

Labour & Trade Union Review

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Thatcherism versus Toryism

Will the kissing have to stop?

In Defence of Pornography

1968-1988 or 1688-1988?

Shoot to Kill - truth a casualty?

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Health Care in the USA

Leading article

Thatcherism versus Toryism

Mrs Thatcher declared recently that

"There is no such thing as society, only families and individuals".

It was a very significant remark because it obviously encapsulates what she believes in. It sums up her considered views on society and politics. It is surprising that Labour has not drawn more attention to it and attempted to point out its implications.

One implication is that Maggie cannot be considered a Tory except in the very broadest sense of the term. It would probably entail too great a sacrifice of anti-Tory sentiments for Labour's leading lights to be able to say this. But it is a fact nonetheless.

Toryism is based essentially on the premise that society is anything but a collection of individuals. It reckons that if it were ever reduced to that state then society would have collapsed. Individuals exist and flourish only insofar as there is a well-defined framework, called society, in which they can operate. The attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, culture etc that bind society together is the substance of politics. Disregard or belittle those bonds, and individuals can very quickly become rather pathetic beings living, or rather suffering, an animal-like existence.

A social jungle

Some admirers of unlimited competition think that it will have a good effect on people;

weeding out the unfit and enabling the better-adapted to survive. But competition without a social framework will favour the worst human qualities, not the best. Al Capone would do much better than Albert Einstein. St Francis of Assisi would be no match for Cesare Borgia. The crude, greedy and cunning would do best.

The most animal-like of all will be the individual capitalist who can be relied on to survive and thrive in any environment from the literal jungle to the metaphorical jungle of the market economy. He will exist whatever level of society there is and will have the same virtues and vices. His interests certainly do not coincide with those of society. Running a society involves matters that are not dreamt of in his philosophy.

Maggie obviously believes that there is a marvellous harmony of interest between public and private interests. She has no experience of a society where maintaining the general and public interest has not become almost a matter of habit. She assumes that the individual interests of individual capitalists will be in harmony with general social needs. And she promotes government policies to facilitate this presumed harmony.

And not only government agencies. She recently had the bishops down to Chequers to account for themselves. They were no doubt treated as the moral agents of her policies who were not behaving properly in that role.

All behaviour that does not fit into this world view is considered some kind of aberration. All kinds of issues from football hooliganism to Moslem fundamentalism can be explained away by mind-emptying concepts like terrorism.

The mechanics of the market

Thatcher's view is essentially a mechanical view of the world. The world is driven and directed by the market economy and all other matters are extraneous. They are either a help or a hindrance, but not real issues in themselves. She is living up to the most simplistic pop-Marxist notions. But the irony is that the simplistic Marxists have been pontificating for so long about it that they no longer can distinguish between reality and fantasy and have become the most paralysed part of the body politic. Rigor mortis has probably set in.

The real Toryism

Toryism by contrast has what can best be described as an organic view of society. It grows and develops and sometimes it rots in places. It needs cultivating and care and it is all a bit of a mystery if you are concerned with fundamental questions and answers.

Harold Macmillan had a penchant for using musical analogies. It was like conducting an orchestra or playing the piano. It was essential to be able to appreciate the difference between a harmonious arrangement and a cacophony. In any case, you learn skills on how to cope with the various elements and you develop an instinct for assessing whether you are failing or succeeding. Any element can be just as important as another, and too much of anything is a disaster. Even too much growth.

Should Labour care?

Is all of this any concern to Labour? We would suggest it is



Thatcher as a junior minister

of vital importance because it is now quite clear that Toryism is objecting strongly to Thatcherism and could very well replace it if Labour is not able to do so.

Toryism's potential should not be underestimated. No other party has been an actual or potential party of government for such a long period. Few, indeed, have managed it for even one century. Laughing at 'stupid Tories' may get a good cheer at gatherings of the Labour Party faithful. But if Labour is not to become just an ever-dwindling band of 'the faithful', it is necessary to look at the Tories as they actually are.

Labour can only succeed, in both the short and the long term, if it steals some Tory clothes and acquires some of the skills and attitudes that have made Toryism so successful for the past three hundred years. The present government has discarded a lot of its Tory clothes and they are there to be picked up.

Deterministic Thatcherism

It should be remembered that the Thatcher revolution over a decade ago adopted quite consciously the economic determinist view of the world which was up to then the accepted view of the Left. It was used with a vengeance against the Left, but it established quite clearly that clothes-stealing is acceptable behaviour in British politics.

What is now apparent is that the Thatcher revolution is finally coming into its own.

The conventional Left has cried wolf so often that they have the same problem as the boy in the story. When the wolf really turns up, they have nothing new to say, and no one listens to them. Disaster and reaction have been predicted so often that the reality of either is no longer recognisable.

Morals and policies

The mainstream Labour movement also has yet to establish a realistic perspective that can cope with Thatcher. More importantly, they have yet to establish a moral perspective that can cope with her.

Morality in the political arena is no more than the ability to recognise and the courage to cope

with the major problems facing a society. Thatcher came to power by default -- because Labour was not able to cope with its own power in the 1970s. It could not channel the power of the working class in a constructive direction.

Labour was the natural party of government and it shied away from putting its own house in order. Instead it allowed organised labour, through the trade unions, to become an "overmighty subject" in the kingdom. And such subjects are not tolerated. Not even by most of the individuals whose collective power was being expressed through the trade unions. The Labour Party was supposed to put such power to good ends, and it failed to do so. It thereby lost its moral authority, and that is why it has declined.

Labour has to start by recognising these facts. Having done so, it could possibly be in a position to replace Thatcher. Because it is now being recognised that she has let capital - in particular the money men and the speculative traders - become an overmighty subject.

Also that the trade unions are still being kicked when they are laid low and flat on their backs, which is quite wrong from the standard British view of things.

The real Thatcherism

Thatcherism is now coming into its own in a real sense. Up to now it has been a policy of reforms that by and large were acceptable in themselves. However if they are treated as simply a preparing of the ground for the real thing -- an attempt at the atomisation of society that would gladden the hearts of Hayek, Friedman etc, then that will change the attitude of the electorate towards her.

All the indications are that Thatcher sees herself as having simply prepared the ground up till now. The 'real thing' is reflected in the poll tax, the social security changes, the new trade union legislation, privatization of electricity supply, water, sewerage, the civil service, museums, art galleries etc.

There may even be a continuation of such things as the selling of graveyards for 5p a time, which was done by a clone

of hers in charge of Westminster City Council. Perhaps the dead are to be encouraged to stand on their own two feet!

If Labour had had its act together, there is no doubt that the selling of graveyards could have been the symbolic nemesis of Thatcherism, just as the gravediggers' strike was Labour's nemesis during the Winter of Discontent.

Labour's opportunity

We would hope that the Labour leadership will appreciate fully the chasm that is appearing in the Tory party. And that it will be able to make a genuine common cause, based on coherent principles, with the anti-Thatcher forces.

If it did so, it would be the surest means of establishing itself with the electorate as a party to be trusted with government. If it does not do so, it will simply become lobby fodder for the Tories in their fight against Thatcherism.

Jack Lane

(Hugh Roberts is on holiday)

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Discussion

In Defence of Pornography

by Dan Ackroid

There is a new campaign against pornography, with the imaginative name of the *Campaign Against Pornography*. It was launched in February by Labour MPs Clare Short and Jo Richardson, and still seems to be running strong. One of its targets is another attempt to ban topless pictures from the tabloids.

The tabloids are a load of rubbish, certainly. But the whole of the daily press has been going downhill over the past few decades, regardless of what they have on Page 3. With or without topless models, the *Sun* would remain a load of rubbish.

The *Sun* sells because people like to buy it - and because some highly skilled and highly educated people work in extremely subtle ways to keep them buying it. A change in the way newspapers are owned and financed might improve their contents; legislation never will.

Sexually explicit material often includes bad or corrupt attitudes towards women, and towards sex in general. But this has nothing to do with how explicit the material is. The *News of the World* and similar papers flourished long before the permissive society came along.

Censorship tends to be irrational. With the benefit of hindsight, the rules can be seen to be senseless and useless.

Look at the attitudes towards women in many of the strictly-censored American films of the 1930s to 1950s. For instance, there is a scene that is repeated in many of these films which goes like this. Heroine rejects hero. Hero grabs hold of her, ignoring her protests. Heroine promptly changes her mind and accepts hero. (After which, presumably, they screw happily ever after -

but the morals of the time required that no more be shown.)

Now if anything in a film can be an inducement to rape, that sort of scene must qualify. And yet those films were produced under an extremely strict censorship regime.

An unreasoning power

Censorship can be no better than the people who administer it. The things that the old-time censors chose to suppress make little sense. For a long time, they were determined to hide the fact that women had pubic hair. It has now been conceded that women do in fact have pubic hair, and nothing very serious has come of allowing it to be shown.

Present-day rules are no more rational. British censorship still forbids the erect penis to be shown. If it doesn't droop, it isn't legal - a rule that seems unfair to those women who'd like a look. There are also some curbs on sado-masochism and sexual fetishism. But torture or flagellation may be shown in films that are set in some past age, or in some imaginary Science Fiction world. (In the recent filmed version of *Flash Gordon*, for instance, which has been shown on television). And of course, sexual murders of the most horrific kind are judged to be quite OK so long as they are shown late at night.

Any new law will hit at serious artists (including many feminists) who want to deal explicitly with sex and the erotic. Meanwhile the sleaze-merchants will continue to flourish, producing material that conforms to the new law. There was plenty of porn around in the days before the "permissive society". Today it may seem bland and uninteresting; standards

have changed a great deal. But in those days, such things as Renaissance pictures of nudes and photographs of women in bikinis were just as powerful.

A cause of rape?

In recent years, the feminist movement has been conducting a campaign against pornography. It is built around the assertion that pornography is a cause of rape. The assertion lends weight to the campaign. After all, everyone is against rape. And general public awareness of rape as a problem has been increasing over recent years.

The campaign is built around the assertion. What is lacking is any definite evidence that the assertion is true.

Many rapists have never been readers of pornography, and most porn-readers are not rapists. A survey of prisoners found that those in prison for non-sexual crimes were more likely to be porn-readers than those whose crimes were sexual. It would be as logical to argue that porn turns people into burglars, as that it makes them rapists!

There are of course rapists who blame pornography for their crimes. There are people who will use any excuse to avoid accepting responsibility for their own actions. It's a neat line for any convicted rapist to put - or for any smart lawyer to try to sell to the judge or jury. A rapist who also reads pornography can raise the matter in mitigation. But the large number of rapists who have no interest in porn suggests that the excuse is a false one.

It is no less a false excuse when the feminists use it. If their concern were really about rape, one would expect them to concentrate on trying to ban material that shows men being violent towards women. In fact they are out to ban pornographic magazines in general. They concentrate attention on material that includes violence, because this is the most likely thing to upset the greatest number of people. But the demand is for a generalised ban that would hit everything, no matter how innocent of violent overtones.

In almost all the other West European countries, there is far less restriction on the sale of sexually explicit material. And

yet these countries do not seem to have a higher incidence of rape.

Out of the whirlwind - Clause 28

Freedom is one and indivisible. When different groups with different interests start defending merely their own sort of freedom, freedom only for the things that they approve of, then the outlook is bleak.

For years now, there has been a campaign against heterosexual pornography led by radical feminists - who include a strong lesbian element. They have had some success. They have no hope of imposing their views on society at large, but they have helped to silence many of the voices on the Left that used to protest against censorship in general. People nowadays are afraid to call for freedom, because it would unavoidably include freedom for pornographers to produce their trivial rubbish.

They have sown the wind; now they reap the whirlwind! "Clause 28", which seems likely to restrict homosexuals' freedom of expression, is possible only because of the general decline in tolerance. Lesbian feminists led attacks on other people's freedoms; now they are short of friends when their own freedoms come under attack.

This assumes that support from the heterosexual majority was wanted in the campaign against Clause 28. The way that the campaign was run rather suggests that it was not wanted. Essentially, it was a campaign by gays for gays, with no attempt to link the matter to wider issues of human choice. It was precisely the sort of campaign the government must have anticipated when they decided to promote Clause 28, and thus doomed from the beginning.

