'd have been a more plausible candidate in 1975 than either Thatcher or Willy Whitelaw. Maudling died in 1977, indeed, but I've a feeling he'd have lived a lot longer had he had the stimulus of power and success to live for. And there would then have been no Thatcherism.

I also think it remarkable how Christian Democracy was destroyed in Italy, greatly damaged in Germany, by an unexpected flood of scandals that occurred just after the ending of the Cold War and the birth of a New World Order in which the USA saw such people as obstructive rivals rather than vital allies. US signals intelligence is sophisticated, far more so than the often-clownish exploits of the CIA. And there's nothing like a bit of inside information for guiding investigative journalists to a suitable target.

Hard Right Blues

As for Le Pen, it is a set-back for the left rather than a positive advance by the Hard Right. Le Pen's vote has gone from 15% to 18%, the rest is a fluke of the French electoral system. Had it been Single Transferable Vote, with the worst polling candidate having their votes transferred to the voter's next choice, Le Pen would probably not have got above 20% and Jospin might even have accumulated enough votes to win.

First reports exaggerated the margin, the final results showed a difference of less than one per cent between Jospin and Le Pen. He also got no more than a couple of hundred thousand votes more than in the election of 1995, it was just that mainstream voters were less inclined to bother in what had been billed as a trivial first round that was just for protest voters.

It's also not Fascism. The Hard Right protest against Anglo-Globalisation is based on a simple protest at old values being destroyed by shallow greed. Despite which, Le Pen still counts for little. The big winner within France is Chirac, obviously voters must rally round and give him a decisive win in the second round. But globally, Anglo-Globalism has managed yet another sleek success.

Hard Left, Harder Left, Hardly Left, Little Left

In France, the Marxist Left has once again missed an open goal. Between them, candidates who were to the left of Jospin scored more than Le Pen. Had they been united behind a single popular leader, it would have been the Hard Left that scored the newsworthy triumph. Always assuming that the media hadn't sounded the alarm over that particular possibility, which is moot.

As it was, the most popular of a trio Trotskyists scored less than 7% and came fifth. The once-powerful Communist Party scored even less, deservedly. But when there are three Trotskyists and a host of alternatives, how can they be taken seriously?

The rise of Trotskyism coincides very nicely with the decline of the left, so you'd need very good reasons NOT to see them as a major cause. The New Left of the 1950s had promise, but was

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Muslim and Christian quarters of the old city, but only a loosely defined "permanent custodianship" over the Haram al-Sharif, the third holiest site in Islam. The status of the rest would fluctuate between sovereignty and functional autonomy.

But this could hardly be called a functional state. Palestinian territory was carved up into three discontinuous areas surrounded by Israeli troops and settlers. The land swap was supposed to compensate Palestinians for the loss of prime agricultural land in the West Bank. The only territory offered in return were stretches of desert adjacent to the Gaza strip.

The Aftermath

The Palestinians, try as they might, were totally unable to make any headway within the talks. Barak refused to meet with Arafat and they were faced with a continuously moving target of ideas and proposals. Barak was getting all the praise for seemingly to appear to go as far as any Israeli had ever gone in search of peace. But it was the Palestinians who had made the biggest concessions. At Oslo it was they who had conceded 78% of mandated Palestine to Israel.

During the Oslo talks, the Palestinians believed, it was they who had come up with the creative ideas to assuage Israeli concerns. They accepted that Israel would annex some of the West Bank for an equivalent amount of Israeli territory being transferred to Palestine.

As far as the Palestinians were concerned they had acted in good faith all through the process and they were now being blamed for the failure.

Barak's behaviour at Camp David has led to disastrous results. His insistence on an all or nothing approach and his refusal to implement any of the agreed-to interim measures led the Palestinians to view him with grave suspicion. By presenting early positions as immovable ensured the Palestinians distrust. And as far as the current view that Arafat turned down a generous peace plan at Camp David, I for one cannot agree, as strictly speaking, there never was one.

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hijacked in the 1960s by the detritus of the Old Left, the branch Leninism who had never achieved anything positive—and still have not.

Our laws, not The Law

The small matter of a mobile phone-call made from much too far away makes it very unlikely that the accused in the Damilola were actually guilty. But we now learn that the acquitted youths had previously got off on other matters, including a sexual assault where the case was rejected on a technicality.

The British legal system insists that mundane justice must be denied if the proceedings are not 'ritualistically correct'. The phrase used is 'fair trial', but this is pure jargon and has no real connection with convicting the guilty or acquitting the innocent. Procedures are elaborated to an insane degree to give the proper degree of ritualistic correctness. One cannot call it anything else, since fairness in the normal sense of the word does not come into it.

Remember also that the vast majority of those acquitted are guilty as hell. The burden of proof is on the prosecution, and juries are told to allow for 'reasonable doubt'—acquit where guilt is probably, but not quite probably enough.

The old soft-liberal notion was that it was better to free ten guilty suspects than convict one innocent—which translates crudely into an acceptable probability of 91%, and obviously a lot of false-positives.

Of course smart lawyers have managed to convince juries that a million-to-one possibility of error for a damning piece of evidence is enough to get it thrown out. If this were applied consistently, not a single person could ever be convicted and lawyers would be out of a job, replaced by systems of blood-vengeance which were the original human condition.

It's also notable that the whole structure of British law is mired in 18th century absurdity and inefficiency. And if you were wondering why it remains sacrosanct while all sorts of other traditions have been attacked, just look

at how many ex-lawyers you find as MPs, ministers and even Prime Ministers.

Half-Liberalism

Beginning with Reagan and Thatcher, the Anglo establishment rejected political liberalism but has a dogmatic devotion to the linked creed of economic liberalisation. Not a very sensible mix. And it has not delivered a better economic performance than the older liberalism of the Keynesian era. What it *has* done is deliver far more of the benefits to a small minority, and a minority which includes media barons and their best known and best paid staff.

I'd also say it's an irreversible process. Traditional liberalism was the product of a self-confident and powerful ruling class. People who had a privileged position and saw that there were duties attached to it.

Liberal with a small 'l' also had the meaning of 'magnanimous, generous, large-spirited'. Assuredly, our New Right are not liberal in that sense. Much more 'mean with a small m', petty and malicious in their thinking.

Queen-mummified.

In accordance with the wishes of much of the population, the BBC was suitably Queen-mummified, with hours of shallow chat about a nice old lady who had died at a very advanced age and whose death changes very little.

Monarchy was taken seriously when Britain was still seen as a family. That ended with Thatcher, and it's not coming back. Respect for the monarchy will last for as long as our present Queen is there as an embodiment of nostalgic values. But I couldn't see Mr Charles Windsor ever winning the same sort of respect. He is all-too-obviously a muddled victim of a muddled age.

As for the next generation—I've not really followed it, but I'd predict that it's only a matter of time before Prince William does something *really* stupid (not just mildly stupid as he's managed to date).

Weaving the web.

You can find the Bevin Society at <http://members.aol.com/BevinSoc/is.htm>

EU ENLARGEMENT

David Morrison

EU enlargement has been talked about for many years but the timetable for its realisation has kept slipping. But now there are concrete proposals to admit 10 states by 2004 - the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta - thereby increasing the EU's total membership to 25.

