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Socialist OUTLOOK

Fight new Asylum and Immigration Bill!

Race hate ploy by desperate Tories

FEARING that the tax hand-outs planned for Kenneth Clarke's Budget will fail in their objective of buying back the Tory government's lost electoral support, John Major's government has resorted to the basest form of rabble rousing - racism.

Amid a rag-bag of odds and ends in the Queen's Speech, the focus of media attention will be Home Secretary Michael Howard's reactionary Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Despite Howard's weasel words, carefully citing only cases from Eastern Europe to create the impression that "Our proposals have nothing whatsoever to do with race", the crackdown on an alleged rising tide of 'bogus' asylum seekers, and restrictions on their right to appeal against refusal to admit them, coupled with Peter Lilley's moves to cut their access to benefits, are clearly designed to appeal to racists inside and outside the Tory Party.

Only racists react with alarm to Howard's hysterical warning that if the numbers seeking asylum were to go on rising for the next five years it could mean as many as 100,000 applications a year in 2000. Many more people leave Britain each year.

Much more alarming is the fact that the vast majority of hounded and desperate people who apply for asylum

in Britain are - often after a lengthy period of detention in jails like Campsfield in Oxfordshire and Haslar in Portsmouth - rejected and deported by Howard's hard-faced Home Office gang. Howard admits that:

"Only four out of every 100 people claiming asylum in Britain are deemed to be genuine by the Home Office." Among these are many fleeing from repressive regimes deemed 'friendly' to British imperialism: almost all Nigerian refugees are refused asylum.

The attempt to make it even harder for asylum seekers to find refuge in Britain is of course part of a Europe-wide crackdown, the 'Fortress Europe' policy spelled out in the notorious Schengen agreement, in which liberalised internal EU borders are combined with tougher action to prevent entry from non-EU countries.

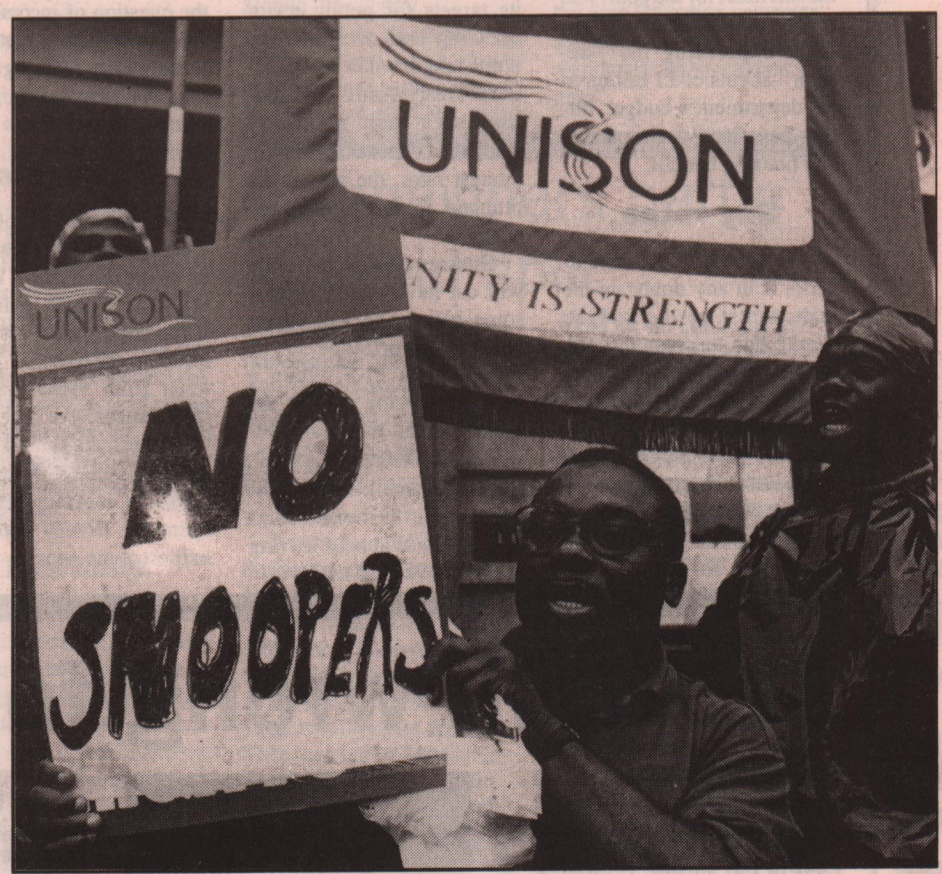
Deportations

Deportations from Britain have climbed to record levels - often carried out with extremes of brutality and occasional tragic consequences, as the case of Joy Gardner demonstrated.

But the Tories have added their own refinements.

Howard has introduced a new 'racist charter', obliging teachers, doctors and others to snoop on and inform the police about families they feel may be here 'illegally': naturally the finger will tend to point first at black people.

The Immigration Service, relying on



what Howard describes as 'intelligence and liaison with other agencies' - snoopers and racists - has stepped up the harassment of suspected 'illegal immigrants' in the workplace.

Last year they 'caught' 10,000, most of them in low-paid sweatshop jobs: Howard does not say how many innocent black British citizens and legal immigrants were also harassed in the process, or much this petty and vindictive operation costs.

There is no doubt that creating a new hue and cry over a handful of asylum seekers is a deliberate attempt by the Tories to stoke up the fire of racism so ably exploited by Thatcher in the past. Black and ethnic minority

communities have a right to demand that Tony Blair's Labour Party, supported by the TUC which last month called a national demonstration against racism, lead a full-scale counter-attack against Howard's cynical pack of lies, half-truths and repression which is intended to drive new wedges between black and white.

Labour should pledge to scrap the battery of racist immigration laws brought in since 1979, close down Campsfield and the other immigration prisons, and tear up the Schengen accords.

■ Campaigns fight back - See p 5

What we think

Taxing questions for Labour

AS CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke put the finishing touches to his 1995 Budget, hospitals throughout Birmingham ran out of beds and nursing staff.

All non-emergency operations were cancelled for 24 hours as the first few cold days of the winter created instant chaos in an under-resourced NHS.

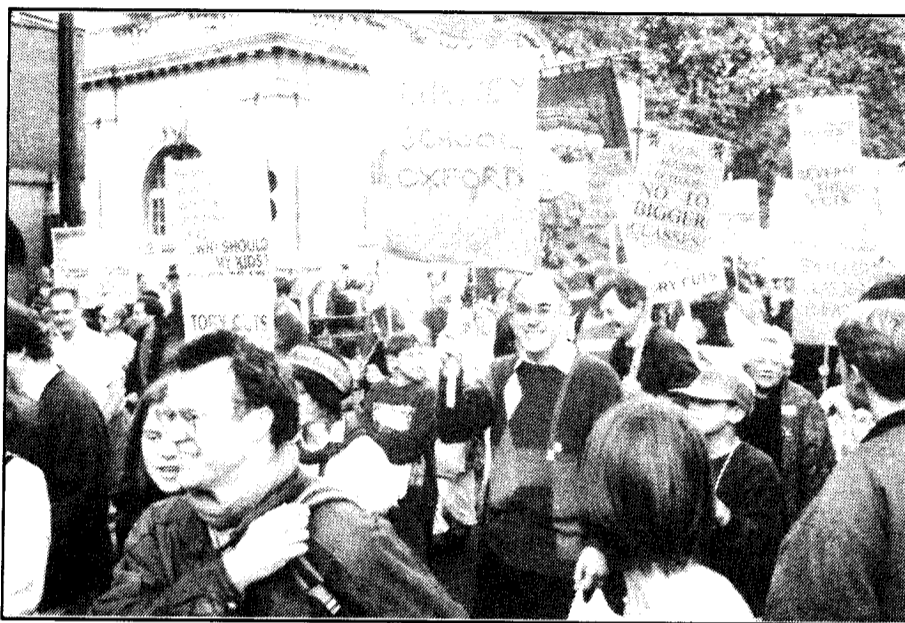
The NUT published figures to show that over 9,000 teachers lost their jobs this summer through the impact of spending cuts. As class sizes have gone soaring, the 'independent' education standards authority Ofsted tried vainly to argue that larger classes do not mean a drop in educational standards.

Even the Church of England has got in on the act, underlining the grim and unchanged reality of grinding poverty in Britain's inner cities. Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley, not known for his soft heart for the poor, was revealed in a leaked document expressing his "despair" at cuts of £1 billion in his department's budget, hitting benefits to lone parents and housing benefit.

Buy votes

Yet none of the commentators is in any doubt on the main thrust of the budget. Clarke has to press through further cuts in public spending in order to free up cash to buy votes with a series of tax cuts.

He needs to cut spending, because the sluggish growth in the economy leaves no other room for a giveaway,



Fighting education cuts: nothing on offer from Labour

and because the entire Tory electoral strategy rests on the popular appeal of tax cuts – placating the richest at the expense of the poor.

He has little leeway. The government is set to exceed its targets for public sector spending and overshoot the limits laid down in the Maastricht Treaty. And in anticipation of a rash giveaway Budget and possible cuts in interest rates, the pound has plunged in the foreign exchanges.

Guesses on which taxes he will cut have varied widely: some believe he will cut or abolish inheritance tax – which raises £1.5 billion a year by levying tax on the estates of the wealthiest 3% who die without having taken steps to evade it. Few working people even dream – short of a lottery win – of leaving assets of over £154,000.

Others expect further cuts in corporation tax – which is already extraordinarily low. To raise it to the EU average would bring an extra £4.5 billion a year.

But most eyes will be on the question of income tax – the one with the greatest potential to con working people that they are really getting something back.

Basic rate

For £3 billion of cuts, Clarke could give away up to 2p on the basic rate of income tax. The Tories dislike income tax because it is inherently progressive – taking most from those that earn most: successive Tory governments have shifted the tax burden increasingly from income to indirect taxes on spending (VAT) which hit hardest at the poor.

This same view has now been echoed by the Labour Party. First we heard Tony Blair assure the fat cats of the Confederation of British Industry that a Labour government would not restore higher rates of tax on top incomes – and that he was committed to ensuring that employers can become wealthy.

This policy closes the door on an easy source of cash to improve health, education and welfare: if income tax for those earning over £40,000 a year were increased to 55% (the EU average), it would generate an extra £6 billion a year.

Barely had the applause for Blair subsided when Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown piped up with a double whammy: a Tory-style 'workfare' system to compel unemployed youth into 'training' schemes on pain of



Clarke: desperate face of Tory election panic

loss of benefits on the one hand, and a tax-cutting plan to axe income tax by up to 60% – to 10-15p.

This might seem like the master-stroke to outflank Labour's course away from progressive taxation, and, by restricting the amount of cash in the kitty, leaves Blair's party unable to offer any real relief for those queueing for NHS treatment, campaigning against education cuts or fighting poverty.

Minimum wage

Blair's team shudders at the thought of a modest £4.15 an hour minimum wage to benefit the lowest paid, but opts instead for a tax break that would stuff the wallets of the wealthiest.

Having rejected in Clause Four any concept of socialism, it appears that New Labour has abandoned any serious project even for reforming capitalism.

Mouthing endless banalities about training and 'partnership', it is clear that while

Blair's team rules the roost Labour's only real selling point to its core electoral support is the fact that they are not the Conservative Party.

The fight for a socialist alternative, which will prioritise the creation of new, properly paid jobs in a programme of useful public works to tackle such things as the housing crisis, and the need for new schools, hospitals and expanded public transport, must be stepped up in the labour movement.

