

Socialist OUTLOOK

Demand real Trade Union action

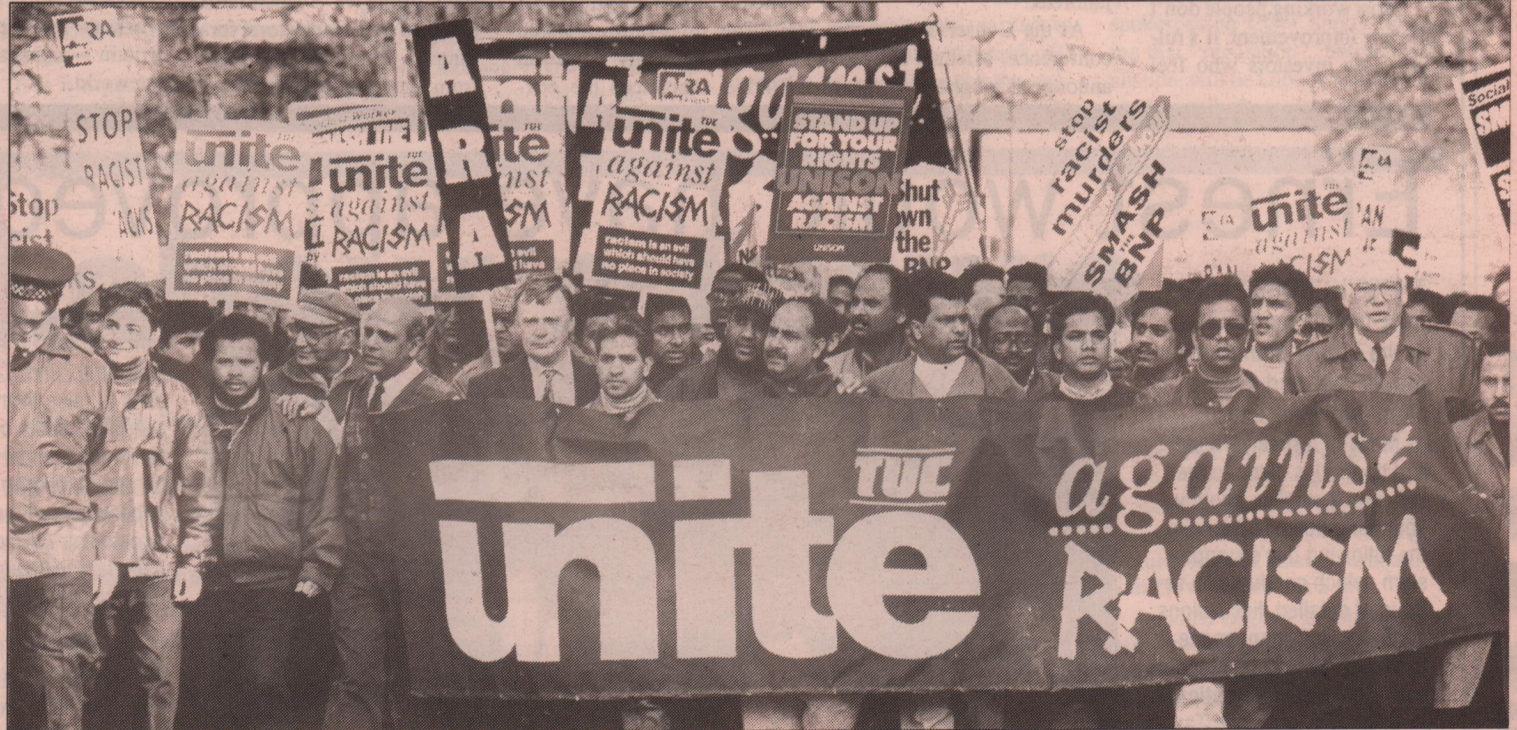
FIGHT AGAINST RACIST LAWS

CABINET DIVISIONS meant Michael Howard did not announce the details of new immigration legislation at Tory party conference as expected. But that doesn't mean that this attack has been shelved - though it is unlikely to contain fines for bosses who employ those without status.

Certainly we know from Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley's announcement that a huge swathe of asylum seekers will have their benefit stopped from January 8, 1996 - a change doesn't require an Act of Parliament, just new regulations.

In addition, the Queen's speech at the opening of the new parliamentary session is likely to contain proposals to

- **IMPOSE** immigration checks on those claiming benefits, health care, housing and education
- **DENY** these services to a large number of people whose status is not settled, as well as to so called 'illegals'
- **LIMIT** the number of countries from which asylum requests will even be considered
- **IMPOSE** further visa restrictions on countries from which asylum seekers come
- **WITHDRAW** the right of oral appeal from some asylum



Union leaders must be a part of organising the anti-racist struggles for more than one day a year

Photo: Andrew Ward

seekers

The impact of such changes, with their emphasis on 'internal controls', rather than border controls, would be an extremely negative one not only for refugees and asylum seekers but for all black people in this country. The proposal for checks on the status of service users will require policing by working people, many of them active trade unionists.

While many anti-racist organisations have been

organising conferences and meetings to discuss the likely changes, very little has happened so far within the unions - which must be a central focus for organising resistance. UNISON did organise a conference in October but it was not seriously built.

Over the last decade there have been some successes in forcing trade unions to fight racism; most notably in taking up deportation cases affecting their own members, but also in

pressuring the TUC itself into calling demonstrations such as that on October 28.

Now task for every trade unionist in unions whose members will be called on to implement these pernicious measures is to fight for their organisation to back measures of non-cooperation against these proposals. Many workers will be angry about the idea that they should police service users, but without trade union organisation there is a danger that they will either

feel impotent to achieve anything or will end up being picked off individually. Collective action with official trade union support could make internal controls inoperable - it must be fought for vigorously.

INSIDE:
Behind the Tories
immigration
witchhunt: pages 8 & 9

What we think

'National security', electoral insecurity

THE TORIES may hold the election in the spring of 1997, but October's party conferences showed the general outlines of the campaigns to come.

On the right, a Conservative government which has brought real success to Britain's exploitative ruling class but — riven top to bottom on European integration — is unable to show a way forward.

In the centre, a Labour Party suffering from Blair's blitzkrieg. The clique around Blair are pushing new Labour to the right at a pace which even scares many of the Labour MPs who back Blair.

On the left, there's disparate bands of those who defend the real interests of the workers and the oppressed.

The real political challenge facing the Conservatives is how to hold on to power.

They've done their bit by their class. The British economy is now growing by three per cent a year, and the government will try hard to reduce income tax even further.

Last week, the FTSE index, which measures the value of shares, reached an all-time high.

Most working people don't see any improvement. It's ruling class investors who feel

the benefit, not workers, pensioners, parents, students or the unemployed. Less income tax and more profits means worse education, lower pay, worse welfare, health and social services and higher indirect taxes, like VAT.

Security

To win back the votes of working people, the Conservatives are trying to launch a big propaganda war. They want to show that the Tory party is the party of internal and external security: against criminals and asylum seekers at home, and against 'Eurocrats' and potential invaders abroad. It is a natural extension of the law and order policies of Michael Howard.

On compensation rules, information for prisoners, parole for IRA prisoners, police authorities and more Howard has been overturned by judicial review.

The damaging writ served on Howard by sacked Prison Service chief Derek Lewis is a product of the government's high-handed attempt to whip up fear-driven appeals for stronger state powers in the aftermath of the Parkhurst jailbreak.

At the Conservative party conference, Michael Howard announced tougher sentences

for burglars and sexual offenders, Peter Lilley brought in £200 million cuts in welfare aid to those seeking asylum.

Defence Secretary Michael Portillo — fiercely opposing defence spending cuts — invented, and then denounced, a series of non-existent EU proposals: common military uniforms; a 40-hour week for the armed forces (quite a good idea); a common military policy.

This may be very good for the Tory party conference, but it doesn't convince working people. In fact, it no longer convinces the ruling class either.

Economy

For the bulk of the ruling class, it no longer matters whether Labour or the Tories win the general election. Chancellor Clarke plans a three billion pound cut in income tax — but Labour could easily cut the same amount with its windfall levy on the profits of privatised utilities.

Neither party will return public spending on capital and infrastructure even to the modest levels of Thatcher.

Labour's clear advantage is Blair's solid support for Europe integration. When Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind announced the gov-

ernment's goal of a free trade zone linking the EU with Canada and the USA, he reflected the Eurosceptic opponents of European integration.

No-one, except perhaps Mr Rifkind, is convinced by that. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted last week, the US President's trade representative Micky Kantor now argues that the US needs to base itself on the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) bloc: "You know where our real strategic concerns are? They're in Asia — China, Japan, Korea". Kantor went on, "The Pacific, for better or worse, is our destiny."

Europe

Britain's ruling class has no practical alternative to European integration. They must force massive cuts in social spending and state borrowing quickly enough to meet the criteria for full economic and monetary union or be caught out in the coming world trade war. Labour is the party that will do that, the Tories are the party that will try to do it, if the right wing of the Tory party can be outflanked.

Ironically, the Tory 'strong state' offensive — which is so essential to their electoral fortunes — could stop Britain from entering the centre of



Michael Howard

Photo: Andrew Wiard

Europe: the start-up costs of further workfare and law and order plans will push up government spending.

In the run-up to next year's Inter-Governmental Conference, Blair and the dominant faction of Britain's property-owning class will push hard for anything necessary to secure integration.

Socialist Outlook will oppose them. European integration, like the nationalist law and order frenzy of Howard, Portillo, Lilley and Rifkind, offers no way forward the workers and oppressed of Britain — or anywhere else in the world.

Democracy in the NUT

EVEN THE most vicious dictators need votes once in a while.

The plebiscite — a one off vote for or against a certain candidate or proposal — is their favourite tool. While giving the illusion of choice, the lack of any practical alternative means the outcome is almost always assured.

This is why Doug McAvoy, the General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, is seeking to use the same method to manipulate the members of his union.

He has already overturned the policy of the NUT's conference and Special Salaries Conference in this way — overturning a planned one-day strike against the underfunding of education.

Plebiscites and postal ballots do not produce the same results as considered discussions in the union's conferences and local divisions. Voting by post, teachers have no idea of the opinions, confidence or ideas of teachers in other schools and other parts of the country.

McAvoy now plans to keep these cautious postal plebiscites coming. He plans for decisions of Annual Conference to be referred to plebiscites, and for changes to the unions rules to be out directly to the union's members. Of course the ballot papers and subsequent surveys will be written by Mr. McAvoy himself, in order to ensure the most cautious response possible comes back.

As working people gear up to place their demands on a future Labour government, other union leaders will attempt to replace union democracy and real discussion with these undemocratic plebiscites. Working people must prepare now to defeat such attempts in the future.