Britain has always been keen on enlargement as a mechanism for diluting the EU and putting a brake on political union. It is accepted on all sides in Britain that enlargement is a good thing for the EU and for the candidate states. But the basis on which these states are going to join is rarely discussed.

Specifically, are new members going to be given the same agricultural support as existing members? This is an important issue, since relatively large numbers of people in these states live on the land (20% in Poland).

FREE MOVEMENT OF LABOUR?

Another issue is free movement of labour: will people from these states be able to migrate freely to Western Europe and take up employment and receive benefits there? If as one would expect employment in agriculture declines and if alternative employment is not available at home, there may be a substantial movement of jobseekers westward, from which Britain would not be immune since English is now taught as the second language instead of Russian across Eastern Europe.

In the past, there hasn't been much movement of labour across state boundaries in the EU, despite significant differences in living standards between states, for instance, between Greece and Germany. But it would be unwise to assume that it would not occur after Eastern European states join, not least because the differences in living standards between the existing and new member states is much greater. The cultural brake on movement to seek employment may not be sufficient to keep it at a low level, particularly if

unemployment rises in the new member states.

In fact, it has been decided that there will be a seven-year transition period after the admittance of new states before workers from these states will be able to move freely and seek work within the EU. Naturally, the candidate states want free movement of labour immediately, but they are in the position of supplicants and have no option but to accept what the EU offers them. (It should be said that Spain and Portugal also faced a seven-year transition period after they joined in 1985 before their workers were free to move within the EU).

COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE

On 30 January this year, the Commission announced details of agricultural, and other, support for the years 2004-2006. The Commission proposes to spend around £25bn overall in the new member states in those three years, about £6bn on agricultural support. For direct payments to farmers, there is to be a ten-year transition period and it will be 2013 before farmers in the new member states get the same support as those in existing member states.

The starting level in 2004 is planned to be only 25% of the level in existing member states, rising to 30% in 2005 and 35% in 2006 and reaching 100% in 2013, by which time it is expected that agricultural support within the EU will have been reduced substantially, or will no longer exist. So, for ten years, the farmers in the new member states will, in general, be at a competitive disadvantage compared to their much richer colleagues in the existing member states, a competitive disadvantage imposed by the EU itself.

You would have thought that this would be contrary to EU competition legislation. Certainly, state subsidy to industry is strictly regulated to guard against unfair competition. But it is apparently all right for the EU itself to place the rich farmers in the existing member states at an unfair advantage against their poorer colleagues in the

new member states.

The Commission's reasoning for this is straightforward: they want to drive people off the land in the new member states. In a document entitled **Enlargement and Agriculture: An Integration Strategy for the EU's New Member States** (IP/02/176) dated 30 January 2002, they say:

"The Commission took several factors into account: If direct aids are introduced too quickly in the candidate countries, there is a significant risk that badly-needed restructuring would be slowed or even stopped, creating a vicious circle of low productivity, low standards and high hidden unemployment. High levels of direct payments would be likely to consolidate existing structures in a period which should be one of rapid restructuring."

There may be shanty towns outside Eastern European cities as a result.

It is true that other support measures for farmers will be available in the new member states at the same, or better, level as in existing member states, for example, access to CAP market measures, such as cereal intervention, and rural development support. In addition, there will be structural fund expenditure in the new member states. Set against this the new member states will have to contribute to the EU budget to the tune of about £3bn a year immediately they join.

VERY POOR DEAL

It seems to me that the new states are being offered a very poor deal. What is on offer is second class membership of the EU which may never evolve into full membership. The name of the game seems to be to complete the opening up of these economies to capitalist exploitation from the West, and to do so at as little cost as possible to the EU budget. Enlargement is therefore in harmony with the EU's globalisation ambitions.

Listen to this from Heather Grabbe, the Research Director of the Centre for European Reform:

"The immediate impact on the EU economies will be small, because the applicants make up only about 7% of the EU's present-day GDP. ...

LOCKERBIE APPEAL LOST

David Morrison

On 14 March, Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi lost his appeal against his conviction for the Lockerbie bombing. He was convicted early last year by a special Scottish Court consisting of three Scottish High Court judges sitting without a jury at Camp Zeist in the Netherlands. His appeal was heard by a similar Scottish Court, this time with five judges.

It is difficult to credit this, but it is clear from the appeal court's judgement that the appeal was brought on the wrong grounds, and as a result its failure was inevitable. As we will see below, al-Megrahi's lawyer, William Taylor QC, made a complete mess of mounting the appeal.

Al-Megrahi's original conviction was perverse. In the written judgement which accompanied it, the judges accepted the prosecution's account of how the Lockerbie bombing might have been carried out - by introducing an unaccompanied bag containing a bomb into the international airline baggage system at Luqa airport in Malta tagged for loading on to the fatal flight Pan Am PA103 at Heathrow Airport, having passed through Frankfurt Airport - and concluded that it was done that way, and that it was done by Megrahi. But there is no evidence at all that the bomb was introduced at Luqa airport and no conclusive evidence connecting Megrahi with the bomb.

It is inconceivable that the three intelligent men who put their names to the judgement last year believed that the prosecution had proved that Megrahi was guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

GROSS INCOMPETENCE

This extraordinary outcome was a consequence of the extraordinary decision of the Scottish prosecution authorities - the Scottish Crown Office - to indict al-Megrahi (and another Libyan, Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, who was

acquitted) in the first place. They did so on the evidence of Abdul Majid Giaka, a former member of the Libyan intelligence service, the JSO, and from August 1988 a CIA asset. During the trial, the defence demolished his credibility as a witness. Before they charged the two Libyans in November 1991, the Scottish prosecution authorities had a duty to ensure that their key witness was credible. They did not do so. This gross incompetence had consequences of geopolitical importance: it led to economic sanctions being imposed on Libya for most of the 90s at the behest of Britain and the US in an attempt to force Libya to hand over the accused for trial.

What is more, the CIA and therefore the US government knew that Giaka was not a credible witness - it was in the cables which his CIA handlers sent back to Langley about him from August 1988 onwards - but they kept this information from the Scottish prosecution authorities. The CIA may even have furnished Giaka with the "evidence" he gave about the two Libyans. Be that as it may, the Scottish prosecuting authorities allowed themselves to be conned by the CIA.

So, what was at stake in the trial at Camp Zeist was about much more than the guilt or innocence of the two Libyans in the dock. For the judges to pronounce them innocent was an indictment of the their fellow professionals in the Scottish legal system who had brought the charges against the two Libyans in the first place. It was also an indictment of Britain and the US for pursuing a vendetta against Libya for most of the 90s to force the handing over of two innocent people.

So, what could the judges do but suspend reasonable doubt and find at least one of the Libyans guilty? That way, their professional colleagues would not get egg all over their faces for bringing an unwarranted prosecution which had such serious consequences for Libya.

With the failure of al-Megrahi's appeal, the original perverse verdict stands and he is serving a life sentence in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow.