Moorcock and Dworkin

This article grew out of a report about the *Campaign Against Pornography* that appeared in *Time Out* of February 10-17 1988. It sparked a lot of letters on the subject, both for and against freedom from censorship.

In the February 17-24 issue, there was a letter from Science Fiction writer Michael

Moorcock. One might have expected the author of works like *The Brothel in Rosenstrasse* to be warning of the dangers of censorship. But in fact he was explaining how he was involved in a group that was campaigning against pornography, but which was nevertheless against censorship.

Moorcock and a few other individuals had been involved with people like Clare Short in the *Campaign Against Pornography*, but

"had problems around Clare's Page 3 Bill (sic) and in the end decided that the 'parliamentary' group might as well go ahead with its campaign, using the name with our blessing, while we continued our attack on pornography from a somewhat more radical liberationist standpoint."

Just what is Moorcock on about? He is campaigning against pornography, and yet he is against censorship. He and some like-minded friends start a campaign in alliance with people who are trying to extend censorship, and then quietly drop out when the latter group try to strengthen existing censorship laws. They content themselves with doing something else which sounds esoteric in the extreme, while the real battle over censorship is fought out. They maintain that they are against censorship, while in practice helping to bring it about.

Laws against pornography are the logical outcome of campaigns against pornography. Indeed, if they are not the objective, then the campaign has no object at all. Expressing an aesthetic objection to certain types of sexually explicit material does not need a campaign. Some of Moorcock's own work has been caught by the existing obscenity laws.

Mr Moorcock may see a great difference between his own writings and commercial porn. Other people will not see it that way. Literary critics may see the distinction, but not the judges and juries who actually decide such matters.

People like Moorcock and radical feminist Andrea Dworkin campaign against pornography - or rather, against other people's pornography. They help create a

climate of intolerance which is certain to push public opinion in the direction of greater censorship. They then cover themselves by saying that they are against censorship. They make it more likely that new censorship laws will be introduced - and laws that will have no exemptions for libertarian writers or radical feminists.

They are like turkeys voting for an early Christmas. Even if they say that it is a vegetarian Christmas that they are campaigning for, the net result will be exactly the same!

The new foolishness

The current "radical" line is to create a climate for censorship, without actually wanting censorship. In the 1960s, radicals broke down the rules about what would and could not be said and shown. They were then surprised to find that people they did not approve of made use of this new freedom. Now most people on the Left are confused in the face of attempts to reimpose some of the old rules.

It should be added that a lot of the anti-porn campaign was sparked off by foolishness in the 1960s. People who liked

pornography supposed that *everyone* would like pornography if only they got the chance to see it. Thus they did things like showing full frontal nudes on television. Since a lot of people keep the telly switched on permanently, without bothering to check what is likely to be shown, a great many people were shocked and offended. This laid the basis for a tightening up of censorship.

It would have been wiser to recognise that different people have different tastes, and that they have a perfect right to have different tastes. The right to be explicit about sex need not and should not include any attempt to impose illustrations of explicit sex on those who don't want to see it.

The dangers ahead

There is now a campaign against "sex and violence on television". It will probably be used as a way to curb programs that try to show how horrific violence and war actually are. Cartoons that show continuous violence, as a game and as a nice thing to do, will not be touched. We will continue to have the strictest censorship in Western Europe. It may well become even stricter. Meanwhile, Labour MPs will campaign against Page 3 girls -- probably the least malignant part of the contents of the *Sun*.

Does anyone remember that the *Sun* used to be a Labour newspaper? Why has the Labour party never sought to make newspapers into non-profit-making trusts, immune from takeover? Would a paper that was run by its own journalists ever sink as low as most of the national papers have now sunk? The answer is, not state censorship but control by the working journalists.

Freedom is one and indivisible - and at the moment it is very much under attack. Campaigns against any one sort of freedom are likely to have a wider effect. For this reason, even though I despise the *Sun*, I would defend its right to print Page 3. If that goes despite the opposition of all the millions of ignorant and semi-literate *Sun* readers, a lot of other things are likely to follow, sooner or later.



Even in Peking, freedom of expression is now allowed

Trade Union Diary

by Dave Chapel

The trade union conference season has begun with a determination in many quarters to see the end of the TUC rather than accommodate the industrial practices of the EEUPTU and the AEU. Subjects such as single union deals and no-strike agreements have been elevated to points of absolute principle, and unions face expulsion from the TUC.

Unions have been thrown out of the TUC before, and after a period let back in again. But those were the days when the TUC was a powerful centre with a worked-out strategy for making

its voice something that had to be listened to by all who mattered. Unions desperately wanted to belong to the TUC, and felt a whole lot weaker if they didn't.

Now the TUC is a weak and rather purposeless body. Expulsion or forced resignation matters hardly at all except that it could save a union a lot of money. One suspects that the EEUPTU would be relieved at being thrown out.

The trade union movement has no overall sense of direction. And many unions show no desire to have a unified sense of

direction. In such a situation the TUC becomes a mere bickering shop.

This sorry state cannot be blamed on the Thatcherite shake-up. The unions could give themselves a sense of general and unifying purpose. For example they could replace Thatcherite dog-eat-dog with fighting for an industrial and commercial society imbued with a spirit of public service.

This would involve a new attitude *from the unions*. An attitude of always striving to produce the highest quality products, providing superb

personal service in hospitals, on the buses, on trains, in hotels etc; instead of just filling in time, not caring about the product. It would mean treating the public they serve as fellow-workers (as most of them are), instead of treating them as just a nuisance.

This is a *socialist* attitude for the trade unions to take up. It would be a reasonable and popular alternative to Thatcherism. The habits acquired over a century and a half by British industry, commerce and public administration would often get in the way of such a



What difference would no-strike deals have made to the dispute with P&O?



policy. As and when this happened, workers could make a reasonable demand for the extension of democracy to the workplace. We could demand legislation which curbed the arbitrary power of employers (private and public), instead of legislation that curbed the power of trade unions.

Such a policy would give the unions a real sense of common purpose, and therefore give their common organ, the TUC, a real role. For this reason the TUC should be preserved. For this reason unions should not be driven out of the TUC.

Unfortunately there are all too many in our midst who are interested only in the purity of their souls. These narrow-minded trade unionists would love to see unions like the EETPU and the AEU driven out of the TUC. Just as they were delighted to see the Nottingham miners cut adrift from our movement. They exist in all unions. But they are especially powerful in the T&GWU, the NGA and NALGO. And they are aided by weak-willed leaders like

John Edmunds of the G&M. Edmunds voted to censure the EETPU in the same week that his own union signed a single-union deal!

It is a comfort to see strong leaders like Bill Jordan stand up to these people, while fighting to preserve the integrity of our movement. I hope more of us are prepared to stand by the likes of Bill Jordan and save our Congress from the lemmings who would cheerfully and gleefully see it torn apart.

No-strike Deals

A word about no-strike deals. Recently, a member of the NUS was interviewed on the matter. He said it was all very well for Eric Hammond to sign no-strike deals, but what would happen if an employer like P&O tore up and agreement. The unions would have abandoned its weapon of last resort, and would be destroyed.

There is a myth about no-strike deals, which some people clearly believe. This myth says that workers who sign a no-strike deal can never strike. This

is simply not true.

A no-strike deal means that agreement is attempted directly between the parties concerned. If they cannot agree, the final positions of each side are put to an *agreed* arbitrator. This arbitrator must then take one side or the other. He does not compromise, and both sides must accept the arbitrator's decision.

If the employer refuses to accept such a decision, then the no-strike agreement is invalidated and the union is free to call out its members.

In the case of P&O, the unions would have certainly had the support of such an arbitrator. And if P&O refused to accept his decision there would be nothing to stop the NUS from striking. And the strike would have most likely been far more successful.

UDM

Bad and good news from the UDM. On the eve of their Conference, UDM leaders have had to admit that little progress has been made in recruiting in traditional NUM territory. That was one option open to the UDM. The other was settling differences with the NUM. That has not been done either.

The UDM set itself up as an alternative to what it saw as an undemocratic, unresponsive and incompetent NUM. But it has not behaved as such an alternative. Instead it has developed the Notts laager mentality which the NUM accused it of having all along. There is something smug and self-satisfied about the UDM. And while it is like that there is no incentive whatsoever for the NUM to compromise with it and re-unite the miners in one union - even though there is a growing feeling in the NUM to bury the bitterness of the strike.

On the positive side, the reaction of the UDM to the proposed privatisation of British Coal has something to recommend it. The union is entering into negotiations with British Coal and the government with a view to taking over the pits when the government sells them. Let's hope that the NUM isn't too proud to follow suit.

If the government is determined to privatise and Labour is determined not to re-

nationalise, then the UDM position is surely the best to adopt.

NGA Conference

Union leaders get a lot of stick in this column - and that is no more than most of them deserve. But I like to feature at least one in each issue who genuinely serves the interests of our movement and is not hidebound by sterile ideology.

This time congratulations are due to John Monks, TUC Deputy General Secretary, who entered the lions den of the NGA, and told them to cop on after Wapping.

"There are things that have been done by unions and by worker to worker that will never be forgotten or forgiven in our history."

"But we have to decide whether we can afford another highly publicised exercise in union bashing, not by the Government, but by one union bashing another."

"...the union's call for the expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC appears like revenge rather than justice"

Monks went on to deal with the proposed merger between the NGA and SOGAT.

"I can see you are trying to put current antagonisms behind you and I hope that the movement can be quickened, and the commitment renewed, so that one union for printers is speedily set up."

SOGAT is already committed and the NGA leadership is in favour. But some fierce opposition exists lower down. Snobbery is still alive and well in the NGA - even if nothing much else is.



John Monks

Notes on the News

by Madawc Williams

1688-1988 - Permanent Revolution in Britain

The notion of "permanent revolution" was cooked up in the first decade of the 20th century by Rosa Luxemburg (who was killed after an abortive revolution in Germany) and Parvus (who defected from Socialism and became a millionaire businessman instead). It was popularised by Trotsky, particularly after he had lost power in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky was very good at cooking up notions that sounded good on paper. Very few of them actually worked when they were tried -- and Trotsky largely forgot about them during the time when he was a successful practical revolutionary in Russia. In so far as one can make sense of "permanent revolution", it would involve a revolutionary party creating a series of state structures, and continually organizing their overthrow in favour of something even more revolutionary.

Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution is the nearest anyone came to trying this system in practice -- even though Mao would certainly have denied that it owed anything to Trotsky, and few Trotskyists cared to claim it as an example of their master's thought in action. In effect, the Cultural Revolution was an attempt by Mao to overthrow the state he had helped to found less than two decades before, and replace it with something better.

It was a fine notion, but a disastrous policy. Factions of Red Guards fought each other with great ferocity, each side mouthing exactly the same slogans. Artists and experts were harassed by teenagers who suspected them of ideological deviation. Many of them suffered very badly; some died, or else committed suicide. In the end, reaction against the chaos led to the present swing towards something much more like the Western pattern of government and economy.

Now consider Britain. The state has had direct continuity since 1688. And yet this continuity has not stopped power from being transferred far beyond the governing classes of 1688. It has not prevented social reforms that were hardly even dreamt of in 1688, were viewed as mad and dangerous radicalism in 1788, were still substantially rejected in 1888.

The essential feature of the 1688 settlement was that you could be against the government and the ruling classes, and yet fully accept the existing state. This was possible because the government and the ruling classes did not normally use the power of the state against reformers.

This system did not come out of nothing. Charles II had accepted that he had been restored as a limited monarch, and acted accordingly. This had indeed been the substance of Parliament's original demand on Charles I. James II partly upset the system. But his overthrow established it on a much firmer basis.

Bloodless revolutions are possible, under the 1688 system. Or rather - because the political structure was flexible, and pressure for reforms did not build up until there had to be a vast and violent revolutionary upheaval. In effect, this was and remains a permanent revolution.

The French alternative

The left in Britain has normally looked back at 1688 as a glorious success. If subsequent politics was highly imperfect, at least the principals of 1688 were sound.

