

FOCUS

ON IRELAND AND THE WIDER WORLD

ISSUE 56
ISBN: 0790 - 7249

SUMMER '97
£1.50

Made in Ireland



FOCUS SPECIAL ON THE ARMS TRADE

• IRELAND'S ARMS LINKS • CONTROLLING THE ARMS INDUSTRY • LATIN AMERICA
CAMBODIA • BOSNIA • CND • TRIBUTE TO VINCENT TUCKER



Focus on Ireland and the Wider World, established in 1978 and published three times a year, is Ireland's leading magazine on global development issues.

It is published by Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Returned Development Workers, which works to promote global development through education and action. Focus is produced by an editorial collective of volunteers, with the support of the Comhlámh offices in Dublin and Cork.

This issue was compiled by John Buckley, John Talty, John Walsh, Kevin Healy, Michael Hegarty and Grant Marsh.

Special thanks to Anna Legge. Thanks are also due to Dominic Carroll for the layout. We are grateful to Amnesty International and AFRI for providing photographs for this issue.

The views expressed in individual articles are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the collective or Comhlámh.

© Copyright Comhlámh 1997

Correspondence
Comhlámh
10 Upper Camden Street
Dublin 2
Ireland.
Ph. +353-1-4783490
Fx. +353-1-4783738

Comhlámh
55 Grand Parade
Cork
Ireland
Ph. +353-21-275881
Fx. +353-21-275241

Layout
Graphica Zapatista
Co. Cork (023) 40881

Printing
Carraig Print
Co. Cork (021) 883458

Publication of Focus is grant aided by the National Committee for Development Education

Made in Ireland

Is there such a thing as a 'just' war? How you answer this question will determine your attitude towards the arms trade. Pacifists, one would have thought, will simply denounce the trade *in toto*. If you oppose



war on principle – no matter what its objectives may be – then of course you'll want nothing less than the complete abolition of the weapons industry.

What about Bosnia? Or Cuba? Nicaragua during its Sandanista period? The East Timorese Liberation Front? The IRA? If you believe that those involved in these situations had/have the right to struggle – to wage war – then it follows that you'll support their efforts to acquire arms.

In which case you'll surely have no principled objection to the manufacturing of weapons – someone has to make these things if your favoured liberation movement is to equip itself with rifles, rocket launchers, tanks. And landmines? Napalm? Thumbscrews to persuade your prisoners to reveal the enemy's position? Come on, you want to win this war, don't you?

Now that we've established that you have no principled objection to the arms trade, we'll hazard a guess that you nevertheless want to specify who should and who shouldn't be allowed to purchase weapons. No doubt you'll not want Saddam to get his hands on any more, or the Indonesian government. But what about Clinton? Or Blair? Or Bruton/Ahern?

Or perhaps you think that's being unrealistic – it's these mad 'Third World' outfits we need to control, not civilised Western states. So it surely follows that you'll have no principled objection to the paraphernalia of war – the means to kill, maim, and destroy – being manufactured here. In Ireland.

Or does all this make you queasy? Do photographs of war victims – dead people, people with ghastly wounds – make you feel that you have no stomach for any of it?

Maybe this one has to be categorised as a 'not a black and white' issue.

This edition of Focus includes several articles which consider the arms trade – we'll leave it to you to decide where our contributors stand on the subject. •

Cover photo shows a field air-defence gun manufactured by Allied Ordnance Singapore with components supplied by Moog Ltd (Ireland) from its plant in Cork

Made In Ireland

The Arms Trade

• THE ARMS TRADE	
The Irish Connection	
by John Cullen	3
Ireland Favourite to Become 51st State of the USA	
by Declan McKenna	5
Beyond Control	
by Robin Hanan	6
Simple Truths Behind the MIBT Complex	
by Caroline Maxwell	8
Mordechai Vanunu	
by David Polden	10
Only Doing Our Job	
by John Cullen	11
Nuclear-Free Zone/Soon?	
by Seán Dunne	13
• LATIN AMERICA	
Still Crazy After All These Years	
by Jim MacLaughlin	15
• RETROSPECTIVE	
When It's Immoral Not To Trade Guns	
by Adrian Hastings	20
• ON THE SPOT	
Bosnian Campaign Trail	
by Seán O'Breasail	21
Grandchildren Continue to Die in Grandparents' Wars	
by Máire Dorgan	22
• NEWSWATCH	
Now It's Kosovo's Turn	
by John Walsh	24
Hawks Still Gunning for East Timor	
by Seán Steele	25
• TRIBUTE	
Vincent Tucker	
by Mary Mangan	28
Images of Development	
by Vincent Tucker	30

The Irish Connection

Firms based in Ireland are engaged in government-sanctioned international arms dealing

by John Cullen of AFrI (Action From Ireland)

John Cullen is the author of the Links report, published by AFrI (Action From Ireland) which detailed international weapons-dealing by firms operating in Ireland, under Irish government sanction

Six years ago, in a far-off desert, a spectacle of slaughter took place that became known as the Gulf War. One of the largest military machines ever built played a significant role in the carnage. It was a United States aircraft carrier called the JFK.

Last summer the JFK sailed into Dublin bay amid a carnival atmosphere and to an open-arms welcome. The visit was sold as a celebration of the historical link between our two countries.

Shortly after the leviathan and its cargo of war left our neutral shores, AFrI published a report that revealed how some of the technology employed within the JFK's warplanes was probably made here. The warship's reception assumed another dimension.

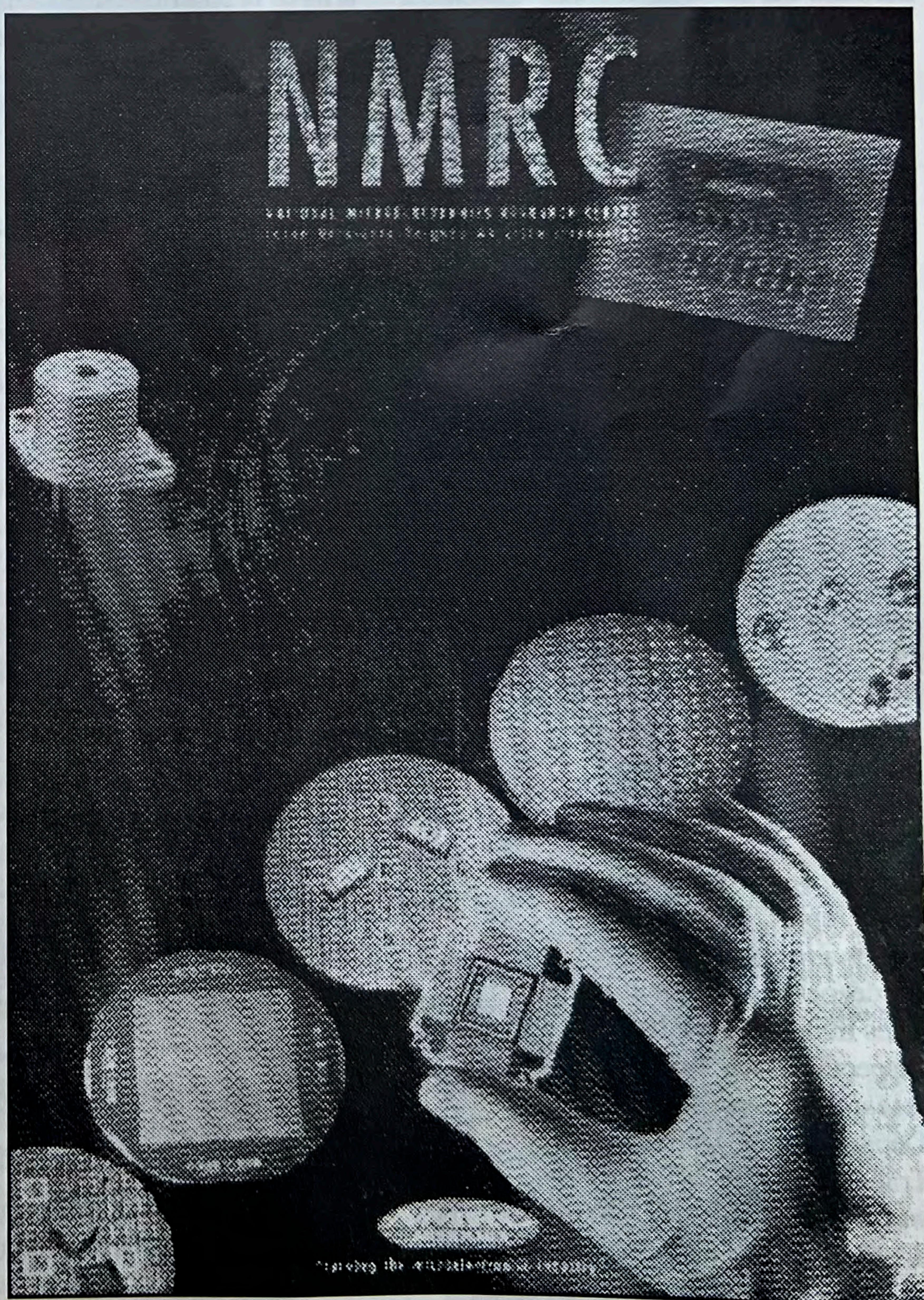
AFrI's *Links* report was published in July 1996 and had quite an impact in the papers and on the radio for a couple of days before being dropped. As expected, certain sections of the media, notably *The Independent* and Kevin Myers, dismissed the report's findings out of hand.

A less caustic response should have been expected from Joan Burton yet she called the report 'baseless and naive'. Obviously, we had touched on a nerve.

The *Links* report revealed the involve-

ment of a number of Irish companies in the arms trade. Its findings confirmed for many what had long been suspected – that our hands are not clean when it comes to the dirty business of arms sales.

Aerospace microelectronics, gun turret technology and military radar are among some of the products on offer by Irish firms to the world's military. One company, DDC in Cork, admitted that sixty-five per cent of their products were destined for military aircraft. ▀



The National Micro Electronics Centre at UCC has completed projects funded by the US Department of Defence and the British Ministry of Defence. The centre also tests products to US military standards

Another, Moog, also of Cork, said that about ten per cent of their output was composed of military gun-turret technology for export. Clare firm, Essco-Collins, export about twenty-five per cent of their products – radar equipment – to airforces abroad.

The fifteen or so companies named in the report represent only the tip of the iceberg in respect of Irish-made 'dual-use' goods that find their way to military applications. The fact that most of the goods were dual-use was seized upon by critics of the report who see such items as innocuous and impossible to restrict.

The term dual-use is, however, often used as a smokescreen by apologists for the arms trade as the implication is that there is no distinction between military and non-military products that fall into this category. This is not the case. Even dual-use goods that are intended for a military system must be made and tested to more rigorous standards than their civilian counterparts. This helps to explain the huge price differential between the two.

Export of Dual-use goods is governed by European regulations that came into force in 1995 and that require the exporter to apply for a licence when selling outside of the EU.

The licence application must specify the end-use and end-user, if known, for which the goods are destined. One obvious flaw in the system is that there exists no binding rules within Europe on the export of arms to countries outside of the EU. This means that Irish dual-use goods could, for instance, end up in British weapons systems being exported to countries like Indonesia.

In the wake of the initial *Links* report, we received information that suggested a far deeper involvement in the arms trade than we had suspected. After further research, it emerged that the Department of Tourism and Trade (DTT), in collaboration with Foreign Affairs, also issues licenses for the export of 'military' goods. Distinct from dual-use items, military goods are clearly and unambiguously made and intended for a military purpose. In other words, they

have no civilian application.

The DTT revealed that they had issued over thirty licences for military-goods exports between January and October 1996. The sales included gun turret technology and military airforce equipment. What was even more disturbing was the destinations for which these exports were being licensed – Colombia, Turkey, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Singapore were among the countries named. These revelations showed that our government was flouting agreed EU guidelines on arms exports which ask for such criteria as human rights, internal conflicts, democracy, and other factors to be taken into account before exporting military technology.

Apart from Colombia's long history of human rights violations and military repression, the Colombian exports were being authorised at a time when details were emerging about collusion between oil companies and death squads. Turkey is waging a war against the Kurds in which thousands of Kurdish villages have been bombed. Saudi Arabia is an absolutist monarchy with an appalling

human rights to our foreign policy, it is clear from the above that the government is operating a twin-track foreign policy. It is hypocrisy to, on the one hand, castigate those governments responsible for human rights violations, while at the same time sending a very clear message of support by promoting arms sales to the same people.

In a Dáil response to questions raised about these revelations, Enda Kenny appeared to dismiss the findings of organisations such as Amnesty International: 'We must bear in mind, however, that the annual report of Amnesty International routinely cites deficiencies in human rights performances in as many as one hundred countries, not excluding Ireland. It is relevant that neither the UN Commission of Human Rights, UN General Assembly, High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OSCE nor the Council of Europe have concluded that any of the countries named by AFR are guilty of serious and systematic violations of human rights.'

If the political will did exist to end the trade in military-related technology from Ireland the legal scope is there for it to be implemented. In relation to dual-use goods, Article 10 of the European regulation allows a member state to prevent any exports if it is considered that the export 'would be contrary to its essential foreign policy or security interests or to the fulfilment of its international obligations or commitments.'

If our foreign policy really is integrally linked to human rights, then a more scrupulous approach to licensing could at least preclude exports to clearly defined military-end users. In the area of military goods, under European regulations there is nothing to stop the government introducing a complete abolition of this trade. A minimal level of vetting and enforcement could at least stem the trade of arms technology to the most undesirable destinations.

Ireland's links with the arms trade is currently at an embryonic level, but growing. With decisive government action, this could be nipped in the bud before military industry becomes a major feature of our economy, as with so many of our European neighbours. •

All trade in military products falls within national jurisdiction and is not covered by European regulations. As such, the Irish government has sole discretion in the licensing for export of these goods. The licensing authority in Ireland is the Department of Tourism and Trade.

Export 2 (Export of Military Goods)

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND TRADE
KILDARE STREET, DUBLIN 2

1. Name and Address of Exporter		2. Name and Address of Consignee	
3. Tel. No. Fax No.		4. Tel. No. Fax No.	
5. Agent/Representative (if different to exporter)		6. Country of origin	
7. Address		8. Country of final destination	
9. Tel. No. Fax No.		10. Description of the goods	
11. End-user (if different to consignee)		12. Contract No. M.	
13. Address		14. Country and Value	
14. Tel. No. Fax No.		15. Contract date	
15. Description of the goods		16. Customs exp. proc.	
16. End-user		17. Additional information	
17. Additional information		18. Signature	

I apply for an export licence in respect of the goods described above and I declare that the particulars furnished by me are correct.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL APPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY LICENCES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN END-USER CERTIFICATE

19. Date

20. Signature

21. Date

22. Date

23. Date

24. Date

25. Date

26. Date

27. Date

28. Date

29. Date

30. Date

31. Date

32. Date

33. Date

34. Date

35. Date

36. Date

37. Date

38. Date

39. Date

40. Date

41. Date

42. Date

43. Date

44. Date

45. Date

46. Date

47. Date

48. Date

49. Date

50. Date

51. Date

52. Date

53. Date

54. Date

55. Date

56. Date

57. Date

58. Date

59. Date

60. Date

61. Date

62. Date

63. Date

64. Date

65. Date

66. Date

67. Date

68. Date

69. Date

70. Date

71. Date

72. Date

73. Date

74. Date

75. Date

76. Date

77. Date

78. Date

79. Date

80. Date

81. Date

82. Date

83. Date

84. Date

85. Date

86. Date

87. Date

88. Date

89. Date

90. Date

91. Date

92. Date

93. Date

94. Date

95. Date

96. Date

97. Date

98. Date

99. Date

100. Date

human rights record and Singapore has a long history of being used as a conduit for arms diversions.

