Unite the struggles, defend the right to strike!

Teachers show the way to win

THE TORIES' schools tests (SATS) are dead in the water – thanks to the rank and file mobilisation and determination of teachers, and despite the reluctance and obstruction of the leaders of the teachers' unions.

Mass meeting all over the country and a huge campaign spearheaded by rank and file activists have forced the hands of leaders like the NUT's Doug McIvor, who only two months ago was denouncing a boycott of the tests as dangerous extremism.

Throttling SATS has dealt a major blow to Tory education reform plans. This is a welcome victory. But millions of workers face a huge battle in the coming months – against redundancies, against the 1.5 per cent pay norm and the threat to ban strikes in the public sector.

The teachers shows that solidarity, struggle and unity is the way to win. That is what is needed to throw back the Tory attacks.
BFN march thwarted

200 FASCISTS were unable to march from Victoria station to a rally in Grosvenor Gardens in London on Sunday for the hanging of IRA "terrorists.

1500 anti-fascists gathered at Grosvenor Gardens to stop the BNP rally. The police kept the BNP and the anti-fascists apart and redirected the fascists down to their coaches at Vauxhall bridge for their own safety.

The BNP attempt to call for tougher government action against the IRA and to capitalize on the weekend bombings in London was a failure. Denied by the SWP, the ANL demonstration included a sizeable contingent from the Militant.

But the call to stop the BNP rally was a victory by default. The organisation of the counter demonstration was chaotic with no proper stewarding.

In this situation the pathetic turn out by the BNP meant success for the anti-fascists but this cannot be counted on and a well-organised united anti-fascist movement is necessary to keep them off the streets.

Right-wing minister behind crackdown

French cops kill black youth

FOLLOWING the appointment of arch right-winger Charles Pasqua as Interior Minister, three young immigrants were killed by police.

Pasqua was the minister who ordered the repression of students' demonstrations in 1986 which ended with the murder of Malik Oussakine by a special corps under Pasqua's direct command.

A 17-year-old Zairian was shot in the head in a Paris police station, a 17-year-old Algerian was shot by a drunken police-mate in Watertous and another was killed in Chambry.

Wounded

A 15-year-old was seriously wounded after being shot in the back by police in Charny. Police have organised massive identity checks on immigrants in Paris. In the wave of repression several demonstrations have also been attacked.

A severe young immigrants were arrested after a Paris gathering; many were wounded, including a young militante of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, the French Trotskists' organisation, hospitalised after police beat him up.

The killings and the repression against immigrants is an immediate consequence of the election of a right-wing government dominated by the Gaullist RPR and the centre-right UDF. During the election campaign the RPR in particular tried to outdo the fascist Front National in the racism of its election broadcasts.

Divided

The right is divided about how far to go in implementing privatization policies and austerity measures, given the presidential elections in two years' time. Its substitute for a coherent policy will be a high profile attack on immigrant workers and youth.
Emergency action needed

Defend the pits and the right to strike

THE ONE-DAY STRIKES in the mines and on the railways have put class struggle back on the agenda at a time when this was desperately necessary.

This has been followed up by the decision of the teachers' unions to take action over school tests.

The solidarity of the strikes and the rising confidence and morale of those involved put a generalised fightback against Tory attacks back on the agenda.

But the government threat to ban strikes in the public sector massively raises the stakes in the current wave of union struggles.

RMT climbdown

The miners now face immense problems: and the decision of the RMT executive to re-ballo 23rd their members on BR's latest offer means that further industrial action on the railways, if it happens, could not start until well into May. In effect the RMT decision is a face-saving climbdown.

If the current wave of industrial action runs out of steam, the Tories will find it much easier to impose the new law, revealed by the NUT last week, effectively banning public sector strikes.

Five months after the announcement of the pit closures, the Tory rebels have predictably collapsed, the energy White Paper is going through parliament and of course the Labour front bench has mounted no serious challenge to defend the pits. Now the government has won in parliament, the closure of the first 19 pits on the immediate hit list will come rapidly; coal production there will stop at the end of next week.

The developing fightback is crucial for the public sector and the whole trade union movement: but it may be too slow to have an impact on pit closures. And now the RMT leadership have decided to re-ballo 23rd the chances of relaunching industrial action on the railways are not high; we can be sure that before the May 6 ballot, BR and the government will bombard railworkers with threats and anti-strike propaganda.

The Tories' threat to ban industrial action which prevents public sector workers 'carrying out their statutory duties' would be the most draconian anti-union law in the Western world; if it was made to stick it would be a major and devastating defeat.

Abj ect

The 'new realist' union leaders are paying the price for their abject failure to fight the anti-union laws.

The struggle to defeat the proposed public sector strike ban is now directly linked to the outcome of the miners' struggle, the fight against compulsory redundancies on rail, and the battle against the 1.5 per cent pay norm.

What action can therefore be proposed which could realistically have an impact on the situation? The struggle against the 1.5 per cent pay norm in the public sector must be vigorously pursued.

The miners must develop a strategy for the occupation of the frontline pits to prevent their closure. The actions by Ann Scargill and WAPC have given a lead in this respect, and so far this is only symbolic, protest action.

Occupations

The occupation of the pits, combined with a call for solidarity action by other workers, would electrify the situation and immediately cause a national political crisis.

Such action may of course be difficult to win among workers worried about losing redundancy payments. But it is this kind of action which is necessary to defeat the government.

The other imperative is solidarity action organised by the TUC.

The demand for a national day of strike action against pit closures and anti-union laws must be raised throughout the labour movement.

As promised: here's your new-style Socialist Outlook

THE SHORT break in the publication of Socialist Outlook has seen huge mobilisations of the black masses in South Africa, the deepening crisis in Bosnia and important developments in the class struggle in Britain. The need for a revolutionary marxist voice in the labour movement has never been greater.

During our break we have refurbished our offices, bought new computer equipment, put in place new staff members and redesigned the paper. We also held a very successful national school of supporters on writing for, and building support for, the paper.

Not all of the changes we have wanted have been incorporated into the first issue; there will be more in the next few issues. But we hope our readers will like the new-style paper. Having achieved it, however, we cannot rest on our laurels. Now is the time to get out and win new readers and subscribers.

The new-style paper is a weapon in the fight to build the marxist movement. It is only useful if a large number of our readers have an active relationship to the paper.

We want your letters, articles and ideas. Most of all we need to win a larger audience for the paper.

Every reader can play a role in getting friends and political contacts to buy the paper regularly or subscribe. And last but not least is the continued need for financial support. Producing a newspaper is expensive, and achieving our relaunch fund drive does not mean that the need for continued financial support is ended. If you like the new paper - buy it with cash.
WAF warn: Stop the Bible bashers!

By Sarah Parker

THE N.W. wave of Christian fundamentalism came under scrutiny at the recent Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) day school.

The discussions set out to assess developments in fundamentalism across the world.

Niva Yuval Dalav argued that a new form of Euro-racism is taking shape around European Christian morality and "Fortress Europe" - the term given to the new controls on immigration and migrants in the European Community.

"Without understanding this new development of cultural racism the European Left will not be able to adequately pay its role in the struggle against racism," she said.

Other participants emphasised the increasing importance of Christianity as part of a racist English identity that exists through exclusion of, and disdain for, outsiders.

WAF also discussed its priorities for political campaigning. Top of the list was to continue publishing its journal.

Many women emphasised how eagerly this is received, including women in other countries. It was agreed that monitoring fundamentalist movements and spreading information was a vital part of the group's role.

WAF agreed that it must campaign on domestic and international issues - analysing multiculturalism and anti-racist strategies, supporting campaigns against domestic violence, and for the dismantlement of the Church of England.

Contact WAF at BIM Box 2706 London WC1 3X, or ring 081 571 9595.

The more Swedish women have responded to the attacks by organizing together to force the implications for women onto the national political agenda, women in Britain have been much slower to organize around the public sector as a "women's issue".

