

f Socialist Future

February/March 2000 Vol.8 No.4 Price 50p

Magazine of the Movement for a Socialist Future

MSF

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NATO bombing was illegal



NATO VIOLATED international humanitarian law in bombing raids in Kosovo and Yugoslavia which killed at least 500 people, a report by a leading human rights body has concluded. Human Rights Watch analysed 90 separate incidents involving civilian deaths during the 78-day NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia last year.

It highlighted cases where NATO forces:

- ♦ conducted air attacks using cluster bombs near populated areas;
- ♦ attacked targets of questionable military legitimacy;
- ♦ did not take adequate precautions in warning civilians of attacks;
- ♦ took insufficient precautions identifying the presence of civilians when attacking convoys and mobile targets
- ♦ caused excessive civilian casualties by not taking sufficient measures to verify that military targets did not have concentrations of civilians.

"We determined the intended target in sixty-two of the ninety

BY OUR OWN REPORTER

incidents. Military installations account for the greatest number, but nine incidents were a result of attacks on non-military targets that Human Rights Watch believes were illegitimate," says the report.

These include the headquarters of Serb Radio and Television in Belgrade, the New Belgrade heating plant, and seven bridges that were neither on major transportation routes nor had other military functions.

"Thirty-three incidents occurred as a result of attacks on targets in densely populated urban areas (including six in Belgrade). Despite the exclusive use of precision-guided weapons in attacks on the capital, Belgrade experienced as many incidents involving civilian deaths as any other city.

"In Nis, the use of cluster bombs was a decisive factor in civilian deaths in at least three incidents. Overall, use of cluster bombs can be confirmed in

seven incidents throughout Yugoslavia (another five are possible but unconfirmed); some ninety to 150 civilians died from the use of these weapons."

Human Rights Watch said that reports of civilian casualties led in May to a secret White House order to halt the further use of cluster bombs - although the British continued to use the deadly anti-personnel weapons.

"One disturbing aspect of the matter of civilian deaths is how starkly the number of incidents and deaths contrasts with official US and Yugoslav statements," says the report. US officials stated that there were only 20 to 30 incidents of "collateral damage" in the entire war, while there were up to four times this number.

"The seemingly cavalier US statements regarding the civilian toll suggest a resistance to acknowledging the actual civilian effects and an indifference to evaluating their causes." Yugoslav authorities have said as many as 5,000 civilians died. ■

To view the full report, visit www.hrw.org

Straw banned from student union

STUDENTS AT LEEDS University have banned Home Secretary Jack Straw from the students' union. Straw has honorary life membership of the union where he was president in 1968.

Simon Rothstein, the union's finance and

administration officer, who proposed the motion, said Straw's policies on asylum seekers and trial by jury were too much to stomach.

He said: "The only people who like him are Margaret Thatcher and our vice-chancellor.

"Even the Bar Council has come out and said Jack Straw has gone too far. He has brought total shame on the union."

Like all ex-sabbatical officers Straw was given life membership. But Rothstein said: "Because of all the things he's done since coming to government, the erosion of civil liberties, the Freedom of Information Bill, the

anti-terrorism legislation, the Asylum and Immigration Bill, the removal of legal aid, we want to ban him from the building.

"He doesn't deserve life membership and we are suggesting he got it under false pretences because he never would have got that now with his attacks on civil liberties." ■

Russian party condemns invasion of Chechnya

The Moscow-based International Workers' Party, one of the 31 organisations that founded the revolutionary Movement for a Workers Party (MWP) last year, has condemned Russia's war against the Chechen people. In a statement, they declare that the war is related to oil interests and is aimed at preserving the power of the capitalist groups in Russia and the global oil companies. "The working class has no need of this war, and its youth above all has no need of being sent into military service," the IWP says, pointing out

that the ruling clique sends its sons abroad to avoid military service. The IWP denounces the complicity of the USA and the other major powers in the aggression being carried out by the Russian government. "The genocide being perpetrated against the peasants of Dagestan and the population of Chechnya is a dress rehearsal for massive repression aimed at the workers throughout the whole of Russia," the statement warns. It denounces the nationalist hysteria and discrimination against people from the Caucasus and calls for

the defeat of Russia and Chechen self-determination. "Only when we are united with our class brothers in Chechnya and the other republics, whatever their nationality or religion, will we be able to settle accounts with our exploiters. "A real solution will only be found in the voluntary union of our peoples and with the setting up of the state power of the armed workers."

Marchers on a London demonstration against the invasion of Chechnya



Beijing cracks down on Internet cafés

CHINA HAS closed 127 Internet cafés in Shanghai in a new effort to curb the spread of online information, which is threatening to mushroom out of control.

A week after a clampdown to halt the spread of "state secrets" on the Internet, the Stalinist authorities raided more than 200

premises, seizing computers and other equipment. The strict licensing of Internet cafés is meant to allow the authorities to work out who has written anonymous e-mails.

The cafés are required by law to log the names of users.

Beijing introduced new rules, making the operators of Internet bulletin boards, chat

rooms and news groups responsible for any security breach.

