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Socialist OUTLOOK

It's got to be
the limit!

March
to stop
Tory

education cuts

30

THE ANGER is building again over cuts in education just a few weeks into term, as parents, teachers and school students survey the damage done by last year's cutbacks.

The mood is building for the national demonstration against cuts in schools, called by Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) on September 30.

Thousands of teaching posts and thousands more support staff have been axed over the summer - many of them through 'voluntary' severance, early retirement, 'natural wastage' or the non-renewal of short-term contracts.

However they went, the loss of

these staff has pushed up class sizes in schools across the country.

But there is worse to come. Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is searching for yet more spending cuts to finance budget tax hand-outs. Even Education Secretary Gillian Shephard is warning her colleagues that the Tories are not spending enough to sustain standards in education.

Class sizes

Every further cut will mean more teachers will be lost, and class sizes will increase. More than a million children are now being taught in classes of over 30.

But angry parents, governors

and teachers are beginning to fight back and organise for September 30.

In Oxfordshire a county-wide 'council of war' to link local campaigns and coordinate action for a new school year attracted over 75 enthusiastic representatives, and a 150-strong conference of secondary school head teachers and governors gave a standing ovation to FACE National Chair Sue Lister, who spelled out the determination to fight on.

Ten coaches (including one sponsored by a local UNISON branch) are already booked from Oxfordshire for September 30.

Groups of students and school students are organising contin-

gents for the march, which has been backed by UNISON, the GMB, the NASUW and many branches of the NUT.

No cuts

The FACE demands are simple: halt and reverse the cuts, and no classes larger than 30. Governing bodies are again urged to refuse to make cuts, and to draw up instead budgets based on the educational needs of their schools.

This fightback could be a focal point of anger against the Tories, and key to the next election.

Be there on September 30 - and bring your banners!

**FACE demo
LONDON
SATURDAY
September**

30

**Assemble 12.30,
Embankment
March to Hyde Park**

What we think

TUC's Monks in apparent switch of habits

Blair sets collision course with unions

DESPERATE to attract attention to a Congress that threatened to become a low-profile side-show, TUC General Secretary John Monks dressed up himself unconvincingly in the mantle of militancy.

To the delight of the media, and the surprise of most trade unionists, he used an article in the ASLEF journal to declare himself a 'unapologetic militant'.

In most un-TUC type language he argued that the tide has turned against the Tories, he proclaimed. "Bosses have been lining their own pockets with scant regard to the wider interest, and some need to be challenged. Militancy reminds us not to be complacent ... so some of this militancy is to be welcomed."

The words themselves betray Monks's limited political horizons; but for a TUC General Secretary to do anything other than denounce militancy is so unusual we should notice the change of tone

rather than the continuing illusions that somehow the bosses should be expected to respect the needs and interests of the workers they exploit.

"If workers are treated badly, they will react," Monks went on. Of course partly he was pointing to the increased number of successful strike ballots, most notably among rail and tube workers: but his speech is if anything a warning to Labour's right wing leadership that the full fury of years of frustration by workers beaten down by employers since 1979 could make itself felt once the Tories are removed from office.

Academic

Monks's militancy is largely of this academic and speculative kind. Although he may, hypothetically, be 'counted among the militants' at some time in the future, he is not militant *now* – opposing any fight for a specific minimum wage figure, and joining the efforts to gag TUC unions

demanding a much bolder Labour commitment to uphold union rights at work.

Monks, in alliance with virtually all the main unions, took a hard line against the National Union of Journalists, and upheld Tony Blair's conservative line that the legal right of union recognition would be extended only to 'bargaining units' where a union had more than 50 percent membership.

The fact that this could subsequently be used by employers in many workplaces (notably most NHS Trusts) as a pretext to *withdraw* recognition of unions falling below the 50 percent mark was brushed aside by unions, including the TGWU, which could find themselves drastically undermined.

The NUJ, whose bargaining power has been hammered by a systematic employers' campaign of derecognition, argued that recognition should automatically be guaranteed to any group of workers who wish to



Andrew Ward



'Don't start a fight with the unions, Tony, they're harder than you think.'

be represented by a union.

But attempts by NUJ General Secretary John Foster to organise support around this demand found no support even from 'left'-led unions. TGWU leader Bill Morris claimed the proposal might 'undermine union stability'!

This year's TUC has also taken a far from militant line on demanding repeal of other anti-union laws, and rejected the call from the bakers' and miners' unions to refuse to cooperate with laws which deny union members' democratic rights.

It did endorse a limited call for the legalisation of 'solidarity' strikes, but making it clear that this meant strikes against the same employer, not industrial workers striking in support of nurses.

At each stage, when it has come to the crunch, the limits of TUC policy have been set

not by the needs or militancy of union members, but by the willingness or otherwise of Tony Blair's right wing Labour leadership to accept the policies on offer.

But while union leaders are supposed to jump through hoops to show the unions' commitment and subservience to Blair, Labour's leaders go to ever greater lengths to put 'clear blue water' between their party and the unions.

The leaked documents from Blair's office published at the start of the TUC Congress underline the unmistakable trajectory of Labour's leadership towards a complete severing of links with the unions. This was further highlighted by his speech to the Congress, in which, as Arthur Scargill summed up, he came 'to tell us to get stuffed': Blair made one categorical pledge:

"There will be no repeal of all Tory trade union laws. Strike ballots are here to stay. No mass or flying pickets, all these ghosts of time past. They are excoriated. Leave them where they lie ..."

No doubt delighted to have heard Monks, Morris and other top union leaders energetically denying that the unions wanted to run the country under Labour, or even had any policies to promote, Blair spelled out quite clearly that while he is in charge Labour will pay no more attention to the unions than they will to the employers:

"We have an obligation to listen, as we do to employers. You have the right to persuade, as they do. But the decisions must rest with us. We will govern for the whole nation – not any vested interest within it."

Of course the powers of persuasion are not equally distributed between workers and bosses. The class that

owns the media, the banks and big industry can be confident that – day to day and in the longer-term shaping of policy – they will have more influence on a rootless Labour government than union members fighting for jobs and wages.

The fact that Blair received an unusually less-than-unanimous standing ovation after his deliberately insulting speech should sound the alarm bells. The TUC Congress is far from the most radical gathering of union activists – yet even here sections are beginning to get restless and reject the line that every policy and principle must be sacrificed to get the Tories out.

Offensive

Unions that bankroll and look to Labour to fight politically on their behalf will be propelled by their members into the leading edge of the offensive against the inevitably right wing policies of a new Labour government.

Nobody need hold their breath waiting for Comrade Monks to lead the militant charge: but the seeds of conflict are being sown with every speech and policy emerging from Blair's office.

While Blair prepares for a government that will make no bones about serving the interests of capitalism, it's time for union activists to organise genuinely broad left alliances that will press home the fight.

Unions still have a crucial voice at Labour conference: instead of buttoning their lips and hoping for the best after the next election, union leaders like UNISON's Rodney Bickerstaffe, Bill Morris, John Edmonds and others who like to be seen as left wing must be called upon to fight up front and openly for their unions' policies.

Blair in 'no policies' shock

IT WAS the biggest leak since the Titanic went down: or was it?

The revelation that one of the key members of Tony Blair's unelected 'kitchen cabinet', Philip Gould, was in favour of concentrating even more dictatorial power in the hands of the leader and his office was scarcely a surprise.

Nor, for anyone who has been searching in vain for any sign of radicalism or genuine commitment to the side of the working class from the Blair team, will it be a shock to discover that Labour "does not have a political project that matches the Thatcher agenda of 1979, nor one that will be able to sustain Labour in government and transform Britain".

Socialists have been saying this for years – since the rise of 'new realism' in the mid 1980s.

Indeed Blair's main task has been to follow through the onslaught of the Kinnock years, and purge the party of any lingering remnants of such a project – by scrapping anything vaguely reminiscent of a socialist policy, culminating in the ditching of Clause Four.

Having shaped a political profile primarily decided by fear of the media and toadying to the Tories' reactionary agenda, it is obvious to all that Blair's team lacks conviction, coherence and any sense of determination to confront the evils of market capitalism.

It thrives largely on the back of the unpopularity of the Tories and the very mar-

ket system to which New Labour has so shamefully capitulated.

Blair has ambushed Labour, exploiting the desperation of many members to win the next election.

He has won acquiescence, and the party has recruited new members, some of whom are now joining because they believe the party is *not* socialist. But he has not convinced many activists to go out and preach his new policies – not least because there is not much to proclaim.

The narrow coterie of SDP drop-outs, superannuated students and middle class manipulators who now surround Tony Blair fear nothing more than the prospect of their policies and proposals being scrutinised and criticised by the wider la-

bour movement, with whom they have nothing in common.

Much better for them is a scheme by which each of their policy retreats can be simply funnelled directly through to Blair, and released to the press without the embarrassment of any votes or wider debate – the way the party abruptly changed its mind on opted-out schools.

The real question is how much further are trade union leaders, MPs and Labour activists prepared to allow themselves to be humiliated by Blair's clique of rootless dilettantes before challenging the new regime?

Will Philip Gould, co-architect of two electoral failures under Neil Kinnock, be allowed to go for the hat-trick?

Battle lines drawn

FLASHPOINTS of what threatens to be a remarkably dull Labour conference, with the left still reeling from the Clause Four defeat, will centre on issues where it is possible Blair's leadership could be overturned by a combination of CLP and union votes.

This in itself is likely to be the subject of further debate, with moves before the conference to reduce the union block vote to 50 percent – and the implicit ambition of Blair and co. to reduce it still further as they cut the Party's links with the unions.

On policies, the most likely setback for Blair is on the minimum wage, with strong CLP support for naming an hourly figure of £4 or above.

But there could also be a revolt over the Party's feeble policy statement on Education and the leadership's failure to side unambiguously with the parents, governors, teachers and students fighting Tory cuts. A FACE fringe meeting will seek to galvanise delegates into action.

And there are numerous resolutions which go well beyond the timid line of Blair and Jack Straw in opposing racist immigration laws and state racism, including a motion calling for the closure of the notorious Campsfield immigration prison.

