Labour flunks Maastricht challenge

Bosses' Europe attacks welfare state

Labour missed a golden opportunity to defeat the Tories in parliament last week over the Maastricht agreement. Fifty-nine Labour MPs voted against the agreement; if all Labour MPs had done the same the Tories ran the danger of defeat, and the government falling.

But the Labour leadership – Kinnock, Coe, Smith and the rest – believe the myth that European Monetary Union offers a progressive way forward.

This is a myth. Monetary union means harmonising budget plans, inflation and interest rates to the deflationary levels laid down by the German Bundesbank. The outcome will be huge cuts in public spending in Britain and throughout the EC.

Faced with the Japanese and US challenge, Europe's bosses are determined to smash the welfare state. Wage increases will have to be held down to meet low-level inflation targets.

Europe's social policy is a myth – it is an anti-social policy which will call the shots.

The new Europe – 'Fortress Europe' – will impose harsh policies against immigrants and asylum seekers. Control will continue in the hands of the unelected and secret Council of Ministers, not the European parliament.

European unity is the way forward, but not unity on the terms prescribed by the multinational bosses. Unity on the bosses' terms is being imposed on the people of Europe without them having the right to decide. In Britain and Europe-wide there should be a referendum. The left must fight to reject the carnage of living standards which Maastricht will impose.
The office block that sank the world

By Jamie Gough

THE LARGEST property company in the world, Olympia and York, has gone bust, owing $12 billion to its bankers. At its peak the company was worth $35 billion - three times the value of Barclays Bank for example. It has been badly hit by the collapse of office rents in North America. But the main problem is the Canary Wharf office development in London’s Docklands.

This is the largest-ever development in Europe. Its first phase, just completed, is the size of twenty Centre Points and is guessed to have cost around £2 billion. Olympia have let only around half of it, and to do so have virtually given the space away.

Canary Wharf was planned during the mid-1980s boom. Demand for central London office space soared following financial deregulation and rapid growth of financial capital.

Business was happy to invest in offices, apparently less risky than industry. So the developers piled in, each ignorant of the others’ plans.

These offices arrived on the market just as the boom was ending - in 1989 the equivalent of 25 Centre Points were completed in the City alone. The result was oversupply, and since then rents have halved. This absurd waste could be avoided if the overall amount of office building was planned by a single organisation, by nationalising this sector.

Tory policies

Ironically, Canary Wharf has been weakened by the Tories’ infrastructure policies.

Reacting to the market meant that the government did not plan the necessary underground line (the Jubilee extension) until after the development got going, and it will not be ready until 1997. The Tories also relied on Olympia to pay a third of the cost of the tube extension. This money will not now be paid, and it may not go ahead, thus hitting both other businesses and residents in Docklands.

The coordination of capitalist state and private investment is always chaotic, but this takes the biscuit.

Not that the Tories have been mean in Docklands. John Turkie has estimated that Canary Wharf will receive £6 billion in public subsidies, including tax breaks and infrastructure.

The net public benefit has been to shift some offices two miles east from the City. Though typical of the Tories’ generosity towards influential sectors of business and their fondness for spectacle, this is a lunatic waste of money for British capital as a whole.

Banks worldwide are in a serious crisis, in which the collapse of world property prices is playing a major role. Olympia is so large that it will have a substantial effect on the whole system.

When the banks write off its debt, they will have to call their lending by several times that sum. This will deepen the world recession.

This wonderful banking and property system is the one that John Smith refuses to nationalise because ‘the market should do what it is best at’.

Women spoke – Bernie listened

By Sam Inman

WITH MARGARET BECKETT standing as the ‘women’s candidate’ in the Labour deputy leadership contest, and Bryan Gould proclaiming his ‘woman-friendly’ New Man image in the leadership election, one might have felt that their campaigns would have welcomed an opportunity to talk to women at the grassroots of the movement.

But these days important Labour leaders do not have the time, or even feel the need, to attend meetings such as last weekend’s ‘Women speak – Labour listens?’ sponsored by Women for Socialism, Labour Women in NAC, Women in Black Sections and the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

As it happened, only Bernie Grant was able to attend – Ken Livingstone having been incapacitated by the sudden onset of the hangover from his campaign. The only candidate who did not even bother to send apologies was John Prescott, although the rest – along with many Labour women MPs – did.

Despite being a fairly small meeting, the level of discussion was extremely good. It was clear from the meeting, as preparation for women’s input into the Campaign Group conference on 20 June, that there was a good level of input into the general meeting of left political debate.

Perhaps the most refreshing part of the meeting was when the problems that young women face were addressed. With several school students present, this was a rare opportunity for many older women to engage with Bernie, to hear how important it is that the left tap into the anger and political ambition of youth and start to positively address ways of working collectively with young people.

Bernie Grant, there to listen and respond, made copious notes before coming back after the discussion to make a very positive contribution to the debate. He made it perfectly clear we needed to take this new generation of leader – unlike Livingstone he argued you couldn’t side a cigarette paper between Smith and Gould.

He did say that he personally would be voting for Prescott, but agreed that a campaign of writing his and Livingstone’s names on the ballot papers would be a good idea.

Socialist Campaign Group of MPs

After the general election

Relaunching the Labour Left

Saturday, June 20th
West Indian Centre, Laycock Place, Leeds
11am - 5.30pm

All Labour Party members welcome
Admission: £2 full-time employed/£1 everyone else

For further information contact CSG, c/o Jeremy Corbyn, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7

Crescendo places available; please contact Steve French 071 733 3403
New realism slides rightwards.

It was utterly predictable that following the election defeat the Labour right wing would draw the conclusions that Labour should move further to the right.

Now Jack Cunningham has come out openly for the scrapping of Clause Four - that section of the Labour constitution which calls for the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Revolt

The last time that happened was after Labour's 1959 defeat, when Hugh Gaitskell's attempt to scrap Clause Four led to a massive revolt of the party's ranks.

Time, however, is the centre of the right's offensive is over the links with the trade unions. The attack from all sides on the block vote is not about democratising the Labour Party, it is about weakening its position as the party of the organised working class.

Anyone who saw the gawping performance of AESI president Bill Jordan on Question Time two weeks ago will realise the direction which the far right of the Labour Party wants to go. If Jordan had his way Labour would become just another capitalist party, like the US Democratic Party.

In the two years before the general election Socialist Outlook argued that Kinnockism was heading for a crash; either it would lead to the most right wing Labour government ever, or alternatively towards the imposition of Smith as the new leader and another decisive shift to the right.

It is this latter scenario which is being played out. Of course, a short term destruction of Labour's union links is highly unlikely. Not only will the block vote be retained in some form for the moment, but the unions remain the indispensable basis for financing the party.

But the important thing is the trend of development. The current attack on the block vote is just the beginning of the process, which if unchallenged and uninterrupted would eventually lead to a frontal challenge to the union link, that is why the assault on Labour's union links has to be fought now.

Implicated

In the leadership election however the basis for judging candidates cannot be their attitude to the block vote alone. Whatever candidates like Gould and Prescott say about the unions, they are deeply implicated in new realism, and the whole disorganized process of undermining the labour movement which Kinnockism represented.

The attack on the block vote cannot be combated without rejecting new realism as such. Although it may be possible for the left to make partial political alliances with people like Prescott on the specific point of the block vote, any general political alliance is precluded.

Fighting left unity has to attack new realism all along the line.

German workers double their money

Another slap in the face for Kohl

By Patrick Baker

German engineering workers dealt Helmut Kohl's right wing government another slap in the face, as bosses almost doubled their 3.3 per cent 'anti-inflation' bonus for fears of retribution in terms of massive strike action.

