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Socialist OUTLOOK

Join TUC demo: Sat. 28 October

UNITE AGAINST RACISM

BRITAIN'S most dangerous racist is the State. The front-line in the fight against it is the battle against racist immigration controls.

In Britain today, the Conservative government are making black people the scapegoat for cuts in social security. The police are responsible for a mounting number of black deaths in custody and racist attacks.

Black people are systematically discriminated against by the courts. Special Home Office departments aim to seek out and remove black people from Britain.

Home Secretary Michael Howard will announce new restrictions on the rights of people coming to Britain at the Tory party conference on October 12. It follows months of increasing state racism.

Now proposals are being made to restrict the right to

appeal against deportations, to cut the social welfare rights of people seeking asylum and to introduce "internal" immigration checks. These checks — comparable to the racist pass laws of apartheid South Africa — will mean that many thousands of black people will have to prove their immigration status before they can gain access to health care, employment and other rights: forcing some workers to act as immigration officers.

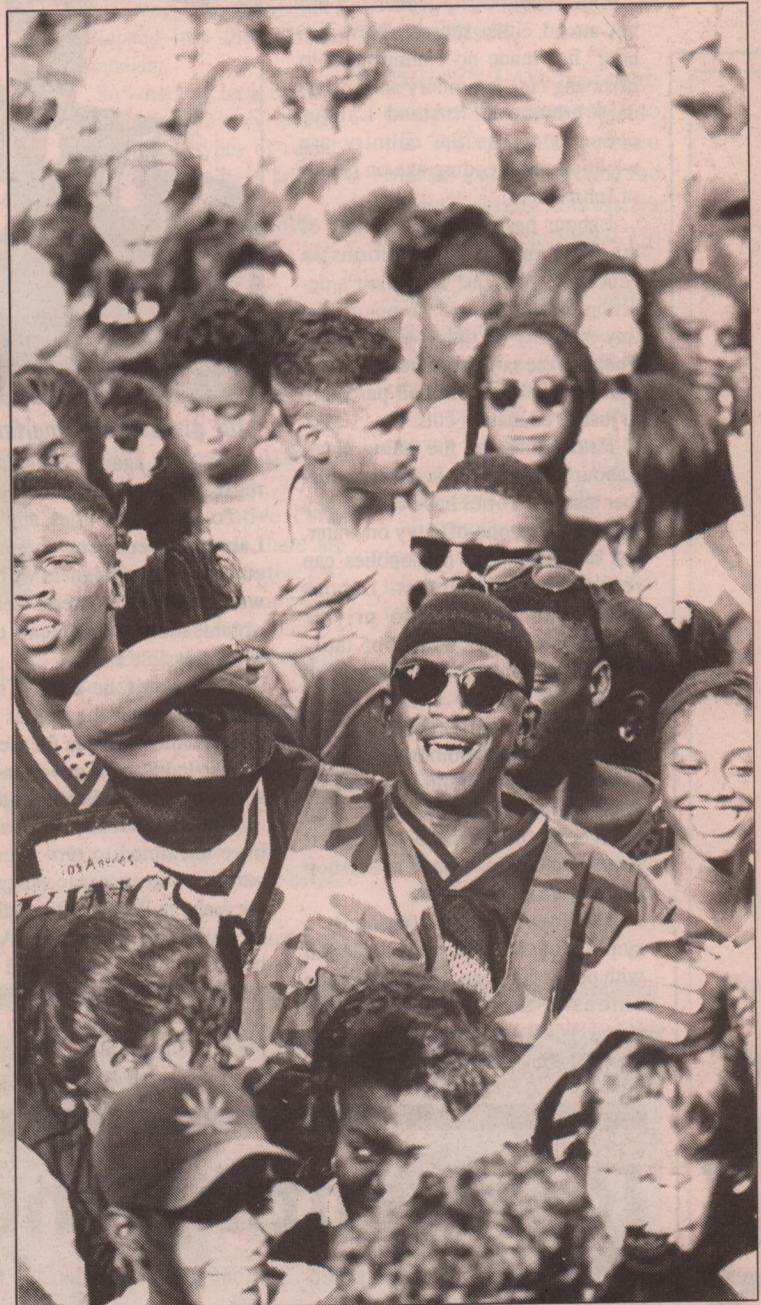
Other measures will lead to fines on employers of undocumented workers, a "white list" of countries from which no-one will be granted asylum, more visa restrictions against countries from which asylum seekers come and removing the right of asylum seekers to an oral appeal.

These new measures arise through an atmosphere of racist hysteria from the media against people seeking asylum in Britain. While Michael

Howard claims that Britain is being swamped by "bogus asylum seekers", the reality is very different. Europe accepts only five per cent of the world's refugees — a disgracefully low number when compared to Europe's riches, and its historic responsibility for creating political and social persecution world-wide.

Last year just 825 people were granted asylum in Britain. Britain was built on imperial conquest and exploitation. People who seek asylum are fleeing from torture, war and devastation, often from governments supported politically by the British government and its allies. Thousands of immigrants and refugees are held in prisons and detention centres without charge, conviction or access to the courts.

The racist government offensive gives real authority to fascists and racists on the streets, in the workplaces and



Thousands attended trade union-backed ARAfest

Photo: Andrew Ward

schools, in the media and in the police. The TUC demonstration in Manchester on October 28 will let workers, students and black people demonstrate their opposition to racism. However, we need to get organised if we are to make that opposition felt.

The National Network Against Detentions and Deportations will provide an important focus. While we still lack an authoritative and active black-led anti-racist coalition, the Network has played a crucial role in developing

demonstrations, pickets, days of action and other campaigning work aimed against state racism. Its next protests will happen in five different cities on Saturday October 14: including a noon demonstration outside number 10 Downing Street.

The TUC and local labour movement and student bodies should learn from the Network. We need to develop on-going anti-racist action to turn the racist tide in society. October 28 must be the start.

What we think

Unite to reverse education cuts

10,000 PEOPLE joined the FACE (Fight Against Cuts in Education) demonstration in central London on September 30.

It was the second show of massive national support for FACE, a campaign built by parents, school governors and teachers across the country despite the lack of official backing from the TUC, most unions or the Labour Party. Although one teaching union, the NASUWT, has given support, leaders of the largest, the NUT, have set out to sabotage FACE.

The Labour Party leadership did not attend either march. 'New Labour' has made no commitment to reversing cuts in primary and secondary education: instead Labour councils across the country are wielding the spending axe on behalf of John Major.

Labour has caved in to many of the Tory market-style reforms in education, not least with Blair's decision to send his son to one of the tiny minority of opted-out schools. They use the same arguments - about 'failing teachers' and bad parents - to justify education cuts.

Rather than tax the ruling class, Labour wants to cut taxes even further than the Tories have done. They pretend that a one-off levy on water, gas and electricity monopolies can reverse unemployment. Labour won't cut subsidies to private schools or take hundreds of thousands of university students out of poverty.

Despite its endless rhetoric about training and education, Blair's reluctance to fix a minimum wage shows that Labour essentially agrees with the Tories on the need to convert Britain into a low-wage sweatshop for the European Union.

The FACE demonstration is a symbol of massive dissatisfaction with poor education. Important trade unions - the GMB, UNISON, NASUWT - did back the demonstration, showing that unions can be won



Photo: John Lister

FACE gives us an opportunity to turn the unions around

to the fight against education cuts, regardless of what Labour thinks.

To defeat the Tories, and to win a Labour government committed to education, campaigners will need to work together to create permanent organisations which can draw in every possible ally.

This won't be easy. The right wing leaders in the unions meekly place all their hope in the election of a Blair-led Labour government, and scuttle to get their feet under the table.

The NUT's leaders, in particular, have attempted to turn every campaign into an excuse to snuggle up to the Labour Party. After selling out the campaign against the SATs tests before any real gains could be won from the government, NUT General Secretary McAvoys went on to campaign successfully against strike action on class sizes which would have

linked the NUT with campaigns of parents and governors, and to denounce FACE as an 'SWP front'.

Despite his efforts, the number of NUT banners on the FACE demonstration showed that members are keen to link up with others to fight the education cuts.

Opportunity

FACE gives us an opportunity to turn the unions around, so that they act to support working class people, not Labour and the ruling class. A link-up between education unions and a broadly-based organisation of parents, governors and school students would challenge both the Tories and 'New Labour'.

The decision of FACE to remain non-party political reflects more than its broad support from across the so-

cial and political spectrum: it also reveals a widespread dissatisfaction with the Labour Party's inability to lead the fight against education cuts.

Freed from the apron strings which tie the NUT leaders to Blair's timid and ineffective clique, FACE is not only more able to fight the cuts - it is able to challenge Shadow spokesman David Blunkett's pathetic pledge to restrict class sizes to 40, and continue the open fight necessary to commit the Labour Party to reversing education cuts.

Another FACE conference will be held in the new year. Every student, worker, socialist or parent must start where they can to build for it, developing a broad coalition spanning trade unions, the Labour Party and community organisations of all types that are willing to fight for education.

Behind new Bosnia peace talks

DESPITE their bombs and cruise missiles, NATO and the UN have failed, at this stage at least, to force the partition of Bosnia which has been the strategic aim of western policy.

The US brokered so-called peace talks have floundered into meaningless abstractions.

The NATO raids coincided with the Bosnian and Croat offensive in the north west and had the effect of making it more successful than it might otherwise have been.

Now with large tracts of liberated territory under its belt, the Bosnian government is unlikely to accept a 49 per cent-51 per cent division of the country as the starting point for any negotiations which are likely to get anywhere.

They may play their current relative advantage to the full and take back as much territory as possible before the Balkan winter brings operations to a halt.

Socialist Outlook supports the right of Bosnia to take back territory previously taken and ethnically cleansed by Serbian forces in violation of the national rights of the Bosnian people.

Bosnia is not "a warring faction" as claimed by much of the left in Britain, but a sovereign state fighting for the retention of a multi-ethnic society, despite pressures towards Islamisation within the multi-ethnic government.

