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# socialist OUTLOOK



PHOTO: Jez Coulson

West Bank refugees still behind bars

## Freedom for Palestine!

As the Madrid peace talks wound down, Israel was bombarding the villages of southern Lebanon, which have seen so much bloodshed in the past. The Israeli aim is to drive the villagers out, to widen the size of its northern 'buffer zone', the better to prevent Palestinian commando attacks. At the same time, Palestinians demonstrating for peace were having their marches broken up, and were being arrested by Israeli soldiers.

The fighting in southern Lebanon – business as usual for that part of the world – highlights the reality behind the conference rhetoric. In the past four years there have been more than 1200 Palestinian deaths during the *Intifadah* – the mass Palestinian

uprising in the territories under Israeli military occupation.

The Palestinians fight back because they have no alternative. Tens of thousands of young Palestinians have decided that it is better to die on their feet, rather than live on their knees – in the squalor and hopelessness of refugee camps policed by Israeli military thugs.

Whatever is decided in the 'peace process', the Palestinians and their struggle will not go away. There can be no peace without Palestinian freedom, and no Palestinian freedom without liberation from Israeli tyranny.

## Feeble line on Telecom rip-off

LABOUR'S Industry spokesperson Gordon Brown might denounce British Telecom's latest huge profits. But his timid response – when he knows BT are raking in more than £100 per second just highlights the inadequacy of Labour's policies.

The scandal of BT's massive overcharging – and the three billion a year profits that result – mean that it is a prime candidate for a popular Labour campaign for nationalisation. At a time when Telecom is in the process of sacking a further 20,000 plus workers, Kinnock's dithering is a disaster.

Research shows that BT charge more for practically every service than their major competitors on an international level. Even the conservative *Financial Times* pointed out that the monopoly could slash its profits by a billion and still out-perform its equivalents. Gladys Birs of the Telephone Users Group said 'Customers have been robbed left, right and centre by this monopoly and some of the vast sums of money should be ploughed back into providing a better service.'

Labour's campaign around the NHS shows that one of its best hopes for winning the election lies in defence of public services. A campaign to take back control of BT, stop the sackings and reduce charges could be a real vote winner.

And it would provide some of the funds Labour desperately needs, if it is to have a hope in hell of implementing any of the (minimal) improvements in public investment that it has promised. But Kinnock's desperate rush to the right, dropping every policy deemed 'loony left' by the tabloids, blinds Labour's leader to such obvious facts.

Gordon Brown's call for an inquiry into BT's profits is all very well. But what would really bring in the votes – and the cash Labour will need to compensate for years of under-funding of the NHS and other services – would be an up-front pledge to re-nationalise Telecom.

Labour Party members and trade unionists must demand that BT is re-nationalised with compensation only in cases of proven need.

And those millions of workers paying a fortune to make phone calls should be told exactly what BT does with its billions – at a time when it is making thousands redundant.



PHOTO: John Harris

Labour's new model Conference delegates, complete with Next suits

Socialists for Labour say

# Don't sit out the general election campaign!

by Pete Firmin

Politics in Britain is dominated by the general election – it's not just the parties' pre-election sparring.

As for the class struggle, it's at its lowest level since the 1930s – despite the magnificent resistance to the Poll Tax. The Tories' anti-union laws, combined with the fear of losing a job, have succeeded in holding down any fight-back to the shake-out of the recession – ably assisted by most union leaders.

Most workers are looking to a Labour government to provide relief from the 12 years of battering they have taken from the Tories. After defeats over jobs, housing, education, the NHS, social services and union rights, it is 'treading water' until after the election.

But Labour's leadership has not only dropped nearly every 'left' policy it held and increasingly distanced itself from anti-Tory struggles over the years. It has also tried to kill off any idea that Labour will reverse the damage, with its well-worn phrase 'as the economy allows'.

A Labour victory would still



Don't let him put you off!

see the British economy in the tail-end of a recession. The Tories have not succeeded in restructuring British capitalism – quite the reverse. And given that Labour has no plans to take over profitable companies, this means a long wait!

But, despite Kinnock's policies, the Left have to be strong campaigners for a Labour vote. Because of its link with the organised working class, a Labour vote is the only one which represents basic class independence. While a Labour victory will bring its own problems, another defeat by the Tories would be a disaster.

The left shouldn't sit back and wait for the election results,

in the hope that things go the right way. We may only be able to affect the vote in a small way. But we have a major task in building a campaign which calls for a Labour vote, but also raises radical policies which put workers' interests first.

We have a duty to warn against the austerity policies of an incoming Labour government – but also to lay the basis now for the political opposition to such sell-outs.

Socialists for Labour (SfL), launched earlier this year by Labour Party Socialists aims to be such a campaign. Its basic platform includes rejection of coalitions; repeal of the anti-union laws; restoration of cuts in public services; an amnesty for Poll Tax non-payers; unilateral nuclear disarmament; a woman's right to choose and complete equality for lesbians and gay men.

It already has over 200 sponsors from trade union and Labour Party activists, including Ronnie McDonald from the OILC oil workers' union, Joe Marino, general secretary of the Bakers' union, Jeremy Corbyn MP and a number of trades councils and union branches.

Further sponsors should be

sought in every area and union (not just from Labour Party members), but the campaign also needs to be built in the localities. A recent rally in Manchester attracted several hundred people.

SfL can link up with a wide range of single issue campaigns, linking their demands with a call for a Labour vote. One of the most fruitful areas will be around defence of the NHS. Labour may have gained the high ground in the pre-election arguments, but it is being very careful about its (lack of) commitments. Activists can link up with campaigns against opting out, against hospital closures, and others.

Wherever possible we should try to get the Labour Party to make this a part of their official election campaign. But such is the mood of not 'rocking the boat', that even on single issues this will be rare.

The only alternative to hibernation until after the election or just peddling Labour's official policies is to build Socialists for Labour now.

The SfL national meeting on November 16 will discuss left policies and practical campaigning ideas. All those in broad agreement with the campaign should be encouraged to come and bring their ideas.

## Split in Telecom union Broad Left

By a special correspondent

IN A DRAMATIC moment during the NCU Broad Left AGM on 26 October, the Chair Ian Cuthbert noticed that outgoing secretary Andy Gibb was taping the proceedings.

When asked to turn off his tape recorder, Gibb refused and stomped out of the meeting – and out of the Broad Left.

This set the seal on a split which had been planned for months. It was organised by the Kinnockite/Eurocom-

munist 'Unity campaign', the right-wing faction of the Broad Left.

The background to their desertion was the outcome of the 1990 pay claim. The Kinnockite faction of the Broad Left, which is powerful on the national executive, was complicit in a sellout pay deal.

As a result, some of their supporters were opposed by more militant Broad Left members in the national executive elections, and defeated. Thus for the Kinnockite/Eurocom-

an election machine.

Indeed the split in the BL was engineered by union general secretary Tony Young, backed by the majority of NEC members from the clerical section. These people have only ever used the Broad Left as a flag of convenience.

The split in the Broad Left was inevitable. In reality the NEC is controlled by a Kinnockite/right wing ('Members First') alliance.

Their latest sell-out is de facto acceptance of the appalling redundancy scheme (see SO9), in which BT over-60s

will be forced to retire, and 16,000 voluntary redundancies will be sought.

Few members have any confidence that this many voluntary redundancies will be achieved, and thus compulsory redundancy looms.

The split in the Broad Left is a clarification. The situation in which militant activists were in the same union grouping with Kinnockites and others who have no intention of fighting was never viable.

It is a first step towards giving an effective lead to those who do want to fight.

**Socialists for Labour National meeting**

**Saturday, 16 November, 11-5 Camden Town Hall, London.**

Socialists for Labour can be contacted c/o 1 Gorefield House, Canterbury Road, London NW6

# Pax Americana in the Middle East?

On the eve of the Madrid peace conference two Jewish settlers from the West Bank were killed in an ambush. The Israeli 'Defence Force' swept into action, barring Palestinians from the West Bank from Jerusalem, and carrying out their routine 'search' and harassment operations.

Speculation immediately started about how such an event would 'harm' the peace conference. If it had been two more Palestinian dead, no one would have noticed. What's a couple of Palestinians more or less, when more than 1200 have been slaughtered by the Israeli army during the Intifadah?

The conference is being held because the US has managed to persuade the Arab governments that there might be something in it for them. In the new world order it is now impossible for right-wing Arab governments to manoeuvre between the US and the Soviet Union, as was possible at the height of the cold war.

To get aid and loans from the IMF and the World Bank, and from the US government itself, close diplomatic accord with the US is vital.

It is possible that Israel could give the Golan Heights back to Syria, in exchange for a peace treaty and recognition of Israel. But the Palestinians will get nothing worth having.



*Demanding self-determination: the fight goes on*

Every day work advances building more Israeli settlements on the West Bank. Arab fields are confiscated and Arab houses bulldozed to make way for the settlements. The aim is to use the influx of Soviet Jews in particular to per-

manently change the demographic character of the West Bank, to make it impossible to ever become the centre of a Palestinian state.

Opposition to the peace conference from Israeli hard-liners like Ariel Sharon makes it appear that something substantial could be conceded to the Palestinians. This is a totally false impression. 'Land for peace' is never going to apply to the Palestinians. Israeli and its US backers have no interest in even a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank and in Gaza.

The conference is a big diplomatic victory for the US. By brokering the conference America looks the 'peacemaker' and confirms its status as the sole superpower. Any real concessions are likely to come from the reactionary Arab governments, abandoning their limited support to the Palestinians. Overall, it is the Palestinians who have most to lose.

Most pathetic in this charade is the Soviet delegation led by Gorbachev, acting as the loyal servants of Pax Americana.

The real line up in the Middle East is clear; a holy alliance against the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, under the hegemony of the US. Pax Americana will offer nothing in the way of justice for the Palestinian people.



*Next stop Zaire? French troops en route to the Gulf*

## First steps towards a Euro-army

By Clifford Smith

Last week the United States gave its first response to the French and German proposal for a European army, in an interview by the US ambassador in Britain, Raymond Seitz.

Seitz was not amused. In a non-too-diplomatic way he told the Europeans that it was not on.

Why has this proposal come forward, and why are the Americans so hostile to it? The run up to December's Maastricht summit show the race for European monetary and political union is accelerating.

### New world order

The basis for European capitalist integration is the new shape of the 'world order'. This is not so much a question of the collapse of the Stalinist states, but the decline of absolute US economic dominance. Today there are three contenders for

international economic supremacy - the United States, Europe and Japan.

### Undermined

After the second world war, the United States towered over the world economic and political scene. But by acting as the motor force to rebuild the shattered European and Japanese economies, in order to ward off the threat of 'communism', the US undermined its own long-term position.

While West Germany, the largest of the European economies, rebuilt, Japan developed high technology industries based on a low-wage economy with weak trade union organisation.

The long-term crisis of international capitalist profitability has hit US manufacturing industry particularly hard. Japan now equals the US in manufactured goods. But the United States still has by far the biggest national economy.

The crisis in eastern Europe

throws the three way inter-imperialist conflict into sharp relief. Japan is buying into US banking and real estate, as well as taking over manufacturing firms: there is a tide of anti-Japanese chauvinism in the US.

To compete with the US and Japan, the ruling classes of Europe must go for economic integration. But economic integration, to be effective, requires common laws, and that means political integration.

As the Gulf war showed, political and economic power are intimately linked with military power. Because of its overwhelming dominance militarily, the United States is able to partially compensate for its declining economic position.

### Deadly dynamic

The idea of a Euro-army has a deadly dynamic. In all of preceding capitalist history inter-imperialist competition has led to war.

The rapid decline of the 'common enemy' - the military power of the USSR - puts in question all preced-

ing alliances. For the United States, the vital question is to maintain the framework of NATO. NATO has been the key mechanism for maintaining the dominance of the United States in Europe for forty years. NATO is not just the co-ordination of national armies, but a *political* framework which links European domestic politics to the US at every level.

### Sinister

The significance of the Gulf war was that it pointed the direction for a new revamped NATO under US leadership. This is an utterly sinister project - to swivel the gun turrets of NATO 'southwards', against the third world.

The problem is precisely that the Europeans and the Japanese know exactly what the US is doing; but until now the Europeans have feared a direct confrontation with Bush and Baker. During the Gulf war the German government in particular gave cast-iron guarantees to the US that

on all key aspects of military and security policy it would not go outside the NATO framework.

But already there is agreement to create a 10,000-strong European rapid deployment force. But will it be inside, or outside of NATO control? A compromise the US could accept is control by the Western European Union, on which the US is represented.

The function of the deployment force is itself likely to be intervention in the third world. Over the past few weeks French and Belgian paratroopers have been imposing 'order' in Zaire. It is a sign of things to come.

For the left, a Euro-army is in no way preferable to a NATO army. It is one more sign of the shape of an integrated capitalist Europe - an undemocratic 'fortress Europe' which offers nothing positive for the working class, immigrant workers, or the oppressed. The left must demand - no to NATO, no to European militarism!

# Anti-fascists combat threat from far right

by Ian McLarty

Pickets besieged a fascist paper sale in Brick Lane, East London on October 20. The area has a large Bangladeshi community and has seen an increasing number of racist attacks in the last 18 months.