Despite last year's government White Paper reaffirming the importance of



Ireland Leads Race to Become 51st State of the USA

by Declan McKenna

Declan McKenna is Co-ordinator of Cuba Support Group and Chairperson of the Campaign Against US Foreign Policy

According to Captain Chuck Wyatt, the USS John F. Kennedy 'is the executive branch of American diplomacy. If this mighty warship was put off someone's coast, they would get the message' (*Irish Times* – 1 July 1996). Indeed we did. Several messages in fact. What a pity that everybody involved in the organising of the warship visit was not as honest and direct as Captain Wyatt. This 'aircraft carrier' was the biggest and the best. It was as long as Dublin's O'Connell Street and as wide as Croke Park. It had thousands of young sailors. It had two McDonald's on board. It would bring one million pounds into Dún Laoghaire every day and it would be a great family day out!

The National Lottery dished out the invitations but hardly anybody mentioned that this 'aircraft carrier' was in reality a warship used to enforce the will of the United States – officially to protect US interests. While it has served as a training ship its last 'action' was

during the Gulf War. The F-14 and F-18 fighter aircraft, which people flocked to admire, had been the cause of thousands of civilian deaths in Iraq only a short time before the visit.

The US Embassy in Dublin requested the Irish government to invite the warship to Ireland. A public relations exercise was unleashed on us under the guise of Fourth of July celebrations. Only the cynical would suggest that the visit had anything to do with politics, or with the NATO neutrality debate or with the apparent desire for Ireland to publicly display its servile, imbalanced relationship with the US. No, sir – this was just a show of friendship between countries and only spoilsports would think otherwise.

We could just have said 'no thanks' to the US embassy when it requested an invitation. Instead, we warmly embraced the machinery of war and ensured that our children didn't miss out on the fun either.

The US Navy, the US Embassy, the Irish government, the National Lottery and Budweiser set the agenda and, for the most part, the seduction was complete. Well, almost. There were

military displays and related events in Dún Laoghaire, St Stephen's Green, Dublin Airport, Galway, Shannon Airport and Waterford and in each area there were demonstrations against the visit in particular and against war in general.

In the end, the public relations exercise, for all the power behind it, was less effective than it could have been. You cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

Disparate organisations – such as AFR, Comhlámh, Cuba Support Group, Green Party, Irish CND, Irish Nicaragua Support Group, The Workers' Party and others – joined forces to oppose the visit. How was this resistance, this exercise in democracy greeted? The gardaí in Dublin Airport threatened to charge the demonstrators with a breach of the peace.

Final word to the US navy. Two of the USS John F. Kennedy officers, on being told that there would be demonstrations against the visit, had this little conversation: 'And what's the size of this demo?' said one. 'Nothing that an F-18 can't sort out,' came the reply (*Irish Times* – 22 July 1996).

Where would we be without such valiant defenders of democracy? •

The international arms trade is now one of the largest trades in the world. Many of the world's strongest economies – United States, Germany, Britain, France, Sweden and, before 1990, the Soviet Union – are heavily dependent on arms production for their technological and industrial development and even economic survival. As a result, the arms manufacturers constitute one of the most powerful industrial lobbies in these countries, shaping government policy and even the media.

Beyond Control?

by Robin Hanan

Robin Hanan is Coordinator of Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Returned Development Workers. He also chairs the working group on the IGC in the NGDO-EU Liaison Committee which represents over 800 non-governmental development organisations across Europe

During most periods in human history, military spending has been seen as a burden for all except a few profiteers. Each war was followed by a period of rapid demobilisation, as the warring parties returned to a civilian economy. World War II is unusual in that the victorious parties never really demobilised – both the US and the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, their allies maintained a war economy. During the Cold War, the cost of this was largely paid for by tax-payers as protection money against real or imagined threats and as a contribution to national machismo.

With the end of the Cold War, some economists argued that the arms industry would be hit by the peace dividend. In fact, the industry has defended itself with much more aggressive marketing of arms in the Third World, stoking up local conflicts and shoring up unpopular regimes. The arms trade is one of the few areas where sudden changes can bring about enormous windfall profits. This was brought home very dramatically to TV viewers during the Gulf War, with carefully staged commercials for various aspects of US military technology which were thinly disguised as nightly military press-briefings. The *Economist* magazine estimated that the US paid for the Gulf War several times over through this publicity, pushing their competitors out

of the Middle Eastern markets.

The suffering caused by this cynical business tactic is incalculable. Most people in the West are only peripherally aware of its impact, through campaigns by NGOs and peace organisations or through the publicity surrounding an ex-royal visit to landmine victims.

The Pushers' Defence

The arms manufacturers justify their tactics with the traditional drug pushers' argument: we're only responding to demand and if we didn't sell them, someone else would. This leads to an accepted wisdom in the New World Order that controlling the arms trade is vaguely desirable but unrealistic. Anything which costs jobs or undermines profits in the West is impossible, and its proponents are well-meaning but naive.

It is interesting to compare this with the discussion on the trade in illegal drugs. The two industries are similar in many ways: Cocaine, opium and hashish sustain many more livelihoods in Southern countries than arms production does in the North. Arms-pushing causes at least as much suffering in the South as drug-pushing does in the North. The main difference is that the arms trade flows from economically richer to poorer countries, while the drugs trade flows in the opposite direction.

In spite of the power of the drugs mafias, the war against drugs is one of the top priorities of the international community, involving governments, police and United Nations agencies, however ineffectually. Enormous resources are put into the hunt for its producers, couriers, financiers and distributors. Communities of poor farmers growing coca, hemp and

poppies, which might be used for drugs, are threatened with eviction, defoliation or bombing. US public opinion is regularly whipped up into a frenzy by politicians, press and thriller movies to demand sanctions or military intervention to stamp out the drugs traders, or at least those not on the CIA payroll.

By contrast, the arms trade is not only protected from public scrutiny and control, but is subsidised and protected. The arms producers are a powerful political lobby and operate in most industrialised countries. They can exempt their trade from the controls and scrutiny which is normal for all other products – from apples to zebra skins – by pleading 'national security'. They can win government support and subsidies by arguing for the need to compete for one of the world's biggest markets. They can promote their products and the instability and suffering they need to grow through their states' promotion agencies.

Many people may not be aware that, during the Cold War, the Cocom system run by the US State Department effectively prevented transfers of technology from the West – including Ireland – which might have a military use, such as computers, etc., not only to the Eastern Bloc but to countries considered a 'transfer risk', such as West Germany. This proved that controls are possible if there is a political will. In the case of the current arms trade, that will does not exist.

There is no doubt that converting Western industry from arms to civilian production is costly. The main pain should be felt, however, in short-term profits rather than in jobs or overall national production. The experience of those countries which did de-militarise

after 1945, most notably Germany and Japan, is that conversion to civilian production can be a vehicle for stable growth. Even if we accept the worst forecasts of damage to local employment, it would clearly be less devastating than the impact of the 'war against drugs' on Colombian campesinos. We accept that the latter is an acceptable price for reducing the misery caused by the drugs trade – why is it acceptable to promote misery and destruction in the Third World in the interests of Northern profits and jobs?

In practice, the main argument against arms trade restraint is national or EU interest. If we control our sales, someone else will get the business, goes the argument. As in so many other areas, multinational companies are eager to exploit competing nationalisms to reduce controls worldwide. This undermines the need for arms control campaigns to be strongly based and well co-ordinated in all of the main economic blocs.

Discussing Controls

Controls on the arms trade is under discussion, with more or less enthusiasm, at several levels:

- In the United Nations, where the highest moral aspirations can be expressed without much chance of decisions carrying weight in the real world;
- within each of the exporting countries

or economic groups. Naturally, this is where the resistance is greatest, since controls at this level can have real teeth. South Africa, since the fall of Apartheid, has gone furthest in bringing in controls and public scrutiny, though not as far as many might wish. Campaigns in the US and the EU are still at a fairly early stage;

- in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE – remember the Helsinki Conference and the Nixon-Brezhnev handshakes? OK – most people have forgotten!) which groups all European countries, East and West, with the US, Canada, Japan, etc. Some of the more pro-control governments are talking up this Forum, on the grounds that it is less threatening, being based on agreement rather than law, but can at least start to open up the trade to scrutiny.

International Campaigns

It would probably be fair to say that the international arms industry carries as much clout with the major powers as, for example, the farming lobby carries in Ireland. Questioning this lobby on its operations, much less seriously reducing its trade, is a formidable challenge.

In practical terms, the campaigns for arms trade control centre around three initial issues:

- Monitoring and information. At

present, in the European Union, arms and dual-use products are protected from the controls which apply to all other products, on grounds of 'security interests'. The first step in controlling arms exports is to know what is being exported, from where to where;

- banning inhumane weapons. all weapons are inhumane, but certain anti-civilian products, such as landmines, chemical weapons, laser-blinding weapons and torture instruments, are beyond the imagination. Campaigns by Pax Christi, Oxfam, Trócaire and others have raised widespread awareness of their impact in Ireland. Recent Irish governments – particularly ministers Dick Spring, Joan Burton and Tom Kitt – have taken a lead on these issues internationally;
- boycotting particularly repressive regimes. This can be dangerous (guess who defines a repressive regime?) but is vital in cutting sales to countries like Indonesia, as it was in isolating apartheid in the past;
- controlling arms promotion in areas of instability. Memories of one-sided bans undermining republican Spain and, most recently, Bosnia, show how arms boycotts can be misused by powerful interests. This is an argument for democratic monitoring of sanctions, however, rather than uncontrolled sales.



Kurds killed by chemical weapons in Halabja, Iraq, March 1988

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Codes of Conduct

In recent years, peace and development NGOs in the US, the EU and South Africa have concentrated on promoting legally enforceable 'codes of conduct' covering these three areas. This tactic has been controversial, with some groups arguing that a code of conduct would be set at a minimum level and could give legitimacy to arms dealers who comply on paper. There is also a concern in neutral countries like Ireland that a European code could be used to embroil us in military cooperation.

The main case for the new emphasis is that any code would open arms sales up to public scrutiny, and that arms control must start with realisable objectives to answer the critics who say that no controls are possible.

The EU is central to this, as one of the world's main arms exporters. Between 1991 and 1994, EU members sold over \$15 billion of arms to Southern countries – about one third of their total imports. EU members have sold arms to both sides in most recent conflicts, with major sales to business partners like the Indonesian military government and the genocidal former regime in Rwanda. A recent successful case by the World Development Movement against the

British government exposed the use of large amounts of development aid to promote an arms deal.

It is clear that, in an increasingly united Single European Market, all EU member states will be dragged down to the level of the worst country, unless there are controls. The recent groundbreaking report by AFRi has shown that Irish companies are increasingly moving into the arms and dual-use markets.

Currently, The EU is committed to six 'guideline principles' adopted in 1993-94 by the Council of Ministers. These principles deal with sales of weapons to areas where they will exacerbate conflicts, to repressive regimes, etc. Not surprisingly, they have no legal force and member governments can and do interpret them as they like, or simply ignore them. The Campaign for a European Code of Conduct on the Arms Trade, which was launched by three British NGOs – Saferworld, the World Development Movement and BASIC – now involves over 700 organisations. The main concentration is on the Inter-governmental Conference (IGC) to revise the European Treaty which is currently grinding its painful way to a conclusion. The IGC is the only body which can change the provisions in the Treaty

which exempt arms sales from normal trade regulations.

The evidence from the IGC to date is not encouraging. The first interim report of the Reflection Group which prepared for the IGC referred to the need for arms trade control. In their final report, in December 1995, this had been replaced by a concern about the need to strengthen the competitiveness of the European arms trade with central support. The arms-control issue has been endorsed in a number of submissions, including that of the European parliament, but is clearly being sidelined in the real debates.

For Ireland, this issue is clearly crucial as we integrate further into the European market. It is essential that we bring in controls now, before Ireland's technological future becomes dependent on the arms trade, and the misery and instability which go with it, in the same way as so many of our European partners have. •

In Ireland, the arms trade campaign is coordinated by Comhlámh, AFRi, Pax Christi, Oxfam, Trócaire, Amnesty International, the Irish Missionary Union and the Africa Faith and Justice Network, any of whom can provide further information.

Simple Truths Behind the MIBT Complex

by Caroline Maxwell

Caroline Maxwell is a development education worker in Ireland with a community development agency working in Africa

The manufacture of arms has been an integral part of the human story. For many nations, their sense of strength and identity lies in their ability to design, manufacture and sell the products of their arms industries. Being so closely intertwined with national policy and decision-making, the arms industry has been the pride and protégé of many successive governments. However, as the war-torn twentieth century draws to a close, escalating costs at all levels of research, design, manufacture and marketing are compelling

companies to look outside the borders of their parent nation-states in order to survive and thrive.

Arms producing states are divided into first, second and third-tier producing nations. First tier countries include the US and those countries formerly within the Soviet Union – Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. These states are at the cutting edge of global research and development (R&D) in armaments. They produce enough arms to meet national requirements and are not dependent on export earnings to survive. During World War II, destruction of the arms industry across Europe gave the US and the USSR a lead which was subsequently fuelled by the Cold War. The post-Cold War world has inherited this hierarchy.

Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada have guarded and nurtured their arms industries through state policies and subsidies. These countries rely on ability to adapt weapons to suit market demands, a process which doesn't require self-reliance. However their R&D spending is much less than that of first-tier countries. Second-tier states also rely on key inputs from primary producers – for example, between ten per cent and thirty per cent of the French Tornado fighter is imported from the US. A strong export policy is essential to finance the industry at second-tier level.

Brazil, North Korea, India and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan, Chile and Iraq, copy and reproduce existing technology

via the transfer of design but don't capture the underlying process of innovation or adaptation. They are very dependent on exports. The Iran-Iraq war was such an enormous consumer of arms that it brought China, Brazil and North Korea to the forefront of third-tier producers.

Major domestic commitments to purchase locally will keep second and third tiers in production but domestic markets will not be enough. A national policy must be in place to nurture and sustain the industry within the nation – state. This has been called a 'technocomplex', referring to the interdependent relationships between government, its agencies and domestic and foreign companies. But for the realist, the power behind the process of sustaining an arms industry lies in the nation's MIBT complex – the Military, Industrial, Bureaucratic and Technological complex. The MIBT complex sustains the R&D effort in first-tier producers. The motivation for the MIBT complex is military power and imperial ambition. Defence strategies become attacking strategies, boosted by the need for new markets for the state's arms industries.

Arms Industry Employment

The US, several of the successor republics of the USSR (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus), Western Europe (UK, France, Germany) and China account for ninety per cent of employment in the global arms industry. Numbers peaked in the mid-1980s to sixteen million, then fell to below fifteen million at the beginning of the 1990s. A further three to four million jobs may be lost by 1998. The remaining ten per cent of employment is located in approximately forty other arms producing states.