The regulations cover e-mail and have given the authorities a powerful weapon against the Internet, since China's definition of state secrets encompasses almost any information not actually approved by the Government for publication. ■

Joining the MSF

The Movement for a Socialist Future goes to the heart of the system. We believe the source of injustice lies in the power of the global corporations and that the way forward is for the vast majority to take power into their own hands.

Anyone who supports the MSF's draft policies can join. These are aimed at securing the mass democratic ownership and control of economic, social, cultural and political life.

Organisations like trade unions and campaign groups are also welcome to affiliate and send a delegate to the MSF. Members meet locally and organise the building up of support for the Movement. Each area sends a representative to a national steering committee.

Everyone has equal rights to influence the programme and policies of the MSF and decide what kind of organisation we need to build in order to challenge capitalist power.

There is a monthly subscription based on what members/ organisations can afford, with a minimum of £2.50. This helps pay for a full-time worker, running costs and the production of Socialist Future, which every member is sent.

I would like to join/find out more about the MSF

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Please send to: MSF, PO Box 942, London SW1V 2AR
OR VISIT OUR WEB SITE AND FILL IN THE RESPONSE FORM
www.sfuture.demon.co.uk

NOTHING SYMBOLISES the "all style and no substance" approach of this New Labour government better than the Millennium Dome.

It was hastily constructed on government orders to celebrate the Millennium with no thought of what to put in it. The Dome ended up as a tacky show best remembered for the smell of greasy hamburgers.

Although organisers boast that not a penny of taxpayers' money has gone into the project, lottery funds, which can be justifiably described as a tax on the poor, accounted for £450m of the £758m cost.

That's before the organisers requested an extra £60m to bail them out of a cash flow crisis.

Even the *Sunday Times* points out that every pensioner in Britain could have been given £75 with the lottery money lavished on the Dome or education spending could have received a one-off boost of 2%.

And what about those homeless people still lining our streets? How many could now be in living in Millennium houses if the money had been wisely spent?

But the Dome is more than an expensive folly. It is a warning of the power wielded by corporate sponsors.

Jennie Page, chief executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, may have made a complete cock-up of running the government's star attraction

But she was a career civil servant appointed by the state to oversee the project. When it came to getting rid of her, however, New Labour stood back and let commercial pressures force her out.

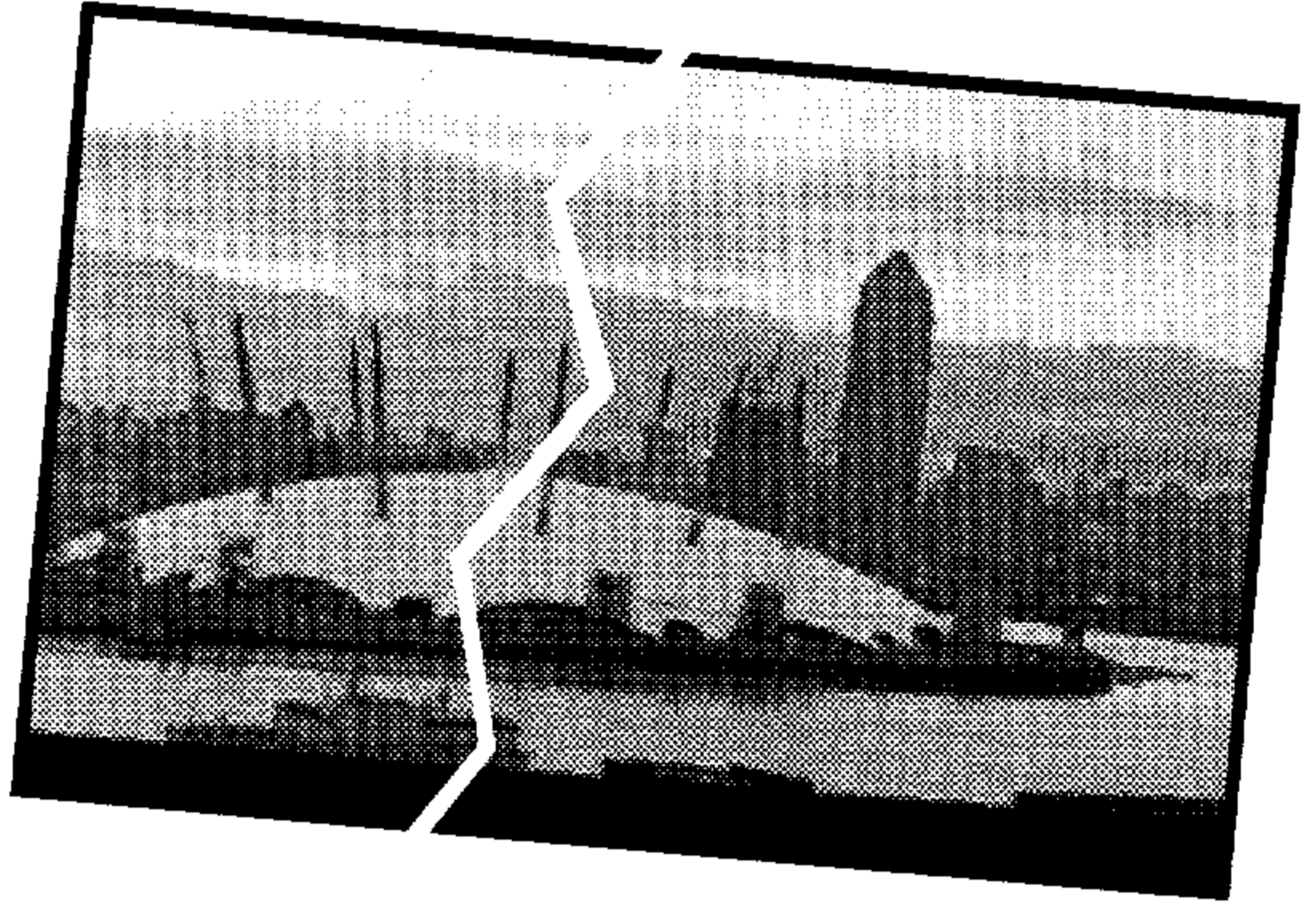
It was the companies who have pledged to invest over £150m worth of sponsorship in the individual zones who staged a revolt against her.