The picket, called by Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) to highlight the increased threat posed by fascism in Britain, attracted more than 300 supporters. The pickets outnumbered the fascists by more than two to one, despite the British National Party (BNP) national event in London the same weekend. The fascists had to leave under police protection.

AFA has now called a National Demonstration Against Racist Attacks on November 10. This has replaced AFA's usual anti-fascist protest on Remembrance Sunday, in recognition of the need for a response to the rising tide of racism in Britain. The demonstration has attracted wide support from trade union



branches, trades councils and Labour parties. As the first national demonstration against the far right in many years, it is particularly important that the event is a success.

Fascists are planning to stand in at least 60 seats at the next election, and activists are now planning a broad based campaign to isolate the candidates. The campaign also aims to expose far right ideas inside the

workers movement, ensuring that any attempt made to gain legitimacy through the elections is exposed.

Such a campaign would need to recognise the self-organisation of black people and their self-defence as a positive development rather than an obstacle. Potential support for such a campaign is broad, particularly among those threatened by fascism – the black community, lesbians and gay men, trade unionists.

It is only such a campaign that can have the numbers and authority to prevent the intimidation of whole communities caused by fascist marches. This is what is necessary to deny the extreme right the platforms they abuse and the 'democracy' they deny to others.

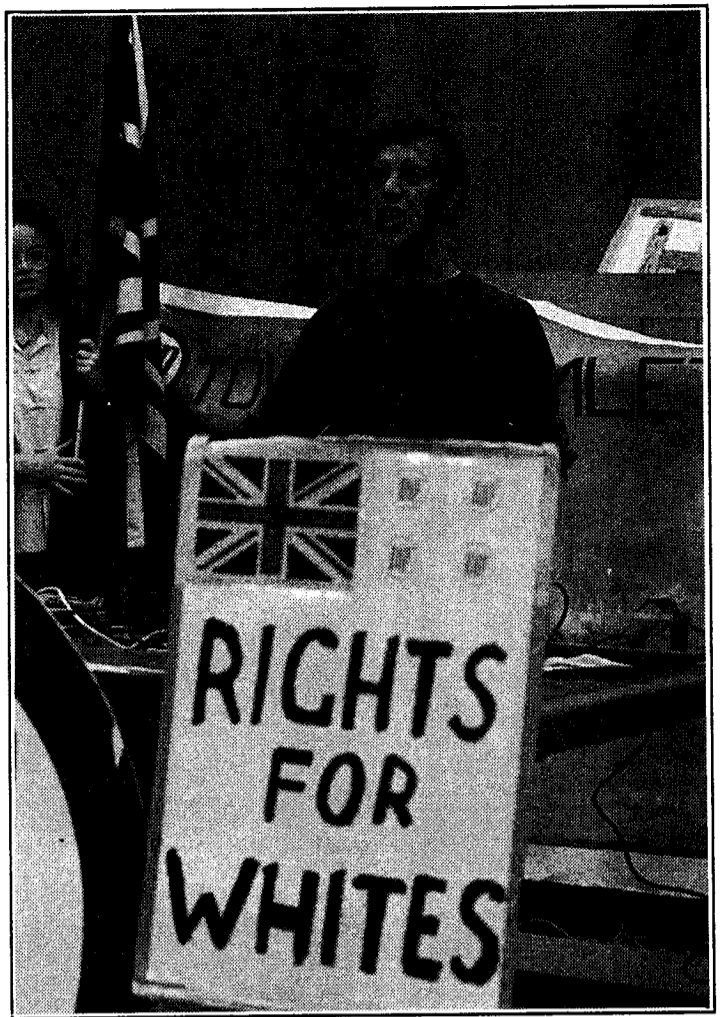


PHOTO: David Hoffman



NALGO has a long tradition of fighting for equal pay

# How will 'super-union' uphold women's rights?

by Gail Squires (E.Mids Rep, NALGO Women's Committee)

NALGO, the local government workers union, is Britain's third largest trade union, organising white collar workers in the public services.

Of its 750,000 members, about 500,000 work in local government, with the rest working in the NHS, gas, electricity, water and universities. Over 50% of NALGO's membership are women.

The proposed merger with the public employees' union NUPE and the health union COHSE would bring a further million women into the new union. But despite the opportunities this creates, there are also potentially major setbacks.

Since 1987 NALGO has had a clear policy of promoting self-organisation for women, black members, members with disabilities and lesbians and gay men. It is generally recognised as one of the most progressive unions on the question of equal opportunities.

But there is no cause for complacency. The right to self-organisation for women and other oppressed groups within NALGO has been a hard-fought battle. There have been many pitfalls along the way for activists campaigning for representation and structures based on self-organisation.

In 1989 NALGO held its first national conference for women members. Demands were placed upon the leadership to implement its decisions. These included proposals around the National Women's Committee and other structures to organise and represent women in the union. It also demanded the right to a direct input into NALGO's annual conference.

NALGO's conference endorsed these proposals. But the leadership refused to implement them, continuing to refer to the Women's Committee as the Women's Rights Committee!

Two years on, some progress has been achieved, but much remains to be done. The Women's Committee is reluctant to confront the union leadership, attracting criticism from rank and file activists.

But there have been positive developments. Structures representing women at all levels have spread to many districts

and branches. District conferences have been encouraged to elect representatives to the Women's Conference.

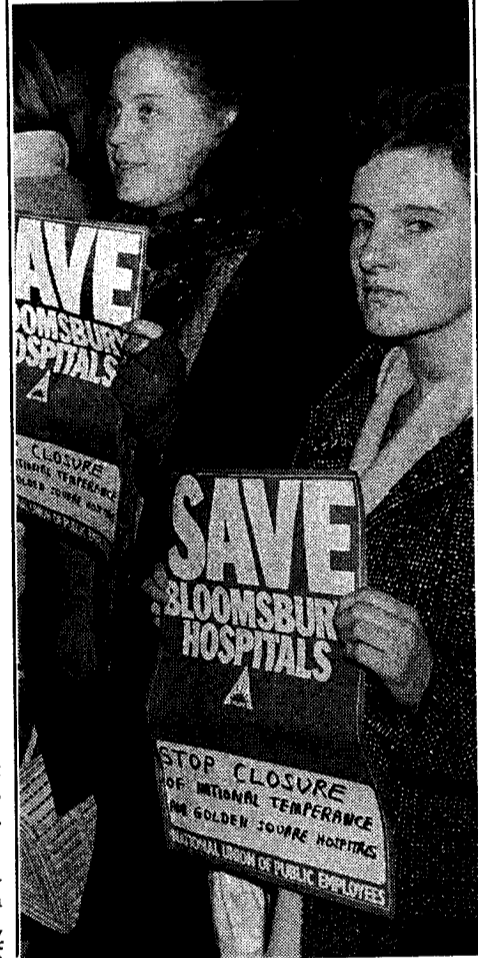
NALGO has a reputation as a progressive union, often aligning itself with left unions such as MSF and the NUM. But its leadership is permeated by 'new realism'.

So the leadership has tried to turn the proposed merger to its own advantage. This affects the right of oppressed groups to self-organisation, with consultation documents clearly aiming to undermine previous gains.

Far from reinforcing the self-organisation of women in the new union, the proposals attempt to replace this right with the notion of 'proportionality' – reserved seats and quotas.

Proportionality itself should not be opposed, even if it is a tokenistic gesture if implemented in isolation. But it would be a major defeat if it was allowed to replace self-organisation.

The leaderships of NALGO, NUPE and COHSE clearly prefer their committees to 'look good' when it comes to



The new union will have over 400,000 women health workers

women's representation, rather than enable women members to organise an effective lobby in the union.

Attacks on workers in local government, the NHS and elsewhere in the public sector have had a disproportionate effect on women workers. Women overwhelmingly comprise the low-paid, part-time and temporary sectors of the workforce.

Improvements in conditions directly affecting women have proved almost impossible to win in the current economic climate. Most concessions have been forced on employers by market factors and changes in the composition of the workforce.

Now more than ever, women in NALGO need a strong voice to challenge the employers' offensive and new realism in our union.

## Women in the Unions Conference

23rd November  
10-5

Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC1

I would like to register for Women in the Unions

I enclose ..... (£5 per person)

I would like to book ..... places in the creche

The venue is wheelchair accessible

Please return to Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Road, London E9. Make cheques to Socialist Movement TU

# Carnage in Belfast

By Liam Mac Uaid

An atmosphere of terror is enveloping Belfast and many other towns in the North of Ireland. A wave of nakedly sectarian murders reminiscent of the period from 1972 to 1976 seems to be claiming more innocent victims every day.

The loyalist murder gangs have a long history of murdering Catholics simply because of their religion. It is now largely undisputed that their campaign in the 1970s was conducted with the active cooperation of the British intelligence services with the intention of terrorising the nationalist population.

What has changed is that a group within the RUC is passing what is sometimes described as 'low grade intelligence' to the loyalist terrorists about people with connections to the Republican movement. Murder is made much easier with a photo, address and car registration number of a potential target.

The second significant change is that a new leadership has emerged within the Ulster

Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). They are better organised, and have clearly decided to embark on a prolonged campaign of murdering Catholics.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), a legal front-organisation for the UDA, have stated that everyone attending Gaelic Athletic Association sporting or social events is now a 'legitimate target'.

The response of the Republican organisations has not been good. The Irish People's Liberation Organisation (IPLO) has been meeting sectarian murder with sectarian murder, walking into bars frequented by Protestants and shooting anyone to hand.

With the increased effectiveness of the loyalist killers, a Catholic is usually murdered, tit-for-tat, within a matter of hours. Such gangsterism has nothing in common with the Republican movement's anti-sectarian traditions, and has still less to do with socialism.

Meanwhile, the IRA's military campaign has been deteriorating into adventurism.



which unemployed youth can pay for the habit is to turn to crime against working class communities.

But all that is being offered to the youth are moralistic appeals, more worthy of a priest. All that is expected of the communities that are affected, is that they sit at home and cheer on the IRA volunteers when they firebomb a pub in which cannabis has been sold.

The imperialist offensive represented by the Brooke talks, the nightly slaughter, the isolation and aimlessness of the Republican movement, all bring to mind the low point of the mid-1970s.

These are dark days in the Irish national liberation struggle and, at the moment, it is difficult to see what will be the issue to draw the anti-imperialist masses back into active politics. What is certain, is that with its present political orientation, the Republican movement will not be able to break out of this vicious spiral.

Bombs have been left on Protestant estates, and Protestant businesspeople have been killed on the grounds that they were supplying goods to the British army or RUC.

That the IRA is more isolated from the civilian population now than at any time in the last 15 years is demonstrated by a report in a West Belfast local paper, 'The Anderstown News'. In this, an SDLP councillor called on anyone with knowledge of the identities of the IRA members in a car which killed a local man, to pass it on

to the RUC.

In a development which seems almost calculated to increase their isolation from the youth, the IRA have begun a campaign of kneecapping suppliers of cannabis, LSD and Ecstasy in Belfast. Earlier this month, *Republican News* carried a full page article on the evils of these drugs, and the iniquities that occur at the 'raves' where they are consumed.

The IRA is right to assert that the people supplying these drugs are open to manipulation by the state. The only way in

## Bigots unite against sex education

An interesting, if unsurprising, feature of Northern Irish society over the past 20 years is the unity of Catholic and Protestant bigots on matters sexual. JOHN MAGEE, from People's Democracy – the Irish section of the Fourth International – looks at the issue. This article originally appeared in *An Reabhlóid*, the bi-monthly journal of PD.

THIS unity surfaces every time there is a suggestion that people in Ireland should have the opportunity to be as informed about sexuality as other European peoples.

It matters not what the intensity of sectarian conflict may be on other issues. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of the blessed crusade to keep the populace ignorant.

While Catholics are gunned down on a daily basis by Loyalist murder squads, the Catholic hierarchy and Ian Paisley's Free (sic) Presbyterians are mounting a campaign against the opening of a Brooke Advisory Clinic in Belfast.

The opening is at the invitation of the local Health and Social Services Board. It reflects growing concern amongst health professionals at the rising incidence of teenage

pregnancies, and the basic factual ignorance that many young people displayed about how their bodies function.

It was recognised that these same young people were the last to seek advice from their family doctors or the statutory agencies. The hope was that an independent voluntary agency, guaranteeing confidentiality, would be able to reach these young people.

The religious approach to sex education in Ireland is to deny sex exists, or to surround it with a fog of nonsense. A recent survey of teenage schoolstudents in County Cork gave a disturbing insight into what children are taught.

