GEORGINA CRANSTON DIETER HELM AUDREY KURTH CRONIN
SIR ADAM ROBERTS IRSHAD MANJI PRAKASH KARAT
SIR MARRACK GOULDING STEPHEN FREARS DAVID HELD
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04 EYEWITNESS • 06 RETHINKING TERROR TAHIR SHAH IRSHAD MANJI MILAN RAI SIR ADAM ROBERTS AUDREY KURTH CRONIN • 16 GLOBAL ORDER DAVID HELD PRAKASH KARAT SIR MARRACK GOULDING • 22 ENVIRONMENT DIETER HELM • 26 MODERN SLAVERY GEORGINA CRANSTON TONY THOMPSON • 32 THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE DEBATE GUGLIELMO VERDIRAME • 38 FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE INTERNET STEPHEN COLEMAN • 42 AT HOME JULIE MELLOR • 46 ABROAD SIR KEITH MORRIS • 54 CULTURE MIKE CAREY MELISSA P STEPHEN FREARS

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Clarification: The Oxford Forum *would like to point out that in last issue, Phil Clarke's article,* Scramble for the Congo, *was unconnected to the International Crisis Group's 2000 report of the same name. We apologise for any confusion.*

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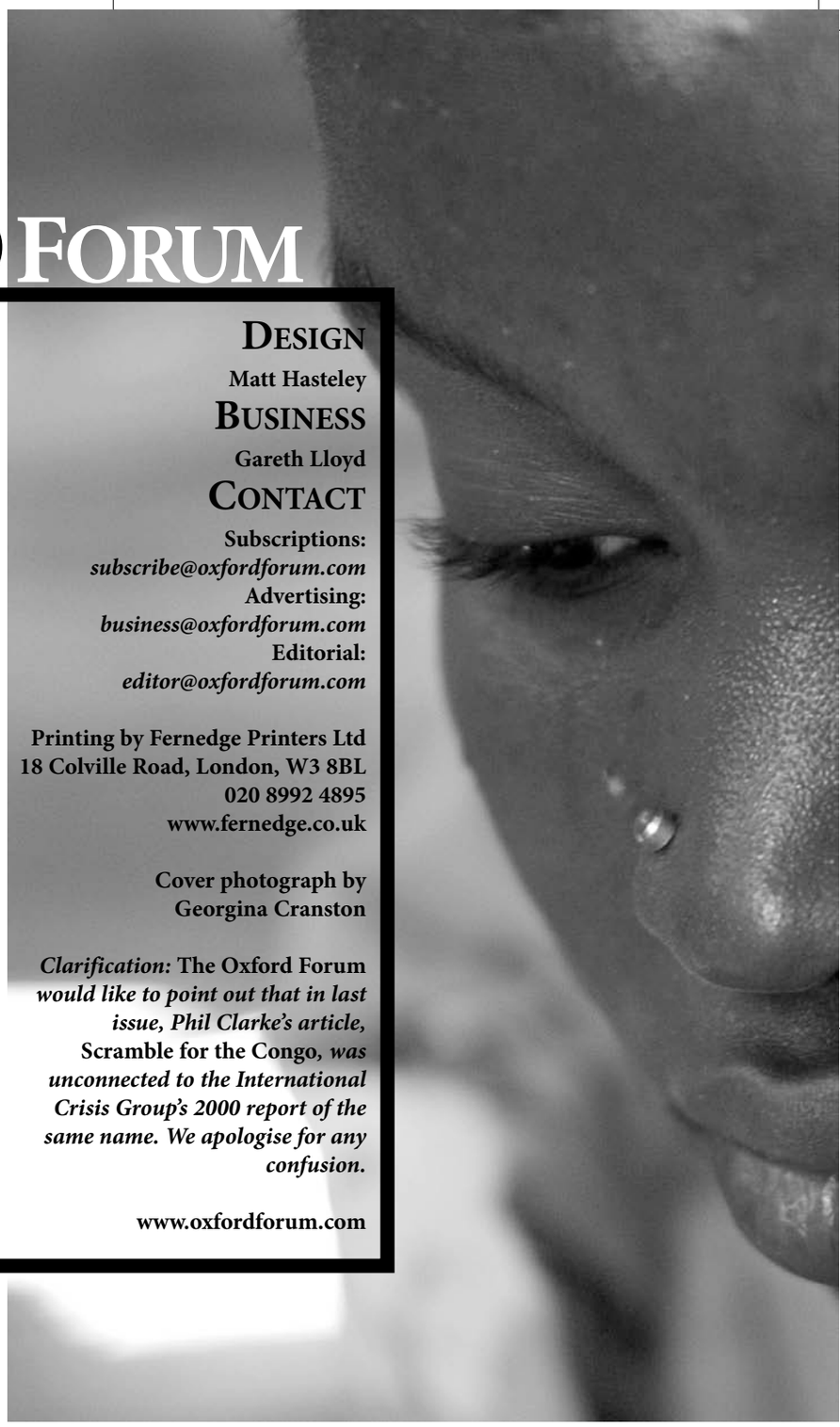

the **best** i
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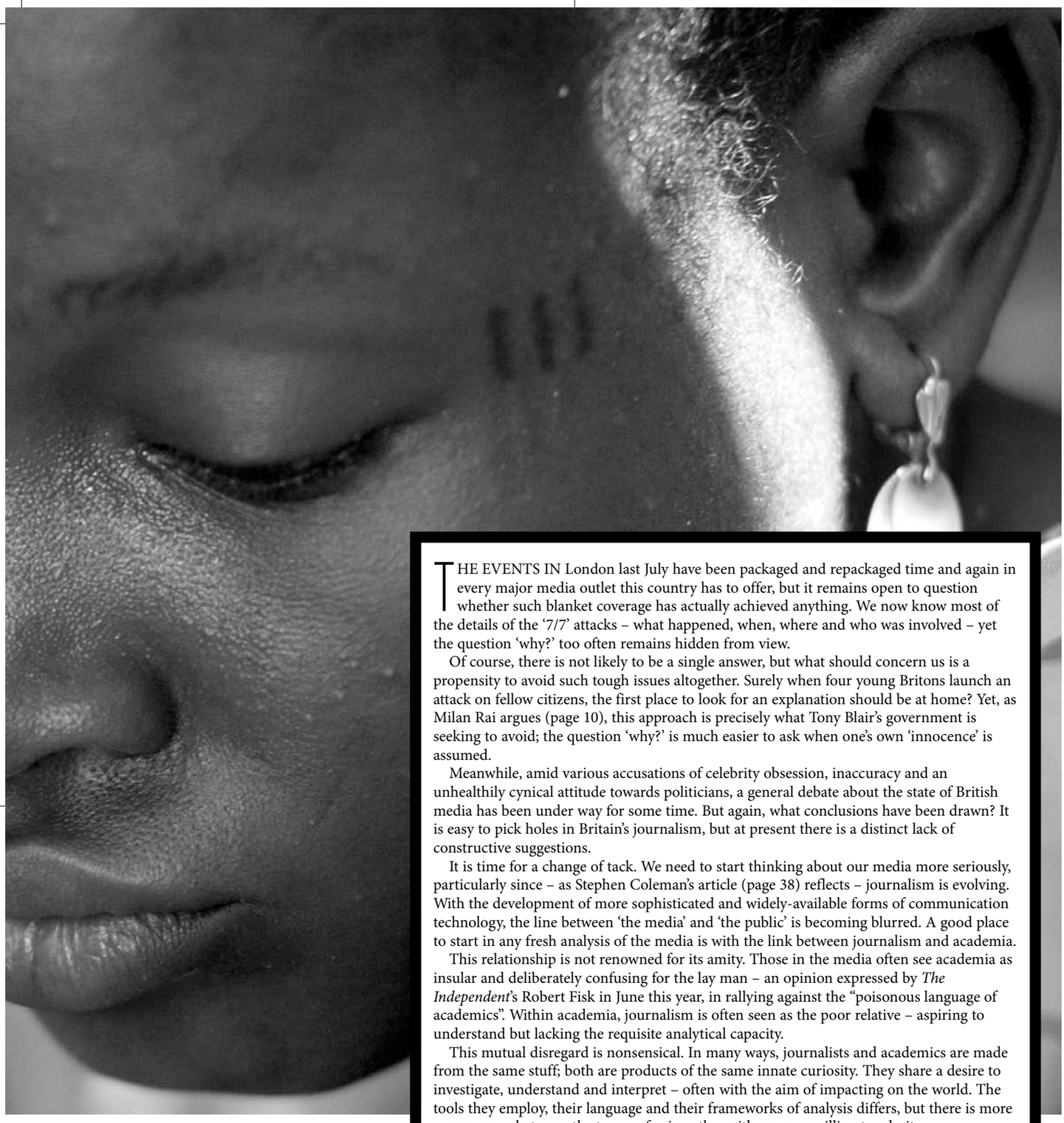
[Photography Georgina Cranston]



THE EVENTS IN London last July have been packaged and repackaged time and again in every major media outlet this country has to offer, but it remains open to question whether such blanket coverage has actually achieved anything. We now know most of the details of the '7/7' attacks – what happened, when, where and who was involved – yet the question 'why?' too often remains hidden from view.

Of course, there is not likely to be a single answer, but what should concern us is a propensity to avoid such tough issues altogether. Surely when four young Britons launch an attack on fellow citizens, the first place to look for an explanation should be at home? Yet, as Milan Rai argues (page 10), this approach is precisely what Tony Blair's government is seeking to avoid; the question 'why?' is much easier to ask when one's own 'innocence' is assumed.

Meanwhile, amid various accusations of celebrity obsession, inaccuracy and an unhealthily cynical attitude towards politicians, a general debate about the state of British media has been under way for some time. But again, what conclusions have been drawn? It is easy to pick holes in Britain's journalism, but at present there is a distinct lack of constructive suggestions.

It is time for a change of tack. We need to start thinking about our media more seriously, particularly since – as Stephen Coleman's article (page 38) reflects – journalism is evolving. With the development of more sophisticated and widely-available forms of communication technology, the line between 'the media' and 'the public' is becoming blurred. A good place to start in any fresh analysis of the media is with the link between journalism and academia.

This relationship is not renowned for its amity. Those in the media often see academia as insular and deliberately confusing for the lay man – an opinion expressed by *The Independent*'s Robert Fisk in June this year, in rallying against the "poisonous language of academics". Within academia, journalism is often seen as the poor relative – aspiring to understand but lacking the requisite analytical capacity.

This mutual disregard is nonsensical. In many ways, journalists and academics are made from the same stuff; both are products of the same innate curiosity. They share a desire to investigate, understand and interpret – often with the aim of impacting on the world. The tools they employ, their language and their frameworks of analysis differs, but there is more convergence between the two professions than either seems willing to admit.

A rapprochement is in order. On the one hand, journalism could benefit from some rigorous analysis of its role in society. The resignation of David Blunkett provides only the most recent example of the power the media can wield. Yet a fuller understanding of this power is crucial to it being utilised in the public interest. There is tremendous scope for academic input. On the other hand, academic study could only benefit from a greater appreciation of the way journalism works. For instance, understanding political calculation is now impossible without accounting for the effects the media. The media should be treated not just as a historical source, but as a distinct sphere of human interaction that deserves to be analysed and picked apart in the same way as any political system.

We hope *The Oxford Forum* can play a small part in helping reconnect journalism and academia. Our 'Rethinking Terror' section presents eyewitness accounts next to opinion and academic analysis; similarly, the 'Global Order' articles combine the work of a Professor, David Held, with the writings of a politician, Prakash Karat, and a former diplomat, Sir Marrack Goulding. We hope that by combining rigorous journalism with accessible academic analysis, we can begin to provide a well-rounded insight into pressing global issues.

Anna Maybank
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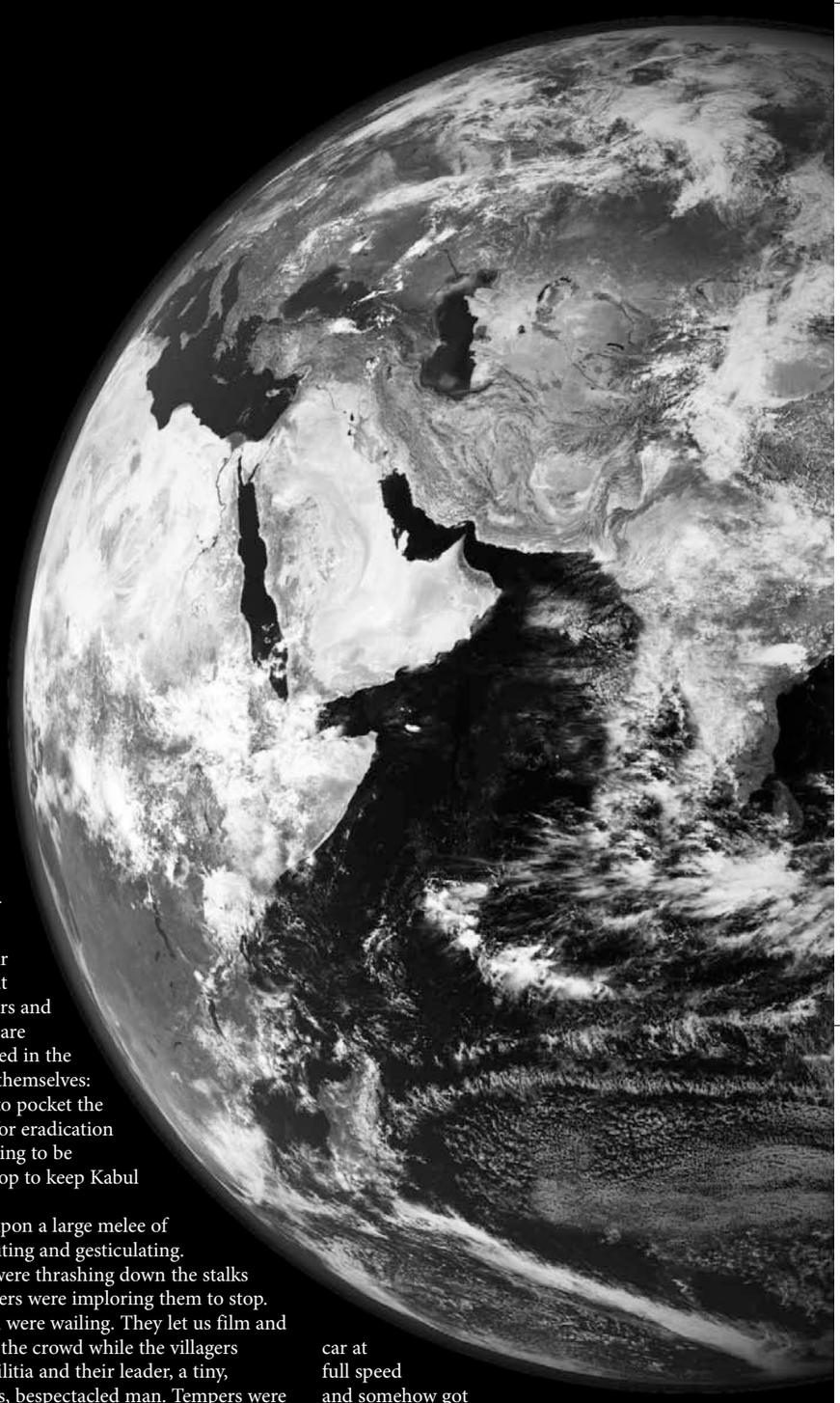
fields of Gold

CHRIS HORWOOD enters the dangerous – and lucrative - world of opium politics



OCHRE-COLOURED POPPY stalks stood chest height all over the mountains. The purple and white petals had been removed leaving the spherical capsules potent with heroin sap. Pure gold for the subsistence farmers in northwest Afghanistan: pure trouble for Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Western governments supporting him.

These weren't large plantations of drugs lords but a myriad of small fields and plots belonging to dirt-poor farmers. Years of war, drought and grinding poverty meant their only hope of survival through the winter lay with opium. I was told by villagers they knew it was against Islam, but they had no choice and this is what we were making a film to show: sudden poppy eradication was cruel and the West had to offer alternatives.

The problem is that the hopes of the warlords and those who want anything but a stable centralized government in Kabul also lie with opium. They are amassing huge personal wealth from opium to fund private militias and terrorism.

Beyond Afghanistan, opium is cursed by international law and Western powers have been leaning on President Karzai to wipe out the illicit crop. Poppy cultivation has sky-rocketed since the Taliban were kicked out. On London streets over 90 per cent of the heroin sold derives from Afghanistan, causing the Brits to take a lead in the efforts to eradicate the crops in High Asia.

Everyone was out, working the lines of metre-high poppy, scraping off the gungey produce. Poppy needs ten times more labour-hours than wheat but it's worth it when the same area of land can net the farmers 30 to 40 times the value of wheat. I watched very young children work alongside ancient bearded men and women out in the swaying poppy.

It was the high point of the harvest cycle. In the summer breeze drops of opium oozed out of the harvesters' incisions. As the creamy drops coagulated in the sun they turned blood-red. People's clothes were flecked with the bitter smears of their work. Villagers welcomed us with big grins. Mountains, sun, drugs: conditions were perfect and the cameraman was delighted.

What we didn't realize is that we had stepped into a hornet's nest of local politics played for high stakes. The Brits were funding a programme to pay local governors to eradicate a percentage of the poppy grown in their provinces. But local governors and their cohorts are deeply involved in the opium trade themselves: they wanted to pocket the money paid for eradication whilst appearing to be culling the crop to keep Kabul happy.

We came upon a large melee of villagers shouting and gesticulating. Militia men were thrashing down the stalks while harvesters were imploring them to stop. Some women were wailing. They let us film and move among the crowd while the villagers cursed the militia and their leader, a tiny, expressionless, bespectacled man. Tempers were flaring as arguments raged. Our interpreter warned me things were turning ugly. He told me the villagers were desperate as they saw their livelihood cut down before their eyes. It turned out the small man was a warlord who had ruled the area with an iron fist and took taxes from all opium producers. Now he was randomly destroying their crops and the villagers demanded an explanation.

Stupidly I looked forward to a violent scene that would jazz up our film. I stood before this warlord in all my foreignness and he pointed a finger at me. He'd found his scapegoat. We were the agents of Western powers that were causing this. We were their spies and representatives cruelly filming it for our masters.

The panicked translator did not finish telling me what he said before the crowd was picking up stones and moving towards us. We ran to our car at full speed and somehow got inside unhurt as stones flew at us. Yelling at the driver to move, the wheels skidded in the dust, and for some hair-raising seconds I saw the sun blotted out as bodies rushed and surrounded the car. We sped off, shaken and shocked at the irony that our deaths or injuries, during a balmy evening in northwest Afghanistan, would have certainly meant that eradication efforts would have halted in the area. It would have brought down a security curtain over the region, delaying government agents and British monitors' access and allowing the peasants to grow they poppy. I thought I saw the small man smile as we fled.

***Chris Horwood is an international aid worker for the UN, NGOs and as a consultant. A version of this article appeared in the* Financial Times Magazine**

[Photography NASA]

diverse Performance

PETER CARDWELL explores South Africa's National Arts Festival for cultural progress

BETWEEN THE township-inspired musicals, Javean dance-drama and enterprising local children miming their way to a few rand, the 500-plus acts of July's National Arts Festival and fringe in Grahamstown reflects how South Africa is coping with the post-apartheid artistic freedom and associated cultural bewilderment.

The most dominant themes at Grahamstown are social, issues such as generational conflict, domestic violence, crime, the position of women and the strain placed on traditional values through urbanisation. Previously taboo subjects such as homosexuality in the black community and HIV/Aids are beginning to be explored.

Now in its fourth decade, the ten-day festival explores every possible cultural facet through dance, film, jazz, music, fine art, literary events and theatre.

Of course, South African performing artists were heavily constrained by draconian censorship and apartheid race laws. White liberal audiences at pre-apartheid festivals sat in Rhodes University buildings and all-white school halls to take in largely Eurocentric offerings.

Since democracy in 1994, South Africa's cultural scene has experienced the renaissance so evident in Grahamstown. Although audiences are still predominantly white – indeed there are more black performers than patrons – festival-goers are at last beginning to more accurately reflect national demographics.

Mannie Manim, the festival committee chairman, explained: "It's obvious there has been a shift to reflect the freedom we now have. There's retelling of history that was previously not allowed."

The opera company Dimpho Di Kopane had great success with its production of *The Snow Queen*, having previously performed at several international festivals. But it is jazz which dominated the musical programme; ranging from laid-back acoustic guitarist Tony Cox to the experimental Zim Ngqawana, whose cow bell and a whistle complimented more traditional instruments.

South Africa's cultural scene has experienced a renaissance since 1994

Among the festival hits was Spice Root, a culturally introspective dance-drama featuring Javanese dance, shadow puppetry, Gamelan music and food preparation tracing slave ancestry in the Cape. An exploration of this kind was largely unthinkable during apartheid. The University of Pretoria Chorale took over an hour to cover South Africa's eleven official languages in song. At the market stalls African traditional crafts are on sale; a cultural microcosm of the country.

Cultural freedom has brought with it challenging, and not always successful, forms of theatre. The musical *Ambie Sistas* presents a hopelessly romanticised version of the role of popular music in the struggle against apartheid, while *Hostile Takeover*, a straight satire on black economic empowerment and racial problems in the new South Africa, sees a white man digging his own grave on a hillside while arguing with his black executioner, and represents the higher end of theatrical performance.

Grahamstown's population of 100,000 suffers from dire unemployment endemic in South Africa and is significantly boosted economically by the festival. Casual work ranges from staffing at restaurants to more skills-based technical support.

For many performers, particularly on the fringe, financial risks are high. Directors do all they can to impress international talent-spotters, who pick shows to tour abroad, taking part of the social and cultural milieu of Grahamstown to the world stage.

Peter Cardwell won the 2005 Geddes Prize and was Consulting Editor of Cape Town's The Daily Voice *in the summer vacation*

united they Stand

MARTIN MCCLUSKEY finds himself in the Labour Party Conference jungle

THE WORD 'CONFERENCE' just doesn't do justice to Labour's gathering in Brighton this autumn: Presidents, Prime Ministers, Nobel Prize Winners, the Deputy Prime Minister dancing to R-E-S-P-E-C-T and, oh yes, throwing out that 82-year-old victim of Nazi Germany.

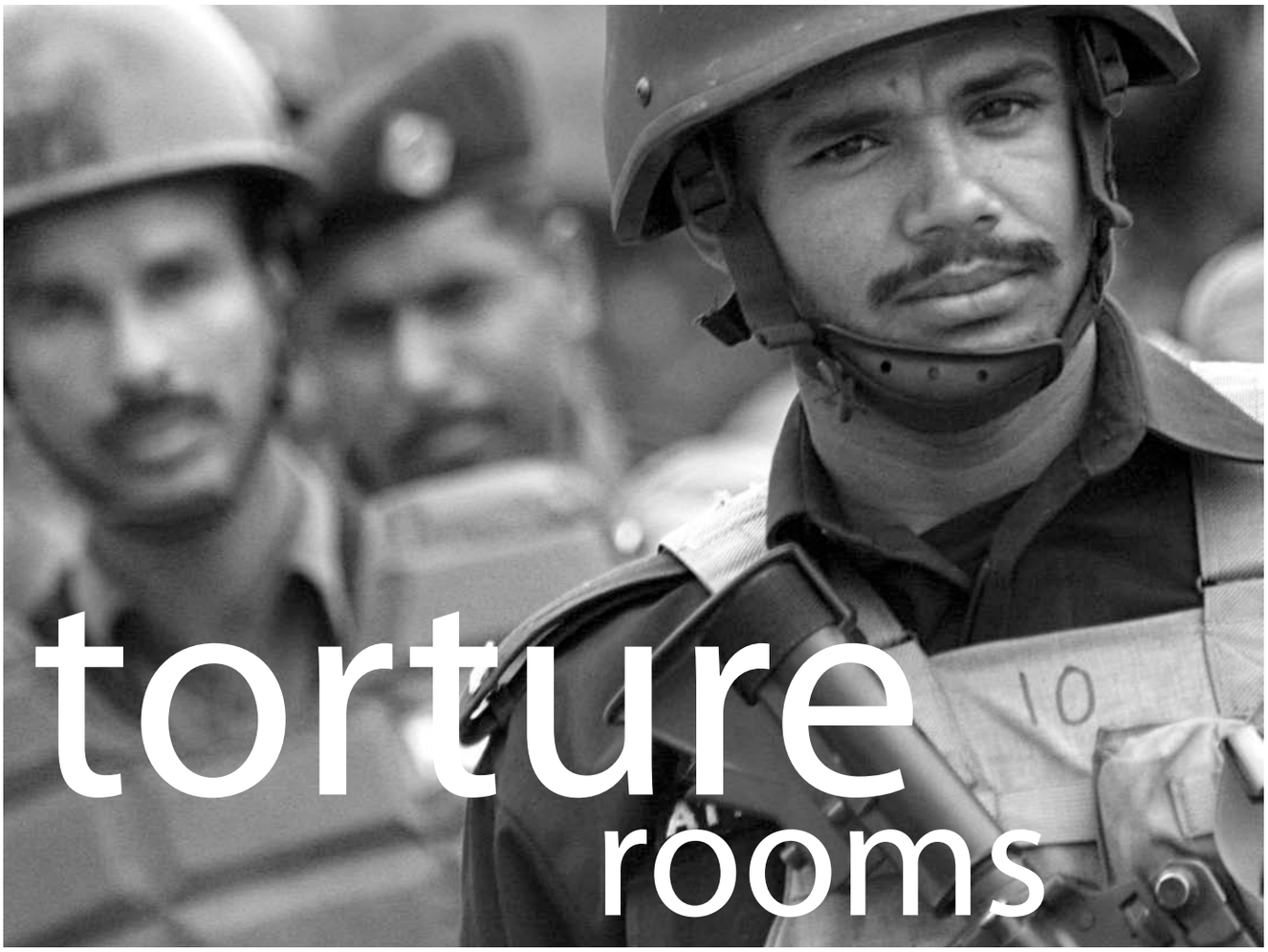
This year's party conference may not have been the tub-thumping pre-election rally of last year, but it wasn't without its moments. Three votes against government policy and the unions back in force, leading to a vote in favour of secondary picketing and against Thatcher's union laws. There were also a number of policy announcements, ignored by the media in favour of the perennial Blair/Brown 'saga'.

Witnessing the spectacle of the Leader's speech is like being at a rock concert. There are flashing lights, blaring music and plenty of groupies dotted around the room (the cabinet). It comes across as slick and well-organised on TV, but in reality it's a zoo; cameramen fall over each other to get the best shot of the PM while advisers and party staff crowd the hall's edges frantically turning page after page of the speech checking the delivery, briefing the press.

This year we had more rock-star chic as Tony bounced onto the stage to Sham 69's *If the kids are united*. You'd think that the well-oiled Labour Party machine could have come up with something which wouldn't fuel the inevitable headlines the next day. Perhaps they were having a dig at the laziness of our media; probably more likely.

The most bizarre speech of the week came from John Reid in his close of conference address. Reid sounded more like he was making a leadership pitch and even Iain McCartney joked beforehand that he has held three cabinet positions and "What next?" Perhaps the eventual fight for the leadership may not be between a Scot and a middle-Englander, but a battle between the east and west coast of Scotland; intellectual New Labour versus Gorbals-hardened Old Labour. But now it's surely time to move on; after all, the Tories are voting on who's going to be their fourth leader in the same time that Labour have just had the one.

Martin McCluskey is Labour Club Co-Chair for Michaelmas Term 2005



torture rooms

TAHIR SHAH was visiting relatives during a working trip to Pakistan when he was arrested, imprisoned and interrogated

THE TORTURE ROOM was fitted out with all manner of equipment: harnesses for hanging a person upside down, gear for drowning and breaking the feet, straps and braces, medical drips, electric shock cables, syringes filled with dark brown liquid, and plenty of blood. As I glanced round the room, preparing for the next bout of interrogation I wondered how I'd landed up there.

I had been travelling from India to Afghanistan, doing reconnaissance for a British documentary about a lost treasure of Mughal India. With me were filmmakers Leon and David Flamholc, a seasoned father and son team, from London-based Caravan Film. We had taken the new overland bus from New Delhi to Lahore, and had made our way to Peshawar on Pakistan's north-west frontier. Our plan was to head straight on westwards down the Khyber Pass, to Kabul. We were travelling light with minimal luggage, a couple of still cameras, and a tourist's mini-DV video.

Before leaving Peshawar, I suggested that we have a quick look to find the house of a distant relative of mine. We all squeezed into a rickshaw and, within ten minutes, we were on the edge of the former British Cantonement. David pulled out the video and filmed me, hoping to capture my reunion with old relatives. Suddenly, a military police officer, armed with a submachine gun, strode up. He grabbed our passports, and the camera, and led us to a military post a few hundred metres away.

After about four hours of waiting, sitting in a police kiosk explaining over and over how we had not filmed anything sensitive, a plain clothes officer appeared. The six military police jumped to attention. The soldier abruptly told us we were now prisoners; that we were to undergo a medical examination and that we had no right to call our embassies or to ask any questions. The next moment we were blindfolded, our hands chained high behind our backs, and led to a pick-up truck at gunpoint.

After a short drive we arrived at the medical installation. Stripped naked, still chained and blindfolded, we were examined and the doctor ordered his assistant to make sedatives ready. It was a terrible moment. I crouched on the floor waiting for the pinprick of a needle which, thankfully, was never to come. Realising I was about to pass out, I fought hard to take deep breaths. I was sweating so heavily that my blindfold was drenched. Through a tiny gap at the left side I could make out fragments of the room; resuscitation equipment, manacles, and a large pool of fresh blood on the floor.

Once the medical exam was over, we were bundled back into the pickup and driven at high speed to a military police interrogation unit. Although we were forbidden to speak to each other, the chains and blindfolds were removed and we spent the next 36 hours in a dungeon; armed soldiers at the door, bare walls and a concrete floor. The rickshaw driver who had driven us that morning had been rounded up and thrown in with us. He had no idea what was going on either.

Over the course of the first day we were all interrogated by the plain clothes officer who had ordered our arrest. Initially he told us that we had committed grave crimes and would now have to pay the price but after watching the few minutes of video footage we had taken, he changed tack, agreeing there was nothing at all wrong. It became evident that the film footage was immaterial, and that I was being held on suspected terrorism charges.

[Photography Warrick Page]

As a British citizen of Asian Muslim origin I was suspected, it was insinuated, of being part of a wider network – the world of suicide bombers, religious schools and Islamic fanaticism. All I could do was stress that they had the wrong man: "I eat bacon," I said, "I drink wine and enjoy it, and I don't even know the Muslim prayers."

At 10pm on the second night we heard the sound of keys. The cell was opened by a pair of towering plain clothes officers. I noticed that the chains and blindfolds they were about to use were different from those used by the military police. It seemed that we were being passed to another agency. As the jeep drove out of the city, and down a bumpy dirt track, my overwhelming fear was that we were about to be disposed of – shot in the back of the head and dumped away from town.

Eventually, the jeep braked hard. We were dragged out onto the ground and held squatting for a few minutes. There was the smell of jasmine flowers and the sound of a man crying out in the distance. We were led into a brightly lit cell block and isolated from each other. My barred door was slammed shut and secured with a huge padlock leaving me in a cell about two metres by three, with a concrete floor and a raised concrete platform for a bed. There was no mattress, but a rough lice-ridden blanket, a strip-light on the ceiling which was never turned off, a squat toilet, and a hosepipe pushed through a hole near the floor. The walls were bare white, covered in graffiti, written mostly in faeces and blood. It immediately struck me that much of it was written in English script. On one wall was written 'Man United', a hint that British Muslims had been taken to the same unit and softened up.

I couldn't sleep that night. There were the sounds of men weeping, and others being tortured. I crouched in the corner wondering what the hell was happening, and how I could get a message to my wife. There was the constant fear of being taken out and shot, especially as no one outside had a clue that we had been taken away. I sweated so much that my hands went pallid and wrinkled.

The next day I began to piece together the situation. We seemed to be being held by military intelligence. This was borne out by the fact that the guards, who would appear from time to time, were dressed in plain clothes and not uniforms. They refused to give their names or their ranks. One of them, a young man, who brought me some drinking water, said the unit was known as 'the Farm'. He told me that remaining calm was the best way to stay alive.

My colleagues, Leon and David, were in cells nearby, but speaking to each other was strictly forbidden. Talk, I was told, and I would be punished. When I needed the hose pipe turned on, I would shout loudly so that my friends could hear me. They did the same. It was a wonderful feeling to hear that they were still there, still alive.

The worst time was night. That was when the interrogations and the torturing took place. There was a bustle of activity, the sound of keys rattling, gates opening, and men crying out. My first interrogation took place on the second night. A guard came to my cell with chains and blindfold. It was after midnight. I called out to David and Leon that I was being moved. They told me later that they thought I was being taken to be shot, and that they felt so helpless. I staggered down a long corridor, breathing deeply, and stumbled into what I came to realise was the torture room.

I was pushed down on a chair. A voice close by said that I was going to be questioned, that if I told the truth I would not be harmed. I was interviewed for about three hours that night. The questions ranged from my knowledge of Islam, to explosives, my work as a writer and documentary maker, and to how much money I earned.

As a British citizen of Asian Muslim origin, I was suspected of being part of a world of suicide bombers and Islamic fanaticism

It was clear that my interrogator knew all about the recent London bombings. From my answers it must have been clear that I know absolutely nothing about how to make a bomb, just as my formal knowledge of Islam is woefully deficient. My worry was that this lack of knowledge would be seen as hiding information.

