Anti-Racist Alliance
Stop racism
NO to the fascists

Britain, France, Germany: grim toll of fascist violence

Stem racist tide!
EC slams door to keep out refugees

EC immigration ministers attending a meeting of the TREVI group in Copenhagen have taken a tough line against the families of refugees from former Yugoslavia being allowed to join their relatives in the West.

They proposed limiting the possibility of family reunion to 'exceptional circumstances'. This implies an indefinite period of enforced separation for thousands of the most tragic victims of the Bosnian conflict.

British refugee organisations claimed Britain has reneged on its pledge to give a temporary haven to the relatives of a specific group of refugees - the former Bosnian camp detainees. The Home Secretary had promised to let them be joined by up to 3000 of their dependents.

Figures are very hard to obtain but according to the UNHCR only 238 ex-detainees and 334 members of their families had arrived in Britain by early May.

Bottom of table

Already the Home Office definition of the family has been applied insufficiently and according to the UNHCR Britain comes close to the bottom of the European league table in honouring its quota.

The new EC guidelines on refugees fleeing ex-Yugoslavia conclude that most people displaced by the conflict should be given protection and asylum in the region.

Six countries should continue to admit particularly vulnerable groups including former prisoners, those with illnesses that cannot be treated locally, those whose lives or physical safety are threatened, rape victims who do not have access to rehabilitation and returning combatants who face serious problems in their places of origin.

The new definition of 'exceptional circumstances' will mean those few who manage to find asylum in the EC will not be reunited with their families.

French cracks down on migrants

By Paul Clarke

France has been a country of immigration and no longer wants to be', said Charles Pasqua, interior minister on the eve of presenting harsh new immigration legislation.

He added: 'We don't have the means. If we don't hold this line firmly, public opinion will harden and the country will drift to the extreme right. France intends to pursue a policy of 'zero immigration' and no longer welcomes immigrants.' Pasqua wants to start a police crackdown on searching for and immediate expulsion of so-called 'illegal immigrants', giving the police the power to check documents without a reason, to make it harder to obtain residents permits.

Prior to the legislation it someone lived in France for ten years they had automatic right to residency - now people will have to prove they entered the country legally. Similarly marrying someone French will be no guarantee of the right to entry or residence - people will have to prove they had the right to be in France anyway.

No appeal

The right to asylum will now be decided by frontier police and there will be no right to appeal against refusal to admit some one at the border. There will also be no automatic right to family reunification.

These measures, alongside the similar legislation being introduced in other EC countries, form part of the project of the EC states via the TREVI group to pull up the drawbridge of Fortress Europe.

Pasqua also has his own project, his challenge to Jacques Chirac's candidacy for the presidential elections in 1995. Pasqua claims to be the true inheritor of De Gaulle's ideas, even claiming 'at my modest level I feel exactly like De Gaulle'.

He claimed that the new laws, rather than promoting xenophobia and racist violence would address three popular concerns - French identity, the fight against crime and the integration of established settlers. He claims that unless those laws are enacted people will one day vote massively for the extreme right.

These arguments justifying racist laws are echoed across Europe. Pasqua claims that his party the Gaullist RPR shares the values of the racist National Front but have been quoted 'out of context'. But the laws he is now promoting speak louder on his real politics.

Turkish women murdered by German fascists

Thousands protest at racist killings

By Hans-Jurgen Schultz

HUNDREDS of thousands of people staged spontaneous demonstrations in every major German town in response to the murder of five Turkish women and young girls in Solingen last weekend, in the biggest outburst of public anger yet seen.

For the first time these demonstrations involved tens of thousands of Turkish workers.

The murders came just two days after the German parliament (Bundestag) passed a new law, with the support of both major parties, the right wing CDU and the Social Democrats (SPD) aimed at drastically reducing immigration into Germany, to a maximum of 10,000 each year.

Kohl in retreat

The new anti-immigration law is widely seen as a capitulation to racism and having given the green light to the fascists, to intensify their attacks. Thus Chancellor Kohl, despite his attacks on the 'violence' of Turkish demonstrators, has been pushed onto the defensive.

His government is now talking of allowing 'dual citizenship' to Turkish 'guest workers', allowing them civil rights inside Germany.

For the first time the unions are taking a stand. The public services union, the second biggest in the country, called a 50-minute strike last Thursday. The printers' union openly blamed the government for what happened in Solingen.

Many left wing groups inside the Social Democrats have good anti-racist positions, but their leadership has collaborated with the government all along the line in bringing in the new anti-immigration bill.

What lies behind the rise of racism and fascism in Germany? German fascism never went away after the war, it was only driven underground in a semi-legal existence.

The fascist press, half a dozen different weeklies and monthlies, has a combined circulation of around 800,000.

Unemployment

What gave this current new opportunity was of course the social and economic crisis, especially massive youth unemployment, made worse by German reunification. In the time-honoured manner the immigrants and foreigners are made the scapegoats.

The far-right organisations probably organise 100,000 people. The Republicans have around 25,000 members, and will probably gets seats in the Bundestag in the next elections, passing the necessary 5 per cent barrier. The National Peoples Union has about 22,000 members, and already has seats in the regional parliaments in Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen.

The Nazi terrorist groups are much smaller of course. But 15 per cent of Germans says they sympathise with the aims of the far right, and 35 per cent want tougher action against immigrants.

For right groups have found an audience because in the present crisis the Social Democrats and most of the rest of the left are discredited.

Responsible

The SPD is seen as being responsible for the crisis and nearly all the 'far left' was in some way or another Stalinist. It means that we have to rebuild the left on a new basis out of a new generation.

Right now a major problem is the lack of a viable national anti-fascist campaign to co-ordinate a major fight back. Each time there are attacks the left leads big mobilisations. But we need to build a united anti-fascist fightback.

Hans-Jurgen Schultz is a leading member of the Antifa group, German supporters of the Fourth International.

Rohit Dugal's family mourn his murder
Major silent on race hate speech

TORY MP Winston Churchill's racist outburst on May 28 came at the same time as a vicious racist attack on Asian youth Mohammad Iqbal in Luton.

While Churchill was expounding his disgusting ideas, 17 year old Iqbal lay in hospital with a punctured lung.

Racist speeches by Tory MPs encourage the thugs that commit these vicious attacks. Churchill said 'the relentless flow of immigrants must be halted if we are to preserve the British way of life. Attacking John Major's claims that 'there would always be an England' Churchill said, 'he promises us that 50 years on from now, spinster will still be cyclical to Communion on Sunday mornings - more like the Muslin will be calling Allah's faithful to the High Street mosque'.

Churchill trotted out the time honoured racist rubbish that Tories always come out with when they are in political trouble. In an attempt to provide a scapegoat he said, 'the population of many of our northern cities is now well over 50 per cent immigrant'.

This is a blatant lie. The majority of Britain's black population have been born here. Not one city has a black population anywhere near that figure. Bradford's black population is fewer than one in six and in Leeds it is 5.8 per cent.

Churchill's claims that Britain is being swamped by 'immigrants' come at the same time as the government is about to implement the Asylum Bill, making it even harder for people to come into the country. It is more difficult than ever to enter Britain now.

Playing the race card to deflect anger about government policies is dangerous and inflammatory at a time of increasing racist attacks and murders. Churchill's provocative remarks have been condemned but significantly not by John Major - his silence implies support.

Fortress Europe, Racist Europe

The last two weeks have shown the real face of racist Europe.

In Germany the government passed a new bill restricting immigration just two days before the outrage of the murder of five women and young girls in Sollingen by Nazi thugs. The British government is on the verge of passing its new Asylum Bill.

And on the very night that Winston Churchill made his infamous speech attacking immigrants, two Pakistani youths were brutalised by a racist gang in Luton.