The Greater Serbia project of Milosevic and Karadzic is for an "ethnically pure" i.e. ethnically cleansed state. Their ruthless pursuit of this was clear in the genocide around Srebrenica and Zepa and is becoming even clearer as mass graves are uncovered in the liberated territories.

It is this policy which has created the tens of thousands of ethnic Serb refugees who have fled in advance of Bosnian and Croat forces. They fear reprisals because of the policy previously carried out by their own Serbian leaders.

The Bosnian government however, has a big responsibility to create the conditions to encourage their return, and for the return home of all refugees in this war. This is a crucial issue for the Bosnian working class if a multi-ethnic society is to be established for the future.

The tide has turned in the war, but it is far from over. Serbian forces still have the predominance of heavy weapons.

They will repair the damage to their military infrastructure, and be resupplied behind the scenes from Belgrade. The effects of the arms embargo which has discriminated against Bosnia for so long will be back in full force.

Croatian troops have been supporting the Bosnian army - but may well be used against Bosnia at a later date.

Any just solution will ultimately be in the hands of the Bosnians themselves.

The UN, the US and NATO have a different agenda which has never coincided with that of Bosnia and will not do so in the future. NATO should keep out and the UN should get out.

The arms embargo should be lifted and the Bosnia given the basic right to defend itself.

- Lift the Arms embargo!
- No to ethnic cleansing!
- No partition of Bosnia!
- Right of return for refugees!

EDITORIALS

Reinventing the General Strike?

FRANCE'S RECENTLY elected conservative government has opened a series of attacks on public services.

President Chirac's first target is the privatisation of France Télécom. Half of the company is being sold off to a cartel headed by Deutsche Telekom and the US Sprint company.

The privatisation attempt follows a series of attacks by Télécom managers. Chirac's predecessor found a 1992 dispute, in which three-quarters of Télécom workers were on strike, too hot to handle. Now the right is restarting its offensive.

Chirac's attacks aim much more widely than Télécom. His government intends to freeze wages and pensions for public sector workers. Now

public sector unions are fighting back.

A general strike in defence of the public sector is planned by France's seven trade union federations for mid-October. It is long overdue. Public sector wages in France have fallen nine per cent since 1982. The minimum wage in the public sector is now less than the youth training allowance.

Major opening

Our French sister organisation, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, sees the planned public sector general strike as a major opening in the fight against privatisation and for decent wages and pensions. The LCR points out that it is historic: the first

such strike for decades.

In recent years Europe's unions have organised general strikes, just when the tactic appeared to have been nearly forgotten. In Spain, Italy, Belgium and elsewhere a new wave of austerity is being enforced by the state.

All across the European Union, governments are trying to cut state spending at the cost of working people.

They are increasing the wealth of the ruling class and the big multinationals at the cost of public services desperately needed by working class people and their families.

Only the trade unions can turn back this offensive. To do so, they must take up the responsibility locally and nationally to unite all the victims

of the new offensive in a determined fight to defend welfare rights, free education, wages and pensions.

Though no general strike in recent years has gone beyond protest action to draw out the potential of a bid for power, they have allowed the unions to show their strength and turn back much of the attack on social rights.

Most members of Britain's unions don't agree with the need for general strike action, or even the idea that it can be effective.

If trades unionists take up their responsibility to lead the fight against austerity, they will see why the general strike is becoming, once again, the strongest weapon of Europe's working class.

What is the future for New Labour? LÁSZLÓ ANDOR speaks to Tony Benn

Benn: "Tony Blair is a conservative"

The intellectual fashion of the past two decades suggests that class has lost its meaning to describe political action. Should we take it seriously?

IT IS TRUE that the social democratic element in the Labour Party has abolished class. They speak about serving the nation. It is, however, totally unrealistic in terms of people's actual experience.

The term 'working class' has been deliberately associated with somebody with dirty fingers doing a manual job; but you get people quite high up the scale who depend for their skills on selling their skills. On this basis, the working class goes up to 80 per cent of the population.

What they do now is to turn everybody theoretically into "middle class"; and have an underclass, who they speak of as if they had chosen to opt out of society—they prefer to live in cardboard boxes, they do not want jobs.

The very clever word they developed is *consumer*. If you do not have any money, you cannot be a consumer.

They found a word which dehumanises and depersonalises the poor. They do not exist, they are the slaves in society.

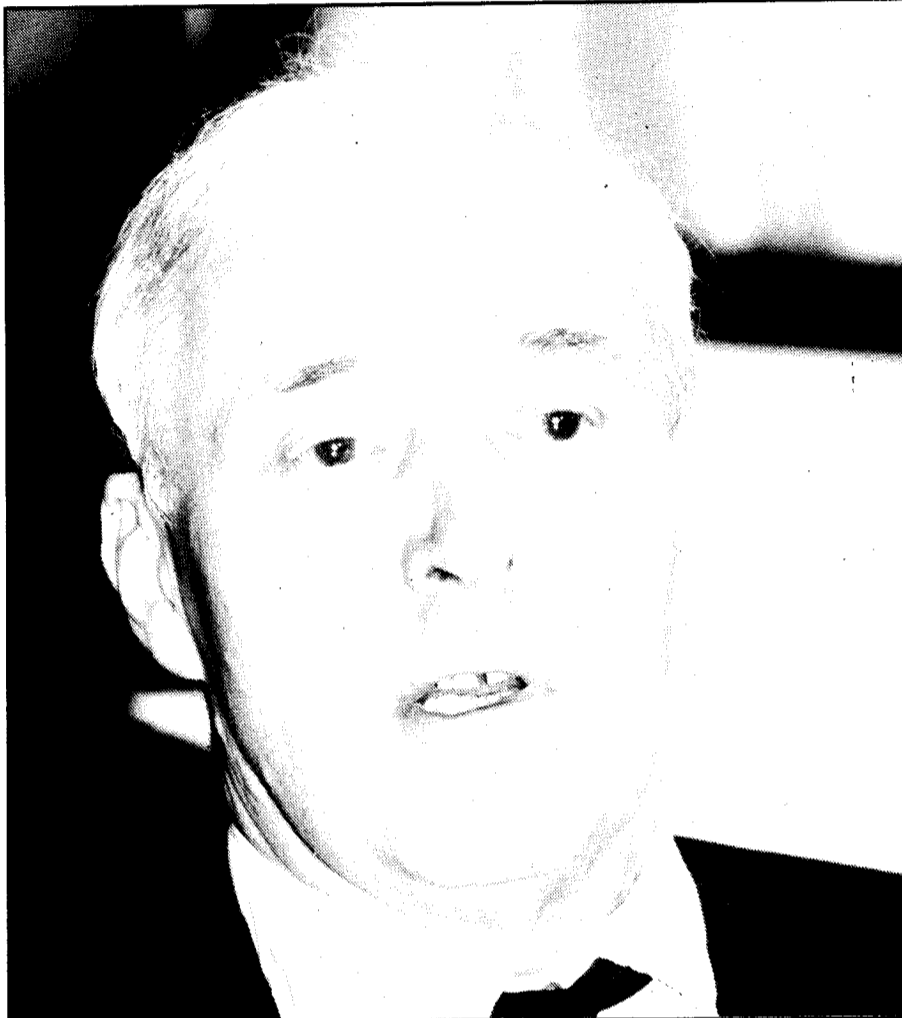
In this way, by telling the middle class people that they are all right, because they are middle class, they have created a completely artificial structure.

Behind the new political discourse there is a new political agenda.

IT IS VERY important to understand the nature of a society based on fear. Those who deny class, invent illusions and denounce anyone who talks about full employment, universal welfare or free health and education as extremist, in reality work completely at the command of the international financial markets.

When sterling drops three points, they close hospitals and "confidence is restored".

It is not hard to realise that this is not an attack on socialist ideology but an attack on democracy. There is an article in the *Financial Times*, written by the BBC World Service economics correspondent, saying that in Africa it would be better if the countries were run by companies rather than



Tony Benn

Photo: Wayne Edginton

governments.

The more you think about it, the more you realise that the world financial markets are the new Raj—the new capitalist empire.

How you get out of it is the next question, but I think we have to be absolutely clear, that a century of tentative progress by working people in

controlling their economic destiny is being reversed. It is a massive counter-revolution, and that is why the social democrats say, "We cannot do anything about it. The world has changed, you are a dinosaur...etc".

Globalisation is an attack on democracy. What they say about a short period of hard-

ship is on the agenda is just an illusion.

The new leadership of Labour have quickly accommodated to this new agenda.

TONY BLAIR is a conservative; he is a nice man, but he is a conservative. He is

not just not a socialist, he is not Labour.

He does not believe in the organic link with the unions. He is really the most popular conservative in Britain. He could have applied for the leadership of the Tory Party.

This is the failure of the social democrats. They have failed as much as the communists did. The communists failed by being authoritarian, undemocratic and bureaucratic, but the social democrats very largely have collapsed into the arms of capitalism.

So when we look back on the twentieth century, and see the different types of socialism, all of them have failed.

Do you expect that the next government will be very unpopular?

I THINK when they win the expectations will go up very sharply. Then the disillusion will set in very quickly. Then all sorts of things may happen.

The Conservative Party may split, because there are already two conservative parties: there are the centre conservatives, of whom Blair is a natural member together with the Liberals.

Then there is the right wing now with John Redwood.

And then there is the trade union and socialist and green left, still in British politics, keeping its head down now because of the desire to defeat the Conservatives.

If you had proportional

representation we could have a complete realignment of politics.

I think the British establishment now actually wants Blair in order to make the cuts in the welfare state, which he would be stronger to make than Major, because Major is weak and unpopular.

The fall of communism and the crisis of social democracy leave the left with the task not only to reorganise but also to reinvent itself.

THE COLLAPSE of communism is comparable to the Reformation, when Martin Luther attacked the Vatican, which was utterly corrupt and centralised. He created a more popular type of Christianity which was more democratic.

