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**NO MORE HIROSHIMAS!**

The 2007 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs will be held from 3 to 9 August 2007 in the A-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the theme 'For a Nuclear Weapon-Free, Peaceful and Just World'. We cordially invite all those people in the world as well as Japan who wish to contribute to achieving this goal through interaction, cooperation, and solidarity to take part in and support the 2007 World Conference.

The Iraq war was launched based on lies about weapons of mass destruction being developed by Iraq, and it is now a quagmire of death. The Bush Administration is now under severe criticism both at home and internationally.

Amid growing concern over the danger of nuclear proliferation, calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons are increasing. Recently, former US Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and other former key US administration officials proposed that a 'world without nuclear weapons' should be created and for this 'a major effort should be launched by the United States', which 'would lend additional weight to efforts already under way to solve the problem of nuclear proliferation'.

The Bush Administration insists on modernising its nuclear armaments and is clinging to the policy of the possible use of nuclear weapons. It is also insisting on continuing the Iraq war. However, such a policy will only lead to deeper isolation and total failure. We will work to increase people's movements to make the 21<sup>st</sup> century free of the threat of nuclear weapons and wars at the earliest possible time.

The efforts by the Japanese anti-nuclear peace movement are drawing attention from people around the world, thus raising their hopes. The recent development on the issue of North Korea's nuclear programmes can be a concrete step forward toward its peaceful resolution. We do not condone the emergence of new nuclear weapons-possessing countries. We stand firm against the Japanese government considering arguments for arming Japan with nuclear weapons by capitalising on the issue of North Korea's nuclear programme. We oppose Japan's dependence on the US 'nuclear umbrella' as well as its attempt to push ahead with the adverse revision of the Japanese Constitution.

Japan is the atomic bombed country with its 'Article 9' and its Three Non-Nuclear Principles. We will increase efforts to transform our country into one that will contribute to creating a peaceful world without nuclear weapons.

The World Conference against A & H Bombs, working together with the *Hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors), has played a major role in advancing the anti-nuclear movement worldwide. In recent years, it has helped develop international solidarity and cooperation between non-governmental organisations and national governments that are making efforts to abolish nuclear weapons. This has had a positive impact on international politics. By making the voices of the *Hibakusha* and other nuclear victims heard around the world, we will work to increase the current of calls for the swift abolition of nuclear weapons. We sincerely hope that the 2007 World Conference against A & H Bombs will further build on our past achievements involving young people bearing the future of humanity and the broad range of people from around the world as well as Japan. With this, we cordially call on you to take part in and give support to the World Conference, and to cooperate with us in the various activities in preparation for a successful World Conference.

Contact the Japan Council Against A & H Bombs for more information ([antiatom@topaz.plala.or.jp](mailto:antiatom@topaz.plala.or.jp)).

## **BLAIR PROSECUTION AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT?**

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, has urged Arab countries, particularly Iraq, to sign up to the Court to enable allegations against the West to be pursued. He said it was still possible for an investigation to be launched into coalition actions in Iraq if that country signed up. Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, Hamid al-Bayati, said that his country was actively considering doing so.

Mr Moreno-Ocampo said it was frustrating that the Court was viewed in the Arab world as biased in favour of the West. Asked by a British newspaper, *The Sunday Telegraph* (18 March 2007), whether he could envisage a situation in which Mr Blair and Mr Bush found themselves in the dock answering charges of war crimes in Iraq, he replied: 'Of course, that could be a possibility ... whatever country joins the Court can know that whoever commits a crime in their country could be prosecuted by me'.

America has refused to accept the Court's jurisdiction and has signed more than a hundred separate bi-lateral agreements with other states not to hand over its citizens to the Court. Britain, however, has signed up.

Sudan, which has been investigated by the Court over its role in the killing of civilians in Darfur, has called for the International Criminal Court to investigate coalition actions in Iraq, although it is not a signatory to the Rome agreement which established the Court.

The UN Security Council can ask the Court to act – as in the case of Darfur – or the Court can launch an investigation if it receives a complaint from a state which is party to the Rome agreement. It can also look into alleged offences carried out by, or on the territory of, a party to the agreement.

# Reviews

## March On

**Ann Pettitt, *Walking to Greenham: How the Peace-camp began and the Cold War ended*, Honno ([www.honno.co.uk](http://www.honno.co.uk)), 320 pages, paperback ISBN 1 870206 76 2, £8.99**

Peace March 1981, or *Fredsmarsjen 1981*, to give it its original, Norwegian title, did not end in Paris on 6 August, after six weeks on the road from Copenhagen. It merely paused for breath, resting its weary feet, searching for someone like Ann Pettitt to take up the torch and carry it on. Later that same month, Ann and her friends set out from Cardiff for the gates of Greenham Common. The rest, as they say, is history.

