

## Reviews

### Cuba Crisis

**Len Scott, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Threat of Nuclear War – Lessons from History*, Continuum Publishing, 222 pages, hardback ISBN 9781847060266, £25**

This book is perfectly described by its title. The events of those critical days of October 1962 for the whole world are set out in impressive detail. Most of us have seen similar accounts written by top-level contemporary participants, but memoirs understandably tend to show their authors in the best light. Len Scott has given us a record of events which is more detached.

The Cuba crisis was the highest of high-wire balancing acts. Both superpowers were equipped with massive nuclear weapon arsenals. Had a small proportion of the total exploded anywhere, life on earth as we know it would have ground to an end. George Kennan, one of the architects of the Cold War, described, in his later years, the level of weaponry as ‘grotesque’. It was to grow even more grotesque in the Reagan years during an arms race which led, as intended, to the financial ruin of the Soviet Union.

But ‘Lessons from History’? They are there to be learnt but we do not learn them. Nikita Khrushchev wrote these words to President Kennedy on 26 October, at the height of the crisis,

‘If people do not show wisdom then in the final analysis they will come to a clash like blind moles and then reciprocal extermination will begin’.

It very nearly did. Blind moles is an appropriate metaphor. What the book makes clear is that often enough neither side knew what the other side meant or intended. Communication travelled by unusual channels. Participants put their own glosses on messages. Assumptions were made of the most dangerous kind. For instance, members of the US Executive Committee of the National Security Council thought that Moscow could communicate with its nuclear weapon-armed submarines. But that meant the submarines coming to the surface. Submarine captains underwater were indeed blind moles.

The account of what went on in one such submarine is enough to show how extreme were the levels of risk. Captain Valentin Savitsky was in charge of one. For four hours during the blockade they had been submerged underneath United States warships which were trying to get them to surface by dropping small explosives – not of depth charge size. Temperatures had risen to 60 degrees centigrade. Crew members were collapsing under the strain and heat. Savitsky

ordered the officer responsible for the nuclear torpedoes to assemble one at battle readiness. He is quoted as saying,

‘Maybe the war has already started up there while we are doing somersaults here ... we are going to blast them now. We will die but we will sink them all. We will not disgrace our navy.’

Fortunately, even at such a time of tension, wiser words prevailed. The submarine came up to the surface.

What would have happened had a nuclear torpedo been fired? Who knows. The book is full of hypotheticals. What if this? What if that? What if the other? It may well have been that, in the eventuality of an actual firing of one, or a few, nuclear weapons ‘the other side’ may have realised that full-scale war was not intended. Perhaps a junior officer had exceeded his duties. Perhaps there had been an accident. Whatever the hypotheticals, the dangers were very great indeed. One can play poker with limited stakes without any worry. But this, as the author makes clear, was not poker and the stakes were not limited.

There were other critical moments. It was not just a matter of one submarine captain getting hysterical. A U2 was shot down over Cuba and the US hawks wanted retaliation. Fortunately, Kennedy had taken direct control himself, and the powers of the hawks were limited. Another U2 went into Soviet air space as if reconnoitring for a nuclear first strike. The Soviets did not respond as they might have done. A taped simulation of a Soviet attack was put into a computer and for a short time it seemed that an American city had been targeted. Kennedy did not panic.

Robert McNamara said when he came over to England recently: ‘we were saved not by good judgement but by good luck’. Nuclear deterrence presupposes extreme rationality and accident free procedures.

This most interesting book is another reminder of what the report of the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament said in 1978:

‘Enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority’.

If there is a weakness in the book it lies in the author’s own apparent lack of knowledge about current nuclear disarmament opportunities. He asks, in his last chapter, this important question: what will it take ‘to create the political conditions for nuclear disarmament?’ One should not ask questions of such importance and not try to answer them.

I commend to him the draft abolition treaty prepared by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and lodged with the United Nations by Costa Rica. As global opinion begins to understand that nuclear weapons do nothing to solve the actual problems of insecurity today, the political conditions are moving in a more rational direction.

*Bruce Kent*

## Saskatchewan Uranium

**Jim Harding, *Canada's Deadly Secret: Saskatchewan Uranium and the Global Nuclear System*, Fernwood Publishing (Ocean Vista Lane, Black Point, Nova Scotia BOJ 1B0, Canada) 272 pages, paperback ISBN 9781552662267, £13.95**

Jim Harding, the author of this detailed account of Saskatchewan's engagement with the nuclear industry, is a retired Professor of Environment and Justice Studies. Like the sociologist Charles Perrow, who wrote *Normal Accidents*, he has learned several new disciplines as a persistent inquirer into the nuclear business and he rewards his readers with plenty of little-published but well-validated information. His message in brief is that there is no peaceful atom, no safe radioactive waste management, and many health hazards.

Because of Canada's rich sources of uranium ore in the north of the province of Saskatchewan, Harding starts with mining – the front end of the nuclear business. We learn that the inhabitants discovered later that, from 1953 to 1969, all the uranium mined in Saskatchewan went to make the massive stockpile of US nuclear weapons. Mine sites remain largely un-restored, with waste in the form of tailings – finely-divided, crushed rock in mine tips or in semi-liquid suspension in lagoons – left behind to pollute the land, air and water supplies and the food chain of the people who live there. These radioactive residues, often uncharted, amount to millions of tons and worldwide to hundreds of millions of tons. In the USA a total of 250 million tons has been estimated, and in Canada close to 200 million tons.

In the United Kingdom, since the Aberfan tip slide which included tailings and which killed 144 people in October 1966, 112 of them children, we have legislation on tips and lagoons. The Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969 and its regulations require design by qualified persons, site surveys, geotechnical assessment, tip design specifications, and competent supervision and inspection. Such regulation is not found worldwide. At a recent meeting of the Institution of Mining Engineers in Cardiff we heard that tailings dams have been built up to 100m high and that, worldwide, tailings dam failures still occur at a reported rate of 25 a year. The explanation for such hubris in design is that neither governments abroad nor investors have seen fit to set constraints. The difference between a 'successful' design and a similar one that failed can be little more than that one was affected by landslip causing overtopping or by earth tremors sufficient to cause solids to behave as liquids.