Not only did they tell NMEC they had no confidence in the management, six of the Dome's biggest sponsors - Boots, BSkyB, 3Com, L'Oreal, Roche and Mars - threatened to withhold £30m in sponsorship unless new management was introduced.

Leading the revolt was Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, whose own company has just reported losses of £60m!

They demanded a theme-park operator. Hence the arrival of a top executive from Euro Disney.

No one should blame the



Corporate sponsors call the shots at the Millennium Dome

by Anna Tate

sponsors for wanting the Dome to attract more visitors. They are commercial operators who want a return on their money to satisfy their shareholders.

They did not make altruistic donations. Sponsorship is designed to enhance a company's profile, not to associate it with a sinking ship.

The sponsors' coup was sanctioned by Prime Minister Blair and his crony Lord Falconer, who is absurdly known as the "Dome Minister".

Labour's poll ratings had begun to wobble and let's face it, it's not in any government's interests to be lumbered with a white elephant in the run-up to an election in 2001.

But Page's dismissal sets a dangerous precedent. Public-private partnerships, of which the Dome is by far the biggest, is the mantra of New Labour's "Third Way".

What it clearly highlights is who calls the shots in these so called partnerships - the

partners holding the purse strings.

What if public sector projects like schools and hospitals, partly built or run with corporate sponsorship, don't fulfil the sponsors' marketing objectives? What company wants to be associated with a failing school?

So what will they do, withhold funding until all the "stupid" pupils are turfed out to make way for bright kids?

We should heed the warning signals before it is too late. Unfortunately it is not in the interests of this government to do so. It is committed to the Third Way because this approach allows it to cut public spending and reduce taxes without having to cut services - a sure-fire election winner.

Yet reliance on corporate sponsorship is dangerous because it comes with strings which the companies will pull when it suits them - and no one else - least of all the electorate of this country. ■

THOSE WHO run global capitalism constantly generate images which conceal the real nature of the big corporations and the system they represent.

At the same time, more and more people are aware that enormous power is concentrated into these multinationals. To challenge this power we need to discover what their images actually reveal.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of images churned out 24 hours a day by the media and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between image and reality, and to establish the relation between the two.

But to discover how to change the system we must see these images as a **starting point** for discovering the real essence of the system, not just a clever marketing tool.

All images stand in a relation to what produces them. An image - by definition - is the **image of something**. That thing (or "source") is by its nature not the same as the image. Yet it is connected to it and it is the thing which produces the image.

From the standpoint of logic, the image - because it is a reflection of a certain thing - of necessity contains the properties of that thing. For example, the image of yourself in a mirror will reflect what you actually look like.

This relation between image and the thing imaged persists even in the complex conditions of today's image-dominated global society. To get to the truth we cannot afford to ignore the images presented to us especially in the form of news. We cannot simply dismiss all images as media concoctions and "switch off", much as we may want to. We need to get to the truth **through** the image.

Many images which are presented to us are in direct contradiction to the message they are putting across. The more "real" they are, the more deceptive they can be. Real-life events, such as a birth or a death, or even prisoners on death row, are used by Benetton, to shock people.

Mobile telephone companies use documentary news images of those who have fought against the system, such as Martin Luther King, to lure people into

Images cannot hide reality

by Corinna Lotz

buying their gadgets. The pro-capitalist *Financial Times* newspaper puts out images of the revolutionary anti-capitalist Lenin to promote itself.

The use of such images actually shows the desperate need capitalist companies have to find new ways of selling their products. Nothing is sacred and nothing is taboo. The way in which images are used today is the ultimate commercialisation of anything and everything. A

system which has to "use" images of its opponents to "brand" itself is in deep crisis.

Images can seduce and grip people temporarily, but they cannot solve the real problems of life or in the end hide them.