Labour's policy for the National Health Service, which effectively accepts the Tory market reforms complete with NHS Trusts and the imposition of a purchaser-provider split, could also prove controversial.

Life on the Party fringes

Key fringe meetings for the left will include:

- Socialist Policies for a Labour Government – Monday, 7.00pm.
- Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights – Tuesday 6.00pm
- Campaign Group Rally – Tuesday 7.00pm
- NHS campaigns – Wednesday, 6.00pm
- FACE – Wednesday, 9.00pm
- Socialist Campaign Group Network – Thursday, 7.00pm.

Details of speakers and venues, with a day-to-day guide to debates and events will be published in the Daily Bulletin of the Socialist Campaign Group Network.

Learn lessons on education fight!

By Harry Sloan

THE TORIES know they are exposed and on the run; the public, led by precisely the normally conservative layers of 'Middle England' which Tony Blair appears obsessed with courting, is demanding radical action; but Education remains yet another missed opportunity for New Labour and its blundering spokesperson David Blunkett.

Anger at this failure, and at the fiasco over school opt-outs, in which Tony Blair single-handedly revised party policy after deciding to send his son to an opted out school, could make education another of the flashpoints of this year's conference. Indeed Blair's ride would probably be even harder if the teaching unions were affiliated to the Labour Party and able to argue their views directly at conference.

The campaigns to defend education are almost nowhere led by Labour activists: instead it has been left up to parents, governors and teaching unions to lead the fight on what should be a vote-winner for Labour.

Why is this? Gillian Shephard's leaked memorandum was not far of the mark when she summed up the total

confusion created in Labour's ranks by Tony Blair's cowardly and conservative leadership:

"Labour is hopelessly confused and divided. 'Foundation schools' are all to get 90 percent funding. This is abolition of GM by the back door, while paying lip service to them because of the position of Blair and others. They have no real policy on Higher or Further Education: their thinking stops at 16."

Shephard cynically distinguishes between 'New Labour' which seeks to maintain Tory policies, 'Old Labour' which does not support Tory policies but is confused, and 'Labour in power in Town Halls', which she claims is 'still promoting left wing policies'.

Of course Shephard's words were written before her own policy backyard was fouled by John Major, who has blundered in Blair-style, blurring out a series of new



Demonstrations against education cuts are starting again: but where is Labour?

proposals for encouraging more schools to join the tiny handful that have so far taken the proffered bribes to opt out and seek Grant Maintained status.

But it is clear that Labour policy is a total shambles.

As long as 'New Labour'

continues to dodge any kind of commitment to spend more money on education and reverse the Tory cuts, and holds back from the necessary offensive against the Tories' two-tier system, the party will be fighting at a disadvantage.

A classic example was the

Oxfordshire conference of head teachers and governors from secondary schools throughout the county, opposing cuts: all three political parties were invited to send a speaker – but only the Liberal Democrat turned up.

A backlash from delegates at this year's Labour conference is needed to pre-empt an even more vigorous backlash from voters.

On present form seem likely to face a new round of cuts administered by Labour-led councils, helped locally by Liberal Democrats, whose party nationally has been the only one willing to commit itself to raise taxes to spend more on schools.

"On education, Labour maintains a lead over us of about 30 percent compared with 20 percent a year ago. There is a perception that schools are under-funded and peace in the classroom is threatened. ...
"There are areas where we are politically exposed: the need to improve standards must not be overshadowed by arguments about the mechanics through which education is delivered.
**"Insufficient resources now threaten the provision of education in the state school sector, including GM schools."
 (Education and Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard)**

Straw's war on poor

By Terry Conway

THE COMMENTS from Shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw on how Labour would deal with "aggressive begging" and "squeegee merchants" is the latest in a long line of attempts by Labour politicians to steal the Tories' political clothes and outdo their attacks on the homeless and unemployed.

Neither on Straw's speech, nor in Labour's policy papers on housing are the causes of rising homelessness analysed, never mind addressed.

Labour's role in government is to apply a few sticking plasters over the worst signs of decay in society – in case such unpleasantness offends those Labour's front bench wants to woo.

Blair's New Labour is interested in home owners and potential home-owners – not in those it sees as a lost cause, whose feelings and rights it is quite happy to trample upon.

Straw's 'answers' combine the carrot and the stick: the



Following Tories: Straw

carrot to save the liberal conscience of his middle class audience and the stick to pander and feed the fears of decay and lawlessness among these very same groups.

At first glance the carrot seems something that should be welcomed – the idea of opening more 'wet' hostels – where clients are allowed to drink.

Better

Certainly socialists should be arguing for more and better hostel provision, and should fight strongly for the right of those living in hostels to take as much control over their

lives as possible: this includes having the right to drink openly.

But we also have to go beyond this and demand the right for permanent, secure, cheap housing for all – not assume that there is a category of people (the homeless) who are fundamentally different from the rest of us, and for whom second-class accommodation will do.

The big stick of increased police powers to keep 'these people' off the streets is a familiar continuation of Labour's right wing law and order theme.

Similar policies applied in the USA have led to a massive increase in imprisonment – and a jail population of more than 1.5 million.

Jack Straw clearly does not agree with *The Big Issue*, which points out that the streets belong both to the housed and the unhoused.

It used to be Tory MPs who had to be challenged to try living and surviving on benefit: but Straw and his Labour colleagues clearly have no more idea than the Tories of the misery of being unemployed or homeless, let alone both.

Ernest Mandel Memorial Rally

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED INCLUDE:

Tariq Ali, Alain Krivine, Robin Blackburn, Charlie van Gelderen, Mildred Gordon MP, Jeanette Habel, Duncan Hallas, Alan Thornett

7pm Friday 13 October

NOTE NEW VENUE:

Conference Centre, Congress House, Great Russell St. WC1

Doors: 6.30pm for start at 7.00pm sharp. Tickets: £3 from 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

International Symposium

Saturday 14 October

1.00pm-6.00pm ULU, Malet Street, London WC1. Includes first showing of Tariq Ali's biographical film of Ernest Mandel. Tickets £7 (£3.50 UB40/MUS). For more details, 'phone: 0181 800 7460.

LABOUR '95

£4.15 per hour: make it the minimum!

By Harry Sloan

How low can you go? That must be the question as Labour's leadership claims a commitment to a minimum wage, but refuses to name a figure.

The issue could prove the focus of the biggest challenge to Tony Blair's leadership at this year's Brighton conference.

It is an issue which finds grassroots support in the constituency parties as well as backing from trade unionists and union leaders. As a poll commissioned for one of the civil service unions has discovered, a specific pledge to a minimum wage of £4.15 per hour would also be popular, a vote winner for Labour.

In a squalid deal, the biggest unions – led by the GMB and TGWU – sliced off 15p, cutting the target to £4 as a

futile gesture to Blair.

But there can be no real unity on the issue, because the minimum wage requires legislation by a Labour government, and it is well known that Blair is opposed to naming any figure in advance of the next general election.

Open door

As the employers and Tory leaders step up their propaganda, asserting without any proof that a minimum fixed as low as £4.15 figure could result in the loss of 'up to two million jobs', it is clear that as far as Labour's right wing leaders are concerned the bosses are pushing at an open door: the argument is not contested.

Instead Blair, claiming to arbitrate 'fairly' between the competing class interests of capital and labour, is searching for a figure which will seem like an increase while

causing minimal disturbances with low-paying employers.

In fact New Labour more or less openly agrees with bosses of firms like textile giant Claremont Garments, manufacturers for Marks and Spencer, who warn that to increase their lowest rates from £3 to £4 per hour might hurt them.

While Blair's team is eager to take its distance from the unions, it has nothing but respect for the profitability of the employers. This is why Blair has already explained that he would only fix a minimum rate after fully consulting firms like Claremont, who are doing very nicely from paying sweatshop wages, with profits up 10 percent this year.

No doubt Blair is also grateful to the right wing leaders of the engineers' and electricians' union, who declared that if the minimum wage was raised to £4.15, then their members



GMB's Edmonds: £4 an hour would hardly keep him in pies!

might demand increases to 'restore differentials'.

Such bravado should be taken with a pinch of salt. The AEEU has shown no willingness so far to fight for the living standards of its skilled members.

Gap

The reality is that sixteen years of Tory rule have seen the employers on the rampage, widening the gap between the lowest-paid and the top earners, casualising much of the workforce, and paying millions of workers at poverty levels, subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of £2.4 billion a year in social security income support payments.

Panicked Tube chiefs get tough

By an RMT member

BOSSSES at London Underground Limited have decided to play hard ball.

As we go to press they are taking legal action against the rail union RMT, and have written to all 2,000 who supported the last one-day strike threatening disciplinary action.

The Tories have told LUL chiefs that *their jobs are on the line unless they can sort us out. Hence all the management threats, intimidation, and mutterings about privatisation.*

Well, it's nice to see them panic. Our strikes are going ahead.

Other unions

We need to step up the fight by involving more members of other unions.

If we are knocked back, LUL will not only have beaten the workforce in a straight fight, but they will have forced in a series of productivity and privatisation measures – in particular the introduction of part time workers on trains, more 'flexible working' on the stations, privatisation of engineering staff and line by line productivity plans – which would undermine us in the future.

Our bosses are never going to stop attacking our working conditions and settle down to run a railway. They are paid to reduce the subsidy and privatise, not run a service.

So far we're doing well. By organising teams of militant activists through the RMT's London Transport District Council, with constant supplies of class conscious leaflets, we're keeping ahead of the game. But the struggle is of course political as well as industrial: management are merely Tory puppets.

Dinosaur

The Tory media pump out the line that 'dinosaur' Jimmy Knapp is leading misguided but greedy workers in a fight for extra cash. But we're fighting over working conditions, and we're not led by Knapp, we're doing it ourselves.

Most ASLEF members – despite the do-nothing line of their leaders – want to support the strike and respect our picket lines. It is to forestall any such unity that management have issued their sacking threat.

NHS pay deal: UNISON 'wins' the worst of all worlds

AFTER MONTHS of half-hearted campaigning, procrastination and back-peddling, the biggest health union, UNISON has eventually signed a sell-out deal on NHS pay.