Part One of Ann Pettitt's autobiography tells the story:

'... I was trying to help write a leaflet in someone's house in Kidwelly, about nuclear-free zones. I was feeling bored and stuck generally ... what was the point of your local town declaring itself a "nuclear-free zone" when what we were facing was the possibility of a nuclear war "limited" to Europe? My eye caught an item in a *Peace News* magazine that was lying open on the floor, about a group of women walking from Copenhagen to Paris to protest about this threat. I no longer felt bored or stuck. I felt terribly excited.'

Ann and a handful of other women in Wales set about organising their follow-on march. Caring for children, gardening, and all their other responsibilities had to be managed at the same time as they looked for places to stay, begged money, and gathered the vitals to sustain what became Women for Life on Earth.

Twenty and more years on, what was achieved, and why did Ann Pettitt do it? The short answer to the first question is rather startling: the end of the Cold War and the removal of some 'theatre' nuclear weapons from Europe. Ann has her own particular perspective on that sea change in world affairs. From Greenham she had journeyed to the Soviet Union to meet with members of the unofficial Moscow Group for Trust. She, together with a British and an American colleague, wished to discuss the Group's 'Appeal to Governments and Publics', which called for greater mutual trust between peoples East and West based on direct contact.

Subsequently, in the company of Dr. Olga Medvedkova from the Moscow Group, the Greenham delegation visited the official Soviet Peace Committee. The protests at Greenham Common were big news in the Soviet Union, where they were portrayed as directed against aggressive US militarism. But the Peace Committee hierarchy was unimpressed at Dr Medvedkova's inclusion in the delegation which brought first-hand news from Britain. She was subsequently arrested and convicted on a trumped-up charge, but given a suspended sentence, indicating some belated sensitivity to wider international opinion.

Mikhail Gorbachev, then a comparatively unknown Politburo member, surprised a visiting delegation from the British Communist Party ‘by describing the provocative behaviour of someone called Ann Pettitt who had visited with a Greenham “delegation” and had brought an uninvited person into an official meeting.’ Gorbachev suggested to the assembled delegation that they should keep their peace movement comrades ‘under better disciplinary control’.

Notwithstanding her personal notoriety, Ann Pettitt identifies Gorbachev as the man who broke the mould, and moved the world away from gathering confrontation and towards serial disarmament measures which encompassed the removal of cruise missiles from Greenham and, ultimately, the return of at least part of the base to common land. He ‘led the world out of the arms race ... a wise and honest leader, astonishingly undervalued’ by his own people.

Why did Ann answer the call of the Scandinavian women and keep marching for a Europe free of nuclear weapons? A deeper motivation seems to have been at work, borne of her parent’s wartime experiences in Northern France and, in particular, her father’s enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, which led him to make an unauthorised visit to Moscow in 1937. The person Colin had come to see had mysteriously disappeared. The implication is that he had disappeared in Stalin’s purges of the 1930s which engulfed millions of Soviet citizens. Six years later, in 1943, Solange, Ann’s mother-to-be, would taunt German guards in the northern French town of Tourcoing with cries of ‘Stalingrad’, as news spread of the Germans’ defeat there. The parents’ commitments and courage found their own particular echo in the daughter.

Ann Pettitt says she can’t quite remember how the Cold War ended. But she has given us a poignant and insightful account of the bits she can recall, which resonates strongly with the assault on life and liberty that is now our daily lot.

*Tony Simpson*

## Pictures and Poetry

**Bertolt Brecht, *War Primer*, translated and edited by John Willett, Libris, 196 pages, ISBN 9 781870 352468, £19.95**

During his exile from Germany during the Second World War, Brecht cut out war photographs from newspapers and magazines, kept them in a portfolio, and wrote four line poems to accompany them. We reproduce three of the pages in his *War Primer* by kind permission of the publishers.



**The Nazi Big Three—Their Ending Should Be Wagnerian.**

O swan-song! 'Never seek to question me!'  
O pilgrims' choir! O fiery-magic trick!  
Song of the Rhine gold on an empty belly!  
That's what I'd call the Bayreuth Republic.



**Field Marshal Fedor von Beck**



**Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle**



**Field Marshal Karl von Rundstedt**



**Field Marshal Erwin Rommel**



**General Heinz Guderian**



**Field Marshal Siegmund List**

Here are six murderers. Now don't turn away  
And don't just nod and murmur 'That's the truth'.  
Showing them up has cost us to this day  
Fifty great cities and most of our youth.



Look at the helmets of the vanquished! Yet  
Surely the moment when we came undone  
Was not when they were smitten from our heads  
But when we first agreed to put them on.