Women for Socialism will bring together a wide range of women activists at a Saturday 22 May day school. Discussion will focus on how public sector proposals particularly affect women.

How service cuts affect health workers and reduce abortion and contraception facilities as well as care for the sick. Public sector cuts threaten women's safety and independence.

Privatization creates part-time, low wage jobs while increased family responsibilities have forced women to become a flexible, cheap labour force.

While a woman's party is not the answer in Britain or Sweden, the left must understand that the cuts mean for women.

Struggles against Tory attacks to defend jobs, conditions and trade union rights, but they also defend a whole range of women's rights.

Resurrecting lesbian and gay politics

By Sam Imman

UP TO 200 activists from the capitalist's diverse lesbian and gay communities will debate radical strategies for liberation at a May 15 conference organized by the London Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition.

The success of the conference will send signals to the communities and to both genuine and spurious supporters in the labour movement.

While Labour's leaders continue to privately proclaim their abstract support for lesbian and gay rights, they backed the anti-lesbian Child Support Act and publicly urge the Tories to witchhunt healthworkers living with HIV or AIDS.

Though most lesbians and gay men vote Labour, this continued betrayal pushes many away from politics and towards apathy or a lifestyle of nightclubs and casual sex.

"Queer Politics" also came up for debate at the conference. It's three years since the direct action group Outrage sprung up in London, but on the backs of the US Queer Nation - now torn apart by its own contradictions. The same problem are eating away at Outrage's Queer hyper-activity and clubbing-til-you-drop both create alienation and burn-out.

Lesbian and gay liberation means smashing the material and ideological prison of compulsory heterosexuality. It can only come about mass action against their oppression by lesbians and gays in their tens of thousands. Self-selected pock- ets of largely white, middle class gay men can't do it for us.

Oppression

Liberation necessitates understanding of, and commitment to, the fight against other oppressions in society.

If the Solidarity/Liberation '83 conference can show that there is a radical political alternative, based on the historical experience of mass struggles, then radical politics will attract more of those now disabled.

Right wing thugs threaten September return

Abortion campaigners beat bigots

By Eileen Gersh and Sarah Parker

AFTER an international right-wing hit squad failed to close down abortion clinics in Britain, the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) is warning that the thugs plan a major return attack in September.

Organised by the US-based Rescue America, the tri-national team were aided by police. Pro-choice activists gathered outside the International Planned Parenthood Federation before an anti-abortion rally, 18 were quickly arrested while 28 rightists turned up and were allowed to hold a press conference.

Sixteen anti-abortionists were able to form a barricade inside and out of a Brin- gham clinic while 70 people were successfully mobilized to keep the clinic open. Most of the overseas contingent of the New York squad has now left the country.

Rescue America leader Dan Troschman was served with a deportation order after an attempted blockade at a north-east London clinic.

In the U.S. these groups have gone from pickets to fire-bombings and killings. Last year marked a record for vio- lence against clinics.

Vandalism

There were 1,157 acts of serious violence (bombing, arson, chemical contamination, invasion, vandalism, etc.) costing nearly $50 million. Operation Rescue carry guns and recently killed a clinic doctor.

Special camps train members to read license plates, follow people, harass them at home, illegally enter schools and leak children with pic- tures of fetuses.

In Britain, NAC is preparing now for their arrival and will stage a public event shortly. The pro-choice campaign is getting a telephone 'tree' in London to quickly mobilize supporters to defend clinics.

Readers, especially those who live near clinics (BPAS, St. Ann's Hospital N15; Roslyn Nursing Home, Twick- enham; Marie Stopes Clinic, Ealing; Raleigh Centre, Brix- ton; Parkview, Ealing; Leigham, SW16), can join the "tree" by phoning NAC on (071) 923 4976.
Local government pay ‘93

Bust the 1.5 per cent limit!

By Doug Thorpe
(vice chair
Islington NALGO)

The UNISON unions (NALGO, NUPE and COHE) have put forward a local government-wide council pay claim based on a 700 flat-rate increase for all workers.

Predictably, this has been rejected by the employers, who have offered a 1.5 per cent increase in line with the government’s public sector pay limit.

Deciding the size of the claim has the potential for building national action across all local government unions.

But winning such action will not be easy. With high unemployment, job cuts remain workers’ main concern, and there will be a temptation to accept pay rises in order to avoid redundancies.

If public sector expenditure cuts can be translated directly into pay cuts and worsening worker’s conditions, this will suit not only the Tories but also any Labour council bosses who have qualms about redundancies. In this sense the fight against the pay limit is an essential component of the fight against cuts and not contradictory to it.

The separate settlement dates for manual and white collar workers undermine the potential for maximizing united action. This must be overcome by campaigning, for a common programme of national action across all unions, whatever the settlement date.

UNISON is due to come into existence on 1 July 1993 ( Discipline Talking Day). By co-ordination this is the settlement date for local government white collar pay. Let’s invest both the date and the new union with some real meaning by calling for it to be a day of national strike action, in union, across local government.

Compulsory redundancy dispute

RMT off the rails

Greg Tucker
(RMT Traincouncil
National Secretary, pers. cap.)

ONCE AGAIN the RMT leadership has called off industrial action despite having won a mandate from the membership. This time, however, they have done so despite also having won a mandate from the RMT General Grades Committee (the rail national executive).

Arcane

The GCG voted 12-7 for strike action to take place on 27 April, only to have the vote ruled out of order by RMT President Pete Doherty, using an arcane precedent no one could remember that strike action needed a two thirds majority vote.

Instead of action the RMT is to ballot again with the GCG recommending non-acceptance of BR’s latest offer. While this recommendation is to be welcomed many railworkers will correctly interpret this as a furtive attempt to direct the RMT to campaign for a split RMT bureaucracy.

RMT management aim to use this wavering to encourage a vote against action. Left activists will have to work harder to win the ballot.

There can be no excuse for the failure to call further action. The first few days of action have been rock solid. With feelings running higher than they have for many years the message was the same throughout the country - "no trains moving here". Further action would have been just as successful. BR’s offer gives no guarantees going even half way to those required by the RMT.

In a parallel development ASLEF have settled their dispute with BR, ASLEF members have been left angry and confused. They are entitled to ask why they went on strike in the first place as they have settled for no more than a promise of discussion at a new working group - with the proviso that the “interests of customers” must be protected.

In effect they have come out of a successful one day stoppage, where not one train moved, with a deal which leaves them worse off than when they started.

RMT and ASLEF members striking together on April 16 was a major step forward. But even without the ASLEF the RMT could have maintained its action successfully. Now we are facing a battle to convince the RMT membership to vote for further action. While the mood is still strong many members will wonder if it is possible to win with a leadership clearly divided. On past performance this seems unlikely. Which leaves the task of the union to pick up the gauntlet.

Teachers can stop Tory school wreckers

By Roy Leach,
Oxfordshire NUT Secretary (personal capacity)

A GROWING willingness to fight has developed among teachers since the general election.

Demoralisation has been replaced with a militancy that can take on both the Tories and the new realist union leaders. Decisions of the NUT Easter conference opened the way to industrial action, and victories in the courts mean that boycotts for 14-year olds is now a virtual certainty.

Leaders of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) came to the union’s Easter conference committed to ballots for a boycott against National Curriculum tests. A NUT-Aslef (another teaching union) boycott, and calls from science, maths, technology and primary teachers placed them under pressure to go further.

Threatened with a major defeat at conference opened, the Executive proposed extending the ballot to a total boycott of National Curriculum testing. To avoid accusations of political action, the result will be announced after the local government election. A boycott by the NUT, NASUWT and the ATL (a non-TUC union) will stop a central part of the Tories education reforms, dealing a blow to streaming and the reintroduction of selective admission to certain schools. Teachers and their unions must now re-examine debates about the curriculum’s content and confront the growing radical right influence in education.