During the days I felt myself almost slipping into madness. The trick was to stay calm and keep the mind occupied. I spent hours staring at the cell bars, working out how to break free. But trying to escape would have been suicide. I prayed that my colleagues would remain mentally strong, and I worried that one of us would get sick. Fear is a great suppressor of appetite. I could hardly eat, but forced myself to drink huge quantities of liquid to compensate for all the sweating. I spent the days in fitful sleep, worrying about my wife and two small children.

Interrogations were generally held between midnight and about 3am. My colleagues were grilled night after night about being Jewish. The Pakistani military intelligence seemed preoccupied by their ancestry.

As for me, I would hear the rattle of keys and know that they were coming for me. In a way it was a relief to get out of the cell, away from the blank walls and the stink of sewage.

Sometimes I was blindfolded, and at other times not. When I was able to see, I caught a glimpse into a couple of the other cells. I saw two men with long black beards. They were both crouched in their cells, the second one of which was painted with lurid black and white spirals; a ploy to drive the inmate mad.

After about a week I persuaded the young guard to leave a message for my wife's sister in London. All he would say was that we were alive.

My family immediately waited for a ransom demand, assuming I had been kidnapped whilst my sister jumped on a plane and flew to Pakistan to try to find us. We had no idea that all of this was going on, of course.

The days dragged on. Sometimes guards would turn up to take hair and fingernail clippings for DNA testing, or to photograph us. But most of the time, I crouched there in my cell, trying to stay sane.

I had plenty of time to think about the danger of having a Muslim-sounding name and a British passport. It makes for an unfortunate combination these days. I gave a lot of thought to the fact that totally innocent people like me were being rounded up and interrogated across Pakistan. I heard later that more than 600 foreigners had been arrested at the same time as us, and imprisoned without charge in the country. As I told my captors quite truthfully, I understood that in the current climate everyone is a suspect, and that they couldn't be too careful. But at the same time I urged them to see reason; that I was the farthest one could be from an Islamic fanatic.

I found that the best way to stay upbeat was to see the absurdity of it all; to remember that it was going to end, however uncertain I was of what that ending would be. And there were moments of grotesque humour. One night I was stamping around the cell killing cockroaches. In the background I could hear the wild wailing of a man in the torture room. The guard came to my cell and ordered me to stop making so much noise. He said I was keeping the other prisoners awake.

At around 4am one morning, after 16 nights' detention, our bags were brought to the cells. We were told to check that nothing had been taken, and ordered to sign a document confirming that we had not been mistreated. An officer from the Pakistani Civilian Intelligence Agency stepped from the shadows. An hour later we were sitting in the VIP lounge of Peshawar airport, with the civilian officer apologising for the military's heavy-handed treatment. It was explained politely that we were being flown to London via Abu Dhabi and that we had no choice. The officer said repeatedly that there were no charges against us, and that we would be welcome to return to Pakistan.

Arriving back in London in the wake of the summer bombings was bizarre. There were armed police on every street corner, and an atmosphere of understandable paranoia. I walked the streets wondering what was happening to the world; to my world. But my mind wasn't really on London. It was focussed on the graffiti-strewn cell I left behind in Pakistan. All I could think of was who was locked up in there now.

Tahir Shah is a freelance journalist, documentary maker and photographer. He has also authored of a number of books and screenplays

seeking ijtihad

ANDREA D'CRUZ talks to controversial author IRSHAD MANJI about the liberal Muslim views which have attracted the attention of extremists

IRSHAD MANJI CERTAINLY does not act like a woman beleaguered by death threats. Incredibly confident, self-assured and outspoken; everything about her is bold, from her spiky, highlighted hair to her forthright manner and controversial views, some of which she herself describes as 'horribly politically incorrect'. As a lesbian Muslim – two words one seldom sees juxtaposed – Manji received much abuse from elements of the Muslim community during her time as presenter of Canada's *Queer Television*, but the problems really started following the publication of her book, *The Trouble with Islam*.

The book has Manji fulminating in an impassioned indictment of the brutality, anti-Semitism, sexual inequality and most of all the dogmatic literalism she perceives as having become entrenched in the practice of her religion today. "The main argument I make in *The Trouble with Islam,*" she reiterates, "is that although every single religion today has its literalists only in Islam is literalism going native. Even moderate Muslims believe that the Koran is immutable, untouchable, unfaltering. This empowers the radical fringe and inhibits the reasonable centre from openly challenging

[Illustration Guy Shrubsole]

them. Why? Because the radical fringe is so expert at quoting from the Koran to justify its violence that the rest of us are led to believe that because we can't question the Koran, questioning the jihadists amounts to questioning the Koran."

Irshad Manji is rapidly finding herself something of the Salman Rushdie of non-fiction. Just as Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* resulted in the infamous fatwa, so too has Manji's work incurred the wrath of many a radical imam or fanatic mullah. She describes an occasion, shortly after the publication of the book, where her mother sat through a sermon at her mosque, blinking back tears, as the imam proceeded to explain that her daughter was 'more criminal than Osama bin Laden.' However, Manji's troubles had begun long before then. "When news hit the street that I was writing a book calling for a liberal reform of Islam the death threats started pouring in," she tells me.

It was Rushdie himself whose encouragement ensured Manji ploughed onward, undeterred, with the publication of her book. "I had the occasion to ask Salman Rushdie 'why would you support a young Muslim woman writing the kind of book that might invite into her life the violence and the chaos that has been visited upon yours?' Without any hesitation he replied: 'Because a book is more important than a life.' He explained that whenever a writer puts out a thought it can be disagreed with vigorously, vehemently, even violently but it cannot be unthought. And that he said is the great permanent gift that a writer gives this world. What I loved about his answer was that he wasn't denying that I might die as a result of this book; he was implying that the purpose with which one lives is much more important than the length of time for which one lives."

Manji appears to have taken this sentiment very much to heart. She relates anecdotes of up close and personal death threats in a startlingly nonchalant manner and outlines her security precautions: "I have bullet proof windows at home, a state of the art security system, a portable panic button…" reeling off the list in a matter-of-fact fashion. She is evidently unphased by the militant would-be murderers out to get her. "To be honest, I should be more frightened, but I couldn't imagine living my life with more passion and purpose. The kind of purpose that says human rights are universal and that no ethnicity, culture or religion should be immune from being held accountable to respecting these rights. I believe that is a just cause and I don't think I'm hurting anybody but myself in the process and for that reason alone if I have to die as a result I know I'll have made a contribution."

Manji is unmistakably a woman on a mission then. That mission being to issue, loud and clear, to Muslim communities across the globe, a 'wake up call for honesty and change' (incidentally, the subtitle of her book). Her endeavour is currently being furthered by a new venture, Project Ijtihad. "Ijtihad is Islam's lost tradition of independent thinking," Manji explains. The Project's stated aim is restoring that tradition, opening up debate so that "young, reform minded Muslims can openly dissent with conformity in Islam".

Since the London bombings of July 7 the Irshad Manji 'Islam needs a wake up call' philosophy has become à la mode amongst British politicians and much of the press alike. Indeed in the aftermath of the attacks, Manji has developed into somewhat of a media darling, her commentary on the issue of extremism and British Muslims constantly in demand. In fact her interview with *The Oxford Forum* comes the day after an evening which engaged her in a Newsnight debate with Muslim Council of Britain Secretary-General, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, and less than a week after the attacks. Consequently, it is almost inevitable that our conversation tends in that direction.

Manji is clearly shaken by the knowledge that the bombers were British. "How can it not shock you when there is no conceivably legitimate reason for young men to do this? Young men who, even if they are working class, have it far better off in this country than millions upon millions of other Muslims do. Britain is a country that offers great protection to Muslims. You have British police officers patrolling the mosques a day after these bombings in order to ensure that there is no anti-Muslim backlash. This is just one of the many signs that the British state, far from perfect, is none the less hardly the demon here."

'Whenever a writer puts out a thought it can be disagreed with vigourously, vehmently, even violently, but it can't be unthought'

Yet it was the same British state which just last year produced a report, entitled *Young Muslims and Extremism*, highlighting factors which might attract some to extremism. The list included anger at the double standards perceived in British foreign policy, alienation, and relative economic and educational disadvantage (Muslims have an unemployment rate three times above the rest of the population, while over two-fifths have no qualifications). Surely this relative deprivation and alienation generates the low self-esteem likely to make these youths vulnerable to extremist groups offering a way to get back at the society which has excluded them economically, socially and culturally?

Manji is scathing: "I find it interesting that the people who make that kind of argument use that kind of argument to actually justify these bombings." It's the classic Bush 'you're either with us or with the terrorists' line of attack, designed to stifle genuine debate, and as such strikes as something of a surprise, coming from a woman who is so resolutely intent on opening up discussion in one particular sphere.

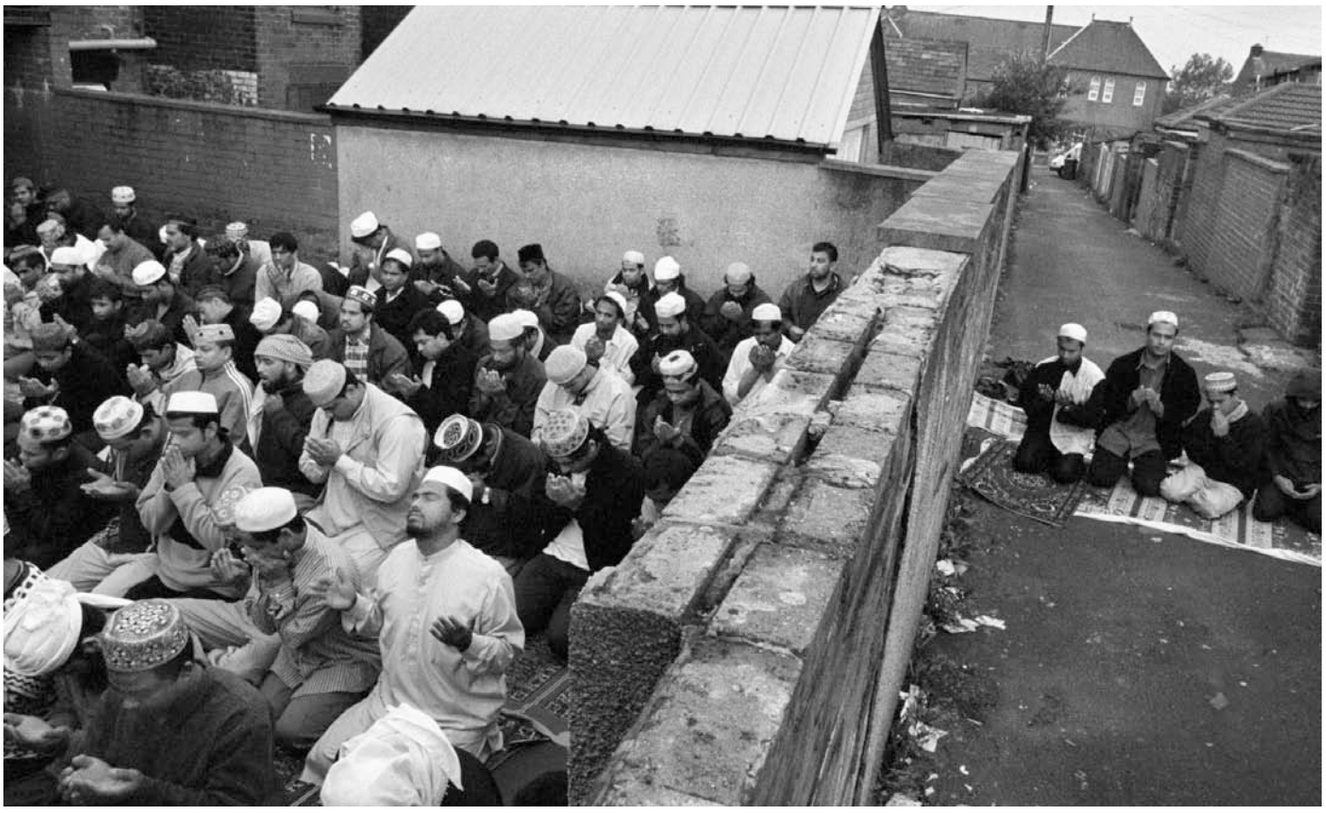
She continues: "It is not at all a given that even relative economic deprivation is a defining part. Could it play a part? Of course it could. But people use it as an argument that this is the reason why, as Sacranie did last night when he went through a list of possible explanations. He never included religion once. All I'm asking is for people like him to add religion to the list of possible explanations."

Although willing to add other aspects to her list of explanations as 'possibilities', Manji's unequivocally preferred explanation is religion and she is loathe to accord other factors any weight: "I contest that there is a proper link between economics and extremism. It is a common myth that economic deprivation is what ultimately leads young people to commit suicide bombing. This is simply not true," she argues. "I was in Gaza three years ago. And I managed to get an interview with a political leader of Islamic Jihad and I asked him 'what's the difference between suicide and martyrdom?' He replied: 'Suicide is done out of despair but remember most of our martyrs are very successful in their daily lives – they're teachers, they're engineers, they're educated.' It's not poverty – these young people believe in something, the everlasting afterlife."

Manji's comment brings to light two shortcomings in her method of reasoning. Firstly, her tendency, when presented with any scenario, to autopilot to blaming it on Islam. She may recognise other explanations but she is unwilling to generate them of her own volition; her example refutes the economic deprivation argument but she ignores political factors, failing to explain how the educated status of the suicide bombers would have shielded them from the trauma of the Israeli occupation. This is in part due to the second flaw in her modus operandi – an almost 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' attitude. She has irked fellow liberal Muslims with her constant reference to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as 'the territories'.

One feels that this disinclination to empathise with matters many Muslims feel strongly about is only likely to make Muslims in the 'reasonable centre' less receptive to her message when she exhorts: "People don't hang onto power without the people over whom they are exercising their power allowing that to happen. What are we Muslims in the reasonable centre doing to take back the power the fringe has? All we are doing at this point is chanting a mantra – 'Islam means peace, Islam is about love.'"

Yet Manji will undoubtedly carry on determinedly in her quest for Ijtihad, whether people like what they hear or not. "It's not popular among students to be saying that Muslims themselves have a role to play in taking the religion out of the moral and intellectual rut in which it finds itself, but I really feel it's necessary to say if we're going to get to an honest conversation about what role everybody has to play in this."



British Bengalis pray in Oldham, near Manchester: one photograph from a series by Justin Jin recording the lives of British Muslims

terrorism and denial

MILAN RAI highlights the warnings he believes Blair chose to ignore

WE ARE IN a peculiar position in relation to the London bombings. British society in general, the foreign policy establishment, the intelligence services and the relevant ministries, all agree that British foreign policy was a major contributory factor behind the July attacks. What we know of the suicide bombers indicates that anger over the occupation of Iraq, in particular, was a prime motivation for their actions.

The Prime Minister, on the other hand, is desperate to deny these simple and obvious truths, despite having been warned of this precise danger by British intelligence before the war on Iraq.

Less than two weeks after the first terrorist attacks, Tony Blair announced that he was setting up a 'Muslim taskforce' to deal with the problem of growing 'extremism' in the British Muslim community. Unfortunately for the Prime Minister, the taskforce has come back with answers he finds unacceptable.

At the time of writing, the Government is trying to find some modality for derailing one of the central proposals of the taskforce: the setting up of a Royal Commission into the causes of the July bombings. "The inquiry would need to include an examination of the extent to which the government's foreign policy has radicalised Muslim youth. Without such an inquiry, the government is not going to win the confidence of the Muslim community," Lord Ahmed, a Labour peer, told the *Financial Times* on September 22.

The problem is that the Government has already conducted such an inquiry, and the answers were rather uncomfortable. They are not insights that Blair wants to come to public consciousness.

Just three days after the 7/7 attacks, *The Sunday Times* carried an astonishing leak. At a moment where the central question of our times had become the emergence of homegrown terrorism emanating from a section of the British Muslim community, *The Sunday Times* carried a front-page story about a leaked government report entitled *Young Muslims and Extremism*. This was the burning topic of the moment. Yet the most extraordinary contents of the report – still available on *The Sunday Times* website – were barely noted in the newspaper, and, besides a few references in *The Guardian*, disappeared from public discourse.

According to *The Sunday Times* story, the

[Photography Justin Jin / www.justinjin.com]

report was a "joint Home Office and Foreign Office dossier", which "ordered by Tony Blair following last year's train bombings in Madrid". The documents reproduced on the newspaper's website are dated May 2004.

The report identifies various factors which it claims make young British Muslims more likely to move towards 'extremism'. First in the list of factors are 'Foreign policy issues'.

Foreign policy concerns are followed by domestic issues: Islamophobia, (including "Muslims' perception of bias in the way counter-terrorism powers are used to stop, detain and arrest people, both at ports and in-country"); socio-economic deprivation; lack of representation in public life; problems of identity; and the quality of the "Muslim leadership." According to the report: "Some young Muslims are disillusioned with mainstream Muslim organisations that are perceived as pedestrian, ineffective and in many cases, as 'sell-outs' to Her Majesty's Government".

Returning to the first factor, the dossier states: "It seems that a particularly strong cause of disillusionment among Muslims – including young Muslims – is a perceived 'double standard' in the foreign policy of Western governments, in particular Britain and the US… This perception seems to have become more acute post-9/11. The perception is that passive 'oppression', as demonstrated in British foreign policy, e.g. non-action on Kashmir and Chechnya, has given way to 'active oppression'. The War on Terror, and in Iraq and Afghanistan, are all seen by a section of British Muslims as having been acts against Islam."

This is from a secret Home Office/Foreign Office report drafted in May 2004 (with intelligence input), to be presented to the Cabinet shortly thereafter, and to be used as the basis for a more intensive inquiry into the sources of al-Qaeda-type terrorism in British society itself.

Much the same analysis was given by British intelligence just weeks before the 7/7 attacks. On July 19 (the same day Mr Blair set up the taskforce) a copy of the previous month's report by the secret Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre was leaked to *The New York Times*. This states that: "Events in Iraq are continuing to act as motivation and a focus of a range of terrorist related activity in the UK."

The same analysis was given in a Chatham House report published a day previously on July 18, which said: "The UK is at particular risk [from al-Qaeda] because it is the closest ally of the United States, has deployed armed forces in the military campaigns to topple the Taleban regime in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and has taken a leading role in international intelligence, police and judicial cooperation against al-Qaeda and in efforts to suppress its finances."

Professor Paul Wilkinson, the author of the report, commented, "A key problem… is that the UK government has been conducting counter-terrorism policy 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with the US, not in the sense of being an equal decision-maker, but rather as pillion passenger compelled to leave the steering to the ally in the driving seat." He mentioned Iraq in particular.

The British public appeared to be thinking along the same lines. A poll published in *The Guardian* on July 19 found that 33 per cent of Britons thought that the Prime Minister bore "a lot" of responsibility for the London bombings and a further 31 per cent "a little". Altogether, that's roughly two-thirds of the British people. Only 28 per cent of voters agreed with the government that Iraq and the London bombings were not connected.

Six days later, a Daily Mirror poll found that 23 per cent of respondents said the war was the main reason for the London bombings and another 62 per cent believed that whilst Iraq was not the principal causal factor, it had contributed to the atrocities. Twelve per cent of those polled said there was no real link.

Blair knowingly increased the risk of a 9/11-type attack in London, having been advised by British intelligence of the dangers

So, in summary, the Home Office, the Foreign Office, British intelligence, Chatham House, and the British public all thought that post-9/11 British foreign policy in general – and the war in Iraq in particular – was a key factor in driving young Muslims towards support for al-Qaeda-type terrorism.

Blair, on the other hand, refused to publicly accept that this might be the case. Too wily to be caught out explicitly denying this connection, the Prime Minister for several weeks evaded questions on the link between Iraq and the July bombings by referring to the long pre-Iraq history of al-Qaeda terrorism.

He was perfectly correct in arguing that the UK has always been at some risk of al-Qaeda-type terrorism. What he never addressed was whether participating in the US War on Terror (in general) and invading Iraq (in particular) had increased this risk.

Neither has Blair ever addressed his decision to ignore advice from British intelligence prior to the 2003 war that invading Iraq would "heighten" the risk of such terrorism. We learned of this warning in the Government's Intelligence and Security Committee report on *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*. According to this report, on February 10, 2003 the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) advised the Prime Minister in the following way: "The JIC assessed that al-Qaeda and associated groups continued to represent by far the greatest terrorist threat to Western interests, and that threat would be *heightened* by military action against Iraq," (emphasis added).

In other words, Blair knowingly increased the risk of a 9/11-type attack in London, having been advised by the apex of British intelligence of the dangers of the course of action which he pursued just over a month later.

The reason Blair is so desperate to avoid public acceptance of a causal link between Iraq and the risk of terrorism, however, is not because of what happened in the past, but because he is fearful of what might happen in the future. The central question being posed in relation to all these leaked documents is whether withdrawing from Iraq – and Afghanistan – now will reduce the risk of terrorism in Britain in the future.

For the authentic anti-war movement, this question of self-interest is irrelevant. These occupations are wrong, and should be ended even if this was to increase the risk of terrorism in Britain. For much of the British population, however, who are unenthusiastic and uncomfortable about the occupation – opinions which may be seen throughout the media and in the unprecedented public demonstrations around the country – but who perhaps see no acceptable alternative, the question of self-interest is extremely important. If the Government admits that the occupations are significantly raising the probability of another 7/7, this might tip the balance in favour of withdrawal.

The fact that withdrawal from Iraq would reduce the risk of terror, is therefore of critical significance, and this explains the Government's desperate attempts to distract attention from this prospect, and to mislead the British people. The link with British foreign policy is evident in what we know of the July bombers. In his video, 7/7, Mohammed Sidique Khan explained his actions clearly: "Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters… Until we feel security, you will be our targets. And until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight." Khan's view of British foreign policy may be wrong, but this is besides the point when it is undeniable that this is at the heart of his stated motivation for carrying out terrorism against British citizens.

The Government may be forced to hold some form of inquiry into the 7/7 bombings – it is likely to be highly circumscribed, so that British foreign policy is kept to the margins, if mentioned at all. But until the Government is forced to change its foreign policy orientation, the public, the security services, foreign policy experts, and the civil service all believe that more 7/7s, more Madrids, perhaps even more 9/11s are in store for the people of Britain.

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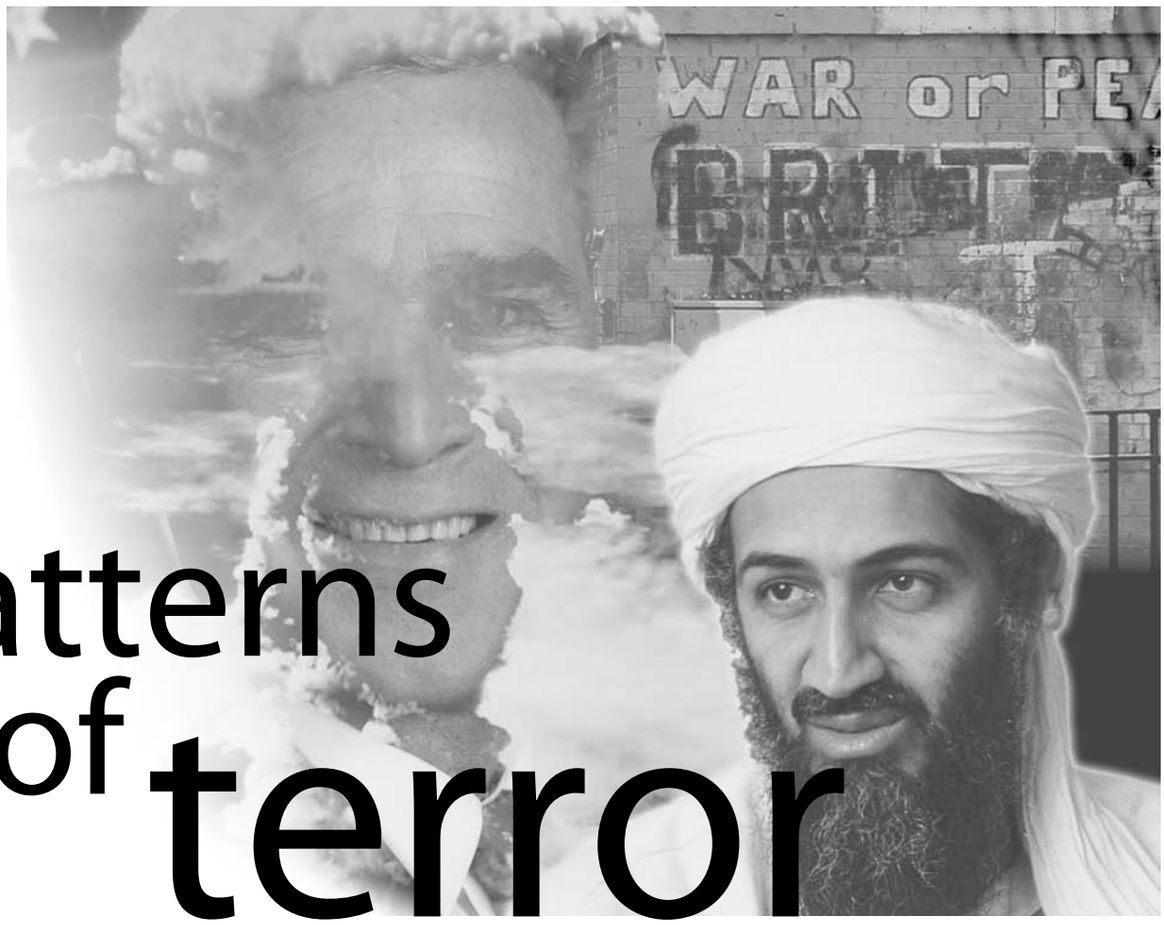

patterns of terror

Sir ADAM ROBERTS stresses the importance of an historical perspective in understanding modern terrorism

TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL terrorism has assumed organisational forms and means of operating that are historically new. The shadowy entities labelled 'al-Qaeda' are different from earlier terrorist movements in the extremism of their aims and in the far-flung, coordinated and ruthless character of their operations. No less novel is the contemporary US and international campaign against terrorism. And yet, despite all the unprecedented aspects of this conflict, there are dangers in neglecting past episodes of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

The history of these matters repays study, not because it offers a single recipe for action, but rather because it enriches our understanding of a peculiarly complex subject. It indicates a range of possibilities for addressing terrorism, and a number of hazards to avoid. It remains odd that since 2001 much writing on terror, particularly in the United States, has tended to neglect the long history of terrorism and counterterrorism. Yet in practice, the response of each country to the 'War on Terror' has been deeply influenced by its own particular experience of terrorism and counterterrorism.

For instance, in the UK there has been frequent reference to the experience of countering terrorism in Northern Ireland. British ministers and officials, however, refrained from pointing out bluntly, and in public, that almost everything about the language and manner in which terror in Northern Ireland has been opposed, and about the attempts at underwriting its end through mediation and even negotiation, has been very different from the US approach to the 'War on Terror.' Partly, of course, this is because the problems faced have been different: the IRA is far removed from al-Qaeda in ideology, in political goals and in methods. Yet the British may have been too reticent about their experience of terrorism.

Specifically – though at the risk of over-simplification – it is possible to draw the following eight propositions from the long history of terrorism, and action against it. These propositions all have a bearing on the conduct of, and language regarding, today's international campaign against terrorism.

First, terrorist action often has unintended consequences. Most terrorist movements and individuals have notions of change with two main strands: a spectacular act of violence will transform the political landscape, particularly by mobilising and radicalising the dormant masses, or a long terrorist campaign will wear down the adversary, leading to demoralisation, doubt and withdrawal.

Yet rarely are events this predictable. In practice, terrorist actions may lead to vigorous political or military campaigns against the terrorists, and even to the outbreak of international wars, as in Europe in 1914. In some cases terrorist action has been so callous that it has aroused antagonism even among the population that has some sympathy with, even involvement in, the terrorist cause. For example, in August 1949, when Communist terrorists in the Philippines murdered the popular widow of President Quezon, for the first time there was widespread popular wrath against the insurgents.

Secondly, one of the most pernicious aspects of terrorism is its capacity to become endemic in particular regions, cultures and societies. The experience of terrorism suggests that, after it has been taken up in one cause, it is adopted by others, and by splinter-groups, and how difficult it is to reach a definitive end to terrorist activities. Moreover, it can be difficult to call off terrorist struggles. A hard-core splinter group within a movement may refuse all compromise and continue the struggle. This view of terrorism as damaging to the societies in which it takes place is confirmed by the history of the Middle East, Latin America, the Balkans and Ireland over the past two centuries. It forms an important buttress to moral condemnations of terrorism. An understanding of its destructive character within the societies that produce terrorist movements provides a better basis for securing international action against terrorism

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

than do certain views of terrorism that focus on it as a threat principally to Western democratic states, or to the United States in particular.

The third proposition is that, contrary to myth, counterterrorist activities and policies can sometimes succeed – at least in the sense of contributing to a reduction or ending of the activities of terrorists without yielding power to them. For example, the forces opposed to terrorists were successful in this sense in the long-running Malayan 'emergency' that began in 1948; in the Philippines at the same time; and against the 'Red Brigades' that were active in Italy and Germany in the early 1970s. Perhaps 95 per cent of the important action in any campaign against terrorism consists of intelligence and police work: identifying suspects, infiltrating movements, collaborating with police forces in other countries, gathering evidence for trials and so on. This underlying truth is far from denied by President Bush or other leading figures involved in the 'War on Terror'. However, their rhetoric, being much more that of open war and of victory, has sometimes obscured this basic fact.

Fourthly, it should also be admitted that there may be a need to address underlying grievances. Where counter-terrorist strategies have succeeded, success has often been in combination with a political package that either responded to certain terrorist demands while rejecting others, or undercut the terrorists by reducing their pool of political support, or both. In Malaya, for example, the promise, and the actuality, of unqualified national independence was crucial to containing the terrorist threat.

It is sometimes suggested that making changes that respond in some way to terrorist demands constitutes appeasement, or implies recognition that a campaign of terrorism is justified. Yet to say that a movement responds to real grievances – as, for example, over Palestine – is not to say that it is justified in resorting to terror, but it is to say that the terrorist movement reflects larger concerns in society that need to be addressed in some way. The exact way in which they are addressed may not be the way the movement is demanding. To refuse all changes on an issue because a terrorist movement has embraced that issue is to allow terrorists to dictate the political agenda.

Fifthly, respect for law – including international legal standards embodied in the laws of war – has been an important element in many operations against terrorists. A perception that the states involved in a coalition are observing basic international standards may contribute to public support for military operations within the member states; support (or tacit consent) from other states for coalition operations; and avoidance of disputes within and between coalition member states. There are some well-known difficulties in applying the laws of war to terrorist and counter-terrorist activities. Most terrorists do not conform to the well-known requirements for the status of lawful belligerent, entitled to full PoW status.

Further, few states could accept application of the law if it meant that all terrorists were deemed to be legitimate belligerents on a par with the regular uniformed forces of a government. However, application of the law does not require acceptance of either of these doubtful propositions. Rather, it means recognition that, even in a war against ruthless terrorists, the observance of certain restraints may be legally obligatory and politically desirable. Understandable doubt over the formal applicability of some provisions of existing law should not be turned into a licence to flout basic norms.

Sixthly, the treatment of detainees is an issue of crucial importance in the history of terrorism and counter-terrorism. When fighting an unseen and vicious enemy, who may have many secret sympathisers, most states, even democratic ones, resort to some form of detention without trial. There are huge risks in such detentions. Firstly, a risk of arresting and convicting the wrong people; and secondly, maltreatment of detainees. Both tend to create martyrs and to give nourishment to the terrorist campaign.

The British may have been too reticent about their experience of terrorism

The treatment of detainees and prisoners has been one of the major failures of the 'War on Terror'. In January 2002 US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld infamously said of the prisoners in Guantanamo: "I do not feel even the slightest concern over their treatment. They are being treated vastly better than they treated anybody else over the last several years and vastly better than was their circumstance when they were found." Those who suggest that humane treatment is a relatively unimportant issue need to address the criticism that ill-treatment and torture have in the past provided purported justifications for the resort to terrorism and also discredited the anti-terrorist cause.

Seventhly, in the history of both terrorism and counter-terrorism there has long been a temptation to depict the adversary as 'evil'. In terrorist movements, many otherwise decent and serious individuals have been seduced by the simple and attractive notion of the power of the deed: that a cleansing act of violence can rid the world of uniquely evil forces. In counter-terrorist operations, the depiction of the adversary as evil poses severe practical problems. One hazard of this approach is that many people in the population from which the terrorists come will know that such an explanation is too simple. They may have sympathy with the cause for which the terrorists stand but not with the method. If the terrorist group is described as simply 'evil', the population will therefore be further alienated from the anti-terrorist cause, which they will see as depending on a caricature that they do not recognise.

Finally, a student of the history of terrorism cannot help being struck by certain similarities between terrorists and at least some of their opponents. Both share not only a vision of the world as a struggle of good versus evil, but also a belief that particular new weapons and tactics now give an opportunity to strike directly at the heart of an adversary's power. Russian terrorists in the 19th century believed that their new and quite accurate weapons – the pistol, the rifle and the bomb – could enable them to attack the source of all evil (namely the Tsar) directly and with limited side-effects. The similarity between so-called terrorists and their adversaries was noted by Régis Debray in his little-known novel *Undesirable Alien*. In this unsentimental view of his fellow revolutionaries in Latin America, he mocks his comrades for having a taste for cowboy films, and suggests that red revolutionaries may be propounding nothing more than the ideology of the American western. Sadly, events have moved on since then, and it is the Hollywood disaster movie that is emulated by Osama bin Laden and his colleagues. The general philosophy of radical Islam also has Californian roots due to the presence there in the 1950s of its founding father, Sayyid Qutb.