The vast profits and wealth being accumulated by capitalist monopolies, banks and finance houses and the runaway salaries of top bosses (at the expense of continuing redundancies and casualisation of the workforce) are the obvious source of the cash required to finance these schemes and raise pensions and benefits.

Brown recently put forward the plan for a 'windfall tax' on the privatised utilities: it's time to go further, exploit the public anger at the utility bosses, and raise again the need for renationalisation.

Scargill: wrong formula, wrong time

THE LABOUR left has had its worst period in recent memory. After defeat on Clause Four in the spring, it faced a comprehensive trouncing at the Brighton conference, losing every single fight with the platform.

Compounding the damage done by union block votes has been the sea-change in the voting of Constituency delegates, swinging behind Tony Blair's right wing offensive. The Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, hopelessly divided over Clause Four, has with a few honourable exceptions subsided into passivity.

In short, this is not a good time to appeal for a left wing revolt in the Labour Party. Those who continue the fight for socialist policies are weak enough without the best



Union base: Scargill

layers deserting.

In the unions, however, there are promising indications that all is not lost. Unofficial strike action from Ford workers in Dagenham this month comes as a refreshing

blast from the past: but there are ongoing battles by firefighters and dockers in Liverpool, and by hospital workers. Rail unions have repeatedly shown their ability to fight, as have postal workers.

In the biggest public sector union, UNISON, over 65,000 voted for explicitly left wing candidates challenging Rodney Bickerstaffe, though nobody would seriously claim they are all ready to vote for parties to the left of Labour in a general election. Indeed many of Bickerstaffe's 150,000 votes came from workers responding to his left speeches in support of the minimum wage and Clause Four.

The case for a left wing political regroupment of class struggle forces to develop policies and solidarity in the unions is as strong as ever, as workers brace themselves for the right wing policies of a Blair

government.

In such a project, Arthur Scargill, who gave such firm and principled leadership in the miners' strike, could play a key role. The policies and dynamic of such a regroupment would have an impact on the key unions whose block votes have backed Blair, and on the ranks of the Labour Party itself.

Socialist Outlook would welcome and support such an initiative, as would wide sections of union activists. In the struggles to come, such a broad 'class struggle left wing' regroupment may form the platform around which the left of the labour movement as a whole would focus: depending on the struggles to come, a new left party with genuine mass roots might eventually emerge from it.

Unfortunately, Scargill has proposed instead to launch a new

party, the Socialist Labour Party, committed to running electoral candidates against Labour.

Set up in this period, such a breakaway would carry with it only the reduced ranks of the existing far left and sections of the hard left in the unions. It could even help to entrench Blair more firmly, by weakening the left in the Labour Party.

While opposing Labour, the SLP would be reduced to campaigning at best for a protest vote: it could not hope to secure the election of even a single MP. Such campaigns have been run before in Britain, and failed.

We urge Scargill and those supporting his new party to think again about how best to build on the undoubted following he still has in the unions, and how best to win broad sections of workers to the fight for socialism.

McAvoy's ballot: bid to dump NUT democracy

By Roy Leach

WHILST parents, governors & students organised in FACE groups have been increasing the pressure on

CWU in uproar

THE RULES revision conference of the Communication Workers' Union saw scenes of uproar as the minority clerical section repeatedly vetoed rule changes supported by the majority telecom engineering and postal sections.

Under the terms of this year's merger each rule change has to have a majority in each of the three "constituencies". This means that branches representing 15,000 members can veto changes supported by branches representing over 200,000.

The clerical section first voted down a rule change that would have helped end deals made by the postal executive over the heads of the members.

In the ensuing uproar General Secretary Alan Johnson was forced to promise to bring forward a rule change limiting the veto to constituency matters - yet this proposal will itself be subject to veto.

Given that the main beneficiary of the existing set-up is the national executive - their voting recommendations closely coincided with the clerical majority - it is questionable whether they will end the veto.

RMT fight against victimisation gains pace

THE CAMPAIGN for the reinstatement of victimised RMT militants has moved centre stage in the union's struggle against British Rail's attempts to break the union.

Ballot papers for strike action have now gone out to traincrews at Manchester's Piccadilly station and cleaning staff at Longsight depot.

The RMT special conference on November 14 gave its support for the struggle.

Management have been forced to back off from attempts to wreck the national General Grades Committee, which would have severely restricted the rank and file's control over head office.

Tory MPs and the government the NUT has turned in upon itself in an increasingly bitter internecine struggle.

General Secretary Doug McAvoy, still smarting from a humiliating string of defeats at the union's Easter conference, has launched a last-ditch desperate attempt to consolidate his control over the union. In this he is uncritically supported by a politically bankrupt and weak right wing executive majority.

The NUT is presently amongst the most democratic of trade unions: local branches (known as associations and divisions) are able to levy and spend local subscriptions and are consequently able to exercise a high degree of organisational autonomy.

Local lay officers undertake the negotiations with local education authorities (LEAs) and are, within the framework of nationally agreed policy, able to determine teachers' conditions of service.

Critical

Despite a squeeze in grants from the National Union, branches remain able to fund and circulate material throughout the union which is often critical of the National Union and its General Secretary.

The Union also has two active and increasingly effective broad lefts - the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) and the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union (CDFU), presenting a very real alternative leadership and pole of attraction for members fed up with the do-nothing policies of the "new realist" leadership.

The union's annual conference attracts over 1,000 delegates and has over the past few years, shown itself increasingly unwilling to rubber stamp the views of McAvoy and his Executive supporters.

This culminated in Blackpool last Easter when delegates voted for, among other things, a ballot for a one day strike against the underfunding of education and a more vigorous campaign against excessive class sizes and teacher redundancies.

Collision course

These policies put the union on a collision course with Blair's "New Labour" Party and jeopardised the cosy relationship that McAvoy has been cultivating with Labour's Education Spokesperson David Blunkett.

The usual tactic of appealing to conference delegates through the media failed to save the day for the right wing, and an overwhelming



McAvoy has opposed growing FACE campaign on cuts

majority rejected the witch-hunting atmosphere which they attempted to create on the back of the ill-conceived SWP demonstration against Blunkett.

At the end of conference McAvoy made clear his intention to ignore or overturn decisions he didn't like. Nothing unusual here, but what was unexpected was the viciousness with which he embarked upon his task and the extent to which he was prepared to use union resources to meet his ends.

The ballot for a one-day strike - which the left had posed as part of the coherent militant strategy of opposition to the Tory offensive against state education - was the first target.

Over £155,000 of union money was spent on a succession of unashamedly biased communications sent directly to members' home addresses and to schools for display on NUT notice boards.

Well spent

From McAvoy's point of view the members' money was well spent, with a 4:1 vote against action.

The result has been cynically and unashamedly used to 'bash the left', which has been characterised as being "out of touch" and "unrepresentative of the membership", branded "extremists with their own narrow political agenda".

Encouraged by the success of this plebiscite McAvoy has gone onto the offensive and has initiated a ballot on "extending democracy" in the NUT. Every member has received a letter urging them to vote "yes" to six questions whilst an issue of *NUT News* has implied that 14 named Executive members are opposed to consultation with the membership and to internal democracy.

The fact that they actively promoted an *alternative* form of consultation, aimed at addressing the very real problems that members experience in trying to attend meetings, gets not a mention.

Whilst the ballot material pays lip-service to encouraging members to participate in the existing representative democratic structures of the union (added at a late stage by

some uneasy right-wingers) it is clearly intended to endorse the marginalisation of branch meetings and, more particularly, annual conference.

The six questions ask members to endorse the use of ballots to determine everything from who may be nominated to national office to which decisions of annual conference should be implemented.

One man band

Of course the ballot remains silent on the fact that both the questions and the accompanying material will be decided by General Secretary - surely the ultimate 'one man vote'.

There are positive signs, however, that the McAvoy steamroller may be running out of steam.

In the National Officer elections which overlapped the "extending (sic) democracy" ballot, left vice-presidential candidate Christine Blower topped the poll, whilst Ian Murch, standing for treasurer, increased his vote and the right-wing incumbent fell.

In the short term McAvoy is likely to win the current plebiscite (but with a majority below the 80% in the one day strike ballot).

Elections

The forthcoming Executive elections therefore take on a particular significance. A left majority on the Executive is needed more than ever to put a brake on his excesses, his right wing supporters no longer able to exercise any sort of control on his conduct.

If McAvoy can get away with restructuring the NUT and snuffing out any oppositional voice, then other union leaders will no doubt be encouraged to follow suit.

The future direction of the labour movement hinges very much on this "clash of titans": the best organised union left against an extreme right bureaucrat. *Socialist Outlook* will keep you informed.

■ In an important initiative, the STA is writing to other union broad lefts to discuss possible areas of co-operation.

Battle over Birmingham college axe

By Anthony Brain

Matthew Boulton College Edgbaston is about to make 40 workers redundant. Ten work in the administration department, the rest are lecturers.

NATFHE members will be asking for support from the students. The union is currently balloting for strike action and contacting UNISON.

It is important that there is the maximum unity against the onslaught of college management.

Students are establishing an anti-cuts society that should affiliate to the Free Education Campaign, linking up with students and lecturers around the country.

In order to be effective in defeating these cutbacks we need the mass participation of members of NATFHE, UNI-

SON and the NUS. We should link it to a national fightback.

After demo on national November 23 we must continue to build upon the gains won by the left on grants at the special conference in May.

The right are doing everything to sabotage the democratic decisions of the conference - including closing NUS London, attacking other regions where the left is strong and a money wasting PR exercise.

The student right is following the policies of the Labour Party leadership.

When the masses of students mobilise they have an impact on the labour movement.

The left in the NUS must now bring broader forces into the Free Education campaign, using it as a way of fighting for democracy within student unions.

Campaigners battle to avoid split

A 24-hour vigil is the formula under which competing lobbies of parliament by two campaigns on the Welfare State will be sandwiched together.

The original call for a Budget Day lobby came last April from the Welfare State Network at its well-attended conference, following a successful lobby last year.

But in October, the Campaign to Defend the Welfare State, headed by Ken Livingstone, the GMB and backed by the *Morning Star*, put out

a call for an 'Eve of Budget' lobby, having apparently rejected appeals from the Network for joint campaigning.

Now a series of events involving campaigners on health, education and benefits has been orchestrated by the Network to span the 24 hours between the Campaign's lobby and that of the Network.

But the case for coordinated action is should be obvious to every activist.

Demands for this should be raised at the Campaign conference on December 2.

Defend the Welfare State!
Budget-day lobby of Parliament

called by Welfare State Network
TUESDAY
November 28, 2pm

St Stephen's Gate
House of Commons
MPs, trade union and campaign speakers

WELFARE STATE

Liverpool dockers dig in against sackings

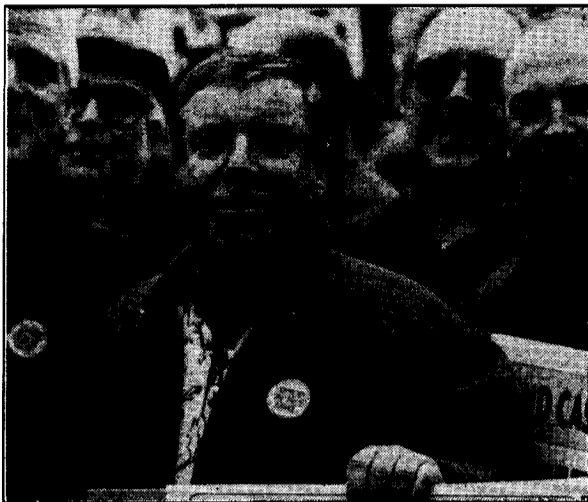
By Simon Day

Five hundred dockers have been on strike and picketing hard for seven weeks against being sacked by Mersey Docks & Harbour Company (MDHC) for refusing to cross a picket line.