Gone without trace is the union's original 8.5 percent claim. Gone, too is the principle that was the real sticking point of the whole campaign leading up to a ballot vote for strike action: the defence of national pay against the imposition of local pay bargaining.

The new deal agreed by UNISON combines the worst aspects of local pay bargaining with the pretence of a national deal. In a highly complex arrangement, which has baffled activists (and requires diagrams to explain it to managers in the

Health Service Journal), health unions would be left to negotiate pay locally on a Trust-by-Trust basis: but at the end of the year the level of settlements would be assessed, and those who had fallen behind would be brought up to the 'average'.

The problem remains that management would retain the whip hand. It is more than likely that Trust chiefs, squeezed by cash limits, could form a cartel committed to hold pay down to minimal if any increase – resulting in a minimal 'average' increase across the country.

The Tory objective – of ending any national action on NHS pay – has been conceded. But without the possibility of national support, local strikes are also most unlikely. Few sections of health workers are strongly

enough organised and led to go it alone in a serious offensive on pay against their own Trust.

UNISON's desperation to do a deal – and avoid calling strike action from what appears to have been a very weak mandate – was no doubt received with relief by most other health unions, few of which had any real appetite for a fight.

And it has delighted the scabs of the Royal College of Nursing, who will now posture as the main opponents of local pay bargaining.

With UNISON's health sector conference due to open later this month in Blackpool it remains to be seen whether the undoubted anger of a layer of activists will be reflected in emergency resolutions and conflict with the platform.

Social workers strike on

RESIDENTIAL social workers in Liverpool are now in their sixth week of indefinite official strike action against the City council's attempts to rip up national agreements and casualise the service.

The Labour-run council argues that Tory cuts are forcing them to cut the social services budget. But their plan to end 'sleep in' payments for some residential

social workers would only save around £300,000 – less than the cost of the 3 new limousines the council has just bought!

National pay

The dispute is not just about the pay of 300 residential workers in Liverpool: if this Labour council succeeded in undermining national pay agreements, then the pay and conditions of

every local government worker would be under threat.

The strikers are appealing for resolutions of support to put pressure on Liverpool council, donations to the strike fund, and support on their demonstration through the city on September 23.

Donations and messages to RSW strike committee, Liverpool City UNISON, 4th Floor, 8, Victoria St, Liverpool L2 6QJ. Tel 0151- 227-3962.

CPSA Job Centre staff strike ballot

By a Job Centre worker

AS WE go to press thousands of CPSA members in the Employment Service are voting on strike action to pursue their pay claim.

The management offer is worth below the rate of inflation, and is entirely linked to performance. The union's claim was for 9 percent for all staff, regardless of performance, plus two hours off the working week with no loss of pay.

Management have already backed down once on pay this year. Chief Executive Mike Fogden described the original pay offer – which was even worse! – as 'generous'. But when CPSA members thought otherwise he came across another £4.5 million to make a revised offer. Maybe he found

it down the back of the settee?

If Job Centre workers strike, they will do so with the full support of their Broad Left-led Section Executive. Even notorious right-winger Barry Reamsbottom, CPSA General Secretary, has expressed support for a programme of industrial action.

Employment Service management have nothing but contempt for the CPSA members who deliver the service at the sharp end. While management peddle their falsehoods in glossy in-house newspapers and 'personal' letters from the Chief Executive, union members are not even allowed work time to meet and discuss the pay offer.

This year's ballot is a referendum on ES management. It's time for Job Centre workers to show they have had enough, and vote YES to a programme of industrial action.

RMT militant victimised

AN RMT member has been dismissed from Longsight British Rail depot for refusing to cross a picket line in the recent rail dispute.

A campaign for Chris Jones' reinstatement is being launched. The RMT is being requested

to hold a strike ballot over the issue.

Interestingly, the West Coast BR manager in charge of the affair is the same person who oversaw similar sackings at Manchester Piccadilly three years ago.

Contact the campaign at: Department 11, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1.

LABOUR/UNIONS

Satpal Ram wins appeal

By Pete Bloomer

AT LONG LAST! After nearly nine years of wrongful imprisonment, Satpal Ram has been granted an appeal.

Satpal was the victim of a violent racist attack and has been the victim of Britain's racist legal system since.

The granting of an appeal, to be heard at the Court of Appeal on 20 October, is an admission that there were serious errors in the original trial. Now the courts are endorsing what Satpal and his supporters have said all along - that Satpal's conviction and imprisonment are the result of a shameful mistrial. A key issue is that Satpal's barrister was negligent in failing to advise a plea of self-defence.

The appeal will also address the lack of interpreters for Bengali-speaking witnesses in the original trial which meant that the full facts of the case were never brought out in court. The judge acted as translator despite having no knowledge of the Bengali language.

• Contact the campaign on (0121) 507 1618, (0114) 235 2618 or (0171) 837 1450.

Free Oliver Campbell



Campbell's campaign, like many other anti-racist campaigns, is a sponsor of 7 October 'Demand Justice' march

By Mark Jasen

OLIVER CAMPBELL is a Black man with severe learning difficulties. He was convicted in December 1991 of murder and conspiracy to rob. He has been locked up since November 1990.

On 22nd July 1990 two Afro-Caribbean men attempted to rob a Hackney

off-licence, the shopkeeper was killed in the struggle.

Shortly after Oliver's arrest he stood in an ID parade. One witness who was only a few feet away from the gunman failed to pick anyone out from the parade.

Another witness, who had only a distant view of the robbery, failed to pick anyone out in December 1990 but changed his mind some 3 months later. The four witnesses to the murder and

the escape placed the height of the man the Police claim was Oliver at between 5'8" and 5'11", whereas Oliver is 6'4".

After an initial interview with a social worker and a solicitor present, the police said that they would inform the solicitor of any subsequent interviews. They did not, rather they obtained a written statement from Oliver's foster mother saying that a solicitor would not be

necessary. It was after several of these following interviews that Oliver "confessed".

At his trial, Oliver pleaded not guilty to both charges, and has maintained his innocence ever since. The judge ruled that rules against evidence based largely upon confessional evidence of a person with a mental disability did not apply to Oliver's case, nor was there an issue of the interviews being oppressive or made in circumstances likely to render them unreliable.

'Evidence'

Other "evidence" against Oliver is based on the fact that Oliver brought a baseball cap similar to one found near the scene of the crime, which he says was stolen from him near the Hippodrome nightclub.

There is no forensic evidence to suggest the cap near the scene of the crime was Oliver's, nor is there any other forensic evidence linking him to the crime.

The Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign is convinced that Oliver's case is yet another miscarriage of justice at the hands of the racist legal system.

Support this campaign

Affiliate to the Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign, PO Box 6580, London E6 3TL
Pass a resolution supporting the campaign in your trade union, Labour Party, student union or community organisation.
Send messages of support to Oliver Campbell, MV3344, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London, W12 0AE

Mobilise for 28 October TUC national anti-racist demonstration

Unite against racism

By Simon Deville

THE LAST FEW months have been marked by a significant increase in racism from the state.

The launch of "Operation

Eagle Eye" has given the green light for police to step up their repression and intimidation of black communities.

Alongside this offensive the Tories are planning to open up a second front against black people, with even

tighter immigration controls. It is almost certain that a further tightening of immigration law will be proposed at this year's Tory Party conference.

Proposals have been floated to increase restrictions on the right to appeal and speed up deportations, to reduce benefits to asylum seekers, and to introduce "internal" immigration checks which will mean all black people will be suspected of being "illegal immigrants" and will have to prove their immigration status before they can gain access to health care, education, employment, housing, social security benefits and any other areas the government may dream up. Clearly, prisons for immigrants like Campsfield are set to swell.

The response of the Labour Party leadership has been to place themselves quite clearly on the side of the racists. Rather than to oppose this racist onslaught for what it is, Labour has simply tried to outdo the Tories in being the

"party of law and order". Jack Straw's new proposals will inevitably mean an increase of police repression on the poorest and most oppressed sections of society, particularly the inner city working class.

While the Labour leadership may occasionally point out that the Tories are playing the race card over their immigration policies, it hasn't stated precisely what in the Tory proposals it opposes, or how Labour policy will be any different.

It would be wrong to see these developments in isolation from other attacks on the working class.

State attacks

The state aims to smash the post war gains of the working class, most significantly with massive cuts in social spending. Whipping up racism will enable the state to divide and thus weaken the working class.

The actual reduction in social spending from excluding

asylum seekers is completely negligible, but its importance for the state is the ideological impact and, therefore the much wider cuts the government will be able to make in the future.

It is precisely for this reason that the anti-racist movement and the labour movement must provide a militant, united opposition to this offensive.

Divisions within the anti-racist movement have allowed the government to get away with its racist policies so far, and allowed the Labour leadership to get away with showing little opposition to the Tories. The failure of the national anti-racist organisations and the labour movement to fight around common areas of agreement has left individual campaigns to fend for themselves.

Next month there are a number of initiatives that can provide the basis for starting to build the much needed unity within the movement. On October 7 the Justice Demo will march from the no-

torious Stoke Newington Police Station to Tottenham Police Station.

The following week the National Network against Deportations and Detentions will be demonstrating outside the Tory Party Conference on the day of any announcement of proposed new racist legislation, together with a day of action on Saturday 14, including a picket at Downing Street, and local actions across the country. On October 28, the TUC is calling a national Unite Against Racism demo in Manchester.

These initiatives cannot be left as one-off events, but must be used to build an ongoing campaign of united action against racism.

The TUC must use this demo as a first step towards uniting the existing anti-racist movement around the needs of the black community. It must place an uncompromising anti-racist agenda at the head of the labour movement. Only a unified response can offer a serious challenge to state racism.

New book special offer

Ending the Nightmare

Includes Ernest Mandel's previously unpublished *Learn the lessons of Germany*

This timely volume traces the development of racism and fascism in Europe, from the first fascist movement of the 1920s through to the right wing gang and state racism of Fortress Europe. The 128-page book is available post free in Britain and Ireland for the cost of £5.00. Send cheques for £5.00 per book to Socialist Outlook Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2JU.