In the 'War on Terror', a vision of clean and well-targeted war against dictatorial regimes has informed much US policymaking. As George W. Bush put it in his infamous 'Mission Accomplished' speech on 1 May 2003: "Today, we have the greater power to free a nation by breaking a dangerous and aggressive regime. With new tactics and precision weapons, we can achieve military objectives without directing violence against civilians. No device of man can remove the tragedy from war; yet it is a great moral advance when the guilty have far more to fear from war than the innocent." This vision of the 2003 Iraq war as a more or less clinical excision of an evil regime looks to have been a desert mirage – just as many terrorist visions of achieving change through violence have also led to disappointment.

In present circumstances there are powerful reasons to buttress the claim that the threat faced is totally new, and needs to be tackled in new ways. Today's terrorist incidents can involve a combination of elements, many of which are new: elaborate planning carried out far from the location of the attack; a suicide mission; an assault on a nuclear-armed power; the destruction of major buildings; and the killing of hundreds or even thousands of people, usually civilians. Such an attack may be on behalf of a movement many of whose demands are probably unachievable and certainly non-negotiable. Because the changes have been so great, it would also be easy to brush aside earlier historical experience of terrorism on the grounds of diminished relevance – and this indeed appears to have happened in much contemporary analysis. It is a huge mistake.

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evolving threats

AUDREY KURTH CRONIN argues that we must understand the innovations in 21st-century terrorism

TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS ARE both rooted in the past – reflective of the long historical patterns that have emerged in the miserable human experience with the phenomenon – as well as characterized by the unique aspects of the eras within which they emerge. Because terrorism is a tactic, there are many motives for employing it and countless conditions under which it is used.

Yet organizations that employ terrorism can resemble each other over vast periods of time, even as their means and methods evolve, reflecting contemporary circumstances. The trick, of course, is to distinguish what is new from what is old, and to adopt agile responses that reflect an understanding of both.

Important innovations that affect the evolution of today's terrorism, in type or degree, include changes in technologies, a vast increase in mobility, enhanced sharing of tactics, more access to modern weaponry, an explosive growth in means of communication, and diversified access to resources. While firmly tied to the history of terrorism, these characteristics also distinguish 21st-century terrorism from its predecessors and subtly change the strategic landscape for countering it in an increasingly globalised international community.

New information technologies are facilitating the popularity and employment of this old type of symbolic violence. The use of the internet, encryption, mobile phones, and instant messaging etc have greatly improved the ability of international terrorist organizations to communicate, resulting in more sharing of information between formerly unconnected groups and increasing numbers of coordinated attacks. Such information technologies have also played a key role in facilitating research for members of terrorist groups, from al-Qaeda operatives, who studied the chemical-dispersing powers of crop dusters shortly before 9/11, to research on bio-chemical agents seized in operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda is not the only group with a demonstrated interest in chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological weapons: the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the Red Army Faction, Hezbollah, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), German neo-Nazis, and the Chechens have all demonstrated a similar fascination. And, of course, the first group to use such weapons was Aum Shinrikyo, whose sarin attack on the Tokyo subways in 1995 breached a threshold that other terrorist groups may now be less averse to crossing.

Perhaps more importantly, and belying the myth that there is a clash between modernity and medievalism, the internet has become a crucial tool for the dissemination of the terrorist organization's message and the recruitment of potential new members or supporters. Groups as diverse as Israel's Kahane Chai, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Aum Shinrikyo, the Kurdistan Worker's Party and Peru's Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) maintain user-friendly official or unofficial websites, accessible by interested net surfers throughout the world.

Contrary to the expectations of many terrorism experts, the internet has not been used primarily as a means of carrying out major attacks; the fear of "cyber-terrorism," dominant during the 1990s, has been replaced by a realization that terrorist groups are employing information technologies to facilitate greater carnage through other, more traditional means.

The web has led to enhanced efficiency in many terrorist-related activities, including administrative tasks, coordination of operations, recruitment of potential members, communications among adherents, and attraction of sympathisers. These may not be dramatic developments, but over time they are

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

potentially more important; organizations are reaching disaffected and marginalized cohorts in both developed and developing countries. As is the case with most modern enterprises, terrorist organizations are using new technologies to become more efficient, globally connected and capable, and the implications of this dark underside of the information age are only beginning to be studied, much less understood.

Globalisation has also enabled terrorist organizations to reach across state borders in the same way – and via the same channels – through which international trade travels. The removal of trade barriers in places such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) has been a double-edged sword. These and other measures have facilitated the movements of terrorist groups like Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, and the Egyptian al-Gama-at al-Islamiyya, resulting in the establishment of new far flung cells. Growing networks of terrorist groups are able to collect intelligence, carry out attacks, and exploit the variable laws of the states within which they operate, even evading extradition if their members are arrested. Operatives are moving very easily across borders, in other words, only until they are caught: states are then typically more encumbered by territorially-based restrictions than terrorist organizations are.

It is not only people moving fluidly across borders, but also resources: terrorist organizations again including al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Tamil Tigers have well-developed funding operations, often with both legal enterprises (such as charitable organizations and legitimate companies) and illegal elements (such as drug smuggling and production). Indeed, with terrorism, the situation is often the opposite of the usual money-laundering process of organized crime, in which 'dirty' money (raised from selling drugs or other crime) is made 'clean' through laundering. In terrorist financing, often 'clean' money is made 'dirty'. This is harder to track, as it requires knowing the final spending destination for what may appear to be otherwise legitimate money.

Finance and resources used for terrorist organizations may or may not be moved through the usual channels, such as the traditional banking and financial sectors. Indeed, the most effective movement of money and commodities may not necessarily rely on sophisticated high-tech methods at all. As has been widely reported in the press, groups like al-Qaeda employ everything from direct currency transport (cash carried by individuals) to reliance on very ancient informal money-changing arrangements like the hawala or hundi systems to move their assets without encumberance.

Often value is translated into diamonds or other precious metals, even bought at prices above market value, so as to translate it into new, more mobile forms. Again, the money may never reach formal state-controlled banking institutions that might be effectively regulated and there is often not a large amount of it to trace. Most terrorist operations do not require a great deal of money, especially compared to conventional military operations or criminal profit-making activities. The increased fluidity of resources in a globalized age, combined with the prevalence of relatively inexpensive and widely available weapons, explosives and mechanisms, make the 'business' of terrorism relatively inexpensive, by most standards.

There is an additional tactical evolution in international terrorism that has enhanced the autonomy, flexibility, and effectiveness of terrorist groups. While the practice is ancient, the increasing prevalence of the use of suicide attacks by terrorist organizations in recent years is unprecedented.

New information technologies are facilitating the popularityof this old type of symbolic violence

An illustrative list of geographically disparate groups that actively use suicide attacks includes the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the Israel/Palestine region, Al-Ansar Mujahidin in Chechnya, Lashkar-e-taiba of Pakistan and Kashmir, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) of Algeria, Barbar Khalsa International (BKI) of India, the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) of Sri Lanka, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) of Turkey, 'al-Qaeda in Iraq,' Jemaah Islamiya (JI) of Southeast Asia, and, of course, al-Qaeda.

There is clear evidence of sharing of information, training, logistics and technical information among many of these groups, as well as with less formally organized clusters of individuals, many of whom tap into networks through the internet. Suicide attacks in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle and in Iraq are widely known and reported; however, the extent to which the phenomenon has truly global dimensions has hit home painfully in far flung places such as London, Istanbul, Moscow, and Bali.

In addition to the growing autonomy of terrorist organizations is the widely recognized threat of increasing access to so-called weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear chemical, biological or radiological weapons. Here we see a coalescing of both motive and opportunity. For some time there has been ample reason to fear that today's religious-oriented terrorism, with its pursuit of open-ended goals, faced with more widely available and destructive means, might seek to carry out unprecedented destructive attacks.

Research indicates that religious organizations find it easier to 'dehumanize' their victims, separating the 'believers' from others; and the experience with religious terrorist groups bears out these findings. Many experts have argued that religious groups may be more inclined to use so-called 'existential' weapons. And through the growing prevalence of international proliferation, these weapons are more available. In the post-Soviet era, there has been much focus on so-called 'loose nukes,' as well as other unsecured weapons caches, and these continue to be a serious concern. Porous borders, advanced technologies and modern modes of transportation also make it increasingly difficult to intercept small amounts of toxic materials intended for use in weapons of mass destruction. The danger may be growing, especially in the context of the increasingly beleaguered non-proliferation regime, and no one state can act against this problem alone.

The threat is not confined to increasingly globalized WMD proliferation. In the focus upon the most dreadful scenarios, observers often neglect the likewise growing access to conventional arms and weaponry, such as the highly-capable guns and explosives being used now in lethal attacks around the world. Even in the absence of WMD attacks, the lethality of international terrorism is being enhanced by increasingly sophisticated and widely available conventional arms, including everything from shoulder-fired missiles to rocket-propelled grenades to increasingly powerful and deadly explosive devices. Modern 'conventional' weaponry can result in mass destruction, rendering the distinction between conventional and unconventional weaponry increasingly irrelevant in this respect.

Thus, terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and many other local organizations are much less dependent than they used to be upon the clandestine support of state governments for resources, intelligence, and movements across borders, as well as access to information, weapons, and technological expertise. They have growing access to state resources, including both conventional and unconventional weapons, but are less and less likely to be under the control of the state itself. In the context of a globalized economy, they are sharing methods, logistics, and weapons, and are increasingly collaborating in a common anti-modern, anti-secular state ideology.

Much of the response to terrorism today can benefit tremendously from careful analysis of the successes and failures of earlier eras. The roots of current terrorist organizations are firmly anchored in the long-standing history of the phenomenon, and some of the mistakes that have been made by the United States in its response thus far reflect a failure to understand and appreciate that history.

But it is also important to recognize elements that are new and are altering the direction and the impact of what used to be largely a peripheral threat. These new elements will continue to complicate efforts to confront terrorism effectively, and must drive toward comparable innovations in international cooperation against an increasingly globalised threat.

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Positive Consensus

DAVID HELD argues that dominant attitudes towards international relations are counter-productive

WE LIVE IN a world of what I like to call 'overlapping communities of fate' where everyday life – work, money, beliefs, as well as of trade, communications and finance, not to speak of the environment – connects us all with increasing intensity.

The buzz-word for this story is 'globalisation' and since 1945 we have sought to build international institutions that might regulate and govern aspects of it based on universal principles of equality of all human beings.

Half a century on, the international community has reached its next clear moment of decisive choice. I am an optimist; it is still possible to build on the achievements of the post-Second World War era. But we have to be clear about the dangers and difficulties. A combination of developments points towards a very disturbing combination of negative factors. We are at a turning-point, choices are now being made that will determine the fate of the globe for decades to come.

Four major ongoing developments reinforce each other and point in a negative direction. Firstly, the failure in many countries and regions to move towards the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals which set the minimum humanitarian levels for large sections of the world population. Secondly, the emergence of serious questions about the regulation of world trade, and the clear danger that trade negotiations could worsen not redress global inequality. Thirdly, the complete failure to address the awesome consequences of global warming and finally, the erosion of the multilateral order symbolised by the United Nations which extends through a whole series of international agreements and agencies.

The post-war multilateral order is threatened by the intersection and combination of these humanitarian, economic, environmental and political crises. More serious still, there is a driving force taking them from bad to worse. This force is willed, even though it often presents itself in the form of inevitability, and it can be summed up in two phrases: the Washington economic consensus and the Washington security strategy.

These policy packages are, of course, not the sole cause of globalisation in its current form. But together they have promulgated the view that a positive role for government is to be fundamentally distrusted and that regulation which creates common rules and duties threatens freedom, impedes development and restrains the good. They need to be replaced by a progressive framework that both sustains the enormous enhancement of productivity and wealth that the market and contemporary technology make possible, and ensures that the benefits are fairly shared. Equally such a framework must address extremes of poverty and wealth as part of a commitment to overall security which engages with the causes as well as the crimes of terrorism, war and failed states. I will call the approach that sets itself this task; social democratic globalisation and a human security agenda.

The Washington Consensus can be defined as an economic agenda which advocates, among other things, free trade, capital market liberalisation, secure property rights, deregulation, and the transfer of assets from the public to the private sectors. It has been neo-liberal economic orthodoxy for most of the last 20 years in leading OECD countries and prescribed, until recently without qualification, by the IMF and World Bank as the policy basis for developing countries.

Some of the proposals and advice of the Washington Consensus may be reasonable in their own terms. Others are not. Taken together, however, they represent too narrow a set of policies to help create sustained growth and equitable development. The evidence is now growing; it is clear that it does not work well enough. The dominant economic orthodoxies have failed to generate sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and fair outcomes in many parts of the developing world.

In particular it has been found that one of the key global factors limiting the capacity of the poorest countries to develop is the free movement of capital. While tariff liberalisation can be broadly beneficial for low-income countries, rapid capital liberalisation can be a recipe, in the absence of prudential regulation and sound domestic capital markets, 'for volatility, unpredictability and booms and busts in capital flows'. As Geoffrey Garrett has shown working at UCLA, countries that have rapidly opened their capital accounts have performed significantly less well in terms of economic growth and income inequality than countries that have maintained tight control on capital movements but cut tariffs.

Furthermore, the experience of China and India – along with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan in earlier times – shows that countries do not have to adopt liberal trade or capital market policies in order to benefit from enhanced trade and to grow faster. All these countries have grown relatively fast behind protective barriers, growth which fuelled rapid trade expansion. And as each of these countries has become richer, it has tended to liberalise its trade policy. But as Dani Rodrik, the Harvard economist, has emphasised, the only thing that can be said with certainty is that countries tend to become more open as they become richer – it is not a matter of simple cause and effect.

For a country to benefit from growth, its priority should be internal economic integration – the development of its human capital, economic infrastructure and of robust national market institutions. Initially, this needs to be stimulated by state-led economic and industrial policy. The alternative to the Washington Consensus is not a simple endorsement of state-centric development nor is state intervention always progressive and beneficial. Public objectives can be delivered by a diversity of actors, public and private. And the development

[Illustration Nick Hayes]

of civil society – trade unions, citizen groups, NGOs and so on – is an indispensable part of national development. Although there can, of course, be conflicts between economic development and the strengthening of civil society, all societies need significant measures of autonomy to work out their own ways of managing this conflict.

Developing nations need policy space to exercise institutional innovations that depart from the orthodoxy of global market integration first and foremost. Similarly, organisations like the WTO need to move their agenda away from a narrow set of policies concerned with market creation and supervision to a broader range of policies which encourage different national economic systems to flourish within a fair and equitable rule-based global market order. Leaving it to markets on their own to resolve problems of resource generation and allocation will perpetuate the vast asymmetries of life-chances within, and between nation-states, and the emergence of global financial flows which can rapidly destabilise national economies.

Indeed, pushing back the boundaries of state action and weakening governing capacities in order to increase the scope of market forces in a society will often mean cutting back on services which have offered protection to the vulnerable. The difficulties faced by the poorest and the least powerful – north, south, east and west – will be worsened not improved. The rise of 'security' issues to the top of the political agenda reflects, in part, the need to contain the outcomes which such policies help provoke.

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon was a defining moment for the history of today's generations. In response, the US and its major allies could have decided that the most important and effective way to defeat the torrent of global terrorism would be to strengthen international law and enhance the role of multilateral institutions. They could have decided it was important that no single power or group should act as judge, jury and executioner. They could have decided that global hotspots like the Israel-Palestine conflict which feed global terrorism, should be the main priority for coordinated international efforts. They could have decided that the disjuncture between economic globalisation and social justice needed more urgent attention. They could have decided to be tough on terrorism and tough on the conditions which lead people to imagine that al-Qaeda and similar groups are agents of justice in the modern world.

Instead they have systematically failed to decide any of these things. Since 9/11, the world has become more polarised, international law has become weaker, and the systematic political failings of the Washington Consensus have been compounded by the triumphs of new Washington security doctrines.

The rush to war against Iraq in 2003 gave priority to a narrowly conceived security perspective which is at the heart of the new American doctrine of unilateral and pre-emptive war. This agenda contradicts most of the core tenets of international politics and international agreements since 1945. It throws aside respect for political negotiations among states: a single country which enjoys military supremacy to an unprecedented extent, has decided under its current president to use that supremacy to respond unilaterally to perceived threats.

The new doctrine has many serious implications. Among these is a return to the view of international relations as, in the last analysis, a 'war of all against all'. Once this 'freedom' is granted to the USA, why not also to Russia or China; India or Pakistan; North Korea or Iran? It cannot be consistently argued that all states bar one must accept limits on their self-defined goals and that this can be called law. It will not take long for such an approach to become manifestly counter-productive.

What the world needs is a global security agenda that requires three things of governments and international institutions – all currently missing. Firstly, there must be a commitment to the rule of law and the development of multilateral institutions that can prosecute a robust form of international law enforcement. Second, a sustained effort has to be undertaken to generate new forms of global political legitimacy for international institutions involved in security and peacemaking. Third, there must be a head-on acknowledgement that the ethical and justice issues posed by the global polarisation of wealth, income and power, and with them the huge asymmetries of life-chances, cannot be left to markets to resolve.

Instead, we are now witnessing a deeply misguided response to terrorism in which the new security agenda of the American neoconservatives arrogates to the United States the global role of setting standards. Specifically, we need to link the security and human rights agenda in international law; reform the UN Security Council to improve the legitimacy of armed intervention, with credible threshold tests. We must amend the now outmoded 1945 geopolitical settlement as the basis of decision-making in the Security Council and extend representation to all regions on a fair and equal footing; expand the remit of the Security Council with a parallel Social and Economic Security Council, to examine and, where necessary, intervene in the full gambit of human crises – physical, social, biological, environmental – which can threaten human agency. And lastly, a World Environmental Organisation is needed to promote the implementation of existing environmental agreements and treaties, and whose main mission would be to ensure that the development of world trading and financial systems are compatible with the sustainable use of the world's resources. To reconnect the security and human rights agenda in this way we need a global covenant which encompasses both the fundamental legal humanitarian issues and social and economic well-being, such as basic education and fundamental humanitarian priorities such as clean water and public hygiene.

Social democracy at the level of the nation-state means being tough in pursuit of free markets while insisting on a framework of shared values and common institutional practices. At the global level it means pursuing an economic agenda which calibrates the freeing of markets with poverty reduction programmes and the immediate protection of the vulnerable world-wide. Economic growth can provide a powerful impetus to the achievement of human development targets. But unregulated economic development which simply follows the existing rules and entrenched interests of the global economy will not lead to prosperity for all. Economic development needs to be conceived as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

If developed countries especially want swift movement to the establishment of global legal codes that will enhance security and ensure action against the threats of terrorism, then they need to be part of a wider process of reform on these lines that addresses the insecurity of life experienced in developing societies.

Do we have the resources to put such a programme into effect? The four major interlocking crises of the multilateral order are evidence of the current lack of political will to confront some of the most pressing global threats. But it cannot be said that we lack the means. A few telling examples make the point. The UN budget is $1.25 billion plus the necessary finance for peacekeeping per annum. Against this, US citizens spend over $8 billion per annum on cosmetics, $27 billion per annum on confectionery, $70 billion per annum on alcohol and over $560 billion per annum on cars. (All these figures are from the late 1990s and so are likely to be much higher now.) Or take the European Union: its citizens spend $11 billion per annum on ice-cream, $150 billion per annum on cigarettes and alcohol, while the EU and the US together spend over $17 billion per annum on pet food. If all OECD agricultural subsidies were removed and spent on the world's poorest peoples this would release some $300 billion per annum. A small shift between military and aid budgets (respectively $900 billion a year globally and $50 billion a year globally) would make a marked difference to the human security agenda. Clearly, the economic resources do exist to put in place reforms to aid the world's poorest and least well-off. The question really is about how we allocate our resources, to whose benefit and to what end.

Economic development needs to be conceived as a means to an end, not as an end in itself

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nuclear family

General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), PRAKASH KARAT, crticises the Indian Government's decision to side with the US over Iran's development of atomic weapons

ON SEPTEMBER 24, India voted with the US and the European sponsors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board's resolution to refer Iran to the UN Security Council, due to its alleged nuclear programme. Unlike other developing and non-aligned countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Nigeria and Algeria, India did not abstain on the resolution. This was a surprisingly hawkish stance: even its South Asian neighbours, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, refused to line up with the US.

The Manmohan Singh government has been thoroughly exposed by this episode. Until the eve of the vote in the IAEA, India proclaimed merely that Iran should adhere to international obligations while affirming its right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. During the foreign minister Natwar Singh's visit to Teheran in the run-up to the IAEA vote, it was declared that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved within the framework of the IAEA. Further, the Indian government stated that within the IAEA, the issue should be decided on the basis of consensus.

All this proved to be nothing more than empty posturing. Just a few days of sustained American pressure led the Manmohan Singh government to cave in. Condoleeza Rice's demand that India, China and Russia rally to the US position has now been acceded to – by India alone.

The trend towards capitulation was precipitated by a raucous denunciation of India's prior position in US Congressional hearings. The final act of surrender seemingly took place during Manmohan Singh's visit to New York in mid-September and in the run-up to his meeting there with President Bush.

For some time the foreign minister, Natwar Singh, continued to reiterate India's former, accommodatory stance on the issue. The last time he did this was before his meeting with Condoleeza Rice in New York on September 20. Nonetheless, just three days later, in a phone conversation with the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Manmohan Singh distanced himself from this position. According to an official statement, the Prime Minister advised the Iranian President to take: "a flexible position to avoid a confrontation" and: "to make concessions to this end".

All the three components of the position formulated – relating to Iran's nuclear rights and obligations, retaining the IAEA as the proper forum for dispute resolution, and the necessity that any resolution should be consensual – were abandoned. Iran has been asked to stop enrichment of uranium and to halt construction of a research reactor using heavy water, despite

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

India's original stand that Iran, as a signatory of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has the right to develop nuclear technology under safeguards. The assertion that matters are "within the competence" of the UN Security Council clearly goes against the declared stance that it should be dealt with within the IAEA framework. Finally, the adherence to consensus was given up when India lined up with the US and the EU3 to force through a majority vote in the IAEA.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Manmohan Singh government gave up its stand simply to appease the United States. The underlying theme of the India-US Joint Statement signed in Washington in July 2005 is now being played out. In return for the US fully recognising India's nuclear status, Delhi is expected to conform to its role as a strategic ally; it cannot baulk at US plans to target countries like Iran, Syria or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Manmohan Singh government seems to have calculated that its IAEA vote will send a message that India is a reliable ally and a responsible nuclear power. It has deliberately ignored the immoral and illegal position of the US and the Western powers – powers that allow Israel to have nuclear weapons and have helped its nuclear development despite the fact that it is not a NPT signatory, but will nonetheless do anything to prevent any other country in the Middle East from acquiring similar technology.

Thus the Indian government seems to follow the 'railway compartment analogy' of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Jaswant Singh. When you are trying to get into a crowded railway compartment, you have one view; having gained entry into the compartment, you join the rest of the inmates to keep others from entering. Being a 'responsible nuclear power' means not only keeping others out, but accepting the terms for entry set out by the nuclear 'haves'.

The logic of the 1998 Pokhran nuclear test blasts (with which India first demonstrated its full nuclear capacity to the world) is now playing out. In return for possessing a nuclear threat, India has to accede to the rules of the game that the US and its allies have set out to gain de facto nuclear weapons power status.

It is the height of hypocrisy – telling the US privately that India does not want another nuclear weapon state in the region, while India has maintained that it has the right to conduct nuclear tests and go for weaponisation. Unlike India, Iran is a signatory of the NPT and there is nothing substantial in the charges of violation and concealment levelled against it, as revealed in the reports submitted by the IAEA inspections. This has been lucidly brought out in a three part series published in India's *The Hindu* newspaper by Siddharth Varadarajan.

The anti-Iranian case is developing into a repeat of the 'weapons of mass destruction' fantasy built up to legitimate conflict against Iraq. By voting with the US, India is becoming party to another infamous exercise in intimidation and coercion against a country with which it previously enjoyed friendly relations and a vital energy trade.

The explanation given by the Indian government for its vote last September is laboured and riddled with contradictions. After conceding that India does not believe Iran to be 'non-compliant' under Article XII C of the IAEA's statute, and that characterising the current situation as a 'threat to international peace and security' is unwarranted, there was no reason for India approve the resolution. But it did so.

The Manmohan Singh government gave up its stand in order to appease the United States

The government claims that two concerns of India were met by the draft resolution. First, that more time should be given for exploring all avenues for a satisfactory resolution of the issues that have arisen. By stating that the next Board meeting would take a decision, it is claimed, that time has been provided for. Second, India was opposed to the matter being referred to the UN Security Council immediately, as it was not justified by the circumstances. Hence the draft has supposedly kept the matter within the purview of the IAEA for the time being.

Both these grounds are specious. There was only ever going to be a few weeks before the next Board meeting in November. Furthermore, the resolution has already found Iran "non-compliant" and thus declared it is a fit case for reference to the UN Security Council. The resolution takes the form of an ultimatum to Iran that it give up its right to develop nuclear technology or face action through the Security Council. A crucial line has therefore been crossed by it; whether the IAEA retains oversight for the intervening period, before compliance is assessed, is neither here nor there. As for the claim that India's stand was to help Iran, the hostile reaction of the Iranian government following the vote has exposed this particular double-talk.

India, in an unconscionable move, has fallen into step with the US and the Western powers and broken ranks with the non-aligned countries. That is why Nicholas Burns, US Under Secretary of State and the man who negotiated the deal, singled out India for particular thanks. Its vote, he said, had foiled Iran's attempt to frame the issue as a contest between developed and developing countries.

The major non-aligned countries on the Board of the IAEA – South Africa, Brazil, Nigeria, Algeria – refused to line up with the US and sanction Iran. Their stance was stated in black and white by the Malaysian representative and chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Ryma Jama Hussein, after a meeting of the NAM countries: "All countries have the basic and inalienable right to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes."

India's stance is more subtle: all countries have these rights, subject to US approval. The defection of India from the NAM stand on the Iranian question has damaged the country's image as a non-aligned power. Countries like Brazil and South Africa – partners in the G20 group in the WTO – must now legitimately question India's reliability.

Why the sudden change in India's approach to foreign policy? July's Joint Statement, and the India-US Defence Agreement immediately preceding it, represented a key turning point. The Manmohan Singh government has entered into a compact with the US which makes it a strategic ally. The nuclear cooperation pact is part of an overall framework with both political and strategic aspects.

The United States was quick to demand that India, as a strategic partner, take on board the United States' concerns about Iran. Failure to do so would not only imperil the nuclear cooperation agreement but also affect broader US attitudes towards India. Yet as a direct result of succumbing to the American pressure, the vital India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project has become endangered (despite government protestations to the contrary).

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government has taken a major step which adversely affects India's independent foreign policy and its status in the non-alignment movement.

The Prime Minister is directly responsible for this state of affairs. India should state clearly that the Iranian nuclear issue is not a fit case for referral to the UN Security Council. Iran has the right to develop its nuclear technology within the framework of the NPT and IAEA safeguards. To make the Indian government adopt such a position, it is necessary for all the Left and democratic forces to mobilise the people in defence of an independent foreign policy.

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struggling to change

Former UN Under-Secretary General, Sir Marrack Goulding, assess the attempt to reform the United Nations

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

Heaven help the United Nations – if its Member States cannot do better, does it have a future?

DOES THE UNITED Nations need reform? Yes, it certainly does. Reform has been high on the international agenda for years. But little has been achieved because the Member States cannot agree on what to do.

Why is reform required? The main reason is fundamental change in the world since the UN was founded in 1945. The Cold War is over: the European empires, including the Russian one, have been dissolved; membership of the UN has more than tripled; a technological revolution has led to the globalisation of almost everything; states' ability to assert their sovereignty is much diminished; and new values have been defined in human rights, governance, integrity and the relief of human suffering.

Lesser reasons are major errors by the UN in the hectic expansion of its peace operations following the end of the Cold War, errors – for which I share responsibility, as head of UN peace operations at that time – and weak personnel management, incompetence and, sadly, corruption in the Secretariat, recently revealed by Paul Volcker's investigation of the Oil-for-Food programme in Iraq.

Another reason for the decline in public respect for the UN is the Member States' frequent inability to agree on what should be done. This cannot be removed by reform, nor should it be. The UN is, after all, a democratic institution. Its decisions are taken by majority vote and it is natural that 191 Member States should often disagree on what to do.

Iraq brought all this into the open. Member States were bitterly divided, fantasies and lies flew in all directions, there was no consensus in the Security Council, some major democracies decided to violate the UN Charter by invading a Member State, others condemned the invasion, the Secretary-General was ambivalent. Result – the United Nations failed to prevent the illegal invasion of Iraq. It was led by two permanent members of the Security Council who defied the Charter's most important principles – the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty of states and no use of force without Security Council authorization.

This result did enormous damage to the UN – some even predicted its demise. But the failure of the invasion to produce the expected political results, the huge number of civilian deaths, the growing insurgency, disgraceful conduct by Western troops – all this has had the perverse effect of causing many to say that it would have been better to go down the UN road. Perhaps, it was said, a new, reformed and efficient UN could arise like a phoenix from the ashes of Baghdad and Fallujah.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan seized the moment and appointed a 'High-Level Panel' to produce recommendations for reform. Many, including me, were sceptical – there had been umpteen reports on reform, what was there new to say? But we sceptics were wrong. The Panel's report was clearer, less verbose and less cautious in its recommendations than its predecessors. Its most important recommendation was recognition that the security of human beings ('human security') is not just a political and military matter. Human security depends also on economic and social factors which must therefore receive from the UN and its Member States as much attention and resources as the more familiar political and military factors.

The High-Level Panel identified a fundamental weakness in the UN's existing Charter. In 1945 the UN's founding fathers assumed that only the behaviour of states gave rise to security issues; the Charter did not mention insurgency within states or terrorism or international crime or poverty or uncontrolled migration as threats to the security of states and their peoples. And no one thought that the sovereignty of states might be eroded and their powers decline.

But that is what has happened. State policy no longer constitutes the primary threat to citizens' safety, well-being and prosperity. The High-Level Panel made familiar recommendations about reform of the General Assembly and the Security Council, closer relations with regional organizations and the restoration of professionalism and integrity in the Secretariat. But the most important recommendations were new ones: they were about how the world should (a) address the economic and social threats to international security and (b) provide support to countries emerging from the stress of conflict.

These recommendations were widely welcomed. But would governments have the political will to adopt them? In particular, could Washington be persuaded to do so? For President Bush and his neo-conservatives, the United Nations is anathema; their doctrine that the overwhelming military power of the United States should be used to establish US-style democracy and freedom in the rest of the world does not conform to the doctrine of the UN Charter. The omens were not good.

They were soon made worse. A few Member States decided to launch a campaign for Permanent Membership of the Security Council. This was a secondary issue, important but not as important as the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the policy required to implement them. But for the media it was sexy stuff and ruled supreme for nine months, distracting attention from the Panel's all-important recommendations on human security.

As a result, the recommendations were buried in a vast document prepared by the President of the General Assembly for a Summit Meeting in New York in September – 37 pages with 159 paragraphs and riddled with UN platitudes. The human security concept was allowed only 40 words: 'We stress the right of people to live in freedom and dignity. We commit ourselves to further discussion of the notion of human security in the General Assembly with a view to addressing more effectively the needs of vulnerable peoples.'

And, at the last moment, the US Ambassador to the UN came on stage with a track-changed text containing 467 amendments, one of which reduced the passage on human security from 40 words to 28. Many of the US amendments were accepted and the document was finally approved by the assembled Heads of State. But, like everything in the UN, the 'Summit Outcome Document', as it was called, was given an acronym. The acronym was spot-on: it was SOD.

Heaven help the United Nations. If its Member States cannot do better than this, does it have a future? The ball remains in the court of the Member States. Only they can extract from the General Assembly's platitudinous, verbose decisions to make the organization more efficient and more honest. The capacity required is not a financial one. It is a political one. Do the Member States have the will to implement reform? Or will they let their United Nations stumble on until it finally loses credibility and sinks beneath the waters of the East River?