The conflict began with attempts to bring back the system of casual labour. Casualisation of labour is a major part of the capitalist restructuring of society. Workers in sectors as unrelated as banking, heavy industry and education are all suffering its effects.

Liverpool docks is one of the most profitable and successful ports in the UK, with profits in excess of £35 million, handling more cargo than its heyday in the 1950s.

Last year the MDHC imposed a work contract on dockers after issuing them with 90 days notice. They ad-



vertised the jobs in the *Liverpool Echo* and interviewed 1800 unemployed from Merseyside.

Not one of them was given the job. It was a disgraceful hoax to enforce new contracts on the existing workers.

The dockers fighting for reinstatement have won backing from MPs, councillors Euro MPs and the local com-

munity. Two thousand marched through the city centre of September 7 and ten thousand on September 21.

Since 1989 the government has helped featherbed the directors of the company. Over £200 million was used to make the 1989 wave of redundancies.

To get the Liverpool dockers to agree to go back to work

the government, the employer and the union gave assurances that they would suffer no job losses or attacks on their union organisation.

Nothing could have been further from the truth.

MDHC have inherited vast property rights worth billions of pounds. The government has a 20 per cent stake in the company and was prepared to waive £112 million of debts in the 1989 strike.

■ **MARCH:** Saturday December 2, 10.30am Assemble at RC Cathedral, Hope Street, Liverpool.

■ **RALLY** - St George's Hall 12 noon.

■ Send messages of support and donations to: J. Davies, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Make cheques out to: Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards Committee.

■ Get in touch with the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards Committee c/o TGWU, Islington Liverpool.

Defending the last unionised port

SOLIDARITY with the Liverpool dockers has been pouring in from Britain and internationally.

Hull Trades Council and the local TGWU dockers' branch have established a Liverpool Dockers Support Group. At its inaugural meeting, sacked Liverpool dockers Danny and Paul spoke about the dispute.

KEITH SINCLAIR interviewed Paul, one of the sacked dockers:

What's the background to the dispute?

As you know, it goes back to the abolition of the Dock Labour Scheme in 1989. Liverpool was the only port that held out and remained unionised.

Torside was a company set up in 1991 to prevent the use of casual labour on the dock. But Torside sacked some of the young dockers and then the Mersey Docks and Harbour

Company sacked all the dockers for refusing to cross a picket line.

What has been the response?

The men have been magnificent. I wasn't surprised though, Liverpool has always had a strong socialist base.

The response in Liverpool generally has been brilliant. We've had excellent support from all sorts of people.

We have also had excellent international support. American dockers have sent 5,000 dollars and promised to refuse to unload any cargo diverted from Liverpool.

What next?

Given the support we've had, we think we're winning. It's just a question of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company realising that.

Less than half back Bick Challenge for UNISON left

by Fred Leplat

The outcome of the recent elections for UNISON's General Secretary turned out to be a surprise for many people and revealed the union to be deeply polarised.

On a 23 per cent turnout, Rodney Bickerstaffe, current Associate General Secretary with Alan Jkinson, took only 48% of the vote, polling 151,893 votes. Bickerstaffe was the favourite and his supporters believed him to be so popular that he would romp home.

His nearest rival was Peter Hunter. A former Tory Party member who apparently has now applied to join the Labour Party, Hunter's campaign was promoted through the Catholic Church.

His election address was anti-abortion, homophobic and racist (no money for self-organised groups or international solidarity). To everyone's surprise, Hunter got 93,402 votes or 29% of

the total.

This vote reveals that there is a significant reactionary layer that is as yet unorganised.

The CFDU (the main left caucus in UNISON) candidate, Roger Bannister, obtained 58,052 votes or 18%

This strong vote indicates that he was a very credible candidate and appealed to a wide layer of UNISON activists who have been disillusioned by the national leadership's sell-out on compulsory privatisation and pay in health and local government.

Industrial action

The main call by the CFDU for national campaigns including industrial action against Government attacks was seen by this layer as the only way for UNISON to defend its members.

The SWP candidate, Yunus Bashkh, came a distant fourth with 15139 votes or 5% of the total. The SWP

must be sorely disappointed with this result, as they were confident of beating Roger Bannister.

The polarisation of the union to the left and right immediately posed Bickerstaffe with a dilemma. He was let down by the "soft left" in the union who did not campaign hard for him. The "Blairite wing" of the union bureaucracy sat on its hands as it did not want to boost a critic of the Labour leader.

In the short term, Bickerstaffe cannot rely on this section of the union. He therefore immediately made some concessions to the left to take the pressure off.

He announced that he would not take a pay increase from his current salary of £57,000 to £60,000 (this was one of the main points of Bannister's campaign).

He also stated that UNISON was not in the "pocket of the Labour Party".

However welcome these statements are, they do not indicate that Bickerstaffe has shifted to the left.

Nevertheless the left in the union, including the CFDU, will need to continue to support Rodney Bickerstaffe against Tony Blair when he is speaking up for UNISON's policies such as the minimum wage or against privatisation.

But we will also have to campaign to force Bickerstaffe and the national leader-



No walk-over: Bickerstaffe

ship to organise national campaigns including industrial action in defence of these policies and here and now for members jobs and conditions.

The CFDU can now be the focus for all those on the left who want to turn UNISON into a fighting and campaigning union. It is time for all on the left, including the SWP (who have been ambivalent about the CFDU), to join it and turn it into a real broad and national left throughout the union.

Strategy

In the next year, the CFDU will have to provide a strategy around key issues such as for winning on pay in local government and health, opposing the Tory Immigration Bill which will require many UNISON members to check nationality status, and stopping the continuing privatisations, including voluntary services.

The CFDU Conference on December 9 in Leeds (see box) will be the first opportunity to bring the left together since the election and to prepare a way forward.

Labour left regroups to battle on

Pete Firmin
(Socialist Campaign Group Officer)

ABOUT 150 people attended the conference of the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network in Manchester on November 18.

With a wide geographical spread, there was a useful sharing of experiences around both campaigning and inner party issues.

Although the failure of the MPs to attend left a political gap, there was a stirring contribution from a Liverpool Docks shop steward on their strike (and £250 was raised in a collection) as well as useful political debate.

Workshops on the welfare state, anti-racism and party democracy produced resolutions about the campaigning priorities for the Network in the next period.

In addition to the election of officers, decisions were taken to strengthen its function as the organisation of the Labour Left, and a change of name to the So-

cialist Campaign Group.

The political discussion which dominated the final session was around Arthur Scargill's proposal for a breakaway "Socialist Labour Party".

The proposal coming from a workshop was to write to Scargill saying he is wrong, and for him to discuss with those in favour of staying in the Labour Party and fighting before taking this step.

While a very small minority agreed with Scargill's proposal out of frustration with years of witch-hunts and moves to the right, a larger minority argued that we should "listen to Arthur's arguments" before saying he is wrong.

After lengthy discussion and the defeat of amendments which would have watered down the resolution, it was passed overwhelmingly.

What was obvious though was that this should not be seen as the end of the discussion but that there is still much confusion amongst the Labour Left.

The Socialist Campaign Group will have to continue this discussion to convince those who are wavering that they should not take this

Campaign for a Fighting Democratic UNISON
2nd National Conference
'Preparing for battles of 1996'
Speakers invited: Arthur Scargill, Hillingdon strikers
SATURDAY DECEMBER 9
10am-4pm, Swathmore Centre,
4, Woodhouse Square, Leeds 3.
Affiliation fee (£25) motions to CFDU
c/o Paul Harris, 6 Beula View, Leeds LS6 2LA.

Hillingdon Hospital strike: it's official!

LOW PAID workers for private contractors Pall Mall Services at Hillingdon Hospital have voted to strike against the imposition of new contracts involving a 20 percent pay cut.

The workforce, mostly Asian women, are now set to start their 'official' strike on Monday November 27 joined by other Pall Mall employees in UNISON, who have not been sacked by the company.

The strike is a major step forward for the sacked workers, who have been picketing the hospital for more than 7 weeks with only very limited support from the UNISON leadership.

A continued and strengthened strike, involving all workers employed by the company, will increase pressure on Pall Mall to back down and reinstate the workers on their old



Pall Mall pickets

contracts.

Support groups have been set up. A demonstration is planned for Friday November 24 12-2pm outside the main hospital entrance. There will be a daily picket at the hospital every morning.

Please send messages of support to the UNISON office, Hillingdon Hospital

Deportation threat over jailed journalist

Release Raghbir Singh!

By Jeremy Dear, NUI Secretary Birmingham, personal capacity

NUJ member Raghbir Singh continues to languish in Winson Green prison Birmingham, threatened with deportation on the grounds of "national security".

He has been imprisoned without trial for over eight months. The British government claim Raghbir is an "international terrorist" despite never presenting any evidence. Despite requests from MPs and his legal team no evidence has been forthcoming.

It is extremely difficult to build a defence case when you do not know what you are being accused of.

Amnesty International have expressed their grave concern over the case. They claim that by refusing the right to an independent judicial hearing and by not telling

Raghbir the specific allegations against him the British government are breaking UN Principles of Detention.

Amnesty are also concerned because Raghbir was editor of *Awaze Quam*, a Punjabi newspaper which campaigns for an independent state in the Punjab. He should not be deported for his views.

As a result of incarceration Raghbir's family have split, his wife sacked from her job through stress-related illnesses.

Since his arrest the NUI have staged three lobbies of the prison and a local demonstration of about 1000.

An Early Day motion of Parliament tabled by David Winnick got the backing of around 125 MPs.

Michael Howard continues to insist on deportation.

The forthcoming London demonstration needs to be built to put maximum pressure on the Tories and on the Labour Party front bench in order to force them to take up the case officially.



No evidence against Raghbir, but Howard won't retreat

A show of strength will be a huge boost to the campaign.

■ Contact the Raghbir Singh Defence Campaign at 7223 Pershore Road, Birmingham B29 7NY. Telephone 0121 486 1809

■ Demonstration December 3 assembles 12.30pm Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park (adjacent to Imperial War Museum) Lambeth Road, Southwark.

Battle against Fast Food union-buster

By Inbar Tamari

On Tuesday 31 October, 40 Turkish and Kurdish workers at J.J. Fast Foods in Tottenham were sacked. Their only 'crime' was joining a union.

J.J. Fast Foods is a distribution company supplying food to schools and many other workplaces, mainly around the South East. The workers there had a 60-70 hours week. Six years ago they were paid £180 a week; now they are paid only £130.

There is no overtime pay, no sick pay, and no holiday pay. The drivers have to pay parking fines and the first £250 of any damage to their trucks out of their pay.

It is therefore no surprise that more than half of the 75 workers decided to join the TGWU, elected a shop steward at a mass meeting, and made the following demands:

- All workers to have contracts and be in the union.
- Holiday Pay
- Sick Pay
- No money to be paid by drivers out of their own pockets

● Two shifts to be introduced in the freezers, where people work at 30 degrees below zero.

The workers were sacked as soon as they had joined the union. The workers and a union official went to see the boss, who refused to recognise or even meet with the union.