ANTI-RACISM

Down Peking road to Indonesia bloodbath

Thirty years ago a bungled coup in Indonesia by a small number of left-wing officers led President Sukarno and the army general staff to begin the savage and systematic slaughter of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The party had three million members and genuine mass support. Yet by the time the massacres had subsided hundreds of thousands of them had been slaughtered, thousands more imprisoned and the party all but destroyed as a political force. So many bodies were thrown into the rivers that they became a serious health problem. Piles of communist skulls were dumped in villages to set an example. **SIMON KENNEDY** looks at the background to the tragedy of the PKI.

THE *PARTAI Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) did not fail to take power because the conditions of Indonesian society were not suited to a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. They did not find themselves brutally massacred because their organisation was too weak.

The primary factor in the destruction of the party was its mistaken understanding of the strategic problems facing revolutionaries in "Third World" countries.

The mistakes proved fatal. Fundamental in the PKI's strategy was the idea of the "democratic national revolution". Their activity was directed towards critical support and close collaboration with all those forces who were in favour of this policy.

The movement for democratic revolution was therefore made up overwhelmingly of peasants and workers. But key to the PKI's strategy was the winning of those elements of the bourgeoisie who were opposed to imperialism and feudalism — the layers who were frustrated by "bureaucratic capitalism" and the role of foreign powers.

They believed that the advance to socialism had to go first through the stage of European-style modern capitalism. This analysis had long been the position of the "official" communist movement. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Communist Parties throughout the world pursued the model.

In South Africa, for example, it has provided the backbone of the SACP's analysis.

The basic idea underlying this model was that the revolution and role of workers' parties in underdeveloped countries must be "bourgeois-democratic" rather than socialist — it must establish modern capitalist and democratic states.

The problem with this scheme of development lies in

the nature economies and societies that come "late" to the world capitalist market.

The growth of capitalism in Indonesia was very unlike the route taken in Western Europe. This has been true of almost all the post-colonial states created this century. European capitalism did not grow up in a world already dominated by bigger powers.

The heritage of colonialism affected not just Indonesia's economic functioning, but also determined its internal class formation and politics.

The existence of a well-developed state, and its capacity to shape the economy at the onset on capitalism is unique to countries that are introduced to capitalism by colonial powers. This state bureaucracy usually plays a large part in politics.

The western European route involved a long struggle against feudalism and its political arrangements, conducted by a revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The PKI's application of the line of cross-class alliances led it to make a central alliance with nationalist forces — mainly the PNI and the charismatic Sukarno. They believed this alliance expressed the interests of the "national bourgeoisie" and could become the basis of a struggle against imperialism and domestic feudalist landlords.

Indonesia's President Suharto on September 8 1995 dismissed calls for opposition parties to be officially recognised, saying the move would be "inconsistent with the state's ideology and constitution".

The PKI's huge party machine was put to work in backing Sukarno.

In the 1955 elections they won 16.4 per cent of the vote and in 1965 probably enjoyed the support of half the popu-



Even now the brutal Indonesian regime is holding political prisoners from 1965

lation.

Yet the national bourgeoisie did not come to play anything like the role the PKI had written for it.

Indonesia's economy was quickly hit by economic crisis caused by the moves against the colonial economy. In this crisis the "national bourgeoisie", instead of struggling to re-build a non-dependent national economy, used the opportunities to enrich themselves in the state apparatus.

While the bureaucracy swelled to enormous proportions, no national economy was built. The integration and balance the PKI hoped for did not arrive.

Their belief that its alliance could seize control of a feeble state and use it as a tool to overcome the army, landlords and "bureaucratic capitalists" proved unfounded.

Instead of the workers driving out the Dutch and handing the factories to the anti-imperialist people's government, the army invariably proved the strongest force. Officers and their corrupt civilian subordinates came to have a large degree of control over the economy.

The elections of 1957 had made the PKI the biggest party in the country. The nationalists, while willing to let the party support them in office, saw its huge popular support as a threat.

The general election of 1959, where the PKI was sure to win a big victory, was cancelled after pressure from the army. It became increasingly clear that, in contradiction to the PKI's analysis, the nationalists had no interest in a genuine extension of popular sovereignty. They favoured instead what they politely

termed a "guided democracy".

Even while the government began to repress its party the PKI stuck to its "democratic national revolution" strategy.

The working class was directed to build an alliance with peasants against feudalism and a front with the "national bourgeoisie" in defence of democratic rights.

This front however, cut across the alliance with the peasantry because it included some of the very same "patriotic landlords" who were ex-

ploiting the poorer peasantry. The nationalists refused to allow the kind of peasant mobilisations needed to cement the worker-peasant alliance.

Moreover, the front placed the working class in an impossible position. The more they backed the nationalists, the more they had to back the new capitalism that was systematically eroding their living standards.

The small bourgeoisie in which the PKI had put its hopes turned out to be a lot less revolutionary than its plan had suggested. Because it was so hampered by the strength of imperialism, so politically weak and irresolute the "national bourgeoisie" failed to become the leadership the party had expected.

It was unable to establish the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist democratic reforms necessary to build a national economy. Its commitment to "bourgeois democracy" was insubstantial. And it was quite happy to come to a new deal with imperialism.

Contrary to both the Moscow and Peking line, it proved entirely possible to build a post-colonial capitalism with a repressive state and a domestic base.

For hundreds of thousands of PKI activists, these errors were of the most costly nature possible.

The "democratic revolution" strategy failed completely. Sukarno was sidelined (eventually dying under house arrest in 1970), and a new military regime took the reins of power. The party was proscribed and the army and right-wing gangs set about the systematic butchering of the party's membership.

The same dictatorship, headed by General Suharto, is still in power 30 years later, brutally repressing the workers of Indonesia and East Timor.

• **Olle Tornquist's book *Dilemmas of Third World Communism: the destruction of the PKI in Indonesia*, (Zed Press 1984) provides an excellent account and analysis of the tragedy of the PKI.**

Fighting on ...

The Indonesian government continues to hold political prisoners from 1965.

TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign reports that twenty four remain in prison, three on death row.

There have been 22 executions of 1965 prisoners

since 1985.

Justice Minister Utuyo Usman told the Java Pos newspaper that two political prisoners would be executed before the year was out.

Contact The Indonesian Human Rights campaign at: 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HW. Telephone: 0181 771 2904

Sri Lanka's Popular Front government deepens racist anti-Tamil war

'Left' coalition opens war against Tamils

Sri Lanka's Peoples Alliance coalition government recently made far reaching devolution proposals, tied to a veto by referendum in which the Tamils would be a minority.

The NSSP (Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International) as well the Tamil Tigers (the LTTE) view the proposals as a fraudulent attempt to legitimise and step up the war under the guise of peace proposals. Even whilst the proposals are made, new appeals are being made to foreign governments to step up arms supplies, arguing the 'legitimacy' of the government's initiative. V. THIRUNAVUKKARASU is a leading member of the NSSP and the party's coordinator on the national question. ALAN THORNETT spoke to him in Sri Lanka.



V. Thirunavukkarasu, from the Political Bureau of the NSSP

Why is the Peoples Alliance Government putting the devolution proposals forward at this time and what do they want out of it?

The PA government has been a year in office, on a very thin majority in Parliament.

During the election campaign Chandrika Bandaranaike repeatedly said that the resolution of the national question was the single most important issue at stake, that it must be resolved by granting national rights to the Tamils, and that the army must be withdrawn from the north east.

She accepted that there should be maximum devolution of power to the peoples of the north east and stressed that she had a framework for this almost ready. Her proposals, however, were withheld for a number of months - despite protests from the LTTE and other groups.

Instead Chandrika opened negotiations with the LTTE. These discussions were not on a solution to the war but confined to practical issues: roads, electricity, and so on. On this basis they reached an agreement for the ceasefire - which lasted three months.

During the negotiations the LTTE made demands such as the removal of the army base at Poonaryn (which cuts off the land route to the Jaffna peninsula) and freedom of movement for the LTTE in the territory of the north east. The government team rejected these demands - only agreeing to shift the army camp involved a distance of 500 metres! The LTTE responded by giving two deadlines for the resumption of the war - March 28th and then April 19th. On April 19th the war resumed.

Soon after the truce had

been broken, on July 9th, the government launched a massive military assault on the Jaffna peninsula code named "Operation Leap Forward". They predicted that they would be able to defeat the Tigers with that single operation, but this did not happen. A lot of people died but they were unable to penetrate the Tamil heartland.

It was only after this failure that Chandrika came out with her package. It was never put on the table during the talks - which showed from the start that she was not serious about such a settlement. Chandrika's new slogan was to "continue the war in order to reach peace".

Withholding the package also meant that it was presented after an intensive post-war climate - during which the Sinhala racists had gained some ground. The worst conditions for its acceptance had been created. The package is not a genuine attempt for a settlement but a shield behind which she can, through diverting the attention of the international community, pursue the war more brutally. This is their strategy.

What is the attitude of the NSSP to the war and the package?

The NSSP recognises the north east as the home land of the Tamil speaking people and defends their right to determine their own future.

Our position on the package is that while it looks attractive and interesting its implementation is a big major problem not only because of the way it has been introduced but because it has to have a two thirds majority in parliament before it is adopted.

It also has to be subjected to a referendum under conditions of an inbuilt Sinhala majority amongst the voters.

This Chandrika says is the requirements of the constitution. In reality it is a veto on the package since it can never be adopted by those means. This is what makes it a total fraud.

Instead of hiding behind the constitution the government should implement the proposals immediately through a constituent assembly. This could bypass the constitutional formalities and resolve the situation.

What form is the campaign taking against these proposals in which the NSSP is involved?

The UNP (the main capitalist party) has said that they would consider supporting the proposals as long as they do not lead to separation. In other words they have made no commitment.

There is also the extreme chauvinist elements who oppose any change in the current situation and that the LTTE should be smashed by military means. This is the Buddhist clergy and a group of 23 Buddhist organisations.