Meanwhile the new right-wing government in France is organising a witch-hunt against immigrant workers.

But the victims of this racism are not just immigrant workers, and those from the third world seeking asylum. The victims include tens of thousands of Bosnian refugees, rapidly becoming 'Europe's Palestinians'. Britain has taken just 4000 refugees from Bosnia; now the British and other European governments are determined to keep the Bosnians out. Although they are subject to daily massacres, Fortress Europe, Racist Europe, is determined to keep them in camps 'near their homes'.

Even if they have relatives in western Europe, they will not be allowed to come 'except in exceptional circumstances'. The real face of Fortress Europe is being revealed. The likes of Churchill, Major and Kohl just give the green light to racist attacks. Euro-racists need a Europe-wide fight-back.

Hear Kwame M.A. Somburo!

A founder member of Malcolm X's Organisation of Afro-American Unity, Kwame Somburo is on a European tour organised by the Fourth International. Brixton: Tuesday June 22 7.30 pm Lambeth Town Hall Acre Lane.

Birmingham: Wednesday June 23 7.30 pm Afro Caribbean Centre 339 Dudley Road.
Four women from Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures (LWAPC) occupied Parkside pit for four days beginning on Friday 28 May. HELEN SHAW spoke to Socialist Outlook supporter SHEILA GREGORY who took part in the occupation.

'We've done our best to sustain the men in remaining stalwart against the pit closure in the area, we've had our pit camp at Parkside since 18 January. Our determination certainly seems to have helped the men. We had been planning an occupation at some point. We were determined that we should not take direct action of this sort unless it was possible for us to do without jeopardising jobs, when all due processes had been gone through. But once we got to the point where the High Court had ruled that the ten pits could be shut we felt that was our moment to move. The effect it did have was to stop them serving redundancy notices or serving the closure of the pit for another four days which was quite useful.

Four members of LWAPC participated in the actual occupation but the whole group worked on it beforehand and during from the pit camp.

We mounted a command style raid late on Thursday night, early Friday morning and approached the pit from a route we wouldn't be expected to come from and gained access to number one tower without being spotted.

We got to the top of the tower which is 200ft, through various staircases and a series of long ladders and were seen just as we were getting onto the roof by the wind.

To start with management reacted with disbelief that we'd managed to get up there! And then a lot of anger. They started using tactics to try and persuade us to come down like, 'you're in danger' and various silly things that they wouldn't have thought we'd thought of. We took great delight in winding them up. They didn't know how we were communicating – we had a walkie talkie. While we were up there the four of us worked out elaborate signalling systems between ourselves and stood and apparently signalled to each other while various men stood at points around the colliery with binoculars trying to work out what we were doing...it was quite funny.

Management said they wouldn't discuss with the men what they intended to do until we finished the occupation. It wasn't fair that the men should be put in that position by us being there so we came down. We'd made our point and we believe we've given the men some more resolve.

Something that struck me really forcibly was, that although it was a difficult thing to do, in the end how easy it was to stand up to these people, how disorganised they were and what little effort it takes to overcome them – just some courage and determination.

LWAPC is building for the North West Peoples March Against Unemployment and Pit Closures. We are speaking at various rallies along the route and we're organising the final rally at the pit on Sunday 20 June.'

The North West Peoples March Against Unemployment and Pit Closures starts on June 17 and culminates in a mass demonstration and rally near Parkside colliery on Sunday 20 June.

There are four different 'legs' of the March starting at different towns across the North West. The 'legs' will be linking up with other workers fighting job losses and closures.

The March offers the best opportunity for a long time to build support for uniting the struggles of trade unionists in the public and private sectors, those fighting cuts and unemployment and can help to build a long awaited fightback against the Tories.

Various events, rallies and civic launches and/or receptions are being organised along the route. Details of the 'legs' are as follows:

The North and Central Lancashire leg
17 June – Start Lancaster, march to Garstang for luncheon rally, on to Preston for evening rally and social.
18 June – Start Preston, march to Leyland for luncheon rally at Leyland DAF, on to Chorley for evening rally and social.
19 June – Start Chorley, march to Wigan for luncheon rally, on to Earlsdon.
20 June – Links up with other 'legs' at Leigh, on to mass demonstration and rally near Parkside colliery. Further details from Chris Cooper Tel: 0524 843512

The Manchester Leg
18 June – Start Stockport 6pm, march to Wilhton Hospital for evening rally and social.
19 June – Start Wilhton Hospital, march to Eccles via Chorlton, Stretford, Ordsall and Salford.
20 June – Start from Leigh to gether with other 'legs', march to mass demonstration and rally at Parkside. Further details from Rick Summer Tel: 061 881 3508

The North East and East Lancashire leg
18 June – Start Burnley and Otley, march from Burnley to Rawsterton and Otley to Rochdale for luncheon rallies, on to link up at Bury General Hospital, march through Bury for civic reception, evening rally and social.
19 June – Start Bury, march to Bolton for luncheon rally, on to Atherton to link with supporting march to Leigh for civic reception, evening rally and social.
20 June – Start Leigh, march with other 'legs' to Parkside for mass demonstration and rally. Further details from Steve Hall Tel: 0942 884765

The Merseyside leg
18 June – Start Birkenhead, march and ferry to Liverpool for luncheon rally, on to Bootle for evening rally and social.
19 June – Start Bootle, march to Kirkby for luncheon rally, on to St Helen's for reception and rally.
20 June – Start St Helen's, march to Earlstown to link with other 'legs', on to Leigh and to mass demonstration and rally near Parkside. Further details from Alec MCFadden Tel: 051 708 3995
Building the NW Peoples March

Lancaster gets organised

By Margaret Jones (Lancaster and Morecombe Miners' Support Group)

TRADE unionists, unemployed people, students and pensioners of Lancaster have joined together to organise the North and Central Lancashire leg of the North West Peoples March against unemployment and pit closures.

"Unite the struggles" has been the banner under which Lancaster and Morecombe Miners' Support Group has organised the community's fight back against Tory attacks.

Bus, rail, clerical and communications workers, as well as teachers, lecturers and unemployed people have come together to form a fighting united front against ruling class attacks. The focus of the campaign has been the fight to save Parkside pit.

The march is the culmination of eight months of intense struggle since the pit closures were announced last year.

Central to this struggle has been the organisation and effort of women workers in Lancaster.

Their involvement in the Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures movement has spurred the development of the fightback against Tory attacks.

They are a key force in organising the North and central leg of the North West March.

Manchester shakes a Leg

By Colin O'Driscoll (South Manchester Miners' Support Group)

PLANS are well-established for the Manchester leg of the North West March against unemployment and pit closures.

The march will link up with health workers from Withington Hospital, threatened with imminent closures, and strikers from Revell and George, a local print firm in Salford.

These workers have been sacked for rejecting a pay offer. Support groups in Manchester are using the march as an opportunity to build solidarity for the two disputes, as well as raising awareness of the attacks on jobs and the public sector as a whole.

Support for the march has already been pledged from Labour Parties, local MPs and MEPs, trade unions and community groups.

Realists want a revolution

It's forty years since a Commonwealth team climbed Everest and the Queen came to the throne. But no wonder the Queen didn't want to celebrate. The last forty years has seen the endless collapse of what was once the world's leading capitalist power.

The country that painted the world map red now can't even run a decent railway system. When head teachers showered the government minister something is rotten in the whole system.

In 1953 the trend of decline was hidden by the beginning of post-war economic expansion.

A bright new world seemed on offer: confidence in progress was universal, and a return to the conditions of the 1950s seemed unthinkable. Even if Britain could codify the role of dominant capitalist power to the United States, nonetheless Britain was one of the major world powers and visibly getting richer.