The sacked workers were then attacked by hired thugs wielding sticks and knives; three workers were hospital-

ised. The next day a 100-plus strong picket of the sacked workers and supporters was attacked by the police.

So far, six more workers have joined the union and the picket line. The TGWU has been supporting the workers from their victimisation fund; they have also received money and messages of support from other unions and from their local MP, Bernie Grant. Islington UNISON 'A' has already voted to contribute £1,000 to the strike fund.

Several schools have cancelled their contracts with the company. After three days, the boss requested to meet the union, asked for 24 hours to reconsider their demands, and then refused them again.

This shows that the business is suffering. Further loss of contracts could force him to meet the workers' demands. Many workplaces are suffering by J.J. Fast Foods.

● Join the picket, Millmead Road, Tottenham, London N17, every morning at 6.00 am (Saturday, 8.00).

● Jenny's Restaurant and Jenny's Burger are franchises contracted to J.J. Fast Foods. Don't eat there; preferably get in and tell them why.

● Send letters of protest to Mr. M Kaimil, Managing Director, JJ Fast Food Distribution Ltd, Unit One, Lockwood Industrial Park, Millmead Road, London N17 9QP, Fax 0181 880 9094

● Money and messages of support should be sent to JJ. Fast Food Locked Out Workers Support Group, c/o Unwaged Centre, 72 West Green Road, London N15 5JL. Make cheques payable to 'JJ. Fast Food Protest Committee'.

December pickets against racist immigration laws

By Rod Marshall

ALGERIAN and Ivory Coast asylum seekers will join a hunger strike outside the Social Services Advisory Committee on December 6.

They are opposing new regulations restricting benefits to asylum seekers and immigrants, which will be under discussion by the

Committee.

The hunger strike will also be supported by CARF, the National Network Against Detentions and Deportations, the Colin Roach Centre, the Campaign to Close Camps and the Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign.

The SSAC are at New Court, 48 Carey St, London WC2.

More details of the lobby from CARF, 0171-837-1450.

ON DECEMBER 18 Peter Lilley is due to announce new regulations on social security and other benefits in the Commons.

The Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill and the Asylum Rights Campaign have jointly called a lobby of parliament the following day outside the Commons and at a meeting 1pm-5pm in Committee

Room 14.

December 19 marks the point from which MPs can request a vote on these regulations (which could otherwise be automatically accepted).

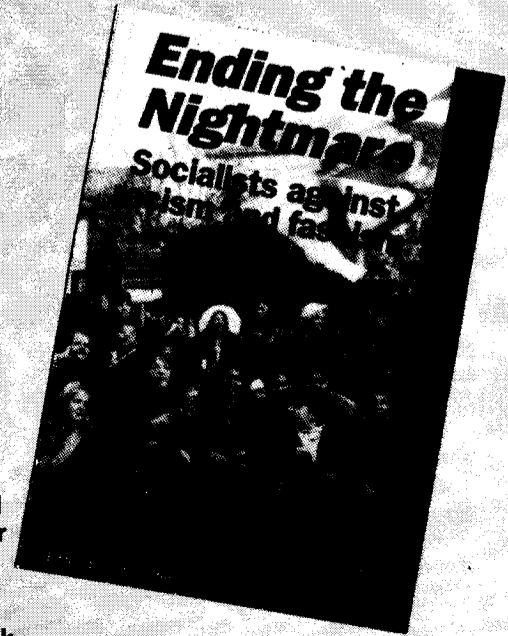
If they do so, the vote will occur early in January (before January 8, when the new regulations are designed to come into effect).

More details CAIAB, c/o CAPA, St Hilda's East Community Centre, 18 Club Row, London E2 7EY.

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



By Neil Murray

HISTORY never repeats itself precisely, but it certainly has lessons for socialists; and unless we learn from them we will repeat the mistakes of others.

There have been many attempts to form left breakaways from mass social democratic parties, particularly in Western Europe. Without claiming that it is possible to map out precisely how Arthur Scargill's "Socialist Labour Party" will develop, we can at least draw some general lessons as to the problems and pitfalls.

Whatever the circumstances in which they broke away, they have all come up against the same basic problem - that if they are to sustain themselves and grow in competition with their "parent" party, a qualitatively different kind of party and programme is necessary.

A rival social democratic party, however left its version of social democracy, is very unlikely to grow and challenge the hold of the old party on the working class.

A basic tenet of social democracy in all its variations is the belief that parliament can legislate socialism into being. For revolutionary socialists, parliament is the "executive committee" of the bourgeoisie, whose rule rests on the whole of the capitalist state machine.

Decisions affecting the lives of workers are made *outside* parliament by the big capitalists. Socialism cannot be achieved without smashing that state machine and replacing it with a workers state based on workers' councils.

This does not mean that revolutionaries reject the use of parliament - on the contrary, as long as the working class looks to parliament, revolutionaries will use it, and elections to it, to propagate their alternative.

We use it as a platform to help popularise our ideas, expose parliament as a sham, and use the authority as workers' representatives to further the class struggle.

Common to the breakaway parties is that they either continue the social democratic acceptance of parliament as the basic eternal form of democracy or prevaricate on the issue, at best trying to reconcile the antagonistic forms of parliament and soviets. The latter is a hallmark of *centrism*, vacillating between reform and revolution.

Revolutionaries recognise that *the class struggle*, not parliament, is the motor force for change in capitalist society and see their prime purpose in furthering that struggle, educating the working class in the nature of capitalism and its state, and the use of parliament as subordinate to that task. Left reformists and centrists again vacillate (at best) on this.

In the years immediately after the end of the First World War much of Western Europe was in ferment, with mass strikes and uprisings breaking out in several countries.

Mainstream social democracy, after having capitulated to imperialism in 1914 through its support for the war effort in all countries, followed this up by being defenders of the capitalist system and parliamentary democracy in peace time.

Russian Revolution

Revolutionary communist parties were being established by those forces which had opposed the war, on the strength of the example and authority of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

In these circumstances large layers to the left of social democracy questioned its programme and practice and there were *mass* breakaways from the Second (Socialist) International, while in other countries, such as Britain, social democracy put on its left face in attempt to forestall such developments.

In Germany capitalism and bourgeois democracy would probably not have survived this period without the support rendered to it in the workers movement by the SPD.

The USPD (Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany) reluctantly split during the war on a pacifist, not a revolutionary platform. This was a mass party with 800,000 members, obtaining 18% of the votes in the general election of 1920 (as against 2.1% for the Communist Party).

Its programme encapsulated prevarication - at a time when workers' councils existed and revolutionaries were arguing for building them as an *alternative* to parliament, it had that workers' councils and parliament should co-exist and co-operate on a permanent basis, effec-



The upsurge of the Russian Revolution inspired mass left splits from social democracy

Left wing splits from social democracy: Historic break - or dead end?

tively demobilising the struggle.

Under the dual pressure of events and the Communist Party (KPD) the Left in the USPD fought for an end to such wavering and, against all kinds of manoeuvres by the right, voted at their congress for fusion with the Communist Party and affiliation to the Third (Communist) International. As part of this same process of clarification the KPD expelled its ultra-left wing (which rejected work in the mainstream unions, the use of parliament and the united front). The fusion with the USPD transformed the KPD from a large fringe party into a mass party.

Similar developments took place in France and Italy, except that the fight took place primarily *within* a single mass party.

In France, where a centrist leadership had won control of the SFIO during the war, the party swung far to the left after the war and flirted with the Comintern. But its leadership really wanted a *centrist* international, excluding only the out-and-out social patriots like the German SPD and the British Labour Party.

The SFIO, however, voted by a 3-1 majority at its Tours congress in December 1919 to affiliate to the Comintern, including acceptance of its 21 conditions, which included the expulsion of its prominent left reformists.

The new French Communist Party (PCF) started with 150,000 members and the right split away to re-establish the SFIO. However, its centrist leaders, like Marcel Cachin, masquerading as revolutionaries, remained until 1923.

The Italian PSI had taken a similar centrist position to the USPD during the war. In March 1919 its executive voted to affiliate to the new Third International, but the party still had centrists and left reformists in its leadership.

The centrists refused to expel or even seriously politically fight the reformists and the situation came to a head after the occupation of the Italian factories in September 1920 in which the PSI talked left, but in fact gave no real lead to the movement and capitulated to the reformist trade union leaders (also PSI members).

After this the left in the PSI pushed for a split, which took place at its Livorno congress in January 1921. However, unlike in France and Germany, the Left failed to win a majority of the party because of the "boycottist" line of its leadership towards parliament.

After an aborted attempt to set up a centrist compromise 'Two and a Half' International, the right and centrist wings of the USPD, SFIO/PCF and PSI drifted back to their natural home, the mainstream social democratic parties and the "Socialist International".

These centrist parties were a temporary product of the large-scale radicalisation which followed the war. Mass centrist organisations, vacillating between consistent revolutionary politics and consistent reformist politics are inherently unstable. Trotsky observed

"The masses don't stay for very long in this transitional stage: temporarily they rally to the centrists, then they go on and join the communists or go back to the reformists - unless they lapse into indifference".

Headed off

In Britain, no such mass breakaway from social democracy occurred in the aftermath of the first world war, because the revolutionary groups were so weak, the post-war radicalisation was much less thoroughgoing, and the Labour Party leadership skillfully headed off the movement in sympathy with the Russian revolution by the adoption of the supposedly "socialist" Clause IV and support for a toothless national "Council of Action" against British intervention.

When the British Communist Party was formed in 1920 with a claimed 10,000 members (probably a considerable exaggeration) only a tiny section of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) joined, and at conferences the leadership of the Labour Party was easily able to win rejection of the Communist Party's request for affiliation.

When a large break from the Labour Party did come, in 1932, it was in entirely different

circumstances - amid mass unemployment and without any radicalisation of the masses.

The ILP had pre-dated the existence of the Labour Party, and its leader at the time, Keir Hardie, can be credited with bringing the trade union-based Labour Party into existence after a long fight. From the start the ILP was an affiliated organisation, and provided several early leaders of the Labour Party (including Ramsay MacDonald).

The ILP had always been a left reformist organisation, accepting that parliament was the vehicle for legislating socialism and only expressing frustration at the most craven aspects of Labour Party politics.

The ILP was permitted to stand Labour candidates under its own name, and after the general Election of 1929, which saw the election of the second Labour government, it had 37 MPs.

While there were grumbles from some sections of the ILP about the weakness of Labour's programme (particularly in dealing with mass unemployment), the ILP had no real alternative.

Things came to a head around the government's acceptance of proposals to reduce unemployment benefit. The ILP group of MPs opposed the proposals and the group attempted to impose discipline amongst its members to vote against in parliament. Thus a dispute blew up with the Labour Party leadership about whose discipline the MPs were subject to - the ILP's or the Labour Party's.

Defection

The dispute continued after the defection of Ramsey MacDonald in 1931 to form a National Government and the subsequent general election had reduced the ILP to 5 MPs, even though, with the LP back in opposition - and a rump one at that - the issue was hardly likely to be immediate.

The 1931 Labour Party conference made the acceptance of Standing Orders obligatory and the MPs began to function as a separate parliamentary group. The ILP voted (by 241 to 142) for disaffiliation at its July 1932 conference and immediately split, with a section staying in the LP and going on to form the Socialist League.

Although there was talk of the ILP becoming a party of "militant marxist socialists", in fact it wavered between reform and revolution. It came under increasing pressure from the (by now fully Stalinist) CP which, though much smaller, was considerably more effective.