TURNING A BLIND EYE

The appeal court judges must have been equally aware that the verdict of the trial court was perverse. Fortunately, or unfortunately, they had a legal excuse for turning a blind eye to the fact that it was perverse, namely, that it is not normally the business of an appeal court to take a fresh view on the evidence presented to a trial court. And there was no significant new evidence presented to the appeal court.

On the face of it this seems unreasonable. But the jury system would be undermined if it were always open to an appeal court to overturn a jury verdict simply by taking a different view of the evidence before the jury at a lower court.

There is normally an exception to this: that the jury in the lower court had behaved entirely unreasonably in coming to its verdict. An appeal on these grounds necessarily involves the appeal court in re-evaluating the evidence presented to the lower court.

But al-Megrahi's lawyer, William Taylor QC, did not appeal on these grounds even though the trial court had manifestly behaved unreasonably in returning a guilty verdict. As a result, the appeal court did not have to re-evaluate the evidence before the trial court. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this was a fatal mistake on Taylor's part.

LEGAL BASIS

The legal basis for the appeal was Section 106 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, which makes provision for a right of appeal against conviction by a jury. In this instance, of course, the lower court had no jury - the three judges acted in that capacity - but

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the legal basis for the appeal was the same. Under subsection (3) an appeal may be made against:

"any alleged miscarriage of justice, which may include such a miscarriage based on -

(a) subject to subsections (3A) to (3D) below, the existence and significance of evidence which was not heard at the original proceedings; and

(b) the jury's having returned a verdict which no reasonable jury, properly directed, could have returned."

Only one of the grounds for appeal invoked paragraph (a) and brought forward new evidence. With the exception of that, the appeal was based on general allegations of "miscarriage of justice" under subsection 106(3), none of which the appeal court upheld.

None of the grounds for appeal invoked paragraph (b) and contended that the verdict of the trial court was one that no reasonable jury could have returned.

NEW EVIDENCE

The one new piece of evidence was not deemed to be significant, and rightly so.

A major element in al-Megrahi's defence at the original trial was that the suitcase containing the bomb was introduced at Heathrow Airport, rather than at Luqa airport in Malta. And it should be said that there was ample evidence that this could have been done because of the lax security at Heathrow, and there was even some evidence that a suitcase similar to the one that contained the bomb was introduced at Heathrow. In marked contrast, there was no evidence at all that the fatal suitcase was introduced at Luqa, or that one could have been introduced there.

Evidence was given to the appeal court that a landside-airside boundary at Heathrow had been deliberately breached sometime during the night before the bombing, and al-Megrahi's lawyers suggested that this was the route whereby the fatal suitcase was taken airside the night before. But there was no evidence that this was the way the suitcase was taken airside. It was just further evidence that security at Heathrow was lax at the time.

In fact, it is unlikely that this breach had anything to do with the introduction

of the bomb. Pan Am 103A, which was brought down over Lockerbie, was the third Pan Am flight of the day to New York. If the fatal suitcase been taken airside the night before, it would most likely have been put amongst the luggage for the first Pan Am flight to New York of the day, rather than hidden airside in order to be put amongst the luggage for the third.

SELF-MISDIRECTION

Aside from fresh evidence, the normal grounds for appeal are that the judge in the lower court misdirected the jury in regard to a matter of law or a matter of fact in his summing up. This was possible in this instance also, even though there was no jury per se in the lower court. But here it was a matter of the judges in the lower court misdirecting themselves in private and misdirection, if any, had to be inferred from their written judgement.

A few of the grounds for appeal submitted on behalf of al-Megrahi were that the trial court had indeed misdirected itself. Although the court accepted that misdirection had occurred in one instance - it was clear from the written judgement that trial court had misinterpreted evidence - it concluded that the misdirection had not contributed to al-Megrahi being found guilty.

The vast bulk of the grounds for appeal (around 50 of them) were along the lines that the trial court had failed to take proper account of, or give proper weight to, or gave insufficient weight to, various pieces of evidence. Appealing on these grounds was a waste of breath. Although the judgement goes through each of them at length, they were all rejected on the general principle propounded early in the judgement that it was not open to the appeal court to "substitute its own view of the evidence which was before the trial court" (Paragraph 23).

Not only that, it was not up to the appeal court to second guess the trial court in respect to the inferences to be drawn from the evidence or the weight to be given to evidence:

"We have no doubt that, once evidence has been accepted by the trial court, it is for that court to determine what inference or inferences should be drawn from that evidence. If evidence is

capable of giving rise to two or more possible inferences, it is for the trial court to decide whether an inference should be drawn and, if so, which inference." (Paragraph 25)

"In the course of this Opinion we will discuss each of the grounds of appeal. However, at this stage we would observe that, for the reasons which we have given above, where it is not said that a trial court has misdirected itself by ignoring something, the amount of weight which should be attached to it is a matter solely for the trial court, and not for the appeal court." (Paragraph 27)

These principles are normal for an appeal against the verdict of a jury in a lower court. But al-Megrahi's lawyer, William Taylor, was of the opinion that the position was different in this instance - because the decision to convict had been taken by a trial court which, unlike a jury court, had supplied a written account of its reasons for convicting. He argued this to the appeal court, submitting that it was open to it to review the conclusions reached by the trial court from the evidence, as set out in its written judgement (see paragraph 22).

The court rejected that view, saying: "In our opinion this argument is not well founded. The respective roles of the appeal court and the court by which issues of fact are resolved and guilt is determined are not changed by the fact that the normal arrangements have been modified by the Order in Council, and in particular by the requirement that the trial court should deliver a reasoned judgment. While accepting that this court is not a court of review in the sense in which that expression is used in regard to civil cases Mr Taylor failed to recognise the full implications of that acceptance." (Paragraph 23)

NO REASONABLE JURY

As we have said, Taylor did not mount an appeal invoking subsection 106(3)(b), and contend that the verdict of the trial court was one that no reasonable jury could have returned. In fact, he specifically ruled out any reliance on paragraph (b), arguing to the appeal court that it was not applicable in this instance where the judges in the trial court had supplied a written account of its reasons for convicting.

The appeal court went out of its way to state that they disagreed with him about this, saying that if paragraph (b) had been invoked "it would be for the appeal court to consider whether, having regard to the evidence which was not rejected by the trial court, the verdict was one which no reasonable trial court, properly directing itself, could have returned" (Paragraph 24).

There was, of course, no guarantee that, had such an appeal been made, the five appeal court judges would have convicted their three trial court colleagues of having acted unreasonably in bringing in a guilty verdict against al-Megrahi. But by specifically ruling out an appeal on these grounds Taylor ruled out that possibility. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this was a fatal mistake on Taylor's part. What was there to lose in asserting what was obvious from the trial court's judgement, that the three judges brought in a verdict that no reasonable jury - not even a Lockerbie jury - could have returned?

CONCLUSION

The appeal court concluded its judgement as follows:

"When opening the case for the appellant before this court Mr Taylor stated that the appeal was not about sufficiency of evidence: he accepted that there was a sufficiency of evidence. He also stated that he was not seeking to found on section 106(3)(b) of the 1995 Act. His position was that the trial court had misdirected itself in various respects. Accordingly in this appeal we have not required to consider whether the evidence before the trial court, apart from the evidence which it rejected, was sufficient as a matter of law to entitle it to convict the appellant on the basis set out in its judgment. We have not had to consider whether the verdict of guilty was one which no reasonable trial court, properly directing itself, could have returned in the light of that evidence. As can be seen from this Opinion, the grounds of appeal before us have been concerned, for the most part, with complaints about the treatment by the trial court of the material which was before it and the submissions which were made to it by the defence.

