

Socialist OUTLOOK

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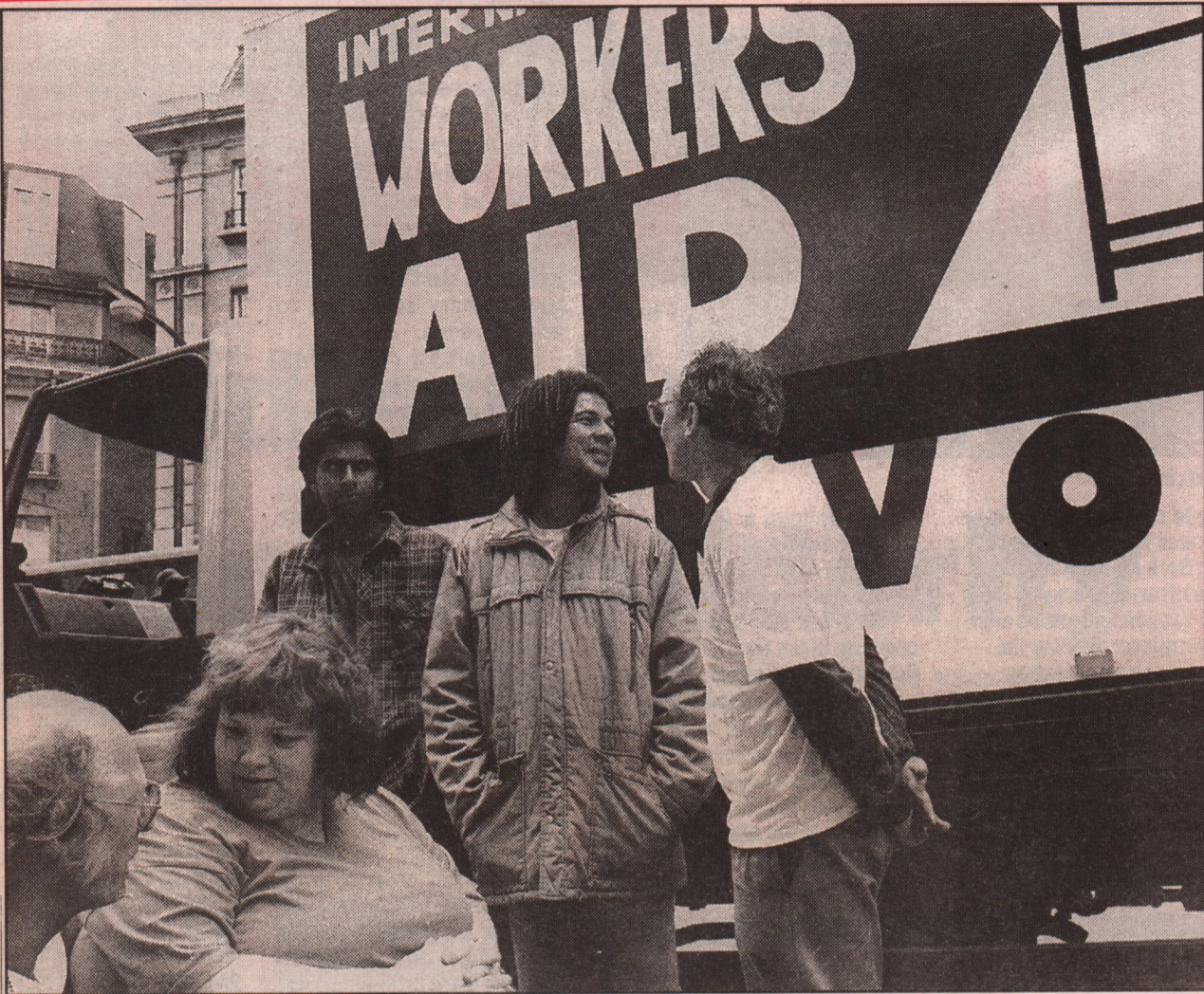
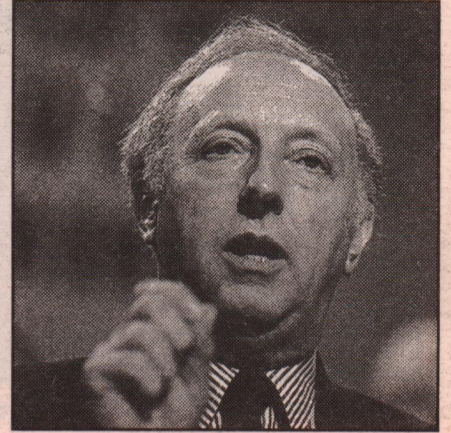


Photo: Rex Dunn

WORKERS AID ROLLS INTO BOSNIA

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Convoy
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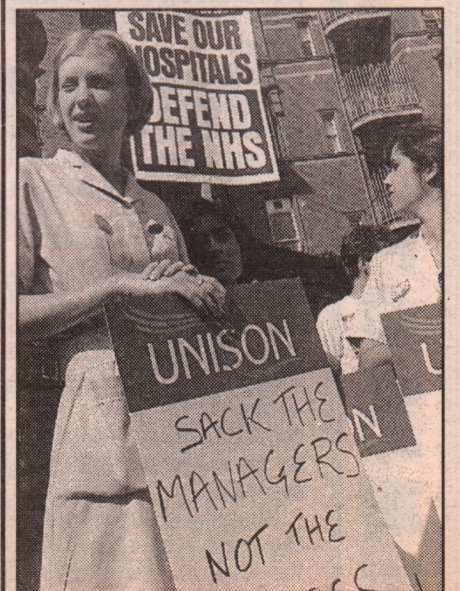
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Bosnia: reject imperialist peace plan!

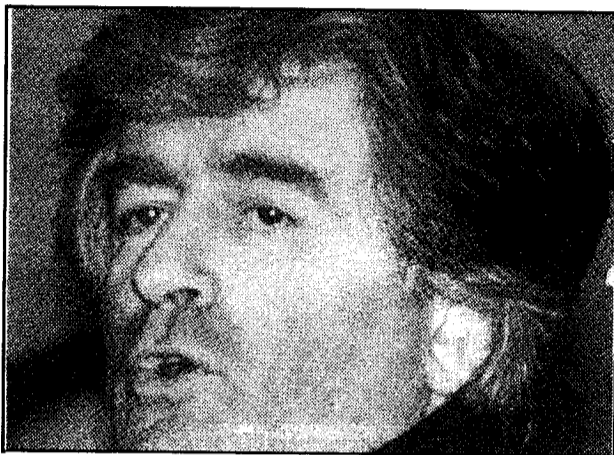
The United States and the European Community are pushing hard for the Bosnian government to accept the 'peace plan', albeit with a few amendments giving the rump of Bosnia access to a sea port.

The plan would split the territory of Bosnia into three on ethnic lines, and give the rump Bosnian state only 30 per cent of its former territory.

The Bosnian resistance should reject this plan. It would mean the death of multi-ethnic Bosnia and set the seal of approval on 'ethnic cleansing'.

The Bosnian republic of Yugoslavia was multi-ethnic, a republic in which Muslims, Croats and Serbs lived together. When Bosnia was invaded, many Serbs and Croats fought together with Muslims in the resistance.

The ethnic map of Bosnia before the Serbian invasion was so mixed that the only



Karadzic

way to create three ethnic areas was by ethnic cleansing.

If Serb leader Karadzic gets his way, the same thing will happen to Bosnian capital Sarajevo; dividing the city means a population movement to create an 'ethnically pure' Serbian area.

The rump Bosnia envisaged by the peace plan will be, like the rump Palestinian 'autonomous' area, a 'Bantustan' - a tiny statelet dominated by its neigh-

bours. Hundreds of thousands of people will not be able to go back to their homes and remain refugees.

The peace plan shows the cynicism of the United Nations and imperialism. The aggressors, the prison camp guards, the torturers and murders are to be rewarded with the fruits of victory. Multi-ethnic Bosnia is to be sacrificed at the altar of imperialist realpolitik.

Why we back Bosnia

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK has been in the forefront of the Workers Aid to Bosnia campaign, and supporters of the paper are on both legs of the Convoy.

But the campaign raises the question 'why back Bosnia?'. A prominent letter in the Morning Star on 10 September attacked the campaign and argued for neutrality in the war.

We say socialists should defend Bosnia against the plans for a 'Greater Serbia' and a 'Greater Croatia' which would eat up 70 per cent of Bosnian territory. This is not because we are always for the underdog; it is because we are always for the oppressed against the oppressor.

Yugoslavia broke up because the economic crisis of the Stalinist system created competition between the different republics. This opened the door to reactionary nationalism.

But the immediate cause of the war was the decision of the

Slobodan Milosevic leadership to stay in power by using the weapon of Serbian chauvinism, and then their launching of a military attack on Croatia and Slovenia when they exercised their right to independence.

Kosovo

The first people to be attacked by the Milosevic leadership were the ethnically Albanian population of Kosovo, which has been harshly repressed. Popular protest was put down with many deaths in 1989. Then came the attacks on Croatia, Slovenia and finally Bosnia. Milosevic started the war.

Socialists should defend the right of national self-determination. Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia have the right to be independent and sovereign states if they so wish. By national self-determination does not mean ethnically 'pure' states. That is a reactionary idea.

Most states in the world

have national minorities and socialists oppose all oppression of these minorities.

We are opposed to the oppression of Serbs in Croatia, and Croats in Serbia. We also defend the right to existence of multi-ethnic and multi-national states, if that is the will of their people.

Before the war there was little demand from Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats for a break up of Bosnia. People who have lived side-by-side for generations, who inter-married and worked together, have been forced into conflict by first reactionary great Serbian chauvinism and then by Croatian nationalism.

We say defending Bosnia and bringing material and political aid is an elementary defence of democratic rights, and thus an elementary duty for socialists. All socialist organisations, particularly the SWP and Militant who have kept silent, should be challenged to back Workers Aid.

WHERE WE STAND

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

Socialist Outlook exists to fight for a new type of working class leadership, based on the politics of class struggle and revolutionary socialism, to tackle this crisis.

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

The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions with legislation, and to fragment and weaken the resistance of the working class and oppressed, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time, using the full powers of the state.

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while ditching any pretence that they offer a socialist alternative. Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the government has simply fuelled and encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form taken by the politics of *reformism*, seeking no more than improved conditions within the framework of capitalist rule.

Socialist Outlook rejects reformism, not because we are against fighting for reforms, but because we know that the needs of the working class - for full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy - can never be achieved under capitalism.

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

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

Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change. We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class - the overwhelming majority of society - to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth - and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world. *Socialist Outlook* is above all an *internationalist* current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises co-thinkers in 40 countries world-wide.

Unlike some other groupings on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. Too often this degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from the actual struggle taking shape within the labour movement, playing into the hands of the right wing.

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

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

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

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

YES, I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter.

Name

Address

Phone

Age

Send to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

BOSNIA

Massive Support for aid Convoy

The Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy is up and running and scoring major successes in mobilising support for the beleaguered people of multi-ethnic Bosnia.

The time to mobilise material and political aid for the Bosnian resistance is now.

The convoy is now in Europe and a new wing of the convoy is under way from Scandinavia. Sections of the Fourth International have played a major role in ensuring the success of this project. Further convoys are being discussed.

This campaign is living demonstration of the possibilities of rebuilding working class internationalism. What we need in the coming weeks is urgent action to drive this campaign into the labour movement and build local community support.



Seen here at Timex, the aid convoy is being built up all across Europe by the Fourth International

Building Europe-wide Bosnia solidarity

By Helen Shaw

THE WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia Convoy has had a massive impact both in Britain and Europe. It set off for France after its successful tour through Britain culminating in a visit to the TUC on September 9.

The Convoy has split into two in order to visit more countries but even so it is not able to respond to floods of requests coming in from all over Europe.

Full lorries

The organisers even considered not visiting some of the towns on the route as the lorries are full and the pressure of the schedule is tight. But this has not happened as the response on the ground has been so tremendous.

In Brescia, Italy the whole of

the left has united around the campaign, including the communist party and 50 trade unions are giving support. They are organising their own lorry to come and join the convoy.

Morale is high and as the convoy travels through Europe the teams are becoming more organised and cohesive.