The size of defeat the teachers can inflict on the government is shown in the new proposal to make illegal boycotting tests or parts of the National Curriculum. The expensive failures of the Tory’s Wundtrose stonoges in the courts reinforces their desperation.

The conference also decided to ballot over a boycott of appraisal. The Executive motion calling the pay freeze and Performance Related Pay (PRP) put off action till next year. Socialist Outlook supporter Roy Leach seconded a narrowly defeated amendment calling for a national one-day public sector strike. An amendment calling for a total boycott was passed despite a vitriolic attack from the Executive, who ended up opposing their own pay policy! The amended motion calling for a total boycott was finally carried. Already NUT branches committed to the boycott are building for a ‘yes’ vote.

The left also succeeded in broadening the Union’s aims and objectives to allow branches to express collective opinions on matters outside education, allowing campaigns like Fight the Aught Bill. The Executive was heavily defeated over their use of disciplinary procedure to victimize left-wing Treasurer Ian March.

The Tories are defensive over education. Teachers have to defend conference decisions against the NUT leadership and keep the Tories on the run.

TRADE UNION NEWS
Labour movement must back Bosnian refugees

By Steve Myers

'NEVER AGAIN' was the powerful slogan made famous by the Jewish community after the Holocaust. But in 1993 Europe ethnic slaughter and genocide is back with a vengeance.

In less than two years a surge of extreme nationalism, rabid racism and fascism has exploded through east and west Europe. And now, at the same time the genie of ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces, Bosnia is beingمنح from the south and west as Croatian nationalist HVO forces butcher Bosnian Muslims in Vitez and surrounding villages.

So far the leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions have done nothing to assist Bosnian refugees, nor challenge the 'Forties' block on them coming here.

Thatcher's outburst doesn't challenge Major's closing the asylum doors. Her call for military intervention is solely connected with inter-imperialist rivalry in the area.

No campaign

There is no independent campaign on the issue from a working class perspective. The grass roots of the labour movement must now build a campaign that lines up with the working class, the oppressed and those facing genocide in the region - and genuinely assists refugees here.

By fighting to open the asylum doors in Britain and joining hands with others doing likewise in western Europe, we are challenging the whole basis of 'Fortress Europe', of racism, Europe, and building the fight-back.

Red Aid for Bosnian Refugees aims to fight for the opening of the asylum doors for all victims of ethnic cleansing; to give material aid for refugees in Britain, including housing, jobs, clothing, welfare advice etc; to forge links with left-wing trade union and workers' organisations in ex-Yugoslavia; and to support other campaigns opposing racism, deportations and fascism.

A national conference of Red Aid for Bosnian Refugees will be held on 6 June, during the weekend of action for Bosnian refugees. It is preceded by the 5 June demonstration in London aimed at exposing the hypocrisy of the Tories and demanding the admission of Bosnian refugees into Britain.

For further details phone 081-494 5799

Ireland UNFREE

Where is the solidarity movement?

By David Coen

WELL BEFORE the propaganda gifted to the Brits by the killing of two children in Warrington, the solidarity movement was in its worst state for many years.

'Movement' is indeed a grandiloquent term for what now exists. Not since the Anti-Internment League in the early 1970s has there been anything like a mass movement for British withdrawal.

The 21st anniversary of Bloody Sunday on 30 January saw just 1500 mobilised. The turnout from the left was poor, despite a bigger than usual counter-mobilisation by the fascists.

Growth in the solidarity movement has always followed upsurges in the struggle in Ireland, and the converse is also true. The mass movement on the streets in Ireland during the Hunger Strikers gave a spur to the changes in Labour Party policy in 1984 and the advances of the Labour Committee on Ireland during the 1980s.

Disappearing

Now the LDC hardly exists, partly disappearing into the famed Labour Party Irish Society, while Time To Go has long since gone. Membership of the Troops Out Movement is flagging, while the smaller Irish Freedom Movement/RGP clings to the 'franchise' for the August demonstration and refers to co-operate with anything not controlled by themselves.

So what kind of solidarity movement is possible today? A real Irish solidarity movement like the US anti-war movement is highly unlikely, given the stage of the Irish struggle and the low body count.

It is unlikely that the British will be forced out of Ireland until the crisis of the British state, which is progressing steadily, produces the kind of political upheaval which dictates such an outcome.

Withdrawal

That is not to say that a withdrawal movement cannot be built in the coming period. It will require less sectarianism and a correct orientation to the labour movement. For all its faults, Time To Go's work in the unions showed what was possible.

But over the next period the prospects for a troop withdrawal movement will be good. The current political initiatives in the Six Counties will fail. Once they fade away, the fundamental fact of the situation, that the Brits cannot impose a solution, will re-emerge. Pressure for troops out will rise again. Opinion polls continue to show a majority for troops out.

Ireland remains a decisive test for the far left in Britain. The current difficulties in building a solidarity movement should not be an excuse for capitulating to hysterical media campaigns, the relays for imperialist pressure.
World ORDER

Brazilian privatisation threatened

Brazil’s zigzagging ruling rich are banking on a new privatisation programme. Since 1981 Brazil has had eight stabilisation programmes and 54 price control packages fall.

ANC leader dies

African National Congress Chair Oliver Tambo died in hospital last weekend aged 75. Forty years in the leadership of the South African organisation, he was exiled in 1960 and had not before his return in 1990 Tambo marred talks in Harare, Zimbabwe, that drew the ANC into the continuing round of negotiations with the apartheid regime. The ANC statement said it ‘would not permit criminal and hoilligan elements to disrupt the funeral. The reformist organisation is striving to retain the leadership of the youth. Last week it intervened to force its militant Youth League to stop chanting “Kill the Boers, kill the farmers” at political rallies.’

Left & humanitarian aid reaches Cuba

Ships bringing aid from US charities and radical organisations reached Havana, Cuba, this week. Some ships had to turn back because of bad weather. Despite operating a longstanding blockade of the island, the US Government allowed the aid through for “humanitarian reasons”.

Italian Government in crisis

Accusations made by informers have linked seven-time prime minister Giulio Andreotti to the mafia and police anti-mafia probing. Andreotti has reduced his deficit budget to comply with the European treaty. This means not only reducing the welfare state but also the bloated police and corrupt patronage which has kept the Christian Democrats in power.

 Plans to end proportional representation in elections to the Chamber of Deputies were opposed by trade union and the left. The new system will produce a more stable government able to attack the welfare state. By compelling parties to seek alliances in order to maintain representation, the change will speed fusion between the reform-socialist Party and ex-socialist Democratic Socialists.

BLACK ANGER ERUPTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Charlie van Gelderen

The murder of Chris Hani by a member of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), the para-military fascist organisation led by Eugene Terblanche, has brought to a head not only the critical situation facing South Africa, but also the uncertainties of doubt in the ANC supporters in the townships.

Harry Gwala, the ANC leader in Natal, a region which has seen more than its share of bloodshed over the last few years, has again voiced his opposition to the current round of negotiations in favour of a transitional government of national unity.

This opposition has been echoed by Peter Mokaba, charismatic leader of the ANC Youth League. He said: “We are an angry people, we are an angry organisation, we are an angry nation. The murder of Chris Hani is the murder of a people. We cannot take it any longer. We will act. But we will act with calm and discipline. There will be no racial war.”

There can be no question that this echoes the mood in the townships. Macbeth Ndaba, at 26 a veteran of the liberation struggle, voiced the feelings of hundreds of thousands: “There’s a lot of pain. Not just because of Comrade Chris — many others have been killed before him. Now we should take revenge. Now we should take up arms against the enemy.”

Although Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo and other prominent ANC leaders have appealed for calm and not to allow the assassination of Chris Hani to radicalise the negotiation process, there can be no doubt that they will have to take serious note of this mood when they gather to further round the negotiating table.