The ILP lost its youth section to the CP, but participated in many Stalinist campaigns, while at the same time criticising the Moscow show trials. On the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) the ILP was divided down the middle between those who called for sanctions against Italy and those who argued that socialists had no interest in backing either side.

It cut itself off from serious work in the labour movement by the decision of its July 1932 conference to immediately resign from all positions of responsibility within the Co-ops, Labour Party and trade unions.

At the time of its disaffiliation the ILP had 16,700 members (compared to the CP's 2,500) and 653 branches.

Four months later it had lost 203 branches, with big losses in the traditional strongholds of Scotland, Lancashire and Yorkshire; by 1935 membership had declined by 60 per cent and at the general election of that year all four ILP MPs elected were for Glasgow constituencies.

What's more, in some constituencies although the combined ILP/LP vote was a majority, the Conservatives won because of the split vote. This decline continued and the ILP virtually ceased to exist after the war.

Around the same time centrist parties arose in several other countries and they repeated the earlier attempt to form a new international. However the same fate befell it as the earlier attempt, and the various parties fell by the wayside.

This brief survey, which could draw on many more examples such as the short-lived Scottish Labour Party in the 1970s, shows that if a breakaway from social democracy is to achieve any momentum, it not only has to be at a time when it reflects a radicalisation of the mass of the working class, but also to quickly clarify its politics if it is not to disintegrate.

Clause Four is not enough for a new left party

Scargill's false start

HARRY SLOAN looks more closely at the document put forward by Arthur Scargill on November 4 as the basis for a new Socialist Labour Party.

MANY ON the left, especially in the trade unions, will share the sense of anger and frustration that animates Arthur Scargill's scathing analysis of the state of 'New Labour' under Tony Blair.

Some will initially be attracted to the idea of launching a new left party: but the conditions for building a left-wing, class struggle breakaway from the main party of the British working class have seldom if ever been less favourable.

Scargill's claim that there is no hope whatever for a revival or successful struggle by the left in the Labour Party appears also to echo the views of prominent members of the Communist Party of Britain – who have never been in the Labour Party – and Militant Labour. Our last issue carried a lengthy response to such ideas (*Militant fails to define the moment, Socialist Outlook No.93*).

The difference is that Militant pulled out of the Labour Party several years ago – long before Blair became leader or Clause Four was scrapped. They announced that they were now building a 'marxist' left challenge to Labour. This tactic has – like other such experiments by the British far left – led to a rapid decline in Militant Labour's membership and influence in the labour movement.

They may have come to the same point from different directions, but Scargill and Militant both face the same colossal contradiction: the very conditions which have paved the way for Blair's crushing victories over the Labour left are also the most unfavourable for promoting any kind of left wing split from the Labour Party.

Political allies

Scargill's text ably catalogues the succession of policies overturned by Blair: but it does not discuss the political coalition within the Labour Party that gave Blair the votes he needed to push through these changes.

Indeed so keen is Scargill to argue that 'New Labour' is "now almost indistinguishable from the Democratic Party in the United States ... or, nearer home, the Liberal Democrats" that he omits the scandalous – but crucial – role that is still being played by the trade union bureaucracy in sustaining Blair.

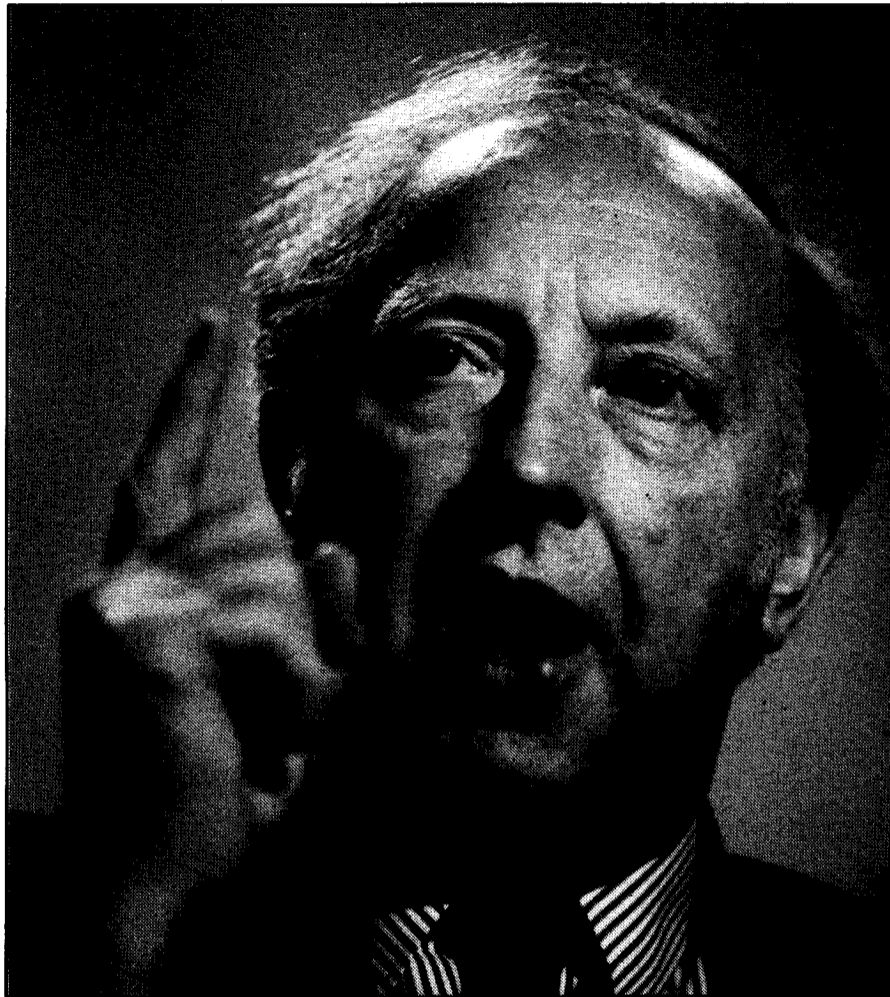
'New Labour' is very different indeed from the Democrats and Liberal Democrats: it still maintains a political link with the trade unions which founded it.

And while this link can be used in times of right wing domination to stitch up bureaucratic procedures against the rank and file, it can also, as we saw in 1978-82, result in dramatic upheavals if union leaders are compelled to fight back.

Even now, 50 percent of the vote at Labour conference is controlled by the trade unions. Workers look to Labour to represent their interests.

The problem is that most of the union leaderships – even those who between conferences have occasionally made 'left' speeches defending Clause Four or appearing to criticise Blair – have been happy to cast their votes for his policies. Without their votes he could not have implemented his policy changes.

The outcome is therefore a product not just of the politics of Blair and his leading clique, but also of the trade union bureaucrats, who have been among the most avid exponents of the line that we must get the Tories out at any price, and elect a Labour government.



Scargill: surprisingly his document does not discuss building base in trade unions

But the timidity of the top union bureaucrats, and their willingness to isolate and crush those who – like the miners in 1984-5 – step out of line and attempt a fightback, has, over a period of years, also succeeded in damping down the militancy of the trade union rank and file.

Strikes are at the lowest level for 100 years. Trade union membership is in decline, trade union activism is at a low ebb, and shop stewards' organisations have been ground down by 16 years of bosses' offensive. This means that the union leaders feel little pressure from their rank and file, ready to do deals with Blair at their members' expense.

We can expect these conditions to change with the defeat of the Tories and the election of a Blair-led Labour government.

The ousting of the party of the class enemy from government will help regenerate the missing confidence and fighting capacity of key sections of the working class – especially in the public sector which is likely to be the first to feel the effects of Blair's right wing policies. They will not feel bound by the policies nodded through by their leaders.

The challenge for the left is to ensure that the groundwork has been laid to give organised and political leadership to those who will be forced into battle.

Scargill appears indifferent to these issues. His document does not discuss the unions, and implies that the election of a right wing Labour government would be an unambiguous disaster. The new party would, it seems, campaign against workers voting Labour.

Scargill's conception of a Socialist Labour Party is one that would function primarily as a parliamentary party ("it should commit itself to fight every Parliamentary seat").

The new party threatens to divert from the fight to organise the left at the base of the unions, and from the necessary challenge to Blair inside the Labour Party itself.

Sidelines

It would be launched in the most unfavourable circumstances for class struggle politics, and once launched, the new party would be left on the sidelines of the battles that must even-

tually erupt within the mainstream labour movement – and Labour Party – after the next election.

The marginalisation would be total. If Scargill burned his bridges and left the Labour Party, he would be frozen off the national stage by the media. The new party would quickly be reduced to a curiosity among the lists of also-rans in local elections.

It appears that some supporters of the Socialist Labour Party project believe that they might be able to win the affiliation of some regional trade union bodies. This is most improbable.

Even if there were isolated regional councils where delegates might be persuaded to take such a step, union constitutions do not allow for such autonomy in the application of their Political Funds.

It is hard to imagine any union where a membership ballot on disaffiliation from the Labour Party – almost certain to be the next government – and affiliation to the Socialist Labour Party – which is unlikely to get even one MP elected – could win majority support.

Even if conditions were more favourable, a new party would need much clearer politics to offer workers a way forward. Scargill's starting point reflects a long-standing confusion on the character of the Labour Party.

"Do we, and others who feel as we do, stay in a Party which has been and is being 'politically cleansed'?" he asks.

"Or do we leave and start to build a Socialist Labour Party that represents the principles, values, hopes and dreams which gave birth nearly a century ago to what has, sadly, now become New Labour?"

Socialist strategy

His document again and again insists that the Labour Party before Blair was a 'socialist' party, and asserts that Clause Four "was designed to clearly clearly commit the Party to a strategy for achieving Socialism".

"At the time of its formation, the Labour Party had both a Constitution and policies which projected a Socialist philosophy, politics and programme."

Scargill's simplistic view of the politics of

the Labour Party ignores the outrageous and reactionary policies of a succession of Labour governments, every one of which ignored the 'socialist' window dressing of Clause Four and set out to collaborate with capitalism.

Attlee's post-war Labour government, with its landslide majority and its sweeping nationalisations, set out not to establish socialism but to patch up British capitalism and to uphold its imperialist interests.

The Wilson and Callaghan governments of the 1960s and 1970s confronted the unions, cut health and education spending, built new nuclear weapons, supported the European Common Market, and paved the way for almost every one of Tony Blair's current policies.

So it's just not enough to build a new left party based on Clause Four and fond illusions of a past golden age of Labour's 'socialism'. A party to play a leading role for the left in the labour movement and the struggles of the oppressed needs to develop a comprehensive socialist programme, and agree policies and tactics. This is a very big task.

Supporters of Scargill's suggestions come from a wide range of political background and experience. To build this heterogeneous support into a coherent party requires extensive, democratic debate.

Unfortunately democracy is one item not on offer from Scargill: the new Party it seems, would be set up on a 'take it or leave it' basis:

"1. Convening a special 'Discussion Conference', to which all those committed to founding such a Party should be invited with the aim of formulating a Constitution and structure ..."

Advance commitment

In other words an 'invited' list would be asked to agree in advance of any decisions on the political line of the party that they are 'committed to founding' it. And lest anyone should hanker after internal democracy, Scargill has already insisted that the new party would require only

"a simple Socialist Constitution and a structure to fight our class enemies. This structure would demand an end to internal wranglings and sectarian arguments."