"For the reasons which we have given in the course of this Opinion, we have reached the conclusion that none of the grounds of appeal is well founded. The appeal will accordingly be refused." (Paragraphs 369-370)

That is a carefully phrased statement, which pointedly refers to the fact that the appeal court was not asked to consider whether the original guilty verdict was one that no reasonable trial court could have returned. It adds weight to the view that al-Megrahi was very badly served by his counsel.

THE EU & GLOBALISATION

David Morrison

If there was ever any doubt about the EU's dogmatic commitment to globalisation, then it will have been dispelled by the leaked Commission document revealed in the Guardian on 17 April (and available in full on the Guardian website). It contains Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy's proposals for the EU's negotiating position in the current WTO round. It is 1000 pages long.

If it is approved by member states this month, the EU will demand comprehensive privatisation and deregulation of the service sector around the world as the price for dismantling the Common Agricultural Policy. The demands within it are directed at 29 countries around the world, including Malaysia, India, United States, Japan and South Africa. And this is just the beginning: other countries are expected to be added shortly.

SHOPPING LIST

The demands contained are breathtaking in scope, applying to many sectors of these countries' economies, and ranging from the very important to the relatively trivial.

For Malaysia, for example, the shopping list includes:

Σ opening up of the telecommunications industry to foreign competition

Σ removal of the requirement for state approval to buy land "if the purpose is speculation and against state interests"

Σ removal of the ban on non-residents registering as accountants

Σ equal treatment for foreign and domestic insurance brokers

For the US, the shopping list includes:

Σ removal of restrictions on foreigners buying land in South Carolina, Oklahoma, Florida, Wyoming and Mississippi.

Σ removal of the requirement that estate agents in New York be US citizens

Σ opening up of mail delivery to foreign competition

The EU is engaged in the naked pursuit of the interests of European service corporations to make profit around the world. This is, of course, accompanied by cant about this being a

"development round" of WTO negotiations for the benefit of the poor countries of the world.

BEHIND TARIFF BARRIERS

The rich countries of the world became rich behind tariff, and any other, barriers they considered necessary to assist their economic development. And it was only when they had broken through the development barrier and become rich that they began to favour trade liberalisation - because they wished to expand the market for their goods, and grow richer still. Now, the demand from the rich countries is that their private corporations be given complete freedom to make and sell goods and services anywhere in the world without any state imposed restrictions on their operations. The purpose of this is to make the rich corporations of the world richer. One needs to be very naïve to imagine that this is motivated by a desire to make poor countries richer, or that it will so do.

If we in the rich countries of the world wish to help the poor countries of the world develop economically, then we should allow their goods free access to our markets without demanding reciprocity. And we should allow them to impose whatever barriers they see fit to protect their indigenous industries. In other words, we should allow the poor countries of the world the freedom of action that we had when we were poor. And any aid we give them should be unconditional.

The inequalities in this world are mind-boggling. Writing in the Economic Journal in January this year, World Bank economist, Branko Milanovic, came up with the following illustrations (quoted by Larry Elliot in the Guardian on 21 January):

Σ the richest 50 million people in the world, huddled in Europe and North America, have the same income as the 2.7 billion poorest

Σ the slice of the cake taken by the richest 1% is the same size as that available to the poorest 57%

Under the guise of the WTO "development round", the EU will make that inequality worse if it gets its way.

TORY TRICKERY ON HEALTH SPENDING

David Morrison

Spending more money on the NHS will not necessarily lead to better health outcomes or to better health care delivery. That has been the message from Iain Duncan Smith and other Tory spokesmen before and since the Budget.

Look at Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, they say. Health spending in each of these countries is already up to the target set by the Government - EU average spending as a proportion of GDP - but health outcomes and service delivery are worse than England's.

BOGUS REASONING

It is true, generally speaking, that health outcomes and health care delivery are worse in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see, for example, the Interim Report by Wanless, Chapter 12)

But has health spending in each of these countries really reached the target set by the Government? Well, sort of.

NHS spending per head is higher than the UK average in each of these countries, but not all that much. (I have no figures for private spending). However, GDP per head in each is much lower than the UK average. That is why the Tories can say health spending in each of these countries, expressed as a proportion of GDP, is dramatically higher than the UK average.

It is hard to credit it, but it is this bogus reasoning that lies beneath the Conservatives' assertion that the Government's target has been reached. It is not that much more money per head is spent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; it is primarily because GDP per head in these countries is much lower.

LEAGUE TABLE

Last month, the Conservatives published a survey of health care systems across the world entitled *Alternative Prescriptions*. This covers both the financing of health care provision and the means of delivering it. On these it doesn't come to a conclusion as to what is best for Britain. We will have to wait until nearer the next election for that.

Section 2.3 of the pamphlet compares spending internationally, and across the UK, as a proportion of GDP (Table 4 gives a league table for 1998) and arrives at the conclusions quoted above:

"Taken as a country as a whole, the UK spends the smallest percentage of national income on health (both in the public and private sectors) of all the countries of the study.

"However, this disguises the spread of spending in the countries of the United Kingdom. Spending in Northern Ireland and Wales is 9.2% and 9.1% of GDP respectively, which would place these countries sixth in the rankings, spending nearly as much as France. Scotland, with spending of 8.6% of GDP, would be ranked seventh, spending nearly as much as Holland."

NORTHERN IRELAND

Let's look at Northern Ireland specifically. The key factor here is that in 1998 GDP per head in Northern Ireland was around 75% of the UK average (see, for example, the Interim Report by Wanless, Chapter 12).

The actual money spent in Northern Ireland per head is close to the UK average, and therefore way below what is spent in most European countries.

(According to the Interim Report

by Wanless, Table 12.2, NHS spending in Northern Ireland in 1998 was around £819 per head, compared with the UK average of £766, that is, 7% higher. I have no comparative figures for private spending, but it probably doesn't differ all that much between Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole.)

Spending in the UK as a whole in 1998 was about 6.8% of GDP, and therefore way below the European average. Approximately the same spending per head in Northern Ireland, expressed as a proportion of Northern Ireland's much lower GDP per head, is much higher. To be more precise, about a third higher, which is how the figure of 6.8% for the UK as a whole becomes 9.2% for Northern Ireland, and therefore above the EU average.

So without spending a penny more, Northern Ireland has been catapulted from the UK's position at the bottom of the European league table to near the top alongside France. *Alternative Prescriptions* fails to mention that Northern Ireland has shot up the league table simply because its GDP per head is much lower than the UK average.

MISCELLANY

EU RAPID REACTION FORCE

From the outset the establishment of the EU's Rapid Reaction Force has been bedevilled by arguments about its relationship with NATO. France stood at one extreme for the force's total autonomy from NATO, with its own ability to plan and execute military operations. This wasn't acceptable to Britain (or to the US). A highly ambiguous form of words was agreed at Nice in December 2000 and the force was established.