So far the convoy has collected over £70,000 plus tens of thousands of pounds worth of material aid. The convoy has agreed to take in 200,000 tons of goods collected by Muslim Aid on the condition that it is distributed to all the people in Tuzla - Muslim, Serb and Croat.

In Paris, the Communist Party have given the campaign a free stall at the huge annual Humanité fete, and 25,000 leaflets will be distributed.

The CGT union confederation is allowing the campaign to collect at their conference, which is unprecedented. The

Mayor of Montreuil has donated a permanent warehouse to store aid.

Negotiations and plans are currently being made to set a similar warehouse in Berlin. Members of the Workers' Aid have gone ahead to Slovenia to co-ordinate the setting up of the office there.

There will be a permanent warehouse, office and bank account (so overseas groups can get cash across now). Due to the massive response some lorries from the convoy will travel down to Slovenia immediately and then return to collect more aid.

Juggernauts

The size of the convoy is growing all the time. It will be joined by two juggernauts from Scandinavia in Berlin on 15 September.

These two vehicles are currently touring round Denmark

and Sweden in the same way the convoy travelled round Britain and will petition the TUC equivalent in Copenhagen before going on to Berlin. In Denmark they collected £8,000 and in Sweden £10,000 in addition to filling the lorries with goods.

In Courtrai, Belgium the Northern leg of the convoy held a very successful press conference and appeared on national TV.

In Hungary the National Miners Union and the Socialist Party have agreed to support the convoy and a series of events have been organised this week.

The convoy route currently covers the following cities Lille, Liege, Courtrai, Antwerp, Oberhausen, Hamburg, Cologne, Berlin, Vienna, Graz, Paris, Liege, Charleroi, Nancy, Strasbourg, Basel, Geneva, Brescia.

At the same time Irish Solidarity with Bosnia is organising support for the convoy. Irish

postal workers have managed to get information distributed by the Post Office and members of the NUJ have persuaded RTE to stop describing Bosnia as a 'Muslim' state but to refer to it as 'multi-ethnic Bosnia'.

Significance

Politically the campaign has huge significance. The co-operation of the French CP, support from the Hungarian Socialist Party and from the CP in Brescia for a convoy which not only brings material aid but carries a political message of support for the 'multi-ethnic state of Bosnia' and solidarity with all its people represents a remarkable breakthrough for a campaign launched by small groups in Britain.

This campaign has practically pulled together strands of the European workers movement in a way unprecedented for many years.

WORKERS' AID TO BOSNIA

Workers Aid for Bosnia Programme of Action

■ TO CAMPAIGN for the opening of the asylum doors to all victims of ethnic cleansing and those facing political persecution.

■ To help provide material assistance to the refugees in Britain: housing, jobs, employment, food, clothing, welfare advice, etc.

■ To take direct action to stop threatened deportations.

■ To expose the hypocrisy of the present Conservative Government in their relation to refugees; and of how Western Governments

are supporting right-wing nationalist (and even fascist) forces in ex-Yugoslavia.

■ To urge trade unions at all levels, Labour Parties at all levels, to take a fighting stance on the defence of aid to Bosnians and refugees.

■ To forge links with the left-wing, trade union and workers movement in ex-Yugoslavia to assist in our aims. To support democratic forces genuinely fighting for democratic rights against dictatorial rule and imperialist intervention and to oppose the European partition of Bosnia.

■ To build links throughout Europe with those of similar outlook with a view towards co-ordinated action in an International Workers Aid.

■ To support other campaigns to open asylum doors, stop deportations, and to oppose racism and fascism.

■ To campaign for the immediate lifting of the British backed United Nations arms embargo against Bosnia and for the withdrawal of UN troops from the area.

■ For imperialist hands off the Balkans!

Bosnia Action Checklist

1. GET YOUR local organisation to send a delegate to the Workers' Aid October 30/31 Conference.

2. Is there a Workers' Aid Committee in your area? If not set one up now.

3. Drive the campaign into the Labour Movement. Get your trade union branch, Labour Party, campaign organisation, women's organisation, anti-racist group to affiliate to

Workers' Aid, make a donation and send a delegate to the October Conference.

4. Approach other people on the left. Ask them if their

organisation is supporting Workers' Aid. If not why not?

5. Make a personal donation to the campaign.

distribute the Workers' Aid brochure. Ring 081 694 9799 for details.

6. Send reports of all local activities to Socialist Outlook.

Contact Workers Aid, c/o PO Box 30, London SE15 5EP

Tube union militant victimised

Reinstate Patrick Sikorski!



RMT President Knapp: essential the RMT pulls out all the stops.

**By a London
Underground
Train Operator**

PAT SIKORSKI, a well known RMT activist on London Underground, has been victimised and sacked from his job as a guard on the Central Line. Strike action is now planned to demand his reinstatement as well as that of sacked guard Ray Stelzner.

Pat is the Secretary of the RMT's London District Council and has long been a thorn in management's side. By sacking him LUL management are sending a message to union activists that they will tolerate no opposition and intend to break the RMT.

Since their success in introducing the Company Plan, LUL management has been clamping down on all opposition and trying to stamp out the old culture of railway working and trade unionism with it. Instead they want an American-style business culture based on profit instead of service.

Managers are trying to instill

an atmosphere of fear. Nowhere has the tension been greater than on the Central Line.

When they sacked guard Ray Stelzner, with no serious charges against him, Central Line workers had enough. RMT and ASLEF activists called two unofficial meetings to discuss action. Surprise, surprise, the phone lines between management and the union head offices started to buzz.

Circular

RMT head office sent out a bureaucratic circular denouncing calls for unofficial action. They said this was to comply with the law, but in reality they were not supporting the members' and activists' fight with management.

ASLEF head office were not so coy about doing management's job. Derrick Fullick, ASLEF General Secretary, rang up the local branch secretary and told him to resign his union rep posts or face sacking by management. The threat worked leaving RMT activists to fight alone. A few days later Patrick Sikorski was sacked.

The Train Crew Manager at

Leytonstone, Pat's depot, took down notices about the Ray Stelzner meetings from the RMT notice board. Pat naturally protested against the interference. Four days later he was told he was on a 'DB' (disciplinary board) for alleged threatening behaviour.

If you can be sacked for arguing with a manager there wouldn't be many workers left on LUL. So at the disciplinary hearing the charge was changed to putting up an unofficial notice over Stelzner's case. Punishment - instant dismissal. Now you can be charged with one thing and sacked for another.

This point was not lost on management, who at the appeal decided he had been sacked for the original charge after all!

Afraid

Everyone on the job (with the exception of a few ASLEF activists for sectarian reasons) is clear that Pat's dismissal is victimisation for trade union activity. RMT sacked him because they are afraid of unofficial action and trade union unity.

Once the union head offices

had disassociated themselves from local activists over the Selzner case, the way was clear to sack Pat Sikorski. The message from the company is that militant trade unionism must be smashed.

Pat has worked on the Underground for 11 years. Secretary of the District Council, he is also a representative for train staff, and tipped to get on the RMT executive in January. This would have been a problem for management and the union bureaucracy.

Hesitation

If LUL can keep him sacked, doubtless the right wing will argue he is ineligible for this position. This is perhaps behind the initial hesitation before the RMT bureaucracy faced up to the need to defend Pat.

But eventually they realised that to defend any trade unionism on LUL, they couldn't stand by. The result is a ballot of train staff on the Central Line. This follows demands by the District Council which plans to spread a successful central Line stoppage to the rest of the system.

Jimmy Knapp has attended a

meeting of workers on the East End of the Central Line to support Pat; John Prescott, Labour's Transport spokesperson has written to LUL on his behalf. But the deciding factor is whether the union can organise successful strike action.

The new union brought in August means that organising a legal strike takes five weeks. Management can go to the courts delaying things further, and use the delay to intimidate workers.

No wonder LUL are so afraid of unofficial action. In many situations unofficial action is the only way forward. We didn't see the health unions distancing themselves too far when London hospitals came out on a completely illegal set of strikes. If one union can support unofficial action so can another.

Activists are campaigning hard on the Central Line and the rest of the Underground to keep the anger going strong. If we can get Patrick Sikorski and Ray Selzner reinstated, it will be a blow to management and a blow to 'crawl on your belly' trade unionism.

TRADE UNION NEWS

Avon CPSA activists sacked

By Shaun Cohen

STEVE Goldfinch and Amanda Lane, who is the CPSA branch secretary, have been sacked from Bedminster Job Centre.

CPSA members there struck for a day in protest at the Centre advertising vacancies at JW Arrowsmith, where 120 workers have been locked out since April.

It is an attempt to intimidate union members in the run-up to market testing and privatisation. Management are worried by upcoming bal-

lots by four unions - CPSA, IRSF, NUCPS, NIPSA - for a united civil service-wide strike against market testing on 5 November

On 2 and 3 September, 11 Employment Service offices in the Bristol area took industrial action in support of the sacked activists with the support of the CPSA nationally.

Demand the union backs further industrial action by writing to CPSA HQ, 160 Falcon Rd, London SW11 2LN.

Send protest letters to the head of Employment Services, M Fogden, 30 Orange St, London WC2H 7HT.

Edmonds faces up to Burnsall's strikers

By Bob Smith

AFTER 15 months, Burnsall's Electroplating strikers have met John Edmonds, General Secretary of the GMB union which sold out the dispute three months ago.

After an embarrassing mass picket at the TUC conference which called for him to come outside and meet his members Edmonds agreed to go to the GMB's West Midlands office 14 September to meet the strikers and regional officials.

Official support was withdrawn from the dispute by regional organiser Geoff Wheatly because it was not possible to win it within the limits of the current anti-union laws.

Even though the GMB organises within Burnsall's main suppliers, there was no call for a boycott, no mass pickets or requests for workers to not handle Burnsall's components, many of them used in the car industry.

The union claimed that if it broke the laws it could be sequestrated - that its funds would be seized by the government. But the GMB also claim the strike cost them £200,000. Maybe fighting to win the strike would have been cheaper!

Workers at the plant were paid £120 or less each week, faced poor working conditions and a seven-day week.

The strikers are demanding that the union supports the 52 industrial tribunals and 12 court cases that have resulted from the strike and the repeated violent

assaults staged against the picket line.

They also want strike pay reinstated, mass pickets of the factory; and a GMB call on other TUC affiliates to boycott Burnsall.

Cooperation

They are calling for the GMB to cooperate with the support groups, in Birmingham, London, Manchester and Oxford; and opens an internal enquiry into the running of the dispute.

Send messages of support and request for more information to Balvir Singh, 82 Rosefield Road, Smethwick B67 6TX, tel: 021 565 5416. Mail donations to Burnsall Strike Fund, 27 Firsvale Road, Lisdale Park, Birmingham.

Anger erupts over East End racist violence

Unite against the BNP!

By Helen Shaw

ASIAN youth Quaddus Ali lies in a critical condition in the Royal London Hospital, with possible permanent brain damage after being left for dead, following a vicious beating by a racist gang of eight on Wednesday 8 September.

Quaddus and two friends were attacked as they were walking in the street.

A vigil attended by 300 people outside the hospital on Friday 10 September ended in violence after the police snatched youths from the crowd.

The police typically claim they were attacked by angry youths and that 'politically motivated troublemakers' unknown to community leaders 'hijacked' the vigil.

They are trying to play down their role in causing the violence and at the same time play up the 'good' relations between the police and the community. Bengali youth do not share that view and perceive the police as their enemy.

The situation in the East End is volatile with sporadic violence continuing over the weekend. The Asian community are

angry about the lack of action in dealing with racist attacks and police collusion with racists. Nine people appeared in court on Monday 13 charged with rioting after Friday's protest. A defence campaign has been set up.

Real violence

This attempt by the police to smooth over the real violence and threat to the black community comes at

the same time as the trial of two men accused of murdering Asian taxi driver Fiaz Mirza who was robbed, and then shut in his car which was then pushed into the Thames in docklands.

The BNP is also standing a candidate in a council by-election in Milwall ward, on the Isle of Dogs on September 16, and canvass returns indicate that support for the fascists stands at 34 per cent!

Last October, in a by-election in the same ward the BNP gained 20 percent of the vote.

Labour managed to hold on to the ward by a strong campaign co-ordinated by the left.