Forty years on all that is tatters. Two world wars destroyed the Empire, the base of Britain's economic dominance. Now Britain is in relentless decline.

The British ruling class may have had its confidence shaken but important sections are doing all right thank you. That's the tremendous paradox of the decline of British capitalism; the domestic economy is in ruins, but the ruling class is still among the richest in the world.

Investment

There may be no Empire forced to accept British manufacturing exports, but there is massive British investment abroad, reaping a huge tribute to sections of the British ruling class. Britain's rulers are increasingly a rentier class, making profits from foreign investments and financial services, while the best brains in the upper middle classes head straight for the free-charging professions rather than manufacturing.

But such an arrangement is temporary. A secure imperialism needs a strong domestic base. Without a revival of British industry it will all end in ignominious collapse.

Ruling class comprehensiveness of the decline was slow in coming: when it did, it took the form of Margaret Hilda Thatcher. But Thatcherism turned out to be half a plan; attacking the unions and collapsing the welfare state couldn't substitute for industrial recovery.

Yuppies

Decline was again hidden in the 1980s 'yuppie' boom, when deregulation of the City and property speculation created the illusory boom which has now so obviously turned into near-slump.

The stench of decay is everywhere in Britain. Rotten housing, rotten transport, low wages and long hours, mass unemployment, the war without end in Ireland, the desperate poverty of millions of the elderly, crime, pandemics, couponitis, privatisation, get-rich-quick privatizations - even the precipitous decline of the quality of television over the last 15 years (no wonder there are so many repeats).

With the collapse of so much of the post-war order, the ideology of post-war Labourism - the mixed economy and the welfare state has also collapsed, leaving half-baked notions about the market in its place.

What is remarkable against this background is that the ruling class have got away with so much, without having to face Italian-style terrorism or US-scale urban uprisings.

One thing is now absolutely clear: the British ruling class lacks the economic means and political will to reconstitute British capitalism - at least unless a fundamentally new social and political order, some form of authoritarian state rule, is created - and we are many years from such possibilities. Only the working class can rebuild Britain; and only by becoming the ruling class.

That is the turning point today. It is merely a question of political leadership, the determination to break with all the old crap, a clear understanding that a patientclient with multiple injuries needs more than sticking plaster. All these things are totally foreign to the leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party.

When the world of full employment and the friendly society has changed into that of the dot coms and the riot police only utopians think John Smith or maybe Paddy Ashdown can change anything. Realists want a revolution.

Socialist Outlook Public Meeting

Unite the Struggles, Build the Fightback!

SUNDAY 20 JUNE

2.30pm (approx)

(Immediately after NW March final rally)

Leigh Arms pub, near Parkside colliery

Speakers include: Steve Hall and Glenn Vorriss (North West Miners Support Group), Sheila Gregory (WAPC), Alan Thornett (Socialist Outlook editorial board).
Postal workers shift left

By Jon Green
(Communication Workers Fightback)

THE UCW annual conference gave a clear indication to the leadership that the management offensive had to be stopped. The mood of conference was reflected in vote after vote overturning the national officers by big majorities.

There were a number of clear victories for the left, including an immediate claim for a 35 hour gross working week and opposition to any attempt to remove the trade unions from the selection of Parliamentary candidates.

Days of action

There were calls for the TUC to call days of action against unemployment and privatisation, and for a voluntary levy of the membership to prepare for strike action against the privatisation of the Post Office.

The only two major defeats for the left were on support for the Public Sector Alliance and opposition to the Maasstricht treaty.

Conference unanimously passed an emergency resolution committing the UCW to build the next mass demonstration at Timex.

At the sectional conferences the mood of anger threatened to boil over at times. Underlying the membership’s dissatisfaction has been the UCW leadership’s practice of signing agreements without ballots on the membership. The conference passed a number of resolutions that attempted to tie the leadership’s hands in negotiations.

Distrust of the leadership was also reflected in the adoption of a resolution calling for a special conference on the NCUUCW merger.

The left was organised around a new bulletin, ‘Communication Workers Fightback’. The modest steps forward in organising the left need to be built upon. The UCW leadership is notorious for surviving rocky conferences and spending the next year selling the membership down the river.

Timex strikers reject sell-out

By Chris Brooks

LAST WEEK’S rejection of a 27 per cent pay offer ‘offered’ to Timex strikers has helped push TUC President Alan Tuffin into backing a June 19 demonstration called by the strike committee.

The employers’ proposal resulted from weeks of talks between the multinational company and senior AEU officials Jimmy Airilne (one-time leader of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in).

Interviewed by ITN, the company’s Norwegian chairman said the union considered the offer to be fair.

As well as a pay cut, the deal reduced company contributions to pensions, lowered canteen subsidies, brought down sick pay and extended the qualifying time.

On top of that, the 342 workers locked out were offered their jobs back on conditions of a ‘skills test’. This allowed the company to still sack the workers they didn’t want back.

Both terms have quite a simple idea behind them. The US-based multinational wants a massive facility to produce goods for sale around the world. They offer the same pay and conditions in Dundee as they’d offer at a new factory in the developing world.

Pinned down by angry post-
al workers at the recent UCW conference, Tuffin called for the TUC and Scottish TUC to mobilise for the June 19 demonstration - ‘not just to pass resolutions but to get stock into building support’. Strikers have also called for a women’s demonstration on Friday June 11.

The Timex strike represents the fightback against a new wave of pay cuts which European employers are trying to force on working people as the recession deepens into a full-blown slump.

If the full weight of the labour movement is brought to bear in the Timex dispute the rights of every worker will be more secure.

Send donations and requests for speakers to Timex Strike, 2 Union St, Dundee DD1 4HR. Phone 0382 22406.

The women’s demonstration starts from TUC on Friday June 11.

The mass demonstration starts from Saturday June 19.

Prepare for post-merger fight

UNISON: Left must be built

UNISON – the merger of NALGO, NUPE and COHSE, comes into existence on 1 July. That’s why this week’s Brighton NALGO conference has many less resolutions and amendments than before – everything decided will be open to question in UNISON. Nonetheless the left faces important battles, not least the fight to build an organised left in UNISON.

The new union will be the country’s biggest. But while the left has always been strong in NALGO, it has been less influential and organised in NUPE and COHSE.

But the new union will immediately be in the forefront of key struggles, as the biggest union in local government, the health service and in numerous public services. All these are under attack from cuts, competitive tendering, redundancies and privatisation.

The danger from the merger process is that if the left doesn’t organise across the three former unions, the right-wing in NALGO can link up with the Bickershaw-Sawyer NUPE leadership to pull the new union into mainstream realignment.

That’s why a meeting is being held at NALGO conference to discuss the possibilities of a united UNISON left; the meeting is sponsored by NALGO member Roger Banister, Islington branch secretary Brian Gardner and Bromley branch secretary Glen King.

Key issues at NALGO conference will include the fight to commit the union to breaking the 1.5 per cent pay limit; to defend NALGO policy of full opposition to anti-unions laws and carry that into UNISON; and to challenge general secretary Alan Jenkins’ repudiation of the Islington nursery occupation.

NALGO fringe meeting: Fighting Socialist Policies in UNISON.

Wednesday 16 June, 6pm, Brightling Centre, North Rd, Brighton.

MSF delegates tame ‘moderate’ Lyons

By Glenn Sutherland, Delegate, St Pancras Branch (personal capacity)

ACCORDING to the press, the 1991 annual conference of MSF (Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union) was to be a triumph of moderation and ‘realism’.

In the event, delegates sent new General Secretary Roger Lyons home with a bloody nose.

The London Region left, organised around Network 90, had prioritised motions and amendments including Maasstricht and trade unions/Labour Party links.