There has to be some real change. Because anything less than a real change in the course of world politics would be a disaster. Politics could move to the right.

Fascism is a product of two forces. It is a failure of capitalism, and a failure of the left to provide an alternative. Both ingredients are integral.

That is the real failure of New Labour. They have no explanation other than the Conservatives are wicked. We do not discuss socialism. We do not discuss capitalism.

To build up understanding and support for a real change is difficult; it may take decades. But this is an inherently unstable situation we are in.

Blair launches new witch-hunt

By Neil Murray

AFTER A LULL of several years, the Labour Party bureaucracy have restarted the witch hunt against the left.

The lull did not mean that they had become more tolerant. Rather they hoped that the weakened left would censor itself, give up in despair, or be swamped by the wave of recruits who are expected to toe the Blair line.

The atmosphere of witch hunt has not been much below the surface. Critics are dismissed as being "in need of therapy".

The refusal to endorse Liz Davies, selected by Leeds North East CLP as its prospective parliamentary candidate, is another expression of this mood.

She has been accused of all sorts of things. The latest dossier "proved" that she was a Trotskyist because she has been on the *Labour Briefing* board.

Several attempts have been made to submit emergency resolutions to party conference demanding Liz's endorsement.

The Walsall parties have also encountered the rough edge of Blair's hand—not for making redundancies among the council workers (New Labour has no problem with sacking workers), but for trying to make the Labour Group accountable to the District Labour Party.

The biggest witch hunt of all has been against black members. Four Birmingham CLPs are suspended. The Black Socialist Society in Manchester Gorton has been suspended, along with several individuals.



Witch-hunt victim Liz Davies

Photo: Tribune

It is estimated that as many as 5,000 people have been either suspended or had their membership refused, with 90 per cent of them black.

The Campaign Against Labour Party Suspensions (CALPS) has been recently formed to fight these injustices.

It is clear that the party leadership is moving on from hoping to marginalise the left, black members and trades unionists to a policy of actively crushing dissent.

We need to make sure they meet the maximum resistance.

LABOUR PARTY



National action is needed to confront cuts

Photo: Mark Salmon

Left challenge in UNISON ballot

By Fred Leplat, Islington UNISON 'A'

FOUR candidates have secured enough nominations for the ballot paper as UNISON elects a new General Secretary.

The front runner, Associate General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe, won nominations from 283 branches; SWP member Yunus Bakhsh has 47 branches behind him, while Militant supporter Roger Bannister, the candidate of the Campaign for a Fighting

and Democratic UNISON has 43. Tory anti-abortionist Peter Hunter also scraped enough nominations to get onto the ballot.

The combined far left has obtained a respectable 90 nominations across all parts of the union, indicating a real support for a fighting alternative to the current UNISON leadership. Despite calls from the CFDU the SWP have consistently refused to build a united and broad left.

The election campaign takes place against the sell-out of the NHS pay claim, and after Bickerstaffe bullied the union's TUC delegation into ditching the

union's policy of a £4.15 per hour minimum wage, ensuring a vote on a meaningless composite. For the sake of pre-election unity, Bickerstaffe ensured Tony Blair an easy ride and ditched the union's policy.

Alternative

A fighting and democratic alternative needs to be raised in this election campaign, to debate the way forward in the union. To confront attacks on pay, jobs, and conditions and the privatisation of public services, a strategy of national industrial action is essential.

A strong vote for Roger Bannister would signal the

need for a change of course. Bannister stands for strike action against the NHS deal, a national fight against cuts and privatisations, defiance of the anti-union laws, renationalisations of utilities, support for self-organisation and the election of UNISON officials.

• To invite Roger Bannister to speak at your meeting, or to obtain election leaflets and posters, contact the CFDU c/o Bromley UNISON, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close Bromley, BR1 3UH, or phone 0181 464 3333.

1,000 new recruits in strike aftermath RMT reaps rewards

By an LUL worker

AT THE beginning of August the RMT had 5,200 members on London Underground. By September there were 6,200. More join every day.

Membership has become decisive in the struggle between LUL and the RMT.

The man in the wig has ruled that individuals not balloted can't strike—even if they join the RMT. This ruling is an attack on the right to picket. Management are threatening to sack anyone not protected under law.

Last year management stopped accepting paybill reductions for RMT dues, while continuing to operate the system for other unions.

Nevertheless, by a massive effort, we have maintained our strength among the workforce and have been able to challenge management over the current pay and productivity struggle.

The membership has now reached its former level and is still climbing.

ASLEF split

The latest offer by LUL was successful in splitting off ASLEF. LUL removed the problematic question of part-time drivers from their offer. This was a move closer to separate pay bargaining for different grades.

Despite a two to one vote against the deal days the ASLEF leadership eventually accepted it. This was hardly a surprise, since the management and ASLEF bureaucrats had worked it out in

private discussions.

It is now apparent that the openly admitted "special relationship" between their union and LUL management extends to an unwritten no strike deal.

Many ASLEF members are therefore joining the RMT. It has re-balloted in order to accommodate them.

The continuous flow of recruits has postponed the ballot date by a week.

The lesson for the bosses should be clear. If workers are determined to struggle, they will find a way.

Although the legal harassment has been severe, and although the workers do not feel collectively strong enough to defy the law, they are determined to keep going, through ballot after ballot, strike after strike.

LUL wants to break the back of militancy in its workforce, but so far we have matched them blow for blow—and we're getting stronger and more united.

FACE shifts to local campaigns

By Roy Leach, NUT Executive, personal capacity

TEN THOUSAND buoyant parents, students, governors and teachers marched through London on 30 September as part of FACE's campaign to secure adequate funding for education.

Timed to put the pressure on the government in the run-up to the autumn statement the demonstration was a major success, despite being smaller than the one held on March 25.

With massive cuts already implemented in Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Sheffield, delegations from these areas made up the backbone of the protest.

Mobilising support in areas in which cuts are yet to have a major impact — including the metropolitan areas — was more difficult but most areas of England were represented. There was

even a small contingent from Wales.

The demonstration was officially supported by the NASUWT. Its general secretary Nigel de Grunchy admitted at the rally that his union had initially been sceptical about FACE, but the NASUWT would give it full backing now it was established at the forefront of the campaign against cuts.

With support for FACE still growing among NUT branches, the pressure on Doug McAvoy to drop his opposition will continue to grow. FACE's focus will now inevitably shift to local campaigning, particularly once the settlement for local government is known.

Nationally up to 5,000 teaching jobs have been lost this year. Demands upon councils not to implement government cuts will grow as will the pressure on governing bodies to set 'needs related' deficit budgets.

A national campaign of industrial action by teaching unions backed by parents students and governors is the real solution.

Publication schedule

The next issue of *Socialist Outlook* will be dated 28 October. The one-week gap is necessary for us to keep to our schedule of two issues a month. The gap also allows our staff to participate in the Ernest Mandel memorial events. Issue 92 will be mailed out to distributors on 25 October. The paper will be fortnightly from then until our December double issue.

If you like our paper, get in touch

Socialist Outlook is a fortnightly newspaper produced by British supporters of the Fourth International, the world-wide socialist organisation. If you like and agree with what you see in this issue, why not find out more about us and our ideas? Simply clip out and return this coupon.

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TRADE UNIONS

Safety strike by BT engineers

By a BT engineer

BT ENGINEERS in the Communication Workers' Union who work in the streets have voted to strike against management plans to force them to work alone or up poles in the dark.

It is the first ever vote by BT engineers for national action on a safety issue.

Traditionally, BT 'exter-

nal' engineers worked in daylight hours. BT recently altered hours to as late as 8.30pm. In the winter, this will mean working up to five hours in the dark.

All trials and training for engineers take place in daylight. Floodlighting equipment used for working in darkness entails working in shadow much of the time, multiplying chances of falls and injuries.

Working alone in the dark

makes engineers more vulnerable to injury or attack: police use of 'BT' vehicles for surveillance means engineers are seen by some as fair game for assault. Injured staff can lie in the dark undetected for hours after an assault or injury.

Refused

Even so, the Health and Safety Executive has refused to intervene on the workers' behalf until there is a serious accident. The dangers are so

clear to engineers, however, that the vote for strike action was never really in doubt.

The union's head office proposed the form of action taken should be refusing to use the floodlighting. This leaves open the question of working alone in the dark, except perhaps in some 'exclusion zones'.

It is vital that the union presses home its case by insisting on both demands being met in full.

theory+practice

Remembering Ernest Mandel

By the editors

OUR QUÉBECOIS comrade, Michel Lafitte, recently summed up how many socialists and revolutionaries will remember Ernest Mandel, who died on July 20 this year: "He was familiarly called 'Uncle Ernest'... but never to his face.

"For all of the generation which really made up the leadership of the Fourth International and its sections in the 1960s and 1970s, he was our tutor and leader.

"For most people outside the revolutionary movement he was, above all, the most independent and creative marxist economist since the war. But for us young comrades he was primarily a political leader - an indefatigable militant of the Fourth International and its Belgian section."

A rally and international symposium in London this month will attempt to discuss Ernest's place in the history of the marxist movement - as one of the great revolutionary thinkers of the post-war period.

Charlie van Gelderen, a founder of the Fourth International, supplies the major article in this memorial issue of *theory+practice*. Together with the selections of Ernest's writings in this issue, we hope it develops that discussion and allows us to better understand Ernest Mandel's lasting contribution to marxism.



Ernest Mandel (1923-1995)

Photo: ErnestMandelFoundation

Support grows for memorial events

By Duncan Chapple

HUNDREDS of Ernest Mandel's comrades, friends and readers will meet on October 13-14 for two important memorial events in London.

Around 8,000 leaflets advertising the rally and International Symposium - advertised left - have been mailed out to many of the people in this country whose lives Ernest touched in over five decades of revolutionary leadership.

Over 400 people are expected to join a Friday-night rally at Congress House, the headquarters of the Trade Union Congress. Tariq Ali and Robin Blackburn, of *New Left Review*,

will speak alongside Duncan Hallas, a long-standing leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and Fourth Internationalists from Belgium, Britain, France and Ireland.

