



unwanted guests

the G8 comes to Scotland

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Feedback

Tommy Sheppard and Elaine Smith's exchange of views on 'can you vote Labour?' in the last issue of the Scottish Left Review (SLR issue 27) vividly illustrates the dilemma faced by left voters in the recent General Election. But narrow party politics are prominent in both points of view.

Tommy says he holds no brief for the Liberal Democrats and Elaine seems to agree. Yet their the Labour Party is in a governing coalition with the Liberal Democrats in the Scottish Parliament – a coalition which has taken Labour beyond its own policies on proportional representation, tuition fees and free care for the elderly. And a broader unity in Scotland, transcending party politics, faced down Brian Souter and the Catholic church on Clause 28.

Our Scottish Parliament, despite the 'Mickey Mouse' and 'pretendy parliament' slurs by some politicians who should have known better, was established as a result of years of campaigning on a broad basis, and especially by the pluralist leadership of the Constitutional Convention with all parties involved except the Tories and the SNP and supported by churches, the STUC and other progressive organisations. The narrow party politics of the SNP kept them outside the Convention.

Tommy and Elaine forget Labour Party and labour movement history. The first MPs to represent working class and trade union interests were liberals known as Lib-Labs before the formation of the Labour Party in 1904. The Labour breakthrough electorally was enabled by Liberals not standing a candidate in around 25 constituencies in the 1906 General Election, and a total of around 56 Labour MPs were elected. With this 'leg up' Labour was able to overcome the huge difficulties that new and smaller parties face in a 'first past the post' electoral system.

Tommy sees a Lib Dem 'constituency' to the left of Labour – presumably in their policies on taxation, proportional representation for Westminster and perhaps local income tax, and interestingly raises a perspective of a "huge swathe of Liberal, Nationalist and maverick MPs" in Westminster. And

there could be more independents and mavericks in the future. Might one, given Labour's history, look at such a perspective against the background of the British political scene over decades, project the possibility of winning a lasting progressive majority of our people for centre-left and social democratic policies which face down and curb the powerful market forces that dominate our society and our world? Such a majority could be won by alliances and cooperation on issues transcending narrow party boundaries and permanently isolate the Tories, but it requires a break with the Thatcherite agenda, and serious constitutional change. Surely the signs are there given present problems with the 'turn off' from 'party politics' that there is a prize to be won, even if it is a long road ahead, and it's clear that Blair is not going along that road despite murmurs some years back about possible cooperation. So there's still the problem of changing Labour that Tommy and Elaine discuss.

Most of the problems they raise will remain after the election, so it is not just about voting – the exchange of views has been invaluable. There is also the even more complex connecting problems of the 'commodification of life' culture. The left has long underestimated the role of culture in the broadest sense. But that's another engrossing subject for conversation. ■

John Kay

Your readers may or may not know about the campaign for an independence referendum, Independence First. Independence First is trying to achieve as broad a consensus as possible for independence. Under our plans secondary issues like republicanism or EU membership would be left up to the people of Scotland after the initial objective of breaking up the UK through a straightforward 'yes or no' referendum.

This campaign has received considerable support since it was launched a few months ago. The former leader of the SSP, Tommy Sheridan, sent the campaign the following message of support: "As a socialist I believe passionately in genuine

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Printed by Digisource, Unit 12, Dunlop Square, SW Deans Industrial Estate, Livingston

democracy and the right of nations to self-determination. My party's vision is of an independent socialist Scotland but we absolutely endorse and promote the right of citizens in Scotland to democratically decide now via a referendum if they wish an independent country. I see the British imperial union as a reactionary barrier to social progress and want that British union dismantled to encourage progressive and democratic ideas to flourish in the individual entities of Scotland, England and Wales. The campaign for an independence referendum deserves support from all socialists and democrats alike."

Sandra White SNP MSP said "I'm happy to get behind anything that advances the cause of Scottish independence. I definitely support this grassroots movement, Independence First, in their demand for a Scottish referendum on independence. Please keep me informed of any further developments." Stewart Maxwell SNP MSP said "I support the holding of a referendum on Independence as the Scottish people have never had the opportunity to express their opinion on this option."

A number of SNP candidates at the UK general election, including Bill Wilson and Stuart McMillan also expressed their support for the campaign. Stuart McMillan wrote: "Since the day that the parcel of rogues sold out Scotland's independence in 1707, Scotland has never been asked the direct question 'do you want to be independent?' The time has come to put aside the distractions and let the Scots decide. If Independence First helps foster a collective of individuals and organisations to do this, then I fully endorse it and welcome its contribution."

Green MSPs Mark Ballard and Shiona Baird have both sent messages of support. Shiona Baird wrote: "Along with my colleagues in the Scottish Green Party, I am committed to supporting demands for an independent self-governing Scotland, while recognising that such constitutional changes will come about only because people in Scotland want them and support them in a referendum. The Greens are also currently committed to working with the independence convention as a way of promoting debate and making the case for independence, and we work with others who support such a convention. I welcome the principles of the [Independence First] charter and its commitment to working with people of all parties and none towards independence. This is an issue which will be taken to

our next National Council meeting in May and I would anticipate it receiving the party's support."

We have also received messages of support from the Free Scotland Party and the Scottish Independence Party. Independent MSP Campbell Martin sent us this message: "Independence First is yet another manifestation of the desire within Scotland to re-take our independence and become, once again, a normal nation. However, the organisations creation is also evidence that many pro-independence Scots are becoming increasingly frustrated at the pace of our nation's move towards independence. Many Scots see the benefits of an independent Scotland but don't see politicians making sufficient progress towards achieving that goal. Independence First shows that pro-independence Scots are not necessarily members of one or of any political party and that, in pursuit of the main prize, we must all work together to deliver independence in the shortest possible time. Independence First can only help in that fight and I welcome its creation and offer it my support."

Author and historian David R Ross wrote: "Scotland is a nation state. We owe it to all the generations of Scots yet unborn to deliver a heritage of freedom, of pride, of self determination. For many generations Scots have strived to create the independence that our nation rightly deserves. Let us be the generation to deliver that freedom -and those Scots to come can grow without the burden that weighs so heavily on our shoulders and stops us taking our rightful place, with our flag flying as an equal amongst the other nations of this planet. I therefore support the Independence First campaign and wish it every success."

I hope absolutely everyone who supports Scottish independence will consider supporting this campaign, which is open to members of all political parties and none. A membership form can be downloaded from our website www.independencefirst.com. ■

Joe Middleton

Press Officer

Independence First

signs of life

Tom Nairn looks at the aftermath of the General Election

At the living-dead UK election of 2005, all parties and most ideas emerged even deadlier than before. However, a flicker of something like light has been glimpsed from Australia. "The Future of Britain is Scottish!" wrote the Europe correspondent of **The Australian**, Peter Wilson, on March 9. Noting that Gordon Brown is now likely to succeed the shop-soiled Blair, he argues "the odds are that the Brown Labour government will not be followed by a Conservative government but by a coalition of Labour and the Liberal Democrats, like that which now rules Scotland". Toryism has become a negligible force in Scotland. But not in England, where there have already been "unhappy mutterings in England about the political influence of what some call a Scottish mafia, or Scottish Raj". Are the English being punished, or improved? Or both? Wilson isn't quite sure. But at least, unlike most British commentators on the election, he sees that the real issue looming is not limited to leadership and policies. It is constitutional. "The combined vote of Labour and the Conservatives was also lower than at any time since 1923", he points out, "hence single-party rule has a limited life expectancy". After 1997 the New Labourite dawn quickly became a road into the twilight home where such expectancy — the 'Great' in Britain, US special relationship, the Crown, etc. — could be kept going. Blair's 2001 re-election confirmed this noble-decline status. But now, after Iraq, his 2005 'victory' may be interpreted as opening a farther phase: the shadow of the hospice draws closer. And significant parts of the UK electorate are stirring in other directions.

What is the alternative route appearing out of the fog? Although armour-plated against serious change, the old British order is not completely immune to it. As 1997 demonstrated, it remains possible (just) for a sufficiently disenchanted electorate to vomit out the imposed regime. The recent election was of course not on that scale: it may take a few more years to generate a comparable spasm. However, a lesser yet quite determined reaction has taken place in 2005, on analogous if milder lines. And the interesting thing is that this is already impacting upon a very different situation, both internally and globally. During the electoral period Liberal-Democrat opposition to the Iraqi War was foregrounded, and plainly did them no harm. But their abiding aim remains proportional representation and a written constitution. Last year the Rowntree Trust "State of the Nation" survey showed that over 80 per cent of those consulted favoured the latter. Blairism had succeeded in converting four-fifths of the electorate into 'chattering classes'. And as Wilson perceives, such changes will now have to be Britain-wide in a sense quite distinct from the old Crown-unitary one. Thanks to Devolution, a differentiated and evolving pattern has already started up — and is fuelling the drive for central reform. When devolved elections were held in 2003 for the Cardiff and Edinburgh parliaments, it became clear how awkward even small doses of democracy can be. Not only does a little of the stuff go a long way, it appears to feed off itself. In the reservations, fairness had reared its wimpish yet somehow irrepressible head. Coalition regimes in Wales and Scotland were bad enough; but what 2005 suggests is that these may soon collapse into utterly unreasonable all-round demands.

Among the Scots it has already happened. As the price of coalition, the Lib-Dems demanded a more all-round democratic Scottish system for the new parliament, and the result has been the unthinkable: proportionality in town and county councils. This will bring an end to what the Australian Labor Party knows as 'vote-stacking' — the time-honoured apparatus of Buggin's turn, petty favouritism, due ascent, and (most recently) postal vote rigging. Yet such seed-beds have been the foundation of one-party rule and (eventually) of New Labour obedience and State. When the next round of Scottish elections comes, civilisation could founder at its grassroots. The entire apparatus of governance could end up dominated by Liberal-Democrats, Nationalists, Greens, Socialists, Gay activists, anti-war lunatics, animal-liberators, and God knows what else. With (as Wilson is amused to observe) England trailing somewhere behind. What was possible in Glasgow will clearly be so on Tyneside and Merseyside.

"The most grotesquely unfair election in British history" was how Iain Macwhirter summed up the strange half-convulsion (Sunday Herald, May 8). Like Peter Wilson, however, he senses its unintended consequences. No mould was broken, but a time-worn template was more decidedly judged, and morally rejected — most forthrightly in Scotland and Wales, where voters had been given some experience of making a difference. In spite of all the limits of devolution, Thatcher's litany of 'No Alternative' had ceased to be the case there. A new mould is possible, and as both of these perceptive journalists see, it's already in active formation. Wilson hardly mentions Wales, regrettably, for in some ways the development is most evident there. The Richards Commission on the future of the Welsh Assembly envisages its growth into a fully legislative body (with PR taken for granted) and has won support from most parties in Wales. Though not solved in the sense of universal Welsh discourse, the old ethno-linguistic battle has been both advanced and transcended on the basis of a more institutionalised country with strong European ambitions. It has fostered what John Ralston Saul describes as "positive nationalism" in the concluding part of his new **The Collapse of Globalism** (Atlantic Books 2005).

Such positive (or 'sustainable') nationalism is now being favoured by global conditions — that is, by the more interwoven and inescapable reality following the Cold War. Though ideologised initially as 'globalisation', this was a half-wit 'ism' conceived by economists, then injected into public opinion by neo-conservative politicians and pundits — as well as by ex-leftists drawn irresistibly out of assorted graves by the odour of 'radical'. For all its disgraces and confusions, the 2005 election has also been a 'return to sender' advice, advertising the exhaustion of an -ism. "The more complicated our national and international relationships are" Saul argues "the more all of us will need to use our most complicated sense of belonging both to feel at home, and to find multiple ways to be at home with the widest variety of people and situations".

Cross-party campaigns for constitutional change will re-emerge, in both Scotland and Wales, and should soon be accompanied by an English movement — an amplification, presumably, of

the Charter 88 campaign for constitutional reform active since 1988 (third centenary of Old Corruption's foundation, under William of Orange). The Independent newspaper launched a vigorous campaign for all-round constitutional change in the days following the 2005 results. Far from being complicated or held back by this variety of starting-points, reform could be spurred on by it.

However, a flexible yet credible formula is required for the process. And one thing about it is clear from the start: it isn't 'federalism'. Today this furtive, two-timing cousin of the ismic tribe is (in the old English North-East expression) as much use as a chocolate fire-guard. It was invented by great-nation states in the late 18th and 19th centuries, as a way of forcing effective unitary structures upon incorrigibly various or troublesome national minorities. Abraham Lincoln's United States was a pioneering example. That it gets sung about today with renewed zeal in George W. Bush's school system may be taken as underlining the point. Most of the globe's great-nation scoundrels have blessed the Federal Ideal, and considered military means justified in imposing it. Indeed, New Labour's devolutionary ideas were little but last-ditch moves of the same sort: the reinforcement of central authority, occluded by minority folk dancing. Confederation may sound like federation, but the similarity is verbal. It is in fact a wholly different concept, resting upon the real sovereignty of its constituent parts. Agreement of the latter on collective action or institutions presupposes their power to differ — and indeed to depart altogether. During the great-nation age this structure was dismissed as weak and indecisive: no use for serious warfare, and no good at either empire or 'radicalism'. None of them had a single colony or WMD to their names. While nobody doubted that the Helvetic Confederation would be good at defending itself, in the grander, Realism-driven world it came to represent do-gooding like the Red Cross, neutrality, and Harry Lime's cuckoo clock. Now, however, that damn clock is sounding all over the place: in Latin America, in Iberia, in the Ukraine, in Uzbekistan, in the arguments over the European Union constitution, as well as within the oldest lag in the line-up, the UK. After Iraq, modest indecisiveness is making ground against lordly pre-emption, and all the other detritus of empire. Is it just small-minded philistinism, to have had enough of Apocalyptic Terrorism (and Anti-Terrorism), of God-Almighties and *la pensée unique*?