However, well over a year later the force hasn't got off the ground. It is now hoped that its first deployment will be to take over peacekeeping duties from NATO in Macedonia in the autumn, but it isn't certain that this will be realised.

The problem is that the force has to use assets that are normally assigned to

NATO and for that to happen all 18 members of NATO have to consent. This has presented Turkey with a golden opportunity to exercise leverage on the EU, which it has been trying without success to join since 1963. It was formally accepted as a candidate member in 1999.

Turkey is understandably sensitive that NATO assets would be used in the Aegean Sea/Cyprus area under the EU banner, an operation in which Greece would have a say as an EU member but Turkey itself would not.

Negotiations have dragged on since December 2000 and although on more than one occasion it looked as if the matter was settled it is still up in the air. At the outset in December 2000, Turkey demanded full participation in EU military decision-making even though it wasn't a member of the EU. It now appears that it is prepared to settle for carefully defined consultation rights about the deployment of the EU force, and as a sweetener the EU is allowing it take part in the Constitutional Convention.

However, Greece has now vetoed the agreement to give Turkey consultation rights about the deployment of the EU force. And that is where the matter rests at the moment. As a result the plan to deploy the force in Macedonia in the autumn is in doubt.

It also appears that the plan that Turkey take over the leadership of ISAF in Kabul has fallen by the wayside. That deadline is now long passed without any sign of Britain handing over the leadership to Turkey, and some or all the British contribution to ISAF being withdrawn.

Hugo Chavez is President of Venezuela again, having been deposed on 11 April. He was first elected President in late 1998, since when he has re-written Venezuela's constitution, got it approved by popular referendum and got himself re-elected under the new constitution for a further six years with an impressive 60% of the popular vote.

When Chavez came to power, crude

Chevez

oil prices were languishing at under \$10 a barrel. Production quotas set by OPEC were not being stuck to, not least by Venezuela itself. Two years later crude oil prices were over \$30 a barrel. Chavez was almost single-handedly responsible by revitalising OPEC. He undertook that Venezuela would stick to OPEC production quotas and under his leadership OPEC set out to stabilise oil prices within the range \$22 to \$28 a barrel. That objective has been achieved.

It was no surprise therefore that when Chavez was deposed by military coup on 11 April, the price of crude oil dropped instantly by about \$4 a barrel to around \$24 a barrel.

The generals who deposed him took advantage of an anti-Chavez demonstration on 11 April, which marched on the presidential palace. Pro-Chavez elements allegedly fired on demonstrators and killed and wounded a number of them. This story has been widely disseminated worldwide and was the excuse for mounting the coup.

An alternative story is told by Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Brien, who had spent the previous three months in Venezuela making a documentary about Chavez for an independent Irish company. They were close to the centre of events in Caracas from 11 April when Chavez was deposed until 13 April when he was reinstated. An interview with them was published in the Irish Times on 16 April.

Ms Bartley says the shooting began when they arrived in the centre of town on the evening of Thursday, 11 April. She goes on:

"I filmed a while then took cover in a doorway. Whoever was firing aimed directly at the crowd, which was pro-Chavez. I filmed two dead bodies, both of them beside the podium set up to rally Chavistas to defend the presidential palace. A woman working in the vice-president's office identified the bodies as a legal secretary and an archivist, both working inside the building. A 10-year-old girl was then taken away, fatally injured.

"More shots. We ran for cover like

everyone else. We made it to the palace through back streets as the firing continued and as soon as we got in the gate another sniper started aiming at the crowd. We were all thrown to the ground behind a wall and later ran for cover into the building. Three of the snipers were arrested."

According to her, Chavez was about to explain what was happening in a live television broadcast but the state channel's signal was cut just as he began to speak. Then army generals arrived and went off for a meeting with Chavez, who some time later emerged in the custody of junta soldiers and was taken away. At that point radio and television announced the resignation of Chavez and began broadcasting upbeat messages: "*Venezuela is finally free*" was the banner across all private TV channels.

That account doesn't rule out the possibility of anti-Chavez demonstrators having been shot, but it certainly adds an additional dimension to the story. It also confirms that the privately owned radio and TV are bitterly anti-Chavez and played an active part in the coup.

In a telephone interview carried out not long before his arrest and reprinted in the Mexican daily, *La Jornada*, on 12 April, Chavez said that the media had been reporting events selectively and "*giving a public voice to those who were calling for the violent overthrow of the government regardless of how many deaths this would cause*", which was why he had just suspended three TV stations from broadcasting.

Ms Bartley's account of the restoration on Saturday, 13 April also confirms that the radio and TV were part of the plot:

"The media kept repeating footage of the swearing-in ceremony of the interim president [Pedro Carmona] which was followed by images of empty streets, everything in perfect tranquillity. We were about to book a ticket to Panama when a well-dressed passer-by told us to get off the streets. 'The Chavistas are coming', he said. It was Saturday afternoon.

"We took a taxi to the centre, where huge crowds had surrounded the palace, demanding the return of Chavez. We managed to get inside and found several

Chavez deputies calling round the country to find out what was going on. A dozen people who were working for the interim government had been taken to a room in the basement for their own safety.

"Reports came in from around the country, barracks by barracks, like a Eurovision song contest jury, that the military was rebelling against the coup.

"The television continued to broadcast a steady diet of soap operas, saying nothing about the huge mobilisation, which was now making a deafening racket outside. Then came the news that Chavez had been freed and was taking a helicopter to [the presidential palace at] Miraflores. The crowds went wild. The presidential guard made a tunnel from the palace gates to a helicopter pad across the street. The sound of choppers buzzing overhead.

"Then he was there, striding toward the palace, mobbed by supporters. It was like a dream, it's still hard to believe it really happened."

The US Government wanted to see the back of Chavez and there is no doubt that they knew that a coup against Chavez was in the offing. The leading players in the conspiracy (including Pedro Carmona) had been to Washington in the previous few months and had met members of the Bush administration. After the event, the President's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, made no secret of the fact the US officials knew a coup was being planned but claimed that they warned against (see his press briefing of 16 April).

The Friday morning after the coup, far from condemning it as an unconstitutional seizure of power, Fleischer portrayed the replacement of Chavez by Carmona as legitimate. He faithfully repeated the fable that the perpetrators of the coup had told, the crucial element of which is that Chavez had resigned. Not only that, prior to resigning he dismissed his vice-president, his constitutional successor. So, what else could be done but establish an interim president prior to holding an election?

At his press briefing that morning Fleischer began by saying that

"yesterday's events in Venezuela resulted in a change in the government and the assumption of a transitional authority until new elections can be held."

He went on to indict the Chavez government for provoking the crisis by suppressing peaceful demonstrations. Government supporters, on orders from the Chavez government, fired on unarmed, peaceful protestors, resulting in 10 killed and 100 wounded. The Venezuelan military and the police refused to fire on the peaceful demonstrators and refused to support the government's role in such human rights violations. The government also tried to prevent independent news media from reporting on these events.

He concluded:

"The results of these events are now that President Chavez has resigned the presidency. Before resigning, he dismissed the vice president and the cabinet, and a transitional civilian government has been installed. This government has promised early elections."