The debate on the Maasstricht treaty was taken at 2am. Smith waited to address conference. Delegates voted by a sizeable majority to oppose the terms of the treaty – social chapter or no social chapter.

Lyons poses

The debate on Trade Union/Labour Party links the next morning was to have far more significance as MSF is the fourth largest affiliate to the Labour Party.

At the pre-conference NEC, Lyons proposed all the motions on the links be referred to the NSC. This was a rule change conference, and the left must start preparing now.

Contact Network 90 at: Network 90, c/o Alison Miles, 43 Dussett Road, London SE27 0UF.

POST AND TELECOM workers will unity at last
Cuban trade collapse

CUBA may suspend most of its sugar trade after a slump of over one-third in the sugar harvest. It is hoped that the harvest, the worst since the 1959 revolution, will still meet the oil-for-sugar barter deal with Russia. It was the blockaded islands chronic shortage that caused the poor harvest. Mechanical farming and transport has had to be replaced with hand-cutting and ox-drawn carts. A tropical storm in March further reduced the harvest.

Yeltsin silences Congress speaker

RUSSIAN President Boris Yeltsin denied his chief rival a chance to speak when the new Constituent Assembly opened last week. Designed by Yeltsin to quickly approve his draft constitution, the Assembly had a majority of his supporters who proceeded to drown out the attempts of parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov to speak. Yeltsin's plan is to introduce a more powerful presidency that would limit the ability of the opposition to organise politically through the Soviet, councils and parliaments.

Li Peng 'disappears'

LI PENG, the member of the Chinese leadership most associated with the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, has been absent for nearly two months from the public eye. The Beijing Foreign Ministry says the 65-year-old has a 'cold'. Some rumours suggest Li has suffered a heart attack, but his disappearance may indicate a permanent departure. Li is thought to be unpopular with western governments; his removal could help the Chinese statists widen the market there.

ANC corruption investigation.

An internal African National Congress investigation is underway into a trust run by ANC President Nelson Mandela's deputy Walter Sisulu. Batho Batho trust owns the Thebe investment corporation which was to receive CPPA, a national monopoly on school textbooks. The investigation is thought to centre on the activities of the investment company and where its profits go to.

Electoral blow for Sri Lankan regime

PROVINCIAL council results in the May elections were embarrassing for the ruling United National Party (UNP) but of little comfort to the opposition. The Sri Lankan Freedom Party-led alliance won control of the prestigious Western province, which is the commercial and political hub of the island.

A split from the UNP, the Democratic United Front (DUNF), was damaged by the assassination of its leader Lalith Athulathmudali. It will join forces in two other provinces leaving only four provinces in outright DUNF control. Elections were not held in the mainly Tamil North east province due to the ongoing war. However, neither the war nor the economic and social mess of free market policies were the main issues. Instead the opposition concentrated on the imperial style and abuse of power by President Premadasa.

His main agitation was for the abolishment of the executive presidency and the restoration of Westminster-style democracy.

Assassination

With Premadasa's assassination on May Day march and the installation of DB Wijetunge, who promises to break with his predecessor's authoritarian style, the ground was pulled from under their feet.

Both the SLFP and DUNF support the government's pro-IMF austerity and privatisation policies, and are hardest opponents of any deal with the Tamils.

Thus the vote they captured was an anti-government vote, rather than one for positive policies.

The left electoral front led by the Fourth International, Nava Sama Sama Party polled a creditable 60,000 votes, but won only one seat.

Many workers had voted for the 'left' faction in the SLFP led by Chandrika Kumaratunga who is now Chief Minister in Western Province. She is also supported by the reformist LSIP and Communist Party, who see the SLFP as a vehicle for socialism. Chandrika's public embrace of market economics and the deteriorating economy means that disillusioned workers and disaffected youth will be looking for an alternative. This is the challenge for the real left.
Yugoslavia – who's to blame?

1. Why did Yugoslavia go into crisis?

TITO’S Communist parties led a real revolution against the Nazis. Breaking with the orders coming from Moscow, after October 1945 they took all power and began the destruction of capitalism.

The state they established was heavily bureaucratised, relying on the ‘leading role’ of the Communist Party.

The Tito leadership attempted to solve the problem of the complex national structure of the country by creating a federal structure of six republics and one autonomous province, Vojvodina within Serbia. This gave an element of real self-government to the different republics.

However, the drawing of the boundaries between the republics left 25 per cent of Serbs outside Serbia, 25 per cent of Croats outside Croatia and many Moslems and Albanians outside Bosnia and Kosovo.

This was not some kind of plot by Tito to weaken the Serbian nation (as Serbian nationalists claim) but a reflection of the inevitability of national minorities in such an ethnically mixed area.

However, only with the fullest socialist democracy could have been a guarantee against any trampling of national rights within the various republics.

The one area which did suffer serious violations of national rights was Albanian Kosovo. But the 1974 constitution granted Kosovo the status of an autonomous province within Serbia. Kosovo was able to participate alongside the six republics and Vojvodina in the eight-person presidency created to replace Tito upon his death.

After 1974 therefore Kosovo had the same rights as any republic. But it was in Kosovo that the break-up of Yugoslavia was to start.

Tito’s government held national tensions in check, despite economic transfers from the richer republics to the poorer ones, so long as there was relative economic stability.

How ever many of the measures taken to keep the economy stable also contained dangerous centrifugal tendencies, particularly the increasing reliance on market forces pursued during the 1960s.

The experiment in localised ‘workers self-management’ developed into competition between different factories, different industries and different regions. This helped fuel economic competition and rivalries between the different republics. In particular the richer republics of Croatia and Slovenia complained that resources were being taken away from them.

This incipient economic rivalry between the republics got much worse in the 1970s, when the world economic crisis impacted on Yugoslavia and created a massive international debt.

Local economic autarchy, disguised as workers’ self-management fuelled rivalries between the different national components of the bureaucracy.

It was in this framework of competition for economic resources that national resentments and conflicts grew, leading to the rise of the Great Serb project in the 1980s.

The economic crisis was worst in backward Kosovo. In 1981 the people of Kosovo demanded the status of a full republic and were met by fierce military repression, which has continued at an even higher level since the Kosovo miners strike of 1989.

2. Why did the crisis lead to war?

RIVALS between the different republics led to war for one simple reason. In order to try to keep itself in power, in the face of economic crisis and mass disillusionment, the leadership of the League of Communists in Serbia, personified by Slobodan Milosevic, rejected the politics of Great Serb nationalism – leading eventually to the 1991 military attack on Croatia and Slovenia.

Serbian nationalist forces built up their strength throughout the 1980s. The most Stalinist wing of the League of Communists in Serbia began the Serbian nationalist crusade in response to the Kosovan events in 1981. Whole sections of the intelligentsia, including former dissidents like Mihailo Markovic, editor of Pravda magazine, capitulated to nationalism.

The chauvinist political offensive was capped by the capture of the leadership of the Serbian party by Milosevic in 1987. He immediately set about changing the balance of forces in Yugoslavia. By 1988 he had changed the party leadership in Montenegro to install his stooges, and did the same in Vojvodina in 1989. The Serbian constitution was unilaterally changed to abolish the autonomy of two provinces. By these measures Milosevic effectively gave himself four votes on the eight-member collective Yugoslav presidency, in effect a veto on any decision.

The rise of Serbian nationalism led to the rise of republicanisms in the other republics, and eventually to various forms of reactionary nationalism, especially in Croatia.

While it is clear that small groups of Croatian nationalists had long hoped for total independence, the opportunity to push forward with this project was given by the need to take defensive measures against Serbian threats.

3. Who is responsible for the war and its atrocities?

THE RESPONSIBILITY for the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia lies firmly with Milosevic and his Great Serbia project. Not a single act of war has taken place on the territory of Serbia.