Despite all the appearance of control by the global corporations, any stability in the world financial markets has gone out the window. NatWest, one of the biggest British banks has just been taken over by a much smaller Scottish bank, with the loss of 21,000 jobs. However many images are presented about banks, it is clear that the old institutions, whether economic or political, have no future.

The more a system and its government feels it must rely on images alone, the more susceptible it is to being undermined.

The frenzy of speculative share dealing in Internet shares, the bubble of house price increases and obscene flaunting of new-found wealth are part of an artificial house of cards which cannot last.

People are driven, in the last analysis, by their self-interest, which under capitalism, depends on what class they are members of.

If it is in their interest to challenge the ownership of the multinationals they will do so. The Seattle demonstrations and other movements by workers and young people globally are proof of this. ■

"When political memories are growing increasingly short, it is good that the effort has been made to record the life of Gerry Healy, a revolutionary Marxist who had a massive impact on the working class socialist movement, in Britain and internationally."

Ken Livingstone, MP

Gerry Healy: A revolutionary life

by Corinna Lotz and Paul Feldman

Introduction by Ken Livingstone.

Published by Lupus Books (1994)

380 pages paperback.

£13.50 including postage.

Send cheques or postal orders made out to: Lupus Books at P.O.Box 942, London SW1V 2AR



Park campaigners call for nationwide cinema boycott

The council and the local community are at war, says barrister Philip Kolvin, who chairs the Crystal Palace Campaign.

Bromley Council took legal action against people who supported the eco-warriors who occupied the site to stop the cinema development.

Over 2,000 security men were used to evict the 50 protesters, at an estimated cost of £3m.

He says private detectives hired by the council have been used against the campaign's officers and workers.

"We were called 'eco-thugs' by the council's chief executive. I am proud of that," he told a campaign rally.

"We did not ask for a war – but war has been declared on us by the London Borough of Bromley. And it's a dirty war."

He accused London and Regional Properties, the developers, of joining the war by refusing to talk to the campaign.

But he warned: "Every war has its resistance movement." The campaign was "an antidote against greedy, commercial exploitation" and against "corporate madness in our green space". He described as a "crying outrage" that John Prescott, the environment

secretary, had not ordered a public inquiry.

Katrina Ogilvy-Webb has led a weekly picket outside the Empire, Leicester Square, with her Boycott UCI Group.

She said: "We've got to hit them where it hurts – in the pocket." ■

February 26 is boycott day

Campaigners are appealing for support for a national picket of UCI cinemas on Saturday, February 26, from 3-6pm.

UCI have 34 cinemas in Britain and Ireland, and the campaign wants a picket outside each one. Telephone 0171 274 7566 for more information, or visit the campaign's websites at www.boycott-uci.freemove.co.uk and www.crystal.dircon.co.uk for a list of cinemas.

A national boycott of all UCI cinemas throughout Britain is planned for February 26 in the latest shots by campaigners to stop the building of a multiplex and car park in the historic Crystal Palace park in South London.

The Campaign to Save Crystal Palace park in south London has taken on a Lib-Lab local council, property developers and a Hollywood multi-national.

Campaigners have unsuccessfully fought Bromley Council in the courts at a cost of £40,000, which supporters have raised.

The campaign can count on the support of thousands of local people, and amenity groups, as well as Friends of the Earth and the London Wildlife Trust.

A successful demonstration was held last year in front the Empire, Leicester Square, UCI's flagship cinema.

A weekly picket outside

the cinema has turned away many cinemagoers after they were told of the plans to despoil the park.

The proposals came from Bromley council when it was Tory controlled. Its plan is to use money from the sale of the land to a developer to help improve the park, which has fallen into a run-down state.

After the last elections, a Lib-Lab coalition took control – but decided to press on with the proposals.

John Prescott, New Labour's environment secretary had a chance to order a public inquiry when Bromley asked for planning permission for the cinema in April 1997. But instead he allowed the proposals to go forward in 1998, much to the disgust of the campaigners.

Once again, it is a case of New Labour cosying up to developers and multi-nationals. Protection of the environment is the last thing on this government's mind. ■

What the developers are planning

Crystal Palace is a beautiful tree-lined ridge at the highest point in London, with spectacular views, wildlife and plants.

The developers want to build the biggest multiplex in the south with 18 screens, 4,800 seats, video arcades and parking for 1,000 cars on the roof.

Five other multiplexes are already planned within a short distance from the park. More than 20,000 people have signed petitions against the plans. Bromley council is getting £6m for the site.

CRAMER

IN OUR VIEW

SPIN DOCTORS CAN'T RESCUE NEW LABOUR

New Labour is a government that is beginning to unravel, as the events of the real world prove stronger than all the "messages" Tony Blair's spin doctors can transmit.

The crisis with the NHS, the Dome, the Welsh Assembly, the London Mayor, rail safety and the reaction to the attacks on democratic rights have left New Labour looking careworn. Yet this is a government with the largest majority in modern times, facing an opposition Tory Party which is heading for oblivion.