Some, indeed, were tempted by alternatives. In *The Rights of Man*, Tom Paine polemicised against Edmund Burke, imagining that the French Revolution was a new and better 1688, without any pointless monarchical trimmings. Yet a few months after writing *The Rights of Man*, Tom Paine was in prison in France, in great danger of perishing during the Terror.

In the short run, Burke was wiser than Paine. He certainly had a better grasp of politics. Yet while France was not to live up to Tom Paine's hopes for it, most of the things that he demanded in *The Rights of Man* have in fact been won. And they were won within Britain without any overthrow of the political structures of 1688.

In France, there were a series of dramatic revolutions, reactions, new revolutions, new reactions. The pace of progress was more or less the same; the cost in blood and wrecked lives was much much higher. British radicals generally saw the advantages of playing the political game by the rules of 1688.

But since the 1950s, British radicals and leftists have seen things differently. They have supposed that a game without rules might be better for the left than politics under the rules of 1688. This supposition developed during the 1960s, and has been maintained despite the disasters suffered throughout the world by leftists who managed to polarise their societies and break down their constitutional structures.

In Britain, the main source of such ideas was the New Left. As Hugh Roberts has described (*L&TUR* 6), they decided that the real truth about politics could be learned from France. Now it was true that political theory was better developed in France than in England. But this was largely because French political practice had been so terrible for so many years, inducing thinkers to try revising things from first



Protest in China. Is "bourgeois democracy" the answer after all?

principals.

The proper job for the New Left would have been to use French methods of analysis in order to understand what was actually happening in Britain. Instead, they tried to learn political practice from them. It was rather like Frenchmen coming to England to learn how to cook!

A restaurant in France that served authentic English cooking would not win many customers. In the same way, the radical movement of the 1960s ruined itself by trying to make British politics more French, more bitter and polarised. And they did this at the very time when French politics were becoming more like the British pattern.

Up until 1968, revolutionary risings in France had tended to end in mass bloodshed. Either the reactionaries put down the revolution with tens of thousands of deaths. Or else the revolution triumphed and then the revolutionaries began killing each other. But 1968 was dealt with in a fairly mild way. There was no mass slaughter, no mass jailings or deportations -- as had happened after the failure of the Paris Commune, for instance.

The true lesson of 1968 is that the pattern of 1688 is getting established on a world-wide basis.

Tanks for the memory

Twenty years is one generation, and the generation of American and West European radicals who were young in 1968 have naturally chosen this year to remember their past. Dozens of programmes have been made about what it was like to be a student radical in Western Europe or the USA.

But other things happened in 1968. It was also the year of the Tet offensive in Vietnam, which persuaded a majority of Americans that the war was unwinnable. And it was the year in which the "Prague Spring" was crushed.

History since 1968 has been dominated by the outcomes of these three events. America's failure and final defeat in Vietnam, plus the student uprising, forced a big re-think and shift of values in the West. The crushing of the Prague Spring led to a freezing-up in

Eastern Europe. What Gorbachev is promising to do in 1988 is far less radical than what Czechoslovakia was actually doing in 1968.

During the 1970s, the left in Western Europe had an immense opportunity - and largely wasted it. Socialism was divided between "idealists" who phrased mongered about revolution and "pragmatists" who were content to run the existing capitalist system, and in fact ran it rather badly. The middle ground - those who could devise practical reforms, and push them through - was too weak numerically to put its ideas into practice.

In Britain, the best opportunity was Workers' Control, in particular the Bullock proposals. But Workers' Control was blocked by an alliance of Labour Left and Labour Right. This failure to do anything coherent with the massive trade union power of the 1970s tarnished the image of West European Socialism. Soviet-style Communism had lost the last of its credibility in 1968. Vietnam, dear to our hearts in the 1960s and early 1970s, got involved in an invasion of Kampuchea and a senseless border war with China. Thatcherism triumphed almost by default!

Other anniversaries

Of course, it's not only 1968 that we should be remembering. We've already had the celebrations of the founding of modern Australia in 1788. Then there was the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. And as I mentioned earlier, there was the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the people and Parliament drove out James II, the legitimate King, and established a constitutional settlement that has lasted ever since.

Surprisingly enough, the British state is determined to play down its own origins. Almost every other state in the world has a "national day" or something of the sort, celebrated each year. Some states have several, reflecting different stages in their development. Yet there seems to be a consensus of the establishment that the 300th anniversary of the founding of the modern British state is a

minor matter. The defeat of the Spanish Armada is getting just as much attention, even though it was just one battle in a long and indecisive war. But the great thing about Britain post-1688 is that individuals don't have to follow the state's lead. So you'll be seeing more about 1688 in future issues of *L&TUR*.

What else? Dublin is celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of "Dublin in Ireland". Dublin is in fact rather older than that, but it began life as a Viking base used for raids on the disunited Irish tribes. Some time around 988, a ruler of Dublin found it convenient to acknowledge an Irish High King as overlord; this is the event that is being celebrated.

Coming to more recent times, there was 1848, of year of revolutions in many European countries. In Britain, the ruling class agreed to give up some of its privileges, a process that had begun with the reform of Parliament in 1832. Elsewhere, the ruling class tried to hold on to everything, succeeded in holding on to everything for some decades, and in the end lost everything.

Coming to the 20th century, there was 1918, the end of the Great War, and the disappearance of much of the old order of Europe. Then there was 1938, when Britain and France tried to preserve peace by giving Czechoslovakia to Hitler, and succeeded only in laying the basis for a longer, bloodier and far more dangerous war. There was 1948, when an alliance of local Communists and the Soviet Union overthrew a democratically-elected left-wing government in Czechoslovakia - an event as upsetting in its day as the crushing of the Prague Spring was in 1968. 1948 was also the year when George Orwell wrote 1984.

One should also not forget 1958, and the founding by Charles de Gaulle of the Fifth Republic. The signs are that the Fifth Republic has finally given France a political structure in which Left and Right can contest with each other, and replace each other in government, without the danger of civil war that has dogged France since the Fall of the Bastille.

One last thing. The 5th of

May would have been Karl Marx's 170th birthday, had he still been alive. And his ideas *are* still very much alive. Despite the mess-ups that various self-styled Marxists have made in the interim, they are still helping to re-shape the world.

Spaghetti Borgia

Shellfish can occasionally contain lethal toxins; every year there are a few such deaths somewhere in the world. Cigarettes give lung-cancer to those who sit next to smokers, as well as to the smokers themselves. Alcohol, though safe enough in moderation, is lethal in excess - and there are many who drink to excess. And yet none of these things are illegal. The irradiation of food has none of these dangers. Yet it is still illegal to offer the public irradiated food, even clearly labelled as such.

Irradiation is the purification of food by radiation. It does not make food radioactive, any more than exposure to light would make it luminous. What it does do is kill off the bacteria that tend to be present in even the cleanest fresh food. Thus irradiated fruit would last for much longer without going bad.

Irradiated food would prove popular, if people were allowed to buy it. There is no rational reason not to let people decide for themselves. Large-scale tests with irradiated food have been carried out in China, where few people can afford a fridge, and there have been no ill effects. But irradiation is held up because of a spill-over from fears of nuclear war and pollution from power plants, even though it has nothing to do with them. Irradiation remains against the law!

Flags of convenience

Last time I looked, the three largest fleets in the world were those of Greece, Panama and Liberia. The first of these is hardly surprising; the Greek connection with the sea is older than recorded history. But the other two are blatantly "flags of convenience"; anyone who likes can register their vessel as Liberian or Panamanian. For ship owners, this brings great benefits in terms of low safety

standards and few rules about rates of pay.

But in the Gulf War, such flags are not so convenient. The American and West Europeans have been defending ships that fly their own flags, but not those of other nations. There have been arguments that it should be extended to all shipping - even to ships that are substantially British, French or whatever, but fly a flag of convenience.

Understandably, the navies in the Gulf have refused to do this. They have enough to do defending their own. It's a selfish attitude - but unless and until something can be done to suppress "flags of convenience", it makes more sense than the alternatives.

SoLiD as a rock?

In *L&TUR* 6, I commented that "...the party that ripped itself apart in the Asquith/Lloyd George power-battle is showing itself true to its traditions". This was not intended as a prophecy. But at the time of writing, it is showing every sign of predicting the future of the Social and Liberal Democrats. (SLD, hence SoLiD)

Having angered a great many people, and having got rid of David Owen, David Steel has now stepped down. If he did not want to be leader, then the wise and far-sighted thing would have been to promote Owen as leader of the new merged party. But Steel is neither wise nor far-sighted. He has broken the Alliance, excluding its only really serious and substantial politician. And he has for all practical purposes re-invented the Liberal Party, with all of its eccentricity.

The Liberal Party was a party with ancient corruption in its bones. Lloyd George was one of the leading promoters of corruption -- although it is possible that the covert sale of honour was also intended as a long-term ploy to undermine and discredit the whole system. His bust-up with Asquith came because Asquith was not an effective war leader, but would not admit the fact. Lloyd George ousted Asquith, and went on to win the World War for Britain. Thereafter he and Asquith ran

rival Liberal parties. Both of them lost power, but the Lloyd George party lost more, and more or less vanished.

Running a nation is a bit like driving a car. It's nice to have some good destination in mind, but you also have to be competent to manage the vehicle. Rash or inexperienced drivers can not be trusted with cars regardless of where they hope to end up.

God and Iran

The Iranian Islamic revolutionaries have always been very confident that they had God on their side. For a time, their seemed to be some objective support for this notion. Overthrowing the Shah, who had seemed so powerful, was more or less miraculous. Surviving the Iraqi invasion was also a notable achievement, even though Iran has a larger nation, with a strong well-equipped army that the Shah had built up. But then they tried to push things too far, assuming that God would give them a new string of victories. God is showing no sign of obliging them.

At present, the US has Iran stalemated in the Gulf. The fierce words uttered by the Iranians were not backed up by actions. The few times there has been a clash, the US has shown its great superiority in wars of machines and complex electronics.

Meanwhile, Iraq has pushed Iran back on the key southern sector -- the only sector where Iran ever had any chance of a decisive victory. Not only is the Iranian war effort getting nowhere -- it is actually going backwards!

We leave it to the Iranian religious leaders to try to explain why God has allowed this to happen.

The sniggerers on the sidelines

There was a time when serious things were said in *Private Eye*. There was a time when it was a pioneer of the "permissive society". But that time is long past, and now drifts on as a slightly more modern alternative to *Punch*.. A lot of it nowadays is devoted to trivial and predictable faults - greed and

vanity among media people, and sharp practice or fraud among money men.

It's not really unexpected. *Private Eye* never had any serious purpose, beyond satirising the establishment. And their satire was more or less an end in itself. The main people running *Private Eye* have never had any particular desire to change the world, nor any notion of what they might like the world to become. When they realised that their criticisms of the world might actually result in changes to the world, they lost their nerve. Thus in the course of time, they were bound to decay into no more than a funny magazine. (And there was even a time, long ago in the early 19th century, when *Punch* was a radical magazine.)

For a brief period there was an alternative to *Private Eye*. Called *The Digger*, it was a similar but rather better alternative. More like *Private Eye* once was. Alas, it is no more. It was not a really independent publication; it depended on its financial backers, mostly Irish, who grew discontented with it and let it die after it had run for a few months. It's not exactly a tragedy, but it is rather a pity, since *The Digger* had a lot going for it. So let us give it this lament:

Satiric London's dead and gone;
It's with *The Digger* in its gravel

Kings Cross phoenix

Kings Cross in North London is a really dismal area. Dull, dirty and run down, for the most part. But it lies more or less between up-and-coming Islington and expensive areas like Bloomsbury and Oxford Street. It was thus certain to be re-developed one day.

The key to the matter is Kings Cross Station, and a lot of unused or little-used land near to it. A complex deal is being put together by British Rail and a consortium of developers, for a huge scheme worth several billion pounds.

There are objections, naturally enough. The development will no doubt be very Thatcherite, with huge profits for the investors and with poorer people in rented accommodation getting squeezed out. But the alternative is -- what?