After public sector workers' union OTV had won more than 5 per cent, it was clear that Metall, Europe's biggest union, would not settle for less. And workers in the peace-settling region of Baden-Wurtemberg actually won 5.8 per cent for this year.

Setting the rate

This is likely to set the rate for the rest of the year, but it was not a foregone conclusion. The immediate government reaction was to warn of economic doom and gloom — particularly in the east. Kohl made it clear that any price would not be paid from the massive profits notched up by German industry in the 1980s, but out of workers' pockets.

Government investment in eastern Germany is likely to be the original offers were improved on.

Relief

The bosses' real view was summarised in the Financial Times: 'Generally the deal was greeted with relief for avoiding a damaging and possibly prolonged strike'.

Socialist Outlook

£7000 Development Fund

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK supporters have launched a £7000 development fund to be completed by next November. The fund drive has two objectives — to stabilise the fortnightly production of the paper, and to buy new equipment.

When the newspaper was launched we relied heavily on the equipment acquired up to seven years ago to produce a monthly magazine. Much of that equipment is now wearing out and becoming unreliable.

More up-to-date equipment will make a substantial contribution to a more attractive and better laid-out paper.

We have entered a period of rapid political changes, domestically and internationally. It is now clear that the semi-collapse of Stalinism has completely failed to stabilise international capitalism.

The strikes in Germany, the uprising in Los Angeles and other US cities, and the turmoil in Thailand are indicators of the period we are entering. At home the left is undergoing a radical change as it debates the consequences of the electoral defeat. In this political situation the need for revolutionary Marxist ideas is greater than ever.

Over the past few months our sales and subs have been going up. Help us ensure that we can continue to go forward.

Our thanks to two supporters in Potters Bar who kicked off the fund drive this week with an £100 donation.

Send all donations to: Socialist Outlook(FD), PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.
Rail union climbs down on Plan

**Outlook**

**Home News**

**NUT surrender brings mass sackings for teachers**

**IN THE WAKE of the NUT Easter conference, which failed to vote for effective action against job cuts, the NUT has admitted that thousands of teachers now face the sack. The sackings stem directly from the government education reforms, especially Local Management of Schools (LMS) which puts schools in charge of their own budgets.**

Ironically it is the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers which is threatening strike action against redundancies, rather than the NUT.

But NUT members at Walthamstow Girls school say that, for the first time, they have been invited to join the NUT conference call for strike action against redundancies from the Socialist Teachers Alliance were defeated by a combination of the right wing, led by general secretary Doug McAvoy, and the so-called Broad Left.

As the deadline for redundancies looms, more and more teachers will be getting a nasty surprise from their postman. It is the result of years of sell-out from NUT leaders, and of the capitulation by local authority unions and Labour councils to rate capping and the poll tax.

With a public spending deficit of £6 billion, and the Maistrach demands of economic harmonisation to be met, the government will over the next two years make the big- gest cuts in public services seen since the Tories came to power in 1979.

Waiting for the next Labour government won't pay either for teachers of any other section of public sector workers.

**Europe-wide anti-racist mobilisations called**

**ANTI-RACIST and anti-fascist organisations from all over Europe met in Strasbourg on 15 May to discuss co-ordinated continent-wide action.**

Britain was represented by the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA).

An initial proposal was for co-ordinated demonstrations on 9 November, the anniversary of 'Crystal Night' when the Nazis smashed the windows of Jewish-owned shops all over Germany.

But the 9 November proposal was blocked by SOS-Racisme from France, and replaced by a more general call for action around that date.

The ARA is calling a national Convention on 13 June, at the University of London Union, Malet St. Delegates are allowed from national and local organisations. Contact ARA, PO Box 2578, London N5 1UF. 071-607-5988.

**Europe-wide anti-racist mobilisations called**

**Nurses lead new fightback against cuts and closures**

**By John Lister**

DESPERATE managers at London's University College and Middlesex Hospitals, wrestling with a £20m deficit, are closing beds and trying to cut 630 posts for newly-qualifying nurses. But nursing staff, with official support from NUPE and COHSE, have fought back.

Following the lead of their colleagues in Bloomsbury & Holborn's mental health unit, whose successful strike action forced management to increase staffing levels, they have staged angry strikes and protests beginning on May 15, with a further walkout on May 29. This battle is likely to run for some weeks, but it is only the first of many that are likely to be fought in London and throughout the country, as NHS chiefs try to balance their books in the Tories' new internal market by cutting staff and services.

In Central Manchester, staff have protestted at chiefs' plans for cuts of

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**Europe-wide anti-racist mobilisations called**

**Nurses lead new fightback against cuts and closures**

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**Europe-wide anti-racist mobilisations called**

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Why oil workers' leader will back Unshackle the Unions conference

North Sea battle for union rights

Socialist Outlook spoke to RONNIE MCDONALD, President of the Offshore Industry Union committee (OIUC).

The OIUC, a union for offshore oil workers formed to fill the gap left by the inadequacies of 'on-shore' unions, has been met with hostility from both oil bosses and the TUC.

But increasing numbers of oil workers are turning to it. Ronnie is to be one of the speakers at the coming Unshackle the Unions conference.

The OIUC are to hold their founding conference on June 27/28. What is its importance?

This conference will mark the end of the two-year process towards legal certification of the OIUC as a trade union.

A union conference is legally recognised and indeed should act as the supreme governing body of a trade union. It will also endorse the objectives of the union and agree a constitution.

Steps towards certification began once sufficient oil workers had begun to turn to the OIUC for action over safety on the North Sea.

The conference will also continue the debate on the practical organisation of members on oil platforms, where they have to operate clandestinely for fear of victimisation.

The process will continue until unions are able to operate openly throughout the North Sea.

What are the main aims of the OIUC?

Our main area of activity is and will remain the campaign for offshore safety.

It has been proved over the past 22 years that the nine onshore unions which claim members in the area can't work together to tackle the safety issue. It is their failure which gave the OIUC the reason for its existence.

The other important aim is to achieve a democratic union. Where OIUC is able to operate openly, as in Piper Claymore, where there are around 150 members, it is possible to practice democratic organisation.

On other platforms, anyone found to be an OIUC member can kiss their career goodbye. This clearly restricts the democracy of the union. It is this non-acceptance of unions which is the main structural problem facing the OIUC.

Piper Claymore has recently been taken over by Elf, the first time this company has operated in the British sector. It has a very relaxed attitude to union organisation, in contrast with other operators.

Has the attitude of other unions to OIUC changed?

The leadership of other unions have become more hostile to OIUC, but when we are able to address union members they give support. At the recent CPSA conference a member of their executive described us as a 'breakaway scab union the same as the UDM'.

We fortunately had the opportunity to counter these accusations which we totally reject. First, we are not a breakaway union. The other nine unions have failed to cooperate in the North Sea for 22 years. The OIUC is a unifying factor acting primarily on safety.

Also, the OIUC has never asked any member to resign from another union. We encourage members to retain their membership of their existing onshore union when they join the OIUC.

This dual-card approach encourages union participation and is the opposite of 'scabbing'.

By their failure to cooperate or solidarise, it is the other unions who are breaking away from union traditions. When the issues were presented to them, the CPSA members supported the OIUC.

Why are you going to the Unshackle the Unions conference?

During the two major North Sea disputes between 1989 and 1991, the OIUC suffered from a lack of a network of resources and support. For example, when Shell took legal action, lawyers' fees cost OIUC £12,600. But through solidarity networks we now have links with sympathetic lawyers who can donate assistance. And during these disputes, trade unionists throughout the UK donated more than £60,000.

No one organisation can stand on its own. We clearly need a network of solidarity between trade unions, so that we can pool resources. We want to participate in setting up such a network as a network assisting trade union.
The rise of Europe's far right

IN RECENT elections far-right organisations like the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Freedom Party in Austria and the Lombard League in Italy have made spectacular gains. What lies behind the rise of the far right, and how can it be fought? Socialist Outlook spoke to OLIVER MACDONALD, a member of the New Left Review editorial board.