Jim Harding describes lagoon failures resulting in the release of millions of litres of radioactive liquid. Because Canada was a founding partner of the Manhattan project to produce atomic bombs, it is not surprising that radiation hazards were not acknowledged or they were understated. Even as late as 1989, the Canada Nuclear Association, in a pamphlet, *How Do We Protect the Environment in Uranium Mining*, used in schools, failed to state that uranium

tailings are radioactive. Thorium, for example, has a half life of 76,000 years and for one and a half million years will continue to generate carcinogenic radon daughters. Not only mine workers have been affected. By 1990, it was reported that 300 miners in Ontario had died of lung cancer – likely to have been caused by the inhalation and ingestion of radon daughter particles. Pollution on the scale described means that local communities also are vulnerable to polluted air, water and food. Many of the local communities are indigenous Americans whose concerns about land rights are not yet alleviated.

In the period reviewed by Jim Harding, permitted levels of occupational exposure to ionising radiation were reduced from 350 millisieverts per year (350mSv) to 50mSv per year and, by 1990, the International Commission on Radiological Protection advised a maximum dose of 20mSv per year averaged over five years. Now it is accepted by the US National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionising Radiation (BEIR) that there is no safe level of exposure, and in the United Kingdom we require operators to limit exposure to members of the public to 1mSv per year. There was consternation when experts advised Sellafield workers to think twice about having children, but it remains pertinent for us to think of the reasons that allow people in industry to be exposed to doses 50 times higher than those permitted to members of the public. Harding reports that traces of depleted uranium have been detected in air in Britain which can be correlated with the use of depleted uranium weapons by coalition forces in Iraq. Such controversy as remains in dose assessments appears to lie between the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose mandate is to promote the use of atomic energy, and the World Health Organisation, which appears to have a subordinate role in matters nuclear. Perhaps we should be hearing much more from the WHO on world trends in the incidence of radiation related diseases such as leukaemia and myeloma.

The political climate in which the nuclear industry developed in Canada is examined with the author's particular interest, and sometimes dismay, in the positions taken by the New Democratic Party (NDP). In 1963, the NDP opposed the placing of US nuclear armed missiles on Canadian soil but, by 1971, the Saskatchewan NDP provincial government was seeking a uranium enrichment plant and, in 1973, unsuccessfully sought a heavy water plant. In 1974, the NDP provincial government created the public uranium corporation Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation (SMDC). This was the climate in which Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd sought to sell its Candu reactor to Argentina's military government, and came close to selling one to Iraq. In 1979, the NDP provincial government formed the Uranium Secretariat whose publications were regarded by the no-nuclear movement as disinformation and, in that year, the Regina Group for Non-Nuclear Society published Jim Harding's father's anti-nuclear *Correspondence with the Premier*.

In 1981, with Ronald Reagan in the White House escalating a second nuclear arms race, the demand for uranium increased and US cruise missile testing began in western Canada. In 1987, some months after the Chernobyl explosion, the Inter-

Church Uranium Committee (ICUC) was campaigning to make Saskatoon a nuclear-weapons-free zone. As in Europe, the debate between the advocates of a nuclear and a non-nuclear society was in full swing. Jim Harding records instances of bias – in official enquiries such as those into nuclear spills, in the regulators' promotion of the industry, and in the industry's so-called educational material. He reports the not-so-readily acknowledged public subsidy of £500bn for the nuclear industry in the USA and describes the insurance waivers and other subsidies which provided the appearance of viability for a Canadian industry that could not manage its waste and which made inadequate provision for an already polluted future. The neglect of developments in renewable energy, and the insupportable claims that new nuclear reactors could have a timely effect on climate change, are the topics of the final chapters of the book.

This is a book that comes closer than many others to exploring the reasons for institutional support for all matters nuclear in the face of the world-wide proliferation of nuclear weapon-making material and the radiation hazards now enlarged by the threat of terrorism. In the United Kingdom terrorism is a topic that the government and the regulators now refuse to discuss on the grounds of national security, in spite of their statutory duty to provide information to the public<sup>1</sup>.

One has to conclude that mendacity in matters nuclear is international. Two recent examples in the United Kingdom must be mentioned. Our government's last two consultations on its already-taken decision to encourage the building of new nuclear reactors were invalid for that reason. A High Court judge described the first as 'misleading and unlawful'. On waste management the government modified the conclusions of its waste management committee (CoRWM) to claim that co-disposal of legacy waste and waste from new build was feasible. (Did you know that the difference between a repository and a depository has been abolished by the government's definition of the one being the same as the other?)<sup>2</sup>

Researchers have since argued that co-disposal of the hotter higher activity spent fuel waste will require a repository three times larger than one for legacy waste alone.

The conclusion reached by Hugh Richards, an anti-nuclear campaigning colleague, in *Too Hot to Handle*<sup>3</sup>, that no feasible design of such a repository exists is supported by the far from dove-like International Atomic Energy Agency. Last year they warned that Britain must not go ahead with a new generation of nuclear power stations until it has a 'clear and robust' plan in place for dealing with the twin problems of decommissioning and waste treatment. The agency's executive director said:

'The spent fuel issue is the most critical one for nuclear. It will not develop if there is not a credible and satisfactory answer to the management of spent fuel and one that is convincing for the public.'

No such facility exists here or anywhere else. This is reminiscent of the 1976 but still extant recommendation of the Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution<sup>4</sup> which stated that there should be no commitment to a

large nuclear power programme ‘until it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that a method exists to ensure the safe containment of long lived highly radioactive waste for the indefinite future’. Of the ‘indefinite future’ the Commission said

‘We must assume that these wastes will remain dangerous and will need to be isolated from the biosphere for hundreds of thousands of years. In considering arrangements for dealing with such waste man is faced with time scales that transcend his experience.’

We are left to ponder what experience and disposition makes for hawks and doves in the nuclear debate. Jim Harding makes the connection throughout that you start with the bomb. If you can contemplate the death of a million people at the push of a button you are on the way to being a reactor hawk. There are few who would be without the bomb but still want a reactor and all its problems.

The book has a chronology of Canadian nuclear affairs but would benefit also from an index. A foreword by Helen Caldicott, whose most recent book *Nuclear Power is Not the Answer* was reviewed in *Spokesman 99*, sets the scene and supports the author in his conclusions.