All negotiations now will have to be held in full view of the people. No more backstage deals. The demand now is for elections, with one person one vote, but even such an election will leave the liberation movement at a disadvantage, with most of the media firmly in the hands of the Afrikaner National Party or big business, and the security forces still under the control of the white elite.

Mandela: under fire in the townships

By Charlie van Gelderen

NELSON MANDELA got the signal about the changing political mood at a wreath-laying ceremony for Chris Hani on 14 April, when he was booed when he mentioned continued talks with the ruling National Party.

The large crowd by contrast cheered Clearance Masekela, leader of the Pan Africanist Congress.

Since then Mandela’s rhetoric has taken on a less conciliatory tone. Now he no longer speaks of De Klerk’s “integrity” but of “this corrupt and illegitimate government”. The ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) anxious not to be outflanked by the more militant PAC, are now pushing for immediate elections and launching a campaign of mass action, in an effort to contain the revolutionary fervour which has been unleashed.

By endorsing the negotiating process as the only real option for the present, Mandela and the majority of the ANC leaders were unwittingly supporting the well-laid plans of the government.

According to Jeremy Cronin, leading member of the SACP, back in 1987 Neil Barnard, then head of the National Intelligence Service produced a trail-blazing document in which he argued for negotiations as a mechanism for denting the ANC.

Barnard wrote: “We are not defeating them (the ANC) with our current strategies (repression).” Let us use them, engage their leadership in negotiations, and prolong the talks. Popular expectations will soar, and then plummet as the ANC in the plain light of day, shows itself to be no more than human”.

The ANC leadership, if the strategy was followed, would become detached from its major strength — mass support.

In their grooming of Nelson Mandela and the other ANC leaders, the government was playing an old ruling class game — if you can’t beat them in open battle, try buttering them up with material temptations.

In the Johannesburg Mail an ANC member asked how could the ANC leadership be liberating its people from poverty when Mandela lived in the plush white suburb of Houghton, his daughter Zinhle’s luxury honeymoon was paid for by a white millionaire. He also referred to the lavish lifestyle enjoyed by ANC leaders.

“Who’s paying for all this?” asks the ANC member. “Are these gifts from the South African white economic elite? If so, why do these leaders accept them?”

The mass reaction to the death of Chris Hani may well signal the end of this particular party.
May Day 1993

The flame of socialism cannot be extinguished

"THERE IS A tidal change that is held in check by two things. One is fear; people are frightened because if you step out of line and lose your job, you lose your house and you’re homeless.

Second, there is no clear leadership given. People are being sold, don’t rock the boat, keep your head down, if we’re moderate we’ll slither into power.

The Labour Party has lost four elections under right-wing leadership and has been persuasively after each defeat to move closer to the centre. That has created a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness. In the depths of a slump, people are normally fearful, and fear simulates the right wing rather than the left.

I think what will happen – I’m anticipating a bit – is that this anger, which is really strong, will break through from underneath. The miners’ campaign since October has been the most effective campaign I’ve seen, certainly since the Industrial Relations Act in the early 1970s.

The miners weren’t just arguing about pits, they were arguing about the health service, about wages, councils, about low pay, about unemployment. They took on board every issue and won very wide support.

The significant thing to remember, and why I’m optimistic, is that events create institutions. The events now taking place contain within them two powerful forces. One is the flames of anger at injustice, and the other is the flame of hope for a better world.

Not all the fire extinguishers in Fleet Street, or Broadcasting House, or even Walworth Road, can extinguish those flames. They will continue to flicker and burn and they will reflect themselves through the labour and trade union movement. But probably, as it always the case, it’s when there’s a hope on the horizon that these flames burn brightest.

On the Labour Party, it’s hard to escape the conclusion that the whole project is being wound up just at the moment when everything it said is needed. That is a strange phenomenon. What will have to happen is that the local parties will have to organise themselves more.

“The dead hand of Walworth Road has got to be lifted”

I think we can move back to some sort of federal party of the kind we had before 1918, where local parties, with affiliations from local trade unions and with a broad base, agreed to affiliate nationally.

The dead hand of Walworth Road has got to be lifted. I think that is the way it will move. As for the idea of a new left wing party, well it’s first stricture would be to destroy the Labour Party.

How could you destroy, or try to destroy (not that you could) the instruments fashioned for the purposes which are still needed? You couldn’t do that.

Left critics of Labour, the people who say set up left parties, say you’ll always be betrayed, there is no alternative. But if you say that you are actually indicting pessimism, and there’s no way in which you can build hope.

Non-aligned

On an international level I have been campaigning for a new International – a Fifth International. This would be a re-formulation of the role of the non-aligned countries, which lost their way when the cold war ended.

A Fifth International, which brought progressive people together from the third world – and I would expect them to take a lead with progressive people in America and Western Europe, and Russia and eastern Europe, could be quite a powerful force in breathing some life into the United Nations reform movement.
Do we really need a Fifth International?

By Phil Hearse

IN SUCCESSIVE interviews in this paper Tony Benn has argued the necessity of a mass international to link up the struggles of working people worldwide. Socialist Outlook enthusiastically supports this proposal. As May Day 1993 is celebrated by workers' demonstrations in many lands, nothing is more obvious than that the struggle for workers' power is an international struggle.

Our enemy, world capitalism, is organised on an international basis - through transnational corporations which dominate world trade, through economic blocs like the EC and the new North American trading block NAFTA, through military alliances like NATO.

Corporations

How can working people confront this international power of capital in a world where big corporations like Ford and IBM can shift their production swiftly from one country to another? How can mass struggles win when local ruling elites can summon up the power of the United States and other imperialist countries against local popular resistance?

In any case socialism cannot be built in one country, or a small group of countries. Whenever a revolution takes place, for example the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution, imperialism internationally mobilises against it.

Working people thus need many types of international links and solidarity. Trade unions fighting a common employer or groups of employers need international links. Progressive struggle, especially those in eastern Europe and the so-called 'third world', need solidarity and practical aid from workers in the imperialist West.

Direct links between workers, international solidarity with struggles and many other types of practical mutual support are needed. But workers always need a political party to represent their interests: and the most efficient form of political struggle is an 'international', a political party organised on an international scale.

The key paradox for the workers' movement in 1993 is the gap between the bankruptcy and crisis of international capitalism, and the weakness of the political organisation and consciousness of the working class. Of course the working class, despite many defeats over the last 20 years, still possesses powerful trade unions and political parties, especially in Western Europe and the United States, through which workers' movements are very weak. And compared with the huge tasks of combating the offensive of world imperialism.

Tony Benn's proposal for a 'Fifth International' is thus to be greatly welcomed. Until Benn's intervention, the only mass-based socialist force which has even raised the idea of a new international has been the Brazilian Workers Party (PT).

Revolutionary

But a mass international could only be one organised by working people themselves, on the basis of revolutionary opposition to imperialism; there is no government in the world which embodies such a political position.

It would have to be a revolutionary formation. Trotsky, and his close supporters in the 1930s like James P. Cannon, explained that a new revolutionary international might be formed, indeed almost inevitably.

"the perspective of a mass international has to be consciously fought for, with organised forces, and with a political programme"

Provided that it was based on clear anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist principles, the conscious adherents of the tradition of Lenin and the Bolsheviks could operate as a loyal minority in such a regroupment.

The problem is that this idea of assembling all those forces committed to resist anti-capitalist struggle in one international will not happen spontaneously. In many places these mass forces remain to be built. Even where such forces exist, they often do not see the need for an international.

Mass force needed

When Trotsky built the Fourth International he was under no illusions; it was a tiny force. What was needed was a really international force to fight the domination of the working class by the Stalinists and social democrats. But all socialists have to start with what they have, not what they would like.

The task which Trotsky set the FI, which is still its task today, is to bring a new mass international into existence. Of course, there can be debates, there can be seminars, informal links and discussion of many types about building a new international. But nothing will replace political struggle to politically regroup and organisationally reconstitute the international workers' movement.