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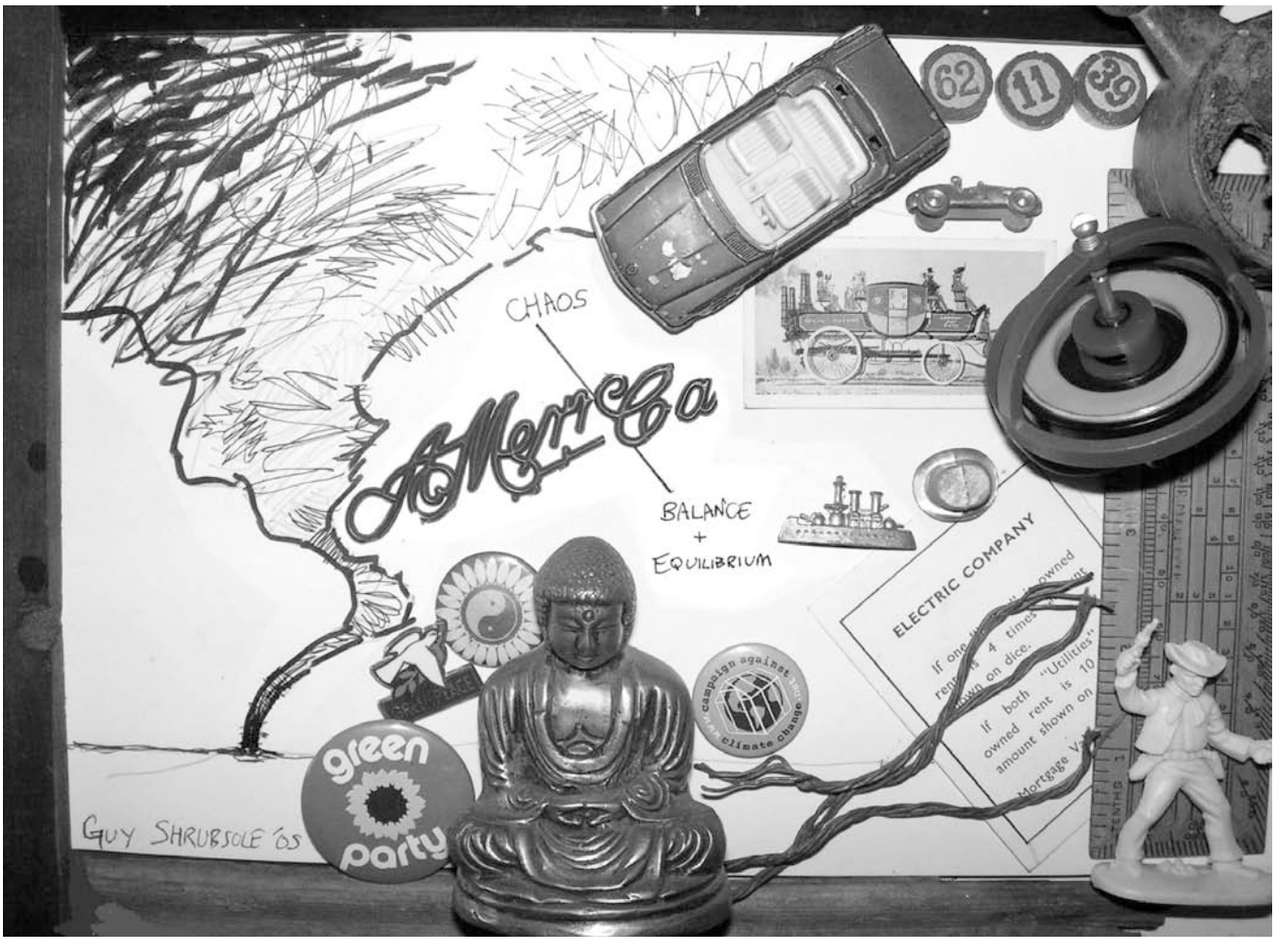


rising cost of change

DIETER HELM advocates the role of the market in providing a solution to global warming

IN THE TWENTY-FIRST century, there are many challenges that threaten our way of life, itself the product of the enormous economic expansion of the twentieth century. International terrorism and flu pandemics are two obvious candidates. Yet none of these is on a par with climate change.

Though terrible in their potential, both terrorism and flu are largely known challenges, and containment is at least possible. But climate change has so many almost intractable elements; the science and the economics are very uncertain (modelling whole global systems is beyond most conventional tools), the diplomacy is difficult (so far the three big players – the US, China and India – are not even in the game), and the non-carbon technologies have yet to make much of an impact.

Put simply, the question is: how can CO_2 – and other greenhouse gas – emissions be limited to a rise from about 270 ppm (parts per million) to between 400 and 550 ppm, and the world's population rise from six to nine billion, and the developed world carry on growing by between two and three per cent per annum, and China, India and indeed much of the developing world catch up with Western living standards?

When the problem is put in this stark perspective, current attempts to grapple with it look feeble. The Kyoto Protocol is, at best, a first attempt at building an international framework, but even its supporters recognise that it will not make much difference to global warming even if – although it seems unlikely – its targets are

[Illustration Guy Shrubsole]

met. To its critics, its short-term perspective gives little incentive to invest in non-carbon technologies and no incentive to undertake research and development (R&D). Though it is almost politically incorrect to criticise Kyoto, its critics probably have a point: in the end, it took the promise of support at the WTO to persuade Russia to join and hence bring the Protocol into effect, and all the key polluters are outside its targets.

This has not stopped Britain, and to a lesser extent the EU, making commitments that are as much aspirations as credible targets. For Britain, the closure of much of the coal industry in the 1990s made the Kyoto cap seem like a doddle; committing to the Kyoto targets was for Britain simply a statement of a clearly expected trend, and therefore entirely painless. But the 1997 Labour manifesto promised to cut CO_2 by 20 per cent by 2010, and this was restated in the 2005 manifesto. The rationale was that, although this would make no real difference to global warming, it would show leadership and give Britain moral authority in international negotiations. In effect, it was a return to Robin Cook's ill-fated 'ethical foreign policy'.

The trouble with this approach is that it requires delivery. So far, it has been unsuccessful: there is virtually no chance of meeting the 20 per cent target (so there is little moral authority) and leadership at the G8 Summit at Gleneagles failed to persuade the US and, in its wake, China and India to join in.

At the European level, hitting the Kyoto targets looks like a long haul for many member states: only the very depressed European economy has kept a lid on emissions, but even this has not been enough. There is virtually no evidence to suggest that the leading EU member states are rushing to impose draconian short-run costs on their economies in a scramble to meet Kyoto's 2012 deadline. Nor should they; climate change is a long-run problem, and the short-run (but not necessarily long-run) costs are very high.

While a short-run solution would not make much sense, however, there has been a growing inclination to beef-up the credibility of targets by developing emissions trading. The idea is simple: set a ceiling on carbon emissions, and then require polluters to obtain permission to pollute. This is rendered through permits, and enough are issued only to meet the constrained total. The permits can be grandfathered (given out to polluters) or auctioned. The permits are then traded amongst polluters, so that those who find it most expensive to reduce pollution will pay the price, and those who can reduce emissions cheaply will do so to avoid the costs of the permits. The price of permits then goes to whatever level is necessary to meet the ceiling or target.

But this is deceptively simple. Emissions trading assumes that the targets are defined. The property rights (represented by the permits) also need to be defined in detail. Emissions need a base line. They need accreditation. Markets need to be created and regulated. In practice, the EU scheme has seen intense national haggling, weak targets, and the first period (2005-08) has had to be regarded very much as a trial. The rules for the second period (2008-12) are yet to be determined, and no one has much idea of what to do after 2012.

It is the last factor that matters most. Without targets, the number of permits cannot be determined. But why should firm targets, such as those set by the Kyoto Protocol, be expected after 2012? What evidence is there that, at the global level, emissions will be capped – and, in particular, capped to the level necessary to stabilise at say, 550ppm? In fact, global energy demand is set to rise by about 60 per cent between now and 2030. And with that demand, carbon emissions will similarly rise.

Developments in the world oil market since 2000 have dwarfed all other climate change policies

Weak targets, such as those of the Kyoto Protocol, could be adopted again, rolling over the emissions trading schemes. That would please the traders – after all emissions trading is a profitable business – but it would not tackle the core problem.

What really matters is low and non-carbon technology; the supply side. However much environmentalists bang on about reducing the demand for energy and changing our lifestyles, at the global level the real issue is about how that energy is produced and consumed. This is a technology-based investment problem: how to replace overwhelmingly carbon-based economies with non-carbon ones, and to do this in the next half a century or so. It will be hugely expensive and require major structural change.

While so much attention has been paid to emissions trading, only the US, and to a lesser extent China, have seriously cast the problem in this technology context. Of course, many countries (especially in Europe) have persuaded themselves that wind farms and energy efficiency measures, such as insulation, will do the job. But the real questions are about baseload electricity, and major new technologies for transport – finding massive, non-carbon energy supplies.

Fortunately, some of the technologies are already known, at least in outline. It is, in theory, perfectly possible to do without the carbon emissions from fossil fuels. A demonstration hydrogen plant is already being developed in Britain. If it works, it will save more carbon than all the wind turbines that have so far been built. Carbon sequestration is, in theory, just reversing the process of taking the carbon (oil, gas and coal) out of the ground. Then there is nuclear power, a known technology, with costs which countries such as France have been able to carry without damaging their economic growth.

But both carbon sequestration and nuclear power have their own problems. Carbon sequestration requires whole new infrastructures and technologies to ensure permanent storage. Nuclear creates waste that worries those who question society's ability to keep it safe, and those who fear the military use of the technology. And then there is the hydrogen that can be produced from the clean coal and nuclear. Replacing petrol stations with hydrogen ones is just part of the networks in which investment is needed.

None of this is to suggest that, in particular contexts, other technologies will not have an important part to play. New intelligent networks, smart metering, new building technologies will all have a role. There will almost certainly be completely new technologies too.

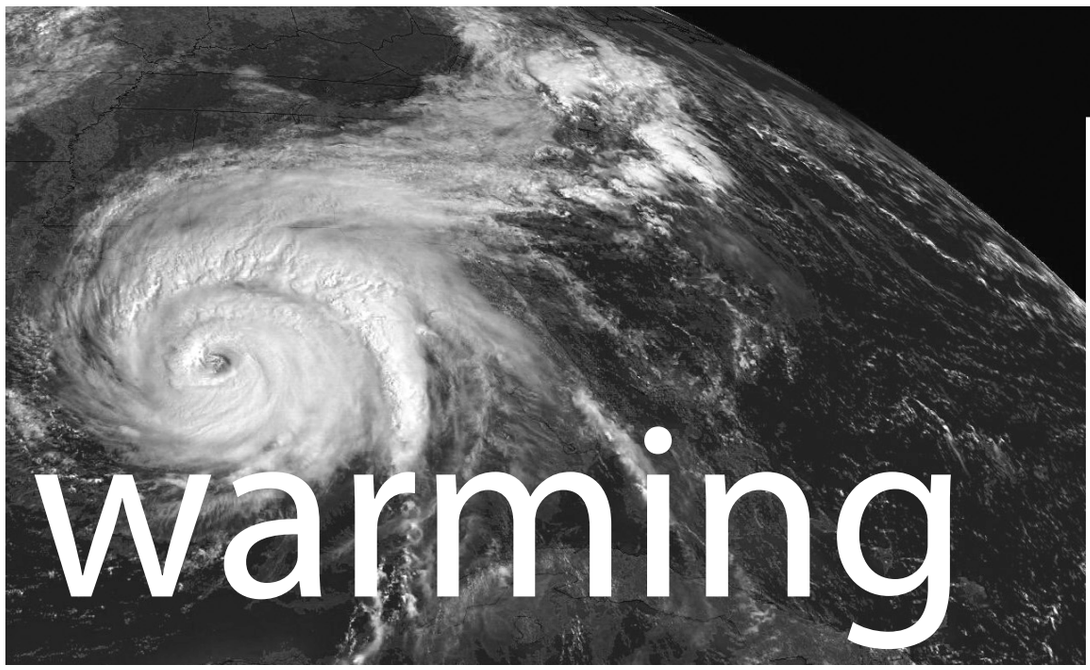
The lesson from the history of energy and environmental policy is that 'picking winners' from available technologies is a hazardous game for governments and their agencies. The market is much better. And here there is an optimistic development that puts the existing emissions trading schemes in the shade – the price of oil.

Developments in the world oil market since 2000 have dwarfed all the other climate change policies: the oil price has risen from $10 a barrel to over $60 a barrel – in effect, a massive carbon tax. This has transformed the economics of clean coal, nuclear, hydrogen and other non-carbon technologies and it will hit demand too.

There are many causes of this oil price rise and, from a climate change point of view, it is very good news. Moving away from carbon is expensive, and oil prices may fall back in the short run, but the longer-term trend is probably an increasing one. Oil production is approaching its peak: as demand grows, supply will struggle to keep up. As a result, prices should be going up. There is much more coal, but that is why sequestration is so important.

Whether the global warming will be slowed and then contained depends upon human ingenuity to find new ways of harnessing energy. That search has been what much of human history has largely been about. Rising prices and massive investment in technology will help this search. Emissions trading has a part to play, but it is not the panacea that many have claimed. It is a bit part, not the main act. What matters is whether the price of carbon is forced up to the level necessary first to stabilise and then reduce emissions. A carbon tax or the price of permits could do it, but the existing EU Emissions Trading Scheme is not delivering and, more worryingly, is tending to create a false sense of security. Fortunately from a climate change perspective, Opec is shocking the leading world economies out of that complacency.

Dieter Helm is Office Fellow in Economics at New College, Oxford, and a member of both the Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board and the Prime Minister's Council of Science and Technology. The views expressed here are in a personal capacity. Further commentary can be found at www.dieterhelm.co.uk



warming to the fight

GUY SHRUBSOLE speaks to JONATHAN NEALE about the importance of popular protest

THE SUN GLINTS off the waters surrounding the atoll, calm despite the nearby events. Ahead, a ketch has dropped anchor, its crew defiant before the large French military vessel bearing down upon it. Besides the whiff of diesel fuel and salt-spray, there is the reek of sweat: the atmosphere is tense. And with good reason. The year is 1972, and a small boat called the Vega, piloted by members of an organisation calling themselves Greenpeace, have sailed into a nuclear testing zone in French Polynesia, determined to halt proceedings.

It was world-changing image – one whose impact helped to kick-start environmental protest in the West. Yet these outcomes need to be replicated, even bettered, if the environmental movement is to succeed in the oncoming fight against global climate change.

Jonathan Neale is an Oxford-based academic and a leading light in the UK group Campaign Against Climate Change (CCC) – a movement whose many sponsors include the columnist George Monbiot and former Environment Secretary Michael Meacher. Neale's ambition is to see global warming become "the issue that everybody has had a conversation about". Moreover, he believes the only way a binding international deal to tackle climate change can be squeezed from the world's governments is through mass popular protest. It is an ambitious strategy: climate change is has already made the headlines and filled hundreds of column inches, but is it yet a problem that people will take to the streets over?

Fittingly, I met Neale for the first time in a week in which people were taking to the streets to protest – in large numbers – about almost every grievance conceivable. It was the July G8 summit in Edinburgh this year. In a crowded seminar hall of anti-poverty campaigners, 'Stop The War' marchers, anarchists, hippies and ecologists all determined to weigh in with their twopenn'orth during a question-and-pontificate session, Neale's impassioned reasoning and calm determination made him stand out. When I caught up with him later at his home in Oxford, his resolve had not faded – despite the lukewarm deliveries of the G8 on climate change. If anything, the vagueness of the leaders' communiqué on July 8th has made Neale yet more clear-sighted.

"The people who run the world do realise about the threat of climate change – even the naysayers like Bush – but the scale of the problem makes them reluctant to act." Hence, he reasons, only the public can persuade their leaders that there is political capital to be made by facing up to the problem. But the sheer scale of the challenge makes many people believe there is little they can do as individuals. Neal claims this approaches the problem from the wrong angle: "I don't feel that 'what can I do as an individual?' is the right question. The question is: 'what can we do together?'"

The time for lone eco-warriors is passing. When Erin Brockovich took a stand against her local Californian polluting plant, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, her story was immortalised on the big screen; but dealing with global warming requires changing the behaviour not of one firm but of the majority of humanity. Evidently, it is time for some 'united-we-stand' action.

Neale explains that the power of mass movements such as the ANC in South Africa, the civil rights campaign in the US, and the trade unions in the UK, lies in their ability not only to change the minds of governments but to change profoundly the people involved in them. A great assembly of concerned citizens, united in a cause, can create a wonderful atmosphere – a sense that even if one's hopes are not realised through one demonstration, the memory of the event will nourish future efforts to bring about change.

[Photography Diane Greene Lent]

Of course, some form of inspiration is required to get people demonstrating in the first place. Currently, we either seem to be chastising students for being less passionate about causes than their predecessors in the rose-tinted days of the Sixties or propagating a fashionable cynicism about such activities.

Yet many of the anti-Vietnam war protests on American campuses were helped along in no small way by the very immediate prospect of the draft: students were not just distant observers of the war but only a year or two from being called up themselves. Neale accepts that a similar urgent impetus provided then by the draft cards is lacking in any environmental campaign. "Although, like the young men on the draft, none of us can truly escape the consequences of the issue – unless we somehow leave the planet."

Part of the barrier to stimulating popular interest in the climate change is that it can get rather quickly mired in dry scientific debate. As a campagining issue, environmentalism has never had the kudos of socialism or civil rights – its passions have tended to be more subdued, sobered by morbidity at the damage already caused to the planet, or by a reliance on scientific predictions whose validity has fluctuated with the gathering of fresh data.

The science of emissions and atmospheric chemistry is the solid rock upon which a movement can now be built. But that information cannot itself inspire and empower. To their great credit, Neale says, in recent years: "Scientists have done something they've never done before – organised themselves as a group to tell the world about the threat they've discovered." In the past, individual scientists have occasionally intervened in political discourse to offer warnings – such as Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt conveying his misgivings about the danger of atomic weapons – but seldom has such a large section of the scientific community spoken with so unified a voice, on a subject so politically relevant. Neale sees this as an indicator of the scale of the issue. Subsequently, green groups have sought to popularise science, so everyone is at least aware of the predictions.

Katrina highlighted the potential such an event has to promote a breakdown in the social fabric

Perhaps real momentum will only be gained once the malevolent effects of climate change impinge upon people's lives directly. Neale is sure that this is happening already; and that even natural disasters unrelated to global warming are acting as wake-up calls, signifying what the world will be like with an unstable climate. Our meeting is taking place only a few days after the floods caused by Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans – part of the most active Atlantic hurricane season on record. Is it stretching the rhetoric too far to suggest that Katrina was linked directly to climate change? After all, the world witnessed plenty of extreme weather events before the temperature increases of recent years; not every storm that blows up can be a direct result of global warming.

Yet Neale is insistent: granted, one cannot link any individual event to the altering climate, but the growing frequency of hurricane activity is one of the effects of rising temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico, and worldwide. "Whether or not you blame this particular storm on global warming, and I do, you have to say that New Orleans is what global warming will look like. It's our future."

If the events following Katrina are a test-run of how Western society copes in the wake of an extraordinary, catastrophic flood, what does that mean for a world in which such calamities are becoming ever more frequent? Katrina highlighted not just the logistical and health problems caused by widespread natural disaster, but also the potential such an event would have to prompt a breakdown in the social fabric. Neale makes the point well: "Climate change highlights like an x-ray every social weakness, cruelty and inequality. Look at sub-Saharan Africa, where the desert has been advancing in the last 25 years, and the famine that has produced. Famine has bred war, and racism, and the collapse of those societies."

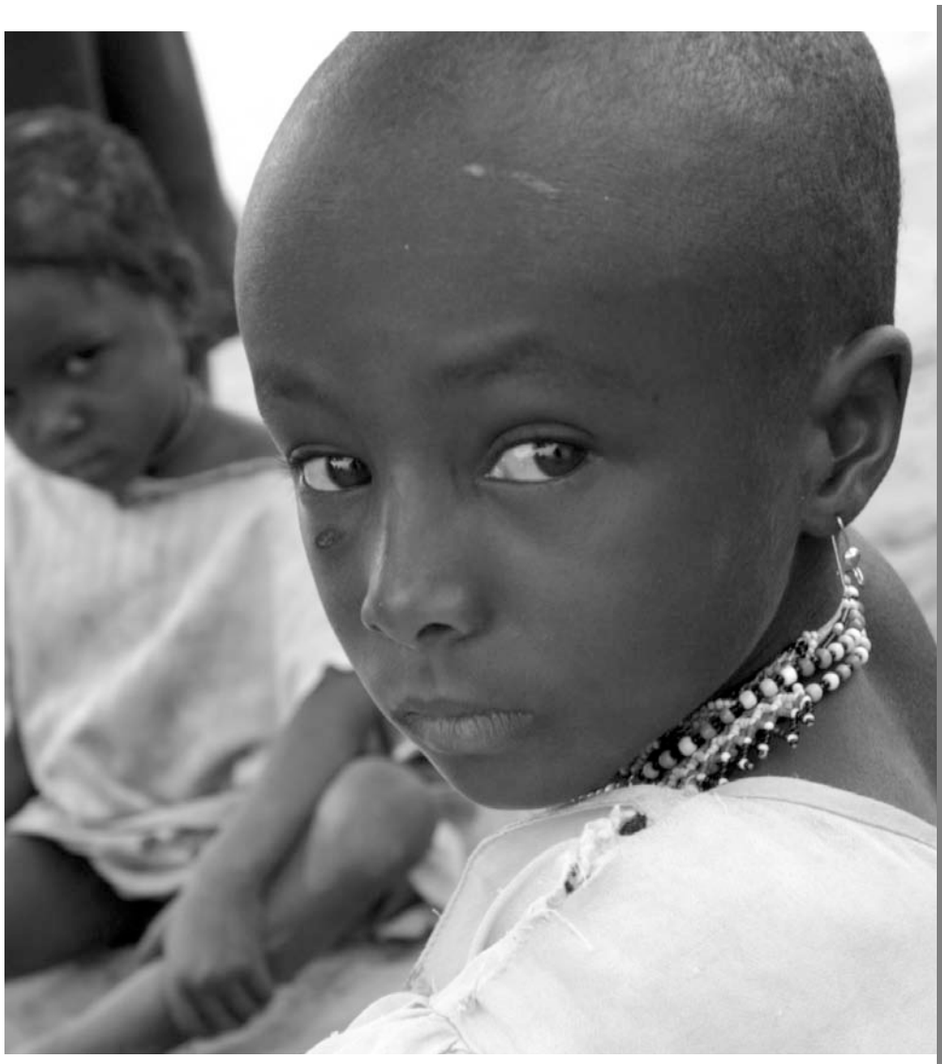
Whether we are being presented with the actual effects of climate change, or a taste of what is to come, Neale is convinced that such events are changing people's minds.

For more information on the Campaign against Climate Change, visit www.campaigncc.org

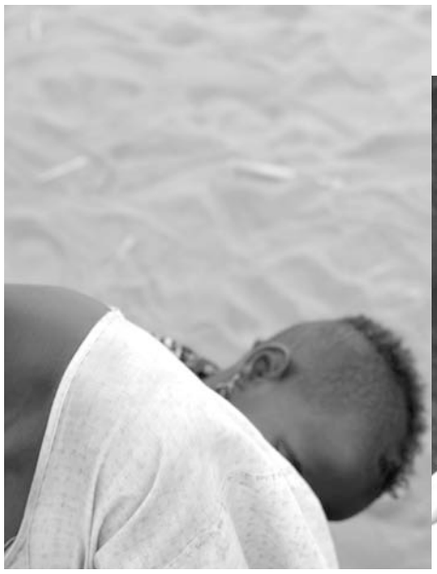
georgina cranston: modern

Slavery in Niger is illegal, yet as the work of photographer GEORGINA CRANSTON shows, the practice perisists

[Photography g@georginacranston.com / www.georginacranston.com]



slavery



Niger:
BROKEN PROMISES

The term 'slavery' conjures up a variety of images: sugar plantations in the Caribbean, hellish journeys across the Atlantic – perhaps the US Civil War. It is unlikely, though, that these images will be grounded in the 21st century, or even the 20th. Surely forced labour was something dealt with by our distant ancestors?

It is a perspective that the government of Niger would whole-heartedly endorse. In March 2005, it intervened directly to block a ceremony celebrating the release of 7,000 slaves by Arissal Ag Amdague (a traditional 'chief' in western Niger), on the grounds that it was a meaningless exercise. Slavery, the administration was at pains to stress, no longer existed in Niger.

Legally, it was entirely correct; the parliament in Niamey put a ban on keeping or trading slaves in May 2003. Yet forced labour persists in numerous pockets of rural Niger. Anti-Slavery International (ASI) claimed in 2004 that at least 43,000 slaves were being held in the country.

Photographer Georgina Cranston was the only Western journalist to witness the aborted 'release' by Amdague, (ceremony pictured page 29). During her time in Niger she went from village to village photographing and speaking to the modern-day victims of slavery.

Slaves in Niger are usually born into an established slave class, distinguished by bracelets worn around the ankles. Tamada, (pictured on *The Oxford Forum* cover) was born into slavery but escaped: "The situation of a slave is more than I can describe. There was so much violence; verbal insults; spitting. If we didn't do what we were told we would be hit so hard."

Based in Niger, the pioneering anti-slavery organisation Timidria helps to locate the families of freed slaves or those who escape. Poverty is a big factor, as slaves become economically dependent on their masters. Timidria provides vital lifelines such as food, schooling, farming equipment and animals.

One of Timidria's most crucial roles is in the education of slaves – and masters – about equality and the right to live like others. Azara (facing page, top left) is 25 years old and was born into slavery. She says she did not know what freedom was: "When the masters were not around I once heard someone saying this was not right. I now realise how wrong slavery is." A year and a half ago, Azara escaped and was taken in by Timidria; her case is now in court.

It seems that Timidria's work on the ground is filtering through. Halima (page 29, bottom right) was a slave in Tajaye. Her master forced her to marry and she now has three children; forced marriage is common

practice to increase the number of slaves. "My master treated me so badly and often raped me…He would put a headscarf on me to try and make me look like a proper Tuareg, because for someone to sleep with a slave like me is not good. His traditional doctor had told him if he slept with a slave he would be cured from illness."

Following meetings with Timidria, helping Halima to understand her rights, she lodged a complaint against her master. She now says she has been liberated, although her children remain enslaved.

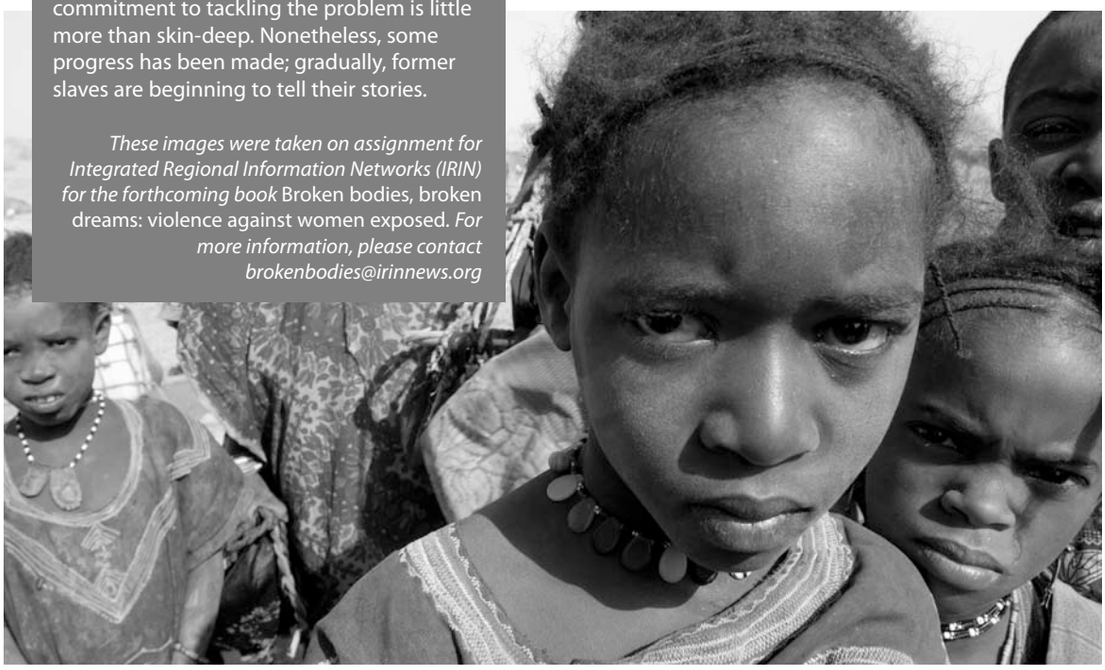
Mamuna (bottom, centre) was a domestic worker until her mistress sold her for Fr200,000 (about £210) to a man, Bebe, who wanted to marry her. "He beat me so hard that my knee cap was put out of place and I couldn't see with my left eye…One time when he beat me I was screaming so loud that other people heard. They came in and said that I am a human being and not an animal. He said: 'I have bought her and I will do what I want with her'." Mamuna had not spent a week with Bebe before she ran away. Timidria wanted to make a court appeal, but Mamuna's former mistress frightened her into dropping the prosecution. She is now working as a prostitute.

Like many slaves, fifteen-year-old Sabila (page 27, bottom right) suffered sexual abuse at the hands of her master. "He has forced me to sleep with him so many times. I used to refuse but he would beat me. This started when I was about seven years old…My schooling hasn't helped: when the teachers talk about slavery they teach that it goes back to the transatlantic slave trade and that it doesn't exist anymore. I am too afraid to say anything."

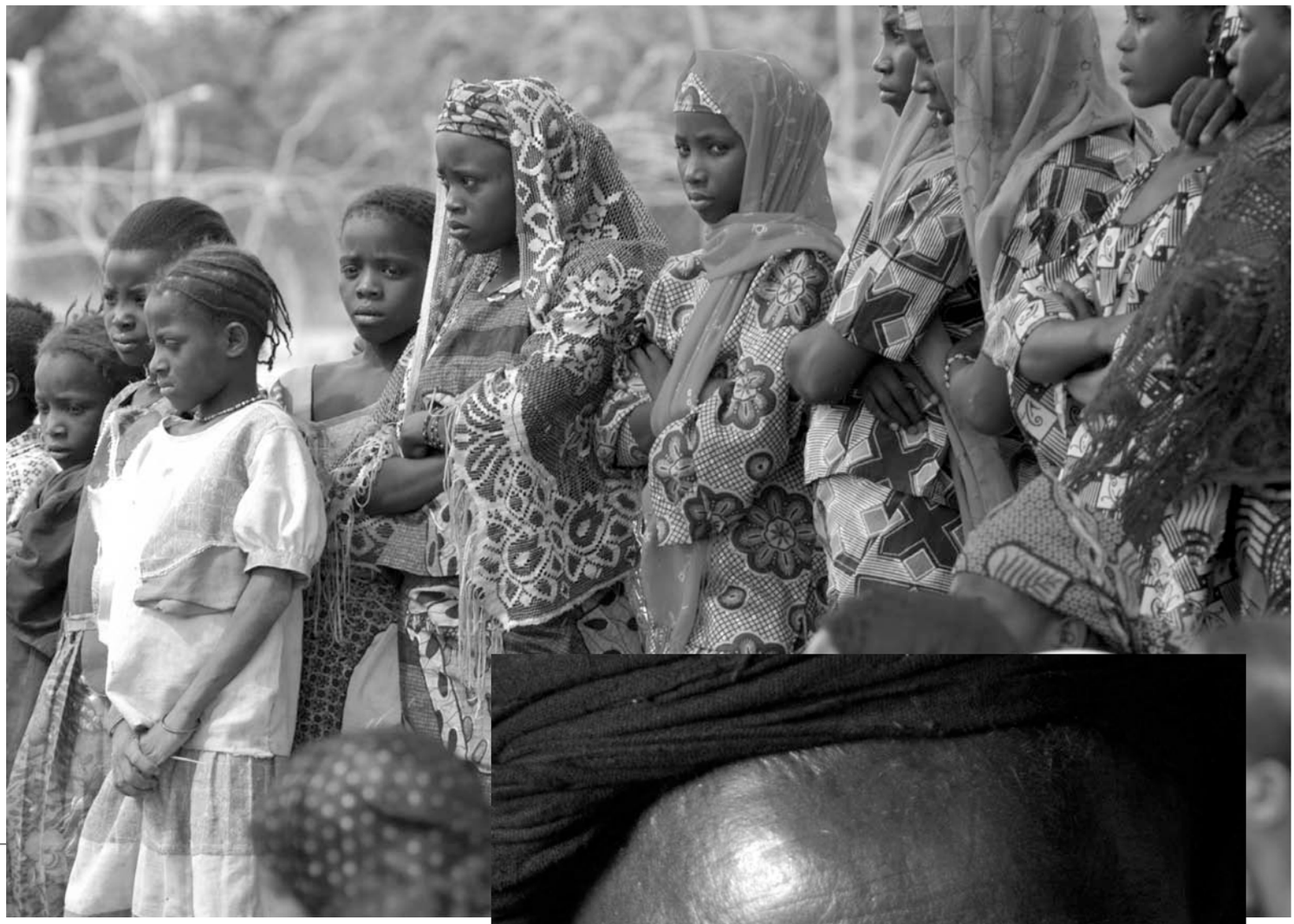
As the events of early 2005 demonstrated, the very existence of slavery remains an extremely taboo subject, and it is difficult to escape the impression that the government's commitment to tackling the problem is little more than skin-deep. Nonetheless, some progress has been made; gradually, former slaves are beginning to tell their stories.