Teenagers said how they had been told by a priest that a girl could become pregnant by sitting on a boy's knee. The survey also revealed that 70 per cent of the 14 and 15 year olds interviewed knew a young girl in

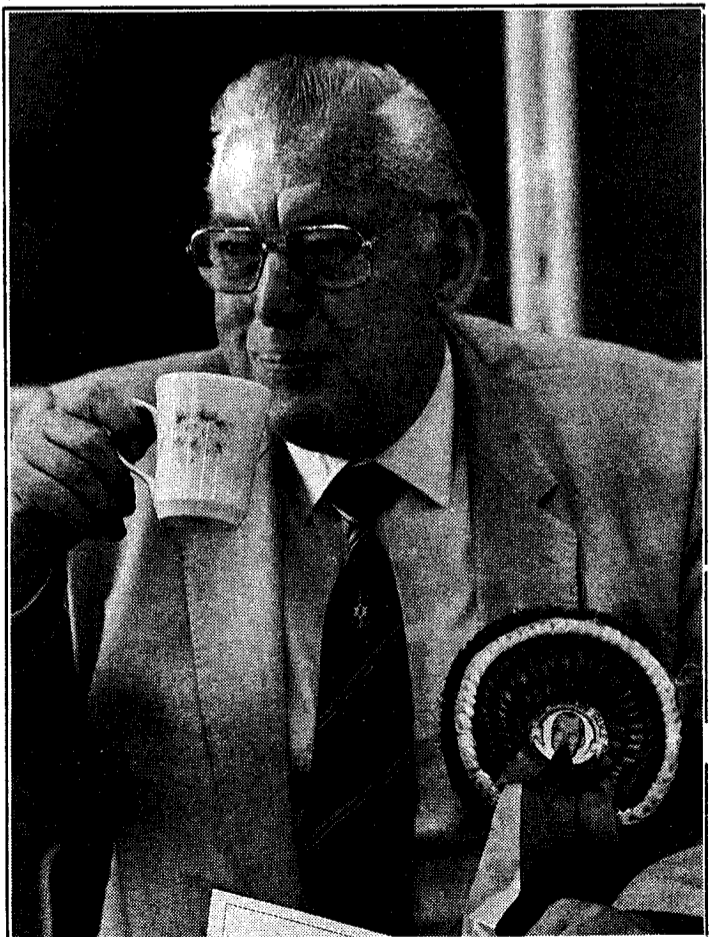
their class who had become pregnant.

Another survey examining the attitudes of Irish women who seek abortion revealed that the main reason those women chose abortion was their 'fear and shame' of having a child outside marriage. It also showed that young Irish women who became pregnant outside marriage felt isolated in having to cope with the situation alone.

The 'progressive' wing of the church, if such be possible, of course admits the need for sex education – but only as a preparation for marriage.

The coordinator of the Marriage and Family ministry in the Catholic diocese of Down and Connor, covering the greater Belfast area, claims that 'sex education' should be properly called 'education for love' and is 'much more than information or facts'. He wants sex education 'within the framework of the Christian vision of human life and sexuality'!

It is this same 'vision' which seeks to terrorise Irish women. That which energetically mobilised all the dregs of Irish society to prohibit divorce in the 26 counties, to outlaw not just a woman's right to choose



Sex is definitely not his cup of tea

but the 'information or facts' that would allow women to make an informed choice.

A campaign has been set up by socialists and feminists to support the Health Board's invitation to the Brooke advisory service. Resolutions are being put to trade union branches and

community groups urging support for this initiative. Letters supporting the Health Board's decision should be sent to: Dr. Gabriel Scally, Director of Public Health, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Linenhall Street, Belfast 1.

# As the dictatorship of the market takes over from the Party in East Europe Women forced back to the kitchen sink

By Sam Inman

'COMPASSION be the bright light of your eyes'. So says the motto on the cover of the influential Hungarian women's weekly magazine, *Nok Lapja*. It never used to be there. But these days women in Hungary, along with their sisters in all the other former Stalinist dictatorships in Eastern Europe are facing a huge ideological and economic offensive.

From Poland to Czechoslovakia, East Germany to Hungary, anti-abortion attacks escalate, childcare facilities are being shut down, and hundreds of thousands of women workers are losing their jobs and livelihoods.

Enormous price rises, the removal of subsidies, inflation and other pressures hit women hardest, since they are most often responsible for feeding and clothing their families.

The first subsidy to be scrapped in many East European countries was that on children's clothes.

As material attacks mount, Eastern Europe is also witnessing a renaissance of all manner of reactionary ideologies. For women this means explicitly that their role, first and

foremost, is as wife, mother and homekeeper. Virtue, in a good woman, is seen through how caring, tolerant and understanding she is.

Re-emergent nationalist currents also have a tendency to see women as mere machines with which babies can be produced 'for the nation'.

The danger lies in the fact that many women may accept this retreat. Why? Surely women in Eastern Europe will automatically demand the defence of the real social gains of these previously post-capitalist states? Not necessarily.

To understand why, means looking beyond the surface 'emancipatory' rhetoric of the old Stalinist regimes.

Without doubt, it is true that there were progressive gains for women in Eastern Europe made, albeit, imposed via bureaucratic diktat. Legislation provided free abortion, virtually on demand in the first three months of pregnancy. Women were positively encouraged to gain 'economic independence' by having full-time jobs.

State-run creches and nurseries were provided in varying degrees throughout Eastern Europe. Even positive discrimination for women in train-

ing opportunities was taken for granted by both women and men in the GDR, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Today many of these gains are under massive attack. Creches and nurseries are unprofitable. Large sectors of female labour are considered uneconomic, hence the huge numbers of women that are now joining the growing army of unemployed.

So why aren't working class women visibly demonstrating mass resistance to these attacks? In part, this may be a result of the mass rejection of Stalinist ideology, since official Stalinist rhetoric committed itself to women's emancipation.

But the fundamental material (and ideological) contradiction of the old system was that women were defined as both workers and mothers, without any corresponding definition of the role of men.

Therefore women faced a double burden, enshrined in legislation, where not only were they expected to be model waged-workers as well as to raise families and be domestic workers. Surveys showed that women in Eastern Europe were responsible for some 75 per cent of domestic labour.

Indeed many women also



faced a triple burden, as many were also expected to play some role in social and political work. Not surprisingly, many women did not feel the slightest bit 'emancipated'. On the contrary, they felt positively overstretched.

Whilst women were active at all levels of the dissident movements prior to the 1989 upheavals, and were present in large numbers on the 1989/90 pro-democracy demonstrations, they have subsequently been marginalised from political activity.

With very few exceptions, the former dissidents who make up the new transitional governments are men. In the new parliaments, women, on average, make up about 9 per cent of deputies. Even in the former regimes there were some 33 per cent women deputies. Of course in both

regimes, power does not rest with parliament.

At present few women are mobilising in support of their rights. But a number of independent women's organisations have sprung up in Eastern Europe, though these are small and politically very diverse. Feminism, like socialism, is far from popular in the eyes of the masses.

The idea of independent women's organisation has been discredited by the old-style official women's movements, controlled by the bureaucracy. In reality these were just extensions of the state with a pretended autonomy.

Nevertheless, in the immediate aftermath of the events of 1989, there were signs that a strong independent women's movement could develop.

In the GDR the women's magazine, *Fur Dich*, which had been close to the official women's movement, became far more radical post-1989. It supported the newly emerging independent women's movement, and was vocal in demanding both the defence and extension of women's rights.

This came to an abrupt end after the publisher was taken over by a West German company in association with that well-known defender of women's rights, Robert Maxwell. *Fur Dich* was closed down in June this year.

In Poland after the draft of the Unborn Child Protection Bill was discussed in parliament in April/May 1989, there were huge demonstrations in Warsaw, Poznan and Bydgoszcz.

Many independent women's organisations arose during this period - the Polish Feminist Association, Democratic Union of Women, Pro Femina, Women's Self-Defence Movement. But while opinion polls showed a majority of Polish people opposed to the Bill, active mobilisation rapidly declined.

This passivity is a real problem. It reflects the thorough demoralisation that exists among a big section of the East European working class, particularly women.

Challenging both the attacks against women's rights and the ideology of 'motherhood' that is gaining ground in Eastern Europe, is a vital task of socialists everywhere.

This task is made all the more difficult by the absence of a strong socialist feminist movement in Western Europe. Men in the West as well as the East have as much responsibility to take these issues up as women do. This experience shows again that there can be no socialism without feminism, and no feminism without socialism.

## El Salvador Is liberation struggle facing defeat?

By Tony Franklin

In late September, negotiators from the El Salvador right-wing government, and from the rebels of the FMLN, agreed the basis for ending the country's 12-year old civil war.

The talks were on the highest level which have occurred so far. Although they did not meet directly, both FMLN leader Jaime Villalobos, and president of the ARENA party government Christiani were there.

The talks were held directly at the initiative of UN secretary general Perez de Cuellar.

The outcome of the talks is a wide-ranging agreement for a demilitarisation of the conflict, and its transformation into a political struggle, in the framework of a democratic constitution.

Virtually all political forces in El Salvador welcomed the agreement, from the FMLN to the debonair psychopath leader of the death squads, ARENA 'president for life', Roberto D'Aubisson.

The agreement provides for:-

- A reduction of the size of El Salvador's military forces, and a

new admissions and training policy to be worked out. A commission to investigate human rights abuses by the army.

- A permanent national consultative body, including government, labour and bosses' organisations, on economic issues.

- Private peasants to be allowed to till state-owned lands, and the government to respect peasant occupancy of land in guerrilla-controlled areas until the courts decide rightful ownership.

- The establishment of a national commission for the consolidation of peace, with representatives from all sides.

In the framework of this agreement, the FMLN would be disbanded, and transformed into a purely political, and not military, force. Former guerrillas would not be eligible to join the army, but could be admitted into the national police force.

The agreement includes important concessions from the government side. But the FMLN have been waging a revolutionary struggle for the past 12 years. Have they really achieved that much if this agreement is accepted? This is a

highly controversial question on the left internationally.

No agreement has been finalised. This is just the basis for a possible agreement.

But FMLN fighters have been systematically prepared by their leadership for reintegration into civilian life. The end of the war is certainly coming.

Originally the FMLN set out bold socialist aims. But after violent struggles in the FMLN leadership, in 1984 they adopted a programme for a 'government of broad participation' which would integrate the FMLN and Salvador army into a single force.

No such proposal is on the table now. Although a purging of officers responsible for crimes is a possibility, the army would remain intact, but the FMLN fighters would disband.

The FMLN faces huge difficulties in its fight with the death-squad government. Internationally it is isolated, especially with the events in the Soviet Union, and the defeat of the Sandinistas. The people above all want peace. This exerts a huge



Salvador army on terror campaign

pressure.

But with the army intact and the FMLN disbanded, there is no guarantee against the return of the rule of the oligarchy and the death squads.

Proponents of the agreement argue that the FMLN is winning as much as can be won, and that a strategic retreat is inevitable; thus revolutionary struggle has now to be waged by other means. But the danger is that the FMLN will become a social democratic, reformist, force.

Nobody can doubt the enormous difficulties which the FMLN face, or the courage with which they have waged their war. But unilaterally disarming their forces could open up huge dangers.

The Salvadorean revolution is on the verge of defeat. The fact that it is negotiated defeat cannot hide the reality. It is not, as the US radical paper *The Guardian* claims, 'one for our side'. It is one for their side, the victory of counter-revolution.



PHOTO: Jeremy Nicholl/KATZ

Muscovites didn't fight the coup for the elite to fill their pockets



Raisa Gorbachev

# From Soviet bureaucrats to capitalist elite

by Fred Weir

ZHUKOVKA, USSR – If you thought perestroika was a real revolution, take a closer look at the faces. Who, exactly, are the insurgents pounding on the gates?

Common wisdom has it that the onset of market relations has created terror among the old Soviet ruling elite. Looking at it close up, you might expect to see some serious turmoil and massive personnel turnover at the top.

If you thought so, you might be wrong. Despite some celebrated exceptions, the shift to market relations in the USSR has not been accompanied by waves of formerly suppressed 'entrepreneurs' moving into positions of economic power or political influence.

Rather, the illusion of social upheaval has been largely generated by a frantic changing of labels, burning of party cards, re-orientation of priorities, sanitising of personal histories and privatisation of administrative power on a huge scale within the old

nomenklatura elite itself.

Probably the best place to test this observation is right here in Zhukovka. The list of residents in this sprawling dacha village, barely 30 kilometres from the heart of Moscow, reads like a who's who of the old nomenklatura. If any genuine social revolution is taking place, where else would you feel its reverberations if not in this citadel of old-fashioned Soviet privilege?

At the centre of Zhukovka is a complex run by the Soviet Council of Ministers, comprising dozens of lovely country homes occupied by the currently-powerful.

In several areas around this compound are private dachas ranging in grandeur from the humble rented cottage of television star Vladimir Posner to considerably more imposing homes constructed by luminaries of the old elite, such as artist Ilya Glazunov, musician Dimitri Shostakovich and Sergo Mikoyan, scion of the old CPSU family.

The place is a real village, in more senses than one.

Everybody rubs shoulders. A handsome two-storied brick villa presented by Stalin to physicist Andrei Sakharov sits on the same shady lane, just a few doors down from a somewhat more garish one owned by former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's daughter, Galina, and her currently-imprisoned husband Yuri Churbanov.

Former New York Times correspondent Hedrick Smith wrote a long, and mostly accurate description of Zhukovka in his 1976 book, *The Russians*.

His central remark about the place was that, had you stood by the village store any morning in the early 1970s, you would eventually have seen 'everybody' go by. Brezhnev, Kosygin and other top leaders would have raced past in their limousines headed for Moscow. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, then staying at the villa of the musician Rostropovich, would have come by for groceries, as would Stalin's retired henchman, Vyacheslav Molotov. And so on.

Little has outwardly changed in 20 years. Most of the same people, or their children, still occupy the same dachas. One tiny and recent adjustment is that instead of official black Volga and Chaika limousines on Friday evenings, these days most of the denizens deliver themselves in private cars.