The non-existence of a mass international is not simply a product of the failure to grasp the need for international organisation; its failure is also a product of the weakness of the revolutionary wing of the workers' movement.

For Socialist Outlook, the building of a new mass international proceeds in the same way as building a revolutionary party in any country. It is a matter of starting where we are, not where we would like to be. That means we have to get on and build with the forces we have, not the speculative mass forces of tomorrow.

Upheavals

That's why we support the building of the actually existing Fourth International. It is not a mass force, but it has a common programme and common activities, and exists in about 40 countries.

The future mass international will not be the result of individual recruitment to the present Fourth International, but will only be the result of huge upheavals and regroupments involving mass political forces. But the perspective of a mass international has to be consciously fought for, with organised forces, and with a political programme.

That's why with disagreements with Tony Benn that the Fourth international is a 'structure from the past', it is a force in the present fighting for the future.

The future in a purely chronological sense will come spontaneously. Of course, the socialist future has to be organised. The point is not just to be for a future mass international; the point is to build an international socialist movement to fight for it.
Memoirs of a British Bolshevist

BOB WOOD reviews Keeping My Head The autobiography of Harry Wicks (with the assistance of Logie Barrow) Platform Books, £5.95.

HARRY WICKS was surely unique. A founder member of the Communist Party at the age of 15, he was expelled as one of a tiny band that initiated the British Trotskyist movement, the Balham Group. He remained active until his death in 1939.

On 14th June 1939 he was told by building worker Jack Clancy ‘we need to question everything’. This was advice he took to heart in his odyssey from working class Balham to the International Lenin School in Moscow, to Trotskyism.

No one expected a writer with his observations on the early history of the Communist Party of the disputes among British Trotskyists in the 1930s, but his memories are a welcome addition to our knowledge of these things.

Harry came to the early Communist Party, via the Battersea Herald group which was present at the CP’s founding congress. His view is that over-concentration on organisational questions and Bolshevizing the party led after 1922 to a declining political level and a drift to the right: the first signs of later popular front strategies began to appear.

From the perspective of a rail worker, Harry has some sharp comments on the performance of the CP during the 1926 general strike and the influence of Trotsky.

The book finishes with a one-page end-note on Harry’s later years. It joins the International Socialist in the late 1960s, and lefts the International Socialist Opposition in the mid-1970s. It can add further details.

The expulsed IS rapidly became the Workers League and published first Workers News and then Socialist Voice. This WL then became part of the International Socialists Alliance in 1978.

When this fell apart in 1979, Harry became part of the Revolutionary Unity Caucus, which fused with the International Marxist Group in early 1980.

Unfortunately Harry’s renewed membership of the Fourth International more or less coincided with the partial paralysis of his wife Marjorie, and he was never able to participate in the life of the IMG as he wished.

The honesty, integrity, modesty and courage of Harry Wicks shines through on every page of this autobiography. This book can be warmly recommended to everyone willing to benefit from the lessons of more than half a century of struggle.
Malcolm X, Black Nationalism and Socialism

Malcolm discusses with Elijah Muhammad in Spike Lee's film

THE SUCCESS of Spike Lee's film Malcolm X has generated a wide debate on the relationship between socialism and the different currents of black nationalism. This contribution, by Polish Trotskyist ZBIGNIEW KOWALESKI, continues the debate.

WITHIN the general framework of nationalism of oppressed people American black nationalism possesses certain very important distinct features. It is a nation without its own territory. Once dispersed through the countryside the South black people became concentrated and homogenised within the great urban ghettos and the modern industry of the North. The North saw a formidable expansion of the black nationalist movement led by Marcus Garvey in which Trotsky saw 'a sign of a serious moral and political awakening' of black people. In the 1950s the Nation of Islam arose, led by Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X.

In 1969 an opinion poll conducted by Newsweek revealed that 33 per cent of blacks thought that they should have their own state or were seriously expecting the formation of such a state in the future. At the same time, however, separatism became only one nationalism currents amongst others, as can be seen in the evolution of Malcolm X.

While Malcolm was an avowed partisan for racial separation and the building of a black state during his period of activity at the heart of the Nation of Islam. After his break with them, he renounced the separatist road. He shows that while all black separatism is nationalist not all black nationalism is separatism.

The other particular feature of black nationalism is its social composition. The overwhelming majority of blacks belong to the working class. Black capitalists are an insignificant layer. This gives the black question a definite social nature. It gives black nationalism a class base and a much stronger socialist dynamic than the nationalists of other oppressed peoples.

Black nationalism signifies the decision by certain blacks, followed in reality or potentially by much greater numbers, not to leave the destiny of their race in the hands of white society but to unite to decide their collective destiny and to organise with the aim of achieving this destiny. Black nationalism, in common with all nationalism of oppressed people has nothing to do with the nationalism of oppressor nations.

As the American supporters of the Fourth International explained in 1963, 'black Americans find themselves in a unique situation in several ways. They constitute an oppressed minority without a clearly defined geographical, linguistic or cultural base to differentiate themselves from their oppressors.' In this situation black nationalism is a broad means of "self-identification", a method of differentiation from a minority subject to racial oppression by its oppressors and of ideological and organisational unity necessary to free themselves from this oppression. Black Nationalism has

for black people in this country a similar function, in many ways, to that of class consciousness in relation to the working class. Nationalism expresses the desire of black people to decide their own future and, among other matters, to resolve the question of a separate nation. The first task of the struggle of blacks is to mobilise and unite the black masses into an independent movement channelled towards the fight for equality -- an indispensable condition for an eventual revolutionary alliance of the working class and black people. Black nationalism is progressive because it contributes towards the creation of an independent black movement. It will always remain progressive as long as it fulfills this function, irrespective of whether the struggle develops on integrationist or separatist lines. Black nationalism and revolutionary socialism are not only incompatible but supplementary forces which need to be intimately linked at the level of ideas and of action. The common sympathy and support for the colonial revolution, as well as hostility to imperialist domination, forms an important link between the two movements.

black nationalists can have a lot of wrong ideas and the most bizarre illusions. But instead of fighting nationalism under the pretext that it contains such ideas and illusions black socialists should add anti-capitalist ideas and the socialist programme to black nationalism.

For the Trotskyists the rise of the Nation of Islam reflected the general rise of the mass black movement for civil rights led by the traditional organisations preaching racial integration, the shift of the struggle towards the black working class heartland, that is the urban ghettos of the North, and its growing tendency towards political independence and social radicalisation.

With the exception of supporters of the Fourth International, virtually all the American left saw the Nation of Islam as a retrograde movement -- 'inverted racism' -- if not downright reactionary. Our attitude was as unique in the US then as had been that of Trotsky in relation to the wave of black nationalism led by Garvey.

At the time of the new rise of black nationalism, in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the Nation of Islam became its main standard bearer. Nevertheless, its backward ideology and bureaucratic structure, formed during the 1950s when it was only a marginalised sect, increasingly distorted and weighed down on the rise in nationalist consciousness of the black masses. In order to turn towards mass action, which the Muslim bureaucracy rejected, to modernise, to open itself up and develop, black nationalism needed to break from this yoke. This is exactly what Malcolm X did during the last year of his life.

He proceed to revise, in a more and more radical fashion, the form of black nationalism expressed by the Nation of Islam. He purged it of its irrational, religious, exclusive and oppressive aspects. His abandonment of the bizarre religious beliefs developed by Elijah Muhammad in favour of Sunni orthodoxy during a pilgrimage to Mecca was followed by a clear separation between religion and politics and the founding of a political, secular organisation. The Nation of Islam only organised those blacks converted to its religion, considering that they alone constituted black nationalist consciousness. Malcolm rejected this sectarian and elitist notion.