This time their campaign is hopeless, with only 4 - 5 campaigners out each night compared to the BNP who are campaigning in groups of 20 - 30.

The BNP come on to estates in these large groups and as some of them canvass, others march up and down chanting racist filth. Residents say they have seen their neighbours coming out and shaking hands with the fascists.

The weakness of the left in the local Labour Party, the perception that Labour councillors are complicit in many of the unpopular housing policies, the racist policies of Tower Hamlets Liberal Council and the failure of the Labour Party to mount an anti-racist campaign has meant the BNP have been able to grow and increase in influence.

Labour councillors in Milwall are up to their necks in carrying out the Liberals dirty work for them. The Liberals



Fascists in London's East End

have played on racist sentiment, their policies fuelling racism.

The BNP have been able to capitalise on frustration amongst the white islanders about housing and inadequate repairs and maintenance policies.

The response of the anti-fascist organisations has been poor and often destructive. 'Islanders Against the Nazi's' was formed last year and has met on an infrequent basis since then.

When the by-election was called they put out a leaflet on the estates without holding a meeting - it was obvious the leaflet had come straight from the SWP and even their local members had not been informed.

They wanted to hold a rally

in Milwall park which is bordered by two estates with mainly Bengali residents.

This action would merely give a platform for the SWP and then leave the local community vulnerable to the violence from the BNP after the SWP had gone home.

These sort of tactics will not unite anti-racists but instead create divisions and merely promote one particular organisation.

It remains to be seen who will win the by-election but even if the BNP lose, the size of their vote and vicious racist attacks will mean it is more urgent than ever to create a united anti-racist movement truly rooted in the community.

**Close down BNP
HQ! Stop racist
violence!
Join the UNITY
demonstration
Sat OCT 16 1pm
Plumstead Common**

1993 Congress sees TUC's Monks in retreat

Brighton Rot!

By Dave Osler

THE 125th Trade Union Congress opened in Brighton last week, exactly one week after the prosaically titled 'Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act (Commencement No 1 and Transitional Provisions Order) 1993' came onto the statute book. The timing was a calculated insult.

Wages councils - the last remaining protection for the low-paid - were unceremoniously scrapped, and the Bridlington Agreement preventing union poaching rendered a dead letter.

Unions must now give seven

days notice before striking, while a 'citizens' right' to stop unlawful industrial action in the courts has been instituted.

Workers will now have to contract-in before union dues can be deducted by check-off. The financial implications for many unions, and ultimately the Labour party could be devastating.

Fightback

The possibility of building a fightback scarcely figured in the proceedings. The major questions of the week were Labour-union links (technically not even on the agenda) and the readmission of the electricians to Congress House.

John Smith cleverly devoted his speech to a major interven-

tion in his drive to win one member one vote, without even mentioning the subject.

Two hours later he stepped on the rostrum and turned on the charm. Delivering a carefully crafted blend of Tory-bashing and praise for the unions, he offered the audience a charter of rights at work.

These were mainly existing policies repackaged, but included a new commitment to protection from unfair dismissal from day one, abolishing the present two-year wait.

The gamble paid off. Garfield Davies, general secretary of the shopworkers' union US-DAW, duly announced his union would ditch conference policy and back OMOV.

Thursday saw a heated de-

bate over the return of the, expelled over Wapping in 1988, but now part of the AEEU. The result had been stitched up well in advance, but nevertheless, standard procedures were manipulated so that nothing was left to chance. What price democracy when a cheque for £1 million-worth of affiliation fees is on the table.

During the debate a succession of general secretaries, including Bill Morris of TGWU, argued for the clear constitutional right to move reference back.

No bottle

No way said Alan Tuffin of UCW in the chair; a straight yes-no vote was all that was on offer. But no one had the bottle to

challenge the chair.

Caving in to the electricians could prove a costly mistake. Now, with the Tories' abolition of Bridlington, the AEEU will do pretty much as it likes.

It was left to the NUM to address head on the need to unshackle the unions. A motion calling for defiance of the anti-unions laws won surprisingly wide support, garnering 2,418,000 votes for to 4,757,000 with backers including Unison, UCATT and GMPU.

Socialist Outlook supporter Paul Davidson, a UCATT delegate, was a key speaker in support of the NUM resolution. A mainstream composite pledging continued nominal opposition was passed instead.



The Timex struggle was ignored by TUC leaders

HOME NEWS



Last month's strike to save UCH and Middlesex

UNISON must build for November 11 demonstration

Market massacre threatens NHS

By Harry Sloan

THE STRIKE action by nurses and support staff organised in UNISON at London's University College Hospital remains the focal point of the rolling, escalating crisis in the NHS.

The impact of the action in opposition to the 'temporary' closure of the UCH hospital site has been far bigger than might be expected from the relatively small numbers involved. Though strikers' attempt to spread the action to neighbouring hospital and beyond have had little success, they have retained official UNISON backing and courageously defied increasingly heavy-handed management efforts at intimidation.

The management tactics descended on September 10 to abruptly moving patients from their wards without notifying either the staff caring for them or their visiting relatives.

Lunch

An angry protest co-ordinated by UNISON but spearheaded by angry relatives and accompanied by TV cameras burst in upon a sumptuous management lunch. The episode helped highlight the gulf between the brutal cuts in front line services and the rich pickings to be had by top axe-wielding NHS bosses.

The UCH strike stands out strongly against a background of passive inactivity from UNISON and other health unions, despite the mounting evidence of a jobs massacre sweeping the NHS.

Despite the fanfare which greeted the merger of COHSE, NALGO and NUPE to form UNISON with nearly 500,000 health workers, there has been little leadership on offer at national or local level for members battered by cash-cutting, bounty-hunting management struggling for survival in the Tories' ruthless market-style NHS.

A combination of incompetence, disorganisation and the bureaucratic preoccupation of top officials with preserving their own jobs has meant that the half-hearted UNISON call for a national demonstration on the NHS on November 11, which has the potential to focus and build on growing anger has been followed up by just one limp circular to branch secretaries - giving no details.

Meanwhile the market reforms are taking a brutal toll, with jobs and services under fire across the country.

The entire UCL Hospitals unit, comprising UCH, the Middlesex and related hospitals in central London, faces total bankruptcy and closure as a result of the plan by cash-strapped Camden & Islington health authority to withdraw its contracts for routine acute hospital services. If these services were to close, the remaining, purely specialist, hospital services would be saddled with enormous unit costs and lose £19m in teaching grants, triggering a financial collapse. Services at risk include the busy casualty unit at UCH.

Storm centre

London as a whole remains the storm centre of the NHS cuts, since its high overhead

costs coupled with the drastic reduction in budgets of many London health authorities have left many hospitals stranded by the loss of contract income.

Casualty services are lurching towards chaos as closure looms for busy unit at Barts and Charing Cross Hospitals; Heathrow Airport emergency services could be threatened by the closure of A&E services at Ashford Hospital; and outlying casualty units at Barnet General Hospital and Harold Wood in Essex face the axe. Barnet Trust chiefs, facing a £5m deficit, are seeking a merger with the

Elizabeth's military hospital site.

The mad scramble for survival in a chaotic market system in London's NHS is complicated by the pretence of 'planning' epitomised by the Tomlinson Report and a network of related quango bodies presided over by the London Implementation Group. Sweeping cuts in specialist services are expected from Health Secretary Bottomley some time in November.

Meanwhile waiting lists in much of the capital are rocketing upwards, well above the 150,000 mark, even before the impending autumn round of cash cuts.

But of course London is not alone in this crisis. Birmingham, too, faces havoc, with a massive shift of contract income away from the city's central specialist hospitals, where local health budgets are also facing heavy cuts.

£24m shortfall

South Birmingham health authority alone faces a massive £24m deficit, of which £11m stems from the under-funding of acute hospital services, and another £2m from the refusal of other health authorities to pay up for patients treated.

The city's Accident Hospital closed in August, with the Royal Orthopaedic closing in December. Others at risk include the Children's and the Eye hospitals, while brutal cuts are looming at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Elsewhere Newcastle General Hospital faces closure as brutal rationalisation plans are forced through by rival Trusts in the teeth of public opposi-

tion. Bradford Hospital Trust is pressing ahead with closure of Woodlands orthopaedic hospital to save £500,000 a year. In Manchester, Salford's two children's hospitals are facing drastic cuts and across-the-board job losses to cut £1.5m from a £2.6m deficit.

Double deficit

Other units in trouble include Plymouth hospitals, where a £200,000 overspend doubled in July, raising the spectre of a £1m plus deficit, and Darlington, where 5 percent of staff at the Memorial Hospital could face the axe to cut £3.5m over three years.

Almost every Trust is now looking at ways of cutting jobs to save money.

But it is not all bad news. London's Forest Healthcare Trust, based in Waltham Forest, has announced a first-year profit of £1.1m. However a closer reading of its annual accounts shows this follows service cuts totalling ...£1.1m!

None of this appears to trouble Virginia Bottomley. She recently travelled to Islington's Whittington Hospital to 'open' a hospital wing which had already been in use for two years. It is not clear when she will return to officially close the ward which has already bitten the dust.

The fightback for our NHS must be stepped up as the cuts gather pace. Support for the UCH action can best be built by opposing each and every cut-back in hospital and health services across the country.

Demand UNISON build and other TUC unions support the November 11 demonstration!

**LONDON
DAY OF
ACTION
THURSDAY
16 SEPT
For details
phone UCH
Unison on
(0860) 370523
or 370525.**

Royal National Orthopaedic Trust, itself in cash problems.

In South West London, Queen Mary's Roehampton and one other district hospital (either Kingston or St Helier) are likely to face closure as purchasing authorities pull the financial plug. To the South East, purchasers are demanding the closure of either Guy's or St Thomas's hospital to save £30m a year, while plans have been announced to close both Greenwich District and the Brook hospitals to merge into a smaller unit on the Queen

Labour: the party that makes nothing out of a crisis



NEVER MIND the class struggle: this year's Labour conference will be dominated by the issue of Labour's links with the unions, and the attempt by John Smith to force through so-called 'one person, one vote'.

Labour leaders have chosen to respond to the Tory offensive with this destructive proposal, after a year of utter failure to capitalise on the Tories' crisis.

Significantly it is not just Arthur Scargill and the Trade Union left who have appreciated the threat of the modernisers. Even John Edmonds has highlighted how Labour's poor performance is related to the attempts to weaken the trade union and Labour link.

Non-debate

In the year since Labour carried out its non-debate on 'what went wrong' at the last election, the Tories have been through their biggest crisis since they came to power in 1979.

This crisis combined the struggle of the miners and the deep-going Tory rift over Europe, has still far from healed.

It seems light years away now, but at various points in the last year there has been a real possibility that Major's government would fall. The pits crisis alone opened that opportunity.

If Labour had thrown itself

into a massive campaign for the miners, if it had joined with the TUC in backing mass industrial action to defend the miners, if Labour had backed that campaign through parliamentary wrecking tactics, there would have been a massive response from millions of working people. Heseltine's final Houdini act to win back the Tory rebels would have been much more difficult.

But far from Labour capitalising on this and other crises, the Tories have been allowed to hang on and at the same time carry through some of their biggest anti-working class attacks since 1979. New anti-union laws, the new Asylum Act - about which Labour did nothing - the snowballing destruction of the NHS, further privatisations, the Child Support Act - the list goes on and on.

Paralysed

In the face of all this the Labour leadership remains paralysed. Worse, the 'modernisers' have shifted Labour policy even further right, capitulating all along the line to the Tories' reactionary economic and social reforms.

Once again Labour leaders merely hope that Tory unpopularity on its own will deliver electoral success.

Gordon Brown has made it clear that Labour will make no specific promises whatever before coming to power; indeed,

abandoning any commitment to sharply increase taxes on the wealthy makes such a position absolutely inevitable.

The cynically-named 'Commission on Social Justice' is a fig-leaf for backing 1930s-style means-testing and abandoning universal social benefits, a cornerstone of the welfare state.

David Blunkett has made it clear that Labour will not reverse the Tories' market NHS reforms. And Tony Blair wants to outflank the Tories by being tougher than them on 'law and order'.

Labour's dire performance has even roused Hain, Gould and other Tribune Group MPs into some modest attempts at rethinking Labour's direction.