## Burning Hot

**George Monbiot, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet Burning*, Allen Lane, 277pages, hardback ISBN 978-0713999235, £17.99**

George Monbiot has for many years been both a key voice of political dissent and an espouser of practical solutions for challenging the inherent structural inequalities of national and global power. Presciently, it is with his environmental campaigning, and specifically that most omnipresent of subjects, climate change, that his latest clarion call of a book is concerned. In his own words, it is a 'manifesto for action'.

The thrust of the argument is relatively simple: we have perhaps about 25 years to reduce our output of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases by 60 per cent globally. This means that through accepted 'contraction and convergence' criteria the advanced industrialised world's reduction has to be of the order of 90 per cent, the United Kingdom included. This book is a national blueprint setting out how to achieve that target. He is persuaded that alternatively, with a 'business as usual' scenario, or weak palliatives, there is a high probability that we will reach a global tipping point, where runaway natural forces lead to incalculable effects. Monbiot is convinced that we need to stabilise at 450 parts per million (ppm) CO<sub>2</sub> (plus the other greenhouse gases) by 2030 to prevent temperatures rising above the 2°C threshold. As a comparison, Sir Nicholas Stern, in his recent Review on the Economics of Climate Change, uses a broader stabilisation range of 500 to 550ppm by 2050, and thinks that 'stabilisation at 450ppm CO<sub>2</sub> is already almost out of reach'. Even Stern's more leisurely containment, he admits, puts us within the possibility of a 4.5°C warming, dangerously close to the Permian extinction temperature of a 6°C rise when 95% of living organisms met their demise. Monbiot, on the other hand, is confident that meeting the target of no more than 2°C will make 'the sort of warming that took place at the end of the Permian impossible'. (If you remain unconvinced of the immediacy of the problem, then Fred Pearce's book *The Last Generation* is a readable introduction to the science of climate change and the debates within the climatological community.)

Monbiot's book contains, as one would expect, a fair amount of scientific calculation of possibilities and likely scenarios, and the reader must be prepared for this. If you are looking for science with 100 per cent assured outcomes you will be disappointed, but this does not mean that there is not a large scientific consensus that global warming caused by anthropogenic industrial sources is happening. There is much scientific debate over differing climate models and the rapidity of change but a virtually total scientific consensus with regard to direction. This is in spite of the devious activities of the 'denial industry' to muddy the waters, succinctly exposed in chapter two of Monbiot's book. And what a repugnant band of apostates they make: ranging from those media pump attendants of denial, Melanie Phillips and Peter Hitchens, through Internet obfuscation placed by bogus academic and 'grassroots' citizen organisations whose funding apparently derives

from those paragons of corporate rectitude, Exxon and Phillip Morris. New support for denial has recently surfaced in the European Parliament from recently joined East European countries, among them the Lithuanian Free Market Institute, funded by a large petrol company Mazeikiu Nafta and Phillip Morris (*www.Corpwatch* 22/02/07). The only recycling this lot go in for is of their own spurious science.

Monbiot's solution proposes combining a number of measures: carbon rationing; an adaptation of existing power generation technologies through underground carbon sequestration; a localised energy internet with home and area-based power and heating units using a mixture of renewable, hydrogen and natural gas generation techniques; the deployment of geographically appropriate renewable solar and wind energy; a massive improvement in housing energy insulation efficiency; major reductions in individualised transport systems, namely the car, and the substitution of a much improved motorway coach system; the rationalising of retail and wholesale distribution; and a sweeping reduction in mass air travel. There will be a place for the market but it will be largely confined to realistic carbon pricing, and he rejects carbon taxing for its rightly perceived regressive nature. He proposes a carbon rationing system that would give an equal carbon allowance to each citizen and could be traded to give an element of consumer choice and yet still, hopefully, reflect individual social and medical needs. This proposal, potentially still to a degree favouring the wealthy, has already been mooted in New Labour circles by David Miliband.

In contrast Monbiot rightly sees 'carbon offsetting' as at best akin to medieval indulgences, a sop to the conscience preventing the tackling of the real problem, giving no worthwhile reduction and, at worst, an unregulated arena for dubious entrepreneurs, and even capable of inflicting bad science and environmental practice on mainly Third World communities. Carbon trading through the present European Union emission scheme is, as presently constituted, a 'classic act of enclosure' with rights and subsidies dispensed to the big corporations instead of to the population as a whole. Additionally, as Monbiot rightly points out, the Kyoto and European Union emission stipulations were always well padded in favour of the industrial corporations and nations who should have scant difficulties in meeting the targets, given the added bonus of purchasing the emission deficits of the collapsed industrial base of the ex-Soviet economies. For that matter what Bush objected to about the Kyoto agreement was not the specified lax parameters on emissions themselves, but the principle of the national restriction on the United States' right to pollute and the dangers of an on-going process of negotiated 'constriction and convergence'. Monbiot is only too well aware of the dangers of applying marketplace solutions to what Stern has called 'the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen'.