This advance commitment to a monolithic structure is a potential time-bomb beneath any initiative to launch the new party, and a serious obstacle to its possible political development.

By walling off debate, it would preclude any clarification on the role and practices of stalinism, any deeper analysis of the politics of the trade union bureaucracy, any development of transitional demands to bridge the gap between today's situation and the full programme of socialism, and any debate on international issues – all of which will emerge as problems to be confronted, and potentially lead to splits if there is no democratic mechanism to permit differences to be argued out.

Today's labour movement needs a class struggle, socialist leadership to combat the class traitors leading the Labour Party and TUC: but this role cannot be filled by a new party bogged down at the level of repetition of Clause Four, and which turns a blind eye to the real political problems of today's labour movement.

It is not always wrong to build a left wing challenge to mass reformist parties – even when these begin with a small minority. But the formula Scargill has proposed is the wrong answer and comes at the wrong time to lead to the result its supporters wish to achieve.

Far from advancing the fight, it would weaken the left and strengthen the right wing. A more productive approach would be for Scargill and his co-thinkers to spearhead an initiative to organise and politicise a broad left in the unions and Labour Party that can confront Blair's key bureaucratic support, and prepare for the battles to come against a Labour government.

New 'peace' tactics aim to stabilise Zionist rule

ROLAND RANCE analyses the reality behind the rhetoric of the Middle East 'peace process'.

FOLLOWING the assassination of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin, many commentators were concerned at the effect on the 'peace process'.

Such concern is misplaced. In the first place, Rabin's successor, the former Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, should be regarded as the true architect of this process, the man who convinced Rabin to swallow his doubts and attempt a different strategy.

And secondly because, despite the doubts of the extremists who plotted the assassination, this process truly serves Israel's interests and confirms the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people.

Euphoria

Indeed, amongst all the euphoria at the signing in September of the second Oslo agreement, some activists were asking "Why all the fuss? What has changed?"

For what has been decided is that:

- the Israeli army will

withdraw completely from six Palestinian towns, and partially from Hebron;

- the other 450 Palestinian towns and villages in the occupied territories will be administered by the Palestine Authority, although the Israeli military presence will continue;

- 68% of the West Bank will remain entirely under Israeli control.

This 68%, which is effectively being annexed to Israel, includes not only the hundreds of Zionist colonies in the West Bank, but the lands which they have stolen from Palestinian cultivators, the roads which link them, all 'strategic' routes, and the whole of Greater Jerusalem.

Surrounded

The West Bank and Gaza are being cantonised, with areas under nominal Palestinian rule being surrounded by Israeli soldiers and settlers, who will control all access to the Palestinian zones, and communications between them.

In the words of Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal:

"Arafat was forced to sign in the White House an Agreement which includes Palestinian acquiescence, de facto and de jure, to the entire network of Jewish settlements in the [occupied] territories. . . If Oslo I gave the Palestinians in

the interim period everything but the settlements, Oslo II reversed what had been agreed upon and has kept everything in Israel's hands but the Palestinian cities".

So the agreement does not even begin to resolve most of the issues that led to the Intifada - the continuing misery of the Palestinian refugees, languishing in the camps of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Lebanon and Jordan, since the establishment of Israel in 1948; the theft of Palestinian land and other natural resources, for the benefit of the Zionists; the lack of any social, economic, cultural or political prospects for the mass of the Palestinians in the occupied territories; the swaggering racist arrogance of the Israeli settlers, backed up by the army of occupation.

Even an agreement on the lines hoped for by some Israeli liberals and Palestinian optimists - complete Israeli military withdrawal from all of the territories occupied in 1967; dismantlement of all Israeli settlements; the establishment and recognition of an independent Palestinian state - would not bring an end to the conflict.

Except for the replacement of Jordanian rule in the West Bank and Egyptian rule in Gaza with rule by the PLO,



Crowds welcome Palestinian police officers to West Bank town of Jenin

such an unlikely agreement would simply restore the situation that existed before the war of June 1967.

But the 1967 war was not an accident. Nor - despite Israel's regular propaganda claims - was it a war of defence against threatened Arab aggression.

Three weeks before the start of the war, Rabin, then Israel's Chief of Staff had warned on Israel Army Radio:

"The moment has come when we will march on Damascus to overthrow the Syrian government".

And after the war, he remarked: "I do not believe that Nasser wanted war". Similar remarks have been made by President Weizmann, then Israel's Air Force chief.

Israel went to war in 1967 in order to seize Palestinian land and natural resources (particularly water), and in order to destroy the nascent Palestine Liberation Organisation, which struggled for the return of Palestinian refugees to the homes from which they had been expelled in 1948.

Zionists of the left as much

as the right had seen the 1948 partition of Palestine as a necessary first stage in the occupation of the whole of Palestine.

(Indeed, the Likud opposition still officially lays claim to the whole of Jordan as well).

1967 provided the opportunity for the achievement of long-standing Zionist aspirations.

The so-called 'peace process' is simply a means of stabilising and policing Israel's continued rule in the occupied territories.

WORLD OUTLOOK

Left debate policy on Irish 'peace process'

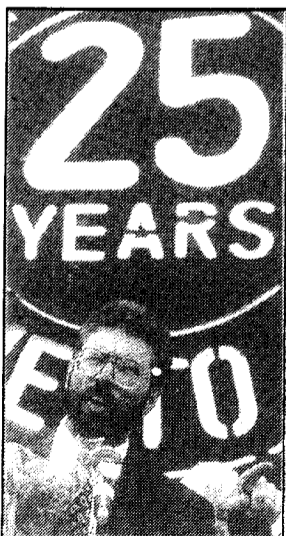
SOCIALIST OUTLOOK debated Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) and Workers Power on the question of Irish politics at a packed meeting in Birmingham last month.

A central theme was the current so-called 'peace process'.

Socialist Outlook speakers made it clear that we do not welcome the process or regard it as a solution the oppression of the nationalist community in the six counties.

Whilst not being opposed to a cease fire as such, we argued that Sinn Fein have capitulated to pressure from Britain, the Republic and the USA, and are trying to emulate the PLO from a very weak position.

Britain's objective in this is the disarming of the IRA, as a part of a general offensive



Weak position: Adams

against anti-imperialist forces in Ireland and elsewhere. As in Bosnia, they will advocate, enforce and police a partitioned state.

ALW leader Sean Matgamna, on the other hand,

welcomed the peace process, arguing that in his view imperialism no longer plays a role in Ireland. He welcomed the cease fire, argued that the IRA are a sectarian murder gang, and defended protestant separation.

His line reflected the fact that Billy Hutchinson, a spokesperson for the loyalist Progressive Unionist Party - the political wing of loyalist terror gang the Ulster Volunteer Force - has recently been given a platform by Workers Liberty.

He used it to denounce John McNulty of the Irish section of the Fourth International as "a well known supporter of the fascist IRA".

When pressed, Matgamna refused to accept that it had been wrong to give a platform to a loyalist leader in this way.

Socialist Outlook speakers linked this to the equally as-

tounding decision of the AWL to invite Ken Maginnis, an Official Unionist MP, to their summer school this year. Maginnis is also given to calling for the IRA to be smashed.

We wonder what racist or sectarian groups will be given a platform next.

Our speakers rejected these accommodations to loyalism and pointed out that in Ireland our comrades raise the slogan of a workers' republic.

In England Scotland and Wales we raise the demand for Troops Out of Ireland Now and self determination for the Irish people as a whole.

The debate made it even more clear that the AWL, echoing much of the British left, neither reflect a revolutionary Marxist programme for Ireland nor take up the role of the British state in the partition.

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French Tories put the boot in

by Charles Mullet

FRANCE'S political cartoonists complain that their Gaullist Prime Minister Alain Juppé is hard to draw. His chameleon-like nature goes deeper than a lack of distinct facial features.

Back in May he announced that his first government (Juppé 1) would fulfil campaign promises to make a dent in unemployment and combat poverty within six months, now he is proclaiming that the new (Juppé 2) government will, in three months, make major strides towards bringing down France's budget deficit.

Spending cuts

Whereas before cutting unemployment was the key to increased state revenues, the new line is that cutting state spending is the prerequisite for bringing down unemployment.

The formation of "Juppé 2" on November 7 was a media event aimed at reassuring the markets.

While the core personnel remained the same, the reshuffle provided an opportunity to trumpet the government's determination to do the necessary welfare-cutting and tax-raising to get France ready for the European single currency in 1999.

The government has been

made smaller, with the removal of a large number of women junior ministers, to show that the time has come to get down to serious business.

The proposed attacks on welfare have already sparked off resistance, which may culminate in a general strike towards the end of November.

A previous protest on October 10 by public sector workers against wage controls saw unprecedented union unity and strike action by millions of workers. At the same time the new academic year has seen a powerful movement in universities against inadequate resources.

British readers battered into terminal scepticism by years of defeats and betrayals should not assume that these movements are doomed to failure.

While governments often get away with breaking election promises, there is usually a deeper "social contract" which they have to stick to.

The Thatcher governments made frequent U-turns, but they had a clear electoral mandate to wage war on the unions and liquidate social gains into cash and property hand-outs for the middle and upper working classes.

The central thrust of Juppé's - and President Jacques Chirac's - election campaigns, on the other hand, was a promise to heal France's social wounds, above all by abandoning the so-called



Workers hit back: French unions were joined by millions of non-union workers in strike action on October 10

"pensée unique" (one-track thinking) on economic policy.

Bold measures to promote growth and create jobs were hinted at. This loose talk now leaves them with a major problem of legitimacy.

The iron fist must therefore be concealed in a velvet glove. The new minister for employment, social affairs and health, Jacques Barrot, is described by an "insider" as "a self-centred egotist with socialist leanings".

"He believes it is better to give in to the unions than lose a single vote". Both Chirac and Juppé are still insisting that the burden of reform will

be borne equally by all sections of society.

Market forces

While Juppé may succeed in defusing the present protests through deals with French union leaders, it is also quite likely that he will not be able to do enough to satisfy "the markets".

Then the question of a new Prime Minister will be on the table. Beyond that, in the longer-term, looms the ruling class's need to create a new hard right able to demolish expensive traditions of social consensus.

Out there in the twilight of

reason, besides the explicit neo-fascist Le Pen, with his solid 10+% of the vote, lurk such figures as Sir James Goldsmith's associate, Philippe de Villiers, a "romantic" "gentleman" reactionary from the Vendée region, famous for its resistance to the Revolution of 1789-93.

There is also Alain Madelin, a "maverick" free marketer, thrown out of the Juppé 1 government as a sop to assuage previous protests, and Charles Pasqua, the feared former Interior Minister.

Law and order, racism and

family values (in France, essentially Catholic) are the traditional cement of the far right.

Here the present government, building on the achievements of its predecessors, has been blazing the trail with massive deployments of police and troops against immigrants, using the pretext of the recent bombings attributed to Algerian Islamic fundamentalists.

The organisations of the working class will need to build on the success of the October 10 strike and forge a powerful united front to combat this desperate offensive.

Spirit of resistance still burning bright in East Timor

Aidan Salter

DECEMBER 7 will be an international day of protest marking the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's bloody massacre of East Timor.

The Indonesian authorities have used every tactic against the East Timorese, ranging from genocide to cultural assimilation. But they have failed to crush their spirit. A new generation of youth is emerging to lead the struggle for freedom.

East Timor lies on the tip of the Indonesian archipelago, 350 miles north west of Australia. The East Timorese have a distinct national and cultural identity, and have never been Indonesian.