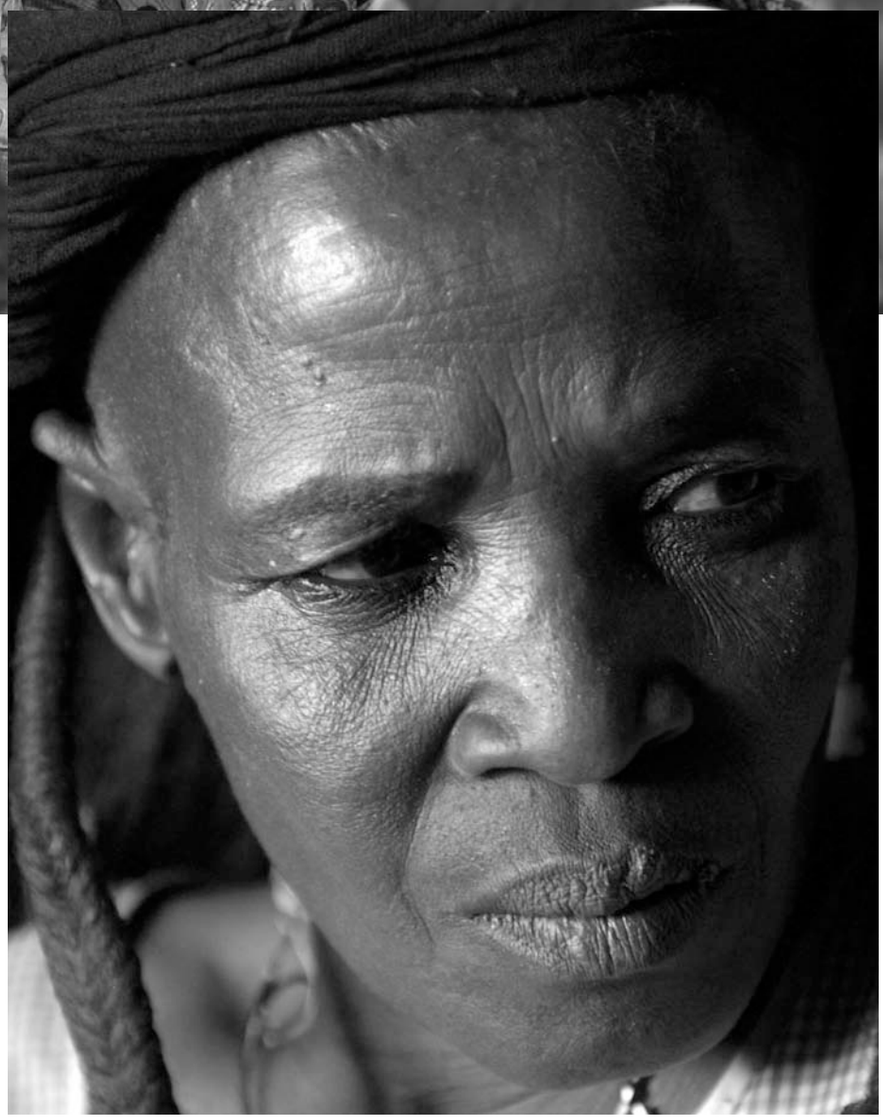
These images were taken on assignment for Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) for the forthcoming book Broken bodies, broken dreams: violence against women exposed. *For more information, please contact brokenbodies@irinnews.org*

My schooling hasn't helped: they teach that slavery doesn't exist any more. I am too afraid to say anything



[Photography g@georginacranston.com / www.georginacranston.com]





trading in life

TONY THOMPSON reports on the growth of human trafficking and the forced labour market that it is fuelling in the UK

AS SOON AS David Bell pulled open the heavy metal doors, he knew that something was terribly wrong. It was the summer of 2000 and the Dover-based customs officer was carrying out a routine inspection of an articulated lorry which had just disembarked a ferry from Zeebrugge. The manifest said the vehicle was transporting fresh produce so the interior should have been chilled, but as the doors swung open Bell was hit by a blast of intense, fetid heat.

At first the interior of the 50-foot long container offered no explanation. Boxes of tomatoes on wooden pallets were piled ceiling high and nothing more could be seen. Bell climbed a ladder and tried to see what lay beyond but when that failed, he called on two freight supervisors to help unload the lorry's cargo. And that's when he found the body.

The Chinese teenager was sprawled across the corrugated metal floor, half naked and half buried by the scattered crates and boxes. As Bell climbed in and began clearing crates from around the man's body, he saw another; a young girl, lying on her back with her mouth open and eyes closed. He pulled out his torch and pointed it into the darkness. At first he thought the floor

[Illustration Hannah Marks]

was covered in more crates. Then, as his eyes adjusted to the gloom, he realised that he was staring at a sea of bodies.

As his torch beam picked out the individuals figures, Bell caught a movement. One man was weakly tapping on the side of the container, trying to attract his attention. The man was barely conscious and gasping: 'bang wo, bang wo' – 'help me'. Then another young man, bare-chested and dripping with sweat, began moving towards the open doors, climbing over the bodies to get there.

Within an hour Bell and his team had removed a total of 58 corpses – 54 men and four women. The two men they had seen moving were the only ones left alive.

The world population currently stands at around 6.6 billion. By the year 2025 it will be 8.5 billion. In 42 countries, 24 of them in Africa, 10 of them in the Middle East, the population doubles every 25 years. India increases its population by the size of the population of Iceland every four days, and by the size of Norway every three months.

What all this means is that the greatest growth in world population is set to come from the poorest countries. This in turn means that in the future, as now, the people trafficking gangs will have a never ending supply of 'clients' who will pay them handsomely in order to be smuggled from one country to another.

At present at least 600,000 people enter the EU illegally each year and around 80 per cent of them are brought in by criminal gangs. With conservative estimates putting the value of the business at around £20 billion, people smuggling is easily as lucrative as the drug trade but, even with recent increases in sentences, the penalties for those who are caught remain far lower.

And it's a business experiencing rapid growth. In 1991 a mere 61 people were discovered trying to enter Britain clandestinely. In 2004, 21,000 were caught. Despite millions spent on additional security measures, thousands still slip through undetected.

The issue here is not about the rights or wrongs of Britain's immigration policy or the shortcomings of the systems used to process asylum seekers, both of which are debates in their own right. Instead the issue is about the cynical exploitation of the vulnerable by the global institution known as international organised crime.

But people smuggling is only one part of the equation. Far more worrying is the parallel rise in people trafficking. Though the two terms are often interchanged, they relate to very different activities.

In the case of the former, a smuggler is hired to bring someone into the UK illegally. Once the person arrives, the business relationship ends. In a trafficking case, the person is lured to the UK and then forced to work against his or her will by threats or physical force. In these latter instances the victims are incredibly vulnerable. They often come from impoverished countries, don't speak English and don't have any friends or relatives nearby. They usually don't understand the judicial system, so threats of arrest and deportation are sometimes enough to hold them in an involuntary-servitude situation. They are also susceptible to threats of harm against their families in their native countries.

They are often called modern-day slaves. Women, men and children from around the world are lured into the UK with promises of jobs and then held against their will and forced to work long hours for little or no pay. Many are coerced to work as prostitutes and domestic workers or to become indentured servants in the agricultural and garment industries.

If you get caught smuggling cocaine, you're looking at 20 years. If you smuggle women…the most you'll get is three

The smugglers are easy to find. Their agents hang around in the bars and cafes of Calais and other port towns across northern France. They approach likely targets and offer to smuggle them to England on the back of a truck for around 500 Euros or to provide them with a false passport and 'guaranteed' passage for close to 3,000 Euros.

The gangs that indulge in human trafficking – considerably more violent and ruthless – are more difficult to track down, though their victims are everywhere.

When Mei first arrived in Britain from Thailand on a six-month student visa, she could not speak a word of English. A few weeks later, without attending a single lesson, she managed to pick up several key phrases – 'massage', 'blow job', 'condom' – and she could count up to 50 in increments of £5.

Each morning she reports for work at a small sauna in Glasgow's Charing Cross, where she 'services' up to 20 clients a day, charging them £50 for full sexual intercourse. Of this, she hands over £45 to the sauna's boss to cover her rent, security and contraceptive pills. Any money left over goes towards repayment of the £17,000 debt she owes the Triad gang which arranged her passage. Mei is just one of hundreds of foreign women being trafficked into Britain by major criminal gangs – including the Chinese Triads and the Albanian mafia – to work in the UK sex trade.

According to Sandra, another girl at the same sauna, the girls are 'bought' from the trafficking gangs for £15,000 each, then charged a further £17,000 for their passage once they arrive.

"The reality is that they make that money back in a few weeks, but because of all the expenses they have to pay, their debt stays the same, no matter how hard they work," Sandra claims. "The Scottish girls have a choice about working, but the Thai girls can get trapped. If they don't pay off their debts within six months, they're left with nothing. They become sex slaves. It's appalling."

Then there is the case of Ileana. At the age of 12 she was sold for £600 by a relative to a gang of criminals in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia, who forced her to work as a prostitute. She was taken to a strip club and made to have sex with dozens of customers each day as well as dance. A few months later another gang bought her for £2,300. She was taken to Albania and then by speedboat to Naples where she was again forced to work as a prostitute. She was just 15.

It was then that she met Albanian Mustapha Kadiu. At first he seemed different to the men who had used and abused her all her life. He took her to Rome and then said that she should come with him to the UK and start a new life away from prostitution.

He gave her a false passport and paid for a trip which took her via Brussels and Ostend to Harwich, Essex, and then by train to Victoria station in London. Kadiu took Ileana to his house in north London, but the promise of a new life away from the world of vice was nothing but a lie. After four weeks Kadiu made her work in saunas in Tottenham, Kings Cross, Camden, West Hampstead and Chalk Farm.

He would drop her off in the morning and pick her up in the evening, at least 12 hours later and often more. She was to charge £30 a time and had to earn at least £400 a day. She worked seven days a week, week in week out.

Leaving was not an option. She had no money, no papers and had little idea of where about she was. She knew that if Kadiu caught her she would be beaten severely. Kadiu convinced Ileana that if she went to the police they would simply hand her straight back to him. Having spent all her life in countries where police corruption was rife, and having been abused by one man after another since the age of 12, she simply knew no better.

Eventually she plucked up the courage to tell one of her regular clients of her plight and he in turned tipped off Scotland Yard. Kadiu was arrested and is now behind bars.

One senior police officer who has studied the trend in trafficking foreign women said he believes that, unless action is taken, the problem – and the violence associated with it – will get even worse, because the profits are enormous compared to the risks.

"If you get caught smuggling cocaine, you're looking at 20 years," he said. "If you smuggle women, the profits can be just as high, and if you get caught the only thing you're looking at is living off immoral earnings. The most you'll get is three years. If you're a criminal, the choice about which to go for is pretty simple."

***Tony Thompson is a journalist who has written on international crime for* Time Out, GQ, The Independent *and* The Guardian. *He is also the author of* Gangs: A Journey into the Heart of the British Underworld *and* Gangland Britain**

one state Mind

ANDREA D'CRUZ argues that a one-state solution is the only way forward for Israel and the Palestinians

ISRAEL'S EVACUATION AND dismantlement of the illegal settlements in the Gaza Strip and Northern West Bank provided a world embittered by the scourge of terrorism and war with a glimmer of hope for at least one place in the Middle East. Here appeared a ray of light finally shining through for a future Palestinian state standing in peace alongside Israel. Yet to those whose vision of the bigger picture remains unaffected by the smokescreen of disengagement, the final nail in the coffin of the two-state solution may seem a more fitting metaphor for the events of the past few months.

Disengagement must be seen as part of a two-phased operation: pullout and pull in. As Israel pulled out 8,500 settlers from Gaza it moved to pull in yet more land for yet more settlers in the West Bank. Approximately 420,000 settlers continue to reside illegally on occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Some 12,800 new settlers have moved to the West Bank since Ariel Sharon announced the disengagement plan last year. And there are more to come. It was only a few days after the evacuation of the settlers – and the timing was no mere coincidence – that Sharon confirmed to *The Jerusalem Post* what those living in Palestinian's West Bank have long feared: "There will be building in the settlement blocs".

Israel is engaging in the largest settlement expansion yet in the West Bank; an area greater than that of the Gaza Strip has already been seized to enlarge the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, so that it will encroach onto the eastern periphery of Jerusalem. The Israeli army has issued land expropriation orders to Palestinians living near Ma'ale Adumim, to enable the construction of the separation wall, which is to extend 25km beyond the pre-1967 'Green Line' into Palestinian territory and will annex the settlement and its 30,000 residents to Israel. The new expansion plan wholly aborts the embryo of the would-be Palestinian state by cutting off its lifeblood: territorial contiguity. It severs the West Bank from its spiritual capital of East Jerusalem, and carves up the occupied territory into northern and southern cantons.

By squeezing the Palestinian population into minuscule disconnected vestiges, the separation wall and the settlements, with their associated mammoth system of by-pass roads, have strangled out the viability of a two-state solution, to the point where it has arguably drawn its last breath. Israel's settlements, legal and administrative control, road networks, water and electric systems, and military occupation are so deeply and irreparably entrenched in the West Bank that the only Palestinian 'state' that could emerge out of the current situation would be, as Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions explains: "A truncated Bantustan [referring to territories designated as tribal 'homelands' for black South Africans and Namibians during the apartheid era; a region that lacks any real legitimacy or power] which has no control of its borders, no freedom of movement, no economic viability, no access to its water resources, no meaningful presence in Jerusalem and no real sovereignty, and that leaves Israel with 90 per cent of the country."

Thus, for those genuinely interested in a just solution to the Israel-Palestine issue, persisting in clamouring for the two-state solution is dangerous, because in doing so one may be unwittingly advocating a Palestinian Bantustan. Assuming that this is not a palatable outcome,

[Photography Andrea D'Cruz]

one alternative stands out: the one-state solution.

The demographics of this single state will prompt Israel into some serious soul-searching as to what its 21st-century identity should be. When 3.5 million Palestinians are thrown into the equation in addition to the one million-plus Arabs currently in possession of Israeli citizenship a state purporting to be a 'Jewish democracy' is rendered oxymoronic. This demographic 'problem' is the very same dilemma that Israel has faced since – and indeed even before – her inception in 1948: what to do with the people, when all you want is the land?

There are three main options. Israel could attempt to preserve a simultaneously Jewish and democratic identity for itself by firstly doing something most revoltingly undemocratic: ethnic cleansing. But, moral issues aside, forced transfer of the Palestinian population out of the West Bank, which would occur primarily across the river Jordan, would incur such international wrath and aggravate such regional violence as to be unthinkable for any Israeli politician, however pressured by the ultra Right.

So Israel is left with two remaining options and one critical choice: being Jewish or being democratic? Short of ethnic cleansing the only way for Israel to remain a Jewish state whilst exerting control over the whole country, is to confine the Palestinians to selected enclaves of the territories under some form of 'autonomous' Palestinian leadership. This societal separation alongside effective territorial amalgamation represents nothing less than the Bantustanisation of the West Bank, the transformation of Palestinian territory into fragmented population vestiges, lacking both economic sustainability and political sovereignty. This situation entirely contradicts the democratic principles once at the foundation of modern Israel; it is a situation of de facto apartheid.

When, of three options, one is ethnic cleansing and another is virtual apartheid, any state that wishes to retain some moral integrity can only hope to find its salvation in the third, which in this case happens to be democracy. A single democratic state is thus the only solution worth talking about.

The facts on the ground have propelled the one-state solution from the domain of the idealists to that of the pragmatists. However, the one-state solution is not only a pragmatic option but a principled one. Only a single state across the whole of historical Palestine can accommodate a just resolution of the core issues of the conflict: control, East Jerusalem, and the Palestinian refugees.

Within any two-state set up, Israel will impose limits on Palestinian sovereignty. In the name of security it will insist on retaining control of borders, airspace, and the second-most precious resource in the Middle East: water. Alongside these strategically motivated demands is the cultural and spiritually motivated desire to retain the illegally-annexed East Jerusalem. The competing claims of both groups to East Jerusalem and of Israel to security and the Palestinians to sovereignty are irreconcilable within a two-state framework. The one-state solution accommodates all these claims. The creation of a single state is also the only way in which the rights of the Palestinian refugees can be realised. The right of return of the Palestinian refugees is exactly that: a right – enshrined in a UN resolution and the Fourth Geneva Convention – and as such should not be subjugated in any negotiations. Yet the Israeli leadership will not allow for this right to be granted within a two-state context because the potential influx of three or four million Palestinians into Israel would alter the demographic balance and thus the 'Jewish character' of the state. In a single secular democratic state there is no ethno-nationalist barrier standing in the way of justice for the Palestinian refugees.

The 'security fence' which divides the West Bank (left) and the work of graffiti artist, Banksy, on a section of the wall (above)

The death of the two-state solution necessarily coincides with the expiry dates of the two competing nationalisms: It is an ironic quirk of history that the settlements, at the very frontiers of the Zionist dream of Eretz Israel, may well spell the end of the Zionist state. Israeli author and near-lifetime Zionist, David Gavron explains that: "Given the choice between sovereignty and land, we chose land. We have manifestly preferred settlement in the whole Land of Israel to a State of Israel in part of that land. We are left with only one alternative: Israeli-Palestinian coexistence in one nation."

This may be hard to accept because the idea that the Jewish people 'need' a state of their own has become so deeply entrenched. The idea became ingrained in the aftermath of the Holocaust, in which it was made clear that Jewish people could depend on no one. Yet, as is the case with most small nations, the Jewish nation is incapable of defending itself, depending instead on the US for substantial amounts of support. Nor does the pro-Zionist argument that the Jewish people require a state of their own in order to express their culture or religion stand up. A state founded on secular and democratic principles allows for the flourishing of religious and cultural diversity.

Just as the Jewish people do not need Zionism to guarantee their individual rights, the Palestinian people do not need Palestinian nationalism to guarantee theirs. Ali Abunimah of the online news source, *Electronic Intifada* writes that: "The mere trappings of nationalism – flags, anthems, stately buildings, and passports – mean absolutely nothing to me in themselves and I would just as soon do away with them. What matters is the content: does the flag represent true independence and sovereignty? Do the buildings enclose genuinely democratic institutions that do justice? Does a passport give its holder the freedom to travel the world and live securely in his homeland?"

Given the facts on the ground, Palestinian nationalism can no longer deliver true sovereignty, democracy or freedom. In place of a futile nationalistic struggle for a 'barely there, hardly sovereign' state of their own, the Palestinians must substitute a campaign for democracy and equality – legal, political and economic – with Israelis. Their rallying call must switch from 'two peoples, two states' to 'one person, one vote'.

It is only in the name of nationalism that the dead horse that is the two-state solution continues to be flogged. When we start thinking outside the box constructed by the narrow confines of nationalism we see that not only may the one-state solution be the only remaining available option but that it is ultimately the most compelling one, because it is based on reconciliation rather than separation; equality and respect rather than fear and suspicion; and human rights rather than irreconcilable nationalist aspirations.

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Separate futures

GUGLIELMO VERDIRAME foresees a two-state future for the Israel-Palestine conflict

THERE ARE WIDESPREAD arguments that a state with a national identity cannot, by definition, be truly democratic. However most democracies in Europe today are still nation-states, Britain being an exception. Over the last 15 years new states have been created in the Balkans and Eastern Europe based on national identity. Yet, Israel is the only state whose national identity is still often considered antithetical to its democratic character.

If, in France, Germany or Italy, there was a risk of such demographic changes as to make the main national element minoritarian, concerns of the majority would hardly be dismissed as undemocratic, or even racist. Because democracy is a much more complex concept than the simple rule of the majority, a state cannot be truly democratic if it systematically violates certain rights, to which members of minority groups are entitled under both constitutional and international law.

Some would argue that in order to maintain its national identity Israel will either have ethnically to cleanse Palestinians from the occupied territories, or to institute a system of apartheid. Even at a time when it could have done so with almost certain impunity, Israel did not pursue a systematic policy of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population in its territory, or in the territories it has occupied since 1967; and it is widely accepted that this is not an option which any serious Israeli policy-maker has spent any time contemplating. However, it is important to remember that ethnic cleansing has been systematically used in the Arab-Israeli context in the past: Jews who found themselves on the 'wrong' side of the armistice line were (often forcibly) removed, whereas a considerable Arab presence remained within the territory of the state of Israel; over the following years Jews were also forced out of Arab countries where they had lived for centuries, their property expropriated without compensation. Outside Israel the Jewish presence in the Arab Middle East has been essentially erased, with the exception of a small community in Morocco.

The one-state solution runs the risk of stalling the process of negotiation, rather than advancing it

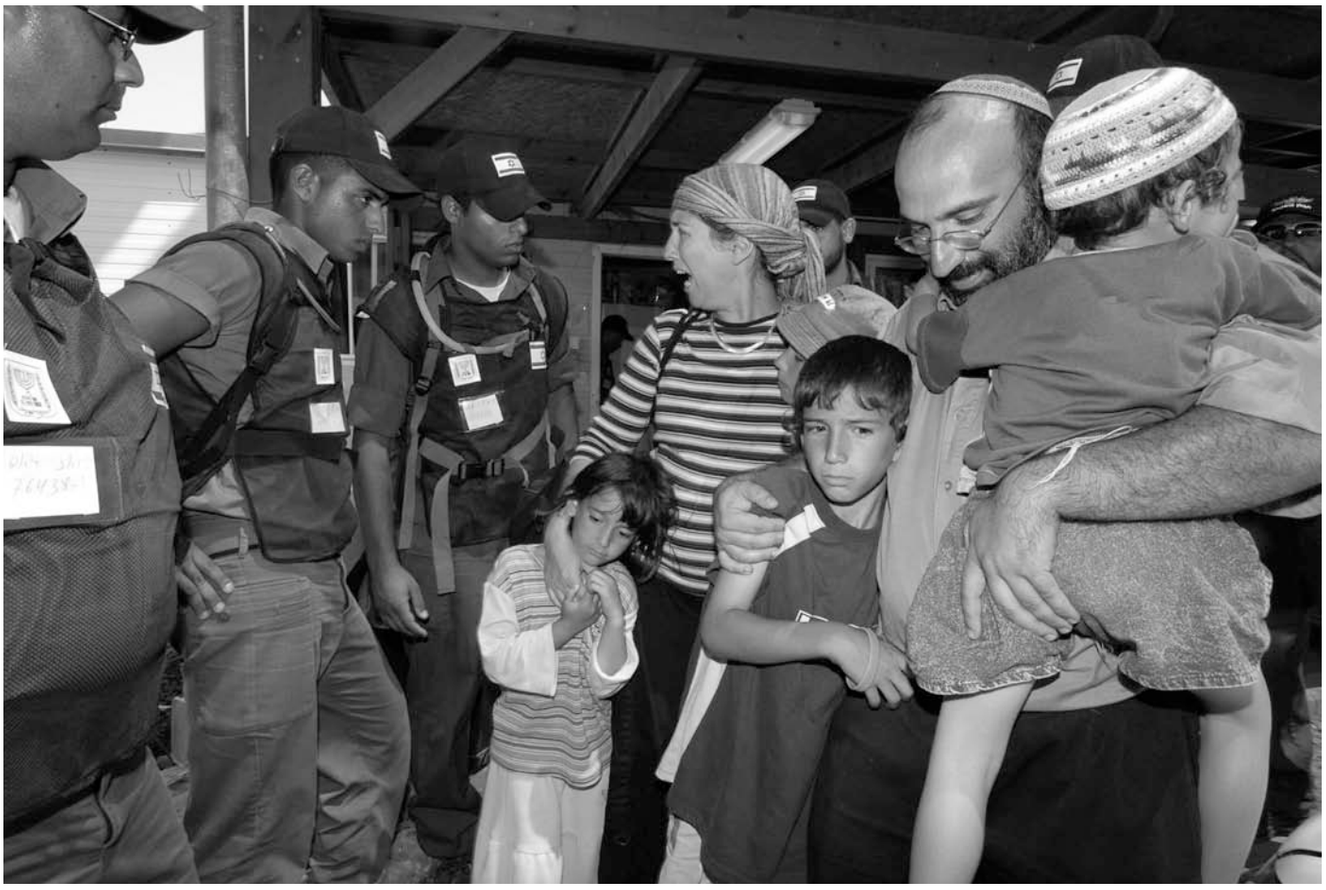
Israel's situation cannot be compared to apartheid in South Africa: did black South Africans sit on the South African Supreme Court in the days of apartheid? Did black South Africans sit in parliament? Did they have ministerial appointments? The answer to all these questions is negative in the case of South Africa; affirmative in the case of Israeli-Arabs. With Israeli-Arabs represented in the three main branches of government, I do not see how the apartheid allegation can be sustained without some serious conceptual overstretch.

Perhaps even more striking, and worthy of note, is the fact that there are in Israel numerous voluntary organisations that work on improving the socio-economic conditions of Arab-Israelis and campaign for their rights. How many such organisations exist in other Middle Eastern countries to promote socio-economic justice for the Jews expelled in the Fifties and Sixties? Or for the various oppressed religious and national minorities that constellate the region?

But, of course, the crux is not the treatment of the Palestinian minority that lives within the internationally recognised boundaries of the state of Israel. The real question is the future status of the territories that Israel occupied after the 1967 war and of the Palestinian population which inhabits them. With the exception of the inhabitants of East Jerusalem, Palestinians who live in the occupied territories are not citizens; and this is not because Israel is an apartheid state, but because the conferral of citizenship on them would amount to an act of annexation contrary to international law. I do not know of any Palestinian negotiator who calls on the extension of Israeli citizenship to Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

There is however one merit that modern one-state solutions to the problem have, compared with past single-state proposals. It is not based on the idea that Jews should be physically expelled from Israel: the 'Jews in the sea' option

[Photography Eddie Gerald]



was the name of one-state solutions proposed in the past. But there are problems even with more progressive versions of the one-state solution. Neither Israeli Jews nor Palestinians want it, and Israeli Jews would certainly not feel safe under it. At the moment it is one of those proposals that runs the risk of stalling the process of negotiation, rather than advancing it.

Arguments in favour of a single state often rest primarily on criticisms of the alternatives, namely ethnic cleansing – a solution that is not really on the table – and apartheid, which in reality is little more than a rhetorical device which serves as a muezzin call for the European Left. The merits of the main solution to which both parties, and the international community, have been committed are rarely addressed in detail: the two-state solution.

No solution to the Middle Eastern quagmire will be ideal. It will, by necessity, be a compromise which, as such, will leave many unhappy. The two-state solution remains the best option on the table. And yes, of course, the Palestinian state will have to be a viable state, but it seems to me that for some the definition of 'Bantustan' in this context is any Palestinian state that does not include Haifa and Tel Aviv.

Look at the proposals that were on the table at Camp David and then look at the map of the world: you will find dozens of states with less land and with more geographic challenges than those envisaged for the future Palestinian state. We have now unfortunately taken many steps back from the days of Camp David, for, amongst the many misfortunes to have befallen the Palestinian people, there is one that is entirely of their own making: their leadership.

Throughout recent history there have been national liberation movements with leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or Vaclav Havel; and then there is the league of Robert Mugabe, and of Yasser Arafat – the man who addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations with a revolver strapped at his waist.

The Palestinian cause has attracted much support in Europe. It is probably correct to say that, after South Africa, no other cause has managed to mobilise so many activists as that of the Palestinians – neither the far bloodier conflicts in Africa, nor the status of women or the rights of migrants in Saudi Arabia. And yet very little has been achieved. It is, of course, easy to blame this on the strength of the Israelis and on American support for them. But the soul-searching few may want to consider some other possibilities. They may, for instance, ask themselves why, while in all refugee situations advocates see it as their main role to ensure that host countries protect and integrate refugees, the pro-Palestinian activists have generally chosen to remain oblivious to the plight of Palestinian refugees in Arab host countries. They may also want to consider whether the cause of Palestinians would not be better served by a 'de-escalation', and an end to the wholly pointless and counter-productive demonisation of the state of Israel.

The Palestinians' right to self-determination has now been accepted by the Israelis; and Israel's right to existence as a state has been recognised by the Palestinians. This is the shared common ground that was not obtained until the 1990s – and that has radically changed the terms of the problem. A state that is already in existence and a state-to-be now have to decide where the boundaries between them will be.

Arafat's catastrophic leadership set this process of negotiation back – and I will count myself amongst those who have on many occasions been driven to complete pessimism on the possibilities of starting over again. Yet, the more pragmatic and constructive the approach we choose, the better the chances of finding a solution – for this is in the nature of disputes about boundaries.

The creation of the two states could turn out to be only the first stage, and – in a future which I cannot at present foresee – these two states may choose to move towards closer integration, having left the conflict and its bitter legacy behind them. But at present we are far away from that. We can come up with all sorts of conspiracy theories about Sharon's decision to leave Gaza, but the facts should speak for themselves: the Israeli army no longer occupies Gaza; Jewish civilians have left their homes there; synagogues have been burned down. The way forward is a two-state future.

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newborn nation

GABRIEL DOCTOR analyses the significance of this summer's disengagement in Gaza

IT SEEMS LIKELY that August 2005 will be seen by future chroniclers as the month that heralded the Palestinian state. Certainly it confirmed Palestinian nationhood. It saw the ratification, finally, of the Palestinian Arabs' claim to land over which they had never held any authority – land that had been controlled, in turn, by the Ottoman Empire, a British Mandate, Egypt and Transjordan, before these last two ceded it to Israel as part of peace deals.

Ironically, this recognition was facilitated by a people that is, in the common currency of our times, the Palestinians' most inveterate enemy. Whatever one may think of Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), their positioning of the Israel-Palestine conflict as a popular struggle for national self-determination – basically, their substitution of 'Palestinian' for 'Arabs of Palestine' – was inspired. Israel's disengagement from Gaza gives this small strip of land the same status as about 40 per cent of the West Bank – autonomous Palestinian government – but the Gaza Strip has borders, not administrative boundaries. This is the start of statehood.

Israel, in its 57 years of life has fought many battles. It is now high noon in the battle for its soul

The disengagement, too, has had a cataclysmic effect on Israeli society. It is not the first time that Israel has pulled out citizens and troops as part of concessions for peace – in fact, several of the families forced to leave Gaza had, 23 years earlier, left the Yamit settlement in Sinai, which Israel dismantled as part of the Israeli-Egyptian peace deal signed at Camp David. The scale of the Gaza withdrawal alone is one issue, but it is not just those forced to uproot their homes that have been affected by the pullout. Scenes on television of soldier and civilian praying together, before the soldier carried the other away, are emblematic of the wider conflict that the disengagement provoked in Israeli society.

The pullout from Gaza represents the end of dreaming for many parts of Israeli society. For those religious Jews who believe that their settling in Biblical Israel will hasten the arrival of the Messiah, the withdrawal is mostly considered a step in the wrong direction – especially if they are unconvinced that it will save any lives. For the secular right-wing, the withdrawal represents a victory of faith over facts. Ariel Sharon's claims that it will strengthen Israel's security by reducing friction with the Gaza Palestinians, and by lessening the military burden of defending 8,000 Israeli citizens surrounded by over a million Palestinians, is met with derision. They argue instead that now Hamas will be free to fire even more mortars at more easterly Israeli towns and villages, without the interference of the Israeli army. For both groups, and others that voted in the Likud referendum on disengagement, the pullout is also profoundly anti-democratic, as a spokesman for the settlers organisation, Yesha, argued.

Yet even for the more left-wing segments of Israeli society, the disengagement has proved problematic. For a start, it was proposed by the man known as the father of the settlers, whose call in 1998 was to 'grab the hilltops' in order to thwart, in the analysis of David Horowitz, Editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, any of his concession-minded successors. As Horowitz says, there is an ironic consolation found in the fact that this successor turned out to be a later version of Sharon himself; but, having found itself in the position of having to protect the political life of this man (and his precious project) in the Knesset, the Labour Party is hardly laughing.

Moreover, the disengagement was unilateral – though certain issues such as the fate of former Israeli property were discussed with the Palestinians. Sarah Kreimer, Associate Director of Ir Amim (City of Peoples), a group that is committed to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital, feels that there is an urgent need to return to a paradigm of negotiated settlements. There is neither security for Israel nor satisfaction for the Palestinians, unless both sides come to an agreement. Though they welcome the pullout, the eschewal of negotiations sets a worrying precedent.

The June 6, 2004 Israeli Cabinet resolution regarding disengagement says: "The purpose of the plan is to lead to a better security, political, economic and demographic situation… In any future permanent status arrangement, there will be no Israeli towns and villages in the Gaza Strip." Controlling 1.5 million Palestinians, temporarily, for the sake of 8,000 Jews, made little sense. But the key word in the text is "demographic". Demographics – in this case manifested by a large Palestinian population, with a much higher birth rate than the Israeli average – is the most sobering concept with which the disengagement has confronted Israel. It is the reality that kicks the slightly paternalistic attitude of the Israelis towards the Palestinians in the teeth. Arafat always recognised that, if the Palestinians had nothing else – indeed, because they had nothing else – they had time; for the Israelis the truth is the exact opposite. And so who, ultimately, is the richer? Disengagement is of itself a tacit admission that there will be more disengagement; this is what Israelis know, despite Sharon's recent blustery electioneering to the contrary.

The demographic question has also focused attention on the one million Arab Israelis, who are citizens of Israel, pay taxes, vote in elections and send representatives to the Knesset. For Jewish Israelis, issues raised by the disengagement will not go away, because just about all of them accept that the Israeli-Arabs are there to stay. Jewish Israelis are undecided on how Arab citizens fit into Israel; and according to one businessman, Amar Yanas, the Arabs are themselves unsure – his allegiance, he says, changes depending on which side of the bed he wakes up – Israeli? Arab living in Israel? Palestinian Arab?

The division between Jewish and Arab Israelis is just one of the many divisions in Israeli society, caused by differing answers to the question; 'What is Israel?' Is it about the land, or is about the people? Is it Jewish essentially, or is it just a place for Jews? Is it religious, or is it secular? And what about the Arabs? There is a general consensus that Israel must remain somehow Jewish – both Ashkenazi Jews, who fled the Holocaust, and Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from Arab countries, see Israel as the guarantor of 'never again'; and even Israeli-Arabs, prizing their economic freedom and freedoms of speech and movement, do not want to see Israel turned into just another failing Arab state. Israel, in its 57 years of life, has fought many battles. As the disengagement has shown, it is now high noon in the battle for its soul.