This fable of a constitutional handover of power to a civilian government committed to the democratic process might have held, had the interim president and his associates not dissolved the National Assembly and the Supreme Court a few hours later. That action made the fable unsustainable, and though the US Government would have dearly liked to go along with the overthrow of Chavez, it was no longer possible to maintain a democratic gloss on what had happened in Caracas the night before.

That Friday afternoon, heads of state of several Latin American countries - Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Costa Rica - spoke out against the illegal seizure of power, and so did the General Secretary of the Organisation of American States (OAS), Cesar Gaviria (who is a Colombian). The US President did not and, to the credit of the White House press corps, over the next few days Fleischer was tortured with questions about why, when all these heads of state had condemned the coup, President Bush had not.

However, the next day - Saturday, 13 April - the Permanent Council of the

OAS met to consider the situation in Venezuela and was of a mind to condemn the coup. A resolution, the first clause of which was "To condemn the alteration of constitutional order in Venezuela", was drawn up and the US Government had no option to support it.

Chavez was restored to power later the same day. A number of factors contributed to his restoration. One was that by Friday afternoon it was clear that the OAS was not going to accept the new government as legitimate, despite the US being happy to treat it as such. The others were the support for Chavez in the Venezuelan population and in the lower ranks of the military that manifested itself in Caracas that Saturday.

The US administration has yet to condemn the military coup in Venezuela on 11 April or welcome the restoration of Chavez on 13 April by way of public statement. They have directed, and continue to direct, much harsher words at Chavez than at the people who overthrew him. It's a racing certainty that, had their friend President Pastrana next door in Columbia been overthrown by FARC, we would have been blown away by rhetoric about democracy coming out of Washington - and the US military machine would have been deployed to put him back in power.

It is true that the US supported the OAS resolution of 13 April, which explicitly condemned the coup, but they had no option but to do that. Likewise, they had no option but to support a resolution passed by the General Assembly of OAS resolution on 18 April, the first clause of which is: "To express satisfaction at the restoration of the constitutional order and the democratically elected government of President Hugo Chávez Frías in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela". That must have stuck in their craw.

TROTSKYISM — MORE THAN 57 VARIETIES?

Essays on Historical Materialism edited by John Rees

B o o k m a r k s
£8.50

I started reviewing this book on the day the bomb was detonated in the US embassy in Nairobi: 'history' had recommenced, with a vengeance. The incident is germane to the theme of this collection of Marxist miscellanea, which is largely aimed at 'postmodernism' in academic history research and writing. A problem facing the writers in this collection, published by an imprint of the British Socialist Workers' Party (in 1998, the SWP may no longer exist) is that they are stuck with an ideology which means that they are not in a position to be realistic about large swathes of modern history. Stalin was not merely incorrect in his general outlook, and/or made mistakes and miscalculations (matters which can be argued about, and be the subject of discussion): he was evil. He pops up in the course of a number of essays, Mike Haynes's *Social history and the Russian Revolution*, Sam Ashman's *The Communist Party Historians Group* and most of the rest of the essays like a pantomime demon rather than a genuine historical figure.

This sort of thing makes the absurdities of 'postmodernism' seem almost acceptable. The basic absurdity is that 'nothing exists outside of the text' (oddly enough, nobody among these ten revolutionaries mentions the fact that if that line were followed through it would lead back to Thomas Babington Macaulay — pure elite history with the lower orders entering now and then as the 'mob'). The best essays in this rather short (and surely over-priced?) book are those of Lindsey German simply entitled *Women's History*, and Brian Mannings *Labour and the English Revolution*. As Stalin cannot be included in these essays, their major mental block is irrelevant, in fact, Brian Manning forgets to mention the Blessed Names of Marx, Engels and Trotsky until the last few paragraphs of his piece, and they are clearly an afterthought. He brings forward a very substantial amount of evidence to contradict the notion that there was no class feeling or consciousness in the Puritan revolution. He may even bring forward too much evidence, as the essay

is extremely densely written and exhausting for the non-expert.

Lindsey German's essay is vigorous and straightforward, (she has something substantial to say, and 'Marxist' and academic fripperies and lingo are dispensed with). There were some attempts to make women the subject(s) of historical investigation in the Suffragette / suffragist period, by the Fabians, and also immediately after the Great War. (This is why the essay is entitled *Women's History* — these were attempts to look at the rôle(s) women played in history at various stages — they were not attempts at 'gendering' history.) There were spirited attempts to maintain the momentum until well into the 1920s, but the enterprise rather fizzled out: not even the Second World War revived interest. An attempt (by a male academic) in Oxford in the mid-1950s to organise a series of lectures on women in seventeenth century England was regarded as 'bizarre' by his fellow-academics, and no students (of any gender) turned up to listen to them.

German then attacks a favoured notion of feminist historians, that women were excluded from the labour market by a deal between male workers and employers. She points out that the figures do not add up, that even when women were employed in the mines they constituted 2.2% of the workforce, and that more women were in factory employment after the Factories Acts than before. The notion that they were excluded from the Trade Unions is also based on false (she is too polite to use the word 'doctored') premises. Women were heavily employed in ununionised domestic service, but were also very well represented in the strongly unionised textile industry (in the 1860s a third of the women employed in textiles were married — all of her figures refer to the English textile industry).

German chastises feminist historians for praising "complete reactionaries" who fought for Prohibition and similar causes, she also, like some other contributors, writes quite interesting stuff about the Chartists. Mark O'Brien's *Postmodernism and British History* also deals with the Chartists, and apart from falling over the Red Demon, Stalin, trips over another aspect of the British (as opposed to the more 'mainstream' American) SWP's ideology. This is a sort of Rosa

EU Enlargement from p10

"Although immediate benefits will be small, so will costs. Less than 10% of the EU's budget is devoted to enlargement and the money is ring-fenced, so more funds cannot be diverted to the new members. The total cost is 67bn euros (about £41bn) over seven years, which amounts to just 1/1000th of EU GDP a year - a tiny price to pay for uniting Europe. It is 10% of what the German federal government transferred to the eastern Länder after reunification in 1990 and a fraction of what the west spent on defending a divided Europe during the cold war. ...

"Next time present-day recipients of European gold complain that they will lose regional aid, they should remember that in 2006 (the last year of the current budget), Spain will still be getting 400 euros a head, while much poorer Poland and Estonia (assuming they have joined by then) will be receiving a maximum of 225 euros a head." (Guardian, 17 July 2001)

Its message is that although the immediate benefits of enlargement to the EU - to the rich existing members of the EU, that is - will be small, it's not costing them much either, and certainly nothing like the amount the German government poured into East Germany after reunification. It rejoices in the fact that a mere 10% of the EU's budget is being spent on enlargement, and that the new member states will be discriminated against in terms of regional aid (and as we have seen in terms of agricultural support) in favour of the rich existing states.

The new states will have about a sixth of the total population of the EU, and therefore should have at least a sixth of the EU's budget spent within their boundaries. Given that they are much poorer than the existing states and heavily dependent on agriculture (which makes up the bulk of the EU's budget) they should have much more than a sixth of the budget. If Heather Grabbe is right, they are getting a tenth. If they want to join the EU, they have no option but to accept.