*Christopher Gifford*

#### Footnotes

- 1 The regulations dealing with foreseeable emergencies are the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 SI: 2971.
- 2 In *Managing Radioactive Waste Safely* DEFRA, DE and DTI 2007 page 67.
- 3 *Too Hot to Handle*, Hugh Richards 2008 – a response to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation on radioactive waste management.
- 4 In *Nuclear Power and the Environment* (also known as the Flowers report) Cmnd 618 HMSO 1976.

### Hiding the Truth

**Achin Vanaik (editor), *Selling US Wars*, 400 pages, Interlink Publishing/Transnational Institute, paperback ISBN 9781566566681, US\$20**

This collection of essays prepared by members of the Transnational Institute has been published at a particularly appropriate moment for those with an interest in North-South politics. Not that we haven’t been here before. The United States bogged down in a war started on the pretext of a lie; oil prices going through the roof; the dollar collapsing. And add to these an asset bubble that is deflating in instalments as central banks, sometimes unilaterally, other times multilaterally, step in to nationalise tranches of their trading banks’ debts, although all the while denying that is in fact what they’re doing.

Achin Vanaik’s introduction sets out the route that the discourse is to follow. The chosen starting point is the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism. After the collapse of the Iron Curtain, it quickly became apparent

that the use of the threat from the East, although useful in controlling radical movements in the West, revealed that the securitocracy of the West had been inhibited to the extent in which it wanted to control its own population and in how they wished to transfer economic control from state to private hands. Freed from these bounds, the United States in particular has set out to, as they would call it, 'expand freedom': much in the way that expanding freedom for the pike increases the possibility of death for the minnow.

*Selling US Wars* is mainly an investigation of the way in which the US attempts to manufacture consent for its actions. It has three spheres of influence in which to pedal its ideas: first, its own domestic audience, second, the target states, and, thirdly, the rest of the world. The book investigates US public diplomacy under six different 'ideological banners', or, for the sake of clarity, excuses. First is the 'global war on terror', then 'weapons of mass destruction', in the wrong hands of course, followed by 'failed states', 'humanitarian intervention', 'regime change in the name of democracy' and 'the war on drugs'.

Each of the chapters on these six themes are broadly united by their common concern (a) to identify the origins or emergence of the particular legitimizing discourse or ideological banner; (b) to examine the character and composition of the banner; (c) to point out the purposes or aims that lie behind the unfolding of the banner; (d) to evaluate how effective the use of the banner has actually been; (e) to highlight the falsity of the banner or the dishonesties, deceits, and hypocrisies that have guided or lain behind its use; (f) to suggest how in all moral honesty and seriousness one should address the particular problem, be it terrorism, violations of universal human rights, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or opium, heroin, and cocaine production, distribution, and use.

Walden Bello's conclusion to his own contribution follows closely Tariq Ali's foreword quotation from Trotsky at the time of the Wall Street Crash, that the US will operate more ruthlessly under economic stress than during a period of boom. Bello's conclusion was written before the sub-prime market crash, so his comments about an economy built on easy credit awaiting their day of reckoning show some prescience.

The themes chosen and dissected are indeed powerful ones in the march from Cold War to neoliberal globalisation. The issues of American exceptionalism with regards to international law, and the shameful me-too antics of the United Kingdom government to provide legitimising cover for the US attempts to denigrate the UN, are well covered by Mariano Aguirre. He explores the use of the cover of humanitarian intervention to send in the military, which carries with it the useful collateral damage of fomenting splits in liberal ranks. All humanitarian intervention since and including the war on Yugoslavia has been carried out by military forces and, although ordered to the areas for relief by politicians, these forces have in their operations been directed by military logic. The skies have darkened with B-52 bombers flying overhead long before aid trucks and ambulances have been ordered in on the ground.

The appearance of Nato out of area, or wherever the US wishes to deploy, has

changed the organisation's *raison d'être* from Cold War defence to power projection on behalf of the rich, white north against those of the poor black south who happen to be living on top of raw materials that the north requires. Why else would Britain have ordered two huge new aircraft carriers, except for future imperial interventions? It is worth pointing to the contribution of Phyllis Bennis and her comments on the effects of the great American adventure in Iraq on the extension of democracy in that wretched country:

'The reality in Iraq is (1) the establishment of an American puppet regime that will enable the US to have permanent military bases; (2) the shameful imposition of a basically American-drafted constitution under foreign occupation; (3) the promotion of a corporate privatization that most suits American business and state interests; (4) the activation of a divide-and-rule policy that has created terrible sectarian hostilities now threatening to become an enduring civil war. So much then for the US claim to promote democracy!'

The history of Britain's imperial past should have cautioned us against all of these problems, but it was our misfortune at this juncture to have the least informed Prime Minister with regards to foreign affairs in living memory. No one has been able to find any coherent foreign policy utterances traceable to Tony Blair prior to his elevation as Prime Minister. Under these circumstances, one would have thought that he might have at least shown some humility or perhaps have read the works of those with knowledge to offer on the subject. Perhaps he could start now by reading *Selling US Wars*, then enter a complete confession of guilt and a period of condign penance for all of the misery and suffering he has caused.

*Henry McCubbin*

## **Darwin's Legacy**

**Janet Browne, *Darwin's Origin of Species: A Biography*, 192 pages, Atlantic Books, ISBN 9781843543947, £7.99**

In the year of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150<sup>th</sup> of the publication of *Origin of Species*, which are to be celebrated at Cambridge in July 2009 (for programme see <http://www.Darwin2009.cam.uk>) there will be much spoken and written about the great man, and his influence ever since, on our ideas about evolution. A first start has already been made by Janet Browne, Darwin's foremost biographer, in a short and highly readable new biography. This covers the five year voyage of the *Beagle* (1831-36), Darwin's studies of his immense collection of plants and bones, his long search for 'a theory with which to work', the publication of *Origin of Species* in 1859, the controversies which it aroused among scientists and churchmen, and, finally, the legacy which informs our present understanding of evolution.

