

Labour & Trade Union Review

No 216 April 2011

www.ltureview.com

Price £2.00 (€ 3.00)

Never Waste a Good Crisis.

The large demonstration in London against the Government's cuts on the 26th March signifies something important. First, that a third of a million people are prepared to take time and trouble to make a point which they feel is important to them. Second, that there is significant opposition to the spending cuts that are beginning to unfold as a result of the government's policy of deficit reduction. Third, that this movement, although based on strong feeling, lacks any meaningful political leadership, either from the Labour Party or from the trades unions.

No political movement will be effective in the long term unless it has both intellectual substance and determined and skilful leadership. Not only are these qualities currently lacking, but there is little prospect of them appearing in the near future in either the Labour Party or the trades unions.

Let us take the intellectual substance first. The Government wishes to eliminate the 'structural deficit' by 2015. But what is this structural deficit? The simplest way of looking at it is to think of the remainder of the gap between expenditure and income after expenditures incurred by a downturn in the economic cycle have been taken into account. The total deficit currently runs at 60% of GDP, a figure that is moderate by historic standards.

England has run a 'structural deficit' since the Seventeenth Century without coming to serious harm. The harm that the British have done to their economy has arisen from misplaced private investment and blinkered and obstructive industrial policy, not from unsustainable public debt. The idea of eliminating the structural deficit is ludicrous and has no warrant in economic practice. In effect, Osborne has been bamboozling the public with bogus economic theory and has been getting away with it.

Even in its own terms the government's strategy is non-

sensical. As Compass showed last year, reductions in government expenditure which lead to increased public sector unemployment, reduce tax receipts, increase expenditures on social security and have similar effects on those extensive sections of the private sector that are directly or indirectly dependent on government expenditure. All of this before the less obvious costs associated with social damage caused by increased unemployment are taken into account. The claim that private sector investment is 'crowded out' by public sector expenditure is economically illiterate. There is no reason to suppose that significant sectors of the economy could switch away their investments from dependency on public expenditure to make up for the shortfall in their turnovers arising from reductions in public expenditure.

The point of the Government's current economic policy is to undermine, if not destroy, the welfare state and to reverse permanently the percentage of GDP that is devoted to public expenditure. It is nothing more than a more crafty application of the Thatcher strategy of the 1980s, also carried out under cover of a bogus economic crisis. This time it is being supervised by Cameron, a skilful public relations artist, who has worked up a rhetoric about the 'Big Society' as another way of bamboozling the public as to what he is really up to.

Since the Labour Party also accept the government's premises and differ only in the detail how they are put into practice, they are extremely vulnerable to the charge that they do not have any meaningful alternative to what the government proposes. It is hypocritical of the Labour Party to pose as if it is against cuts when, in effect, it supports them.

It would be quite possible to advocate a long time scale for the reduction, rather than the ridiculous elimination, of the 'structural deficit' by maintaining growth through public expenditure and bearing down on wasteful and harmful variants of it, like our post imperial pretensions, PFI, wasteful employment of consultants and bloated senior salaries. In addition, redistributive taxation, which erodes the discretionary expenditure and savings ratios of the rich and targets it directly at employment generation, would do wonders for reducing this

deficit. In particular, there is a need for more progressive income tax directed at higher earners, a revision of council tax to ensure that high value properties are taxed at a fair percentage of their value and the introduction of a modest property tax.

The Labour Party is frightened of this kind of measure because it is still obsessed with appearing 'respectable' in the eyes of the press. In this respect, Miliband is no different from his predecessors and is, in some respects, quite pathetic. 'Nauseating' rather than 'moving' would be an accurate description of the invocation of his parent's flight from Europe as a justification for attacking Libya. Labour appears to be locked into a considerable period of New Labour style policies at a time when they are even more inappropriate and divorced from the needs of the 'squeezed middle' than they were under Brown and Blair. The obsession continues to be with following what they take to be public opinion rather than trying to lead it.

The trade unions too, seem bereft of any practical ideas. They cannot even summon themselves to exert financial pressure on the Labour Party to act less cravenly, let alone think in the longer term about tipping the balance of industrial relations in favour of their members, by advocating more of a social partnership approach to the governance of their firms and of the economy. None of this is radical, it is what our neighbours in Northern Europe have been practising for years.

Neither the Labour Party nor the labour movement have ever given any serious thought to the politics of their decline from the wielding of working class power in an incoherent way in the 1970s, to their disastrous flirtation with Trotskyism in the Miner's Strike of 1984, to the evisceration of social democracy under Blair and Brown. Neither is there any serious prospect of them doing so. Unless they do, however, they will continue to provide cover for the Coalition and will suffer the consequences at the next election. Anyone who nurses even a glimmer of social democracy within their political constitution needs to think very carefully about whether the Labour Party will ever become a vehicle for their aspirations.

Not Exactly The Long March

Yes, the march was about half a million,

TUC-inspired, wending through London, but somehow you already felt abandoned, hijacked, part of their battalions.

The leader awaits on his Hyde Park perch:

To cut but not to cut too deeply.'

So why bother, it's a fait accompli.

Within that throng there could be a re-birth?

No, but the vacuum fills high-sky:

The red and black flag of the anarchist.

What cannot be re-created must die.

They rant, those who dream of the Honours List, regime-change Libya their alibi while anger at home makes escapologists.

Wilson John Haire.

The Labour & Trade Union Review

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The Labour & Trade Union Review

Published by the Ernest Bevin Society

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Life as a Burden on Money

How Trade Unions are playing a heavy price for their excessive fear of Corporatism in the 1970s.

Why the Coalition's policies are not about freedom but about a planned policy of 'Feed the Rich'.

The Coalition's budget cutting goes way beyond anything needed by the Britain's modest state debts. It is based on a view of the world that sees money as the key to everything. Opponents must not accept the enemy's terminology and say 'Free Market'. When they say 'free' they mean *their* sort of freedom, freedom for the things they value. 'Feed the Rich' would be a much better description of the policies that Thatcher began, Blair and Brown bowed down to and the Coalition now pursue with ignorant enthusiasm.

Freedom is always socially defined. The 'Free World' in the early days of the Cold War praised itself as a repository of virtue without much concern about large number of non-white colonies held in subjection. Colonial wars in Indochina, Malaya, Kenya and Algeria could be justified in those terms. The USA up until the early 1960s felt very content with itself despite segregation in the South, criminal intimidation to prevent Afro-Americans voting in the South and racism throughout the society. At that time, the rights of women were much more advanced in the 'unfree' countries of the Soviet Bloc than in the 'Free World'.

The 1960s changed many things, mostly for the better. In the West, the Youth Revolt basically succeeded, with fringe values becoming mainstream. An equally valid shift in the Soviet Bloc was smashed by the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

G. M Williams

The USSR had been very successful economically under Stalin. It should have then moved on, as China did after Mao. Instead it engaged in an incoherent 'de-Stalinisation' that made no particular sense, discrediting the system without actually changing it.

Leninism has given rise to a great many highly effective political movements. But there has been no effective Leninist movement that saw any marked difference between Lenin and Stalin. The history of both the numerous Trotskyist fragments and the main pro-Moscow Communists show that those who based their politics on the supposed difference achieved nothing politically, fail in the long run to hold what they have. And the former Soviet Union was wide open to Solzhenitsyn exposing the continuity. They should simply have defended the past as being justified in the context: the senseless slaughter of the Great War, and then the need to build a strong economy before the growing forces of Fascism invaded.

Post-Stalin Russia dismantled a highly successful planned economy. They moved to something described as Market Socialism, but which would be better described as a Bureaucratic Commodity System, which proved very bad. After the Soviet collapse they turned against their own past and started copying blindly from the West. But in Russia, Fundamentalist Capitalism with no social restraints was even worse than Brezhnev's 'Period of Stagnation'. The economy shrank and like expectancy slumped, with the population actually shrinking. In politics, Yeltsin set a horrible example by shelling his own parliament during a dispute that could probably have been solved by negotiation. One of his main opponents was a Chechen who was happy to work within

the broader framework of the Russian Federation. That man was swept aside: the Chechens turned to separatism and banditry. Two groups of broadly pro-Western liberals existed as a significant force in Russian electoral politics in the 1990s and both have vanished into well-deserved oblivion, failing to cooperate even when this might have been a path to survival. Russian Communism revived, only Yeltsin's final phase prevented them getting re-elected. That and Putin's succession and re-assertion of Russian interests.

He's probably prevented a much more drastic rejection of western values, either a restored Communism or some sort of Russian Fascism. But all you get from the mainstream Western media are protests, "how dare he deal with Russian realities instead of sticking to the West's failed fantasies

To return to Britain, in the 1970s, working people in Britain were offered a major advance and turned it down. Workers Control would have made employees equal 'stakeholders' with the owners of the business. Incomes Policy would have meant the society as a whole taking responsibility for fairness and deciding who earned what. This was the deal offered by the Tories under Edward Heath, and repeated in an improved form by Labour under Wilson and Callaghan. It wasn't defeated by the right, which at that time was demoralised and timid. It was defeated by the left.

The opposition was based on two rival delusions:

- The traditionalists thought that the excellent system that had been built after World War Two could continue for ever. That it would be successfully assaulted and cracked open in the 1980s was outside their understanding of the world. But the world is never limited by the limits of human understanding.

- The Hard Left saw the deal as a sell-out to capitalism. It was true that what was on offer didn't promise immediate socialism. But if it had been taken up it would have been a huge step forward. It would have kept a large mass of sympathisers encouraged that things were getting better. The Hard Left rejected this, in the belief that they could get something much better if this weak reformism was avoided. They turned out to be bunch of vain little fools.

The left in Britain was paralysed by fear of accepting formal limits and state role. It is notable that successful political movements since the 1960s have shown no such fear: have sometimes demanded a much larger state role in particular areas.

This applies most notably to the Feminist, Green and Gay movements. They are not state-worshippers, but they accept that practical politics means that you work with the state, seeking to modify its role. The state is an agency to get things done, and to maintain coherence in a society where everyone interacts all the time and you are routinely dependent on strangers. Mainstream Leftist fear of the state has led to 30 years of economic error and loss.

The left had had an attitude of "don't take 'yes' for an answer". Sensible reforms were opposed because they did not offer an immediate and total solution. The New Right did always stick to the possible. They met the desire for both individualism and stability by promising both. Such promises made the New Right project a bit of a 'Ponzi scheme', but it has not yet collapsed.

Thatcher fed on the discontent of the 1970s and the Leftist fear of the state. People were ready to change existing values. The actual changes – the withdrawal of the state from many areas – hasn't restored old-fashioned values. It could not restore the Bourgeois Respectability that made the system viable in the 19th century. People close to Thatcher were on the whole a lousy example of Bourgeois Respectability. Jeffery Archer was typical of them in having a huge admiration for cheats and cheap crooks.

If Thatcher had been a proper Tory,

something very different might have resulted. A proper Tory might have saved a lot more of the old values. That didn't happen. New Right policies have worked by feeding on greed and selfishness. That's not wealth-creating or decency-creating. Old-fashioned values that were under threat in the early 1980s are now pretty much dead: this was obviously not Thatcher's intention but it was the predictable result of her work.

The 'Big State' is denounced as an anomaly. The real anomaly is that huge chunks of human life have been reduced to the 'cash nexus', exchanges between strangers with social values marginalised. It's not a human way to live. And it's not even given us more material wealth. Britain's economic record 1975-2000 was slightly worse than 1950-1975.

The Thatcherite 'revival' did more harm than good. And while Thatcher did genuinely believe in old-fashioned decency, she hadn't the least idea how to defend it and actually let it wither and die. 'Good riddance', a lot of people will say (including some Tories, though mostly not in public.) But we also need some sort of public morality, even though the Judeo-Christian view of sex and marriage has been rejected by a majority and even those who practice it for themselves don't mostly want the law to impose it on others.

Globally, the advanced economies no longer have Ruling Classes in the way they used to. Instead there is an "Overclass" that is pervasive but weak. It rules because the mass of the people distrust government. It feeds on ordinary people's desire for Empowerment and the delay in responding to it. But it doesn't actually empower more than a small minority.