Gabriel Doctor is a student at New College, Oxford and ex-president of Oxford University European Affairs Soceity

[Photography Eddie Gerald]

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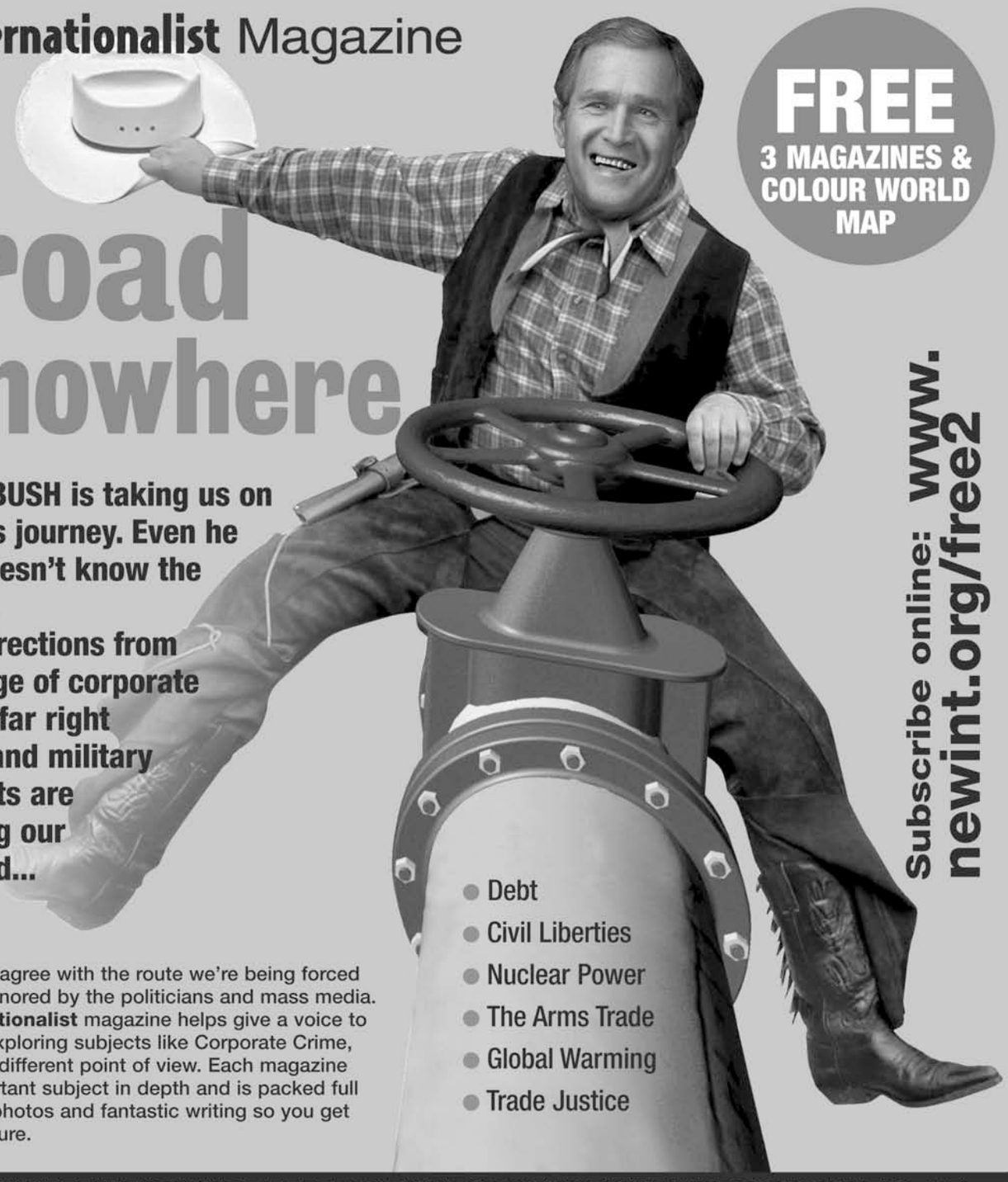

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news values

STEPHEN COLEMAN examines the implications of the rise of open-source media

MOST OF THE news we receive about the world around us is not the result of our direct experience, but comes to us via television, radio or the press. Whether we are witnessing famine in Africa, listening to the Prime Minister or observing economic modernisation in China, our experience and understanding is filtered through media which frame our perceptions of reality.

In the past hundred years, large, regulated, authoritative media organisations, such as broadcasting networks, newspapers and press agencies, have managed the production of news and disseminated it to mass audiences. Professional journalists, working within media organisations, deliver news to the public. This top-down industrial model is unlikely to survive in the digital age, now that it is possible for anyone with access to the internet to publish their own accounts or remix others.

As in the case of the music industry, which lost its cultural and commercial grip in the face of online file-sharing, the threat to the news media comes from these online social networks which empower ordinary people to produce, distribute and remix news without passing through the mass-media filter. According to Columbia University's Project for Excellence in Journalism 2005 report, *The State of the News Media*: "Journalism is in the middle of an epochal transformation, as momentous probably as the invention of the telegraph or television." The trend towards participatory, open-source media is nurtured by three characteristics specific to the internet.

First, the inherent feedback path of digital communication technologies normalises interactivity. The 'one-way conversation'[1] of the old broadcast media is replaced by the implicit assumption in all digital communication that the message flow is two-way: more like a many-to-many telephone than one-to-many television channel. Like politicians, professional journalists have come to expect their audiences to be distant and silent. Occasional, well-managed and filtered moments of public participation in the old media discourse – such as letters to the editor, phone-ins and studio question times – have allowed the public to raise their voices, but the general assumption has been that citizens of a democracy should receive rather than produce media messages. In a digital culture, message-sending is only one half of the communication process. Journalists publishing reports or offering opinions online cannot escape potentially challenging feedback. The peer-to-peer sharing of news takes more the form of a conversation than a monological account.

A second feature of digital media is hypertextuality, which allows content to be linked and shared across the web, creating rich multilinear, narratives that defy the single-authored authority of traditional journalism. News blogs – of which there are now tens of thousands – use hyperlinks as a form of news syndication, spreading the task of news-gathering and interpretation across dispersed networks comprising people who do not need to know one another. As Kovach and Rosenstiel have observed, whereas in the past news services relayed "their always-breaking

[Illustration Nick Hayes]

information to other journalists, who sorted through the various accounts and cobbled together their own stories…today, in effect, the pipeline goes straight to the citizen."[2] These days the open-source pipeline contains images as well as text, with flickr (www.flickr.com) offering a vast store of freely accessible windows on the world.

A third characteristic of digital networks is the tendency towards multimedia convergence. Technological barriers between television sets, personal computers and telephones are collapsing as media forms converge, allowing content to be accessed across different platforms which open up a range of options. One can sit back and watch edited news packages on terrestrial television; or watch streaming of live events on digital television; or receive email and SMS news alerts; or participate in phone polls or web-based discussion fora. More than ever before, the form of mediated experience is a matter of choice. At the same time, the diversity of new media technologies lowers entry barriers to news production: anyone with a mobile phone and a camera can tell their story (as became clear when pictures taken by soldiers in Abu Ghraib hit the headlines) and amateur bloggers can break stories that have major political consequences (such as the blog reports of US Senator Trent Lott's support for racial segregation which led to his resignation).

According to the 2005 Carnegie survey, *Abandoning the News,* the internet is the most frequently cited source of news for 18 to 34 year-old Americans. Forty-four per cent report using online news portals at least once a day, compared with 37 per cent who watch local TV news and 16 per cent who watch national network news on a daily basis. In the 2005 UK election 71 per cent of 18 to 25-year-old British internet users visited the BBC election web site and only 20 per cent said that they did not visit any election-related web sites. Clearly, there is a generational migration towards online news sources.

Online news-seekers are still gravitating towards sites run by newspapers and broadcasters with established reputations. Of the 12 most popular news sites in the USA in June 2005, eight (CNN, Gannett Newspapers, *The New York Times*, Knight Ridder, Tribune Newspapers, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post,* ABC News and Hearst Newspapers) were trusted news publishers and the other four were run by internet service providers or search engines. In the UK the BBC and *The Guardian* have been spectacularly successful in adapting to online formats, although all old media organisations face an inevitable tension between intellectual property rights (owning their stories) and the open-source ethos of content-sharing.

But established media organisations are under growing pressure from open-source news sites which have abandoned top-down editorial control for a more participatory style of journalism. The Indymedia network was established as a response to the failure of traditional media to cover the anti-globalisation protests on the streets of Seattle in 1999. A web-based global network of reporters and photographers was set up, designed as: 'an interactive platform for reports from the struggles for a world based on freedom, cooperation, justice and solidarity, and against environmental degradation, neoliberal exploitation, racism and patriarchy.' In January 2005 there were 160 Independent Media Centres on six continents, making it the largest alternative media service in the world.

According to one of its leading activists: "Open publishing means that the process of creating news is transparent to the readers. They can contribute a story and see it instantly appear in the pool of stories publicly available…readers can see editorial decisions being made by others. They can see how to get involved and help make editorial decisions."[3]

Reporting and interpreting the truth is a messy business, best served by multiple perspectives

Another major success, Ohmynews, emerged out of the fierce electoral contest in 2002 which resulted in a mandate for Roh Moo Hyun, the first liberal President of South Korea in over 40 years. Ohmynews is a grass-roots news service, comprising over 30,000 citizen-reporters who submit about 200 articles each day. Founder, Oh Yeon Ho, speaking at the World Association of Newspapers conference in 2004, explained the editorial objective of Ohmynews as creating 'a two-way journalism' in which "the readers are no longer passive. They can be reporters anytime they want."

Key to the success of both of these new news services has been a democratic notion of accountability, based upon the participatory production of news, with minimal and transparent editorial control. As with so many other areas of contemporary public life, the conflict between old journalism and open-source news involves two quite different conceptions of trust.

The old media appeal to the professional skills of journalists, who possess exclusive expertise and adhere to rigorous ethical standards, to produce a reliable first draft of history. Perhaps they protest too much, given their contempt of certain tabloid newspapers and populist broadcasting networks for any kind of commitment to truth or historical accuracy.

New media argue, as many historians now do, that reporting and interpreting the truth is a messy business, best served by multiple perspectives and opportunities to challenge the veracity of narrow or biased sources. They argue that they are simply going back to the days when journalists were people who published accessible journals and news correspondents were people who wrote letters reporting on what was going on around them.

Whereas old news relies upon the authority of institutional reputations, open-source news relies upon the capacity of citizens to make sense of the world on the basis of the fullest possible information and a broad range of available interpretations. But sorting through the vast mass of news and interpretations presents citizens with new problems. Firstly, in a world of information abundance, how can you know where to find what you want to know?

This calls for specific metadata tools which allow people to search for specific themes, individuals or perspectives. Tools such as Rich Site Summary (RSS) are used to retrieve material from the web on any given theme, so that each day one receives an aggregate of any updated news content on a particular theme. Services such as Technorati and Blogdex provide regularly updated accounts of the main themes being discussed in blogs, so that anyone with a particular interest can focus on issues that concern them.

But the personalisation of news raises a further problem. If racists only ever read news and views produced by other racists and Americans never encounter news agendas emanating from the rest of the world, the tendency will be towards intellectual retreat into self-selected information ghettos. How, in a world where you are free to choose your own news agenda, can you find out what you might not want to know, but probably need to know? This is where public news services, such as the BBC, have a new and important role to play.

Just as in the 1920s, Europeans realised that public service broadcasting organisations were essential if the new medium of radio was to serve public purposes at all well, so today an area of the internet should be given over to a quite new-style public service framework, designed to enable and organise consultation and deliberation between citizens and political institutions over issues of public policy. Rather than thinking of this as an online service, it would be more imaginatively conceived as an online civic commons: a new public space for citizens to encounter unexpected information, fresh views and strange voices.

The new media landscape could democratise public communication, making it more participatory, transparent and encyclopaedic, but this democratic promise is only likely to be realised if attention is paid to the need for shared spaces of civic communication.

[1]Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Penguin Books (1986)
[2]Bill Kovach, Bill and Tom Rosenstiel *Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media*, Century Foundation Press (1999)
[3]Matthew Arnison http://www.cat.org.au/maffew/cat/openpub.html (2001)

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free surfer

Ahead of UN's World Summit on the Information Society, DAVID MCGUIRE outlines US concerns over internet governance

EASILY LOST IN the discussion of the internet's transformative global impact on culture, commerce and everyday life is the profound effect the medium has had on our ability to exercise our basic civil liberties. No technology since the printing press has been so intrinsically beneficial to democratic values and the preservation of basic human rights.

Defending that essentially democratizing nature has been the singular goal of the civil liberties community that has sprung up around the internet. In the United States, we have fought off coordinated legislative efforts to limit what sort of content web site operators can publish; give the government more power to eavesdrop on online communications; and force online speakers to comply with cumbersome regulations and reporting requirements.

Until recently, most of those threats originated in the US, where Congress, regulatory agencies and the administration have struggled for years with how to apply laws written for an off-line world, defined by state and national borders, to a borderless online medium. Recently however, the focus has shifted to the international arena, where troubling developments have begun to take shape.

A movement gathering steam in the United Nations threatens to drag down the open, lightly governed internet on which we all rely into a morass of national laws and inter-governmental bureaucracy. A large and vocal cadre of world leaders is campaigning to put more power over internet governance into the hands of the labyrinthine International Telecommunications Union (ITU) or – perhaps even worse – a new international body created solely to regulate the World Wide Web.

Founded in Geneva in 2003, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is the official UN forum for discussing how internet addresses are doled out; how cross-border online disputes are resolved; what role developed countries should play in fostering Third World internet development and how to impose international laws and moral standards on internet communications. The body is set to consider proposed changes at a meeting in Tunisia in November.

No technology since the printing press has been so beneficial to democratic values and human rights

Proposals pouring in from Syria, Brazil, India, and dozens of other UN nations run the gamut from the benign (increasing aid to support internet development in the Third World) to the potentially catastrophic (increasing government involvement in the internet and putting the ITU in charge of coordinating that involvement).

The US delegation has tried to promote the value of the current decentralized, nongovernmental oversight of internet standards. But this has not gone down well with much of the developing world, where concern over a perceived US-centric standards process has fostered vocal opposition.

Aspects of that opposition ring familiar to many of us in the internet community. Formed in 1998, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers – the non-governmental body that manages the internet's addressing system – has long been a target of criticism for high-tech companies and public interest advocates. Originally intended as a lightweight technical standards-setting body, ICANN has stretched both its mission and its budget into areas that make the internet community justifiably uncomfortable. Given those concerns, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that ICANN has chalked up an impressive track record – fostering the continued development of the internet's addressing system in a way that promotes technological innovation and has not impinged on the free flow of ideas and commerce. In the public interest community, we can and will continue to pressure ICANN to limit its scope and increase the transparency of its operations, but in our global dialogue, we need to do a much better job highlighting ICANN's successes in preserving the democratizing power of the internet.

The real threat of the WSIS process is that UN leadership, spurred by the outcry of dozens of member countries, seems intent on pushing for at least some change in the existing internet governance power structure. Although UN officials have been publicly agnostic about some of the more troubling proposals, they have openly rebuffed suggestions that the UN may do better by keeping its hands off the process altogether. Sarbuland Khan, head of the UN Information and Communications Technology Task Force told the Washington Post in 2003: "That sentiment is very much out there… and

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

although [ICANN] has evolved and has tried to bring in a lot of engagement from a lot of places, there have to be ways to open up the process even a little bit more."

The Working Group on Internet Governance, an international body convened to advise WSIS, sounded an even more ominous note about the goals of the Summit. In a publicly distributed questionnaire they claimed that "there is no existing forum in which the global community as a whole can address broad public policy issues or emerging issues that are cross-cutting or multidimensional and affect more than one institution. The group therefore discussed the desirability and feasibility of setting up an additional body or arrangement to address these issues."

While public interest advocates would agree that ICANN could use some tweaking, very few of us would care to see the UN in charge of making those tweaks. One need look no further than the endless bureaucracy of the ITU to see a nightmarish vision of what a multi-governmental internet governance apparatus could look like.

Representatives from several developed countries have made a good case that internet governance should be improved by working through existing mechanisms, rather than creating new ones, or re-delegating roles now filled by non-governmental agencies to government bodies. It is clear that government officials involved with the WSIS process understand the significance of what is being debated in the multi-year summit. But members of the global public interest and business communities have yet to have fully grasp what is at stake. Their awareness and involvement may be the key to tipping the balance of the debate in favour of those fighting to preserve a lightly regulated, open internet.

ICANN is an easy and frequent target of criticism within the internet community, and with good reason. The organization has yet to achieve the lofty goals of simplicity, transparency and public representation with which it was founded. As ICANN's efforts to make itself more open have foundered, its mission and scope have grown considerably; developments that give the internet community considerable cause for concern. In defending existing internet structures, it is important not to ignore the need to improve and open the ICANN process.

Yet for all of the concerns associated with ICANN, the group has tallied a slate of accomplishments over the past seven years that would have been unheard of for an intergovernmental body operating under the same timeline. Since its inception, ICANN has introduced competition to both the retail and wholesale domain name businesses (both former monopolies) drastically driving down prices for consumers worldwide. By adding new internet domains – .info and .biz for example – ICANN has expanded the internet space, and created more choices for users seeking to communicate.

The organization, which boasts an internationally representative board, headed by an Australian, Paul Twomey, has also gone to pains to involve developing countries in the standard setting process, holding its meetings all over the world, on every continent except Antarctica.

Although many of us have been dissatisfied with ICANN's efforts to make its processes more transparent and representative, the organization has been responsive to the complaints raised by businesses and public interest advocates. ICANN has re-juggled its internal governance structure several times, and whilst many feel that the organization has not yet struck the proper balance, the fact that it is willing to work with the internet community to resolve such issues contrasts favourably with even the best multi-national bodies, which tend to be impenetrable to all but their member nations.

Winston Churchill famously said of democracy: "It's the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried." This is a particularly apt description of ICANN, which, despite its flaws, remains our best hope for properly overseeing the vital functions of the internet's global addressing system.

ICANN is a young organization and by no means beyond repair. We can and will continue to apply the pressure necessary to encourage the organization to narrow its scope and make its processes clearer. In the meantime, we must stridently defend the organization from external attacks, in order to give it the time it needs to evolve into the organization we wish it to be.

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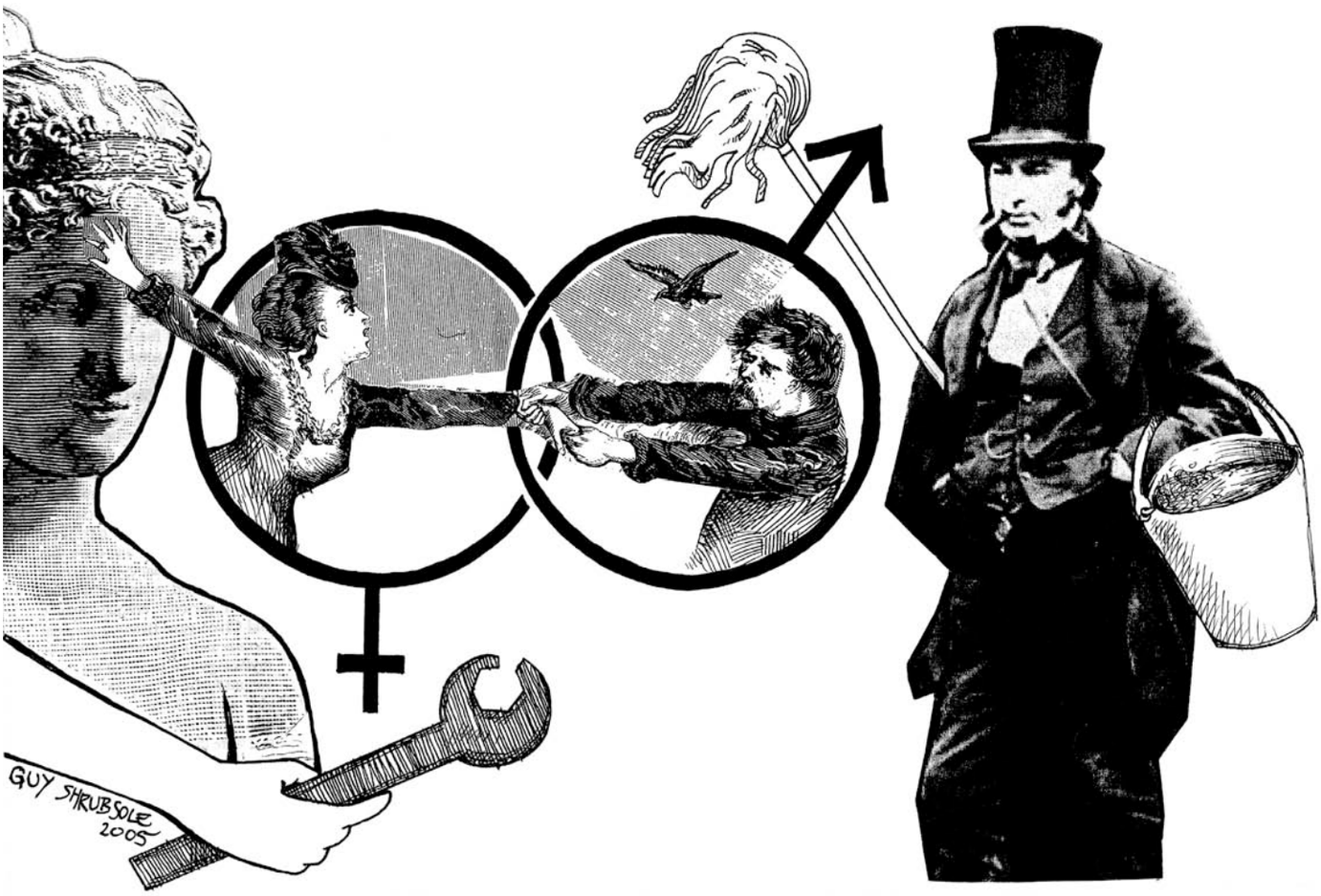

sexual politics

JULIE MELLOR welcomes the end of the sex war but says society has yet to cash in on the peace

[Illustration Guy Shrubsole]

WHEN I ARRIVED AS an undergraduate at Brasenose, I felt I was doing my bit to break down barriers for women: Brasenose was one of five previously all-male colleges that had just gone co-educational. I was part of a generation excited at the prospect of gaining equality of opportunity in education and at work, and I arrived against the backdrop of the Sex Discrimination Act which set out precisely that goal.

Yet I could also see that men and women occupied very different worlds – one visit to the college drying room told me that. While we used it for drying washing, the men used it for drying unwashed rugby kit, which stank.

But the differences went beyond laundry. Many male students were pleased to see women around – it meant that they didn't have to trek out to the surviving female bastions of Somerville and St Hilda's to find us. But, whereas we were excited by equal opportunity, some of them felt threatened. Not only was there now tougher competition for places, some worried that fewer men would secure a first. They also recognised that competition at university was bound to lead to battles for pre-eminence in the work place. In short, the sex war had hit Oxford.

At that time, it did not even cross our minds that men might share our dreams of equality; our expectations were more limited than that. We hoped that if we protested enough, if we worked hard enough, if we were brilliant enough, if we focussed our collective resources well enough, then maybe, just maybe, men would have to let us through.

fellows are women, and there is just one female honorary fellow: me. It is a picture reflected throughout our society. Just one in ten of Britain's top jobs is held by a woman. When all other factors of skill, experience and so forth are accounted for, women still earn on average 18 per cent less than men. The gulf grows huge as men and women become parents and women tend towards badly paid part-time work. Half of pregnant women experience discrimination. And things get even worse as we grow older. Female pensioners enjoy incomes 43 per cent lower than men.

This is a story of lost potential; of women emerging from places like Oxford with an excellent education, yet often finding themselves in mid-life, working in jobs below their potential. The workplace has failed to catch up with the changing lives of women, leading to huge losses to us personally, and to UK plc nationally.

But we should not be disheartened, because the forces gathering to transform the workplace are only becoming stronger. If that sounds too hopelessly idealistic, then look at some facts. Today, for example, fathers are responsible for a third of parental childcare. That is an eight-fold increase from when I was a student. For the first time, they no longer identify their primary role as breadwinners, according to latest research from the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Whatever your views on Fathers4Justice – and I don't like their methods – they were a at least a marker for an extraordinary political development. For centuries, men have taken to the streets in defence of their jobs and their

FATHERS AT WORK

- 89 per cent of fathers are in employment compared with 74 per cent of men who do not have dependant children.
- UK fathers work the longest hours in Europe at an average 46.9 hours per week.
- Four per cent of working men with dependent children work part time, with the figure rising to 12 per cent for those without. Whereas, 59 per cent of mothers who work do so part time, compared to 33 per cent of childless women.
- In the late 1990s, fathers of children under five spent an average two hours a day on child-related activities, compared to less than 15 minutes a day in the mid 1970s.

Sources:
Facts about Women and Men in Great Britain. EOC (2005)

Brien & Shemilt Working fathers: earning and caring. Manchester, EOC (2003)

All the old polarities, the apparent certainties of women versus men, just don't work any more

So when I look at Britain today and think about the aspirations of men and women, I find the transformation quite astonishing. In a generation, we have seen an extraordinary shift so that, to a great extent, women and men share remarkably similar dreams.

We come from different places, from different upbringings and their rugby kit still stinks. But the struggle that men are undertaking to broaden their lives and identities beyond work is stunning. In particular, we are increasingly finding common ground in our desire to make work suit the needs of our lives as parents and carers. It is not too fanciful to say that in certain, crucial respects, the sex war is over.

I find this both exciting and comforting. It is exciting because this new alliance of shared interests is reinvigorating the agenda with which I have been concerned since my Oxford days. It is comforting because we need allies; just a quick look at the statistics shows how far we have still to go before we realise the dreams we had in those days.

Start with Brasenose: it has been co-educational since 1975. Yet only six of its 36

incomes. For the first time, here in the 21st century, we have witnessed men take to the streets in defence of their caring roles.

Let us not get distracted by the rights and wrongs of Spiderman and separating couples. We should instead focus on the broader political significance of such protests. It is this: as men enter a political sphere traditionally part of female discussion alone, the role of caring must inevitably be poised to gain new power, dignity and weight both in the political process, and in the work place.

We know that male discontent is also deep, though less vocal, among fathers in general. For example, nearly half say that they are stressed about being unable to find enough time for their children as a result of long working hours.

In short, today's women and men are expressing common dreams. Women are dreaming of greater job satisfaction, of part-time work that really uses their skills and of a more equal division of caring roles. Meanwhile, men dream of working less in order to spend more time with their children. It is not difficult to see that a victory for women can be a victory for men and vice versa. All the old polarities, the apparent certainties of women versus men just don't work any more.

The challenge for the Government is to recognise this radical realignment of gender interests, and help women and men to optimise their lives together. That requires sophisticated policy making, focussing on women and men not in isolation, but in complicated, dynamic relationships. The danger is that politicians, as addicted to outdated political philosophies as the media is to worn-out stereotypes, may continue to create policies tailored for the old order. So something gets thrown to women, something else to men and the inter-relationship is lost.

We face this danger at the moment, as politicians tinker with support for parents and look like they will fail to optimise parents' capacities to work and care together. Why are they failing? It is partly because the politics has not grown up fast enough. The women's movement is only beginning to accept the notion of common interests with men. Meanwhile, the men's movement remains in its infancy, and, with only the most angry and unpredictable mobilised, prone to misogyny. It is little wonder, then, that politicians are confused and retreat to old and inadequate certainties. The challenge for women and men today is to find fresh voices to express the new realities of today's society and make politicians and business sit up and listen.

Julie Mellor is an honorary fellow of Brasenose College, former chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, chair of Fathers Direct and a partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

A prisoner near the time of his release. He has been moved to a flat in the prison where inmates can learn to manage their own time, feed themselves and accommodate to freedom after years of incarceration

Rethinking Grendon

ADRIENNE RIVLIN reassesses HMP Grendon, a Category B dispersal prison and therapeutic community, which accepts some of the UK's most damaged, disturbed and dangerous male inmates from other prisons in England and Wales

HMP GRENDON AND its therapy process has been both heralded as the 'next big thing' in criminal justice rehabilitation and derided vociferously as the 'soft' option for some of our country's most violent criminals and prolific sex offenders. Despite a 1993 Prison Service study, calling for at least 2,500 therapy places in the UK penal system, over a decade later, just over 500 actually exist. Perhaps it is time to look more closely at what has been holding back institutions such as Grendon.

Grendon is a self-styled 'therapeutic community', priding itself as the only prison establishment in the UK devoting all of its resources to the rehabilitation of its severely personality disordered inmates through small and large group therapy, art therapy, psychodrama and the establishment of a respectful and tolerant prison culture.

Founded in 1962 as an experimental psychiatric prison, Grendon was, and remains, a direct challenge to Freudian psychoanalytic theories which sought to develop an understanding of an individual's offending behaviour in terms of their individual underlying and unconscious motivation. In contrast, Grendon's approach was borne both out of a belief that crime is a social (rather than an exclusively individual) phenomena and from emerging neo-classical theories of crime which argued for offending theories based on free and rational action, rather than physical or genetic abnormality.

In that spirit, Grendon's therapy seeks to understand offending behaviour in terms of a breakdown in social dynamics and, to whatever extent possible, 'treat' inmates in a therapy process based on four key principles – responsibility, empowerment, support and confrontation – believed to foster a prison culture where every prisoner and staff member is treated and is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. From the seemingly smallest of details – that staff and inmates call each other by their first names and wear their own clothes for example – to rather more serious efforts to monitor the well-being of each individual inmate offering words of encouragement and support, Grendon tries to instil an element of the humane that is absent from much of the rest of the prison system.

Nowhere were these themes clearer than on my initial open-day visit to Grendon. After the first round of security clearances, I was greeted and offered a mug of coffee in the 'socials' room by a prisoner serving life for a series of serious sex offences. I was to spend the remainder of the day with Jeff*, who had been at Grendon for five months and was a murderer. He had strangled his neighbour to death with his bare hands and had received a life sentence – quite a lot to take in at 9.30am. We sat in our group with coffee and biscuits making pleasant chit-chat until a round of presentations began. There were no prison officers looking over our shoulders; they were too busy with the administrative arrangements for the rest of the day.

The theme of the day was 'victims' and each of the prisoners, who had been sitting in amongst the visitors, had ten minutes to speak in front of an audience of around 60 people about himself, life in prison and the impact that his crimes had had on his victims. Each spoke frankly and honestly about their past and their therapy. They did not shy away from often gruesome details concerning their crimes. Keith, a recidivist sex offender, spoke of his inability to separate fantasy and reality, how he raped women and how he was learning about his behaviour so he would know how to stop it. In his psychodrama sessions, he told us, he had to play the part of one of his victims, whilst another prisoner acted out on him what he had done to her. Simon told us about his drug-dealing history, how he had shot and killed a man during a drug deal and how he was trying to understand how he came to murder someone over a few hundred pounds. The presentations were sometimes interrupted by other inmates

[Photography Tim Nunn / www.timnunn.com]

who challenged aspects of the speech, especially if they thought that the presenter was attempting to minimise or deny the effects of their crime.

The entire day was chaired by a prisoner, a sex offender called Alex, who, as part of his treatment program, was practising his social skills and gaining confidence in interacting with other people. We talked informally over lunch on his wing where he told me about his life, his crimes, prison and his hopes for his therapy and the future. Alex told me he had had difficulties adjusting to life at Grendon and especially to the small-group therapy process: "the hardest thing I have ever had to do".

The soul of Grendon's therapy is without a doubt its small-group sessions usually led by a psychologist, psychotherapist or a uniformed member of staff. Each group is made up of between six and eight men who have committed different types of offence. They meet three to five times a week for about two hours. A typical session focuses on the discussion of a particular inmate's life-history. He will tell 'his story' in his 'own words' probably for the first time ever – at least to people interested in listening – leaving out no details; including a full account of his criminal history and details about his crimes and victims. Other inmates question him and cross-examine his thoughts, beliefs and the justifications that he has given for his actions.

Additionally, large group (community) meetings involve the entire inmate wing population and the wing's staff. They are designed to run democratically with inmates voting a chairman and vice-chairman and attempt to deal with issues arising from the day-to-day running of a prison such as requests for special privileges – job requests, trips outside of prison and so forth. Issues arising from the therapy process are also discussed at the community meeting and decisions to vote a fellow inmate off therapy may be taken here.

Amongst the most important supplementary therapy procedures are the art therapy and psychodrama classes which aspire to give inmates another means of externalising issues raised by the therapy process. Wing socials and open days are aimed at reintegrating the inmates with the outside world whilst life and cognitive skills classes run by the education department or the uniformed staff address practical issues such as how to apply for a job.

The therapy procedures are enhanced by an informal dialogue between inmates, and inmates and staff that aims to build on the therapy process. Informal communication is encouraged to take place continuously: in the lunch queue, in social hours, during exercise and whilst in the cell. Therapy is a programme of full immersion at Grendon and it is perhaps the integration of formal therapy sessions with informal 'chatting' about all aspects of offending behaviour, life and therapy that is the key to Grendon's work. It is a living, learning experience for men who come to Grendon.

Grendon's aim – as specified by the prison itself – is quite simple: to foster a change firstly in behaviour through therapy that results in lower rates of reoffending both in number and severity; secondly improved self-esteem and self-worth and lastly; better and more fulfilling interpersonal relationships. The therapy process, at least at face value, appears to be a radical, but humane and serious, attempt at rehabilitation. But how does Grendon fair in relation to each of its stated goals?