Ernest would have approved

THREE HUNDRED and forty people participated in the Ernest Mandel memorial rally and symposium two weeks ago.

Many of Ernest's friends and comrades came to the rally and a smaller, slightly younger, audience attended the following day's symposium, which conducted a serious of detailed discussions on the contributions made to Marxism made by Mandel and the Fourth International.

Billed rally speakers Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Charlie van Gelderen and Alan Thornett were joined by three leading Fourth Internationalists, Terry Conway, Penny Duggan and Francois Vercammen. Anne Conway, of the Irish section of the Fourth International, was particularly warmly welcomed to the platform.

Charlie van Gelderen, one of two surviving founders of the Fourth International in 1938, opened the meeting recalling Mandel's life. Noting Mandel's work on the strategy of permanent revo-



Alan Thornett, Anne Conway, Terry Conway and Tariq Ali

Photo: Simon Kennedy

lution, Anne Conway linked the Irish struggle to Bosnia's struggle for self-determination. Penny Duggan discussed the strengthening of the FI through its feminist politics and the effort, much supported by Mandel, to build revolutionary youth organisations and common work between them, like its

successful annual summer camp. Tariq Ali, former editor of *Socialist Challenge*, recalled how Mandel was a link between the generation of leaders of the Fourth International in the 1970s, and the experiences of the early communist movement.

Like the rally, the symposium's meetings were hon-

est and good-hearted, with a high level of discussion and presentation. Some people became *Socialist Outlook* sellers after the symposium, and others joined the Fourth International's Supporters' Association. Ernest would have warmly approved: it was a modest but real step forward for the Fourth Inter-

national in Britain.

It also marked a real advance for the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund. The fund aims to raise over £3,000 towards the costs of building an Ernest Mandel Study Centre and helping to secure the publications of the Fourth International: *Inprecor*, *International Viewpoint* and *Inprecor para Latin America*.

So far, over £1,000 is in for the Memorial Fund — mainly from donations at the rally. The Fund ends in December, when leaders of the Fourth International's sections in Europe meet in the Amsterdam building which will house the Ernest Mandel Study Centre.

■ *Socialist Outlook* readers and supporters groups around Britain plan to raise nearly £400 a week to complete the fund by 3 December. Make your donation payable to 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund' and post to EMMF, PO Box 1109, London N4 2JU.

'New Labour' prepares for government

"Blair 10 - Labour Left 0"

By Dave Packer

SOCIALIST Outlook argued that this year's Labour Party Conference we would see Blair move further onto the offensive, building on his victories against the left over Clause 4.

However the scale of Blair's triumph took us by surprise. A 10 - 0 victory over the left (as the *Observer* put it - adding that 'Old Labour' was lucky to get nil!), was unprecedented in recent history. With the help of the trade union bureaucracy he was able to set the left up, knock it down, and push it firmly into touch.

We argued that CLP delegates led by the organised to commit Labour to even minimal socialist policies that could address the problems of the low paid, sick, elderly, jobless youth and the oppressed in our society.

Attempting to recoup ground lost over C4 and organised in the Socialist Campaign Group Network and in other co-ordinations, the left challenged Blair with a highly focused delegate's bulletin and rightly daily on policy issues such as support for a commitment to a £4.15 minimum wage, resolutions designed to stop the erosion of the trade union link.

Class basis

They correctly recognised that this issue lies at the centre of Blair's aim to shift the class basis of the Party. The left opposed the leadership's concessions on grant-maintained schools, its willingness to countenance the development of a multi-tiered education system and its new rule book. It also organised to defend Liz Davies, who was set up just before Conference, to no avail.

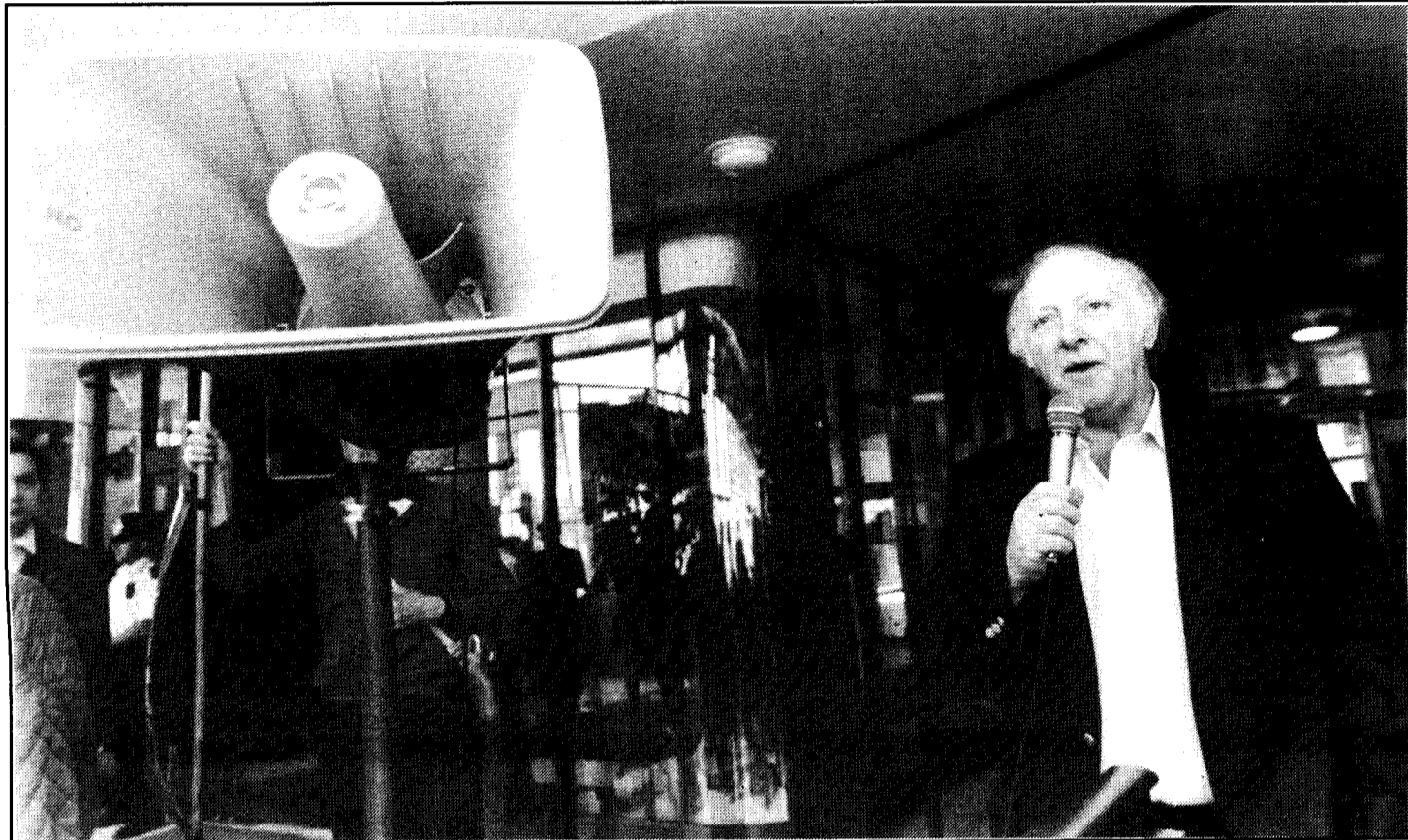
At the end of the day the socialists were engaged in little more than a rear-guard action. With the help of John Edmonds of the GMB and Bill Morris of the T&GWU, the Blair bandwagon won all the votes taken at conference. Conference avoided specifying the minimum wage and even defeated the Constituency left on Trident, while a call for defence spending to be cut to the European average was effectively headed off.

Orchestrated

It was one of the most successfully stage-managed conferences ever, which provided the media with choice soundbites and slick suited images. Bloody noses for the left were orchestrated over Liz Davies and Arthur Scargill's tactically questionable efforts to reraise Clause 4.

Worse, Clare Short's speech against Liz and the Leeds North-East CLP on behalf of the NEC ruling, has set the scene for a possible new round of witchhunting. But stage management is not new. It was the weakness and failure of the left to challenge it that was new!

Blair delivered a visionary speech which mobilised the delegates and won widespread acclaim. There is no doubt that his emotive and psychologically tuned but vacuous rhetoric was effective. Even many Tory MP were impressed, one enough to cross the floor of the House to embrace Tony Blair's New Labour.



Scargill: "Start spreading the news, I'm leaving toda-a-a-a-ay"

Photo: Linn Hjort

Blair unashamedly pilfered the ideas and even the language of Wilson, Kennedy and Clinton, but also of Newt Gingrich, the high-tech ideologue of the US right. Blair's biblical references and the ideals of Christian socialism, interspersed with a constant, rhythmic repetition of key words like "you", "me", "new", "young", "fairness", "the future", jarred on some of his audience, but not in all cases for the right reasons.

This was particularly so amongst the ageing ranks of trade union bar-

ons, who today preside over plummeting union memberships and a situation in which only 4 per cent of employed youth under 20 are organised in trade unions.

Evangelism

Despite the evangelism, morality plays and one-off windfall taxes, none of this cuts much ice in the inner cities or on the housing estates: nor will it inspire the county's disillusioned and angry youth, less than half of whom voted at the last General Election.

Blair's unrivalled triumph was bought at a price. But the trade union bureaucracy, frightened to rock the boat, wanted only a small price for their loyalty: a fragile agreement from Blair not to force their share of the Conference vote below 50 per cent in the foreseeable future, an end to compulsory competitive tendering in local government, a clearer commitment on union rights of recognition and representation, an end to restrictions on the use of 'check off' schemes by employers for the payment of union subscriptions.

Another carrot was thrown by the leader in his Conference speech. The RMT was given an ambiguous 'guarantee' for the existence of a publicly owned rail network under Labour. According to the *Sunday Telegraph*, one union baron described the outcome of Conference as "trebles all round"! Unfortunately the promises on rail has already been put into question, with new Labour transport spokesperson Clare Short explaining that "regulation", not renationalisation, will be Labour's immediate goal for rail after privatisation.

Labour's future

By Dave Packer

IT IS CLEAR that sharp tensions exist between Blair's project to transform the Party and sections of the union bureaucracy and Parliamentary Labour Party.

In particular there is an anxiety about their exclusion from future privileges, but their fears were allayed. As one boss of a big union explained, "It has proved easier to politic under cover of Blairism than it ever was in the old days." (*Sunday Telegraph*, 8.10.95)

However, there is also a fear that they won't be able to hold the line if Blair goes far, especially when in government. But these fault-lines are not open ruptures today. They want a Blair government at any price. Nor are they likely to rock the boat until well into a Labour Government when open fissures may appear under mass pressure from below.

