

Socialist OUTLOOK

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UN out! Lift the arms embargo!

Bosnia's blood on UN hands

Socialist Outlook has always argued that neither the U.N. nor N.A.T.O. was interested in defending Bosnia. The brutal crushing of Srebrenica and renewed Chetnik attacks on the 'safe havens' of Zepa, Bihac and Sarajevo has shown the complete bankruptcy of the United Nations.

When the U.N. introduced its 'safe haven' policy in Srebrenica it first disarmed the Bosnian army. Rather than let the Bosnian people defend themselves the U.N. claimed it would 'protect' them. The slaughter of thousands of people in Srebrenica is the result.

The U.N. has encouraged the Greater Serbian chauvinists by agreeing to the division of Bosnia. Every single plan produced by the U.N. and E.U. envisaged the carve up of multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina.

'Ethnic cleansing' is not just an excess on the part of the Bosnian Serb army. It is a deliberate policy designed to create the largest possible area over which the Serbian bureaucrats rule. Far from the U.N. plans producing a solution for peace they have given the green light to General Mladic and Radovan Karadzic to step up their war against Bosnia.

The attempt by Mladic and



Over 5,000 marched in central London in solidarity with Bosnia. There have also been demonstrations in Spain and South Africa

Karadzic to create Greater Serbia, with the support, sometimes tacit sometimes open, of Slobodan Milosevic, is the total rejection of Tito's Yugoslav ideal.

Those who defend the idea that all peoples, whatever their ethnic origins, can live together in a single state are those fighting to defend Bosnia-Herzegovina. The multi-ethnic defence forces of Bosnia are the real heirs of the Yugoslav ideal - not Karadzic and his Chetnik thugs.

The war in Bosnia is not a 'civil war' between 'warring factions'. It is war between those who want to create ethnically 'pure' states and

those who desire a multi-ethnic Bosnia. Tens of thousands of Serbs and Croats continue to fight alongside Muslims to defend multi-ethnic Bosnia.

The unwillingness of the U.N. to defend the 'safe havens' stands in marked contrast to its determination to maintain the arms embargo. The Chetnik attacks on the 'safe havens' demonstrate that the arms embargo affects only one side in the war - the side fighting to maintain a multi-ethnic Bosnia.

It is the Bosnians' lack of arms and the tacit support of western imperialism that encourages Mladic to continue his bombardments. It is the

Bosnians' lack of arms and the lack of real international solidarity that allows mass slaughter. Far from halting the war the arms embargo has caused it to continue for longer than the First World War.

Despite the embargo the Bosnians have been able to improve their military capability. This reflects the mass and active support of the Bosnian people for multi-ethnic Bosnia. It was this increased fighting capacity that allowed them to defeat Croat forces trying to carve out their own state and renew the Croat-Bosnian alliance. Without the arms embargo Bosnians would be able to

resist effectively the Chetnik attacks.

We believe there is a great danger in demanding that the U.N. intervenes. It has demonstrated time and time again it has no desire to preserve multi-ethnic Bosnia.

The U.N. is only interested in a brutal peace on Serbian terms in order to make the Balkans safe for western business. They have no concern for the oppressed and exploited.

The only useful thing the U.N. can now do is get out of Bosnia, hand their weapons over to the Bosnian army, lift the arms embargo and let the Bosnian people defend themselves.

ASLEF 'Yes' shocks tube bosses

By an ASLEF Southern Region activist

THE 75 per cent majority in the ASLEF underground ballot was obviously a shock to the LUL and BR managers.

LUL thought it had turned the drivers in to strikebreakers with salaries well above other manual grades and a cosy arrangement with officials for ASLEF, which organ-

ises two-thirds of drivers. But a 2.7 per cent pay rise is an insult whatever it is based on. BR had been hoping for a no vote so it could argue its own drivers are isolated. Isolated?

An all-out underground and BR drivers strike will bring the county to a halt on 27 July.

BR hurriedly arranged more talks for 24 July when they were expected to marginally improve their 'last chance' offer — a productivity 'bonus' of between nothing and £200. Talks revealed

that the vast majority of drivers would get... nothing.

ASLEF's joint LUL-BR mass meeting on 25 July discussed progress. *Socialist Outlook* supporters joined others on the left stressing that workers must not accept bonuses that do not affect the rate of pay.

Despite all the talk in the press of drivers earning £30,000 a year, the basic is £11,227.

By working every rest day and every other Sunday, and including shift allowances and high mileage payments,

this can be increased to £20,000 or even £23,000 at some depots. Others are stuck at £13,000 a year. But at the end of the day, it is the £11,227 that pensions, holiday and sick pay are based on.

It would have been good to be on strike with the RMT fighting for a decent pay increase for all grades.

Many are paid as little as £120 a week, but the level of anger is high amongst drivers, who are the first to be blamed in case of an accident and subject to more and

more monitoring and harassment from petty-minded management more concerned about their corporate image than public safety or efficient services.

Negotiations for a decent basic salary have been going on and off for several years. The only figure to result was £13,500 plus £1,000 for 100 per cent attendance. For this, BR wanted massive productivity gains, which would eliminate all overtime and other allowances.

There is a tendency in ASLEF to go down that road,

where the only argument is about figures.

Furthermore, General Secretary Lew Adams suggests that drivers should become a professional grade, with ASLEF as a professional body, arranging transfers from one company to another — more in the manner of the BMA or the Law Society than a union.

These mistaken ideas must be fought against, but the priority today is to win the strike: it alone can stop privatisation.

Unity on the tubes at last

By an LUL train operator

AT LONG last we have it. The moment London Underground (LUL) workers have been waiting for — the RMT and ASLEF are co-ordinating strike action on LUL.

It is supposedly over pay. This is what both unions balloted on.

Additionally, engineering members of the RMT have been balloted on job security in response to the LUL 'make or buy' privatisation policies.

Both ballots and have been given decisive three-to-one votes for action.

All grades of staff are under enormous pressure from the increased workloads and the new regime of bullying. Stress-related illness has rocketed since the introduction of the Company Plan package of new management techniques.

There are whole teams of mangers whose sole purpose is to get more work out of us. A vital part of our pay claim is therefore a reduction in working hours.

The union bureaucrats hope that the issue will go away, pretending the dispute is merely over percentage points.

It would be cheaper for the government to settle immediately then let it go on.

But they know that what is really at stake is the morale and organisation of railway work-

ers and, beyond that, other public sector workers and the whole trade union movement.

The Tories don't mind spending a few bob of the taxpayers' money to push a deeper wedge between unions and the Labour Party.

The RMT London Transport District Council and LUL Executive Member Pat Sikorski have played an important role in the run up to the dispute. We have managed to maintain our organisation, in contrast to large areas of BR.

Leaflets

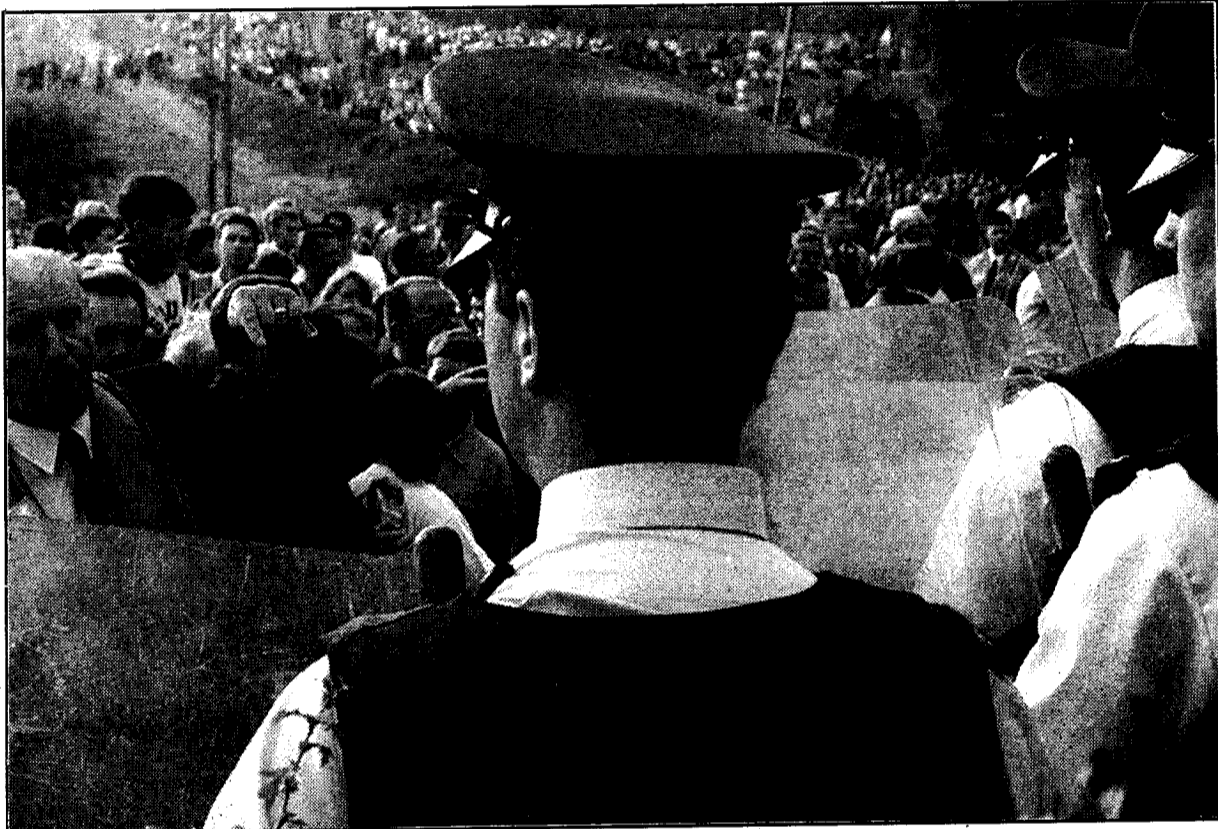
The steady flow of militant leaflets from the District Council, in contrast to the head offices of both unions, has kept up pressure on the ASLEF leadership, who have a sad history of making deals for train operators at the expense of other LUL staff.

No doubt some of the bosses would like to make a deal with ASLEF on LUL to divide the struggle. There will be systematic strike breaking from management. Members of the other rail union, TSSA, (Too Scared to Say Anything) will come to work as usual.

Support from other workers is important. London readers can raise morale simply by wishing good luck to the ticket collector.

Railway workers want a safe public service which serves the needs of users.

Management want a series of railway businesses whose safety requirements are determined by profit maximisation.



One up for the loyalist bigots

By David Coen

FOR ALL the sighs of relief in the British press that the loyalist marches on July 12th had passed off without seriously damaging the "peace process", one stark fact remains: the loyalist bigots once again banged their drums through nationalist areas.

Whipped up by Ian Paisley, they roared their traditional demand that the croppies lie down.

While there was undoubtedly a certain amount of posturing in the antics of David Trimble MP, who is angling to take over the leadership of the Official Unionist Party from the ageing James Molyneux, there can hardly be much doubt as to the real balance of forces in the Six Counties.

Under pressure from the nationalist areas the Sinn Fein leadership persuaded Dublin to put out a call to the British

to start talks immediately.

Smarting from the open contempt shown to them by the British over, among other things, the Lee Clegg affair, they also began to crank up the threat of "angry voices and marching feet" only to be neatly snookered by Taoiseach John Bruton's statement that more marches would only make things worse.

Prisoners

Having thrown in their lot with Dublin, they now find themselves prisoners of the very strategy they themselves initiated.

John Major may have defeated the Tory right in the short term but he is still not in a position, even if he wanted to, to confront the unionist fellow travellers who supported the "flowerpot man" Redwood.

Major occasionally throws scraps to the nationalists like the transfer of some prisoners to Ireland but is generally content to sit and wait for de-

velopments inside the Republican movement, hoping for a split.

It is clear that a Blair Government emerging from an election in which the Tories "rally to the flag" would not change the policy; indeed Majorie Mowlem has gone out of her way to reassure the Unionists that the union is safe in Labour hands.

So even if Sinn Fein ignored Dublin and restarted a campaign of street protests to demand the British begin talks, the agenda is a Unionist one.

The irony is that the armed struggle originally resulted from the realisation that the Northern State could not be reformed: yet the very people who drew that conclusion in the first place are now demanding to be let into discussions about how it can be reformed.

History repeats itself... Likewise, the make-believe socialists who think that "proper" class politics is a real possibility now that the

IRA have declared a ceasefire, or who suddenly find staunch socialist hearts beating behind the red hand symbols of the loyalist paramilitaries, have about the same grasp of reality as all the conciliators, intermediaries, mediators and reconciliation centres which were the great hope of English liberals in the confrontations around July 12th.

Sectarian

The Six County state was designed to be sectarian, and it has functioned like that for more than 70 years. It cannot be reformed. It is propped up by the British.

It cannot be dismantled until the British withdraw. Attempts at reform are not a "peace process" unless you define peace as the (temporary) absence of war.

Republicans and socialists should adopt a strategy of angry voices and marching feet... to demand that Britain gets out of Ireland now.

HOME NEWS



Leading role: Executive member Pat Sikorski

What we think

His Masters' Voice

THE PROBLEM with Tony Blair's trip to talk to the assembled bosses of Rupert Murdoch's empire in Australia was not that he went, but what he said when he got there.

Of course we can draw interesting inferences from Murdoch's decision to invite the Labour leader and not a top Tory to address his gathering of string-pullers and propagandists.

The man whose top-selling British tabloid staunchly backed Margaret Thatcher, acting to popularise her ruthless free-market ideology, and claimed credit for John Major's election win in 1992, is plainly reviewing his political options. Of course the motivation remains the same: protection of Murdoch's interests.

Murdoch's papers – as custodians of the Tory vote – led the charge to oust Major as Tory leader, and stridently denounced his reelection.