In almost all instances, where figures are available, the decrease in employment was most significant during the period between the mid-1980s and 1992. In the former USSR alone, 100,000 people lost their jobs. In Czechoslovakia, the arms industry employment figure almost halved during that time, from 145,000 to 75,000. In Argentina, the figure fell from 60,000 to 20,000. In the US, the figure dropped from 3,100,000 to 2,750,000. In Western Europe, the same trend is apparent: France – from 290,000 to 241,000; Germany – from 347,000 to 241,000; the UK – from 470,000 to less than 400,000. According to Sir Ronald Ellis, head of Britain's Defence Sales Organisation 'the most important area (of the arms industry) does not lie in employment or even in the balance of

payments, but in maintaining the technology in this country' (1978).

In third-tier states, production of armaments above the most basic level has become more expensive than imports of the same item. Evidence suggests that the import of parts and subsystems for national production uses more scarce foreign exchange than paying for the importation of completed weapons. Again, if the defence sector soaks up a large proportion of scarce investment and/or technical skills, foreign investment may be affected or even obstructed. For third-tier states, the international market place may offer the best value in arms purchase.

In a very few countries, an increase in employment levels has occurred. During the same period as above, India's figures rose from 240,000 to 250,000; Japan's from 39,000 to 45,000; the Netherlands' from 18,000 to 20,000 and Spain's from 66,000 to 100,000.

Streamlining the arms industry through increasing or decreasing employment numbers is a political decision and enables the state to take its place more effectively within an anarchic international system. According to the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, worldwide sales fell by 53 per cent between 1989 and 1991. US foreign military sales fell by 34 per cent during this period, to \$12 billion. An aggressive sales policy pushed this figure up to \$28 billion in 1992 and up further to \$32 billion in 1993.

Processes of Internationalisation

Economic realities, such as falling defence budgets, gaining access to overseas arms markets, a falling export trade and rising costs of production have led to a variety of tactics demanding cooperation and co-production between nation-states within the arms industry since the latter half of the 1980s. These fall under seven main headings:

- International trade – promotes a government's foreign and trade policies;
- foreign investment – stakes a state's claim to increased market access;
- International sub-contracting – reduces costs and satisfies offset arrangements;
- International licensing – often given as the result of customer pressure;
- cross-border mergers and acquisitions – increases economy of scale and opens up local production possibilities;
- international joint ventures – shares high risks and costs and increases market access;

- international inter-firm agreements (including co-production, consortia, and teaming arrangements) – provides the ability to produce common equipment and to bid for large contracts.

In some sectors, internationalisation is more advanced than others and the lower the production costs, the less pressure exists to internationalise. In Western Europe several countries have promoted the creation of 'national champions' which are mega-firms dominating national defence production and formed as a result of a series of mergers and acquisitions – for example, the joint purchase of the British electronics firm Plessey by GEC-Marconi and Siemen's of Germany. Such major mergers and acquisitions are leading to a regionalised arms industry network instead of national defence industrial bases.

Military alliances such as NATO have long collaborated to enhance effectiveness by, for instance, eliminating duplication in arms production. The EU has also promoted European arms production co-ordination as part of its efforts towards a common foreign and security policy.

A quote from Barry Buzan's book *An Introduction to Strategic Studies* will throw some light on the present position of the arms industry and the nation-state: 'Mounting pressure to achieve economies of scale explains both the move towards joint production projects, and the persistence of talk about a more integrated European arms industry to compete with the Americans within NATO. Neither this pressure, nor perceptions of common European security interests, has yet triumphed over the still-strong traditional values of national self-reliance in arms production in the major European states, or over their rival interests as arms exporters.' •

'... For the realist, the power behind the process of sustaining an arms industry lies in the nation's MIBT complex – the Military, Industrial, Bureaucratic and Technological complex...'

Mordechai Vanunu – Patriot or Spy?

by David Polden

In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, who had worked on the Israeli nuclear weapon programme at Dimona in the Negev Desert, revealed the existence and extent of that programme to Peter Hounam, a reporter on the Sunday Times of London. He produced photos he'd taken secretly at Dimona as evidence for his story.

Even before the Sunday Times published the story, Mordechai had been lured from London to Rome by 'Cindy', a Mossad agent. In Rome he was kidnapped, drugged and taken in a ship's hold to Israel. There he was sentenced at a secret trial to eighteen years' imprisonment for treason and espionage. He has now served over ten years – all in solitary confinement in a small cell with a piss-hole in the floor. This treatment has been called 'cruel, inhuman and degrading' by Amnesty International.

Who is Mordechai Vanunu?

He was born to a Jewish family in Marakesh, Morocco in 1955. He lived there until he was eight-years-old when he moved with his family – he has ten brothers and sisters – to Israel. In an interview from 1985 which has recently come to light, he explained that though he grew up speaking Arabic, when he arrived in Israel he 'spoke only Hebrew'. 'I wanted to be Israeli,' he commented with a laugh. He did his military service in Israel and then, while studying at Beer Sheva University, worked at Dimona 'to maintain myself financially during my studies'. At university he studied philosophy to postgraduate level, becoming radicalised and helping to form a joint Jewish-Arabic student body. In his 1985 interview he was calling for equality between Arabs and Jews in education and in all other areas, and for peace, 'including a solution to the question of the Palestinian refugees' and for a return to the 1967 borders. Later he went to Australia where he converted to Anglicanism and spilled the nuclear beans to Peter Hounam.

After his capture, Vanunu wrote a poem entitled, 'I am your spy'. But whose spy? In the poem he answers that

he is 'the secret agent of the people . . . the eyes of the nation . . .'

So Vanunu's answer is clear – he is a spy for the Israeli people, revealing what those he describes as 'the insiders' have hidden from them.

While Israel was claiming that it would not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East, the Israeli government by the mid-1960s had developed an effective nuclear arsenal which by the late 1980s consisted of some 200 warheads and long-range missile delivery systems. Yet these facts were hidden from the Israeli people and the Knesset even though, on at least one occasion, Israel came close to using these weapons. This was during the October war of 1973 when, according to Time (April 1976) thirteen nuclear bombs were deployed to bases. Other sources claim that this was after the commander of the northern front warned the Minister of Defence, Mosha Dayan, that he might not be able to hold on to the Golan Heights. Dayan is said to have obtained permission from Prime Minister Golda Meir to arm aircraft with the bombs.

Vanunu was certainly performing a service to Israeli democracy. It might be argued he was also performing a service to Israeli security. If these weapons have any function it is in deterring attacks by Arab neighbours and they can hardly act as a deterrent unless such potential

enemies know about their existence.

The argument that knowledge of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons might lead other countries in the Middle East to develop their own arsenal of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction falls before the fact that countries such as Iraq and Iran were attempting to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons before 1986.

Conscious that the nuclear option is hardly credible for such a small country, Israel appears to be changing heart on the issue. In December 1995 Shimon Peres, while still refusing to say whether Israel possessed nuclear weapons, told a press conference that Israel was ready 'to give up the nuclear option' in return for a comprehensive Middle East peace deal.

Most of all Vanunu performed a service to humanity – we cannot work effectively to rid the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons unless we have full knowledge of what nuclear weapons there are in the world and who possesses them. In revealing such secrets, Vanunu broke an oath of secrecy he signed in order to become a nuclear technician.

In breaking this oath was he betraying his country? Surely there are circumstances where breaking such an oath is justified? Consider this analogy: a German civil servant before the last war learns as part of his work that his government is preparing a 'final solution' to what it describes as the 'Jewish problem'. Our German is horrified and goes abroad in order to inform the world of these plans. Would s/he not be hailed as a hero?

To end with Vanunu's own words: 'I have sacrificed my freedom and risked my life in order to expose the danger of nuclear weapons which threatens this whole region. I have acted on behalf of all citizens and of all humanity.' •

COURSES IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Part-time and full-time options

MA in Development Studies
Graduate Diploma in Development Studies (day-time)
National Diploma in Development Studies (day-time)
Understanding Development (evening course)

All course accredited by the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA)
Individual subjects may be taken on a part-time basis

For further information contact:

Applications Office, Development Studies Centre,
Kimmage Manor, Whitehall Road, Dublin 12.
Tel: (01) 4554381/4560075. Fax: (01) 4560089



Governments are not insensitive to scrutiny and criticism of their arms' policies – they know the importance of providing justification for dealing in death. John Cullen of AFRi considers the arguments

Only Doing Our Job

by John Cullen



Rwanda – Hutu prisoners held under armed guard by RPA soldier equipped with automatic rifle

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

While it is tempting to offer simplistic and generalised assumptions on the rationale for supplying arms, this is, in fact, quite a complex area and deserves some elaboration. There are three traditional justifications given for the trade in arms:

- The supplier gains influence and leverage;
- stability and security;
- economic benefits.

Arms can be an important symbol of support and friendly relations and thereby create influence. Supplying weapons to a country often facilitates access to its military and political élites. Training in new weaponry is often required and so are ongoing supplies of parts and spares, thus ensuring continual contact between the military establishments of supplier and recipient.

Leverage over other countries' foreign policy decisions is another privilege to be gained from arms sales. Yet these generalised justifications for arms transfers may prove to have only a temporary effect. Moreover, arms supplies may lead to future complications between supplier and recipient and may even prove to be counter-productive.

While the provision of arms is seen as an important foreign-policy tool in gaining influence and leverage for the supplier nation, such transfers can also create an uncertain and symbiotic supplier-recipient relationship which may act as a restraint on the actions of both. Ironically, arms transfers can also lead to a situation of 'reverse leverage' over the supplier.

Another traditional rationale for supplying arms is to help fulfil the

security requirements of allies and friends. Arms for allies are often perceived as being transferred within the context of creating or maintaining a regional balance of power. However, a process of competitive acquisition may often lead to a local or regional arms race which raises tension to dangerous levels.

Another military concern used as a rationale for arms transfers is the right to establish a military base in the recipient country. There are, however, a number of security disadvantages that may result from arms sales. The first is the possibility of the arms being diverted to third countries; the second is the prospect of arms being used against the original supplier country, as happened in the 1991 Gulf War. Lastly is the danger that, with political changes, a change in government may result in the weapons being used in a way that is completely

contrary to their original purpose. There is the ultimate fear that supplying arms to a country could eventually embroil the supplier country in a war or armed conflict.

The third plank of traditional justifications for arms transfers has to do with economic benefits, and is the one argument which politicians and companies confidently espouse. Arms sales have come to be viewed as an important earner of foreign exchange and as a contributor to the balance of payments.

It is argued that arms exports support high numbers of jobs for the supplier nation and that they enable greater economy of scale in military industry which results in lower unit cost savings for domestic arms procurement. However, there are powerful countervailing processes within military industry itself that far outweigh any perceived economic benefits from exports. The actual proportion of export earnings generated by arms sales rarely exceeds more than a few per cent – any savings on domestic arms procurement (in the UK it is estimated at £400 million annually) are counteracted by expenditure on such things as export credit guarantees and arms sales promotions.

Military industry is capital intensive and therefore creates far fewer jobs per pound than other more labour-intensive sectors. A recent report by Cambridge economists estimated that 500,000 more jobs would be created if the money spent on military industry was invested in labour-intensive civil sectors.

Nations with high military spending suffer an 'opportunity cost' to their wider economy in terms of a 'crowding out' of civil investment by the military. Qualified scientists and engineers (QSEs) are attracted to the prestige of military work. However, the specialised nature of their work renders their skills less applicable to the civil sector. There also occurs a 'contamination' effect of military production processes

'... European policy-makers and industrialists are currently striving to overhaul military industry to make it more efficient and cohesive ...'

upon the civilian sector. Military production processes emphasise product improvement while productivity improvements are vital to civil production.

The above factors partly explain why nations like the UK and the US have tended to lag economically behind nations such as Germany and Japan who traditionally have had low military expenditures.

The relatively minor benefits that accrue from arms sales are seen to be of considerable value by particular interest groups that may have a significant influence on policy. Yet, for none of the main suppliers do arms exports occupy as important a role in the national economy as is often assumed by those who believe that economic imperatives must overrule any attempt to restrain arms sales.

After the Cold War

As the Cold War drew to a close from the mid-1980s, military spending around the world began to fall. The international arms market not only shrank, but its character changed dramatically. Instead of choosing a conversion strategy, large arms firms opted for increased exports as a way of bridging the recession, keeping unit costs down and maintaining capacity in what were seen by governments as vital national industries. And so began a new age of export driven proliferation. As this strategy took hold worldwide, it appeared that the 'peaceful' post-Cold War world would have an arms market which, although considerably smaller, would in many respects be more diverse, vigorous and competitive than its Cold War predecessor. Increased competition made the global arms market a buyers market, with recipient countries more able to set the terms for arms purchases through offsets (investment by the supplier country) and technology transfer. With

manufacturers anxious to sell, particularly in the boom market of the Asia-Pacific region, the international arms trade has changed in two important ways.

Firstly, the manufacture of weapons and the trade in them are increasingly seen in national terms, as the ability to produce and own modern weaponry is seen as an inalienable right.

The second important feature is the absence of an internationally accepted, central organising principle. With the bipolar superstructure no longer in place, the arms trade is more commercially driven with a lack of the political influence or control that is necessary to regulate it.

Europe

The member states of the EU occupy a very large share of the international arms market. In 1993, according to the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the EU exported equipment worth \$6,950 million – 32 per cent of the world total (SIPRI puts the figure at around 25 per cent).

Since the downturn in military spending that occurred around the mid-80s, the European military-industrial base has desperately been trying to restructure in order to be more competitive. These upheavals have resulted in the loss of around 600,000 jobs – around 37 per cent of the former military industrial workforce. Military industry in the US rapidly adjusted to the changes through a series of mergers, takeovers and concentration of armament programmes. This contrasts starkly with the fragmented European arms market and weapons programmes that create a lot of duplication between states. Consequently, Europe is struggling to develop the economies of scale that will enable it to compete with the US (Europe imports six times more military equipment than it exports to the US). European policy-makers and industrialists are currently striving to overhaul military industry to make it more efficient and cohesive (Europe's market share of world exports of arms has declined from fifty-six per cent in 1989 to less than forty per cent and is decreasing at a rate of about five per cent a year). This process is seen as an essential 'pillar' of establishing a viable European defence identity. Thus, we are likely to see not only a more integrated military-industrial base across the EU, but also a concerted effort to increase Europe's share of the world export market in arms. •

Seán Dunne is the national secretary of Irish CND



Next year marks the 40th

birthday of CND. Who? CND – the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament! More specifically, Irish CND, which started in the same year, 1958, as the campaign started in the UK.

That year about thirty Irish CND members went over at Easter to participate in the first Aldermaston March – you know, Aldermaston, just outside London, where sick minds design and make the nuclear, biological, chemical and other such weapon obscenities. Thirty stalwarts from Ireland joined the thousands of other duffle-coat and brown-bread brigade as they marched and sang their way into Trafalgar Square, saying clearly 'Ban the Bomb' and thus gave rise to a movement that has spread far and wide around the world.

Irish CND salute those visionaries, and thankfully many of them will be with us to celebrate that historic birthday next year, including ICND's present president, Dr John de Courcy Ireland and his dear wife Betty.

Who would have thought that the campaign would go on for such a long time? And the campaign isn't over yet but, like any birthday, it gives one time to think – to reflect over past years, past achievements. So many friends of mine have now reached their fortieth birthdays and perhaps 'our' generation of campaigners are entitled to draw a breath and see what we have achieved and survived through over so many years.