Labour's retreats are having a devastating effect on the structures and activism of the party. Much of the basic infrastructure of wards and constituencies, finances and electoral motivation lies in tatters.

Labour's mass base has been demoralised. Where was the Labour leadership when the miners needed them? Where is the Labour leadership when hospital workers strike? Where are Labour council leaderships when ruthless anti-working class cuts are proposed?

Disillusionment with the Labour leadership doesn't automatically win people to the left.

The vast mass of workers look for an alternative at the level of practical mass politics.



Never mind the class struggle: Smith

The whole of the working class suffers because of the lack of a left alternative at the level of mass politics.

The regeneration of the left of the labour movement depends on a reawakening of mass working class militancy which is channelled into a fight in the Labour movement.

Class struggle

Without that class struggle component, left opposition in the Labour Party and Trade Unions is futile.

Any abandonment of the rearguard fight by the Labour left will only make the task of the new realists, in the unions as well as the party, easier. The fight in the Labour Party is part and parcel of the class struggle, not something apart from it.

This year's round of trade un-

ion conferences have shown a general, if modest, reawakening of combativity following the resistance of the miners, and the importance of the retention of a political expression through the TU link to rank and file trade unionists.

Socialist Outlook supporters will continue to build the Socialist Campaign Group Network as the best way of organising a left which fights the 'modernisers' at every turn and which links up with those in the trade unions who have shown a willingness to fight such as around the attacks on public services.

The network has developed positively but if it is to flourish it must ensure that the struggles of trade unionists and campaigns such as Workers Aid for Bosnia are centre stage in its activities.

UN's Somalia slaughterhouse

By Chris Brooks

LAST WEEK a three-hour massacre of more than 100 Somali civilians, mostly women and children, gripped the attention of the world.

They were not gunned down by Somali 'warlords', but by UN 'peacekeepers' - in this case American troops.

But the US assassins weren't doing anything new. They have already committed staggering atrocities against non-combatants.

Something new has caused the hue and cry from the bosses press and the US Con-

gress. The bosses now realise the UN cannot win.

What was behind the UN's 'Operation Hope'? Certainly not to disarm the warlords and to bring democracy to the country.

The US refused to support the holding of peace talks which discussed disarmament. Belgian troops have taken arms from one armed faction only to hand them over to another.

The US-run invasion has the goal of ensuring none of the armed gangs alone controls the whole country. Somalia has valuable mineral and oil reserves.

While the US doesn't need these reserves now - when

they are facing an economic slump - they want to ensure that a strong regime doesn't prevent big business reaping super-profits from Somalia in the future.

The other Western powers are coming to see that the US can't win. The Italian contingent has been withdrawn from the country and German support is waning.

Desperate to win a quick victory, the UN troops are using more and more indiscriminate force.

But against a population united against the invasion,



Stop US/UN war machine

the UN can't win. Already they have spent more than the cost of the war in ex-Yugoslavia.

Losing the war will be a massive blow against the American ruling class, who are trying to remain the cen-

tre of the world political system through a monopoly on world-wide 'policing'.

To subdue Somalia will need far more than the 4,600 troops the US has there. Socialists have a simpler solution - get the troops out now!

EDITORIAL

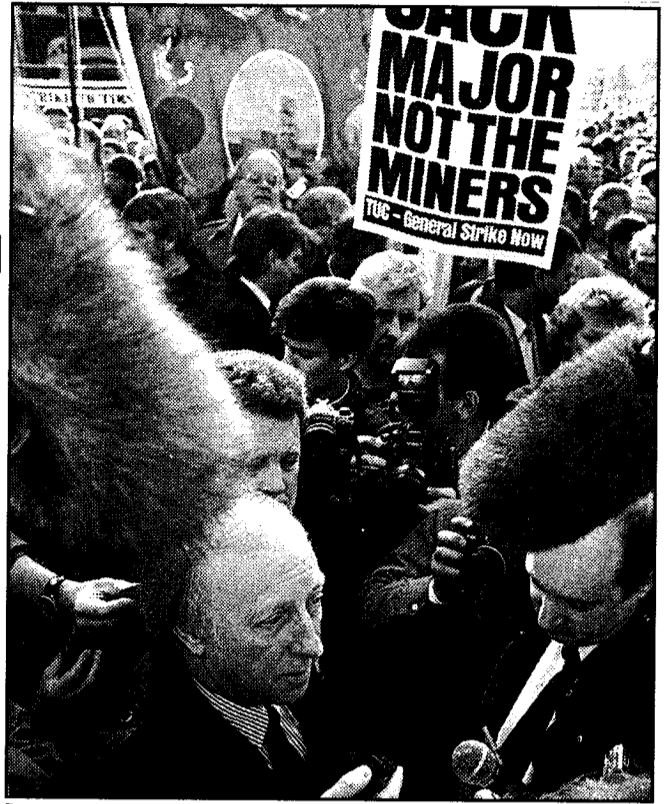
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Scourge of Labour's Clinton clones

SCARGILL SPEAKS OUT



250,000 marched last October, but not John Smith

AFTER BEING stitched up by the *Daily Mirror* and the *Cook Report*, ARTHUR SCARGILL is now the victim of another vicious journalistic attack, the 'unauthorised biography' of labour correspondent Paul Routledge, who portrays Scargill as a power-crazed megalomaniac. Here we publish Scargill's first full-length interview since the defeat of the miners' struggle. This full-length version is published exclusively in *Socialist Outlook*, a shorter edited article recently appeared in *Tribune*. Interview by DAVE OSLER.

SO THE Tories have come out of the pit closure crisis with more or less everything

they wanted, I ask Arthur Scargill, seated behind the formica table of a greasy spoon cafe near his London flat in the Barbican. 'Yes', he replies. Stony silence. Try another tack.

What conclusions can be drawn, then? Although still hesitant over his words, Scargill is immediately more expansive: 'The Labour movement had the best opportunity in 50 years to transform not merely an industrial situation and win an important battle for workers in struggle, but an opportunity to change the government of the day.'

'If it had decided to call upon the British people to give expression to the outrage shown on the two days of action on the 21st and 25th of October 1992, and take part in a 24-hour stoppage, it could have reversed the pit closure programme. It would at the very least have resulted in heads rolling in central government, and possibly the government itself rolling out.'

But it didn't. Chalk one up for the boss class? 'Not at all. Since last October this government has had to spend £450 million because of the resistance of the NUM.' The calculation runs as follows. The High Court ruling that the pit closure programme was unlawful and irrational meant that British Coal paid out wages and running costs for ten

collieries that did not produce any coal. Then there was the cost of two one-day strikes involving both British Coal and British Rail.

'If that money had been given to the ten pits, it would have resulted in them being kept open for at least 50 years. That demonstrates that it's an ideological and not a financial argument. It demonstrates the lengths to which the ruling class are prepared to go to try and defeat the NUM.'

At first, Scargill insists that 'the NUM could've done nothing other than what it did. It campaigned brilliantly, even our most ardent opponents concede that. The trade unions and

shows how far to the Right the Labour Party's gone.

'In letters from the Trade Union Congress general secretary Norman Willis and from the Labour Party leader John Smith, all I got was a negative response to my call for them to ask their affiliates to join a 24-hour strike.'

During the campaign, Scargill publicly called for a South African-style one-day 'stay-away' from work, a circumlocution clearly designed to skirt Tory legislation banning secondary action. But did he ever campaign for a head-on one-day general strike?

Scargill says he used a deliberately precise formulation, 'a

like in the poll tax campaign, the first thing the Labour leadership does is to condemn it.'

There must have been debates on strategy on the NUM executive. Scargill is angry at what he sees as an implied attack: 'Well, if you can criticise the strategy, I'd be delighted to hear...' No, no, I interject, but surely other ideas were floated?

'You have to understand that in October last year, the NUM members, had they been consulted about industrial action, may not have supported that call. But by the time that the ballot did take place, it was nothing short of an outstanding victory to win 60 per cent of them for industrial action.'

'That wasn't achieved by just calling upon them to do something, it was the result of a massive campaign. We marched further than Mao Tse Tung on his long march, we've been involved with so many churches that I've been offered the Bishop of Durham's job when he retires. Yet what you need is not marches, demonstrations, rallies or wide associations, all of them important. What you need is direct action. The sooner people understand that, the sooner we'll begin to change things.'

Focus for solidarity

Wouldn't the occupation of one or more threatened colliery, not by three or four supporters of Women Against Pit Closures but by the workforce itself, have created a focus for nationwide Labour movement solidarity?

Scargill revises his contention that the NUM line was completely perfect: 'It's well-known that Arthur Scargill advocated occupation of the pits, which was not accepted at that time by the executive committee. As a consequence the campaign that was adopted was put into play.'

Scargill is insistent that trade unionism will continue to be a force in the mining industry: 'There's a feeling that strength is determined by the size of a union. That clearly is nonsense.'

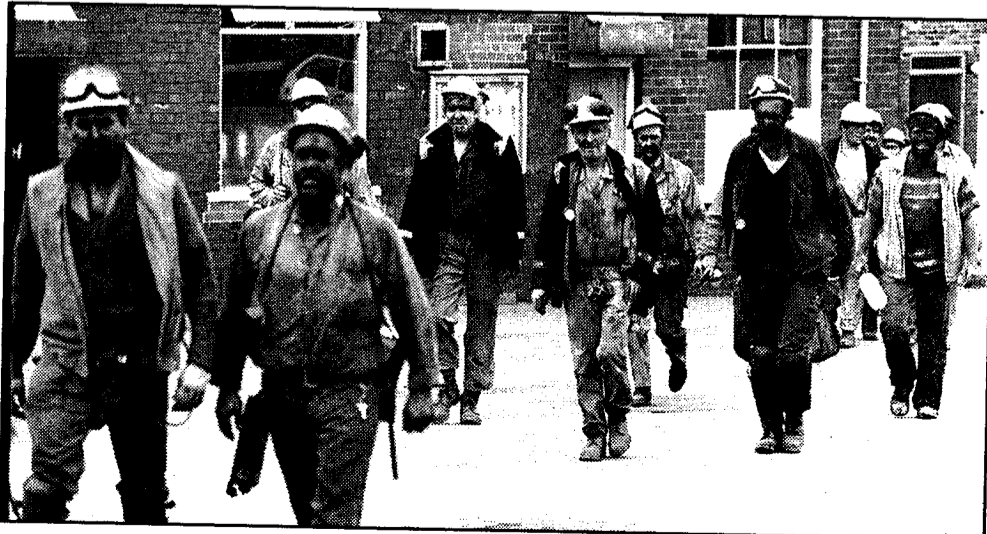
'It's well-known that Arthur Scargill advocated occupation of the pits, which wasn't backed up at the time by the NUM executive...'

the Labour Party, on the other hand, failed miserably. Instead of giving concrete support, and calling upon workers to take industrial action, they did nothing.'

'Contrast that with the call of the Liberal Democrats in April, when they were prepared to call upon the British people to participate in a 24-hour strike. Its

day of action which would involve a stoppage of work for 24 hours', before the TUC general council: 'Those words were chosen carefully. You have to recognise that some unions would be prepared to advise members to stay away and join the demonstration for 24 hours, while other unions slavishly adhere to the Tory legislation and ballot their members. That's a matter for them. The object of the exercise was to try and get workers to stop work, and everybody understood that.'

'When I talked about people power in Hyde Park, I wasn't referring to marching around London or linking arms with the church. I was talking about bringing workers out on the streets of Britain. The trouble with the Labour Party leadership and the trade union leadership, they're quite willing to applaud millions on the streets of the Philippines or in Eastern Europe, without understanding the need to also produce millions of people on the streets of Britain. When it does happen,



TUC and Labour leaders refused to follow Scargill's call for a 24-hour strike

COMMENT

'When I talked about People Power in Hyde Park I wasn't talking about marching round London or linking arms with the church. I was talking about bringing workers out on the streets of Britain.'

When the NUM had over a million members, it was at its weakest industrially and politically. It won its greatest victories when it had less than 300,000 members, in 1972 and 1974.

'In 1984, the miners' union, which was down to about 180,000, was able to sustain a national industrial dispute for one year and four months,' he argues, dating the start of action to the commencement of an overtime ban.