The alternative is to figure in the next EU hit list of states for "reform" via the WTO and to have their economies opened up without any monetary compensation.

Sean McGouran reviews

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prepared to use troops and cannon on the demonstrators, and that a fair number of the original demands in the Great Charter were being put into effect.

He and Chris Bambery, in the next essay, *Myth and reality in British working class struggle*, tend to regard the fifty years after the collapse of the Chartists as barren from the point of view of the working class. Bambery quotes a former radical Chartist sneering at the co-operative movement and trade unions, but another contributor regards the co-operative movement as a very positive development. Others, (including Lindsey German), defend the 'craft' unions, the SWP is big on the 'general' unions, the craft unions being the 'labour aristocracy'. This sort of nonsense still tends to cloud their view of the engineers union, it is 'right wing' (a phrase which is essentially meaningless). This is because it joins with the employers in defending the industry, against Thatcher's attempt, in the 1980s, (as an example), to turn the UK into a gigantic franchise of McDonalds, and destroy industry.

Many contributors use the phrase the Great Unrest of the period prior to the Great War, it is a phrase I do not recall having come across before, and they set a great deal of store by it. But the unrest they discuss was incapable of being harnessed by any one force. The Suffragettes, militant members of the general unions, Ulster Unionists, Irish nationalists and republicans, and the rest, were all moving in different directions (particularly the elements at work in Ireland).

Despite the SWP's name from 1960 to 1977 being the International Socialists, there is a curiously insular feeling about all the contributions (except German's, and even there, it is her engagement with the feminists which gives *Women's History* its resonance). It is summed up for me, by a phrase in Chris Harman's *History, myth and Marxism*, where he attacks the falsification of history[!]. He describes the Condor Legion's attack on Guernica as the "first ever aerial bombing", on an urban area, presumably. The first ever bombings of undefended towns was by the RAF in Iraq in the period just after the Great War, and for many years after that. There are survivors still living to tell the tale, and it is in Iraq that Air Marshal 'Bomber' Harris acquired his sobriquet.

Alex Callinicos contributes *Marxism and the crisis in social history* (in which he leads the attack on postmodernism) to the above publication. He also authored a small book called simply *Trotskyism* in an Open University series *Concepts in Social Sciences*, published in 1990. Other than claiming the notion of 'classical Marxism' for the Trotskyists it is really only a history of the tradition in the English-speaking world, and even then in the UK and USA, in the main. This allows Callinicos to avoid

what he suavely describes as "the tragedy" of Trotskyism in Ceylon / Sri Lanka, (the latter name means 'blessed land').

For some reason, Trotskyism got a grip in Ceylon in the late 1930s, and the major trade union the General Mercantile Union (founded on the T&G and James Connolly's 'one big union' principle and based on the workers in Colombo's docks), fell under Trotskyist control. The Trotskyist party got enough seats in the parliament of independent Sri Lanka to be courted by the two big parties, it joined in government with the United Party of Sirivamo Bandaranaike. Despite the Trotskyist tendency to vissiparousness the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaha Party) experienced very little in the way of loss of membership when it effectively became the most extreme Sinhala-chauvinist element in the government. They also helped suppress the 'Guevarist' insurrectionists in the 1970s. Is it any wonder he did not want to dwell on the history of the only element of the Trotskyist movement which actually exercised state power?

In regard to Europe and America, Callinicos gives a fair picture of the movement, though he gives no reason for leaving out Latin America, which has a rich growth of such parties. He mentions the Workers' Party of Brazil, very much in passing, ('Lula' da Silva the leader of the Party seems to be able to keep half a dozen varieties of Trot, two or three of Maoist, two 'Moscovite' CPs, trade unionists, small farmers, landless peasants and vavala-dwellers all pointing in more-or-less the same direction). What is left, basically is France, Britain and the USA, and a history of what they have been doing since the Second World War. (Immediately after the War, Michel Pablo / Raptis, (he had been in the Greek Communist underground), claimed that the likes of Tito, and - to an extent - Ho Chi Minh and Mao, had made Trotsky's Fourth International redundant. The major split in Trotskyism has been about this matter ever since — this is my 'spin' on these matters, Callinicos is far more circumspect about the matter — this is probably because the British SWP's 'state capitalist' theory can be seen as an attempt to theorise-round Pablo / Raptis's position.)

On pages 36 / 37 Callinicos gives a family-tree, or what he describes as *The Evolution of Anglo-American Trotskyism* (though if there is, or should be, such a thing as Anglo-American Trotskyism is surely a moot point?) This has partly to do with just who is the boss of Trotskyism internationally, as the British and American SWPs are (or were) the most substantial bodies. They have 'ideological' differences and the US party

is older, being founded in 1938. It was as powerful as the CPUSA, and, like the Sri Lankan party had quite substantial roots on the trade unions, though these have tended to rust away along with the former industries in the Mid-West. (The most substantial Fourth International — there were two major and roughly sixteen minor bodies claiming the title at one point — is centred on Paris. It used to be in Brussels. The French-speaking element in the movement simply does not have the financial muscle the two big English-speaking parties have, though if they get any more members elected to the National Assembly the situation might be equalised. Two brands of Trotskyist have been elected in recent years, part of the dissolution of the Communist Party's vote, which has benefited the National Front in the main. Lutte Ouvrière and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire have discovered in parliament, that their much debated 'ideological' differences amount to very little. This is a recurrent theme among Trotskyists, when Neil Kinnock was purging the British Labour Party of members of the *Militant* tendency, (named after their main publication, a Trotskyite tradition), a member of the SWP told me that "the Left" was being thrown out of the Party. I was about to mention the fact that they had denounced *Militant* as 'right-wing' scum in the course of the week, when the realisation that it would have been pointless was borne in on me. It was Pavlovian / Orwellian, there are times when being a simple-minded Stalinist can make life quite trying.)

Even at a glance, Callinicos's 'family-tree' is rather insular and 'East Coast', the small Seattle-based Freedom Socialist Party is missing, despite being quite vigorous. The Los Angeles based Spartacus group, now called the International Communist League, is also missing, again it is small, but some of the groups mentioned here and in the text were tiny. Gerry Healy's group which became the Workers' Revolutionary Party in 1973 (the Trotskyists were having Parties all over the place in the '70s) was comparatively large. According to this graph it "disintegrates in 1985" — the above mentioned Spartacus group, rather more accurately claimed that it, and its overseas affiliate groups, "imploded". It was doing things like taking Jewish-sounding names out of the London telephone book and sending them off to secret police organisations in Arab states as the names of Zionist agents. They 'earned' millions doing that sort of thing, no wonder they could boast of having the only Trotskyist daily paper.