For forty years many people thought that fascism and the extreme right was dead. What lies behind its new rise?

The essential background is the economic and social crisis of the Western economies which started in the 1970s. This includes, of course, the growth of mass unemployment, the housing crisis, the growth of poverty, the fiscal crisis of the state and other well-known crisis symptoms.

This has two connected consequences for bourgeois politics; the imposition of harsh austerity and anti-welfare policies involved the gradual emergence of more authoritarian types of bourgeois governments, like Thatcherism in Britain, and led to a reorganisation of capitalist politics.

This was an attempt to insulate all government decision-making from pressures from below and force official policies into a narrow right-wing straight jacket.

But as part of this, and in line with the generalised cynicism about the mainstream parties, was a reorganisation of the right wing of capitalist politics.

It is a mistake to see new parties, especially pro-capitalist parties, as emerging simply 'from below'. New capitalist parties are generally the result of the mobilisation of elites, or influential groups of intellectuals, around new projects.

Thus we see in the alliance around Le Pen in France the crucial role of people organised in the Club D'Holloge, whose origins were in the Gaullist RPR. Or the people around the Schoenhuber, the leader of the Republicans in Germany, who came out of the CSU - the Bavarian wing of Kohl's party.

These people were able to link up with more sinister forces, namely the semi-submerged fascist currents and neo-fascist currents who had been marginalised, or kept their heads down, since the defeat of fascism in 1945.

The nexus of the question is the merging of hard right, authoritarian, neo-liberal currents, with the old fascists. So in Germany the Schoenhuber crowd linked up with people from the NPD, a neo-Nazi group founded in the 60s; the same happened with the German Peoples Union, an organisation which the working class could turn that is the essence of the labour movement crisis.

As a subsidiary point I would argue that the far left didn't understand the dynamic of the emerging crisis in Europe, from the viewpoint of the internationalisation of capital, and the need for internationalist responses. This would have meant a socialist programme to revitalize the continent and generate economic growth, a programme for a united socialist Europe.

In a situation of growing nationalism, the 'natural' defenders of nationalism, the far right, are back on the rise. And we see this in the growth of anti-federalist currents in most of the parties of the right in Europe.

The traditional petty-bourgeoisie has declined, doesn't this rebirth of fascism mean the mass base, the kind of mass base that the German and Italian fascists had?

Yes, but we are not having a simple re-run of the German and Italian fascist movements.

If we call these parties 'neo-fascist', we mean they are the functional equivalents of the inter-war fascist parties. Anti-labour movement, anti-progressive, the new parties of the counter-revolution.

But are they the real equivalents? Surely inter-war fascism was characterised by its role as the organised armed gangs which physically crushed the labour movement?

This raises the question of the political programme, the political essence of these movements.

One of the problems in analysing this is that much of the traditional thinking of the left is that the fascists were simply a defensive reaction by the ruling class to conquer the revolution.

Of course the fascists and Nazis were that; but not only that. One part of their base was the frenzied petty-bourgeoisie crushed between the working class and capital. But they got strong support from sections of the bourgeoisie who had never accepted liberal democracy.

But today there is no insur- gent, revolutionary labour movement like the old Communist parties in their revolutionary period. So the programme of the counter-revolution is pursued by different types of parties with a different social base.

It is by no means clear that today the bourgeoisie wants to defeat the working class. The experience with dictatorship led to
some curious results, if you look at the overall balance sheet of Hitler and Mussolini for their respective ruling classes.

A resort to dictators is unlikely, if for no other reason than the forms of liberal democracy give fantastically good access to the bourgeoisie in controlling governments.

Traditional petty-bourgeois layers are not the only possible source of support for radical right populist capitalist parties. If the crisis deepens they can win support in new middle class layers, and even demoralised sectors of the working class, especially the unemployed - as did Hitler of course.

What is unclear is what the final programme of the far-right parties will be.

But if the Front National came to power in France through the ballot box, would it really be anything but a rather nasty right wing fascist government? Would it be real fascism?

If the Front National came to power, it could have a different appearance to the one it has now. What I'm saying is that you can carry out the essential programme of the counter-revolution, imposing massive historical defeats on the working class, the without resorting to an openly Nazi-type of state.

You could maintain an anti-communist bourgeois political parties, but utilise a feature of democracy the Nazis were very keen on - the plebiscite.

Don't forget that frequently after 1933 the Nazis resorted to plebiscites to get popular support for their measures. And with the structure of mass communications today, you can imagining Le Pen, if he were president could use the press and TV to organise plebiscites.

You already have wide Western 'democracy' fantastic anti-popular legal powers. We have laws which allow these legal powers used against the labour movement without any attempt to deport immigrant workers en masse.

But of course Europe does have one 20th century experience of mass deportations of ethnic minorities - the mass expulsion of the Jews from Germany and central Europe. The extermination programme really got under way in 1941. Until then, Himmler was merely expelling the Jews. This kind of thing could easily happen if a Le Pen-type government came to power, irrespective of whether it conforms with the classical model of inter-war fascism.

The great danger is that the left, on the grounds that the Front National or the German Republic are not classical fascist movements, will underestimate the massive damage that authoritarian government of these new extreme right parties would do.

In my view the complete prostration of the social democrats and liberal democratic forces before the neo-liberal, anti-welfare state offensive of the right and far right is disastrous, and can play into the hands of the far right parties.

Le Pen and those like him have a programme of gutting the essence of the post-1945 consensus, of social and democratic rights, even if they preserve some of the forms.

Is what you're saying then that the form which the fascist movement took in the inter-war years was determined by the existence of a revolutionary wing of the working class movement which had to be militarily crushed? And that today the same programme can be implemented without recourse to the extreme.

That's exactly what I'm saying. Except that the form of inter-war fascism was not entirely determined by the need to crush the Communist parties.

It was also because important sectors of the ruling classes had never committed themselves to liberal democracy, and saw it as a weak form of government which opened itself up to a revolutionary challenge.

Many of these sectors were not modern capitalist forces at all.

Another factor was the need to unify the different fractions of the ruling classes, which were pulling in so many different directions. The emergence of dictators was a coercive way of doing that.

But of course the experience of fascism in its old form was an important learning experience for the ruling classes. The problem with dictators is that they can have crummy kitchen cabinets which make all kinds of irrational decisions from the point of view of capital accumulation. That's why ruling class support for old-style fascism is unlikely.

How should the left respond? Is it a matter of street demonstrations to expose the fascist core of these movements? To fighting against racism? Or more generally advancing a socialist programme to build an alternative?

All these are valid approaches which need to be integrated into a coherent socialist response. But demonstrations and other mobilisations against the new fascists are very important. All of these movements, while not being based on mass movements in semi-military, street-fighting wings.

In Germany we have the great threat to immigrant workers represented by the skinhead movement; and in France the Front National youth do engage in attacks on immigrant workers. So I am very much in favour of an activist approach towards demonstrations and mobilisations against the far-right parties.

Mobilisation against the far right is directly linked to the question of self-defence of the black communities. So, while in Britain the fascist parties are relatively marginal, the level of racist attacks in the 1980s has been going up and up. Self-defence of immigrant workers needs to be linked directly to mobilisation against fascist provocations, like marches through black or immigrant areas.

Exposure of Nazi links can help isolate far right. Here a BNP member gives a Nazi salute at an anti-fascist demonstration.
Democratic rights in a new ‘Commonwealth’

Benn’s challenge to bosses’ Europe

TONY BENN is introducing a parliamentary Bill proposing the creation of a Commonwealth of Europe. Part of the function of the Bill, he says, is to fight the idea that you are either for the EC and capitalist Europe being built through the Maastricht process, or otherwise you are anti-European. His Bill proposes a Commonwealth including all European states, not just Western Europe, and outlines fundamental social and democratic rights that it would embody. SAM INMAN and WILL McMATHON talked to him about it.