In a previous SLR article (SLR Issue 23) I suggested that Scotland wanted to re-join the world, and that (contrary to Neo-liberal religion) **this** world was ready to be re-joined. After the 2005 election, it may be becoming a little clearer how that might be done. As Macwhirter puts it: "If this was the revolt of the shiraz and chardonnay set, then it has found its voice and it is drinking well". Enhanced self-government, **de facto** independence, could be obtained by overall electoral reform, and the joint restructuring of centre and periphery along confederal lines. It's quite true that UK Liberal-Democrats used to be bemused by federalism, in spite of all the arguments against it in Britain, above all the huge preponderance of the English. But their recent election manifestos have said mercifully little on the theme. The best definition of Scottish independence aspirations has been given by author, journalist (and Lib-Dem candidate) Neal Ascherson, in his book **Stone Voices** (2002):

The Scottish people do not see their future as an either-or. They simply want Scotland to run its own affairs, as other nations do. For most people, devolution and independence

are little more than different uniforms which can be buttoned over the single reality of self-government. Most Scots would prefer not to leave the UK, but if that is the only way in which self-government can be made real, then so be it. This wish is widespread, of rather low intensity and rather vaguely formulated, but absolutely persistent

He also notes a "gravitation towards a constitutional view of public life and popular sovereignty which is European rather than British", and a recognition of the country's need to "encounter the world directly rather than through the priorities of "Great Britain". These amount to so many reasons for a 'velvet divorce', whereby both Scots and Welsh re-establish national identity within the wider confederated structure of the emergent European Union.

Wilson notes that Britain may get more Scottish, but also that this may be even less popular in England if Gordon Brown succeeds Tony Blair as Prime Minister. Won't the "unhappy mutterings" about a Scottish power-mafia increase, to the point of revolt, or counter-affirmation of English majority rights? However, two things are being unjustly conflated here. Scottish dominance of the New Labour Party is undeniable, but also utterly different — indeed, bitterly opposed — to the prospects of a reformed UK political system linked to devolution, greater autonomy and Ascherson's European (or confederal) dimension. What they're muttering about is simply a by-product of British decay, and of refusal to contemplate democratic reforms for one of the most anachronistic states in the world.

In its decrepitude, British nationalism has come to rely upon the over-compensating support of unrepresentative minorities — of whom the Scottish Labour contingent just re-elected to Westminster is a perfect example. The Ulster DUP, plus New Labour's cadres of Gallo-Brits and Caledonian-Brits, furnish a sub-class of obedient mediocrities whose vested interest lies entirely in tradition, routine, and the discouragement of all wimpish, liberal, fair-sharing nonsense. The mutterings against this tyranny have been, if anything, far too muted and formless. Because the great English majority still finds it so hard to dissociate themselves from 'British' mythologies, this vile stratum of apparatchiks knows that its influence is best preserved by an exaggerated rhetoric of Unionist values and achievements.

So Scottish prominence in the all-Brit charade is utterly different from (and indeed opposed to) the important Scottish and Welsh contribution to reform of Westminster. It was the latter that the 2005 farce has brought into view, even if it couldn't help advertising the former as well. The old-imperial version of 'multi-nationalism' will now try to repress the wimps, harder than before. Emancipation may have got some unexpected encouragement from 2005; but so has reaction, and not only in Ulster. New battle-lines are emerging that might encourage self-government, and turn the Lib-Dems into more than an alibi for **ancien regime** continuity; but only if two-partyism is more decisively discarded, by a more significant part of the old parties. Isn't that what the European Constitution issue is really about? Can Britain turn towards being a collection of democratising countries, worthy of a confederal Europe — or is it fated to remain an Atlantic anachronism, rotting forever in the tomb of 1688's (and 1707's) National Values? ■

Tom Nairn is a leading writer. A full version of this article is available at www.scottishleftreview.org

briefing

A week of actions and events is planned around the G8 Summit in Scotland this July including marches, rallies, an alternative summit, cultural events, and much more. This is your guide to all the week's events

Thursday 30 June – Friday 1 July

`Black Sun Over Genoa`

Community Play at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

With `Black Sun Over Genoa` Theatre Workshop will challenge and articulate protest in a powerful, politically-charged account of the 2001 demonstrations against the G8 Summit in Genoa. The Genoa demonstrations are shown through the eyes of six characters constructed from accounts of those who were really there. The play looks at the right to protest peacefully and how the police used violence to repress the demonstrations.

Presented by the Edinburgh Theatre Workshop

For more info or tickets www.theatre-workshop.com, 0044 (0)131 2265 425

Saturday, 2 July

“Make Poverty History” Demonstration, Edinburgh.

This promises to be the largest demonstration in the history of the Scotland. A diverse group of Churches, NGOs, Trade Unions, environmentalists, and ordinary citizens will march to end poverty in the UK and around the world.

For more information see www.makepovertyhistory.org

Sunday, 3 July

G8 Alternatives Summit, Edinburgh

“Ideas to Change the World”

Usher Hall, Queens Hall & Edinburgh University will feature prominent speakers from around the world in eight plenary sessions and more than 36 workshop/seminars. The purpose of the Alternatives Summit is to present a serious ideological challenge to the corrupt policies and ideology of the G8. Plenary Sessions will focus on:

- War & Imperialism
- The Attack on Civil Liberties
- Africa
- Climate Change
- Asylum & Immigration
- Nuclearism
- Corporate Globalisation & Privatisation
- Aid, Trade & Debt

Speakers will include:

Mark Curtis, author of *Web of Deceit and Unpeople*; Susan George, Vice-President of ATTAC, France; George Monbiot, radical journalist and author; Trevor Ngwane, Anti-Privatisation Forum, South Africa; Dita Sari, President of National Workers' Struggle, Indonesia; Scott Ritter, former UN Weapons Inspector; Ken Wiwa, son of Ken Saro Wiwa, executed by Nigerian government; and many others.

For more information including a list of confirmed speakers visit www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Tickets £10/5 Contact Usher Hall for tickets 0131 228 1155 www.usherhall.co.uk

Monday, 4 July

Faslane Nuclear Base Blockade

Faslane – 30 miles west of Glasgow, Scotland

“You can’t end poverty unless you end war”

Faslane is home to the UK’s own WMD Programme. The G8 use massive military power, war and occupation to pursue profit and power. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate expression of that militarism. We cannot make poverty history unless we make war and militarism history. Join us to block all gates into the base - shutting it down for a day.

Organised by Trident Ploughshares, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament(CND) and Scottish CND in collaboration with G8 Alternatives

For more info see www.faslaneg8.com

Tuesday, 5 July

Dungavel Detention Centre Mass Protest

“Close Dungavel, No-one is Illegal!”

Dungavel is where Scotland imprisons hundreds of people, including families and children who have committed no crime. They have merely crossed borders fleeing persecution and poverty, seeking safety and freedom.

Around the world millions of migrants are displaced by G8 economic and military policies and demonised as illegals. We demonstrate to show solidarity with those behind the razor wire and demand equal rights, free movement for all, and an end to detention and deportations.

Coaches leave in the morning from Edinburgh, Shuttle-bus service from Glasgow

For more info contact Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees at glascamref@hotmail.com

Wednesday, 6 July

Gleneagles Hotel

Gleneagles, Perthshire

“Another World is Possible”

Assemble 12 noon at Gleneagles Train Station for a march to the gates of the Gleneagles Hotel on the opening day of the G8 Summit.

The G8 countries have appointed themselves rulers of the world. This group of eight white men have brought war, occupation, neoliberal corporate globalisation, poverty and environmental devastation. The G8 is not welcome here.

Join the global movement when it comes to Scotland to oppose the G8. Anti-war groups, trade unions, left parties, students, anti-capitalists, environmentalists and community organisations will march side by side to the gates of Gleneagles Hotel to let the G8 rulers know what we think of them. The march will be followed by a mass rally.

Another world is possible. They are G8, but we are six billion!

For more information visit G8 Alternatives at www.g8alternatives.org.uk

g8 and the art of being fooled

David Miller looks at what is really going on in and around the G8 on Africa, and concludes that it is certainly very much more harm than good

"It would be very odd if people came to protest against this G8, as we're focusing on poverty in Africa and climate change. I don't quite know what they'll be protesting against." (Tony Blair in Dundee, March 2005)

Blair's mixture of perplexity and faux naivety is no off the cuff response. There is a clear strategy unfolding before us. The Prime Minister and his cohorts in government and in the police, special branch and MI5 have been busy with their strategy of trying to undermine and marginalise protest against their failed policies when they meet at Gleneagles this summer. The first part of the strategy is to separate the 'good protestors' from the bad ones. This is done first, by whipping up fear about the prospects of trouble at the G8 summit and second by suggesting that New Labour is on the side of the angels. They are building on the 'progressive consensus' in the phrase Schools minister David Miliband recites by rote. We will come to the reality of New Labour policy shortly, but for the moment let's stay with the demonisation campaign. The aim is to suggest that anyone who protests against the G8 is illegitimate. The police have joined in enthusiastically encouraging increasingly wild media stories about anarchist training camps, plans for violent protests and the like. But the government have appeared to be facing two ways on the issue. As early as January 2 this year, Trade Minister and Scottish MP Douglas Alexander could be found promoting the "massive rally... planned for Edinburgh on Saturday, July 2, to send the world leaders a message with a triple theme: Trade Justice, Drop the Debt and More and Better Aid... The Make Poverty History campaign is a cause whose time has come. In Government, we know we will be challenged by this extraordinary coalition of people who care."

Blair has endorsed this view in the interview cited above and he noted "There will be people who come out on the street in favour of the Make Poverty History campaign and that's a good thing". The good protestors will be tolerated, but the bad protestors will not. Asked whether the government would use the new anti-terror laws against G8 protesters, Blair said "I couldn't rule it out". Even before being given the nod by the Prime Minister the police and intelligence services were preparing the ground to legitimise repression and police violence. This depends crucially on spreading fear and rumour about alleged threats from shadowy forces. The prize for the earliest reporting of "anarchists" and the "environmental dogs of war" goes to the Herald on 26 January 2004, more than a year and a half before the summit. It was, of course, only the start. Apart from the routine inaccuracy, exaggeration and hyperbole of this reporting, it should go without saying that the main problem with it is the almost total failure to report the issues (including the war in Iraq, global poverty, climate justice, corporate power and lots more) which will drive thousands of us to protest against the G8 except in terms favourable to political and business elites. Much of the reporting results from briefings from police and intelligence sources with the line between legitimate mass protest and the alleged 'terrorist

threat' being deliberately blurred. Thus the spooks 'reveal' that "British intelligence agents are disguising themselves as down-and-outs in 'key terrorist target areas' as part of a nationwide surveillance operation to foil attacks by al-Qaeda". This is reportedly in use in areas "considered to be potential terror targets... such as around Westminster and the Scottish parliament" (Sunday Herald, 17 April 2005). The propaganda built by the government and intelligence agencies encourages panic and the media amplifies it.

The spiral of panic suits some very well, since they can make money out of it. Here is how the scam works. The press have repeatedly quoted 'Security consultants' about the risk of trouble around the summit. Two such are Clive Fairweather and Stuart Crawford, who regularly warn about a "greater degree of organisation than had previously been recognised" amongst protestors which "fuelled fears that violent... protests would erupt" (Crawford, Scotland on Sunday 12 December 2004) or that the protestors "will be most interested in publicity" and so will focus their efforts on the "temptation of Edinburgh, Glasgow or Stirling" (Fairweather, Scotland on Sunday, 3 April 2005). In fact both men work for Stuart Crawford Associates



which describes itself as “specialising in Scottish public affairs, security issues and media communications” - in other words public relations. The worse the warnings, the better the business. At present they are engaged in advising the Gleneagles Estates (bordering the Gleneagles hotel and owned by seriously old money) and possibly other business interests. Their background is in the British Army; Crawford is a former Lt Colonel and Fairweather a Colonel. He was in command of the SAS when it raided the Iranian embassy in London in 1980, killing all but one of the hostage takers and, according to eye witnesses, executing two of them after they had surrendered. Amongst their former clients are the Scottish People’s Alliance, a political party linked to the New party, which was condemned by the Scottish Conservative leader David McLetchie as “fascist and undemocratic”. Both parties are run by Robert Durward, the Scottish business man who also runs the British Aggregates Association (also listed as a former client of Stuart Crawford Associates). In other words trained killers with dubious connections to far right politics are posing as security experts and briefing the media on the dangers faced from protests. The more the dangers are hyped the more likely it is that they might be hired. At best this is a conflict of interest, at worst a conspiracy against democratic protest for pecuniary interest. Certainly the media do not yet seem to see a story in the fact that trained killers are advising on the security response to protests at Gleneagles. They prefer to refer to ‘military style’ training given to ‘anarchists’ whose total tally of killing of civilians or military personnel in the last decade is zero. This compares very favourably with the tally attributed to US and UK forces in Iraq in the year 2003-4 alone (over 100,000).

But the smearing of protestors as violent has been rebuffed to some extent by the G8 alternatives coalition which has applied for permission to demonstrate at Gleneagles. The police publicly accept the right to protest, but raise fears especially in off the record briefings about a minority bent on trouble. This translates in the media as shop smashing, police attacking, masked anarchists. But if one looks carefully at police statements there is cause for concern about their plans. Reports about the importation or authorisation of water cannon and plastic bullets, have fuelled fears expressed by the MSP for the Gleneagles area Roseanna Cunningham who noted “there is actually a real danger that all the talk of armed police, surface-to-air missiles and holding compounds will make the fears of violence, understandable after Genoa and Seattle, a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some of it looks suspiciously like the police effectively saying: ‘Come on if you think you’re hard enough’” (BBC Online, Thursday, 3 March, 2005). The line between protest (including non violent direct action) and violence is blurred deliberately by some sections of the police as a means of legitimating police aggression against demonstrators engaged in peaceful protest. Scotland has a well known tradition of non violent protest such as the regular blockades of Faslane nuclear base. There is no

Gordon Brown’s mention of the problems of education fees in Tanzania in his speech in January is particularly inappropriate since the problems are the direct result of IMF structural adjustment which forced the Tanzanian government to introduce the market into education

reason not to treat non violent protests any differently around the G8. But already the MoD briefers at Faslane have been busy advising willing hacks that “Our intelligence people are monitoring the situation closely... We’re used to this sort of thing but the people planning it are not the ordinary peaceful protesters. They have a different agenda” (Sunday Times Scotland, 17 April 2005). Such lies easily find a place in the sun in the press. If there is trouble at Gleneagles, it will not just be the police that are to blame, it will be their willing propagandists in the press. They should hang their heads in shame

Can we discern the outlines of a strategy here? When Noam Chomsky visited Scotland in March one of the questions he was asked at a press conference was what should be the reaction of the protestors to the hysteria about violence. Chomsky noted that this is a classic pattern and that no doubt agent provocateurs working for the police or the intelligence services would

be present amongst the demonstrators. His most important message, developed later in the day in the Gifford lecture, was that governments attempt to move the political debate and the strategies of resistance to their policies away from substantive political issues where they are very weak and towards issues and acts of violence, because that is where they are strong. Chomsky noted specifically what he called the important victories of non violent resistance in Iraq, which he claimed forced the US and UK to hold elections. But he also noted the desperation of our rulers to keep us from discussing anything which might threaten their power. Their real record is not one which bears examination so they attempt to divert attention onto the issue of violence. In any violent confrontation, Chomsky noted, the forces of the state have overwhelming firepower and resources. But on the political issues they stand exposed as defenders of privilege and corporate power. This is why a second element to the official strategy is their desperation to appear as if they are progressives and as a result to attempt to co-opt the Make Poverty History coalition. Blair has been sporting his white MPH wrist band, Bono refers to Brown and Blair as the “Lennon and McCartney” of poverty reduction. Both Blair and Brown have been making speeches on their commitment to Africa. In January, Brown made a long speech that in its own terms sounded serious about his concern to make poverty history. He noted the “hopelessness and human loss that lies behind the numbers” and reported that in Tanzania he “saw eight, nine, 10, 11 year old children begging to continue in school - but denied the chance because their parents could not pay the fees”. He concluded with a clarion call to make the “arc of the moral universe... bend towards justice”.