Literally grasping at straws, the US government in particular seems to think that a way out of its climate impasse is through bio-fuels. (This would have the added advantage of loosening the market grip of those troublesome oil-rich states.) Consequently, Brazil with its sugar cane-sourced cheap ethanol industry, based on staggering levels of human exploitation (*Guardian* 09/03/07), appears to be succumbing to Bush's deadly embrace. This conflicts with the interests of the

US farming belt, already beginning to exploit its commercially more expensive bio-fuel crops at the expense of food production, both in terms of availability and price. In fact the major difficulty with this solution is the stress it will put on global food crop production. Monbiot, for example, maintains that there are 5.7 million hectares of arable land in the United Kingdom and that the production of bio-fuels for one year just for 'cars, buses and lorries would require 25.9 million hectares'. Bio-fuels have some useful applications, but not at the expense of global food supply, gross human exploitation, and deforestation of rainforests with the consequent rainfall depletion.

Neither is the solution to be found in the tokenism of Blair's Caribbean holiday flight carbon offsets and Cameron's bicycling toy chimney windmill gestures. Nor does Monbiot accept the necessity for the hair-shirt back-to-nature approach of a biogas energy system driven by our own ordure or living in a yurt somewhere on Salisbury Plain — his are eminently practical if daunting proposals. However, when you perceive the mountain to be climbed when we have not yet managed to scramble over the foothills of ever more eminent political rhetoric, it does seem bleak. As Monbiot remarks it 'is not that people aren't hearing ... but that they don't want to know'. The most noticeable effects of global warming are often to be felt in the developing world, impacting on their poorest communities, who are usually the least responsible in terms of emissions. As with the global consequences of other manifestations of the neo-liberal world economy, even in the heartland of neo-liberalist capitalism, it is the poor, the elderly, the sick, the very young and the ethnic minorities who suffer the derelictions of the state at times of crisis, as we saw most graphically in New Orleans (2005) and the European heat wave (2003).

Hardly a day goes by without some new proclamation on the importance of halting climate change from the great and the not-so-good. Meanwhile, ever greater coats of 'greenwash' attempt to seduce us with the idea that BP, Walmart and Marks & Spencer are to save the planet. As Monbiot notes, just to get the latter supermarkets to fit doors to all their refrigerators so as not to be in a perpetual energy war with their own heating systems would appear to be too much to ask. At the same time, the New Labour Government steams ahead with airport expansion, places niggardly financial limits on grants for renewable energy initiatives, obstructs environmental legislation within the European Union, funds motorway lane expansion, gives support to nuclear power expansion, and who can now remember John Prescott's 'public transport Renaissance' that never happened? The car corporations all have their prototype 'green' cars, but ask them to restrict new mass-market cars to 120 kg/km carbon emissions and the whines of protest from BMW and Volkswagen are sufficient to force a climbdown by the European Commission.

Unlike Blair, Monbiot places nuclear power generation second from the bottom when it comes to desirable power sources, the very bottom being open-cast coal mining. He admits that the figures for nuclear power can be manipulated by both supporters and detractors to support their case, but makes a powerful case himself for its non-expansion. This he bases on the familiar arguments of waste storage,

weapons production, terrorism, the industry's historical record and an energy-based input/output analysis. Alongside the expansion of renewables, electricity generation should at least, in the relatively short term, as a 'partial solution', continue to use natural gas but with the carbon emissions sequestered in suitable geological sites. Like many environmentalists he fears a return to relatively cheap coal when the oil and gas start to run out.

Throughout the book Monbiot, where possible, has made every effort to cost his proposals and compare them against alternatives, a testament to the hard work he and his small band of researchers have put into the book. But whatever way you look at the problem, the infrastructural costs to make many of Monbiot's ideas work will be colossal. We perhaps forget that the change from wood burning to coal took perhaps 200 years of development. Add to that a further 100 years for the full infrastructural development of oil-based technology and it seems, in retrospect, a fairly leisurely pace of transformation. In contrast, we need to make the transition to renewables and possibly hydrogen in a couple decades at the most, according to Monbiot's scenario. He suggests therefore a mixture of technologies and scales of action. As well as relatively immediate solutions there are also suggestions for long-term endeavours. For example, it may be possible to develop a new long distance international electrical power grid based on DC (direct current) transmission sourced from enormous solar farms based in the Sahara. Many of his more long-term proposals in particular need changes to the national and international economic infrastructure and call for a degree of planning and coordination of gargantuan proportions. The book to some extent downplays the enormity of the changes required and does not touch on the many and significant political and economic obstacles, but in Monbiot's defence this is not the book's purpose. We do need practical plans to meet the technical problems but also, perhaps more importantly, practical conceptions for focusing and building a mass movement across the radical political spectrum, capable of providing the necessary leverage.