There can be no doubt that the Serbian regime is guilty of acts of aggression against its neighbours. War was declared on Bosnia even before the referendum on independence had been held.

Therefore we do not equate the nationalism of the oppressor—which we condemn—with that of the oppressed—which we defend, even if we do not share their nationalist ideology. To equate Serbian and Croatian nationalism is to equate the oppressor with the oppressed.

This is not, of course, to deny the reactionary nature of the Tudjman regime in Croatia or to imply support for its policies. For example, the decision of the Croatian government to change its law on citizenship—denying equality to Serbs—strengthened Milosevic’s appeals to Serbian chauvinism and his preparations for war.

It also facilitated Milosevic and Karadzic in their attempt to declare a separate Bosnian-Serb state. Moreover, it is obvious that Milosevic and Tudjman agreed on the carve-up of Bos-
"Military intervention by the United States was never likely, if only because the United States ruling class has no strong interests in the region. That's why Clinton's personal preference for some kind of intervention has been so controversial in the US establishment.*

*ina-Herzegovina some time ago.

However, despite the crimes of Tudjman it is completely false to claim that he is equally responsible for the destruction of Yugoslavia or, even worse, primarily responsible (as does Socialist Worker).

It has been the Serbian army and the Chetniks that have carried out systematic murder of people because of their ethnic origins. It has been the Serbian army and Chetniks that have driven people out of their towns and villages, the so-called policy of 'ethnic cleansing'. It is not the Serbian army and the Chetniks that have used mass rape as a weapon of war. It has been the Serbian army and the Chetniks that have set up concentration camps.

While it is almost certainly true that murderers, expulsions and rapes have been carried out by soldiers and militias of all sides these have – until recently – primarily been carried out by individuals or small groups.

However reprehensible these acts may be they do not compare to the deliberate policy of murder, rape and torture embarked upon by Milosevic and Karadzic in order to implement their policy of uniting all the Serbs in a single state.

Their main targets have overwhelmingly been the non-Serb civilian populations and all cultural manifestations of their existence.

The Croat HVO is now carrying out similar acts in northern Bosnia and evidence is emerging of collusion between Serbian and Croat forces to facilitate attacks upon Moslems and others trapped in the carve-up of Bosnia.

The ability of the HVO to attempt to emulate Karadzic is, however, a direct consequence of the totally cynical policies pursued by the imperialist powers.

4. What has been the role of imperialism?

THERE HAS been no single, unified approach to Yugoslavia from the imperialist powers. Each has attempted to defend its own specific interests. The overwhelming point is that they have approached the crisis not with any 'humanitarian' concern but with total cynicism.

Germany has tilted towards the Serbs as an area of potential economic and political influence. France has long had good relations with Serbia.

Intervention

But the attitude to intervention in the war has been underlined by the fact that all the imperialist powers see Serbia as the crucial force in the region, one which they will eventually have to do business with.

Military intervention by the United States was never likely, if only because the United States ruling class has no strong interests in the region. That's why Clinton's personal preference for some kind of intervention has been so controversial in the US military, foreign policy and political establishments.

The same is true of Britain. Imperialism has not intervened because there is nothing (like oil in the Gulf) for them to defend.

What they all want is stable: and of course a war and genocide is a big embarrassment for them when it takes place in Europe.

But ultimately the imperialists are making a rational calculation about their own interests. They calculate that ultimately stability requires a strong Serbia. Slovenia is already out of the quagmire. Croatia will survive, and multi-ethnic Bosnia can be sacrificed: it only costs a little aid and a few crocodile tears, together with show-case gestures like the meaningless no-fly zone over Bosnia.

6. What is the way forward?

FIRST and foremost, socialists should demand the lifting of the arms embargo, which is being enforced against Bosnia. The Bosnian resistance must have the right to defend itself against both the Serb onslaught and Croatian attacks.

Second, the west must respond by opening its borders to the hundreds of thousands of Bosnian refugees driven from their homes and plunged into despair by this crisis.

A socialist approach to the crisis must start from a recognition that whatever its merits and faults, Yugoslavia is dead – forever. The long term solution is a free and equal, eventually socialist, federation of the peoples of the Balkans.

The road to federation now goes through independence and self-determination for the different republics.

But the idea of 'ethnically pure' republics is racist and reactionary. Every republic will have national minorities which must have equal rights.

Beyond the current crisis, the eventual defeat of reactionary nationalism can only come with a rebirth of working class politics in the region, the rebuilding of trade unions and independent workers organisations.

The European left must facilitate that, both through the campaign for opening the borders to refugees and direct links with the left in ex-Yugoslavia.
US youth gangs fraternise, politicise Towards a Black intifadah?

By Zbigniew Kowalewski

THE BLACK ghetto youth organised in the street gangs commemorated the first anniversary of the Los Angeles uprising in a very significant way, remarked on by all the media. A meeting of around 200 delegates from the gangs of 36 towns met in Kansas to conclude a peace treaty in order to put an end to the 'urban war' between the oppressed and to elaborate a common platform of immediate demands. During the second half of the 1980s, Black and Hispanic youth came into the youth gangs in huge numbers. This was a response to the catastrophic social effects of the 'liberal' economic policies of Reagan and Bush. The response of those in power was to unleash, under the pretense of the 'war on drugs', what was literally a war waged by the police against the oppressed youth of the 'coloured' community. Meanwhile, US socialist Ben Tupper put it: 'While violent, heavily armed, gangs are not inherently a negative entity, the lack of political radicalisation of these forces has resulted in a self-destructive frenzy of young men and women killing each other over the limited available resources of the ghetto.'

Feared

In 1988 Dennis Hopper's film Colors introduced public opinion to what would be the most feared and visible of all street gangs, the Bloods and the Crips. 1988 was also when the Compton (Los Angeles)-based rap group NWA introduced 'gangsta rap' to the world and, in the process, sold millions of records in the process, sold millions of records that glorified the lifestyle of the Southern California gangs' says Rap Pages magazine.

But, while some 'gangsta' rappers continue to glorify the life, the values and the violence of the gang, according to Ben Tupper 'various urbanites have crossed over from the 'gangsta' message to a position of critique of the self-destructive violence. The result is an evolving group of 'ex-gangsta' who are redefining gangsterism with a touch of political savvy.'

These rappers raise the real reasons for gang violence, which lie not in gang rituals but in the system of exploitation and violence.

'Build your brain'

This is the case with Ice-T, one of the most influential and sussed of the 'gangsta' rappers. 'Peace to all LA gangs. We are all brothers, we can live together. Death is no answer. No one lives in the ghetto by choice. Go to school, build your brain. Escape from the killing fields. Fuck that war!' says one of his records. Just before the 1992 uprising, a truce was announced between the LA gangs. The Crips and the Bloods were often to be found together at the head of the youth participating in the uprising, and served as a factor of leadership and organisation. Their weapons intimidated the Los Angeles cops (LAPD), who did not dare to engage in large scale repression until the uprising subsided. In his report on the uprising published in The Source James Bemand explained the dynamic and scale of the fracturing between the gangs. After the uprising numerous joint meetings of Bloods and Crips were held, sometimes involving up to 700 people. Often these meetings were attacked by the police, leading to violent clashes. The result was declared by leaders of the Crips and the Bloods under the auspices of the Nation of Islam (NO), and supported by well-known rappers.

A coalition of gang leaders launched a programme of demands for the immediate development of LA's poor communities; demands for more resources to employment, education, social security, health, AIDS and the urban environment. All told they demanded a programme of $3.7 billion, putting the stress on self-organisation and control of their own communities. 'Give us the hammer and nails, and we'll rebuild the city' said the leaders of the Crips and Bloods.