On the launch of the Commission for Africa Report, the centrepiece of the government’s policy for the G8, the BBC listed eight findings requiring action by the West. They included doubling or trebling aid, forgiving debt, spending more on HIV/AIDS, funding African universities and removing trade barriers to African exports in the West. Not much there to disagree with.

But, in the report itself, a different picture emerges. Journalists need only read the summaries of the various chapters to get a clue about the real agenda. For example, goals for economic growth in Africa are said in Chapter 7 to be possible “only if the obstacles of... a discouraging investment climate are overcome”. This involves “public and private sector working together to identify the obstacles to a favourable investment climate”. What this means is more liberalisation and privatisation and more opportunities for western corporations to exploit African resources and labour. “Investments in infrastructure and the enabling climate for the private sector are at the top of the agenda” says the summary of the next chapter. These passages are available for all to see but are commonly suppressed in the mainstream media (including the allegedly left leaning papers the Guardian and the Independent). They provide a clue to the real agenda of the government, which is to spearhead neoliberal reform in Africa.

Also closely involved with the work of the Commission for Africa is Business Action for Africa (BAA), a coalition of over 250 senior business representatives. BAA met with the Commission for Africa prior to finalising its report in February 2005. This followed a “programme of formal consultations between the CFA and the private sector in Africa, Europe and North America”. This was accomplished through the ‘Business contact group’ established in July 2004 at a meeting chaired by Niall Fitzgerald of Reuters and Chancellor Gordon Brown. Its programme was managed by the ‘private sector Advisor’ to the commission for Africa, an employee of Shell and input in the US and Canada was ensured through business lobby groups the Corporate Council on Africa and the Canadian Council on Africa, both representing trans-national capital. The corporations involved can barely contain their excitement. The ‘outlook’ of the business community is a ‘positive one’ says one of the CFA commissioners. “It believes Africa is the next frontier for investment”. James Smith, the UK chair of Shell, which co-hosted the meeting, noted that progress “requires that the private sector has a bigger role”. The chair of the Commonwealth Business Council, the business lobby group co-hosting the meeting, read out the concluding statement. Dr Mohan Kaul affirmed that “getting the conditions right for doing business in Africa is the biggest single investment for the future well-being of its citizens”. A “vibrant and successful private sector... is required” he noted.

Amongst their duties in this adventure, corporations “should” sign “leading codes of good social and environmental conduct”. The one apparent crumb of comfort is that “Corporate governance principles should clearly identify and punish malpractice”. But this is a mirage as there is no requirement to sign and the codes noted (such as the



UN global compact and the Global Reporting Initiative) are all voluntary and do not have any provisions or appetite for ‘punishing’ corporate wrongdoing. This is their unifying and defining characteristic. Unsurprisingly, therefore we find that the corporations sponsoring the BAA conference are amongst the worst currently engaged in the exploitation of Africa including Shell (oil), Anglo American (mining), Rio Tinto (mining), De Beers (diamonds), Diageo, SAB Miller (both Drinks industry, use vast quantities of water), GSK (pharmaceuticals), British American Tobacco, and Unilever, (food and consumer products). Also involved are the providers of capital who profiteer from exploitation such as Standard Chartered bank and the venture capital fund Capital for Development. This pro-business agenda is nowhere clearer than in the statements of the IMF. Its International Monetary and Financial Committee, met on 16 April in Washington and reiterated the neo-liberal mantra that “the key challenge remains to press ahead with reforms to strengthen the investment environment and foster private sector led growth”. The Committee “emphasizes that successful and ambitious multilateral trade liberalization is central to sustained global growth and economic development”. This is as unsurprising as it is damaging to Africa and the rest of the world. The Committee met in the middle of an election campaign in the

UK, but the chair of the committee - Gordon Brown - managed to find time to attend. Those hankering after the accession of the Chancellor to Number 10 take note.

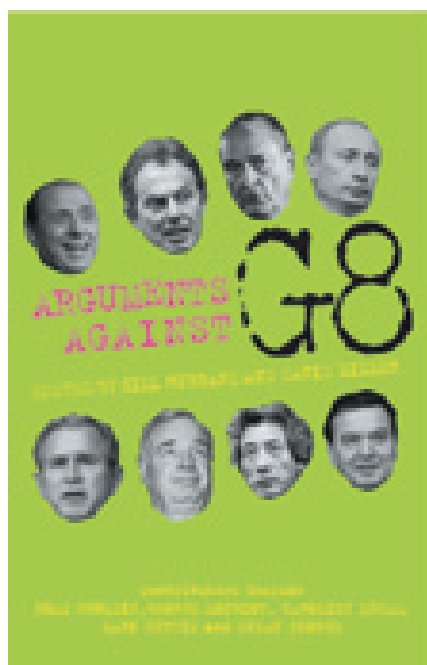
Brown's mention of Tanzania in his speech in January 2005 is particularly inappropriate since the problems of education fees in that country are the direct result of IMF structural adjustment which forced the Tanzanian government to introduce the market into education. Education's share in total budget percentage fell from 11.85 per cent in 1983/84 to 6.95 per cent in 1990/91. Government expenditures on education, health, and other social sectors had to be cut in order to meet conditions of donor countries and international lending institutions. What Brown gives, with apparent sincerity, with one hand is the means for the corporations to take away with the other. He offers, in other words, not fine words unmatched by practice, but the very tools for the corporations to swoop on Africa and bleed it dry. This is nowhere more apparent than in relation to aid, where the promised increases come with strings attached - they require liberalisation. Even worse, the Department for International Development aid budget directly funds privatisation PR campaigns run by the far right Adam Smith Institute and others. In such obscene circumstances, cutting aid to the developing world would be a better policy.

In fact the UK government is at the forefront of the new corporate drive to open up markets throughout the developing world. The adoption of some of the rhetoric of the Make Poverty History campaign is both a sign of the success of the movement and an indication of the dangers of co-option. Sadly, some of the organisations involved in MPH are less than clear about this. For example Justin Forsyth, Oxfam's campaign manager, noted in 2002 that "When you speak to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown,

they really understand these issues. They are easily some of the best leaders when it comes to talking about development and dismantling subsidy, and they are making the right arguments time and again." Last year Forsyth left Oxfam to work as Blair's advisor of International Development. Meanwhile Brown's advisor on International Development, Shriti Vadera, described by the Guardian as "tough-talking" and "not suffering bright junior officials, let alone fools, gladly" is a former director at the US bank UBS Warburg and 'expert' on, and advocate of, "the complex funding behind public-private partnerships". Amongst her other roles Vadera sits on the Oxfam Council of Trustees, Oxfam's governing body. These relations are not necessarily corrupt, but the lack of critique of Brown and Blair and the apparent lack of recognition of the real agenda of the UK government by some in the development NGOs does suggest that the prospect of co-option of some sections of the movement is real.

he strategy to divide and rule is real and if we are to have any prospect of undermining the spin and building popular forces to turn back neo-liberalism, we should confront the failed policies of the G8 head on. This requires the broadest possible movement and in particular a battle on the terrain of politics and ideology. On the terrain of politics, the fact that we are many and they are few counts. Their policies on climate, on Iraq, on Africa, on global poverty (and the rest) have failed, it is time for us to declare that another world is possible and to make it so. ■

David Miller is co-editor of Arguments against G8 published by Pluto and co-editor of Spinwatch www.spinwatch.org



"One of the most important books in recent years. ... This book draws together some of the most brilliant analysts in the world. I cannot recommend it highly enough." **Robert W. McChesney, author, The Problem of the Media**

"The G8 runs what South African president Thabo Mbeki and others describe as 'global apartheid'. ... He - and everyone else - should read this superb book, and then help abolish, not polish, the chains of global apartheid." **Trevor Ngwane, Organising Secretary of the Anti-Privatisation Forum, Johannesburg**

"This book reminds us brilliantly that, far from ending poverty, today's political elites are the chief creators of human want, war and ecological disaster. The collective voice of the different contributors cuts through the propaganda of the pro-globalisation elites ... If you care about our future, read this book." **John McAllion, Oxfam Scotland**

"A clear and precise analysis of how the G8 operate and the perverse logic by which they make wealth for the few at the expense of the many." **Francisco Ramirez Cuellar, President of the State Mining Corporation Workers Union, Colombia**



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the spin doctor's prescription

Can Africa still provide the legacy Blair seeks? Not if he follows the G8 agenda, argues Emma Miller.

On March 11, the Commission for Africa (CfA), initiated and chaired by Blair, released a report detailing a recovery plan for Africa. The CfA claims to set out a radical vision for Africa, with a range of measures to contribute towards alleviating poverty, improving health and education and reducing conflict in the continent. However, The CfA report is the latest of a range of initiatives for Africa launched in recent decades. Previous strategy documents have gone nowhere. Such initiatives have failed not because Africa is a 'basket case', nor because a whole continent is incapable of progress, but because Africa remains trapped in a subordinate position in an increasingly merciless global economic order. There are some fine words in the CfA report. However, there is another agenda operating. New Labour Trade Secretary Patricia Hewitt previously described it more accurately: "We want to open up protected markets in developing countries". Indeed, it is not words but deeds that count. A brief examination of the UK's deeds in Africa concurs more with the agenda outlined by Hewitt.

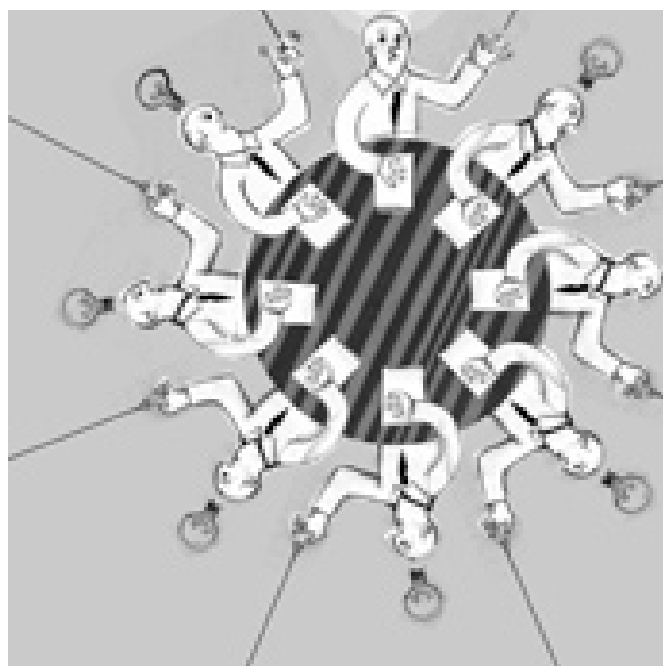
The G8 leaders pursue neoliberal economic policies, which treat everything as a product and everyone as a consumer/producer. There are three key crises emerging from this approach, all directly associated with the problems of Africa. These crises are increasing inequality (locally and globally), environmental destruction and the democratic deficit. Firstly, Africa is the poorest continent in the world and, while a few are enriched at the top, overall incomes are actually decreasing under globalisation. Secondly, in ecological terms, Africa and the South generally are more affected by the ravages of climate change, which is largely caused by excessive consumption/production in the rich countries of the North. Although climate change is also top of the G8 agenda, it does not feature in the CfA. Thirdly, the democratic deficit is increasing in Africa as elsewhere, as the powerful focus on the promotion of the interests of multinational corporations above all else. This is the context in which we have to consider the Commission for Africa.

It is not new for a G8 summit to make grand gestures for Africa. The last summit in Britain was in 1998, when 70,000 people surrounded Birmingham's International Convention Centre to protest against third world debt. Debt has remained on the G8 agenda since, to very limited effect. In 2002 in Canada, the G8 reached a \$1bn agreement to lighten the debt burden for the world's poorest countries. Aid agencies argued the sum was only equal to 50 days of repayments and would not counterbalance price falls in coffee and cotton (which have not recovered). An offer to 'work towards' increased aid was made - for African nations that 'govern justly'. The concept of 'good governance' continues to be promoted by the leaders of the rich world. While there is much to criticise in the CfA report, perhaps the most glaring contradictions centre round the concepts of good governance and addressing corruption. The subtext remains 'do as we say, not as we do.'

The CfA report identifies poor governance as 'Africa's core problem.' However, good governance is interpreted differently

depending on whose interests are at stake. For the United Nations, good governance has eight major characteristics; it is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. The UN places primary importance on the participation of all members of society. This is in contrast to the IMF definition: "Our approach is to concentrate on those aspects of good governance that are most closely related to our surveillance over macroeconomic policies - namely, the transparency of government accounts, the effectiveness of public resource management, and the stability and transparency of the economic and regulatory environment for private sector activity" (Michel Camdessus, IMF Managing Director, 1997).