Even 'left' bureaucrat Rodney Bickerstaffe, when questioned

about the left's weak challenge to Blair, snorted angrily to the camera: "What do you expect? We can't make the Party look like a floppy rabbit just before a General Election."

That says it all.

Conference confirmed the two main goals of the Labour right. The first is to reassure the bosses that Tony Blair is their man - a reliable servant; the second is to win sections of the professional and middle classes.

Central to achieving these goals is Blair's unconditional acceptance of the capitalist market and his desire to sever the historic links of the Labour Party with the trade unions.

The core of their plan is therefore to transform the Labour Party into a social democratic party like the German SPD, at best.

The spectre of continuing witchhunts against the left is an inevitable consequence of this policy. The new rule book consolidates OMOV and even provides for leadership plebiscites

(yes, like Stalin did), both of which are designed to by-pass the local party structures and representative democracy, in the name of 'real democracy' - the atomisation of a passive party membership which is subject to direct appeals from the leader from Walworth Road and through the media.

Scargill

At the end of Conference, Arthur Scargill, smarting from his 11-1 defeat, questioned his future membership of the party (there had already been reports of resignations of active party members in some fringe meetings, eg, by the editor of *Tribune*).

Despite Tony Benn's assurances that Scargill would not leave the fold, his well publicised stance undoubtedly flung up a discussion taking place in parts of the left about the need for a new party of labour. Some, prematurely in our view, see as imminent the demise of the Labour Party as the party of the working class movement: others just feel that there is an urgent

need for a socialist pole to the left of Labour.

However, the conditions are not ripe for the development of a new left party today. The faultlines in the Labour movement are not yet ruptures and the masses want a Labour Government not a split.

Socialist Outlook insists that the task is to build a consistent revolutionary current not prematurely establish a vacillating party that does not know whether it is meant to be the living soul of 'Old Labour' or a revolutionary departure from Labourism. If it was based on this contradiction it would soon go the way of the old ILP into the dustbin of history.

Even if a few year's experience of a 'new Labour' government radically changes the perceptions of the vanguard, calling today for a new socialist party is simply the luxury of armchair revolutionaries - and a diversion from the task of fighting the Tories and fighting Blairism, a fight that must be focused on where it counts most, in the unions and amongst the social movements and the youth.

LABOUR PARTY

Job centre bosses use courts to block CPSA strike

**By Nigel Danby,
North Humberside
ES CPSA, personal
capacity**

ON TUESDAY October 10 Employment Service management were granted a High Court injunction preventing CPSA taking strike action over pay. The strikes were due to start on October 12.

Management claimed that some CPSA members had voted who were not entitled to take part.

General Secretary Barry Reamsbottom says, "We are not about to go away simply because they have resorted to legal manoeuvring.

The court injunction is not a victory for Management, but an admission of weakness."

Despite the fighting talk, mem-

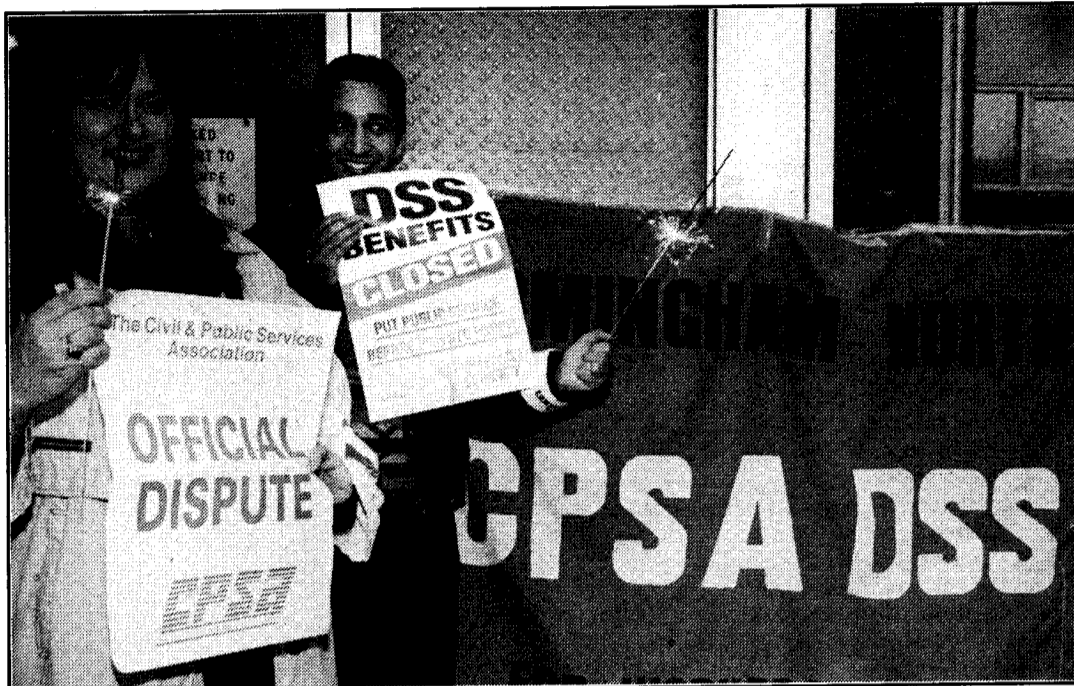
bers fear Reamsbottom is inching towards a sell-out. He sees his job as one of partnership with management. He talks of how the CPSA must "explore how the current crisis can be replaced by a new climate of industrial relations in which there is proper respect for the legitimate interests of each party."

Cosy chats

The problems of the Employment Service cannot be solved by cosy chats between bosses and trade union bureaucrats.

ES management treat Job Centre workers like machines. And the only time when you take notice of a machine is when it stops working.

CPSA members in the Employment Service will soon be re-balloted on strike action. A massive yes-vote will show management just what we think of them and their legal antics.



These striking DSS members don't listen to Reamsbottom's sell-out antics

Photo: Mark Salmon

FACE looking forward



February 10 conference should be built across the unions and beyond

Mark Salmon

**By Roy Leach
NUT Executive,
personal capacity**

BETWEEN now and the November 28 budget is a crucial period in FACE's campaign to reverse education cuts.

Recently published figures show that between in 1994 over 80,000 primary aged pupils were jammed into classes of over 30 (Times Education Supplement 21.10.95). This was before this year's round of cuts and redundancies.

It is quite possible that we could see the majority of primary pupils in impossibly large classes by this time

next year.

FACE is mapping out its strategy up to the general election. Up to budget day MPs are to be deluged with letters and post cards, culminating in "FAX jams" of Downing Street.

Local marches and rallies will further help to maintain the pressure to keep education centre stage.

On November 27 torchlit vigils will be held outside Town and County halls up and down the country.

Even with a loosening of Treasury purse strings it is likely that some schools will be unable to balance their

books without sackings. As an alternative governors and head teachers can refuse to implement cuts and set "needs related" budgets.

Despite the dire warnings, no governors have so far been penalised for pursuing this course of action.

FACE is organising a conference on February 10; one of the purposes of which is to give practical guidance on setting deficit budgets.

FACE goes from strength to strength and has no intention of letting up the pressure - it now looks certain to outlive this thoroughly discredited government.

Liverpool docks strike builds

FIVE HUNDRED dockers have been in dispute with their employers for a month. It began as a dispute about overtime, involving five workers.

Now the 500 have been dismissed for refusing to cross picket lines set up during the original dispute.

Casualisation of the workforce and the breaking of the Mersey docks and harbour joint shop steward committee are behind the dispute.

The TGWU has fought shy of official involvement. The support throughout Merseyside has, however, been magnificent.

There have been two demonstration of over two

thousand. Picketing has been well supported and substantial donations have been received from Ford and Halewood car workers and Sefton City council.

The pressure is already beginning to tell despite some scabs being brought in and some work being transferred. The company has offered 250 jobs back and a £10,000 pay off. This has been rejected.

This is a major national dispute which needs massive support, especially financial.

Money and messages of solidarity should go to: Edinburgh Park dockers club, Townsend Lane, Liverpool. Cheques payable to: Merseyside docks shop stewards appeal fund.

TRADE UNIONS

Pressure mounts to reinstate RMT militant

By Simon Kennedy

AS WE go to press the campaign to reinstate Chris Jones is escalating.

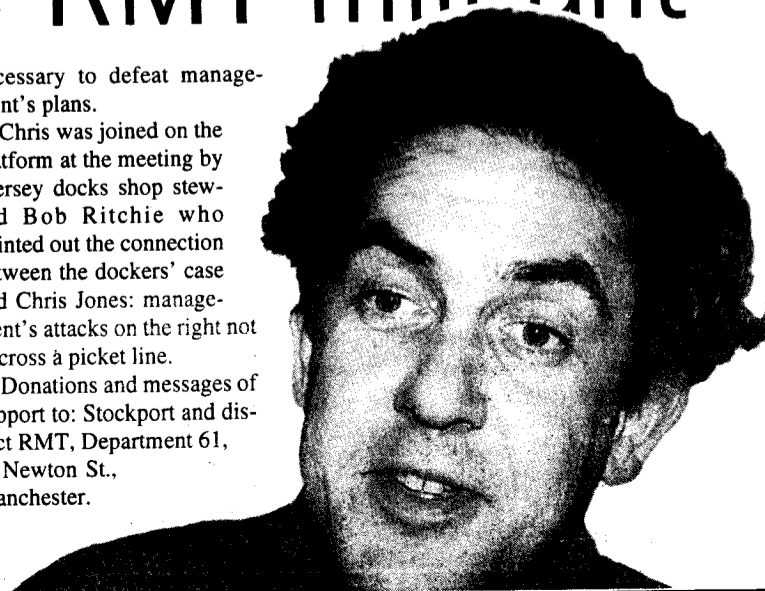
Jimmy Knapp is meeting the Managing Director of West Coast Inter-City to demand reinstatement. An interim industrial tribunal will take place on Friday 29 October and the RMT is holding a referendum ballot at Chris's Longsight Manchester depot.

Support from members and branches has flooded in. Everybody fully understands the sacking as an attack on union organisation. Pressure is mounting for a strike ballot. At last week's public meeting the mood was clear—action will be

necessary to defeat management's plans.

Chris was joined on the platform at the meeting by Mersey docks shop steward Bob Ritchie who pointed out the connection between the dockers' case and Chris Jones: management's attacks on the right not to cross a picket line.

Donations and messages of support to: Stockport and district RMT, Department 61, 1 Newton St., Manchester.



Cruise O'Brien cruises Loyalists

By David Coen

AFTER HIS election as leader of the Official Unionist Party, David Trimble had a visitor from the South who brought advice on how the Unionists should deal with Dublin.