Janet Browne devotes much attention to the influence on Darwin's thought of

Thomas Robert Malthus, whose book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* came into Darwin's hands in 1838. Although the book had been published forty years earlier, its thesis, that populations grow faster than the food supply to feed them, had received much attention during the 1830s food riots in Britain, when food prices rose as supplies dwindled, and protest grew about the protectionist Corn Laws and the repressive Poor Laws. The idea that the healthy and well fed survived while the poor and weak went to the wall seemed to be quite acceptable to those who were well placed. Farmers selected the herds and crops that had proved strongest. There was no divine intervention there, as those with religious beliefs saw in human history. 'But what happened in nature?', Darwin asked.

'Being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence,' he wrote in his *Autobiography*, 'it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. Here then I had at last a theory by which to work'.

In fact it was Herbert Spencer who coined the phrase 'the survival of the fittest', and though Darwin came to use it, he was anxious to avoid any religious assumption of a divinely select people or the racist implications that came to be associated in Social Darwinism. Darwin wrote of 'natural selection', but later decided that a more neutral wording would have been more appropriate, such as 'natural preservation'. There should be no suggestion of an outside intelligence making the selection. It was the principle of divergence in development that Darwin insisted on. It was always advantageous for living beings to diversify. Those diversities best adapted to their surroundings survived, the others died out. This was how evolution took place over millions of years. This was, of course, what distanced him not only from the fundamentalists who believed that God created the earth and all that was on it, a few thousand years earlier, but also from those who saw subsequent changes as the intervention of a divine power or, in today's thought, of 'intelligent design'.

Controversy over Darwin's ideas raged most powerfully among those who sought to apply them to human development in the espousal, by many professional people, of the concept of eugenics, and the founding, in 1907, of an Eugenics Society, under the chairmanship of Darwin's son, Leonard. This had the explicit aim of 'improving and controlling the masses', in effect by sterilising those of supposedly low intelligence. Such 'Social Darwinism' was employed to justify slavery and colonial rule over 'lesser races without the law'. This had no support in scientific evidence.

Janet Browne's final chapter on the Legacy of Darwinism covers the discovery of genes and the reconciliation of Darwin's original proposals with the science of genetics, leading to Richard Dawkins' concept of the 'selfish gene', not meaning a gene for selfishness or for any other human characteristic, but a gene demanding its reproduction. Debates over these ideas provided an opening for a surprising revival of creationist thought, reaching even into school textbooks first in the United States and then in Britain.

What is perhaps unexpected is that Janet Browne says little or nothing about the influence of ideas of the survival of the fittest on economic theories. She recognises that Darwinian ideas took off at the end of the Nineteenth Century because they justified an economic system which rewarded the well placed in a fiercely competitive market. But she does not examine how the system works today.

The revolt in the 1930s, led by John Maynard Keynes, against *laissez-faire* in economic organisation was aimed deliberately at such competitive assumptions. But they have remained remarkably strong. Even a recent so-called ‘New Labour’ government in the United Kingdom has hesitated to intervene in the struggle for survival of workers, companies, and even banks, in a fiercely competitive market. The assumption that the fittest survive depends on the definition of fitness. It has to be asked what the competitors are fit for. They may be the fittest for making money, but the results of such competition are obviously not the best for human survival, even for the planet’s survival, given the uncontrolled using up of resources, and the resultant destruction of the planet’s self-generating capacities. Darwin was well aware that human survival, like the survival of many animals, depended on the evolution of a capacity to co-operate as well as to compete. He knew that Adam Smith, whose recommendations of competition are still enshrined in the promulgations of the Adam Smith Institute, advanced also the theory of moral sentiment. Without such safeguards, who indeed will survive?

*Michael Barratt Brown*

## Ford and After

**Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols (editors), *The Fordism of Ford and Modern Management: Fordism and Post-Fordism*, Edward Elgar Publishing, two volume set, 1,032 pages, hardback ISBN 9781858989488, £295**

**Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols (editors), *Patterns of Work in the Post-Fordist Era: Fordism and Post-Fordism*, Edward Elgar Publishing, two volume set, 1,176 pages, hardback ISBN 9781845423247, £295, Elgar Reference Collection**

These two ponderous collections have brought together a variety of treatments of what Ethan Kapstein, the Director of Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations in New York, described as the break in the post-war bargain built around the Bretton Woods agreement.

‘The global economy is leaving millions of disaffected workers in its train. Inequality, unemployment, and endemic poverty have become its handmaidens. Rapid technological change, and heightening international competition are fraying the job markets of the major industrialist countries. At the same time systemic pressures are curtailing every government’s ability to respond with new spending. Just when working people need the nation state as a buffer from the world economy, it is abandoning them.’

The first two volumes of this collection give us an overview of industrial life according to Henry Ford, with an extensive excursion into the mores of the Japanese automobile industry. Innovation raced ahead, and the literature followed it in the 1980s, with extensive discussions of flexible specialisation and lean production, dissected in the second two volumes.

The shaping hand of the Marxist journal *Capital and Class* focuses our attention on what is called the Third Italy, and what is called 'the decline of the mass-collective worker'. The Third Italy bases itself on the analysis of small engineering firms in Emilia-Romagna, extending to the Marches, Tuscany and Umbria. In happier days, this wide region was known as the 'red belt', before the remorseless advance of the Italian Right. Its working practices represented the powerful continuity of an artisanal culture, suddenly revived by the crisis of profitability in conventional industries. It had become necessary to find ways of intensifying productivity, if possible engaging a workforce whose alienation had become legendary, just as Ethan Kapstein was to report.

Much of the evidence for his dispiriting conclusion is drawn from journals with a socialist provenance: *Marxism Today* contributes pieces by John Atkinson and Denis Gregory, and by Doreen Massey. *Capital and Class* furnishes pieces by Bob Carter and Adam Tickell, and by John Holloway on conditions in Nissan. Another piece on call centres is gathered from *Soundings*. So many of our readers may already be familiar with some of these contributions.

How far is post-Fordism different from what went before? Possibly, it may be more profitable, more labour intensive, and more 'efficient'. But the numerous apologists who have celebrated its greater humanity will find a powerful indictment in these pages, which are anything but rosy in their appreciation of the meaning of these changes. Was it not Tolstoy who said that the masters would do anything for their serfs except get off their backs?