Then there are those who support the Tamil people in their national rights, most importantly the NSSP and sections of the trade union movement. We are for the unification of the country by the recognition of the national rights of the Tamil people. We have launched a campaign against the referendum and for the implementation of the package through out the trade union movement from a conference held recently in Colombo.

The main slogans of the campaign are: stop the war; no referendum; introduce the devolution proposals through a constituent assembly.

What is type of organisation is the LTTE?

The LTTE has a mainly petty bourgeois base. It adopted the armed struggle after two and a half decades of oppression of the Tamil people.

It has never been a democratic organisation and does not allow pluralism or opposition. They have assassinated other left leaders such as our own comrade Annamalai.

As a revolutionary party we of course do not rule out armed struggle but their has to be a mass involvement and mobilisation which has to be allowed to mature and there has to be democracy in the movement.

The LTTE has only the armed struggle. There is no mass participation or democratic expression. There are occasional demonstrations in Jaffna - a recent one of several thousand against the war - but they do not alter the character of the struggle.

The NSSP believes that the struggle of the Tamil people has to be linked up politically with other struggles; for democratic rights, trade union rights and workers rights etc. The LTTE is militarily very powerful but this is not enough for victory.

Can you say something of the current sufferings of the people in the north east?

The sufferings have been

and are enormous. Over the last 12 years not less than 50,000 people have been killed in the war.

There are 500,000 refugees in the refugee camps and 120,000 staying with relatives. There are another 125,000 in India.

In "Operation Leap Forward" 300,000 people were displaced - but most of these have returned. There is at the same time regular shelling and bombing of civilian areas.

There is a permanent shortage of food and medicine. There has been an embargo on petrol, diesel, cement, fertiliser and other agro-chemicals. There has been a ban on fishing in the north east waters.

There has been no electricity in the Jaffna peninsula for a long time. Even oil for domestic lighting is very restricted. A litre of oil for lighting is 900 per cent dearer than in the government areas. 90 per cent of the people have only one meal a day.

The Jaffna peninsula is under a state of siege, surrounded as it is by military bases at the following places: Palaly, Mathagal, Karainagar, Mandaitivu, Kayts, Pooneryn

and Elephant pass. There is no safe passage to and from the peninsula and people have to use the hazardous and expensive Kilaly lagoon route.

How are the Western powers involved in this?

They are the main target of this strategy. The package is crucial for the supply of arms to the Sri Lankan government.

It legitimises the arms trade since Chandrika can say that she has done everything possible to end the war but has been forced to pursue it. She will say that the only alternative is a military victory. Many western countries have welcomed the proposals and accepted them as a genuine attempt to end the war.

Some have hinted that the package has created the conditions for the resumption of arms sales.

You must demand of the British government that it does not respond to this request. You must insist that left Labour MPs in Britain demand that the murderous war is stopped and that no arms are supplied.

SUPPORT HARAYA!

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

- against the World Bank and IMF
- amongst the Sinhala

majority to stop the war against the Tamils

● against the austerity measures of the Chandrika government.

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

CENTRE STAGE

30,000 attend fourth global assembly of women in Beijing

No solutions for women from UN conference

By K. Govindan

"WOMEN HOLD up half the sky" goes a Chinese revolutionary saying, though to the hosts at the Beijing United Nations Women's conference it must have seemed as if the sky had fallen on their heads.

Besieged by 30,000 women who arrived for the parallel Non-Governmental conference, some of whom were vociferously critical of the Chinese record on women's rights, they were stung by Hilary Clinton speech as leader of the US delegation to the official gathering.

The US First Lady first identified issues in the conference ranging from female genital mutilation to dowry deaths and domestic violence. She then mounted a thinly veiled attack on China when she asserted that "it is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their families". The rest of her speech was about how the family is the bed-rock of society: the very same institution in which most abuses of women occur.

The location of the Fourth conference had been controversial from the start. Undoubtedly the 1949 revolution had ushered tremendous economic changes with enormous strides in ad-

vancing the status and participation of women in work and society. However China's single child family policy which compels women to have abortions and has led to the reappearance of female infanticide reduces women's liberation to sloganising. Amartya Sen has calculated that there are more than 100 million women "missing" in Asia alone, that is neglected, ill-treated, abandoned such that the girl child dies.

The marketisation reforms in China have also had a contradictory effect. Among richer women personal freedoms and individual choices are easier to make but many are at the rough end of the new industries, ununionised, poorly paid, badly housed and harmed by the atrocious safety record at these transnational sites.

Adjustment

The deteriorating position of women in countries subject to structural adjustment policies; the related issue of women's access and use of education and health services and the representation of women in government were three areas of concern for progressive women's groups.

The wording of the official declaration and the weakness of specific commitments particularly financial ones in the Programme Of Action indicated to Indian women's groups that "the statements are of good intention only.



Tibetan women at the conference protest against Chinese occupation

They do not identify the root causes for the deterioration in the status of women'. They added "the draft document does not challenge global hierarchies and takes structural adjustment as a given. It accepts many current trends and policies as unchangeable".

The radical ideas and pronouncements in Copenhagen two decades ago and even Nairobi ten years ago have been dissolved away in the

neo-liberal tide and the scaling back of expectations. There is no mention of the uprooting and eradication of poverty - the biggest killer of women worldwide. Instead the accepted terminology is its 'alleviation' or 'management'.

The official delegations - particularly that of the United States - bracketed at one stage 40 per cent of the Declaration giving notice of objections to

them. The final document will be used or ignored in so much as it suits individual governments. Every one came away claiming victory from the Vatican to Saudi Arabia and the European Union delegations.

One Chinese woman taxi-driver commented, "As far as I am concerned, this [conference] is just a pain in the neck: a waste of energy and a waste of money. What do we ordi-

nary people get out of it?"

For the non-governmental organisation their evaluation of participation in the conference must be mixed. They were exiled to a muddy field in Huairou, an hour's journey from Beijing. Visas were denied to some prospective delegates on political grounds.

Tibet

Tibetan women from overseas were harassed by police and organisers who followed them around, video-taped their meetings and so on. Many NGOs have long ceased to be organisations articulating the feelings of the poor and dispossessed. Some prefer the lobbying approach including becoming expert advisors to their governments, bashing the West but blind to their own failings.

Yet the question of Tibet has enjoyed some publicity. There is the recognition at least that gender based rights are human rights too and even sexual orientation cannot be dismissed any longer as irrelevant to discussions of women's rights.

How relevant though is Hilary Clinton and her message of universal sisterhood to women who aren't rich, middle class and own property, and how have the Clinton Administration's policies and its big business backers worsened the life chances of the average US woman?

Government reforms threaten revolution's positive achievements

Chinese women losing out

By Zhang Kai

THE RECENT arrests of the journalist Gao Yu and Tong Yi, secretary of the dissident Wei Jingsheng, show how willing the Chinese government is to impose the same repression upon women the regime exercises over men.

Amnesty International has recently reported that around 200 women have been arrested for participating in pro-Tibetan independence demonstrations since 1992.

Formally women in China have the same political, cultural, educational and social rights as men. The prominent role of women in the revolution enabled them to make important gains. Hence in 1949 when "New China" was formed the law stipulated equality in all spheres.

In February 1994 the Chinese government published the "National report on the People's Republic of China's implementation of the Nairobi strategy to enhance the status of women". In June it published a white paper on the "Situation of Women in China".

Both documents talk of the positive achievements gained for women in China.

Improved status

It is certainly true that the status of women has dramatically improved since the revolution. Yet according to scholars at the Shanghai Social Sciences Academy cases of discrimination and abuse of women are on the increase. Incidences of domestic violence are rising.

Both documents either evade or gloss over the negative aspects of the situation of women.

The one-child policy is being rig-

orously enforced. Abuse and the killing of girls are everyday facts of life.

The male-female balance is being seriously upset. In the 30-44 age group there are 7.4 million unmarried men and only half a million women. This phenomenon will continue to worsen.

According to an international conference on women and education at the end of 1992 2.1 million girls are not in school. Most working women have received only primary education. The white paper reports a 32 per cent illiteracy rate among women.

Although there are 7 million women members of the Chinese Communist Party, comprising 14 per cent of the total membership, not one of the 20 members of the political bureau is female.

Since the reforms began in 1978 unemployment has been a central problem for Chinese women. According to the Labour Bureau in

China over 70 per cent of the 20 million "redundant" workers in state and collective enterprises.

The Shenzhen Labour Bureau reports that 80 per cent of the unemployed above the age of 24 are women. Sit Chaojin, the deputy president of the National Labour Federation, commented that "according to many of our sample surveys, women constitute about 60 per cent of those dismissed in recent years... they not only suffer from phycological pressure but also find it very difficult to make a living".

Unemployment

Yet the report made no mention of large scale womens' unemployment.

Wang Jun, the head of the women workers section of the federation pointed out that the surveys indicate serious abuses of womens' legal rights in foreign owned enter-

prises—low pay, sexual harassment and poor conditions are frequent.

A 1995 survey of joint enterprises in Shanghai found that over half the enterprises did not adhere to the 44-hour working week, overtime was the norm and that in some businesses 137 hours of overtime a month were demanded of the workers.

The official trade union follows the government right down the line. Its womens' section is also led by the party. All attempt of workers to organise independently have been met with repression.

Only free trades unions can effectively fight for workers. The furthering of the cause of women will depend upon women fighting for their rights with their own strength.

• This article is taken from the Hong Kong Fourth Internationalist magazine *October Review*

French colonialism behind nuclear tests

By Simon Kennedy

THE ANTI-NUCLEAR and pro-independence mobilisations in Tahiti on June 29, July 14 and September 2-3, and the uprising that followed the French explosion show the depth of resistance to the testing in the Pacific.

Oscar Temaru, the leader of pro-independence Tavini Huiraatira said "the majority of the Maohi people refuse the resumption of nuclear testing in our backyard. We have organised the biggest demonstration in the street to show that we are the people of this country, not France."

Within two weeks of Chirac's decision to explode the bomb in the Pacific's "French territory" some 80 organisations—political parties, trades unions, environmental groups, NGOs—have agreed a common appeal to demand and end to nuclear tests and French signature of the Comprehensive test ban Treaty.