Black nationalists like Malcolm X abandoned the idea that the white race as a whole was a hereditary enemy of so-called 'people of colour'. His conception of the black revolution no longer had a racial connotation but became part of his general concept about the abolition of oppression and the ending of exploitation. He also abandoned condemnation of inter-racial marriage. All this was only the beginning of the huge changes brought about by Malcolm on black nationalism.

Although many of these ideas remained incomplete at the time of his untimely and violent death, it is still possible to trace the general line of Malcolm's evolution. Malcolm outlined it in the following thesis: the structure of white power in the US and on the national level is founded on capitalism. There can be no capitalism without racism. The abolition of racial and national oppression is impossible within the socio-economic and political framework of capitalism: a chicken can't lay a duck egg.
Row over electoral reform
Keep it in proportion!

By Pete Firmin

The British labour movement confronts huge struggles and big political questions. But for some on the left, the very secondary issue of proportional representation is regarded as a big issue dividing the left. Le'wingers who oppose it regard PR as no more than part of the armory of the right-wing 'modernisers' who want to build cadastral with the Liberal Democrats. This is false logic.

Democratic

The arguments for PR go way beyond whether or not it technically makes coalitions more likely. It is an important democratic issue; and many left wingers, including Arthur Scargill, Ken Livingstone and Labour Party Black Sections support PR.

The issue has been brought to life by the decision of a narrow majority of the Labour Party's Plant Commission to propose a system of PR.

According to many opponents of PR on the left, this would mean institutionalised coalition, no more majority Labour governments and the growth of fascism. This way of arguing ignores the fact that precise coalitions have been a constant theme of British parliamentary politics without PR.

Labour has participated in formal and informal coalitions many times in its history, most recently the Lib-Lab pact under Callaghan, and the agreement between all three front benches which ensured support for the Gulf War.

Coalitionism has to be confronted politically by fighting for working class independence and anti-capitalist politics, not by a vain hope of excluding it by means of a particular voting system.

The argument that PR allows the growth of fascism is fatuous. Fascism grows in particular economic and political circumstances. It is not primarily a parliamentary movement, but builds its support in the streets.

Hoping that democratic voting systems will curb the fascists is in effect to argue against any democratic reform which allows political 'extremes' (including the far left) to be heard. It is an argument for maintaining the straitjacket monopoly of official and mainstream politics.

In short, socialists should be in favour of democratic reforms, even within bourgeois democracy.

What lies behind much of the anti-PR venom is a particular idea of the transition to socialism, in which a minority Labour government is elected to carry through socialist measures.

Bureaucratic

The idea of a Labour government with minority support (or even a large majority!) carrying through radical socialist measures is highly unrealistic. It also reveals a very bureaucratic notion of socialism and socialist transition.

If the socialists should support PR, they should keep the whole argument in perspective: the left must reject the view that a position either way on PR determines which side of the ‘class divide’ anyone stands on. The left has enough enemies without creating false ones.

In the slammer

MY OLD PAL, 'Society gems dealer' Darius Guppy (rhymes with Yippie), and his business partner Ferriday had to half-inch the dash to meet a tidy underwriting bill.

While he denied everything, the judge deemed the ‘tally card scrupulous’, and, on top of the sentence, disqualified him from being a company director for ten years.

Golden Legg

HILLSDOWN HOLDINGS – of Hartley's jam, Typhoo tea and Buxted chickens fame – has given its former company secretary a £200,000 pay-off. It felt that poor old Barry Legg was unable to do the job full-time anymore, after being elected as a Tory MP for Milton Keynes South West.

Incidentally, Hilsdown's time to the British's national party of government are looking good, after it last year footed the £200,000 bill to install a pond at the home of agricultural secretary John Selwyn Gummer. It has also appointed former Tory cabinet minister Sir John Nott to its board.

Breach of trust

I EXPECT that Trotskyite scum such as yourselves will be rejoicing at the sad news that John Ferriday, former chief executive of mini-conglomerate Eagle Trust, is to spend six years as a guest of Her Maj after being convicted of stealing £13 million from the company, in cash and shares.

Eagle Trust made a cash or shares takeover offer for Samuelson, a lighting equipment outfit, in autumn 1987, backed by a rights issue. Right on cue, the stock market crashed that October, knocking a third off the value of ET shares. Samuelson shareholders sensibly went for the cash, and Mr

Sterling stuff

LORD STERLING of Plaisdon, my fellow Carhew club member and Dover ferry union bustier extraordinarse, recently enjoyed doubtless lavish hospitality from the leaders of one of last remaining degenerate workers states, as I believe you Trot chappies call them.

As my man Jeff says in the P&O group annual report: Earlier this month I accepted an invitation to visit Beijing and meet the Chinese premier, Li Peng.

This meeting left me in no doubt about the very positive future possibilities in the region and P&O's ability and capacity to participate in them.
Why socialists must oppose...

'Humanitarian' intervention

By Dave Osler

THE WOMAN who personally ordered the death of 368 Argentinean sailors and then counselled the nation to 'rejoice!' surely has no right to brand anyone else an accomplice to massacre.

Yet what was effectively a call from Lady Thatcher for the West to make war on Serbia has found surprising resonance on the left.

'Margaret Thatcher is right,' editorialised Tribune, in a deliberate bid to make headlines. The Guardian and The New Statesman reiterated long-standing calls for United Nations military intervention in the former Yugoslavia.

Some 15 Labour MPs, stretching from Peter Mandelson to one or two of the Campaign Group, signed a statement arguing for the deployment of ground troops in the country. Even John Smith is now calling for air strikes.

Since the Gulf War, such old-school gunboat diplomacy has been rethought into the doctrine of 'humanitarian intervention'. Michael Meacher, Labour’s development and co-operation spokesman, and Martin Shaw, a former revolutionary socialist and peace activist, now an academic at Hull University, have both this year set out their case in detail in the left press.

The basic idea is that the US has a duty to intervene militarily to stop the sort of situation that has existed in the former Yugoslavia.

'Somaliland' The SOMALI and the Kurds in Iraq are the generally cited examples. Bosnia in the former Yugoslavia, we are told, should be next.

On this reading, those who put the traditional left case against imperialist intervention might as well have loaded up the shells that rained down on Serbënica. But the record of 'humanitarian intervention' in practice has not been a good one.

It hardly needed a multi-nation task force, complete with fighter-bombers, helicopter gunships, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery, to tackle gangs of AK-47-owing Somali somalis in battered pick-up trucks. More money has been spent on media coverage of the invasion than on the food supplies that Operation Ruanda Hope is supposedly about ensuring.

Somalia’s problems are rooted in British, French and Italian colonialism of the area and, more recently, US and Soviet powerplays in the Horn of Africa; running back the clock to a direct military presence can scarcely be praised as 'going God's work', whatever former president Bush may claim.

Saddam Hussein was no less barbarous towards the Kurds when he was systematically armed by the West as a regional counterbalance to Iran. Yet 1988's poison gas attack on Halabja, killing thousands, was not seen as reason enough for British companies to stop supplying the technology that let it happen. Let alone cause for military intervention. It took a threat to western oil supplies to necessitate that.

Some 200,000 lives perished as smart bombs knocked out civilian air-raid shelters and pilots went on "turkey shoots" of retreating troops on the Barra Road. Yet rather than allow a Kurdi/Shiite insurrection to topple Saddam, 'coalition' forces deliberately held back.

Would such 'humanitarian intervention' in the former Yugoslavia result in a progressive outcome? Thatcher's position is the natural expression of her bourgeoisie enthusiasm for the 'free market'. Croatian government of Franjo Tudjman against the 'socialist' SFRY government of Slobodan Milosevic. In fact, the sell-off of state property is more advanced in the areas under the latter's jurisdiction.

The most likely effect of direct Western combat involvement would be to trigger off conflict in Kosovo, which would draw in Albania, and in Macedonia, which would draw in Greece. The result would be a generalised conflagration in the Balkans. Even if the British state, military occupation would only replicate the effect of Tito’s Stalinists' dictatorship, passing the conflict into cold storage.