Also in the programme was the demand for community-controlled law enforcement, and the involvement of former gang members in it. In some racially mixed areas policing has been virtually taken over by NOI security, establishing a non-constructive and educational style with gang members; this shows the practicality of the demand for an alternative mechanism for maintaining order.

Publicity

Ice-T, who organised an LA meeting of 30 gang leaders and founded the association Help them Across the Rap said: 'The sole thing that the gang members ask me today is to publicise the truce.' Frank Broughton wrote in I-D magazine: 'Last year's violent events in South Central LA brought a sharp and inevitable politicisation of the gang culture there, and this has been well reflected in the lyrics of the 'gangsta' groups. The Crips and the Bloods have called an end to their mindless war of retribution. Violence - both in reality and rap lyrics - is now aimed firmly at the system. The revolutionary rhetoric of east coast groups like Public Enemy has been absorbed by the gang members, and people like Ice Cube and Da Lench Mob rather than continuing to emphasise the Black-on-Black violence of street warfare, are now celebrating the under-publicised gang truce and the new feeling of brotherhood.'

Rapper Paris' recent attempt to reach and recreate the large, and in his opinion, largely misguided gang youth and 'gangsta' audience, exhorting Black youth to inspire themselves with the thought of Malcolm X and the experience of the Black Panthers. He calls for the formation of an organised and conscious political movement, orientated towards revolution and the taking of power by the people. The police and those in power have observed the evolution of the gangs with great disquiet. Before the LA riot a Black police official told the Final Call: 'The fearlessness and leadership potential of the Black gangs frightens them. Imagine if this youth becomes properly motivated, trained to love themselves and commit themselves. You might have the emergence of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.'

After the uprising US socialist Mike Davis, author of City of Quartz about LA, wrote: 'The ecumenical movement of the Crips and the Bloods is their worst imagination: gang violence no longer random but politicised into a Black intifadah. The LAPD represents only too well that a generation ago the Watts rebellion produced a gang peace out of which grew the Los Angeles branch of the Black Panther Party.'

In this situation, the capitalist authorities continue to try to criminalise the Black youth. A report after the LA uprising by the District Attorney's office states that 47 per cent of Black males between the ages of 21 and 24 show up in police gang databases.

Corrupt and co-opt

But at the same time, the authorities are trying to corrupt and co-opt a section of the leadership of the gangs. The challenge that faces the gangs, in this period between gang war and peace, is to construct a Black youth leadership, capable of surviving in the face of repression and developing independent politics. In any case, as Ben Tupper puts it: 'Souls are being planted in fertile but volatile ground for the construction and development of politicised gangs and radical organisations in America's cities.'

**Well-known Polish revolutionary socialist Zbigniew Kowalewski is the author of a book on Malcolm X.**
Paths to socialism

Dave Oster reviews Hal Draper’s, ‘Socialism from Below’, Humanities Press International, £39.95

ACTIVISTS’ reading time is always at a premium, so Hal Draper’s work might well have been overlooked in the footnotes of modern Marxist literature, but never quite got round to Draper until now.

While his most famous work, ‘Capital & Marx’s Theory of Revolution’, is acknowledged as a classic, it is unfortunately out of print at an off-print of five hefty volumes. I’ve always reasoned that Marx himself only needed three, and never quite got round to Draper until now.

Humanities Press has done well to make a 270-page selection of his key writings available. I would like to have said widely available, but the price tag means this book is unlikely to get far beyond the better academic libraries. More’s the pity, because interest in Draper’s ideas is currently growing on the British left.

Both the Socialist Workers Party and some anarcho-syndicalist currents frequently claim to represent ‘socialism-from Below’. The debate on this is often made age-old.

Moreover, Draper was a leading member of a group of American Trotskyists who broke with the movement in 1940 in the belief that the Soviet Union represented a bureaucracy-collectivist society, and were among an historically exciting expatriate. These misleading notions are currently being resurrected by Socialist Organiser.

Draper bases his world-view on the famous opening lines of the rules of the First International, which stress that the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.

He argues that this socialism-from-Below is the sole genuine socialism: Stalinism’s, Fabians’, Social Democrats’, Labour’s, anarchists and national liberation movements offer only socialism-from-above, which in fact is not socialism at all, and will always end in disappointment, if not bloody repression.

Draper argues: ‘Before Marx, nowhere did the line of the Socialist Idea intersect with the line of Democracy-from-Below. This intersection, this synthesis, was the great contribution of Marx; in comparison, the whole content of his Capital is secondary.’

While the author’s style is completely accessible, superlative scholarship is evident on almost every page. A case in point is ‘The Principle of Self-Emanicipation in Marx and Engels’.

Draper’s analysis of Marx’s earliest journalistic writings tells how Marx moved from the young liberal, earnestly seeking the incoming Prussian monarch to hand down constitutional reform from on high, to a self-advocate of workers’ democracy.

Of course, all revolutions will say they are in favour of socialism-from-Below; this is an anachronistic bourgeois politicians’ support for motherhood and apple pie. The problem is flushing the content out. What is essentially a volume of historical studies is inevitably weak on how the concept should be used as a guiding light in day-to-day class struggle. The closest Draper comes is the reduction of all politics to the explicitly stated question, which side are you on?

If that was all there was to it, there would be no need for Marxist theory whatever. Most old egalitarianism would fit the bill. For Draper, ‘Capital’ is indeed secondary. But while socialism-from-Below is undoubtedly necessary, it is nowhere near sufficient.

Incidentally, this book is the second in a series entitled ‘Revolutionary Studies’, which promises works by key Fourth International theoreticians such as Ernest Mandel, Michael Lowy, Pierre Rosset, Alan Wild, Paul Le Blanc and Enzo Traverso. Sounds good, if it comes.

One last quibble: I suspect most British readers could have done with more explanatory material on the illustrations drawn from American history. For £40, it ought to be in there.

A regular look at the world of business, compiled by INSIDER DEALER

Robin’s tax Leigh-way

I USE to think that those guys at the Inland Revenue were on our side. Now I’ve discovered they typeset top executives to pay tax on the freebies that go with their job, I’m not so sure.

But Robin Leigh-Pemberton, outgoing governor of the Bank of England, found an easy way of getting round this minor inconvenience.

Robin was in the habit of taking his wife Rosemary with him on business trips, with the taxpayer ultimately picking up the tab for the first-class flights and five-star hotels.

Jubilant included visits to Washington for the annual International Monetary Fund Shindig, and a tour of Chicago, all of which sounds like nice work if you can get it.

When the Revenue ruled that this counted as a perk, and weighed in with a tax bill for £16,000, the Bank upped his salary by the same amount, taking his annual earnings to £209,165. This just goes to prove that, with a good employer, there’s absolutely no need for trade unions.

Solidarity with Maxwell

IT’S ALL roundabouts and swings for you taxpayers. Invesco MIM last week admitted 55 charges of breaking city rules and is paying a record fine of £750,000 and £1.6 million costs, so at least you get some of your money back.

Invesco breached rules on the handling of client money, issued a misleading advertisement, supplied unsatisfactory regulatory information, carried on business outside its permitted areas, kept defective records, failed to provide investors with accurate and timely information and made unsuitable investments on behalf of customers. My kind of guys!

Invesco looked after some of the Maxwell pension fund money, and knew at least something of what that great Labour Party member was up to, but failed to grass him up. What’s wrong with a bit of solidarity between fellow newspaper proprietors, I ask you?

Nose candy

‘FINGERS’ fans may remember my earlier tale of how eighteen-junk bond supercock Michael Milken turned over a new leaf on release from prison and set up an educational cable channel for kindies. In league with singer Michael Jackson.