Empowerment by Self-Interest was supposed to do the trick. It was also supposed to be Enlightened Self-Interest, but mostly it was not. More generally, the defects of this system were

a) It could be you but probably will not

b) Even if you do something major you may get little reward. A surprisingly large number of those who did work of

long-term benefit to humanity got little out of it in terms of cold cash.

c) Achieving financial success damages many, and favours many who were already maladjusted.

d) You end up with a very nasty world in which everyone mistrusts everyone else, and religious fervor of the sort that seemed to be dying in the 1960s is reviving all over the world.

Up until the crisis of 2008, the financial system seemed to be generating 'free money'. Actually money flowing out of the financial system has to come from somewhere, and the voids left behind by the money flowing out of the financial system in bonuses and hedge-fund profits were exposed in dramatically in the crisis, which remains unresolved. Bankers can generate a little extra wealth by reducing transaction costs, but they have mostly flourished by consuming the essentials of the system, reducing its usefulness.

Across the North Atlantic area, the weakened financial system was bailed out by the state or by several governments working together. This should have been taken as proof that capitalism independent of the state was not in fact possibly in the modern world. But once the media had dampened down the vast anti-state prejudice for long enough to prevent a financial collapse, it was re-started to justify a new round of cuts.

And Britain, unfortunately, has largely accepted it. Britain seems locked into a pattern of decline that's very similar to other fallen Empires, you know something is wrong but the answer is always more of the same failed remedies. It could well go on for decades. It could well include more pointless wars like the one currently being waged on Libya.

On the other hand, the world looked pretty dismal in the mid-1930s, and did indeed get worse, but then drastically better. The game is still worth playing.

On The Blatant Hypocrisy Of Referring Libya To The ICC

Libya is not a party to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and does not accept its jurisdiction. In this respect, it is no different to about 80 other States in this world, for example, the US, Russia, China, Israel and Sudan.

But on 26th February the Security Council voted unanimously, in Resolution 1970, to refer Libya to the ICC. To be precise, it decided

“to refer the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya since 15 February 2011 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court;”

Amongst those States who voted for this referral were five States—China, India, Lebanon, Russia and the US—who are not parties to the ICC and don't accept its jurisdiction. This is blatant hypocrisy.

Writing in the *Irish Times* on 12 March about US support for this referral, Siobhán Mullally, a senior lecturer in international law at University College Cork, said:

“This support reflects the Obama administration's policy of positive engagement, a welcome reprieve from the Bush administration's open and hostile opposition to the court.”

What planet does she live on? What is positive about the US forcing Libya to accept the jurisdiction of the ICC, when it refuses to accept the jurisdiction of the ICC itself?

Sudan

This referral by the Security Council of “*the situation in the Libya*” to the ICC closely parallels the action of the Council on 31st March 2005, when it passed resolution 1593, which decided—

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“to refer the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court”.

Like Libya, Sudan is not a party to the ICC. On this occasion, the US and China abstained, but three States—Philippines, Russia, Tanzania—which don't accept the jurisdiction of the ICC voted for it.

As a result of this referral, the ICC charged the President of Sudan, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, with genocide and two other Sudanese nationals with lesser charges. None of them has been taken into custody or tried.

Article 13(b)

How were these referrals possible? The answer lies in Article 13(b) of the ICC statute (aka the Rome Statute), under which the ICC may exercise jurisdiction in respect of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity if:

“A situation in which one or more of such crimes appears to have been committed is referred to the Prosecutor by the Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations;”

So, the ICC is not an independent judicial body, the jurisdiction of which States can choose to reject, as the US and others have done. On the contrary, its jurisdiction can be extended by the Security Council to apply to states that have chosen to reject its jurisdiction.

Of course, this cannot happen to veto-wielding members of the Security Council, who have chosen not to become a party to the Statute—since they can wield their veto to block any attempt by

the Security Council to extend the ICC's jurisdiction to their territory. So, China, Russia and the US, which have chosen not to ratify the Statute, will never have ICC jurisdiction extended to their territories.

And neither will Israel, since the US can be relied upon to use its veto to block it.

A Court with universal jurisdiction is fair. A Court, the jurisdiction of which states can choose to accept, has a semblance of fairness. But a Court, like the ICC, the jurisdiction of which can be extended by the Security Council to some states that have chosen not to accept its jurisdiction but not to others, is grossly unfair.

Protecting own nationals

The ICC has jurisdiction in respect of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, committed in the territories of states that are party to the Statute, or by nationals of states that are party to the Statute. However, the primary duty for prosecuting these crimes lies with the state in which they were committed—and the ICC only acquires jurisdiction to prosecute them if the state fails to prosecute them. In principle, the ICC can prosecute any individual responsible for these crimes, regardless of his/her civilian or military status or official position.

This means that, in theory, a national of a State that is not party to the Statute, for example, a US national, may be tried by the ICC for crimes committed in a state that is a party to the Statute. The US is particularly opposed to this, since it has civilian and military personnel in lots of States around the world, many of which are party to the Statute. It is US policy to prevent the ICC trying any US nationals.

Because of this, Resolution 1970 includes a paragraph exempting nationals from States not party to the ICC, including US nationals, from the jurisdiction of the ICC for acts committed in Libya. This is paragraph 6, which says that

“nationals, current or former officials or personnel from a State outside the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya which is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of that State for all alleged acts or omissions arising out of or related to operations in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya established or authorized by the Council, unless such exclusive jurisdiction has been expressly waived by the State;”

The hypocrisy surrounding this is staggering: States that are not party to the ICC support the referral of matters occurring in the territory of one of their number to the ICC, but exclude their own nationals from the impact of that referral.

Article 98 agreements

Since the ICC came into operation in 2002, the US has gone to extraordinary lengths to prevent its own nationals from being subject to the jurisdiction of the Court. Under Article 89(1) of the Rome Statute, states that are party to ICC are required to “*comply with requests for arrest and surrender*” by the Court. In principle, these may be for the arrest and surrender to the Court of US nationals.

To prevent a State acceding to such a request, the US has sought to take advantage of Article 98.2 of the Rome Statute, which states:

“The Court may not proceed with a request for surrender which would require the requested State to act inconsistently with its obligations under international agreements pursuant to which the consent of a sending State is required to surrender a person of that State to the Court, unless the Court can first obtain the cooperation of the sending State for the giving of consent for the surrender.”

Starting in 2002, the US negotiated

agreements with more than a hundred States in which they agree not to surrender US nationals to the Court. These agreements are variously known as Article 98 agreements, bilateral immunity agreements (BIAs) and bilateral non-surrender agreements. To the best of my knowledge, Ireland has not made such an agreement with the US.

States that are parties to the ICC cannot receive military aid from the US in the absence of such an agreement. Section 2007(a) of the American Service-Members’ Protection Act passed by the US Congress in 2002 includes a prohibition of military assistance to the Governments of countries that are parties to the ICC. However, Section 2007(c) allows the President to waive the prohibition of military assistance if an Article 98 agreement exists.

Such are the lengths that the US is prepared to go in order to exclude its own nationals from the jurisdiction of the ICC, while voting in the Security Council to extend the jurisdiction of the ICC for others.

Libya

UN Resolutions

Standing beside US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington on 18th March, our new Foreign Minister, Labour leader Eamon Gilmore, gave Ireland’s backing to regime change in Libya and the Western intervention aimed at bringing it about. He said:

“As regards to Libya, I believe that Colonel Qadhafi has lost all legitimacy to rule and should be encouraged to leave the stage.”

The encouragement is contained in two Security Council resolutions, number 1970 passed unanimously on 26th February and number 1973 passed on 17th March by 10 votes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, France, Gabon, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, South Af-

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rica, UK and the US) to none, with 5 abstentions (Brazil, China, Germany, India and Russia).

Resolution 1970 imposed an arms embargo on Libya, a travel ban and assets freeze on the family of Muammar Al-Qadhafi and certain Government officials. It also referred “*the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya since 15 February 2011*” to the International Criminal Court (paragraphs 4-8).

Resolution 1973 authorised UN member states

“to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory” (paragraph 4).

“*All necessary measures*” is the traditional Security Council euphemism for armed force. The Resolution also imposed

“a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians” (paragraph 6)

that is, a *No Fly Zone*.

The *Irish Times* editorial of 21st

March 2011 said that Resolution 1973 was “*binding on Ireland to assist*”, which implies that Ireland is required to assist in military operations against Libya. That is not so: the Resolution allows UN member states to engage in such operations and requests member states to assist by, for example, allowing overflights, but a state is not obliged to do either.

However, it is binding on all member states, including Ireland, to apply the arms embargo, the travel ban and the assets freeze, that is, those aspects of the resolutions that do not involve military action.

Regime Change?

Will the provisions of Resolutions 1970 and 1973 allow France and Britain, the prime movers in getting them through the Security Council, to achieve their goal of overthrowing the Qadhafi Government?

It’s unlikely that the rather limited economic sanctions in these resolutions will bring down the administration, certainly not in the short term. And it is by no means certain that the military action authorised in these Resolutions are sufficient to break the present stalemate, in which the opposition forces are largely confined to the Benghazi area.

On the face of it, by “*excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory*”, Resolution 1973 bans the use of French or British ground troops to effect regime change, in which case they will have to rely on the opposition forces in the Benghazi area, supported by foreign air power.

Currently, these forces are poorly armed and utterly disorganised. Chris McGreal wrote in the *Guardian* on 22nd March that “*rebels manning an anti-aircraft gun were probably responsible for shooting down the revolutionaries’ only fighter plane*”.

The questions arises: do the resolutions permit the arming and training of this rudimentary force so that, coupled with foreign air support, it might be capable of overthrowing the Qadhafi

regime?

The answer to that appears to be Yes. Whereas paragraph 9 of Resolution 1970, imposes an arms embargo on Libya, paragraph 4 of Resolution 1973 cancels the embargo in the context of member states taking military action to protect civilians authorising member states “to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians”.

A further question is: what restrictions, if any, does Resolution 1973 impose on the use of foreign air power against Libyan military forces? A subsidiary question is: does Resolution 1973 empower foreign states to target and kill Colonel Qadhafi and other Libyan leaders?

At the time of writing, foreign air power has destroyed the Libyan air force and its air defence systems. This has been said to be necessary in order to make overflying Libya safe for foreign planes enforcing the No Fly Zone.

In addition, French planes destroyed an armoured column moving in the direction of Benghazi. This was justified on the grounds that the column was about to attack Benghazi and kill civilians.

However, it is clear that, as far as France and Britain are concerned, Libyan ground forces are fair game, whether or not they are acting in an aggressive manner. At the time of writing (25 March), military bases are being bombed and deployed forces are being attacked from the air, even though they are not on the offensive.

No doubt, the ‘justification’ for this will be made that, so long Qadhafi has any military forces at his disposal, he will use them to kill civilians—and therefore destroying these forces is a measure necessary to protect civilians, within the terms of Resolution 1973, paragraph 4. It follows from this that providing air support for attacking anti-Qadhafi forces would also be within the terms of Resolution 1973, paragraph 4. The possibility of killing large numbers

of civilians is the only restraint on this action.

Targeting and killing Colonel Qadhafi and other Libyan leaders could also be ‘justified’ under Resolution 1973 on similar grounds. After all, since he has said to be giving the orders for his troops to kill civilians, then it’s not too much of a stretch to argue that killing him is necessary to protect civilians.

There has been a public dispute in Britain between the military and politicians on this question. When asked if Colonel Qadhafi was a legitimate target, the Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir David Richards, said: “*Absolutely not. It is not allowed under the UN resolution*”. However, the politicians were quick to deny this—a spokesman for Prime Minister Cameron explained that it was lawful to target Qadhafi if he was seen as organising the threat to civilians, since the Security Council’s objective was to protect civilians (*Guardian*, 22 March).

Carte Blanche

So, the provisions of Resolution 1973 with regard to the protection of civilians are extremely wide. They are being interpreted as giving *carte blanche* to attack and destroy Libyan Government forces wherever they may be found. Nevertheless, without foreign troops on the ground, the likely outcome is a continuing stalemate with Qadhafi in power and controlling most of Libya.

Such an outcome, with Qadhafi remaining in power, would be intolerable to France and Britain and the US. Success for them is the unseating of Qadhafi and it’s difficult to believe they will settle for less. For that, ground troops may be required.

It has been generally assumed that Resolution 1973 doesn’t permit that, since “*a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory*” is specifically excluded from the “*necessary measures*”. But, that doesn’t actually exclude a foreign liberation force to overthrow the Qadhafi regime, which, as British Foreign Minister, William Hague, told the House of Commons on 24th March, is a *sine qua non* of Libyan

civilians being protected. No doubt there are some there already.

