

Eclipse: The Anti-war Review

After the attacks of September 11th the US administration moved with unnerving speed to produce a simple narrative to explain what had happened, and to justify a war in response to it. According to this narrative, the attacks had been organized by an international network of terrorists led by Osama bin Laden and motivated by a hatred for America's freedom and democracy. Furthermore, this network had its headquarters in Afghanistan, so the regime which was harbouring it must be destroyed and the terrorists liquidated. From very early on many of us found this story utterly unsatisfactory, ignoring as it did the history of British and US colonialism and imperial intervention in the Arab world, and the geopolitical value to the US of establishing a military presence in Afghanistan. But what was the real story? What was really behind the attacks of September 11th and the Afghan war that followed them? In October a group of students and faculty at the University of Sussex formed the idea of publishing an independent fortnightly review that would try to answer these questions, and the result was the launch of *Eclipse: The Anti-war Review*.

The aim of the review was to publish articles on the crisis which would be 'informative, revealing and provocative of clear thinking', and which would go beyond the superficial understanding of events peddled in the British media. But in addition we aimed to reprint articles from the foreign press which were often far more insightful on the nature of what was unfolding than anything available in this country, as well as the full texts of significant speeches by figures like Blair and Bush. To this we added cartoons, satirical pieces and news of anti-war events. A number of its issues have concentrated particularly on special themes, such as US foreign policy, the 'new imperialism', gender and the war, the militarization of the globe, and most recently the Israel/Palestine conflict. This spring we established a website on which the main contents of each issue appear a week after publication date, and with the April issue we began to establish a subscription base so as to develop the review into a national and even international forum for the anti-war movement. At present we are looking at the possibility of passing the editorship of particular issues to like-minded groups elsewhere in Britain who have made contact with us.

Meanwhile the world crisis triggered (or revealed) by September 11th has broadened and ramified. The Afghanistan adventure is developing inexorably in the direction of 'another Vietnam'; the USA's military unilateralism has encouraged Israel to launch an unprecedented assault on the West Bank; in the Arab world outrage at the US administration's policies is at its most intense for a generation; and now tensions between Indian and Pakistan have been inflamed to the point of an outright war between nuclear powers. On 25 May Robert Fisk wrote in the *Independent*: 'Each morning now, I awake beside the Mediterranean in Beirut with a feeling of great foreboding. There is a firestorm coming. And we are blissfully ignoring its arrival; indeed, we are provoking it.' At times like this efforts to explain what is happening can seem puny by comparison with the forces that have been set in motion by the US and UK governments. *Eclipse* is dedicated to the proposition that understanding can make a difference, above all here in the West, from where, as we should always remember, the vast majority of the violence since September 11th has originated.

The Eclipse website is at www.eclipsereview.org. Individual copies of Eclipse cost 70p, but Radical Philosophy readers can request a complimentary copy of a recent issue by emailing eclipse@sussex.ac.uk with a name and address. Eclipse welcomes contributions on any aspect of the current crisis.