It now seems that Milken, who once earned £324 million in a single year with Drexel Burnham Lambert, is helping inner-city school students to fight the drug menace. This is not, however, volunteer work. A New York court has ordered him to do 1,000 hours of community service every year for the next three years.

That should keep him out of mischief. I wonder if it was ever partial to a spot of the old nose candy himself?
PART TWO of a series on marxism and the trade unions

Neither sectarian nor trade union routinists

Fighting to win the majority

By Harry Sloan

MARXISTS have always had to fight inside broader, non-marxist organisations to win the support of the best militants.

This means winning over workers whose initial position is to abstain from politics or to embrace the social democratic politics of their existing mass leaders.

From very early after the successful Russian Revolution, Lenin, Trotsky and the leaders of the new Communist Third International argued that marxists had to adopt a combined approach.

They needed to produce their own, openly revolutionary propaganda to attract the maximum recruits to the new Communist parties; but they also needed to fight for tactical positions designed to secure a united front with the reformist workers and their organisations and leaders against the capitalist counter-offensive.

The Theses of the Comintern spelled out in laborious detail that the united front was not in any way simply an exposure demand designed to show up the treachery of the reformist union and social democratic leaders.

It was a serious attempt to rally the majority of the proletariat in united clas action, through which they could learn their real strength while dealing significan t blows against the capitalists and their state machinery. Workers could learn more through these experiences of actual struggle than they would ever ab sorb through leaflets denouncing the treachery of their leaders.

Under Lenin and Trotsky the new international took this further, elaborating a series of transitional demands, designed if they were seen to be concerned with the problems faced by the workers - and themselves active in the front ranks of the day-to-day battles in the unions.

Marxists could only hope to convince militants of their policies and programme in entirely exceptional cases, when the party considers impossible the submission of its members to some rout.

Trotsky is also quite explicit in expecting marxists active in the unions to carry out visibly political work: "The number of Communists in leading posts... is only one of the means of measuring the role of the party in the unions... But the principal criterion is the general influence of the party on the working class, which is measured by the circulation of the Communist press, the attendance at meetings of the party, the number of votes at elections and... the number of working men and women who respond actively to the party's appeals to struggle.

"Ideological laboratory"

Years later, again arguing against syndicalism, Trotsky declared: "The Left Opposition considers that to influence the trade union movement, to help it find its correct orientation, to permeate it with correct slogans is impossible except through the Communist Party... which besides its other attributes, is the central ideological laboratory of the working class."

An immediate obstacle to any real initiative reaching beyond individual and local union bodies to appeal to wider layers of the working class is the role of the trade union bureaucracy, which developed to its present level of importance only during and after the 1920s.

Union bureaucrats, increasingly a definable privileged layer resting on the back of mass and strengthening trade unions, might present themselves as openly reactionary opponents of class struggle.

Or they may be "left" reformists - like the TUC 'lefts' who were cultivated by the British Communist Party in 1924-26, but who so dismally failed to challenge the right and convinced at the sell-out of the 1926 General Strike.

In his writings on Britain, Trotsky explored some of the political standpoints running through the union and social democratic bureaucracy as he attempted to correct the blunders of the British CP, which repeatedly zigzagged from ultra-left to opportunism under directions from the Kremlin.

The early CP clearly saw its role as intervening as a disciplined, organised force working inside the unions: but the politics of Stalinism turned this into a negative role, leading to the squandering of opportunities to build a class struggle challenge to the bureaucracy.

Concluded next issue
Lenin and the British Communist Party

The biggest and most influential revolutionary party to have existed in Britain was the Communist Party founded in August 1920. Despite rapidly succumbing to Stalinism, the CPGB represented strong roots in the working class and immense potential. Here PHIL HEARSE explains how the party was founded and why, despite very different conditions today, the story of its foundation has many lessons for Marxists.

WITHOUT the Russian revolution of 1917, and without the active intervention of the Communist International founded by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919, the formation of the Communist Party in 1920 would have been impossible.

The Comintern and Lenin’s personal intervention created the conditions for the unity of warring socialist groups, and a political clarification of fundamental problems. This involved the fight against passive propaganda and against ultra-leftism towards the Labour Party.

By far the biggest organisation involved in the foundation of the CP was the British Socialist Party (BSP). The BSP came out of the old Social Democratic Federation, Britain’s first Marxist party, founded in 1893.

Pro-imperialist

Changing its name to the BSP in 1911, this party had been marred by the pro-imperialist positions of its founder-leader HM Hyndman. Fierce debates broke out in the BSP with the onset of the First World War, with the majority adopting an anti-war position, and Hyndman leading a minority out of the party.

The tradition of the BSP was however highly propagandistic, in line with much of the British socialist movement. The idea of active intervention as a party in workers struggles was almost absent; the tradition of passive Sunday school-type propaganda for abstract ‘socialism’ was very strong.

It was however in the BSP that the idea of forming a unified Communist Party took root after the Russian revolution. But the BSP had to deal with several other overall Lenin insisted on a combination of the fight for unity and a fundamental political clarification against both ultra-left and opportunist ideas.

The issue of affiliation to the Labour Party, favoured by the BSP, became a thorn in the side of the party. The SLP was eventually split over the question of unity, a minority going on to join the Communist Unity Convention in August 1920 and eventually the formation of the Communist Party itself in September. Some of the party’s most prominent leaders, such as Tom Bell and IT Murphy, came from the SLP.

Sylvia Pankhurst, bitterly opposed to work in the unions, standing in parliamentary elections and affiliating to the Labour Party, jumped the gun and formed her own Communist Party (British Section of the Third International) in 1919. Lenin fought her political ideas, and insisted that the BSP must go into the unified Communist Party.

Lenin’s answers to Sylvia Pankhurst and Willie Gallagher in the Shop stewards movement, on the question of the revolutionary attitude to parliament, the Labour Party and work in the unions remains among the classics of Marxism (1). His fundamental point was that revolutionaries have no illusions in parliament or the union leaders, but seek every platform to influence the working class masses.

More than that, the Communists should seek to influence reformist workers on the basis of creating united fronts in the struggle against capitalism.

Bourgeois politics

Lenin argued that Labour Party was a party based on the working class but politically bourgeois. As he put it: ‘Of course, the bulk of the members of the Labour Party are workers; however whether a party is really a political party of the workers or not, depends not only upon whether it consists of workers but also upon who leads it; on the content of its activities and of its political tactics.’

From this point of view, the only correct one, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although it consists of workers it is led by reactionaries and the worst reactionaries at that, who are fully in the spirit of the bourgeois (2).

But he insisted that the Labour Party, at that stage, was a ‘very peculiar party’ and in some ways ‘not really a party at all’, because of its federal structure and the affiliation of all the unions. Thus he advised the BSP to formally affiliate to the Communist Party to formally affiliate, but only on the basis of open action as the Communist Party opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat and open criticism of the leadership of the Labour Party on that basis.

It is important to stress that this debate was conducted between all sides on the issue of the formal affiliation of the Communist Party as a party to Labour, considered possible because of the kind of federal structure of the Labour Party at that time. Thus it was a very important debate to subsequent debates among Marxists about the usefulness of working in the Labour Party. The political basis had to be full freedom of criticism and the right to build the Communist Party openly within the Labour Party.

Insufficient

Lenin was however particularly attentive to the question of the Shop Stewards Movement, and its fundamental role in the building of a Communist Party. Lenin insisted that the 6000 or so members of the BSP were an insufficient basis to get a real hearing among the masses.

Hence his detailed attention to the debate with the Shop Stewards Movement over whether a revolutionary party was necessary or whether the workers could rely on purely industrial strike action. At the Second Congress of the Comintern...