Double Standards

Why has Qadhafi's Libya been singled out for attention by the West when a matter of weeks ago he was a valued ally? Around 400 people were killed by state forces in Egypt without any suggestion of military action and all of them were unarmed, whereas some at least of the Libyan opposition forces are armed. Unarmed protesters are being shot down in the street in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, without any suggestion that similar action is being contemplated.

It is inconceivable that the Governments of France and Britain and the US embarked on this mission out of concern for the lives of Libyan civilians. In recent years, the US itself has killed hundreds of civilians in Pakistan in drone attacks, triggered from the safety of mainland US. The slaughter has intensified under the Obama administration and it is still going on. Has France or Britain ever expressed any concern for these civilian killings, carried out regularly by their

close ally? Of course not.

Israel killed around 1,500 Lebanese civilians from the air in the Summer of 2006 and around 1,500 Palestinian civilians in Gaza in 2008-9. The chorus of demands for a No Fly Zone in Libya was prompted by claims that the Qadhafi regime was massacring civilians from the air, evidence for which is hard to come by.

But there is no doubt that Israel has killed thousands of Arab civilians from the air in the last few years, without any call for a No Fly Zone from Britain or France or the US. In the case of Lebanon in the Summer of 2006, the US and Britain acted to prolong the conflict, and the killing, in order, they hoped, to give Israel time to wipe out Hezbollah.

It isn't credible that these Governments are motivated by humanitarian concern for Libyan civilians. For them, humanitarian concern is merely an instrument for whipping up domestic and international support for action they want to embark on for another reason.

Nor are the Imperial Powers moti-

vated by a desire to see political systems in the Middle East that are responsive to the popular will. Such an Arab world would act far more in accord with its own interests, rather than being manipulated by Western interests. The idea therefore is to support limited change in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and Yemen, on the understanding that there is no revolution. The situation in Libya is different, where regime change is sought. Though Qadhafi has accommodated himself to Western interests in recent years, and opposes Al Qaida, he has maintained the coherence of the Arab nationalist State he has built, and retained a form of Socialism in its structures. This is intolerable to Western interests, which prefer to see a mess *a la Iraq*, rather than a strong State pursuing the interests of its people in its own way. The plan, therefore, is to destroy the Libyan State under humanitarian and democratic guise. It is no concern of the West that it may be unleashing a bloodbath.

First Iraq, then Libya: that leaves the last Arab Socialist State, Syria. That's why France and Britain and the US are bombing Libya.

Bombing Baghdad

America's Wars in the Muslim World was the LSE (London School of Economics [and Political Science]) Public Lecture (26.01.11). It devolved into a discussion of Iraq. Fawaz Gerges, head of the LSE's Middle East Centre introduced, gave a run-down of the US's blunderings in Iraq. He said participant Professor Mary Kaldor was one of the LSE's 'treasures'. Dr Alia Brahimi (LSE's Global Governance Project - concentrating on North Africa, whose new book is *Jihad and Just War in the War on Terror*), and Nir

S McGouran

Rosen spoke. His book (on Iraq today) is called *Aftermath*, "a freelance writer, photographer and film-maker who has worked in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia", he is an Iraqi. His was by far the most interesting contribution. He had just come from Baghdad, speaks unaccented English, and is a decidedly clear-headed person.

Dr Brahimi, who has a southern English accent, seemed to imply that there

was a similarity between Bush's Administration, and Bin Laden's Al-Queda. Both perceived their struggle as one between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism'. She implied that there is a parity of power between them. Al-Queda may be able to carry out 'spectaculars' like the 9/11 bombings, (assuming the people who did it actually were Al-Queda). Bin Laden claims Al-Queda are 'free men' and Bush claimed he was leading the 'free world'.

Dr Brahimi claimed Bin Laden / Al Queda have 'invented a tradition' of a cult of martyrdom. The Shia - but not the Sunni - traditionally had such a notion. She said there was a Sufi element in Al-Queda's overall theoretical position.

“Radical Muslims” (it was, as ever, not at all clear whether these people were radically Muslim, or had been radically politicised) attacked Al-Qaeda. ‘Jihadists’ ignore it. Al-Qaeda will disappear as a force in international relations.

Was it ever really a force in ‘international relations’? Bin Laden was a handy villain, allegedly living in a cave in Afghanistan, issuing threats against ‘the West’. Dr Brahimi drew a distinction between ‘jihad’ and the concept ‘holy war’. She claimed the ‘jihad’ concept is similar to that of the ‘just war’. The latter is a secular concept encapsulated in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. She said that Al-Qaeda had introduced the concept of ‘holy war’ into Islam.

Professor Kaldor put her right on this matter. A ‘holy war’ can only be justified (this term was left unexplained), by the Pope. The ‘just war’ is a secular concept. This was very decisively stated. It is quite confusing. The concept is that of Thomas Aquinas, the ‘Angelic’ Doctor [of the Church]. He was not a secular thinker. Except in the sense that he left very little untouched in his philosophising. Professor Kaldor and Dr Brahimi both spoke with considerable expertise on Islam. It is interesting that neither of them appear to know anything about the religion of a tenth of their (UK) fellow-citizens.

Professor Kaldor went on to claim that Saddam’s regime’s behaviour did not justify a war, especially not as it has been fought. She said that the ‘surge’ was an outcome of the Just War theory, an anachronism in the era of globalisation. It was not made clear why it is an anachronism. She divined a contradiction at the heart of US policy, caused by politicians second-guessing what the (US) public wants. Surely there can be very little doubt that the US public wanted revenge for 9 / 11?

Nir Rosen spoke next, confirming everything the Review has published about the US / UK, and their allies’ adventure in Iraq. His response to questions was interesting. In response to an interminable question (Professor Gerges intervened and asked for a question and not a statement - the man then repeated his statement / question), he said the

Kurds have, in effect, their own state. It is a “Turkish vassal”. The Saudis may not be able to prevent a Shia state developing, but such a development is unlikely. There is no real evidence that the Saudis are encouraging Sunni paranoia, he said. But who gains by destabilising Iraq?

In response to a question from a “Baghdad born Assyrian” (meaning a member of an ancient Christian sect) Nir Rosen said that the “Christians of Iraq are finished”. At least in Baghdad. There are enough Christians in Mosul (Kurdistan) for them not to be molested. He noted the more benign aspects of ‘Islamism’ - Hamas, for example provides services for people. (The sort of services that were provided in Iraq by the Ba’ath government).

He compared the situation of the Christian communities to that of the Jewish community. The latter were ‘accused’ of being Zionists, and were driven out over a number of years. Nir Rosen is too young to have witnessed such a series of events. The community was taken to Israel in a number of airlifts in the early 1950s. The notion that it was intimidated out of ‘the land between the rivers’ — after three millennia residence, in less than a decade by a government under the City of London’s thumb — is not really credible. The Christian communities are divided, physically scattered, and as a proselytising religion (particularly in their newer Pentecostalist, and Anglican, forms), a rival to Islam. The accusation against the Christians is that they are accessories of the ‘Crusader’ invaders.

Mary Kaldor, (who did not mention oil), discussed the economic aspects of the war. She referred to the current economic crisis as a world phenomenon. Iraq is a (potentially) hugely wealthy state in Asia. The ‘North Atlantic’ economic crisis is having little effect on Turkey, Iran, India or even Indonesia. China’s economic position need hardly be mentioned. America has given up on its “enduring base” policy for Iraq, and may have to leave for financial, if not for moral reasons. (The US is still the greatest military power on the planet. If it chose to stay who could get rid of it?)

Dr Brahimi said Al-Qaeda was a product of a crisis of authority in Islam due to the “decline” of the Caliphate. She did not define ‘decline’. The Caliphate was influential enough in 1914 to cause disciplinary problems in the ‘Indian Army’. Atatürk’s putting the last incumbent on a train to Paris was, surely, a rather abrupt termination of the Caliphate? Dr Brahimi’s assessment of the strength and influence of Al-Qaeda is, surely, excessive. In so far as it exists outside of Bin Laden’s immediate environs, or even outside of his imagination, (and he may well be a ‘concept’ and not a genuine person), it is something of a ‘franchise’. The use of “Sinn Féin” or “Bolshevik” in the early twentieth century comes to mind.

Dr Brahimi said Tunisian society is “impervious” to the Islamist “pipe dream” of radical Islam. (In 1914 ‘Sinn Féin’ and ‘Bolshevism’ were - just about - concepts floating in the ether. A decade later they were, at the least, more than mere notions). The time ran out at this point, the ideas seem to have run out too. Nir Rosen ought to be asked back to give a lecture. Some of what he said was debatable. But he is prepared to debate, and as he lives in Baghdad, there is a whiff of the street off him.

The Observer featured (30.01.11) reprinted Turkey’s “Soft Power’ Is Winning Iraqi Minds and Markets (New York Times). The Turkey’s ruling ‘Islamist’ Justice and Development Party (AKP) has taken the line that it should be friend to all in Iraq. It has its eyes on the oil and gas that Iraq has in superabundance. It is building its own economy with this material, and making itself useful to Europe in offering it an alternative to dependency on Russian raw materials.

The Turkish government, despite being Sunni, has good relations with Iran, with its own Shia-oriented ‘Islamist’ regime. Iran must implicitly approve of Turkey’s policies in Iraq. Turkey will shortly have a population of 100 million. It is a coming economic power, being ‘Islamist’ it avoids usury, the ‘North Atlantic’ financial crisis passed it by. The AKP has tamed Turkey’s military. The army as custodian of Atatürk’s legacy assumed the running of the state a

number of times.

Turkey is influencing Iraq (rather in the manner of the East India Company's 'stations') by way of Consulates in places like Basra. Like 'John' Company's, the diplomats in these modestly named offices are high-powered, and are allowed - and capable of - taking initiatives. These include 'cultural' initiatives as well as commercial ones. Turkish television stars are popular in Iraq, as is Turkish pop. It is obvious from this article (by Anthony Shadid) that the border between Turkey and Iraq (or at least Kurdistan, is open). "Trade between the two countries amounted to" \$[US]6b in 2010. Turkey is rebuilding and restructuring Iraq. "[R]oughly 25 percent of Iraq's oil exports..." flows to Turkish ports.

The Consul in Erbil (Kurdistan's capital) claims this is not a take-over bid: "we are going to integrate with this country [he seems to mean Iraq-in-general, not just Kurdistan - L&TUR]. Roads, railroads, airports, oil gas pipelines — there will be a free flow of people..." That's fairly comprehensive. Turkey has negotiated the complexities of post-Ba'ath Iraq with considerable dexterity.

Quite what the US thinks is difficult to guess. It has spent the lives of thousands of Service personnel, and billions of dollars, in Iraq. The result is that the only sentiment uniting the people of the place is hatred of the USA. Turkey, an ally of Iran, which once appeared to be in America's pocket, has not become an enemy of America. But it no longer does its bidding. It refused to allow an American fleet to enter the Black Sea to back Georgia against Russia (thereby consolidating good relations with a place a great deal closer than the US).

If Turkey becomes an EU member 'Europe' will extend to the Persian Gulf — shades of the Berlin-Baghdad railway!

Froggy

News From Across The Channel

Diplomacy

The Marly Group of French diplomats blamed Nicolas Sarkozy for the fact that France, tagging along with the United States, and having lost its independent foreign policy, no longer has a voice that could interest the rest of the world. The Group thinks that France needs to reconnect with its own priorities, in particular francophone Africa, which it neglects politically and to whom it denies the bilateral aid it used to give. The group Marly said in a "Point of view" column in *Le Monde* of 23 February: "We must define *our objectives* on vital questions such as the contents and borders of the Europe of tomorrow, *our policy* towards an Arab world in revolt, *our objectives* in Afghanistan, *our African policy*, *our type of partnership with Russia*."

Since then, the Group may have wished that France stayed in its position in the background, instead of deciding to lead the attack on Libya, now that French planes were the first to drop bombs on Libya. As to how that was decided in France, that was no more satisfactory from the point of view of having a coherent policy decided by the Foreign Minister informed by a professional Diplomatic Service. Alain Juppé, the new Foreign Minister, made it a condition of accepting his new post that foreign policy stop being made by people like Guéant, special adviser to the President and other informal advisers. Well, on Libya, Guéant, now Minister of the Interior, made a contribution in favour of attacking Libya, and, even better, Bernard-Henry Levy, philosopher and trendy media personality, got on the phone to Sarkozy from Libya and persuaded him attack was the only response to what he was see-

ing.