Like so many, who were drawn into campaigning to oppose the building of a nuclear power station at Carnsore Point, Co. Wexford twenty years ago next year, we have earned some right to 'pontificate' over past achievements and say to ourselves and to the great unwashed, 'Well done! Chomhghairdeas! Bualadh bos! Thank you! You saved us!' So what more right have the campaigners of forty years service to shout even louder, 'We did it! We are the champions!' and fair play to them all.

Forty Years A-Growin'
Unfortunately, the growing wasn't

Nuclear-Free Zone *soon?*

by Seán Dunne

all that guaranteed. From the dawning of the nuclear era, say, the summer of 1945, with the testing and the dropping of the two nuclear bombs on innocent victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have been lurching from one nuclear crisis to another, to 'grow' or attempt to 'grow' to where we are now.

I grew up in a world where the Commies loomed large and the US, with the good help of John Wayne, Audie Murphy, etc. helped to keep the 'Free World' free – or whatever that meant! Meanwhile, out there in the 'real world' deviant minds thought of different ways to kill and destroy other human beings and contaminate the planet for all time. Nuclear-attack plans were drawn up and rehearsed for use in the Korean War, a so-called 'police action' that killed millions of people and has left a legacy of hatred, mistrust and division. Indifferent nuke scientists carried out hundreds of deadly nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific areas, in Australia, in Algeria, in Siberia, etc., contaminating huge areas and peoples. Cold-War warriors used Germany and Eastern Europe to threaten

and acquire so-called 'spheres of influence'; thousands died in Hungary. And in Cuba – a crisis they called it – more like a nuclear nightmare – fingers hovered over nuclear annihilation. Ignorance is bliss – good guys win again.

Vietnam's crusade to stop the commies changed everything. We all began to take sides – things weren't so clear anymore. I hung on dearly to the idea that the 'good guys' couldn't be wrong, that the US were really saving the world and Cork from being overrun by these baddies – I wanna be a good guy.

The Beatles, San Francisco, and a Bunch of Hippies

Rock music changed everything too – freedom, revolution, civil rights. 'We Shall Overcome' began to reverberate around Cork and the wider world. Martin Luther King, Bernadette Devlin, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and John Lennon became familiar and friendly and liberating – 'We Shall Overcome' became the new chant, the new peace cry. Students took power in the Sorbonne and Berkeley and then there were the



US Boeing B-29 bomber, Enola Gay, which dropped the first Atom Bomb, on Hiroshima, 1945

Maoists in Ireland . . . Maoists in Ireland? Special Branch raids on commie bookshops; Irish universities hotbeds for radical red students. Thank God! Revolution comes to Ireland – gimme some of that! Bloody Sunday – black and white horror on TV. White hankie waving nervously at blackened-faced paras. Embassy and British Rail burns.

Dragged into Life!

Someone said once that we should thank Dessie O'Malley and the ESB for politicising a whole new age of young people in Ireland, for if they hadn't thought about putting a nuclear station in Carnsore then a lot of us might have plonked on aimlessly for ever. What an education! What a successful campaign! Anti-nukes win! No nuke station for Ireland!

I saw for the first time the incredible film *The War Game* at Carnsore in 1980. This was a film originally commissioned by the BBC on the effects of nuclear war but when it was shown privately to the station heads they refused to allow it to be transmitted saying that it would be too upsetting. I, and many others, became more aware of the wider nuclear nightmare as a result of this film and subsequently met Pat Comerford at Carnsore who was then 'in charge' of the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Irish CND. Adi Roche and I, plus a good few more from Cork and elsewhere, then started to get more active in this campaign, and attended the regular meetings in Dublin, eventually holding Executive positions.

Those Were The Days, My Friend – We Hoped They'd Soon Would End!

Irish CND went on to become the main focus point for the rise of the anti-nuclear weapon campaign that then spread across

Europe and the USA. Demonstrations in Dublin would see over 25,000 people on the march. Bono sang his own version of *Blowin' in the Wind* at an ICND gathering outside Foreign Affairs in Stephen's Green – he forgot most of the words but what the heck. He was going to be a mega-star and that's what mega-stars can do! Adi and I attended the UN Special Session on Disarmament in New York in '82. Along with a million others, I made history!

Irish neutrality was promoted by the campaign as a positive tool for peace-making in the world and various Irish governments were urged to consolidate our independent Irish foreign policy. Irish representatives at the UN were pushed to get stuck in for a nuclear-free world.

Europe was being carved out at this time as another battleground for US Cruise and Soviet SS20 nuclear missiles. Irish CND and others begged for sanity and safety, marched against nuclear madness, sat-down against nuclear insanity, set up peace camps to prevent nuclear annihilation taking place.

It was the best of times – it could have been the worst of times. We teetered on the edge. We came close to the unthinkable – the longest, darkest night of our entire existence, the unleashing of utter death, destruction and contamination: a nuclear war with weapons of mass destruction and extermination, a war without 'winners', with no recovery, with no return.

War Criminals!

The fear and helplessness that the baddies generated should never be forgotten. There should be a tribunal of sorts that could try these war criminals – those politicians, the generals and admirals, those scientists and engineers, those arms manufacturers, those poxy

journalists, academics and other commentators, who lied, aided and abetted in threatening the innocent peoples of this world, who generated and created nightmarish fears and anxieties, who robbed from the poor and needy, the

starving millions, the homeless, the sick, the illiterate, who polluted the earth, skies and seas with their nuclear excrement and vomit, who denied hope and vision to generations, who entrapped innocents in their obscene, immoral and nihilistic nuclear nothingness and who would have destroyed us all, only for us, the real good guys – the peace-makers.

Jobs to Do

Is there anything left to do? Well, we can't do everything for you and anyway you must make your mark too!

- NATO is sniffing around to inveigle other suckers into its nuclear net, including Ireland. Aire! Beware!
- Nuclear bombs are still on war alert. Campaign to put them out of commission.
- Call on election '97 candidates to press home the World Court findings at the UN regarding the illegality of nuclear bombs.
- Sellafield still contaminates. Shut it down.
- UK nuclear submarines – based across the narrow waters around Glasgow – are still carrying nuclear Trident missiles. It's your problem too!
- Military Spending still robs the poor and needy. Get Going!
- Landmines continue to maim and kill innocent children in Cambodia, Angola, etc. Lobby for a total ban.
- In the military laboratories around the world, sick minds still labour at newer and more deadly ways of killing and maiming. Do something about that!
- Peace education and conflict resolution has not yet been formally adopted in the Irish education system. Bigí ag obair!
- NATO expansion in the former USSR countries is putting too much pressure on Russia, thus creating new tensions. Inform yourself and write to someone about it and complain!
- Become part of Abolition 2000, a growing global network of citizen groups around the planet that are campaigning to bring about a treaty by the year 2000 on the elimination of nuclear weapons. The number of citizen groups affiliated to the network now comes to over 600. Join up and start collecting petitions in support of the campaign.

Three years to go to the next millenium. We will have that nuclear-free world yet. We owe it to ourselves, to future generations and especially to all those terrific people who have campaigned over the past forty years or so. •

The transition from military dictatorship to democratic politics in Latin America is still far from complete. In this major article, Jim MacLaughlin traces the history of Latin American gun law

Still Crazy After All These Years

by Jim MacLaughlin

Jim MacLaughlin lectures in the Department of Geography, University College Cork

In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982 the Colombian-born writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez referred to Latin America as a 'monstrous reality'. Latin America, he argued, was a continent which outsiders at least perceived as capable of producing great literature, and great art, but incapable of fostering a political culture to solve its many social and political problems. Not least of the difficulties confronting Latin America today is its inability to meet the social and political needs of its large, and essentially non-Latin minorities. This in turn is not unrelated to the problems underlying the transition from military dictatorship and one-party rule to democratic politics. Therein lie the twin sources of Latin America's solitude in the modern world.

Until quite recently it was almost universally perceived as a social anachronism, a political embarrassment to the defenders of the Free World which nevertheless backed the dictatorships. Therein also has lain the reasons for its banishment from global politics and its close confinement within a literary world of magic realism and the exotic/erotic. Writers and artists as far apart as Octavio Paz, Fernando Botero, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel Garcia Marquez have regularly alluded to this paradox in the Latin American experience. They have regularly contrasted the richness of the continent's artistic and, indeed, natural resources with the poverty of its political culture and the 'monstrous reality' of



Counter-insurgency unit of the Colombian armed forces

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



social injustice and military rule that has plagued Latin America since, as well as prior to, colonial conquest in the sixteenth century.

Latin America, Fuentes has suggested, has always been a place where Europeans, initially at least, sought to construct a New World, even their own version of Utopia, only to have their best efforts dashed by their encounter with the harsh realities of the Hispanic American experience in the sub-continent. From the beginning, Europeans – specifically the Spanish, and later on the US – portrayed Latin America's peoples as either literally soulless or so debased that they were incapable either of self-improvement or self-government. Pre-colonial and post-colonial societies have been perceived in the West in reductionist terms: as essentially violent and prone to corruption. Their religious rituals of blood sacrifice from the pre-Colomban era were widely regarded as senseless and wanton acts of savagery. The theocratic regimes that practised such rites were perceived in much the same light as Islamic society is depicted today by many in the West. Pre-Colomban, pre-Latin America was portrayed as an irrational world of violence and hatred where the weakest members of society, typically women and young adults, were

violently excluded from the public arena. The peoples of Latin America were seen to be subjected to a very high degree of political manipulation and to suffer victimisation under one of the harshest forms of priestly and patriarchal rule known to the world. This not only distorted the real meaning of native religious practices in pre-Colomban Latin America, but also ignored the many real achievements of Aztec, Incan, Mayan and the many other smaller, but no lesser civilisations that flourished in this part of the world long before the Spanish conquistadors set foot there.

Certainly, many practiced blood sacrifice as an expression of religious belief and as a means for asserting priestly control over a tribute-paying peasantry. Far from being an act of wanton human destruction, blood sacrifice was a way of communing with the gods by offering them their most precious possessions, namely their lifeblood and their very hearts. However, the Incas, Aztec and Mayans also developed an early form of the welfare state which allocated to the rural poor food for nourishment and seeds for planting in times of need. These urban-based civilisations were responsible for the construction of great cities and religious centres which were linked

together by a complex network of highways and canals whose remains still criss-cross much of the continent from modern northern Mexico to southern Peru.

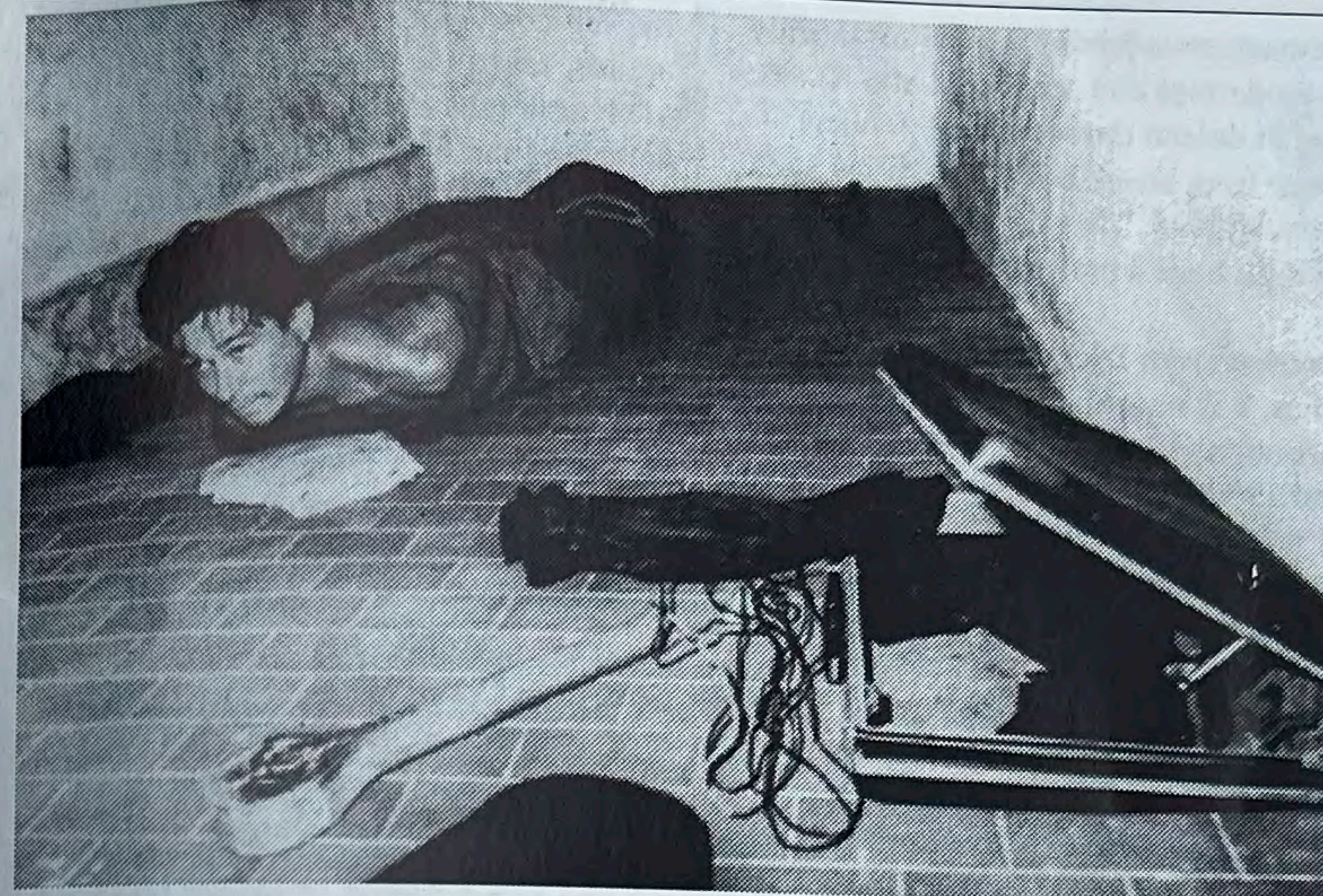
These civilisations were never simply the barbaric opposites of Western Christianity. They were complex societies in their own right. They nurtured great art, sponsored strategies for environmental management that are now being revived all over Latin America and developed a calendar system that permitted them to accurately locate themselves in time and to predict seasonal variations in the growing and harvesting of crops.

They sustained themselves on agricultural surpluses from the great 'floating farms' and the intensely farmed estuaries of what later became Latin America and the Caribbean basin. Tenochtitlan, the site of modern-day Mexico City, had a population of some 300,000 inhabitants when Cortes, with essential help from warring factions from within Aztec society, ruthlessly put an end to native rule in 1521. This was one of the largest urban centres in the world at the time. Similarly, the pre-Colomban population of what later became Mexico has been estimated at fifteen million. By 1650, after a century and a half of enforced labour which also saw the extension of the disease fields of urban Europe to the New World, that population was shattered through smallpox, venereal disease, typhoid and simple measles and reduced to a mere two million survivors.