New Labour's problems arise principally because the whole Blair government is based on self-deception.

Blair's "Third Way" tells us that we live in an age where the

boundaries between public and private sectors do not matter, that the interests of corporate giants are the same as ordinary people's and that market forces benefit all of us.

Well, the opposite is true. The people of South London, for example, do not accept that the interests of developers and leisure companies are identical to those who use local parks.

The 21,000 NatWest workers facing the sack do not say to each other that redundancies are for the national good.

And those waiting endlessly for operations while drug companies take the NHS for a ride, do not accept that this is how things have to be.

The question that New Labour's crisis raises is this: If

New Labour can't deliver with its big majority, then surely parliamentary politics is at a dead end.

If traditional parties and governments have conceded that global corporations and business interests are too powerful to control, a different solution is needed.

That is why the Movement for a Socialist Future campaigns for a fundamental alternative. We need to build a movement strong enough to bring about a transfer of power in Britain, from the hands of big business and banks to all working people.

New Labour's crisis gives us encouragement that the conditions to achieve this are fast emerging. ■

KARL MARX – the founding father of modern socialism – is the subject of innumerable scholarly studies, many of which have served as retrospective eulogies, while others have sought to discredit Marx's criticism and analysis of capitalist economy.

Francis Wheen's new biography of Marx tells us as much about our current era's obsession with the minutiae of personality, as it does about Marx's theories and ideas.

Wheen's study of Marx, then, is an eminently palatable overview of Karl's life and times, rejecting sycophantic hero-worship and venomous denunciation alike, in favour of a succinct and balanced appraisal of the most influential political thinker the world has ever known.

Marx emerges from Wheen's account as a warm, ram-bunctious, capricious, contradictory and egotistical giant – in short, palpably human.

Karl Marx was the family man who had a son by his housekeeper, the political agitator who preferred libraries to barricades – a man of spectacular contrariness. Wheen captures the essence of Marx with a degree of success, and in doing so has written a captivating and humorous biography.

The text is littered with uproarious anecdotes – while at Bonn university in the 1840s Marx becomes co-president of the Trier Tavern Club, a student drinking fraternity. The Young Hegelians of the society quickly incur the wrath of the Borussia Korps – the soldiers compel the students to swear an oath of allegiance to the Prussian Junker – culminating in a duel between Marx and a young officer.

Needless to say, Marx loses, fortunately escaping with only a minor wound. "Is duelling then so closely interwoven with philosophy?" his father quips sarcastically in a letter. Brilliant stuff!

From 1843 Marx emigrated to Paris – then revolutionary capital of Europe – in order to set up the *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbucher*, a paper that appeared under various guises following Marx's wanderings across Europe. It is here that his antagonistic nature becomes



Shock, horror! Marx was human!

BY PAUL PARVANITOPOULOS

evident in his relations with fellow émigrés and revolutionaries.

Marx answered Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty* with the satirical skit *The Poverty of Philosophy*. He also (hilariously) fell out with Arnold Ruge, editor of the *Jahrbucher*, not over a matter of political principle, but because of the philandering of erstwhile colleague, Georg Herwegh.

Marx displays his polemical acumen with invectives against



Feuerbach in the *German Ideology* (1846), and again in 1852 in *The Great Men of the Exile* – a detailed denunciation of the

Above: Engels with Marx and his three daughters Laura, Eleanor and Jenny; below Jenny & Karl Marx "a remarkable love story".

entire revolutionary diaspora in London. Later comes the irrevocable schism with Michael Bakunin in 1872 at the Congress of the International Working Men's Association.

Although disorderly and fickle in his habits, Marx is revealed by Wheen as possessing remarkable prescience of mind. The publication of the German edition of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 proved timely indeed — by 24 February Louis Philippe had abdicated in France; Metternich fell within a month.