Bernard-Henry Levy is famous among other things for being photographed cowering under sniper fire in the former Yugoslavia, in a photo later shown to be posed (people near him were walking around normally). Last year, he championed a philosopher, a hitherto undiscovered Botul, who asked deep questions regarding sexuality and Kant. His philosophy was of course Botulism. Ridicule does not kill obviously. This is the calibre of advice Sarkozy is relying on. Juppé however has not resigned. He wanted to attack Libya anyway. And, two weeks into the bombing, two-thirds of the French interviewed for an opinion poll supported the attack.

Recent elections

Local elections took place on Sunday 20 March (first round) and Sunday 27th (second round). France is divided in 22 *régions* and 101 *départements*. The *département* is administered by a General Council. For electoral purposes the *département* is divided into units called Cantons. A city might consist in a number of cantons, while in rural areas a canton can include several villages. People have no personal allegiance to the canton where they live, and may not be aware of where the boundaries are. The cantons are renewed by election in tranches: in March this year, 2026 canton seats, out of a total of 4 039, were up for renewal.

The Socialist Party holds 21 of the 22 regions. It is not quite as successful at *département* level: since these last elections, it holds 60 out of the 101 *départements*,

two more than previously. Participation in the poll was 47%. The Socialist Party received 36% of votes, the ruling UMP 18, 6% and the National Front 11%. This translates for the NF as 2 seats, which represents the sum total of their elected representatives at all levels of government.

Personalities

National political leaders have a local base. Segolène Royal is leader of the Poitou-Charentes region; Francois Hollande, her former partner and rival presidential hopeful, is leader of the *Correze département*. As a way of launching himself as a presidential candidate, he said he would stand if he was re-elected in *Correze* (he was). Martine Aubry is Mayor of Lille. The vice-president of the National Front stood in a Northern *département*, (he was beaten by a socialist). Marine Le Pen's partner stood as a general councillor in *Perpignan*; he was beaten, on the second round, by a Socialist woman born in Tunisia, *Tous-sainte Calabrese*. Even Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the supposed favourite Socialist presidential candidate, and head of the IMF, started his life as an MP with a local base, a working class suburb of Paris, which has actually just been lost to the ruling party.

Parties

The National Front caused some anxiety in the media after the first round, arriving in second place in 400 of the 2026 cantons. Marine Le Pen succeeded her father in January this year at the Party Congress. Her strength, and her weakness, is that she has made the Party 'respectable'. The strength is that people are now asking if the National Front could be considered as a party like any other. The weakness is that the new line does not gather enthusiasm among all NF members. Bruno Gollnisch, her tradition-

ally NF opponent for the post of leader succeeding her father, received enthusiastic applause at the Congress for a speech where he referred to the 6th February 1934 right wing riot in Paris, whereas her speech, where she referred to the French Revolution, the Resistance, the importance of the role of the State, and even Gaullism, was received in embarrassed silence in some parts of the assembly.

Marine Le Pen has played up the place of the Holocaust in world history; in an interview to a French language private Israeli radio (30/3/11) she said her party was not racist, xenophobic or anti-Semitic, and would not take part in a boycott of Israeli goods. It has been said that the NF is presentable, now that it is hostile to Muslims, not Jews. Sarkozy is trying to take votes away from NF supporters by creating a lot of talk about certain subjects, while not actually doing anything substantial about these issues. So he initiates "national debates" on topics he knows worries NF members, such as immigration, debates presented as objective deliberations on "national identity" (last summer) or now on "secularism". The same Guéant mentioned above, now Minister of the Interior, helped along by declaring on television that "even with controlled immigration, sometimes the French don't feel at home in their own country."

But NF members are not fooled.

70 % of NF members are said to be anti-Sarkozy. The NF has an economic policy diametrically opposed to the President's liberalism and free trade policy. It calls for protectionism, an end to factories being 'delocalised' abroad and a withdrawal from the Euro. Their website says these policies are the fruit of the work of (unnamed) eminent economists. It is not clear if these economists are anonymous because they don't exist or because an association with

the NF is more than their career is worth.

Some left wing journalists with an interest in economics, for example Philippe Cohen and Elizabeth Levy, have said that the policies of the NF should be taken seriously, both because they have an effect ('for a worker victim of globalisation, voting NF is the only way to express his anger and his revolt' said Cohen on *France Inter*) and because protectionism is a sensible option today. The outrage which has greeted this position is remarkable. Nevertheless, *Le Monde* actually devoted a long analysis article (14/3/11) to criticising the NF economic policies.

The fact remains that the NF is divided and not strong financially. What rich backer would support an anti-free trade organisation of that sort?

Martine Aubry, meanwhile, in advance of the publication of the 'Socialist Project', explained on *France Inter* radio (28/3/11) the difficulties faced by the French today: 40% had not had a wage increase for 5 years; for many, the rent takes up 40 to 50% of their income; even two income households find it hard to make ends meet.

She talked of creating 300 000 'Jobs for the Future', successors to the 1997 Jospin 'Youth Employment Scheme' which was a success according to her, since 85% of participants in Jospin's scheme are still in employment today. These Jobs for the Future will be state aided and paid for by changing the way overtime is taxed. We will have to wait and see if the Socialist 'Project', which, according to their spokesman Benoit Hamon, has to be capable of being adopted by any of the candidates, says anything about protectionism and free trade.

Notes on the News

By Gwydion M Williams

No Need To Cut

In 2008, it was clearly understood that the global financial system was suffering convulsions and needed help from governments to stop it coming apart. It was assumed that drastic reforms were going to happen.

By 2010, the blame had been shifted. Labour should have been much more militant about it being the banker's fault and their damage to a healthy Real Economy. Instead New Labour compromised, got soft on the bankers and agreed that huge amounts of money should be removed from Public Services in order to appease the money markets.

The Coalition took the process much further. Had the Tories and Liberal-Democrats campaigned on the basis that much deeper cuts were needed, then Gordon Brown would still be Prime Minister. Instead they suggested that nothing much extra needed to be done, then 'discovered' the need for massive cuts once they had a firm coalition with the Liberal Democrats. Of course Nick Clegg was part of the 'Orange Book' faction that made a stand in 2004 for 'Market Liberalism', so it was largely what he had been wanting to do all along.

It's an historic tragedy that the Social Democratic Party let itself be swallowed by the Liberals, the remnant of a corrupt old party, a remnant of the 19th century elite. Had the Social Democrats held fast to Old Labour values, they might have pushed the Liberals into oblivion and become significant in the longer term. Now it's quite possible the Liberal Democrats will suffer disaster at the next election, even if they get Alternate Voting.

March For The Alternative

The TUC demonstration of the 26th March went quite well. The early talk had been of 100,000: on the day it was 250,000 according to the police and 500,000 according to the TUC.

Sadly, 90% of the publicity was grabbed by a few hundred fools who went for 'direct action'. If they want to fight the police they should be Soccer Hooligans, or maybe just freelance hooligans. Rioters are parasitic on normal protests

Direct Action can succeed for a limited cause that a lot of people agree with. The Welsh Language Society scored a great success back in the 1960s, getting a Welsh language radio stations and road signs showing both Welsh and English versions of place-names. On Green issues there is also some scope, since a lot of people are worried. But the 'March for the Alternative' was all about persuading people that there are serious alterna-

tives to the Coalition's program. Just saying you don't like it can sound childish and mostly is childish.

Plenty of people on the march were sounding just as foolish as the small number who acted. The Socialist Workers Party included references to Egypt on their banners – Tunisia would have been more sensible, since there are significant left forces in Tunisia and seem to be none in Egypt. But anyway we are opposing a government in Britain that the people chose, however foolishly. We are working within a political system that allows for radical changes, the left largely defeated itself in the 1970s by refusing to take what was on offer.

The rioters would undoubtedly have said they were for freedom, but there is nothing more authoritarian than irregular acts of violence. Not that I'd always reject them, I just try to figure the odds and they are not good. Anarchists and Trotskyists are too violent for useful protests within the existing system but not harsh enough or ruthless enough to be effective revolutionaries, and as a global movement of more than eight decades standing they have been a complete flop.

Failed Conservatism.

The New Right treat Big State as an anomaly: that has been the logic behind the cuts. But the real anomaly in modern society is the very large slice of life governed by commodity production, production escaped from normal social controls. History has shown that this busts whatever social system tries it.

The principle is Laissez-Faire, which is best translated as 'Let Things Drift'. For the Coalition, the minor detail of their system having suffered shipwreck in 2008 is no reason to abandon 'Let Things Drift'. They resist any suggesting of returning to the older idea of plotting a course.

What we've got is an Overclass: they want your money, not your life. The former British Ruling Class lost its power and confidence in the 1940s, and saw its role reduced further in the 1960s. They appealed to people's selfish interests in the 1980s, which gets them elected but limits what they can do. Instead of people returning to 'normal' conservative behaviour once the 'abnormal' state role is cut back, people get ever more unhappy, selfish, overweight and prone to binge-drinking and drug abuse. This naturally infuriates the US Republicans and UK Tories, "how dare reality be so at odds with our values?". That they might be *wrong* is not something they can consider. The more they fail, the more they assert the doctrine. This is the norm for declining powers: Spain was never so fierce for Catholic piety as when it had lost the global struggle for dominance and was

being overtaken by the French, Dutch and English, powers with ideas that were very radical compared to the European norm.

What worries me is the fact that declining powers seldom fall without a major war. So far, the violence of the decline has mostly been taken out on Arabs and Afghans. But things could easily get worse.

Nuclear Worries (real)

Radiation damage is like having a pin stuck in you: a few 'hits' are harmless but when there are lots, it gets serious. So far, only a few brave workers at the nuclear plants have been at risk, after a disaster that killed tens of thousands from the tsunami. But it is the nuclear risk that is getting all of the attention.

But how serious is it? The world has good reason to have nuclear fears: for some 40 years of Cold War we were always conscious that massive death from nuclear weapons might be just hours away. Nuclear power involves a different use of nuclear materials and it is not possible for a power plant to have a true nuclear explosion: the explosions that have happened have been conventional chemical explosions that are serious because they release nuclear isotopes. But it suffers by a confusion of the two things, nuclear bombs and nuclear power.

Fossil fuel has actually proved a much worse killer across the centuries, and this is still the case:

"A 2002 review by the IAE [International Energy Agency] put together existing studies to compare fatalities per unit of power produced for several leading energy sources. The agency examined the life cycle of each fuel from extraction to post-use and included deaths from accidents as well as long-term exposure to emissions or radiation. Nuclear came out best, and coal was the deadliest energy source.

"The explanation lies in the large number of deaths caused by pollution. 'It's the whole life cycle that leads to a trail of injuries, illness and death,' says

Paul Epstein, associate director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. Fine particles from coal power plants kill an estimated 13,200 people each year in the US alone, according to the Boston-based Clean Air Task Force (*The Toll from Coal*, 2010). Additional fatalities come from mining and transporting coal, and other forms of pollution associated with coal. In contrast, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the UN estimate that the death toll from cancer following the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl will reach around 9000.

"In fact, the numbers show that catastrophic events are not the leading cause of deaths associated with nuclear power. More than half of all deaths stem from uranium mining, says the IEA. But even when this is included, the overall toll remains significantly lower than for all other fuel sources." [A]

Nuclear Worries (unreal)

The panic does also have a funny side. Radioactive iodine can be a real menace, because humans concentrate iodine in the thyroid gland and it can cause cancer there. Medical doses of iodine can fix this. But the idea that common salt could help somehow spread in China, which wasn't anyway exposed to any threat from a reactor in Japan's north-west. The *Times of India* reported one consequence of this:

"A Chinese man who bought 6.5 tonnes of salt, hoping to profit from panic buying spurred by fears of radiation from Japan, is now stuck with the \$4,000 (2,480 pounds) worth of the commodity, state media reported on Friday.

"The man, surnamed Guo, bought the salt in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, when rumours spread across China last week that the iodine in salt could help ward off radiation sickness, the *China Daily* reported on Friday.

"Salt prices jumped on the rumours, and, acting on a tip that there would be a supply shortage lasting at least six months, Guo bought 260 bags of salt, which he took back to his apartment in three trucks...