The book is structured into sections about the general meaning of Fordism and post-Fordism, the arguments about work organisation, skilling and deskilling, and then an important section on changes in the motor industry which examines changes in the Ford Motor Company and specific examples taken from Australia and Mexico, together with a case study of changes at Volkswagen in Brazil.

Another section looks at the applications of post-Fordist technologies outside the motor industry in other sectors including clothing, the broiler industry, and meat packing. Two sections consider the developments in call centres, and in financial services; one gives five case studies on customer services, and another considers employment in the State sector.

There is one study of developments in a privatised furniture company in Siberia, which emphasises a prevalent disillusionment among the workers. This gives rise to a serious gap in the work, which is in many respects very wide-ranging and catholic in its coverage. But nowhere does it examine any of the tumultuous events in China, where the mutations of capitalism have been extreme, and the implications of its experience convoluted.

*Elizabeth Trapp*

**Exploration**

**Mike Marqusee, *If I Am Not for Myself: Journey of an Anti-Zionist Jew*, Verso, 320 pages, hardback ISBN 9781844672141, £16.99**

Mike Marqusee will be familiar to readers of *The Spokesman* as an active political participant in the Left and anti-war movements in Britain, but also as a perceptive writer and journalist whose breadth of subject-matter encompasses cricket, the Labour Party and Bob Dylan. This latest offering is clearly a most personal and deeply-felt exploration of the connections between family, Jewishness, nationalism, Zionism and its wrongs. It is a brave endeavour, which places him firmly amongst the list of Jewish detractors from Zionism, along with such notables as Chomsky, Finkelstein, Barenboim, Pinter and others.

Predominantly, the substance of the book is negotiated through the life and vicissitudes of the author's maternal grandfather, Edward Vivien Morand, or EVM for short, and the discovery by Marqusee of an old luggage case containing his grandfather's papers. Morand, who added the 'd' to be more Jewish, was of Jewish Lithuanian stock on his maternal side with an Irish father who died shortly after his birth. Needless to say, EVM was quite a character: lawyer, radio broadcaster, aspiring congressman, journalist, political and community leader, trade unionist and, sadly, Zionist. EVM lived and worked in the Bronx all his life amongst the heterogeneous Jewish and Irish communities which dominated that area of New York up until the 1960s. His most active political period covered the 1930s till the late 1950s – the era of the Popular Front, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Second World War and its McCarthyite aftermath. This was a time fraught with apprehension for the Jews of the Bronx, a period well captured by the novel *The Plot against America* by Philip Roth. Although overt anti-Semitism is not the predominant form adopted by American racism, it was by no means uncommon well into the 1950s, with its undertones playing a part in McCarthyism. Racism's most common manifestation, of course, was reserved for those with a black skin, whose struggle EVM spent a lifetime supporting, as late as 1965 joining with Martin Luther King on the Selma march. There were, it seems, few struggles of the time that EVM was not involved in, from the Scottsboro boys, Sacco and Vanzetti, defence of the Spanish republic, anti-Nazi boycotts, and numerous activities within the Jewish community relating to Zionism. There is even a connection with Bertrand Russell and the New York 'Free Speech' campaign, formed initially over the cancellation of Russell's tenure at City College, which was driven by Christian clerics and politicians already distinguished in the service of anti-Semitism. Russell's victimisation was the beginning of a calculated campaign to restrict academic freedom and other lecturers were singled out for dismissal.

The book describes the political journey and travails of EVM through the mire of New York's Tammany Hall politics, the New Deal Democratic Party, the American Labour Party, the Socialist and Communist parties, and the unsuccessful candidature for President of Henry Wallace in 1948 for the ALP.

There is a great deal of insightful and informative writing about both the international and specifically American political scene in this period and its relevance to the subsequent evolution and stultifying of possible options for the American Left. With the end of the Second World War and the exposure of the full truth, in all its horror, of the fate of European Jewry, we see EVM move up a gear to defend the Palestine partition and the inchoate Israeli state, and failing to appreciate the terrible wrong being done to the Palestinian people. It was not a mistake that his grandson was to make.

The areas covered by the book are spread widely but connected in some way: Jewish history, philosophy, Zionism, Judaism and scripture which amply demonstrate Marqusee's intellectual prowess and commitment to a socialism defined by its humanism. It also covers issues related to the *Nakba*, the partition, British imperial policy towards Palestine, and the effects of the founding of Israel on the Jewish Diaspora in Arab lands. These insights on Jewish history, debates, schisms and ideas enable him to see parallels with other demonised communities, specifically the Islamic community in Western society. The obvious parallel is the many xenophobic attitudes common in the host societies: the idea of the secret agenda, the world conspiracy, the Elders of Zion, and the Al Qaeda caliphate, the supposed loyalty to a theological creed, Judaism and Islam. Marqusee sees the debates within the two communities as comparable also: should they pursue assimilation or separate development? Who are the community leaders and representatives to be: the synagogue and the mosque, or others? Much of Jewish history has been a battle against authority within the community and against religious conformity. Marqusee tells of visits and conversations about Jewish and Muslim identities and beliefs in the Asian sub-continent, but I expect they talked about cricket as well!

There are a small number of autobiographical vignettes throughout the book of which perhaps the most revealing is that of his adolescent experiences, growing up in suburban America. The young Marqusee, brought up within a family comfortably affluent, now matured from its tentative communist background to the liberal wing of Reformed Judaism, attending Sunday School to be taught scripture and the necessity to defend Israel and 'intoxicated by the ideas of justice and equality', discovers an inconsistency that troubles him profoundly. He attends a lecture at Sunday School class delivered by a soldier from the Israeli Defence Force fresh from victory in the Six Day War, who in the course of his peroration describes the native Palestinian population in terms akin to the racial slurs delivered by southern segregationists about Negroes, which of course he was familiar with. The youthful Marqusee questions this in both the lecture and at home and earns the censure of all, his father remarking that his son was suffering 'some Jewish self-hatred', a malady the luckless patient did not realise he had contracted. Further shocks are admonished at a Boy Scout camping holiday, where he meets for the first time overt anti-Semitism, at the end of which no doubt he felt distinctly less like one of 'the most comfortable Jews that ever walked the planet', a previous description by the author of modern American Jewry.