Appropriately each chapter of the book is introduced with a pithy quote from Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* to set the scene for our 'live now pay later' pact with fossil fuels. But moderate as they seem, Monbiot's proposals would alter the whole emphasis and practice of the retail trade, with consumerist choices inevitably becoming much narrower. The compensations wedding workers in the industrial nations to market capitalism would become increasingly tenuous: the car, the cheap holiday flights, even the 'retail therapy' visits to Tesco and M&S, should you be so inclined, would be brought into question by the necessary redefinition of transport and material distribution. Implicitly, reasonable as Monbiot's schema appears, ultimately it demands a new relationship between peoples, nations and between Man and Nature. It is now far too late to continue with capitalism's Hobbesian, business-as-usual war on nature, whatever the many difficulties of forging an alternative.

History is not packed with occasions where definitive action is taken without the actuality of extreme need and, whilst capitalism has the ability to plan, it is usually

to assist relatively short-term accumulation, not generalised social need. Monbiot's plan (whilst not meeting market orthodoxy head on), appears an eminently reasonable working solution, but it still poses structural planning dilemmas for capitalism. These are usually only solved during periods of acute 'total' warfare. The present problem is that the enemy is still over the horizon and doesn't yet appear at the gates, or the right gates, to get the troops in line. Furthermore, the battalions have to be internationally raised and coordinated, and will have to forgo the usual rapine. And as if to cap it all, the generalissimo volunteering for command appears to be (according to the *Guardian* at least) Tony Blair – God help us! *Heat* does not address the question of political practicalities but let's hope George is right and that 'people's power will save the planet'.

*John Daniels*

## Ocalan

**Abdullah Ocalan translated by Klaus Happel, *Prison Writings: The Roots of Civilisation*, Pluto Press, 336 pages, hardback ISBN 978-0745326160, £25**

Abdullah Ocalan was the leader of the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which conducted a guerrilla war from 1984 with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdish state in south-east Turkey. In February 1999, he was kidnapped on the way to Nairobi airport and taken back to Turkey, where he was tried and sentenced to death, although the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

In prison on the Turkish island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara, he has produced, as part of a submission to the European Court of Human Rights, a volume which is an analysis of the history of civilisation centred, in particular, on the Middle East. Although his approach is essentially Marxist, he rejects economic determinism as the basis for his interpretation of history and places great importance on ideology. This is reminiscent of the Italian Communist, Antonio Gramsci, who also produced important theoretical work while in prison.

Ocalan regards the palaeolithic period of history, which covered 98 per cent of humanity's existence on earth, as having been brought to an end by the neolithic revolution, based upon better tools, the development of agriculture and animal husbandry. The essential counterpart to these technological changes was the development of primitive patterns of social behaviour such as fetishism, animism, totemism, matrilineal kinship, patriarchy, and so on.

The next technological revolution led to an oriental slave society. This was based on the use of bronze and the building of settlements which eventually became cities, initially on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, before 3000 BC; in ancient Sumer. A vital feature of this revolution was the development by priests of a new ideology comprising a new religion and a new mythology. This was required to transform the mental outlook of the new settlers from one based on kinship and tribal freedoms to a submissive mindset in which slavery and

inferiority were accepted. Citizens of Sumer were persuaded to accept subordination to a 'divine order' which reflected and demanded obedience to gods who, in effect, decreed a slave society. The priests established an ideological hegemony over the new urban settlements by this means.

Any challenge to this took a religious form. It was the will of alternative gods, monotheism or the advent of a messiah or redeemer which provided an ideological cover for a revolt, or even an invasion, from outside to overthrow a ruling élite.

Slave society with specific local features also developed in Egypt and the Indus Valley in the Indian sub-continent, and religious rituals and beliefs came into existence to create an acceptance of their structures. Elsewhere, other less advanced peoples went through the neolithic revolution before developing their own slave societies which were different in form though they embodied the same fundamentals as those to be found in Sumer. Greco-Roman societies did not have as rigid a religious structure as Mesopotamia or Egypt and, here, philosophical ideologies emerged.

Christianity and Islam both challenged slave society and provided the ideological counterpart to changes in the mode of production which led to the emergence of feudalism. Feudal society was basically concerned with land and land holdings, but it was dominated by religion.

Capitalism in its turn emerged through the introduction of new technologies and the scientific method, but it was accompanied by a successful ideological challenge to feudal religious dogma. In Europe this took shape as the Renaissance, followed by the Reformation, which led on to humanism, the enlightenment, individualism and secularisation.

Ocalan's view is that the Middle East failed to undergo an equivalent change. He believes it is in desperate need of its own Renaissance or Reformation, leading to the adoption of individual rights, secularisation, women's rights, pluralism and democracy. Only then can it advance.