Shortly after, he put out a statement saying the Unionists would talk to Republicans elected to a new Northern Ireland Assembly. In other words, bring back Stormont and well talk.

The visitor was Conor Cruise O'Brien, columnist in Heinz boss Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers and fierce critic of Republicanism. O'Brien's aim was to try to

split the alliance between Dublin, the SDLP and Washington in which the Republicans have put their trust. It was a clever tactic.

All of the so-called pan-nationalist alliance except, to a greater or lesser extent, the Unionist veto and what flows from that, a recognition that there will eventually be a government in the North with some involvement from Dublin to safeguard the nationalists.

The Dublin Government under Fine Gael's John Bruton would happily go along with elections to what would be a Unionist dominated Northern Assembly, except for the difficulty that would cause for other members of the "nationalist family" - Sinn Fein.

Nobody fell for Conor's

trick but it shows the weakness of Sinn Fein's position.

If Dublin had accepted Trimble's offer, the Republicans would be forced either to break with Dublin - which they cannot afford to do, or, openly admit that they accept the Unionist veto with all that involves and risk a split. In the long run, that is precisely what they will have to do.

British provocations over the "peace process", apart from being necessary for Major's survival, are all to do with testing the Republicans commitment (and reducing their expectations still further) in advance of any negotiations about what will be a new partitionist settlement in Ireland.

There is an alternative to the armed struggle/Irish

Peace Initiative divide on which the Republican movement is breaking itself. It flows from the fact that no reform of the Northern State is possible: for the Unionists to make the most minimal concession would fatally damage their cause.

They will not concede on the "right" of Orange bigots to march through Nationalist areas let alone the disbandment of the RUC or power-sharing.

Rather than give legitimacy to the latest attempt to stabilise the Northern Ireland state, Sinn Fein could seek to mobilise against it. In the past that meant coming up against the British Army. But there is no military solution either.

Mass mobilisations around civil rights or the



OUP leader David Trimble

prisoners are what forced change on the British in the past and can do so again, even if not in the short term.

The reason Sinn Fein can't do that is that the leadership are relying on some

of the very forces who favour partition - the Southern ruling class. Conor Cruise O'Brien may be a pompous eccentric but he says what they think.

Hillingdon strikers take on bosses and bureaucrats

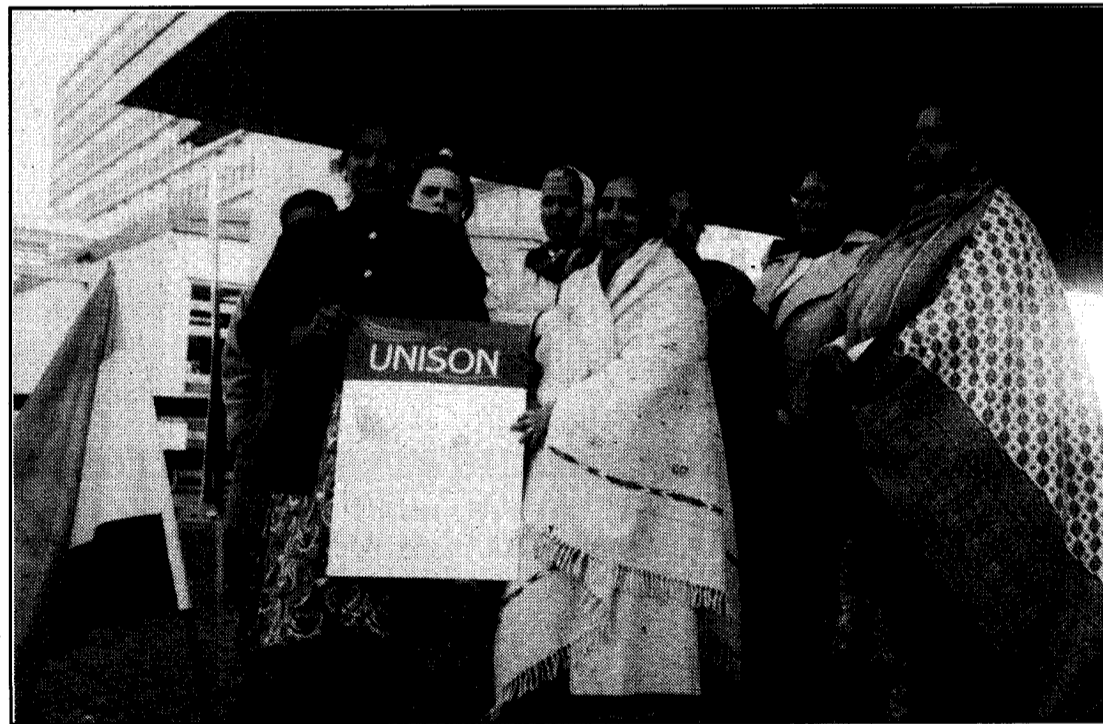


Photo: Rod Marshall

'We will stand here as long as it takes and we're going to make it official'

Cleaners at Hillingdon Hospital are on strike after their new employers, Pall Mall Services, tried to cut their wages by 20 per cent. Rod Marshall spoke to them for Socialist Outlook.

RM: Why did you go on strike in the first place?

Jagir: well you see they wanted us to sign this new contract which we didn't sign.

RM: what did the contract ask you to do?

Jagir: they said that our terms and conditions will be different, they will cut 20 per cent

off our wages.

That's why we didn't sign the contract. When we asked Peter Barry, the UNISON official, "where do we stand now?", he said nothing to us, and he has not even supported us here.

We've been standing here for nearly three weeks in the cold and nobody has taken any action to support us.

RM: is this an 'official' strike?
Jagir: Yes. The UNISON leader Peter Barry keeps saying that it is not an official strike, that it is unofficial.

But according to us it is an official strike and we want to make it an official strike. Because we are fed up standing here, we've been paying them (UNISON) for nothing all these years and they're not doing

Q: is this an 'official' strike?

A: Yes. The UNISON leader, Peter Barry, keeps saying that it is not an official strike, that it is unofficial. But according to us it is an official strike

their bloody job properly.

RM: when did Pall Mall sack you?

Jagir: They sacked us on October 1. October 30 was the last day to sign the contracts. But we didn't sign the contract be-

cause we didn't want the new terms and conditions.

RM: they've brought other workers in?

Jagir: They've brought scabs in - agency people which they are paying double and treble money. Yet they couldn't pay us £3.19 for an hour.

And we've been working all these years, the hard work we have to do - even when we wanted our holidays, we were booking our holidays they used to refuse us.

RM: they refused you leave?

Jagir: Yes. "No we're fully booked, you can't have your holidays".

RM: did conditions deteriorate when Pall Mall came in?

Jagir: Yes. The supervisor knew that the ladies (workers) here are so scared their not going to go anywhere; they will do as you tell them to do. But she didn't know this was the final straw.

RM: how many workers have been affected, how many are on strike?

Jagir: 60-70 of us. Evening ladies and full time dayshift - but now they've got loads of

agency people in there and were all out.

RM: and Pall Mall are refusing to negotiate?

Jagir: Yes.

RM: What action are you plan-

ning and what have you done so far?

Jagir: we're going to take them to court. We ain't going to give up.

RM: where can people send donations, to the local UNISON branch?

Jagir: Yes, we can't cope anymore. UNISON are not doing their job properly - we've been paying them all these years - why?

They said we were going to get £62.50 every week hardship money but we don't want that - we're not slaves or beggars - we want our strike money.

We've had nothing for 3 weeks. They've given us nothing at all.

RM: have you got a message for UNISON?

Jagir: Yes, please write to Peter Barry and tell them to make it an official strike, and to give us support and money as well.

We ain't going to give up, we will stand here as long as it takes and we're going to make it official. We want these people out.

• Write to chief executive of Hillingdon Hospital Philip Brown to protest at the treatment of the cleaning staff at: Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3NN. Telephone 01895 238382.

• Send letters of support to: UNISON office, Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3NN.

FEATURES

Noel Gallagher from Oasis speaks to Ken Loach The 'New Lad' vanguard?

If Blur symbolise the cynical and self-indulgent South in popular music, Oasis echo alienated, drug using, Northern unemployed. Who better to meet Oasis songsmith NOEL GALLAGHER than world-famous marxist film-maker KEN LOACH?

Noel Gallagher I come from Manchester, Middleton to be precise.
Ken Loach Do it like it there? Me, I have a weakness for Manchester.

Noel Gallagher When we began to be successful, we realised that it's really a little hole. That's why I've moved to London, Manchester is too frustrating for me now. When I was young, it was frustrating enough because there was no work and only three usable pubs, but I amused myself there. I go back there at weekends, that's enough for me at present. Of course I'll have to go back there to live one day.

Ken Loach As for me, I live in a little dump in the Midlands. All the London trains pass it but never stop. Originally it was a mining city, then it had car factories, a tentative wave of high-tech industries, and now, nothing.

Noel Gallagher Where do you find the characters in your films?

Ken Loach I don't really have to look very far, they are all there, all around us.



'Under-class' ikons? Oasis: Bonehead, Noel, Liam, Guigs, Alan White

Photo: Jill Furmanovsky

Noel Gallagher 'Kes' was always a reference point for me. I was born in '67, at the time it was released, and I still haven't seen it at the cinema. However, I remember perfectly having seen it on telly. I remember that the ending was very sad but, at one moment, a scene

took place on a football pitch and that pleased me enormously. Why didn't you set this film in Man-

Loach: You, you don't have a structure, a framework for your life

chester?

Ken Loach The bloke who wrote

the scenario wanted it at his place, near Sheffield. I have never written my films, I always work with collaborators. And you, are your records a team job or do you work by yourself?

Noel Gallagher I work alone.

Ken Loach Do you support Man-

chester City or Manchester United? **Noel Gallagher** (offended) City, of course.

Ken Loach Shame, they lost last week.

Noel Gallagher Since I was born they've only won the championship once, and I was one year old. Manchester United only interests people who don't live in Manchester, the people from outside. True Mancunians are only interested in Manchester City.

Ken Loach At Sheffield it's the same problem with Sheffield Wednesday and Sheffield United. Sheffield United is the club for those who live in Sheffield, Sheffield Wednesday is for the expatriates in London.

Noel Gallagher Because of George Best, United is the club of the local Irish. All my family came from Ireland originally and my grandmother would kill me if she knew that I didn't support that club. But because we were six brothers in my family, Liam and I, to distinguish ourselves and shut the gobs of the other four, we chose to support City.

Ken Loach People ask me what my films and your records have in common. I think they share a proletarian culture.