Socialist Outlook: Can you outline the main features of your Commonwealth of Europe Bill?

Tony Benn: It is a Bill to replace the Treaty of Rome with what I call a Treaty of London, to extend the framework of European co-operation beyond the countries of the European Community to the whole of Europe, including all the Eastern European countries and former USSR.

The principles I put down here for the foundation of an association of the peoples of Europe – the Commonwealth – are not anything to do with the free movement of capital and labour.

TB: It must be based on mutual respect, the fully self-governing status of member countries, working for co-operation, committed to uphold the Charter of the UN, believing that the different identities of member states must be preserved, resolving to work for those ends with goodwill, and a spirit of tolerance and understanding.

I also include a Charter of Rights, but not the same as the Bill of Rights that the lawyers want. It has social and economic rights, the things that would require a very active political role.

The reason I’ve done it, is that this idea that you’re either pro- or anti-Europe is a complete illusion. The question is what sort of Europe we want.

SC: What are you trying to do is to say that there’s only one type of Europe that you have to be for or against. It’s like saying if you’re anti-Maori you’re anti-British, if you’re anti-monarchy you’re anti-British. It’s not anti-British at all, it’s a question of trying to offer people an alternative perspective.

Tony Benn: The Labour leadership has completely capitulated to the EC idea. What Smith says to himself is, if there’s any possibility of a Labour government being elected, there must be a run on the pound that the economy would be destroyed before Labour got there. So if you’re in the EC, then they would control our economy.

SC: Would you prioritize your ideas, in the Bill, as a socialist alternative for Europe?

TB: It isn’t explicitly socialist. It would provide that if a state wanted to vote for a different system it could. But it would make it possible. It is an enabling bill for socialism, which

SC: What is the Common Market about is the liberation of capital and the enslaving of labour. We have to have a programme for the control of capital and the liberation of labour – and that must be done on an international basis.

TB: There are some fairly radical proposals. But it’s presented within the framework of you’ve got to have the power to do it. For example we could demand all these things in practice, but in theory we couldn’t achieve them. It would be illegal to do it.

SC: Your Bill is not going to get passed by Parliament, what are you intending to use it for?

TB: Of course it won’t get passed but these things can have an educational role. I’ve seen it round a little bit. I’ve been working on this for about ten years one way or another. I think there are a lot of people who may be open to this alternative, look at the striking German workers for example. If as a result of the strikes they got subsidies to the industries they work in, the European Court would say that was illegal, I think there’s an audience for our sort of ideas.

SC: How do you see events around the Maastricht Treaty evolving now?

TB: I think that the Maastricht Treaty and those moves towards federalism are now a dead duck. I’m much less worried about it than I was. The Common Market was set up after the war to prop-up capitalism in Western Europe, NATO to defend capitalism in Western Europe at the time of the Cold War. The ‘Russian threat’ has disappeared.

But we are now seeing in Russia an attempt to apply capitalist forces having a catastrophic effect upon the standard of living of the Russian people. Yeltsin is a demagogue, a capitalist, a Thatcherite, even fascist in what he’s doing.

So people there, although quite properly they’re not prepared to go back to the old system, must be thinking now quite carefully.

It’s producing a disintegration. If you remove a socialist perspective and analysis from the political scene, then what happens is the vacuum left is filled by religious fundamentalism, nationalism, racism, anti-semitism, every sort of superstition and dangerous nonsense.
they've never liked the EC, but they were
told by Kinnoch they've got to live in the real
world of apartheid.

Kinnoch had to persuade the party into ac-
tcepting the EC, but they don't really ac-
cept a federalised capitalism Europe.

Now we're out for another five years, and
the pressures on all our trade union
members to resist all these cuts and restric-
tions and restrains coming from the

My fear is that if you go along this
road, it'll either lead to people coping
out completely or going nationalist. If
the Irish or anyone else return to neo-
capsim, they certainly shouldn't be able
to control legislation governing Britain.

Of course we would have to work with
the Italian working class movement, so
underpinning this has got to be the
closest association between the different
socialist movements in Europe.

SD: Jacques Delors has argued for
increased powers to the European
Commission. Some socialists support
this, and at the same time there is a
debate within the left about its
acceptability. What would you reply to
this?

TB: I don't think that progress ever
comes from above. I think this idea that a
Good King or a Kind Commission will
give you your rights, runs contrary to the whole history of
working class struggle.

This is all about changing the balance
of power in the British constitution, let
alone the European one. It is about the
corrosion and destruction of our
democracy. The people in the City of
London and so on, have been so worried
since the onset of democracy, since the
victory of the Suffragettes, universal suf-
frage and the welfare state, they are
saying 'why do we keep paying for the
Crown, through the Prime Minister, so
that the Crown can make the laws of
Brussels.

SD: With capital organising on an
over greater international level, and
seizing the huge power the
multinationals have over the whole
world economy, not just the Europeans,
doesn't it mean we have to prepare new forms of international workers' organisations to fight this?

TB: The future of socialism has to be
thought through very carefully now.

The collapse of the centralised
Stalinist system showed that without the vital ingredient of democracy
that project was an absolute dead
dead.

What the Common Market is about is the
liberation of capital and the enslav-
ing of labour. We have to have a
preoccupation for the control of capital and
the liberation of labour – and that must
be done on an international basis.

SD: You say the 'objective'
conditions for socialism have never
been ripe, but that of course begs
the question of the subjective
need. Given the last years have
been a time of defeat, some
sections of the left are drifting over
to the idea that the class struggle is
dead. Don't the recent events in
Germany and Los Angeles show this
to be totally untrue?

TB: The intellectuals who say all this,
the professional pessimists, are
themselves doing quite well out of
the tax cuts that the Tories have
made for the rich – and then say that
the class struggle has gone! I don't
want to go back around bald but all
these leftists who write articles in papers
and appear on TV to say this, there's
something quite funny about it, it
doesn't correspond.

Until we can root socialism back into
ordinary people's experiences, represent
and articulate their views, support their
struggle, we can't really talk about
having a base for socialism.

If you're not on a picket line, if you
didn't support the miners' strike and you
don't support struggles now, then your
credentials as a representative of working
people might be legitimately ques-
tioned. The same thing, of course, can
be said of most of the trade union leaders,
Bill Jordan and the rest.

There is an element among these pes-
simistic intellectuals who don't see
any future, who see Britain condemned
ever to being some sort of slum. And
because it's difficult to mobilise people
at this point in time, they conclude
that they don't want to mobilise anyone
to change things. But it's a complete il-
lusion that you can bypass the working
class, and just look to the EC.

You see socialism has become a rather
refined intellectual thing, and what you
have to do is root the debate on Europe in
more real experiences. That's the
goal.
By Paul Clarke

The slaughter of up to 100 pro-democracy demonstrators in Bangkok last week has cast a spotlight on the persistence of military rule behind the facade of "democracy".

The army carried out a bloodless coup in 1988, and promised a return to civilian rule. But the 22 March elections gave governmental power to political parties controlled by the army and, especially, the air force.

Their appointment of a non-elected prime minister, General Suchinda Krapayao, led to an explosion of anger amongst the middle class and workers of Bangkok.

Thailand has, except for short periods, been ruled by the military since 1932, when the army pushed aside the king and his immediate circle. Military rule reflected the social structure of the country: a small working class, and a weak middle class. National unity and cohesion was provided by the armed forces.

Electronics

But Thailand has been undergoing rapid social changes, becoming a centre for the assembly of electronic goods from components. Its main exports are no longer agricultural goods like rice and tea, but computers and silicon chips.