He is committed to a socialist transition of society worldwide, but argues that this cannot be achieved by means of revolutionary violence or the establishment of a totalitarian state. He regards the Soviet Union as a failure in its overall efficiency, its excessive bureaucracy, and its denial of its peoples' rights. He further declares that traditional violent methods of achieving change have done extreme harm to the Arabs, the peoples of Israel, Iran and Iraq, and the Kurds.

He now argues that socialism can only be achieved through a wide-ranging democratisation and the achievement of a form of democracy which is superior to current Western democracies. He demands pluralist structures, participation of all in decision-making, women's rights, and peace.

'In my opinion', he says, 'one of the fundamental criteria characterising a socialist regime must be the level of democracy which it enables'. [p. 37]

Ocalan's treatise is based upon a profound study of the history of the ancient Middle East and the world in general. During the First World War a Belgian historian, Henri Pirenne, wrote a *History of Europe* to 1550 without access to sources, while he was interned by the German authorities. Ocalan's achievement in prison conditions, with limited access to books, calls this to mind, although he

does provide a bibliography and, presumably, consulted the items listed.

Ocalan might have made some reference to the controversy about the existence of a specifically Asiatic hydraulic form of society, which Marx and Engels accepted, but which was rejected in the former Soviet Union. He might have referred to the theory of the former Iranian Kurdish leader, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, that the Kurds are the descendants of the Medes. There are numerous other aspects of his book that raise key issues for further discussion and debate. Some of his contentions are controversial.

Notwithstanding this, Abdullah Ocalan has produced a brilliant theoretical study of the origins and development of civilisation which should be essential reading for all historians interested in a scientific approach to our knowledge of the past. It is a fascinating work which is likely to be of permanent interest. The final conclusion that democratisation, not Islamic fundamentalism or the armed struggle (apart from self-defence), is the way forward in the Middle East and elsewhere is not the message one would expect to receive from the leader of a group that conducted a guerrilla struggle in Turkey for nearly a generation. Left-wing socialists and all who oppose imperialist attempts to dominate the world should consider very carefully the arguments which he advances to justify this thesis.

As for the Kurds, he suggests that being divided between several nations (i.e. Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria) gives them a key advantage in contributing to change in the Middle East by democratising themselves.

‘No longer will the fate of the Kurds be ignorance, war, rebellion and destruction but a democratic and developed civil society and unity in freedom,’ he declares. [p. 297]

Abdullah Ocalan has written an extremely important book which everyone concerned with the politics of the Middle East, the Kurdish question, ancient history or socialist ideas should read and digest. Whatever the view taken of his previous stance as a guerrilla leader, his erudite and thought-provoking thesis is of outstanding interest and I recommend it without reservation.

*Stan Newens*

## Slobodan Milosevic

**John Laughland, *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and the Corruption of International Justice*, Pluto Press, 232 pages, hardback ISBN 9780745326368 £50.00, paperback ISBN 9780745326351 £14.99**

John Laughland’s superb new book, *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and the Corruption of International Justice*, is the fourth important critical study of the issues pertaining to the Balkans wars that I have reviewed. The earlier three were Diana Johnstone’s *Fools’ Crusade* (2002), Michael Mandel’s *How America Gets Away With Murder* (2004), and Peter Brock’s *Media Cleansing: Dirty Reporting* (2005). It is an interesting and distressing fact that none of the three earlier books has been reviewed

in any major US paper or journal, nor, with the exception of *Z Magazine* (and *Swans* and *Monthly Review*, which later ran a fuller version of the Johnstone review), in any liberal or left journal in the United States (including *The Nation*, *In These Times*, *The Progressive*, or *Mother Jones*). This is testimony to the power of the established narrative on the recent history of the Balkans, according to which Clinton, Blair and Nato fought the good fight, though coming in late and reluctantly, to halt Serb ethnic cleansing and genocide managed by Milosevic, with the bad man properly brought before a legitimate court to be tried in the interest of justice.

This narrative was quickly institutionalized, with the help of an intense propaganda campaign carried out by the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim governments (assisted by US PR firms), the United States and other Nato governments, the Nato-organised and Nato-servicing International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY, or Tribunal), and the Western media, which quickly became co-belligerents in this struggle. This informal collective focused on numerous stories and pictures of suffering victims, on one side only and devoid of context. In commenting on the parade of witness victims, Laughland notes that ‘Indictments [by the ICTY] are drawn up with little or no reference to the fact that the acts in question were committed in battle: one often has the surreal sensation one would have reading a description of one man beating another man unconscious which omitted to mention that the violence was being inflicted in the course of a boxing match.’ But this stream of witnesses, that the defence could duplicate in its turn if given the opportunity – and Milosevic did with a video presentation of badly abused Serbs for several hours towards the beginning of his trial – is effective in demonisation and helped mass-produce true believers who viewed any contesting argument or evidence as ‘apologetics for Milosevic’.