The world does not stand still. And the chance to establish a socialist pattern of redevelopment was missed and messed up in the 1960s. Local councils and other public bodies have tended to be foolishly wasteful, leaving huge numbers of houses empty for no very clear reason. "Social planning for social needs" is a fine slogan. But there ought to be some substance behind the slogan, and for the most part there was not. Without a serious re-think, things like the proposed Kings Cross redevelopment can not be effectively opposed.

Afghanistan - return to anarchy

When it became clear that the Russians really were pulling out of Afghanistan, a lot of commentators reckoned that the government they had left behind them must be doomed. Just as the Saigon regime was doomed, once the USA pulled out.

The difference is that in Vietnam, all opposition to the Saigon regime was controlled by Hanoi. Whereas in Afghanistan, there is a total muddle, with a great diversity of rival "freedom fighters", and probable splits between the internal and external leaders of each faction.

Afghanistan is basically the high mountainous land that was left free when the Russian expansion southwards from Central Asia met the British expansion northwards from India. Its ethnic groups do not have a great deal in common with each other. And in fact, the modern borders of Afghanistan cut across most of them. Most notably the Pathans, the largest Afghan group, but half of whose territories are in what is now Pakistan.

The Communist regime that the Russians have left behind is the most coherent thing that can be found in the whole country. The various "resistance groups" will go on fighting it, no doubt. But they will also fight each other. And if one "resistance group" looks like becoming supreme, it is likely that the others will all gang up on it, perhaps in *de facto* alliance with the Communists. Thus nothing very definite is likely to happen in Afghanistan -- not for decades to come!

Health Insurance

- an alternative to the NHS?

by Martin Dolphin

Readers may have followed the recent 3-part television series called Kentucky Fried Medicine which examined the insurance based American health care delivery system. It is no accident that a program on this issue should be screened at this time. The general review of the NHS being currently undertaken by the Tory administration includes an examination of foreign health care delivery systems of which the American system is but one.

The second program in the series took the form of a debate with five or six protagonists on each side. There were Americans on both sides. What I found particularly striking was how unenthusiastic the Americans who were supposed to favour the role of competition actually were for their own health system. The enthusiasts for the full scale operation of the market system in health care were not the Americans but two quite young British ideologists, one from the Economist and the other from the Adam Smith Institute. One got the impression that their fellow American panelists found their enthusiasm embarrassing at times.

The American health system, like those in France and Canada is an insurance based system. In this article I want to examine the economics of insurance systems in general, to develop as it were a pure theory of insurance markets, and then to see how the actual functioning of these three separate health systems matches our theory.

Why Insurance?

Why do people take out insurance for anything? Well the answer is that there are certain events which may happen, which are unlikely to happen but which, if they do happen, would have catastrophic consequences for any one individual if he did not have insurance to cover the event. For instance very few people's house burns down. But if it did and they did not have it insured they would stand to lose something equivalent to 5 to 10 years salary. Insurance markets develop to cover these events which are uncertain but potentially catastrophic. It is a way of spreading the costs over a group of people. Everyone in the group has the benefit of not having to worry if the event then happens to him/her. If the event happened to everyone then there would be no point in insuring against it though it would make sense to provide for it (like pensions for old age). You are essentially buying peace of mind. Insurance systems, however, have problems which I want to examine in a more general setting before considering specifically how they relate to the health systems in the USA, France and Canada.

Problems in Insurance Markets.

1. Adverse Selection

Consider the market for insurance against burglary. Suppose there is only one insurer, A, who insures everyone against burglary. He may calculate his premiums by taking last year's claims, adding a profit mark-up and dividing by the number of people he insures. However suppose that someone else, B, notices that the level of burglaries in a part of the country, Leamington Spa, is considerably lower than the national average. Then B may devise a policy

exclusively for the people of Leamington Spa and successfully sell it to them. The people who buy insurer B's policy will now be paying lower premiums while insurer A's premiums will have to go up to cover his increased average costs. This stratification of the insurance market is called 'adverse selection' because it results in the people with the highest need paying the highest premiums and defeats the pooling of risk which makes insurance viable.

Adverse selection can certainly exist in the Health insurance market when a policy is devised exclusively for people between the ages of 20 and 50 who on average require very little health care. People outside this age band are then subject to very high premiums to cover their very high average costs. This however defeats the whole purpose of insurance which is to spread costs over as wide a number as possible (to pool risk), yet it is inevitable in an insurance system in which the insurers are assumed to be profit maximizers. Exactly this has happened in America as we shall see.

2. Moral Hazard.

When people are insured against an event then there may be a tendency for them to become careless in taking precautions against the event happening or in rectifying the situation if the event does happen. This is referred to in the literature as 'moral hazard'. A typical example might be where you take out holiday insurance against loss of property. So when on holiday you may become careless about leaving your camera lying around because the attitude is 'it's insured. If it gets stolen I won't lose anything since the insurance company will pay up'. Moral hazard in this form seems unlikely when applied to health since people generally have a very positive desire not to be ill. However it can apply in another way: if people get ill they may make little effort to see whether the health care they are receiving is good value for money on the basis that they are not paying, rather the insurance company is paying.

3. Some people cannot afford insurance.

A third problem associated with private insurance is that if you cannot afford the premiums you are not entitled to any cover. It's as simple as that. If you are poor or become unemployed and cannot pay your premiums then your entitlement to any cover ceases. This problem with insurance is not unrelated to that of 'adverse selection' since the stratification of the market caused by 'adverse selection' can make insurance too expensive for anyone to pay.

The American, French and Canadian health care markets.

The American, French and Canadian health care systems are all insurance based. However in coping with the problems outlined above they have developed into quite different structures with different problems which we shall now examine.

Adverse Selection

The American system does suffer from the stratification implicit in adverse selection. In the early 1930s the private Blue Cross insurance

scheme was developed to cover people against hospital costs (not doctors' costs). This was extended in the late 1930s with the Blue Shield insurance policies covering the cost of physicians' services. Both these insurance systems were non profit making (i.e. they set their premiums to cover their costs). When profit making insurers entered the market this changed:

"The Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurers originally adopted community rating such that all families of a given size paid the same premium. When commercial insurers entered the market they used 'experience rating' thereby offering probable low users (of health care) more favorable premium terms than Blue Cross/Blue Shield, who in response and in order to maintain market shares had to modify their community rating basis for premium calculation.

"This illustrates well the problem that competition creates in markets: it is less a problem of efficiency than of equity, for if premium averaging becomes impossible by pooling risks, the premiums for high risk groups, the chronic sick, etc., are likely to become sufficiently high for major distributive questions to be raised." (A.J. Culyer, *The NHS and the Market*, in *The Public/Private Mix for Health*, NPHT 1982)

This stratification of the market by risk factor means that the high risk groups such as the elderly, chronically ill and mentally ill are faced with insurance premiums which are impossible to pay. Recognition of this failure of the insurance system led in the early 1960s to the introduction of the Medicare state insurance system for the elderly and the Medicaid system for the Poor. These schemes are still in existence but since Reagan came to power they have been forced to operate within tight financial budgets.

France and Canada manage to largely avoid the problems of stratification implied by 'adverse selection'. In Canada the solution adopted is quite simple. Only one Health Insurance System is permitted by law. The Canadian system is a monopoly insurance system maintained by legislative exclusion of private insurers. In addition insurance is compulsory. It is deducted from your pay packet in much the same way as taxes are deducted in the UK. In this way everyone pays the same premium irrespective of their risk factor.

In France there is not one insurance fund, but there is only a small number and you are automatically allocated to one depending on the sphere of your employment:

"At first, NHI was mandatory for specific occupational groups and administered by private insurance and mutual aid funds. Since 1945, however, the Social Security Ordinance committed the State to devising a unitary NHI programme with equal benefits for all. This process of extending health insurance coverage and making benefits uniform has taken over thirty years and is still not complete. Virtually the entire population (99 per cent) is now covered under four NHI funds. The majority (75 per cent) are covered by the Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Maladie des Travailleurs Salaries (CNAMTS)-the NHI fund for Salaried Workers. However, agricultural workers (8 per cent), the self-employed (7 per cent), and a set of special interest groups (9 per cent), have their own health insurance funds....In spite of this pluralism in the structure of French NHI, one can safely say that the French NHI, have succeeded in eliminating financial barriers to medical care." V.G.Rodwin, *The French Health Policy Gamble*, p293-294, in *The Public/Private Mix for Health*, NPHT 1982)

The 'Moral Hazard' problem

One of the criticisms which is levelled ad nauseam against the NHS by the free market ideologist is that the free nature of health care in the NHS means that people will abuse the system and demand more health care from it than they need. It is ironic that precisely the same criticism can be levelled against all kinds of health insurance.

The best kind of insurance is comprehensive insurance. However once comprehensively insured you are entitled to abuse the system to your hearts content since there is no cost to you. In the NHS this potential abuse is handled by only allowing people access to health care via the medical profession. It is basically the medical profession that decides the amount of health care which you may consume (this really upsets the Free Market ideologists who see their right to

choose being tampered with). In America the solution is to introduce insurance policies which are not comprehensive:

- 1) an upper limit to the cover provided,
- 2) the insured has to pay a proportion of the costs,
- 3) the insured has to pay all the costs up to a fixed amount before his insurance becomes effective.

Perhaps in the majority of cases this is satisfactory. But enough families are ruined by not having comprehensive insurance in the US for us to reject anything but comprehensive insurance. There is the additional question of the extent to which people do not seek medical care because they cannot afford the costs associated with 1), 2) and 3) above. Small charges may stop people abusing the system but it may also stop people who genuinely need care from getting it. A study by the Rand Corporation suggests that charges up to 25% of total costs may not significantly affect people's health.

The 'moral hazard' problem in health care has another side to it in the US which is closely related to the way the insurance system is implemented there. In considering insurance based systems we may divide the participants into three broad groups: the consumers of health care, the providers of health care, and the insurers (also known as carriers). Now in the US the tendency has been for all three to be quite separate. This has had the result that providers tend to over provide not just in comfortable surroundings but in actual health care itself (You may get an operation you do not really need). The insurers paid virtually without question the bills which the providers sent them and then set next year's premium on some sort of average cost + profit markup basis. The result was that health care costs increased at an alarming rate to almost 11% of GNP in 1987 (and 20% of the population may not be insured). Some of the non-comprehensive policies described above attempt to meet this problem by forcing the consumer to discriminate against over provision. If you, as consumer, are going to be paying an additional \$100 per week for the advantage of a remote control TV, you may decide you do not need it (this is an example of the benefit of choice). Such cost



Is this baby insured?

control policies have not however been very successful, so more recently the employers (who pay most of the insurance premiums in the US - insurance being a standard job perk) have been experimenting with structures named HMOs - Health Maintenance Organizations. These HMOs (about which the free market ideologists were initially enthusiastic) are essentially mini-NHSs which attempt to control costs by limiting your freedom of choice. No longer will you have the doctor of your choice or the hospital of your choice rather you have to choose from a short list provided by the HMO.

The Moral Hazard Problem in France.

The problem of 'moral hazard' is handled in France by demanding that people pay up to 25% of their health costs up to a certain limit. (Once you go beyond this limit then health care becomes free so you are back to the problem of 'moral hazard'.) This 25% contribution has been introduced into France in an attempt to control the increase in health care expenditure. Since there is an upper limit on what people are charged however it has had little effect on total health care expenditure.

The French medical profession have in addition nurtured and preserved the idea of *La medecine liberale*. Basically what *La Medicine Liberale* means is that people are free to go to the Doctors of their choice, and these Doctors are allowed to prescribe to them as they see fit. This is great but very costly. The four Insurance groups have, accordingly, introduced standard charges for most courses of treatment above which they will be unwilling to re-imburse a doctor without good reason. The Medical profession tried to oppose this National charge system but without success and now most doctors have joined it. It has not yet been very successful in controlling costs because although it fixes the rates at which particular medical treatments are charged it does not control the volume of medical treatments prescribed. As Rodwin explains:

"In an open-ended system characterised by fee-for-service payment under NHI the problem with price controls is that the volume of services tends to be adjusted to compensate for rigid price regulation. This is true for private practice in the ambulatory sector as well as for clinics and public hospitals. Thus, policy-makers in France have attempted to control the volume of services provided...."