Hypocrisy

The fundamental question for socialists is, exactly what is this 'international community' so frequently wheeled out by the humanitarian interventionists? Dominic Lawson, editor of the right-wing magazine The Spectator, advanced an excellent working definition in a recent article backtracking Thatcher's stand: "Those who regularly and reliably support the actions and utterances of the government of the US..."

Thus the hypocrisy of our humanitarians is readily apparent. By Lawson's lights, Israel is patently part of the international community. Yet its territorial expansionism in Gaza and the West Bank stands condemned by the self-same UN invoked in the name of Somalia, Iraq and the former Yugoslavia.

Since the early 1990s, combined annual US military and economic aid to Israel has been entirely in reverse form, in effect lifting the burden of Israel's foreign debt. That has allowed the country to continue its bloody repression of the Palestinians through military spending which at times amounts to more than 20 per cent of gross domestic product.

UN cloak

In recent years, the US has preferred to cloak itself in the mantle of the United Nations, presented as a kind of super-parliamentary democracy of the nation states, where the United States and Bangladesh both have one vote apiece. The argument is as convincing as the one that insists that British Steelboss Sir Alastair Frame has no more political clout than an unemployed Ravencreag worker.

The US systematically bribes, cajoles, bullies and horse-trades to ensure its political dominance of the UN, a task facilitated by the collapse of the USSR. Take the case of resolution 678, which mandated war on Iraq, and look at what happened to the various members of the ruling Security Council.

Only Cuba and Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, dared vote against. Minsters later, a senior US dipломat told the Yemeni ambassador:

"That was the most expensive "no" vote you ever cast."

Within days, the US stopped its $70 million aid programme. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund suddenly raised problems, while Saudi Arabia expelled 800,000 Yemeni guestworkers.

Those who meekly bowed the line were paid off handsomely. Turkey got $8000 million worth of military hardware, the US Export Import Bank underwrote the construction of Silivri helicopter plant in the country, and at Washington's urging, received $1500 million in soft loans from the World Bank and IMF.

Egypt got 'debt forgiveness' of $14,000 million. Syria was given the go-ahead to finish the bloodbath it had started in Lebanon, and China was offered a return diplomatic legitimacy in the wake of Tianamen Square. And so on and so forth, all the way to the turkey shoot.

The socialist case has to be better, not guts. As humanitarian interventionists are so keen on the UN, let us consider the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 1992, which calls for a 20 per cent cut in absolute poverty worldwide, primary health care and safe water for all, the elimination of serious malnutrition, universal basic education and 80 per cent access to family planning by the year 2000.

This could be achieved by a 3 per cent annual cut in global military spending, a one-dollar-a-barrel oil consumption tax, debt write-offs to eliminate the $50,000 million developing countries hand over to industrialised countries every year, and the removal of tariff barriers against third world imports.

As conceived by their proponents, these ideas are utopian. The self-same profit system which is so happy to throw its military weight about in the third world will never change its priorities to embrace production for human need. Nevertheless, the statistics serve to illustrate a more fraction of the arguments that will be possible after the establishment a democratically planned global socialist economy.
Where We Stand

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

Socialist Outlook exists to fight for a new type of working class leadership, based on the politics of class struggle and revolutionary socialism, to tackle this crisis. The capitalist class, driven and politically united by its own crisis, its requirement to maximise profits at the expense of the working class, has been given determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal class war. Tory high command.

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

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defactist politics of ‘real realism’, effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while offering any pretense that they offer a socialist alternative. Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the government has simply fueled and encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

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

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

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

We are a Marxist current, based not on the brutal totalitarian parodies of state Marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of Marxism beloved by arthouse academics, but the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, women, pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth — and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world.

Socialist Outlook is above all an internationalist current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises co-thinkers in 40 countries world-wide.

Unlike some other groupings on the British left, we do not believe that the demands of the poor, black people, poor white people, working class people and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

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

To strengthen this fight we press for united front campaigns on key issues such as fighting racism and cuts, but the defence of left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate their differences.

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

YES, I agree with much of what I have seen in Socialist Outlook, and want to know more about readers’ groups in my area.

Name: _______________________
Address: _____________________
Phone: _______________________
Send to: Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Lib-Lab pact to kill student politics

By Duncan Chapple and Simon Deville

The Liberal-Labour bloc formed at the recent National Union of Students (NUS) conference has backed a plan to ban most political campaigning and to clear out left wingers on NUS bodies.

This sharp turn, which shocked many Labour supporters in the colleges, emerged in the debate on voluntary membership. The Tories aim to weaken the ability of student unions to combat overcrowding and cost-cutting in colleges. They propose an end to automatic membership of NUS, introducing a membership fee. With most students strapped for cash, many will not pay.

The conference passed a consultative document from the Labour-dominated executive calling for student union's union to be covered by the same recognition as charities; and for a Student Union 'Ombudsman' to control union activities.

These rules have already led to successful prosecutions of student leaders. Last year union officials at Anglia Institute of Higher Education were fined for campaigning against the US-led war in the Persian Gulf. More recently Greenfield University Student Union has been prosecuted for anti-racist campaigning.

The left wing at the conference did poorly. The first vote of the main left groups, 'Left Unity', which reflects the positions of Socialist Organisation, and Socialist Worker's Student Society (SWSS) was around a hundred.

Skilful manipulation of the conference by the right ensured that key debates, in which the left normally does very well, took up only an hour of conference time. The fifth day of the conference, given over to discussing the situation in Israel/Palestine, was cancelled by the votes of Labour and SWSS members of the union's steering committee.

A daily bulletin produced by Socialist Outlook was so well received it was stepped up to twice-daily. Alongside our editorial comments, articles were carried from the Black and Irish student caucuses, Militant, Green and other left students.

There were two surprising gains for the left. Fiona Smyth became the first independent left elected to the executive in the 1990s.

Vice-President Martin Linstead failed in his election attempt and was defeated by leftwinger Kevin Bostock after conference was told about long-standing allegations of sexual harassment against him.

Socialist Outlook Vice-Presidental candidate Louise Whittle defended the right of women to speak about the allegations. In a powerful speech, she called for an investigation to be held and for Linstead to be deposed.

Burnsall strikers confront violence

by Bob Smith

NOW IN its tenth month, the strike by 19 mainly Punjabi Burnsall workers in Birmingham is surviving brutal assaults.

Employer Jimmy O'Neil allegedly threatens pickets and supporters regularly. He has yet to be charged for two hospitalisations of pickets. A recent assault led to the arrest of strikers. Only after a three hour picket of Smethwick police station were the latest victims released after being charged with Public Order offences.

GMB, the strikers' union, is discouraging labour movement delegations invited to the picket line by the strikers. The cowardly bureaucrats argue that anti-union laws threaten the existence of unions funds. The union also backed off from mobilising solidarity from workers at factories that supply Burnsall. Solidarity groups have had successes: car firm Jaguar have stopped buying from Burnsall and the London Support group raised £5,000.