Big cars bearing the distinctive yellow number plates of US, German and Japanese business people pass routinely through the whirring electronic gates of the Council of Ministers complex. Perhaps they are sizing up dachas they soon expect to be permitted to buy, or maybe they are closing business deals with the inhabitants.

In any case, they are the only kind of outside invader to threaten the serenity, security and self-assurance of the old elite in their summer quarters. One Sunday in August I was

walking on Zhukovka's main road when a brand-new white Volvo came streaking by, then screeched to a halt. Out got an old friend, Andrei, who was until recently a career functionary for the Young Communist League. Today, he says, he is an executive with a British-Soviet joint business venture, and doing very well. He invited me to a party at the dacha of some friends up the road.

There too was another old acquaintance, Volodya, grandson of the late CPSU ideologist Mikhail Suslov. The last time I'd seen Volodya he was an official at the party newspaper, Pravda. These days, he tells me, he works for a commercial bank.

Seated to my left I found Dima, son of Andrei Sakharov by his first marriage (yes, believe it or not, they all seem to be good friends). Dima gave me his card. It reads: 'Dimitri A. Sakharov, US-Soviet trade consultants'. So he's some kind of capitalist too.

The only awkward moment in the conversation came when Andrei jokingly asked me if I was still a communist. Consternation all round when I answered 'yes'.

## Warm and witty

Don't get me wrong. These are generous, intelligent, cultured, witty, warm and charming people who would fit easily into any North American upper class garden party. That's precisely my point.

As the children of the old elite they are the best-educated, most widely travelled, best-connected, most self-confident representatives of their society. The transformation from nomenklatura to corporate elite looks like a perfectly natural, long-overdue process to them. And, to all appearances, it's going swimmingly, with a minimum of teeth-gnashing and soul-searching.

To judge by the conversation, absolutely no one is nomenklatura any more. The nomenklatura system has evaporated like a mist, leaving the old elite virtually intact and free to act in their own individual interests.

Well, hold on, maybe Gorbachev, whose dacha is just beyond the next village, is still nomenklatura. But you won't find anyone like that in Zhukovka any more: nobody in here but us biz-nis-myen.

Foreign business people who

come over here hoping to invest profitably could do with a lot less confusion on this point. They often appear to be looking for Soviet partners who correspond to the noble, untainted entrepreneurial type – like the heroes of those elevating ideological fables you always find between the covers of Reader's Digest. Hence they scan the ranks of political prisoners drifting back from Siberia, or search for budding young Henry Fords among the swarming street hustlers. And they come to grief.

## Reader's Digest

In July Reader's Digest launched its Russian language edition in Moscow. It had taken the company's executives less than a year, an incredibly short time, to come over to the Soviet Union, recognise their own kind, and cut a deal.

Reader's Digest parachuted in just one employee of its own, Konstantin Galskoy, a former researcher at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, to oversee the whole Soviet operation.

No danger that all those nomenklatura chefs will spoil the purity of the magazine's traditional broth, however. The first Russian edition of Reader's Digest carries a profile of Norman Schwarzkopf, hero of Operation Desert Storm, an article about the retiring US ambassador to Moscow, a right-wing polemic entitled 'Myths about the American homeless' and a story about the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl.

I trust I haven't digressed. The point is, no insurgents are banging at the gates in Zhukovka or any other bastion of the old elite. Vast changes are taking place, but few of them are likely to alter the social hierarchy.

If anything life in Zhukovka, freed from communist hypocrisies about concealing and moderating privilege, is growing more visibly prosperous by the day. Along the shaded laneways, new Mercedes, Saabs and Audis glint in driveways. Someone is erecting a satellite dish. There is a distinct whiff of charcoal in the air.

Meanwhile, 20 minutes drive away in downtown Moscow, queues for everything keep getting longer and meaner. Ordinary Soviets, jostling for their daily cabbage, appear to have less say about where it's all going than they ever did.

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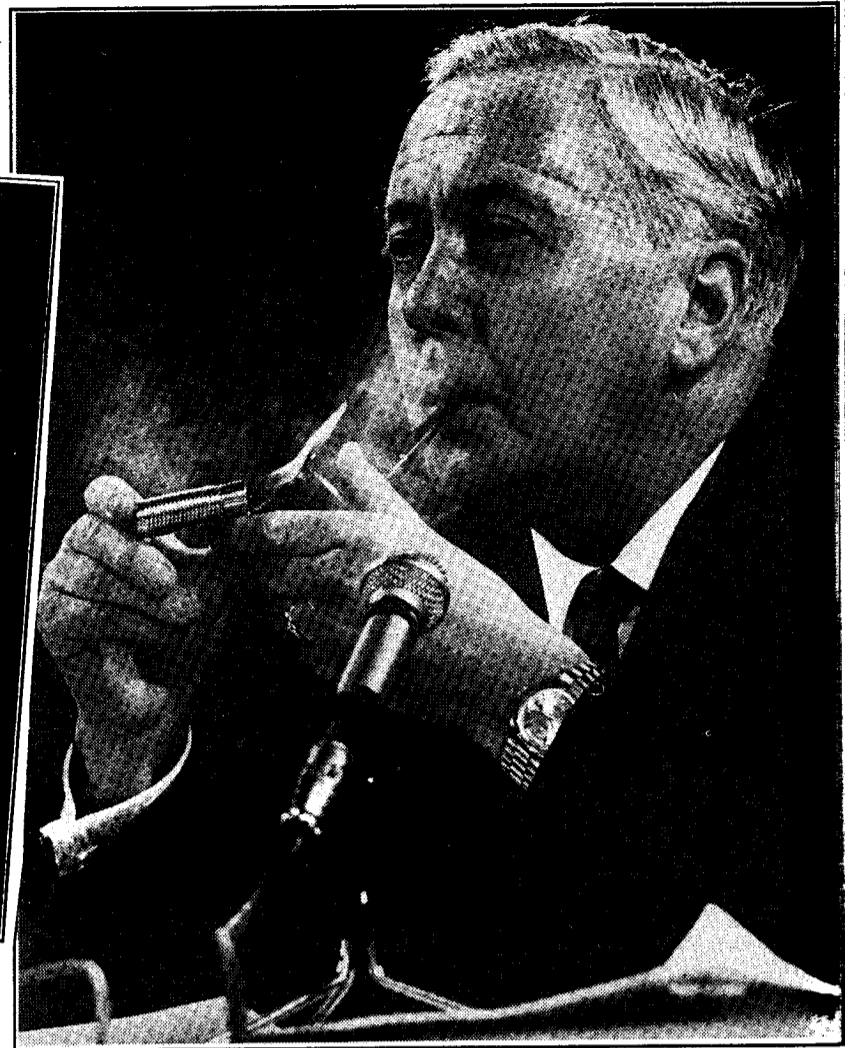
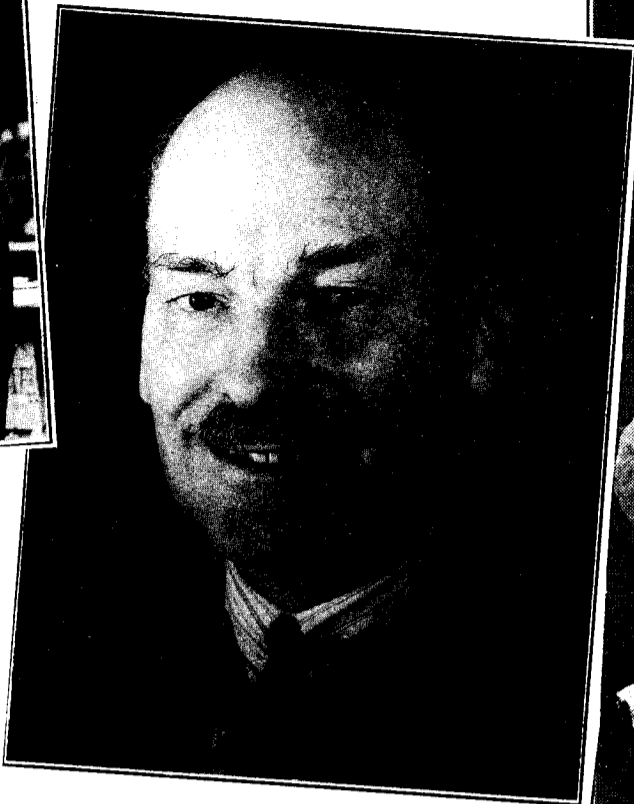
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The rogue's gallery: a continuity of class collaboration from Ramsay MacDonald (above) through Clement Attlee (right) to Harold Wilson (far right).



## Labour's eight decades of Kinnocks

# Elected by workers, working for the bosses!

AS THE LABOUR leadership plans to fight the next election on the most right wing Labour platform for decades, HARRY SLOAN looks at the track record of British social democracy in government. MANY on the left feel not only bitter but *betrayed* by Neil Kinnock's demolition of the radical policies fought for and won at Labour Conferences in the 1980s.

In many cases the disillusionment with the present Labour leadership arises from the mistaken belief that the Labour Party could be transformed into a genuine workers' party on a socialist programme.

This idea is often linked to the illusion – promoted by the old Communist Party, and even by Militant's call for an Enabling Act – that socialism can be achieved in Britain through parliamentary measures, using the existing (capitalist) state machinery to legislate

away the power of capital.

These were always illusions. If anything, by renouncing any policy that even hints at a challenge to the legitimacy of capitalism, Kinnock's team are returning Labour to the *real*, right wing traditions of British social democracy. It has been the periodic bouts of 'leftism' – primarily during spells in opposition – that have been the exceptions in Labour's history: class collaboration and right wing policies have been the general rule.

### Bourgeois

Marxists have always shared Lenin's characterisation of Labour as a 'bourgeois workers' party' – one tied hand and foot to capitalism and its state, but linked to the unions and resting upon working class support. We call for a Labour vote *despite*, not because of the various policies, programmes and manifestoes it has published, *none* of which has ever called for working class action let alone mapped out a perspective of socialism.

There *never* was any 'golden age' in which Labour leaders spoke out as working class militants or put forward a socialist programme. Nor could there have been. The Party began life in the early 1900s as the political offspring of the far-from-radical trade union bureaucrats, themselves not socialists but on the rebound from their traditional alliance with the Liberal Party.

Though the formation of a Labour Party organisationally and politically independent of the capitalist parties represented a historic stride forward for the British working class (one which workers in the USA have yet to make), the development was restricted. The new Party took on in parliament the traditional trade union reformist goal of seeking to improve workers' lot within the capitalist system.

Since then Britain has had a succession of Labour governments. Each time the basic policy framework has been the same – an attempt to manage (or 'plan') capitalism better than the capitalists, backed by a readiness to repress the workers when their militancy gets in the way.

Labour's problem is that no matter how servile may be its leaders' behaviour and commitment to capitalism, the Party's base of working class support and its links with the unions mean that it is always potentially under pressure – and therefore regarded by the employers as less reliable than their own political party – the Tories.

### Turning points

Many of the watershed dates and events in Labour's history that stick in the mind concern major betrayals under economic pressure. Having rejected any socialist solution to the capitalist crisis, Labour leaders wind up taking responsibility for restoring viability.

1931: It was Prime Minister Ramsay

MacDonald's failure to persuade his cabinet to impose huge spending cuts to placate the City which led him to form a coalition with the Tories and Liberals. In the ensuing general election Labour was decimated – falling from 289 to 52 seats, and remained marginalised throughout much of the 1930s.

1951: The post-war Labour government's decision to respond to economic problems by imposing charges for spectacles and false teeth – undermining the principle that the new NHS should be free at point of use – triggered the resignations of Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson. But it also helped ensure the defeat of Attlee's party in the General Election, ushering in the Tories for their notorious '13 years of misrule'.

1966: Harold Wilson's pay freeze ran alongside his witch-hunting and state scabbing on the Seafarers' strike. The 1967 devaluation of the pound and Wilson's attempt to cover up the impact it would have on workers' living standards ("The pound in your pocket has not been devalued") helped undermine Labour's support in the working class even before the attempt at anti-union legislation in 1969.

1976: When Labour's Chancellor Denis Healey returned from the International Monetary Fund to unveil a swingeing package of public spending cuts and compulsory wage controls, he set the scene for the subsequent parliamentary pact with the Liberals, and for the 'Winter of Discontent' of 1978-79 which saw a Labour government in pitched battle with section after section of trade unionists, opening the door for Thatcher.

### The economy, or the workers?

It was nothing new when Neil Kinnock boasted at the 1985 Bournemouth conference that Labour was "the party of production". He insisted that:





"We've got to have a government that like the government of Japan, of Germany, of Sweden, of France, of Italy, puts the real interests of its country first".

This approach follows on a long, undistinguished history of Labour leaders struggling to run the capitalist economy.

The economic policies of the 1945-51 Attlee government were strongly shaped by Labour's involvement in the wartime coalition government, in which TGWU leader Ernest Bevin as Minister of Labour spearheaded the strikebreaking and speed-up offensive in industry.

After 1945 the wartime Joint Production Committees – in which unions collaborated with employers to maximise output – continued, as did the brutal 1927 anti-union laws, passed in the aftermath of the General Strike, which remained in force until broken by mass unofficial action on London docks.