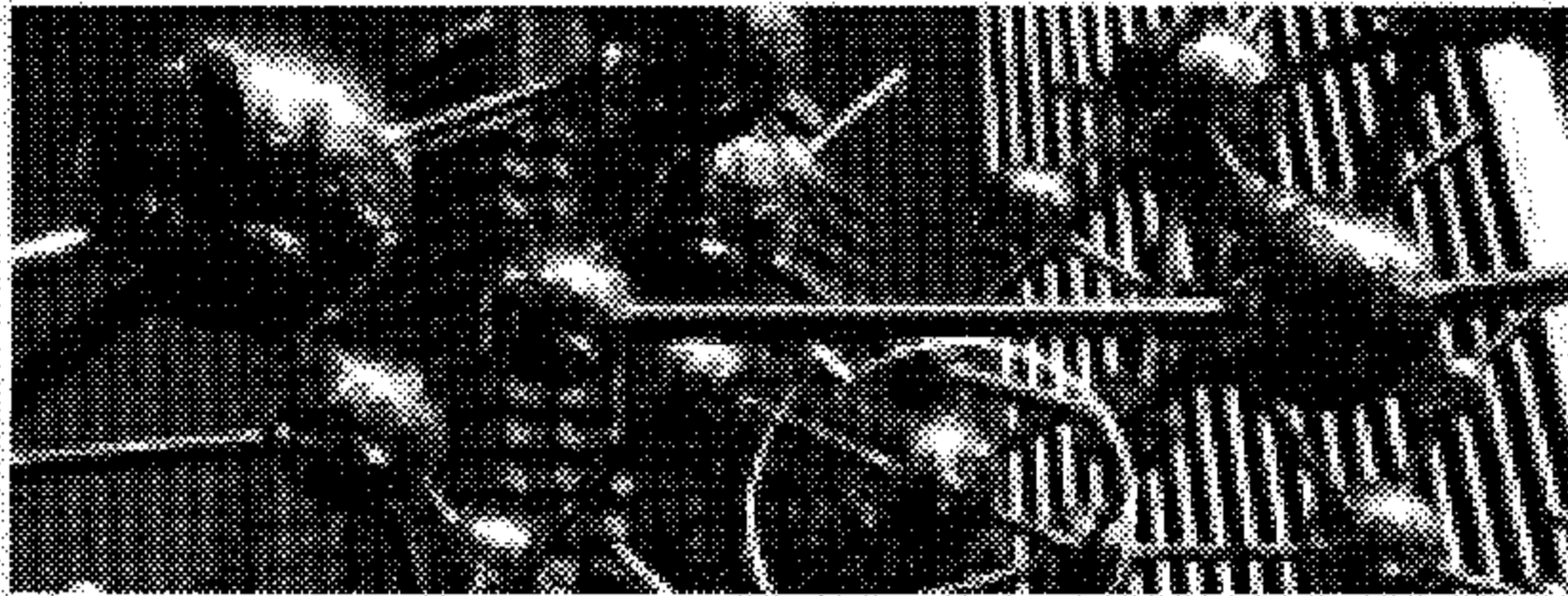
The cataclysm awaited so eagerly by Marx and Engels manifested itself not in an economic slump, but in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, which heralded the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx, of course, was resident in London from the 1850s onwards, and Wheen captures the richly depressed carnival atmosphere of Dickens' metropolis with aplomb.

It was the fall of the Commune that elevated Marx from obscurity to infamy with the publication of *The Civil War in France* — a tract which lauded the achievements of the Communards, while earning Marx a reputation as an inveterate subversive.

Marx reached the zenith of his political career with the publication of his magnum opus, *Capital*, in 1867. *Capital* was an exposition of the fuzzy logic of capitalist economics, and established Marx's reputation as a consummate political satirist: his attempt to justify criminal activity as a form of productive labour stands *Capital* in comparison to Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. Francis Wheen's biography exposes the dichotomous personality of Karl Marx in all its glory, and offers us one of history's more memorable love stories. Marx's marriage to Jenny von Westphalen, whose devotion was tested by years of penury and political exile, provides the love interest, while his dependence on Engel's largesse, inspired mother Marx to the quote of the book: "I wish you would make some capital instead of just writing about it!" ■

Karl Marx by Francis Wheen. Fourth Estate, London, £20.00.

WIRED UP TO TECHNOLOGY



WIRED LIFE BY CHARLES JONSCHER, PUBLISHED BY ANCHOR AT £7.99, REVIEWED BY COLIN SANDIFORD

THIS BOOK IS a quite fascinating look into many aspects of the influence of computers in the modern age.

Many of the varied subjects have been known to those in industry for years and yet never get mentioned whenever technology is discussed in the media.

The author has some quite strong beliefs about computers and the position of humanity in the universe with which I, as someone who has studied and worked with computer science for over a decade, strongly disagree.

THE LARGEST
COMPUTER EVER
BUILT IS THE
TELEPHONE
SYSTEM....

But yet reading this book, you do not get the feeling that you are being pressurised into following his views.

Wired Life is intended to give an all-round view of the current state of computing, and how it got there. So it covers the smallest component of a computer right up to the largest computer in the world.

And in attempting to show the possible future routes that computing could take, the book talks about both the latest innovations and theoretical work being done at the present.

Did you know that the smallest component of a computer is referred to as a switch and that currently even the fastest and most powerful computers have switches made up of billions of atoms?

And that about 10 years ago, researchers discovered a way of manufacturing switches with only three atoms, thus making it possible to fit even more into the same space?

Also, when you think of big computers, where would you expect to find the largest? In a research lab, on the stock markets, or in your own home?

The largest computer ever built is, in fact, the telephone system. Although you would not think it, the telephone network can store, process and transmit data, whether it is voice, fax or a recorded message about the weather in Guatemala.

The book is written so that each paragraph is about a different aspect of the vast world of computer science, but many refer to previous information. So it's best to start from the beginning.

So if you want to find out about technology around you, pick up some useful information you would never normally find outside of research papers and stuffy text books, this is a good choice. ■

THE ENTIRE visual history of the world could be bought up and controlled by two or three global organisations like Time Warner and the Getty oil tycoon foundation.