'Today, we've got about 30,000 mineworkers in Britain, and yet the production is heavily concentrated in one-coalface pits. One coalface operates where previously there would be eight.' In some cases, Scargill points out, as much as £100 million can be invested in one production unit: 'If you stop that unit operating, it's the same impact as stopping 20 pits, say, 10 or 15 years ago. All too often miners, and indeed other trade unionists, underestimate the economic strength that they have.'

£2 billion cost

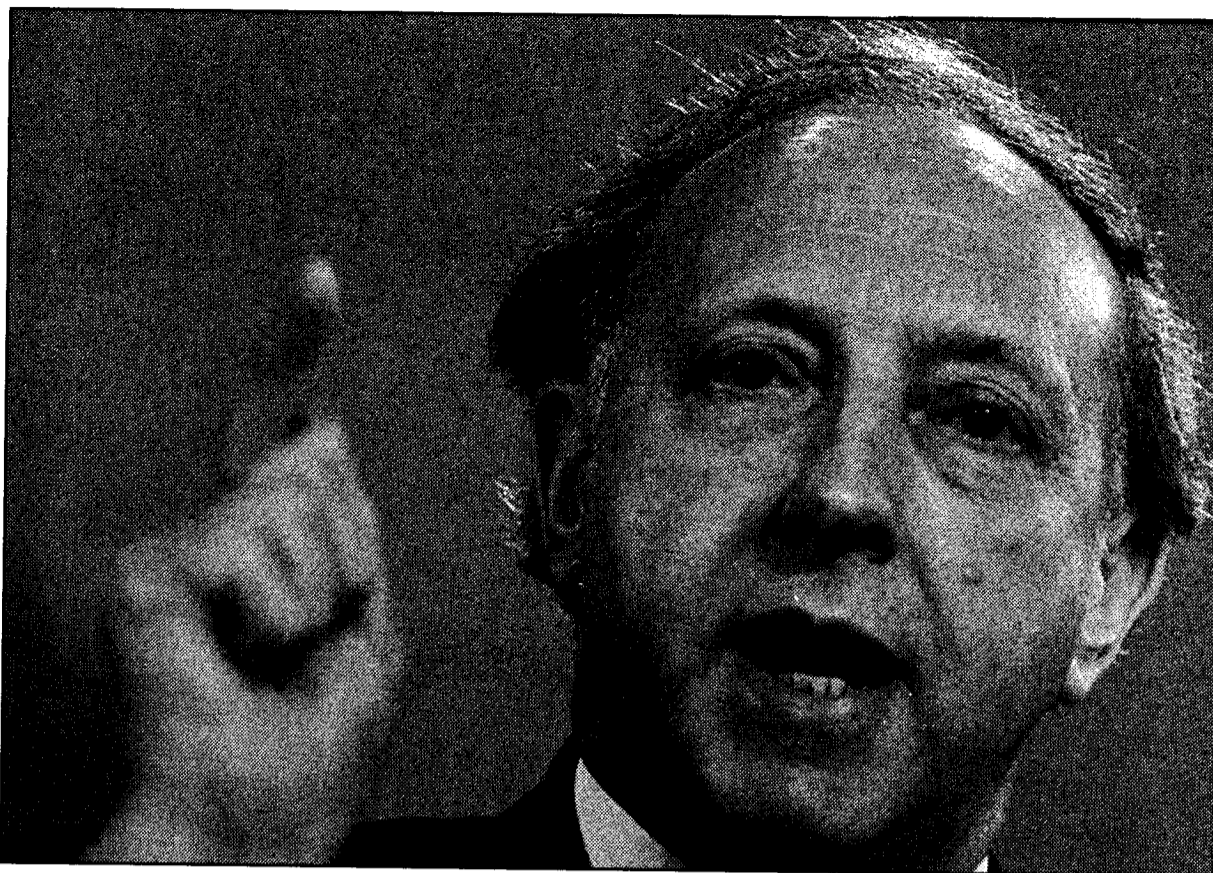
'British Coal and British Rail both admit that each of the one-day strikes cost them £10 million per day. That's £40 million.' Moreover, 6 million workers couldn't, or didn't, go to work: 'You don't need to be a brilliant mathematician to work out the total cost of the two days of action. I conservatively estimate it at £2 billion.'

There are now major coal import terminals in Britain for the first time ever. The mining unions alone can no longer stop supply. Yet Scargill argues that the workforce's hold on the industry is essentially undiminished: 'If you've got an industry where you've got massive investment, it doesn't matter whether you bring in alternative supplies. You still lose the money on that industry.'

Can anything be done to stop privatisation? 'Take industrial action! If anybody can give me a better way to do things I'm prepared to listen... If the Trade Union Congress doesn't, sooner rather than later, give a positive lead and call upon its affiliates to support workers on strike, whether they be at Timex, Burn-sall or the NUM, then it will become increasingly irrelevant as an organisation.'

Conversation switches to the Labour Party. Scargill argues that it should build its strategy on delivering the goods to the

'If the leadership of the Labour party, and the Clinton clones - Mr Brown and Mr Blair - get their way, it could be the first step on the road to disintegration of the Labour Party...'



'Scargill revises his contention that the NUM line was completely perfect'

working class, in terms of maintenance of the NHS, education system, and social services. If that means jacking up income tax, so be it: 'I would replace the whole of VAT with income tax. I would have no compunction at all about doing that. It's common sense.'

When were you last at Walworth Road? 'I've never been, I'm pleased to say.' A Mike Yarwood-style send up of well-known telly documentary star Neil Kinnock follows, complete with cod Welsh accent.

'Relations between the NUM and the Labour Party haven't been a problem. Relations between the NUM leadership and the Labour Party leadership certainly were at a low level, and that was clearly because of the Labour Party leadership's attitude.'

Scargill expresses 'disgust' with four Labour MPs who signed the Department of Trade and Industry select committee report on the coal industry last March:

Shame

'They ought to hang their heads in shame for what they did. They voted for a report which had a Tory majority, and which proposed an increase in nuclear power. They supported no action to stop the dash for gas, and they refused to call for a stop to coal imports. Finally, they adopted a measure calling for a change in working practices which in effect means a 10 or 12 hour shift and a six or seven day week.' All told, it was simply a green light to Heseltine.

Scargill is generally satisfied with the NUM group of Labour MPs, which he says has consistently supported the union's line. Yet one of its members was on

'If people are saying I don't have a right to my views in the Labour Party as a Marxist, I'd like someone to point to the constitution and explain to me where that is.'

the DTI select committee: 'Mick Clapham has not broken any rules; he's committed an error of judgement, but that's different.'

'If the leadership of the Labour Party and the Clinton clones, Mr Brown and Mr Blair, get their way, it could be the first step towards the complete disintegration of the Labour Party as we know it. You may see the emergence of a new political party from the body of the trade union movement which represents a very clear-cut socialist alternative policy and which gives expression to the views of the trade union movement in parliament.'

Great, when can I join? 'It's not as ridiculous as some people would have you believe,' Scargill insists. The leadership of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain was allied to the Liberal Party, even after the foundation of the Labour Party. Historical developments bought a change of attitude.

Could a new party be both trade union-based and explicitly socialist? If one political proposition unites V.I. Lenin and Ernest Bevin, it is the recognition that the one certainly need not be the other: 'Yes, it could be both. If it wasn't both it wouldn't be the kind of party that would have the support of the trade unions or be capable of winning mass support.'

Union revolt

'I hope that the Labour Party will not pursue its current policy of one member, one vote to a position where we ever begin to contemplate this. All I'm saying is that if it did, it may result in certain trade unions deciding that something's got to be done.'

What would stop it being the political expression of the trade

union right? 'Nothing at all. You can't have it both ways. You can't say, we want a political party that springs from the womb of the trade union movement and then seek to condition the trade union movement to fit in with hardline socialist ideological views. You have to accept that there will be occasions when it does not necessarily give expression to views that are in line with yours.'

'But if you elect trade union leaderships which give the sort of expression they should be giving and which we saw in the 1970's, there is no reason on earth why they can't have the decisive influence on the political party.'

So it would be a trade union party where socialists fight their corner, then? 'I don't see why you keep separating socialists in the Labour Party from trade unionists. That's a fundamental mistake. It's just as bad as separating right-wing Labour Party leaders that we've now got from trade unionists.'

US Democrats

'What I don't want to see is a middle-class party emerging with ultra social-democratic concepts, because it will become indistinguishable from the Democratic Party in the United States. God forbid... I want to see a socialist party with trade union support. Don't forget, the Labour Party has got a clause called clause four.'

Big deal. It's still in the constitution, maybe, but the Clinton clones don't give a toss. Scargill replies: 'They don't give a toss because people in the trade union movement have allowed them not to give a toss. But we've got a chance to stop that... If the Labour Party were to apply the same rigid rules that they apply to the Militant Tendency,

there's a lot of people who are currently calling for an abandonment of clause four who quite honestly would be better off with the Liberal Democrats.'

Hence a lot of *New Statesman and Society* editorials: 'I certainly wouldn't have any pacts with the Liberals, I wouldn't have any realignment of policy that put us on a par with the Liberals, even though we're to the right of them at the moment.'

'I certainly am a passionate, passionate advocate of proportional representation, because it's a socialist policy. Had we had proportional representation, you wouldn't have had Thatcher, you wouldn't have had the abolition of the GLC, you wouldn't have had the miners' strike, you wouldn't have had the setbacks we've seen in British industry and you wouldn't have had four and a half million unemployed.'

Codswallop

Scargill dismisses the argument that PR means coalitions: 'Load of codswallop. Even if you get elected with 40 per cent of the vote, if you then put your policies to parliament and say, you either back us or you don't, and if you don't we call a general election.'

Some socialists support PR because they see the opportunity to create an electorally viable hard Left, even Marxist, party. Scargill is dismissive:

'I don't see any reason why the Labour Party, under a proportional representation system, can't win a majority of votes in a general election... I'm not in favour of different political parties being created just for the hell of it.'

'I'm a Marxist, and I'm a member of the Labour Party and have been for 30 years. If people are saying I don't have the right to express my views in the Labour Party as a Marxist, I'd like someone to point to the constitution and explain me where that is.'

Britain's most militant trade union leader picked up the tab for the cappuccinos.

COMMENT

Choosing what to die for

In the Line of Fire

Reviewed by
Liam Mac Uaid

CLINT Eastwood plays an American Secret Service agent in a frantic rush to save an averagely unpleasant President from a deranged professional assassin.

Set aside your scruples about cheering on a representative of the American secret state and enjoy one of the best thrillers of the decade thus far.

This film is as complex as Eastwood's last masterpiece, *Unforgiven*. As one of the bodyguards who got drunk the night before JFK was shot, he hesitated and did not put himself between the bullets and the President as he was trained to do.

He has become a misanthropic outcast and is pushing retirement age. The assassin, played by John Malkovich, tor-

ments him with this weak spot.

Two themes dominate their relationship. Does Eastwood have the courage to stop a bullet for someone else? If so, why should he?

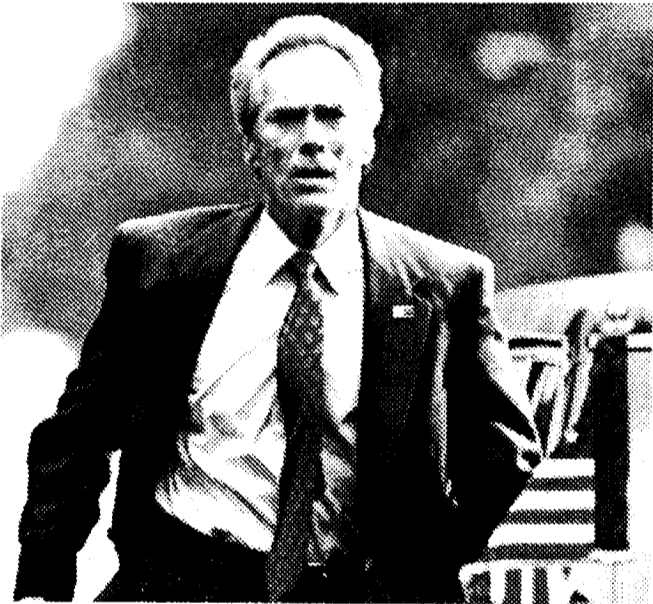
The implicit reply from Eastwood is that you decide for yourself what makes life worth living. You also decide what you want to die for.