The Labour government used its massive 100-seat election victory as a mandate not to sweep away but to reconstruct British capitalism. The profitable manufacturing and engineering industries were left secure in private hands, as were the banks (other than the Bank of England) and finance houses. Only the most bankrupt sectors and infrastructure industries – notably coal, rail and electricity – were nationalised, paying lavish compensation to the old owners while many of the existing managers remained in control.

Just as government cash was the only way to prop up these industries, so the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948 – arguably Labour's most radical reform ever – bailed out hundreds of bankrupt charity-funded hospitals which faced ruin.

### White Heat

When Labour eventually returned to office under Wilson in 1964, it pledged to reforge the (capitalist) economy in 'the white heat of the technological revolution', its radicalism was equally limited.

It took the form of nationalising the ailing steel industry and attempting to 'plan' capitalism, with the establishment of a new Department of Economic Affairs as a counterweight to the Treasury, and the drawing up of a National Plan.

However the 'plan' got little further than establishing an Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, which helped sponsor mergers between big firms, resulting in giant job-slashing combines such as GEC, British Leyland and ICL. The attempt to rope unions into a common strategy with employers ran swiftly into trouble as Labour tried to impose a 3 percent limit on pay increases.

The final years of Wilson's first period in government saw workers seeking their own answers to low pay and poor conditions, through a massive escalation of official and unofficial strikes.

The response from Wilson and Minister of Labour Barbara Castle was to draw up draconian anti-union measures in the misnamed *White Paper In Place of Strife*. It was withdrawn after massive unofficial stoppages in 1969, but by that point Labour in office had once again undermined its own support sufficiently to allow Ted Heath's Tories to creep up from behind and win a surprise election victory in 1970.

### Radical manifesto

By the time Wilson came back to Downing Street in the midst of the miners' strike in February 1974, the preceding Labour Conference had adopted a range of radical left wing policies, including substantial calls for nationalisation. Few of these saw the light of day.

Once again Labour's approach was to attempt to 'plan' an expansion of capitalism, this time through the negotiation of "planning agreements" with private employers rather than nationalising them, and setting up a National Enterprise Board with powers to nationalise or nationalise firms.

... desperate approach



Labour's platform 1991 has the familiar ring of Wilson's 'Let's go with Labour!' in the 1960s

were the failed "planning agreement" with US car firm Chrysler which collapsed with thousands of redundancies; the Ryder Report and state takeover of much of British Leyland – also followed up by the massacre of dozens of BL plants and thousands of jobs; and the fiasco of the De Lorean sports car plant in the north of Ireland. The struggling shipbuilding and aerospace industries were nationalised.

On the trade union front, Wilson inherited Heath's Industrial Relations Act – which was only repealed under the threat of a national engineering strike, and the third phase of Heath's pay laws, which despite concessions to the miners was upheld against a bitter struggle by health workers.

The early, honeymoon period of class collaboration saw the arrival of the Social Contract in which TUC bureaucrats decided that their members should make sacrifices in exchange for the promise of reforms. This was swiftly followed not by reforms but by outright wage controls, triggering a prolonged national strike by firefighters in which Labour (unsuccessfully) called out the troops as scabs.

By 1978 the unbroken militancy of the working class resistance led Prime Minister Callaghan to demand a TUC agreement to limit picketing and curb the effectiveness of strikes in the public sector.

When Kinnock now proclaims his refusal to repeal Tory anti-union laws and his commitment to make reforms wait for the hoped-for economic growth he is merely following a well-worn path to failure.

### Foreign Policy

Though the left watched aghast as Kinnock's team vied with the Tories to be most hawk-like on the Gulf War, we should remember that from the very outset Labour has always been a party committed to British imperialism, acting in wartime as the recruiting sergeants of the capitalist class.

Under Wilson, Labour ministers in government insisted in 1968 that the Falklands had to remain British. In opposition 14 years later, Michael Foot's team were quite consistent in obligingly backing Thatcher's colonial war.

Labour in office has shown its readiness to support not just its 'own' capitalists, but also the general cause of world imperialism. The Attlee government sent troops to back the USA's bloody intervention against North Korea in 1950, while Wilson from 1964 defied growing protests in Britain to give political support to Lyndon Johnson's brutal Vietnam war effort.

Britain under Labour has also proved a crucial adjunct in US global strategy, with Bevin as Foreign Secretary playing a key role in the formation of the Cold War NATO alliance in the late 1940s, and assisting similar reactionary alliances world-wide.

And while allowing India and Pakistan independence, Labour leaders bat-

tled tooth and nail to defend the rest of the British empire against colonial liberation struggles. This tradition was continued under Wilson, with Denis Healey clinging doggedly to the continuation of British bases 'East of Suez', and British troops fighting bloody wars to repress guerrilla forces in Africa and Asia.

As Kinnock turns his back decisively on unilateralism, it is worth remembering that it was a Labour government that developed the first British nuclear bombs, and that this policy continued – despite huge rank and file opposition – under Wilson and Callaghan.

Kinnock's team is now seeking to outstrip the Tories by emerging as the leading British mouthpiece of the European capitalist class, arguing for ever-greater integration: but here too they are following a familiar path. The first (unsuccessful) initiatives towards Common Market entry came from Labour's Harold Wilson in the late 1960s.

Once the Heath government had negotiated entry to the EEC, the returning Wilson set out to legitimise this, flying in the teeth of bitter opposition from the PLP, Party Conference and the constituencies.

In 1975, Wilson called a referendum, in which he and the Labour right wing joined with Heath's Tories and the Liberals to wage a campaign for a 'yes' vote, backed by big business and using government funds.

### Respect for the state

A symptom of Labour's lack of radicalism in office is its failure, despite six election wins since the war, even to alter the key power structures of the British state.

The House of Lords has remained intact; the monarchy survives unquestioned and untaxed; the judiciary is just as reactionary and unaccountable as ever, while the secret services have run rampant under Labour governments, secure in the knowledge that they were safe from scrutiny or challenge. New immigration laws have buttressed state racism with much greater effect than the tokenistic Race Relations Act.

The 1974-79 Labour government created and used the brutal picket-busting Special Patrol Group and presided over blatant police cover-ups, including the police murder of anti-fascist demonstrator Blair Peach.

Having been the first to send British troops into the six counties of northern Ireland in 1969, Labour was also the most ruthless in the repression of Irish prisoners – triggering the 'H'-block blanket protests and hunger strikes by withdrawing political status from



Callaghan: the Labour PM who never won an election

republican prisoners. It was the incoming 1974 Wilson government that steam-rolled the vicious Prevention of Terrorism Act through parliament, effectively making it a crime to be Irish in Britain.

### No illusions

It is clear that in eight decades, British social democracy has learned nothing and forgotten nothing in their dismal repertoire of class collaboration.

So why do we call for a Labour vote? Because despite Kinnock's policies and intentions, the very fact of ousting the Tory government would create better conditions for a revival of working class militancy and activity.

The tension that will develop between the government and its working class supporters contains a positive dynamic that can break down the demoralisation and apathy that has gripped much of the labour movement during twelve years of Thatcherism and almost unbroken defeats.

One example shows the difference. Should the Tories return to office for a fourth term, they have pledged draconian new anti-union laws that could all but extinguish shop floor organisation; if Kinnock takes office there will be a battle – but it will be over how much existing Tory legislation should be repealed.

It is clear that workers will have to fight hard against an incoming Labour government, to resist many of its reactionary policies; but the fightback will be on more favourable ground, strengthened by the anger of workers whose illusions in social democracy lead them to expect real reforms and concessions from Kinnock.

Socialists must spell out and popularise a programme of policies and demands that build on the progressive aspirations of the working class on living standards and democratic rights, and lead towards the necessity for a socialist solution to the economic and social crisis of capitalism.

# Trotsky Still dangerous after all these years

by Ben Wolff

EUROPE is awash with racism and reactionary nationalism. Nothing could be a bigger indictment of the failure of the 'official' labour movement - of the social democratic and Stalinist parties. The collapse of the Stalinist system in the east combines with the chronic failure of the social democratic parties to offer the prospect of radical change during the last 20 years.

Social democratic governments, like those of Mitterrand in France and Gonzalez in Spain, have provided nothing but austerity and slavish support for the priorities of the market.

The international political

scene is profoundly affected by this failure of the dominant trends in the labour movement. The space has been opened up for a reactionary offensive claiming socialism is 'dead'.

For millions of people worldwide this offensive has credibility because of the experience of Stalinism and social democracy, forces which became profoundly reactionary and conservative.

In many countries there is much discussion on the left of the necessity for a 'refoundation' of socialism. In Italy, because of the right-wing collapse of the once-powerful Italian Communist Party, a new party of 'communist' refoundation will be formed this autumn.

Marxists should not be afraid of the idea of a refoundation of socialism. A renovation of what



PHOTO: David King collection

No, nothing to do with Ted Grant! Trotsky is reading the US Militant in the 1930s

has passed for socialism for the last hundred years is vital.

## Democracy

But the events in eastern Europe are graphically showing what is *not* the answer - the capitalist market plus liberal democracy. A good example is contemporary Poland, where the market and liberal democracy have led to authoritarianism and economic collapse.

Socialism needs an alternative framework that shows how anti-capitalism and the idea of a socialised economy can be combined with democracy.

The international workers movement needs an alternative vision of a movement that can wipe out capitalism without imposing the rule of the tanks and secret police.

Any such project will inevitably confront the ideas of Leon Trotsky. It is no accident, for example, that Joe Slovo and other leaders of the South African Communist Party are forced into grappling with Trotsky in discussing 'what went wrong' in the Soviet Union.

This is not just an historical question, a question of the fact that Trotsky led the fight against the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union. It is a matter of the political content of that fight and its contemporary relevance.

In fact Trotsky analysed the contradictions of the bureaucratic command economy, and predicted its crisis and collapse in a way which makes uncanny reading after what has happened in the Soviet Union. Key to Trotsky's analysis was a refusal to separate 'economics' from 'politics'.

He insisted that a socialised economy could only work, could only ensure high quality production, if it was under the democratic control of the workers, and harnessed their creative endeavours. By contrast, he insisted, a bureaucratic economy could only result, eventually, in stagnation and collapse.

Trotsky's solution - a socialised economy plus democratic workers control - is the only viable solution against the twin evils of the bureaucratic command economy and the capitalist market. Which is why all debates about 'feasible' socialism must eventually confront Trotsky's ideas.

## Internationalism

Opponents of Trotskyism

generally put the persistence of organised support for Trotsky's basic ideas down to the dynamics of quasi-religious sects. This kind of flip response fails to get to the heart of the matter; it is a way of avoiding dealing with Trotsky's global vision of the nature of socialism and the struggle for it.

It also evades the fact that historically it was the trotskyst tradition which predicted the inevitable collapse of the Stalinist system - a view treated with derision by many left-wingers for decades.

Trotsky argued that the situation in each country was 'an uneven crystallisation of the elements of the world process'. The world could not be understood as the sum of different national situations, but was dominated by the developments of world capitalism and the international class struggle.

This understanding underpinned Trotsky's internationalism. In a world of rapidly advancing international integration of capitalism, with economies dominated by transnational corporations, the need for the international organisation of the workers movement and especially of its revolutionary component is vital.

## Permanent Revolution

No idea of Trotsky's has been more controversial than that of permanent revolution. It is a simple idea. In the jargon it says that 'the national and democratic tasks of the revolution cannot be solved outside of the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Put plainly, it says that in the semi-colonial and dominated countries the way forward to industrialisation can only be opened up by a radical break with imperialism and the domination of the world economy.

The third world is littered with countries thrown into poverty, misery and despair. In the post-war world dozens of bourgeois nationalist governments have taken power with promises of modernisation and progress. Almost invariably they fail, generally declining into corrupt dictatorship.

Permanent revolution points out the necessity for the working class to seize the leadership of national and democratic struggles in the third world, and the fatal consequences of any 'stages' theory - the notion that the struggle for socialism should be abandoned until after

national liberation, inevitably leading to the subordination of workers struggle to bourgeois-nationalist forces, with disastrous consequences.

## Workers' power

Trotsky's writings, especially those of the 1930s, are a vast storehouse of theorisation of the struggle for workers' power. His writings cover the character of the capitalist state and the transition to socialism; the nature of fascism, bonapartism and military dictatorship; the methods for constructing a revolutionary workers' party; the revolutionary programme; working class independence; women's liberation and the struggles of youth; and the fight for the workers' united front.

Focusing all these writings is the idea of leadership, the necessity to renovate the labour movement from top to bottom. Time and again Trotsky returns to the disparity between the objective strength of the labour movement and the working class, and its capacity to reorganise society on socialist lines, and the political weakness of its organisations - dominated by a class collaborationist bureaucracy.

He rejects any notion that this is a problem which will be spontaneously overcome simply by 'struggle'. On the contrary, the renewal of the labour movement is a fight which has to be consciously prepared and organised through a struggle inside the mass organisations and movements of the working class for the programme of workers' power.

Contrary to what is commonly alleged, Trotsky loathed sectarianism or ultra-left impatience. While he was organising the Fourth International he repeatedly insisted that his supporters reject attempts to go outside the existing labour movement, or be satisfied with making 'revolutionary' propaganda, a lesson which many latter-day sympathisers have ignored.