They speak different languages, belong to different ethnic groups, and have a

different history.

Whilst Indonesia was a Dutch colony until 1945, East Timor was ruled by Portugal until 1974. Under the leadership of Fretilin, a radical independence movement, the East Timorese fought successfully to drive out the Portuguese. But Indonesia moved in to stop East Timor declaring independence.

Although the United Nations condemned the invasion, the major regional and world powers, including Britain, the USA and Australia, backed Indonesia.

East Timor is important to British capital because of its substantial oil and gas reserves. British firms regard the Indonesian government as their best ally and believe that their interests would be threatened if East Timor gained independence.

For the British government and multinational companies, no price - not even

200,000 East Timorese deaths - is too high for continued access to East Timor's natural resources.

By selling Hawk jets, Britain has direct responsibility for part of this blood price. But the price keeps on going up. British Aerospace is supplying at least 24 more Hawks to Indonesia.

The British government, which licences the export of Hawks to Indonesia, denies that they have been used against the East Timorese, and claims that the new Hawks are only for "training". Robin Cook, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, echoes this line.

This is whitewash. East Timorese leaders testify that Hawks have been used against their people. Jose Amorin Dias says that 4 of his cousins were killed in Hawk attacks. According to Jose Ramos Horta, 30 people were killed in September

1994 when a Hawk missile destroyed 6 houses. On 12 November the *Independent on Sunday* reported that 2 Hawks menaced Dili (the capital city). Even an Indonesian Minister admitted that "the planes will be used...also for ground attack" (*Times*, 18 April 1993).

The campaign against the Hawk deal and other arms sales to Indonesia is gearing up to stop the first Hawk delivery in April 1996. There will be a huge lobby of Parliament on 7 December. Non-violent direct action will occur at various British Aerospace sites. And plans are under way for a huge week of action in March 1996 to build up pressure to stop the first delivery.

To get involved in the campaign, contact Stop the Hawk Deal (Manchester) on (0161) 834 0295 or CAAT on (0171) 281 0297.

STOP THE HAWKS!



Lobby of Parliament
No Arms to Indonesia!
Thursday December 7

called by Campaign Against Arms Trade 0171-281-0297

WORLD OUTLOOK

HOME NEWS

Jaffna offensive won't answer Tamil question

By K.Govindan

ON OCTOBER 17 the Sri Lankan army launched its bloodiest assault yet on the northern Jaffna stronghold of the Tamil separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), code-named Operation Riviresa or Sunshine.

Three days later the LTTE took the war into the capital city Colombo, when it destroyed the main oil storage depots causing damage estimated at over Rs.1 billion and striking fear into the heart of the political and business establishment.

That bombing campaign has continued.

Until now the Sri Lankan army has controlled the outlying islands and perimeter of Jaffna, leaving the LTTE in control of most of the peninsula and running a parallel administration there. While the LTTE and indeed Tamils regard the Eastern districts as part of their traditional homeland, LTTE control has been weakest in this ethnically mixed region.

Atrocities

Tensions between the three main communities in the East, Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils have been raised by the appalling atrocities committed by the LTTE against non-Tamils. In recent weeks 150 mainly Sinhala civilians including infants and women were killed by the LTTE in their customary brutal and callous way.

These attacks, which outrage all decent opinion, have two objectives. They aim to drive away Sinhalese and Muslims from their lands - "ethnic cleansing" - and also keep the political pressure on the army to maintain some



Sri Lanka protest at role of World Bank

forces in the East for civilian protection instead of concentrating them against the LTTE in Jaffna.

There is no justification for the systematic and mass killing of innocents, no matter how legitimate the struggle may be. With every such death the prospect of a Tamil nation in the north-east of Sri Lanka in which non-Tamil minorities can live freely and without persecution becomes a more forlorn hope.

It also symbolises the ideology and political practice of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. They are exclusivist and authoritarian and at heart both reactionary and socially conservative.

Just recently the LTTE conducted the public execution of thirty-five civilians in Jaffna whom it accused of being Army informants.

The background was an LTTE assault on an army camp a few months ago which was beaten back with the loss of many cadres, nearly all teenagers. Instead of taking the blame, the LTTE leadership looked for a scapegoat:

traitors in their midst. They identified several sympathisers of rival Tamil groups and independents and 'punished' them.

However regardless of its propaganda the Sri Lankan army is not the saviour of the Tamil people that it claims to be. Its forces, though now under the political command of an allegedly centre-left government in which the ex-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party and Communist Party are represented, continue to be racist and repressive of Tamils.

Army terror

While foreign newspapers have publicised LTTE atrocities against villagers in the East, they have not reported the Sri Lankan Army's reign of terror there too. It has tortured and "disappeared" Tamil youths and goes on shooting sprees in which any Tamil is fair game.

On 9th July the Air Force bombed St.Peter's Church at Navaly killing sixty five and injuring hundreds more.

This is not unusual. In this

thirteen year long war neither side has respected non-combatants. The Armed Forces have consistently bombed and shelled civilian targets like places of worship, schools and hospitals. However people congregate there because the Air Force drops leaflets urging them to leave their homes and seek sanctuary in these neutral places.

Quite recently on 22nd September, a crowded schoolyard was bombed killing thirty four children and seriously injuring dozens more.

There is no way that children in their white uniforms could have been mistaken for LTTE cadre who favour dark green military fatigues.

This was no accident. It was an attempt to break the will of a defiant population who have braved food and medicine shortages, the absence of electricity and basic services, even the expectation of imminent death.

More than 400,000 have been forced by the LTTE to leave their homes as the army approaches Jaffna town. This is half the total population of the peninsula. Only those too old, too sick, and too stubborn to move have remained.

Many take the Sri Lankan Army spokesperson Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe seriously when he said, "The operation is planned in such a manner that it will be a fight to the finish."

Civilians have been moved by the LTTE to three areas, Thenmarachchi, Chavakacheri and Kili-nochchi. The LTTE itself has had to abandon its main base at Kondavil and has relocated to Thenmarachchi where it hope that the large displaced population will be a human shield from the bombing raids of its enemy.

Relief agencies have appealed for emergency shelter

and food provision. There is a long running economic embargo on the North and though food is sent with government permission from the south, the quantities are never sufficient and at military checkpoints there are often long delays due to extortion and hostility of soldiers.

There is now censorship of the press, so Sinhala people in the south receive information filtered by the military, but little news of armed forces atrocities. Hard statistics are not easily available nor reliable but it does look as if the LTTE have lost at least four of its cadre (male, female and children) for every government soldier. Furthermore the LTTE have under 10,000 troops while the Armed Forces have around 60,000.

Many fear that we have yet to see the worst of the fighting. The LTTE has retreated from Jaffna town which the Army is hesitant to enter, suspecting it is booby-trapped and mined. However the LTTE can open up new fronts against the military in other parts of the peninsula.

Pyrrhic victory

While losing Jaffna town is a psychological blow for the LTTE it may prove to be a pyrrhic victory for the Sri Lankan government. What point is there in conquering a deserted town which it would be costly to protect from LTTE recapture? Neither has the LTTE been decisively defeated and it remains the hegemonic military and political force in the Tamil community both within Sri Lanka and in the diaspora.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga announced a radical set of constitutional proposals on August 3rd which, though short of allowing the right of the Tamils to secession (which revolutionary socialists defend) is a federation of regions giving Tamils control over land, education and taxation powers.

Aside from some details this package should be supported in principle because it accepts the case for extensive devolution of powers while maintaining the territorial integrity of the north-east.

However since it was announced it has been greeted by condemnation from Sinhala mainstream opinion particularly the Buddhist clergy and indifference from Tamils. The LTTE has maintained a studied silence on the proposals, though most Tamil political parties and the Nava Sama Samaja Party [Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International] do back it.

The proposals are no nearer towards implementation since their an-

nouncement. According to the government they must go before a Parliamentary Select Committee and then before Parliament as a whole and finally to a national referendum.

The problem is that even the President's own Sri Lanka Freedom Party which dominates the coalition government doesn't support it, a two-thirds majority in Parliament is required, which the opposition United National Party is unlikely to offer.

Finally it gives the Sinhala people a veto over granting self-government to the minority Tamil nation which has been oppressed by the Sri Lankan state for nearly fifty years.

Worthless

At each stage of the way it will be weakened and diluted at the insistence of the chauvinist elements within the majority Sinhala community who have nothing on offer to stop the war. Thus it will be yet another worthless document full of good intentions but failing to meet the expectations of the Tamils.

This suits the LTTE's needs, giving 'proof' that there is no alternative but a separate state, Tamil Eelam, under LTTE domination and that no Sinhala politicians can be trusted.

The People's Alliance government was swept into office in August last year promising to respect media freedoms and to end the bloody war.

Its censorship of military related news has destroyed its free media credentials and its continued prosecution of a no win war and dithering over speedy implementation of its constitutional proposals is fast eroding its other major promise.

Illusory

The current military offensive may win popularity for the government in the south but it is only creating disaffection among the Tamils.

It is illusory to believe that the LTTE can be uprooted in this way. Its influence can only wane when the grievances of the Tamils are redressed and their aspirations have been met. The tragedy of this war is that both sides know that they can't score a conclusive defeat of the other.

Our rôle is not to choose between the rival agendas of two parties neither of whom represent the aspirations of the Tamil people. It is to articulate and take forward the demands of the trapped people in between. They want an end to the war - and self-government.

WORLD OUTLOOK

Letters

No truck with religion!

I DISAGREE with Joe Auciello's view on the Nation of Islam (NOI). We must remember religion is a tool used by the ruling class to divide the working class.

The NOI was involved in carrying out the assassination of Malcolm X because he posed a political threat to them with his development of an anti-capitalist strategy for Blacks, including black women and their working class allies.

Islamic fundamentalists are in no way a progressive

force in society and deserve no support from us, whether critical or otherwise.

Sure the NOI mobilises the masses; but so did Enoch Powell mobilise the East End dockers to march with reactionary slogans.

So do the fascists and the communalists in India, Ire-

Which side?

AT A MEETING in Dublin on November 11, with Billy Hutchinson of the PUP by their side, Militant Labour they unveiled their new policy - building a 'working class party' with sections of the UVF!

Unfortunately for Militant,

land, Algeria and elsewhere. Because we see the masses of oppressed moving, we need to intervene to win the leadership of those masses to a secular and socialist alternative.

We need to stop the religious freaks, who represent support for the ruling class

Mr Hutchinson did not play by their script. He announced that he had killed Catholics, had been a member of the UVF and had no apologies to make to anyone - to applause from the 'socialists' of Militant Labour!

When asked about his socialist policies, he said he was in favour of zebra crossings on the Falls Road.

Blind and deaf to reality, Militant rush towards the abyss - physically endanger-

and reactionary ideas, winning ground amongst the oppressed. In getting our message across, we must be tactically flexible, but more politically aware than Joe Auciello obviously is.

Bernie Hynes
Leicester

ing themselves and many other working class activists and helping to legitimise a far-right Loyalist group and the death squads behind them.

Peter Hadden of Militant claimed there are 'many roads' to socialism. Socialists and republicans will be interested to know that one route is sectarian murder!

John McNulty
Irish Committee for a
Marxist Programme
PO Box 40, Belfast

Power to the people

By Rod Marshall

Panther, directed and written by Mario and Melvin Van Peebles

SOMETIMES when you least expect it comes a brilliant reminder of why. Why it is worth the struggle, the drudgery, the wait. Just what we're fighting against but also what we are fighting for.