"The newspaper said Guo can't resell the goods, because he has no receipt and also because he was told it was illegal to do so. He also can't take it to another province, as the government strictly controls salt transport." [C]

Arabs Free To Choose

This magazine said about Iraq that once the repressive regime was removed, the West would find itself face to face with the things that had been repressed, most of which were much more alien than Saddam Hussein. The same is likely to happen in Egypt and Tunisia, and also in Libya if they manage to bring down Gaddafi.

"As the world's spotlight remains trained on the carnage in Libya, tensions are mounting in nearby Tunisia, where the first of this year's Arab dictator-dominoes fell....

"The secular left and the Islamists want deeper change. Along with the main trade union federation, they are displaying remarkable unity and recently formed a National Council for the Defence of the Revolution (NCDR). Far more people were driven into exile or imprisoned for long terms under the old regime than occurred under Hosni Mubarak's rule in Egypt. Welcome parties still turn up at Tunis airport almost every day to greet returning friends and heroes.

"After all their personal sacrifices, they are determined not to be cheated into accepting a system that amounts to a sanitised version of Ben Ali's rule, with only a mild softening of the old top-down political control and the same economic inequalities between the capital city and the provinces that sparked the January uprising...

"After suffering under a presidential dictatorship and de facto one-party rule, most leftists and Islamists are calling for a parliamentary system,' says Radhia Nasraoui, a lawyer who heads the Association against Torture in Tunisia. Her husband, Hamma Hammami, leads the Tunisian Workers' Communist party and was only released from prison when Ben Ali was toppled.

“There is a widespread consensus that the old Islamist party, al-Nahda (Renaissance), is Tunisia’s strongest political force. It is more powerful morally, if not yet organisationally, than its Egyptian counterparts because so many hundreds of members suffered torture and exile under Ben Ali, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which was banned but not brutalised (apart from very few).” [B]

The Get-Gaddafi Zone

At the time of writing (28th March), the NATO intervention has stopped an immanent victory for the Gaddafi government and moved fighting to the middle of the country. The rebels briefly threatened Colonel Gaddafi’s birthplace of Sirte, which has been solid for him all along. But now they have been pushed out of Bin Jawad – I make that the fourth time the place has changed hands in this ding-dong civil war.

The West has been hung up on the idea of ‘Colour Revolutions’, ignoring the fact that they often create chaos and sometimes a return by the overthrown ruler, as has happened in the Ukraine. Nothing so neat is likely in the Arab world. In Tunisia the ruler fled: that made things easy. In Egypt, Mubarak stood his ground and then simply vanished, as I noted in the last issue. None of our fearless free media seem interested in asking after him.

In Libya, there has been a confused revolt with strong regional elements, a revolt that briefly seemed to sweep all before it. But then Gaddafi’s forces rallied, helped perhaps by the West revealing that it had learned nothing and forgotten nothing and was giving priority to revenge for past defiance. The Arab League weakly agreed to the idea of a ‘no fly zone’, which would have rapidly failed if it hadn’t been turned into a general authorisation to attack by a UN resolution.

Though it’s unclear just what the UN did authorise:

“Concern over the legality of the military action in Libya reignited on Monday as rebel forces surged into the space created by the international bombardment

of Colonel Gaddafi’s military.

“Philippe Sands QC, professor of international law at University College London, warned that coalition forces were facing a ‘major problem’ to justify their latest strikes on legal grounds and Lord Ashdown, the former high representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, said the coalition forces led by Britain, France and the US were facing ‘a moment of danger’ over the legality of their actions. He said ‘continued support for this looks as though it is leading to support for regime change, which legally is beyond the [United Nations] security council resolution’.

“Legal experts said the international coalition may have overstepped what was agreed by the UN resolution sanctioning military action to ‘take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack’.

“Professor Nicholas Grief, director of legal studies at the University of Kent, said it was possible there could be an attempt to bring the matter before the international court of justice. Others said the coalition forces were within the bounds of legality and could continue to attack Gaddafi’s military positions as long as they posed any future threat to civilian populations.

“Concern grew as Sergei Lavrov, Russia’s foreign minister, said he believed the military action was in breach of international law. ‘We consider that intervention by the coalition in what is essentially an internal civil war is not sanctioned by the UN security council resolution,’ he said. Russia abstained from the vote which resulted in resolution 1973.

“Britain said the strikes remained legal. ‘The UN resolution’s point of ensuring that civilians could be protected allows the international coalition to take action against those who are threatening civilians,’ said Alistair Burt, Foreign Office minister. ‘The Gaddafi forces have been threatening civilians through the advance of their military machine. In order for that threat to be lifted, action has been taken as we have seen. It is very important for us and for everyone that what has been done is under the terms of

the UN resolution.’

“But Sands said it was becoming increasingly hard to justify the strikes on the Libyan leader’s forces as pre-emptive.

“‘The resolution is concerned with the protection of civilians, so a military attack on Gaddafi’s retreating forces could only be justified if it could be shown to be related to that objective,’ he said.

“‘It is difficult in international law to argue for a pre-emptive use of force to protect civilians from a possible threat that might arise in the future. We don’t know if there is evidence to show that a failure to attack Gaddafi’s forces would lead to a regrouping that would lead in turn to attacks on civilians. Pre-emption is a major problem because it is seen as a slippery slope, and rightly so.’” [D]

The initial strikes saved the rebels in Benghazi, where they probably do represent the majority of the population. It let them retake some places they had lost – the third time those places had changed hands, it seems. But the next target was Gaddafi’s home town of Sirte, which had never revolted and seemed solid for him. Attacking there was certainly not protecting civilians, because if any of them are anti-Gaddafi they are lying low and safe from Gaddafi’s forces. Not safe from NATO air-strikes, which seem not to be as targeted as was claimed:

“On Sunday night at least 18 large explosions were heard in or near Sirte, apparently part of the coalition’s campaign of attacking air defences and other military targets. But reports that the city had fallen to the Benghazi-based rebels were evidently wrong – and fuelled Libyan fury at the satellite TV channels that claimed it had.

“It was firmly in government hands and its people defiant. ‘I saw death with my own eyes,’ said Fawzi Imish, whose house and every other in his seafront street had its windows shattered by a Tomahawk missile strike in the early hours of the morning. ‘It was just intended to terrify people. And if the rebels come here, we will receive them with bullets...’

“In early afternoon a convoy of 15 Toyota Land Cruisers carrying groups of fresh-looking regular soldiers moved east from Misrata where some rebels are still holding out. But there were no signs of heavy armour or artillery – perhaps because these have been easily hit in coalition air strikes in the battles for Ajdabiya, Ras Lanuf and Brega over the past few days.

“Lightly armed infantrymen, backed up by militiamen and civilians driving mud-smearing cars armed en masse by the government will be a far more elusive target for allied pilots if they are involved in a battle for a sizeable town or skirmishes along the coastal road.

“Residents of Sirte’s beachfront area protested angrily at an attack on Saturday night which killed three men picnicking on a breakwater surrounding a small harbour, packed with wooden fishing boats abandoned by their Egyptian and Tunisian crews when the uprising began last month. Fragments of the bomb were embedded in a shallow crater at the end of the stone jetty – which had no conceivable military use.

“On Khartoum Street, where one of the dead men lived, a woman could be heard wailing inconsolably as grim-faced relatives arrived to pay their respects.

“‘We are just civilians, there is nothing military here, only fishing boats and ordinary people,’ complained Ahmed al-Hashr, whose nephew Faraj died in the same attack.

“Anger and fear are accompanied by flashes of defiance. ‘At first people were scared of the raids, but now they have got used to them,’ said Asra Salem, a 15-year-old at al-Manara girls’ school, where many pupils stayed away after another night of attacks. ‘We just stay at home and pray and read the Qur’an,’ said Ghada Imrayet, recently returned from a long stay in Newcastle.

“‘Inshallah [God willing] we will defend our city, our homes and our coast,’ shouted an emotional Abdel-Adim al-Karam, a sound engineer whose small children were terrified by the bombing.

“Khamis Mohammed, a Sirte University lecturer, accused Nato of deliberately targeting innocent civilians and supporting ‘mercenaries and terrorists’ in the east.

“‘Our grandfathers fought Mussolini and we will fight and live free in our land,’ he said. ‘If Nato really cared about civilians it and the UN would send a mission here to find out who is really the aggressor.’

“Hatred for the Benghazi rebels has been fuelled by an incident on Sunday when pro-Gaddafi loyalists taking part in a peace march were confronted near Bin Jawad and three of them reportedly shot and killed, despite carrying white flags and olive branches. But according to some accounts armed volunteers were in one bus at the rear of the convoy.” [E]

If Gaddafi and his people do lose in the end, that will be the end of the last substantial expression of Nasserism, secular Arab nationalism. The end of a creed that shared many Western values but insisted on asserting itself. What will follow next is uncertain, but a supposedly sovereign state that will not assert its rights has no long-term future. A Somali-style collapse could happen in a number of countries, along with a rise of Islamism.

Commentators seem to forget that the winners of a revolution may be quite small in its early stages. The Jacobins in Revolutionary France began as quite a small faction and grew as their rivals failed to provide coherent government. That was also true of the Bolsheviks in Russia. It is in the nature of revolutions to revolutionise, and the West has an inadequate grasp of the risks.

Hague Looks Ridiculous

I’d say William Hague’s days in the cabinet are numbered. Libya was his first major crisis, and he managed to make just about every mistake that it was possible to make. Cameron had to shove him aside to get the current intervention organised, when the alternative was to look weak and ridiculous.

The best policy would have been to urge compromise, to allow for the fact that Gaddafi has a popular base and is very unlikely to flee. Looking more widely, he had compromised with the West and must have hoped that the long dispute was closed. Instead the West showed that no agreement will be honoured if it can be profitably broken.

Probably very few of the rebels are pro-British. The former Gaddafi supporters are pretty certainly not, and there is evidence of Islamists involved as well. So a sensible British Foreign Secretary would have quietly concentrated on getting Britons safely away while a hostile regime self-destructed.

Mr Hague must have thought he knew better. I’d hazard a guess that he has been given sound advice by his senior Civil Servants and has chosen to ignore it. First he made a fool of himself by signalling belief in the false story about Gaddafi fleeing to Venezuela. Then he failed to do his proper job, making sure that Britons in Libya could get out quickly. When this was reported he took no notice, leaving it to Cameron to make the big apology. What he’s done instead has been to posture as if he were something from *The Godfather*, or maybe the gangster-comedy *The Sopranos*. Seeing him being interviewed on television in the first week of the Libyan Civil War, I kept expecting him to say ‘*The graveyards are full of dead people who at one time would have been alive*’. Instead he made sinister-sounding remarks about anyone committing war crimes would be liable to held responsible for it.

Everyone nowadays knows that war-crime trials apply only to losers, and then only if they can’t find a safe refuge. If Gaddafi falls, any of his people who get to Venezuela should be safe, Venezuela is getting stronger and stronger as the oil price rises. Various African countries might make a more probable refuge. Mr Hague’s threats were empty. People caught up in the growing civil war must have viewed it as ‘an offer they can’t be bothered to take notice of’.

Luckily no one targeted Britons or other expatriates, apart from some unfortunate Black Africans suspected of being pro-Gaddafi mercenaries. Brit-

ons working in remote drilling camps got robbed by looters but otherwise no one seems to care what they do or when they leave. So far no foreigner has been intentionally harmed. One UK citizen of Libyan origin has been killed, but it is unlikely he was classed as a foreigner.

All along there was loose talk of no-fly zones and of using the SAS. British Special Forces have been pretty good at their proper job, making fast and skilled attacks on difficult military targets. Trying to use them as a global goon-squad was foolish and has not really worked. They failed to defeat the IRA. They don't seem to have damaged al-Qaeda at all, or achieved anything notable in Iraq or Afghanistan. Several of them were sent into the rebel area on a mysterious mission, were caught and thrown out again.

"Labour has accused the government of 'serial bungling' over the situation in Libya, following a botched SAS mission to the troubled country.

"Six soldiers and two Foreign Office officials were detained for two days in eastern Libya but were released on Sunday and have left the country.

"Foreign Secretary William Hague said the men were withdrawn after a 'serious misunderstanding' over their role...

"Most of the group were dropped by helicopter into eastern Libya on Friday night but were later seized and taken to a military base in handcuffs by opposition fighters.