If he now decides to pull the plug on the floundering Tories, it would not be the first time that sections of the capitalist class have opted to back a right wing Labour government as their best tactical means of securing their long-term objectives.

So what did Blair have to say to this bunch of union-busters, strike-breakers, racists, sexists and profiteers? Did he offer any of the home truths which a socialist would have delivered?

Of course not. His groveling speech, larded with compliments to Thatcher's 'radicalism' and eulogies to Victorian-style family values, pulled back from any of the



Pillars of the British establishment are facing up bravely and with good humour to the prospect of Tony Blair's radical reforms.

most obvious points of controversy.

Old boy network

He was careful to pick only the softest and most hackneyed targets for his denunciation of the limits of Thatcherite radicalism – the House of Lords, the 'old boys' network in the City, the public school domination of Oxford and Cambridge. This safe show of tokenism will probably have amused Murdoch's gathering, since few will expect a Blair government to be brave enough to disrupt any of these hallowed pillars of the establishment.

They know that Blair's right wing brand of 'radicalism' is more likely to be directed

against the welfare state and the public sector unions than against these traditional reflections of bourgeois power.

They will not have been surprised to find that Blair's speech tactfully steered well clear of any reference to the need to curb the rampant power of monopoly capitalism – not least the media monopolies, such as his News Corp hosts in Hayman Island.

Europe

Only on the issue of Europe, where Blair has already won support from sections of the capitalist establishment because of his commitment to the concept of greater integration, did Blair

dare to differ with Murdoch's largely Euro-sceptic evil empire.

But there would have been a few repressed chuckles at the extent to which Blair has run up the white flag to the values of market capitalism, especially when he told the meeting of top-bosses that he expected to embrace even more right wing ideas:

"The battle between market and public sector is over. There will be boundary disputes, but not a war. This should start to reflect itself in a more open style of government, with a more healthy market in ideas across Left/Right divides: there will be some policy convergence and we should be relaxed, not tribal about this."

Defensively, Blair goes on to insist, unconvincingly, that it is false to "claim that new Left is just a fancy way of saying Tory".

His waffle about 'sharing responsibility with people' would also have raised a few titters and grins from the assembled hacks.

They will know that his policies for the NHS and other public services have shied away from any commitment to break up and democratise the Tory networks of quangos, and Labour has promised no serious restoration of powers to local government.

Within his own party, Blair notoriously acts as a one-man band, installing his own chosen nominees as party whips, listening only to his hand-picked inner sanctum of right wing advisors, and setting out policies designed to drive a wedge between himself and Labour's traditional supporters in the unions and working class.

He boasts that by the next election more than half the membership of 'New Labour' will have joined since he took over, rigorously distinguishing between his Party and the 'old Left'.

Murdoch's men will also have spotted and welcomed the complete absence of any positive reference to socialism, which has been supplanted by the right wing fad of 'communitarian philosophy', which runs alongside

Blair, in tailoring his policies to this audience, has already developed the most right wing Labour programme since Ramsay MacDonald

Blair's reactionary focus on the family unit – itself the bedrock institutionalisation of sexual oppression.

It is no coincidence that while rejecting other left ideas Blair now looks nostalgically (and selectively) back to the period before the emergence of the women's liberation movement, and before the big battles for gay and lesbian liberation:

"Look back to the first heyday of the Left in the Thirties and Forties and you will find heavy emphasis on responsibility, self improvement and the family."

Blair has not noticed that the same ideas were also embraced – to devastating effect – by fascism and conservatism. And few socialists would today look back on those grim years of Hitler,

Mussolini, Franco, depression and world war as 'the heyday of the Left'.

In a sense of course, Blair's speech changes nothing. It is more of the same. A year after his election as leader he is simply continuing to accelerate along a rightward path we have charted in many editorial articles.

What is new, however is a real possibility in the aftermath of the Tory Party's leadership convulsions that Murdoch and other sections of capital may seriously consider a switch of political allegiance.

While they may decide against openly promoting Blair, a withdrawal of their powerful and unequivocal backing for the Tories could deal a further decisive blow to Major's hopes of reelection, and trigger the real showdown in the Tory Party which the media moguls clearly yearned for in June and July.

Blair, in tailoring his policies to this audience, has already developed the most right wing Labour programme since Ramsay MacDonald, making it clear that a Blair government could solve absolutely none of the problems currently faced by the working class.

Perhaps the most alarming factor is the feeble level of opposition from the left in the Labour Party and in many trade unions.

Resolutions to this year's Labour conference in Brighton show growing alarm at Blair's threat to reform the welfare state: a quarter deal either with the welfare state in general or the new Blair policy on education.

A fightback is long overdue.

Ernest Mandel

THE DEATH of our comrade Ernest Mandel will come as a blow to many readers and supporters of *Socialist Outlook*.

For fifty years Mandel stood as the foremost intellectual of the Fourth International, a prolific writer, theorist and a captivating speaker drawing large audiences of students, workers and youth.

His enthusiasm for the struggles of the oppressed stood as the polar opposite of the self-righteous sectarianism and empty propagandism which has so disfigured many sections of the far left.

His commitment to democracy, pluralism and collective working within the International, defending the



rights of minority tendencies and factions, represented a significant gain for the revolutionary movement.

And no matter what the difficulties, he never relinquished his ambition to

make the Fourth International a genuine force in the struggles of the masses.

News of his death, at the age of 72, came as this issue of *Socialist Outlook* was being finalised for publication before our summer break in publication.

Initial tributes to Ernest are published on page 11; more articles will appear in our next issue. In the meantime a memorial meeting is being organised in London in mid September.

Ernest was a partisan of internationalism, but also of the need for marxist theory and organisation. As a mark of respect, *Socialist Outlook* is proud to dedicate our Summer School, to be held in Aberystwyth on August 23-28, to the memory of Ernest Mandel.



NHS staff will march in support of their pay demands on July 29, a date clearly chosen to be at the peak period of the holiday season. A big turn-out is vital for the chances of fighting on.

Left policies nodded through, but standing ovation for Blair

No contest at TGWU conference

By Peter Purton

SUPPORT for a national minimum wage based on one half median male earnings, the repeal of all Tory anti-union laws, and a commitment to full employment and public ownership were hardly a resounding support for the Blairite programme.

The TGWU's biennial delegate conference of July confirmed the crushing victory of Bill Morris over Blairite pretender Jack Dromey.

Despite the media coverage of Blair's anti-union message there was hardly a voice in dissent from the positions of the union.

One of the few areas to generate any passion was equal opportunities. The leadership conceded that it had failed to address properly the appallingly low participation of women, black and disabled members in the union.

A motion on lesbian and gay equality was carried despite vociferous opposition from homophobic elements in the conference.

The TGWU remains firmly

under the control of an unaccountable and secretive broad left. Calls for specific actions, and anything that threatened to be controversial, were carefully filleted out at the composing stage.

The union seems to have pulled through a period of serious financial difficulties. It remains a crucial bulwark against the right in the labour movement.

But the stranglehold of a bureaucratic broad left continues to restrict the potential for a powerful challenge to the Tories now, and to any future attacks on its members.

Sheffield library staff battle on

By Simon Kennedy

UNISON is giving £25,000 to support striking Sheffield library workers.

300 staff have been on strike after the council threatened to cut weekend payments - undermining nationally agreed conditions and hitting low-paid staff.

Striking steward Nick James said:

"They have offered us no guarantees that they won't attack our national pay and conditions. The strike remains solid and quite frankly I'm amazed at how high everyone involved has kept their

spirits high".

UNISON is now stepping up the action with a ballot of leisure centre workers.

Nick James said "The leisure and sports centres are the jewel in Sheffield's crown.

"We are confident of a vote in favour of action and look forward to piling on the pressure on the council. It is time they backed down".

Sheffield has voted recently to close six libraries in the city and management refuses to budge on the issue of weekend work pay.

The money from the national union will help "to resolve some of the hardship and avoid management's intent to starve them back to work".

NHS jobs face Trust axe

Management at City Hospital trust in Birmingham have dropped a cuts bombshell.

The release of a "discussion" document listing the axing of 150 posts and the tendering of a massive range of services indicates that they want to make massive cuts.

UNISON branch secretary Chris Rickards said "the staff will feel devastated at these proposals.

"The cuts will mean a reduction in wages and livelihoods for hundreds of members. There is no way UNISON will accept these cuts and we will be fighting the loss of jobs or any cuts in wages of our members."

Welsh Labour Action launched

By Dafydd Rhys

THE Labour party's proposals for a Welsh Assembly are outlined in a document entitled 'Shaping the Vision'. Its publication, following this year's Wales Labour Party conference was greeted with widespread dismay across Wales.

The proposed assembly will have powers to shape very little and the document distinctly lacks vision.

The powers proposed for the Welsh Assembly fall short of those offered by the Labour Party in Scotland. It will have no law-making powers, being able merely to recommend legislation and fill in some details in legislation passed at Westminster. Unlike a local council, the assembly may not raise its own finance.

The assembly will be elected by a 'First Past the Post System, rather than the more democratic 'Additional Member System' proposed for Scotland.

Fairer

Under AMS a majority of representative are elected from constituencies, while a small pool of further seats more distributed to more fairly represent the actual votes cast.

Proposals to ensure an equal representation for women were also dropped from the final document.

These proposals fall far short of the kind Assembly we should fight for. We need an

assembly which decides its own powers and is not subject to any veto from Westminster.

It should be free to decide its relation with the British parliament and European institutions, including those outlined in the Maastricht Treaty.

A Cardiff meeting of trades unionists and Labour Party activists responded to the proposals by launching 'Welsh Labour Action - campaigning for a real Assembly.'

The launch of Welsh Labour Action is without doubt a most significant development in the Welsh Labour Party. Support for an assembly is widespread in the Welsh labour movement and extends far beyond the left.

WLA will directly challenge those, such as Llew Smith MP who reject and assembly, and directly challenge the Blair leadership in the run-up to the upcoming General Election.

The fight over the assembly's nature and powers will be conducted in the Welsh Labour Party and its affiliated unions. The other opposition parties are completely marginal to this process.

At the same time, it is an opportunity to challenge the complacency of Labour leaders in Wales and the dead hand of the Labour's stifling bureaucracy.

Mistake

It would be a mistake to think that this is simply an issue for Labour activists in Wales.

It is an issue that must be confronted by the Labour left across the British state. The formation of Welsh Labour Action presents a great opportunity for this discussion to begin.

Speakers are available. Affiliation from Labour and union bodies and members are required.

Send cheques payable to 'Welsh Labour Action' (£10 for organisations £5 for individuals) to WLA, 23 St Martin's Road, Caerffili, Mid-Glamorgan, CF8 1EF.



HOME NEWS

Car strikers make Rover chiefs sweat

By Jack Johnson

THIRTY-SEVEN sacked strikers at Mainland Car Deliveries in Didcot, Oxfordshire, are still in dispute after ten weeks.

They lobbied the T&GWU Biennial Conference because of what they felt was lack of support by the union. Despite the strike being official, they still have only had two visits by officials to the picket-line.

AT the conference they received a great deal of support from the lay delegates, and they collected £00.

But the emergency motion in their support from the Oxford District Committee was not heard, and will now go to the next general Executive. During the conference they talked with Bill Morris and other union leaders.

Pressed by Rover in backroom talks the company has mooted the possibility of returning to work

with payment until September, so as to clear the stocks of Rover cars that are presently blocked in by the picket line.

Rover have become desperate for these cars because of the arrival of the August registration date. The strikers still need support.

Money, letters, and copies of resolutions should be sent to the strike fund c/o B. Hill, 38 Tyrell's Way, Sutton Courtney, Abingdon, OX14 4DF.

Two-tier schooling for 14-plus

WITHIN DAYS of taking over a combined Education and Employment department, Gillian Shephard unveiled a reactionary voucher scheme for nurseries and new plans to push 'non-academic' 14-year olds into (unpaid) work experience.

Of course work experience schemes are already operating across the country. But Shephard's latest plan has a lot more to do with segregating different abilities within the supposedly comprehensive system than any serious attempt to teach new or appropriate skills.

The Tory scheme would consolidate a two-tier education system replicating the old split between grammar and 'secondary modern' schools. Layers of students branded less 'able' or academic would be consigned to the tender mercies of local employers, while the more obviously academically-inclined (mainly middle class) would continue with GCSE and A-Level courses.

Of course behind these changes is another hidden agenda. With school budgets facing another year of cuts next year, and class sizes increasing, siphoning off tens of thousands of unwanted pupils into activity outside the classroom could make the figures look a lot more presentable.

Grim toll of school cuts

AS TEACHERS packed their bags for the long summer vacation, thousands of them knew that they would have no job to return to in September.

As FACE and other campaigners have warned, Tory cuts of £1 billion in education spending have taken a heavy toll of teaching jobs.

A survey by the National Governors Council has confirmed that at least 4,500 teaching jobs have gone, many of them through early retirement or the ending of short-term contracts rather than outright redundancy.

Average spending per pupil has been cut by 2.2 percent, triggering a predicted 20 percent increase in numbers of classes of more than 30.

School spending on books and equipment has fallen by 10.5% with building and maintenance cut by 12%.

And all the signs are that the squeeze will be even tighter next year.

FACE gears up for 30 September demo

By Roy Leach
(NUT National Executive, personal capacity)

WHILE government ministers sat down to horse-trade over how much to cut from public expenditure in order for Chancellor Clarke to engineer the hoped-for election-winning tax cuts, FACE (Fight Against Cuts in Education) met in Coventry to plan the campaign to achieve precisely the opposite.

Campaigners are demanding at least a billion pounds extra for education, to reverse this year's brutal cuts, and no more cuts next year.

Central to the campaign is another national march and rally, to be held in London on Saturday 30 September, plans for which are well underway.

Whilst the core support will come from local FACE groups which are springing up all over the country — Reading, Bristol, Cambridge and Brighton are among the most recent launches — FACE nationally is making strenuous efforts to secure the support of other organisations,

in particular trade unions organising education workers.