There are vital elements of socialism today which cannot be simply found in Trotsky's work - in particular the centrality of struggles for women's liberation and in defence of ecology. But the political framework for a successful struggle for these goals - the fight for worker's power - directly connects with Trotsky's legacy. If socialism is to be 'refounded' - reorganised and strengthened - the ideas of Leon Trotsky will be a crucial aspect of that process.

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**"The new state was based on the expulsion of the Palestinians... Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were now in refugee camps..."**

By Paul Clarke

ONLY a small minority of the world's Jewish population lives in Israel. There are many Jews in the United States; probably as many in New York as in Israel itself. As a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism, Israel is no solution.

The roots of today's conflict over Palestine lie in the wave of anti-Semitism which swept eastern Europe in the last part of the 19th century. The founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, wrote his book *The Jewish State* in 1896. At that time the idea that a Jewish state would solve anti-Semitism was fiercely contested in the world's Jewish population; many Jews in Eastern Europe adhered to the mass socialist movement.

Until the end of the first world war, Palestine was part of the Ottoman empire. After the war, it became a British protectorate. In 1917 British Zionists managed to persuade the British government to declare in favour of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. This was summarised in the 'Balfour Declaration'.

British imperialism hoped to stabilise its grip on the area by creating a loyal, client population - as a counterweight to the Arabs and rival imperialist powers.

Until 1917 there had only been 60,000 Jews in Palestine. Between 1919 and 1923 this increased to 100,000.

### Massive campaign

Under the protection of the British and with the authority of the Balfour declaration the international Zionist movement waged a massive campaign for Jewish immigration to the Holy Land.

By 1931 the number of Jewish settlers in the *Yishuv*, the immigrant population, had risen to 117,000, or 17 per cent of the population.

Money poured into the country from wealthy backers abroad to buy land. Every effort was made to join up existing strips of *Yishuv*-controlled land, and to exclude Arab labour. Arab goods and produce were boycotted. The *Yishuv* became a self-governing and near autonomous community, relentlessly pushing back the boundaries of Arab-controlled land.

Palestinian anger at the erosion of their territory and their treatment by the British resulted in the massive uprising of 1938, brutally crushed by the British army, together with Jewish irregulars.

The shock of the Holocaust boosted support for a Jewish state. In 1947 the United Nations decided on the partition of Palestine. In 1948 Britain withdrew and immediately war broke out, which pitted the neighbouring Arab armies against the well-armed and motivated Israeli forces.

### Disappeared

The resulting Israeli victory created a new state way beyond the borders agreed by the UN. The West Bank was absorbed into Jordan. Palestine had disappeared.

Zionism had thus won its most decisive victory. The new state it created was based on the expulsion of the Palestinians, an expulsion based on terror. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were now in refugee camps, from which they have never departed.

From the first Israel was a pro-imperialist state. Its very existence gave imperialism, especially American im-



Under the Zionist gun: Palestinians on the West Bank

## Behind Middle East Conference Palestinians fight for their homeland

perialism, a decisive foothold in the region.

This became important during the 1950s, as pan-Arab nationalism began to rise. Nationalist regimes came to power throughout the Arab world, most importantly Nasser's regime in Egypt.

In 1956, Nasser decided on the nationalisation of the Suez canal, then owned jointly by France and Britain. To defeat this, Britain, France and Israel launched a joint invasion of Egypt in October of that year. World-wide protests, joined by US president Eisenhower as a means of boosting US influence in the Middle East, forced the withdrawal of the invading armies.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formed in 1964.

The PLO rapidly created its own armed detachments, the *Fedayeen*. Sections of the PLO, especially the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Democratic Front, evolved in a left-wing direction.

Tension between Israel and its neighbours, especially Nasser's Egypt, reached flashpoint in 1967. Israel launched a blitzkrieg attack in June that year, destroying the Egyptian airforce on the ground. The armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were devastated.

Israel conquered the West Bank from Jordan, and the Gaza strip and Sinai desert from Egypt. The Palestinian populations of the tiny and over-populated Gaza strip, and the West Bank, came under direct Israeli control. To this day, the occupied territories have not been returned.

### Catastrophe

Most Palestinians considered the 1967 defeat a catastrophe. This reinforced the idea that they had to rely on their own struggle to win their national rights.

But the *Fedayeen* fighters faced a major strategic problem - their reliance on bases in neighbouring Arab states controlled by reactionary regimes.

In September 1970 King Hussein of Jordan turned on the powerful PLO forces in his country, launching his army in a war to drive them out.

The PLO made its new headquarters in Lebanon, where it was allied with powerful Arab nationalist and left-wing militias.

However, in 1976 the Palestinians became once again the victims of intervention from reactionary Arab regimes. In the 1975-6 Lebanon civil war, the right-wing Maronite Christian militias were defeated by the nationalist-Palestinian-

left wing alliance.

Fearing the consequences, Syria's Hafaz Assad sent his army to occupy much of the country.

The Palestinian position in Lebanon was dealt a final blow by the Israeli invasion in 1981. Despite a courageous defence of Beirut the Palestinian fighters were forced to leave.

Thus the *fedayeen* were dispersed, and the Palestinian population in Lebanon became the victim of terrible atrocities, noticeably the horrific mas-

sacre at the refugee camps in Sabra and Chatila.

This was carried out by Maronite militias, under the supervision of the Israeli army.

In 1974, after the Arabs had been defeated in the 1973 war, the PLO leadership made a new political turn. Its historic programme - for a 'democratic, secular Palestine', in which Israeli Jews would be united with Palestinian Arabs on the basis of equality, was in practice abandoned. Arafat now fought for a 'two-state' solution, involving a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank.

It is against this idea that the Israeli policy of creating new settlements on the West Bank is aimed. The West Bank and East Jerusalem, won in 1973, have been effectively incorporated into Israel.

### Military defeat

Since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the military struggle of the Palestinians has been effectively defeated. But the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories, especially the youth, replied in the mid-1980s with the *Intifadah* - the mass civilian uprising.

The *Intifadah* put Israel on the defensive again. Its brutal suppression of the uprising gained international condemnation.

The Gulf war was a new defeat for the Palestinians. Imperialist domination of the Middle East is now much more powerful than in the 1950s. Reactionary Arab governments have more and more openly distanced themselves from the Palestinian cause.

The cause of Palestine cannot be won outside of an overturn of imperialist rule in the Arab East. That means that the national struggle of the Palestinians must be linked to the fight of Arab workers to defeat the reactionary Arab regimes, who have stabbed the Palestinian struggle in the back at every turn.

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# French workers challenge government

by Patrick Baker

'More a fitful doze than economic death' sniggered the Financial Times. And this is a fair summary of the media reaction to the French 'general strike' on October 24.

The day of action, called by two of France's three union federations, in fact saw hundreds of thousands take to the streets in protest at government austerity. But the protest was fragmented, and one of the largest union federations didn't support it.

This fragmentation was reflected in the lack of any common call for action from the two sponsors - Force Ouvriere (FO) and the Confederation Generale de Travail (CGT); and in the lack of any joint demonstration in Paris.

But any attempt to pretend that the action was not widespread and massively followed ignores the facts. Equally, any complacency on the part of Edith Cresson's administration would be foolhardy. Important struggles con-

tinued among health workers, airline workers and car workers.

Health workers, often forming the most militant contingents on demonstrations on the 24th, saw the day of action as a part of their sustained action against government health 'reforms'.

They had mobilised in their thousands just two days before, and on numerous occasions over the last five weeks. And, despite repeated government attempts to negotiate a settlement, the action continues.

The threats facing French health workers will be familiar to those working in the NHS - long hours, under-resourcing and a headlong rush for 'local control' and 'profitability'. Edith Cresson's administration, consistent with its reactionary record, is attempting to smash up France's national health system.

Health workers are responding by organising their own rank and file coordination, rather than relying on national

union representatives in talks with minister Durieux. The 'Inter-hospital collective', meeting at the same time as government representatives met with union negotiators, united hundreds of delegates from hospitals around the country.

The workers made it clear that the time had come not for negotiation or compromise, but action. Activists are now preparing for a national demonstration on November 7.

Workers at the car manufacturing giant Renault in Cleon are also stepping up their struggle. Workers are fighting to safeguard their bonuses - and for an increase in line with inflation. The Renault management have responded with a

campaign of intimidation against the strikers.

But the strike has been characterised by a very high level of rank and file participation. Mini-demonstrations of factory managers have met with derision from pickets. Workers have been sending delegation to other major plants in the area to win support - to supermarket giant Carrefour, chemicals manufacturer Rhone-Poulenc, and others. And a Womens Support Committee has been formed, organising factory and street collections to support the strikers.

These examples show that Cresson's problems are far from over. It is these struggles that provide an alternative perspective to the wave of

racism and reaction that has swept France - aided and abetted by the government's anti-immigrant policies.

But one key factor that is missing - and which diluted the effectiveness of October 24 - is trade union unity. The fact that France's labour movement is split into three, and the bureaucrats of each federation often refuse to work with each other, is a block to workers' unity.

Rank and file coordinations - like that of the health workers - provide one way of overcoming the divisions. But in the end, the bureaucrats that run the union federations must be forced to work together and unite France's labour movement.



French workers on the march

# Polish voters say no to rapid marketisation

by Bill Turner

POLAND'S FIRST 'democratic' elections saw most voters abstain, and the rest reject all parties linked to the previous government.

With only 40% of the population voting, and no party winning more than 13% of the vote, the elections have resulted in a political vacuum. No political force can claim a popular mandate.

## Communist front

But parties that called for a slow-down on privatisation plans did remarkably well. The Alliance of the Democratic Left, an electoral front for the Communist Party, got around 10%.

The elections were particularly disastrous for ex-Prime Minister Mazowiecki. His Democratic Union, the Centre Alliance and the Liberal Democrats had all been campaigning for six months or more.

Nonetheless, the three parties - which are all within the Solidarity framework, and associated with the government - only mustered 28% between them. On the other hand, parties that had opposed the 'marketisation in 500 days' policies of Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz generally did well.

Thus the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), which had few bases beyond some anti-



Walesa member of the Warsaw-based Current of the Revolutionary Left, commented 'They did well for two reasons: first, they are very anti-Balcerowicz and have been active in strikes; second, they aren't tainted by involvement in government over the last couple of years.'

Socialists had little input into the elections. Labour Solidarity, a left alliance dominated by social democrats, but supported by figures such as Josef Piniar and Karol Modzelewski, got only 2.3%. Unfortunately it was largely figures on the right of the coalition, such as Bugaj, a member of the Parliamentary Budget Committee, that stood.

## Socialist input

Some left-wingers did stand on a local level, however. In Krakow, a centre of Poland's steel industry, union leader Andrzej Szewczuwaniec challenged the right wing norm. A prominent strike leader and chairperson of Solidarity at the steelworks, Szewczuwaniec argued that an end

to privatisation and workers control was the only answer to Poland's economic crisis.

But the only real winner in the elections was President Lech Walesa. Jan Sylwestrowicz commented 'Walesa has been looking for an excuse to take over and now he's got it. It won't be difficult for him to discredit this parliament.'

Walesa has been threatening to rule by decree for some time. If the 18 parties now elected to parliament can't form a government and agree a budget inside three months - a constitutional obligation - Walesa has the perfect excuse for a 'government of national salvation', with himself as Prime Minister (and who knows what else).

## Little enthusiasm

However, some of Walesa's past supporters have shown little enthusiasm for this idea.

Sylwestrowicz argues that the left's response should be a front in defence of democratic rights.

He also points out that, in one sense at least, the elections mark a step forward for Poland's workers movement. 'At least now Walesa has lost the argument that economic and political problems were all the fault of the system.'

Whatever government is formed, they will have to take responsibility for the situation. It will be much easier to direct strikes at the government, as opposed to the fragmentation we had before.'



# Hear the latest on South Africa!

Carl Brecker, a leader of the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), is coming to Britain in November for a tour sponsored by Socialist Outlook.

WOSA is a comparatively young organisation in South Africa, but has built itself a significant base in communities and townships, especially among the youth.

Brecker's tour will be of interest to all those who want to find out more about the state of the liberation struggle, the political forces to the left of the leadership of the African National Congress. Provisional dates for the tour have been announced, venues will be announced soon. The dates are:

Southampton	11 November
Brighton	12 November
Bristol	14 November
Swansea	15 November
Leicester	17 November
Central London	18 November
Oxford	19 November
Birmingham	20 November
Manchester	21 November
Newcastle	22 November
Glasgow	24 November
Southall	28 November
Socialist Outlook rally	29 November



The March for Land and Dignity protesting against the destruction of rain forests

# Bolivian women workers strike back for union rights

by Phillip Edwards

'The domestic workers' story is the saddest of all. We don't have set hours. We are not allowed to sleep. We are always at the disposal of the patronas. We are people who shouldn't get ill, who can't rest. All for the patronas - only they are allowed to rest.'

Talking to Eduarda Soto, vice president of the Houseworkers Union of Santa Cruz, you are immediately aware of her self-confidence and ability. Only to be expected perhaps, as a leader of one of the most important unions in Santa Cruz - the major city of Bolivia's tropical regions.

Persuasive, humorous and politically adept, she has the qualities one would look for in a union leader.

Only twenty six years old, she has been working as an 'empleada' for over twenty years. She started her first job living in her employers' house, having to eat leftovers from the babies she looked after.