The G8 interpretation appears to be more in tune with the IMF emphasis on macroeconomics and the facilitation of privatisation. Despite G8 gestures of inclusiveness in inviting African leaders to their recent summits, there is little evidence that the interests of African people are driving policy. Potentially positive interventions recommended in the CfA report, come with strings attached. The disastrous impacts of the conditions attached to loans and to debt relief are well documented, and include liberalising trade and economies, privatisation and the imposition of charges for essential services such as health and education. Strings attached to aid also involve adjustments which facilitate privatisation. UK foreign aid is now largely targeted at countries willing to comply with this. War on Want and others have documented how Britain's Department for International Development has paid consultants substantial proportions of the UK aid budget to promote privatisation



in numerous African countries. Good governance entails prioritising the market.

As the governance of the G8 has come under scrutiny in recent years, it has been pressured to respond. Facing criticisms of paternalism towards Africa, the G8 has wanted to be seen to involve African leaders. Of the 17 panel members of the CfA, nine are African, allowing Blair to claim that CfA is a majority African initiative. But such a claim belies the fact that the African leaders who have been hand-picked are among those most willing to comply with the neoliberal agenda of the commission. They include Benjamin Mkapa, the Tanzanian president and Trevor Manuel, the South African finance minister. The Tanzanian government website boasts of the rapid privatisation of its public sector over ten years, proclaiming the UK as its largest foreign partner. The United Kingdom is also the biggest foreign investor in South Africa. In June 2001, Patricia Hewitt spoke at a meeting promoting UK - South African business links, where she highlighted that British companies' total investments in South Africa were over £11 billion. She also promoted the new trade development and promotion organisation, Trade Partners UK, commenting that 'South Africa would remain 'a target market for the UK.'

Although compliant African leaders are described as good governors, they are no more representative of their populations than the leaders of the G8 are of theirs. UK-based Africans and African diaspora groups have described the CfA report as 'colonialist' and pushing a model of development 'favourable to deregulated free markets and Western economic and political interests'. The African groups issued a statement with the World Development Movement: "Real solutions for Africa are more likely to come from genuine African initiatives, for example, the Pan-African Movement, the landless movement in Southern Africa, the Africa Social Forum and the campaign against privatisation in Ghana. The UK and other rich country governments, international NGOs and liberation movements can best support African development by building solidarity with these grassroots movements." Despite acknowledgement in sections of the report that privatisation and trade liberalisation have contributed to the collapse of infrastructure and increased deprivation in Africa, the CfA still seeks to adjust Africa to neoliberalism. Good governance has to fit within that framework. In this context, what does the CfA commitment to addressing corruption mean and how effective is it likely to be?

Describing corruption as 'a systemic problem facing Africa', the Commission urges the G8 to make commitments to improve transparency in transactions with the continent. The report acknowledges that corruption exists in the west as well as Africa: "Fighting corruption involves tackling those who offer bribes as well as those who take them". It recognises the relationship between rich natural resources, such as oil and diamonds, and how their presence in Africa has facilitated conflict, with much of the wealth ending up in western bank accounts. However, the wording of the report is critical in determining its seriousness. The wording indicates good intentions, 'urging' improvements in transparency and more support for self-regulatory bodies such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). But where are the commitments to effective regulation? Patricia Feeney, executive director of Rights and Accountability in Development, sums it up: "They've taken very much the usual line of protecting our companies at any cost... They've not shown any sign of really taking their own medicine." Only a

week after the report was published, Britain was criticised for failing to crack down on bribery by its firms abroad – precisely what the CfA recommended rich countries do. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued a report saying not a single firm or person has been prosecuted since its anti-bribery convention came into force in Britain in 2001, citing a lack of political will and resources. The international arms industry also highlights the commitment of the G8 to pursue its own interests in Africa. Five of the G8 member countries, including Britain, are the world's biggest arms dealers. Transparency International comments on the UK: "The government is seriously deficient in meeting the strategy and targets identified in the commission's report".

Many were sceptical about the Commission's report before it was published, and with good reason. The CfA was never going to consider anything presenting a threat to the status quo. The report, for example, calls on shareholders, consumers and African governments to "put more pressure on companies to adhere to international codes and standards of behaviour". Such codes are always voluntary and have limited, if any, impact. The problem is that multinationals and rich country governments work together to undermine regulation. In other words, the rich country leaders are themselves failing to demonstrate good governance.

At the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Blair will claim that the commission demonstrates his seriousness about healing Africa. By doing so, he hopes that he will be absolved for his warmongering in Iraq. At the same time, he will be running scared from the critical voices who continue to expose his political weakness. There is currently an active government strategy of spinning the planned protests against the G8. This involves a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' protestors. One protest relevant to Africa is the demonstration organised by a conglomeration of NGOs under the banner 'Make Poverty History (MPH)'. Blair has said "there will be people who come out on the street in favour of the Make Poverty History campaign and that's a good thing". While MPH clearly has laudable aims, their demands are limited. There was always a risk that Blair and Brown would be able to claim to be complying with their demands, while effecting little change. Indeed, Blair has been seen sporting his 'MPH' wristband. But there will be many other protestors who will be less easy to spin away.

However, being sceptical about the intentions of the powerful is not the same as resignation to hopelessness. Progress involves not just recognising the source of the difficulties currently faced by the continent, but identifying and working with solutions identified by Africans. Recognising and acting on current difficulties would include a stop to privatisation, abolishing the debt, stop dumping excess agricultural produce from rich countries, control arms, and moves towards African control of food production and development of African pharmaceuticals under national control, to name but a few. These measures have to be enforced by regulation, not voluntary codes of conduct. What the measures have in common is that they do not represent the interests of multinational corporations. Here in Scotland the focus has to be taking the G8 on politically, exposing the mismatch between their words and deeds, and to demonstrate that there are alternatives. The challenge is for the G8 to demonstrate good governance. ■

Emma Miller is author of a book 'Viewing the South: How globalisation and Western television distort representations of developing countries. Hampton: New Jersey (forthcoming)

bringing the g8 home

Corporate Watch's new report aims to ground the effects of corporate-led globalisation in local reality

That the G8 is coming to Scotland is particularly significant. Two hundred years ago, the Scottish Enlightenment made a major contribution to the development of free-market ideology, so in some senses, the G8 is indeed coming back to its roots. Today, Scotland is a very good example of the effects of corporate-led globalisation, in microcosm. The Scottish Executive has made it clear that it wants to take the opportunity of the G8 to 'showcase' Scottish businesses. What the Scottish Executive is unlikely to be 'showcasing' is the erosion of democracy these corporations are causing, and the social and environmental damage they are responsible for both in Scotland and worldwide.

As Forster, Leonard and Baird illustrate in the Scottish Left Review (SLR Issue 24), as a consequence of globalisation, it is actually highly problematic to define a 'Scottish' corporation. Just because a company is registered or headquartered in Scotland, it doesn't mean to say that it is actively contributing to the Scottish economy. In most cases, the biggest 'Scottish' companies are actually sucking wealth out to parent companies and shareholders elsewhere, as they are listed on the London or New York stock exchanges. Furthermore, the companies commonly held to be Scotland's biggest corporations, such as the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBoS) have predominantly grown in recent years through overseas acquisitions. This has also meant that much of their investment and employment has been outside Scotland. In general, as we will see, 'Scottish' companies only owe their allegiance to the international language of money.

The other major feature of Scotland's largest companies, in common with corporate-led globalisation worldwide, is that they have grown through the privatisation of public services. This is especially true in the transport and electricity sectors where companies like ScottishPower and Stagecoach have made easy money from assets developed by the public sector, subsidies from government and/or by acquiring semi-monopolistic market niches. The Scottish Executive's enthusiasm for privatisation, and in particular, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), has resulted in large amounts of public money being handed to major multinational corporations such as Sodexo (Scotland's largest provider of food and management services), Serco, Reliance, Balfour Beatty and Jacobs Babbie. PFI schemes include Scottish hospitals, schools, prisons (Kilmarnock), parts of the immigration service and major road building projects. The scheme has proved controversial in Scotland, especially with an investigation by the Sunday Herald (June 2004) revealing that Scotland is mortgaged up to the hilt to pay for PFI schemes, owing to private consortia debts of at least £25bn over the next 25 to 30 years.

Criticisms of PFI fall on deaf ears at the Scottish Executive, which is overtly favourable to the interests of big business. The Executive's pro-business stance can also be witnessed by the numerous staff exchanges that have taken place between the Executive and industry, and the funding that the Executive has given to corporate lobby groups, such as the Scottish steering committee of the World Business Council

on Sustainable Development. Corporate lobbyists also swarm around Holyrood House, wining and dining MSPs. The 'Scottish Parliament Business Exchange' scheme has also allowed corporate lobbyists unprecedented access to policy makers. The controversy around the building of the Scottish Parliament sums up the atmosphere of corporate sleaze that could be said to characterise the relationship between Scotland's political elite and big business.

The Scottish Executive has been particularly supportive of the development of biotechnology through Scotland's main economic development agency, Scottish Enterprise. This support is unsurprising considering the fact that senior executives from Monsanto, AstraZeneca and Genzyme Corporation sit on Scottish Enterprise's international advisory board. As with the hi-tech experiment in Scotland in the 1980's and 1990's, which saw major global electronics companies tempted to Scotland by government subsidies, and then pulling out when these subsidies ran out, the biotech bubble has also burst. PPL Therapeutics, the commercial wing of the Roslin Institute that bought us Dolly the sheep, was bought out in 2004 having faced bankruptcy. Representing what is clearly the next wave of new technologies, the corporate front group, the Institute of Nanotechnology, is based at Stirling University.

The biggest beneficiaries of the neoliberal agenda must surely be the Edinburgh-based finance capitalists. Edinburgh's banks, investment houses and insurance companies make it a major European financial centre. These companies' investments follow the pattern of the global financial sector as a whole, predominantly investing in oil and drugs companies and the other big international banks. Significant corporations in this sector include Standard Life, Europe's largest mutual life assurance company (despite its members' wishes, the company is likely to 'demutualise' in 2006, to reflect the dominant corporate culture); Scottish Widows, among Europe's largest fund management companies and the Glasgow- and Aberdeen-based 3i, which, according to its website, is Europe's most active investor in the oil and gas sector. 3i also has shares in Glensanda Quarry, near Argyll, one of the world's largest and most secretive granite superquarries. The Royal Bank of Scotland is the sixth largest bank in the world. Headed by one of the most influential men in Scotland, Fred Goodwin (also known as 'Fred the Shred' for his ruthless cost-cutting exercises), it is a major financier of development projects such as BP's environmentally and socially destructive Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Among RBS's non-executive directors is Peter Sutherland, chairman of BP and a former director general of the World Trade Organisation.

Apart from funding unsustainable industries, Scotland itself is home to many environmentally destructive industries. Peat extraction, mainly by English and US corporations, has also decimated Scotland's rare and protected peat bogs, with only nine per cent remaining pristine. Oil and gas extraction, besides being a major contributor to climate change, has also devastated the North Sea marine ecology over the last 45

years. Shell and others are now moving into the ecologically pristine and little understood ecology of the Atlantic Frontier, off the Shetland Islands. The Scottish economy is reliant on the oil industry, with Aberdeen known as Europe's oil capital. However with North Sea oil reserves having peaked in 1999, oil companies are giving mixed messages about the future of the region, with BP mostly selling off its concerns in the North Sea. Numerous international oil companies and oil service companies are still based in Aberdeen, including Shell, Total, AMEC and Halliburton. Scotland has its own oil exploration companies and oil service companies, including Cairn Energy, who rocketed into the FTSE 100 last year after it struck oil in the Rajasthan desert and is now exploring in ecologically sensitive regions in Nepal and Bangladesh. Besides the impact on the environment, the oil industry is hugely destructive to the quality of life of 'fenceline' communities living nearby. This is especially true for communities living around BP's Grangemouth oil refinery, one of two oil refineries in Scotland, where there is constant noise and light from gas flaring at night, black smoke and fallout, as well as high levels of asthma. Incredibly, there has been no ongoing independent monitoring of the effects of the refinery on the health of those living nearby.

Meanwhile, Scotland continues to have one of the most unequal and secretive systems of land ownership in the world. Just 1,250 landowners own around two thirds of Scotland. This is mostly the aristocracy, but also rich businessmen who see land as a good investment, reaping EU and government subsidies for monoculture farming and forestry, as well as for corporate entertainment, in the form of hunting and shooting. Besides plundering Scotland's environment, corporations have plundered Scotland's culture. The co-option of traditional industries by multinationals is especially evident in the alcohol sector, where UK drinks multinational Diageo now owns many of the traditional single malt whisky distilleries including Talisker and Oban. Scotland's fishing industry, which traditionally supported many small coastal communities in the North and North East of Scotland, is now controlled by a handful of Scottish millionaires. This is both as a result of economic pressures, and the disastrous EU Common Fisheries Policy. Meanwhile, destructive fishing practices and overfishing has forced various species to the brink of extinction in the North Sea, and forced some

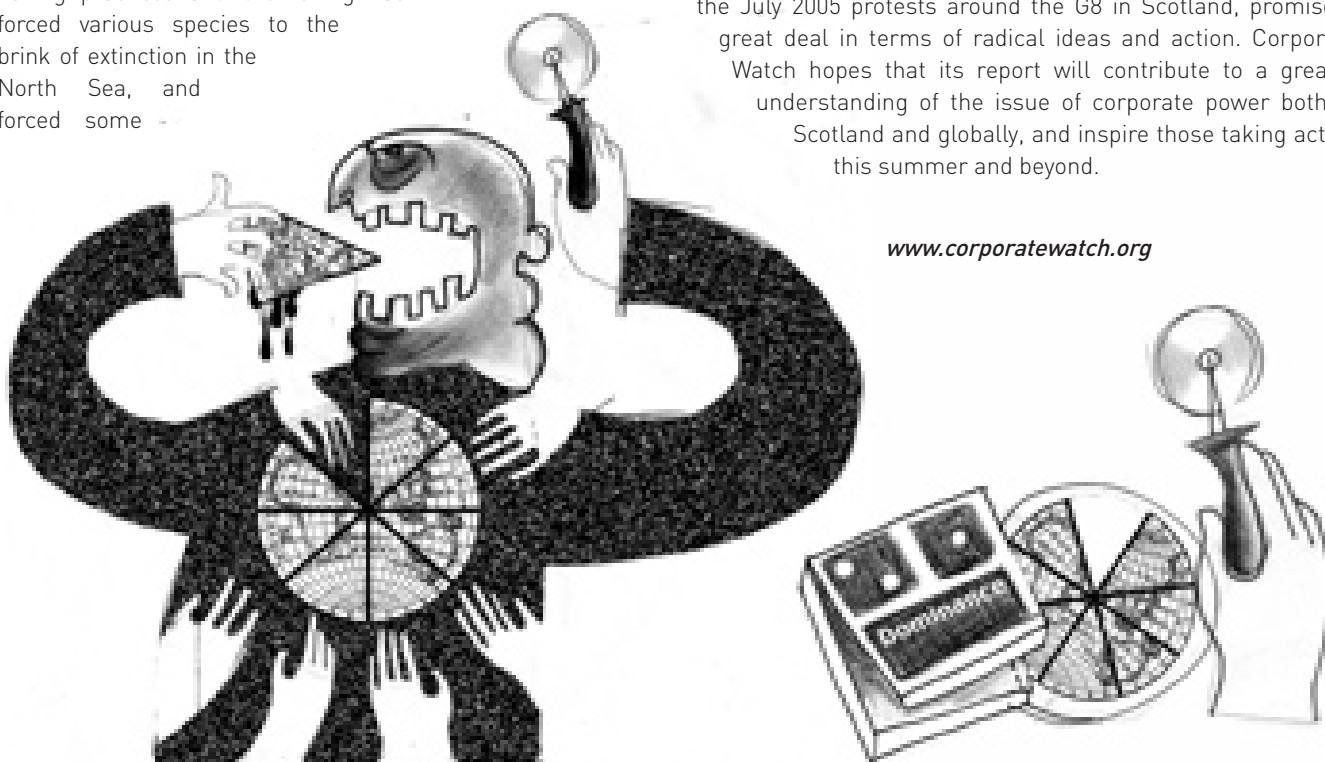
Scottish fishermen to the West African coast, in search of fertile fishing grounds.