Noel Gallagher It was certainly true during the 50s and 60s, perhaps during the 40s too, when everyone worked, when Manchester was still an industrial city. Now, it's less true. When people of my generation left school, they only had three choices offered them: football, music or the dole. That's why there are so many big rock groups from the North. When I travel in the rest of the country, I notice that people have a more sophisticated culture, more artistic than ours. Northern culture is very urban. In fact, we have developed

CENTRE STAGE

Ken Loach: days of hope caught on film

Ken Loach has shot to global fame in recent years. Vincent Ostria spoke to him about his life and work.

"I WAS born in Nuneaton, a Midlands ex-mining town. My father was an electrician in a tool making factory. He was never involved in trade unions. Like millions of others, my family was neither rich nor poor.

From the age of 14 I used to cycle to Stratford-upon-Avon to see Shakespeare plays. I still read the plays - they are extremely rich, varied and sensitive.

In the sixties after being a theatre director, I was lucky enough to get a

job at BBC 2. We had to produce a film every week. We had really good script writers and a great time slot. Everyone looked at our plays.

The team was very much on the left. In those days it was impossible to avoid politics.

In the 1980s I made documentaries for television (*Questions of Leadership* 1983-4), but they were never transmitted because they were too political.

They showed the political view of the left regarding the trade union leadership. For us, they were not doing their job. They did not organise any opposition to Thatcher at the time when her politics were leading to mass unemployment.

My politics was too much against the current. For a while I had no work.

Happily there was then *Hidden Agenda* and *Riff Raff*. *Hidden agenda* was submitted to the Cannes film festival and won the Prize of the Jury.

The next year, *Riff Raff* won the critics' prize. It was a new beginning for me.

I decided to make a film on the Spanish Civil War because it was one of the big moments of the twentieth century; when people took power - the workers took control of the factories and the farmworkers occupied the land.

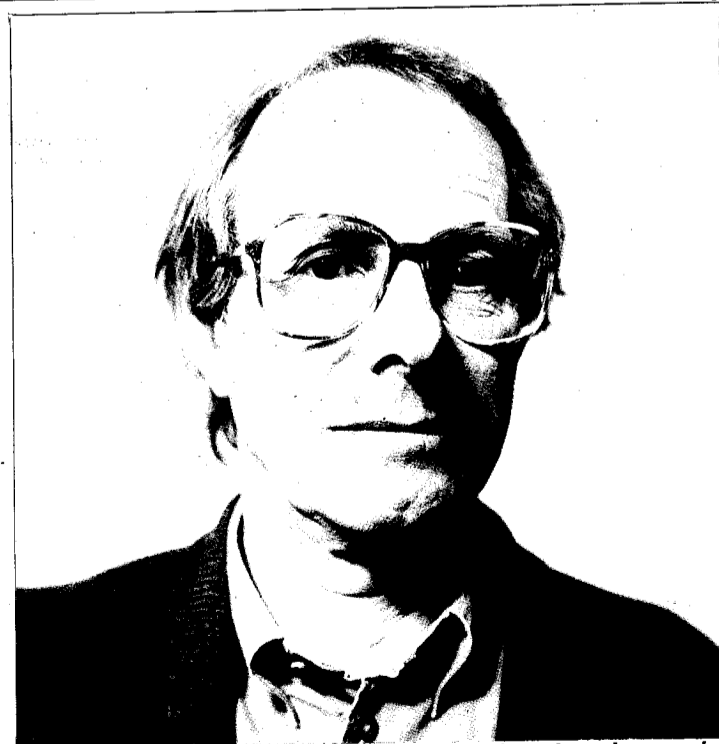
We tend to forget that there have been times when ordinary people have been in power. These moments should be remembered.

And we also have to say that their hopes were betrayed - not only by the fascists, but also by the stalinists.

It was the stalinists, not the fascists who returned the land to the original owners.

What happened in Spain in 1936 shows that it is possible for people to take control.

There were 3 million unemployed in Britain in the 1930s. Today there are 4 million. The far right is on the



'There have been times when ordinary people have been in power'

rise across Europe. There are many things which link the two periods.

A film about the past should attempt to understand the present.

Before making a film on the creation of a union of immigrant workers in Hollywood I am making two other

films.

One will be about what is happening in Nicaragua. We will start filming in November."

• This feature, and the one above, translated from *les Inrockuptibles* by Peter Purton and Fred Leplat.

a sub-culture.

Ken Loach When you grow up in London and you have artistic ability, everything is in place to enable it to develop. In Manchester, where there is nothing and nothing happens, your abilities are stifled. When I landed up in London, at 16-17 years old, I didn't come back, it was like a pleasure park for me.

Noel Gallagher The difference between the kids of the North of England and those of Paris, New York etc, is the humour. Even if the kid from Manchester is the same as the others, there's always a distinctive humour. That's why the Beatles charmed the whole world, they had their own sense of humour.

Ken Loach You have to distinguish between the people of the North. There are fundamental differences between Mancunians and Liverpudlians. Mancunians are convinced that everyone from Liverpool is a bandit, that they are not to be trusted. For generations, Liverpudlians have been reputed for their corrosive humour, for being comical and mischievous. For me, it's not so much a question of town as of class.

Noel Gallagher It's very much tied to the working class. I find the same jokes whether I'm in Manchester or London. It's no good complaining of our sad fate, the conversation always ends with a roar of laughter.

Ken Loach What happened to your schoolmates?

Noel Gallagher One or two became professional footballers, in clubs a little out of date like Portsmouth or Southampton: not at the level to stay in Manchester. The rest just disappeared.

Ken Loach What is missing for your generation is the discipline - I don't like the moral sense of that word - which gave the lives of northern proletarians the rhythms of work. You learnt it from your parents, your grandparents: that was the way it was and it wasn't going to change. These people were exploited, swindled, and they never thought of questioning the system of their lives.

You, you don't have a structure, a framework for your life. At least they had a status, a dignity. With Thatcher, the number of unemployed increased to two, then three, million. All the notion of dig-

nity through work was blown to pieces. Thatcher destroyed the working class. People of your age no longer know what it is to belong to a community which works. No doubt you know that better than I.

Noel Gallagher It's a detail, but at one time, in families, everyone got up at the same time - because they had to go to work. And they came back together, ate together; one could talk. At the end of each road was the factory and, when it finished by closing, all the houses began to empty. In the north of Manchester there are whole streets of empty houses and, saddest of all, in town there are the homeless.

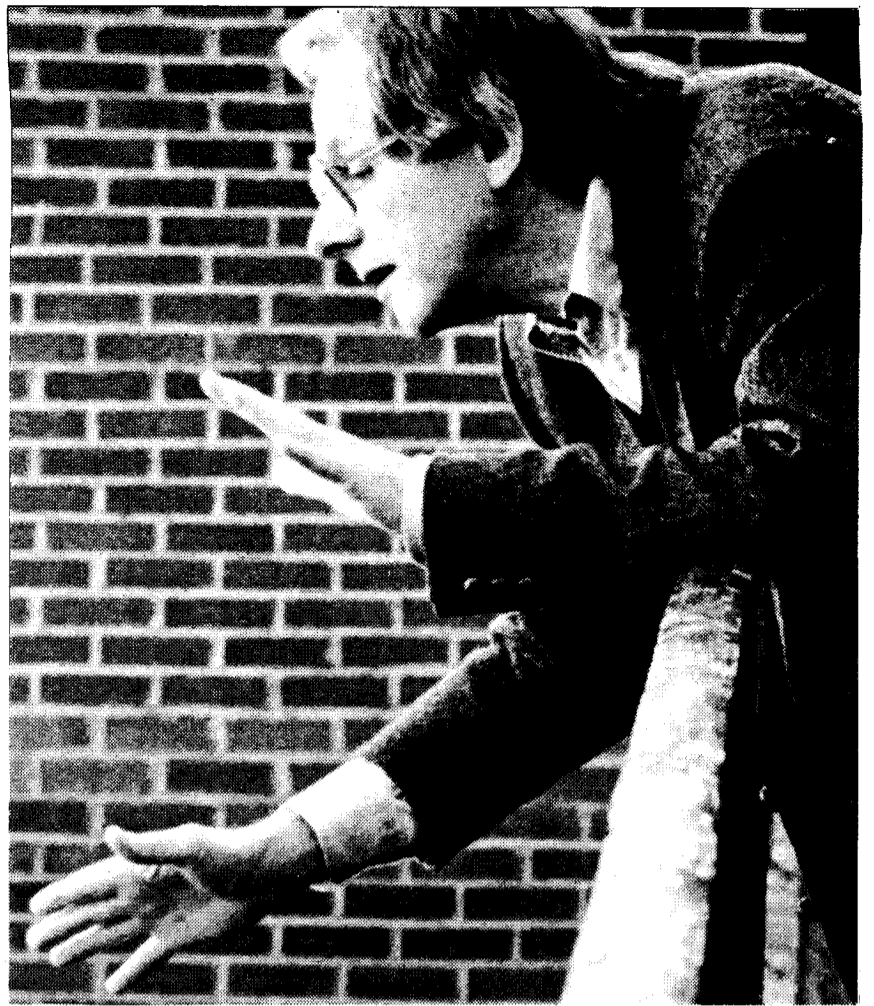
Ken Loach Among the workless there are thousands of building workers who could rebuild the derelict houses.

Noel Gallagher The notion of a work ethic no longer exists in Manchester, because we don't remember what it was like to work. Myself, I had the chance to do work which pleased me: I went into a studio, recorded a song, released a record, I have a good life. What's more, I bring some pleasure to others. Most of my mates hate their work.

Ken Loach At the same time as destroying the factories and jobs, they made people think themselves guilty because they were not loyal to this work ethic. Not only did they spike the work, they gave complexes to the unemployed! At the start of Thatcherism, people thought, I am out of work, it's an exception. Today, it's normal.

Noel Gallagher In the 60s, when you heard of a family friend out of work, you knew it was temporary. Today, you start off life sure you'll never find a job. So you adapt your lifestyle to this new fact. You go to bed at 4 in the morning and get up in the afternoon, because there is nothing better to do, nothing to expect from life.

Ken Loach When you work, you are part of a group, a community. But if you are forced out of the pack, you become isolated, abandoned. In the North, the notion of



Loach: a bridge between the old generation and the new

family has disappeared. What is the point of getting up in the morning? Where is there to go?

Noel Gallagher Who wants to get out of the house to find other unemployed people, to hear their problems? It's everyone for themselves, you stay at home. I know whole streets in Manchester where no one has work any more. And people don't talk, they are

would have become. I got the talent to write songs and live from it. So I do my best to amuse people. Because I know that's all I can do for them. Three and a half minutes of happiness in a gloomy and banal life, I'm afraid that's my only contribution.

Ken Loach I can't even give them that, because cinema doesn't have the direct impact of music. It doesn't have the visceral side of Oasis' rock.