"Witnesses said they were found to be carrying weapons, ammunition, maps and passports from four different countries, claims reportedly denied by the group.

"They left for Malta on board HMS Cumberland on Sunday night.

"Mr Hague told the Commons: 'Last week I authorised the despatch of a small British diplomatic team to eastern Libya, in uncertain circumstances which we judged required their protection, to build on these initial contacts and to assess the scope for closer diplomatic dialogue. I pay tribute to that team.'" [F]

If that's a 'diplomatic team', what would an undiplomatic team be like? Who Dares Gets Kicked Out Again, it seems. They were not expected and were treated as hostile:

"Libya's rebel commanders have freed two MI6 officers and six SAS soldiers captured by farm guards on Thursday morning, after the British government vouched for their identities. The group was immediately flown to the frigate HMS Cumberland, which remains stationed off the coast of Libya.

"Seven of the group had been inserted by helicopter into farmland near the rebel capital Benghazi on a mission to establish contact with anti-regime forces. The eight Britons had been detained and questioned since Thursday by rebel leaders who had suspected they were mercenaries.

"Challenged by guards at a wheat farm, they were forced to open bags containing weapons, reconnaissance equipment, and multiple passports, then herded into a dormitory before they were handed over to the rebels...

"The Guardian can reveal that the helicopter group's contact was a British national named Tom, who is believed to be an MI6 officer. He had worked for the past five months as an administrator in the Al-Khadra Farm Company, 18 miles south-west of Benghazi. The group's cover was blown by suspicious guards as soon as they arrived at their staging point inside the farm courtyard, which was adjacent to Tom's living quarters." [G]

Had this been followed by the fall of Benghazi to Gaddafi's forces, Britain would have suffered a serious short-term blow to its prestige. What actually happened was that Cameron stepped in and raised the stakes, lending support to the idea of a No-Fly Zone, which might have worked if applied earlier. The USA decided that it wasn't going to work, and so raised the stakes again, getting a UN resolution that effectively made NATO a party to the Libyan civil war, though with a promise of no ground troops. The danger is, this will produce stalemate and chaos. It might have been wiser for Cameron to have cut his losses and sacked Hague at the time.

Prospects for Good Government

A government threatened with removal must be expected to defend itself. This is even more true when the state itself is at risk. Demonstrators who occupy the heart of a city and demand the government's resignation have effectively declared war even if they have no weapons.

It is also normal for a government to refuse to punish its own people, even when blatantly excess force has been used. Remember Kent State University back in 1970? During a protest against the Vietnam War, unarmed college students were shot by members of the Ohio National Guard. The guardsmen fired 67 rounds over a period of 13 seconds, killing four students and wounding nine others, one of whom suffered permanent paralysis. Some of the students who were shot had been protesting against the enlargement of the Vietnam War with the American invasion of Cambodia. Other students who were shot had been walking nearby or observing the protest from a distance.

Protesting at the invasion of Cambodia was justified by history: the USA still lost and the long-term result was to destroy stability and lead on the years of Khmer Rouge rule and then a Vietnamese invasion, followed by a brief border war between China and Vietnam. But none of the Ohio National Guard received any punishment for blatant criminality.

Much more recently in this country, the policeman who caused the death of Ian Tomlinson during a G20 protest has so far escaped punishment, even though he was filmed being unreasonably violent to a man who wasn't even part of the demonstration. States always enforce their power and seldom punish anyone for being over-violent in enforcing that power.

The claim that Gaddafi fired on unarmed protestors has yet to be proven. A lot of other stories have been proved to be false. Perhaps some people see this as secondary, the important issue is getting rid of the dictator and establishing good multi-party government. That view extends even to some of those who op-

posed the Iraq War, but is largely based on illusion.

Multi-party competition works when the differences between electable parties is outweighed by the prestige of the system within which they operate. It is hard to get going, and in England it needed two centuries and several rounds of civil war, followed by many decades of transition before Britain's parliament was actually elected by the majority of Britons.

A monarchy can allow a smooth transition to democracy, if that monarchy is well behaved. Some are not. The Greek Royals from the 1950s were a definite 'menace to society'. There was excellent reason to suspect them of involvement with the murder of moderate Socialist leader Grigoris Lambrakis in 1963, and with the Greek Junta of 1967-74, even though that junta threw out the monarch after a few months. It is rather a pity that those particular royals escaped with their lives. But elsewhere, things have gone better and most of Europe's smooth transitions to democracy have happened with the monarchy accepting the process. Getting rid of the Spanish monarchy in 1931 made a Civil War almost unavoidable. Restoring it after Franco died eased a path to typical Western politics.

A functional multi-party system can be destroyed by a habit of declaring elections unfair. Or creating a pattern of rallies in the capital to break the government. The West and the USA in particular made foolish use of its brief dominance in the 1990s.

Meantime the Ivory Coast goes from bad to worse. It functioned OK for decades under an autocrat who could keep the place united. When they tried multi-party democracy, the place split along regional lines and this has led on to civil war.

Meantime in China...

"Like the Tunisian whose self-immolation sparked a revolt, Xu Mingao is a young street vendor. Fourteen-hour days selling flatbread in Zhongguancun – the capital's Silicon Valley – earn him about

7,500 yuan (£709) a year.

"Home is a tiny cubicle in a dusty, hastily constructed neighbourhood where adverts pasted to lampposts seek workers who can 'eat bitterness' – endure the grind.

"But the 30-year-old is 'pretty happy' with his life: 'The difference [from the old days] is huge. When I was small my family had to borrow money for my schooling and we wore hand-me-downs,' he said.

"He and his wife have built a house back in their home town in Anhui with their earnings and hope for an office career for their boy.

"Rising expectations cannot always be met. Many of Xu's neighbours are members of China's 'ant tribe', who benefited from an explosion in higher education only to end up unemployed or in poorly paid work. One neighbour, Tian, said: 'I notice how everyone on my bus looks tired. No one seems happy.'

"Like Xu, she is the child of farmers; unlike him, she has a degree and white collar job. Yet she feels she faces more pressure than her parents did, partly because others are so visibly doing better.

"The rich are too rich and the poor are too poor,' she says.

"Workers feel the pinch of rising food prices and property costs. Spiralling living costs among the urban poor and middle class disenchantment could prove a toxic mix for a government that has justified its rule largely on improving people's living standards.

"But economists expect food inflation to fall back in the coming months and migrant wages in many parts of the country have risen rapidly thanks to labour shortages.

"The party has also been careful to promote itself as 'après nous le déluge', presenting itself as the only force standing between China and chaos.

"People feel they have something to lose,' said Nicholas Bequelin of Human Rights Watch." [H]

They also maybe have a better knowledge of their own history than Western journalists seem to possess. In 1911 they overthrew a rather bad system of Imperial rule, but then faced decades of chaos and an invasion from Japan, an invasion that the West failed to anything serious about. The Chinese Communists restored unity and stability. Under Mao, the economy tripled, after being fairly stagnant for centuries. In 1950-1955, life expectancy at birth was 40.8 years in China, 37.9 years in the newly independent Republic of India. Infant mortality per 1,000 live births was 195 in China, 163.7 in India. By 1970-1975, China's life expectancy was up to 63.2 years and infant mortality down to 61.1, while India's figures were 50.4 years and infant mortality of 119.7. [J]

China with its home-grown system has all along done better than India with its copy of the British system. A lot of Western commentators make drastic accusations about the setbacks of the 'Three Bad Years' 1959-61. They fail to figure how many extra Chinese lives would have been cut short had their system worked no better than India's, which itself has been a moderate Third World success.

Science Rising

"China is on course to overtake the US in scientific output possibly as soon as 2013 - far earlier than expected.

"That is the conclusion of a major new study by the Royal Society, the UK's national science academy.

"The country that invented the compass, gunpowder, paper and printing is set for a globally important comeback.

"An analysis of published research - one of the key measures of scientific effort - reveals an 'especially striking' rise by Chinese science...

"In 1996, the first year of the analysis, the US published 292,513 papers - more than 10 times China's 25,474.

"By 2008, the US total had increased very slightly to 316,317 while China's had surged more than seven-fold to

184,080.

“Previous estimates for the rate of expansion of Chinese science had suggested that China might overtake the US sometime after 2020.

“But this study shows that China, after displacing the UK as the world’s second leading producer of research, could go on to overtake America in as little as two years’ time.

“Projections vary, but a simple linear interpretation of Elsevier’s publishing data suggests that this could take place as early as 2013,’ it says.

“Professor Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith, chair of the report, said he was ‘not surprised’ by this increase because of China’s massive boost to investment in R&D.

“Chinese spending has grown by 20% per year since 1999, now reaching over \$100bn, and as many as 1.5 million science and engineering students graduated from Chinese universities in 2006.

“I think this is positive, of great benefit, though some might see it as a threat and it does serve as a wake-up call for us not to become complacent.’

“The report stresses that American research output will not decline in absolute terms and raises the possibility of countries like Japan and France rising to meet the Chinese challenge...

“However the report points out that a growing volume of research publications does not necessarily mean an increase in quality.

“One key indicator of the value of any research is the number of times it is quoted by other scientists in their work.

“Although China has risen in the ‘citation’ rankings, its performance on this measure lags behind its investment and publication rate.

“It will take some time for the absolute output of emerging nations to challenge the rate at which this research is referenced by the international scientific community.’

“The UK’s scientific papers are still the second most-cited in the world, after the US.” [K]

Of course citation rates might also be expected to lag a little behind quality: familiarity and prestige do count for something. Despite which, China undoubtedly has some way to go. But China has got its priorities right, ploughing money into rail networks, education and science. The US and UK cut back on these as needless luxuries, while allowing bankers to get absurd salaries and bonuses for playing games with financial stability.

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Parliament Notes

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Up In Arms!

It was not so long ago that the UK government was selling weapons to governments and autocrats in the Middle East and North Africa who they now condemn for using these weapons against opponents of their regimes. Although it must be said that such condemnation doesn't extend to Bahrain or Saudi Arabia. But other than condemn them, what else could they do? They could, of course, stop the sale of weapons altogether, but that would mean a substantial loss in income and jobs in the UK's weapons manufacturing and sales companies. So the Government came up with the bright idea of revoking, temporarily of course, certain licences to those countries where there was civil unrest; namely Bahrain, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

A Written Answer for 9 March revealed just how many licences had been revoked. Responding to a question from Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge & Malling, Con.) about the Government's review of export licences, Minister for Business Mark Prisk said, "As at 3pm on 3 March 2011 the following export licences have been revoked under this review: **Tunisia** - One Standard Export Licence (SIEL) was revoked on 27 January and Tunisia was removed as a permitted destination from one Open Individual Export Licence (OIEL) on 28 January. **Egypt** - 36 SIELs were revoked between 7 February and 11 February and Egypt was removed as a permitted destination from eight OIELs between 10 February and 1 March. **Libya** - 62 SIELs were revoked between 18 February and 3 March and Libya was removed as a permitted destination from nine OIELs on 23 February. **Bahrain** - 23 SIELs were revoked on 18 February and Bahrain was removed as a permitted destination from 16 OIELs between 18 February and 2 March. The review is ongoing as we continue to monitor how the situation develops in this region."

Of course it's useful to know which weapons licences have been revoked, and

when. But there is something wrong with the above list. There was a brief protest in Saudi Arabia bought off with an injection of billions of dollars into the economy, and a ban placed on all future demonstrations. And it is now known that Saudi Arabia has been assisting Bahrain to stamp out opposition there. Arms and men have been supplied to King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa who ordered the military to use brute force against the protestors, which they did in the capital Manama. And Saudi Arabia was behind the violent crackdown in the Yemen, which killed dozens of demonstrators. Many more are still unaccounted for and leading activists have been detained. As the UK government's review of export licences is ongoing can we therefore expect an announcement that licences to Saudi Arabia have been revoked? Unlikely, given the scale and value of weapons and equipment sales to Saudi Arabia, which greatly exceeds that to any other Middle East/North African country, and the UK's and the West's dependence on oil.

What is also interesting about the question on the revocation of licences is the absence of one on UK weapons sales to these countries. The current unrest is a good opportunity for Labour to promote a discussion on this, but we've heard nothing from Miliband and co. Under the late Robin Cook Labour developed an ethical foreign policy, but nevertheless continued to sell weapons and associated equipment and this may account for the silence. To obtain information about weapons sales to the Middle East/North Africa one has to go to the website of Campaign Against Arms Trade.