Labour rights in Scotland, as elsewhere, are being eroded as a consequence of corporate-led globalisation. This is very evident in the oil industry where the erosion of union power by the oil corporations has led to a lowering in health and safety standards. Privatisation is also bringing in aggressively anti-union multinationals, such as Sodexo, which in recent years tried underhand tactics in attempts to break a strike at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Casualisation is becoming a feature of the Scottish labour force, epitomised by Scotland becoming known as a 'nation of call-centres', with many international companies having call and contact centres in Scotland. Many of these are now off-shoring to India in search of cheaper labour.

The last word must go to Diageo, the company to watch during the G8. Corporate Watch believes that this company will not only benefit materially from the Summit taking place in Gleneagles hotel, which is owned by the company, but also from the agenda being set by the G8 at this Summit on economic and structural support for Africa. Diageo is the 11th largest corporation in the UK owning many well-known branded drinks such as Guinness, Smirnoff, Red Stripe, Johnny Walker and Gordon's gin. Scotland is a major production base for the company, which has a presence in almost every country worldwide. Diageo is already one of the most powerful corporations in Africa, and can only benefit from proposals to open up Africa further to trade liberalisation and 'foreign direct investment'. Diageo has increased its market access across the continent through aggressive marketing and by spuriously attacking traditionally-brewed beer as posing severe health hazards. Attacking homebrew directly means attacking a small scale industry – mostly carried out by women – that brings much needed income into the household. Diageo's breweries in Uganda and Tanzania have been responsible for large scale pollution.

As with many other regions where corporate-led globalisation has prompted resistance, Scotland too has a hugely exciting history of resistance to corporate and centralised power. With its vibrant environmental, peace and radical labour movements, the July 2005 protests around the G8 in Scotland, promise a great deal in terms of radical ideas and action. Corporate Watch hopes that its report will contribute to a greater understanding of the issue of corporate power both in Scotland and globally, and inspire those taking action this summer and beyond. ■

www.corporatewatch.org



you are a terrorist

Robin McAlpine examines how G8 protesters have been portrayed in the media and argues that this is the next step in ending all dissent

It was early in October last year that I got my first phone call, not long after it was announced that the G8 Summit in 2005 was to be held in Scotland. The call was from a journalist from one of Scotland's leading broadsheet newspapers, and someone whom I regard as a good and responsible journalist. The conversation went something like this:

Journalist: Could you put me in touch with any of the people who will be organising protests at the G8 Summit next year?

Me: Yeah, sure. (Provided names in some of the campaigning organisations and NGOs involved in G8 Alternatives and the Make Poverty History demo)

Journalist: Eh... (followed by embarrassed silence)

Me: Oh, you don't want to hear about protest, do you? You're asking me if I can put you in touch with any rioters.

Journalist: I know, I know, but the news editor...

In the end, the article had nothing more than a couple of spurious suggestions that anonymous 'anarchists' from somewhere vague in continental Europe were planning to come to Scotland and that they would want to disrupt the G8 through some unspecified means. The NGOs got some comments at the end, in which they said they hoped there would be no trouble; clearly selected from what were probably lengthy discussions about all the non-violent protests they were planning and which were chosen to give the impression that even the 'good protesters' expected lots of 'bad protesters' to mar the event with mindless violence. After all, we all saw what happened in Genoa.

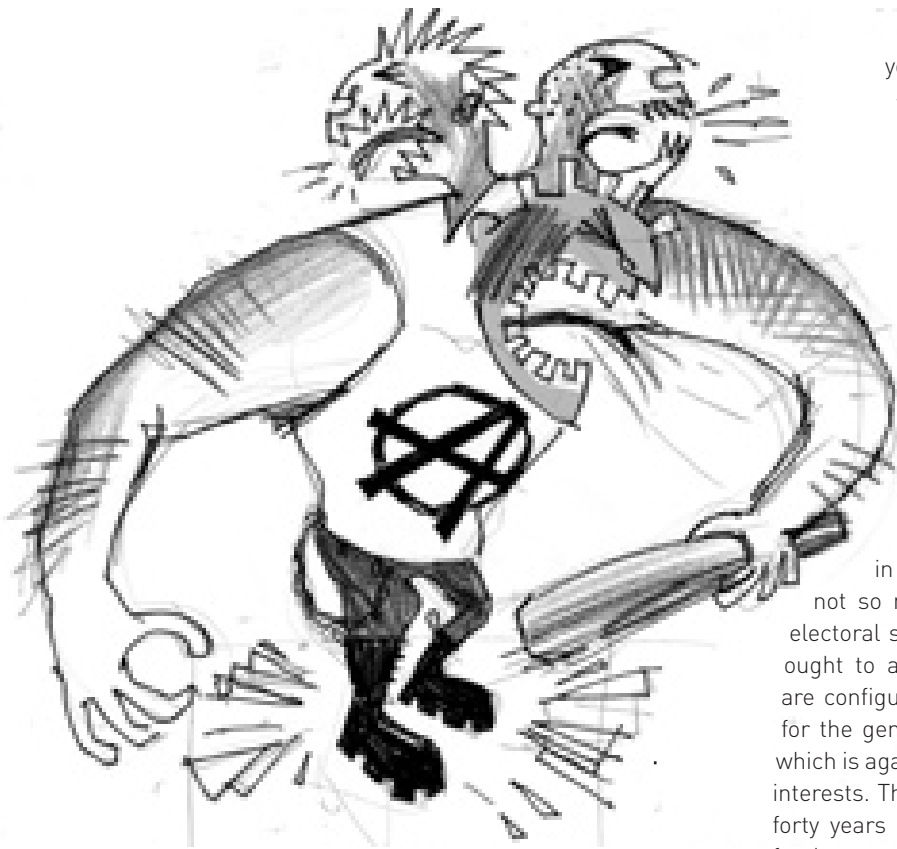
Or did we? To understand what has happened in the Scottish press over the last six months we need to understand the role and importance of Genoa. The public understanding of dissent from neoliberalism is controlled through the carefully managed image of Genoa. Despite the fact that Genoa was five years ago, it is still the prime evidence against dissent. This regardless of the fact that, unreported here, it is becoming clear that Genoa was a set-up (in early April, 28 Italian police officers – including Italy's current anti-terrorism chief and a head of the EU taskforce on Islamist terror – went on trial for grievous bodily harm, slander and false arrest in a vicious operation in which peaceful protesters were brutally assaulted in their sleep in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to provoke a riot for propaganda purposes). As is so common these days, the media and the politicians want us scared; in this case scared of any form of dissent.

The October exchange above is freelance fear-mongering – if there had been a story no-one would have phoned me and journalists would be hunting in packs. In late 2004 there was quite a bit of freelancing, but the coordination doesn't start until

28 January this year. On that day almost every newspaper in Scotland ran a story warning us to be concerned about protesters coming to the G8. The Herald plays it pretty straight – "Police believe as many as 200,000 people will take part in a march in Edinburgh in the run-up to the G8 summit at Gleneagles Hotel in July, and are concerned that violent protesters may seek to infiltrate the event". The others were inflammatory to varying degrees. This is not a newspaper freelancing; this is the State starting to dictate the manner in which the public is expected to understand the protests. What the 28 January story also does is announce open season on protesters. From that point onwards there is a steady stream of stories about the G8 and in a large majority of them you will find at least some inference which would lead you to believe that violence is coming. Let's take a random sample from March:

- "G8 Protesters could be put under house arrest" says the Sunday Mail after Tony Blair went out of his way to refuse to rule out the possibility that laws for locking up terrorists without trial might be used to prevent the presumably comparable risk of unruly protesters embarrassing him in front of his friends (6 March)
- "What the well-dressed anarchist will be wearing this summer" is the headline to an almost surreal Sunday Mail article showing us over a two-page spread how protesters are going to wreak havoc wearing a "£75 DIY 'uniform'" (13 March).
- "Police target persistent criminals in run-up to G8" reports the Herald, all to free up the police to deal with the expected riots. It is unclear why Tayside Chief Constable John Vine felt compelled to tell us this. (15 March)
- "Call to crack down on G8 demo camps" – in which the Scotland on Sunday stops just short of calling them terror camps but in which the non-violent 'Festival of Dissent' comes across like something from the mountains of Afghanistan. Populist Tory MSP Phil Gallie wants any talk of breaking of laws to be cracked down on to protect democracy; the polar opposite stance to the one he took over fox hunting protests. (20 March)
- "New batons for G8 police" in which the Metro tells us what the police are buying in to keep a lid on uppity demonstrators. Photo shows three police officers wielding them and scowling. (21 March)
- "Rubber bullets an option for G8 police" – the Metro follows up the next day with more details of the arsenal required to maintain a peaceful Scotland. (22 March)

There are dozens of similar articles with barely two or three demonstrating any form of sympathy ("It's Gr8 for tourism" claims the Daily Mirror on February 15 while pointing out that protesters often have jobs and spend money). In fact the Mirror reports the one explicit threat of violence, but unfortunately for the right wing press it is a death threat against Scottish



Socialist MSP Rosie Kane warning her she would be killed if she joined the G8 protest.

We have become so used to distorted reporting by the corporate media in Britain that we barely blink at these things any more, but it is worth taking a little time to consider what is being done. Firstly, the language being used is chosen carefully. Obviously it is being used to portray protesters in a certain way – the language is violent and is peppered with violent phrases. But they are not random phrases. The language is not the language you'd use to describe violence at a football match, it is the language you'd use to describe a war. This is not 'fighting' it is 'siege', 'plan of attack', 'destroy', 'orchestrate', 'strategy', 'target'. Protesters are not misguided people, they are calculating, almost evil people. If we consider it in terms of what the political parties now call

political 'narrative' (a coherent story strung together to describe the world in ways that favour the interests of one side) it is not self-contained or independent. The language used

clearly aligns the protesters with 'the terrorists' and the reader is clearly encouraged to see both as part of one issue, and indeed one problem. The messages are repeated over and over again, each story finding some sort of hook on which to hang the same set of assertions. The cumulative effect is that we absorb the narrative but are unaware of the extent to which we have done so. If you want to test this theory, pick someone who isn't politically active and ask them to describe for you how protesters are preparing to disrupt the G8 Summit. They will probably be able to tell you a lengthy tale full of spurious detail which will sound like something from a James Bond movie. And yet almost none of what they say will be true, and if you were to press them to cite any sort of reference for the detail of what they are claiming they would be largely unable. And

you would quickly become aware of the omissions – you would hear almost nothing in this tale about what is really being organised, because that is not part of the pro-G8 narrative. Again, we are so used to being fed biased news that we barely notice it any more, and yet what we are seeing is the manufacture of an imaginary world which people believe is true. If the public were being similarly controlled through hypnosis or medication there would be an outcry.

And just as we think we know how this is being done, so we think we know why this is being done. Yet like the how, the why is something we think we know but we don't really think about. So spell it out. In Britain, democracy (a system in which people choose how they are governed) is not so much a sham (not real) as a scam (a trick). The electoral system, the political parties and the systems which ought to act as check-and-balance (particularly the media) are configured in such a manner that it is almost impossible for the general public to change national policy in a manner which is against the interests of large, international commercial interests. There has probably only been one election in the last forty years in which the public had a realistic opportunity to fundamentally change the economic or foreign policies of UK PLC, and there is a good chance that had Labour been elected in the 1980s in government they would have been persuaded not to change them after all. Britain has mass education, mass democracy and endemic inequality. The great majority of British people have an interest in changing direction, the education to understand this and (in theory) the power to do it. And that is why the scam is needed – we need to be tricked into thinking what we have is what we chose. The democratic process has already been stitched up and the ability of the public to understand what is happening is well under control; there has been a thirty-year project to make sure of this. So, because a human desire for justice cannot be completely destroyed, dissent from control emerges. The behemoth of global commercial interest (which includes or has co-opted the media and the big political parties)

has locked down every exit from its global what-we-want-we-get economy, so protesters, activists and NGOs are trying desperately to show people that there are indeed ways out. Which

OXFAM wants to promote a little fairness at the expense of a little profit? Then the public must be intentionally confused over the difference between OXFAM and Al Qaeda

is why, with everything else locked down, we're next. OXFAM wants to promote a little fairness at the expense of a little profit? Then it has to be locked down too. If that means that the public must be intentionally confused over the difference between OXFAM and Al Qaeda, then that is what has to be done.