Some orphans of that particular storm are involved in the production of *International Socialist Forum* which appears to be largely a magazine (as opposed to a proto-party or academic gathering which is what the word 'forum' might indicate). According to a piece on page 4 of what is described on the cover as January 1998, Vol. 1, No. 2, it was

continued on back page

Correspondence

N19

14 April, 2002

Dear Ivor Kenna,

I must congratulate you on your letter in issue 115 of L&TUR. You have outlined the future for a British socialist party with a logic which I cannot disagree with. Yes, and a number of we communists and socialists who are without a party can see no future in the present attempts by the Socialist Labour Party and Socialist Alliance to build an alternative to the Labour Party, though I am glad they do exist at all. Many of us still do have our stock-in-trades, as you quote Brendan Clifford in saying, and a re-think is now top of the agenda. Whether it is the past or the future I now realise that we need a political landmark and you have presented Ernest Bevin then let that be so for the common good or otherwise we'll be as rudderless as the alternative left organisations. And now to end with that anti-imperialist bit.

I was on a London demonstration on the 13th of April protesting about the treatment of the Palestinian people by the Israelis. The 30,000 or so who turned up were mostly Moslems of every shade of opinion, which I could judge by the leaflets being handed out. The great bulk of the demonstration were British along with those from a dozen countries. Some of the females were veiled while others chose differently. Likewise some of the males wore jeans or suits. This was not the monolithic muslim world presented to us through the media. This was a united anti-imperialist demonstration and I couldn't help thinking that a lot of these enthusiastic mainly young people might have been part of a socialist movement if one had existed like in the post-war heyday of the Young Communist League.

Accepting Ernest Bevin as that political landmark from the past and also for the foreseeable future we also have to consider the multi-racial mix of present day Britain as opposed to Bevin's society.

My own extended family now includes members from Somalia, Angola, the Philippines and Barbados and there is nothing unique about that in Britain today. So maybe that anti-imperialist concept within a new socialist movement will come sooner than we think.

Yours Sincerely

Wilson John Haire.

review continued

"launched by comrades — socialists from Britain, Iran and other countries — who have participated in a series of discussion meetings in London throughout this year." Presumably "this year" was 1997, unless they have either magical properties, or the bulk of the publication took longer to appear than was expected. The only other publication to hand is subtitled October 1998, No. 3, and both cost three quid for, in one case sixty, and in the other eighty pages of black ink on white paper with some lovely graphics and a few 'muddy' reproductions of Revolutionary (Russian) posters. The only obituary is for a "university teacher", so presumably money was assumed to be relatively freely available.

It also probably accounts for the fact that the input from the 'British' end is very dull. It is mostly academic sucking on the bones of Bolshevism, the usual *pronunciamento* from an obscure Trotskyist group in Latin America, some material from comrades in what is rather poignantly described as the "Former USSR" (you can almost hear the sigh) — and nothing about New Labour (except in an advertisement) or a place called Ireland (or Northern Ireland, or Ulster: an actual, living, political problem on their doorstep). There is also an incursion into 'counter-factual history' (usually known as wishful-thinking), in which Trotsky might have stopped the rot by leading a military *coup d'état* in the RSFSR in the mid-1920s.

The 'Iran' end, I assume, contributes the most substantial article in these two magazines (though a letter mentions two articles on Iran, in particular, in the first issue) *Islamic Fundamentalism* by Yasmin Mather. She says that Taleban and other fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Egypt and other places are by-products of the war in Afghanistan and that their pay-masters are Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Pakistan. And that the money comes ultimately from the CIA, or at least is dispensed with their approval. The foundation of a Shia state in Iran has led to violence and denunciation by Sunni clerics and the Sunni-leaning Islamic Brotherhood. (The latter group, despite the trappings of a religious [con]fraternity, has always been deeply political. Though it is vaguely republican in tone — not seeking the reinstitution of the Caliphate, for example — it is deeply reactionary, and despite its alleged Islamic orthodoxy, wants to persecute other religions, even those traditionally practiced in Islamic areas: Christianity in the Arab lands, Hinduism in Indonesia, and so forth.) This sort of thing has had an effect on Iranian foreign policy, despite the concept of *Ummah*, or the 'Islamic nation' — this is Mather's phrase, possibly the Christian notion of a 'people' or 'family' of or in Christ might be nearer to the idea — it (Iran) opposed Taleban, because of the Pakistan / Saudi connection. And it supported Armenia against Azerbaijan "simply because Turkey backed the latter". This has a ring of truth to it despite the fact that most commentators

claim that both Turkey and Iran backed Azerbaijan for different motives. Turkey is a secularist state and has been since the days of Atatürk but it has 'interests' in the Caucasus, and, despite the fact that it claims not to have national minorities within its boundaries, has a very large Armenian minority. And Armenians, particularly those living outside of the area — especially in America — blame the Turks for the genocide of 1916. It is in the Turkish state's interest to keep Armenia, and the rest of the new states in the Caucasus feeble, and backing the Islamic Azeris keeps their own Islamists happy.

The Azeri 'language' is in effect, a dialect of Parsi (the major language of the Iranian empire — and yes, there is a connection with 'Parsee'. Zoroastrianism was the state religion before being displaced by Islam, the exiled die-hards took their language as well as their faith to India). But the calculation in Iran seems to have been strictly cold-blooded and uninfluenced by such notions as race and religion. On the other hand, there are also ethno-linguistic connections between all three peoples, and Iran has better prospects in the wide open spaces of Central Asia. It is an area with a fair number of Shia Muslims and lots of oil.

Yasmin Mather also examines the position of women in Iran. It is pretty grim. Women can file for divorce, but she instances cases (involving physical abuse to the point of torture) which have taken eight, and fourteen, years to be processed. In the latter case, it took a promise by the woman not to make financial demands on her former husband to actually prise the divorce out of the Procurator General.

This publication seems to have fizzled-out and one can understand why, as it had only one readable informative article in these two editions. (And it was written by a woman, as was the only really interesting article in the *Historical Materialism* — I am not sure if that means much, but it is food for thought).

THE IMPLICATIONS of 'sama samaha' — 'social[ly] equal[ity]' (equal citizenship?) have been taken up by other aspects of the 'implosion' of Gerry Healy's version of Trotskyism. There are now a number of parties, in mostly, the English-speaking world called the 'Social Equality Party', led by a man called Tim Wohlforth, who held the Healyite franchise in the USA. Whether or not these 'parties' have any connection with Sri Lanka, I do not know. The LSSP has suffered splits in the past number of years, but it has to do with matters of 'ideology' (and parliamentary stipends) rather than with actual policy. ☐

BEVIN SOCIETY MEETING

at the

Labour Party
Conference

The Middle East

Monday 30th
September

7.00 pm

New Emerald Hotel

6-10 Regent Road

Blackpool

Political Science
by Randy Newman

No one likes us I don't know why
We may not be perfect but heaven knows we try
And all around even our old friends let us down
Let's drop the big one and see what happens
We give them money, are they grateful?
No, they're spiteful and they're hateful
They don't respect us so let's surprise them
We'll drop the big one and pulverise them
Boom goes London and boom Paris
More room for you and more room for me
And every city the whole world 'round
Will just be another american town
Oh, how peaceful it will be, we'll set everybody
free
You'll wear a japanese kimono babe
They'll be italian shoes for me
They all hate us anyhow
So let's drop the big one now
Let's drop the big one now.

Red Rose Club

June 5

H G Wells

July 3 British Road
to Socialism

August 7

James Murphy on
Hitler and Mussolini

The Printers Room
Red Rose Club
Seven Sisters Rd N7
corner Sonderburg Rd