The Australian government are bending over backwards to reassure the French government that it does not oppose its presence in the Pacific. The Minister for Pacific affairs said "It is absolutely no part of our agenda to boot the French out of the South Pacific. There is absolutely no reason why we would want the French out...and plenty of reason why we would want them to stay."

But it is impossible to separate France's nuclear testing from its colonial role. The nuclear programme is only made possible by its domination of the region.

Tahiti

France first occupied Tahiti in 1842 and, after a bitter guerilla war, eventually subdued the resistance.

The current independence movement looks back for inspiration to the nationalist Pouvanaa Tetuapua Oopa. In 1947 he led militant demonstrations against French privileges.



Uprising in Tahiti was prompted by French nuclear test

After a spell of imprisonment he was elected to the French lower house with mass support. Two years later his Democratic Assembly of the Tahitian People (RDPT) won a massive majority in the Territorial Assembly.

After 1958 the RDPT began to campaign on the slogan "Tahiti for the Tahitians...vote NO so that the enslaving yoke will be quickly removed from around our necks".

After divisions opened up in the

organisation Pouvanaa was banned from the radio and, using his Algerian emergency powers, De Gaulle sacked the entire cabinet. For Pouvanaa, eight years in jail and 15 in exile followed.

Dependence

Once the opposition was subdued France was in a position to begin its testing programme. To establish Tahiti's dependence on France the economy of the region was trans-

formed. Within a decade Tahiti was importing 80 per cent of its food. Military bases and tourist hotels were constructed denying precious land to the indigenous population.

As French historian Jean Chesneaux comments, "The whole of the South Pacific has suffered the same phenomenon—the imposition of a consumer society more like Hawaii than Europe, which has left 20 per cent of the population below the poverty line."

35 years of nuclear vandalism

By Simon Kennedy

FRANCE STAGED 184 nuclear tests between 1960 and 1989. Before moving to the Pacific France used Algeria for its nuclear explosions. Four atmospheric and 13 underground explosions were performed.

In 1963, when the French announced the establishment of the Pacific Experimental Centre, the Maohi people were unaware of the impending devastation that was to be inflicted upon them.

France promised that the bombs would be detonated only when the winds were blowing away from inhabited islands. The pledge was swiftly forgotten—in one incident the French even redrew the map of the Pacific in order to cover up their mistakes.

After 1966 international pressure eventually brought an end to atmospheric testing after 44 blasts. The decision of the New Zealand government to send a frigate to Mururoa, with support from the Australian government, was crucial in ending the tests.

French tests were henceforth conducted underground at Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls from 1974. Nevertheless, the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu and other nations of the area have all registered heavy radioactive fallout and are faced with an increase in cancers.

The last test took place in October 1992. The government announced in April 1992 that it was joining the unilateral Soviet moratorium begun in the mid 1980s.

By 1989 118 of the 123 underground tests had been conducted at Mururoa.

Despite 74 atmospheric tests and 131 underground tests and 131 underground tests France insists that Mururoa is less radioactive than Paris. But no medical reports have been released since testing began in 1966.

But stories abound of terrible cancers, increasing miscarriages and children born with deformations. The United Nations estimates that 150,000 people have died, or will die, as a direct result of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Near-meltdown at ageing nuclear plant

By Duncan Chapple

RATHER THAN stop production, a state-owned nuclear power company knowingly risked the meltdown of a nuclear reactor for nine hours.

Nuclear power is the next industry to be privatised by the Conservative government. Closing the reactor would have led to fines for the power company from National Grid, the electricity suppliers, and would have drawn attention to a series of safety problems at nuclear power stations.

Nuclear Electric were fined "a six-figure sum" at the Crown Court last week for negligence during the accident in 1993 at the plant in Wylfa, north Wales. It is the world's largest Magnox-class reactor, employing 500 people.

When a 130lb crane grab fell into the reactor and cracked a chan-

nel containing a rod of enriched uranium fuel, a partial meltdown became likely. The court heard recordings of staff discussing the financial penalties, laughing and giggling as the accident unfolded.

A meltdown would have contaminated the gas used to cool the reactor. Depressurisation in the reactor could have led to the release of radioactive gas into the atmosphere, forcing the evacuation of the surrounding area.

After nine hours, and unable to monitor the condition of the coolant, Nuclear Electric closed the reactor. It remained closed for two weeks, costing £3 million.

The indifference of Nuclear Electric officials to the accident has heightened fears about the safety of nuclear power in the run-up to the planned £3.5 billion sell-off of nuclear power after a programme of licensing plants for safety comes to an end in December this year.

Friends of the Earth's Dr Patrick Green asked "If these kind of considerations take over Nuclear Electric when it is in the public sector, what is going to happen when many stations are in the private sector?"

While safety problems in nuclear reactors are made greater by the threat of privatisation, nuclear fission has always been unsafe.

Fission

Nuclear power is produced by attempting to control a nuclear chain reaction. Fission - the splitting of atoms - releases a massive amount of heat which is used to boil water. Steam produced powers turbines which produce electricity.

The reaction is controlled by separating the uranium fuel into thousands of rods held within graphite channels and cooled by gas or water. If the flow of coolant is obstructed, the fuel can fuse into a molten mass which can burn

through the reactor. This is what happened at the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in the United States.

Even if the reaction can be successfully controlled, fission creates further dangers: radiation, waste, and the power stations themselves.

Nuclear radiation consists of tiny rays or particles which are spit out of 'radioactive' chemicals, such as uranium or radium. These rays, like tiny bullets, tear through living tissue. They can change the electrical charge of the tissue: killing it or changing its normal life cycle.

No level of radiation is safe: while the earth underneath us contains much less radioactivity than a power station it can still damage cells, causing diseases like cancer.

However a single commercial nuclear reactor contains far more dangerous radioactive material than exists on earth naturally. Only nuclear fission can produce plutonium, which fuels nuclear bombs.

Capitalism's desire for cheap electricity, to break the power of oil workers and coal miners, and to produce nuclear weapons does not extend to considering human safety.

No method has been developed for the safe long-term storage of nuclear waste. Nuclear power stations operate for about 30 years: no safe way has been found to dismantle them.

After Wylfa we can expect more nuclear accidents in the coming years. They can only be prevented if democratic control of society ensures that energy is created in sustainable and renewable ways. That needs a social revolution.

• For a copy of Fred Halstead's booklet 'What working people should know about the dangers of nuclear power' send £1.50 to *Socialist Outlook Fund*, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

Anti-Republican view of 'the long peace'

The Long War by
Brendan O'Brien
(O'Brien Press
Dublin 1995)
Reviewed by
David Coen

THE WAR IS OVER and there will be no resumption of armed struggle by the IRA. There will be a "long peace" concludes O'Brien.

The changes in Republican thinking come after the failed cease-fire of the mid-1970s—when the British came close to military victory—the prison protests, the hunger strikes, election victories, Libyan arms, the attacks on the City and the Hume/Adams talks.

He believes the main reason for the cease fire is the acceptance by the IRA that a military victory over the British is not possible; that the outcome of the "long war" strategy will be a stalemate rather than pull-out by a war weary Britain.

In other words, he believes the IRA have simply given

up. The leadership have no desire for a lifetime struggle or to see their own offspring carry on a futile battle. There is also the risk of heightened loyalist violence aided and abetted by Britain.

O'Brien works for Radio Telefis Eireann—a bastion of vicious anti-Republicanism and "west Brit" attitudes. He is careful in his preface to purge himself of any hint of sympathy with Republican aims.

The author's journalist background shows itself in a book which is good on dates and details but short on analysis.

The pivotal 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement is mentioned only in passing.

The Agreement gave the Dublin government the role of guaranteeing the position of the nationalists by giving it a limited say in the affairs of the North. It was deliberately designed by both sides to stop Sein Fein's political advances after the Hunger Strikes.

Douglas Hurd spelled out in 1991 that in the debate on how Northern Ireland can run its affairs within the United

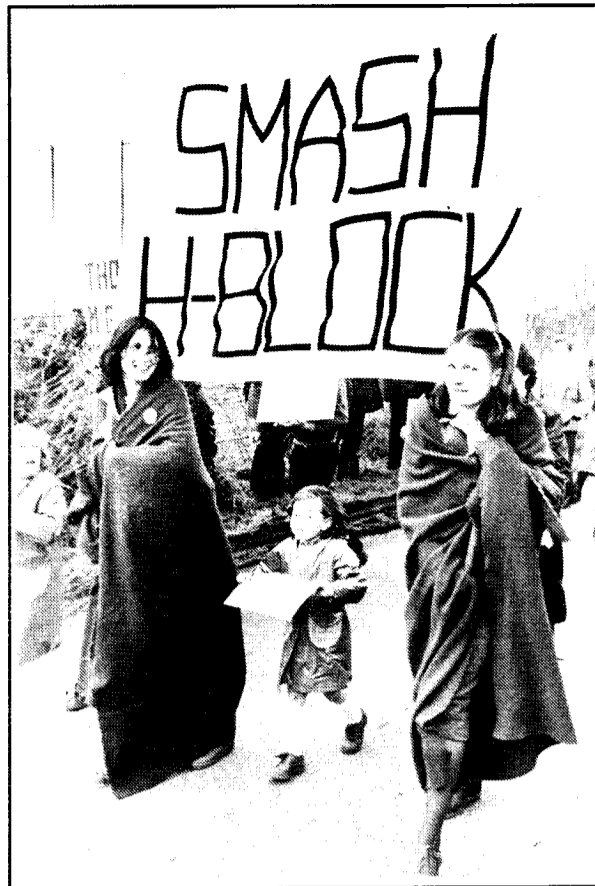
Kingdom: "The Republic of Ireland has a crucial role, not as a rival for sovereignty, but as a partner in ending violence and making possible a return to the decencies of democratic life".

The Downing Street declaration and the Framework document both build upon the political gains made by Dublin and London in the 1985 Agreement.

Because Republicans think of politics as simply a tactic within the armed struggle, they were completely outflanked by the agreement, which was portrayed as a step to unity—even by some on the British left.