A recent Home Office reconviction study of Grendon did appear to show a treatment effect for men who attended Grendon compared with a matched sample of men who were selected for Grendon but who did not go. Men who attended for at least 18 months were the most likely to show a reduced rate of reconviction four years after release from prison. However, for violent and sexual offenders the treatment effects were much less clear. A follow-up study showed that, after seven years, men who had been to Grendon were still exhibiting significantly lower recidivism rates. Various studies have shown that Grendonites appear to undergo quite radical personality changes during their therapy process. For instance, one study showed a significant reduction in anxiety and depression, lower self-reported levels of social introversion and hostility and fewer negative attitudes towards authority figures such as policemen, prison staff and probation officers. Another study showed significant reductions in guilt, extra-punitiveness and overall hostility.

The therapy process appears to be a radical, but humane and serious, attempt at rehabilitation

A further measure of Grendon's success is its extremely low rate of prison offending. Grendon has the lowest rate of prison offending in the country for any category B prison and one of the lowest rates for any prison or Young Offender's Institute in England and Wales. No small feat considering the profile of men accepted to Grendon.

Grendon's 2004 inspection by Anne Owers, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, could not praise Grendon enough. Staff were congratulated for their approachability and dedication, the institution was lauded for the breadth of its therapy regime especially considering the paucity of its budget and the inmates acknowledged as being, for the most part, seriously committed to their therapy.

Yet despite the evidence, attitudes towards Grendon in the media and amongst academics and professionals in the criminal justice system have continued to be negative. Critics claim that Grendonites learn to 'talk the talk' pointing out that psychopathic and sociopathic individuals are often clever enough to absorb into a prison subculture and learn ways of behaving that will engender for them the best results (early parole for example) without actually affecting their criminal behaviour. Further criticisms of Grendon are that it is expensive and not suitable for every offender. And this last point certainly has some merit – Grendon's selection procedures are tough and not every applicant makes it through.

Selection requires the psychologists, uniformed officers and therapists to question whether the inmate is motivated to change, whether he is intellectually able to deal with group psychotherapy, whether he is psychologically minded (whether he believes in the capacity for people to change through therapy and whether he is capable of insight into interpersonal relations), whether he is capable of undertaking therapy within the boundaries and policies of a therapeutic community and whether his problems of personality and offence are able to be addressed by Grendon's therapy process.

Patrick Mandikate, Head of Wing Therapy makes clear: "The majority of prisoners who apply for a place in Grendon's Therapeutic Communities do so for genuine reasons, to reduce their risk of reoffending. The assessment procedures are stringent and men who arrive on the assessment unit with the wrong intentions are often de-selected at the assessment stage. Attrition rates of 33 per cent at the assessment stage clearly demonstrate this. When inmates become members on one of the five therapeutic communities in Grendon, there is a further three to six month initial assessment period during which those not motivated to change may be de-selected."

So why then, given the amount of evidence in support of Grendon's approach and the call for more places to be made available, does this prison and therapeutic community receive such a bad press? Persistent prejudice amongst a considerable proportion of the penal system is a likely explanation: if you believe prison is only about punishment, Grendon is anathema – why give serious offenders a regime that gives them democracy, 12 hours a day out of a cell (virtually unheard of in other category B prisons) and a perceived 'cushy' ride, even if, as a side-effect recidivism rates are lower?

Yet at a time when the UK's already over-crowded prison population has been spiralling, re-offending rates show no sign of abating, frequent reports of bullying and homicide in prisons appear in the media and prison suicide and attempted suicide rates have been escalating, the time may very well have come to take a radical step in a different direction. If we are serious about affecting change in dangerous recidivist offenders Grendon-type institutions could very well be our only alternative option or, at the very least, one worthy of more sustained attention amongst academics, researchers, the media and most importantly of all, policy-makers.

***Names have been changed.**

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democratic approval

ROWENNA DAVIS and SAMIR DEGERSEN witness political transition in Egypt firsthand

ABOVE THE BUSTLE and the crowds, the rising heat and the honking horns of Cairo, banners of the Egyptian election are still flying. Egyptians are overwhelmed by multicoloured waves of election advertising not just in the richer downtown areas, but in the poorer parts of the city: Bulaq and the slums of 'Islamic Cairo'. And it's hardly surprising, because this is the first genuine election in Egypt's history.

For the last 50 years, Egyptians have only had a referendum; the option to accept or reject the given incumbent. Without positive opposition, there was no democracy. On September 7, nine other candidates contested Hosni Mubarak's leadership of Egypt. Travelling through the country during the weeks preceding and following the election, observing the atmosphere and engaging with the people, we are in no doubt that we were witnesses to a step forward for Egyptian democracy.

So why then has the Western media written these elections off as something of a façade? Why have they not presented it as more of a progressive move for Egyptian democracy? Maybe it is because everyone knew that Mubarak was going to win; almost every poster, banner and billboard depicts an airbrushed Mubarak, a picture that almost halves his 77 years in the eyes of his near 80 million constituents. The announcement of the elections only two months in advance, giving opposition parties very little time to spread

[Photography Rowenna Davis]

their message and mobilise support, has provided fuel for sceptical critics in the West.

But cynicism extends to the independent press within Egypt; newspapers are reporting that only Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) officials have been allowed to send representatives to polling stations and the request by the principal opposition figure Ayman Nour for a re-run has been rejected. A newsagent in Luxor told us that he changed his vote from Nour to Mubarak because he doubted the secrecy of the ballot. In fact, many of those we spoke to who didn't support Mubarak had to be pushed to admit their preference for other candidates.

But it is too easy to write the elections off. Accusations of minor corruption cannot explain how Mubarak has managed to obtain 88.5 per cent of the vote with Nour, his closest rival, attaining only three per cent. Travelling from Cairo to Aswan, there is a genuine public enthusiasm for Mubarak and an endorsement of his 24 years in power. His support can be found within any class or ethnicity and is present from the poorest slums of south east Cairo to the well educated workers in the tourist industry, and even amongst the nation's minorities, the Copts and the Nubians.

Those we interviewed cited Egypt's economic development, particularly the building of new infrastructure, as a major reason for supporting Mubarak. Egypt's former dependence on the public sector has been replaced by a growth in private initiative, with the latter now accounting for 70 per cent of GDP, whilst Suzanne Mubarak, Egypt's popular First Lady, has pioneered successful reforms in women's education and the environment. The public belief seems to endorse this perception of economic progress: as a café owner in Coptic Cairo told us, "Why should we change? Egypt is getting richer…all of these bridges, they are Mubarak's."

Yet it is not just about the economy, Egypt is a security conscious nation and the fact that Mubarak is the first Egyptian leader in 60 years not to have taken his country to war remains important for its people. The relative safety and stability of Egypt is linked in the public consciousness to Mubarak's age and experience; rather than being a hindrance, his long tenure is considered a positive quality. Indeed, major opposition figures, particularly Nour, are widely perceived to be either corrupt or incompetent. As a shopkeeper in Cairo said: "Mubarak knows Egypt."

It seems clear, then, that this was no phoney election. The majority who voted for Mubarak did so because they believed he was the right man for the job. However, although this election was democratic, it raised fundamental questions about what it means to be a democracy. People went to the ballot box to express their preferences, but these were preferences shaped in a nascent democracy, not a fully-fledged one, and made by an electorate accustomed to stable authoritarianism, not political pluralism.

Mubarak may not have actively interfered with the election results but no one can deny that there is a bias towards the incumbent.

He has huge influence over the media and you only have to step out onto the streets of Cairo to see that his advertising budget dwarfs those of his competitors.

Further constraints on democracy are placed by state control; it has left little room for the establishment of strong political parties and the other candidates are essentially wealthy individuals who have no mechanism for mobilising nationwide support. As Mohammed, a taxi driver in Cairo, explained: "Everyone will vote Mubarak; nobody even knows the names of the other opponents". Moreover, with one incumbent and a further nine separate candidates, the opposition is fragmented, the vote split and no single figure emerges as a plausible alternative.

In the West we associate authoritarianism with despotism and tyranny - here it is associated with stability and security

The incumbent bias also has a psychological dimension. For many Egyptians, Mubarak is all they have ever known and his 24 years in office have offered relative stability to a historically troubled nation. For an Egyptian who was born under his rule and has grown up with his policies it is hard to fully conceptualise an alternative. But this is deeper than just a failure of imagination; Mubarak seems to have become weaved into the fabric of the nation, he has become part of the national identity. As a tour guide in Giza explained to us: "It's like your queen – some people in Britain may criticise her but ultimately they become used to her and she becomes a symbol for your country." It is almost as if people are unable to separate the state as an institution from the state as an individual; to support Mubarak is to support the state.

Of course, supporting the state has always been important for Egyptians; even for those who have not grown up with Mubarak, the concept of deference to the centralised state has permeated Egyptian society for decades. From Nasser in 1952 to Sadat in 1971, stable authoritarianism is all Egypt has ever known. Mubarak has inherited a role; and it is a role that Egyptians are comfortable with. In the West we often associate authoritarianism with despotism and anarchy but here it is associated with stability and security.

It is wrong to assume that every society is a latent democracy and that any other form of government is forcibly suppressing a nation's true preference. The truth is that trust in democracy often grows with democratic institutions and this trust is built upon people's experience and exercise of choice over time. Perhaps this explains the low turnout – people need time before they engage with a new political system.

Today, democracy is still a new concept in Egypt. It is an avenue for change but change can often engender fear. Democracy could create schisms in the country, erode stability and exacerbate Islamic extremism. July's bombings in Sharm-al-Sheikh saw the revival of Islamist aggression that was last seen nine years ago in the tourist massacre in the temple of Hatshepsut. There is still a pervasive fear of groups such as Jihad, Takfir and Jamaat al-Islamiyya. Even the activism of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite its moderate stance, inspires fear in some sections of Egyptian society.

Aside from the fear of extremism, there is a genuine concern that a new president might be incompetent. In a nation where a quarter of people live in poverty, where one in ten people is unemployed and where the cities are full to breaking point, electing an unknown candidate is not a risk people are willing to take. A country facing so many challenges might be expected to opt for change but, in the absence of a longstanding democratic tradition, Egyptians would rather have continuity than face the inherent risk of a new leader. As Samira, a woman in Islamic Cairo, summarised, "The devil you know is better than the devil you don't."

So what can we make of the Egyptian election? It's all too tempting to underestimate its significance; to dismiss it as rigged or corrupt. This clearly was not the case – people really do want Mubarak to continue in office. Yet the kind of democracy visible in Egypt is not the same as in countries with a long history of free elections. The votes may have been counted fairly, but the candidates were not competing from an equal standpoint.

The public has heard nothing but Mubarak for 24 years and his pictures still flood the streets of Egypt. But even if it wasn't Mubarak that was running, Egypt has become used to a stable authoritarian figure at the helm of its political structure. This separates democracy from its usual connotations of continuous change and causes Egyptians to vote for familiarity.

However, this does not always have to be the case. This election must be recognised for what it is; an important step towards a trusted democracy, in which all candidates can compete on an equal footing. It would be foolish to think that the first multi-candidate election in a nation's history would be perfect, but it would also be wrong to suggest that democracy and Egypt are incompatible.

The reality is somewhere in between; if democracy is to prosper, it requires trusted political institutions, something that can only come with a history of free competition. As a hospital worker told us: "Maybe this time Mubarak will get 90 per cent, then maybe in six years he will get only 70 per cent and then after that even less, but, if we can choose, things will change in the end."

facing Reality

An Aids epidemic may be about to threaten China. EDMUND SETTLE explains the economic and legal reasons why

OVER THE PAST few years, much media focus on the problem of Aids in China has concentrated on HIV cases caused by the blood and plasma trade in the centre of the country, and has continually tried to characterise the central government's response as inadequate. Thus far, little international or domestic attention has been given to the increasing rates of sexual transmission that threaten to channel HIV out of localised vulnerable groups and into China's general population.

The Chinese government identifies commercial sex work as the primary factor driving this increase of sexual transmission rates. However, current government policies such as criminalising sex work have had limited positive impact on HIV/Aids prevention and control efforts, and leave sex workers socially and legally marginalised – thereby inhibiting effective outreach and prevention programs.

In order to prevent a widespread increase in sexual transmission rates, there needs to be a significant change in the attitude of the Chinese authorities to the sex trade. Chinese legal definitions need to reflect the fact that female sex workers are economic migrants, with limited education and workplace opportunities, and are in need of legal protections such as access to health care and a safe working environment.

Since its first reported Aids-related death in 1985, China is estimated to have had over 840,000 HIV/Aids cases. Although the overall HIV infection in the adult population remains less than 0.1 per cent, reported cases of new HIV infections have increased at an average annual rate of around 30 per cent (though the figure reached 122 percent for the period between 2002 to 2003).

Sexual transmission is responsible for an in increasing number of HIV cases in China's urban areas. Heterosexual sex presently causes 18.9 per cent of infections, and homosexual transmission causing 11.1 per cent. Injection drug users (IDUs) account for an estimated 44 per cent of cases, and are primarily located along China's southern and western borders. HIV infections through tainted blood transfusions and blood products stand at 20 per cent, and mother to child transmission (MTCT) has also increased substantially, from 0.1 per cent in 1997 to 0.5 percent in 2003 (source: State Council, 2004).

Sex workers act as a 'bridge population', capable of channelling HIV from high-risk groups into the general population. The national rate of HIV infection among sex workers has risen from zero in 1995 to 1.32 per cent in 2002. However, in certain regions, rates of infection tend to be much higher, sometimes rising above 10 per cent.

In the first half of 2002, Shanghai experienced close to a 50 per cent increase in HIV cases, with unprotected sex viewed as the main cause. Shanghai health officials showed that 80 per cent of females and 20 per cent of males were infected by their spouses, and some 67 per cent of married and 45 per cent of single males were infected by prostitutes or sex partners.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and China Family Planning officials, only one in 20 married couples use condoms regularly, with the rest relying on other forms of birth control.

While local political leaders are quick to blame unregistered migrant workers for the rapid increases of HIV and STDs, a recent nationwide survey showed that the majority of clients of sex workers are middle class men aged below 35. The survey also showed that urban officials and businessmen are ten times more likely, and rural officials and businessmen 22 times more likely, to hire prostitutes than

[Illustration Matt Hasteley]

migrant labourers. This trend is likely to increase as China focuses its economic development priorities on its mid-level cities and towns.

The decision to use a condom is primarily dependent on the partner's or client's preference. Among surveyed sex workers in southwest China, approximately half of sex workers did not use a condom because the client refused, familiarity with the client often being cited as the reason. More significantly, among men between the ages of 25 and 45 who frequented prostitutes, about 40 per cent said they had unprotected sex.

During the past 25 years, in parallel with China's domestic economic expansion, commercial sex work initially re-emerged in the industrialising coastal cities and has rapidly spread inland. In 1983, the Xinhua News Agency reported the cumulative number of registered sex workers as 920,000. Currently, conservative estimates place the number at more than six million, the majority of whom are women from rural areas. Given that sex workers are a highly marginalised group, both socially and legally, the actual number in China is believed to be much higher.

According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) published in 2003, China reduced its number of rural poor from 30.7 per cent of the rural population in 1978 to 3.2 per cent in 2000.[1] This reflects a significant shift from employment in agricultural labour and rural enterprise to non-farm jobs in large urban areas where income is higher. The perceived benefits from receiving a higher salary have pulled many rural women to urban areas. While some were able to find short term-work in manufacturing or service industries, a substantial number moved into sex work. Thus the decline in agricultural and rural enterprise employment is dramatically contrasted by the sharp increase in arrests for prostitution during this same period.

Inequity in access to education is a key factor contributing to women's engagement in sex work. Prior to 1979, universal and equal access to basic education was a priority for Beijing. However, the accelerated shift from a planned to a market economy in the 1990s corresponded with a growing gender gap in schooling, especially in rural areas. Currently, the average Chinese female over the age of 15 has only six and a half years of schooling. Furthermore, a study conducted in 1999 showed that 72 per cent of sex workers had low education and lacked the necessary skills for standard work.

Gender-based labour discrimination against rural women is widespread, and is another key factor in the rapid increase in prostitution. Domestic rural-urban female migrants tend to be young and under-educated, and usually take insecure jobs with poor working conditions.

Furthermore, women are more likely to be laid off than their male counterparts and less likely to be hired or promoted. In a 1987 poll of 660 industrial enterprises, 64 per cent of workers who had recently been made unemployed were female.

Consistent with the experience of women worldwide, Chinese rural women are increasingly marginalised in the process of modernisation and economic liberalisation, as they are pushed closer and closer to the bottom of the social hierarchy. Even though globalisation has completely changed the face of China's traditional values, women are increasingly faced with gender-based discrimination in the family, the workforce and in education. Thus, an increasing number of rural women and girls have perceived little option but to enter the sex industry.

Although prostitution is illegal in China, Chinese law does not specifically define sex work. The act of prostitution is generally viewed as a legal and moral problem running contrary to China's socialist ideology and traditional values. Existing laws and regulations primarily focus on punishment for those who facilitate, coerce or shelter persons engaged in sex work. Nonetheless, the majority of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women details the penalties and legal responsibilities for violations, thus providing a legal basis for enforcement of the anti-prostitution law.

Sexworkers act as a bridge population which channels HIV from high risk groups into the general population

In the context of HIV/Aids control, there are several references to the legal status of prostitution. According to the State Council's Plan of Action for Containment and Control of HIV/Aids in China (2001–2005), prostitution is considered an illegal activity that can contribute to the uncontrolled spread of HIV/Aids. At the latest China State Council HIV/Aids Working Conference held in April 2004, Vice-Premier and Health Minister Wu Yi reiterated the importance of taking uncompromising measures to reduce prostitution, and thus reverse the sexual transmission rate of Aids. She later tempered her statements by becoming the first high-ranking health official to recommend expanding condom promotion actives for high-risk groups, including sex workers.

In a recent report by the China Centre for Disease Control, female sex workers at various types of entertainment sites, restaurant, hotels and on-street locations are finally defined as a key target group.[2] The document thus proposes that: 'HIV/Aids education campaigns shall be launched through means of outdoor services and partnership education in order to promote the use of condoms, and enhance the effectiveness of the comprehensive intervention strategies, such as encouraging testing and treatment of the potential virus-infected individuals and providing reproductive health inquiries.'

As illustrated, the majority of sex workers in China are economic migrants with limited education or job opportunities, and are compelled to enter sex work for economic gain and security. Altering the legal status of sex work would allow for increased social and legal space in which local health authorities and non-governmental organisations could operate effective HIV/Aids prevention programs. Furthermore, gaining full worker status would allow sex workers to have open access to healthcare and legal support to demand condom use – privileges that are currently virtually unattainable.

Evidence has shown that punitive HIV/Aids control policies are not only ineffective, but inhibit those who are actively trying to reach the individuals most vulnerable to HIV/Aids. Any decrease in sex work will depend not on the occupation's legal status, but on education and labour opportunities for women.

Given China's current political climate, linking HIV/Aids control to periodic, 'strike-hard' anti-prostitution campaigns will remain the mainstay of a set of contradictory health and public security policies. However, these campaigns have little long-term effect on the numbers of prostitutes and their customers, or on STD/HIV transmission rates. Furthermore, continued failure effectively to address the contradictions between the legal and health policies towards sex workers may contribute to an uncontrollable HIV/Aids epidemic in China, by directly contributing to a substantial increase in sexual transmission rates among sex workers and the general population.

[1] *Millennium Development Goals: China's Progress*, UNDP, 2003
[2] *Intervention Guide for Entertainment Sites Female Workers HIV/AIDS and STD Prevention*, 2004 (Provisional)

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narco terrorism

SIR KEITH MORRIS discusses the history of conflict in Colombia and the international 'war on drugs'

THE INTERNAL CONFLICT in Colombia is the subject of much controversy with many NGOs, fiercely critical of the Colombian government's policy towards the situation and the strong support it receives from the United States, and to a lesser degree, the EU. The conflict cannot be understood fully without taking into account the degree to which drugs money fuels it.

Colombia has suffered more than any other country from the perverse effects of the UN conventions on narcotic drugs. A long-running but low-intensity insurgency has most probably been prolonged, and certainly been greatly intensified, by the profits of the international trade in illicit drugs. The decisions of the US administration in the mid-1980s firstly to reinforce the UN system with bilateral sanctions for producer and transit countries which did not cooperate and secondly to militarise the 'war on drugs' and fight it in the Andean region as near the source of production as possible, aggravated the problem. The situation was exacerbated in the mid-1990s when the US subordinated its foreign policy towards Colombia to anti-narcotics.

The UN conventions, which prohibit the production of, and trade in, illicit drugs, were the result of much diplomatic effort by the United States over the last century. This effort was driven by a strong element in American opinion morally opposed to the use of mind-altering substances. The Christian Right failed on the prohibition of alcohol inside the United States but won the wider battle on narcotics.

Aimed to protect the consumer, the conventions, translated into national legislation, have had the effect of turning commodities that are very cheap to produce into highly priced goods on the streets, providing huge profits for the traffickers with accompanying violence and corruption. This has affected all countries, but most acutely producer and transit countries. Worst affected has been Colombia, which became the leading producer of cocaine from the late 1970s and of coca from the mid-1990s.

Of course, Colombia's internal conflict pre-dates the drugs trade. It started in the mid-

1960s as one of several Communist insurgencies in the Andean region inspired by the success of the Cuban Revolution. It was one of the factors – along with the weakness of the Colombian state and its judicial system; its strategic position on the route to the US market; the country's strong entrepreneurial culture and its smuggling tradition – that made it possible for Colombian drug traffickers to win a majority stake in the cocaine trade by the end of the 1970s against strong competition from Peruvians and Bolivians who had the advantage of controlling the supply of the raw material, coca. By this point, the strongest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) – founded in 1964 with Soviet backing – were largely based in the Amazonian jungles of southeast Colombia. The presence of the state was exiguous and this was the closest region of Colombia for light aircraft bringing coca paste from Peru and Bolivia. The FARC was only too happy to provide protection at a price.

Drugs money in the 1980s financed a sharp escalation of the internal conflict, which had remained at low intensity during the preceding two decades. The FARC expanded in strength from 1982 and paramilitary groups, often financed by drug traffickers, grew up to fight the FARC and the other guerrilla movements. When the Cold War ended, and with it the funding from Communist states for Latin American guerrilla movements, peace deals were struck in Central America and with several Colombian groups. In contrast the FARC had ample means to continue the armed struggle, as did the smaller Army of National Liberation (ELN) whose main income came from extorting the oil industry.

The task of the FARC and ELN was made easier because the Colombian state from the mid-1980s had been increasingly challenged by the drug traffickers, especially the largest cartel, under the leadership of the notorious Pablo Escobar. They launched a narcoterrorist campaign in response to the Colombian government's efforts to extradite them to the United States; an outcome for which the US administration was pushing for under its new policy of tackling the drug problem near to source.

The narco-terrorist campaign saw three Colombian presidential candidates assassinated and hundreds of officials and ordinary citizens killed. It led to a call by President Virgilio Barco for international aid in August 1989, which inaugurated the international support for Colombia that continues to this day. That cooperation was based on an informal compact: the United States and its European allies would provide help for the Colombians to tackle the trade internally while they took measures themselves to stop the supply of precursor chemicals, crack down on money laundering and reduce consumption. Needless to say, the consumer countries have not been able to deliver their side of the bargain.

Barco's successor, Cesar Gaviria tried to use the threat of extradition to get Escobar to end his terrorist activities, offering him jail in Colombia for a moderate term if he surrendered. After a Constituent Assembly voted to prohibit his extradition in June 1991, Escobar eventually gave himself up.

He had also secured himself a luxury jail, effectively under his own control where he continued to run his business. When in July 1992 the Colombian authorities moved to stop this he escaped and launched relaunched the narcoterrorist campaign. He was finally shot dead in December 1993 whilst trying to evade arrest.

The flow of drugs money combined with the country's difficult terrain, gives an advantage to illegal groups

Two developments in the mid-1990s contributed to an intensification of the internal conflict. Firstly a US-backed campaign to eradicate coca crops and interdict light aircraft ferrying the coca paste to Colombia, resulted in falling supplies of coca paste from Peru and Bolivia and prompted Colombian drug traffickers to focus on local production with dramatic results. Production quadrupled between 1995 and 2000, but coca plantations required much more protection than cocaine laboratories and the FARC and the Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC), into which most of the paramilitaries had organized themselves, grew in almost exact proportion to coca production.

Secondly the Colombian state was weakened and the internal conflict aggravated by heavy-handed US tactics towards President Ernesto Samper's administration between 1994 and 1998. Allegations that his campaign had been financed by the Cali cartel – a group which had taken over the dominant share of the cocaine market after the killing of Escobar – were used by the US administration to pressure him to bring back extradition, increase penalties and pursue the drug trade into the jungle. Sanctions were imposed under the certification procedure to increase the pressure. Samper complied but the cost was high in the demoralization of the Colombian security forces, encouragement for the guerrillas and paramilitaries and lost investment and economic growth.

By late 1997 the United States had realized that in giving their anti-narcotics line priority over all other issues they had threatened the stability of Colombia and made a victory for the Communist insurgents a real risk. As a result sanctions were dropped and unprecedented backing was given to the Andrés Pastrana administration, elected in 1998. Under Plan Colombia, the US has provided $500 million a year in military aid as well as substantial economic aid since 1999. This support allowed Pastrana to pursue the dual strategy of strengthening the armed forces while negotiating with the FARC on conditions extraordinarily favourable to the latter.

The failure of this peace process in 2002, which Colombian public opinion attributed to the FARC's blatant abuse of the safe haven the government had given it, was a major factor in the election of President Alvaro Uribe. Uribe ran as an independent advocating the need to restore the authority of the state. This became his democratic security policy, which has had considerable success in reducing violence. Homicides and kidnappings, previously more concentrated in Colombia than anywhere else in the world, have fallen dramatically. Uribe's administration has received strong US support, not least in the removal of restrictions on the use of US donated equipment. Until 2002 such equipment, including helicopters, could only be used against drug-related targets despite the fact that both the FARC and the AUC were heavily involved in the drugs business which fell outside this remit. Coca production was reduced by a half between 2001 and 2004. The economy, which had suffered its first recession in 70 years in 1999, (an event not unrelated to the US sanctions against the Samper administration), has returned to a steady yearly four per cent growth under Uribe.

Like his predecessors, Uribe realizes that ending the internal conflict will require negotiation, not least because the flow of drugs money combined with the country's difficult terrain, gives such an advantage to illegal groups. He has made considerable progress with a peace process with the AUC, many of whose members have already demobilized. 'Justice and Peace' legislation recently passed provides that the leaders who have been responsible for atrocities will have to serve short term prison sentences (five to eight years) and hand over their illegal assets. This would apply equally to the FARC and ELN although the FARC have shown no interest in negotiating with the current administration.

'Justice and Peace' has been much criticized for excessive leniency by NGOs, not least because many of them allege that the AUC has been in cahoots with elements in the security forces over the years and have been responsible for appalling human rights abuses.

Unfortunately 'Justice and Peace' is quite unacceptable to the FARC who would not be prepared to spend even a second in jail as a price for peace. Given the interanational community's responsibility for the UN drug control regime and the continued failure of consumer governments to reduce consumption, there is an obligation to support Colombia's efforts to resolve its conflict. And since the international community has made it harder to negotiate a settlement by raising the bar, that obligation is now even greater.

Sir Keith Morris was the UK ambassador to Colombia from 1990 to 1994

fall from grace

ANDRÉ BORGES reports from Brazil, where disappointment replaces hope as the left-wing government faces a major corruption scandal

ELECTED IN NOVEMBER 2002 by an impressive margin of 50 million votes, president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva represented for many Brazilians the hope that much needed social and economic transformations would finally come to pass. In a country that figures among the world champions of social inequality, the election of a working class leader as president, born into a family of peasants, seemed a clear and significant watershed. The fact that Lula rose to power as the leading figure of one of the most successful and well-organised left-wing parties ever to emerge in Latin America – the Workers' Party (PT) – was the cause of yet greater optimism, supporting the view that the new government was in a privileged position to conduct redistributive reforms and, at same time, safeguard democratic stability.

It has been almost three years since the election of the PT government and much of that initial hope has faded way. Lula has disappointed many of his left-leaning supporters by backing fiscal and monetary policies that differ little or not at all from the ones that were put into practice by his neo-liberal predecessors of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB). As Minister of Economy, Antônio Palocci has proved to be an intransigent advocate of balanced budgets and tight monetary policies, even if that means reducing public resources available to implement social policies and invest in basic infrastructure. Nevertheless, the greatest disappointment with Lula and the PT has not originated from orthodox economic policies. Thanks to a favourable international environment, Brazil has been experiencing a rare combination of ever-expanding trade

surpluses, moderate growth and low inflation rates.

Until early this year, the Brazilian public seemed to be satisfied with the government's performance, despite limited successes in areas such as health and education, and the President's approval rates remained high; around 50 to 60 per cent of the electorate. But things started to change some five months ago, when a bribes-for-votes scandal involving some leading PT figures hit the headlines in the major newspapers and news magazines of Brazil.

The scandal began in May this year, with the release of a video apparently showing a top executive of the postal service receiving a £750 payoff. The executive happened to be an appointee of the Brazilian Labour Party (PTB), which is part of the Lula coalition in the Congress. The then-President of the PTB, Federal Deputy Roberto Jefferson, reacted to his alleged involvement in the postal service kickbacks scheme by making heavy charges against the PT and Lula's cabinet chief, José Dirceu. Deputy Jefferson alleged that the PT had mounted, under Dirceu's coordination, a scheme of monthly bribes to be paid to individual parliamentarians in exchange for political support in the congress.

After Jefferson's explosive public statements, Pandora's box was opened, and day after day a new scandal erupted in the national press, claiming to reveal an intricate network of business people, lobbyists and party leaders involved in the laundering of money siphoned off from major state-owned companies, and kickbacks paid by government contractors. The PT, it was alleged, had relied on this corrupt scheme to finance electoral campaigning and buy off political support in the National Congress.

As the opposition succeeded in obtaining support for the opening of a parliamentary inquiry commission into the scandal at the postal service and the bribes-for-votes scheme, the Lula government was forced to stay on defensive. Since June this year, following the start of parliamentary inquiries, several leading figures of the PT, such as cabinet chief José Dirceu, have resigned their posts, in an attempt to preserve Lula's – and the PT's – public image.

The political significance of this major corruption scandal cannot be underestimated; particularly in view of the previous efforts made by the PT to establish itself as a the party of 'ethics in politics'. Many PT mayors and state governors built their careers by presenting themselves as honest and efficient administrators who refused to make concessions to 'traditional politicians' and their clientelistic practices. Lula relied on the same strategy in the 2002 electoral campaign, and that certainly explains the combination of shock and disappointment that has marked the reaction of the Brazilian public to the corruption charges made against the PT.

According to polling company Datafolha, Lula's approval rate experienced a marked decline in the three month period from March to June, with those viewing his performance as 'very good' or 'good' falling from 60 per cent to 49 per cent. A more recent poll by the Sensus institute, revealed that the President's approval rate has fallen even further, stabilising around 35 per cent. Lula's falling popularity means that his bid for re-election is now seriously at risk; the latest poll, released by polling company Ibope on September 21, shows that the PT's presidential candidate is technically neck and neck with José Serra, of the PSDB: in a hypothetical run-off, Lula would receive 33 per cent of the total vote and Serra 30 per cent.

Brazil's recent political crisis has raised questions not only on the electoral prospects of Lula and the PT, but also on broader issues concerning the nature of the country's party politics and electoral campaigning.

Some academics, journalists and parliamentarians have been arguing that political corruption is a consequence of the institutional framework of Brazilian democracy. Brazil's combination of presidentialism and multi-partyism at the national level has the tendency to produce minority presidents, and the latter are forced to build heterogeneous and unstable parliamentary majorities based not on partisan agendas, but rather on the 'fair' distribution of patronage resources.

The bribes-for-votes scandal might be understood as a symptom of the difficulties faced by chief executives in Brazil's democracy

Open-list proportional representation, according to this view, makes matters worse, by producing a candidate-centred style of campaign and weakening the national party leadership. Because party discipline is rarely enforced by political parties – with the exception of the PT – and because chief executives are often in the minority in the congress, the use of public jobs and/or public money to purchase political support is a strategy that has been pursued by virtually all Brazilian presidents elected since the return to democracy in 1985. Read against this context, the bribes-for-votes scandal might be understood as simply an exacerbated symptom of the difficulties routinely faced by chief executives in Brazil's fragmented democracy.

If it seems clear that Brazilian institutions are robust enough to deal with the recent corruption scandals – one only needs to remember that the Congress impeached President Fernando Collor de Melo in 1992, due to his direct involvement in a major corruption scheme. However, it is hard to predict what will happen to the country's most important left-wing party in the near future. The alleged PT involvement in corruption has made the party look very much akin to Brazil's catch-all, non-ideological political organisations. Whereas the PT of the early 1990s was committed to reinventing local politics in major state capitals such as São Paulo and Porto Alegre, the PT of today seems to have involved itself in the more normal, corrupt style of politics.

Even worse, although the PT's gradual shift towards the centre of the ideological spectrum and the abandonment of its previous anti-market rhetoric may have contributed to the expansion of Lula's electoral base, it has also made it almost indistinguishable from its centre-right opponents. The challenge faced by the party is, perhaps, to reinvent itself and maintain its electoral strength, without losing its core identity.