Colonial Roots of Modern Militarism

The militarisation of modern Latin America dates from this period of colonial conquest. Unlike the early explorers to North America, those who arrived here came as soldiers and conquistadors, not as traders or simple missionaries. Having truncated the priestly rule of indigenous warrior chiefs they were rewarded with slaves, land and mineral wealth. When Spanish power collapsed in the nineteenth century it did so not as a result of social revolution or the adaptation of the principles of the French Revolution to Latin American circumstances. It was instead largely the result of well-organised military campaigns led by able military leaders like Simon Bolivar and Jose de San Martin. This marked the beginning of local caudillo rule in modern Latin America. Similarly, from the mid-nineteenth century to the late 1960s military leaders, not politicians, occupied the most important positions in Latin American society.

Thus, this same period also saw Latin America by-passing any experience of popular democracy and passing instead from foreign colonial domination to a mixture of native and US-assisted military rule. The latter commenced after the signing of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 when the US, in an effort to defend vital strategic interests in Central America and the Caribbean basin, declared Latin America a geostrategic zone from which all European powers were henceforth to be excluded. It is important to emphasise, however, that military rule in Latin America had indigenous roots which were not always



Torture-victim in Brazilian jail – 1994

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

traceable to the US. Thus, Latin American governments in this century have never simply been comprador regimes that protected US investments in the sub-continent. From the late nineteenth century down to the present day they functioned to protect the wealth of powerful Latin American élites, even individual families, from indigenous minorities, from the landless poor, and more recently from united fronts of the working class, the intellectual left and the emergent bourgeoisie.

Military rule of course also defended US geostrategic and political interests in the Western hemisphere. Because of this the US was involved in a huge build up of military strength in the region in the opening decades of this century and once again in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution in 1959. Both periods, particularly the first, saw the transformation and institutionalisation of private armies of powerful individuals and local caudillos into the forces of the state. Indeed, the private armies of many of the latter often outnumbered the state forces. For that reason they were widely used against indigenous campesinos to assert the right to property of powerful individuals over and above the communal rights of peasants and were subsequently incorporated into the structures of the patriarchal state. This was the case in Venezuela in the 1860s where an estimated 40,000 military casualties were recorded in a country whose official army was only 3,500. Today, private armies of 'security guards' and death squads used by the state has meant that powerful groups with vested interests in business, drugs and land have been able to resist all attempts at state reform, including reform

of the armed forces to make them accountable for large-scale political murder of their political opponents.

The transformation of paramilitaries and 'irregulars' into institutions of the state was greatly accelerated in the early twentieth century. This occurred alongside a growing privatisation of land and wealth in countries like El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala, where the US also had clear geostrategic interests. It also happened in resource-rich countries like Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina, which were rapidly integrated into the global economy in the first few decades of this century. From the 1930s right down to the 1970s these countries were also looked upon as vital areas of Uncle Sam's backyard deep within the Latin American sub-continent. Elsewhere in the country – most notably in Paraguay but also in countries like Nicaragua and Guatemala – military rule was used both to defend local privilege and to shield Latin American countries from progressive influence from the 'outside', whether from elsewhere in Latin America after the Cuban revolution or from the US and Western Europe in the Sixties and Seventies.

The US at this time injected huge amounts of weapons into Central and South America and provided the military training and expertise that ensured that the dictatorial regimes became among the most effective-counter revolutionary forces in the modern world. So intense was US involvement in the training and equipping of officers and soldiers in the Panama Zone from the 1960s to the late 1980s that this region became known as a 'school for dictators'. In the 1950s and

early 1960s the Colombian-born artist Fernando Botero painted these military leaders, especially the haute bourgeoisie who supported them, as puffed-up individuals who ruled whole countries as their own private estates.

Modernisation and Militarisation

The professionalisation of the armed forces that accompanied the modernisation of Latin American societies in recent decades has also fostered powerful career structures and given rise to militarist ideologies with their own internalised systems of values flanked by equally powerful ideas about military honour and social order.

The 1960s to the 1980s saw a growing isolation of the armed forces from society at large in that, unlike the rest of the Western world, military establishments in Latin America have, until quite recently, practically been autonomous social forces in their own right. Their privileged positions and enhanced status is derived from the fact that civil society was poorly developed and the few civilian governments that struggled to power in this period never lasted long enough to exert control over the armed forces. Instead, the systematic abuse of state power by the military, together with their monopoly of state violence for most of this century, has made Latin America synonymous with dictatorial rule, military coups, murder squads and state-torture the world over.

The increased militarisation of Latin America coincided with a number of other related processes operating in the post-war era, or more accurately in the post-Cuban revolutionary period. They continue to operate today and still provide the basis for a strong interest on the part of the military in the nature, the tempo and the direction of social change in contemporary Latin America. They include a quite radical process of class formation and peasant marginalisation in the countryside which has been driving the rural poor off the land and into the cities since at least the 1960s; the explosive growth of the informal economy which is often beyond state control; the metropolitanisation and proletarianisation of the rural poor in huge urban labour markets of Latin America; a renewed high degree of capitalist penetration of the rural sector that has been unprecedented since the late nineteenth century; and, finally, deeper and wider penetration of foreign capital, especially in the form of financial aid, but also in the form of manufacturing which has rendered Latin America the

BACKISSUE REQUESTS

Only £1 per Backissue

- #55 Development Worker
- #54 European Union
- #53 The Media
- #52 Labour
- #51 South Africa
- #50 Population
- #49 Twinning
- #48 United Nations
- #47 Tourism
- #46 Women's Health
- #45 Columbus
- #44 Maastrich
- #43 Irish Aid
- #42 Democracy
- #41 The Gulf War
- #40 Dumping
- #37 Debt

Each issue of *Focus* takes one particular aspect of global development as its central theme and consequently many of them remain invaluable resources long after they are published. Each gives a clearly focused snapshot of a particular issue at a particular time, with an emphasis on Southern perspectives, alternative coverage from the mainstream media and an eye for the Irish angle. Backissues still available are listed left – £1 per copy. Moreover, if you subscribe to *Focus* you get a backissue of your choice ABSOLUTELY FREE (see pull-out card in this issue). To order simply tick the box alongside the issues you would like and complete the form below.

Please make your cheque or postal order payable to Comhlámh. Do not send cash in the post. Return this form to: *Focus Magazine, Comhlámh, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.*

Name _____
 Address _____

most indebted region in the world economy.

Not surprisingly, this same period has witnessed the growing concentration of power and decision-making in capital cities, and the consequent aggravation of class conflict, rural-urban division and ethnic tension. All of these processes have brought very significant and rapid change to Latin America in the past three-and-a-half decades.

Change is particularly evident in the shift of power from the countryside to the city. It is also obvious in the spatial concentration of production in fewer and larger centres of population. It is apparent, too, in the territorial centralisation of power, in the spread of highways into the countryside and in the growing surveillance power of the state and its ability to monitor social and political activity within the boundaries of modernising states.

As in Spain and Germany in the inter-war years, so also in Latin America today, the rapid pace of such change has caused many – and not just the traditional élites – to still look upon military establishments as the defenders of organic society at a time when the organic unity of that society is perceived to be under serious stress. Since the sixties many on the Right within Latin America, together with leading banks in the US and Western Europe, have also looked to the armed forces to protect their interests, and those of the world financial system, and to keep the latter – and indeed Latin America itself – from falling apart.

For their part the patriarchal military establishments have often perceived

themselves as having a manifest destiny to modernise and 'civilise' Latin America and to defend the social and political order from attack both from below and from without. They alone, they have argued, have a proven record in this area.

Retreat from Dictatorship?

Thus, it is no coincidence that the militarisation of Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s occurred alongside a process of metropolitanisation. Cities are now regarded as much better fields for social surveillance and military control than rural hinterlands and open countryside where discontent and popular revolt were endemic. The role of the armed forces in this new Latin America is to maintain unity through an orchestration of the activities of the state's other public authorities without appearing too visibly aligned with civilian regimes in the process. Still today in Peru, as in Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Ecuador, military establishments see themselves as having this essentially political role. They perceive themselves, and are often perceived by forces on the Right, as the most-organised and best-educated sectors of Latin America society. To a much lesser extent than in the past, however, they are still looked upon – especially by the forces of reaction who have most to fear from 'the risen people' – as harbingers of progress and defenders of national unity.

One result of this linking of military rule with the processes of capitalist modernisation in Latin America in recent decades has been a growing concern to maintain political and social stability in

the sub-continent. This, as has often been argued, eased the transition from military to civilian rule while simultaneously defending the interests of finance capital. All the while this has facilitated the processes of capital accumulation in town and country within Latin America and in the global centres of finance capital alike. However, since the 1980s, power in Latin America has gradually been moving from the military dictators to civilian leaders, particularly to authoritarian presidents – such as Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Violetta Chamorro in Nicaragua, Virgilio Barco and Ernesto Samper in Colombia and Patricio Alwyn in Chile – and to the presidential palace. This has been achieved partially as a result of fundamental changes in US foreign policy in the region. The latter has aimed at far greater participation by a rapidly expanding middle class in the political arena. The gradual democratisation of Latin America has also been due to the inability of military dictatorships to hold their countries together in the face of the widespread revolt of the dispossessed together with the growth of new social movements and grassroots democracy. All sorts of new social collectivities have been involved in this process. They include the women's movement, peasant organisations, radical Church groups, those operating in the informal economy, shanty-town dwellers and the huge ethnic minorities of Latin America.

However, the retreat from dictatorial power has varied enormously from country to country in Latin America. In many cases, most notably in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Guatemala and El

Salvador, legislation has been enacted, or is being passed, which seeks to ensure the immunity of the armed forces in any post-dictatorial regime. This leaves those who have suffered most from military rule without recourse to legal redress and some form of compensation for the terrible suffering inflicted on both poor and middle-class families. As Jorge Castenada has argued in his excellent *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War*, the whole process of democratisation in Latin America today is being weakened because of this failure on the part of the judiciary to punish past crimes. This, he argues, is weakening from the outset 'the restoration or creation of an independent, trustworthy and respected judicial system' (Jorge, 1994: 339). This means that political change in contemporary Latin America is often only a superficial phenomenon which has not been matched by any fundamental change in the prevailing social and economic order which gave rise to military rule. It is instead viewed as something brought about by copper-fastened promises not to persecute those guilty of the worst abuses of human rights and not to tamper with the dominant social and political order. This in turn has meant that political change in countries as far apart as Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Chile and Argentina has not been accompanied by any significant degree of social or economic evolution.

In many of these countries the officer class – the sector which has traditionally schooled Latin America's political dictators – still hover, ever-alert and increasingly vigilant, around the wings of Latin America's political stage. They are there partly to ensure that any enactment of human rights legislation will not embarrass the armed forces or affect its ability to establish the parameters of what they deem to be an orderly process of social change for Latin America. They are also alert to events that might tarnish civilian rule and provide the opportunity for the military to re-enter the political arena. This means that many regimes in Latin America today can still be classified as post-military rather than full-blown civilian or democratic institutions. As Castenada has also argued, one explanation for the perennial succession of military takeovers in Latin America in the past half-century lies precisely in the fact that to most of those on the Right all previous attempts to establish representative government have edged the urban poor and the dispossessed further onto the political stage than the middle-class can prevent and more than the old ruling class can tolerate.

However, it remains to be seen whether the new regimes recently established in countries from Nicaragua to Chile, from Argentina to Honduras, will so neutralise popular discontent and foster mere illusions of reform that they will ultimately and effectively eliminate popular commitment to 'real change'. This, more than anything else, explains why so many on the Left, both inside and outside Latin America, are now focussing so much attention on Chiapas. This beleaguered region in south Mexico is still an abiding symbol of the power of the 'risen people' in a sub-continent where politics is increasingly the preserve of new business and landed élites operating with the approval of military establishments. As such, it is an enduring symbol of revolutionary activity in a sub-continent that is rapidly, though not irretrievably, falling under the political influence of neo-liberalism and the harsh dictates of free market economic policies. •

Don't Waste Another Summer!

Are you tired of the same old summer holidays? Do you seek a change and want to do something different this year? If so, the Voluntary Service International (VSI) range of national and international Summer Camps could be what you want.

VSI (the Irish branch of an international peace network) have just published their 1997 Workcamps Booklet containing information on more than 500 workcamp projects throughout Europe, North America and North Africa.

These 2/3 week workcamp projects run from June to September each year, enabling volunteers from all corners of the world to contribute to local community development in a foreign country. 10–20 volunteers take part on each project.

The 1997 projects include:

- *Assisting Native Americans with animal care and trail maintenance on an Indian Reservation in New Jersey, USA;*
- *Gardening in the former concentration camp in Dachau and learning about the history of National Socialism in Germany;*
- *Working with children on a summer project in Siberia;*
- *Helping a local community contain soil erosion in a remote part of the French Alps.*

Irish projects include a workcamp on Inis Mor Island (Co. Galway) as well as working with refugees, people with special needs, the environment and many more.

The primary aim of the workcamps, while completing practical work, is to break down barriers of culture and religion between people from different countries.

Participants should be 18 years of age or over. Food, accommodation and a memorable experience is provided for all.

A copy of the VSI workcamps booklet is available at £3.00 (includes p&p) from VSI, 30 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1 – but hurry and don't waste another summer!

For further information, contact Fran Flood: (01) 855 1011

Voluntary

Service

International



Demonstration in El Salvador, 1990, following bomb attack on the offices of *Comite Semenino do Frenastras*

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

When it's Immoral *Not* to Trade Guns

by Adrian Hastings

Adrian Hastings is Professor of Theology at the University of Leeds

When I and others in the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina appealed from 1992 to 1995 for the arms embargo to be lifted so as to enable the legitimate government of Bosnia to obtain the weapons needed to protect its cities and citizens from a heavily armed aggressor bent on the genocidal destruction of Bosnian society, I was saddened again and again to find left-wing peace workers, Christian pacifists, CND enthusiasts and others lined up with right-wing extreme nationalist and anti-Muslim groups bent on retaining the embargo and providing it with a coating of moral respectability. I have never felt more disillusioned with my pacifist friends.

The war in Bosnia was not a civil war. It was not an unpremeditated eruption of ancient hatreds resulting from the collapse of communism. It was not started by two sides. It was a deliberate and carefully planned campaign, mounted by a resurgent Serb nationalism, to establish a Greater Serbia which include large areas of Yugoslavia such as Bosnia – which had never in history been part of Serbia – and to do so by wiping out, or driving out, all non-Serbs while destroying their cultural monuments, in particular those of Muslims – mosques, manuscripts, tombstones, even the names of towns. Anyone who doubts the essential truth of this inevitably simple summary can now read any number of well-informed books: Thomas Cushman and Stjepan Mestrovic, *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York University Press, 1996); Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (University of California Press, 1996); Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia* (Texas A&M University Press, 1995).

The war was begun by Serb nationalists led by Milosevic and Karadzic, though it was opposed by many brave Serbs who hated both its ends and its

methods. To begin with, it was extremely successful for the very simple reason that only the aggressors had an army and heavy weapons – the army and weaponry of the old Yugoslav army, one of the largest and best-equipped in Europe.

The freely elected government of Bosnia, backed by a large majority of its citizens, had to defend itself with no more than hastily organised and very lightly armed militias. Yet its right to defend itself and its people is inherent both in natural law and in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. However, it is impossible to defend oneself successfully without weapons proportionate to those of the aggressors and it was just this which the Arms Embargo prevented. The latter was, in consequence, a substantive violation of the UN Charter itself.