‘Much ICTY funding comes from the United States government or its agencies such as the Orwellian sounding United States Institute for Peace. There has also been funding from George Soros’ Open Society Institute ... Carla del Ponte rattled the begging bowl and said that the work of the ICTY was intended to deliver profits for private companies: “It is dangerous for companies to invest in a state where there is no stability, where the risk of war is high, and where the rule of law doesn’t exist. This is where the long-term profit of the United Nations’ work resides. We are trying to help create stable conditions so that safe investments can take place. In short, our business is to help you make good business ... international justice is cheap ... our annual budget is well under ten per cent of Goldman Sachs’ profit during the last quarter. See, I can offer you high dividends for a low investment”’.

Page 28, *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and the Corruption of International Justice* by John Laughland

This consolidation of a party line has been reinforced by a virtual lobby of institutions and dedicated individuals ready to pounce on both the deviants who challenge the new orthodoxy as well as the media institutions that on rare occasion allow a questioning of the 'truth'. The refusal to review these dissenting books and to deal with the issues they raise is also testimony to the cowardice and self-imposed ignorance of the media, and especially the liberal-left media, unwilling to challenge a narrative that is false at every level, as is spelled out convincingly in the three books reviewed earlier and once again in *Travesty*.

Laughland's *Travesty* focuses on 'The Corruption of International Justice' displayed in the Tribunal's performance in the seizure and trial of Milosevic, but in the process the book covers most of the issues central to evaluating the Balkan wars and the role of the various participants. The institutionalised lies are dismantled one after the next. On the matter of 'international justice', Laughland stresses the fact that the Tribunal is a political court with explicit political objectives that run counter to the requirements of any lawful justice.

This political court was organised mainly by the United States and Britain, countries that now freely attack others, but seek the fiction that will give their aggressions a *de jure* as well as quasi-moral cover. For this reason the rules of the Tribunal stood Nuremberg on its head. The Nuremberg Tribunal tried the Nazi leaders for their planning and carrying out the 'supreme international crime' of aggression. But the Tribunal Statute doesn't even mention crimes against peace (although with Kafkaesque hypocrisy it claims to be aiming at protecting the peace). Thus, Laughland notes, 'instead of applying existing international law, the ICTY has effectively overturned it'. The dominant powers now wanting to be able to intervene anywhere, the new principles to be applied were a throwback to the Nazis in disrespect for international borders. Laughland says that 'the commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of states, reaffirmed as part of the Nuremberg Principles in the United Nations Charter, is an attempt to institutionalise an anti-fascist theory of international relations. It is this theory which the allies destroyed in attacking Yugoslavia in 1999'. And it is this anti-fascist theory that the Tribunal and humanitarian interventionists have abandoned, opening the door to a more aggressive imperialism.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established not by passage of any law or signing of an international agreement (as in the case of the International Court of Justice) but by the decision of a few governments dominating the Security Council, and Laughland shows that this was beyond the authority of the Security Council (also shown in another outstanding but politically incorrect and neglected work, Hans Kochler's *Global Justice or Global Revenge?* [Springer-Verlag Wien, 2003]). It was also established with the open objective of using it to pursue one party in a conflict, presumed guilty in advance of any trial. The political objectives were allegedly to bring peace by punishing villains and thus serving as a deterrent, but also to serve the victims by what Laughland calls 'the therapeutic power of obtaining convictions'. But how can you deter without a bias against acquittal? Laughland also notes that 'The heavy emphasis on the rights of victims implies that "justice" is equivalent to a guilty

verdict, and it comes perilously close to justifying precisely the vengeance which supporters of criminal law say they reject'. 'Meanwhile, the notion that such trials have a politically educational function is itself reminiscent of the "agitation trials" conducted for the edification of the proletariat in early Soviet Russia.'

Laughland features the many-levelled lawlessness of the Tribunal. It was not created by law and there is no higher body that reviews its decisions and to whom appeals can be made. The judges, often political appointees and without judicial experience, judge themselves. Laughland points out that the judges have changed their rules scores of times, but none of these changes have ever been challenged by any higher authority. And their rules are made 'flexible', to give efficient results; the judges proudly noting that the Tribunal 'disregards legal formalities' and that it does not need 'to shackle itself to restrictive rules which have developed out of the ancient trial-by-jury system'. The rule changes have steadily reduced defendants' rights, but from the beginning those rights were shrivelled: Laughland quotes a US lawyer who helped draft the rules of evidence of the Tribunal, who acknowledges that they were 'to minimise the possibility of a charge being dismissed for lack of evidence'.