These social changes have created a strong middle class, especially in the Bangkok area, which no longer sees why the corrupt military should hold all the reins of power.

The first major challenge to military rule came in the form of the mass student mobilisations in 1973. At that time the King intervened to prevent an army massacre. But after three years, in 1976, the military finally cracked down with a bloody coup that killed hundreds.

Thousands of the student activists fled to the jungle to join the pro-Chinese Thai Communist Party (CTP) in guerrilla warfare. But following the 1979 border war between Vietnam and China the CTP went into hiding. Its supply lines from China through Laos were blocked by the Vietnamese and their Laotian allies.

The students were disappointed by the ultra-authoritarian and crise-nidden CTP. Gradually they drifted back to the towns. Dispersed, most of them dropped out of political activity.

With the decline of the CTP and the growth of the economy, civilian parties were allowed an increased political role, until the military stormed back in 1980.

The March elections were carefully prepared by the military. Massive corruption was used to buy politicians - a transfer fee of 8 million baht, about $115,000, is thought to be the going rate.

The Chart Thai party was taken over by retired air chief Marshal Somboon Rukhong, a notorious crony of the vice-chair of the National Military Council, Air Chief Marshal Kaset Ronavanij.

The Social Action Party leadership was taken over by a retired general, the Chart Thai, and former army commander, now prime minister, Suchinda Krapayao.

With two other parties effectively under military control, the Chart Thai stacked the electoral cards. But in the capital Bangkok the Palang Dharma party, led by former army general Chamlong Srimuang, won a landslide. This party fought on an anti-corruption ticket against the pro-military parties.

Even if the elections had been an exercise in staged-managed "democracy", with massive corruption and vote buying, the military might have got away with it.

But they made the fatal mistake of appointing Suchinda as prime minister, when he was not even an elected MP. The fact of continuing military rule was too open not to provoke opposition.

The 48-member cabinet announced on 17 April also contained a host of top generals and people in the pay of the armed forces. Chamlong Srimuang responded with mass rallies and a one-man hunger strike.

This set the scene for last week's rioting and the eventual bloody repression of the revolt. The dramatic intervention of the King to restrain the army has put Suchinda's future in doubt. It seems unlikely that the mass movement will be held back for long.

No left winger

It is unclear whether organised left-wing forces have been involved in the revolt against military rule. Obviously Chamlong is nothing like left wing himself.

Although personally an ascetic, he represents the middle class which is mired in corruption and hungry for a share of power.

Indeed, the fight against military rule is precisely a campaign by the urban well-to-do to implant themselves in the power-structures, and against the monopoly of power by the officers of the military academy's "Class 59".

The social forces set in motion however go way beyond the military's leadership fighting for power.

The tragedy in the present situation is that after the debacle of the CPT, there is no viable mass left wing party capable of challenging for power.

But the destabilisation of the rule of the officers creates the best conditions for the creation of such a mass working class force.
Asking for the Earth – and getting no answers

'There are none so fit to break the chains as those who wear them' James Connolly, Irish socialist and republican, once said. Apply that wise adage to the Earth Summit and few, if any, of the Rio delegates would be allowed to attend. SAM INMAN argues that it is high time the left worked out its vision of a socialist strategy to defend the planet we live on.

IGNORE THE HYPE, this month's events in Rio are just a very expensive charade, masking the real causes and effects of the world's social and environmental crises.

If anything constructive comes out of the summit, we'll be seeing the fluttering of porcine wings in our parched political skies this summer. No-one on the left should deny the enormity of the world's ecological problems. Over the past weeks the media have been full of stories about EC energy taxes, global warming, population control, deforestation, and 'third world' debt.

Anyone who saw John Pilger's excellent TV documentary in May – War By Other Means – knows ecological destruction in the developing 'third world' is related to the imperialist plundering of these countries' economies. This is precisely the reason why the US, Japanese and EC governments have used their clout in the UN to water down the Earth Summit's agenda to the point where it is now virtually meaningless.

$1.3 trillion

Many of these powerful governments are facing very difficult domestic problems. The last thing they need is to arrive on the world stage at Rio, ready to argue that 'third world' countries should stop cutting down their rainforests (which is just about the only ecological point of agreement between them) only to be reminded very public-

ly of the $1.3 trillion that has flowed from 'third world' to 'first' over the last ten years.

In Pilger's documentary, Susan George pointed out the strong correlation existing between those 'third world' countries that are the top deforesters, and those that have the top debtors. Only a fraction of the forests are cleared by landless peasants seeking to scrape meagre short-term subsistence from poor-quality forest soils.

Most are cleared for industrial, developmental, to build factories under transnational corporate control that utilise the cheap labour and natural resources of the 'third world'.

Productive agricultural land is also being swallowed up by the same process – the merciless drive for mega-profits.

No matter how 'green' they claim to be, this is the reality of World Bank/IMF western government 'development strategies'.

Poverty

The consequences are there for everyone to see – massive poverty, population drift to overcrowded and under-resourced cities, homelessness, unemployment, drought, famine, disease, the list is endless. There is only one answer to this – the complete and unconditional cancelling of the debt plus reparations for the parasitic looting of literally billions by the imperialists.

While many on the left could be accused of ignoring the problems before the spectacular success of the Retail Green Party in the 1989 Euro-elections ensured that the politics of ecology were placed on the left's agenda.

There have been two false approaches on the left.

One is to deny that there is anything unecological about traditional socialist programmes for change. The left frequently criticises the Greens for fear that there are limits to economic growth (and sometimes even consumerism).

The other is to condemn all previous socialist practice as inherently anti-ecological. This response is entirely within the framework of 'post-class' radical politics and dovetails neatly with the obsessional search, on the part of an increasing number of left intellectuals, to find a Red-Green-Democratic-Citizens'-Alternative.

Sustainable

These false approaches need to be combatted by outlining an ecologically sustainable socialist alternative.

While there may not be theoretical limits to economic production in an absolute sense – depending on the nature of that production – there are certainly realistic material limits to unfettered industrialisation.

There needs to be massive global investment made into detailed ecological research to ascertain exactly what those limits are. This information should be freely available for public scrutiny – an ecological as well as financial opening of the books.

Any sort of democratic ecological planning requires this sort of knowledge. But, of course, there are some things we know already.

We know, for example, that polluting 'greenhouse gases' – principally carbon dioxide, but also others – need to be drastically cut back. Even the most radical of bourgeois proposals promise only to stabilise emissions at current levels.

Emission cutbacks need to go far deeper than this, though. But so far the loudest voices from the green movement only call for 'energy taxes' or for 'abolishing the private car'.

Socialists would be all in favour of heavily penalising industries that churned out enormous quantities of poison every year.

But all the proposals about 'energy taxes' that I've ever read about would result in the costs being handed on to the vast majority of working class people – it's currently fashionable to call these 'consumers'.

Abolishing the car would not be a problem if we had an extensive, cheap, accessible and ecologically safe public transport system.

Utopian

But this we certainly do not have today. It is utopian to call for this now, and will certainly win us no friends among carworkers whose jobs and livelihoods are already being massively decimated – unless a positive alternative is presented whereby no-one loses their means of survival.

What both of these examples show, and there are plenty more besides, is that you cannot successfully challenge the very nature of capitalist industrial production without at the same time offering those exploited by the system an alternative – you cannot talk about changing the system, without also looking at who owns and controls it.

It should be no surprise to anyone, that the Earth Summit will not produce anything other than yet more hot air. There is no solution to the world's enormous problems with the current imperialist framework.

In its ruthless systemic drive for profit, 'free market' capitalism is waging war not only against the impoverished masses of the world but also against the complex ecological support system that humankind is an intrinsic part of.