In theory, of course, the Arms Embargo applied to all sides of ex-Yugoslavia. In practice it never affected anyone but Bosnia and the international community made not the slightest attempt to apply it, for instance, to Croatia, protected as Croatia was by Germany.

Let us not forget too that the arms embargo was dreamed up by none other than President Milosevic, the man directly responsible for the whole war, the true commander and paymaster of the Serb army in Bosnia, the man who had commanded his guns to ring Sarajevo even before Bosnia's declaration of independence. He proposed the embargo as he had plenty of weapons and wanted to make sure that his victims did not. But we must note too that the arms embargo was piloted through the Security Council by Douglas Hurd who consistently defended it across the following years and maintained a friendly personal relationship with Milosevic even when he gave up being British Foreign Secretary and became instead an executive of the National Westminster Bank.

Every Western government – Ireland included – backed the embargo and yet it was the embargo that ensured the war continued for almost four years with incalculable losses both to lives and to

the infrastructure of Bosnia. As soon as the embargo was effectively ended – after the massacres of Srebrenica, which forced President Clinton's decision to use force against the Serbs – the war came to an end, as opponents of the embargo had all along argued would be the case. The war could not end while almost all the heavy weaponry was on one side and a large majority of the population on the other determined to die rather than surrender. The embargo was, then, both practically disastrous and morally evil.

Every individual and every society has an absolute moral right to self-defence. If a person or community is subjected to terrorism, and still more to the threat of genocide, there are and always have been two and only two alternative approaches in terms of morality to what should be done. One or other must be justified. The first approach, the more 'primitive', is for the people who are attacked to arm themselves and strike back. The basic human right to life includes a right to self-defence and all the means necessary to make it effective. However, in the second approach, people give up that right on condition that a higher authority undertakes to protect them and can do so effectively. The only moral ground for refusing to allow a community weapons to defend itself is that a higher authority is doing it for them. The Genocide Convention in fact required the United Nations to intervene, which is why Western politicians were so anxious to claim that it was not a case of genocide. Even if it was not, the arms embargo remained inherently both immoral and illegal in terms of Article 51.

If the International Community itself was not prepared to undertake the defence of Bosnia. Such a policy was not only wrong, it was actually a clear form of participation in the crime itself. In the case of genocide, those responsible – that is to say the political leaders of every country which backed it, as well as those who rendered it respectable on moral grounds – can still be charged with collusion at the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. I hope one day they will be. •



Bosnian women fleeing Zepa during the war

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Seán O'Breasail was in Bosnia under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Bosnian Campaign Trail

by Seán O'Breasail

As we drove through the green hills of north-west Bosnia on our way to meet election workers, we talked to Mehmed, our interpreter. We chatted about his interests in American TV programmes, the video he had watched at home the previous night or speculated about the results of his school leaving-examinations which were expected within a few days. The car radio was tuned to a local station and was, as always, playing pop music. The music stopped and there was speech. We asked Mehmed what was on. 'The news,' he said.

'We know that Mehmed, but what is on the news?'

'It's about the election,' he said. And that is as much as we could get him to tell us. He was not interested in politics.

Mehmed was a young man of nineteen. The war started when he was fourteen but he was lucky in two ways. Firstly, he was too young to be conscripted. Secondly, he lived in a town called Velika Kladusa just inside Bosnia on the

border with Croatia. A local leader, Fikret Abdic, managed to keep this area out of the war, for a while. He set up an autonomous republic independent of the Sarajevo government. He did deals with the Serbs who surrounded the area. The Serbs on the Croatian side of the border had set up a statelet there which became known as the Krajina Republic. The Serbs in Bosnia followed suit. In both Serbian statelets, discrimination, intimidation and murder followed as Croats and Muslims were forced out of their homes.

By the time Mehmed was sixteen the war had come to Velika Kladusa. The Bosnian government regarded Abdic and his supporters as traitors. Mehmed's family were amongst the majority in the area who supported Abdic. As the government in Sarajevo saw it the people of Velika Kladusa had collaborated with the Serbs who were destroying Bosnia. There followed two years of vicious fighting as Muslim fought Muslim. For weeks at a time the fighting raged in the

countryside around Mehmed's, home destroying the houses of many of his neighbours. After a two-year war the Bosnian Army was victorious and Abdic fled to Croatia. Members of Mehmed's family lost their jobs, his father lost his business, his sister fled to Croatia.

Mehmed returned to school, determined to get an education which would be his passport out of Bosnia. It was not surprising that he was not interested in politics.

As election day drew near my anticipation was tempered by the realism that Mehmed brought to our discussions. It became clear that the election was not going to solve anything in this part of Bosnia any more than it would in other parts. There had been no fighting in the area for a year but there was little sign of reconciliation. Some refugees had returned to their homes; many had suffered 'welcome-home beatings', as they were called. But we had a job to do. We were there to act as supervisors on behalf of the Organisation for Security

and Co-operation in Europe.

OSCE had been given the task of overseeing the election by the Dayton agreement. Bill Clinton had brokered the agreement and had timetabled the Bosnian elections to take place in the run-up to the US presidential election. A strong international army under NATO leadership, an international police supervision force and a large number of electoral officials were deployed to ensure that the elections took place successfully.

The attitude of the people to the foreign powers who had decided, belatedly, to involve themselves in Bosnia varied between indifference and hostility. On a personal level we were welcomed by almost all the people we met but there was cynicism about the

international community's failure to stop the war and about the Dayton agreement which appeared to reward the aggressors.

Our job as supervisors was to liaise with Bosnian election officials, the international army and the police supervision force to ensure that the election was properly run. While we were not to be directly involved in the process we were to ensure that the election was free and fair; that there should be freedom for all parties to campaign; that the voting should be properly conducted and that the count should be carried out quickly and accurately.

On a personal level, I felt that I should persuade Mehmed to vote. I told him about the exhilarating experience of the South African elections and how people queued up for hours to vote. I spoke

about people in many countries who had died fighting for the right to vote. I told him about Ireland, how the people who had lost the civil war had formed a political party and won a general election within a decade. I don't know the reason why but when the day came Mehmed did vote.

The elections were declared to have been substantially free and fair by OSCE and we returned home. The only consolation that I can draw from the process is that the mechanics of the election and the count were conducted fairly in most places. Where this occurred the people who voted experienced democracy which may give them some hope for the future.

As for Mehmed, he has gone on to university and complains that his fellow students talk of nothing but politics. •

Máire Dorgan, with a number of other women activists, visited Cambodia in 1996

Grandchildren Continue to Die in Grandparents' Wars

by Máire Dorgan

Máire Dorgan is a community activist with Cork Combat Poverty Resource Project, and has been active in community and women's politics in Ireland and Europe for the past twenty years

Coming from our respective countries, (Ireland, Belgium, Holland and the Philippine Islands) we had spent a week in Bangkok at the first Asia-Europe NGO Conference, where a peoples agenda for an EU-Asia relationship began to be hammered out. The conference was held just prior to the ASEM summit, which assembled ten South-east and East Asian and fifteen European heads of states in Bangkok, to debate future co-operation between the two regions.

The conference, attended by over 100 NGOs and some 400 activists and policy-makers, heard detailed expert analysis and debate covered topics as varied as 'Sustainable Europe: from global concepts to local action'; 'International migration and traffic in women'; The relationship between domestic and external US policy'; 'The

crisis of security in Asia and the role of the International and European community in fashioning world policy for the peace and security of all nations'. A detailed peoples' policy statement had been presented to the ASEM heads of state, asserting civil society's right and need to be involved at that top policy-making level.

A stark reminder of conference themes Coming from this atmosphere of debate, scholarship, policy analysis, and the active engagement with so many complex world issues, the visit to Cambodia was a welcome change. But this change left no room for complacency and gave very stark and immediate expression to some of the realities we had heard about at the NGO Conference.

I was forcefully reminded of this visit to Cambodia during 1997 International Women's Day, here in Cork – an event marked privately and in a fragmented way by different groupings of women. Last year on International Women's Day, I had sat on the grass in a peoples' park in Siam Reap – a small town in Northern Cambodia, as school children and their parents assembled to sing, dance, and

listen to the town dignitaries officially introduce the day and its festivities – a National Holiday for all. The posters stapled to the trees in Cambodian and in English read: 'No country can develop without the equal participation of women.' Such is the official face of Cambodia in a small town which, up to six weeks prior to our visit, had had an electricity supply for only six hours each day.

Here, dirt roads and pathways connect up the hamlets and the main street; whole families (of three to four children and parents) move around on motor-bikes; children – bright, beautiful, curious and full of laughter – watch the visitors from a distance or jostle with each other for contact, if one engages in some form of communication with them.

Official Cambodia

Other images of this official Cambodia – intent on its own healing and regeneration – that stay with me, are those of healthy looking but poorly clad children, during their long mid-day break from 'school', intent on pursuing their newly developing careers as guides to the •

awesome wonders of the nearby Angkor Wat temples. Obviously, some far-seeing teachers – lacking, we were told, some of the most basic materials and teaching aids – saw the possibilities of combining a thorough knowledge of their own history and art with a skill in spoken English, as one independent way forward for a new generation of young Cambodians, to offer a valuable service to visitors. Sadly, these young people expect, very strongly, to be paid in US dollars and not in Cambodian currency.

But the backdrop to all of this 'normality' was two-fold:

- The awareness among the people that to the north, in the hills, the Khelmer Rouge forces still lived, worked and traded, and that they might, given the next election (the last one had been held under the auspices of the United Nations) re-enter, in one way or another, the national political arena;
- the ever-present all-pervasive fear among the ordinary people, that should they – or we – stray from the normal pathways and move freely through the fields and the countryside, they could be killed or maimed by the many landmines that still pepper the land – a sinister reminder of the American war of aggression in that part of South-east Asia.

The Gruesome Reality of Landmines

I had read something of the landmine issue, but was not prepared for the first-hand confrontation with their gruesome legacy until I spent a few days in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penn. There I was brought face to face with the disfigured, maimed, destroyed men, women and children – victims of landmine explosions, on their own land and for which they had no responsibility.

While there clearly was great poverty among the people in general in Cambodia, there were few people begging in the streets. But everywhere we went – to the museums, palaces, former prison, or out to the awful grotesque Killing Fields – the maimed victims of landmine explosions confronted us – begging, pleading, pushing, imploring us for some money. In a state where there is no welfare system, and where one has to work to eat, the need is for every person, however broken, to contribute to the family income.

I cannot describe my own feelings in those situations – shocked, outraged and drained as I was from the ping-pong emotional effects of the reality of the opulence, regal wealth and exquisite

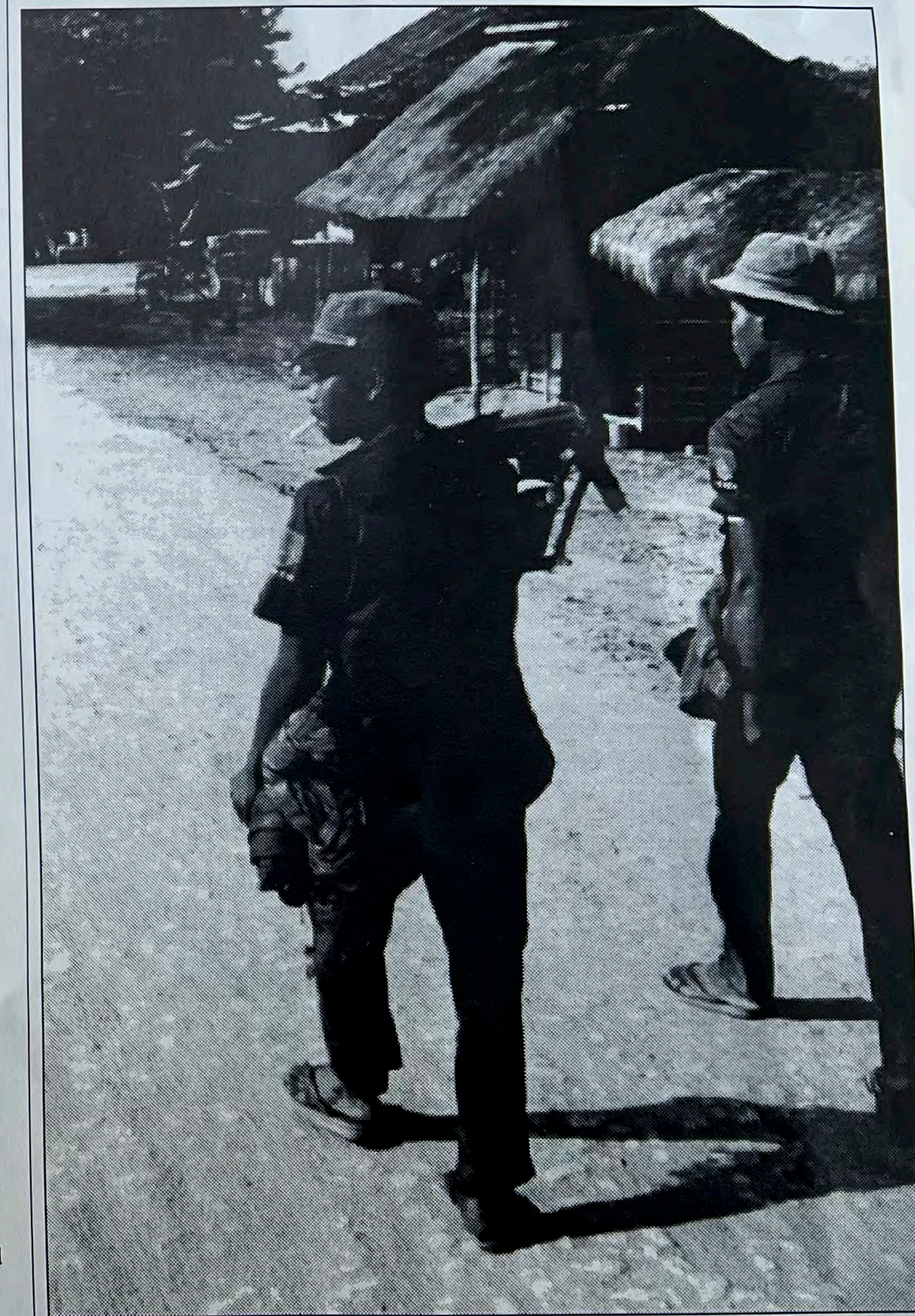
treasures of Sihanouk's Palace, and then the barren, dusty, mutilated, stark terrain of the Killing Fields.

In this context I could make more sense of, and feel the immediacy of the need for global policies, that would regulate and eventually eliminate armaments of all kinds from international commerce. I was aware that the Irish government is among the governments of the world that has consistently called for a complete ban on the manufacture and distribution of landmines, those sinister weapons which continue to create the situation where 'grandchildren continue to die in their grandparents wars'.

But I also had the sickening feeling

that the suffering, the lives and the realities of these poor and dignified people made little difference to the policy-makers of the world, such as the British, US and French governments, who continue to sell armaments, including landmines to Third World countries.

However, these realities should not go unstated and unchallenged. The role of the activist, at whatever level we work in the intersection between the local and the global, must include work to create ongoing pressure for global policies and politics, which allows civil society an effective say in the future of our world and the interdependence of all people. •



Cambodian government soldiers

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Now It's Kosovo's Turn

by John Walsh

As Europe shifts its focus from the horrors of the Bosnian conflict and congratulates itself on the US-brokered 'Dayton Peace Accord' – an agreement which rewarded war criminals and legitimised aggression against a UN member state (Bosnia) – the former Yugoslavia is still very much acting out its aggression, this time in the former Yugoslavian republic of Kosovo.