On arriving in Santa Cruz from the country, she couldn't read or write, but would never admit it, preferring to say she had problems with her eyes. In one job she worked for three years without pay; in others, employers would never allow her the time to study.

Yet others dismissed her without even a day's notice - a common practice, but harsh considering that the majority of domestic workers live in their employers' house. But her case is not the worst. The union has helped women who have been locked in the house and deprived of food, or subjected to violence, including stabbings and rapings. Often the remedy is to help them to escape. The legal position of

domestic workers is so weak that there is usually no alternative.

Domestic workers suffer from the classic conditions that make unionisation difficult. Their labour force is plentiful, but dispersed and isolated. Their estimated average pay is below even the disturbingly low average in the country as a whole.

There is no legal recognition of their status, and because they come from the countryside or from the highlands, they are often subjected to the racism. The cultural and historical position of the indigenous groups from whom the empleadas are taken is an important factor in their weakened status in society.

The country as a whole is overwhelmingly indian or mixed race, but dominated politically by a small, mainly

white, middle class. Added to this, there has been a drift from the country to the town, and migration from the drought affected areas. Conditions which Bolivian friends of mine described as a form of apartheid are allowed to flourish.

Nevertheless, Santa Cruz continues to act like a magnet and there is a surplus of women looking for work in childcare, cooking or housework. Finding

work is yet another attack on their dignity. Every morning you can find a street or occasionally, agencies where women have to line up and wait to be chosen 'like animals in a pet market'.

It's also a world of dashed expectations, as young women qualified to enter university are forced through lack of other work and the need for somewhere to live, to take jobs as empleadas.

Given these conditions, it is not surprising that the union exists largely due to the support of a literacy teaching programme run by the IRFA, a Catholic aid programme, and a community radio station - radio Santa Cruz.

Miriam Suarez, a presenter of a women's programme on the radio, has dedicated much of her spare time to the formation of the union. She told me of the

the first major battles for an eight hour day, the empleadas are striving to have them reduced from a norm of sixteen hours.

They are demanding social security and health benefits, and in recognition of their special cultural position, an education centre and a revaluation of their cultural heritage in the light of the hostility that they continually face.

In pushing for these, they have recognised their weakness in the labour market, putting great emphasis on education campaigns, and trying to influence the government directly to introduce regulating legislation.

They face an uphill battle. Since 1985 governments have rigorously followed a neo-liberal monetary policy, and are little inclined to introduce new laws in this field. More fundamentally, there is a general blindness to the empleadas themselves.

For many of them, they want the union to restore their dignity, and in a phrase repeated by nearly all the women, to help them 'be recognised as human beings'.

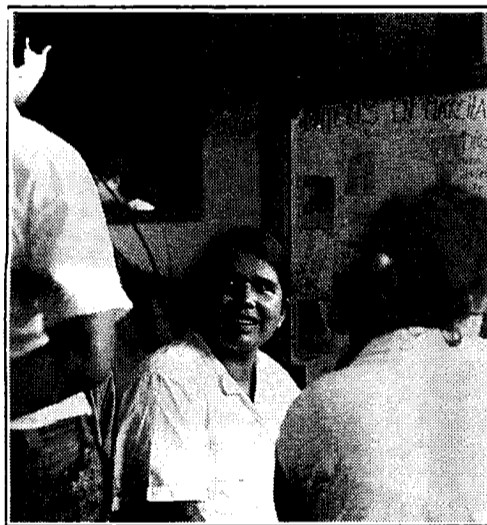
This blindness extends into the conventional labour market. The regional trade union organisation takes little interest, and although there has at last been a recognition of the Houseworkers' Union, this recognition is 'worth more on paper than in practice'.

There is no mistaking the bitterness when the unionised empleadas talk about the lack of support they receive from male colleagues. After attending the early meetings of the union, the local labour representative lost interest.

'They are always talking in



Demonstrating during a two-day strike last January



House workers' union leader Eduarda Soto

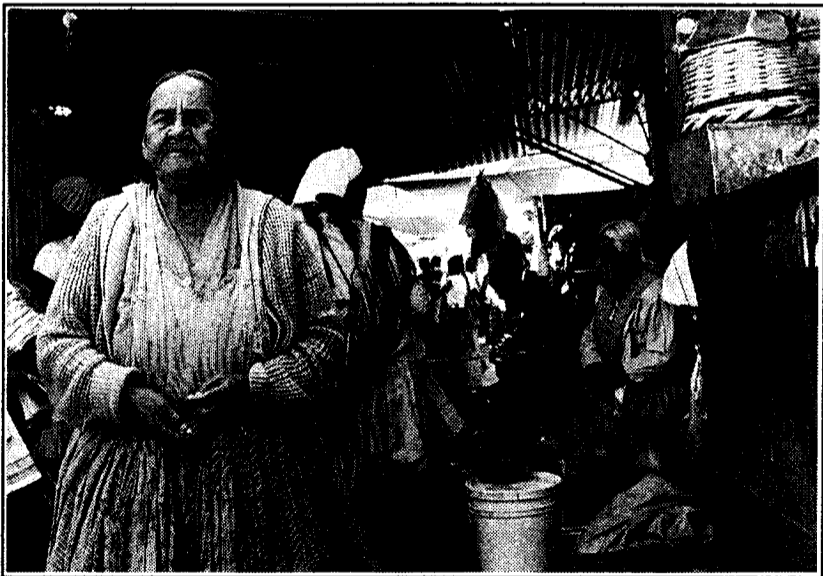
the name of the workers, but never mention us women. They haven't got the right to talk in the name of the workers. What are we then? And we are the great majority of the labour sector in Santa Cruz,' said Miriam Suarez.

These are sentiments that many European women might recognise, but in Bolivia women workers face not only a traditional hostility to their organisations, but an economic climate that has devastated the labour market and weakened even the strongest unions.

Add to this a strong regionalism which is hampering cooperation with similar regional organisations and it would be easy to be pessimistic about the future of such a union. There is, however, a great difference in the nature and style of this type of trade unionism.

It is giving the empleadas a respect and authority which society has denied them. Even without economic concessions, these are substantial gains, that will sustain them until they gain some legal recognition.

A change in social attitudes is one of the preconditions for future advances. Due to the work of the union and the example of women like Eduarda Soto, this has already started to happen.



Women workers in Cocha Bamba

white, middle class. Added to this, there has been a drift from the country to the town, and migration from the drought affected areas. Conditions which Bolivian friends of mine described as a form of apartheid are allowed to flourish.

Nevertheless, Santa Cruz continues to act like a magnet and there is a surplus of women looking for work in childcare, cooking or housework. Finding

obstacles that they had to overcome in the first two years, especially trying to hold meetings when many of the workers were only allowed half a day off in a fortnight.

They have now managed to establish a base, organised their first congress last year.

Their demands hardly appear revolutionary. Bolivia's labour history started relatively recently, but even 80 years after

# Seven lessons from Chinese Trotskyism

## *Memoirs of a Chinese revolutionary*

Wang-Fan hsi  
Columbia University  
Press, Morningside  
edition  
£10.95

**Reviewed by Charlie van Gelderen**

THE new English-language edition of these memoirs should be welcomed by all interested in the Chinese revolution. Particularly for revolutionaries who may have missed the first edition published in 1980.

Wang's life-span embraces almost the entire history of the Chinese and international communist movement. Born in 1907, he is now the only one of the founding members of Chinese Trotskyism still alive.

Despite his great age and ill-health, he still takes a lively intellectual interest in current events. His only regret, as he wrote to this reviewer, is that he is now 'too old and physically weak' to take part in the great debate after the Tiananmen Massacre and the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

To do full justice to this book and to the life of its author would require a great deal more space than is available here.

Wang took part in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27

when the young Chinese Communist Party was hamstrung, on Stalin's instructions, by its alliance with the Kuomintang. It ended with the bloody massacre of Communists by Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces in Kwantung and Shanghai.

This new edition is particularly noteworthy because it contains a new short preface by the author, his preface to the French edition, and the chapter on 'Thinking in Solitude' - left out of the first edition for reasons of space.

In his re-written preface, translator Greg Benton draws attention to Wang's discussion on democracy with Chen Tu-hsiu. In view of the importance of this question today, it is worthwhile to conclude this review with the full text of Wang's seven theses.

- Under present historical conditions, if the proletariat through its political party aims to overthrow the political and economic rule of the bourgeoisie, it must carry out a violent revolution and set up a dictatorship to expropriate the expropriators. So, in nine cases out of ten, it is bound to destroy the bourgeoisie's traditional means of rule - the parliamentary system. To complete such a transformation 'peacefully' through parliament is practically, if not absolutely, impossible.

- A proletarian dictatorship set up in such a way neither must nor should destroy the various democratic rights - including habeus corpus; freedom of speech, the press,

assembly and association; the right to strike; etc., etc. - already won by the people under the bourgeois democratic system.

- The organs of the dictatorship elected by the entire toiling people should be under the thoroughgoing supervision of the electors and recallable by them at all times. The power of the dictatorship should not be concentrated in one body but spread across several structures so that there is a system of checks and balances to prevent the emergence of an autocracy or monarchy.

- Opposition parties should be allowed to exist under the dictatorship as long as they support the revolution. Whether or not they support this condition should be decided by the workers and peasants in a free ballot.

- Opposition factions must be tolerated within the party of the proletariat. Under no circumstances must organisational sanctions, secret-service measures, or incriminatory sanctions be used to deal with dissidents; under no circumstances must thought be made a crime.

- Under no circumstances must proletarian dictatorship

become the dictatorship of a single party. Workers' parties organised by the working class and the intelligencia must under no circumstances replace the political power democratically elected by the toilers as a whole. There must be an end to the present system in the communist countries where government is a facade behind which secretaries of the party branches assume direct command. The ruling party's strategic policies must first be discussed and approved by an empowered parliament (or soviet) that includes opposition parties and factions, and only then should they be implemented by government; and their implementation must continue to be supervised by parliament.

- Finally... since political democracy is actually a reflection of economic democracy

and no political democracy is possible under a system of absolutely centralised economic control... to create the material base for socialist democracy a system of divided power and self-management within the overall planned economy is essential.

All these points are not in themselves enough to save a revolutionary power from bureaucratic degeneration; but since they are not plucked from the void but rooted in bloody experience, they should: (a) help workers and peasants in countries that have had revolutions to win their anti-bureaucratic struggle when the conditions for the democratisation of the dictatorial state have further ripened; (b) enable new revolutionary states from the very outset to avoid bureaucratic poisoning.



*Mao's Long March: Wang uncovers hidden history of Chinese marxism*

# Getting away with murder

## *Deaths at work*

Accidents or corporate crime - the defects of inquests and the criminal justice system  
Price £3.50

**Reviewed by Patrick Baker**



**MANSLAUGHTER INQUIRIES.**

COMPANY directors in Britain get away with murder. Of 5,000 workplace deaths in the last decade, only one has been the subject of a police investigation.

Deaths at work is the subject of a new booklet produced jointly by Inquest, the campaign investigating deaths in police custody, the London

Hazards Centre, and the Workers Educational Association. It shows that companies are immune from prosecution for the hundreds of deaths that take place each year in the workplace.

In the minority of cases where a prosecution does take place, directors and executives are hardly ever held personally responsible. And companies are rarely fined more than £2000, the maximum possible in a Magistrates Court.

Jasmin Zimnowodski, sister of a building worker killed in Central London last year, said '£1000 for a life. I just couldn't believe it. And this was a company which admitted in court that it had a turnover of more than one billion pounds. This was the second time a worker had fallen down an unlit shaft on the site, but of course you never heard anything about that in court.'

Why was this case not referred to the Crown Court? Why did the HSE leave the prosecution to an

inspector and not an experienced lawyer. Just tell me what punishment this is? What deterrence is this? What justice is this?'

Now a campaign is being launched, supported by Labour MPs and trade union leaders, to ensure adequate investigation and prosecution of such cases. It calls for a criminal police investigation of the conduct of company officers after every death at work, and clearer health and safety legislation so that prosecution of companies is made simpler.

They point out that under the current system, prosecution for manslaughter is never considered, since there is no criminal investigation. And the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not, as they claim, pass cases on to the police. This is despite the fact that HSE reports show that 70% of workplace deaths are the direct fault of senior management. But individual managers or directors are only prosecuted



in less than 1% of cases.

Fiona Murie of the London Hazards Centre said 'The entrenched bias of the criminal justice system is clear from this report. Fundamental changes are required before the public can have confidence that the law is applied equally to all, and companies and their senior officers are brought to account.'

Available from: London Hazards Centre, 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DS or Workers Educational Association, 9 Upper Berkeley Street, London W1H 8BY.

# Students must force NUS to fight

By Bala Kumar

CHANTS of 'No Ifs, No Buts - Stop the Education Cuts!' quickly gave way to 'Hey you, Tory shits - give us back our benefits!' on last month's student demonstration in London.

Organised by London Area National Union of Students (NUS) around the issue of student poverty, the turnout of around 2000 was disappointing for many student activists. This is a reflection of the widespread mood of despair and gloom pervading the student movement today.

12 years of Tory attacks have left hundreds of thousands of students deep in debt and poverty. With loans, students can no longer claim income support over the long summer break or housing benefit whilst they are at college.