Immediate measures

Even if we do not know all the answers to an ecologically-sustainable socialism, there are urgent measures which could be taken to immediately tackle global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer and world poverty.

The Earth Summit will not even try, because solving these problems hits immediately at the interests of world capitalism. Demanding action on these questions, and working out detailed proposals for a sustainable socialist society, must be put on the left's agenda.

Socialist Outlook will carry further articles discussing the challenges and problems of green politics. What should socialists make of calls for nationalisation of the nuclear power industry? Is there a future for nuclear power? What sort of workers' control should there be for ecological sustainability? Watch out for future issues.

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Stabilising pollution emissions at current levels is not enough
**Feedback**

We welcome letters on any subject but please keep them brief. Letters over 350 words will be cut. Send your letters to: Socialist Outlook PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU

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**Hands off Outrage!**

One of the signs of retreat from class politics is a focus on individual issues rather than general questions. This has broadly been the case in times of retreat for the workers’ movement since the decline of the Chartists in the 1850s.

Your article, or rather long complaint, about Outrage seems to be another shot in this 130-year process (SO21). It is of course quite possible to doubt whether 'radical querness' will really do much to achieve lesbian and gay liberation. But for socialists the decision by Outrage to allow big-comers, gay or straight, black or white to join the fight for such liberation on an equal footing should be welcomed.

Of course the oppressed should organise to fight their own oppression.

But that's very different from arguing, as you seem to, that the oppressed can gain liberation only by their own efforts. Socialists have no interest in splitting people into smaller and smaller groups to pursue individual issues. 'Only generalise' should remain our key slogan and task.

Keith Fleet
Tottenham

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**Socialist Organiser out-lefted by Ken?**

I read with some interest Paul Clarke's article on Socialist Organiser in issue 21. Perhaps they have a hidden agenda? That is, that their real opposition to Ken Livingstone is that he is well to the left of them on an equal footing should be welcomed.

Of course the oppressed should organise to fight their own oppression.

But that's very different from arguing, as you seem to, that the oppressed can gain liberation only by their own efforts. Socialists have no interest in splitting people into smaller and smaller groups to pursue individual issues. 'Only generalise' should remain our key slogan and task.

Keith Fleet
Tottenham

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**Beyond left orthodoxy...**

**In his article on Socialist Organiser Paul Clarke finds the thought of worked-out ideas dominating politics, even when the ideas offend the average conventional wisdom, so alarming that he can interpret it only as eccentric, 'bizarre, 'sectarian' and 'loopy'.**

And if the alarming bra are not vomiting all hell has to gargle them so that they do seem impressed.

Item: SO said it was 'good news' that Gerry Adams was defeated in the general election. Our argument? That the defeat was a blow to Sinn Fein's 'incredible' 'irrepressible' Catholic fundamentalism.

Instead of dealing with this argument Clarke invents two quotes which do not appear in the article at all, that the result was a result of a rejection of sectarianism, and that the SDLP is 'the party of the Second International'.

In fact the SO article called the SDLP a bourgeois party. I hope that Clarke understands that we would welcome Adams' defeat without positively supporting the SDLP.

**Item: SO attacks Ken Livingstone. But, says Clarke, 'someone on the left' has prepared to get up and fight back against the new reality'.**

So we should 'stand behind Livingstone's campaign, while quite rightly making criticisms of his tactics'.

Where are Outlook's criticisms? Where is the SDLP's 'fight against new realism'? Its main point was to ridicule John Smith's redistributive tax policies from the right.

Livingstone's candidacy is not that of Left against right, but of a shyster trying to promote himself as the new leader of the Labour left.

**Item: SO students intend to take NUS to court over its abolition of Winter Conference.**

Winter conference is crucial for spreading ideas and calling the NUS leaders to account. After a series of dirty tricks, the NUS leaders are now declaring Winter Conference 'abolished' on a 'presidential ruling', against a declaration by the previous conference that it has not been validly abolished.

But says Clarke we have to tell the NUS leaders have their way in the name of 'independence of the NUS'. Independence from what? From their own conference?

**Item: SO denounces the whole of the far left as irrational, biologically against Israel for 'backing the Palestinian struggle'.**

Another Clarke's quote? We ourselves back the Palestinian struggle, but nevertheless those who want Israeli wiped off the map - and they are not the whole of the left.

**Item: SO gives 'almost un-critical support to Boris Yeltsin'. Another Clarke's quote, although without quote marks in his article. We have called Yeltsin 'a Mussolinii, a nationalist demagogue, an enforcer of market madness'. If anyone should give me almost uncritical support I hope they choose kinder words than that.

Item: SO is increasingly based on students. Untrue (compare our trade union coverage with Outlook's). But SO does attract young people willing to challenge all received ideas. And the less young of us try to stay true to our ideas, instead of collapsing into weary alarm at all ideas beyond the bland, carefully-hedged rehearsals of left orthodoxy.

Martin Thomas
Socialist Organiser

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**Socialist Organiser wants judges to defend NUS democracy**

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Peru coup leaves workers in a squeeze

By Roland Wood

THE MILITARY coup unleashed in Peru last month followed years of increasing militarisation, beginning under former President Alan Garcia. Before April, 40 per cent of the country was already under military control or administration.

As soon as Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori came to power in July 1990, he imposed an austerity programme that was unprecedented even by Latin American standards.

The results have been bitter – the economy has plunged further into recession and shanty town markets were closed to try and prevent the spread of cholera. Millions have lost jobs, with no aid or benefits from the state.

This economic policy has been carried out in the shadow of the military. Like other Latin American countries during the period of so-called ‘democratic opening’ in the early 1990s, the military in Peru retained significant influence in the state apparatus.

Power

However, increasing pressure for the military has not translated into any greater efficiency in its protracted war with Sendero Luminoso or the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). The Peruvian Army is 50,000 strong compared to just 5,000 Sendero and 1,000 MRTA.

An MRTA patrol in the upper Huallaga Valley

On the contrary, Sendero is apparently extending its influence, in particular in the capital Lima. Sendero believe they are nearing the threshold of the ‘strategic offensives for taking power’.

Article 82 of the Peruvian Constitution states that the people have the right to rise up against an illegally constituted government – which is clearly the case with Fujimori’s administration. Sendero have been milking the situation to gain international legitimacy.

With the subsequent rise in repression, Sendero are better placed than any other organisation to respond. Increasingly they are seen as the only effective form of opposition there is.

Initially Sendero’s violence was directed against corrupt elements, families and individuals who had often ruthlessly dominated whole communities for centuries. This won them support.

But with the spread of their activity, many on the Peruvian left began to characterise Sendero not so much as Marxist but as Pol Potist. The reason? Sendero began to attack the left as much as the right.

They have been responsible for the ‘execution’ of important trade union and peasant leaders. One of their most recent victims was a leading activist in the women’s movement, Maria Elena Moyano.

Vicious

How is it that Sendero have been able to continue to grow despite their particularly vicious form of sectarianism?

They move into a community, kill the rich and the police, and then leave. The Army move in to find out who the leaders of this community are. They are killed, they disappear, or are put in prison.

They find out what families helped Sendero and then kill them. Then the Army leaves too.

Sendero return to find out who informed the people who were killed. Those who are found guilty are then killed. Sendero then leave.

In these conditions the poor are squeezed between the army and Sendero. They are forced with a choice in a climate of fear. Further, membership or support for Sendero guarantees food every day.

Democratic workers and peasants organisations are squeezed in the same way. Where such organisations have developed, Sendero has been smashed.

This is what happened in the district of Puno, in the north-west of the country where Sendero first emerged. Where such organisations have not developed, Sendero has grown.