The book as a whole gives an insight into the processes by which the Jewish community within America, which had been in many ways like EVM a stalwart of Leftist movements in general, was ostensibly funnelled by Zionism and the reaction to the Holocaust into the slavish and vociferous support for the Israeli state, ignoring actions that they would not countenance closer to home. The importance to Israel of this support within the United States of the ‘Jewish lobby’, (Marqusee objects strongly to the term for reasons explained in the book, but basically, the portrayal of a non-existent uniformity of opinion within the Jewish community in support of Zionism) is important but by no means the deciding factor for the State Department’s close relationship with Israel. He has taken to task James Petras on this matter, as has Norman Finkelstein, and you can read the arguments in the book, which I found saddening but probably necessary. The reader will have to decide the matter for him/herself. Also earmarked for criticism is Tam Dalyell for his implication of blame for the Iraq war on a ‘Jewish’ or ‘Zionist’ ‘cabal’, a statement which he subsequently retracted in that form.

Marqusee’s book is an important contribution to the debate both within and outside the Jewish community. It is also valuable for those in the anti-war movement who need to contest vigorously any attempt to slur the movement as anti-Jewish. The media and political opponents, given half a chance, will paint the movement with an anti-Semitic brush. It is therefore in this context that we must remember that support for Zionism and the actions of the Israeli state are only supported by the West because the state of Israel in its present form corresponds to their interests, as a useful component for keeping the lid on attempts by any of the Middle Eastern nations to pursue policies conflicting with Western interests. It is, perhaps, also that the Israeli state has another useful purpose, as Marqusee mentions: it was Winston Churchill who seemingly saw Zionism as the cure for the Jewish disease, Bolshevism.

*John Daniels*

### **Bin Laden in Bosnia**

**John R. Schindler, *Unholy Terror: Bosnia, Al Qaeda, and the Rise of Global Jihad*, Zenith Press, 388 pages, hardback ISBN 9780760330036, £18.99**

John Schindler is professor of strategy at the United States Naval War College and was for many years the chief Balkan expert with the United States National Security Agency. In this book he has spilt the beans from what he learnt in the Balkan wars of the 1990s and most particularly in the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995. He assures his readers that he has not revealed any secret documents, but the 35 pages of notes and references in the book show the most extensive research drawing upon the author’s mastery of several languages, both European and Arabic. The book will be an eye-opener for those who have gone along with the standard explanation for the Yugoslav tragedy: that it was caused by the so-called

'ethnic cleansing' policy of the Serbs, and of Slobodan Milosevic in particular, with the poor Moslems of Bosnia cast as the chief victims (see in the United State, particularly, Marlise Simons, David Rieff and his mother Susan Sontag, and in Britain Ed Vulliamy, Michael Ignatieff and Alan Little.<sup>1</sup>

There has always been an alternative view to the one demonising the Serbs, a view which I have taken in reporting on the trial of Milosevic before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at the Hague (See M. Barratt Brown et al., *The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic 2004*)<sup>2</sup>, a view which was strongly urged by Edward Herman and David Peterson from the US (ibid.), who list 23 journalists whose views, they say, were generally ignored. These included Balkan experts such as Diana Johnstone<sup>3</sup> and John Laughland<sup>4</sup>.

Alice Mahon, the one-time Labour MP, and member of the Nato Parliamentary Assembly and chair of its Civilian Affairs Committee, for which she made many visits to war-torn Yugoslavia, also holds an alternative view. She appeared as a witness in the last days of the Tribunal's hearings on Milosevic, and added to her support for this contrary view her conviction that the infamous so-called 'Racak massacre', which served as the trigger for the Nato bombing of Belgrade, was primarily an invention of US Ambassador Walker (see M. Barratt Brown, *Slobodan Milosevic and how the US used Al Qaeda in the Balkans, 2006*).<sup>5</sup> On this view, Milosevic and the Serbs were not exonerated of all responsibility for the Yugoslav wars but had to share it with the leaders of the Croats, the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosovan Albanians. The break-up of Yugoslavia, moreover, was then attributed less to internal divisions than to external influence – of the Germans on Slovenia and Croatia, and of the United States on the Bosnian Muslims (see M. Barratt Brown, *From Tito to Milosevic: Yugoslavia the Lost Country, 2005*).<sup>6</sup>

It was particularly the influence of the United States with the Bosnian Moslems that appeared to have led the Bosnian Moslem leader, Alija Izetbegovic, to renege on a UN peace plan that had been negotiated at Lisbon in March of 1992 (see Barratt Brown, 2004). The enthusiasm of Izetbegovic to establish a religious fundamentalist Moslem state in Bosnia was evident to many observers in Bosnia and to some outside. Indeed, Izetbegovic was jailed in 1983 along with others, many from the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo, for his contacts with Tehran after the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran, and for the secret circulation of his book *The Islamic Declaration*. In the post-Tito disintegration of Yugoslavia, he came out of jail in 1988 and founded the Party of Democratic Action (HDA) in Bosnia, with many of the more fundamentalist Moslems, but presented himself, when he became President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as a moderate to the majority of secular Moslems in Bosnia and likewise to the Western world in general. His presentation was accepted by outside opinion, despite the well known appeal by Izetbegovic for Iranian funding and arms for the Bosnian Moslem army (Barratt Brown, 2005). It had also been revealed at the Tribunal that two journalists – one, Eve-Ann Prentice from the London *Times*, and another, Renate Flottau from *Der Spiegel* in Germany – called as witnesses at Milosevic's trial, claimed to have seen

Osama Bin Laden entering Izetbegovic's office in Sarajevo in 1994, and that Bin Laden himself and the foreign members of the Bosnian army had been issued with Bosnian passports (Barratt Brown, 2006).

All these reports were hotly denied by the Bosnian authorities, and an element of doubt hung over their accuracy. Such doubts can now be dismissed as a result of what is revealed in Schindler's book. This comprises absolutely firm evidence for Izetbegovic's determination, however much he denied it, to build a pure Moslem religious state in Bosnia, for President Clinton's close involvement in supporting Izetbegovic, and, more importantly, in bringing Mujahideen fighters from Afghanistan to Bosnia, for the presence of Osama Bin Laden in Sarajevo, for the Bosnian passport granted to Bin Laden and to many of the 2,000 Mujahideen who fought in the Bosnian Moslem army. To all this confirmation of what many of us suspected, Schindler adds new and unsuspected evidence of the continuing role of Al Qaeda in using Bosnia as the training ground for those who launched the assaults on Khartoum, New York, London, Madrid and Bali (Schindler, pp.296-7). It is an extraordinary indictment.