CAAT shows that the value of military and dual use equipment to Bahrain, Egypt and Libya in 2009 was £2.87 million, £16.35 thousand and £27.36 million, respectively. The first three quarters of 2010 (Jan-Sept) revealed sales values of £5.7 million (Bahrain), £5.53 million (Egypt) and £372.5 million (Libya). Sales to Libya included crowd control ammu-

munition, small arms ammunition, sniper rifles and tear gas. Dual use equipment, which include machine tools, software and submersible vehicles, make up the bulk of the sales value, but weapons and equipment for crowd control and strict military use are components of the package.

But it is Saudi Arabia that tops the UK list of sales of weapons and associated equipment. In 2009, the value of these sales was a staggering £1.7 billion, with military sales (i.e. non-dual use) accounting for more than £1.66 billion of the total. Dual use equipment brought in a mere £37.7 million. The military list of 60 items included aircraft missile protection systems, combat aircraft, components for armoured fighting vehicles, CS hand grenades, small arms ammunition, sniper rifles and tear gas/riot control agents. In 2010, the value of sales in the first three quarters (Jan-Sept) was £110.5 million. Still a substantial sum, but way below that for 2009, with military sales making up £60.8 million of the total.

A final word on Libya: CAAT's website for 17 February 2011 reports that no requests for licences to supply were refused in 2010. And it says further that "Libya is a UKTI/DSO priority market country, and the UK has made 'high level political interventions' in support of arms sales to Libya. Libya was also invited to attend the UK arms fairs; the Farnborough Air show in 2010 and Defence and Security Equipment International in 2009", and "The UK had by far the largest pavilion at Libya's arms fair LibDex in 2010, and was supported by a team from UKTI and DSO." But as soon as he used brutal force to crush the rebels he became a 'brutal tyrant', a 'murderous madman' and an 'oppressor of human rights.' Was he none of these when the UK was selling him weapons and Western leaders, including Tony Blair, were embracing him? Is it possible that he has become a 'monster' overnight? And why hasn't someone in Parliament asked these questions?

The Next Stop Is.....

Australia was the most popular country of destination for all UK emigrants, both UK and foreign nationals, in 2009. It topped a list of ten countries of next residence, with Germany the least popular of the ten. A total of 205,000 Out-migrants (emigrants) left the UK for Australia (56,000), USA (27,000), Poland (25,000), France (22,000), Spain (15,000), India (15,000), New Zealand (13,000), China (11,000), Canada (11,000), and Germany (10,000). The information was supplied in a Written Answer for 3 March by Cabinet Office Parliamentary Secretary Nick Hurd. It would seem that the bulk of those who left the UK for Poland were Polish workers returning home. And one can assume the same for those departing for India and possibly China. For the rest, most would have been UK nationals intending to settle permanently in Australia and elsewhere. This rather prompts the question: If it's okay for UK nationals to live wherever they choose, why is it a problem when other nationals choose to live in the UK?

Broken Society?

The popular press give prominence to any rise in crime, from which its readers deduce that society is breaking apart. But the fact is that crime overall is declining. Certain categories of crime are increasing and it is these that the press seize upon as proof of a broken Britain. The press rarely, if ever, report when a particular crime is falling. Vandalism is a striking example of anti-social behaviour and a matter of great concern to many people. Yet offences of criminal damage (aka vandalism) reported to the police have fallen in recent years, but one would not know this through reading the Express, the Mail or the Sun. Home Office Minister James Brokenshire was asked on 17 March, "how many instances of vandalism were reported in each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 1997?"

His reply in the form of a table shows that in 1997 there were 877,042 offences of criminal damage recorded by the police in England and Wales. The most recent figure for 2009-10 was 806,720. This

may not seem a significant drop but there was a steady rise in recorded offences over the following six years, reaching 1,218,524 in 2003-04. The figures then fell in each year up to 2009-10, ducking under 1 million in 2008-09. However, the table strikes a cautionary note. Figures before and after 2002-03 are not **directly** comparable due to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. Nevertheless, they do at least suggest that vandalism is not out of control, which is what we are led to believe. It should be noted however that not all police areas recorded a decline. Avon & Somerset, Hampshire, South Yorkshire and Thames Valley saw an increase in 2009-10 over 1997.

Bank On The 'Big Society'

The huge cuts in public spending are beginning to have an effect, with local authorities and the voluntary sector announcing massive budget cuts and job losses for 2010-11. Already, key services to vulnerable people are being reduced or abolished altogether. But recent Written Answers appear to suggest that Ministers are not unduly concerned. They seem confident that the 'Big Society', with the assistance of the big society bank, will assume control. However, the general public have difficulty with the meaning of the 'Big Society' and Ministers have failed to provide a satisfactory definition.

On 2 March, Labour's Anas Sarwar (Glasgow Central) drew attention to this, telling Paymaster General Francis Maude that, "opinion polls show that the majority of the British people have not even heard of the big society and that the majority of those who have think it is just a cover-up for the cuts." Without possibly intending to, Maude admitted that the economic recession had provided the Coalition with the opportunity to shrink the role (and size) of the state. He said, "I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman does not think that building a bigger, stronger and more cohesive society is worth while, particularly given that the role of the state is having to retrench severely as a result of the financial incontinence of the previous Government of the party that he supports." So the state is simply retrenching itself without any help from the Government. Truly a secular miracle!

But what of the big society bank? Peter Aldous (Waveney, Con.) asked Francis Maude on 2 March, "What progress his Department has made in establishing a big society bank." To which Maude replied, "Sir Ronald Cohen and Nick O'Donohue are working with us and with the banks to develop a proposal for the big society bank. As I have said, it will be capitalised by an investment from the mainstream banks. We are currently seeking to secure state aid approvals from the European Commission so that money from dormant bank and building society accounts can be directed towards the big society bank." It is estimated that the big society bank will be launched at the end of the year with £300 million-worth of capital, with four of the UK's main banks injecting £200 million over two years. This investment from the mainstream banks will be in the form of loans at commercial rates. But if savings accounts are to be used to fund the investment without the approval of the savers, will the account holders benefit from the commercial rates charged by the banks?

£300 million will fall far short of what will be required as Labour's Tessa Jowell (Dulwich & West Norwood) reminded Francis Maude. "Community projects also rely on revenue funding to support capital investment and according to estimates from the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, the total loss of revenue faced by civil society organisations will be at least £1.14 billion in the next financial year, rising to £3.1 billion a year by 2014-15." Jowell asked Maude if he accepted these figures and, if not, would he undertake to provide the Government's own estimates of the revenue losses faced by community organisations over that period. Maude's reply suggested that he and the Government believe that local government, not the Coalition, should be held responsible for any cuts in funding to the voluntary sector. "My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government told the conference of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations yesterday, that the Government had 'reasonable expectations' that local authorities would not impose greater cuts in their funding for community, social and voluntary organisations than they imposed on their in-house services, and

that if authorities did not follow those 'reasonable expectations', he would contemplate making them statutory."

Cameron has said on more than one occasion that volunteer work is a key feature of the big society. And Cabinet Office Parliamentary Secretary Nick Hurd referred to it on 7 March as, "One of the three aims of the Governments vision for a big society." Cameron would like to see more volunteering and appears to regard it as an alternative to paid work. But he would, wouldn't he? It's what rich Tories regard as Christian charity, in the expectation that when their time is up they will slip through the eye of the proverbial needle. Although Cameron has another motive. The more unpaid volunteers there are, the less the state has to provide paid work and the more scope there is for tax cuts, which will disproportionately benefit Cameron and his rich chums.

But how popular is volunteering? Do people come forward in large numbers to do their bit? Data from the 2009-10 Citizenship Survey of England, which distinguishes between formal and informal volunteering, show the regional variations in volunteering and from which one can work out the average for England as a whole. The figures do not indicate a people itching to spend their spare time doing good works. The average percentage of formal volunteer work once a month for England as a whole in 2009-10 was 25.2, just 1/4 of the population. This rose to 40.2 (2/5ths) for those who undertook formal volunteer work once a year.

The percentage of those who did informal volunteer work once a month in 2009-10 was higher at 29.3, but still less than one third. While 54% of people undertook informal volunteer work once a year. Why such poor figures? The answer lies perhaps in the data from the 2008-09 survey which shows that the main barriers to volunteering were, work commitments (cited by 55% of those that did not volunteer), family responsibilities (30%), lack of spare time (26%) and not hearing about opportunities to help (20%). So it looks as though the Government is going to be well wide of the target with one of its three aims for the big society.

Control Freaks

The renewal of control orders for suspected terrorists was the subject for debate on 2 March. Home Office Minister James Brokenshire moved, "That the draft Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 (Continuance in Force of Sections 1 to 9) Order 2011, which was laid before this House on 3 February, be approved." The orders will remain in place until their replacement by an "alternative regime" at the end of the year. This followed a review of counter-terrorism conducted by the Government which concluded that "for the foreseeable future there is likely to continue to be a small number of individuals who pose a real threat to our security, but who, despite our best efforts, cannot be prosecuted or, in the case of foreign nationals, deported. As at 10 December 2010, eight individuals were subject to control orders. Our reluctant assessment is that there will continue to be a need for a mechanism to protect the public from the threat that such individuals pose."

The new regime will include two important changes to the existing control orders. First, as Brokenshire told MPs, "Measures will have to meet the evidential test of reasonable belief that a person is or has been involved in terrorism-related activity. That is higher than the test of reasonable suspicion of such involvement in the control orders regime. The police will be under a strengthened legal duty to inform the Home Secretary about an ongoing review of a person's conduct with a view to bringing a prosecution." Secondly, "Forcible location to other parts of the country will be ended. Geographical boundaries will be replaced with a power to impose much more tightly defined exclusions from particular places. There will be no power to exclude someone from, for example, an entire London borough. Individuals will have greater freedom of communication, including access to a mobile phone and a home computer with internet access, subject to certain conditions such as providing passwords. They will have greater freedom to associate- for example there will be no blanket restrictions on visitors or meetings. Individuals will only be prohibited from associating with people who may facili-

tate terrorism-related activity."

It must be said that the second of these changes strikes one as odd, given that the Government believe that those currently subject to control orders "pose a real threat to security." Brokenshire told MPs, "Our intention is that there should be a safe and managed transition to the new system. This means that, until the new system is introduced, we need to retain the full range of control order powers. The alternative would be to allow individuals who pose a threat to the public to go freely about their terrorism-related activities for the remainder of the year." But if Brokenshire and the Government believe that the current control order system has worked effectively, why change it for a system that will give more freedom of association and movement to people they believe have been connected with terrorism and remain a real threat to the public? Individuals will be prohibited from associating with people who may facilitate terrorism-related activity, but will be free to associate more widely than hitherto. This will surely open up a can of worms, from which may crawl unknown terrorist associates.

Speaking for Labour, Gerry Sutcliffe (Bradford South) agreed with Brokenshire. "As the Minister said, the threat to our country remains at 'severe', and the threat of terrorism is never far away. We are a high-profile country with high-profile events this year and next, so there cannot and should not be any room for complacency." (By "a high-profile country", Sutcliffe presumably means we are a country that sticks its nose into other countries' business, hence the need for control orders.) But he accused the Government of playing politics and wanted to know, "whether the replacement for control orders will be weaker and whether it will protect the country as it should. We would like to hear from the Minister what evidence came from the security services and the police about the new regime that he and the Home Secretary want to introduce. There is a suspicion on our side that it is a political fix to get the Deputy Prime Minister out of a mess, and that it has to do with the reality of being in government as opposed to the rhetoric of Opposition." Sutcliffe's accusation of a

political fix however didn't prevent him from supporting the renewal of the control orders, pending the introduction of a new regime.

Not all MPs were happy with the current control order system, nor were they persuaded that a new, less intrusive, replacement was necessary. Dominic Raab (Walton & Esher, Con), for example, referred to control orders as "an affront to British liberty and justice", and suggested that "their relevance as a security measure for dealing with a threat on which we all agree is at best minimal." And his Conservative colleague, ex-army officer Patrick Mercer said, in relation to the individuals subject to control orders, "The difficulty is that we are detaining those individuals undemocratically and improperly, which plays directly into the hands of our enemies."