We all think we are a smart, media literate generation. This complacency means we think we know what is happening, even when we don't fully absorb what is happening. But we cannot afford to silently allow all dissent from neoliberal economics to be portrayed as tantamount to terrorism; by Blair, by the media, by some guy in the pub who read it in the Daily Mail. ■

Robin McAlpine is Editor of the Scottish Left Review and Author of No Idea

marching – a waste of time?

No, argues Isobel Lindsay; in an era in which the political parties are increasingly beholden to powerful interest groups, protest gives political debate the sharp edge it needs

Does the street matter as a political space? Do social movements need the demonstration in a period in which so many other forms of communication and pressure are available? Have demonstrations been effective in the past? The G8 protests invite these questions. The left has to keep a critical eye on its strategies and tactics.

Social movements have a choice of strategies for influence. The 'long march through the institutions' has always had the attraction of offering the opportunity of direct access to power. Working within mainstream political parties, lobbying civil servants or corporate power-holders can seem a simple target for guaranteed success. Getting a large political party to adopt your cause used to be the obvious priority for many – get your conference resolution through and your party elected and you have succeeded. Except now we have so many case histories that illustrate the futility of that approach that working within large political parties now seems pointless. The mainstream parties have ruthlessly centralised their decision-making in opposition and even more in government. They respond to power and unless their members are prepared to engage in serious rebellion, they are discounted. Their control over patronage ensures that serious rebellion does not happen. External pressure, not internal, changes state policy. Lobbying corporate institutions is only likely to make some impact if you can bring significant countervailing power to the table, like consumer boycotts, industrial action or strongly-negative public opinion. So the long march through the institutions has lost any appeal – if it ever had any – for radical social movements, certainly as a primary strategy.

The potential for individual-centred strategies has expanded with new technology. Even before this, an organisation like Amnesty used personal letter-writing campaigns to some effect. Internet communication and fundraising showed their potential in the recent US Presidential elections on both sides but it generally has to gain meaning in the context of other action. The importance for radical movements of the public demonstration has not diminished, whether in the form of legal, civil disobedience or direct action. The durability of the demonstration over the past two centuries signifies its importance as a tool for civic action and it has survived because it can serve a variety of different and overlapping functions:

Solidarity. The demonstration, even if quite small, brings together people with some shared belief – it contributes to a greater awareness of solidarity and encourages organisational networking

Power (and Disorder). People standing together with a common objective display potential power. Many others might join them in the future. There are always undertones of potential disorder, of escape from control. Authority has always had a fear of the crowd.

Symbolic Communication. The demonstration is a physical statement of an idea – it is street theatre and gives an opportunity to promote positions that are excluded from conventional political discourse.

Challenge. The public demonstration is an 'in your face' challenge – it may provoke antagonism or support. It seeks to reduce apathy even if it increases polarisation.

But have Demonstrations Worked? It is, of course, demonstrations that turned the G7/8 from an event for political and economic specialists that had no significance for the wider public to a focus for debate on the central issues of global inequality and environmental sustainability. Radical challenge to the international status-quo had never been news until the protesting started. And without those earlier demonstrations, Gleneagles would only be of interest because of the presence of powerful men. Now it will be the presence on the street (and in the hills) that will ensure that these powerful men have to respond (or pretend to respond) to the issues of the poor and the planet.

The subject that has dominated street action in Britain and Western Europe over the past 40 years has been militarism. On this issue, can we show that all that activity has produced results? Looking at militarism in the contemporary world, there may seem to have been limited achievements. Yet if you went back to the start of CND, you would be struck by the extent of ignorance about nuclear warfare. I can recall many hours of street campaigning at the start of the 1960s when you had to explain to a sceptical public that there was such a thing

as radioactivity and that they could not expect to survive a nuclear war as they had after World War II. The anti-nuclear campaigning over the years played an important role in securing the first test-ban treaty and, later, the non-proliferation treaty. The street demonstrations made the arms race a central issue when the political leaders of the major parties would have preferred it to be 'above politics'. The anti-nuclear Direct Action Committee in the late 1950s followed by the Committee of 100 also introduced into Britain the use of direct action and civil disobedience as tools of protest. The anti-Vietnam war protests in the US and throughout the world were an important focus in

I can recall many hours of street campaigning at the start of the 1960s when you had to explain to a sceptical public that there was such a thing as radioactivity and that they could not expect to survive a nuclear war as they had after World War II

rallying opinion against the war. The vast international anti-Iraq war protests did not stop the war but they have established new precedents for international anti-war coordination and we have learned lessons on the need to build on momentum and sustain protest.

Environmental protest, particularly the use of direct action, has projected onto centre stage issues like toxic waste, motorway building, GM crops and nuclear power. You can find examples of modest success as with GM crops. Gay and Lesbian rights, disability rights, animal welfare and hospital closures are also examples of issues that public protest has helped to bring into the mainstream. Although most of the campaigning for a Scottish Parliament took place in the context of the electoral and party system, there were points, especially in December 1992 coinciding with the EU prime ministerial meeting in Edinburgh, when a large demonstration sharply altered the perception that the steam had gone out of the drive for Scottish constitutional reform.

Of course, public protest is not just an option for causes to which the left is sympathetic; its nature is that it is open to anyone. The Countryside Alliance used it on a large scale but ultimately without much success. The fuel price protests did frighten the Government and gained concessions. The Sikh demonstration against a theatrical performance achieved its objective. In the US, direct action anti-abortion demonstrations have had some effect. Even if causes are ones to which we are opposed, there is a strong case for having issues out in the open, not determined by secretive backstairs manipulation. Public action of this kind pushes those with power to choose one side or the other rather than to hide behind discrete deals to which the public does not have access.

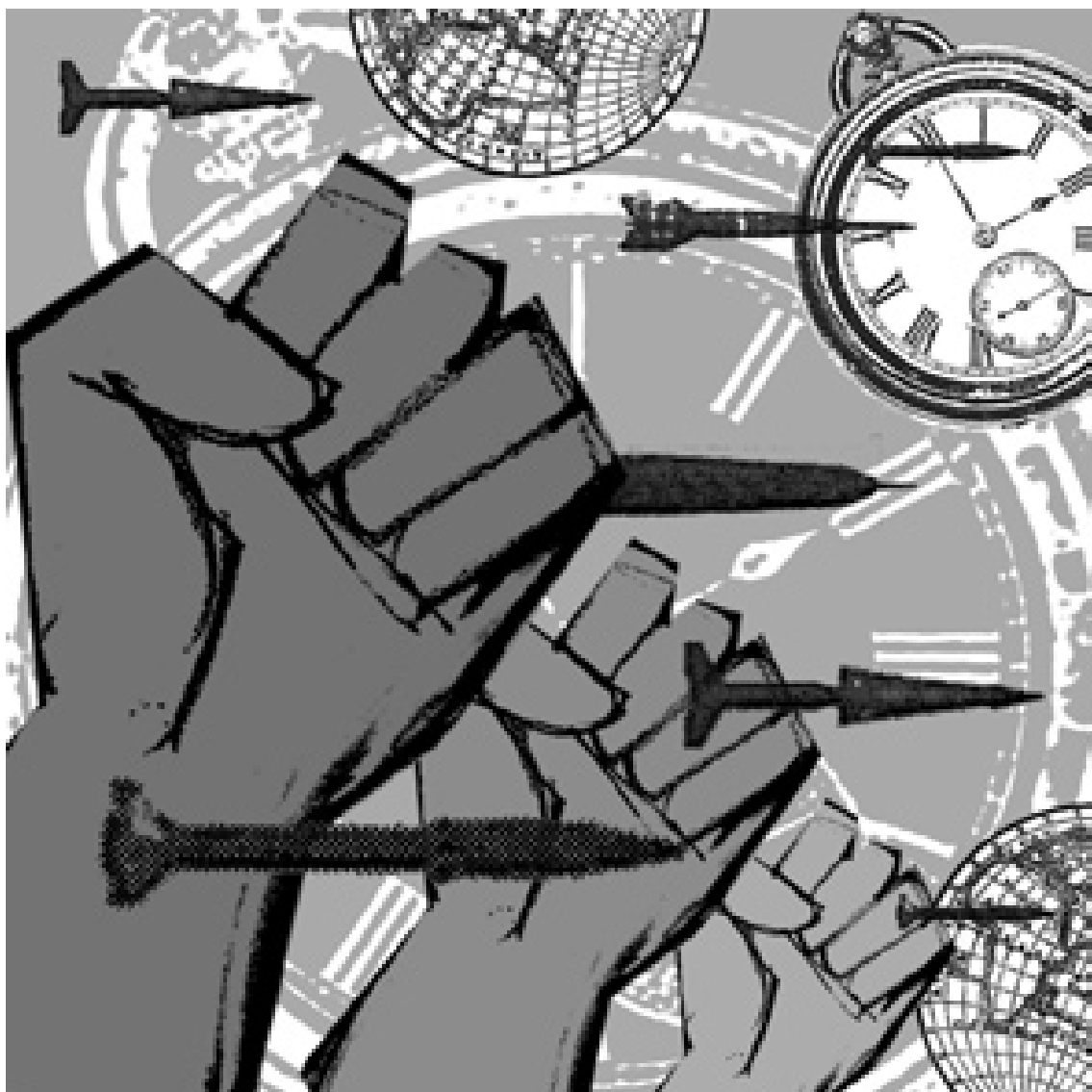
In the international context, one of the ironic twists in the recent history of the mass demonstration is the discovery by US neo-cons of its potency for 'regime change'. Recent events in Eastern Europe and in parts of the former Soviet Union have been presented as the spontaneous rise of the masses against authoritarian regimes. Their origins and leadership are rather murkier. Freedom House, chaired by the former CIA director James Woolsey, the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, are examples of US-funded NGOs with agendas for furthering US interests through regime change driven by mass protest. This is quite a high risk strategy that might spread to movements hostile to US interests, although some of those states that could be vulnerable – Uzbekistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia – might be more ruthless with protesters. The left must not leave the initiative

for change to be dominated by the right.

Of course, street politics have a symbiotic relationship with media. Demonstrations as political communication can only communicate with a small number of the public if their actions are not magnified by media. But media also need action, events; political statements are static and dull, especially for electronic media. Protest, however, is more likely to be perceived as hostile to the dominant values of press and much of broadcasting. In the 1980s there were some very large anti-nuclear demonstrations that were virtually ignored by the press while actions, like some of the anti-capitalist protests, got extensive coverage of violent incidents without any attempt to put the whole protest in context. Campaigners have to live with the power of editorial distortion and hope that the strength and relevance of action will gain some media attention. New media offers opportunities for more direct communication and for fast international transmission of events, but this is still communication for the minority.

Street politics are certainly not in retreat. They have continued to be a popular form of political expression in richer and in poorer societies. As the larger political parties increasingly become the cheerleaders for corporate power, reformers will seek to project alternative ideas in alternative ways. Change is seldom achieved through one dimension and different forms of action, including using electoral systems, have to be part of the process. But we will still look to the demonstration to provide the sharp edge. ■

Isobel Lindsay is Vice President of Scottish CND and has been an active campaigner since 1960



july 2 – cancel everything

Margaret Lynch explains why you don't need a child dying in your arms in a refugee camp to make turning out for the Make Poverty History march a priority

Two papers to cross my desk in the last few days are a report from the World Development Movement on "Where the parties stand on justice for the world's poor" and the results of the YouGov survey for the Make Poverty History Campaign. Read together they indicate just how wide the growing gulf is between the politicians and the people who elect them.

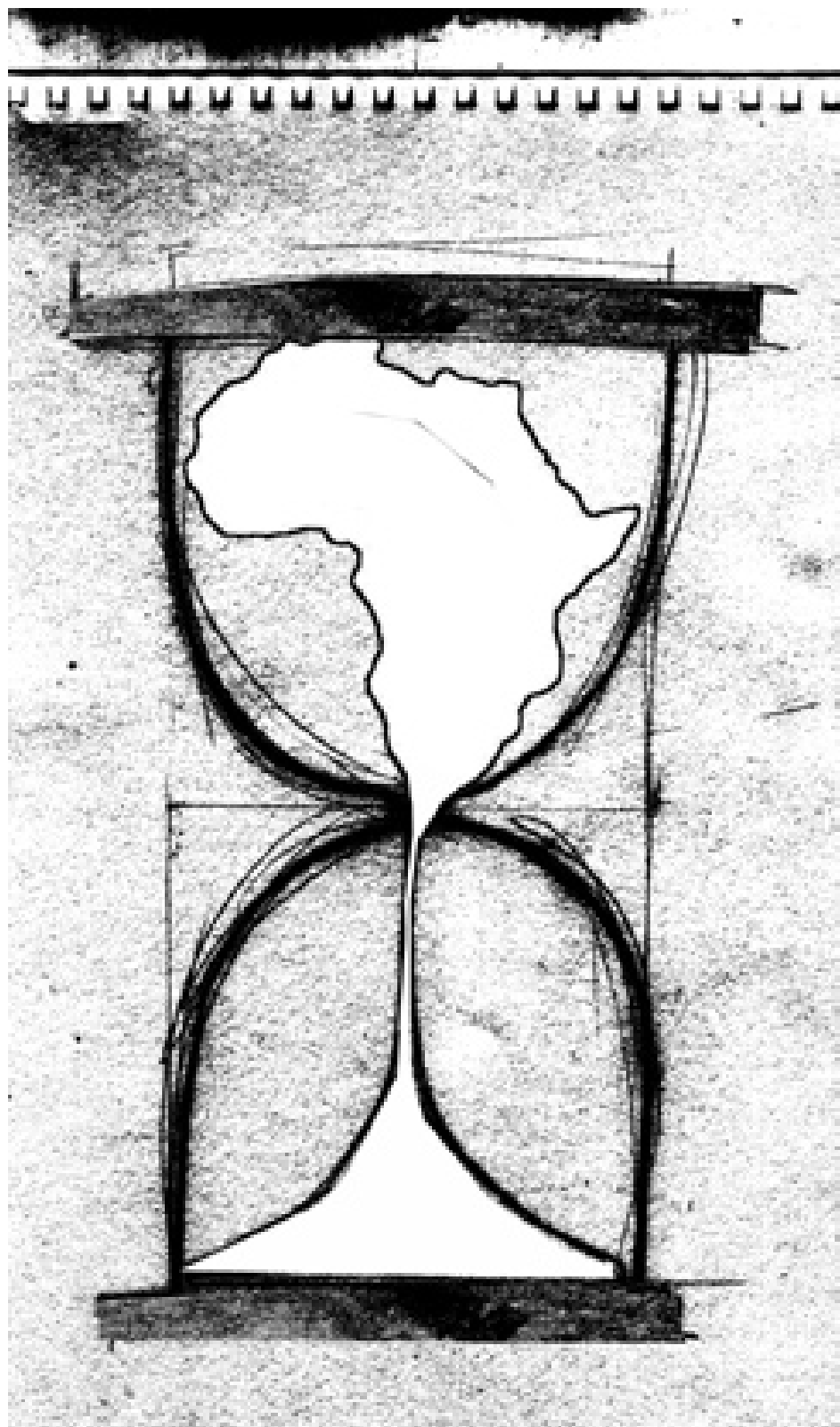
A staggering 70 per cent of voters (almost 30 million people) have taken action on world poverty since the last election in

2001. Seventy eight per cent think that the UK parties are not doing enough to tackle global poverty. Although politicians are desperate to capitalise on the massive public support being given to the Make Poverty History Campaign, few seem prepared to cut the mustard when it comes to making concrete commitments to trade justice, dropping the debt and more and better aid which form the core demands of the MPH campaign.