Two questions remain unanswered: first, why most Western journalists accepted Izetbegovic's pretences and actual lies and supported the Moslems against the Serbs in Bosnia; and, second, why Clinton, apparently against the advice of both the CIA and the War Department, encouraged the Mujahideen to enter Bosnia, to support the Moslem forces. The answer to the first question about journalists, particularly from the United Kingdom, whose bias has to be explained, must be the charisma of Izetbegovic and his extraordinary capacity for concealing his true aims and presenting himself and the Bosnian Moslems as innocent victims of Serbian aggression. Some basic anti-Serb feeling, because of Serb association with Russian Communism, stirred up by German historic Slavo-phobia, may have played a part. But the fact was that the Bosnian Moslems and the Croats, who became allied with them on US instigation, were brilliantly advised by the US public relations company Ruder Finn. (Schindler, p.107). On top of all this, we need to notice the fact that foreign journalists were housed in the Holiday Inn hotel in Sarajevo, which was regularly shelled by Serb forces, and occasionally even from Moslem fire designed to appear to be from Serb guns, to build up anti-Serb feeling (Schindler pp.84 ff. and *passim* in the chapter entitled 'The Great Deceit').

The most extreme example of Izetbegovic's deception is the true story of the Srebrenica massacre, which has entered the history books as the cold-blooded murder by the Serbs of seven, eight or even more thousand Moslems – men, women and children – rounded up in Srebrenica. Schindler accepts the account provided by Generals Morillon and Lewis MacKenzie, commanders of the UN forces in Bosnia, and by the Dutch peace keeping force, viz. that Izetbegovic deliberately withdrew the Muslim forces so that the Serbs were able to enter Srebrenica unopposed and to carry out the killings of Muslim men in revenge for the thousands of Serbs killed over the previous years in the villages around Srebrenica by Moslem forces under the command of Naser Oric. Some 1,300 bodies of Moslem dead men have been exhumed in Srebrenica, some of them with

their hands tied behind their backs for execution. In all conscience this is a terrible number, but it is not seven or eight thousand. Several thousand women and children were reported by the Red Cross to have escaped to Sarajevo and Tuzla. The reason for Izetbegovic's action, as he claimed himself, was that Clinton had said that the US forces could not intervene with air strikes against the Serb base at Pale unless there was a major massacre of Muslims by the Serbs to provide the excuse (Schindler, pp.317-8).

This brings us to the decisions of President Clinton. What led him, despite lacking support from either his Intelligence Services or the Defence Department, to give every kind of allowance to Izetbegovic, including the clandestine supply of arms, in contravention of UN resolutions, even to the extent of encouraging Mujahideen to join the Bosnian army? The US had supported Mujahideen recruits from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, including Osama Bin Laden, to help to defeat the Russians in Afghanistan, but why bring them out to Bosnia? US ambassador Richard Holbrooke was to argue that the Mujahideen provided a useful counter in Bosnia to the influence over Izetbegovic of Iran, but Holbrooke had himself earlier advocated the recruiting of forces from Arab countries (Schindler, pp. 181 and 273-4). Clinton was said to have argued that support for some Muslim forces would show that he had other friends in the Near East besides the Jews. He also said in a remarkable distortion of history that the Serbs had started two world wars and he wasn't going to see them start a third (Schindler p 110).

One reason for Clinton's enthusiasm for the Bosnian Muslims is suggested by Schindler (Schindler p.110). This was Clinton's desire to challenge European interests in the Balkans, particularly those of Germany in Slovenia and Croatia. But there can be no doubt that the main influence on Clinton came from the State Department under Mrs Albright. Their preoccupation was to find a new role for Nato after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This new role was encapsulated in the idea of 'humanitarian intervention', which was to replace the previous understanding of the UN that there should be no intervention in the affairs of any state unless its government had committed aggression against another state. The first war against Saddam Hussein fulfilled that criterion, but the second did not. Nor did the bombing of Belgrade; and it is those among liberal opinion in the US and from the left in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe, who supported that bombing, who are the most anxious that the demonisation of the Serbs and of Milosevic should stick. When Clinton was thinking about the problem, he simply went along with the passionate cries for the defence of the poor Muslims in Bosnia (Schindler pp.90-1).

What Clinton could not *perhaps* have known, though his intelligence service should have warned him, was that Bosnia would be used as a training ground for Muslim extremists, including Mujahideen from Afghanistan, but many also from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, who would together be responsible for the acts of terror in Khartoum, East Africa, New York, Washington, London, Madrid and Bali. Schindler gives the names and biographies of these men; and this detailed denouncement, which he is able to make from his

own knowledge, makes the most telling revelation in the book. (Schindler, pp. 295 ff. in the section headed ‘Bosnia and Bin Laden: the continuing threat’). The particular tragedy to which Schindler refers is the conversion of the Bosnian Muslims to the extreme forms of Muslim sharia law, such as forcing women to wear the veil on pain of torture and even execution (Schindler, p.321).

A most peculiar twist to Schindler’s story is that he can find no evidence of intervention against the Mujahideen by the large UN force (UNPROFOR) stationed in Bosnia after the war was over. No attempt was made to close down the camps where Mujahideen and other Muslim recruits were being trained for terrorist activity. After the year 2002, Paddy (Lord) Ashdown served as the UN High Representative in Sarajevo and seems either not to have known what was going on or to have turned a blind eye to what he saw. More than that, Ashdown not only favoured the more fundamentalist Muslims, but actually fired in 2002 the one member of the Bosnian Government, Munir Alibabic, who was seriously trying to control the Mujahideen and tackle the corruption associated with their activities (Schindler, pp.290ff).