In the crucial arena of the South, republican politics consisted simply of a combination of the community-based approach learnt in the North, with attempts to pressurise the Fianna Fail leadership by appeals to its nationalist consciousness.

In deferring to the rural, small town and Catholic prejudices at the base of Fianna Fail, it could not link with any of the dynamic social forces in the South, such as the working class, the



1980 march led by national Smash H-Block committee

women's movement or those struggling for lesbian and gay rights.

The fruits of the "pressure Fianna Fail strategy" were tasted when Albert Reynold successfully demanded that what the IRA had intended to be a temporary cease-fire was made permanent.

This in return for an invitation to the "nationalist family" of Dublin and the SDLP, who find themselves relying on Dublin to negotiate on their behalf, obliged to accept Dublin's deal with the British.

For many years now the Dublin approach has not been

the ending of partition but "parity of esteem" between what it sees as the two traditions in Ireland.

Their main strategic aim is to eliminate what they see as the potentially destabilising national question from the political agenda. The only difference with the British is over how that is to be achieved.

Peace, as Gerry Adams has repeatedly told us, is not the absence of war. The peace requires British withdrawal and self determination. Neither are on the agenda of the so-called "peace process".

East Timor revolt goes on

By Paul Walker

SINCE THE beginning of September East Timor has been shaken by a widespread uprising led by thousands of youth. The uprising originated in Viqueaque, about 65 miles from Dili, the capital of East Timor.

The targets of the youths are mainly the cultural and religious expressions of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor; musallas (small Islamic prayer centres), stalls owned by Indonesian transmigrants, and other symbols of the Indonesian transmigration programme which has the purposes of swamping the indigenous East Timorese with Indonesian settlers.

The rioting then spread to numerous towns and villages in East Timor, reaching the capital Dili on 9 September when hundreds of youth, mostly secondary school students, took to the streets.

The uprising occurred after reports spread of an Indonesian official insulting the Catholic faith in the Maliana prison, 45 miles south of Dili, on 4 September. Inmates said that they heard a Sanusi Abubakar, a ministry official,

describe the Catholic faith as a "nonsense religion". When word of this spread outside of the prison, through a leaflet written by the prisoners, riots erupted across East Timor.

Early on the 9 of September youths burned down the Komoror market in Dili where Muslim transmigrants dominate the trade.

In an attempt to calm the situation the occupying Indonesian military said on Saturday that the Indonesian official had been arrested on charges of insulting other people's religion.

This charge, is, of course, a double edged sword as many

of the targets of the East Timorese youth were mosques and religious buildings.

Ominously General Adang Ruchiatna stated that "This state is based on law. Those who are guilty will be prosecuted" According to Adang, the violence was "incited" by about 3,000 clandestine activists in favour of East Timorese independence operating across East Timor. "They have made best use of sophisticated telecommunications technology"

That the General was prepared to accept that over 3,000 were well organised is an important concession to

the resistance movement which the military continually claim only has several hundred members. The use of the Internet and radio communications is also a result of the increased capacity and cohesiveness of the urban resistance movement. The response of the military has been to arrest the so-called ring leaders of the resistance.

As of 18 September sources inside East Timor described the security situation inside East Timor as very fragile and tense.

It is indicative of a national liberation struggle that has reached a very high pitch in

the minds of the oppressed people that, what would seem to an outsider to be such a small incident, would spark such a widespread uprising.

A combination of religion and national independence have become the mobilising ideology of the revolution.

The resistance is still on an upward curve which is likely to reach its zenith between November and December this year which see the fourth anniversary of the Dili Massacre on November 12, and the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975.

Join the lobby - Support the resistance

WHILST STUDENTS and others have been engaging in direct action to trespass on BAe sites and invade arms fairs where sales to Indonesia are being organised, the solidarity campaign with the East Timorese resistance and the Indonesian trade union and democracy movements gathers pace in the labour movement.

The current focus for the campaign is to mobilise activists to attend the December 7 lobby of Parliament which is calling for an immediate embargo of arms sales to Indonesia and for the sale of Hawk jets and Alvis Tanks to be stopped.

The conference of the Transport and General Workers Union passed a resolution calling for an arms embargo and for all TGWU sponsored MPs to support the lobby. UNISON is also helping to mobilise for the lobby at a national level.

Labour conference

A model resolution has made its way through to the Labour Party conference which calls for an immediate embargo on all military sales to the Indonesian regime.

Undoubtedly the Blair leadership will try to wriggle its way out by arguing for European Union action on military sales which will of course take some time to

organise. Anything to maintain a bi-partisan position with the government on arms sales. Meanwhile workers are shot down in Indonesia, peasants are strafed in East Timor and resistance leaders are tortured in the hands of the military occupiers.

It is impossible to imagine December 7 passing in East Timor without some expression of popular resistance to twenty years of the Indonesian occupation.

The East Timorese now know that the world is listening as they do battle against the Indonesian giant.

What they are asking for now is for the world to mobilise in defence of their revolution for national self-determination.

What's Happening SEPTEMBER

Sat 23

LANDMINES day of action details phone/fax 01296 632056

Sat 30

FACE demonstration meet 12.30 Victoria Embankment for march to Hyde park

OCTOBER

Sat 7

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

Thurs 12

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

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

Fri 13

CELEBRATE the life of Ernest Mandel rally. Note new venue: Conference Centre Congress House Great Russell St WC1 7.00pm to 9.00pm with speaker including Tariq Ali, Duncan Hallas (SWP), Jeanette Habel (USFI), and Charlie Van Gelderen (Socialist Outlook). Tickets £3 from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Sat 14

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

NATIONAL day of action against immigration detention centres organised by National Network against Detentions and Deportations

Mon 15

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

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

Fri 20

FREE Satpal Ram national demonstration 10am Court of Appeal The Strand.

Sat 28

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

NOVEMBER

Sat 25

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

Serbs denounce Bosnia carve-up

By Roland Rance

ONE DIFFICULTY encountered by campaigners in support of a multi-ethnic Bosnia is the apparent insistence of the British media on referring to all Bosnians as 'Muslims', even if they point out that they are Serbs or Croats.

A definitive response to this distortion of the conflict was provided by the recent visit to London of a high-level delegation representing the Serb Civic Council of Bosnia.

This delegation, which went almost unremarked by the media, included many senior political, military, diplomatic and academic figures.

According to SCC President Mirko Pejanovic, the Council is "the political alternative to the Pale regime and Karadzic, as symbols of violence, evil and the expulsion of Bosniacs and Croats from their homes".

The SCC issued a statement on the latest 'peace plan', maintaining that peace would only be possible on the basis of a democratic and sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina, with equality of all of its peoples and citizens, the right of all refugees to return home, and the punishment of all war criminals.

At a press conference, several delegation members expressed reservations about the agreement. Pejanovic won-

dered: "Are we now faced with an ethnic partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the back door?", and insisted that any agreement must involve a constitutional settlement guaranteeing Bosnia's survival as a multi-ethnic state.

Another delegate, Bosnian deputy Chief-of-Staff General Jovan Divjak, claimed that neither the Croatian re-occupation of Krajina nor the NATO bombing had shifted the military balance.

The majority of Serb troops from Krajina - some 20-30,000 men with 40 tanks - were now in central Bosnia. NATO bombing had not destroyed the main strategic targets, and there had been no consultation with the Bosnian army regarding targets or objectives.

Divjak pointed out that there was no balance of forces: the Bosnian army had 60 tanks compared to the Pale regime's 400; 400 pieces of heavy artillery against 2000; and 4 helicopters against 40. He repeated that the only way to achieve balance was to lift the arms embargo.

Divjak made an appeal to the British media to stop referring to the 'Bosnian Muslim army'. He was proud to be a member of a multi-ethnic army in a multi-ethnic state. The army, which was based on regional units, had proportionate numbers of Serbs.

This meant, for instance, that there were few in Krajina, where the population before

the war had been 95 per cent Muslim, but 10-20 per cent in other areas. There were not enough Serb officers, particularly in command of non-Serb troops, and he had raised this problem with President Izetbegovic.

Like other delegates, Divjak insisted that the government should not agree to an exchange of territories. This would reduce the number of Serbs and Croats in areas under government control, and legitimise ethnic cleansing.

According to Stjepan Kljucic, a member of the Croat National Council of Bosnia travelling with the delegation, "No-one has the right to manipulate and trade territories.

There is no Bosnia Herzegovina without all of its peoples, and there is no sense in talking of exchanges". Kljucic also stated that the return of all refugees, including Krajina Serbs, was a condition for peace.

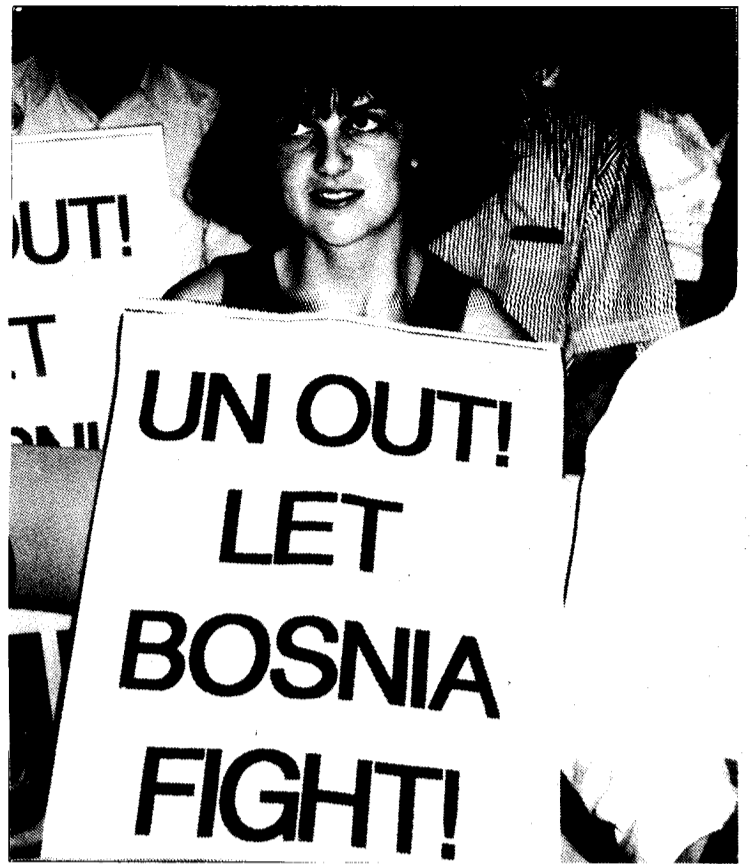
The delegation, which included supporters of several parties in Bosnia, was on an officially-sponsored visit and travelled with Bosnian ambassador Muhammad Filipovic. Although they expressed some reservations about the 'peace plan' and the Bosnian government's ability to withstand US pressure, they were unlikely to attack the government's line.