"In the ambulatory care sector, since....1976, the system of statistical profiles on the procedures performed by each physician was computerised. The rationale has been to control the quality of medical care and to sensitize physicians to the financial implications of their activities...."

"Since 1980, all French physicians receive periodic statements summarizing the consultations and procedures for which they have billed the CNAMTS through the intermediary of their patients". (ibid p311.)

The Moral Hazard problem Canada.

I have identified the fee-for-service character of the French health system as the main reason why costs cannot be controlled. In Canada a similar fee-for-service system is operated yet costs have been very successfully controlled since the monopoly insurance system was introduced in 1970. In that year both the US and Canada had roughly the same level of costs - 6% of GNP. Canada's costs are now less than 8% while in the US they are 11% of GNP - a significant difference. What is there additional in the Canadian system over the French system which has allowed this cost control? We can identify three factors :

1) Level and structure of the fee schedule

"The negotiation of periodic binding fee schedules has been the key factor restraining expenditures on physicians' services...."

"As important as level of fees, is schedule structure. Canadian fee schedules provide little differentiation among types of office visits, penalizing practitioners who perform long and detailed examinations, but also restricting 'fee schedule creep', i.e. by physicians reclassifying a visit or a procedure into a higher paying class."

2) Strict limitation of those who can claim fees.

"...fees are paid only for services of practitioners, not their employees. The practitioner may hire assistants, but he must perform the act. The possibilities for procedural multiplication by task delegation are sharply limited. If the physician wishes to respond to fee constraints by recalling patients more frequently and recommending more services, he must also work more hours". ibid p383.

3) Control of Diagnostic services.

"Diagnostic services, which provide the greatest possibility for expanding billings without extra effort, are to a large extent centralized in hospitals or, in some provinces, in approved laboratories. Thus the opportunity for the average US physician to supplement his earnings with a private lab or radiology facility are largely foreclosed in Canada. The fee schedules restrict the practitioner to an 'income-leisure tradeoff'. Incomes can only rise faster than fees if working time increases." (ibid p383-384).

The overall effect

The overall effect of the fee schedule has been to reduce sharply the relative wages of physicians. Needless to say they are not very happy about this and are exerting continual pressure to remove the regulations which are restricting their incomes all under the guise of providing the consumer with more choice.

3. What happens if you cannot afford the premium?

In the US insurance tends to go with the Job. It is virtually a right which has been won by organised labour. However the standard of insurance varies from job to job and although certain areas of health care once had to be covered in all insurance policies this is no longer the case. For instance an employer may choose now to provide a policy which does not cover alcoholism and drug abuse. This is hailed as tailoring insurance policies to suit the need of the employer. What happens if one of the employees becomes an alcoholic is not considered.

No one knows how many people in the US are not covered by insurance. A generally accepted figure is 35 million. These people rely on the grossly under funded state hospitals for health care. The competing private insurance systems in the US have basically resulted in multiple standards of health care - from too much health care for those comprehensively insured to none for those with no insurance. The Health care you receive may bear little relation to your need for it.

In France and Germany this is not the case. Health care is comprehensively provided on the basis of medical need. If you are unemployed then you are excused the payment of premiums while still being fully covered.

Conclusions

Although described as insurance systems the American, Canadian and French systems are fundamentally different. Excellent standards of health are provided comprehensively in France and Canada on the basis of medical need rather than ability to pay. In the US medical care received may bear little relation to medical need. This fundamental difference is due to fact that in France and Canada the health insurance system is highly regulated and compulsory thus avoiding the stratification of the market into risk groups as happens in the US.

Defenders of the NHS should be aware of this fact. It is important to realise that the financing of a system may be effectively public (through compulsory insurance in France and Canada) while the provision is largely through private channels. What characterises the UK NHS is the fact that both the funding and the provision of health care are public. The NHS is paid for out of public taxes and the vast majority of doctors are glorified civil servants working in government owned hospitals. However it is the public funding that permits universal access not the fact that doctors do not work in private capacity.

"Shoot to Kill" - truth a casualty

by Madawc Williams

Sinn Fein a sin?

The IRA men who planned the Enniskillen bombing must have expected that their actions would be loudly condemned by a great many people. They must also have reckoned that there would be no serious reaction. There would be no reaction that would strengthen Ulster's status as a part of the United Kingdom; if anything, the outrage would be used as an excuse to increase Dublin's role in the Anglo-Irish agreement.

They took the risk, and it paid off. The Churches denounced them - but Churches are always denouncing someone or something, and the average person takes little notice. They issued an official apology, so as not to repel their more soft-hearted sympathisers. They suffered from a brief flurry of police raids - but they are used to such things. All in all, they must have counted Enniskillen a big success.

The subsequent controversy over "shoot to kill" in Northern Ireland confirms this. The policy, assuming it existed, ended more than five years ago after no more than six deaths. Yet it remained headline news week after week, while Enniskillen has become a near-forgotten part of history. Also near-forgotten is the fact that four RUC men stood trial for murder after the "shoot to kill" incidents, and that they were acquitted. Since those prosecutions failed, because those who appeared to be most directly involved could not be convicted through any regular judicial process, it is hard to see what use further prosecutions

would be.

The whole thing is anomalous anyway. The IRA is an army and should be treated as such. The RUC has been messed up by having to fight against an insurgent army while pretending still to be an ordinary police force.

IRA activity has been compared with gangsterism. But even the worse sort of gangsters do not go looking for trouble with the police. At most, they will fight to avoid being captured. Whereas the IRA has had a regular policy of shooting policemen, on duty or off duty, in public places or in their own homes in front of their children.

The IRA is an army. There is a definite logic to their shooting members of the security forces wherever and whenever they can. One would hope that the security forces would have a better standard of behaviour - and indeed this is normally the case. But one should remember that this policy puts their lives at extra risk, and see it in this context when certain members of the security forces break the rules.

How to condemn violence without ever preventing it

When a country is at war, it is common for truth to be the first casualty. The media automatically back up their own people and make propaganda against the enemy.

In the case of Northern Ireland, this situation has been more or less reversed - large sections of the British media have accepted the viewpoint of Irish Nationalists.

It is understandable that Irish Nationalists and Republicans

highlight every possible error by the British security forces. The IRA is fighting for "Irish Unity", a cause which they themselves believe in. Even those Nationalists who genuinely don't like the IRA's methods must know that the defeat of the IRA would make "Irish Unity" a non-issue. The Protestants do not want unity with a Catholic majority, that made the Irish Republic the most Catholic state in the world, and which keeps it highly Catholic even when states like Spain and Portugal have become more or less secular. Such "Unity" has a great resemblance to a cat's desire for unity with a mouse!

Rule from Dublin is not wanted by the majority of those in Northern Ireland. It is doubtful if even the majority of Catholics want it. The Coopers & Lybrand opinion poll of May 1987 showed that only 9% of the Northern Irish population wanted it, and that even among Catholics only 22% wanted it. This is roughly the same proportion of the population as vote for the IRA in elections.

A United Ireland is the aim of the leaders of the SDLP, the main Catholic party. But it is doubtful if most of their supporters actually want it. They vote SDLP for want of anything better to vote for; the Unionist parties are far too rooted in Protestant sectarianism for it to be possible for many Catholics to vote for them. (And the "Alliance" is too vague to be a real alternative; the Alliance for Nothing in Particular.)

If the IRA were to stop fighting, the notion of Irish Unity would at once become one

of History's lost dreams. To keep up the war is necessary for anyone who wishes to prevent this. Essentially, they must prevent the war against terrorism from ever being effective. And the best way to do this has been to play on people's natural revulsion at the brutality and injustice involved in a typical war.

Maintaining the war

Internment was a very effective way of dealing with the IRA. It recognised that the IRA is an army, not a bunch of criminals. Any army fighting a war is entitled to detain and imprison members of the enemy army, keeping them out of circulation for the duration of the war. Internment was the least unpleasant way of dealing with an unpleasant situation. It was therefore necessary to make it out to be something terrible and oppressive. Campaigns against it were launched - and of course plenty of genuine liberals and humanitarians joined in. Internment was ended, and the war continued.

"Shoot to kill" was another possible method of dealing with the IRA. Essentially, it involved fighting the IRA by its own methods. The IRA has never had any hesitation about killing off-duty members of the security forces. "Shoot to kill" was an attempt to reply in kind. The surprising thing is not that it happened, but that it happened only after more than a decade of IRA activity, and on such a small scale, and was so quickly stamped out. During the 1970s, the security forces in a great many countries stamped out



The "Birmingham Six" - casualties in a propaganda war?

urban guerilla movements by "shoot to kill" tactics. Or else they used tactics that were even worse, as in Argentina.

No doubt some of those who protest about "shoot to kill" are perfectly genuine. But the majority would show no concern if such methods were being used to deal with urban guerillas whom they disapproved of. They show no concern about the methods used to control the IRA south of the border. Their main concern is to make the British security forces look bad, even though by world standards they have been remarkably restrained and well-behaved.

How the "Birmingham Six" were sacrificed

The bombings for which the "Birmingham Six" were jailed were a brutal attack on ordinary Britons. This in itself need not have led to anything very much - there have been plenty of equally brutal attacks on ordinary people in Northern Ireland. But the fact is, the people of mainland Britain did react, and they reacted in a very alarming way. There was a wave of hostility towards the Irish in Britain, that for a time threatened to get out of control. And there was a sudden overwhelming pressure for the government to do something.

The arrest of the Birmingham Six was part of the process that restored calm. They were not chosen at random; they were Republican sympathisers at the very least. In fact, when they were arrested they were on their way to attend the funeral of an IRA man who had blown himself up with his own bomb. In any case, they were tried, found guilty by a jury and given long jail sentences.

All that was a long time ago, and had been largely forgotten. In the interim, some of the evidence against them had been called into question. The basis existed to put pressure on the government to pardon them - or at least to release them, since they had already served fairly long sentences.

Instead, the matter was used for another propaganda campaign against Britain's handling of Irish terrorism. As propaganda, it has been hugely successful. As propaganda, it could hardly fail, whether the appeal was accepted or rejected.

The British government is being blamed for the Appeal Court's verdict, even by people who in other contexts would think it shocking that the government might venture to try to influence the judiciary. It's all gone very well. That the Birmingham Six remain in jail, and will probably remain there for the rest of the century, is just an unfortunate side effect. Wars have casualties, don't they?

The two wings of Irish Nationalism

Several years back, when Gerry Adams put forward the policy of "armalite in one hand, ballot box in the other", it was treated by the British media as a startling innovation. It was nothing of the sort.

Irish nationalism has always had a two-track strategy. Sometimes there would be one organisation for the electoral side of things, and another handling the violence. This was true in Parnell's time, and has mostly been the pattern in Northern Ireland. At other times, a single organisation has been in charge of both. Such was the case during the Irish War of

Independence; the IRA and Sinn Fein were no more than two aspects of a single organisation.

The two alternative governing parties of the Irish Republic, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, "Warriors of Destiny" and "Tribe of the Gaels", are both descended from the IRA/Sinn Fein of the War of Independence. Fine Gael stem from the "Treatyites", that part of the movement that accepted a compromise peace with Britain. "Treatyites" and "Anti-Treatyites" fought a civil war, which ended with the "Treatyites" smashing the IRA in a far more brutal and effective manner than the notorious "Black and Tans" had ever managed. "Shoot to kill" was part of the regular military practice of the "Treatyites".

Offshoots of the IRA

Fianna Fail, "Warriors of Destiny" are a direct descendant of the "Anti-Treatyites". They began life as the "slightly constitutional party", a party for those who agreed to work within the political structures the "Treatyites" had built. A remnant of the "Anti-Treatyites" carried on as the IRA/Sinn Fein. They never seriously tried another civil war, but they would not accept the Southern Irish state as legitimate. Not even after Fianna Fail became the government and introduced a new constitution.

The British government keeps telling the Irish government that the IRA is as much a threat to them as it is to the British. Formally speaking, this is true. The IRA programme includes replacing the Dublin government, as well as taking over Northern Ireland. But this formality is no more than a formality.