Noel Gallagher With our music, people can forget everything and dance. I've never seen anyone dance in the cinema (laughs)...

Ken Loach Your music is necessarily subversive. Its strength is that oldies like me don't like it. If your parents like the same songs as you, it's because you've bought bad records.

Gallagher: I know whole streets in Manchester where no one has work any more. And people don't talk.

ashamed and hide themselves away where thirty years ago they rubbed shoulders, all knew each other. They no longer have anything to tell, they live from day to day. Me, if I didn't have football and the guitar, God knows what I



What hope for those 'chained to the mirror and the razor-blade'?

Spain's civil war: fighting chance of real change

'Land and Freedom' Directed by Ken Loach. Reviewed by KATHRYN MARSHALL.

THE COMBINATION of political and evocative qualities in *Land and Freedom* make it completely compelling viewing.

The film opens in modern Liverpool where an old man, David Carne, dies from a heart attack. His granddaughter, Kim, finds all his letters from the period from 1936 when he was fighting for the Republican struggle against Franco's fascist regime in Spain. As she reads his descriptive letters, we return to the days of revolutionary struggle which Carne joined.

We learn about the democratic functioning of the POUM militia; "everyone votes on all decisions" he tells us, and we see that there is no substitute for this when you are forging a team seriously thinking in terms of being a part of revolutionary change.

A Spanish woman, Maite, convinces her comrade to remain at the Front rather than returning home to deal with domestic troubles. These people respect one another as comrades in this most important of struggles.

Throughout the first half of the film Loach also hits you with the tremendous positive energy that swept through them all as they took villages back from the fascists and began to plan together how they were now to run their land. This is one of the major achievements of the film. You not only feel this energy when guns are being fired and fascists are on the run; Loach

also manages to convey it in the context of a new kind of political debate.

No one stops the people from deciding either way on the question of whether or not to collectivise immediately the village land.

Having real responsibility sets the debate on fire; it's noisy, it's animated, it is people deciding for themselves about their lives.

Loach does not romanticise the experiences on the Front as all positive. Comrades die, other have to cope.

Loach argues that the revolution was betrayed by its supposed allies from the Communist Parties; he vocalises through various of the characters how Stalin had quite a different vision of the future from the comrades trying to build a revolution.

But to make sure we are not left wondering who to believe, he shows what went on in the Communist Interna-



'Noisy, animated, it is people deciding for themselves'

tional Brigade through Carne's eyes who, as a carrier of a Communist Party card temporarily joins them.

He hears how the POUM and the anarchists were accused of collaborating with the fascists and he sees them being shot at. It is not long

before Carne is back with the POUM and we know he is right. But it is too late; the stalinists arrive to arrest the leaders of the militia.

If everyone who sees this film goes away understanding the nature of stalinism and its anti-revolutionary ma-

nuevrings, an important step away from the miseducation which says that socialism died with the collapse of the Soviet Union will have been taken.

Loach doesn't locate this film in the past. He uses flashback to make it clear that these struggles remain our struggles even in a period where things seem quiet and where people feel there is no hope.

The film opens with the symbol of the National Front daubed on the wall of the block of the flats where Carne lived. But it also shows an anti-racist, anti-fascist poster on bright red paper next to it.

It closes with Carne's granddaughter raising aloft his red scarf. This deliberate use of colour links the past with today. There are important messages, of having a fighting chance of real change, to be heard from the past and important lessons for the future strongly articulated in this film.

CENTRE STAGE

Britain's racist state

By Rod Marshall

MICHAEL Portillo's appeal to the Tory right and nationalist forces at Tory Party conference was another example of the xenophobia and racism at the heart of the Tory party.

The 'have nothing to do with Europe' sentiment of Portillo is in line with increased attacks by the state on migrant workers in Britain, as announced by Peter Lilley, the social security minister.

The proposals, overshadowed by Portillo's jingoistic rhetoric seek to further restrict the ability of asylum seekers to claim benefits on arrival to this country. Asylum seekers who are already in Britain will be excluded from claiming any benefits, while new entrants will not be able to claim benefits between the time of initially claiming and the time of their appeal.

These new proposals follow in the trail of a decade long increase in the detention and deportation of asylum seekers and refugees by the state.

The government justify these attacks on the grounds of a large inflow of migrants into the country but neglect to reveal that immigration from Britain is more than matched by emigration. However it is not the facts of this situation that is Tory determining policy but instead the increased willingness of both the Tory



Photo: Andrew Ward

Police and state authorities brutally enforce racism

and Labour parties to play the race card.

The shameful record of Labour in government and in opposition shows them close behind the Tories in their support for racist policies on immigration and asylum.

Asylum

The Tory government's 1992 Immigration and Asylum Bill involved a clamp down on people seeking asylum including mandatory finger printing of all asylum seekers, reduced provision for housing and a

quickened procedure for deportation. Rights for appeal if asylum rights were denied was also further restricted.

Since 1987 there has been a massive increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees held in new detention centres such as Campsfield and Doncaster, along with increased detention centres such as at Harmondsworth in West London. Only ten per cent of people seeking asylum are granted it, while many are given 'exceptional leave to remain' with the constant threat of jail and deporta-

tion hanging over them.

The true nature of the racism of the British state can be seen in the overwhelming proportion of detainees who are black or are from non-EEC or NATO countries.

Murder

The murder of Joy Gardner was a vivid example of the brutal behaviour of the police and state authorities in enforcing these laws. In detention centres like Campsfield, refugees and asylum seekers are held without trial for six months

or more and access to food, clothes and medicine is severely restricted. Families are split up and children placed in local council care. Suicide is an increasingly common response to the dual threat of continued detention or deportation.

The holding and treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been taken up by a number of local anti-detention centre campaigns including the Close Campsfield Campaign, Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign, Free Haslar Detainees Campaign, West Midlands Anti-

Deportation Campaign, Hull Asylum Seekers Campaign and a campaign against detentions in Doncaster.

In addition there are specific campaigns around particular detainees such as Satpal Ram and Abdul Onibyo. Nationally activity is co-ordinated by the Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill, National Coalition of anti-deportation Campaigns and the fledgling National Network Against Detentions and Deportations.

On top of the already inhumane treatment of asylum seekers and refugees comes draconian plans from Michael Howard, not yet fully revealed in public, for further restrictions on the right to appeal against detention and denial of asylum rights.

Force

The Tories are also planning to force public sector workers to enforce the increased restriction on benefits announced by Lilley.

DSS workers, teachers, lecturers and council workers will all be expected to finger suspected 'illegal immigrants' who may be claiming state benefits.

A successful week of action was built by anti-deportation and detention centre campaigns and by CARF (Campaign Against Racism and Fascism) which included a picket of Downing Street against Lilley and Howard's new proposals on 14 October and a demonstration outside Tory Party conference.

It is vital that nationally co-ordinated action continues and that campaigns in this country also link up with campaigns against state racism in the rest of Europe such as SOS Racisme and MRAX.

FIGHTING RACISM

Fighting racist 'Fortress Europe'

DESPITE Michael Portillo's anti-European Union sentiment (designed to increase his support on the Tory far right) it is clear that the European Union itself is very effective in limiting the free passage of migrants and in persecuting refugees and asylum seekers.

'Fortress Europe' has been constructed through the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 gave the European Commission the ability to determine policy on immigration in the form of rules concerning visa control across the EEC whereby the Council of Ministers can impose visa controls for six months without consulting the European Parliament. Such an imposition is to be used where there is a "threat of a sudden inflow of nationals from a particular country".

This supports the sentiment of the Commission in 1991 in approving measures by member states to make "the material situation of asylum seekers less attractive while their case is being considered: withholding of certain social security benefits, restrictions on employment and freedom of movement".

The racism of the Tory government is therefore actively endorsed by the European Union.

Indeed the Schengen agreement, supposedly drawn up originally to allow free travel between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (it now includes most member states but not Britain) has been used to justify tougher rules on exclusion of migrants from 120 countries outside the EU.

'Negative list'

The EU at the 1989 Madrid summit to draw up this common 'negative list' of countries whose people require a visa for entry into the EEC. This has recently been updated by the idea of a 'white list' of safe countries from which no-one will be granted asylum.

Other European wide measures include co-operation between EU countries in policing the borders of the union and exchange of information concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition the 'Ad-hoc group on immigration', made up of interior ministers from EU countries, drew up proposals to limit asylum seekers to single applications to one EEC country (enshrined in the 1990 Dublin agreement) and proposed sanctions against airlines carrying unauthorized asylum seekers. It also

proposed the compulsory finger printing of asylum seekers (as supported by the Tory asylum Act).

The second phase of Maastricht, to be discussed at next year's Intergovernmental Conference, is to include proposals to further strengthen European border controls and anti-immigration policies. European integration effectively means exclusion of non-Europeans or to be more specific non-white non-Europeans.

The continued increase of racist measures by European governments comes at a time of continued growth in fascist parties.

New anti-immigration laws are grabbed upon by fascists as justification for their racist and supremacist ideology. The state therefore employs as its racist foot soldiers not only the police and anti-immigration officials but also fascists and their supporters.

Unemployment, the planned result of liberal capitalist economic policy, is blamed on immigration. The 'enemy within' is identified by the state for continued vicious attacks. This enemy is not only black people but is increasingly seen as anyone differing from the 'norm' of white middle class heterosexuality.

It is a pity that it is this 'norm' a media myth of the soap opera which Blair is constantly chasing. It is also a pity that despite the welcome self-organisation of black people represented by the Nation of Islam that it continues to divide the black community along the lines of gender and sexuality.

State

The racism of the state is the act of a tired and desperate capitalist class looking for excuses for low pay, unemployment and the continual misery faced by working people.

Workers must unite against the increased attacks on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers represented in Michael Howard and Peter Lilley's proposals.

We must also build a united anti-racist, anti-fascist movement which not only recognises the crucial importance of black self-organisation but also the fundamental need for a united working class offensive against racism and all forms of oppression. The demonstration on October 28 is a welcome move in that direction. The fight must continue including in the struggle against the detention and deportation of migrant workers.

Record of Labour's appalling racism

By Kathryn Marshall

THE LABOUR Party has often paid lip service across the floor of the House of Commons to attacking racism. Behind their words, the party has actually been responsible for making the anti-racist, anti-fascist cause harder to fight.

Their appalling record speaks for itself.

In 1965 it was a Labour government which abolished the rights of unskilled Commonwealth immigrants to work in Britain.

In 1968 it was the same Labour government which zoomed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act through parliament in 6 days. This display of haste was in order to prevent British citizens of Asian origin, who were being expelled from Kenya, from entering Britain.