IWA activist Jenny Mees recently returned from a visit to Tuzla, reports that the situ-

ation has deteriorated since the fall of Srebrenica and the flight of some 11,000 refugees (including at least 15 Serb families).

She interviewed Serb representatives in the city, who gave conflicting accounts of the situation for Serbs. While the Miso Bozic of the Serb Civic Council gave a positive report, Jovan Djalovic and Vitimir Pavlovic of the Serbian Orthodox Humanitarian Association 'Dobrotvor' claimed that life for Serbs was impossible in Tuzla, and most wanted to leave.

• There will be a fuller account of their views, and of Jenny's report from Tuzla, in the next issue of *Socialist Outlook*.



Hitting the streets against ethnic cleansing

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While stocks remain, this vital book is available at the 50% discount price of £9.75, plus £1.65 postage and packing. Send your cheque for £11.40 to Socialist Outlook Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2 UU. Allow 28 days for delivery.



Serb Civic Council addresses Bosnia conference

By Alan Thornett

ABOUT 150 people attended the first national meeting of the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign on Saturday September 9.

There was wide agreement on the current situation in Bosnia, most speakers seeing the NATO bombing as an attempt to force a settlement which would hand over 49 per cent of Bosnia to Serbian forces.

There was also a wide agreement

on the demands of the Campaign: defend multi-ethnic Bosnia; lift the arms embargo; no UNNATO brokered partition of Bosnia; for the right of refugees to return home. There was less agreement about the structures of the campaign and the involvement of affiliates in decision making. It was decided to hold another meeting in November to discuss these issues.

The most important feature of the meeting, however, was the attendance of a major Bosnian delegation - from the Serb Civic Council. This is the organisation, based in Sarajevo, which coordinates the Serb population of Bosnia Herzegovina in the fight to defend and maintain a multi-ethnic society. The delegation included three members of the Bosnian state presidency and the deputy commander of the Bosnian army: they are, of course, all Serbs.

They were introduced to the conference by the Bosnian Ambassador to Britain who presented Bosnian government policy on the current stage of the war in extremely radical terms. He introduced himself as someone who has fought fascism since his days in the partisans under Tito and was still fighting it today in the defence of the multi-ethnic Bosnia against Serbian aggression.

He did not comment directly on current peace negotiations or the NATO bombing but stressed that "we are not naive. We know that

what is happening in Bosnia today in Bill Clinton's election campaign, but we are not about to surrender one inch of Bosnian territory to the aggressor. We will not trade the 250,000 people who died for a deal which will give away parts of our country to the aggressor".

Some members of the delegation spoke in support of the bombing but implied that whilst they were happy to see damage inflicted on Serbian forces it would not affect the objectives of the Bosnian government and the Bosnian army.

The central theme of the delega-

tion, however, was to make a passionate defence of a multi-ethnic society and the call for the lifting of the arms embargo against their country. General Jovan Divjak, the deputy commander of the Bosnian army gave a graphic account of the disparity of heavy weapons they faced.

We hope that the importance of their visit to Britain is recognised and that the fight they are waging will have some impact on the perceptions of the war which prevail in this country. SWP, Militant Labour, Socialist Campaign Group MPs: please note.

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WORLD OUTLOOK

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Socialist OUTLOOK

Fightback sinks plan for Bosnia carve up

The NATO-US plan to bomb a 49%-51% carve up of Bosnia into existence appears to have failed.

It was always a high risk strategy. If Karadzic and the Bosnian Serbs had collapsed after a couple of days, agreed to NATO terms on Sarajvo, and entered "peace" talks of the basis of a 49%:51% split of Bosnian territory, they could have claimed a breakthrough and Bill Clinton's election campaign would have been boosted.

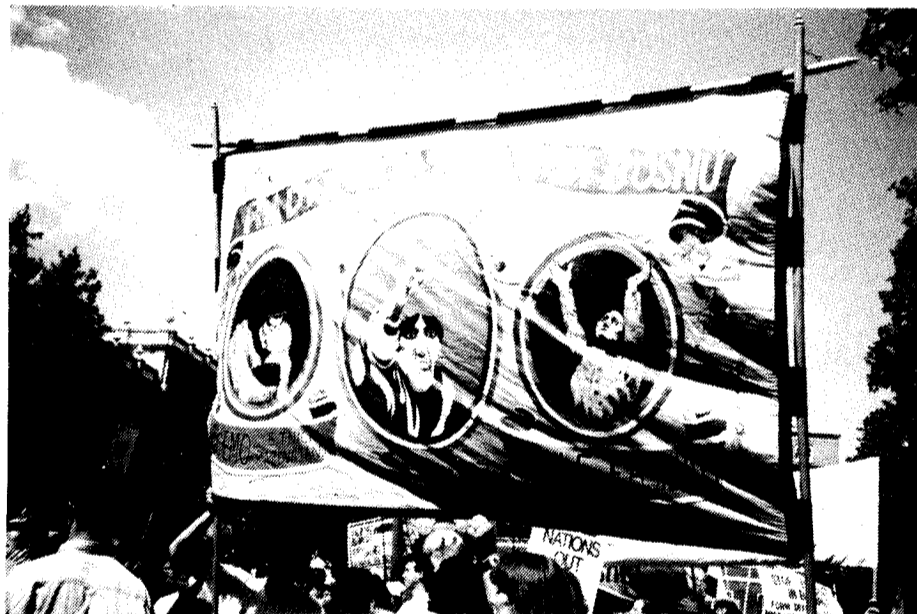
It did not happen that way. The Pale regime stood firm, even after the US had blasted off a volley of Cruise missiles. The bombing campaign went into crisis, caught between two factors; the hostile reaction from Moscow and the Bosnian government's refusal to refrain from taking military advantage of the bombing.

After a week of bombing

the US was frantically seeking a way out and they soon found one: they simply required Serbian forces to pull back all "heavy weapons" over 82mm calibre for mortars 100mm for artillery pieces. How the remaining weaponry would be any less lethal was never explained. They also introduced flexibility in only requiring a "serious effort" to comply.

Initially the main pressure for such a deal was the reaction from the Russian Duma, where deputies offered themselves as human shields against the bombing, and a resolution was adopted, under pressure by Zhirinovski and the nationalists, for the unilateral lifting of the embargo against Serbia. Yeltsin only vetoed the resolution after the compromise deal to stop the bombing had been worked out.

These factors, however, were quickly overtaken by the Bosnian and Croat offensive



around Bihac and in the north west in Herzog Bosna. As we go to press, huge swathes of Serbian occupied territory have been liberated.

The Bosnian army 5th Corps broke out of Bihac, ended its isolation as an enclave, and took the towns of Sanski Most and Bosanska Krupa; it is pushing towards Prijedor and the biggest town in the Serbian army occupied territories, Banja Luka. At the same time Croat Federation troops took the towns of Kljuc and Mrkonjic Grad.

The offensives have created a huge exodus of ethnic Serbs from the territory regained. They fear reprisals for the ethnic cleansing pogroms carried out by the Serbian forces. As such these Serbs are also the victims of the pogroms and the policies of Karadzic and Milosevic.

But the Bosnian government, which is fighting a war in defence of a multi ethnic society, along with the Croa-

tion authorities, also have a big responsibility to create the most favourable conditions to encourage the original Serb families to come back at the earliest possible time.

The offensives have reduced Serbian-held territory from 70% of Bosnia almost down to the 51% which would have been ceded under the US plan.

This has blown the US plan out of the water, since the offensive appears to be continuing, and even if it stopped the figures are out of date as a starting point for negotiations.

The Bosnian government has in any case always had an ambiguous position on the various "peace" plans. They have agreed to various proposals in principle under the pressure of events, while at the same time preparing for a military solution.

Their latest statement on the offensive is that they retain "an absolute right to liberate the occupied parts of Bosnia".

Indeed they have.

In the same way that they have refused to trust those who have been talking peace whilst imposing the arms embargo on them, they should watch their

back with Tudjman - whose intentions are far from clear.

It is a big military advantage to have Croatian forces with the Bosnians in the offensive, but it will give Tudjman far more leverage in the eventual shape of Bosnia and the degree of real independence it achieves.

The international repercussions of the situation are hard to fully assess. Certainly the crisis of credibility of the UN - restoration of which was another objective of the bombing campaign - is not resolved. But the big question is whether Bosnian and Croatian military gains will bring Serbia itself, still the most powerful military force in the region, directly into the war.

This would again bring the issue of the arms embargo, and the disparity of heavy weapons, directly to the fore.

IWA delivers the goods

Following months of preparation, International Workers' Aid has managed to take a convoy to Sarajevo. The three trucks, loaded with flour, oil, salt and yeast for the Trade Union Federation of Sarajevo, arrived on 15 September.

This was the first aid convoy to reach Sarajevo for several months. Michel Wenzler from Sweden, one of the drivers, reported re-

ceiving a fantastic response: "These people had waited for so long for this and now, finally, we could make it through. A woman even cancelled a planned trip to Rome to stay here and receive us!"

IWA has already delivered more than 300 tonnes of aid to the unions in Tuzla, and is now planning further convoys to Sarajevo, as well as to Mostar.

To support this work, please send cheques, made out to International Workers' Aid, to IWA, PO Box 1109, London N4 1AA.

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Liberation! is a quarterly newspaper produced by and for young people working together against poverty and injustice.

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