The more radical left-wing factions within the PT are now mounting a reaction against what they see as a perversion of the party ideals by the Campo Majoritário (Majority Group), the PT faction to which Lula and many of his cabinet ministries belong. Left-wing groups such as the Democracia Socialista (Socialist Democracy) are harshly critical of the government's economic policies, which they see as conservative and inimical to social justice and economic growth. They reject too the government's pragmatic approach to coalition building, which in their view is one of the main causes of the ethical deterioration of the party.

The future of the PT will depend, at least in part, on the outcome of the confrontation between moderates and radicals. Internal party elections are now under way, and the various factions that comprise the left wing of the PT have together obtained over 50 per cent of the vote. A run-off will be fought between the candidate of the government, Ricardo Berzoini, and the representative of the leftist Democracia Socialista, Raul Pont. Although it is very likely that Berzoini will be elected president of the party, the growth of the left might force the moderates who control key posts in the Federal Executive to make concessions to their opponents. Whether or not this will lead to changes in the PT economic model or in other policy areas, is yet to be seen.

No matter what the result of the struggle within the PT will be, one thing is clear: because the PT is the only major political organisation to have established firm roots in the popular sectors of Brazilian society – including industrial labour and the peasant movement – it will continue to hold the key to the resolution of the many challenges and dilemmas that are now faced by Brazil's unequal democracy. The path followed by the party in the near future will certainly have a lasting impact on the country's political development, affecting the electoral fortunes of the other major participants of the democratic game and either constraining or enabling the implementation of much needed redistributive reforms.

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comic stripped

MIKE CAREY finds himself unwittingly embroiled in the world of virtual pornography

MY MAIN SOURCE of income for the past five years has been writing scripts for comic book stories – occasionally tackling mainstream characters such as *Fantastic Four* and *X-Men*, but more usually working within the 'mature readers' market. It's a label that covers a multitude of sins, and I confess to a momentary twinge of unease when I got the pencilled page roughs from one of my recent scripts: women whose costumes seemed to be made out of dental floss (in thicknesses of a single strand) and whose breasts were bigger than their heads, slugging it out with undead monsters in poses that often seemed to be unnecessarily provocative. Maybe this had been a mistake.

I can't help seeing the disappearance of the actual female form in pornography as the eye of an apocalyptic storm in the male id

I'd agreed to do a story arc for *Vampirella*, the sexy vampire-turned-vampire-hunter, and this was the result – *Revelations*: a three-part tale which finds a rationale for the existence of vampires, and Vampirella's mission to kill them, in the Talmudic and apocryphal story of Lilith.

Lilith was created as a wife for Adam, but being reluctant to submit to him sexually she left the Garden of Eden to consort with demons: and she consorted on a heroic scale, birthing a whole race of monsters. In the story that Mike Lilly and myself came up with, these monsters are the vampires, and Lilith has unleashed them on humanity because she feels she has a legitimate grievance against the children of Adam and Eve.

So we'd sort of grounded the story both in gritty biblical politics and in the modern tradition in which Lilith has become a radical feminist icon. Yes, there are still those football-sized breasts, screaming out to adolescent boys in comic shops "buy this – it has football-sized breasts in it": and so yes, maybe the virtual pornographer doth protest too much, but we felt we had something to say about the character and the pulp tradition she springs from. We weren't thinking of ourselves as pimps or panders.

Then I read a news release last week from *Playboy* magazine, and the whole issue became live for me again. It seems *Playboy* is breaking with tradition in its October issue by featuring a photo spread of women with one unusual feature in common: they don't actually exist.

"VIDEOGAME CHICKS TAKE IT OFF," proclaimed the headline on gaming website 1UP, reporting, with apparent approval, *Playboy's* decision to spotlight the 'virtual vixens' of the gaming world, and even providing a list for those in the know - Avalon (*Hellgate: London*), Jacqui (*Blitz: The League*), Carla (*Indigo Prophecy*), Tala (*Darkwatch*), Faerie Queen (*Playboy: The Mansion - Private Party*), Oracle (*God of War*), Alexa (*50 Cent: Bulletproof*) and Cassidy (*Darkwatch*).

Pixellated porn is nothing new, of course – and this is fairly tame stuff compared with, say, Japanese hardcore pornographic cartoons (hentai), now widely available on the internet. If you object to pornography on the grounds that it degrades women, you could even call it a step in the right direction. After all, if the women aren't real, then arguably what you've got is a victimless crime.

And virtual women have a history in other mass media arenas, too – even if, like all traditions that depend on CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery), it's a fairly truncated history. Back in 1996, Japanese telecommunications company HoriPro launched the career of the first virtual pop star, Kyoko Date, with the single *Love Communication*, and her admiring audience (almost entirely male, it should be noted) lapped up the details of her fictional life in Tokyo, her purely imaginary hobbies and ambitions, as well as pin-ups and posters by the million. Kyoko was something of a flash in the pan, because the technology used to create her was still in its infancy, but she was followed in the run-up to the new millennium by virtual newscaster Ananova, virtual cybo-funk starlet T-Babe, virtual super-model Webbie Tookay and, of course, all-conquering cyberbabe Lara Croft. Which brings us back to pornography, since explicit images of the Lara Croft character were being exchanged online within weeks of Eidos releasing the first *Tomb Raider* game almost a decade ago.

All the same, and speaking as someone who may himself be professionally and personally compromised, the news of this *Playboy* feature left me feeling a little unnerved and – yeah, I have to say it – censorious. I pursed my lips and shook my head like Mary Whitehouse: spectral horn-rimmed glasses probably appeared around my eyes. If you're still reading, I'd like to take you through my convoluted reasoning.

Growing up in Liverpool in the Seventies, I found top-shelf magazines like *Playboy*, or like the UK's *Knave* and *Fiesta*, to be of great value in terms of answering otherwise imponderable questions about what women looked like with their clothes off, and what sort of thing I could expect to happen if and when I ever encountered them in a clothes-off situation.

Obviously, with hindsight, I can now see that the girlie mags of my youth were unreliable guides in some respects. They were faithful about matters of female anatomy, but not really about the social mechanics of sexual relationships. Porn peddles myths – the central myth being an almost Arcadian one about a lost paradise of female sexual availability. In its more extreme forms it offers definitions of women, and of male and female sexuality, which few people would endorse if they were translated into verbal propositions.

The case for pornography encouraging acts of rape and sexual violence has never been convincingly made, and for most feminist commentators the more insidious dangers of alienation and objectification were always more

[Illustration Nick Hayes]

of an issue. Women in porn are not actors but are acted on: they exist in order to facilitate a male orgasm which – both within the narrative and in how the narrative is used by its primary audience – is the whole point of the exercise.

Everything builds to the money shot, the highly visible male climax, which in pornographic movies is sometimes played in slow motion or repeated from a variety of camera angles. The female climax is both narratively invisible and inconsequential.

Knowing this doesn't make me feel any less nostalgic about the girlie mags I grew up with: compared to what you find on the internet at the click of a mouse (whether you're looking for it or not) there was an engaging ham-fistedness and almost coyness about them. As in the *Carry On* films of the same era, they were all about travelling hopefully: nobody ever actually arrived.

And these *Playboy* photo spreads similarly promise far more than they deliver, or even intend to deliver. The virtual vixens are shot in decorous poses, concealing to appeal, T&A for the adolescent boy gamer in all of us. The problem, for me, lies in what's absent from these images – which is, let's be blunt, women.

Pornography, for its 99 per cent male audience, has always been an aid to fantasy as well as to masturbation: it's always presented unreal women, their moles and leg hairs and the bags under their eyes airbrushed out of existence so they seem to exist in the red light district of Plato's ideal world of forms. But women who were never real in the first place are different, I submit, from women whose blemishes have been digitally uncreated.

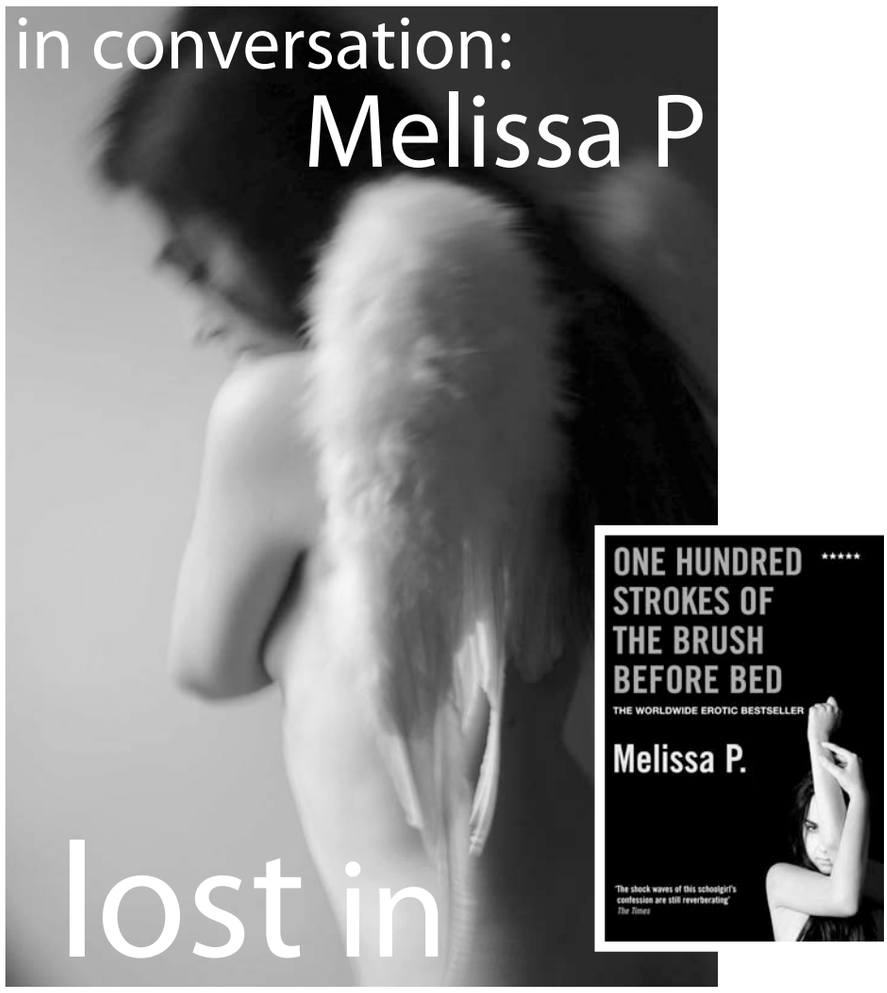
If we're talking alienation, what could be more alienating than this? Young males stepping out of the gaming arcade to pop into the newsagent next door, hoping to explore their sexuality with the help of some specialist literature on the subject, are encouraged to fantasise not about real, flesh-and-blood women but about characters in a video game. The act they're so fervently imagining is cast in the form not of a real encounter with another human being, but of a programmed experience where the 'other' is a sprite, a CGI houri whose every action is controlled and orchestrated by your mouse clicks.

I'm aware of how quaint this may sound – and how much like generational special pleading. All arguments of this kind seem to operate by the same syntactical rules: "my porn was good; your porn is a little dodgy; their porn is misogynistic and indefensible." And I'm not trying to align myself with the American conservatives who howled in outrage over the existence of the sexually explicit *Hot Coffee* sub-game in *Grand Theft Auto*. Somehow that didn't cause my Mary Whitehouse sense to tingle the least little bit, maybe because it was so obviously a programmers' in-joke, much more satirical in nature than it was sexual. Or maybe because I'm drawing an arbitrary line between material which exists only as an adjunct to male masturbation and material in which sexuality appears as one strand within a broader narrative framework. (Yeah, that sorts things out really neatly doesn't it, Mister *Vampirella* scriptwriter?)

So maybe I'm a hypocrite, and maybe I'm an old fart, but I just can't help seeing the disappearance of the actual female form from pornography (where it's been so relentlessly, desperately focused on for so long) as the eye of some apocalyptic storm in the male id – a perfect storm, triggered by the erotic appeal of technology for its own sake, the fear and insecurity that inevitably go with your first forays into sexual relationships, and an unacknowledged dialectic of control and submission.

I mean, where do you go from here? Pay-as-you go websites where you can create your ideal woman from a range of physical attributes and then have her carry out bespoke sex acts with faceless automata? Nope, because that's already been done. It's a brave new world, and – here's the scary part – it doesn't have any people in it.

Mike Carey is the author of DC Comics'* Lucifer *and the* Castor *novels for Orbit. He studied English at St Peter's College, Oxford



translation

A new genre in autobiographical literature or bad sensationalism? FRANCIS GREENWAY talks to MELISSA P, author of the controversial book 'One Hundered Strokes of the Brush Before Bed'

CATHOLIC ITALY SEEMS rather shame-faced about its most recent child literary star. Received variously as "callow, pretentious, unconvincing, only semi-coherent and…shocking in entirely the wrong way" (*The Independent on Sunday*) and "a rather sophisticated commentary on desire…Combining adult subject matter with a child's imagination, the author succeeds in powerfully capturing a young woman's sexual coming of age" (*The Observer*); the work of this 19-year-old Italian has caused as much of a storm in the literary world as her 'confessional' diary did in her home country on its release last year.

Yet it seems that readers can't get enough of Melissa Panarello; translated into 30 languages and selling in around 35 countries to date, *One Hundred Strokes of the Brush Before Bed* was her debut novel which catalogues the author's sexual experience between the ages of 14 and 16.

So is Melissa P merely a sensationalist and temporary fad or a shocking, yet fresh and significant literary voice? Here the author is in conversation.

Francis Greenway: *We've seen a number of examples of the new genre of ''fictionalised memoirs' over the last couple of years: Catherine M and Jane Juska for example – would you place your own work within this category?*
Melissa P: Well, I don't know about that, but *One Hundred…* is a book which in a certain sense has marked out a crisis, in social life as well as cultural and literary
FG: *Just in Italy?*
MP: No, in all the countries where it's published; it has crossed cultures and has highlighted a fracture. It's a new literature, a young literature which up until now has had little expression.
FG: *There's clearly an autobiographical element in the book, but what do you think the balance is between reality and fiction is?*
MP: It's very difficult even for me to draw a line, because in the end our memories always distort things after a period of time. We tend to change what we remember to see events as we would like to, and we don't see them as 'real' in that sense. So when we write them down, that's a whole new process of modifying real experiences, except that in writing your memories the effect is doubled – it renders them more powerful. I think you could say that the foundation is autobiographical. What changes are the identities; the settings,

experiences and feelings which aren't true but which have almost become true because they were necessary to tell a story which is very different to real life.

FG: *Was eroticism and the candid erotic style you employ in your work intentionally the focus of the novel, or is there a deeper message that you're aiming at?*

MP: To be honest, I don't think it's an erotic book – I never intended to write an 'erotic' book. It talks about sex, but that doesn't make it 'erotic'. Erotic literature has its own codes and rules which I don't respect because that's not my genre. It does have sex in it, but it's talking about an initiation into life which occurs via sex. Jack Kerouac talked in his novels about an entry into life through joy derived from drugs, and I talk about this initiative process through sex.

FG: *Your work has been compared to Vladimir Nabokov, most notably the author of* Lolita *and* Pale Fire, *and the French diarist Anais Nin. Would you identify with these as important influences for your own writing?*

MP: Look, I've never read Nabokov because I was never interested in reading him. Certainly, he's very important from a literary point of view, but the story had no interest for me. Also, I'm not a massive fan of erotic literature in particular. I like good writing, I like good use of language, but not eroticism for its own sake.

FG: One Hundred… *has been criticised for its extreme introversion; it is very much centred upon yourself. Do you think this is a fair comment?*

MP: Well of course it's true – all books centre around their author, everyone is writing about themselves in one way or another, be it in a more or a less subtle way, at the end of the day this is the case. The fact that I write in the first person doesn't mean anything…

FG: *It's just a literary device?*

MP: Yes, of course – and in the same way, the fact that I don't use my name doesn't mean that I have some mania about removing all my inhibitions about talking sexually. Even if you're writing science fiction or horror, or a thriller you still express yourself, your ideas, and your fears so there's really no difference between myself and other authors.

FG: *Your representation of men in the book is not always particularly flattering. Do you think they are particularly representative of Italian men, or of men in general?*

MP: Oh God! Ha. Only Italians. I think male culture in Italy is at the moment a very ambiguous phenomenon, even rare because it's disappearing or exhausting itself.

FG: *It's surely difficult to follow up success like* One Hundred… *What direction do you think you're going to take next?*

MP: Well, I've written another book which is very different, completely different. It's different stimuli and reflects different periods of my life that I'm going through. So as to future direction, I wouldn't say I'm a fixed author who only writes erotic books or only horror, or whatever – it doesn't work like that.

FG: *So you think that these first two books are expressions of – I don't quite mean your age – but of your experiences at that point in your life, and in the future your style will change?*

MP: Of course, yes that's normal. As life changes, so does my way of writing and my way of understanding things. Also, you have to remember that I'm 19 so the steps I take are very quick and very long, so that something which I wrote at 16 seems to be very distant. It may only be three years, but for me it's a lifetime. Even in a literary sense. If I were to write *One Hundred…* now, it would be very different because I've developed as a writer. If I had written it at 30 it would be very different again.

FG: *Given the mixed critical reaction to* One Hundred…*, how do you think your forthcoming book it will be received in its English form?*

MP: It's called *L'Odore del tuo Respiro*, [*The Sweet Smell of Your Breath*] and probably very badly! Ha, no it was received very well in Italy – obviously it didn't sell as well as the first one, because that would be impossible, but it has made a good impact on the critics and the public; hailed as displaying good artistic development.

FG: One Hundred… *has sold well across a number of countries but how do you think translation changes your writing? Do you think your books lose something in translation?*

MP: I haven't read the English, but I've been told that the translation is very different. The content is much harsher – in Italian the book is far more poetic and lyrical, but in English the imagery is much stronger and almost pornographic. The book talks about sex, but at the end of the day it is romantic, maybe the most romantic book of the last ten years and if this isn't highlighted, it can be read very differently.

Melissa Panarello's forthcoming novel,* The Sweet Smell of your Breath *will be published in the UK in January

home-grown talent

TOM GOODHAND is unconvinced by the music world's hype over his home town

IT IS A TRUTH universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife, and that everything is brilliant in Leeds. Hmm.

There is a t-shirt. It is chocolate brown in colour. Upon it there is an outline of the county of West Yorkshire. Emblazoned across it is the legend 'EVERYTHING IS BRILLIANT IN LEEDS'. What must have begun as a sudden flash of inspiration from a now very smug person involved in merchandising has become so much more. Suddenly the t-shirt is accompanying ripped jeans and silly haircuts across the country and (as the editor of a local music magazine) what is even more worrying for me is that every other review I get closes with the damn phrase; as if it is some kind of universal truth.

As a Leodensian, I'm not convinced that everything is all that brilliant round here. That's not to say that Leeds is the equivalent of Netto when it comes to musical cities. Neither is it a denial that there are some excellent bands in Leeds. It's just that Leeds isn't quite as special as some would have you believe.

What makes us think that Leeds is like a long dormant volcano; quiet for so long, and then suddenly erupting, spewing out a relentless stream of wonderful bands? When did Leeds die? And when did it rise again? Well I'll tell you what honey; Leeds never died, and never returned. All it is, is that people are taking notice again, thanks to Leeds lads done good, the Kaiser Chiefs.

Some may belittle them, brand them a novelty act, a Britpop throwback, but I'd guess that t'Chiefs (as we all call them in Yorkshire) don't really care too much. They're a roaring success. And good on 'em. I had the pleasure of interviewing the Kaiser Chiefs for local music magazine, *Sandman*, some considerable time before they released *Oh my God* the first time around. They were charming, excitable and passionate about what they were doing. They wanted to succeed, and they loved what they were doing. They did it, and I'm happy for them. However, here in Leeds, we have to be just a little concerned about what this means for us lot who have been left behind.

Leeds is 'hot', apparently. The *NME* and *The Guardian* have both told us that we are a city crawling with talent, passion, and ambition. Musically speaking, apparently we're the most exciting city there is. It's all a scam. What we have in Leeds is a wealth of extremely good bands. Very few of whom sound like Kaiser Chiefs or Forward, Russia!. Very few of whom have been involved with Dance To The Radio. Very few of whom to which anyone outside of Leeds is going to pay any notice.

We don't have some kind of all-loving, cohesive scene, where all the bands share records and ideas, and are all delighted whenever one of their number gets propelled Icarus-style to bigger, but not necessarily better, things.

What we have in Leeds is the same thing that exists in every other city. We have a number of independent record labels, functioning with varying levels of success, and with varying ambitions. We have many, many bands. Some of whom are marvellous. Some of whom are all of a sudden getting national attention. Some of whom are friends with each other, and help each other out. Some of whom who will say, with a look of quiet joy upon their faces: "Yes there is a Leeds Scene". Some of whom who will say, with a look of bitter disappointment grown out of what they perceive as years of deliberate alienation: "If there is, no-one ever asked me to be part of it, hmph".

The danger is that what we have here will get blown out of all proportion. Bands that are still trying to find their feet and their sound will get plucked out of Leeds, ferried off around the country and end up recording career-deciding singles and albums long before they are ready. Bands that don't get 'spotted' by the national press may find a decrease in gig-goers at their shows, as everyone heads off to see whoever is the next big thing to come from Leeds.

Equally chilling is the worry that someone will try to fashion a 'Leeds sound'. Since our two biggest exports are currently the Kaiser Chiefs and Duels (notice how The Music and The Glitterati are thankfully no longer getting a

[Photography Danny North / www.dannynorth.co.uk]

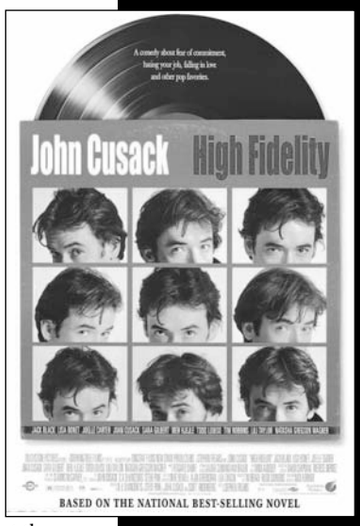
mention as part of the Leeds 'scene,') is Leeds going to become The City Where Brit-Pop Never Died? The place where Damon Albarn is still a captivating genius writing brilliant pop songs about the state of the nation, and not just a cartoon, where Jarvis never started dressing up as a skeleton and getting involved in bizarre electro-pop, where the Gallaghers are still writing pub rock and fuelling their rampant egos (OK, so the last part applies to the rest of the world as well). God help us.

Brit-pop was a rather wonderful phenomenon, which, rightly or wrongly, covered such great and wide-ranging bands as Elastica, Pulp and Blur. Some records from that period are still absolute classics. But the repercussions of Leeds being known as a one-sound-city would be nigh-on disastrous. Excellent bands such as This Et Al and iLiKETRAiNS would have to be ignored, wiped out of existence for playing explosive noise rock and epic, murderous post-rock respectively. The whole canon of the glorious Wrath (pronounced 'Froth' but with a 'W' – not that it really matters) would have to be swept under a huge metaphorical carpet and left to rock to no-one but themselves. Only those with the right sound would creep through. The people would get bored, very quickly, and we'd be left trying to relive past glories, but getting nowhere.

All this sounds like the words of miserable git who's been left behind by the party doesn't it? Well that's not true. As a music obsessive, someone who (cash permitting) would go to gigs almost every night of the week, living in Leeds is a genuine delight. We do have a lot of great bands, and a handful of great labels. Together, that makes for a lot of good music. Now would be a fitting place to talk, in great detail, about all the bands that I like in Leeds. But nah, I'd forget someone important. Or, worse still, bore you with my earnest fannishness. Or, more likely, discover that I've reviewed the bands so many times in the past that I can't think of anything new to say. Suffice to say that pretty much every band that has been mentioned recently in the national press is excellent. That's The Lodger, Duels, The Ivories, The Research, The Sunshine Underground, Forward, Russia!, Black Wire, iLiKETRAiNS, This Et Al. They're all ace. Truly.

But that's far from it for Leeds. Despite my regular attendance at gigs across this fair city, I'm convinced that there is a multitude of bands that I haven't seen yet, but would blow me away. There are also a vast number of bands that I know are ace, and you probably haven't heard of yet. But that's going to be true of almost every city you'd care to mention. Leeds isn't 'hot', but the spotlight upon us is. Look around you. I promise that every local music scene will have some superstars waiting to be spotted. Almost every band that you love has played to a half-empty pub at some point in their past. So go on, make your local venue one person less empty.

***Tom Goodhand is the editor of* Sandman Leeds *magazine (www.sandman.com) and a freelance journalist writing for the* NME**



Stephen Frears in his own words

Often focusing on society's social and sexual fringes as the subject matter for his films, Stephen Frears's work has had international success from Hollywood, (*High Fidelity* (2000), *Liaisons Dangereuses* (1988) to television (*The Deal* (2003), Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* (1993)). Here, Frears discusses his rise to the top

'BEING IN SCHOOL in Leicester in 1949 or 1950, boys were asked how their parents were going to vote. Everyone said Conservative, except for my brother and I who said Labour – as we were the children of what you'd call 'intellectuals'. From then on, we were regarded as slum children – ridiculous, pathetic and sneered at. So somewhere I was left in confusion. Whilst being privileged, emotionally I was an outsider.

"I always assumed that I was meant to be a lawyer or a something like that – something straightforward and respectable. So I studied law in Cambridge. I don't know why: it was outrageously boring. Calling Oxbridge the pinnacle of academia is very conventional. By going to Cambridge, I'd gone where 'people like me' went. I sort of 'fulfilled my destiny' as a bright middle class boy.

"My interest in the theatre grew. Theatre there was very vigorous. I think it was seen as a tremendous opportunity for very quick advancement and to a more interesting life.

"After graduation, I was probably very confused again. I started to go to the local theatre in Nottingham a lot and wanted to work with those people. I met an actor I got on very well with and he knew the man who was about to run the Royal Court. Patronage and privilege – you know, the usual way. So I became an assistant director there. It wasn't very difficult – I'd just stumble my way there and it didn't take very long.

"If you look at all the successful directors in Britain: Ken Loach is the son of a doctor – I think we are all sons of doctors; all middle class. Mike Newell went to Manchester, Ken went to Oxford, I went to Cambridge. Sam Mendes, Steven Daldry – we are the products of a combination of very traditional elements. It's very narrow and you see it in the product: English eccentricity and the class system.

"When I got to the Court I found that I was emotionally out of my depth; I was in many ways very immature. And then I met the famous director Karel Reisz. It is as if my life only began when I met Karel. I went to work as his assistant and I have no idea why. I was like the little boy asking all these questions. The notion of art, or being an artist wasn't something to consider – except for the theatre, as theatre was the only outlet that I had any experience of. I was very anxious. I lacked a sense of structure. Actually, I am happier the way I have been freelance all my life – quite large parts of it have been spent within institutions against which I have rebelled.

"When I choose my film projects, I operate from fear really. When I am asked to make a film, I make a sort of internal calculation: I ask 'would anybody want to see this?' When I was asked to make *Liaisons Dangereuses*, I thought it was wonderful – that is how I wish to spend the rest of my life; seeing films like this.

"The whole time you are sort of guarding yourself against terrible things happening, against failure and humiliation. You are trying to protect your films in a hostile world. And a lot of films need all the protection they can get. If you ask me how I choose scripts, in many ways it's like falling in love. Making films is like therapy. I make my films and afterwards I go: 'Oh that's what I was thinking about'.

"I hate to say this, but I have become more of an artist than I ever imagined. I wasn't brought up to be any kind of artist. It sounds rather complacent – Matisse was an artist. You make films in an industrial situation – wherever you are, you are still in a sort of industrial situation. It's hard to bring myself to use the word, whilst it exactly describes me.

"If you ask me what I think I do, I can see that I can bring things to life. If you asked me what I worry about at night, it is that my ability to bring things to life has gone. I don't like to think about these things because I am afraid in thinking I will destroy my intuition. The best times are when it just comes out of the air – from nowhere. Afterwards you think: 'Oh I can think this profession really suits me – how lucky I am'.

"It's all come as a big surprise. Film has given me a life. Yes, it has given me the most extraordinary life – incredible. I never thought I'd have the life I live. After the war it was very constricted – horizons were so limited. It took me a long time to sort of lift my eyes up."

***Stephen Frears was interviewed by Stephan Littger, an ex-student at Keble College, Oxford. The full interview will be available in book form later this year in* Becoming a Hollywood Director – conversations with Twenty Hollywood directors**

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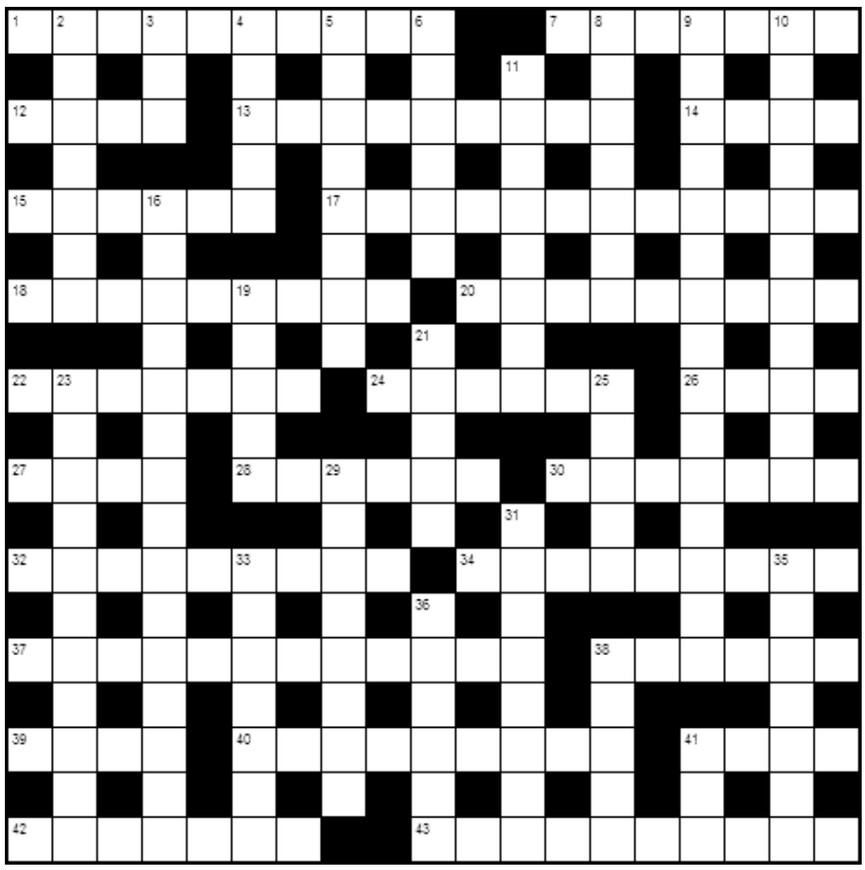

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Send your answers to editor@oxfordforum.com

ACROSS

1 29, 36 & 21 late for remix in city on the Nile (3,7)
7 No. 1 by 1 re-entered after pick up (3,4)
12 Song for Him, reportedly (4)
13 Enterprise attacked: turn! Evade! (9)
14 "____ old age" seen on headstone (English) (4)
15 Lithium from one living in Tripoli? (6)
17 Screen comedy where socialist has change of direction in whorehouse down south (4,8)
18 Young Mr and Mrs Edwards are after Welwyn break (9)
20 Emboldened by flowing lager after court order (4,5)
22 One converted to festive spirit by festive spirits (7)
24 Mint strategy, but parts in wrong order (3-3)
26 Feel for shame (4)
27 I send back knighthood to get the girl (4)
28 Changes around and dances again (6)
30 TV series which helped 1 get by? (7)
32 Plane's aiming device goes down badly with headless figure (9)
34 Cause difficulty to the French, who are after fifty in coins (9)
37 Incredibly high, he prostrates awkwardly (12)
38 Strike woman who's in the water (6)
39 Mode of transport – one after a slice of your money (4)
40 Drug bonfire up in flames (9)
41 No. 1 by 1, written backwards in triple-high tempo (4)
42 Punishment – say, never to return (7)
43 Joining the army, Catachresis gets surrounded by explosives after breaking lines (10)

DOWN

2 Shot bug under the grass (7)
3 Rubbish write-up (3)
4 It cooks at home, over and over (5)
5 No. 1 by 1: "Like My Hair" (4,2,2)
6 Guard sent to Coventry – gutted! (6)
8 Calm Adam's partner Norman Head has left (4,3)
9 Track by 1 from 1968-2005, an annual surprise (8,7)
10 Journalist's work is edited and subject to restrictions (11)
11 Buns turn out toasted (8)
16 No. 1 by 1 lost in sea below: yes, rum involved (6,9)
19 Bet money – money that's been earned, right? (5)
21 Ring ring! – it's Richard Starkey (5)
23 Craftily rob coat in Greater Manchester Bring & Buy (3,4,4)
25 Songbird (5)
29 WC: symbol for phosphorous, gold, Luxembourg or Pope? (4-4)
31 Amiable chef is flexible with rule (8)
33 Lone warrior in karate gear, which is hung up after this? (7)
35 Error in the system as Russian Federation changes kilograms into grams (7)
36 Dragon-slayer, oriental, falling into ravine (5)
38 Getting around on public transport gives a financial boost (5)
41 Radio actor (3)

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