If you mean it, speak English

IRA stands for Irish Republican Army. Although Gaelic Revivalism is supposed to be central to Irish Nationalism, the organisation that actually made Irish independence possible has an English name. True, the most direct Gaelic equivalent would be *Arn Poblocht na h-Eirean*, which would doubtless have been shortened to APE had anyone ever tried to use it. But a suitable Gaelic name could certainly have been found, had there been a need for it. No such need was ever felt.

Before the foundation of the IRA, there was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which was crucial to its development. The IRB was a carry-over from the Fenians, and outsiders often knew them by the old name. But they themselves preferred Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The fact is, Gaelic as a means of communication largely disappeared in the 19th century, and has dwindled to almost nothing during the 20th, despite its official status as the first national language of Eire. Irish nationalists tend to use Gaelic to prove how nationalist and anti-English they are (even when they actually are not). But the IRA has no need for such proof. Since English is the actual language people use when they have something serious to say, it is natural enough that the name remains in English.

Republicans in the Republic

The IRA does not go round shooting the security forces in Southern Ireland. They have strict rules against it. 90% of their supporters, including the Irish Americans who supply

most of the guns and money, would turn against them if they did such a thing. If it came to the crunch, a struggle between Dublin and the IRA would be far more one-sided than that which occurred between "Treatyite" and "Anti-Treatyite". Everyone involved in the matter -

excepting only the British government - is well aware of this and plans accordingly.

Since losing the Irish Civil War, the IRA has contented itself with campaigns against Northern Ireland and, on occasions, against Britain. During World War Two, the IRA/Sinn Fein were actually in alliance with Hitler. Many individual Irishmen joined the Allied cause, and fought very

gallantly. But the Southern Irish state remained neutral, which added greatly to the dangers faced by Atlantic convoys, and came close to giving Hitler victory.

In point of fact, Southern Ireland's neutrality was of much more use to Hitler than the IRA's open support. The IRA exploded some bombs in Britain, but could have no real effect on the battle fought between the Luftwaffe and the RAF. For this reason, it was largely forgotten - and British left-wingers have retained their sentimental attachment to Irish Nationalism.

The IRA achieved very little between the 1920s and the 1960s. None of the IRA's campaigns against Northern

Ireland got very far. Every one of them was defeated by the "B Specials". But the "B Specials" were abolished during the early stages of the present troubles. The British government were sure that abolishing them would help restore peace, and were genuinely surprised when the very opposite happened. (Just as they have been genuinely surprised by the revival of IRA violence since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement).

The revival of the IRA

The abolition of the B Specials created new opportunities for armed struggle, and led to a new upsurge by the

IRA/Sinn Fein. But differences over tactics led to a split between Official and Provisional factions - each faction setting up its own IRA and its own Sinn Fein, and formally pretending that its IRA and its Sinn Fein were two separate and independent organisations.

The Official faction was strongly influenced by left-wing politics. They wanted to believe that they were fighting a class war, instead of a war between rival nationalisms. They could not cope with the basic reality of the campaign: that the British government was quite willing to pull out, and that it was Protestant determination to remain British that was preventing this.

The Official IRA called a ceasefire in 1972 and now lies dormant, pretending not to exist. The Official Sinn Fein side of things fared better, at least in Southern Ireland. They became Sinn Fein/The Workers Party, and then simply The Workers Party. At present they get nearly as many votes as the weak Irish Labour Party.

Gerry Adam's strategy of Armalite and Ballot Box was an attempt to get control of both sides of nationalism in Northern Ireland. As Sinn Fein they would be the electoral nationalists; as the IRA they would be the armed nationalists. Sinn Fein and the IRA would formally pretend to be two separate organisations. But in practice they would simply be two aspects of the same movement.

This strategy actually offered a real prospect of peace. Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and The Workers Party have all become regular political parties which stick to electoral politics. Why not Sinn Fein as well? Up until the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the level of IRA violence had been diminishing year by year. With the military side of things getting nowhere, and the electoral alternative opening up, the movement might well have decided to wind up the campaign after a few more years.

A province in limbo

But the British Government managed to snatch a defeat out of the jaws of victory. They signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and



The aftermath of an IRA car bomb

by so doing made a complete British pull-out seem rather less unlikely. They even declared openly that they hoped to boost the SDLP's electoral strength, and reduce Sinn Féin's, by their policies.

It is highly abnormal for governments to justify their policies as boosting one political party at the expense of another. Such calculations are made, of course, but outside of Northern Ireland they are not openly admitted, let alone boasted of.

The reason for this is not hard to find. Outside of Northern Ireland, both the main parties contest every seat, including those that they haven't the least chance of winning. But Northern Ireland is left in an odd sort of limbo. Southern Irish parties do not attempt to organise there. British parties do not attempt to organise there. Parties are formed on a sectarian basis, because there is no other basis for organising them.

The best response to Enniskillen, the one that would have utterly shocked and demoralised the IRA, would have been for Labour, Tories and SDP/Liberals to have started organising in Northern Ireland. The best response to the whole "shoot to kill" controversy is to explain that it arises out of the abnormal political set-up in Northern Ireland.

Normal parliamentary politics is the only way to restore peace, and to ensure that no one on either side need shoot to kill, or indeed shoot at all. The ancient Nationalist/Unionist feud could be left unresolved, since it can not be resolved without one side or the other being terrorised into submission. But Catholics and Protestants could find a place for themselves in the regular political parties, just as they do elsewhere in the UK. Is there any chance that this will happen?

Gibraltar - a case in point

I had completed the first draft of this article when the news came in of the news of the shooting of three IRA volunteers in Gibraltar. It did not make me wish to change anything I had originally written - but equally it seemed a matter worth commenting on.



Gibraltar - the bodies of the bombers being taken away

The reaction from the Irish government and opposition was exactly what I would have expected. Had the IRA succeeded in carrying through their plan, no doubt they would have shed plenty of crocodile tears. (The plan was almost certainly for a massive explosion at a military parade, which would have killed soldiers on ceremonial duty, interested spectators and casual passers-by alike.) And then they would have called for greater concessions to nationalism in Northern Ireland.

As it was, there was another round of condemnation of Britain for the killings. Some Labour Left politicians in Britain have also joined in the act. But British public opinion does not seem to have been impressed - despite the fact that the IRA volunteers were unarmed at the time they were shot. A survey showed that three times as many approved of the action as disapproved. Admittedly, it was a survey commissioned by the Sunday Express, and with a somewhat loaded question. But it was still a decisive margin.

There are three important questions that need to be sorted out:

- a) were the IRA volunteers challenged before they were shot?
- b) would it have been possible to arrest them?
- c) were they in fact engaged on a mission at the time they were shot?

Point (c) has in fact been more or less settled. When IRA volunteers get arrested or imprisoned, there tend to be grand campaigns proclaiming their innocence. (This makes it rather harder to help genuine innocents who get arrested by mistake, of course.) But the IRA's traditions also require that those who die on active service are acknowledged, and given a proper military-style funeral, with shots fired over the coffins. It has been acknowledged that the dead were indeed IRA volunteers, and were on active service at the time they were shot.

Point (b) is more complex. Let us assume for the moment that they were challenged and given the chance to surrender, and that they did not in fact

surrender. This would have been sufficient grounds for shooting them - almost any soldier or policeman anywhere in the world will shoot you if you fail to surrender when challenged.

To capture enemies who refuse to surrender is neither easy nor safe - particularly when those enemies may have guns, and may choose to use those guns at any moment. There was also the possibility that the IRA volunteers had already placed a bomb, and had the means to detonate it remotely. It was only later that the full facts were discovered.

Point (a) seems to me crucial. If the IRA volunteers were shot without being challenged, without a chance to surrender, then that was definitely wrong - a genuine case of "shoot to kill". It is to be hoped that the inquest due to be held on the deaths will settle the matter. Of course, most people have already chosen sides and will stick to them, no matter what the balance of the evidence may turn out to be.

Analysis

Nations in conflict

by Walter Cobb

After World War One, Eastern Europe was carved up on the principle of national self-determination. At least that was supposed to be the principle. It was ignored in the case of various territories like Danzig and the Sudetenland, where the population was predominantly German. This was the root cause of World War Two.

After World War Two, Europe was carved up again, perhaps on a fairer basis. But just to be sure, the East European countries expelled the German minorities from those territories the Russians awarded them. This could have laid the basis for yet another war. Except that Germany had been divided, and in any case nuclear weapons made a war impractical.

Outside Europe, the former colonial empires began splitting up into nation-states -- or else into imitations of nation states. In Africa, there were few definite national blocks that could have laid the basis for new nation-states. The various ethnic groups were small and uncertain; often they were intermingled. In default of anything better, the arbitrary boundaries fixed by the colonial powers were used.

To this day, these arbitrary boundaries have been kept as the basis for African states. To seek 'more natural' boundaries would have been to open the door to endless division, conquest and war, since each ethnic group would have its own idea of what the *really* natural boundaries are. Just as in Eastern Europe, where there are still some lingering border disputes despite the restraining hand of Russian

hegemony.

In this article, I shall study some particular examples of national conflict. First off, I'll examine the concept of international law. Then a brief survey of the Israel/Palestine conflict, and the complexities of the two Chinas, and other problems of a world divided into nation-states.

International law

When Mahatma Gandhi was asked what he thought of Western Civilisation, he answered that he thought it would be a very good idea. Much the same could be said about International Law; it would be a fine thing if it existed, but it is not a thing that can be relied upon.

The fact is, "International Law" provides very little protection to states that are set on by their neighbours. Czechoslovakia got no help in either 1938 or 1968. In 1960, in the early days of African independence, Prime Minister Lumumba made the mistake of taking the UN at face value and inviting it in to keep the peace in the Congo. The UN, at that time dominated by the United States, deposed him. Later they handed him over to his enemies, who murdered him. Nor did these actions by the UN forces secure peace; they only added to the chaos. The Congo is now Zaire, and still ruled by Lumumba's enemies (though not by the group of enemies who murdered him, who in the interim had won power and then lost it again).

Since the Congo disaster, the

UN has been a thing that everyone pretends to believe in, and which no one actually believes in. It is like the 'musical banks' in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, which were praised by everyone but whose money was never used for practical purposes. The UN passes fine-sounding resolutions. But even the smallest sovereign state can ignore it with impunity. Nor are there any other agencies that can actually enforce international law.

Britain, France and America have all at various times styled themselves "global policemen". But even the worst sort of policeman is under some sort of control by higher authority. Nations that act as "global policemen" do so as judge, jury and executioner as well. Their actions are often blatantly partisan - as when Britain and France invaded Egypt in 1956 during the Suez crisis.

This action made it easier for the Soviet Union to invade Hungary; an event which happened shortly afterwards. The cartoonist Vicki made an apt comment; he depicted Khrushchev surrounded by his tanks, declaring "So what? I'm a policeman too!"

Russia under Brezhnev claimed the right to do whatever it felt necessary to its 'socialist allies'. And although Gorbachev has at times seemed to be dropping this notion, it is doubtful if he would allow Solidarity to come to power in Poland, say. And it is deeply unlikely that he would allow any of the 'socialist allies' to leave the Warsaw Pact!

The fate of minorities

If International Law provides little real protection to states, it provides even less to common people or oppressed minorities. When Hitler began oppressing the Jews, he was of course denounced, but no one did anything. When he threatened to start a world war, the other European states made huge concessions to him - concessions that they had refused to the peaceful and democratic German governments that had preceded him. When he started expelling the Jews in the territories he controlled, the rest of the world refused to take more than a small percentage of them.

Hitler wanted the Jews out of Europe. He didn't specifically want them dead. Enforced emigration was his first idea, but the rest of the world would not accept more than a limited number. The Final Solution was not begun until it became clear that no one would accept the millions of Jews that Hitler wished to be rid of.

Hitler's racist policies need not have led to the deaths of millions of Jews. There would have been room for them in Palestine, at that time under British control. But the British respected the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs, and kept them out.