A young boy looking forward is hit from the side by a car and is killed at a crossing where there is no stop light.

The demand for a light – to protect the people from death or injury – this becomes a rallying cry for control by the people of their own lives.

From these beginnings, from the mundane pain of road accidents and continued police brutality comes the call for power to the people – it is up to us to defend ourselves from the racists and the capitalists.

Working class

So it was that the Black Panther Party for Self-defence began and grew among the working class black communities of America in the late 1960s. The story of this Party is vividly portrayed in the film Panther, written and directed by father and son team Melvin and Mario Van Peebles, previously responsible for the story of the transformation of a hustler into a revolutionary in *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*.

Revolutionary transformation is also the key theme in Panther, where demands for an end to police brutality are put into practice by collective action which led to an increased level of understanding of the racism and inhumanity at the heart of American capitalism.

This process starts, unsuccessfully, through attempting to take down the badge numbers of the cops. More serious defence of the community involves the

arming of members of the party – legal in America at that time – to be used in defence against police attacks.

Members also sold books of Mao's writings to raise money and organised free give-aways of shoes and sickle cell anaemia testing. The Panthers quickly came to an advanced understanding of Marxist politics – including about building a revolutionary organisation.

There was a ten point programme that members had to agree with before joining, and people were interviewed before being allowed to join. Although initially dominated by men, the party soon involved women members on an equal basis.

J. Tarika Lewis, an ex-Panther worked as a consultant on the film and states of her time in the party that women "were the backbone of the party, who did just as much as the brothers, if not more in some cases".

The party was also clearly against black supremacy and worked in alliance with the white dominated anti-Vietnam war movement.

Central leaders of the party, such as Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, were both jailed as Hoover's FBI increasingly victimised the Panthers. This victimisation eventually led to a government plan to eradicate the party – and the black community, through flooding it with drugs, a plan which was initially defeated.

The anti-drugs message of the film is summed up by Mario Van Peebles who has commented,

"What happens when you take drugs? You don't vote. You don't think. You're not political. And you don't join the Panthers. You've been medicated. Neutralised".

This neutralisation is still occurring and the film ended by showing the enormous rise in drug use in America since the FBI plan was started in the late 1960s.

Power

The film clearly shows that democratic demands for community control grow over through struggle into the demand of 'power to the people' rather than power with the capitalists.



Despite the eventual destruction of the Panther Party the film ended with the message "the struggle continues". The message of this film – which is as perfect as can be expected from a major motion picture

– is best summed up by Mario Van Peebles himself. It is

"A story about a couple of young men and women who read some laws, formed an organisation and showed us a way out. Not

the only way, not even the necessarily the best way, but a way out nonetheless.

"To do the movement justice, I can only hope that our film, like the Party, has an emotional resonance that transcends colour lines and

sends a little power to the people".

Put simply Panther is a celluloid expression of the revolutionary power of the working class which is a vivid reminder of the future as well as the past.

Hollow monuments and exploded myths

Simon Kennedy reviews the Hayward Gallery's exhibition *Art and Power*

WANDERING around the Hayward Gallery you could be forgiven for believing that the 1930s in Germany and the Soviet Union were dominated by a competition between painters for depiction of the widest fore-arms.

Both Stalin and Hitler seem to have favoured the "beefcake with attitude" depiction of their supporters to the point of obsession.

But even among kitsch parodies of horny-handed workers and valorous soldiers, the varying political content of the two ideologies can be detected.

The Nazi male wins out on muscles and tends to be more bellicose and mystical. Stalin's are more simple, without the ancient imperial evocations – they wear everyday clothes and clutch hammers rather than spears.

The Nazis celebrate nudity. Hitler in particular was a big fan of the teenage nudes of Adolf Ziegler, known to the Germany of the time as "the master of pubic hair".

Female nudity is explicitly non-erotic – figures are

clean, healthy and wholesome; blonde maidens resting in meadows contemplating the aesthetic wonders of the Aryan race, rather than cheering the record output of tractor parts from their engineering factory.

The male youth of Germany were intended for slaughter rather than work. They are pictured passively, as if awaiting battle orders with fortitude and resolution. Their bodies are already dedicated to the bullet that takes their life from them.

The soullessness of these

The cult of youth and health is still very much with us - Baywatch is the most watched programme in the world.

figures is striking.

Nevertheless, they were still art. Indeed, one of the best things about this exhibition is its debunking of the liberal myth, current in most art appreciation in the last twenty years, that art is impossible under totalitarian regimes.

If it were true then there would be very little art in the world. The magnificence of Michaelangelo would be disowned. Even if democracy is taken to mean parliamentary representation, then most of the world's artistic achievement would be ruled out.

Serious questions can be raised however, as to whether the "art of the dicta-

tors" was good art. Stalin's party-line propaganda painting *Voting to expel the Kulak from the collective farm* is a sloganising sketch - I can't say I was too impressed with *Industrial worker with collective farm girl* either.

Nevertheless, for all their crudity and obviousness the images retain a real power.

This was art for the masses – a conscious attempt at social mobilisation. Terragni's *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* is arresting and impressive. The chandeliers that hang in the Moscow Metro are a outstanding, if naive, way of

phy in the process.

Sculpture is most noticeable because it is essentially public. Goebbels said "the artist creates not for artists but for people. And we shall be concerned to see that henceforth the people is called upon to be the judge of art."

Although many liberal art commentators have been eager to dismiss this episode as temporary pathology, a collective nightmare of capitalist progress that has passed forever, the artistic themes of Nazism are perfectly in line with the mainstream of European culture.

The cult of youth and health is still very much with us - *Baywatch* is the most watched programme in the world. The martial mantle of ancient Rome has been assumed by the USA's imperious bald eagle.

Whatever the propagandistic posturing of Hitler and Mussolini their art was informed by the prevailing styles of the moment.

Along with the work of Vichy there is a conspicuous absence of the work of Hitler himself. It so happens that the biggest collection of his work in in Britain - at Longleat, collected by the father of the present Marquess of Bath.

This is the first official exhibition of the art of the Third Reich - clearly the organisers do not think we are not yet ready for the work of the Führer himself.

Support HARAYA!

Haraya is the Sinhala language fortnightly paper of the Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International. It is the only paper in Sri Lanka which campaigns consistently

- AGAINST the World Bank and IMF
- AMONGST the Sinhala majority to stop the war against the Tamils
- AGAINST the austerity measures of the Chandrika government.

Haraya is facing financial problems, and seeking donations from Britain. Cheques, payable to NSSP UK and sent to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU, marked Haraya Fund.

REVIEWS

Socialist OUTLOOK

Hit Nigerian junta where it hurts!

By Simon Day

Last week Anita Roddick wrote to the *Financial Times* demanding that Shell condemn the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa: "What power can stop it?" she asked "Shell can stop it".

The PR team at Shell must be tearing out their hair. Only days after the Brent Spar dumping had disappeared from the headlines the company's misdeeds are again at the centre of world attention. After what John Major called the "judicial killing" of nine minority rights activists in Nigeria the company is once again in the firing line.

Despite its disclaimers, Shell can only make its profits by the closest cooperation with the military regime. Its work inevitably means joint ventures with the government, especially the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Just as importantly, the government provides a repressive apparatus with which to suppress opposition to its activities.

Money from oil makes up 80 per cent of the federal government's total revenue and 90 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. This is why the opposition in Nigeria sees their struggle as one against both the government and the big companies.

Compensation

One of Ken Saro-Wiwa's most important demands was for Shell to pay \$10 billion compensation to the people of the Ogoni region for their destructive exploitation of the area's natural resources.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was a challenge to the partnership of Shell with the federal government.

It combined the campaigns around environmental issues with self-determination: "the two things



Dictators in solidarity: Zaire's despot Mobutu embraces Nigerian butcher General Sani Abacha

must go hand in hand" said Saro-Wiwa before his execution, "we've been fighting for the environment for a long time. Nobody listened, because the environment was not a serious issue with anybody except those who were suffering. But when we made it a political case, ah, then that began to draw some attention".

The governmental backlash to the campaign was accompanied by violent raids on villages and the imposition of a special task force in the region. It culminated in the executions.

Shell is directly implicated. The executed were all campaigning for a bigger share of the oil revenue, along with self-determination and ownership of the oil beneath the land.

There is a long and brutal history of cooperation between the company and the military dictatorship, in the repression of struggles by the Ogoni people.

Unlike the other oil companies, such as Mobil and Chevron, Shell's production is based on land rather than offshore. It operates 86 flowstations and 6200 pipelines in 31,000 square kilometres of the Niger delta. It has far more stake in keeping the government friendly.

Shell's power actually increases when regimes like Nigeria's go into crisis; the more vulnerable the leaders are, the more sway Shell has. Weakness means freedom to make profit.

The directors of Shell understand how Nigeria's economy depends on its natural resources. They are the mainstay of Abacha's position. Money from oil multi-nationals such as Shell, Elf and Agip keeps the military government in place.

The company accepts that it has caused some environmental problems, but that "these do not add up to devastation" it says.

Spillages

Greenpeace research shows that Shell spilt 1.6 million gallons of oil in the delta region between 1982-1992 - 40 per cent of its spills worldwide. The *Times* carried a better description of the environmental impact of the massive exploitation of the Niger delta: it "looks like a tropical paradise halfway through the apocalypse".

The Shell Development Company, part of the Royal Dutch Shell Group, has been in Nigeria for over

50 years. The 300,000 barrels of oil it pumps out of the country every day is 14 per cent of its worldwide production of crude oil, and half of the country's output.

In the mega-buck world of international capitalism Shell's profits are quite modest - a mere half a million dollars every day - but its commitment is long-term.

There is therefore, a world of difference between stopping the Brent Spar dumping and getting Shell to disengage from its destructive activities in Nigeria.

Greenpeace achieved a dramatic and inspiring victory in the Atlantic. But it was on a different scale to that needed to force Shell to back away from its vital international business interests.

As the *Financial Times* puts it "investment in Nigeria represents an important long-term commitment which can be clearly distinguished from the - probably short-term - furore over executions".

Shell was prepared to put up with the opprobrium of the world in continuous investment in South Africa throughout the days of apartheid.

The future output from the proposed \$4 billion liquefied natural gas

plant in Nigeria has, for example, already been pre-sold to European utilities, even though it will not start flowing until 2000, and investor's dividends will not appear until 2007.

The preparatory technical appraisals alone have cost \$500 million. Four specialist ships have already been bought to take the fuel to Europe.

"Ethical consumption" has been an important movement in the last ten years. It expresses a deep seated hostility, especially by young people, at the activities of multi-national corporations.

Barclay's links with the apartheid regime in South Africa were the first significant target of consumer boycott - mainly organised through student unions.

Other important battles centered around Nestlé's formula baby milk and the campaign for compensation in thalidomide cases.

Yet in all years of boycott Barclays Bank was affected little by students using different cheque books. Not so with Greenpeace and the Brent Spar - direct action had direct results.

Weeks

It took only weeks for the Greenpeace campaign against the proposal to dump the Brent Spar oil storage buoy in the Atlantic to make Shell back down.

Not only did the campaign score an immediate success, but - with the help of new technology - pictures of the protest were relayed all around the world.

Political protest, such as the picketing of Shell stations, remains the most effective way forward. The Labour and trade union movement must not leave the fight to environmentalists and a small handful of supporters, but must build the campaign for a boycott of Shell and of all trade with the Nigerian junta.