Significant sections of the Latin American left have for many years understood the centrality of democracy to the overall struggle for socialism. But Sendero have quite consciously rejected this. They seek to both the only organisation leading the mass movement – whether the Peruvian masses like it or not.

Stalemate in South Africa

By Charlie van Gelderen

AFTER MONTHS of negotiations, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which is supposed to draw up a blueprint for the new ‘democratic South Africa’, has reached deadlock.

Since the opening of CODESA II in February, there have been hundreds of debates and almost as many ‘working groups’. The sticking point has always been the determination of De Klerk and the National Party that ‘power sharing’ does not mean the end of white dominance.

As Merca Andrews, National Organiser of the Workers’ Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), puts it: ‘Negotiations are only an attempt by the South African government to draw the liberation movement into a deal that offers black people a limited form of democracy – in order to blunt the struggles of working people.’

Bottom line

In the all-white referendum last month, De Klerk laid down his ‘bottom line’ in a pamphlet signed jointly by him and the four National Party provincial leaders. This promised ‘strains on the powers of future presidents to ensure that there would be no risk of a black dictatorship’.

This is what white voters expected when they voted ‘yes’ in the referendum.

De Klerk has made a few significant withdrawals since then, but he has been adamant that South Africa will not end up with a Westminster-type democracy.

His negotiating team at CODESA insists on ‘minority protections’ and ‘checks and balances’ – constitutional

Mandela: pushing for 70 per cent guarantees that blacks will not be able to do things which whites have done to blacks for 400 years.

Interim government

The main negotiating parties – the ANC and the government party – have agreed on the setting up of an interim government whose main function would be the drafting of a new constitution. The ANC has previously insisted this task should be the work of a constituent assembly elected by universal franchise.

At CODESA’s most recent meeting, the working groups entrusted with the arrangements to organise free and fair elections agreed on a system where all parties would share executive control over the security forces, state spending and broadcasting.

A Transitional Executive Council would be set up parallel to standing government structures. All seemed clear for this to be in place by July and possibly elections by the end of the year. Then it all broke down.

The ANC insisted that after the elections the transitional council would decide on the clauses in a new constitution on a two thirds majority.

The government and its allies – Inkatha and some of the ‘homeland’ leaders – wanted 75 per cent. Then the ANC offered a compromise on 70 per cent.

Impasse

But at the time of writing, that 7 per cent is a gap that they cannot bridge. The ANC would lose credibility if it gave in to the government’s demands any more, and the government knows that it could never command more than 35 per cent of the popular vote and would face the loss of the last vestiges of white rule.

While all these negotiations were going on, the massacres of blacks in the townships and on commuter trains have continued, with increasing proof of the involvement of the security forces.

The Johannesburg headquarters of the ANC is under heavily-armed guard, following threats from former agents of an undercover hit-squad, the Civil Cooperation Bureau.

In these conditions, a peaceful solution to South Africa’s problems seems highly problematic – and that could be the undersaturation of the year.

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CPSA leaders hope to do deal with Major

By Dave Oser
CPSA civil service union leaders last week effectively overturned a clear conference decision to recommend rejection of this year’s 4.25 per cent plus performance pay offer, just seconds after losing the vote.

Union president Marion Chambers announced there would be an inquiry into the conduct of branches that tabled emergency resolutions opposing the package.

Delayed

This will delay implementation of the mandate until about the end of next week when the balloting is due to be held.

The maneuver was based on legal advice clearly prepared well in advance. Yet in spite of all of the resolutions out of order, a full two hour debate was held, and a statement made only after the outcome went the wrong way for the platform.

A protest meeting attended by over half of all delegates, including some unopposed right-wingers, agreed to mount a united campaign for a ‘no’ vote.

Postal workers throw down the gauntlet

By Brian Soel
DELEGATES at the postal office workers’ union, UCW, conference told their leaders ‘We are fed up with the executive telling us “The Post Office management won’t like it.”’

The Bournemouth conference voted time and again to ballot for industrial action, reflecting the frustration among postal workers at ‘Business Development’. Delegates voted for action to defend victimised workers in east London, over ‘team working’ and ‘team leaders’, defending jobs and other issues.

The splitting up of the Post Office is clearly aimed at future privatisation,-threatening job losses on a similar scale to British Telecom. If management had hoped that by ‘negotiating’ a new industrial relations package they would weaken the UCW, this conference will come as rude awakening.

The real test will now be whether the membership can make the right-wing UCW leaders carry out the conference decisions. Rank and file organisation is now necessary to organise in support of conference policies, against management attacks and to force the union executive into action.

Support shown to the victimised REM 11 workers in east London at the conference demonstrates that wide support exists for such a grouping.

Students mobilise for NUS democracy

By Duncan Chapple
STUDENT UNION activists are calling for an end to internal attacks on the democracy of the National Union of Students (NUS).

Rather than give a lead to student struggles, the Liberal and Labour-right leadership have failed to defend NUS from threatened government attacks by forcing through structural reforms of the union.

Winter conference

Leaders claimed the central change, the abolition of NUS winter conference, has been agreed by the required two conferences.

But the required majority was only won after all officials added additional voting cards to the ballot box after the close of polling.

In response, Left Unity, the student group that reflects the positions of Socialist Organiser, has launched a campaign to take the union to court. The ‘Campaign for Democracy in NUS’ will launch legal proceedings against the union to get a court order forcing NUS to convene the conference.

Socialist Organiser supporters have claimed that student unions often to their right—the University of London Union, Goldsmiths and Queen Mary Westfield—are backing the Campaign’s case.

They have made it clear that they do not rule out using court action in similar situations if they were to arise in the labour movement. Many activists feel that the NUS leadership has provoked the court action in order to divert student organisational efforts away from campaigns that might antagonise Tory leaders.

But court intervention in NUS would end its tradition of autonomy—that only elected student representatives should rule on its internal affairs and policies.

Pressure group

So activists have launched an ad hoc pressure group ‘Defend Yourself! Defend Your Union!’ (DFYDU) to oppose both the NUS bureaucracy’s rigging of the conference and the dubious court case.

The group has released a statement claiming the court action is a democratic way in which the attempts at structural reform have been made in NUS. We are also opposed to the court action being taken against NUS by the opponents of reform. We call for the resolution of the debate on reform to be carried out in an indisputably fair way—by NUS conference, according to NUS rules.

NUS London activist Andrew Berry said Socialist Outlook is helping to circulate this statement. NUS will not organise action while there is civil war between the right and a misguided layer of the left.

We do not blame Socialist Organiser for this court case.

Blame

’The blame lies with the Labour-right leadership of the union. But Socialist Organiser are wrong to give up the autonomy of NUS. The left can’t defend NUS conference without winning the arguments in the colleges.’

Initial signatures to the appeal:

Manchester University: Doug Wong (Communications Officer); Bill Eyres (Academic Affairs Officer); Jamie Moore (Internals Officer elect); Duncan Chapple (Manchester Area NUS Council).

Anne Taylor (Campaigns Officer, Manchester Polytechnic; Anthony Gregory (President, University College Salisbury); Shelley Campbell (Campaigns Officer, University College Salisbury); Mike Brook (President, Salzed College of FE).

Students must rely on their own strength, not the courts
Quayle blames poor as thousands face jail

Apart from rioters, hundreds were arrested in Los Angeles and San Francisco simply for demonstrating against the Rodney King court verdict.

Open pens

In one San Francisco demonstration of 600 demonstrators were picked up. Hundreds were held for several days with little food and water in open pens. Details of this repression appear in an article in US Marxist Socialist Action by student Jerry Caidwell, arrested with his mother near a demonstration. He says after his arrest:

'We were driven to a big warehouse on the waterfront. I could see hundreds of people who were already there enclosed in pens made out of police barricades.