Details donations write Birmingham Support Group, Shahed Udain Singh Centre, 346 Soho Road, Birmingham B21, telephone (021) 551 2258.
What’s HAPPENING

April
Friday 30
SERTUC Mayday social
Conway Hall Red Lion
Sq, WCl 6.30pm on
May
Saturday 1 - May
Day events
MASS PICKET Middle-
brook Mushroom Whitley nr
Shey, S. Yorks.
Strathclyde Buses strike
Politics and the new World
Order day school Harkness
Hall Malet Street W1 10am-5pm
SERTUC March Finchley
Park N4 (Mansion House tube)
assemble 11.30am move off
1pm
FESTIVAL Albert Sq, Man-
chester 12.30 - 3pm
RALLY Towards a Red-
Green Transport Policy, Me-
chanics Institute, Manchester
3pm
SERTUC Festival Alexandra
Palace N22 12.00 - 6.30pm
Salute the Miners show
Huckney Empire E8 doors
8pm show 9pm tickets £3.6
Sunday 2
Socialist Worker RALLY
Alexandra Palace N22 7pm
tickets £1.51
Monday 3
Socialist Worker RALLY Al-
exandra Palace N22 11am-
9pm tickets £1.52
Wednesday 5
TIBET Vigil Chinese Emb-
bassy Portland Place W1 6-
8pm weekly
NO NADS IN HOUNSLOW
phone 081 862 5940 for de-
tails
Thursday 6
CUBA Solidarity Cam-
paign public meeting
Brighton Centre North
Street Brighton 7.30pm

Saturday 8
Youth against Racism in
Europe demonstration Temple
Place WCl 2 pm Embank-
ment tube
NORTH WEST Miners
Support Network confer-
ce, T&GWU building Liv-
erpool details - Steve 0942
804763
BRITAIN’S MEDIA: The Bal-
ance Sheet. A Campaign for
Press & Broadcasting Freedom
conference, UUL, Malet St,
London WC1, 10am-6pm,
(£020) 701-923-9671
Sunday 9th
Labour Campaign for
LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS
NCC
Wednesday 12
Protest Union Ban NATFHE
demonstration South East Col-
lege of Arts and Technology
Southend
Fire Brigades Union con-
ference
Saturday 15
Lesbian & Gay Rights Coal-
tion conference Kennington
Workshops Brigham Street
SE1 10am-5pm tickets £3.2
Saturday
15/Saturday 16
Troops Out Movement
AGM Liverpool details - 071
609 1745
Thursday 20
The Rise of Nationalism:
Socialist Outlook meeting with
Brian Horan Bridge St Tavern
MANCHESTER 7.30pm
Saturday 22
WOMEN & the Public Sector
Women for Socialism
Day School Wesley
House WC1 (Holborn
tube) 10.30am-4.30pm
NUJ Left AGM, The Queens
Head, Acton St London WC2

June
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Campaign Group Network

Labour left gears up for action

By Terry Conway

AN IMPORTANT step for-
ward in reactivating the left
in the Labour Party was
taken in Sheffield on April
17 when 200 activists
launched the Campaign
Group Supporters Network.
Following a successful pre-
paratory discussion in Leeds
last June, this conference estab-
lished a democratic structure
for the Network, with repre-
sentation from local groups,
women, youth and black peo-
ple.
The conference also took de-
cisions on campaigning activi-
ties on job losses, the trade
union link, the Child Support
Act, Maasuritchi, anti-racist,
calls in public services and the
wicked hunt.
Nine Campaign Group MPs
attended and made positive con-
tributions. Attempts to wreck
the Network by dividing the
conference around proportional
representation failed. Socialist
Action supporters, lukewarm
at first, have moved towards
the network since its inception,
for fear that their self-
appointed role as spokespeople
for left MPs might be under-
mined, so switched to a last minute
resolution.
If their virtuoso motion had been
passed, it would have with
witch hunts those on the left
who support PR. If it had been
defeated, given that the Cam-
paign Group itself opposes PR,
this could be used as a wedge
between the MPs and the Net-
work.
Fortunately, a significant
number of supporters of first-
past-the-post voted against this
motion leading to its defeat. An
alternative resolution, not sup-
pporting PR but calling for a
debate was passed instead.
Having dealt with this diver-
gence, the key task now is to
translate the campaigning
movements into action, to ensure
that the Campaign Groups set up
since Leeds take up the priori-
ties of Sheffield.
Becky, probably the most ardent
supporter of first past-
the-post, sidedipped the debate
on PR and concentrated his
closing remarks on the need to
consolidate the positive steps
taken so far against witch hunt-
ing. Surely the rest of us can do
the same.

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Lib-Labs defy Labour

by Steve Kaczynski

REJECTING instructions
from Labour’s National Ex-
ecutives. Reading Labour
Party has withdrawn can-
didates from two wards in
the county council elections.
To safeguard Berkshire’s
Liberal-Labour independent
administration, Labour has
withdrawn candidates in or-
der to give Liberal Demo-
crats candidates a better chance
of winning. One party leader and
former parliamentary candidate
is advocating Labour also
stands down in the upcoming
Newbury parliamentary by-
election.
There has been a remark-
able shift to the right in the party.
Even the mainstream views of
members are in line with the
Conservative agenda.
To safeguard Berkshire’s
Liberal-Labour independent
administration. Labour has
withdrawn candidates in order
to give Liberal Democrat
candidates a better chance of
winning. One party leader and
formal parliamentary candidate
is advocating Labour also
stands down in the upcoming
Newbury parliamentary by-
election.
Arm the Bosnian resistance
Imperialist hands off!

One fact stands out in the mayhem of Bosnia: the utter cynicism of the imperialist West, which has maintained its arms embargo on ex-Yugoslavia, which in effect means an arms embargo against multi-ethnic Bosnia.

What this means is that the Bosnian fighters have been outgunned by the Serbian Chetniks in the east, and the nationalist Croat HVO militia's in the south and west. And the result is horrific 'ethnic cleansing'.

Serbs have inherited all the massive weaponry of the Yugoslav army, and vast amounts have found their way into the hands of the semi-fascist Chetnik fighters. Croatia, with its big exile communities in countries like the US, Canada and Australia, has found the means to buy large numbers of weapons.

The West is utterly complicit in the tragedies which have befallen Bosnia, both through the refusal to allow arms to the Bosnians and in the barriers erected to the admission of Bosnian refugees.

The USA, Britain and France determine their policy not on the basis of humanitarian interests, but on the basis of trying to stabilise the Balkans for capitalism.

The fundamental cause of this war is the Greater Serbia project of Milosevic and his sidekick Karadzic in Bosnia. The only just peace now will be one in which all the republics and provinces of ex-Yugoslavia have the right to self-determination. But Bosnia also has the right to self-determination. And that presupposes that the Bosnians have the right to defend themselves.

It is not the cynical self-interest of the imperialists which will ensure that, but arms for the Bosnian resistance.

Should we back 'humanitarian' intervention? p.13; Red Aid for Bosnia p.6

Yeltsin's poll victory a step to dictatorship

By Paul Clarke

BORIS YELTSIN'S victory in the Russian referendum is a major step in the direction of dictatorial rule. It is also likely to translate into further blows against the living standards of the Russian masses.

The conflict between Yeltsin and the Congress of People's Deputies has been above all over economic reform. Yeltsin's plans to speed up market reform involve cutting state credit to industry, and allowing enterprises to become bankrupt.

If these plans go through, millions of Russians will be sacked.

Industrial chiefs

Opposition to Yeltsin's plans in the Congress has come from groups strongly linked to industrial managers, the sections of the old bureaucracy dependent on the management of big industry and the thousands of large-scale factories which still dominate the Russian economy.

Yeltsin's line has been that economic chaos has been caused by the slow progress of economic reform. But in reality the chaos has been produced by the disruption of the old planning system.

This has been compounded by deliberate economic sabotage by the West. Up to $24 billion in aid to Russia has been designated by the IMF, World Bank and Western governments - but only $1 billion delivered.

Break-up

The rest depends on 'the speed of economic reform' - ie marketisation and breaking up the big industrial complexes.

Add to this is the maintenance of the cold-war COCOM trade restrictions, which blocks thousands of Russian goods being imported into the West, and the export of high tech goods to Russia.

Further privatisation and marketisation will change the situation in Russia from chaos to social catastrophe. If the big enterprises are allowed to become bankrupts it will result in mass unemployment, and the eventual reduction of Russia to third world levels of subsistence.

That kind of social catastrophe will need the heavy hand of authoritarian government to implement it, and that is the road which Yeltsin is going down.