This was the warning issued by members of the Magnum collective at the packed press conference which opened a spectacular display of some 400 images at London's Barbican Centre.

Global companies have offered to buy the Magnum group's archive, which includes some legendary photographs of the last century. But Vietnam war photographer Philip Jones Griffiths, insisted: "We will never sell out to these people." Members of this unique collective are determined to

keep control over their own "products" and how they are used. And they want photography to be "passion-driven" rather than commercialised.

The last decade of the 20th century is documented in a sequence of unforgettable images from all over the planet. Scenes of heartbreaking suffering, ecological devastation and war alternate with simple human pleasures and outstanding beauty.

James Nachtwey's and Gilles Peress' shots from Afghanistan and Rwanda are amongst the most shocking. Others such as Josef Koudelka, Nikos Economopoulos, Paul Lowe, Donovan Wylie and Luc Delahaye captured an inside view of

conflicts in Yugoslavia and Chechnya. Children suffering the effects of Chernobyl as well as US chemical warfare in Vietnam bring to life a world of heart-rending cruelty.

Magnum goes back more than 50 years when it was founded by four war photographers – Robert Capa, Henri Cartier Bresson, David Seymour ("Chim") and George Rodger in 1947. Capa's first published photograph was a dramatic image of the exiled revolutionary Leon Trotsky lecturing to students in Copenhagen. Don't miss this show! And give yourself time.

The book *Magnum Photos* is not cheap, but it will give many days of stimulation, knowledge and pleasure to anyone who buys it. ■

Magnum resists the lure of the dollar





Left **Chernobyl/Belarus, 1997, Paul Fusco**;
above **South Africa, Ian Berry**

Magnum our turning world, Photographs 1989-1999.

Until March 12 at the Barbican Centre, Silk Street EC2.

Admission £6/£4. Open: Mon-Saturday 10pm-6pm. Wednesday open until 8pm. Sundays 12pm-6pm. Telephone: 02076388891. www.barbican.org.uk

Magnum Photos is published by Phaidon Press. 528 pp with 175 colour and 345 b&w photographs £39.95

LISTINGS

Beyond the fall

Prize-winning photo-journalist Anthony Suau's odyssey through the former Soviet Union and its satellite states during the last decade of the last century. Over 100 photographs and another 400 projected pictures. Suau has worked for *Time*, *The New York Times* and *Stern* magazine. Photos of Russia's new elite and the emerging bandit cliques are contrasted with growing numbers of impoverished pensioners. Anti-crime police invade markets, while new religious freedom sees people paying homage to a box believed to contain miraculous powers.

Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank, SE1. Open 10am-10.30pm daily. Admission free. Inquiries 0171 960 4242. www.sbc.org.uk

ecArt

Lime green, orange, mauve and brown feature in dancing shapes by a veteran abstract colourist. John McLean feels his goal is nearest "when my paintings are as clear and direct as possible" His bright colours compliment a new turn in Frances Aviva Blane's style. She displays a haunting emptiness with oil paint layered in whiter shades of pale on large canvases. Curated by Angela Diamandidou in an exciting big space. **ecArt, 53-54 St John Clerkenwell, EC1. Until 18 March. Open Weds-Sat, 12-6pm. Admission free. Telephone: 020 8455 4548.**

Bauhaus Dessau

Founded in Weimar Germany in 1919 and finally closed in Berlin by the Nazis in 1933, the Bauhaus set new standards which revolutionised design in the 20th century. Design classics such as the Wassily Club Armchair and industrial metalwork by Marianne Brandt feature alongside paintings by Kandinsky, Moholy Nagy and Klee. These are complimented by textiles and poster designs. Key pieces from Dessau have never been shown outside Germany.

At the Design Museum, Shad Thames, SE1, South Bank by Tower Bridge until June 4. Admission £5.50/£4.50/£4. Open 11.30am-6pm daily. Telephone: 020 7378 6055. www.designmuseum.org

Jailing threatens shelters for the homeless

By Alistair Heron

WHILE MANY GROUPS feel betrayed by a lack of New Labour radicalism, it is clear that still less has changed in the inherently reactionary nature of the British judiciary.

Just before Christmas, two charity workers, Ruth Wyner and John Brock, received sentences of four and five years respectively under Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act, for failing to prevent the use of drugs in a shelter for the homeless which was under their management.

"Whythall", the police operation that led to the conviction of Wyner and Brock, involved the use of a number of undercover officers at great public expense. The result of this was to "reveal" the use of drugs amongst some of the most desperate and excluded in society, some of whom may have been living on the street a mere 24 hours previously.

The conclusions reached by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary have come as no surprise to homelessness workers who have long struggled with this problem while also trying to provide a vital service at the point of need.

Previously directors and project managers of shelters have had to rely on a sensible interpretation of the law in order to make it possible to work with people who use drugs. But in this case the fair treatment of two dedicated professionals was sacrificed in favour of a politically expedient decision.

The impact on the individuals concerned and their families has been massive. Ruth Wyner has described her plight as "degradation that is beyond belief", and John Brock has been assessed as being at risk of self harm.