"Lenin’s fundamental point was that revolutionaries have no illusions in parliament or the union leaders, but seek every platform to influence the working class masses"
New aid campaign for Bosnia

THE FIRST conference of Workers Aid for Bosnia was held in London on Sunday 6 June and attended by approximately 50 people.

The main speaker, Indula Harper from the Bosnia-Hercegovina Information Centre, said the British government had been identified by Bosnians as the main supporter of the division of Bosnia.

The Bosnians need arms to defend themselves. She comes from Tuzla and spoke of the solidarity shown by miners from the region with the NUS during the 1984/85 strike who despite desperate poverty, donated a day’s pay per month.

The campaign aims to build solidarity with the struggles of the Bosnians and to provide aid for Bosnian refugees in Britain and to campaign for the immediate lifting of the British backed UN arms embargo and the withdrawal of UN troops.

The launch conference of this campaign is a positive step in breaking the inaction of the left and labour movement in solidarity with the Bosnian people. The campaign can be contacted at: PO Box 316, London, SE16 4EU

Tel: 071 252 5122

Rahman campaign slams Churchill

By John Hughes

RAHMAN Family Defence Campaign members joined other anti-racists at a Bolton protest the Saturday after Winston Churchill’s speech at the town’s Conservative Club. Scores of passersby signed the petition condemning his racist outburst.

The Campaign fights for the right of the Rahman family to stay in Britain.

Mrs Rahman originally came to Bolton from Djibouti to visit relatives. She fell ill with a rare form of cancer and was joined by her husband.

After successful initial treatment she needs regular follow-up treatment not available in Djibouti. The Red Sea statelet is also unable to offer the special educational facilities needed by Shabana, one of her two daughters.

Burnsall’s scabs step up intimidation

INTIMIDATION on the Burnsall picket line reached a new level on 26 May when scabs attacked with iron bars, a wooden stave and a Stanley knife.

One striker defending his tent, suffered a severe cut to his left hand and may lose the use of two fingers. Another picket received a severe blow to the head and was also hospitalized.

Throughout the year the strikers have stayed defiant in the face of attacks, maintaining the picket and refusing to bow to racist insults and regular physical assaults from owner Jimmy O’Neill and his scabs.

The 19 strikers are calling an anniversary rally on Tuesday 15 June. Labour movement delegations, black organisations and community groups are welcome to the picket from 1pm and there will be a rally from 4pm - 6.30pm. It is about time that this historic long struggle for health and safety, an adequate wage, equal pay, union recognition and an end to harassment, and abuse from management was brought to a successful conclusion.

The strike needs to be escalated. Despite the widespread support for the strike it has not been enough. The factory must be closed down by popularising and spreading the boycott of Burnsall’s goods. Mass pickets must be organised and quickly.

The strike must be made a ‘causecelebre’ throughout the labour movement. The injustices must be shouted from the rooftops. We need the same kind of massive solidarity that has been shown for the Times workers in Scotland.

It is unfortunate that one of the GMB officials has gone into print labelling Outlook supporters as no better than O’Neill’s scabs and strikebreakers. We call on the GMB to correct this kind of crude witch-hunting and get on with winning the dispute.

If the full might of the GMB and the labour movement were brought to bear the strike could be won. Let the energies of every labour movement activity be concentrated on the proper target - beating O’Neill before we have any more casualties.

Contact the support groups on 021 551 2268 (Birmingham), 071 713 7907 (London).

WHERE WE STAND

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

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

The Tory strategy has been to 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 deafeated politics of ‘new realism’, effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while ditching any pretense that they offer a socialist alternative. Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the greedy owners has simply fuelled and encouraged the opposition to jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

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

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

Not, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers states and degenerated SSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing their own working class.

We are a Marxist current, based not on the brutal totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the same, toothless version of ‘marxism’ beloved by armchair academics, but the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

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

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

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

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

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism. But propaganda alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken into the unions, the Labour Party and every campaign and struggle in which workers and the oppressed fight for their rights.

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

If you agree with what you see in Socialist Outlook, and want to join 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 2UW
What’s HAPPENING

JUNE
Friday 11
EUROPEAN Assembly of the Left Paris coach leaves Lon-
don 10.15am details 061 800 7460

Saturday 12
LESBIAN and Gay Pride: demonstration noon Victo-
ria Embankment; festival 3pm onwards Brockwell
Park south London

Sunday 20
ANTI-Apartheid Move-
ment: march 12.30pm Hyde
Park; rally 4pm-5pm Trafalgar
Square.

MASS demonstration and
rally Parkside Colliery
Newton-le-Willows

Monday 21
PICKEI appeals of JS's three
and Ivan Fergus 9.30 High
Court Strand.

Tuesday 22
US BLACK activist Kwame
M. A. Sombura speaks
7.30 Lambeth Town Hall
Assembly Room Acre Lane
Brixton.

Weds 23
US BLACK activist Kwame M. A.
Sombura speaks 7.30 Afro-Car-
ibbean Centre 339 Dudley Road
Birmingham.

Wednesday 16
POLICIES for Health confer-
ence 10.30am-4.30pm
Camden Town Hall NW1
tickets £10/£5 from Social-
ist Health Association 16
Charles Square N1 6HP

July
Saturday 3
FIGHTING New Manage-
ment Techniques day-
school 11am-6pm Conway
Hall Red Lion Square WC1
advance tickets £5

Saturday 19
TIMEX Mass Picket Dundee

Wednesday 15
BURNSALLS mass picket
1pm Downing Street Bir-
mingham coach leaves
London 9.30am
Kings Cross SR.

Thursday 17
Lancaster leg starts on
North West Peoples March
against Unemployment
and Pit Closures

Friday 18th
Burnley Oldham Manches-
ter and Wirral legs start on
North West Peoples March
against Unemployment

and Pit Closures

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Further details from: Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, Lon-
don N4 2UU.
Magnificent Six hold out at Parkside

Back NW March for Jobs!

By Steve Hall (Acting Convenor, North West Miners Support Group)

TRADE unionists, unemployed workers, pensioners and students from all over Lancashire will be participating in the North West March For Jobs from 17-20 June. The march has been given added significance by the events last week at Parkside colliery.

If the likes of the BBC and Tory press are to be believed, then Friday 4 June saw the end of a mining tradition in Lancashire stretching back almost to the beginning of the industrial revolution. The headline of local BBC TV coverage was 'Parkside miners sign away their jobs.' What cynicism!

The reality is that more than 500 miners at Parkside, who have been among the most defiant in face of closures, did not consider themselves able single-handedly to hold out against closures, especially when they have been abandoned by the TUC and Labour leaderships. So they reluctantly accepted compulsory redundancy terms. None of them accepted voluntary redundancy 'voluntarily'.

But a Magnificent Six, led by NUM executive member Billy Pye, have refused to sign altogether. As result of their action, the deadline for accepting voluntary redundancy was extended to Monday 7 June. When the failed to sign they were sacked – the first compulsory redundancies since the nationalisation in 1947.

Billy Pye and his colleagues are determined to fight on. On Thursday 10 June they will install an NUM Portakabin outside the pit, decked with a red flag, opposite the Womens Camp.

Both they and many who accepted redundancy are continuing the campaign by supporting the North West Peoples' March for Jobs on 17-20 June. The demands of this March and the whole labour movement must now be for full support for the Magnificent Six, and the reinstatement of all 750 jobs at Parkside.

The four legs of the march culminate with a mass rally near Parkside pit. The march has the support of the North West TUC, the NUM, Women against Pit Closures and the National Solidarity Network. Throughout the March meetings will be held at factories and other workplaces threatened with closures, as well as with groups of workers in struggle.

In the face of betrayal by the TUC and Labour front bench, the March can act as a focus for uniting the struggles and building the fightback against all the attacks on the working class.

* Parkside womens' occupation, March details see pp 5-6.

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