Mobilising for the 25 march demonstration was hindered by the opposition of NUT General Secretary Doug McAvoy who enlisted the TUC's John Monks to warn off other unions.

However, recognising the significance of FACE, the second largest teachers' union NASUWT has already indicated its support for the September demonstration and looks likely to distribute FACE material to its branches.

Blunkett

At a recent conference organised by Sheffield City Council even David Blunkett admitted he wasn't opposed to FACE, although he was less happy with its demand for more money for education, rather than just an end to cuts.

Against this background, McAvoy will find it increasingly difficult to maintain his opposition to FACE.

Whilst the last meeting of the NUT Executive amended a resolution calling for support for the demonstration to one noting it, the door was left slightly ajar.

There was a call for a meeting under the auspices of the NUT and a request for more information about the organisation of FACE and the degree of support from NUT branches that it enjoys.

FACE will continue to seek the support of the largest teachers' union and has even offered McAvoy a slot on the 30 September platform.

With even more members working in education than any other union, UNISON is a potentially key supporter of FACE, and a number of Executive members have expressed sympathy.

It will be asked to aid a fringe meeting at TUC Congress, where FACE can establish itself as a central element in the campaign to defend public services. R

enforcing its non-party political character, FACE has also agreed to organise fringe meetings at each of the party conference.

In a further positive development, student activists look set to launch a student FACE.

If thousands of FE and HE students can be mobilised for 30 September this will both help to swell the demonstration and link up two main areas of education funding



Thousands turned out in March: we need more on September 30!

campaigns.

Likewise involvement of the nursery education campaign, which was given a recent boost by the crass voucher scheme announced by Education and Employment supremo Gillian Shephard — apparently against her own wishes — offers to bring many more onto the streets of central London.

It is essential that local FACE groups and anti-cuts campaigns use the lull of the school holidays to make sure

that their plans for 30 September are fully in place: coaches booked; mobilising meetings in early September planned; leaflets and posters printed; street stalls planned and so on.

The demonstration must be huge if it is to force the government's hand. It is up to all of us to make sure it is.

Posters and leaflets are available from FACE: (01203) 311013. The next FACE paper will be available at the end of August. Place your order now!

Bid to bribe the wealthy with cash snatched from state nurseries Tory vouchers threaten nursery chaos

By our correspondent

In 1997, just before the next general elections, Major's government are going to introduce one of its biggest ever con-tricks.

The parents of every four year old child parents will get a voucher for a lump sum of £1,100 so they will be able to 'shop around' for their child's nursery education.

There is no guarantee that they will be able to find what they want: provision is left up to the 'market', while council spending on state nurseries is heavily restricted.

In a deliberate ploy to favour the middle classes, the Tories, arch-opponents of universal benefits, are insisting that the hand-out will not be means-tested, but handed to rich and poor alike.

Ministers claim that parents will be able to 'choose between a part-time (half-day) place in a state school's nurs-

ery, a full time place in a reception class, a place in a private nursery (for which they would have to pay most of its costs), and a place in a playgroup.

Playgroups which provide a half day placement have been encouraged in the past by this government as representing good 'value for money'.

Their staff receive only short and inexpensive training (compared with teachers, NNEB or BTEC), and many rely on parents' involvement, while suffering from uneven, uncontrolled resources. The playgroup movement recently threatened to boycott the scheme when they found they will get only £550 for each part time place.

Condemned

The vouchers initiative is condemned by all teachers, educationists, and nursery workers. Private nursery chains have warned that it could actually force some of

them out of business. Local authorities have dismissed it as unworkable.

Even Geoffrey Wright, the Tory education chairman in Solihull said 'We would be no better off, and could be worse off'.

Up to now the only authority that may volunteer to run a pilot scheme is Tory Wandsworth, an authority which already has excellent nursery provisions for four year-olds. Councils fear the scheme, for which they foot most of the bill, will cut their grants for providing nursery education.

The essence of the scheme is transferring money from public to private hands. The main beneficiaries will be parents who already send their children to private nurseries, whether by choice or because only private provision is available locally.

They will receive a generous hand-out towards these costs: those dependent on state provision, and unable to afford to 'top up' the voucher



to the level of private nursery school fees are likely to lose out. The money will be deducted from local authority spending on nurseries for those dependent on state provision.

The other big winner from the scheme is the administration and inspection apparatus, whose role it would be to distribute, cash and evaluate the 'service'.

The cost of this apparatus is estimated at £20 million, money which should be used to extend free nursery education.

Socialists should be campaigning for, free high quality, full time nursery

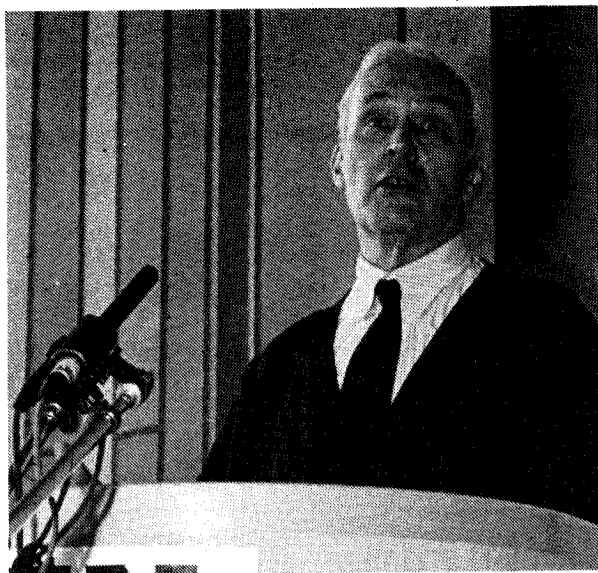
education for three and four year-olds.

We should also demand provisions for extended day care which would truly answer the needs of working parents.

This should be part of our fight for high quality state education for all. All this requires more funds for training, resourcing and establishing new provision.

We should be demanding and supporting our councils to resist this scheme, which is set to butter up the wealthy middle classes by smashing up what little nursery provision working class people currently enjoy.

EDUCATION



Left on the wrong side: Tony Benn

Letter to the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs 'Neutrality' stands for a Serbian victory

Dear Alan Simpson,

I feel compelled to write to you because of the new tragedies currently unfolding in Bosnia. You will have followed the news the same as I have.

Genocide is again happening in the middle of Europe. Srebrenica has been overrun and ethnically cleansed. Zepa and Gorazde are next. From ethnic cleansing we have ethnic mass killing and the return of mass rape as a method of war.

I am writing to the Socialist Campaign Group MPs because I am scandalised by the attitude of most of the left in Britain today to these events including, with honourable exceptions, the MPs in the Socialist Campaign Group.

Surely it is possible to distinguish between the Serbian project of an ethnically pure Greater Serbia and the victims of that project?

It must be possible to see the real role of the UN and the injustice of denying the right of the Bosnians to self defence. Surely if these issues have not been clear in the past they are clear now!

Last year I attended a meeting of Socialist Campaign Group MPs with Mick Woods who had just come back from driving an International Workers Aid convoy through to Tuzla.

We argued that the basis of the war was Serbian expansionism (the project for a greater, i.e. bigger, Serbia) and that it was the duty of socialists to support the Bosnian people, who are the principal victims of the conflict, and the multi-ethnic state which they defend.

Most of the Socialist Campaign Group MPs who spoke rejected that view arguing that both sides were responsible for a war which had been provoked by the decision of Germany to recognise Croatia.

We argued that the conflict, and the Serbian project, started much earlier than this

and goes back as far as the suppression of Kosovo by the Serbians in the early 1980s. Greater Serbian nationalism became a dominant current within the Serbian leadership's politics by 1985 at the latest.

The Serbian nationalists, headed by Milosevic, set out to destroy Tito's multi-ethnic Yugoslavia years before the unification of Germany, let alone German recognition of Croatia.

The reaction of Serbs in the Krajina and other areas of Croatia and Bosnia to the recognition of Croatia was not the spontaneous outburst presented, but a prepared campaign of Serbian propaganda utilised as a part of the greater Serbian project.

Serbian forces not only took 70% of Bosnia but they ethnically cleansed the occupied lands in a way which would have made Nazi Germany proud.

All this shows clearly where the left should stand on this war. Even the empirical facts of what is happening day by day should show why we should defend Bosnia and reject "neutrality".

Such neutrality is not neutral - it is a refusal to aid the oppressed against the oppressor. Rather than stand for internationalism, "neutrality" stands for Serbian victory just as it stood for Franco's victory in Spain.

Why was Spain so different? How come the left could get it right on the Gulf war but cannot support Bosnia in this one?

I am writing to urge you to think again on this issue, reject a stance of neutrality, and help Bosnia survive. The Bosnian government is now calling for the lifting of the arms embargo so do the Bosnian trade unions.

They are entitled to the support of the left in Britain in this objective. I urge you to join the campaign to support Bosnia.

In solidarity
Alan Thornett
July 19, 1995

The grisly logic behind Serbian ethnic cleansing

GEOFF RYAN reviews Norman Cigar: *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing"*, Texas A&M University Press. £27.95.

GENOCIDE in Bosnia is the best exposition so far of the fundamentally reactionary, racist ideology of the advocates of Greater Serbia.

Whilst Cigar is aware that Croats have suffered at the hands of Serbian nationalists (and have also been responsible for attacks on Muslims and Serbs) he focuses primarily on Serb attacks on the Muslim population of Bosnia.

According to Cigar 'the genocide - or ethnic cleansing as it has been commonly known - that befell the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina was not simply the unintentional and unfortunate by-product of combat or civil war.

Rather, it was a rational policy, the direct and planned consequence of conscious policy decisions taken by the Serbian establishment in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina'.

This assertion is meticulously argued and demonstrated throughout the book, with vast numbers of references to press sources throughout former Yugoslavia.

Nationalism

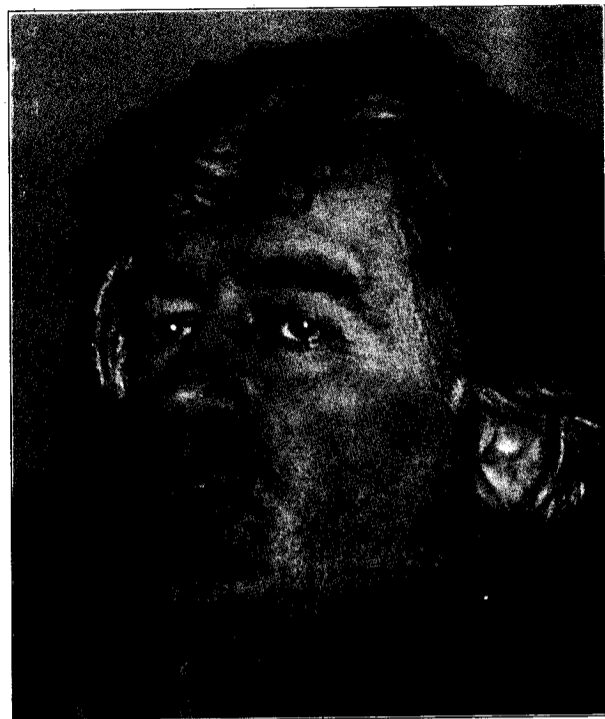
Cigar shows how Greater Serbian nationalism became the dominant ideology of the political and intellectual elites in Serbia during the 1980s. The Serbian Orthodox Church, Milan Panic, Vuk Draskovic and others portrayed as liberals in the west do not escape responsibility.

They were frequently the most vociferous Serb chauvinists. However, it was the wholesale adoption of Serbian nationalism by Slobodan Milosevic that paved the way to war in Croatia and Bosnia.

Such an argument is clearly a rejection of the conventional 'explanation' that the different peoples of the Balkans have always hated each other and that 'ethnic cleansing' is somehow inevitable. It also places him firmly on the side of multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Cigar demonstrates that 'ethnic cleansing' is not purely an act by individuals but a necessary part of the whole Greater Serbia project.

On an ideological level Bosnia's Muslims were de-



Ethnic cleanser-in-chief Radovan Karadzic

monised by the Serbian chauvinists, thus fuelling hatred. But more importantly, there is a material basis for 'ethnic cleansing'.

The more territory the Serbian chauvinists capture, the smaller becomes the percentage of Serb inhabitants. Because of the higher birth rate amongst non-Serb populations Serbs would soon become a minority.

In order to prevent this it is necessary to drive out people of different ethnic backgrounds:

Greater Serbian nationalism is, of course, by no means coherent. The Bosnian Mus-

lims are presented both as Serbs who converted to Islam and as Turks who settled in Bosnia. Such contradictory positions may well be irrational, but if anything the sheer irrationality strengthens the hold of such a reactionary ideology.

US military

Norman Cigar is by no means a revolutionary Marxist. Indeed, he is an intellectual working for the United States' military. It is no doubt this background that leads him to direct his fire against the failure of the United Nations to

prevent slaughter in Bosnia.

Unlike his political masters Cigar clearly does believe in much of the rhetoric of the New World Order. He cannot understand why almost the only intervention the U.N. has carried out effectively is to maintain the embargo against the Bosnian government.

Because Cigar is not a Marxist he talks in terms of a non-class 'world community'. He doesn't put forward any independent working class solutions.

He also tends to present the conflict too much in the terms used by the western media. Thus, although he is clearly aware that the Bosnian army is multi-ethnic he tends to refer to 'the Muslims', rather than the multi-ethnic resistance.

Despite these weaknesses this is undoubtedly the best account of the nature of Greater Serbian nationalism and a damning indictment of the complicity of western leaders in genocide.

Although Cigar is an academic the book is well written and very easy to read. It spells out the real reasons for the war in Bosnia in terms that even Tony Benn, Tony Cliff, Peter Taaffe and others (who continue to portray Bosnia as a 'civil war' between three equally bad 'warring factions') may even be able to understand.