The world did nothing while Hitler destroyed the majority of Europe's Jews. Britain and France went to war to save Poland, and to try to preserve the European balance of power. Russia tried to keep peace with Hitler, and went to war after being invaded and very nearly

overrun. The United States went to war after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and wiped out much of their fleet. Had Hitler been less bellicose, he would have been left free to kill every last Jew in the territories that he controlled.

The Nuremberg trials are sometimes cited as an example of international law in action. Without doubt, most of those convicted at Nuremberg very much deserved what they got. But trials under International Law were exclusively for members of the defeated nations. Offenders among the victorious powers were punished by their own people, or else left alone. Nor were there any trials for war criminals who were of use to the victors - German rocket experts who had used slave labour; Japanese scientists and doctors who had performed germ warfare experiments; brutal policemen and torturers like Klaus Barbie.

Israel or Palestine?

The surviving Jews were wise to place no reliance on International Law. The need for a place of refuge for the world's Jews had been perceived even during the nineteenth century. After Hitler, the need was proved beyond all doubt. Europe's Jews had tried surviving as a quiet and undemanding minority, or they had tried blending in with the peoples among whom they lived. But both methods had failed.

The trouble was, there was no empty place on the globe where a Jewish homeland could be established. A Jewish homeland in Uganda was considered at one time. Given the subsequent history of Uganda, it would have been a singularly unwise choice. Moreover, the majority of Jews were determined that the homeland should be in Palestine, the land of their origins, the land repeatedly mentioned in their religious writings, the one territory which they could claim as their own.

Clearly, this was unfortunate for the existing inhabitants of Palestine. But what else could be done? The Jews had to go somewhere. A sensible solution would have been partition. The UN drew up such a scheme, but the Arabs rejected it and tried to conquer or wipe out the Jewish settlers. They failed, and Israel

Arafat. His uncle negotiated with Hitler.



emerged with rather more territory than the UN had given them. Two fragments of Palestine remained outside of Israel. Egypt took over the Gaza Strip, while the state of Transjordan took over the West Bank and re-named itself Jordan.

In 1956 Israel fought the Arabs again, seized Sinai from the Egyptians, but then gave it back. In 1967 they were again in danger. It was widely believed that the Arabs were about to wipe Israel off the face of the map - and no one would have done anything effective, had that happened. Instead, the Israelis struck first and achieved a dramatic victory. They took over the rest of Palestine, as well as the Golan Heights and Sinai.

Enter the PLO. Up until the Six Day War, the Palestinians had been fairly passive, relying on the Arab states to do most of the fighting. But the PLO asserted Palestinian identity, and the other Arabs have now accepted them as the sole legitimate Palestinian representatives. Thus Egypt had no wish to take back the Gaza Strip when it made its peace agreement with Israel. And

Jordan cannot reach an agreement with Israel over the West Bank without the PLO's approval.

So why can't Israel and the PLO negotiate some sort of peace? The problem is that Israel will have no dealings with the PLO until the PLO accepts Israel's right to exist. And the PLO has repeatedly stopped short of doing this.

The PLO's official position is that there should be a single secular Palestinian state in which Muslim, Christian and Jew could co-exist. This would be a splendid thing if it could be created - but the chances of it actually working are rather less than the Reverend Ian Paisley's chances of becoming President of the Irish Republic.

In a Palestinian state run by the PLO, Muslim and Jew would be more likely to co-exist than co-exist!

The fact is, Palestinians under the PLO's leadership haven't even managed to co-exist peacefully with their fellow Muslim Arabs. The Palestinian fighters were thrown out of Jordan, while in Lebanon they helped to undermine the state and have since been at war with their

former Muslim Arab allies. The different PLO factions have even fought civil wars with each other. The idea that they could co-exist with the Israelis in a single state is absurd.

Yasser Arafat has repeatedly hinted that he would under some circumstances be willing to recognise Israel. The basis for a settlement is there; Israel would withdraw from some or all of the territories that it has occupied since the Six Day War, which would then be ruled by a Palestinian state (or else a Jordanian/Palestinian federation) that would peacefully co-exist with Israel. There are problems; Israel would be unhappy with anything less than full control of Jerusalem. And many Israelis doubt if giving up the land would really secure peace in the long run. But something on these lines might be possible.

At the moment, there has been a lot of talk about holding an international conference to try to settle the matter. International conferences seldom settle anything. Normally they provide a platform for politicians to proclaim fine principles that they haven't the least intention of living up to. Perhaps the most successful international conference of recent times was the Geneva Peace Conference on Indochina, which did enable the French to get out after their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, but which noticeably failed to establish a permanent peace. Possibly such a conference would provide sufficient cover for Arafat and his faction of the PLO to reach a sensible deal with Israel. It is rather more likely that nothing would come of it.

Arafat keeps coming close to a "land for peace" solution, but never actually goes so far as to propose it. Nor is there anyone else among the Palestinians who could make such a deal; his only important rivals are extremists who reject any notion of compromise.

Arafat has been leader of the Palestinians for the last two decades and more, and he has led them damn badly. Under his leadership their position has gone from bad to worse. In this he follows in the footsteps of his uncle, the former Mufti of Jerusalem, who was leader of the

Palestinian Arabs up until 1948, who promoted conflict with the Jewish settlers, who sought aid from Hitler, and who did more than any other single man to produce the present mess.

Where will it lead? The answer is grim. The Israelis might still be willing to trade land for peace. But it takes two to trade. Arafat keeps shying away from such a deal; nor will he step aside and give someone else a chance. And yet the "occupied territories" cannot remain in limbo for ever. The present round of troubles may die down as the Palestinians grow weary. But in the end something decisive must happen. If there is not to be "land for peace", then the only alternative is for Israel to annex the land and secure its own sort of peace by expelling more Palestinians.

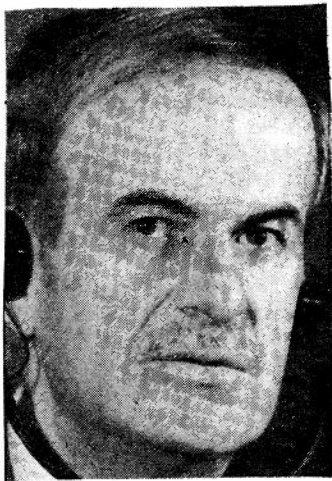
At present, most Israelis reject such a solution. It is too reminiscent of what the Germans did to them - even though the Palestinians could readily find a place for themselves in the other Arab countries, where large numbers of Palestinians already live. But the longer things drift on, the more likely such a solution becomes.

Eyeless in Gaza

You're in the comfort of your own sitting-room, watching the television news. You see a picture of some soldiers beating up a demonstrator, and naturally you find it upsetting. A little while later, the newsreader tells you that twenty people have died in rioting in some other part of the world. It doesn't register in the same way. Or you hear that hundreds of people somewhere else may have been massacred, but that those said to be responsible deny it ever happened. It just doesn't stick in your memory, in the same way as the pictures of the man being beaten by soldiers.

Television news, as it exists in countries like Britain, can give a very misleading view of the world. It shows pictures of the most appalling violence and bloodshed, whenever the authorities in that part of the world give them freedom to do so. When this is not allowed, they still report the facts, but the facts just do not have the same emotional impact.

President Assad of Syria



It is now known that Syria suppressed an internal rebellion in 1982 by shelling one of its own cities, causing thousands of deaths. But Syria has strict censorship; news of the matter leaked out only slowly, and without the visual evidence that would have produced a suitable emotional impact. And of course the Syrian government denies it ever happened.

South Africa, which used to give foreign journalists a good deal of freedom, clamped down when it became clear that nightly pictures of rioting and police brutality were stirring the conscience of the world. *And South Africa got away with it.* The fact of continuing riots and deaths were still reported, but the emotional impact was gone.

The net effect is that television journalists reward those who suppress them, and punish those who leave them free to film what they want. This is not at all what television journalists would wish; some are cynics who only care about getting a good story, but many others have a sincere wish to be fair and accurate. But the fact is, while television continues to show real-life violence and death on a day to day basis, this is the net effect.

Would it not be more responsible to put everyone on an even level and report the facts without showing pictures of the violence, in *all* cases?

China V. China

China is a good deal richer than China; but even so, most of the world has shifted its recognition from China to

China. People who live in China are not normally allowed to visit China, nor may those who live in China ever hope to visit China, even though things have been getting a little more relaxed in recent years.

If all this sounds confusing, it is. In the 1920s, there was a plethora of rival governments in China. The Kuomintang, Chinese Nationalists, managed to crush the majority of their rivals in 1926/1927. Most of the country obeyed the Kuomintang government in Nanking, at least nominally. Their most notable opponents were the Chinese Communists, at one time allies of the Kuomintang, who held out in their own Liberated Areas. Mao's forces lost their base in Southern China, but carried out the Long March to other Liberated Areas in North China. They survived until the Japanese invasion of China let them spread their influence through a new alliance with the Kuomintang.

After the Japanese defeat, the Civil War resumed. On paper the Kuomintang were far more powerful. But they were corrupt and divided, and suffered a spectacular collapse. A remnant fled to the island of Taiwan - recently recovered from the Japanese, having been an outlying part of the Chinese Empire before that.

The two Chinas had no intention of co-existing. The Kuomintang had schemes for recapturing the mainland; the Communists had rather more practical notions of wiping out this last remnant of their enemies. But the Americans took a hand in the matter. Not only did they help the Kuomintang remnant to survive, they persuaded much of the world that the Kuomintang remnant should be recognised as the real China, even keeping its place as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this system finally broke down. The USA accepted that the Chinese Communists were the real China, and they got their UN seat in 1971. But nothing definite could be done about the Kuomintang remnant - which in the interim had been highly successful economically,

providing the land reform and general prosperity that they had utterly failed to deliver when they were rulers of the whole country. Their GDP per head is more than ten times that of the mainland Chinese.

To outsiders, it might seem logical that the Kuomintang remnant should simply declare itself the government of an independent Taiwan. But that is not the Chinese way. The Chinese Empire was established before the Roman one, and unlike Rome it never really fell. At times it was divided and/or subjected to foreigners. But cultural continuity - in particular the written language - was never lost.

An educated Chinese can still read the literature of more than two and a half millennia of Chinese civilisation, directly and without translation. It is natural for Chinese to assume that in due course the two Chinas will unite once again. But just how it happens is no small matter.

After the agreement between Britain and China over Hong Kong, China proposed a similar deal for the Kuomintang remnant - that they should accept the Peking government as the real government of China, while keeping autonomy and their own economic system. Something of the sort was floated after the death of Chiang Kai-Shek, who had been leader of the Kuomintang since the 1920s. It was floated again after the recent death of Chiang's son, who had succeeded him.

To date, the Kuomintang remnant have rejected any such solution. They are not like Hong Kong, which was heavily dependent on trade with China, and which had colonial rulers who were happy to be rid of it. They have no official diplomatic existence; they have been out of the UN since 1971. Yet they remain in existence, and by existing keep their cause alive.

If there is to be unity, it is likely to be on a more or less equal basis. Kuomintang and Communists have made alliances twice before. Could this happen a third time?

The Peking government is currently in full retreat from socialist economics, and seeking to build an economy and society that would be broadly like what

already exists on Taiwan under the Kuomintang remnant. They could well reckon that time is on their side. And they could well be right.

Transcaucasia: a fight between small nations

Armenia lies just north of Iran, and a little east of Turkey. At least that is how the border runs today. Turkey used to have a large Armenian population, who were killed or driven out in the turmoil caused by World War One. Soviet Armenia consists of those Armenian areas that were ruled by the Tsars rather than the Ottoman Caliphs. Many of the victims of the Turkish pogrom fled there; others scattered around the world. Turkey has never even admitted that the pogrom happened.

Armenia is one of the Soviet Union's three Transcaucasian republics, the others being Georgia and Azerbaijan. During the Russian revolution, there was great hostility between them. Each had minorities in the other's territories; each also contained other still smaller minorities.

Human populations seldom distribute themselves in a neat way that will enable nation-states to be formed without trouble or conflict. The Armenians themselves were guilty of massacres in areas where they were the majority.