The rally will also see the launch of *Ending the Nightmare*, a volume of essays on fascism and racism, to which Mandel is a major contributor.

Tickets are selling quickly for a 150-seat International Symposium to be held the following day. Speakers at the Symposium will include FI leaders Penny Duggan and François Vercammen. Plenaries and workshops at the symposium, introduced by present and past leaders and supporters of the Fourth International, will look at the contribution to post-war Marxism made by Mandel and the movement he fought to build.

Ernest Mandel Memorial Rally

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED:

Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Ann Conway, Penny Duggan, Charlie van Gelderen, Duncan Hallas, Alan Thornett, François Vercammen.

7.00pm Friday 13 October

Conference Centre, Congress House, Great Russell St. WC1.

Doors: 6.30pm. Tickets: £3 from 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

International Symposium

1.00pm Saturday 14 October

Upper Hall, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1.

Includes first showing of Tariq Ali's biographical film of Ernest Mandel. Workshop and plenary speakers include: Duncan Chapple, Penny Duggan, Ellis Hillman, Charlie van Gelderen, Jane Kelly, Andy Kilmister, Gill Lee, Rick Simon and Geoff Ryan. Tickets £7 (£3.50 UB40/NUS). For more details, 'phone: 0181 800 7460.

By Charlie van Gelderen

THE DEATH OF Ernest Mandel on July 20 deprived the Fourth International of its foremost leader and thinker. As writer, speaker and teacher, he was by far the most widely known Trotskyist in the world. Even those who did not agree with him respected his views and the courage with which he defended them.

For Ernest, Trotskyism was synonymous with Marxism. His two volume *Marxist Economic Theory* and his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Capital*, placed Marx's theories firmly in the present epoch and marked him as one of the foremost exponents and champions of Marx's thought.



Charlie van Gelderen speaking at 1988 Socialist Outlook rally also addressed by Mandel

Photo: Martine Stead

His literary output is formidable. But Mandel was more than a theoretician. As a Marxist, for him theory and practice were indivisible. That is why the building and strengthening of the Fourth International was central

to his life. Like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky before him, he knew that the working class could not carry out its historic task without a party and that party had to be international, not only in outlook, making genuflections

to internationalism, but organisationally. Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the thing is to change it" was the foundation of his political life.

That is why, from the age of fifteen, he devoted himself to what he regarded the central task for today—the building of the Fourth International.

He was severely critical of those he characterised as suffering from the disease of "national communism", who subordinated the interests of parts of the world proletariat to what they considered to be the priorities flowing from the needs of party building, in their own country.

Sophism

He regarded the argument of the British Socialist Workers Party, that you first had to build the basement and the floor before you can build the roof (the international) as a crude sophism. What architect or group of workers, he asked, could ever build a roof without knowing from the beginning of the building process, what it is going to be and how it is going to be built; not just through a blueprint but through the current experience of building.

"National communism", even when proclaimed by comrades with the best of intentions, is but a variant of the reactionary utopia of "socialism in one country".

For Ernest, to be a Marxist, a proletarian revolutionary was first of all, to be an internationalist. This he was

Mandel on Trotsky's Marxism

JUST AS Leninism possesses definite characteristics and constitutes a definite stage in the development and enrichment of Marxism, so Trotskyism appears today with its own specific traits as a broadening of the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Trotskyism is *the Marxism of our epoch*.

THE CHIEF merit of Trotsky from the point of view of the history of ideas consists in this: he has literally preserved Marxism in the midst of a general recession of the workers' movement, and of a complete degeneration of the traditional parties and ideologies.

Without yielding an inch, he has preserved the Leninist heritage, on the tactical plane, against the enveloping movements of the epigones of Lenin and Stalin's hacks. With the same tenacity, he defended this heritage against the feeble yet incessant attacks of reformism and centrism.

One trembles at the thought of what would have happened had Trotsky died in 1923. Of course Marxism, the expression of contemporary social reality and its internal dynamics would have been preserved by others.

Tens, later hundreds, of young theoretician and tacticians of

Marxism can be maintained only on condition that it is continually enriched.

five continents would have striven to arrive by common effort at a Marxist conception of actual events. But the balance of these efforts, in proportion to the positive results attained, would have witnessed a striking amount of wasted time and lost effort.

Within his own person, Trotsky filled the gap created in the history of the working class movement by the disappearance



Ernest (left) and brother Michel Photo: La Gauche

of a whole generation, which was corrupted and physically broken by Stalinism, demoralised by the succession of defeats, and annihilated by

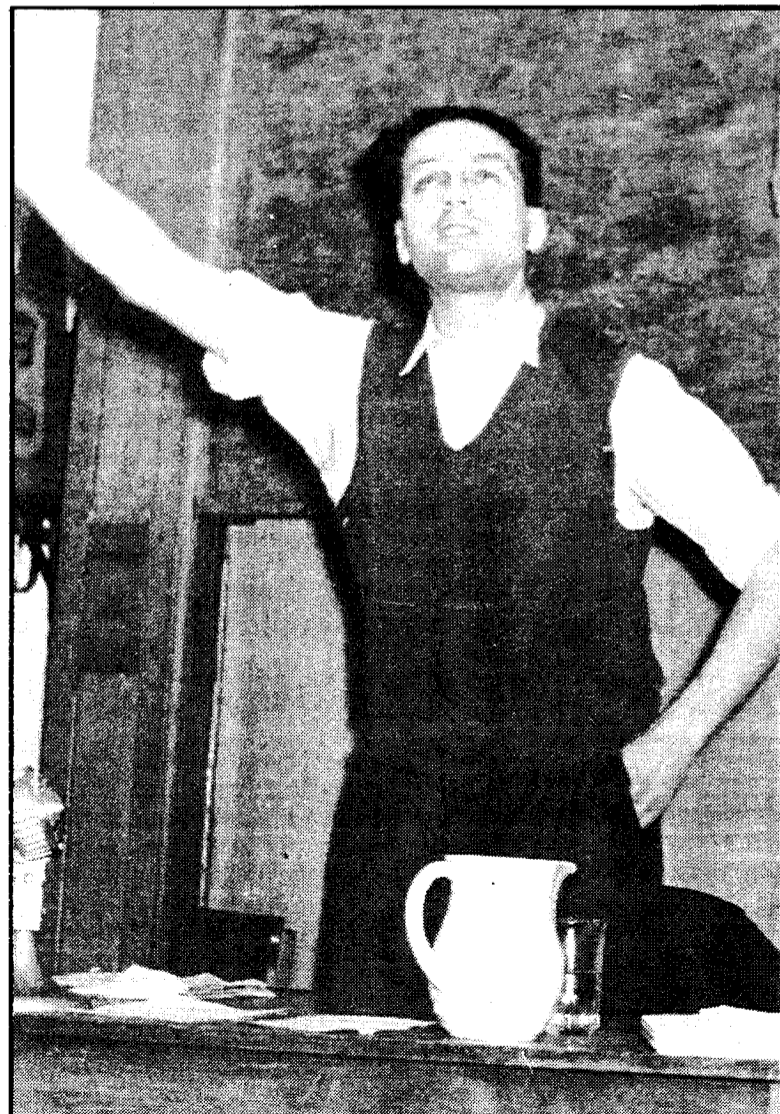
the mounting waves of reaction and fascism.

Trotsky's work from this period continue to be studied by thousands of young workers and intellectuals throughout the world, because these works alone represent the Marxist tradition in this dark period in the history of humanity.

Like any method of investigation and systemisation of the facts of experience, Marxism can be maintained only on condition that it is continually enriched. Any attempt to fall back defensively on "tradition", without any effort to encompass the new developments which are continually taking place through the sieve of the materialist dialectic, is certain to bring about a fatal ossification of the theory and to end in its certain death.

Trotsky's represents the only serious effort to interpret in the light of Marxism, those disconcerting phenomena of the last three decades, namely: the development of fascism, the usurpation of power in the USSR by the bureaucracy, the zig-zag evolution of the Soviet Union's economy, the monstrously accelerated decay of the capitalist world, and the general crisis in the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

On Trotsky has fallen the heavy task of enriching the heritage of Marx and Lenin in the epoch of reaction and triumphing counter-revolution.



Speaking during an education school in 1950

Photo: La Gauche

He has thus continued the tradition with the same implacable clarity, the same breadth of vision, the same sharpness of analysis

possessed by those who preceded him.

Fourth International, July 1947

with every fibre of his being. When dedicating one of his books to comrades who had died, the highest praise he could bestow on them was that they were internationalists.

Some of the intellectuals, some of them erstwhile members of the FI, who rushed into print with obituaries after Mandel's death, were scornful of his revolutionary optimism.

Typical of this was Tariq Ali's piece in the *Independent* (July 21). These people, overcome by the current situation, the temporary success of capitalism in pushing back the frontiers of socialism and curbing the militancy of the working class, have retreated into reformist politics or to their ivory towers. They take the doomsday scenario which they regard as permanent, or, at best, for the foreseeable future.

Tariq accuses him of hiding the truth, of "masking the fact with heady rhetoric". This shows how little he knows Mandel, who he probably confuses with the nasty sexist caricature, Ezra Einstein, in his tasteless fictional satire *Redemption*.

"One would have to be blind and deaf", Mandel wrote, "not to see that the world situation is still very bad for the wage-earning class, that capital is still clearly on the offensive the world over". (*World Socialism Today* BLDOM No. 125, May-June 1995).

In contrast to those intellectuals,

who were drawn into the FI in the heady days of 1968 and the Vietnam campaign, and who now believe that the working class no longer has a role to play on the political stage, Mandel, the dialectical materialist, took the long view of history.

From that longer-term point of view, "several important factors are operating in our favour. On a world scale, the wage earning class is still growing, and growing in an impressive way, although not in all countries and all sectors at the same pace. Internationally, it has long passed the billion mark.