Laughland notes that the Tribunal is a 'prosecutorial organisation' whose 'whole philosophy and structure is accusatory'. This is why its judges gradually accepted a stream of rulings damaging to the defence and to the possibility of a fair trial – including the acceptance of hearsay evidence, secret witnesses, and closed sessions (the latter two categories applicable in the case of 40 per cent of the witnesses in the Milosevic trial). Tribunal rules even allow an appeal and retrial of an acquitted defendant – 'in other words, the Tribunal can imprison a person whom it has just found innocent'.

Laughland's devastating analysis of the Milosevic indictment and trial is a study in abuse of power in a politically-motivated show trial, incompetence, and faux-judiciary malpractice. The first indictment, issued in the midst of the Nato bombing war, on 27 May 1999, was put up in close coordination between the Tribunal and US and British officials, and its immediate political role was crystal clear – to eliminate the possibility of a negotiated settlement of the war and to deflect attention from Nato's turn to bombing civilian infrastructure (a legal war crime, adding to the 'supreme international crime', both here protected by this body supposedly connected to 'law' and protecting the peace!). The later kidnapping and transfer of Milosevic to The Hague was a violation of Yugoslav law and rulings of its courts. The Tribunal's Nato service and contempt for the rule of law was manifest.

The original indictment of Milosevic dealt only with his responsibility for alleged war crimes in Kosovo. But as Laughland points out, the wild claims of mass killing and genocide in Kosovo were not sustainable by evidence, and Nato bombing may have killed as many Kosovo civilians as the Yugoslav army. This accentuated the problem that if the Milosevic indictment was limited to Kosovo it would be hard to justify trying him for Kosovo crimes but not Nato leaders, a point even acknowledged by the Tribunal prosecutor. So two years after the first indictment, but after Milosevic's kidnapping and transfer to The Hague, the

indictment was extended to cover Bosnia and Croatia. A bit awkward, given that back in 1995 when Mladic and Karadzic were indicted for crimes in Bosnia, Milosevic was exempted. There was also the problem that the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs were not under Serb and Milosevic authority after the declared independence of Bosnia and Croatia, and Milosevic fought with them continuously in an effort to get them to accept various peace plans 1992-1995 (documented in Sir David Owen's *Balkan Odyssey*, another important book neglected perhaps because of its contra-party line evidence).

So the prosecution sought to make the case for 'genocide' by belatedly making Milosevic the boss in a 'joint criminal enterprise' (JCE) to get rid of Croats and Muslims in a 'Greater Serbia'. The initial indictments that confined his alleged crimes to Kosovo never mentioned any participation in a 'joint criminal enterprise' or drive for a 'Greater Serbia'. So the prosecution had to start over in collecting evidence for the crimes, 'joint criminal enterprise', and Greater Serbia aims in Bosnia and Croatia and tying them to Milosevic. Guilt decision first, then go for the evidence, was the rule for this political court. The trial moved ahead while the 'evidence' was still being assembled. Most of it was the testimony of scores of alleged witnesses to alleged crimes, a large majority with hearsay evidence, and almost none of it bearing on Milosevic's decision-making or differentiating it from what could have been brought against Izetbegovic, Tudjman or Bill Clinton. Laughland shows very persuasively that the inordinate length of the trial was in no way related to Milosevic's performance – a lie beloved by Marlise Simons of the *New York Times* and the mainstream media in the United States in general – it was based on the fact that this was a political trial that inherently demanded massive evidence, and the prosecution, unprepared and struggling to make a concocted charge plausible, poured it on, trying to make up for lack of any documentation of their charges of a Milosevic-based plan and orders with sheer volume of irrelevant witnesses to civil warfare and Kosovo-war crimes and pain.

A key element in the prosecution case was the belated charge that Milosevic was involved in a 'joint criminal enterprise' with Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia to get rid of non-Serbs by violence, looking towards that Greater Serbia. The concept of a 'joint criminal enterprise' is not to be found in prior law or even in the Tribunal Statute. It was improvised to allow the finding of guilt anywhere and anytime. You are part of a 'joint criminal enterprise' if you are doing something bad along with somebody else, or are attacking the same parties with somebody who does something bad. With that common end you don't even have to know about what that somebody else is doing to be part of a 'joint criminal enterprise'. Laughland has a devastating analysis of this wonderfully expansive and opportunistic doctrine, and his chapter dealing with it is entitled 'Just convict everyone', based on a quote from a lawyer-supporter of the Tribunal who finds the 'joint criminal enterprise' a bit much. Milosevic probably would have been convicted based on this catch-all, or catch anyone, doctrine. Of course, it fits much better the joint and purposeful Clinton, Blair, Nato attack on Yugoslavia, or the Croats US-supported ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Croatian Krajina in August 1995, but there is nobody to enforce the 'joint criminal enterprise'