Soviet power put these conflicts into cold storage. A pattern of republics and autonomous areas was imposed, in an attempt to balance the conflicting claims of the rival nations and national minorities. This work was mostly done by Stalin, who had responsibility for the matter under Lenin. What he did in the Transcaucasus caused some controversy. He was accused of treating the Georgians unfairly. His defence was that he was preventing the Georgians from exploiting the Armenians and Azerbaijanis; he claimed to have a good understanding of the matter, being Georgian himself.

In any case, the settlements that he regarded as fair or necessary were imposed on the various nations and national minorities. Anyone who tried to upset these arrangements would be accused of "bourgeois

nationalism", and quite probably shot.

With the relaxation of Soviet rule under Gorbachev, the various national questions are being raised openly once again. In some cases, such as the Baltic republics, the protests are about Great-Russian domination. But the problem in Armenia is another matter. Armenia wants control of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is predominantly Armenian and Christian, but surrounded by Shia Muslim Azerbaijanis.

Gorbachev agreed to consider the matter. He had little choice; mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of Armenians had been demanding it, and mass suppression by the army would have been the only alternative. But this decision led to counter-riots by the Azerbaijanis; they are not keen to lose a chunk of their national homeland. (Stalin had mentioned in 1923 that some Azerbaijanis regarded the Armenians amongst them as intruders; it seems that they still do.)

Gorbachev had a nasty choice. If he refused to give the Armenians what they want, there

would be more protests. But if he did give them a chunk of territory that is now in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijanis in turn would object strongly. For the moment, he seems to have decided to maintain the status quo. Some Azerbaijanis are being tried and punished for things they did during the riots, but this is being done with minimal publicity.

Is the Soviet system up to the task of finding some mutually acceptable compromise? And even if it does, how many more such cases are there?

A man, a plan, a canal

Panama is a nation invented by US President Theodore Roosevelt. The territory used to be part of Colombia, but the USA sponsored a secessionist movement in order to have a free hand in building the Panama Canal. Part of the deal was direct US control over the canal zone - although it is now being handed back to Panama.

In Central America, as in other Latin American countries, the US used to have hegemony.

But that hegemony is now most uncertain.

It is worth remembering that the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World were founded some time before the Anglo-Saxon ones. Latin America is unique in being both a European colony and a part of the Third World. Latin America was founded on brutal exploitation of the native Indians by a colonial ruling class - whereas Canada and the USA were founded on an equally brutal clearance of more primitive Indians by farmers and trappers.

The Anglo-Saxon pattern proved much more productive. Their ideal was to work hard and grow rich - whereas the Latin American ideal was to be rich and not work at all. The United States became far more powerful than any of the Latin American republics, and came to dominate them. This hegemony had no very clear purpose; generally US policy was dominated by the selfish interests of a few American investors, who found willing helpers among the corrupt local elites. The creation of Panama was nothing very special - though at least it led to



Armenians demanding the return of Nagorno-Karabakh

the building of a canal that was of general benefit to mankind.

The source of the present problem is not really the canal. Rather it is the vast market for cocaine and similar drugs in the United States. A large part of this market is supplied from South America, with supplies passing through Central America or the Caribbean.

Reagan, ignoring his own remarks about the tendency of market forces to overcome all obstacles, has tried to solve the problem by cutting the supply lines. But the real problem is the consumers, many of whom need drugs to keep up with the pressures of an increasingly fluid and competitive society. The suppliers are an evil bunch, without doubt; worse even than the average sort of gangster. But they are not really the source of the problem. While there is a demand for dangerous and illegal drugs, *someone* will always be ready to meet it.

In Panama, the US ecided to solve the problem by organising the overthrow the local "strong man", General Noriega. It seems certain that Noriega had been allowing drug smugglers to use Panama as a staging post. So they persuaded Panama's President, who had been Noriega's puppet, to turn against him and try to dismiss him.

The move failed. Noriega was able to tap nationalist resentment against the USA, and most of the army supported him. The President himself fell from power and had to go into hiding. In an earlier era, the US would have then sent in the marines. But after Vietnam, they feared to do so.

Rather than admit defeat, the Reagan administration decided to rely instead on strong economic pressure. Panama has no currency of its own; it uses the US dollar. But this pressure seems to have failed. And perhaps it is just as well. Noriega may not be an admirable character, but nothing much is likely to go right in Latin America while its governments are vulnerable to whimsical US interventions, undertaken as an alternative to solving the USAs own home-grown drugs problem.

It has now emerged that some of the US troops guarding the Canal Zone were themselves

engaged in drug smuggling. The whole situation looks increasingly absurd.

Fiji - successful racism

Fiji is one of the many tiny independant states that owe their existence to geographical accident. It is only the great distances between the islands of the Pacific that led them to be administered separately, and thus in due course to be given independance as separate states.

This the opposite extreme from India, which has at least as much diversity as the various Pacific Island states, but which was treated as a unit by the British. In point of fact, no previous Indian Empire, whether native or alien, ruled the whole territory that is now India.

Having been told that they are nations, the various islands naturally behave as such. In Fiji, the original inhabitants have made use of their sovereign status to keep down the Indian immigrants who had lived in Fiji for several generations. A government that tried to give the two races equal powers was overthrown by an army dominated by the original inhabitants. A second coup prevented any attempt at a moderate compromise. It seems now that the original inhabitants will be allowed to push out some of the Indian immigrants, and keep political control over the rest.

In all of this, the opinions of the United Nations and similar bodies counted for little. Words were spoken, but everyone knew that nothing would be done. The only possibility was for Australia or New Zealand to invade, and the price of doing this seemed too heavy.

South Africa - unsuccessful racism

South Africa is a case of failed colonialism and failed racism. Unlike the white settlers in North America, South America, Australia and New Zealand, the South African colonists did not reduce the previous inhabitants to a tiny remnant. This was not because their attitudes were any better or worse. Rather, the blacks who lived there were too numerous and well-organised to simply fade away or be absorbed.

According to 19th century

morality, this was not a problem. The white population was under no pressure to share power with the blacks. It was broadly assumed that democracy was for whites only.

Elsewhere in the world, this pattern has broken down. But the white populations elsewhere in the world could afford to let it break down. Even in the south of the USA, the blacks were not a majority by the time segregation was ended.

South Africa faced a unique problem. The white population was a minority, and did not at all like the idea of being ruled by the black majority - as must inevitably happen if all races got equal rights. They could have tried allowing it to happen step by step, but they were not that wise or far-sighted. (And it is doubtful if any other population, of any race or colour would have been that far-sighted, facing a similar situation.)

In the event, they tried to keep up white dominance on an indefinite basis. The world condemned them in public, traded with them on the quiet. Nothing at all was done about Namibia, which South Africa runs, but over which the UN has a theoretical jurisdiction. South African control could not be ended without fighting a major war. No one is willing to try a UN-run war -- not after the Congo. On the other hand, when South Africa did take some small steps towards reform, sanctions were actually stepped up.

The moral choices would be either to put such pressure on South Africa that the white minority would be forced to accept black majority rule, or else to accept and reward the slow pace of reform that the majority of whites are willing to accept. But it is very nearly certain that neither of these things will be done. Things could drift on, getting steadily worse, for a very long time to come.

Towards a World State

The United Nations has failed because it is run by sovereign states, each of which has a strong interest in seeing that it does not become anything like a world government. For the most part, socialists have passively

accepted this failure. The UN is referred to as an ideal body which ought to solve international problems, but everyone knows that it usually solves nothing.

At the same time, the Communist notion of internationalism has lost all credibility. The various states that have ruling Communist parties act in their own national interests, in so far as they are able to. The Soviet Union is for all practical purposes a continuation of the colonial empire that the Tsar was ruling at the start of World War One.

The present world pattern is a sort of frozen chaos, with nations and national minorities aranged in a not-always-just pattern into a number of sovereign nation-states.

It is time to stop regarding "internationalism" as a matter of conventional piety. The vast success of events like **Band Aid** and **Live Aid** shows that there is a vague but definite internationalist spirit at work in the world. And the people who are most against it are the various national governments and civil servants.

In Britain, the Labour Party has only now accepted that we are in the Common Market for good, and that talk of pulling out is foolish. But they still try to show themselves more nationalist than Thatcher and the Tories. The trouble is, Labour can never be whole-heartedly nationalist. The Falklands War showed that.

The future for humanity must lie with some sort of World State. Probably a World Federation, with a great deal of autonomy for regions and nations, but with a single central authority. Peace can never be achieved while the world is full of sovereign nations. Indeed, the right to go to war, the possibility of going to war, is more or less the definition of sovereignty, as distinct from autonomy.

It is unlikely that the world could be united very soon; it could take decades to complete the process. But a start must be made somewhere. And socialists must start pointing out that the UN is a hollow sham, and that true internationalism would have to be something very much better.

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that a management based on capital would again be effective. When the leaders of the labour movement declined to enact a radical reform in the labour interest, it was only a matter of time before a radical reaction restored the managerial power of capital.

The lost chance

If the Bullock Report had been adopted by the Labour movement it is likely that it would have become a watershed in British history comparable to the Beveridge Report (which established the Welfare State). It would have altered the framework of economics and politics, and opened up an array of new and stimulating conflicts and contradictions.

Because the Bullock Report was rejected by Labour, the Labour movement has ever since been disoriented in the face of successful capitalist reaction.

A static socialism

There were reasons of petty vested interest involved in the rejection of the Bullock Report. But much more important than these was the essentially static character of socialist ideology of all varieties in the movement. Socialism was a vaguely imagined eternal harmony, a secularised version of the state of affairs following the Day of Judgement. Some dreamt of a Leninist revolution as the means by which it would be established, while others imagined a systematic scheme of reform through social engineering. The Bullock Report was equally unacceptable to both because it was obviously not a recipe for eternal harmony.

A similar approach would have led to a rejection of the Beveridge Report in the 1940s. And there were those on the left as well as the right who rejected it.

Recovering the dynamic

But the Labour outlook in those days was not confined to visionary dreams of a final condition of things, and to empty rhetoric following from those visions. Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee were determined to enact the practical reforms of the day, and to develop through its conflicts while leaving eternal harmony to the metaphysicians.

The Labour movement is now in the doldrums because during the past two generations because it has not developed out the experience of that group of effective reformers who transformed the conditions of working class life when they came to power -- and who came to power because they had impressed society with their capacity for radical and realistic reform.

The Bevin Society intends to regain for the present generation the experience of the Bevin-Attlee era, and to develop out of it a capacity for thought and action in place of the slogan and the gesture which are now the stock-in-trade of the Labour leadership.

The Bevin Society is at present running on a fairly informal ad-hoc basis. If you'd like to see something established on a more formal basis, or if you'd just like a discussion, please contact us. Write c/o 26 Aden Grove, Stoke Newington, London N16 9NJ

POLICY STATEMENT

The Bevin Society

Aims and Purposes

*The Bevin Society was set up several years ago, but lapsed as individual members became involved in other matters -- including setting up **Labour & Trade Union Review**. It has now been re-founded by some of its original members, and given a clearer statement of aims and objectives. We reproduce them here.*

The aim of the Bevin Society is to develop a programme for the Labour Party that will make possible a comprehensive collectivist reform as the framework for a more widely based individualism.

The Bevin Society is essentially a development from a group in the Institute for Workers' Control which actually supported workers' control when it was a possibility of immediate practical politics: when it was proposed as a radical economic reform by the Bullock Committee.

The leadership of the Institute for Workers Control opposed the Bullock proposals on woolly ideological grounds, as did Neil Kinnock and most of the trade union leaders.

The 'right to manage

The "right of management to manage" was the conservative cry of both the left and right of the Labour movement, as well as of the budding Thatcherites. But 'management' is not a detached element operating between capital and labour. Management must be an agency of capital or an agency of labour.

Conservatism, or the continuation of the status quo, was not a practical possibility in the seventies. Labour had grown too powerful to enable the existing arrangements to continue. Both the leaders and the militants of the Labour movement lived in a fool's paradise, believing that the trade union movement could refuse to become the basis of management and yet retain the power to paralyse the management based on capital.

The status quo was doomed. The only question was whether labour would become the basis of management, or trade union power would be weakened so

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