From the age of fifteen, he devoted himself to what he regarded the central task for today— building the Fourth International.

"If you add to this the semi-proletariat of landless peasants in important third world countries, you will probably reach the figure of two billion" (*ibid*).

While the pessimists and back-sliders could see only retreats and defeats, like Marx after the collapse of the First International, Lenin after the betrayal of August 1914, and Trotsky in the dark days after Hitler came to

power, Ernest Mandel, in the best marxist traditions, analysed the current situation and came to quite a different prognosis.

"We believe that we have passed the lowest point of the working class's and mass movements' retreats. The fight back is now rising" (*ibid*).

He based this optimistic outlook on the growth of those layers of the wage earning class in sectors like telecommunications, banking and the so-called service industries, as well as those in semi-automated industrial plants.

Strike action in these sectors in these sectors could paralyse the capitalist economy more effectively than the "classical" strikes in mines, steel or auto plants. The incompetence and corruption in the top echelons of these concerns is already affecting the mental outlook of those who live only on their salaries.

For Ernest, the building of the Fourth International was the primary purpose of his life. Of all the groupings which claimed allegiance to Trotskyism, the FI is the only one which has succeeded in establishing itself as a genuinely internationalist, worldwide movement, with sections in 50 countries and sympathetic associations in many more. None of the sects which claim Trotskyist orthodoxy can equal this.



"Building of the Fourth International was the primary purpose of his life"

As he has written many times, it is during non-revolutionary conjunctural phases of the class struggle that revolutionaries conquer the capacity to lead their class when the possibility of revolution begins to appear. It was in the period 1912-1914 that the Bolsheviks gained the capacity to lead the revolution of 1917.

Ernest Mandel, marxist, revolutionary, internationalist, fought all his life to change the world, but to

change it with a specific purpose to eliminate all social conditions in which human beings are debased, downtrodden, mutilated in their possibility of developing all their human potential.

This is what he fought for when he joined the resistance in Belgium during the war. It was to remain his goal right up to the moment when the fatal heart attack struck.

£5,000 Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund is launched

Global effort aims to establish Ernest Mandel Study Centre

By Aidan Day

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK is launching a £5,000 Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund.

As part of an international campaign by supporters of the Fourth International, the money will go towards strengthening *International Viewpoint* and the Fourth International's International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam.

The Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund has also organised the rally and Symposium advertised elsewhere in this issue.

Ernest Mandel founded the International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE) in 1983 as a unique study centre for activists in the labour and liberation movements. Hundreds have participated in its initiatives.

In order to achieve a truly democratic society it is necessary not only to learn the lessons of past struggles but also to develop a analysis of the

present that will guide future militants.

The Institute aims to develop research and education in socialism and democracy. It organises courses, seminars and study groups on a wide range of subjects, including economics, ecology, political theory, trades unionism, national liberation, women and other emancipation movements.

Mandel centre

The IIRE has recently decided to create an Ernest Mandel Study Centre on the premises of the Amsterdam school to further develop the non-dogmatic, open-minded and revolutionary theory Mandel fought for all his life.

Participants and lecturers come from all over the world to work in close collaboration—to exchange ideas and information and to forge a broad framework for international solidarity and understanding.

Alongside practical education the IIRE has an important publications programme. It is running two series: the *Notebooks for Study and Research* and a number of *Working Papers*.

All *Notebooks* appear in French and English. Some have also been produced in German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian and Turkish.

They are comprehensive studies; in-depth, open-minded and critical contributions made by and for activists.

The *Working Papers* are preliminary discussions, distributed on a small scale and geared towards an interdisciplinary and international debate that will stimulate deeper research into the pressing problems of socialist strategy in modern capitalist society.

All of these projects will directly benefit from the establishment of the study centre.

Press service

The other main goal of the Memorial Fund is to raise a substantial sum to help strengthen the work of the Fourth International.

Over the last year the Interna-

tional has taken great efforts to strengthen its international press service. As well as producing English, Spanish, German and French monthlies — the English-language edition is *International Viewpoint* — the International uses the Internet to transmit news and political reports to its sections and sympathising organisations.

The developments has extended participation in the press service — allowing the creation of 'virtual editorial boards' on the Internet and allows writing, proof-reading, sub-editing and design work on the same magazine to be carried out by a team of people spread across five continents.

theory+practice looks in-depth at key issues of socialist analysis and strategy. Each issue examines a subject of importance to socialists in greater depth and at greater length than is possible in *Socialist Outlook*.

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6 *Revolution & Counter-Revolution In Nicaragua.*

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Half-price bundles

Many *Socialist Outlook* readers will be interested in carrying forward the discussions reflected in *theory+practice* by taking copies to sell. Bundles in multiples of 10 carry a 50 per cent discount.

Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund

The Fund aims to help establish the Study Centre and to develop the work of the Fourth International. Please make cheques payable to 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund'.

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Return to: Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Before the Wall - and after Mandel on Stalinism and Eastern Europe

One of the toughest tasks of the post war Fourth International was to fill the immense gap left by the death of Leon Trotsky, and develop a coherent political response to the complex changes taking place in the Eastern European 'buffer zone' - the countries liberated by the Red Army.

Much of this fell to the young Ernest Mandel, whose document 'The Soviet Union after the War and the Policy of the Communist Parties', drafted in 1946, was adopted as the position of the FI's International Secretariat.

The document, written before the Cold War lurch towards nationalisations and the consolidation of the monolithic rule of Stalinist parties - and without our benefit of hindsight - strongly rejected the notion of a new 'bureaucratic imperialism', and also the growing view that the Stalinist bureaucracy was 'objectively' carrying through the socialist revolution.

Here we print some extracts.

Defence of the USSR against imperialism

LET US first state precisely what 'unconditional defence of the USSR' does not mean for a Bolshevik Leninist:

1. It does not mean to be silent about, to hide, to excuse or to avoid condemning any crime of Stalinism, whatever it may be or wherever perpetrated.

2. It does not mean being silent about or hiding any political difference with Stalinism, nor abandoning the policy of ceaseless unmasking the Stalinist leaders as avowed enemies of the proletarian revolution.

3. It does not mean to support any given movement of Soviet troops, any diplomatic manoeuvre of the Kremlin, when these go against the interests of the proletariat.

4. It does not mean abandoning anywhere any principle of the class struggle.

Wherever the Red Army may intervene to support the bourgeois state or property, the FI will assist the proletariat in opposing by every means, including arms, such counter-revolutionary intervention.

5. It does not mean the slightest abandoning of revolutionary defeatism in the capitalist countries allied with the USSR.

6. It does not mean automatic acceptance of any given political, economic or military measure taken by the bureaucracy in the course of a war with imperialism.

The struggle against the bureaucracy

This propaganda can be carried on effectively only if we *unreservedly condemn* Stalin's barbarous interventions in the buffer countries; only if we show, with concrete examples, that the Stalinist policy is as ineffective for the USSR as it is fatal for the proletariat; only if we endeavour by every means to *dissociate* the cause of communism and of the USSR from Stalinism, the gangrene of the workers' movement and of Soviet Russia.

In the buffer countries the cause of 'defence of the USSR' demands the *liberation* of the workers' movement from the killing weight of Stalinism; unless the class struggle is consistently carried on in these regions, integral assimilation of the countries into the imperialist bloc is only a matter of time.

the slogan of 'immediate withdrawal of the occupation troops', tied to the slogan of carrying on and broadening the revolutionary struggle against the tottering bourgeoisie, is required both in order to achieve the liberation of the workers' movement from the Stalinist grip and to halt the increasing demoralisation of the proletariat which results from the reactionary policy of plunder, police control and counter-revolution of the Stalinist occupation forces.

This reactionary policy will inevitably throw the petty-bourgeois masses and even many working class layers into the arms of the parties which are agents of imperialism - unless the revolutionary proletariat itself resolutely fights this policy.

But at the same time the FI must be careful not to confuse the *revolutionary* struggle for withdrawal of the Russian occupation troops with any kind of aid to the anti-Soviet bourgeois reaction, which aims to destroy the reforms introduced since the end of the war.

We oppose the looting, the dismantling and removal of machinery; but we will try to *extend* and deepen the nationalisations, demanding the abolition of indemnities, expropriation of the banks, generalisation of workers' control and management.

Bureaucratic realisation of the Socialist revolution?

"The facts prove the complete falsity of the theory that the Stalinist bureaucracy would be compelled 'objectively' to carry through the socialist revolution in other countries'."

This theory is a complete petty bourgeois revision of the Marxist-Leninist concept both of the state and of the proletarian revolution.

The social origin of the personnel of the state apparatus is not what determines the nature of the state: on the contrary, the nature of the state derives from its structure, which is determined by the relations of production on which it is based.

"A policeman who is a 'socialist' is not a socialist but a bourgeois policeman," said Trotsky.

Even if the majority of officials of the bourgeois state were members of the Stalinist party - which is not so in any of the buffer countries - the nature of the state would not be qualitatively different.

The Russian state, it is true, long ago lost the structure characteristic of a workers' state; in *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky emphasised the fact that its structure was approaching more and more closely that of a bourgeois state. But what we are dealing with there is a process of degeneration in a *previously established* workers' state. In 1917 the workers and poor peasants completely destroyed the framework of the bourgeois state, and they consummated this



Chief grave-digger of world revolution: Stalin with successor Khrushchev

destruction in four years of civil war.

The Marxist conception of the *socialist* role of the proletariat is based precisely on the fact that economically, as Lenin showed, the proletariat is the only class in society which, when it becomes the ruling class, can move on toward the gradual abolition of classes and of the state.

The revisionists strike both at this conception, by claiming that the Stalinist bureaucracy can 'take the place of' the proletariat, which they describe as "incapable of fulfilling its historic mission", and also at the very concept of socialism, which is now to be thought of as meaning *less and less* control by the masses, less and less initiative for the masses, and less and less freedom for them.

Finally, this thesis completely revises the Trotskyist conception of the objectively counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy both in Russia and in other countries.