The report "Where the parties stand on justice for the world's poor" illustrates just how far they are prepared to fudge the issue. Harold Wilson in 1951 when he was involved with War on Want said that a reasonable target for Overseas Aid should be one per cent of national income. This was later taken up by the Brandt report in 1980. Today – more than half a century later – his successors are struggling to commit to 0.7 per cent of national income, and in fact the current Labour manifesto commitment says they have a timetable for achieving it. In 2013 (Haud me back!). The Tories have made a similar commitment, but since they halved overseas aid the last time they were in office nobody really believes them. The Lib Dems say that if they win (which we all know they won't) they will reach 0.7 per cent by 2011. Such idealism begs the question; when they know they can't possibly win the election anyway why not err on the side of generosity and take the populist approach? The SNP which has less chance of winning this election than Alex Salmond has of being elected Pope has committed to the 0.7 per cent target and the Greens have gone for Harold's one per cent.

What does this tell us? We are in strange times – political parties used to forge public opinion, now they trail in her wake. The public are more radical than any of the political parties when it comes to commitment to Trade Justice, Debt Relief or More and Better Aid. It probably has something to do with the tiny minority of target swing voters' views being more important to the parties in an election year than the views of 30 million ordinary voters. So what can we do to change that? Ultimately politicians respond to pressure, and that is why the demonstration of support for the Make Poverty History Campaign on Saturday 2 July is our biggest chance this year of showing them that we expect some convincing action when it comes to Trade Justice, Dropping the Debt and More and Better Aid.

I remember when I was seven months pregnant (and feeling like it was a hell of an effort) hobbling off to Birmingham for the Drop the Debt campaign when the G8 last met in the UK – and wondering whether any of the marching made any difference.



That was 1998; in 2001 Tanzania was granted significant debt relief. Now the primary school population has increased by 66 per cent. Tanzanians built 45,000 classrooms and 1,925 new primary schools, they have recruited 37,261 new teachers and retrained 14,852. At this rate they believe that the goal of universal primary education can be achieved in Tanzania in 2006 – nine years ahead of the 2015 target.

So children in Africa are now getting free school education because we all got behind the Jubilee 20000 campaign. It's a pain in the arse – we'd all much prefer it if the politicians would wake up and smell the coffee and would just go and bloody do it because it's the right thing to do. But there you go, they need a shove in the right direction so we have to get together, get behind the politicians and push as hard as we can. Why? Because a child dies every three seconds from hunger and preventable disease. What would you do if it was your child? What wouldn't you do?

One of the hardest things I have ever experienced in my life was in a refugee camp. A neighbour came to my tent and asked if they could bring a sick child to me – they thought that because I was white I was a doctor or a nurse, and that I could work a miracle on their baby. I tried to explain that I had no skills in that direction, but such was their desperation that they brought the child anyway. I have relived that moment many times – a wizened, dry leaf of a child dangling in my arms, life slowly leaving him. And there was nothing, absolutely nothing I could do. Nothing robs you of the light so much as the death of a child. Over the next few days I saw the extent of the grief of the family, neighbours and friends, and then quiet resignation as they got on with their lives. The child was one of many who died in the camp simply because they lacked access to clean water. The well had been polluted by sewage and outbreaks of typhoid and cholera were common events.

I have hundreds of other images which I carry around with me, not as dramatic or painful as the death of a child but affecting never the less. The boy I saw in the marketplace in Cyangugu who had cancer of the tongue; my friend Rosa the 'Queen of the Catadores' in Sao Paulo who is famous amongst the people who live on the streets because after 15 years of hard work and buying her house literally one brick at a time and storing them in the local parish Church, she finally found a home for herself and her family and then started adopting children from the street; or Claude whose brother killed his mother as an act of mercy during the genocide in Rwanda. All the time I think how lucky am I, how lucky to be born in Scotland, to have peace, security and stability in my life, to turn on the tap and drink clean, clear water, and to have no real worries in life.

We are all here because of an accident of birth and I think that creates a stronger obligation on us to make sure that at worst our Governments 'do no harm' to the poor through unfair trade policies or by profiting from the greed and avarice of the governments of the South, many of whom took large loans from the North to fuel the high living of their corrupt ministers and

hangers on. At best it means that we have a responsibility to share some of what we have through more and better aid.

Some shocking things happen in the Aid business. Did you know the British Government forced Tanzania to privatise their water supply? Aid packages were conditional on selling off the water system. (Remember when the Tories tried that in Scotland?) It always amazes me that things that politicians and civil servants would never, in a million years, get away with at home they happily foist onto poor countries. The British taxpayer footed the bill for the pro-privatisation advertising campaign at a cost of £430,000. As a result, poor residents like Maura Hassan don't get piped water any more because she hasn't been able to afford to pay the \$400 bill. She now has to buy from a private supplier and she has no guarantee that the water is safe to drink. Brilliant.

Donor governments, and institutions, including the UK are dictating policy priorities in poor countries thus robbing them of their sovereignty. Policies imposed by donors have often hurt rather than helped people living in poverty

Honduras put together a really impressive 'Education for All' strategic plan but only managed to get half of the money to pay for it. Why? Because the IMF has withdrawn its seal of approval and suspended Honduras from the lending programme. Why? Because the Honduran Government refused to comply with conditions attached to teachers' salaries. By refusing to slash public sector wages and risk losing the very teachers it needed to deliver education for all, Honduras fell foul of the IMF.

Yet there is clear evidence that trade justice works. The Government of Mozambique has set a minimum price for imported sugar, allowing domestic production to compete fairly. This has ensured employment for 25,000 people in factories and plantations and allowed

workers to educate and feed their families. The United Nations has estimated that unfair trade rules rob poor countries of \$700 billion every year. With just 0.01 per cent of this returned to them, blindness could be prevented for 30 million people.

Donor governments, and institutions, including the UK are dictating policy priorities in poor countries thus robbing them of their sovereignty. Policies imposed by donors have often hurt rather than helped people living in poverty. Make Poverty History is saying loud and clear that this is no longer good enough. The Make Poverty History campaign has brought together the biggest coalition of organisations, social movements and churches we have seen to date; what they now need to show is that they can move people to action. So whatever you have planned for July 2, cancel it and make sure that you march with as many people as you can persuade to come along. We need a massive show of public support for the Make Poverty History Campaign. We need to shift the politicians up a gear or two, away from saying that they support Trade Justice, Dropping the Debt and More and Better Aid – to actually doing something to prove it. ■

Margaret Lynch is the Head of Overseas Programmes for SCIAF, formerly the Director of War on Want and has been involved in campaigns for justice and peace for longer than she cares to remember.

occasional democracy

Noahm Chomsky gave the Gifford Lecture at the University of Edinburgh in February. One of the main themes he covered was situation in the Middle East

So-called 'democracy promotion' has become the leading theme of declared U.S. policy in the Middle East. The project has a background. There is a "strong line of continuity" in the post-Cold War period, writes Thomas Carothers, director of the Carnegie Endowment Program on Law and Democracy, in his new book **Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion**. "Where democracy appears to fit in well with U.S. security and economic interests, the United States promotes democracy," Carothers concludes. "Where democracy clashes with other significant interests, it is downplayed or even ignored."

Carothers served the Reagan State Department on 'democracy enhancement' projects in Latin America during the 1980s and wrote a history of them, drawing essentially the same conclusions. Similar actions and pretensions hold for earlier periods as well, and are characteristic of other dominant powers. The strong line of continuity, and the power interests that sustain it, affect recent events in the Middle East, pointing up the real substance of the posture of 'promoting democracy'.

The continuity is illustrated by the nomination of John Negroponte as the first director of national intelligence. The arc of Negroponte's career ranges from Honduras, where as Reagan's ambassador he oversaw the Contra terrorist forces' war against Nicaragua, to Iraq, where as Bush's ambassador he briefly presided over another exercise in alleged democracy

development – experience that can inform his new duties to help combat terror and promote liberty. Orwell would not have known whether to laugh or to weep.

In Iraq, the January elections were successful and praiseworthy. However, the main success is being reported only marginally: the United States was compelled to allow them to take place. That is a real triumph, not of the bomb-throwers, but of non-violent resistance by the people, secular as well as Islamist, for whom Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani is a symbol. Despite US-UK foot-dragging, Sistani demanded speedy elections, reflecting popular determination to achieve freedom and independence, and some form of democratic rights.

The non-violent resistance continued until the United States (and the United Kingdom, trailing obediently behind) had no recourse but to allow the elections. The doctrinal machinery then went into high gear to present the elections as a US initiative. In line with the great-power continuity and its roots, we can anticipate that Washington will not readily tolerate political outcomes that it opposes, particularly in such a crucial region of the world.

Iraqis voted with the hope of ending the occupation. In January, a pre-election poll in Iraq, reported by Brookings Institution analysts on The New York Times op-ed page, found that 69 per cent of Shiites, and 82 per cent of Sunnis, favoured "near-term US withdrawal". But Blair, Rice and others have been explicit in rejecting any timetable for withdrawal – that is, putting it off into the indefinite future – until

the occupying armies complete their 'mission', namely, to bring democracy by forcing the elected government to conform to US demands. Hastening a US-UK withdrawal depends not only on Iraqis but also on the willingness of the American and British electorates to compel their governments to accept Iraqi sovereignty.

As events unfold in Iraq, the United States continues to maintain a militant posture toward Iran. The recent leaks about US special forces on the ground in



Iran, whether true or false, inflame the situation. A genuine threat is that in recent years the United States has dispatched more than 100 advanced jet bombers to Israel, with loud announcements that they are capable of bombing Iran - updated versions of the planes that Israel used to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981.

It's a matter of conjecture, but the sabre-rattling may serve two purposes: to provoke the Iranian leadership to become more repressive, thus encouraging popular resistance; and to intimidate US rivals in Europe and Asia from pursuing diplomatic and economic initiatives toward Iran. The hard line has already scared off some European investments in Iran, for fear of US retaliation, reports Matthew Karnitschnig in The Wall Street Journal.

Another development being hailed as a triumph of democracy promotion is the Sharon-Abbas cease-fire. The news of the agreement is welcome: better not killing than killing. Take a close look at the cease-fire terms, however. The only substantive element is that Palestinian resistance, even against the occupying army, must cease. Nothing could delight US-Israeli hawks more than complete peace, which would enable them to pursue, unhindered, the policies of takeover of the valuable land and resources of the West Bank, and huge infrastructure projects to break up the remaining Palestinian territories into unviable cantons.

For Washington a consistent element is that democracy and the rule of law are acceptable if and only if they serve official strategic and economic objectives

US-backed Israeli depredations in the occupied territories have been the core issue of the conflict for years, but the cease-fire agreement contains not a word about them. The Abbas government accepted the agreement - perhaps, one might argue, because it's the best they can do as long as Israel and the United States reject a political settlement. It might be added that the US intransigence can continue only as long as the American population allows.

I'd like to be optimistic about the agreement, and leap at any straw in the wind, but so far I see nothing real. For Washington a consistent element is that democracy and the rule of law are acceptable if and only if they serve official strategic and economic objectives. But American public attitudes on Iraq and Israel-Palestine run counter to government policy, according to polls.

Therefore the question presents itself whether a genuine democracy promotion might best begin within the United States. ■

Noam Chomsky is a professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the author, most recently, of "Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance". Written for The New York Times Syndicate.



Campaigning for the return of rail to the public sector

Campaigning to keep Caledonian MacBrayne's lifeline ferry services in public hands

Let's put the public back in public transport

Bob Crow, General Secretary

Tony Donaghey, President

reviews

Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire, Anne Norton, Yale UP, 2004, £16.00

Tony Blair is frequently seen as an Eden who has not paid the price of his wilful folly. Richard Gott has recently suggested that his true precursor is, in fact, Chamberlain. Chamberlain, Gott notes, was surrounded by advisors as historically ignorant as himself, had a large majority and a cabinet of complicit nonentities. This led him to misunderstand the genocidal reach of German Fascism. Gott believes that Blair, in a different context, has, at best, misunderstood the totalitarian fantasies, values and practises emanating from contemporary Washington. Nor, with the chilling return of martial Reid, should we anticipate that Blair has understood the horrific error of his pro-Bush ways. New super carriers with a new nuclear missile submarine fleet will be built, not least by Cheney's firm, Haliburton, as we remain the loyal, if very junior, partner in an imperial American project. Will the imperial virus ever quit the British bloodstream?

Those inclined to dismiss Gott's analogy between Hitler's Berlin and Bush's Washington as hysterical extremism might well read the American political philosopher Anne Norton's dispassionate, lucid account of the extensive penetration of American policy by a self-defined generation of Straussian 'scholars' obsessively eager not only to promulgate but personally enact their blueprint, the 1992 **Project for a New American Century**. These men promote a sort of intellectual substance to fill Bush's otherwise mental void. Not the least of the Swiftian ironies involved in this is that their alleged master, Leo Strauss, was a German Jew, a pupil of Heidegger, who having witnessed the terrible results of his existential master's complicity with the Nazis, had fled to America in the Thirties to seek succour and safety at the University of Chicago. Here, he evolved a political philosophy which stressed that truth belonged to a tiny besieged elite. This elite was to be weaned on the illuminating Torah-like reading of certain classical but non-Biblical texts. Strauss hated and feared the modern secular, centralised state; for him FDR's New Deal was another of the twentieth century's dangerous utopian fantasies. Indeed Strauss appears to have hated and feared modernism with a bin Laden-like intensity, despite the fact that his favourite film was **Zulu**.