My one real objection is not the content of the book but the price. At £27.95 it is far from cheap: but well worth it.

More recommended reading on ex-Yugoslavia

General background on the break-up

Branka Magas: *The Destruction of Yugoslavia Tracking the Break-up 1980-92*; Verso

Sabrina P Ramet: *Nationalism & Federalism in Yugoslavia: 1962-1991*; Indiana University Press.

Lenard J. Cohen: *Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*; Westview Press

Branka Magas' book is undoubtedly the best politically. The other two are rather academic in tone; making for fairly heavy reading, but well researched and contain lots of valuable material.

On Bosnian history

Noel Malcolm: *Bosnia: A Short History*; MacMillan

Robert J. Donia & John V.A. Fine, Jnr: *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*; Hurst & Co.

Noel Malcolm is by far the easier to read and, apart from the absolutely outrageous final paragraph, is generally good. Donia & Fine are more academic.

Journalists' accounts

Ed Vulliamy: *Seasons In Hell: Understanding Bosnia*; Simon & Schuster

Mark Thompson: A

Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia; Vintage

Roy Gutman: *A Witness to Genocide*; Element

Misha Glenny: *The Fall of Yugoslavia*; Penguin

Alec Russell: *Prejudice & Plum Brandy*; Michael Joseph.

By definition these tend to be somewhat impressionistic. Ed Vulliamy is probably the best overall account of the war. Roy Gutman is rather pro-intervention. Misha Glenny is the favourite of the Socialist Workers' Party, which shows his political analysis is way off beam.

However, his book contains valuable material, some of which tends to contradict his overall views.

UN hypocrites connive at the rape of Bosnia

Socialist Outlook continues to challenge those on the British left who draw an equals sign between the sides in this conflict, and who fail to oppose the genocidal war against Bosnia.

While some smaller groups have taken a principled stand and helped to build International Workers' Aid and Workers' Aid for Bosnia, the largest groups, the Socialist Workers Party and Militant Labour, as well as the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, have condemned all sides – and denounced us for calling for an end to the arms embargo.

In our last issue, *Socialist Outlook* published a letter from Tuzla Trades Union Council to the 'Committee for Peace in the Balkans', calling on western workers to take sides in the war against fascism.

We challenge these groups: Publish this letter; listen to the voice of independent Bosnian workers! In this struggle against fascism and genocide, it is scandalous that large sections of the British left stand on the sidelines, and will not join those campaigning for a multi-ethnic Bosnia.

By Roland Rance

WHILE THE Bosnian people continue to suffer atrocity after atrocity, the cynical hypocrisy of Western policy has never been more apparent.

The fall of Srebrenica has led to the dispossession of about 40,000 Bosnians. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have been killed, and reports of mass rape and appalling massacres are frequent.

With the attacks on Zepa and Bihac and the continuing shelling of Sarajevo and Tuzla, all of the UN-designated 'safe havens' in Bosnia are under simultaneous attack.

Meanwhile, the NATO and UN forces in Bosnia do nothing, while Western leaders issue further empty threats against the Chetnik forces, without the slightest intention of taking any genuine steps to prevent the genocide in Bosnia.

Their main concern is the protection of their own forces, their only effective action is the enforcement of the arms embargo against Bosnia, and their policy is the dis-

memberment of multi-ethnic Bosnia for the benefit of Greater Serbia.

Socialist Outlook has consistently opposed Western military intervention in the war in Bosnia, and has challenged the illusion held by some on the left that the UN can play a positive role there. The UN is not a benign, independent force; it is a cartel of mainly capitalist and imperialist states, which acts to protect the interests of these states.

Window-dressing

The differences of emphasis between Major, Clinton and Chirac are merely window dressing for a western policy of partition of Bosnia.

Every successive western 'peace' plan has awarded the Serbian aggressors with a larger slice of 'ethnically cleansed' Bosnia; each Serbian aggression and atrocity has drawn a verbal condemnation, while the Bosnians have been ordered to accept 'reality' and to meet yet more of the aggressors outrageous demands.

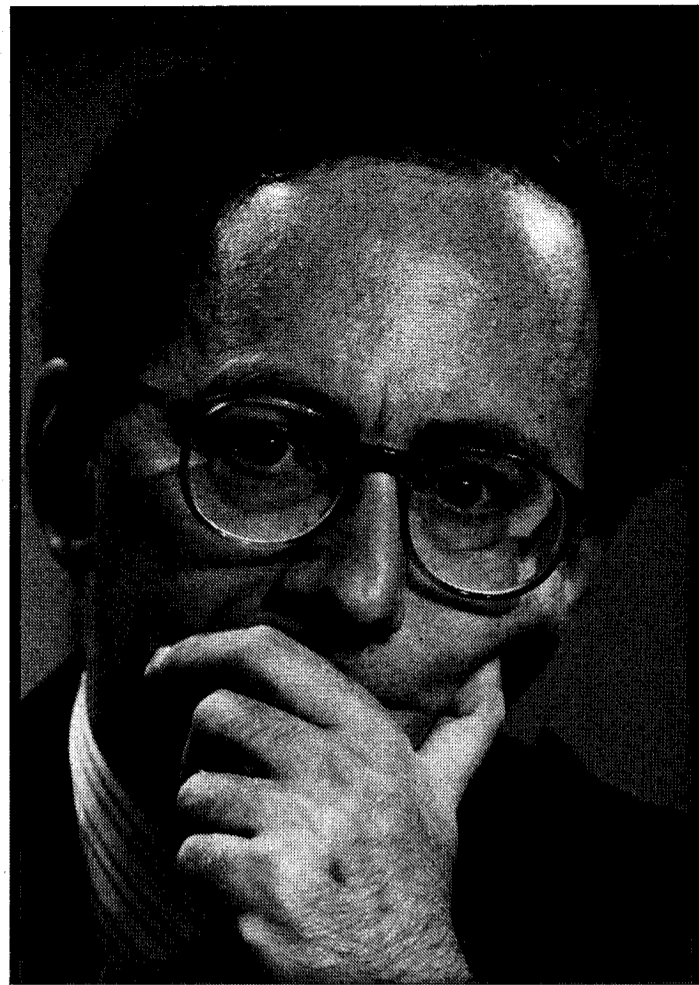
John Major's London summit on Bosnia issued a ringing call for an end to eth-

nic cleansing, and a threat to take action to protect Gorazde. The ultimate threat seemed to be: "If you attack us, we will retreat". As the *Guardian* pointed out, the final declaration of the summit was almost identical to the declaration of the 1992 London conference.

Since then, thousands of Bosnians have been killed, tens of thousands of women have been raped, hundreds of thousands of thousands uprooted and driven away from their homes, while the Serbian chetnik forces treat the western forces with contempt.

This contempt is justified; the Serbians seem to understand better than some activists in Britain that the UN will not take any action against them, that it has no intention of preventing the carve-up of Bosnia and the slaughter of its people.

This demand for the withdrawal of UN and NATO forces from Bosnia does not mean that we favour abandoning the Bosnians to their fate. On the contrary: we demand the lifting the arms embargo, to enable the Bosnian people to acquire the means to defend themselves.



Leading opposition to arming Bosnians: Rifkind

The Serbian army and their Bosnian Serb surrogates do not lack arms; they inherited virtually the entire Yugoslav army, its munitions and factories, and they still receive arms from several sources.

The Bosnians, on the other hand, have virtually no arms, especially lacking in heavy weapons, while the blockade prevents them from receiving any from abroad.

Not only does the UN enforce a one-sided arms embargo – in Srebrenica and

elsewhere they actually disarmed the Bosnians with the false promise to defend the town against attack.

Recent reports suggest that a group of Arab and Islamic states is proposing to supply arms to Bosnia.

We welcome this, and demand that these arms be allowed to reach the Bosnian army.

We defend the right of the Bosnians to acquire arms from whatever source possible.

New Bosnia Solidarity Campaign hits the road

An estimated 5000 people marched through central London on 22 July in the biggest demonstration yet in support of multi-ethnic Bosnia.

The marchers demanded "Stop the rape of Bosnia!", "Break the arms embargo!", "End UN collusion with genocide!". Many marchers carried placards with the slogan 'UN out!', though others seemed to be equivocal on this question.

After the march, a packed

meeting in Westminster Central Hall listened to several speakers, including the Bosnian Ambassador, Indijana Harper of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina, Michael Foot, and Labour MPs Malcolm Wicks and Calum Macdonald.

Speeches demanded an end to the genocide in Bosnia, and called for the lifting or breaking of the arms embargo in order to enable the people of Bosnia to defend themselves and to maintain a multi-ethnic state.

The march and meeting were called by the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina, Workers Aid for Bosnia, the Muslim Solidarity Committee and the Jewish Socialists Group, and supported by dozens of other groups including *Socialist Outlook* and International Workers' Aid. These groups have agreed to establish a Bosnia Solidarity Campaign to continue the political struggle for a multi-ethnic Bosnia and against genocide and fascism.

The campaign has already started work, organising a non-stop 24-hour picket outside Downing Street, and calling a further demonstration in London on 6 August. It will initially be organised by open weekly meetings in London.

Socialist Outlook welcomes the establishment of this Campaign, which is long overdue. We will play an active role in its work, and urge all our readers and supporters to become involved in it.



The July 22 demo: make August 6 bigger still!

We will be urging the Campaign to raise demands in the trades unions and Labour Party, to organise fringe meetings at the autumn conferences, and where possible to get motions on the agendas.

As yet, the campaign has no address or telephone number; for further information, please contact the *Socialist Outlook* office: 0181 800 7460.

Support these mobilisations:

- 24-hour non-stop picket opposite Downing Street (Westminster tube).

- Sunday 6 August. Assemble 2.00 pm in Hyde Park (Marble Arch tube) for a march to Trafalgar Square.

IWA spreads net of solidarity

INTERNATIONAL Workers' Aid continues its work in Bosnia. With new groups established in Norway and Austria, and contacts with a group in Australia, IWA is now operating in at least 15 countries, and aid for the Bosnian unions continues to arrive at the warehouse in

Makarska.

Unfortunately, due to continuing problems with the Herceg-Bosna (Croatian) authorities, most of it is still sitting there until the convoys receive permission to take aid to Tuzla.

Despite this difficulty, much work is still being done with the Kreka miners union in Tuzla, in preparation for the eventual arrival of fresh convoys. IWA groups have

also adopted various projects in Tuzla, including a union newspaper and a youth club, for which they are raising funds.

Swedish IWA, together with the Swedish unions, is organising a 'Ship to Bosnia' project. This ship will leave Sweden on 30 September, carrying hundreds of tonnes of aid to Bosnia.

The IWA office in Makarska is helping to coordinate

the receipt and distribution of this aid. Aberdeen Trades Council and municipality have pledged support for five containers of aid.

Please support these projects; more money is always needed. The IWA group in Britain will forward all money received. Please send donations to IWA, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Cheques should be payable to 'International Workers'

Get the full analysis!

Armageddon in Europe

Why socialists should support multi-ethnic Bosnia against Serbia's war

Edited by Geoff Ryan

£1.50 post free, from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

BOSNIA

The limits of liberalism

Tony Blair's rewriting of Labour's constitution and political platform amount to an outright rejection of socialism and an embrace for the values of liberalism. But just how liberal can capitalism afford to be at the close of the twentieth century? **SIMON KENNEDY** looks at the curious evolution of the idea of democracy and the concept of 'liberal capitalism'.

Decades of Stalinism gave capitalism's apologists and enthusiasts an opportunity to counterpose "communism" to democracy. However caricatured, the picture of a regime without democratic rights in the East was a pretty accurate one. For decades it was their most powerful propaganda tool; an "anti-model" for capitalism's ideologues to scare the western working class into believing socialism means totalitarianism. They had a great deal of success.

In the popular mind socialism and democracy have become severed. The Soviet Union's "actually existing socialism" has established in mass consciousness the definition of socialism as an all powerful state, with intrusive and authoritarian interferences into a daily life which is highly regulated and centralised.

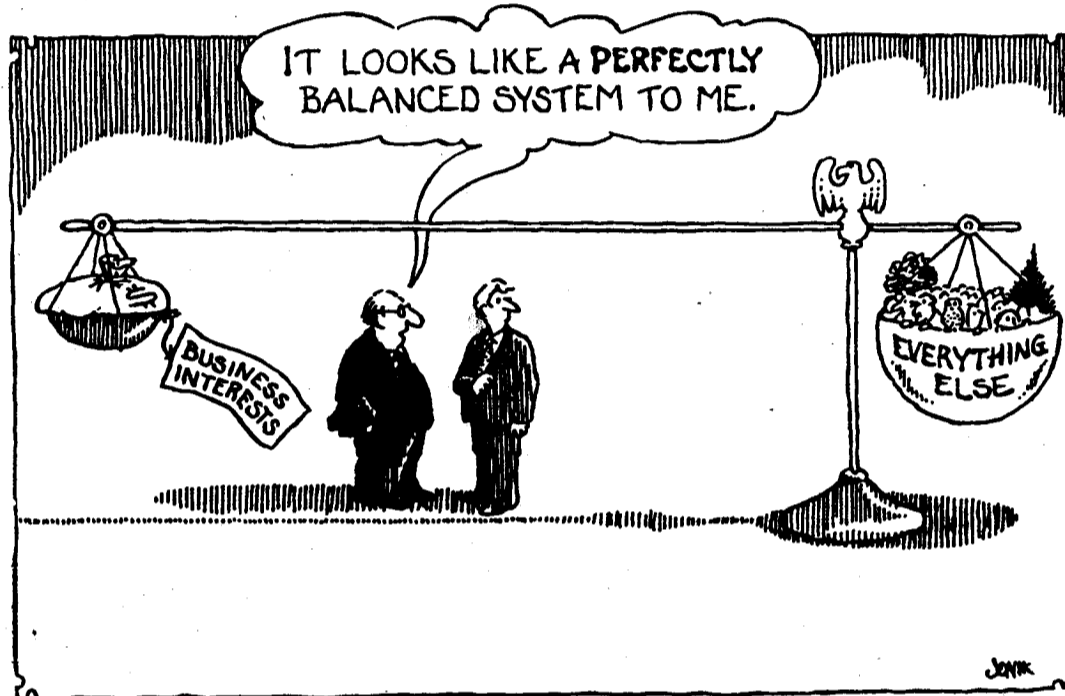
Since the fall of the Berlin Wall capitalism's ideologues have gone hell for leather in an attempt to exclude any alternative to their system from political debate. A central tenet of this offensive has been the attempts to identify the free market with "liberal democracy".