To be sure the bureaucracy furiously 'defends' the economic bases which issued from the October revolution: but it defends them *bureaucratically*.

The whole struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists for 23 years has been based on the belief - verified at every turn of history - that bureaucratic defence of the collective property begets the *degeneration* of collective property; and that 'bureaucratic defence' of the USSR drives the country from one diplomatic defeat

to another, strengthens world imperialism, and deals mortal blows to the world proletariat.

The whole struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists against Stalinism has been based on that fact that its role is that of the *grave-digger* of the world revolution and of the USSR. Yet now suddenly this grave-digger is presented to us as the one who will "objectively" carry through the proletarian revolution".

It is clear that what we have here is a capitulation under the pressure of Stalinism - a capitulation resulting both from disillusionment in the absence of a victorious revolutionary movement and from complete lack of confidence in the revolutionary potentialities of the world proletariat."

Bureaucratic imperialism?

"At the other end of the rainbow of revisionist tendencies on the nature of the USSR is the concept that "the policy of expansion is determined by the state structure and the need for internal accumulation of capital, i.e., by its *imperialist* character."

We have shown that it is incorrect to compare the bureaucracy's participation in the 'joint stock' companies in the buffer countries with the export of imperialist capital.

We have also shown the diametrically opposite sociological consequences of imperialism's actions and the actions of bureaucratic expansionism.

Just as it is false to determine whether there is socialism by *abstracting* the role and condition of the masses, so it is wrong to confine oneself to counting the number of policemen and prisons to determine the social role of intervention by a foreign country.

The comrades actually compare imperialist repression (for example the repression of British imperialism in Palestine or in India) with the bureaucracy's repression, which is directed *first of all* against elements of the possessing classes.

In order to determine the social nature of a country, the dialectic method of historical materialism always starts from the situation in its entirety.

To isolate one factor (the state, political regime, etc.) from this whole and to set it up as the sole criterion for determining the social nature is absolutely contrary to this method."

50 years on: refuting 'state capitalism'

Mandel continued the battle against 'state capitalist' theories on the class nature of the deformed and degenerated workers' states right up to the end. Almost 50 years after writing his careful analysis of the Eastern European buffer countries and his rebuttal of the notion of 'bureaucratic imperialism', he again took up the fight - in a polemic against the British SWP.

"THE ATTEMPTED neo-Stalinist coup in the USSR, and its dramatic aftermath, show we are entering a turning point in world history. The political tendency I belong to, the Fourth International, in common with the British SWP, condemned

the coup from the start and applauded the mass workers' mobilisations which contributed decisively to its defeat.

But now, as has been clear for a long time, the issue is posed whether capitalism will be restored in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Cuba and China.

For us, contrary to the logic of the SWP, such an outcome would signify a major victory for world imperialism. capitalism can only be restored by inflicting major defeats on the working class.

The bureaucracy in the deformed and degenerated workers' states is incapable of resisting capitalist restoration; indeed whole sections of the bureaucracy are preparing to find themselves a new niche as capitalists or in the state apparatus of a reconstituted capitalist system.

For us, the working class and the small minority of socialists in these states have to pursue a *double* struggle. First they have to fight against the bureaucracy to the end, ensuring its political defeat. While in some circumstances it may be possible to address and win over sections of the base of the old Stalinist and neo-Stalinist parties, that is not the political heart of the matter. Politically there must be a relentless struggle to defeat the old Stalinist and neo-Stalinist parties, and build mass independent unions and new workers' parties.

But at the same time, socialists must resist every attempt to destroy the collectivised property relations - concretely this means battling without reservation *against* attempts to privatise enterprises and destroy the social gains of the working class - the inefficient,

unfair, chronically disorganised, but nonetheless real gains of huge subsidies on rents and food, ultra-cheap housing and transport, free childcare and health care and - above all - guaranteed employment.

We have no nostalgia for Stalinism whatever. But every revolution engenders the danger of counter-revolution. Who could believe that the re-establishment of capitalism in the USSR, China or Cuba could be anything other than a defeat?

But for the SWP this is not the case. For them this would merely be a 'step sideways'. The theory of state capitalism is incapable of responding to the needs of the dual struggle against Stalinism and capitalist restoration."

(Excerpt from *The Fallacies of State Capitalism*: £3.95 from *Socialist Outlook*)

Manchester RMT militant victimised Rail bosses attack the right to picket

Last week Chris Jones secretary of the passenger traffic, carriage and wagon grades conference of the RMT was sacked for not crossing an ASLEF picket line.

SIMON KENNEDY asked him to explain the events around his dismissal

"I went to work on the Friday morning of the ASLEF strike and came across a picket line. I hadn't expected to, but when I found it I decided not to cross. I stopped for a while to talk to the ASLEF pickets and then cleared off home.

Six weeks later a manager

approached me very informally to explain what I'd meant by "ASLEF picket" on a note explaining my absence.

I realised then that they were going down the road of discipline. Charges were soon presented.

They clearly came from the highest level of management.

I was in fact charged the very day after the current management of Inter City West Coast had been told that they were not going to be allowed to buy the company until after the general election.

Perhaps it was coincidence, but maybe they took a decision that now was the time to do a bit of union busting - now that it was not going to impinge upon their short-term sales plans. These things are in manager's minds.

I was charged with failing to go to work, taking unofficial industrial action in breach of my contract of employment and taking actions likely to induce other people to break their contracts of employ-

ment.

At the hearing I was sacked.

People saw it not as not just an attack on me, which of course it was, but a collective attack on the shop stewards. This was understood straight away by everybody.

The relations between the various unions are very good in the complex. For five or six years we have had what is now called the joint shop stewards committee, which has done a very good job.

One of the reasons I'm being got rid of is because the shop stewards are very effective in the depot and further afield.

Whether the management have a strategy as such, in terms of planning everything, is hard to say. But certainly they do want to get rid of us. We've been a thorn in their side.

The whole system is being fragmented.

In my depot itself, Longsight, part of the West Coast line, there is serious possibil-

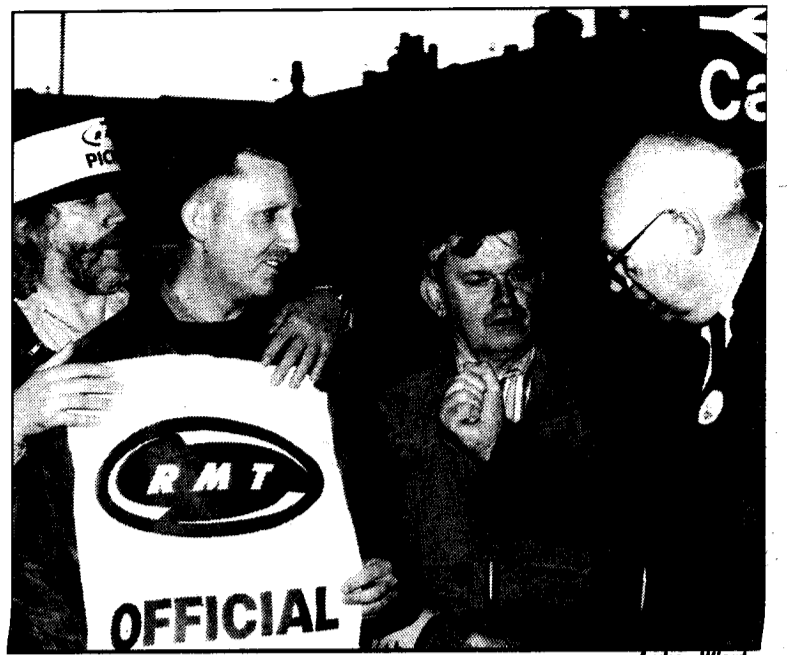
ities that this can be broken down even more. People serious believe that we could see a fragmentation down to a local level.

There's a joke going around that we'll end up with "Longsight Limited": a maintenance outfit. They're already talking about maintaining buses and lawnmowers.

The head of West Coast Inter City was actually the appeals officer when the "Piccadilly Four" were sacked three years ago. At the industrial tribunal he said that he had been involved in the provocation of strikes in order to get rid of shop stewards. He publicly admitted it.

I am sure he said it because he wanted people to be aware that was what he was willing to do. He used the tribunal statements to scare people. Maybe that is what is going on now.

It is certainly the case that one of the biggest obstacles to privatisation is the continued existence of the RMT.



The right to picket must mean the right to turn back workers Andrew Ward

There's no doubt about it.

They are trying to destroy the union's executive, forcing the full-time members back to work next year. This is a major attack on the union's structure. Getting at the reps at a local level is part of it.

My own RMT branch has been brilliant. A lot of the shop stewards on the depot have been running around with the petition for my reinstatement.

I went to the depot last week and was given a letter from 18 of my work-mates. It said that I had their support, that more would have signed, but the management has been issuing threats to anyone associating with me.

They are clearly worried.

What we need now is a national campaign for my reinstatement that defends the right of workers not to cross picket lines."

A campaign has been launched for Chris Jones's reinstatement, backed by leading members of the RMT.

Contact the campaign at Department 13. 1 Newton St. Manchester M1 1HW

Anti-racist ammunition

Ending the Nightmare. Socialists against racism and fascism. Published by Socialist Outlook, £4.95

Reviewed by Martyn Owen

DISTILLING many of the key lessons of the struggles against mass fascist movements in the 1930s, and looking in detail at the fight against fascist violence and state racism today, this new book offers a useful source of information for campaigners and socialists.

The first, historical, section of the book examines the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and Spain, exploring the roots of this most brutal backlash of a crisis-ridden capitalism. An extensive chronology helps set these events in a wider context.

An article by Dave Packer sums up the special nature of fascism:

"Fascism is not just reac-



Fascism whips up the dispossessed into a frenzied civil war on workers' movement

tion; it means civil war, mass slaughter and the physical elimination of whole social groups. 'Midnight of the century' was not really a strong enough phrase to describe the period unleashed by the 1933 victory of German fascism."