Whilst the criminalisation of Brock and Wyner is ridiculous, and the length of their sentence vindictive, this recent judgement has far wider implications. If the decision is to be taken as legal precedent is arguable as to whether there is any future for similar projects.

Already, there are suggestions of CCTV systems with 100% coverage and compulsory room searches. Not only does this disregard the basic human rights of the homeless, but it will also do nothing to encourage people to come off the streets,

whether or not they are drug users.

Amongst the PR friendly messages introduced by New Labour are "tsars" appointed to tackle the twin social problems of homelessness and drugs. In this brave new world of "joined up thinking" it seems strange that charities are encouraged to throw vulnerable drug users back on to the street thus exacerbating both problems simultaneously.

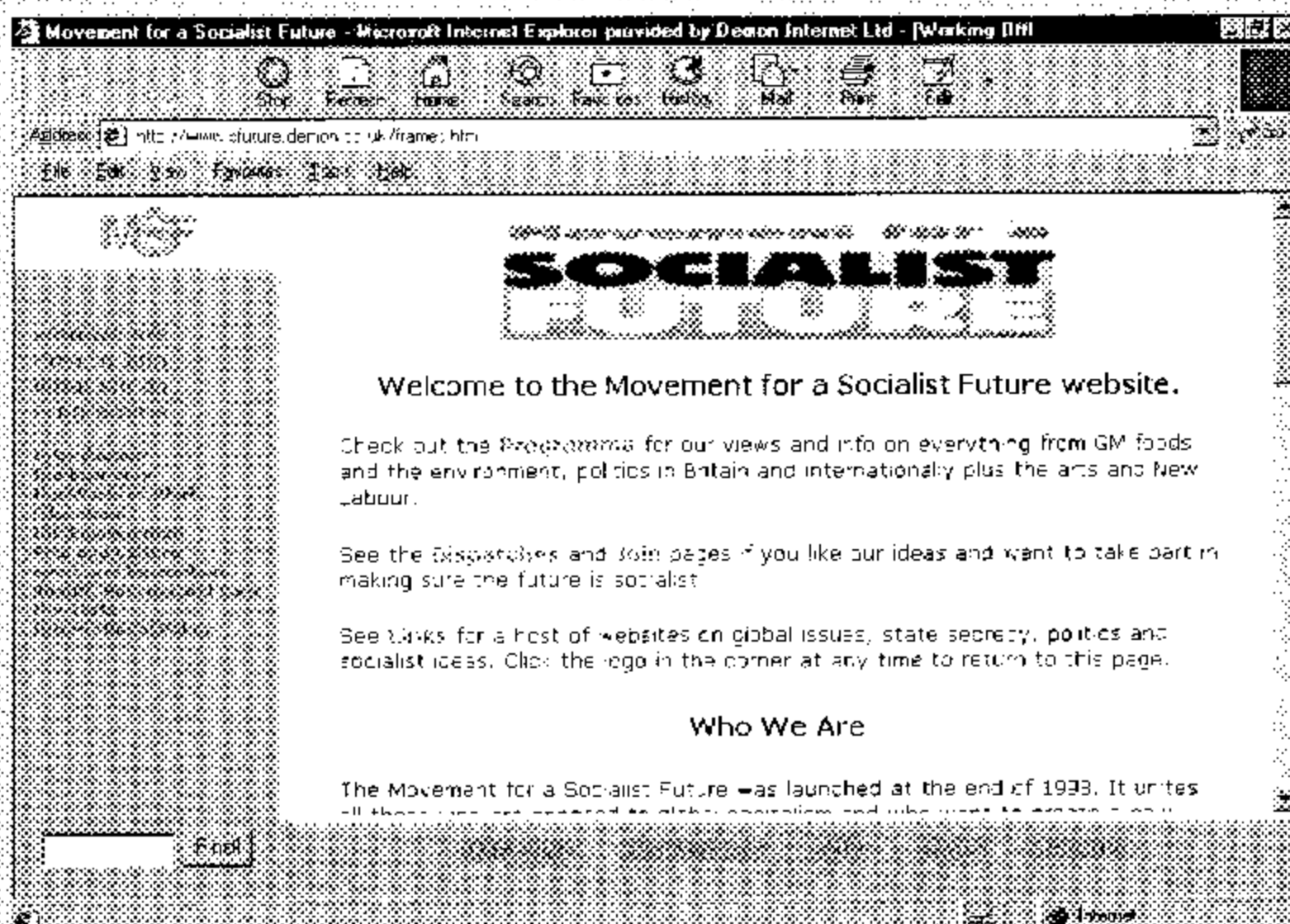
Although the conviction and sentencing of Brock and Wyner is not the direct responsibility of



The wife of jailed homeless hostel worker John Brock.

politicians the reluctance to speak out in their favour is typical of the political cowardice of the current government.

Just as New Labour continues to persecute asylum seekers for fear of appearing "soft on immigration", the charity sector is now bearing the brunt of the government being "hard on drugs". ■



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