Rough deal

The second strand is what you do after life has given you a rough deal. Malkovich dedicates his life and intellect to a futile gesture of revenge consumed with bitterness and a sense of life's futility.

Eastwood has a passion for jazz and (naturally) falls in love. He creates his own happiness in an often unpleasant world.

A first rate thriller, interesting glimpses of the trade craft of the United States Secret Service, a bit of philosophy and outstanding performances. What more can you want from an evening at the cinema?



'Not an avante-garde that seeks to change the world'

Bleak humour

'China Avant-Garde' at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford until 27 October

By Jodley Green

'CHINA Avant-Garde' is evidence of the rejection of Socialist Realism by China's contemporary artists.

The smiling faces and heroic poses of official art are seen here in blatant parody. Instead of the optimistic propaganda seen in communist posters, the exhibition's mood is painfully desolate and despondent.

Most of the artists represent the human figure, especially the face – bleak renditions in which the face is anonymous, distorted by screams or the painter's technique, erased or given the

blank mask of pop art. Elsewhere Mao's face is seen as a background subject or as an icon.

Modern Art movements, are drawn upon by the artists. Yu Youhan's paintings are described as 'subverting' the image of Mao making him a decorative motif rather than heroic.

Superficial

But, as with American pop art – Youhan's main influence – presentation of mass media images as superficial can create superficial paintings which are more commentary on popular culture than radical critique.

These paintings are cynical, in which empty triumphalist slogans on political posters have been replaced by brand names.

There is humour – but it is cynical humour which laughs bitterly at the bureaucratic control of information. Relief

from these alienated images is found in a portrait by Zao Bandi which, although melancholy, is also tender and personal. Deng Yi's abstract paintings which appear as threads of woven colours are wonderful aids to contemplation.

But inevitably one returns to more disturbing images. They reverberate with the bitterness of a cynical society – this is not an avant-garde which seeks to change the world. Progressive art which seeks to do more than represent a sense of sorrow and futility seems to have been almost extinguished in China.

A complementary exhibition of photographs taken of the democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square contains some optimistic images. It is the crushing of that demonstration which to a large degree explains the cynicism of Chinese artists working in the nineties.

Edward Thompson

Success and failure of the 'Old New Left'

By Phil Hearse

EP THOMPSON'S achievements as an historian and champion of the peace movement justly built him a huge reputation.

But Thompson was a key representative of the '1956' generation; he not only shared the strengths and weaknesses of this generation, he theorised and championed both.

The 1956 Hungarian revolution and Khrushchev's secret speech – shook the British Communist Party to its core. The issue of Stalinism was posed centre-stage. People left the CP in droves, and the New Left took shape.

It was a turning point for British Trotskyism. Many CP intellectuals were won over by the then-largest (although still tiny) Trotskyist organisation, led by Gerry Healy.

But those who turned to Trotskyism were a minority. When the key New

Left anthology *Out of Apathy* was produced in 1962 only one of its contributors, Alasdair MacIntyre, latterly right-wing philosophy lecturer at Essex, claimed allegiance to Trotskyism.

The dominant New Left politics were neutralist, anti-Stalinist and anti-social democratic; its political focus was the rapidly growing CND.

Some of the articles in *Out of Apathy* are militantly anti-capitalist, not least that by former Marxism Today guru and ex-socialist Stuart Hall. But among these 'anti' stands, there was little coherent positive alternative.

The 1963 split in the New Left Review editorial board, over the significance of continental 'high theory' Marxism (especially Gramsci), was highly political. In retrospect this clash between Thompson and the Perry Anderson team was part of the transition and conflict between the 'Old New Left' and the 1960s generation which took neutralism and pacifism in the direction of militant anti-imperialism. As

CND declined in the mid-1960s, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign emerged.

Thompson broke with Stalinism, but he never broke with popular frontism; it is the organising theme in all his political positions and writings. Neutralism and popular frontism were writ large in his intervention in the early 1980s peace movement, with his theory of 'exterminism', the idea that east and west were locked into mutually reinforcing nuclear 'exterminism' 'modes of production'.

Thompson's overall theoretical and political positions were subject to comprehensive demolition in Perry Anderson's *Arguments within English Marxism*, to which Thompson never replied.

The Making of the English Working Class is above all a work which celebrates and does justice to the generations of ordinary working people who were the victims of, and fighters against, the horrors of emerging capitalism.

As such it is an immense achievement. But the oft-repeated view that this and Thompson's other historical work is the most important work of the British Marxist historians is exaggerated.

Christopher Hill's work on the English revolution and the successive volumes of Eric Hobsbawm on the development of British capitalism are at least as important as Thompson's work.

In the face of militant anti-imperialism and Marxist theoretical development, Thompson, to use his own words 'sulking in his tent', in the name of 'Reason'.

But his 'reason' was always a combination of socialist idealism and English radicalism, revealing the incomplete character of his break with the tradition of the British Communist Party. The promise of 1956, the potential of a renewed and revolutionary Marxism, had to be taken up by others.

Where is Sinn Fein going?

By Kieran McNulty

RECENT months have seen a gradual shift of emphasis in the politics of Sinn Fein (SF). Not long ago it seemed that the republican movement was hell-bent on pushing the military struggle to the fore and relegating the political struggle to the sidelines. But in the past year key events have forced the movement to re-evaluate priorities.

First was the disastrous SF result in the 26-county election last November (1.7 per cent of the popular vote). Second was the negative backwash from the Warrington bombing which killed two small children.

In the run-up to the North's local elections last May, the SF leadership decided that major changes would have to be made if the movement was to make an effective electoral impact. SF pushed itself forward as a separate party with its own agenda, emphasising its role in the community, rather than just appearing a mouthpiece for the IRA.

SF pushed up its vote to 12.5 per cent, just over one-third of the nationalist community, making it the fourth-largest party in the Six Counties.

Harsh truths

Sinn Fein has been forced to accept some harsh truths about the political realities north and south of the border. In acknowledging the difficulties faced by the party in the Free State, SF first tried to blame its poor showing in last November's general election on media censorship and police harassment of party activists.

SF's failure to relate to large sections of the Free State population was also an important ingredient. Much of the population regarded SF's propaganda as irrelevant to their lives and gave their vote to the Labour Party which made the biggest electoral gains.

At the annual Wolfe Tone commemoration held on 20 June this year at Bodinstown, Sinn Fein executive member Martin McGuinness offered a sober assessment of the situation facing the party in the 26 counties:

'No one can deny that, with honour-



Nationalist fury was derailed by Sinn Fein leaders

able exceptions, we have generally failed to make a significant impact on the political map of the 26 counties...It requires a national focus by us and a fundamental change of attitude if the imbalance is to be corrected.'

He went said that not only should members be active on the national question, but they 'should also be involved in every issue which affects our people...unemployment, low pay, poverty, womens rights and emigration.'

It this represents a genuine change of emphasis by Sinn Fein then all socialists should welcome this.

If Martin McGuinness is to be believed however, Sinn Fein needs to do more than just propagandise about such issues in the columns of An Phoblact, but needs to get more involved in the various campaigns, particularly through the structures of the wider labour movement.

Unfortunately on some issues SF's involvement can only be limited, because of the mandates of its annual conference (Ard Fheis). A classic example is abortion rights.

At this year's Ard Fheis in Dundalk, several motions calling on the party to support full abortion rights for Irish women were defeated. Indeed the party's president Gerry Adams went so far as to say that any change in the party's present policy would be the 'biggest mistake it could make'. SF continues to support abortions only in extreme cases such as incest and rape.

The question begging to be answered is why such a change in policy would be



British occupation inflicts a heavy burden on Ireland

ment to recognise break down of a marriage grounds for divorce.

More recently the party supported the Gay Pride march in Dublin and welcomes the passing of the law which reduced the age of consent to 17 for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

Sinn Fein presents itself as a socialist republican party on occasions but is in reality a nationalist party with some left policies.

In the past Gerry Adams has argued that the party might be influenced by Marxism, but there are no

Marxists within SF.

At the June 1979 Wolf Tone commemoration Adams argued: 'We are not, and never have been a mere 'Brits out' movement...We stand opposed to all forms and manifestations of imperialism and capitalism.'

Disappear

More recently Adams has clarified this position, arguing that in the event of a united Ireland SF's reason for existence would disappear, Irish politics would become more class-based and the party's members would disaffiliate and join other organisations.

In effect SF would, in this scenario, be limiting itself to the national struggle.

It was in this context that the SF leadership issued the document 'Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland' in February 1992. The stress in this document is on becoming part of any future discussions on a settlement; it seems to see discussions with the bourgeois nationalists of the SDLP as being more important than the role of trade unionists and social struggles.

Despite these shifts, there are certain realities which the left in Britain and Ireland need to face up to. Sinn Fein is the only major organisation in Ireland arguing for immediate British withdrawal, the only one claiming to be socialist and anti-imperialist; and that therefore our basic stance should be one of supporting SF, while reserving our right to criticise when necessary.

Hostile

The failure of Sinn Fein to become more involved in controversial issues is not all of its own making. A significant section of the labour and feminist movements in Britain and Ireland are hostile to Irish republicanism in general and SF in particular.

SF has shown in the past that it is, with the support of the left in Britain and Ireland, capable of a great deal.

In 1980 SF established a women's department and since then has been involved in campaigns to make contraceptives more available in the 26 counties and called for on the govern-

DEBATE



Hamas supporter shot by Israeli troops is rushed to safety

From West Bank to World Bank Reactionaries line up to quell Palestine revolt

By Roland Rance

LAST September, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin stated, 'I would like to wake up in the morning and find that Gaza has drowned in the sea, but since that won't happen we must seek a solution'. He now seems to have found such a solution.

The agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation is portrayed as a turning point in Middle East history. Indeed it is.

But, far from being the first step in a process leading to full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, the agreement represents a significant defeat for the Palestinian masses— whose victories in the 5 years of Intifada are now to be overturned by the Palestinian bourgeoisie and the external leadership of the PLO.

The agreement formalises the status of the Palestinians as a colonised people. Except for one but symbolic aspect, nothing in this agreement was not in the 1978 Camp David agreement which was denounced by the PLO.

Falling short

This deal, in fact, falls short of the principles agreed between Begin and Sadat, since it confines the area of Palestinian 'autonomy' to the Gaza Strip and the town of Jericho.

It does not end the occupation but replaces direct with indirect Israeli rule and co-opts the PLO, to police the occupation on Is-

rael's behalf.

The one symbolic innovation is Israel's recognition of the PLO. This major shift has not happened because the Israeli government has suddenly become convinced of the justice of the Palestinian cause. It is the price Israel has to pay to continue its control over the Palestinian people.

As the Standard commented, in this project the PLO is 'Israel's surprising natural ally'.

The national gains of the Intifada are well-known. It has united the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation, and destabilised Israel's system of control.

Repression

In the early stages of the occupation, from 1967 until about 1970, Israel repressed any expression of Palestinian resistance with a massive army presence and established a network of local collaborators and informers. This allowed Israel to mediate the occupation through its local agents rather than through the army.

The Intifada has eliminated this collaboration obliging Israel to flood the occupied territories with troops. This has proved costly, not only financially but politically both at home and abroad.

In class terms, the Intifada represented a new stage in the struggle. It is based among the poorest and most deprived sections of the Palestinian people - the refugees, the peasants and day-labourers unlike earlier bouts of unrest, which were based largely the colleges and universities.

This can be seen in the class nature of many of the demands

on the Palestinian bourgeoisie regarding work conditions, wages, prices, rents, women's rights.

This aspect of the Intifada inspired popular risings in other Arab countries, notably Jordan. It is opposition to this class struggle that creates the common interest between Israel, the PLO leadership, the Arab regimes, the USA and the World Bank.

These forces are now collaborating in order to turn back the class gains of the Intifada. Israel has agreed to train a Palestinian police force; the World Bank has promised economic aid totalling \$4 billion over the next ten years. These offers are an expression of a shared interest in supporting the new regime.

The success of the plan is far from assured, and Arafat faces serious opposition. Leading figures have resigned from the PLO executive and denied the legitimacy of Arafat's leadership.

The agreement has been denounced by the left opposition within and outside the PLO, by the Islamic movements, and by significant forces within Fatah; his only consistent support comes from the former Palestine Communist Party.