But it was Labour's Jeremy Corbyn who put the matter clearly and succinctly when he said, "My concern is that Parliament is again voting through provisions that give extraordinary powers to a Secretary of State, who is able to impose a control order on an individual without recourse to a due process of law. As the Minister said, these are people against whom no criminal charge could be brought and they cannot be deported, presumably because of the lack of convention applicability in the countries to which they might be deported. We do not know, of course, who these eight individuals are. I think that for Parliament to give such powers to any Secretary of State is an abdication of our responsibility for two reasons.

First, the separation of judicial and political functions is central to the constitution and very important. We are not a court; we cannot put people on trial. We can pass laws, and it is for the courts to deal with them in a separate place. Secondly, if by this process we deny individuals access to any judicial process whatever and people are restricted and to some extent detained by Executive decision, that bypasses both ourselves as a Parliament and the independence of the courts. We should think very carefully about that." If Corbyn's Parliamentary colleagues had thought carefully about it, they had clearly ignored what he had said for the order to renew went through on

the nod, without a vote.

The NHS : Labour Wake Up

Did Shadow Secretary of State John Healey obtain a copy of the Feb 2011 issue of the L&TUR which carried an editorial accusing Labour of being in a coma while the NHS was under threat? If not, someone or something woke him and Labour up. On 16 March the Commons debated a Labour motion moved by Healey which requires to be read in full. The motion states: "That this House supports the founding principles of the National Health Service (NHS); therefore welcomes the improvements patients have seen in the NHS and supports steps further to ensure the NHS is genuinely centred on patients and carers, achieves quality and outcomes that are among the best in the world, refuses to tolerate unsafe care, involves clinicians in decision-making and enables healthcare providers to innovate, improves transparency and accountability, is more efficient and gives citizens greater say; recognises however that all of those policies and aspirations can be achieved without adopting the damaging and unjustified market-based reorganisation that is proposed, and already being implemented, by the Government; notes the strength of concerns being raised by independent experts, patient groups and professional bodies about the Government's NHS reorganisation; further notes the similar concerns expressed by the Liberal Democrat Party spring conference; and therefore urges the Government to halt the implementation of the reorganisation and pause the progress of the legislation in order to re-think their plans and honour the Prime Minister's promise to protect the NHS."

Not to put too fine a point on it, this is a weasel-worded motion. If Labour had a plan for the NHS which differed markedly from the Coalition's proposals, it would oppose lock, stock and barrel, the Health and Social Care Bill on which the proposals are based. But it doesn't and that showed up clearly in Healey's speech. As he told Liberal Democrat Simon Hughes, "Our motion calls not for it to be withdrawn but for a pause in its passage through Parliament to give the Government a chance to re-think, exactly as was requested by speaker after speaker at

his conference in Sheffield on Saturday, and all but a handful of the members who voted at it." Has Healey lost his senses? Does he seriously believe that the Government will radically alter the Bill after a pause in its passage? This is a Bill to dismantle the NHS, not to tinker with it around the edges. Is he, also, suffering from amnesia? He told MPs, "The NHS just is not like a commercial business, which is what this Government wants to turn it into." But as Margot James (Stourbridge, Con) reminded him, "The right hon. Gentleman has already acknowledged that competition and markets were the hallmark of the Labour Government; they took them far further than the previous Conservative Government ever did." In other words, Labour left the door open for further privatisation leading to a dismantling of the NHS, which Healey now opposes.

Inevitably, in a speech riddled with buzz words like competition, choice and freedom, the Health Secretary Andrew Lansley accused Labour MPs of being a mouthpiece for the trade unions. "They are not speaking for their constituencies", he said, "they are just speaking for the trade unions." He also stated, wrongly, that "Labour Members are paid for by the trade unions". It is the constituency parties that receive funds, not the MPs. But in his opening remarks John Healey made it clear that Labour's NHS reforms went ahead "in the face opposition from the trade unions." Unlike Labour therefore the unions cannot be accused of inconsistency. Yes, the trade unions, most notably UNISON with over 400,000 NHS members, are opposed to the Bill, but they are not against reform which improves NHS services. But fierce opponents of the Bill also include the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Surgeons. Not one of these, strictly speaking, is a trade union. And not one provides a penny to the Labour Party. But it would be interesting to learn just how many of the private sector companies waiting to get in on the competitive tendering process fund the Conservative Party. Lansley's comments about trade unions are a red herring. Some Labour MPs are serious opponents of the Bill, but Labour's shadow health team is simply indulging

in the luxury of opposition. A few basic changes to the Bill here and there and they would happily support it, as the motion shows and as Healey indicated. However, one of the more serious Labour opponents of the Bill is Warrington North's MP Helen Jones. The following is her speech in full.

"In the devastation that followed the second world war, this country had the courage and the vision to realise the dream of a health service available to all in times of need. If the Government's plans go ahead, that dream will die. [Interruption] Yes, it will. It is not simply that the reorganisation represents a broken promise, which it does, or that it is costly, although it is, but that it strikes at the very foundation of the NHS. Indeed, if it goes ahead, there will no longer be a national health service, but a vast postcode lottery, with treatment depending on where people live. The market, not the patient will be king. That is being done under the cloak of localism - the Government's current buzz word. Remove the cloak and we will see the realities: an NHS driven by the market, run by a vast, unelected and unaccountable bureaucracy, with accountability to Parliament greatly reduced."

"The Government plan to give all commissioning to GPs. They conveniently ignore the fact that if GPs wanted to be managers, they would have taken MBAs rather than medical degrees. They will bring in other companies - mostly private - to do the managing. It is not sufficient for the Government to ensure that private companies determine our health care; they will also introduce EU competition law into the NHS. That means that the private health companies that are currently hovering over the NHS like a bunch of vultures will threaten legal action if services are not put out to tender. They will then cherry-pick the services in which they can make the most money - they do not want to do geriatric care, paediatrics or A and E. That will fatally wound and undermine local hospitals and some, no doubt, will go to the wall. It is no surprise that the Health and Social Care Bill includes detailed insolvency provisions. Some hospitals will bring in more private patients to fill the gap, because the Bill lifts the cap on private patients. We will there-

fore have the absurd situation of private companies making decisions on health care, and of NHS staff and facilities being used not for those most in need, but for those with the ability to pay. There is a word for that and it is not often used in this House: it is quite simply immoral. It is also indefensible."

"At the same time, these plans will undermine our ability to deal with long-term conditions. Progress has been made on conditions such as stroke through co-operation, not competition. It has been made through stroke networks, by sharing expertise and by reconfiguring services to get the best deal. All the expertise in primary care trusts on delivering those services will be swept away. The expertise will be swept away, and the plethora of GP commissioning consortia will have no strategic overview of these services. There has always been a democratic deficit in the NHS, but the Bill will increase it vastly. It will give £75 billion to £80 billion to unaccountable consortia.

It will remove from the Secretary of State the requirement to secure the provision of services. I say Members: when the services go, do not come here to complain because the Secretary of State will not be responsible any more. The NHS commissioning board will be appointed by the Secretary of State and he will be able to dismiss its members at will. It will have no independence. Monitor will not have a single elected member. The Bill does not give power to patients, and it does not empower health service staff. Kingsley Manning of Tribal summed it up cleverly as a Bill to denationalise the NHS. It is not supported by doctors, and it is not supported by patients. I say to the Liberal Democrats that if they go through the lobby tonight in support of this reorganisation, people out there will not forget and they will not forgive."

The motion was defeated 81 votes (Ayes 224, Noes 305), with not one Lib Dem MP joining the Labour lobby. 35 Lib Dem MPs defied their party's conference and joined the Tories to vote against Labour's motion, including 'leftish' liberals like Alan Beith, Ming Campbell, Simon Hughes and Sarah Teather. A further 21 abstained or were absent, including Malcolm Bruce, Nick

Clegg, Chris Huhne, Lib Dem President Tim Farron, Mike Hancock, Charles Kennedy, Bob Russell and Work and Pensions Minister Steve Webb. Lib Dem Mark Hunter was a teller for the Noes. This is a sure sign that many Lib Dems are uncomfortable with the Bill, but being in government their sense of loyalty prevents them from following their conscience. We can expect more such feelings of discomfort from the Lib Dems over the next year or so.

The Census: Survey or Surveillance?

The above was the title of a discussion, before a small, well-behaved audience in Bishoppsgate Institute (near London's Liverpool Street station, Thurs., 17.03.11). Dr Tom Crook (Lecturer in Modern British History at Oxford Brooks University) "co-author (with Dr Glen O'Hara) of *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and People in Modern Britain, c. 1800-2000* (Routledge, 2011)" chaired. The speakers' were Jil Matheson "National Statistician, Head of the Government Statistical Service and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority... since September 2009". Whether or not she acquired these offices simultaneously was left vague.

The term "UK" was confusing. Near the end of the discussion she said Scotland's and Northern Ireland's censuses are separately conducted from those in England and Wales (Britain). Disquiet was expressed

at the cost of the exercise — nearly half a billion pounds. Ms. Matheson tended to quote the actual figure. As it was £485m, it sounded more than ‘half’ of anything.

Jil Matheson put a positive ‘spin’ on the census, and the increasing volume of questions. The public, civic bodies and Parliament suggested these questions. Parliament had to approve of them, a member of her team said that the census is discussed every year by “Parliament”. The audience accepted this as reasonable policing. He did not say if both Houses discussed it nor for how long. Many matters ‘come before the House’ and are nodded through. There was concern about the number of questions and whether or not they constituted invasions of privacy.

The speaker ‘against’ was Guy Herbert “volunteer General Secretary of NO2ID since 2004”. He became “executive head of the campaign in February 2011”. He worked in publishing and is now “a business affairs consultant covering computer games”, film and literary material. He was very low-key, probably not wanting to come across as a wild-eyed fanatic. (I got the impression that Tom Crook was slightly disappointed, he is young enough to have relished a bit of a barney.)

Guy Herbert said he did not disapprove of a census as such, a “capitation” as he put it, a simple head count, as in the first one of 1801. He, and Dr Crook, emphasised the fact that it was not a value-free exercise. It had a great deal to do with the war “against revolutionary France” as Tom Crook put it. The rulers of the realm needed to know how many men of fighting age were available. And how many citizens were employable in the production of food and war materials.

Guy Herbert said a head count was better than the situation in some countries, (Sweden, for example), where one has to report to the local police on moving to a new town or district. He emphasised the intrusive nature of the increasing number of questions. He asked, a number of

times, the question ‘who wants to know these things about you?’ He left it at that, presumably on the grounds that his background in the NO2ID campaign clarified his position. If the census was a simple survey why could such things not be done at a level lower than the national; why every ten years, why not as and when a need was perceived? This turned elements in Jil Matheson’s argument around. She had noted the good things the information could be used for, refining the NHS’s response to public needs, among others.

Audience questions were about the vast quantity of money involved in the administration of the census. There was an objection about the (Lockheed) system used. What would an arms manufacturer know about censuses? The system is the best available, apparently. There was concern about the security of the material collected. The response wasn’t particularly convincing, practically anything can be ‘hacked’ these days. Guy Herbert said the fact that the ‘hard copy’ would be under lock and key for a century meant little. The information asked for was in itself an invasion of privacy. And many agencies can access the material. He mentioned the police but not others (spooks for example). He didn’t mention Islamophobia but it was hanging in the air. We were yards away from Banglatown.

One person took up something Guy Herbert had said about our being legally obliged to fill in the census form and answer all the questions. The 2001 census form for Northern Ireland had seven (yes — seven) questions soliciting one’s ‘birth religion’ (a very odd concept. The (Westminster) government probably demanded it, presumably in ignorance of being ‘born again’). I scrawled ‘atheist’ over all seven questions. There was no legal comeback. Which implies that very many people (including many of the devout) refused to answer the question.

S McGouran

Saving Lives

The pink-cheeked one rants,
storms and turns blood-red.

His government of Imperial
blue wants blooded, and old
colonialist queue.

The screens, papers are full
of these fatheads vying for
the murder of Gaddafi.

New Napoleons rehearse
the dance of death to the
tune of a liberal shibboleth,
while the UN plots more
choreography.

Turning back the clock to a
sun dial is killing the mother
to save the son.

Babies must die - the good
live, not the vile.

Saw your tiny face on radar
outgunned.

It’s called saving lives
NATO style.

So, pink-cheeked, blooded
one, your reign’s begun.

Wilson John Haire.