Democracy has become more than an alternative to "communism". It is now synonymous with capitalism. Newsreaders and philosophers alike make no distinction between the two. Yeltsin justifies his market reforms by equating his restoration of capitalism with the restoration of freedom.

Brutal

Ask any trade union militant in Sao Paulo and the identity of capitalism and democracy will immediately be thrown into doubt. The so-called "free world" has always included some of the most brutal and disgusting regimes of the twentieth century.

For most of its history, and in most of the world, capitalism has not been accompanied by parallel democratic openings. Furthermore,



the granting of "freedoms" in the west can be connected quite firmly to the economic domination of the colonial world by imperialist powers.

Linkage

Nevertheless there does seem to be a real and powerful linkage of capitalism and parliamentary "democratic" forms of politics in the advanced capitalist countries.

This takes the form of a state with a plurality of parties competing for office. Electoral rivalry is decided upon by a mass popular vote. The state formally has a series of "checks and balances" involving differing decision making centres, so as to maintain continuity and moderation.

Most conspicuous among these institutions is parliament, which appears to offer a place of free debate and decision making by representatives chosen by the electorate. All citizens are equal in the polling booth - we get one vote each.

This arrangement deserves explanation. The coincidence is not by chance. There is good reason why liberalism and parliamentary rule remain the best possible shell for capitalism. The political form has its roots in the special features of this way of producing.

Capitalism is unlike any previous system of organising the economy. Previous to capitalism goods were not generally produced for exchange. Resources were not structured around the demands of the market.

Work was also differently organ-

ised. So, for example, peasants in feudal times would work so many days for themselves and their families, and then a set amount on top of this wholly for their lords.

This second period of work was therefore over and above that needed by the peasant to maintain him or herself. It was "surplus labour". Traditional ties of duty, enslavement and coercion of various kinds, were used to "extract" it from the producers.

Capitalism is different. In this form of production the extraction of surplus labour is not so obvious - it is hidden in with the rest of a worker's

labour. In other words, the organisation of production and the appropriation of surplus labour by capitalists occurs at the same time.

The fact that the economic system enables those who own the factories and machines to extract surplus labour without overt coercion makes it a lot more difficult for the workers to see how they are being exploited. On the surface of things "a fair day's work for a fair day's wages" seems an equitable exchange.

This arrangement nevertheless rests upon a fundamental inequality. The vast majority of people are ex-



cluded from effective control and ownership of workplaces and machines, unable to live outside of selling their labour power in order to survive. This division is basic to the system.

Goods are produced for exchange and labour is based on "free" producers working for employers who are themselves "free" from any obligation to those who work for them outside of work time.

All the ties of hereditary duty, political custom and community discussion are gradually broken down. It is this system that is at the root of the "social disintegration" with which Blair and his communitarian brotherhood are so obsessed. As Marx puts it, only under capitalism do the appropriators discard all former "political and social embellishments".

There is a second side to the unique economic arrangements of capitalism. Alongside a "privatised" economic sphere, there is a separate public political one. The two are distinguished. This political sphere is called the state, with various administrative functions and a monopoly over the use of violence.

They are, of course, enmeshed. The state's primary political business is to sustain capitalism.

No need to divide

But in a capitalist society there is no longer any need to embody the division between the rulers and the producers in the same sort of rigid exclusionary hierarchical political division that characterised other economic systems.

Capitalist exploitation is therefore divided into two separate moments: i) economic appropriation and ii) political coercion. The state becomes a highly centralised, specialised and exclusive body. The economy is allowed to follow its own rules, "outside" of politics.

It is this division between the political and economic that provides the basis for capitalist democracy. It is a unique form of rule, for a unique economic system.

Once the division of economic and political is in place then the narrower political sphere can be opened up to people outside of the economically dominant classes. On a formal level, politics becomes expanded in a way never seen before.

But it is an exceptionally restrictive form of politics.

While the citizenship of western countries is vast, they are excluded from decision making about some of the most important things that affect them. The citizen body is essentially passive. "The people" are not an active citizen community, but a col-

In this framework it becomes impossible to even think of freedom from the market. This is why Tony Blair can tell the leaders of News International that "the war between the public sector and private is over".

lection of private individuals. Although it includes rich and poor, owners of factories and offices alongside their workers, voting is confined to a small range of issues.

Capitalism's new relation of economic and political devalues the very same citizenship its liberal advocates claim to extend. The powers of private property are placed outside the remit of politics.

Yet in this same arrangement the economic domain of the market is given unprecedented powers. Capitalists are given huge rights of control over the working day—they probably have more control over the productive process than at any other time in history.

The market is allowed to invade every aspect of our lives — personal relations, life chances, choices, diet, recreation, everything. No medieval despot ever had such powers.

It is the special economic features of capitalism that make possible a form of democracy that concentrates on formal matters of equality and representation while leaving huge basic questions of power and control untouched.

Liberal politics, whether espoused by the Conservative or the Labour Party, remain trapped in its restrictive framework. Liberal doctrine looks only at one side of the equation.

It restricts itself to a discussion of how capitalist democracy enhances personal liberties from the powers of the state and from traditional repressive hierarchies, but refuses to confront the more pervasive inequalities.

The right-wing ideological offensive that began in the 1980s has attempted to push this even further. The market becomes described not just as a mechanism for the distribution of goods and services, but the sphere of true freedom, unhindered by bureaucracy. It portrayed as an open sphere of action, without compulsion or constraint.

Enemy

Anyone who interferes with its operation becomes an enemy of freedom and liberty. Any and all restrictions on it are deemed unhealthy, to be permitted only where there is a threat of social breakdown that would get in the way of profit maximisation.

In this framework it becomes impossible to even think of freedom from the market. This is why Tony Blair can tell the leaders of News International that "the war between the public sector and private is over".

The Canadian Marxist academic Ellen Woods depicts a vivid contrast between modern liberal democracy and the *demos* of ancient Greece. Although liberal commentators frequently refer to this as the "golden age" of democracy, and argue that it provides the model for our present political arrangements, it was in fact a radically different system.

Athenian democracy, unlike that of the modern west, broke down the crucial division between rulers and



The peak of democracy: the Petrograd Soviet meets after the October Revolution

producers. The Athenian peasant citizen could claim to be *masterless*—rule by the *demos* implied liberation from economic coercion by landlords and states alike.

The idea of a civic community and active citizenship, as opposed to a state apparatus imposed from outside, meant an unprecedented degree of freedom. This was limited of course, slaves were excluded, but it was one of the few examples in history of genuine political rule by the direct producers.

It is interesting to note here that the ancient political philosophers who have shaped modern liberalism were amongst the most vociferous *opponents* of this democratic experiment. Plato in particular, was contemptuous of all those who work for a living. He was an anti-democrat.

Modern liberalism grew not out of the ideas of Greece, but the struggle between the lords and their monarchs. The much celebrated "demo-

cratic" Magna Carta was in fact a master's charter asserting the freedom of lords against the crown—and, for that matter, over the peasantry they lived off.

The origins of modern political forms explain to a large degree why liberalism — meaning an emphasis on limited government, civil liberties, toleration, individuality and pluralism — has become the dominant political ideology.

Magna Carta and that other totem of liberalism, the 1688 Glorious Revolution, were not milestones in the struggle for *democracy*, so much

as the assertion of independent powers by the feudal barons and Whigs. This is where liberalism's emphasis on rights comes from — statements protecting lords' liberties from crown encroachment.

Liberalism, with its baggage of "rights", is therefore a very anachronistic creed. It borrows its themes from a pre-capitalist period when the idea of freedom was primarily aimed at the traditional privileges of the aristocracy. This kind of privilege is no longer the chief source of inequality or oppression. Political status is not the determinant of our life chances. It can therefore have next to nothing to say about more fundamental inequalities which determine people's existences.

The origins of parliamentary rule lie in this struggle by a privileged layer against another privileged layer. The original "political nation" was a community of lords bent on retaining and extending their do with a vote once every five years. This is the value of the Greek example. Unlike in the *demos* the capitalist state stands "above" the citizenship. It has an identity outside of the community of producers. There was no need for liberal individual "rights" in Greece because the state had no separate existence from the producers themselves. Greek democracy was thoroughgoing not restrictive. Liberal parliamentarianism can therefore be said to be a *replacement* for democracy rather than its codification. It is a substitute.

The English revolution provides a good example of this contradiction between parliamentarism and democracy. Radicals within Oliver Cromwell's army asked directly for the franchise after their victory. The army leadership turned them down, saying that the right to be governed by a constitutional parliamentary government was enough. No one thought to pretend that this was "democracy". They understood, better than liberal commentators today, that parliament was an alternative to popular power. Tony Benn, for example, is mistaken to see Cromwell as a democrat in the sense we should mean by it. He was in favour of a constitutional oligarchy.

This would suggest that liberalism is not just inadequate, in need of massive extension, but an anachronistic and ineffective political creed for confronting the realities of modern capitalism. Liberalism fails to touch the economic sphere of capitalist domination that so determines our lives. The powers over production, appropriation and distribution of our products are excluded.

Vast areas of daily life remain outside its definition of "politics". The workplace, the allocation of most resources, the distribution of products and the organisation of labour are controlled only by "laws of the market" Interference with its demands is deemed anti-libertarian.

The redefinition of democracy away from popular power made possible by capitalism makes possible such a limited perspective. *Democracy is reduced to liberalism.*

Even if liberal democracy was massively extended by the opening up the institutions of the state and more regular voting this reality would remain. Blair's proposals to do away with hereditary peerage and the "old boys network" of Oxford and Cambridge do not even begin to alter it. They amount to little more than an overdue and partial modernisation of a Victorian crony system that protects class division and capitalist exploitation.

Liberalism claims to offer rule by the people. But really it limits politics to the defence of "rights" which are often secondary or irrelevant. Its formal language encourages the illusion that formal political equality can achieve social and economic equality, whereas in fact it enshrines and codifies their division and disassociation.

This means that socialist democracy has to be more of a *break* with liberal democracy, rather than its extension.

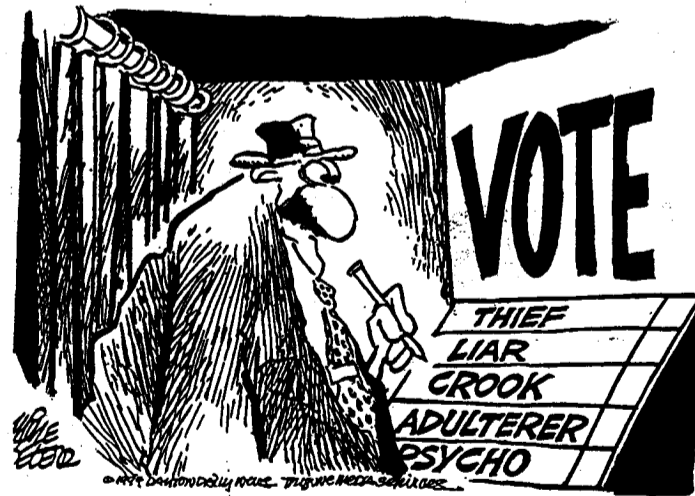
Bolsheviks

History offers few examples of the kind of democracy to which we aspire. Probably the most powerful was the fledgling years of the Soviet Union. The social democratic academic Neil Harding explains it well:

"For a brief period of perhaps nine months after the October revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks committed themselves to the most audacious attempt at transforming the vocabulary and practice of politics since the French Revolution of 1789... the idea of soviet democracy was directly counterposed to that of 'bourgeois', 'liberal' or 'parliamentary' democracy. It signalled the direct, unmediated participation of the people in the administration of public affairs."

Such an extension and transformation of democracy is only made possible by the overthrow of the state. Liberalism does nothing to make this a reality. In the meantime can only shroud the reality of capitalist exploitation behind a smokescreen of "rights". As an outdated and ineffective ideology it is a replacement for democracy, rather than its champion.

Ellen Meiksins Wood's book *Capitalism vs Democracy* is published by Cambridge University Press 1995



cratic" Magna Carta was in fact a master's charter asserting the freedom of lords against the crown—and, for that matter, over the peasantry they lived off.

The origins of modern political forms explain to a large degree why liberalism — meaning an emphasis on limited government, civil liberties, toleration, individuality and pluralism — has become the dominant political ideology.

Magna Carta and that other totem of liberalism, the 1688 Glorious Revolution, were not milestones in the struggle for *democracy*, so much

as the assertion of independent powers by the feudal barons and Whigs. This is where liberalism's emphasis on rights comes from — statements protecting lords' liberties from crown encroachment.

Liberalism, with its baggage of "rights", is therefore a very anachronistic creed. It borrows its themes from a pre-capitalist period when the idea of freedom was primarily aimed at the traditional privileges of the aristocracy. This kind of privilege is no longer the chief source of inequality or oppression. Political status is not the determinant of our life chances. It can therefore have next to nothing to say about more fundamental inequalities which determine people's existences.

The origins of parliamentary rule lie in this struggle by a privileged layer against another privileged layer. The original "political nation" was a community of lords bent on retaining and extending their do with a vote once every five years. This is the value of the Greek example. Unlike in the *demos* the capitalist state stands "above" the citizenship. It has an identity outside of the community of producers. There was no need for liberal individual "rights" in Greece because the state had no separate existence from the producers themselves. Greek democracy was thoroughgoing not restrictive. Liberal parliamentarianism can therefore be said to be a *replacement* for democracy rather than its codification. It is a substitute.