Lecture theatres are filled to bursting point, library books are in short supply and staff are being stretched to their limit.

Soup kitchens have been set up by some student unions, and many colleges have had to provide sub-standard emergency accommodation. In a recent report the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux estimates that a person on income support receives up to £1000 more a year than a student on a full grant.

Those lucky enough to get grants often find their cheques

don't arrive until half-way through the term. Some don't arrive until the end of term.

Student unions are also under attack. The model Tory council of Wandsworth recently cut funding for two Further Education college unions by 40 per cent. They also instituted voluntary membership of the unions and banned affiliation to NUS.

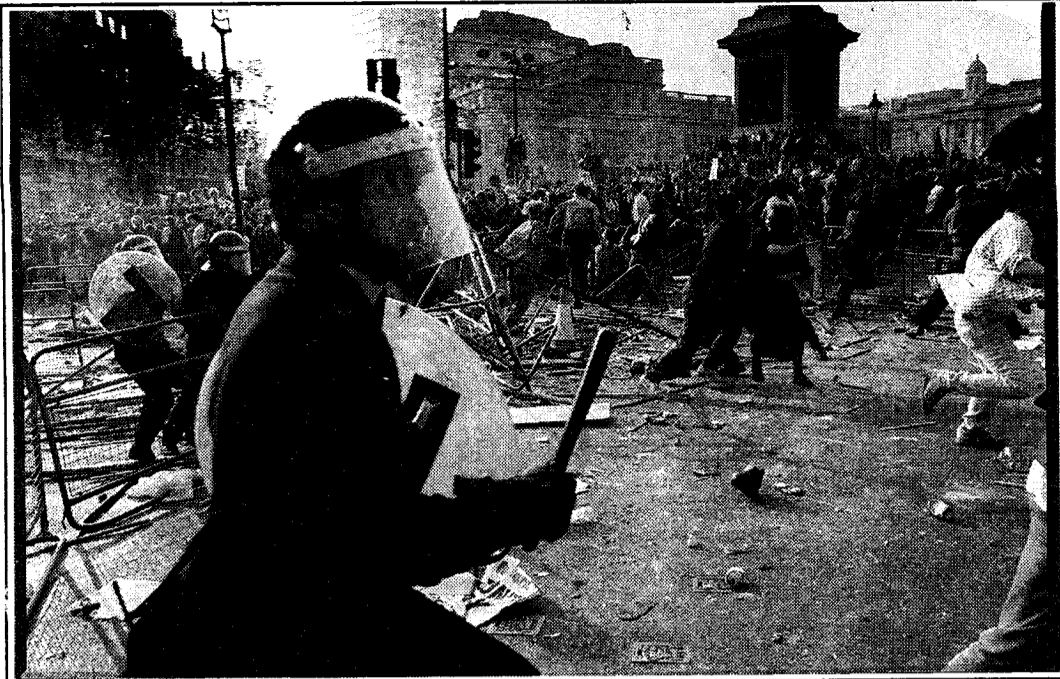
Other unions are facing cuts in their budgets, despite the mushrooming workload of welfare cases that they are dealing with.

What is the national union doing? Nothing. The New Realist leadership of NUS, controlled by the National Organisation of Labour Students, has made plain its contempt for student militancy.

Instead of using its resources to turn the despondancy of the membership into an active, combative force to be reckoned with, NUS is planning a 70th birthday party!

The complacency is staggering. In a recent interview in the *Guardian* NUS President Steven Twigg even said that voluntary membership would not damage the union.

But local victories won by rent strikes, occupations and sit-ins show that action can win. As Kevin Blowe, the convenor of London Area NUS, argued 'students must go back to their colleges and build for a national demonstration for next term'.



Spot the criminal: Police riot at 1990 Poll Tax demo

# Write to Poll Tax Prisoners

## Trafalgar Square Prisoners

(See below for prison addresses; EDR = Earliest date of release)

Brian Tavares MV3239, Camp Hill, EDR Nov '92  
Timothy Donaghy MW0105, Down View, EDR February '93  
Darren Healey RA2183, Wandsworth, EDR September '92

Neil Bremner MW0216, Coldingley, EDR October '92  
Paul Jacob RA0711, Coldingley, EDR May '93  
Matt Lee MW1054, Featherstone, EDR November '92

Simon Russell ND1666, The Mount  
Robert Wray MW1242, Fel-



tham, EDR June '92  
Keith Wray MW1241, Feltham, EDR February '92  
Michael Dalley PF3098, Wandsworth, EDR May '92  
Mark Hutchings MW2737, Coldingley, EDR January '93  
Non-Paying Prisoners - contact the Trafalgar Square

Defendants Campaign for latest details.

## Prison addresses

HMP Camp Hill, Clissold Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5PD

HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS

HMP The Mount, Molyneux Avenue, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 0NZ

HMP Coldingley, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX

HMP Down View, Sutton Lane, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PD

HMP Feltham (YOI and Remand), Bedfont Road, Feltham, Middx TW13 4ND

HMP Featherstone, New Road, Featherstone, Wolverhampton WV10 7PU

More information from: Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign, c/o Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EN Tel: 071 738 7586

# Appeal against the blockade of Cuba

Seventy five members of the European Parliament have now signed up to sponsor the campaign in defence of Cuba, along with political figures from more than 20 countries.

The appeal, launched in France with the support of the Cuban government, is an important step towards countering George Bush's anti-Cuban offensive. With the withdrawal of Soviet support for the tiny island, the US government is clearly targeting the Cuban revolution.

Now socialists, greens, anti-racists and others are rallying to its defence. Examples of the campaign's sponsors include the leaders of FSLN from Nicaragua and the FMLN in El Salvador; Lula, leader of the Brazilian Workers party; Ben Bella, ex-President of

Algeria; and MPs from left parties around the world, from the New Democratic Party in Canada to the German SPD.

British supporters - apart from the 25 Euro-MPs - include Peter Heathfield, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers; and a series of Labour MPs, including front-bencher John Prescott and left-wingers such as Ken Livingstone and Tony Benn.

Now efforts must be renewed to broaden the appeal still further. Socialists should go all out to win signatories in Labour parties and trade unions. But this appeal can win support in broader circles too - there are many who would not call themselves socialists who do not want to see Cuba crushed under the heel of Bush's New World Order.

'The combination of the 30 year-long American embargo against Cuba and the sudden reduction in trade with the USSR and eastern bloc has created a crisis situation.

Problems in getting supplies are multiplying. Cuba's high levels of health care and education are now under threat.

In the name of human rights, people criticise the lack of democracy in Cuba. But this criticism does not give anyone the right to economically strangle a country, in the name of the same human rights.

We, the undersigned, have different views on the Cuban regime. But we have come together to denounce a situation in which there is an attempt to depose a regime by starving its people.

This unilateral aggression by the world's most powerful nation will never lead to freedom for its people.

We demand the lifting of the blockade - an attack on the dignity and life of the Cuban people.'

Name.....

Address.....

Organisation/position.....

Please return to: Socialist Outlook PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

# Tories back Labour's Brighton sackings

150 NALGO members packed into Brighton Town Hall's corridors shouting 'no cuts!' as the council met to approve Labour's £5m cuts package on October 31.

The no cuts message was carried inside the council chamber itself by members of Brighton area Action Against Section 28. They stood in front of the mayor for six hours holding a banner saying "You cut: we bleed"

The public gallery was packed by protestors from the voluntary sector which is facing severe cutbacks, and caravan owners from Sheepcote Valley

who face eviction.

They asked a series of well-organised public questions which forced the Labour group leadership onto the defensive.

The meeting ended with an amendment to the cuts proposals from the six suspended Labour councillors, reaffirming Labour's 1990 council manifesto commitment of no compulsory redundancies.

The Labour group joined with the Tories to vote this down, and then approved a cuts package that will axe over 100 jobs.

John Green

**Labour Party Socialists AGM**  
**Is there a future for the left in the Labour Party?**  
Sunday 17 November  
10am-4pm  
Camden Town Hall, London  
For more information contact LPS, c/o  
58 Florence Road, London SE14

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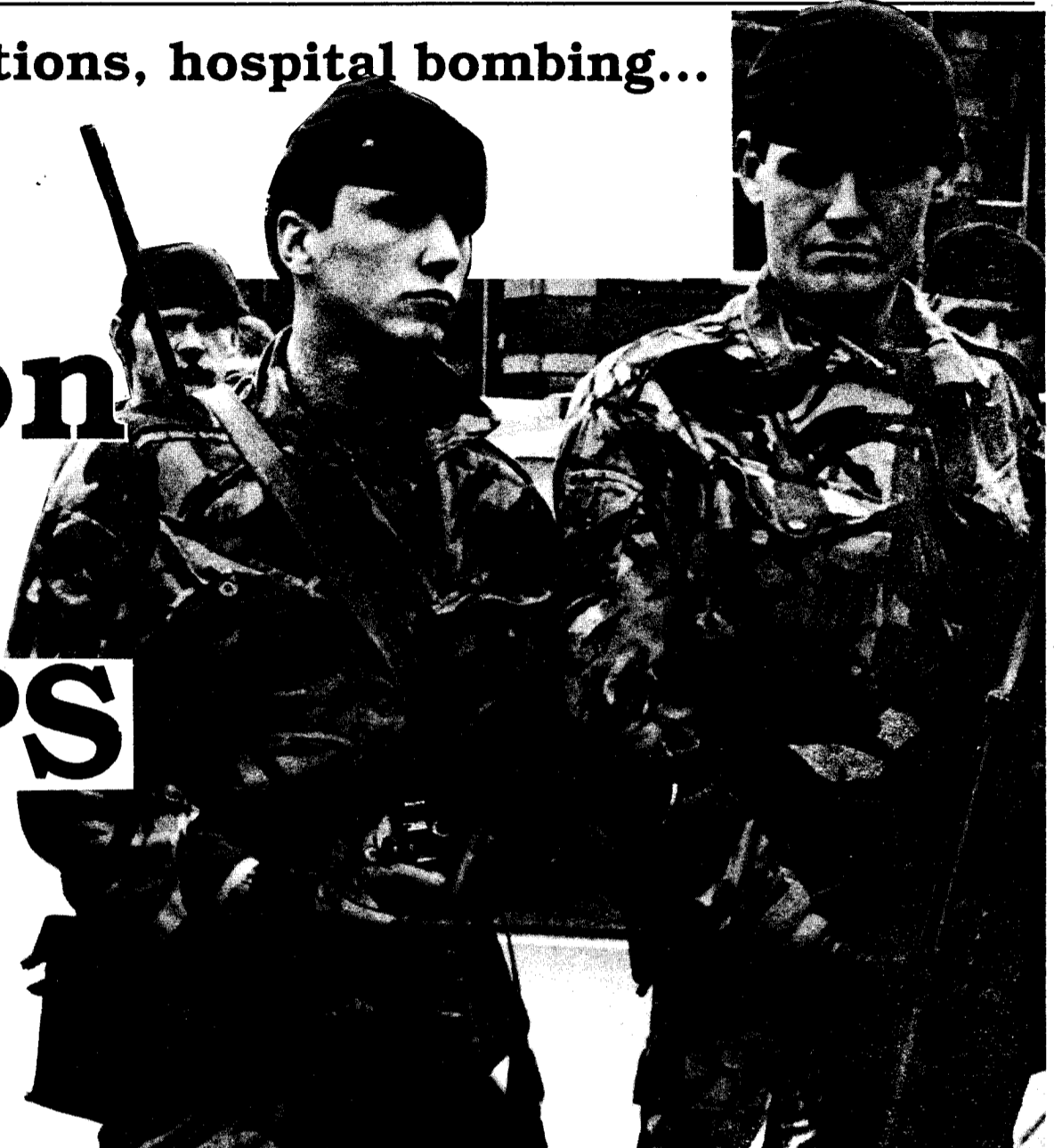
Nov 9, 1991

# *socialist* OUTLOOK

**Sectarian assassinations, hospital bombing...**

# One solution

...  
**TROOPS OUT NOW!**



Last Saturday's bombing of a Belfast military hospital got the full 'shock, horror' treatment from the media. Not even the firmest friends of the republican movement could claim that this was a well-chosen target.

Nonetheless, the media treatment of this event contrasted starkly with press coverage of the events of the preceding two weeks. The nationalist population of Belfast has suffered 12 sectarian assassinations by Loyalist hit-squads in a nightly reign of terror. But you would have known little about it if you relied on the *Mirror*, *Mail* or *Express* for your information.

Only the *Guardian* gave extensive coverage to new revelations of

systematic brutality by the RUC, and to new evidence that Loyalist murder gangs are being fed information by RUC officers.

A list of all the facts about the events in the Six Counties in the past weeks would give a rather different view to the one being doled out to the average British viewer in their sitting room. The facts show that the nationalist community is under murderous siege.

Against that background, the bombing of a military hospital looks different from the Falls Road. Fourteen years of British troops in the Six Counties have only led to war and bloody mayhem. The road to peace and freedom starts with the removal of the army of occupation.

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*socialist*  
**OUTLOOK**

Rally  
November 29  
7.30pm

## Socialism and the new world order

*Ernest Mandel*

(United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

*Janette Habel*

(author of 'Cuba - the revolution under siege'  
Kingsway College

Sidmouth Street, off Grays Inn Road, London WC1