Packer distinguishes between fascism and a straightforward military crackdown; to wage its war on the workers' movement, fascism mobilises the most desperate layers:

"The distinctive thing about fascism is the building of a plebeian alliance, a mass movement, to crush the organisations of the working class. This was not fundamentally what General Pinochet did in Chile in the 1970s.

"If we put the label 'fascist' on every military dictatorship, then the word starts to lose any specific meaning."

The article on Germany from Ernest Mandel explores the way the once prosperous middle classes, squeezed by the power of big capital on the one side and the trade unions on the other, could be whipped into a frenzy by the Nazis' conspiracy theories.

But Mandel also underlines the criminal role played by the trade union and social democratic leaders in Germany, who obstructed working class resistance and offered no policies radical enough to win over the petty bourgeoisie:

"The spontaneous reaction of the German workers was to resist fascism, by all possible means including violent means. Hundreds and hundreds of initiatives were taken at local level, factory level, neighbourhood level, to show that. We now have tremendous evidence of this.

"I have many examples, and I feel very strongly about this, because that is one of the key turning points of history, where the responsibility of the social democratic and stalinist misleaders of the working class is so terrible.

"What they did at that time cost mankind 80 million deaths. It is not the fault of the workers; not the fault of our class. It's not be-

cause of anything inherently wrong with the German labour movement. The fault is with these leaderships and exclusively with them."

The ultra-left sectarian line of the German Communist Party, which turned its back on Lenin's 'united front' tactic to wage a hysterical campaign, denouncing the social democrats as 'social fascists', was a tragic repetition of the errors of the young Italian CP in the early 1920s, examined in an article by Geoff Ryan.

A frightening article by Peter Purton examines the continuity between the barbaric hostility of fascism towards homosexuality and today's 'mainstream' of right wing bigotry:

"The hatred of the fascists for homosexuality was not, and is not today, the whim of a twisted mind of a Heinrich Himmler or Jean-Marie Le Pen, but part of an ideology which took to a murderous conclusion the already existing oppression of homosexuality prevalent in capitalist society."

A second section of the book examines movements of the far-right in Europe today - with special reference to the British BNP nazis, Le Pen's French National Front, and the nationalist far-right in ex-Yugoslavia.

The third section of the book looks at the fight against racism and fascism in Britain today, pointing the finger primarily at the growing battery of racist laws now being built up by the Tories, with active, shameful connivance from Labour:

"The result of this whole barrage of legislation was to create a battery of measures for keeping black immigrants and asylum seekers out, and at the same time to give the police and immigration authorities powers which intimidated and harassed sections of the black community living here."

A fitting tribute to the memory of Bob Smith, a *Socialist Outlook* supporter and enthusiastic fighter against racism and fascism who died last year, the book represents a genuine contribution to the political armoury of the left.

It offers in easy and accessible form many of the key points from a wide range of experiences spanning 70 years of struggle by socialists.

It deserves to be widely read by all those continuing that fight today.

Order your copy, £5 post free, from *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

FEATURES



Swedish demonstrators, but an international message.

Photo: Peter Lindgren

Swedish Social Democrats in poll fiasco

FIASCO! The headline of Sweden's social democratic newspaper *Aftonbladet* said it all. In a single year the vote of the Social Democratic Party has fallen from 45 to 28 per cent.

The Left Party (ex-communist) and the modestly left-wing Greens doubled and quadrupled their vote.

Together they are larger than the Social Democrats. The left party's 12.9 per cent is an all time high.

Kjell Pettersson of the Fourth International's Socialist Party said that the elections results "show how the economic crisis is becoming political. The voters are tired of EU instigated cuts".

In December 1993 the government decided to reduce unemployment benefit and sickness relief from 90 to 80 per cent.

The LO national trade union federation and Social Democratic Party organised a 30,000 strong demonstration. Party chairman Invar Carlsson made an extremely militant speech, full of promises.

Now the party is in government Carlsson has cut unemployment and sickness relief down to 75 per cent to demonstrate to the market whose side they are really on.

Meanwhile the export industry continues to make huge profits and the Swedish Bourse is at an all time high.

The List for Justice has been set up to oppose the attacks. The Socialist Party, *Of-fensiv* and an impressive list of union militants (often members of the Social Democratic Party) are involved.

It gained 14,644 votes, 0.6 per cent of the total. Kjell Pettersson said "the List's platform expresses what the majority of people think, even

if some of our voters abstained. Despite being ignored by the media, in 35 cities we received over one per cent."

On September 8 the List organised an anti-Chirac demonstration of 750 students that gained national attention.

Its activists are confident in the List's prospects. As the Social Democrats implement austerity they will lose their traditional support from LO trades unionists.

The election in Sweden shows how Sweden is becoming less and less an internationally renowned welfare state, and more an ordinary West European country with a weak welfare system and state-dependent parties without active memberships.

Whether the political vacuum will be filled by left radicals like the List for Justice or right-wing populists is still an open question.

French tests: the anger explodes

By Antoine Bouvier

THE MYTH that people in France were indifferent to the thermonuclear threat has been thoroughly scotched in the weeks since President Chirac announced the resumption of French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

While the wave of militant opposition to the tests in French Polynesia itself has attracted wide publicity, within metropolitan France polls show opposition to the tests running at more than 60 per cent.

At least 145 organisations have come together around an international appeal which constitutes the basis of the "ACDC" campaign. ACDC organised protests throughout the country following the first test on September 6, and is organising a big national demonstration in Paris on September 30.

Appeal

The campaign's "international appeal for the immediate and definitive halting of nuclear tests" reads as follows: "in defiance of French and international public opinion, President Chirac has undertaken a series of eight nuclear tests in the south Pa-

cific. Everything must be done to put an end to this.

"This decision opens the door to the resumption of tests by other countries. All efforts to limit and ultimately abolish nuclear weapons are thus undermined. Consequently, we solemnly demand that the President of the Republic abandon the nuclear tests and signs today the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty"

ACDC has received support from a wide spectrum of groups including the major ecological and anti-racist organisations.

Refused

While the campaign has the support of both the French Communist Party and the CP-dominated CGT trade union federation, the Socialist Party has refused to sign the appeal, since party policy continues to favour the retention of French nuclear arms.

The PS participated in the September 30 demonstration on the basis of opposition to the tests alone.

The issue of the nuclear tests has also served to sour France's alleged "love affair" with nuclear power: support is growing for a campaign for the closure of the accident-prone Superphenix nuclear plant near Lyon, recently reopened at 30 per cent capacity in defiance of local opinion.

The mess Clinton left behind New Somali skirmishes

By Bala Kumar

IN SOMALIA the warlords are getting restless. Over the last month self proclaimed President, General Farah Aidede launched attacks on other militias fuelling fears among Somalis that war and war induced famine may visit them once more.

Since the US pull-out a fragile peace has been maintained which rested on decentralised forms of government involving clan elders, religious leaders and clan-based militias.

Aidede's personal fief remains South Mogadishu while his allies in the Somali National Alliance (SNA) control other areas.

The former dictator Siad Barre spent his last days in power the butt of jokes and dubbed the "Mayor of Mogadishu", the only part of the country his government ruled. Aidede and his cabinet of ministers are anxious the

same fate doesn't befall them.

In a show of authority Aidede's militia launched a military assault on the important town of Baidoa which had been controlled by his arch-rival Ali Mahdi of the United Somali Congress.

They won the town but it remains to be seen whether they can keep it. Aidede has also been trying to disarm other militias.

Wealth

However it is the control of arms that has given these clan leaders their power and wealth. They levy taxes on food, goods and supplies produced and transported through their zones.

A number of businessmen including Aidede's former ally and financier Osman Atto now have militias of their own. Aidede has even had trouble keeping his own supporters who occupy Mogadishu Airport and Port under his control.

Taxes and protection money from the brisk trade

abroad in the intoxicant qat and renewed banana exports are fattening the warlords and swelling the coffers of clan militias.

At his victory rally in Baidoa on September 22nd Aidede who is courting international recognition and financial support announced his plans in true general-turned-statesman mode.

They include collection of weapons of all calibres; devising a federal system of government and then multi-party elections with the proviso that clan based parties are disallowed.

While disarmament sounds good to Western governments and aid agencies it has little relevance to local realities. Among pastoral communities every home has at least one rifle of colonial vintage to protect their livestock and themselves from bandits and rival clans.

It is not disarmament so much as demilitarisation that ordinary Somalis want. The freedom to travel without endless harassment by mili-

tias regardless of their clan affiliation. The destruction of the 'technicals', anti-aircraft guns welded onto pick-up trucks which could blow away a neighbourhood. The removal of clan militias from the political scene.

Lectures

Aidede is hardly in a position to lecture others about forming a non-clan based party. It isn't even rival clan-families that these militias are ranged against. It's their own! Aidede and Ali Mahdi are both members of the Hawiye clan family. Nobody else is any better.

Positive and durable change can only come from the same direction that drove out the UN/US troops and forced the militias to a truce.

That's the women and men who through all adversities have run their homes, neighbourhoods and villages with courage and determination. They don't have heavy weapons but they do have high hopes.

What's Happening OCTOBER

Sat 7

DEMAND justice Demonstrate 12 noon Clissold Park Green Lanes N16 Manor House tube for march from Stoke Newington to Tottenham.

Thurs 12

DAY of action in solidarity with McDonald's workers meet 5-6pm Strand McDonald's, Charing Cross tube.

DAY of action in solidarity with McDonald's workers picket of Manchester Arndale McDonald's 12 noon - 1pm

Fri 13

CELEBRATE the life of Ernest Mandel rally. Note new venue: Conference Centre Congress House Great Russell St WC1 7.00pm sharp with speakers including Tariq Ali, Duncan Hallas (SWP), Penny Duggan (USFI), and Charlie Van Gelderen (Socialist Outlook). Tickets £3 from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Sat 14

NO MORE racist laws! Picket 10 Downing Street SW1 12 noon. Westminster tube

SYMPOSIUM on the marxism of Ernest Mandel 1pm to 6pm ULU, Malet Street, WC1 Exclusive showing of Tariq Ali's film on the life of Ernest Mandel speakers include Andy Kilmister, Francois Vercammen, Rick Simon, Ellis Hillman. Tickets £7 (£3.50 NUS/UB40) from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

NATIONAL day of action against immigration detention centres organised by National Network against Detention and Deportation Protests at Oxford, London, Manchester Hull and Haslar. Details 0171 837 1450.