CENTRE STAGE

Turning the tide of Greek chauvinism

The entire Greek political spectrum has shifted sharply to the right. PASOK has done little to fight it. The mainstream parties, the church and the mass media are trying to present a so-called "anti-imperialist" front against Turkey and the USA, using the recognition of the Macedonian Republic by the USA and the EU to whip up Greek nationalism in their own interests. Greek Fourth Internationalist ANDREAS KLOKE reports from Athens.

THE WHOLE of Europe has been hit in the last ten years by a rise in far-right and fascist parties.

A wave of nationalism spread like an avalanche when the regimes of so-called socialism broke up. The "voluntary" absorption of East Germany by the West German imperialist state marked the end of an historical period.

The break up of the Soviet Union showed clearly how the stalinist bureaucracy had been incapable of solving the national question. It had simply hindered its free expression.

This demise of the bureaucratic regimes provoked and abetted a rising of serbian chauvinism. When the other republics asserted their claims to national independence the Belgrade leadership answered with military violence.

It is not an accident that nationalism developed so rapidly when the east European states started to turn themselves into "ordinary" bourgeois regimes.

National myths

Nationalism and the cultivation of national myths and prejudices are indispensable components of the ruling ideology in capitalist states.

One of the strongest of Greek national myths is the military expansion of the Greek state during the so-called "Macedonian struggle" (1904—1908) and the Balkan wars (1912—1913).

The supposed liberation meant in reality the conquest by the Greek state of those areas which are now in its north.

Inasmuch as the population of the nowadays Greek areas of Macedonia and Thrace could not identify with the aims of the Greek state, the result was the imposition of a new foreign yoke.

This was obviously the case in regard to all the Bulgarians, Slavomacedonians, Turks, Vlachs, gypsies, Albanians, Jews and other minorities in the area. In this sense, the expansion of the Greek state was "unjust" from a national point of view.

However, the state man-



Unwelcome embrace: Greek President Papandreou's government denies national rights and allies against 'muslims'

aged over the course of several decades to unify and change the area according to its aims, using violence and repression in many cases, so that the "Greekness" of the state can no longer be denied.

The declaration of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) brought back to life many of the "forgotten" injustices which had been committed to other nationalities — in particular the Slavomacedonians, and their minority population in Greece.

Greece is today the strong-

Athens, Sofia, Bucharest and Belgrade have forged an alliance directed against all the "muslims" of the area.

est economic and military power of the southern Balkans, with a very important role in determining patterns of politics.

Athens, Sofia, Bucharest and Belgrade have forged an alliance directed against Albania, the Albanians of Kosovo, the Republic of Macedonia and, indirectly, against Turkey and all the

"muslims" of the area.

The Greek bourgeoisie has not hesitated to drag up all the medieval legends about struggle between "christian-orthodox" and "islamic" groups. The mass media at the front of the head of the spread of the clerical hierarchy's chauvinist propaganda. They are supported in this by the PASOK "socialists" and the right.

Indeed, the policy of the entire ruling class has undergone a profound shift to extreme nationalism, affecting broad layers of the population. The lack of response by the traditional left-wing parties aids this process.

The essence of the policy is aggression towards Albania and the Republic of Macedonia.

The Greek state uses all the economic power at its disposal to impose its will, including deportations of illegal Albanians and immigrants, and an economic embargo.

Military engagement does not appear its intention at the moment, but the climate is being created for such an adventure in the future.

Greece is denying the right of self determination to the Republic of Macedonia by its refusal of the symbols of statehood, and the controversy over the republic's name.

It is also using Albanian immigrants as a tool of black-

mail. It refuses to recognize any national minority on its soil, talking only of "muslims" in regard to the Turkish and Pomac minorities in Thrace. It denies the existence of Slavomacedonians.

In this policy it is behaving entirely like an imperialist country.

The reactionary Albanian regime of Berisha has responded in the completely wrong way. It has fostered Greek nationalism by a farcical trial of the five members of "Omonia". In doing it violated the elementary rights of the Greek minority in Albania.

Nevertheless, the Greek state bears the brunt of blame for the rise in tension.

The entire Greek political spectrum has shifted sharply to the right. PASOK has done little to fight it. And, despite a show of rejection, both the Eurocommunist SYN and its GCP split have adapted to this shift.

They are near silent on the suppression of the minorities and the GCP colludes in the state's aggressive foreign policy by calling Albania and the Republic of Macedonia protectorates of US imperialism.

They are not even raising opposition to the armament race which is dominating relations between Greece and Turkey, devouring huge sums of money on both sides.

The poison of nationalism is exploited by Turkish and Greek politicians. While Greek reactionaries exploit anti-Turkish chauvinism, the Turkish right proclaims the nationalist virtues of 'Ataturkism'.

rule in Greece.

As the foreign policy of Greece becomes increasingly embroiled in the policies of various imperialist powers and the state attempts to dictate to its neighbours, so too does internal repression grow.

This provides the seedbed for growing racism. Scapegoats and "traitors to national unity" are being picked out and hounded.

Poison

Nationalism remains the best vehicle for the bourgeoisie to safeguard its rule. It is a particularly poisonous ideology because it abuses the deepest human feelings of solidarity, compassion and community.

The struggle against the nationalist wave in our country is the first duty of all those who are striving for peace, defending democratic rights and the rights of all working people, including immigrants and national minorities.

The GCP, SYN and the trade unions are more or less boycotting this struggle in various attempts to align themselves with government policy.

Our medium term aim must be the construction of an anti-racist, anti-militarist and anti-nationalist movement.

Equal rights

It must include the principles of equal rights for all communities, responding to the needs of the national minorities — especially the Turks, Pomais and Slavomacedonians — and recognising their cultural traditions, languages and education.

The trade embargo should be lifted immediately and the militarisation of society halted. Instead of military aggression we need international solidarity, especially with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the ordinary victims of the war in former Yugoslavia.

This is what OKDE, Greek section of the Fourth International, fights to make a reality.

Greece is denying the right of self determination to the Republic of Macedonia and using Albanian immigrants as a tool of blackmail.

new "anti-western" ideology spreading in Greece. It originates in the inter-imperialist quarrels fostered by the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Yet, despite the sharpness of the bickering, none of the belligerents are questioning Greek membership of NATO and the EU. Direct links with those who are the formal object of such scorn remains the backbone of stable bourgeois

Ernest Mandel 1923-1995

By the Editors

ERNEST MANDEL, one of the world's most eminent Marxist economists and a lifelong revolutionary socialist activist, died in his native Belgium on the morning of July 20th, 1995.

In the post war period, there were few more passionate, eloquent and well known representatives on the international stage of the revolutionary tradition of Lenin and Trotsky than Ernest Mandel.

His life seemed to embody the struggles, hopes and setbacks of that period. Mandel would wish to be remembered first and foremost in his role as leader and foremost theoretician of the Fourth International, the world organisation founded by Leon Trotsky and his followers in 1938 to reconstruct an international revolutionary socialist movement from the wreckage of Stalinism.

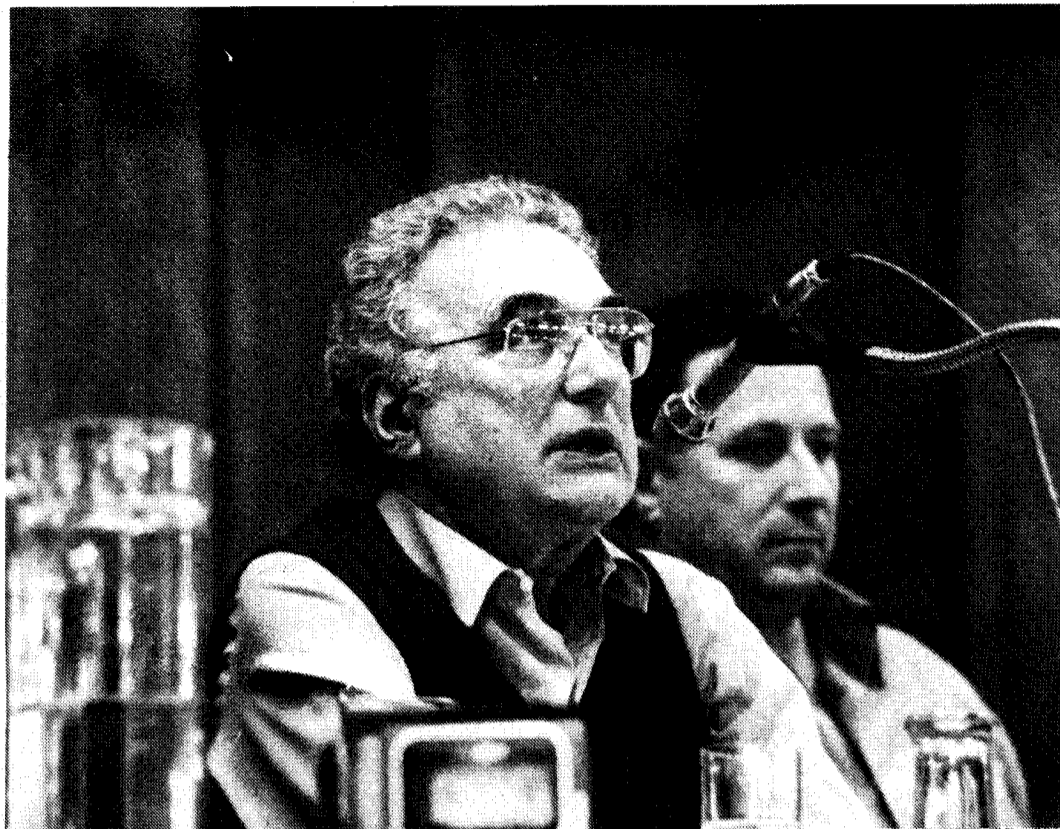
Resistance

Born in 1923, Mandel joined the Trotskyist movement in Belgium in 1940, helping to rebuild an underground group after the Nazi invasion. He was active in the Resistance throughout the occupation; arrested twice, he was deported to a prison camp in Germany in 1944. Prior to this, he had participated in the first European conference of the underground sections of the Fourth International.

In 1946, the second world congress of the International elected Mandel to its leadership body, where he remained on to his death. The 1950s proved difficult years for Trotskyists, in the context of an unexpected stabilisation of international capitalism.

Through this period of "crossing the desert", Mandel was instrumental in developing a non-sectarian and undogmatic brand of Marxism which allowed the Fourth International to link up with and grow rapidly out of the worldwide youth and student radicalisation of the 1960s.

Mandel was a key intellectual influence on many of the student lead-



Ernest Mandel speaking at 1988 Socialist Outlook rally supporting 50th anniversary of the FI

ers of the May 1968 revolt in France, as well as other revolutionary student leaders like Tariq Ali in Britain and Rudi Dutschke in Germany. In the post-1968 period Mandel became one of the best-known spokespersons for revolutionary Marxism internationally, analyzing the problems of the revolutionary movement in a host of pamphlets and lectures.

Banned

In that turbulent period it was evident that the governments of the day did not regard Mandel as a minor irritant; he was barred at various periods from entering the United States, France, Switzerland, West Germany, and Australia.

The militant solidarity with the oppressed evinced by his support for the student revolt, workers in struggle and oppressed nationalities was a tradition he maintained in recent years with the active support he gave to the revolutionary Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the emer-

gence of the Workers Party in Brazil.

Shortly before his death, Mandel attended the fourteenth World Congress of the Fourth International; the building of that organisation, which today includes sizeable sections in countries as diverse as France, Sri Lanka and Mexico remained his central and burning concern until his death.

Outside of the revolutionary movement, Mandel, who was Professor Emeritus at the Free University of Brussels, was best known for his pioneering work in the field of Marxist economics. "Marxist Economic Theory" (1962) was an ambitious attempt at applying the principles of Marx's "Capital" to modern reality. "The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx" (1971) traced the development of Marx's economic analysis from the early philosophical manuscripts to the writing of "Capital".

Mandel's most ambitious work was "Late Capitalism" (1975), which predicted the end of the period

of rapid capitalist growth which had characterised the three decades subsequent to the second world war and put forward the theory of "long waves" of capitalist development (or rather updated the theory initially developed by Kondratiev in the 1920s). The theory of "long waves" has been at the centre of a debate going well beyond the circles of Marxist economists alone; it was restated in "The Long Waves of Capitalist Development", based on a series of lectures given at Cambridge University in 1978 (a revised version of this work is to be published by Verso later this year).

Global recession

"The Second Slump" (1978) was Mandel's attempt to analyze the global capitalist recession of 1974-75. Many readers will also be familiar with the substantial introductions which Mandel wrote to the Penguin edition of Marx's "Capital".

Mandel's theoretical output was not confined to economics; he pro-

duced a host of major works taking up a whole series of political and historic questions. Of these, "The Meaning of the Second World War" (1985) and the series of interviews collected as "Revolutionary Marxism Today" (1979) are perhaps the best introductions to the breadth of his thought.

In recent years, Mandel's creative output barely flagged; he produced major studies of Gorbachevism; the nature of bureaucracy, and (most recently) "Trotsky as Alternative".

Mandel's activities in the wider labour movement, in particular in his native Belgium, should not be forgotten.

During the 1950s and 1960s he was a member of the economic studies commission of the FGFB, the Belgian national union federation, as well as editor of the socialist newspaper *La Gauche* and he actively participated in trade union and workers' seminars throughout Europe.

Optimism

Always concerned with making economics accessible to workers, he took satisfaction in the fact that his "Introduction to Marxist Economics" had been translated into many languages and sold over half a million copies. "From Class Society to Communism" (1978), later republished as "Introduction to Marxism", sold at similar levels.