Serbia continues its unimpeded policy of repression and persecution in Kosovo, a policy which has caused untold suffering and misery for over ninety per cent of its two million population. It is a policy which has the sole aim of cleansing the land of Albanians, a policy which, if allowed continue, will create another major conflict in the Balkans, one that has the potential to finally cross the borders of former Yugoslavia and produce the definitive nightmare for European security.

The Republic of Kosovo has been described as the linchpin in the current crisis of the former Yugoslavia. If Serbia continues its provocations and aggression against the ethnic Albanian people, who constitute ninety per cent of the population of Kosovo, the Balkan conflict is likely to spill over into Macedonia, drawing in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and possibly Turkey, according to many international observers.

Serbia enforces a Police State in Kosovo by suppressing all civil and political rights. It has outlawed Albanian schools, closed the universities in Kosovo and prohibited mass media in the Albanian language. The policy of Serbianising Kosovo has resulted in the dismissal of many intellectuals, teachers and government employees, and widescale harassment and intimidation of community leaders and those linked to political parties.

To date, the Albanian ethnic majority in Kosovo have followed their political leaders, led by Dr Ibrahim Rugova, along a path of non-violent resistance, thus denying Serbia the excuse for a full-scale Serbian onslaught and genocide on a greater scale than that witnessed against

Muslims in the neighbouring Bosnian conflict.

The presence of heavily armed Serbian police forces and military in Kosovo has resulted in the perpetration of some of the worst human rights abuses in Europe. Albanians have been subjected to harassment, beatings, arrests, imprisonment and torture. There have been countless deaths and disappearances at the hands of Serbian security forces and authorities. Almost three quarters of a million Albanians are estimated to have passed

through police hands at some point over the past four years, and young Albanians are being forcibly drafted into the Yugoslavian army against their will.

This policy of Serbianisation, engineered by Milosevic and his cronies in Belgrade, is part of a carefully contrived scheme to force Albanians to flee Kosovo. Latest figures estimate that 350,000 Albanians have already been forced to leave Kosovo. Serbia's open policy of settling Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo is

proof that Serbia is intent on changing the demographic make-up of Kosovo. The President of the Republic of Kosovo, Dr Ibrahim Rugova, on 16 February 1993, during an official visit to the US, proposed the following ten-point plan to alleviate the suffering of the people of Kosovo and prevent a major escalation of the conflict in the Balkans.

- The immediate deployment of UN or NATO peacekeeping troops in Kosovo;
- the establishment of Kosovo as a UN protectorate;
- CSCE (Committee for Security and Co-operation in Europe) monitors to be placed in Kosovo;
- extension of the no-fly zone over Kosovo;
- a halt to quite 'ethnic cleansing' of Kosovo through Serbian intimidation;
- disarmament and disbanding of Serbian paramilitary units, and the placement of all Serbian heavy



Arian Curri after assault by police in Kosovo

PHOTO SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Summer '97

FOCUS

- artillery under international control;
- re-opening of Prishtina airport for humanitarian relief flights;
- cessation of the colonisation of Kosovo by Serbia'
- the freely elected assembly be permitted to meet;
- exemption of Kosovo from International sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro.

The Dayton Peace Accord, which has restored some degree of 'peace' and 'normality', however temporary to Bosnia and Croatia, has allowed Serbia concentrate its efforts on expanding the borders of Serbia into the Republic of Kosovo. The Republic of Kosovo must be afforded the right to self determination and that right vindicated and enforced by the UN. Failure to act against continued Serbian aggression may result in a far greater conflict than those witnessed in the region over the past five years – one that will not be confined within the borders of the former Yugoslavia. Milosevic must not be reinstated to the civilised community and his war crimes conveniently dispatched to history. The civilised world, led by the UN, must clearly state that appeasement will no longer be the world's response to continued naked aggression in a region which has already seen too much suffering and death, and where the memories of World War II return to shame the leaders of the civilised world who allowed such atrocities take place again in the final years of the twentieth century. •

'Kosovo is a police state. Heavily armed Serbian police, paramilitary troops and regular army forces spread their terror. Mass arrests of Albanians are commonplace and, in a society run by brute force and intimidation, few if any prisoners receive a fair trial. In short, the Albanians of Kosovo are struggling to survive.'

Human-Rights Watch,
Helsinki, 1994

'... ethnic tensions, which are potentially explosive, have risen as officers of the largely Serbian police force have increasingly resorted to the use of violence. Amnesty International considers that the level of abuses perpetrated by police in Kosovo province can be only explained as part of an official policy to retain control of the province by extreme intimidation.'

Amnesty International,
19 September 1994

Summer '97



Hawks Still Gunning for East Timor

by Seán Steele

Seán Steele is a member of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign

On Monday 29 January 1996, three women cut through the fence of the British Aerospace (BAe) factory at Wharton in Lancashire. They entered a hangar and with household hammers proceeded to disarm a Hawk fighter aircraft, which was due to be delivered to Indonesia the next day. The three women – Lotta Kronlid, Andrea Needham and Joanna Wilson – remained in the factory for two hours before being discovered. They were arrested and imprisoned. Three days later they were joined by Angie Zelter, who publicly announced her intention to disarm Hawk. They were held in remand until their trial.

At their trial in Liverpool, the three were accused of causing £1.5million worth of damage. Angie Zelter was accused of conspiracy. The four women – known as the 'Wharton Four' – didn't deny the charges. They argued that their action was justified because the aircraft – part of a consignment of twenty-four – would be used to perpetuate genocide in East Timor, where over 200,000 people have died since Indonesia invaded in

1975 – that's one-third of the population. Under international law, they argued, they had acted to prevent a greater crime – genocide. And it was BAe and the British government that had acted illegally by supplying weapons to such a regime.

During the trial, 'Swords into Ploughshares' – who had initiated the action, and to which all four belonged – mobilised public opinion in Liverpool by going into local communities and explaining the situation in East Timor. Public reaction was overwhelmingly sympathetic. At their trial expert witnesses, including journalist John Pilger, testified on their behalf. The jury accepted their arguments and acquitted all four defendants. The acquittal delighted human rights activists and dismayed the British government and BAe, who immediately issued writs against the four. The writs were burned outside the courthouse as a celebration of the result.

A decisive factor in the jury's verdict was the testimony of a BAe spokesman. During the trial he was asked if he cared that BAe was involved in harming civilians. 'No, I don't,' he replied curtly. His answer displayed a casual

FOCUS

contempt, and a disinterest reinforced by distance.

The trial highlighted Britain's role in the arms trade in general and with Indonesia in particular. Successive British governments claim they have guarantees from Suharto's regime that British military equipment is not being used for internal repression. Ian Clarke, a former Defence Minister, described such guarantees as 'worthless' and 'not worth the paper they're written on'. The Observer has published pictures of British-made Alvis water cannons being used to break up protests against government repression in Jakarta. Recently, the Minister of Defence admitted in a letter to the 'Campaign Against the Arms Trade' that British tanks had been used in south Sulawesi to storm a university being occupied by students protesting against price rises in public transport. Three students died.

Because of examples such as these, the British government has changed its tune, though only slightly. Instead of dismissing eyewitness accounts as 'allegations' it says that from now on it will look at each individual case, and hopes that British equipment will not be used again in such a manner.

Of course, Britain is not alone. Numerous Western countries are only too eager to sell arms to a tyrant like Suharto. Killing is his business and business is always good. Germany, France and Sweden all arm Indonesia. In Australia, Kopassus, one of Suharto's most blood-thirsty battalions, train in Queensland and in Perth. The US has recently decided to sell F-16 fighter aircraft and resume training for Indonesian officers cancelled after the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991 when Indonesian troops gunned down 270 peaceful East Timorese protesters in front of international TV cameras. In

justifying the sales, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said that 'the US government believed weapon supplies would have a moderating influence on Suharto's regime'.

The EU's role as the world's largest and wealthiest trading bloc is playing a pivotal role in both Indonesia and East Timor. And they are not sitting on the fence. As the pro-democracy movement emerges in Indonesia and confronts the violence and corruption of Suharto's regime on a daily basis, it faces an army which is armed, financed, trained and supported by most of the EU. The courage of those Indonesians opposing Suharto - like that of the East Timorese - is awe-inspiring.

It is a long way from those diplomats and politicians who hide behind paper-thin walls of rhetoric to justify arms sales as necessary for 'stability' and 'our interests'.

The spiral of violence that ends with the killing of East Timorese, Indonesians, or for that matter Burmese, Rwandans and Colombians, can be traced back through the twists and turns of arms dealing and international diplomacy, usually conducted by cynical, unaccountable diplomats, in their plush offices thousands of miles away from the consequences of their decisions.

East Timor and Indonesia may be far from Ireland, but the European cities where Indonesian diplomats shop for arms are nearby. Many capitals have become supermarkets for arms for some of the worst regimes in the world. Many of the factories where these weapons are made are closer still; such as in Wharton, Lancashire.

The four women who decommissioned the Hawk aircraft lived in Liverpool, on the factory's doorstep. Having exhausted all legal means they felt they had no alternative to direct action.

Weapons sales to Indonesia have become increasingly contentious as the reality of life in East Timor (and Indonesia) becomes better known. In Dublin recently, former Observer journalist, Hugh O'Shaughnessy, who was twice expelled from East Timor, said that companies who sell to Suharto have become increasingly pilloried.

Even in a business where deals are done as far as possible from the public eye, dealing with Indonesia has become especially embarrassing. Public opinion has played a considerable role in this.

For the last five years, the East Timor-Ireland Solidarity Campaign (ETISC) has worked to raise awareness of East Timor. Public pressure has caused the Irish government to publicly support East Timor's right to self-determination. Dick Spring has called for an arms embargo against Indonesia.

Ireland's presidency of the EU was an ideal opportunity for the government to put its words into action. ETISC hopes the government will help set up a monitoring unit that will follow the human rights situation in East Timor and report back to the EU. Indonesia's friends in the EU will find it difficult to ignore or dismiss its findings.

Here in Ireland the arms trade is still in its infancy. A recent AFRi report listed companies that contribute to the arms trade - mostly electronic components for high-tech weapons systems. It is up to those concerned to ensure that this growing sector - although still small - is not allowed to gain a substantial foothold in Ireland.

By making connections between those companies, both here and abroad, and various conflicts, we can mobilise public opinion. After all, that's what politicians listen to. The Wharton Four did it. So must we. •

Take two minutes, then take two years.

APSO is the national agency which enables Irish men and women to exchange skills and knowledge with people in the developing world



Nuala Ní Ghabhann, Mabafokeng Gladys Mahase and Tebello Mokitimi, who are all teachers at St. Barnabas High School, Maiste, Lesotho

If you're skilled, motivated, over 23 and ready for change, somewhere in the world you can make a real difference. Since 1974, APSO has identified, prepared and sent skilled Irish people to work alongside people in the developing world. Make a difference. Take just two minutes of your life. Contact APSO today.

APSO, The Agency for Personal Service Overseas
29-30 Fitzwilliam Sq., Dublin 2, Ireland Tel 01-662 0298 Fax 01-661 4202

If you are in a Public Service Pension Scheme you are entitled to have up to 2 years of volunteer service count towards pension, subject to certain conditions.



APSO

Sharing Skills with the Developing World

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

16-20 SOUTH CUMBERLAND STREET, DUBLIN 2. TEL: (01) 6620866 / FAX: (01) 6620808

SMALL PROJECTS SCHEME

A limited number of Small Grants will be made available this year for new projects in the field of development education. Applicants are welcome from all sectors and backgrounds. Grants of up to £1,000 are available. Full details of these grants and how to apply for them will be available from NCDE from May onwards - to ensure your copy, please write, phone or fax NCDE at the above address and you will be added to our mailing list.

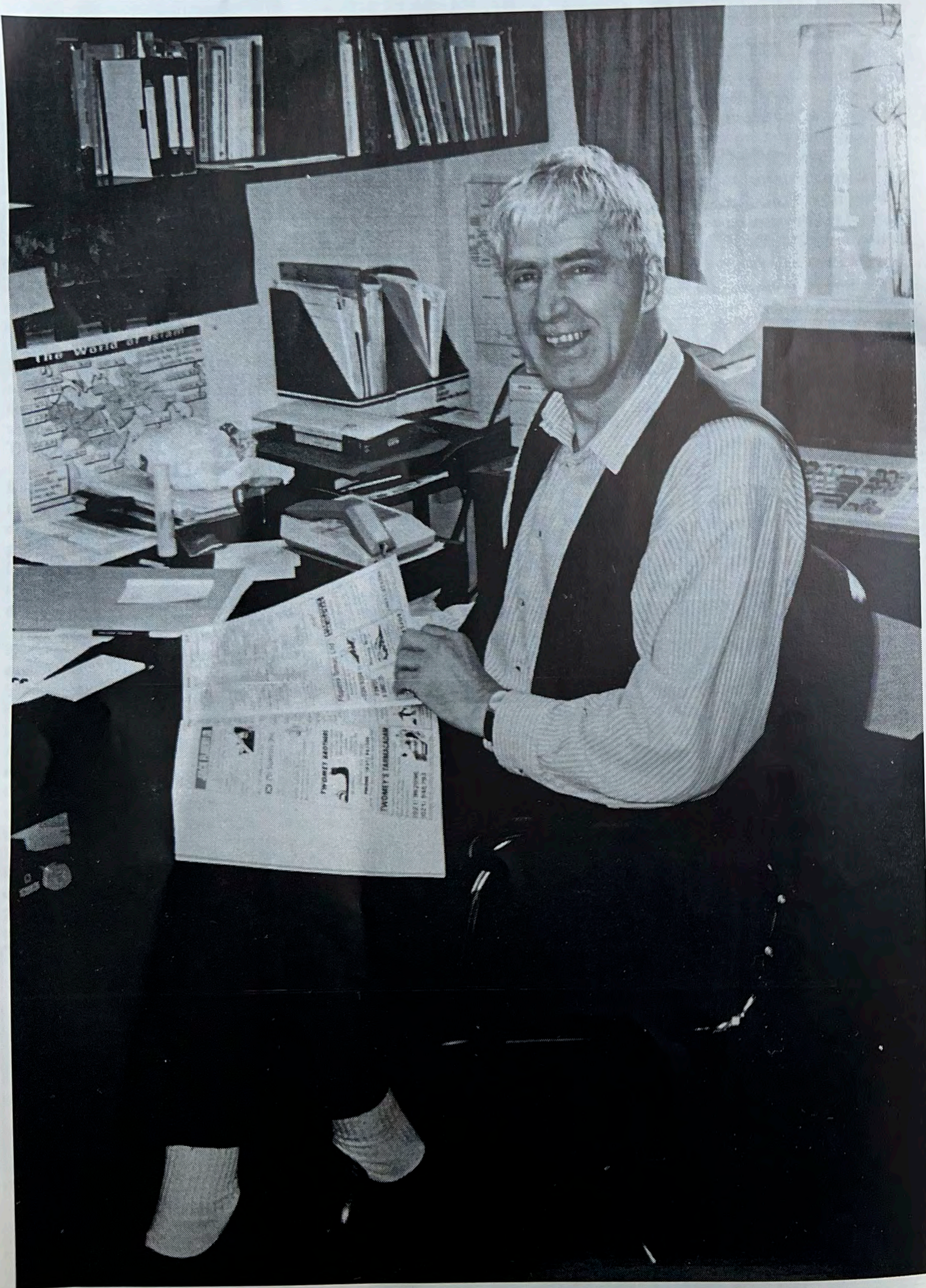
The closing date for receipt of grant applications under this Scheme is 30 June 1997.