A year later the Immigration Appeals Act imposed new visa requirements on those who wanted to join the rest of their family in Britain and prevented fiances of British women entering the Commonwealth.

The 1974 administration failed to repeal the Tories' Immigration Act which they had introduced in 1971.

The story has continued in the same way. In 1988, Labour did not take the opportu-



A Labour government committed to socialist policies would scrap racist laws

nity to attack the Tory Immigration Act which included the abolition of rights of appeal for most people facing deportation. Then in 1992, Labour front benchers made a deal to enable the Asylum Bill to go through.

Abstained

The party even abstained on last year's vote on the Criminal Justice and Public

Order Act. This act abolished the right to silence. It reintroduced the 'Stop and search' law whereby police have the right to search the public if they have 'reasonable grounds' for thinking that they may be carrying offensive weapons or that incidents might be going to take place.

In December 1994 even the Home Office revealed that in London over 40 per cent of those who were stopped and searched came from members of the black community, despite the fact that the black community makes up only about 20 per cent of the capital's population.

The Act also increases police power to attack the right to protest and the right to hold outdoor cultural and musical festivals. This was an act that animated and angered the nation but the Labour Party saw fit to abstain.

Within its own ranks, the Labour leadership has also demonstrated a distinct lack of commitment to black representation let alone self-organisation. The party has no black or anti-racist officer. A staggeringly high proportion of the equally staggering thousands of people who are currently facing expulsion from the Labour Party come from the black and Asian communities.

The latest comments from members of the front bench show that now even the lip service is becoming increasingly unconvincing.

Labour's Jack Straw has recently stated that Britain "needs, but has not got a just and robust system immigration rules and controls. Whatever its sympathy, this country cannot sustain a large influx of economic migrants".

Abdul and Ade Onibyo must stay

By Rod Marshall

IMAGINE LIVING and working in Britain for over 20 years. Then imagine visiting another country for a couple of years. When you return to your country after this short break in residency you are welcomed back by being thrown in jail with the threat of deportation.

Sounds ludicrous doesn't it? Well it is the harsh reality of the government's racist policies which has faced Abdul and Ade Onibyo, currently detained in Campsfield Detention Centre.

What makes this particular example of victimization particularly ridiculous is that Abdul Onibyo actually visited Nigeria for two years over 11 years ago. Before and after this visit, for 22 years, Abdul has lived and worked in this country as a council worker in Lambeth. He also brought up his family, including his son Ade, in this country. Yet the immigration authorities are telling both Abdul and Ade that they are no longer entitled to residency in Britain.

In March 1995, without warning, Abdul and Ade were arrested and imprisoned in the Harmondsworth Detention Centre in West London. As with Campsfield this centre is run by Group 4 security on behalf of the Home Office. Behind the barbed wire on the Great Western Road, Ade was forced to take his A levels. Abdul, in common with many

detainees at the centre, was denied access to a GP when he was thrown into Harmondsworth, despite being beaten up in a police cell just beforehand. Paul Condon's police service have left Abdul Onibyo with no feeling in his left arm.

Cruelty

To add to this cruelty is the ebb and flow of hope and despair that has been experienced when Abdul and Ade were temporarily released before being re-jailed by the authorities first in Stanstead and now in Campsfield. The rest of the Onibyo family are devastated by this horrendous treatment.

It is clear that the immigration authorities have targeted the Onibyos as part of a racist crackdown on supposed 'illegal immigrants'. But there is nothing illegal about wanting to live and work alongside your friends and family. There is nothing illegal about deciding to visit other countries and to decide stay there. Unless of course you happen to be black and this is where the government is seen to be thoroughly racist in its practise. The crime of this injustice, and the many other examples of racial victimization that go on daily, should not themselves go unpunished.

• Protest to Michael Howard, get involved with the campaigns against detentions and deportations and give support to the Onibyo Family Anti-Deportation Campaign which can be contacted at Lambeth UNISON on 0171-738-3209.

NEWHAM'S Labour Council may be about to make a 20 per cent cut in the funding of the Newham Monitoring Project.

NMP is one of Britain best known and well-respected anti-racist organisations. Maximum pressure needs to be put on the council to defend NMP's 15 years of community based anti-racist work.

For more details, phone NMP on 0181 555 8151 or 0181 552 6284.

Ending The Nightmare

Socialists against racism and fascism

Socialist Outlook has published this new collection of articles, including Ernest Mandel's *Learn the lessons of Germany*, to examine the roots of racism and fascism and outline a strategy to defeat them.

How strong are the far right today? Why are racism and fascism on the rise in Europe? What lessons are there for anti-racists from the experiences of the 1930s? Can the ethnic cleansers of ex-Yugoslavia be called "fascist"? For your copy of this 128-page book, send a cheque for £4.95 plus 75 pence postage, payable to 'Socialist Outlook Fund', to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Ending the Nightmare

Socialists against racism and fascism

Includes *Learn the lessons of Germany* by Ernest Mandel
Edited by John Lister

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FIGHTING RACISM

US scientist-engineer ROD HOLT explains why...

Capitalism is bad for your health

"The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World out of Balance." by Laurie Garrett. Penguin Books, New York.

WITH A TITLE like "The Coming Plague" and a flaming yellow and orange soft cover, one expects a sensationalist, pseudo-scientific hand wringer.

Surprise! You will find no false posturing here, no Doomsday agonizing, just a sober clarity.

"The Coming Plague" is an astonishing look at the environment that humans live in, at the ecology of people. It is a scientific work and its particular measuring device is the well-being or sickness of the peoples of the world - or, to be more accurate, the measure is the vulnerability of our well-being to challenges by micro-organisms; challenges not a bit different than many others that have occurred over the last 3 million years.

Garrett presents her views indirectly at first, with a series of exciting narratives of the detection, struggle with, and resolution of the most significant epidemics of recent years.

Afraid

Her scientists have names and faces; some live, some die. All of them are afraid at times. Many retire exhausted. For all her protagonists, the budgets, staffing, and inadequacies of nickel-and-dime research rankle.

To illustrate the relationship between social imbalance and disease, Garrett focuses on the appearance of new diseases, drug-resistant strains, and the spreading of disease in new ways. These are the major factors that enable micro-organisms to overwhelm the body's natural defences.

In most Third World cases, the roots of disease, particularly those that cause sweeping epidemics, could be addressed by the traditional means of the public health department. But they are not.

The World Bank has determined that it is cheaper to vaccinate than to provide sanitation, clean drinking water, and adequate nourishment.

For example, supporting Garrett's thesis, Robbins and Freeman state in the 1988 Scientific American, "Vaccination programs are less expensive, easier to implement and sometimes more effective than other public health approaches now being pursued to



El Salvador: urban overcrowding and poverty breed disease

Photo: Pietro Gigli

varying degrees."

If one looks at humanity as if time stood still, and people are only here to run a print shop for dollars, then that view may be justified.

One of the central points of her book is to demonstrate that the human condition does change, microbes change, and science tries to keep up.

Garrett convinces us very early in her book that microbes cannot be trusted. From time to time, a drug-resistant variant simply appears. In an equally arbitrary manner, a new microbe strain will infect vaccinated individuals. (She tells the horrifying story of dengue fever viruses #1, #2, #4, and #4.) And sometimes a mutant will appear, such as HIV or the Hanta virus.

She also convinces us that pronounced changes in humanity's way of life opens the door to "new" diseases that may really be old, formerly harmless ones.

Imperialism

As the Third World began to feel the effects of imperialism, people were forced from the countryside to the cities to look for work in overcrowded sweatshops, to sleep in cardboard lean-tos, to live piled one atop the next without toilets or drinking water. These slums became the Third World

megacities.

By 1995, 23 of the world's top 40 cities (those over 5 million people) were Third World cities, as were 11 of the world's 16 cities topping the 10 million mark. All these cities are public health nightmares.

Garrett devotes a chapter to the consequences of official indifference to living conditions in the megacities, explaining how diseases that until recently were found exclusively in rural areas are now urban scourges.

A diverse group of internal parasites, round worms, tape worms, protozoa, fileria, and a host of

Monster slum cities re-create the conditions of the medieval city. With those conditions return plague-like diseases doctors thought centuries past

unpronounceable diseases appeared in the cities with a virulence never seen before.

There were few vaccines. Even if the governments of the Third World countries wanted to institute measures for public health, they had no money to do so. They already had their backs to the wall just meeting debt service for old loans from the IMF, the World Bank, and various capitalist agencies.

In the case of the Latin American countries, Garrett says, "In 1980 the Latin American nations collectively were receiving from their external creditors - major banks, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank - about \$11 billion more than they were losing in capital transfers back to wealthy-nation interests. But by 1985 these nations would be losing \$35 billion more a year in capital transfers to North America and Europe than they received in loans and investments."

In sum, the tag end of the industrial

revolution brought by imperialism to the undeveloped world created monster slum cities that in turn re-created the conditions of the medieval city. And with those conditions returned plague-like diseases that the doctors had thought were centuries past.

'Third World'

The author continues this theme in an examination of health conditions in wealthy industrial cities. Here she introduces a most awkward term, "third-worldisation".

She describes the process where the cast-offs of capitalist society must live under conditions no better than those found in the slums of Caracas, Sao Paulo, or Manila.

The constant stress on their immune systems makes them susceptible to once rare diseases. To make things worse, official "Get them off the streets" police harassment herds these people into close contact where diseases can only spread. Where the HIV virus has further weakened the immune system, it was found that 51 per cent of indigents had Multiple-Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), an essentially incurable disease that any of us can contract by casual association with a carrier.

The Coming Plague is a prodigious work of 750 pages, 1326 notes, numerous charts and graphs, and an index.

It is accessible to anyone with a good dictionary, a medical dictionary or a volume such as "Professional Guide to Diseases," Springhouse, Pa., (updated regularly). The book is very well written, with jargon at an absolute minimum.

• Reprinted from the US monthly, *Socialist Action*

What's Happening

OCTOBER

Until 3 Dec

'RECYCLE II' - a show of prints by Stuart J Bullen, the Greenhouse, The Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St. WC1 11am-830pm Mon-Sat; 1pm-5pm Sun; Mon eve women only. **Sat 28**

TUC demonstration: Unite against racism. meet 12 noon Platt Fields for march to Albert Square. Leaflets in bulk available free from Kay Carbury at TUC on 0171 636 4030.

NOVEMBER

Sat 4

STUDENT Assembly Against Racism conference 10am-5.30pm Tower Hamlets College, Poplar High St., E14, by Poplar DLR tickets £5/£3 from SAAR, PO Box 3782, London N1 0DD.

SOCIALIST Campaign Group Supporters Network Forum 1pm.