He himself may well have been absolutely right that an essential part of the university is as an elitist repository of canonical high culture. Humean scepticism, the virtue of a genuine, caring conservatism, may also be a necessary antidote to the absolutist, utopian claims of radicalism. However, the point is that these conservative virtues are present only by their complete inversion in the incessant activities of his many disciples, most notoriously Perle and Wolfowitz who have so assiduously and profitably secreted themselves in the Neo-Con American academic and political establishment. Not withdrawn in ivory towers, these Maehiavels are manically active in promoting a narcissistic, triumphalist vision of the worst elements of

capitalist America as the ultimate stage of human development to which all men, if necessarily at gun point, are to be brought. The savageries on an increasingly atavistic American nationalism are promulgated as democratic universal order.

This causes increasing havoc in both American academic arts and sciences as ideological appointments are made to fit the prescriptive desires and fantasies of government policy and corporate wealth. Their careerist cupidity seems insatiable. Thus given Wolfowitz's earlier advocacy of tactical nuclear weapons as an instrument of American foreign policy, we are arraigned with projections of military technology beyond Swift's wildest nightmares. Much of this military world also reeks of a camp homoeroticism more characteristic perhaps of the Kaiser's rather than Hitler's Berlin. What this neo-conservative group has pandered to and provoked is the deep paranoia of the American increasingly religious right who believe they are innocent victims of an omnipotent liberal conspiracy. Given the high incidence of non-Chomsky like Jews in the new master race, Norton points to the terrible irony that these were the very men, themselves the victims of WASP repression in American Ivy League culture, who have in their new-found dominance subjected the Arabs to the exact racial stereotyping of which they themselves were subject.

In a brilliant little book written just before the Iraq invasion, *Why Are We At War?*, Norman Mailer delineated the corrupting appeal of imperial discipline to increasingly disordered America. Norton sees a very similar lethal temptation present in the Straussian rough-riding American saddle. If we are intent on internally returning economically to the cannibal capitalism of the late nineteenth century, we must also recreate its necessary external partner, rapacious imperialism. It is, therefore, Theodore Roosevelt who rides tall in today's Washington ■

Andrew Noble





ASLEF calls for the Government to introduce a charter of workers' rights that would include, the right to full employment, rights from day one of employment, the repeal of oppressive anti trade union legislation and positive laws encouraging trade unions to represent their members individually and collectively.

ASLEF, 9 Arkwright Road, Hampstead, LONDON NW3 6AB.

Arguments against G8 edited by Gill Hubbard and David Miller, Pluto £11.99, ISBN 0 7453 2420 7

Since the autumn of 2004 an intense debate has been developing around the Gleneagles G8. Part of the background to the debate is formed by the Jubilee 2000 campaign which, although it failed in its main objectives, succeeded in making a massive impact on popular consciousness. Six years on, the Make Poverty History Coalition is using the resources of the big NGOs to mobilise anger and concern in an imaginative and dynamic campaign leading to July 2005 when the G8 leaders come to Scotland. Arguably, already MPH has reached further into British society than any similar campaign before it. Debt, poverty and world trade have been the subject of discussion in schools, colleges, churches and community groups. The leadership of the coalition aims to pressurise the G8 to 'take substantial and immediate action to bring an end to global poverty'.

Much has changed since the late 1990s. In retrospect the mobilisations around Jubilee 2000 look like part of the worldwide movement that includes Seattle, Genoa and the huge mobilisations around the world against war in Iraq. The huge marches in the UK included a very wide spectrum of society including some of the faith groups and supporters of NGOs who were central to the Jubilee protests. **Arguments Against G8** is an intervention in a debate about what is to be done to end poverty and debt. Can the G8 be reformed or is it part of the problem?

The great strength of the book is the range of perspectives it brings to bear on the issues of global poverty. There are contributions from some of the key figures in the world movement, including Susan George, Noam Chomsky and George Monbiot. The range of topics covered is broad with each of the 15 main contributions focusing on specific areas, including trade, debt, climate change, poverty and privatisation. However,

Gill Hubbard and David Miller's introduction provides both a cutting edge and a unifying thread that ties all the contributions together. Together they show how war and imperialism relate to the neo-liberal economic agenda and provide a brief historical overview of the development of corporate globalisation. Their conclusion is a call to action: 'As the polar ice cap melts, Iraq burns and millions live in hunger and poverty, the time for us to raise our voices even louder is upon us.'

But the call is also a challenge to those who believe that the leaders of the G8 can be persuaded to change by strength of argument and appeals to common humanity. Chapters by Chomsky on globalisation and war, Lindsay German on the movement against war and Salma Yaqoob on the 'war on terror', racism, asylum and immigration expose the true faces of the leaders of the world at the start of the 21st century. Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and the other leaders of the G8 lied and lied to justify war. So how can we believe any commitments they make when they talk about ending poverty? Over Iraq and Palestine the gap between rhetoric and reality puts Orwell's ministry of truth to shame. The impact of the war in forging a new movement that is in the process of shaping and forming its identity cannot be underestimated.

Contributions from Mark Curtis, Emma Miller and others uncover how international aid policy is entirely shaped and fashioned in the interests of the big global corporations. They show how the dominant sections of capital use development policy as a tool for enhancing their power to exploit and profit while talking the language of freedom. This is a book that provides some of the arguments we need to make a new and better world but the unity and diversity of its contributors provides a symbol of hope in how we may get there.

Pete Cannell

web review

Henry McCubbin

Opposing G8 in cyberspace

One thing that we are not short of is variety when the G8 Circus comes to town. Best to start with the Official UK G8 Presidency homepage - information about the Gleneagles G8 Summit, the G8 and its priorities and official documents and statements will all be archived on this site as will links to the other governmental sites of this exclusive club. A club we could classify as a Social Exclusion Partnership. All of this is found at www.g8.gov.uk. If your stomach can stand it you will find a welcome from present Prime Minister telling us "I really want to focus on the challenges of Africa and climate change during our Presidency". God help the Africans. In Chicago on 22 April 1999 Blair declared his doctrine of the international community which boils down to meeting humanitarian crises with militarist solutions. Those of us who saw through this at the time received New Labour's usual hail of vindictive responses. Funny though how every time he rushes to the rescue of the wretched of this earth the sky immediately darkens with B52s.

Lots of other organisations are of course jumping on the G8's coat-tails like the local authority at www.perthshireg8.com where you can find the G8 tartan as launched by that male model who gain notoriety in New York with his pinstriped skirt. You can find out how the authorities intend to cope in case the sight of the First Minister inflames the guests too much at www.tayside.police.uk/g8/index.php and, of course, just to delude us into thinking that Scotland has a place at the top table and the meeting is in fact the 'G8 and a wee bit' you'll find our peerie Executive's role at www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Topics/Government/InternationalRelations/G8/introduction, Sewel motion permitting.

The Dissent! Network was formed to provide a networking tool to co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit. The network was formed in the autumn of 2003 by a group of people who have previously been involved in radical ecological direct action, Peoples' Global Action, the anti-war movement and the global anti-capitalist movement which has emerged around meetings of those that rule over us. The Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general. It hopes to exist long after the world leaders have returned home in the early summer of 2005. Dissent! is open to anybody willing to work within the Hallmarks of Peoples' Global Action (PGA). www.dissent.org.uk/content/view/62/52/

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY brings together a wide cross section of nearly 400 charities, campaigns, trade unions, faith groups and celebrities who are united by a common belief that 2005 offers an unprecedented opportunity for global change. www.makepovertyhistory.org/g8.html

The Independent Media Centre (IMC/Indymedia) UK is an open-publishing platform for news, issues, actions and analysis reporting on grassroots, non-corporate, non-commercial social justice, environmental and political issues. IMC UK is maintained by a network of media activists and groups. IMC stands for Independent media centre, UK stands for United Kollektives. www.indymedia.org.uk/en/static/editorial.html. One organisation which was early in to the action on Globalisation is ATTAC. ATTAC is the Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens. ATTAC was founded in France in 1998, and now has over 80,000 members worldwide. It is an international network of independent national and local groups in 33 countries. It promotes the idea of an international tax on currency speculation (the Tobin Tax) and campaigns to outlaw tax havens, replace pension funds with state pensions, cancel Third World debt, reform or abolish the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and, more generally, recapture the democratic space that has been lost to the financial world. ATTAC took part in the demonstrations at Seattle in 1999 against the WTO, and at Genoa in July 2001 against the G8. It is part of a diverse global movement that promotes democratic self-determination for local and regional economies. The idea to launch ATTAC in Britain came from the Friends of Le Monde diplomatique (www.monde-diplo-friends.org.uk) and the LSE ATTAC Society www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=12_1&cd_language=2

With the headline "All Nations are Prison Camps", www.wombles.org.uk/g8/ have a track record of being a real pain in the butt of those who rule us. "Y'know guys it was a decision I had to make so I thought stuff you and made it." to paraphrase Rt Hon T Blair. The following may be accessed through most of the given sites but do deserve separate mention because of the broader inclusive appeal that they represent.

www.cafod.org.uk/get_involved/campaigning/make_poverty_history

www.christianaid.org.uk/campaign/g8/

www.makepovertyhistory.org/g8.html

www.foescotland.org.uk/nation/g8.html

www.resist.org.uk/reports/archive/g82005/train01.php

www.grscotland.net/G8Scotland/whymobilise.htm

www.statewatch.org/news/2005/feb/05scotlandg8.htm

www.g8alternatives.org.uk/

Kick Up The Tabloids

G8 Violence 'may be as bad as a weekend'

As countries including France prepare for referendums on the European constitution, a conspiracy theory has gathered momentum in the UK that Prince Charles' wedding was actually a Mandelson-inspired plot to increase the likelihood of the UK adopting the Euro. Lets be honest, the theory goes, the only way the British people will ever give up their pound notes is if there is a picture of Camilla Parker Bowles on them. Both the Conservatives and UKIP advocate early withdrawal from the European Union. Coincidentally, George Bush announced that early withdrawal was his preferred method of tackling the population and AIDs crisis in Africa, in a rather unique interpretation of 'pro-life' values. Tony Blair announced a relief package for African nations, the relief being that he is not planning to help George W to invade any of them in the near future. The US president announced that he has no intention of extending his interventionist foreign policy to Africa. Time is surely now running out for the stricken people of Darfur in the Sudan to strike oil in order to change his mind. As Blair and Brown hit the UK election campaign, an interesting conversation was overheard, when one asked of the other 'How can we ensure that the debt burden on poor nations is written off, Prime Minister?' The answer Gordon gave to Tony's question is not known.

The Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe cried foul over Robert Mugabe's re-election as President with 110 percent of the 550 million votes counted. In their despair, opposition politicians were heard to cry out 'Where are we? Birmingham?'. The electoral fraud in England's second city has raised fresh doubts over the effectiveness of postal voting. For a start, voters in many towns and villages are increasingly unlikely to find a post office that is still open. Surely British people can be expected to walk to cast their votes? In fact, given the obesity and health problems in our country, voting in person should be compulsory and polling stations should be situated at the top of Munros. As the British nation waits with baited breath to see what would happen if a politician did not mention 'hard working families' during an interview, Robert Kilroy Silk spots his chance and establishes a party for the forgotten single lazy people of these islands.

Gleneagles in Scotland is to host the G8 which, like the European Football Championships we previously failed to stage, Scotland is unlikely ever to qualify for. Despite Jack McConnell claiming it was his coup, it became clear that George Bush himself had suggested Scotland as the venue, given that the pissing rain and sub-zero temperatures will add gravitas to his position that global warming is a fantasy dreamt up by scientists, who after all came up with all this dinosaur and evolution crap that gets no mention in the Good Lord's book. There were concerns that the summit will bring levels of violence and disorder not seen in Scotland since the weekend. Anti-globalisation protestors

will be arriving to protest about the evil menace of multinational companies and the pollution of the Earth (thousands of protestors are expected from across the planet thanks to the very reasonable cheap flight deals available from international airline companies).

An unprecedented security operation will see 20 police officers supported by local gamekeepers in plus fours wielding shotguns and shouting something about communists disrupting grouse yields. The police have stated categorically that they will take firm action against any activists at Gleneagles who do not repair their pitch marks. Protests have already been raised that it will however be impossible to get within ten miles of the Gleneagles complex unless you have an American accent and are amongst the world's wealthiest elite. Quite how this is different to trying to get into Gleneagles at any other time of the year is not yet apparent. Michael Howard announced that Conservative policy would be a quota system to reduce the G8 delegates to G4, and that the British electorate, though a tolerant people, were sick and tired of foreigners coming into their country to discuss World Bank funding reforms and play a round of golf. Howard also announced that he feared the entire summit would be jeopardised if gypsies were allowed to get retrospective planning permission for a deluxe fortune-telling theme park complex on the eighteenth hole of the Kings Course.

The significant international event that was the death of Pope John Paul II was commemorated in different ways throughout the world: in Italy by several days of mourning, in Poland with all night vigils, in Latin America with public holidays and in Scotland through the traditional organisation of mass jeering and booing at a football match. Finally, as the world community seeks to promote democracy as the only effective means of holding politicians to account for their actions, the British people seem likely to return Blair, on the basis that everyone deserves a second chance and you can't judge a man simply on the basis of illegally invading another country, destroying the credibility of international institutions and lying about the reasons for doing so. No wonder Robert Mugabe hates our PM so much. He can only dream of getting away with what our Tone manages... ■

Kick Up the Tabloids is the Stand Comedy Club's monthly satirical comedy show. Totally live and interactive, it offers an irreverent take on who and what has been making the news in Scotland and beyond. The Kick Up the Tabloids team includes Bruce Devlin, John Flint, Susan Morrison and Paul Sneddon with special guest appearances. The show takes place on the third Wednesday each month at The Stand, Yorkhill Place, Edinburgh (Tel 0131 558 7373 or visit the website at www.thestand.co.uk). The doors open at 7.30pm, with the shows kicking off at 9pm.



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