Mandel had been disappointed with many of the trends in global politics over the latter years of his life, but retained an unbreakable optimism, perhaps best summed up in the peroration to a talk he gave a couple of years before his death at the New York Marxist School; "Understand that you cannot be happier than if you know that you have dedicated your life to this defense of human rights everywhere in the world; the defense of the exploited, the oppressed, the downtrodden, the despised. There is no better way to be a good human being in this world than to dedicate your life to this great cause. That's why the future is with Marxism".

20th July 1995.

British left shares the loss

MESSAGES from Britain poured in to the Belgian section of the Fourth International in the days after Ernest's death.

WE are saddened by the news of Ernest's death this morning and deeply feel the loss. Our sympathy and support go to all of Ernest's friends, comrades and those closest to him. We are strongly aware that he played a decisive rôle in building the International, consolidating its unity, leading its international collaboration and bringing forward the new generation.

British section of the Fourth International

DESPITE our differences with Ernest we recognise that he sincerely struggled for socialism in Belgium and on a world basis. The struggle to overthrow capitalism and im-

perialism by the working class will carry on despite the loss.

Militant Labour - Committee for a Workers' International.

THE editorial board of *Socialist Appeal* notes with sadness the death of Ernest Mandel and sends its deepest condolences to all his friends and comrades.

Socialist Appeal.

HE was a revolutionary and a Jew. The Nazis sent him to a transit camp for prisoners on route to Auschwitz.

He escaped: Mandel started talking to the warders; the warders, on their part, were impressed by the precocity of the 16-year old boy in their charge and actually helped him escape. Even though he was soon re-arrested the experience had made him an internationalist.

After the war, Mandel devoted most of his energies to building the Fourth International as a world party for the socialist revolution.

Tariq Ali.

IN memory of Ernest Mandel, whose whole being strove towards the goal of human emancipation, and whose own contributions did so much to keep Marxist theory focused on that goal.

Patrick Camiller.

I WAS won to communist politics by Ernest Mandel. What brought many of us to revolutionary political activity was opposition to US aggression against Vietnam and participation in the student rebellions of the late '60s. Ernest was a central figure in these movements on the world stage. His rôle as a spokesperson for the May

'68 events in France remains an inspiring memory. His polemics clarified many of us inspired by these movements. His writing on economic theory will remain an enduring contribution to the development of Marxism. Our paths diverged in the early '80s around key questions of communist continuity. Even so, Ernest's enduring revolutionary optimism remains infectious.

Brian Grogan.

FOR almost fifty years, Ernest Mandel played a crucial rôle in the continuity of the Fourth International. While his views were often controversial, he helped educate a whole generation in a Marxist understanding of the post-war years, and the scope and depth of his intellect will be sorely missed.

Tony Roberts.

Writings of Ernest Mandel

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OBITUARY

Leading the fight: some of the Fourth Internationalists on the mass demonstration in Saigon, August 21, 1945



Revolutionaries They Couldn't Break, by Ngo Van (tr. Harry Ratner) Index Books London 1995. 234pp £11.95;

Reviewed by K. Govindan

Ngo Van deserves our sincere thanks. As an eyewitness and participant in the events he restores a

Unsung victims of Ho Chi Minh

forgotten chapter in the history of the international workers movement.

Revolutionaries They Couldn't Break is a gripping account of the struggles that exploded between 1930 and 1945 in Vietnam, with spe-

cial emphasis on the role of Trotskyist activists.

New light is shed on the origins and formation of the Indo-chinese Communist Party (PCI), fore-runner of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

An amalgam of national-

ism and stalinism, the PCI was a devoted follower of the twists and turns of the Soviet bureaucracy. Far from leading the masses, the PCI was often way behind the consciousness of workers and peasants in their struggle against French

and Japanese colonialism.

While Ho Chi Minh was looking for help from the Chinese Guomindang after their massacre of communists in Shanghai and Canton and cultivating the support of landlords and capitalists, a number of Vietnamese political activists in France came into contact with Trotskyism. Among their number was Ta thu Thau.

From 1933 onwards Thau and his comrades became active in Saigon politics. The authorities repeatedly annulled election results, arresting and torturing members of the group.

Ho Chi Minh was also concerned about their growing popularity. Although his supporters had collaborated with Trotskyists between 1934 and 1936 in the publication of a common paper, he wrote to the Comintern in 1939 that the time would come soon to "politically exterminate" the Trotskyists.

In September and October 1945 he delivered on his promise, arresting and killing their leaders, including Ta thu Thau. The repression destroyed the groups. The handful who survived in Vietnam had no choice but to abandon active politics.

The Trotskyists of *La Lutte* (The Struggle) and the League of International Com-

munists had exercised a real influence, particularly in Cochinchina. They organised thousands of militants and, according to colonial records, were more popular than the PCI among the urban working class.

During the "mini revolution" of August 1945 *La Lutte* published a daily newspaper with a print run of over 15 000 copies!

The Trotskyists were also well implanted among the peasantry. Their literature shows close attention was paid to rural grievances and revolutionary potential. No "underestimation" of the peasantry here.

Today the organisational and political continuity with those brave fighters for internationalism and socialist democracy and against the bureaucratic Communist Party is maintained by their comrades in France who publish *Chroniques Vietnamiennes*.

The recovery of Bolshevik-Leninist ideas and the construction of a genuine revolutionary marxist party in Vietnam are inter-related. Ngo Van's book helps that struggle.

Other reading:

Revolutionary History Vol.3 No.2 (Autumn 1990)
Vietnam and Trotskyism by Simon Pirani (1987)

It's a fit-up

By Harry Sloan

I was offered better sex on my way into Tesco's. Obviously I was interested. I stumped up my £2.25. But, predictably, I was left less than satisfied with the result.

The magazine that promised 'Better sex than you deserve!' was one of the stable of new magazines dealing with men's health.

While women's health magazines have been around for years, almost all of them focused obsessively on issues of diet and slimness, the men's mags have emerged relatively recently, centring much more on 'performance' - and the selling of a range of sporty toys for the boys.

Fitness rather than fatness is the niche they have spotted in the market, but the target audience appears to include men who prefer to let their wallet to the work.

Not many men will be able or willing to match up to the knacker routines suggested to hone their sagging torsos into the lithe, athletic bodies depicted in the photos. According to the latest survey just 30 percent of men over 40 were on or below their ideal weight - suggesting that in the battle of the bulge the flab is winning

hands down.

XL magazine is up-front about the varying level of men's commitment to losing weight. It offers three levels of exercises: 'No messing about'; 'Gently does it', and 'Can't be arsed' - with exercises that could be done while watching the telly.

A survey of readers of *Men's Health* magazine, a section of the male population most aware of health and fitness issues, showed just 46 percent claimed to visit a fitness centre, while 51 percent said they exercised at least three times every week.

The new mags cash in on men's insecurity and aspirations, and rehearse some sensible injunctions not to smoke, drink too much, or eat fatty food - while they market consolation prizes to the out of shape, in the form of a predictable range of aftershaves, cars, sunglasses, watches as well as designer sportsware.

Adverts

Adverts for heart rate monitors (£69.99 to £299.99) remind us that exercise can kill. Men are urged to seek BUPA health screens (£342!) while features compare aerobic cycles (£185 to £1,999), publicise a new £3,500 mountain bike, and tout a range of

new, healthy super-knicks - at a mere £30 per pair!

The mags are glossy, colourful and full of bite-size articles designed to tempt the sad and unwary.

Of course sex sells magazines, even when it is only hinted at. On a quick skim through, *Men's Health* fell open at page 20, where the headline 'Improve your position on the job' turned out, disappointingly, to deal with adjusting your chair while using a computer.

It's not the only disappointment. The August-September issue of *Men's Health*, researched especially for this article, promised a tantalising feature on 'Great Sex: 20 ways to perfect your style'. But this gutted punter found that there is no such article: instead there was a comparison of different quack remedies for baldness, and a depressingly psychological article on how to get sex (and get it right) on the first date.

The headline article in *Men's Health* which triggered this investigation, offering 'Better sex' under the title 'All Night Long', and the bold assertion that 'Men who work out regularly report increased libidos', consisted of a few suggestive monochrome photographs accompanying an exhausting routine of exercises.

"Men who work out moderately and regularly report increased libidos, more satisfying sex and fewer erectile failures," claims an expert.

Whew! Pretty hot stuff! So what are the facts?

We are told that "in a study" 78 men followed a moderate aerobic programme [a staggering four times a week!] for nine months. At the end of this the results were ambiguous "the men reported their rate of sexual intercourse had leaped an average of 30 percent, with 26 percent more orgasms. An increased frequency of masturbation was also recorded."

But all this raises a series of unanswered questions. How sexually active were these men beforehand? How many "erectile failures" did they have? Is this why they resorted to a punitive regime of exercise? Did their obsessive physical jerks lead to the departure of bored partners, triggering the rise in masturbation?

Casualties

Indeed the same article confesses that, as many of us suspected, the super-fit are no homier than us ordinary fat folk: 'Marathon runners, triathletes and strongest man competitors find that their sexual desire greatly decreases.' If you overdo the



Elaborate, expensive toys are the order of the day

exercises, the result can be 'a very fit man who's always got a headache'.

Sex - and the quest for it - is the more of less hidden agenda behind most of these magazines. *XL* is more down-market, with a gratuitous article on 'Husbands of readers' wives' (who egg on their wives to strip for photos which they send to soft-porn magazines: is this healthy?), and a consumer testing of sex toys.

But the mags also offer a range of handy hints which many socialist men will appreciate: how to tie a bow-tie; a step-by-step guide on how to look at women on the beach; wacky hints on how to use childhood pictures of yourself to get

women into bed; consoling evidence that it is healthier to eat and sleep alone; and healthy recipes you can cook quickly - assuming you have a vast array of complex ingredients to hand. After ploughing through three of these magazines for this article, this correspondent was exhausted and despondent.

There was nobody in any of the pictures looking as old and knackered as me. And short of a Doctor Who-style transformation, no amount of exercise, calorie counting - or magazine reading - could redress the balance.

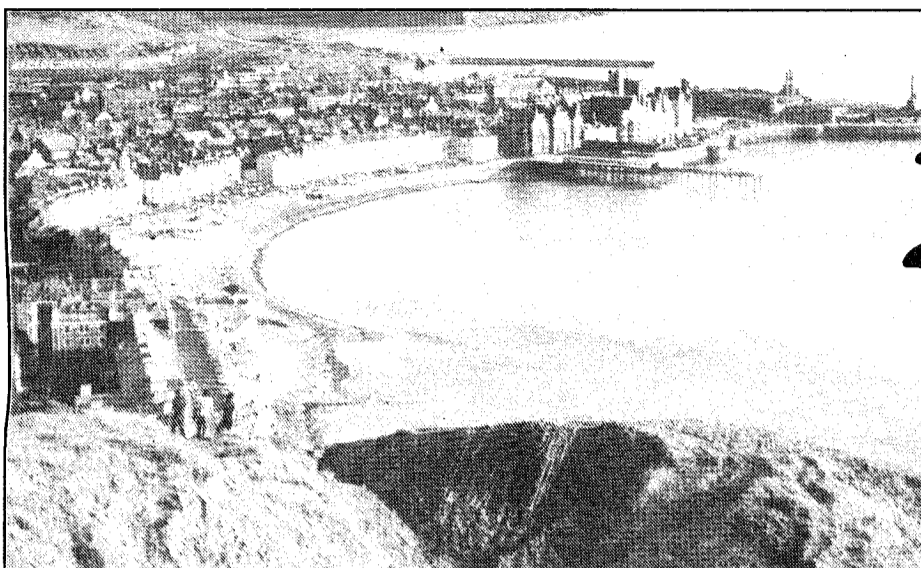
It took a couple of pints and a pork pie to restore my spirits.

COURSES AND SESSIONS INCLUDE:

Art and revolution; anarchism and the Spanish revolution; the origins of the revolutionary programme; Marx and Lenin on the State; Bolshevik party and youth; Stalin; Proletkult, revolutionary press; permanent revolution; Post-war marxism; party, class and social movements; developments in popular culture; ecology; socialism after the fall of the wall; women and the revolutionary party; the popular 'introduction to Marxism' series; Women in Latin America; Bolshevik history; intensive course on the State; women revolutionaries; Revolutions – Germany, Russia, Vietnam and China; the Fourth International; fighting racism in World War Two; Gramsci; the National Question; and more!

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Burmese pro-democracy leader freed

Whose tune will she sing?

By K.Govindan

Aung San Suu Kyi's unconditional release from house arrest on July 12 by the military junta has raised the spirits of Burmese oppositionists.

In 1988 a brief "pro-democracy" spring swept through Burma demanding an end to military rule, human rights and democracy. It was led mainly by students and young Buddhist monks. Nevertheless Suu Kyi, daughter of the national hero Aung San, soon became a symbol and spokesperson for the frustrations and hopes of the Burmese people.

The regime which had isolated Burma from the rest of the world and pursued autarkic economic policies reacted with typical brutality, killing 1,000 demonstrators in one month and up to 3,000 in total.

Hundreds of thousands fled to the border regions for safety. They were protected and supported by ethnic minority armies who have been



Facing a new junta offensive: Karen National Army rebels

fighting separatist struggles for decades. The two forces formed a National Coalition Government for the Union of Burma with Karens, Mons and others.

The regime had succeeded in making its two bitterest enemies into friends.

Despite Suu Kyi's arrest multi-party elections were held in 1990 where her party,

the National League for Democracy (NLD), rode to victory winning 392 of the 485 contested seats.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) comprising senior military figures took power, ignoring the results and stepping up repression.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner's release may be indicative of the regime's self-confidence rather than weakness. A number of the armies of the seven ethnic minority groups have concluded separate peace agreements with the regime, relieving some of the pressure on its forces in the strategically important border regions.