The question remains: why the surprising blindness? The answer must again be the general demonisation of the Serbs, and most particularly of Milosevic, and the need to offer some justification for the illegal and devastatingly destructive bombing of Belgrade by Nato forces as an act of so-called ‘humanitarian intervention’ in the civil war in Kosovo. In this war the Serbs were cast as the aggressors and the Muslim Albanians with their Mujahideen mercenaries from Bosnia as the victims. Ashdown had been in Kosovo, and, as he explained to the Tribunal in the Milosevic case, he blamed the Serbs for what happened there. He does not mention the presence of Mujahideen in Kosovo, which is not surprising as they were all passing as Bosnians with Bosnian passports. He does comment on the drug running that he had seen among the Albanians (Barratt Brown, 2004). But his silence over the terrorist training camps in Bosnia, whose presence was referred to, in 2004, in the *Washington Post*, *Le Figaro*, and several Spanish papers, (Schindler, pp. 297-8) remains hard to explain.

Bosnian veterans are shown by Schindler to have been involved in terrorist actions in 2005, and the Bosnian connection was duly reported in the *Washington Post* and the *Sunday Times* in December 2005 (Schindler, pp. 318-319). Finally, Schindler refers to his own article on the Bosnian-based jihad ‘Defeating the Sixth Column: Intelligence and Strategy in the War on Islamist Terrorism’, published in *Orbis*, Fall, 2005 (Schindler, p.323).

The last sentence of the book under review here, published two years later, in 2007, concludes Schindler’s analysis. It reads ominously:

‘If Bosnia, the most pro-Western society in the *umma*, can be converted into a Jihardistan through domestic deceit, violent conflict and misguided international intervention, nowhere in the Muslim world can be judged safe from dangerous radicalisation. The lesson of Bosnia is that it happened.’ (Schindler, p, 325)

*Michael Barratt Brown*

### References

1. David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1995  
Marlise Simons, *New York Times*, 1998-2003, quoted passim by Edward S. Herman & David Peterson, in *The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic*, Spokesman, 2004  
Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell, Understanding Bosnia's War*, St. Martins New York, 1994  
Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*, Chatto & Windus, 1998  
Alan Little, e.g. in the *Guardian*, 06.01.03
2. Michael Barratt Brown, *The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic*, Spokesman, 2004
3. Diana Johnstone, *Fools' Crusade*, Pluto Press, 2002
4. John Laughland, *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic*, Pluto Press, 2007
5. Michael Barratt Brown, 'Slobodan Milosevic and how the US used Al Qaeda in the Balkans', *Debate: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, August 2006, pp. 161-165
6. Michael Barratt Brown, *From Tito to Milosevic: Yugoslavia, the Lost Country*, Merlin Press, 2005

### Retrenchment

**Francis G. Castles (editor), *The Disappearing State?*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 296 pages, hardback ISBN 9781845422974, £69.95, paperback ISBN 9781847209863, £25**

This collection of statistical essays examines the behaviour of public expenditure in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries since the neoliberal revolution in economic policy in the 1970s and 1980s. It is based on the papers discussed at a workshop of researchers in this field in 2006, and is very much one for technical experts, rather than the more general reader, economist or not. It does contain, however, a variety of statistics of different forms of government expenditure which could be of wider interest.

The expenditure statistics are all expressed in terms of percentages of gross domestic product (gdp) – but without any discussion of the implications of this measure. Changes in this ratio are regarded as 'increases' or 'decreases' in public expenditure. The significance of this approach merits careful consideration. At first sight, maintenance of expenditure on say, health or education, as a constant proportion of gdp might be regarded as implying a growth in resources for this purpose in line with the growth in the economy as a whole. But this is not the case, because in these fields there is little or no scope for increases in productivity as there is elsewhere in the economy. Fewer nurses per 100 patients, or teachers per 100 students, mean a decline in standards, not an increase in productivity; and if nurses' and teachers' pay goes up in line with average pay across the economy as a whole, merely keeping the number of nurses or teachers as a constant proportion of the total working population means that expenditure in these fields will remain

a constant proportion of gdp. The same applies to most other fields of public expenditure, particularly on the military. So the use of expenditure to gdp ratios as a yardstick is a reasonable one, as long as its implications are understood.

The authors divide expenditure into 'social' and 'core'. Social expenditure covers transfer payments, for example, pensions, health and other caring functions. Core expenditure is the residual and includes defence, education and debt interest. Surprisingly perhaps, social spending continued to grow in the 1980s and 1990s, but core expenditure fell – a major factor here being reductions in defence spending with the end of the Cold War. Between 1980 and 2001, average OECD levels of social spending rose from 18.8 per cent in 1980 to 22.7 per cent in 2001; whereas the average for core spending fell from 24.3 per cent to 20.8 per cent. For a smaller group of 10 countries with significant military expenditure, defence spending fell from 3.0 per cent of gdp in 1980 to 1.9 per cent in 2000. This reflected a reduction in Russian defence expenditure of over 75 per cent at the end of the 1980s.

The cost of state overhead expenditure needed to keep governments running is difficult to disentangle. But with increasing pressure for devolution within the nation state on the one hand, and greater cooperation between states on the other, it is interesting to note that the number of governing units can significantly affect total expenditure. France, despite its reputation for centralisation, has nearly 37,000 units of government, from the local communes up. The United Kingdom, by contrast, has less than 500. This partly explains the fact that expenditure on state overheads in France was 3.8 per cent of gdp in 2002, as against 2.2 per cent in the UK.

The key point that does not emerge from the essays is that as countries become more prosperous it would be natural for them to devote more of their resources to education and health – whether they are publicly or privately funded: the way they are financed can well reflect a left/right political divide. If state education or the NHS fail to deliver acceptable standards of service, more people will be prepared to send their children to private schools or take out private health insurance; and the Tories may devise financial incentives to make it easier for them to do so.

It is worrying that New Labour seem to be impervious to the need to divert more resources to improve standards in these fields. This year's Budget estimated that current expenditure would, if anything, decline rather than increase as a share of gdp, falling from its current level of 38.4 per cent to 37.5 per cent in 2012-13. This is not compatible with meeting the electorate's aspirations for better public services. Labour ministers need to recognise the unpalatable fact that meeting these aspirations will inevitably involve higher taxation, and ensure that this is levied in a progressive manner. This means relying on raising Income Tax on higher incomes, and Inheritance Tax on larger estates and avoiding further increases on sales taxes, which fall most heavily on lower income groups. It is unrealistic to discuss future levels of public expenditure without considering the tax changes needed to support them.

*John Grieve Smith*