Mon 15

RACE, Class And Black Struggle 5.30pm - 9.30pm ULU, Malet St. Tickets £5/£1. Tel 0171 837 0041.

COMEDY night for London Hospital campaigns 7.30pm Wimbledon Theatre SW9: Jo Brand, Mark Thomas, Arthur Smith tel 0181 540 0362

Fri 20

FREE Satpal Ram national demonstration 9am Court of Appeal The Strand, London. Details 0121 507 1618, 0114 235 2618 or 0171 837 1450.

Sat 28

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

NOVEMBER

Sat 25

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

Eyewitness report by Bosnia aid worker

Tuzla bears brunt of war



Jenny Mees with the mayor of Tuzla (centre-left) Photo: Tim Wise

JENNY MEES, a founder of International Workers Aid, recently returned from an extended visit to Tuzla. She gives a vivid picture of everyday life in the city and the pressures caused by the continuing war.

IT IS DIFFICULT to form a balanced opinion while in Tuzla, with so many contradictory impressions. The region, especially the town of Tuzla, is still a multi-cultural and democratic society that we should support.

Life is hard and difficult. There is a lot of corruption and favouritism. A lot of undemocratic machinery is in place.

The fall of Srebrenica caused a shock in the Tuzla region, not only because of the horror of the events, but because of the further strain it put on the town's meagre resources.

The new refugees were distrib-

uted among the various areas of the region. By the end of July, nearly 5000 had arrived - including 15 Serbian families from Srebrenica. Tuzla is awfully crowded.

Earlier refugees from Srebrenica have formed a kind of council to deal with the problems of the new refugees, such as tensions between the "old" and "new" refugees, and with the Tuzla municipal authorities.

Trades unions

Many of the activists had been active in trade unions before the war, and, although they are no longer employed, are trying to integrate into the Tuzla trade unions.

There were several incidents after the arrival of the refugees. One Serbian citizen was brutally murdered and several Serbian families were forced to leave their homes. These incidents—about 100 altogether—were worse in the surrounding municipalities than in Tuzla itself.

Matters are now under control, but of course tension has mounted and harassment of Serbian citizens has become worse.

I met Miso Bozic of the Serb Civic Council (SCC) in Tuzla, who com-

plained that "the international community gives aid to the Karadzic Serbs, but not to us". He said that the 13,000 Serbs in Tuzla were without means, and were vulnerable and frightened.

There are many Serbian men in the army. They face no special problems.

The SCC also aims to rebuild a cultural life. One problem faced by the community is the lack of an Orthodox priest - they all joined the other side at the beginning of the war.

Noting the "Muslim euphoria", Bozic called for a political struggle against nationalism.

Bozic claimed that most politically-active Serbs are members of the Social Democratic Party (which governs Tuzla but is in opposition nationally), and he repeated the demand of the Serb Assembly of Bosnia, that Serbs should be considered one of the constituent peoples of the Bosnia-Herzegovina federation and that they be a party to the negotiations.

I also met Jovan Djalovic, Vitor Pavlovic and others in the Serbian Orthodox Humanitarian Association "Dobrotvor". They had quite a different story.

I was one of the very few foreigners who had ever visited this association, which has no links with any organisations abroad, and has received little aid for the people which it supports - some 12-13,000, many from "mixed" families.

They were elderly, very poor, very educated and very bitter. They were "finished with Bosnia and Tuzla".

According to Vesna Sehic-Jugovic, of the Tuzla Human Rights Committee, the region had been very democratic before the fall of Srebrenica. There were human rights violations like in other societies; maybe worse, because of the war and poverty, but no big problems.

But with the arrival of the refugees, who were being used as a political weapon against Tuzla's multi-culturalism, things had started to change for the worse.

No money

Food and most common daily goods are cheap, but most people have no money. Although only the most marginal people go hungry nowadays, a lot of people don't eat well.

Those who can get an extra job to make some money (in addition to their regular, almost unpaid job): working for a foreign NGO, taxi driver, mechanic. Many people sell their own furniture and other belongings in the streets.

At the market and on every street people sell fruit and vegetables, mainly from their own gardens. Flour is available in small quantities, but 50 kilogram sacks are available in the market for 18 DM.

People with a job can usually get one meal at their factory or office. There is water twice a day. Electricity is available the whole day, but



IWA aid convoys go to Sarajevo as well as Tuzla Photo: Linn Hjort

only 6Kw per household. Although petrol is cheap, many people can still not use a car because spare parts and registration are expensive, and they may not have money for petrol.

Clothes are available, and quite cheap - for those who have any Deutschmarks. Several women told me that hygienic goods, not only for personal hygiene, but also for cleaning the bath and toilet, are a big problem.

About humanitarian aid: most people, even if they are not in categories that receive aid packages, now and then get something. Soldiers and their families get food parcels; the contents of the packet depend on where they are fighting.

"Islamisation"

About the "Islamisation" of Tuzla? Well, you can see more girls with the chador, more people use new, religious formulas for greeting, saying goodbye etc, more people attend the mosques, there is more religious life; all of this is the influence of the many rich humanitarian Islamic organisations and institutions.

Bosnians are not at all fanatical and intolerant people, not even after three years of war

A lot of people want to survive, many want to make a way for themselves by betting on the SDA (government party) card. But also, more people want to show their affinity with their own, Muslim cultural heritage.

This of course is stimulated in schools by some teachers, but also with the new books from the Sarajevo ministry of education.

Bosnian TV plays a big role, with its emphasis on the Muslim cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia.

Of course, many people stress that they are European with a European culture - but this is difficult. Europe has let them down, isn't interested in them. And what is a "European culture"? To dress as people dress in London, and use a computer? A nation needs more.

If the war ends, if there is some kind of political solution for Bosnia, then this process can develop.

The Bosnian people can look for and develop their identity after the collapse of the Yugoslav federation.

But now? Somehow, I feel that (small?) group of very active people who are fighting for the European, multi-ethnic and civic option are moving in a kind of emptiness, without roots in the mass of the rest of the town - because this option seems so powerless, so without future, their answers and options so cut off from the possibly not-so-educated and enlightened ordinary citizens, let alone the refugees.

It is undeniable that the city and region have changed in their ethnic and cultural composition.

On the other hand, when prime minister Haris Silajdzic resigned [in protest at the growing Islamisation of the Bosnian government], the Citizens' Forum organised three days of petitioning for his reinstatement, with great success.

Because there is another reality: the tradition of living together and mutual understanding as good neighbours between the Bosnians, they are not at all fanatical and intolerant people, not even after three years of war - if they are given a chance.

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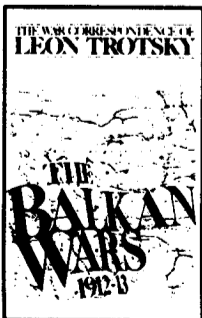
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Socialist OUTLOOK

Education, racist laws, low pay, witch-hunt:

Stop Blair's lurch to right

THE LABOUR Party Conference gives delegates a chance to show - to the working class, particularly the low paid, sick, elderly, jobless youth and the oppressed in our society - that Labour is going to tackle the legacy of 16 years of Tory onslaught and offer some kind of an alternative.

This is not easy.

At this Conference Tony Blair is building on his victories against the left over Clause 4. He is moving to further embrace a Tory consensus that has been established over the last decade by Margaret Thatcher and John Major.

Populist stunts like a windfall tax on the utilities are no alternative to re-nationalisation.

Worse of all is his shocking proposal, made just a few days before the Conference, to means-test child benefit - thus ending universal child allowances.

This shows not only his contempt for the poor (and for the left of course), but also indicates who he is relying on to win the next election. It is certainly not the ever growing millions of down-trodden and oppressed people.



10,000 on September 30 FACE demo: socialists must take up the broader issues

Photo: John Lister

Blair's right turn has two goals. The first is to reassure the bosses that he is their man - a reliable servant; and second, he aims to win sections of the professional and middle classes who have traditionally been hostile to working class interests.

Part and parcel of this strategy is his unconditional acceptance of Tory market mania and his desire to eventually sever the historic links of the Labour Party with the trade unions.

The core of Blair's plan is therefore to transform the Labour Party into a social democratic party of the centre, or even a liberal democratic party like the US Democrats.

"New Labour", as Paddy Ashdown clearly understands, is not just a catchy slogan. A continuing witchhunt against the left is an inevitable consequence of this policy, as the axing of Liz Davies selection as parliamentary candidate has shown.

Blair wanted Conference to be little more than a pre-election rally which provides the media with choice soundbites, slick suited images, and some well publicised bloody noses for the left.

The Labour left, organised in the Socialist Campaign Group Network and in other bodies, is challenging this offensive: attempting to recoup ground lost over Clause four by fighting on policy issues.

In particular the Labour left has focused on a commitment to a £4.15 hourly minimum wage, against the leadership's concessions on grant-maintained schools and its willingness to see the development of a multi-tiered education system.

The left is also backing resolutions designed to stop the erosion of the trade union link. This link in particular lies at the centre of Blair's aim to break the party from its roots in the unions.

Socialist Outlook is part of this fight against Blair. We put particular stress on the centrality of rebuilding the mass movement, in particular the trade union movement, which will be decisive in stopping the Blair bandwagon.

Every socialist needs to take up the broader issues facing the working class and promote not only current trade union struggles, but also build support for campaigns such as Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE), campaigning fighting NHS cuts and the network of campaigns fighting racist detention and deportation laws.

In this way the working class can find the way forward in the fight against the Tories today, and soon against a right wing Labour Government.