Meanwhile, PLO offices around the world are being closed down. In Britain the Palestine Solidarity Campaign maintains an embarrassed silence.

Socialists can be in no doubt that this imperialist agreement is a setback for the Palestinian people. Their struggle, however, will continue; we must deepen and strengthen our solidarity.

No peace on offer in South Africa's 'peaceful road'

By Charlie van Gelderen

The current situation in South Africa will test every political tendency. April 27 1994 is scheduled for the first ever one-person-one-vote election.

But to believe there will be a peaceful transition to majority rule is to sow illusions. An undeclared civil war already exists, disguised as a black against black war, with Buthelezi's Inkatha doing the dirty work for the white ruling class.

The level of violence is appalling. Officially the death toll in political violence rocketed to 2,606 in April and 2,189 in May - nearly 5,000 deaths in two months. The real figures are probably worse.

To quote Neville Alexander at the third WOSA National Conference last April, 'Traditional social control is disintegrating, the bankrupt, racist state cannot and will not re-assert even its repressive order because many parts of the cities have become no go areas for its civilian and uniformed functionaries and because it suits its sinister agenda to promote so-called black-on-black violence.'

The white far right (uneasily linked to Inkhata), with scant chance of winning a 'volkstaat' (Afrikaner homeland) through negotiations or the ballot box, is actively gearing up for secession by armed struggle. Although a minority in the white population, it has considerable support in the South African Defence Force commando structure and could, it is estimated, mobilise 100,000 men at short notice.

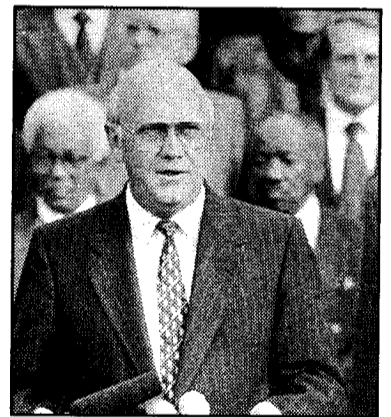
Even if the ANC is allowed to come into power, it will inherit an ever worsening situation, with crisis everywhere - in education, health, recreation and, above all the economic sphere.

Unemployment has never been worse. The government admits that more than 50 per cent of the economically active population are out of work. In the

Eastern Cape - an ANC stronghold - the unemployment rate is above 80 per cent for black youth. Less than four per cent of new labour can be absorbed annually.

What was once thought unthinkable has become normal - white families queue up at soup kitchens; scabbing white workers and their families share hostel accommodation in Natal with black mineworkers; unemployed white workers live in so-called white squatter camps.

The ANC, PAC and other 'peoples' organisations are unable to offer any real solution. Negotiations for power sharing are held



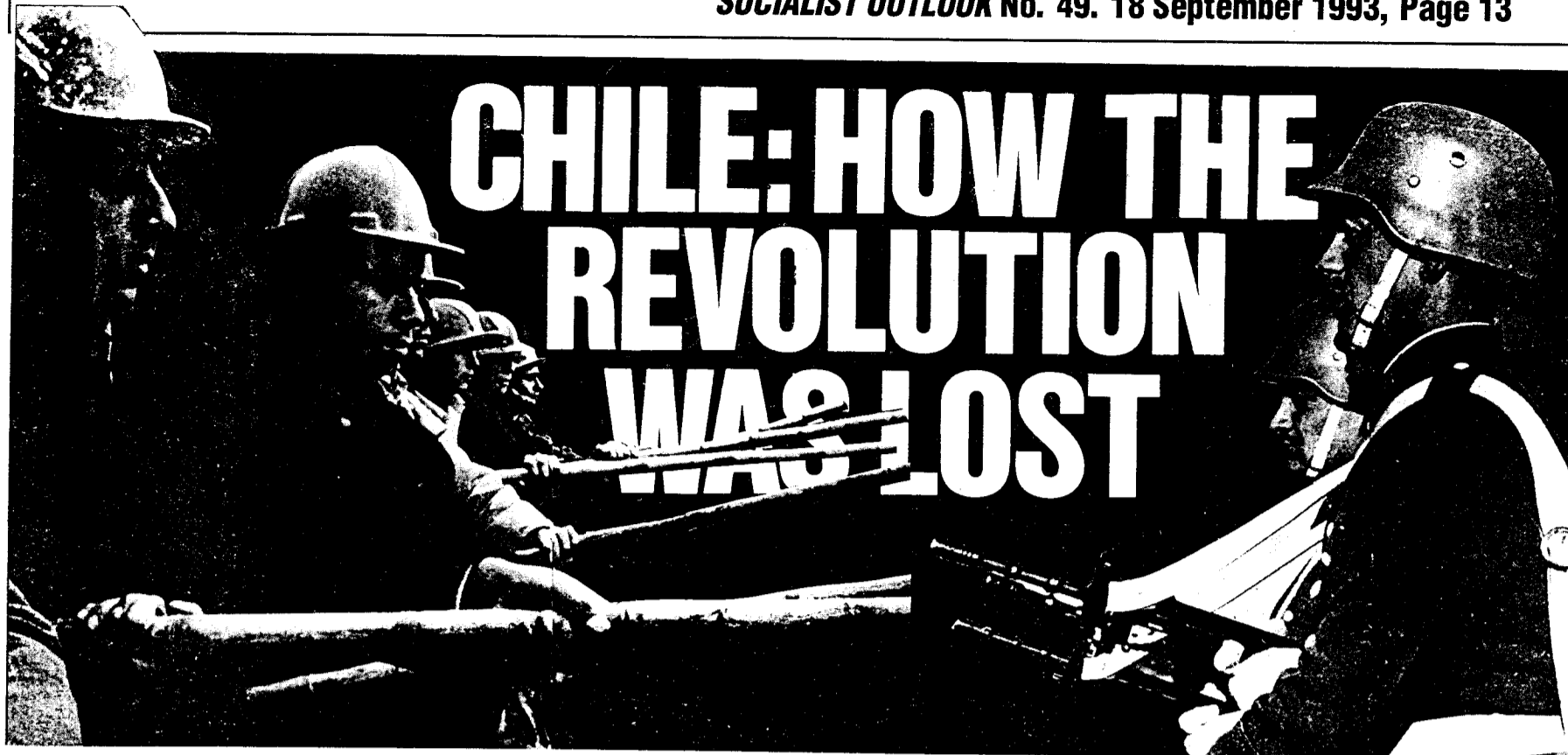
Deal protects ruling elite up as the short term answer.

At the WOSA conference, Neville Alexander spelled out clearly the main thrust of ruling class strategy since February 1990.

'For economic reasons and in order to gain a certain measure of political legitimacy...the ruling class has been compelled to scrap Verwoerdian apartheid. Dismantling apartheid for them meant no more than repealing the pro-white and especially the pro-Afrikaner affirmative action laws...

...so they could accommodate the rising black middle class and the skilled black working class within the continuing racial capitalist system - without...affecting the real power relations between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

For the overwhelming majority of black people, the cosmetic changes to the system...make very little difference, for many they...lead to a dramatic worsening of the quality of life.'



CHILE: HOW THE REVOLUTION WAS LOST

Twenty years after General Pinochet's brutal Chilean coup exposed the bankruptcy of the cross-class politics of 'Popular Unity', PHIL HEARSE draws the political lessons for the left today.

ON THE MORNING of 11 September 1973, twenty years ago, tanks and aircraft attacked the Santiago Moneda palace, residence of Chilean President Salvador Allende. The nightmare of the left in Chile and internationally, a military coup against the left-wing Popular Unity government, was coming true.

Allende and his bodyguards came out of the palace with machine guns, scanning the sky for attacking planes. Within hours both Allende and the 'peaceful road to socialism' in Chile were dead.

The right wing and the army took their revenge against the left. In three days 30,000 trade unionists, socialists and communists were slaughtered.

A reign of terror which lasted more than 15 years under the Pinochet military government ensued; thousands were tortured or 'disappeared'. Chilean workers were subjected to the most radical monetarist economic policy in Latin America, one which created a wealthy middle class but drove millions of workers into dire poverty.

Popular Unity, including the Communist, Socialist and Radical parties, had come to power in September 1970. Right from the start Allende tried to make concessions to the right wing; his cabinet included more members of the declining Radical Party than the much bigger Communist Party. Popular Unity committees organised for the election were disbanded.

Gradual reforms

The policy of Popular Unity was one of gradual reforms in the interests of the working class. Many industries were nationalised and salaries substantially increased. Free milk was distributed to the poor, and public housing greatly increased. There was a surge of support for Popular Unity in the 1971 local elections.

But these successes for Popular Unity were purchased at a high price. Because the banks and big financial institutions were not nationalised, the government had to borrow huge sums to finance its projects and inflation rocketed. Ironically the subsequent economic chaos antago-



Chilean workers and farmers still suffer from Allende's disaster

nised the middle class, which Popular Unity had tried to woo by not going 'too fast'.

The government faced a huge campaign of destabilisation by the bosses. There was an investment strike. Wealthy farmers took their cattle over the Andes into neighbouring Argentina, rather than sell them in Chile. The press carried out a huge campaign against the government.

As the economy got into worse trouble, foreign companies refused to invest in Chile - all financial credit to Chile was ended.

In 1972 the gradualist strategy of Popular Unity went into bankruptcy. The determination of local reaction and imperialism to wreck the economy made it impossible to win over the middle class.

The destabilisation process reached a head in the autumn of 1972 when a bosses' strike was organised. Factories closed down; middle class truck owners went on strike, leaving transport paralysed. The country ground to a halt.

Popular Unity was itself divided. The right wing, led by Allende and the Communist Party advocated a continued 'go slow' policy - what they called 'consolidation'.

The left wing, the left of the Socialist party and its allies, put forward a policy of 'advance without compromise'; to push forward to socialism by mobilising

the workers. They were supported by the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) outside the government.

The workers had something to say about the situation. Against the hoarding of vital necessities, they organised local committees of supply and distribution to break the stranglehold of the black market. Popular Unity base committees were revitalised.

Peasants started to fight for control of the land by seizures of parts of big estates. Most important of all, when the bosses' strike started, workers in the industrial zones - the *cordones industriales* - set up factory and area committees of resistance.

The factory and neighbourhood committees constituted embryonic organisations of workers power; the workers were beginning to take power into their own hands. Popular power was emerging in Chile.

Opposed to mass action

But the Popular Unity government opposed the self-organisation of the masses. As the bosses' strike developed, the government denounced the *cordones industriales* as illegal.

Instead of mobilising the masses, intervening to support the actions of the workers themselves, Popular Unity called in the army to break the strike.

Trade union leaders toured the factories telling the workers to rely on 'legality'; to leave things to the government.

Throughout the period of Popular Unity government the armed forces and the capitalist state remained intact. No attempt was made win rank-and-file soldiers to the side of the government.

This revealed the whole paradox of Popular Unity; in the name of the working class and socialism it had captured the government. But the bourgeois state and its apparatus of repression stayed intact.

The army remained the final guarantor of the position of the right wing and the bourgeoisie.

At the beginning of 1973 pressure from the right wing built up. Middle class students from the Catholic University demonstrated against the government. The whole of the bourgeoisie clamoured for the army to intervene and overthrow the 'Marxist' government.

The military carried out hundreds of raids on factories, left wing offices, shanty towns, union offices and workers homes 'looking for guns'.

On 29 June 1973 the Second Armoured Division led by Colonel Robert Souper attempted a coup. But only a small part of the armed forces joined him. Troops loyal to Allende easily defeated the coup, as thousands of workers mobilised on the streets. Popular Unity committees decided to distribute arms to the workers.

That evening over a million workers marched to the Moneda Palace. As Allende urged caution on the crowd they shouted 'execute the plotter, hit the reactionaries hard, arm the workers'.

Last chance

For Allende and his government this was the last chance. The defeated coup put the right wing on the defensive. The workers were infuriated. They wanted guns. During the day they had occupied their factories and wanted to keep them. It was a decisive moment.

But Allende and Popular Unity, instead of mobilising the workers and crushing the right wing, decided that further concessions were the only way out.

Allende invited a wide range of right-wing figures to join his cabinet, in particular Christian democrats. On August 10 he agreed that the military also join the government.