Sun 5

IS THIS where we came in? - Jewish Socialists' Group day school 10am-5pm Caxton House, Archway, N19 with Steve Cohen, Bill MacKeith, Helen Bamber and others tickets £12/£5 from JSG, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX.

Tues 7

OPPOSE fascist 'National Democrats' Centotaph march. Planning meeting 7.30pm Colin Roach Centre, 56 Clarence Road, E5.

Thurs 9

MANCHESTER Socialist Outlook Forum on Bosnia 7.30pm Manchester Town Hall with speaker Geoff Ryan.

Sat 18

SOCIALIST Campaign Group Supporters Network AGM, Manchester Town Hall.

Sat 25

STOP hospital closures conference sponsored by London Health Emergency 11.00am to 4.00pm ULU, Malet St. London. WC1.

DECEMBER

Sat 2 & Sun 3

PAPER making course held by Stuart J Bullen Details The Drill Hall 0171 631 1353.

Sun 3

CLOSE of Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund.

In the current International Viewpoint Bosnia: land and liberty

Catherine Samary on the imperialist carve-up of Bosnia, Kit Adam Wainer on Clinton and Bosnia, plus a discussion article by Livio Maitain. Also: reviews and features on Cuba, USA, Sri Lanka and Transcaucas.

Single copies £2.00 plus 50p postage from 'Outlook International', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Still available: Ernest Mandel Memorial Issue. £2.50.

US presses for partition of Bosnia

By Alan Thornett

SINCE THE NATO bombings, and partly because of it, there has been a change in the current course of the Bosnian war. Although the Bosnians still face an arms embargo and a massive imbalance of heavy weapons, Government forces have taken the initiative and Serbian forces are suffering serious losses.

The aim of the US backed bombings was to force the ethnic division of

the country rather than to fuel a Bosnia offensive. It did serious damage to the military infrastructure of the Serbian forces at exactly the time when the Bosnian army was in any case going onto the offensive.

The result of was massive military gains in North West Bosnia for the joint Bosnian and Croat offensive, which has now halted just short of Banja Luka. Serbian forces have counter attacked. Arkan and regular units of the Yugoslav army have been sent into the region by Milosevic. However, gains have not been reversed.

Having got an unex-

pected outcome from the bombing western governments, principally the US, launched a major diplomatic offensive. This established a shaky ceasefire. Now they are pressing ahead with pressure to achieve a permanent "settlement" of the war.

Partition

At the end of October they will meet the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia and hope to start the process toward a solution which will, one way or another, partition Bosnia on ethnic lines. The meeting will be held at the Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Ohio USA.

Whether partition is likely is impossible to predict, and will depend largely on the Bosnian Government: whether it accepts some kind of partition or continues the war to maximise the territory it can liberate. There are clear divisions in the Bosnian Government on whether to



IWA on Bosnia Solidarity Campaign demo

Photo: Socialist Outlook

fight or do a deal.

Certainly the idea that a unitary Bosnia under which a central Government would have jurisdiction over a Serbian entity controlled by Karadzic can be achieved through such negotiations is excluded. Realistically there are only two possible variants: the Bosnian Government liberates all of its territory; or there will be ethnic partition under what ever name it is given.

Since the recent gains by Bosnian and Croat forces the battle lines have recently passed the 49%-51% partition long proposed by the five nation contact group. This, however, does not necessarily mean that a settlement is closer. Previously the Bosnian Government was being offered territorial gains as an incentive towards partition, now they have the 51% and are likely to ask for much more if such a settlement is to be

contemplated.

The situation is more complicated than just percentages of territory. Sarajevo remains divided and isolated and both sides have strategic territorial objectives essential to such a settlement. On top of that the Bosnians have to beware the role of Tudjman in the north west where he may well have his own agenda for the territories jointly liberated.

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International Workers' Aid, C/o
PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.
Make cheques payable to 'IWA'.

Chirac: N-bomb 'for future generations'

By Pierre Rousset

WHEN CHIRAC appeared on television to lecture us about the Pacific tests he gave no impression that his decisions would ever be democratically debated.

The massive opposition to the tests could only reflect the "irrational" fears of an ill-informed population, or the wicked manoeuvres of rivals powers. All the French require is a bit of education, the Polynesians a bit of repression, the Australians and New Zealanders the expression of contempt.

Chirac identifies the control of nuclear weapons with a presidency which is personal and sovereign; that is, with an extremely centralised state structure.

He wants a bomb for the 21st century—"for future generations"—and refuses to get rid of it. Chirac simply follows an old French policy—let the Europeans, especially the Germans, pay, we'll intervene in their name and take the benefits for ourselves.

This policy leads to proliferation. If the bomb is necessary for "the security of France", other governments will draw the same conclusion for their interests.

In the end there is only one way of avoiding proliferation—the universal banning of the weapons and the dismantling of existing stocks. But the powers of Paris, London, Wash-



Protestors at indefinite vigil outside Sydney's French Consulate

ington, Moscow and Peking have no interest in this.

Chirac intends to project nuclear weapons far into the next century.

The test ban treaty has no meaning and no chance of being enforced unless atomic weapons are banned.

The same applies to the non-proliferation treaty. Chirac's option leads straight into a 21st century of nuclear terror.

• Translated from *Rouge*.

Will Québec vote for independence?

By Duncan Chapple

LATEST POLLS in Canadian newspapers *Toronto Star* and *La Presse* indicate that the 'Yes' vote may win in the 30 October referendum on self-determination for the mainly French-speaking province of Québec.

Every section of the french speaking population, with the exception of the capitalist class, backs the Yes vote. Canada's french-speakers have lower pay, worse health care, fewer openings for education and training and higher rates of unemployment than English-speaking Canadians. Eighty-five per cent of Canadian french-speakers live in Québec.

Since 1760, Canadian government policies have aimed to obliterate French Canadian reality and reduce it to folklaw. Today Canada is a strong imperialist state, founded on the national oppression of the native peoples and the Québécois. They have been subjected to over 200 years of economic, social, cultural and linguistic oppression and denied the right to self-determination.

Against this long-standing national oppression, the Québécois nationalist movement developed in

the 1960s and soon the bourgeois nationalist *Parti Québécois* (PQ) won the leadership of the movement.

This month's referendum puts the PQ and its allies under great pressure. The PQ favour tying Québec into an EU-type federation with the rest of Canada. An unaccountable Council of Ministers would impose austerity policies which could assure the free circulation of capital and enforce a common monetary policy.

This dead-end bourgeois nationalism opens the door to ultra-right

nationalism. The left forces for the Yes vote organise independently. The *Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste*, within which the Québécois comrades of the Fourth International work, backs the 'Popular Network for the Yes vote', so that the sovereignty of Québec is not just an exchange of one flag for another, but a popular and egalitarian sovereignty, based on solidarity to end exclusion from society.

The Network's key demand is for a Constituent Assembly, 50 per cent women, elected by proportional representation.

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WORLD OUTLOOK

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Million Man March on Washington

THE REVOLT OF BLACK AMERICA

By Jane Kelly

'THE LARGEST march in American history', is how one marcher described the Million Man March on Washington on Monday, October 16.

Over a million black, mostly working class men, and a few black women, went on strike to join the protest against racism and the huge cuts in welfare being carried out by the Republican dominated Senate. Across the country, those who could not attend, stayed away from work and school to take action locally.

Led by Louis Farrakhan, of the Nation of Islam (NOI), it was backed by an array of black organisations and leaders including Stokely Carmichael's All African Peoples' Revolutionary Party, Jesse Jackson, civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, author Cornell West, writer Maya Angelou, singer Stevie Wonder and many more.

Bigger even than the great march led by Martin Luther King and without any support from liberal whites, it represented a massive expression of anger, solidarity and power by the oppressed. Everywhere committees sprang up to organise it and on the day black people debated the way forward for black liberation. "Trains carrying marchers to the National Mall were turned into soviets", said one marcher, "each carriage



Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan addressing hundreds of thousands on 16 October 'Day of Atonement'

elect a chair and anyone who wanted to speak was given a chance, each offering their ideas on the way forward, from religion to socialism".

Wrong Direction?

But other organisations stayed away: the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) refused support, although many of their youth councils built it. The national co-ordinator of the march was Benjamin Chavis, former head of the NAACP, fired a year ago for attempting to forge links between the two organisations.

Angela Davis, a former leader of the Communist Party

in America, opposed it, as did the whole of the rest of the left including the SWP (US) and the ISO, sister organisation of the British SWP. 'A Million Man March in the wrong direction' they said, pointing to the contradictory character of the politics of the NOI, including its pro-capitalist, sexist and homophobic programme.

The sole left group in the US to support the march was Socialist Action. They explained that, despite Farrakhan's programme of black capitalism, because the overwhelming majority of African Americans are working class any mass mobilisation of the black community automatically tends to trigger an anti-capitalist dy-

namic. Along with large numbers of black people they supported the march without giving support to the NOI.

The march opens up a new situation in the US. Blacks are under attack in a myriad of ways. Affirmative action programmes in education are being reversed; cuts in welfare and the \$250 billion off Medicaid - in a country where the top fifth control four-fifths of wealth and income - hit black people, especially women and children, the worst.

The O.J. Simpson trial revealed what all black Americans know (and most black Britains too) that the racist police will fabricate evidence to convict black people. In the

tapes LAPD officer Fuhrman described how they routinely arrest without reason, destroy evidence that would exonerate defendants, plant evidence, beat confessions out of them and give false testimony - 'testifying' they call it. Only Simpson's wealth enabled the evidence to be contradicted. The \$300 allowed poor defendants for forensic investigation means they are usually found guilty.

Leadership

Last October 250,000 marched in Los Angeles against state legislation to deprive immigrants of health and welfare rights. This October

thousands of students and teachers have been protesting against decisions to repeal affirmative action programmes - in Berkeley, San Francisco State, UCLA and elsewhere.

The Million Man March is then both the culmination of a lot of recent anger and activity and the opening of a new situation. We should not sow illusions in Farrakhan, nor the NOI; his interests are not ours. Both Farrakhan and Jackson will try to turn this mass revolt back into the Democratic Party; Farrakhan in return for more federal contracts to supply security in housing projects; Jackson for positions in the Democratic Party. The mass registration of black people as Independents will lead to more black city mayors but no real change where it counts.

However the unity and solidarity achieved, Farrakhan's call for everyone to join local black organisations, including the NAACP, the very numbers mobilised, will make it difficult to defuse the potential power it has triggered.

Farrakhan stepped into a vacuum and has taken the leadership of black America: it is of no use to stand aside and say 'We don't like your programme'. The battle for ideas and leadership is now one. To abstain is to leave the movement to pro-capitalist forces; to engage is to try and win for socialism those who will gain most from it - the poor, the working class and the oppressed.