In her book *Freedom From Fear* (Penguin 1991) Aung San Suu Kyi spells out her political programme. It is one of western liberal democracy, founded on Buddhist ethics and sensibilities.

For the national minorities she suggests that the removal of the dictatorship would resolve their grievances.

Much of the political initiative in recent years has

been in the hands of the students living on the border and in Thailand, through the All Burma Students Democratic Front.

The NLD by comparison has been weak and divided. Some of its members have been participating in the SLORC's National Convention to draft a new constitution.

Most of the opposition movement called for a boycott of the process, knowing that it is simply a sham to legitimise military involvement in politics. Now many will be watching to see how Suu Kyi responds.

SLORC recently began an offensive against the Karen National Army. While the US government makes regular protests about the production and sale of drugs it nevertheless maintains its contact with opium warlord Khun Sa.

The Rangoon government is also involved in the drugs trade. Generals who serve in the border regions and in the ruby-rush Mong Su area are enriching themselves.

The timing of Suu Kyi's

release may be in response to a possible US trade ban. The regime has begun opening up the country to foreign investors, particularly in the oil and gas sector. The US's Total and Unocal are two of the largest.

The Japanese government has been a large aid donor, pledging Y1 billion (US\$11.5 million) in March and writing off Y4 billion of debt in May this year. South-east Asian countries have been investing in Burma while protesting concern about its human rights record.

A Channel 4 documentary showed how villagers are kept in chains and used as slave labour in infrastructure projects. The army press-gangs people to carry ammunition and goods for soldiers. Where a family cannot provide a member for these projects it has to pay a huge fine.

Further investment will only keep these tyrants in power.

A caged bird has been set free. Will it now be allowed to sing, and if so, whose tune will it choose?

WORLD NEWS

OVER one million homeworkers are largely ignored by the trade unions. BOB WOOD spoke to PEGGY ALEXANDER of the Leeds-based National Group on Homeworking about the role of unions in organising homeworkers and the potential impact of minimum wage legislation.

THE NATIONAL Group on Homeworking (NGH) is a membership organisation open to any individual or organisation that wants to do something about homeworkers' rights.

We're supported by local authorities, church groups, trade unions, advice agencies and individuals. The GMB is the only union which is a full member at the moment, but we are working closely with MSF and the TGWU.

Trade unions are one of our priorities. We work to ensure that the needs of homeworkers are met as far as possible because most of the time they are totally forgotten.

The number of homeworkers in this country who are members of trade unions is negligible and I think that there are a lot of reasons for that. The main one is that the unions haven't offered homeworkers anything.

For example, the GMB has recently produced a new health and safety pack that says nothing about health and safety outside the workplace. We are doing a lot of work with trade unions to improve this.

At the moment we are working with the Scottish TUC to produce a code of practice basically for trade union negotiators, so that we can say "think about the homeworkers as well."

Many trade unionists are worried that one way to cut costs is to sack people in the workplace and to put the work out to homeworkers. Poor rates of pay and conditions for homeworkers can undermine conditions in the workplace.

If you are doing collective bargaining, you try and get the best for everyone in the workplace, even if they may not all be union members. When an hourly rate is being negotiated, we think it's important to think about piece rates for people working at home.

We believe in the right to work at home and that it should be a choice. Obviously it isn't now, but it should be. What we've got to work towards is a situation where working at home is alright and is not affecting what's going on in the workplace.

We work with the MSF looking at teleworkers. It's a totally different emphasis from the Scottish TUC, who are concerned with more 'tra-

No health and safety, employment rights or minimum wage

When exploitation begins at home



Low pay for homeworkers can undermine conditions in unionised workplaces

ditional' forms of homeworking: sewing, packing and so on.

We want the unions to see homeworking as a trade union issue. If you are concerned with employment rights for all, how can you miss out this group of workers? We reason that there are over a million of them. They are mainly women and a lot of them are black.

It's important that the trade union movement does something. In the long term, it could see an increase in membership.

One problem is the question of membership subscriptions, because if people are working irregularly and for a

"In other parts of the world, trade unions have successfully organised homeworkers"

pittance you can't expect them to pay dues when they haven't got the work.

In other parts of the world, trade unions have successfully organised homeworkers. There are homeworking groups in many European countries. Apart from Germany (where it's the church) in all the European countries it's the trade unions which do the organising.

The Netherlands are quite important. The socialist trade

union federation in Holland has set up a Women's Union which is open to all women whether they work or not. It provides training and childcare for women and it makes sure that the other unions are looking at policies for women. They have taken up the issue of homeworking in a big way.

In India, the SEWA (Self-Employed Women's federation) are an inspiration to everyone around the world. What they've done with less resources than we've got is amazing. They are increasingly important in the state of Gujarat where they are based. A great deal has been done to organise credit unions and child care schemes. There's an awful lot going on in other countries but not in this country. If unions want to organise homeworkers they've got to re-think how they work.

In Bromley in Leeds there's a local homeworking unit which has worked with a group of women setting up a co-operative. They realised they were all losing out by getting ripped off by the 'middlemen': people giving out the work and taking a percentage.

They were all on different rates and so on. There is also a Homeworkers Association developing in West Yorkshire. Some of the homeworkers want to organise social occasions - they never get out of the house, you know!

Organisation builds confidence. I've been to meetings

with women, particularly Asian women, who a year ago would not have gone further than the end of the street, but now they're going to meetings in the centre of Leeds. Last year a homeworker who had never done anything like it before coming involved in the homeworkers' movement, stood up and spoke at a Euro-

pean Commission meeting. So that side of it is really important.

There are also support groups around the country which organise homeworkers together, particularly Asian women. Although they're not trade unions, they're developing a spirit of collective action. They have to be run completely differently to how trade unions are traditionally organised.

In Rochdale the local homeworkers group were talking about health and safety at a meeting I went to. They were talking about damp and the problems of trying to deal with that.

The main issue for homeworkers is employment status. It's a really complicated issue. The vast majority of homeworkers and their employers think that they are self-employed. Because they work at home they are told they are self-employed.

But cases taken to Industrial Tribunals show that they

Asian women, who a year ago would not have gone further than the end of the street, are now going to meetings in the centre of Leeds.

are not really self-employed. The problem is that if you complain, you lose the work.

Being an employee gives you certain rights which are denied to homeworkers - maternity leave and holiday pay, for example. It's a bit like the situation in the building industry with so much casual work.

Let's look at the situation of homeworkers in the debate about the minimum wage. If minimum wage legislation talks about employees, then homeworkers won't be included. Employers will dis-

cover that saying people are self-employed is a good way to avoid paying the minimum wage. Homeworkers won't be in a position to challenge that.

It won't just be homeworkers and building workers affected. The whole workforce will be under threat. So it's vital that any minimum wage legislation refers to workers, not employees. It's interesting that homeworkers were covered by the old Wages Council legislation because that referred to workers.

We found in a survey that some of the best paid homeworkers (compared to other homeworkers - they were still paid poverty wages) were Asian women doing sewing work, because they were working in an area covered by the old Wages Councils. The rates were below the old Wages Council minimum but were significantly higher than those for homeworkers doing other work.

The other issue that any minimum wage legislation would need to look at is the question of piecework and how the rate is calculated. Someone sitting in a factory in decent conditions is going to produce at a much faster rate than a homeworker with children around.

Most homeworkers face childcare problems. They often work at night after the children have gone to bed. The need for childcare is as great for people who work in the home as it is for those who work outside the home.

One of the main problems homeworkers have is finding work with decent firms.

It would certainly help if jobs were advertised with Job Centres (they aren't at the moment) and if there was some kind of regulation scheme. Unfortunately this is the age of self-regulation.

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FEATURE

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WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

UP AGAINST mass unemployment, rampant employers with savage anti-union laws, and a war on hard-won public services, the working class in Britain faces a real crisis – an avoidable crisis created by the historic failure of its official leadership.

Socialist Outlook exists to build a new type of working class leadership, based on class struggle and revolutionary socialism.

The capitalist class, driven by its own crisis, and politically united by its need to maximise profits at the expense of the workers, has had determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal Tory high command.

The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions, and to fragment and weaken the resistance, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time.

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively total surrender, while ditching any pretence of being a socialist alternative. Every retreat encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form of reformism, seeking only improved conditions within capitalism.

We reject reformism, not because we are against reforms, but because we know that full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy, can never be achieved under capitalism.

Nor, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers states and degenerated USSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing the working class.

We are a marxist current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by armchair academics, but the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change.

We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the

working class to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, to unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth – and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and worldwide.

Socialist Outlook is above all an internationalist current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises in over 40 countries.

Unlike some other groups on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. This degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from struggles in the labour movement, playing into right wing hands.

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland, Ireland and Wales should be left to await revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now for their demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

But propaganda alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken into the unions, the Labour Party and every campaign and struggle in which workers and the oppressed fight for their rights.

To strengthen this fight we press for united front campaigns on key issues such as racism and fascism – in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate differences.

If you agree with what you see in *Socialist Outlook*, and want to join with us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in towns across the country.



Sunday 6 August Bosnia march will be larger than July demo'

What's HAPPENING

AUGUST

Sat 5

NO JUSTICE? no peace! national demonstration called by Joy Gardner and Brian Douglas campaigns. Meet 12 noon Embankment tube.

Sun 6

BOSNIA Solidarity campaign demonstration Hyde Park, Marble Arch tube 2.00pm for march to Trafalgar Square.

Tues 8

ASLEF rail strike

Sat 12

SOUTH African women's day commemoration rally 11.00am Praxis Centre, Pott Street Bethnal Green. tickets £5/£3. Details: 0171 924 9033

Weds 23 - Mon 28
SOCIALIST Outlook Summer School Aberystwyth. Send your £35 (waged), £15 (unwaged) deposit now to 'Socialist Outlook Summer School', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Fri 25

ASLEF rail strike

Sat 25

SUPPORT Guy's hospital 12 noon - 6pm King's Stairs Gardens, Jamaica Road, Bermondsey. Details: 0171 327 9000.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9

ASLEF rail strike

IRELAND and the trade unions conference called by Manchester TUC.

Tues 12

ASLEF rail strike

Sat 16

ERNEST Mandel memorial rally, subject to confirmation. 6pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Speakers include: United Secretariat of Fourth International, Charlie van Gelderen,

Sat 23 September

LINDMINES day of action details phone/fax 01296 632056.

Sat 30

FACE demonstration against education cuts, London.

OCTOBER

Fri 13-Sun 15

AFRICA in the world Manchester civic celebration. Details Simon Katzenellenbogen on 0161 275 3112/ fax 275 3098.

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Socialist OUTLOOK

NEXT ISSUE

This is the Summer break issue of *Socialist Outlook*. our next publication date is September 9.

FREE INSIDE:

8-page youth paper *Liberation!*

Stop the West arming Nigerian junta!

By Paul Walker

The sentencing to death of 15 leading oppositionists and the life sentence imposed on Olusegun Abasanjo, a former President of Nigeria, on 14 July has underscored the crippling political crisis unfolding in Nigeria.

Supposedly found culpable of planning a coup, the convicted were simply guilty of organising resistance to the military dictatorship.

In the two years since the 12 June annulment of the civilian elections following a result that non to pleased the army (a victory for the bourgeois populist candidate Chief Mashood Abiola) Nigeria has been wracked by civil disorder and economic chaos.

Despite the repression of critical newspapers, the jailing of oppositionists and the takeover of the offices of the Nigerian Labour Congress, the military regime has been unable to restore any semblance of normal life in Nigeria.

On 12 June this year a nation-wide security operation was required to ensure calm on the second anniversary of the annulled elections. Tanks and lorry loads of anti-riot policemen and soldiers were on the streets on a day when businesses in the south west, the scene of violent protest, preferred to remain closed.

The critical reactions of western Governments to the latest events are based on the fear that the roof might fall in and with it the disinte-

gration of the Nigerian Federation into a civil war.

That Shell might lose control of the oil fields in Ogoniland is a nightmare scenario for the multinationals.

The hypocrisy of the attacks made by the British government on the Nigerian regime is now so routine as to be banal. While the left hand wags a finger, the right signs export licences for military equipment contracts to Lagos. Supposedly operating a policy of "a presumption of denial" since December 1993, the Government has permitted twenty contracts since January 1994 and denied one. The Foreign Office has been forced to admit that CS gas and rubber bullets have been licensed in the last 18 months.

Other suspected contracts are for tank spares for the Scorpion 100s which the Coventry based company Alvis supplied in the 1980s.

These are the tanks that were rolled out onto the streets on 12 June to ensure no re-appearance of protests against the regime.

The Labour Party seems content to hide behind a campaign calling for greater transparency in arms transfers to Nigeria and demanding that the Foreign Office gets assurances that none of the equipment will be used for internal repression.

Rather than calling for more radical measures, such as an arms and oil embargo, the Blair leadership is preparing for power by practising Foreign Office clichés while oppositionists sit on death row in Lagos.



Howard's new plans give the green light for racist harassment by an army of freelance immigration officers

Tories launch racist snoopers' charter

JOHN MAJOR'S crisis-ridden government is ruthlessly playing the race card in its efforts to retrieve its lost electoral support.

Leading the charge is right wing Home Secretary Michael Howard. As we warned in *Socialist Outlook* 87, he is forcing through new measures designed to increase suspicion and harassment of black people under the guise of detecting 'illegal immigrants'.

On July 18 Howard proudly announced that head teachers, college admission officers and hospital managers will be called upon to act as freelance immigration officers, fingering and denouncing black people and those from ethnic minorities whom they suspect – or claim to suspect of being illegal immigrants.

Other government departments will also be dragged into the act, while the vast majority of black and ethnic minority people are British citizens.

If Howard has his way, and the new snoopers' and racists' charter is implemented, it will only be a matter of time before the outrages begin, with black patients denied hospital care, black students denied education and black claimants denied social security.

The labour movement must challenge this reactionary legislation, and prepare to defend the first victims of Howard's cynical racist play.