By these hasty and desperate concessions, Allende only signalled his weakness to the right. The military became convinced that they could easily overthrow him. On September 11 the blow was struck. Chile went into more than 15 years of the darkness of military dictatorship and brutal repression.

OUR HISTORY

Teach Tories fresh lesson on testing

By Roy Leach

THIS YEAR'S boycott by teachers of the SATs dealt a major (though not decisive) blow to the Tories' plans to introduce an education market place.

League tables of test results were to fuel competition between schools as parents exercised illusory choice between 'good' and 'bad' schools based upon the most unsophisticated (i.e. relatively cheap) of performance indicators.

The teachers' boycott, although driven by deep-rooted opposition to the Tories' education project, was presented in terms of workload in order to satisfy the anti-union laws as a genuine 'trade dispute'.

Fragile alliance

Differences between the unions – the NUT at least raising the educational arguments in contrast to the NASUWT's and moderate ATL's exclusive focus on workload – makes their alliance fragile in the extreme.

The challenge for the Tories was to make sufficient concessions to undermine union opposition whilst keeping their overall aims intact. This delicate task was entrusted to Sir Ron Dearing.

Sir Ron's interim report at the beginning of the summer



Cross-union unity can win

holiday reveals him to be a more sophisticated operator than his supposed master, John Patten.

Firstly, the time the SATs are expected to take has been reduced in all cases – for Key Stage 3 (14 year olds) from 12.5 hours to 6.75 hours and at Key Stage 1 'the overall time for testing of children of average attainment will be reduced by half'.

Secondly, the number of subjects to be assessed is also to be restricted to the core of science, maths and English for three years, thereby attempting to defuse the opposition of technology, geography, history, art, music and PE teachers whose subjects were to be 'fed in' from 1994 onwards.

Appealing directly to the concerns of overworked teachers, Sir Ron had said that there

will be no need to continue with the bureaucratic nightmare of 'tick lists' recording every element of pupils' achievement.

In addition to these 'workload' issues, he also proposes an investigation into the idea of 'value added' as an alternative to crude league tables.

Unfairness

Such an idea would appeal to many teachers and union bureaucrats who oppose the current SATs with their overt 'unfairness' and which fail to take into account the socio-economic background of students.

For socialists it is the very notion of league tabling which we are opposed to but there is a large slice of 'liberal opinion' which would buy the idea.

Along with these proposed changes to assessment, Sir Ron

proposes a number of changes to the National Curriculum itself. Here he has had to walk the tight-rope between rightwing clamouring for a 'return to basics' and the obvious overload of the curriculum the teachers and pupils experience everyday.

His formula of a greater concentration on 'the basic skill of reading, writing and number' ensuring 'some familiarity with basic information technology skills' whilst the 'statutory curriculum, with religious education, would be reduced to 80 - 85 per cent of teaching time (at Key Stage 2) leaves Sir Ron teetering in mid-air.

It remains to be seen upon which side he will fall: towards a more prescriptive national curriculum or one with greater choice for schools and pupils.

The Tories, having suffered a bloody nose over the SATs are no longer in the position of exercising their preferred option of simply extending the school day or year to incorporate all of their pet curriculum plus the 'peripherals' of drama, sociology etc.

Sick Patten

In 'response' to Sir Ron's interim report, Baroness Blatch, the Schools' Minister (deputising for her 'sick' superior John Patten) accepted the recom-



Patten

mendations and made one significant addition:

'The Secretary of State will publish only national aggregate results of the assessments of 7 and 14 year olds, but those results will not be published school by school in performance tables. This will also apply to the results in 1993 (what results? – these were the boycotted tests!) GCSE results will continue to be published in school performance tables'.

League tables

Does this mean that the Tories have conceded defeat? Of course not. The decision to publish league tables of results for Key Stage 2 (the new 11-plus) from 1995 and the recent offensive over truancy tables show that, at best, the focus has shifted.

Teachers returning to work this term were met with a glossy brochure detailing the procedure for next year's SATs, despite the fact that Dearing recommended there be a period of review.

Socialist teachers (mostly organised within the NUT, which has the position that the boycott must continue) must force their unions to hold their boycott position whilst challenging the very notion of an education market and competition.

Solidarity with Colombian telecom workers

By Chris Brooks

In Colombia, human rights are violated every day: political murders, 'disappearances', mass executions, military involvement in every aspect of daily life, death squads etc. Since 1978, 235,236 people have been killed.

Since 1956 the Liberals and Christian Democrats have taken turns to have the presidency operating this arrangement to stay in power.

The present Liberal government of President Cesar Gaviria follows the instructions of the IMF and the World Bank as did his predecessor Virgilio Barco who admitted himself that 50 per cent of the population lived in

absolute poverty as a consequence.

Some sectors have benefited enormously. In the '93-'94 budget the army received increased funding and personnel. At the same time in the multinational owned horticultural industry thousands of women and young people are forced to work on very low wages, often in inhuman conditions.

Short contracts

The majority are taken on with renewable three month contracts making them totally at the mercy of their employers. Those who join a trade union are immediately dismissed.

When workers try to fight back the governments' reaction is swift and brutal. The workers in the telecommunications industry declared a strike against

government privatisation attempts and were immediately arrested and jailed.

Officially they were accused of disrupting production, a charge which the government equates with terrorism. 14 workers from ATT Telecom have now been locked up for 160 days in the 'El Modalo' prison in Bogota.

Their families are in serious financial trouble as they no longer have any income and Colombia has no unemployment insurance or social security system.

The Gaviria government has adopted an anti-terrorist decree to combat drug trafficking and everyday street violence and recently it has become obvious that this new law is being used to prevent any form of social protest.



Colombian telecom workers will visit Britain later this month

ers and the unions in the telecommunications industry are demanding the immediate release of the telecom workers.

They have appealed for unions internationally to put pressure on the Colombian government.

This appeal – condemns the criminalisation of social protest; demands an end to the repression of the Labour Movement; demands freedom of speech and freedom to organise; denounces human rights violations and condemns the right wing regimes of Latin America and demands an end to their support.

Copies of the appeal are available from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Social struggles are classified as terrorist activity and criminalised. It is an attempt to destroy the whole of the Labour Movement.

Assassinations

The consequences of these policies are clear: many trade union leaders have been arrested or assassinated. Additionally there has been a spectacular fall in the level of unionisation – 9 per cent today as against 23 per cent in 1982.

A committee representing the families of the imprisoned work-

What's HAPPENING

WANT YOUR event included?
Send details by **September 24** to **What's Happening?**, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

SEPTEMBER Wednesday 15

Feminists Against Censorship meeting 7.30pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1

Thursday 16

London Health UNISON day of action

Joy Gardner Campaign public meeting 8pm African Caribbean Cultural Centre 8 Clarendon Rd N8

Monday 20

Lift sanctions against Iraq! weekly picket 5.30pm Foreign Office King St SW1 details 071 607 2303

Liberation now! editorial meeting 6pm London details PO Box 1109 London N4 2UU

Wednesday 22

No Nazis in Hounslow! 7pm weekly details 081 572 8656

Scottish National Party conference opens Dunoon

Friday 24

Lobby FBU-Employer talks Fire Brigade HQ Albert Embankment

Saturday 25

Middlebrook Mushrooms demonstration through Doncaster meet 11am College Road

FBU recall conference

Sunday 26

CLPD fringe meeting 10m Corn Exchange Brighton SOCIALIST Campaign Group supporters network fringe meeting 7.30pm Royal Albion Hotel Old Steine Brighton £1/50p

Monday 27

Secrecy and the arms trade CAAT fringe meeting 1pm Old Ship Hotel Kings Road Brighton

Nobby Clarke memorial lecture by Dennis Skinner 7pm Brighthelm Brighton

Troops Out Movement/Friends of Brighton LP disco at the Concorde Brighton

ARA fringe meeting 7pm Bedford Hotel Kings Road Brighton

Tuesday 28

Troops Out Movement fringe meeting with Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Billy Etherington Concorde Brighton

Wednesday 29

BIRMINGHAM Socialist Outlook public meeting on Bosnia with Geoff Ryan 7.30pm Trade Union and Labour Club Pershore Road Selly Park

Tibet vigil 6pm-8pm weekly Chinese Embassy Portland Place W1 Oxford Circus tube

Thursday 30

Drop changes against anti-racists! 9am Gravesend Magistrates Court

Bosnia's Murders Brighton Socialist Outlook meeting with Geoff Ryan 6.30pm Cranbourne Arms, Cranbourne St off West St Supported by Brighton Worker's Aid

Angola Emergency Campaign public meeting 7pm Friends Meeting House NW1 details 071 387 7966

OCTOBER

Saturday 2

Save our student unions picket of Tory party conference

Sunday 3

People's March against the Tories leaves Bradford noon

Liberation now! planning meeting 1pm London details PO Box 1109 London N4 2UU

EVENING for Mordechai Vanunu with Harold Pinter, Julie Christie 7.30pm Hackney Empire E8 details 071 387 5096

Friday 8

People's March against the



Workers' walk-out at Hammersmith Town Hall in protest at compulsory redundancies

Tories arrives 11.30am Bonny St Blackpool

Saturday 9

Mass picket Revel & George Cow Lane off Oldfield Road Salford FIGHTING the employers' offensive conference sponsored by Oxfordshire Trades Councils 10am-5pm Ruskin College Walton Street Oxford £2/£1

CITIZENS' income and the left Socialist Society conference 10am-5pm SOAS Thornhaugh Street WC1 £4.50/£2

Saturday 16

CLOSE down BNP HQ! National demonstration called by ANL, YRE, Rolan Adams & Rohit Duggal Family Campaigns 1pm Winns Common Plumstead SE18

ARA national demonstration central London

Green Party conference

opens Hastings

Saturday 23

Mass demonstration Harvest Print Park Lane Macclesfield

RED-GREEN Network day-school 10am-5pm Vaughan College St. Nicholas Circle Leicester details 0533 556369

Thursday 28

Plaid Cymru conference opens Caerdydd

Saturday 30

Campaign Against Militarism conference Aston University Birmingham

NAC Annual Conference

Sat 30 & Sun 31

Workers' Aid to Bosnia conference Manchester Town Hall

SOCIALIST Conference

Chesterfield, freephone 0800 581611

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 3

Save our student unions! Demonstrate Manchester

Friday 5

Civil service-wide strike against market testing

Thursday 11

UNISON national demonstration against attacks on the NHS

Saturday 20

Campaign Against Double Punishment conference Cheetham Community School Halliwell Lane Manchester

Peace Education Conference 10.30am-4.30pm Friends House Euston Road London tickets £8/£3

HOME NEWS

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Socialist OUTLOOK

New Bantustans solve nothing

Intifadah betrayed



Arafat: petit-bourgeois nationalist

FOR SIX years the Palestinians have been waging an heroic uprising, the Intifadah, in the occupied territories. More than 1500 people have been gunned down by Israeli soldiers in that time. And after all this, after decades of struggle for Palestinian self-determination, the PLO leadership group around Yasser Arafat intends to make peace with Israel in return for almost nothing.

The new peace plan is not a 'breakthrough'. The outlines of the plan are 20 years old, and for most of that time utterly rejected not only by the left, but by the majority of Palestinian opinion.

The plan is for two tiny 'Bantustans' under direct Israeli surveillance. The PLO fighters will police them for the Israelis. There is no guarantee even of a Palestinian statelet, on Gaza and the whole of the West Bank, being the end-result.

'Limited autonomy' around Jericho and Gaza is not even self-rule in these two tiny areas. It does not even amount to a state-in-formation.

Most Palestinians live *outside* the territories occupied in the 1967 war. What of their future?



Plans like these have been repeatedly rejected by the mass of Palestinian opinion

Of the hundreds of thousands in refugee camps in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon? Where will they go? What about the 13,000 political prisoners held by Israel in appalling conditions? When will they be released?

The Arafat-Rabin deal is opposed not just by the Islamic forces, but by all the more militant forces in the PLO; it has been rejected out of hand by the Popular Front and the Democratic Front. No wonder Arafat conducted his negotiations in secret.

In the end the plan will not work. The Palestinian struggle cannot be stifled by Arafat's bureaucratic manipulation of the PLO leadership structures, or a deal which leaves the oppression of the Palestinian people intact.

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