'There were about 150 people in each. As we arrived we cheered and they cheered back. They threw us in a holding tank with only a cement floor, one bench and an exposed toilet. About 25 of us were packed on top of each other like sardines.

'I was lucky. My mother's boyfriend bailed us out at 4 am, by which time I had slept only 15 minutes.

'In 27 hours of custody I received just an orange and a sandwich. Much of the time during the night it was freezing cold. We were lucky to get out easily. Many people stayed there for days.'

Towards the end of the riots the Los Angeles police department started mass raids on apartment blocks occupied by Mexican-Americans. Hundreds were arrested and made to face deportation as 'illegal'.

'Many of the arrested have been charged with crimes which carry very heavy prison sentences. A big defence campaign is in order. Socialist Outlook will be reporting in coming issues.

Victims

The result is that their victims have included supporters of the collaborationist SDLP and the pro-British loyalists.

The area is a killing field where the British army have executed the closest to 'killing policy' to the full. A series of ambushes which have left no survivors have shown that the British have a far greater capacity for 'terrorism' than the IRA. Now the terror has moved on to attempt to break the will of the civilian population.

The membership of the Parachute Regiment has been expanded to a campaign of brutality that has turned the individual soldier into a human rottweiler.

Sealed off

Recent incidents have included the sealing off of Coalisland, rampaging through the town's bars.

After a fight between youths and troops, where the troops' guns were taken, the Parachute Regiment moved in and a Rambo-like rampage. Shooting from hip, they mowed down four civilians.

All this has left the British in some difficulty. The old war cabinet of Peter Brooke as well as Michael Heseltine have shown that they oppose any cosmetic solution; the fact that they have supported the Parachute Regiment is what sort of solution they have in mind.

The SDLP in Dublin has called for the Parachute Regiment to be kept out of Coalisland, a nonmilitary occupation has been demanded. This is difficult since the Parachutes differ only in degree from other troops. Trade union leaders who regularly run around opposing IRA actions had nothing to say.

When Mates offered his support, he was aware that a number of Parachutes are on trial for shooting dead teenager joyriders.

Posters

For weeks afterwards, the soldiers' poster went outside with a picture of the bodies and the slogan 'Vauxhall Astra - made by robots, stopped by Parachute'.

These road dogs should be withdrawn from Ireland and disbanded. The rest of the British forces should follow in their wake. We have had two decades of this 'peacekeeping'. Enough is enough.

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Brits on the prowl! The six counties - paras are ready to bash out at anyone Irish

Human rottweilers on the loose

John McAnulty writes from Belfast

FOR MOST nationalist workers in the North, the only mystery about the '3 Par' terror campaign is that it has been reported in the press and on TV.

In an interview, Bernadette McAliskey gave the solution: where most troops confine their harassment to nationalist areas, the 'Paras' racist prevention from distinguishing between any breed of 'paddy'.

Victims

The result is that their victims have included supporters of the collaborationist SDLP and the pro-British loyalists.

The area is a killing field where the British army have executed the closest to 'killing policy' to the full. A series of ambushes which have left no survivors have shown that the British have a far greater capacity for 'terrorism' than the IRA. Now the terror has moved on to attempt to break the will of the civilian population.

The membership of the Parachute Regiment has been expanded to a campaign of brutality that has turned the individual soldier into a human rottweiler.

Sealed off

Recent incidents have included the sealing off of Coalisland, rampaging through the town's bars.

After a fight between youths and troops, where the troops' guns were taken, the Parachute Regiment moved in and a Rambo-like rampage. Shooting from hip, they mowed down four civilians.

All this has left the British in some difficulty. The old war cabinet of Peter Brooke as well as Michael Heseltine have shown that they oppose any cosmetic solution; the fact that they have supported the Parachute Regiment is what sort of solution they have in mind.

The SDLP in Dublin has called for the Parachute Regiment to be kept out of Coalisland, a nonmilitary occupation has been demanded. This is difficult since the Parachutes differ only in degree from other troops. Trade union leaders who regularly run around opposing IRA actions had nothing to say.

When Mates offered his support, he was aware that a number of Parachutes are on trial for shooting dead teenager joyriders.

Posters

For weeks afterwards, the soldiers' poster went outside with a picture of the bodies and the slogan 'Vauxhall Astra - made by robots, stopped by Parachute'.

These road dogs should be withdrawn from Ireland and disbanded. The rest of the British forces should follow in their wake. We have had two decades of this 'peacekeeping'. Enough is enough.

NUJ - a crisis set to run and run

By Patrick Baker, NUJ London Magazine

Defying all predictions that it couldn't make it worse, the union has become the hallmark of the current leadership, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) new executive has plunged the union into crisis once again.

The executive has ignored an overwhelming vote by the union's recent conference to reinstate the NUJ's financial controller, Daniel O'Callaghan, at its first meeting. Attempts by the left to implement the conference policy were defeated by a slim margin.

Activists are unwilling to take the step that would really resolve the problem - to sack the acting General Secretary, Jane Ebdell. Ebdell was the mover behind the original sacking and has made it clear that he would not support any difference decision to be implemented.

But sacking him would require major campaign within the union, and few activists have the stomach for it. The recent Steve Turner debate, where sacking the ex-General Secretary cost the union in excess of £100,000, is fresh in people's minds.

Electors for the vacant post of NUJ General Secretary are currently in the pipeline. But the chances of victory for the left's candidates, Miles Barker, are unfortunately slim. The NUJ crisis looks set to run and run.

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Milosevic prepares to destroy Sarajevo – as world looks on

Bloodbath in Bosnia

For the past month, irregular Serbian forces, with the help of the Yugoslav army and airforce, have been tightening their grip on the Bosnian capital Sarajevo. The siege of the city is winding up to its inevitable climax – the final defeat of the Bosnian defenders, and the slaughter of many of the 20,000 innocent civilians trapped in the city.

The pillage and destruction of Bosnia is a slow-motion replay of the Serbian assault on Croatia; an attempt to seize as much territory as possible before the frontiers of the new Yugoslavia are drawn.

Civilians

The attack on Croatia concluded with the bloody massacre in Vukovar, which fell after months of siege. Now the same fate awaits the civilian population in Sarajevo.

What is being played out is the last stage of the destruction of the old Yugoslavia and the creation of a new, highly unstable, state system in the area.

The new Yugoslavia is based on Serbia and Montenegro. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic is making sure that to this core area is added as much of Croatia and Bosnia as possible.

The bloodletting has provoked much outrage in the West about the evils of nationalism, and even talk of a ‘Lebanisation’ of Yugoslavia. But the conflict is not the result of irrational communalism or nationalism on all sides; it is a result of the very deliberate policies of the Milosevic leadership in Belgrade.

Crisis

As the Yugoslav economic crisis got worse in the 1980s, and conflicts between the different republics mounted, Milosevic played the nationalist card to keep his grip on power in Serbia. His first victims were the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo, brutally repressed in 1988 and 1989. The attack on the people of Kosovo prepared the way for the later attacks on Slovenia and Croatia. In the subsequent war it is true that there were right-wing nationalist forces and atrocities on both sides.

Nationalism

But the responsibility for the conflict lies with Milosevic, and the Serbian ex-Communist politicians and generals who capitulated to his nationalist policies. And the overwhelming weight of the destruction and slaughter is down to the Serbian militias and Serbian-led army.

The fate of Bosnia is a particular tragedy because of the multi-ethnic make-up of the province, with Muslim, Croatian and Serbian populations living in harmony throughout the post-war period. That gain has been destroyed by the Milosevic forces.

The people of Sarajevo are not going to be saved by the United Nations or George Bush’s ‘new world order’. Bosnia, unlike Kuwait, doesn’t have oil or big bank accounts in London and New York. Without voices being raised in protest from the outside, the fate of the people of Sarajevo is already sealed.