Rannóg Chúnaimh na hÉireann sa Roinn Gnathaí Eachtracha a bhunaigh chun oideachas faoi cheisteanna forbartha domhanda a chur chun cinn in Éirinn.

NEW RESOURCES

The Resource Centre in NCDE is continually updating its stock and a new catalogue will be available shortly which will include details of all newly acquired resource materials. To ensure your copy, contact us at the above address.





Vincent

by Mary Mangan

Vincent Tucker died in a car crash near Lattin, his home place in Co. Tipperary, on 17 February 1997. Many of us felt shattered at a personal level by the news of his death but it also felt like the death of a taoiseach, a great leader.

Vincent embodied the vision and values shared by so many people involved in development education, community development and solidarity work. Inclusiveness, justice, respect – these were the values Vincent lived out.

He had friends all over the world. He loved making connections, bringing people in, bringing people together. He did his best to counter the fractured, splintered lifestyle that prevails now in industrialised society. He and Kathleen created more communities, and organised more 'potlucks' and parties than anyone else I know.

Vincent was one of the first people whom I heard say, 'Think globally, act locally' and that is what he did himself. He recognised the power and importance of collective action. It was he who had the idea of a development education newsletter for Cork. He saw it as a way of promoting cooperation between the various 'Dev. Ed.' and solidarity groups here. It was he who gathered an editorial collective, and in 1983 the first issue of *Cork and the Wider World* appeared. It was a very small pamphlet which we had laboured hard to produce but Vincent was very proud of it.

The pamphlet grew, through marathon late-night editing and production sessions – usually in Vince and Kathleen's place – into the decent-sized magazine, *Ireland and the Wider World*, one of the two parent publications of this magazine. Vincent was initially the only skilled member of the collective. He was the one who knew – in those pre-desktop publishing days – about typesetting, layout and design, printing photographs and drawing cartoons. In his typically generous way, he shared his skills with us all, and none was ever made to feel unequal.

I feel dizzy when I think of all the things that Vincent did, of all the projects he was involved in – rent strikes in Toledo, Ohio; food co-ops in St Louis and in Cork; the Alternative Ireland Directory; Trócaire's Project's Committee; Health Action International; the Cork Development Education Network; his facilitation work with the Mahon Community Development Project; his helping to set up the Development Studies Diploma and the MA in Irish and World Development in UCC – the list of his initiatives is endless. And all the time, he was creating – writing resource booklets (on co-ops), articles and reports when he wasn't designing new courses. And, despite the increasing demands of his work as a lecturer in UCC, he could always be counted on to come up with challenging, interesting pieces for the magazine.

Vincent was our star in Cork. Able, articulate and brave, he went out to bat on all sorts of issues on radio, on television, at

public meetings. We leant on him, knowing that he could out-debate them all – he was better informed, and he argued from deep conviction. He could say the unsayable – and frequently did.

He was a tough strategist. For him, it wasn't enough to be a well-meaning but ineffectual radical. Whatever the issue, he wanted activists' efforts to pay dividends.

He could be tough, and he could also be tender. He was a 'new man' (though he would reject the label) before it became fashionable to be one. Opposites seemed to cohabit quite comfortably in him. He had the wildest, most anarchic sense of fun, and he was also deeply serious about many things.

He delighted in subverting order, in turning things upside down, yet his office is a model of tidiness and organisation.

Despite his disdain for status and privilege and without ever betraying his principles he worked creatively and with great kindness and openness in the competitive, hierarchical world of the university.

Vincent stretched the limits of human possibility in the way that he lived, and he pushed back the boundaries for us all. As usual, he is out there ahead of us now.

One of the groups which he co-founded was called 'Aprovecho'. It was a resource group concerned with self-reliant development and with sustainable ways of living on the earth, who 'walked their talk' on communal land in Oregon. Vincent translated Aprovecho for me as 'I make the best use of'. He certainly made the best use of the time given to him, which is why so many people – most of all his family, Kathleen, Áine, Oisín, and brother Tony – feel so acutely his loss. •

'... Opposites
seemed to
cohabit quite
comfortably in
him. He had
the wildest,
most anarchic
sense of fun,
and he was also
deeply serious
about many
things...'

Vincent Tucker delivered this speech at the Cork launch of the 'For a Truer Picture of the Majority World Campaign' in Cork City library on 25 May 1995

Images of Development

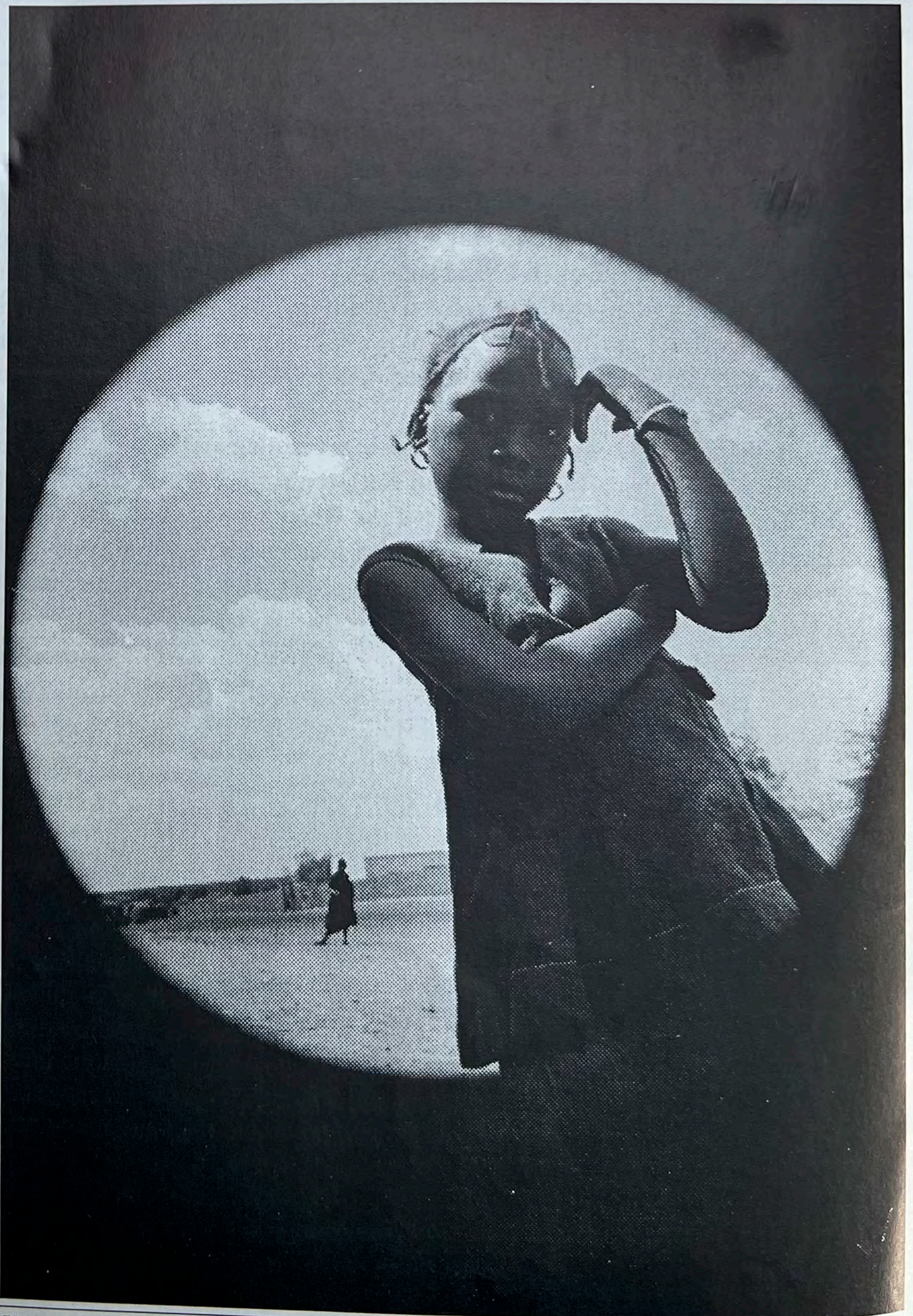
by Vincent Tucker

The ways in which we understand and think about development play an important role in shaping our relationship with other peoples and other societies. Certain ways of thinking about and seeing other peoples have become so ingrained in our thinking, our language and our imagination, that over time they have come to appear natural. For this reason, it is important that we stop and look critically and take stock of what have become common-sense notions about the Majority World and to ask ourselves where these notions have come from.

If we examine the language of development we find that the ways in which we talk about other peoples are laden with value judgements – with prejudices. The very notions of 'development' and 'underdevelopment' suggest that some people have arrived while others have yet to catch up. Since we, the 'developed' world, have already arrived, then we know best how to help them catch up and must bring them our skills, our technology, our political institutions, our religion, etc. Whether you look at the media, the thinking and promotional materials of agencies, policy-makers, politicians or academics, most of them operate from these assumptions. I would suggest that this thinking is a form of cultural racism. It is based on the belief that Western culture and societies are somehow superior and other societies are inferior. How else would you justify the fact that almost all aid programmes, almost all overseas work, is based on the premise that 'they' have something to learn from us but hardly ever that we have something to learn from them.

Recently I had the opportunity to meet a Tibetan Lama who was in Cork for a few days to give some talks. As you may know, the notion of Enlightenment is central to Buddhism. It is a notion of human development based on principles of compassion for all things, on non-exploitation, on loving kindness, non-violence, on contentment – which is the opposite of greed, of materialistic accumulation and so forth. Listening to this man, who comes from a 2,500-year-old tradition with a very different notion of development, I thought of how arrogant is the Western notion of Enlightenment which only goes back to the eighteenth century and yet sees the 'West' as the

pinnacle of civilisation, evolution and development. This is especially so when we contrast this with the so called 'developed' societies such as the US and Europe. In a very real sense of the word, societies such as the US and UK are underdeveloped societies. They are underdeveloped in the ways they treat their poor and disadvantaged, the low level of



Young girl in Niger – name not recorded

PHOTO: SALGADO JUNIORA

self-reliance among their citizens, their lack of co-operative abilities and their use of technologies which most people neither understand nor can control.

This is not to romanticise other societies vis-a-vis ours but rather to emphasise the fact that all societies are underdeveloped in significant ways. We must abandon the notion that there are 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' societies and acknowledge that all societies are developing societies.

This would have very significant implications for aid, for overseas work and for the ways in which we would talk about and report other ways of life. It would employ an emphasis on mutual learning and on mutual aid. If this notion were central to the practice and thinking of non-governmental organisations and aid agencies then I believe that their practice would be very different. APSO, to take an example of the official government agency, would not simply be recruiting people to go and 'help' the so-called 'Third World' (which originally meant a third way and was not a synonym for basket-case countries) but would also recruit others to come and teach in our schools, act as missionaries to our Churches and so forth. I believe that this is very far from our actual practice.

One of the things that blind us to the worth and contribution of other societies and civilisations is the continual projection of other societies as backward, unable to help themselves, subject to the vagaries of nature, diseased and dependent on our help. (Margaret Thatcher actually suggested that what Ethiopia needed was someone to teach them the basics of agriculture.)

The media and many agencies present pictures of the white saviours distributing food and teaching in schools (as Lord Lugard, the great architect of colonialism in West Africa, said at the beginning of the century, 'Ladies teaching the rudiments of arithmetic to naked savages'). You would never know that the majority of the staff in many projects, camps, etc. are Africans. The picture of white saviours appeals to the 'feel-good factor'. We can congratulate ourselves on how good the Irish are in helping other people (but we change the language when it is we who are looking for handouts from the EU.)

For this reason, this campaign organised by Comhlámh is a very significant initiative in bringing these prejudices to the attention of the general public, to agencies and to journalists. I have long wrestled with the language of development and learned a new way of talking and thinking about this from their material – the Majority World. I hope that this will creep into the language of journalism, politicians, agencies and academia. I think that it is important to look critically at the 'fairy tales of development' which agencies continue to tell. 'So many lives saved by your £5; you can save the world through your Giro account without ever challenging your prejudices.'

I hope that this campaign will challenge us all. I hope that it will lead to a debate within agencies. I hope that it will lead to challenges to the conventions of journalistic reporting and to the language of academia.

On the positive side, I hope that it will awaken us to the great richness that exists through the great diversity of societies. The most serious problems of 'underdevelopment' are rooted in the West. We can learn of alternatives in terms of more appropriate technologies, less-dangerous and dependent health practices (drug policies in Africa), more co-operative lifestyles, greater awareness of our relationship with nature and a more spiritual approach to human problems and relationships.

As Comhlámh members are well aware, through their experience overseas, our lives can and have been enriched – indeed developed – by the contact and mutual learning process. I congratulate Comhlámh on this important initiative. •

JOIN COMHLÁMH

Name _____

Address: _____

Tel: (Hm) _____ (Wk) _____

£20 full-time waged £12 part-time waged £6 unwaged

ACTIVITIES

I would like to join a Comhlámh group working on ...

(tick one or more boxes)

- Reorientation weekends and other support for returned development workers
- Education courses, lectures, etc.
- Focus magazine
- Campaigning, lobbying
- Human rights work
- Social and fund-raising activities
- Joint activities with others who have worked in the same country or region
- Environmental activities
- Women's and gender issues
- General help
- Other (please specify) _____

Comhlámh
10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 478 3490 Fax: (01) 478 3738
55 Grand Parade, Cork. Tel/Fax: (021) 275 881

SUBSCRIBE TO FOCUS

Six issues for £8 plus FREE backissue

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| #54 European Union | <input type="checkbox"/> | Now that you've read our magazine, |
| #53 The Media | <input type="checkbox"/> | we're sure you won't want to miss an |
| #52 Labour | <input type="checkbox"/> | issue. <i>Focus</i> is sold at £1.50 a copy, but |
| #51 South Africa | <input type="checkbox"/> | with our special introductory offer you |
| #50 Population | <input type="checkbox"/> | will receive six issues for just £8. What's |
| #49 Twinning | <input type="checkbox"/> | more, when you subscribe we'll send you |
| #48 United Nations | <input type="checkbox"/> | one backissue ABSOLUTELY FREE. Just |
| #47 Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> | pick which of these invaluable resources |
| #46 Women's Health | <input type="checkbox"/> | you'd like and tick it on the list. |
| #45 Columbus | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alternative coverage of global |
| #44 Maastrich | <input type="checkbox"/> | development issues has never been more |
| #43 Irish Aid | <input type="checkbox"/> | accessible. Moreover, if you join |
| #42 Democracy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Comhlámh you receive <i>Focus</i> FREE as |
| #41 The Gulf War | <input type="checkbox"/> | part of an attractive membership |
| #40 Dumping | <input type="checkbox"/> | package. See ad above. |
| #37 Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Please make your cheque or postal order payable to Comhlámh. Do not send cash in the post. Return this form to: Focus Magazine, Comhlámh, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Name _____

Address _____

