Joy Gardner murdered...

RACIST COPS

RACIST STATE!

Stop Racist Violence!
Close down BNP Headquarters!
Join the UNITY DEMONSTRATION
Sat OCTOBER 16
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Indiscreet charm of the Bundesbank smashes ERM

Maastricht in flames?

By Phil Hearse

THE DECISION to allow the European Exchange Rate Currencies to operate in new 30 per cent margins means the temporary abandonment of the drive to a single European currency.

A single European currency goes to the heart of the vision of the European capitalist unity. To compete with Japan and the United States, leaders of capitalist Europe want to see Europe eventually become a single economy. A single currency means common laws. And common laws eventually point the way to a common state.

The plan for a single currency has been put back for years. It reveals "faint lines" not just in the ERM, but in the whole Maastricht process itself.

The fall of Maastricht has always been that although the European capitalists see the need for further integration to fight Japan and the US, the immediate needs of the different European states vary widely. Thus the question has always been "on whose terms will unity be achieved?" Because Germany is the economically most powerful European state it has always been likely that German views would prevail. This means a strong deflationary, "Euro-monstrist" line, restricting growth.

The German needs high interest rates to soak in investment to complete reunification with the east and combat inflation. The ERM could only survive if the rest of Europe accepted high interest rates, further pushing their own economies into recession.

There have always been huge obstacles on the Maastricht road, but wringing off the drive to European capitalist integration is premature.

There are huge stakes for the European capitalists. Not only do they have to face bitter competition from Japan and the US, but there is the prospect of China emerging as a major world economic power. The only state which has other potential options is Germany.

Debate

Indeed there is a fierce debate in the German political establishment on just this point. The alternative to economic and political European union is the option of trying to dominate central and eastern Europe.

This however is fraught with political dangers. France would be utterly humiliated by any attempt by Germany to go it alone.

It would mean an attempt by Germany to hold its own as a major imperialist power at the expense of its near neighbours - a move which resurrects unfortunate historical memories for the European capitalist classes.

Two weeks ago France cut its interest rates. Effective de-linking of the currencies opens the possibility of renewed growth policies in some European states.

It means that there is a chance, but only a chance, of avoiding some of the worst excesses of deflation and attacks on the working class which Maastricht monetary targets would have imposed.

But without a working class fightback we shall see one form of capitalist attack, the Maastricht road, only replaced by another.

TUC ’93

From failure to irrelevance?

By Paul Clarke

THE LAST year has seen major challenges affecting Britain’s trade unions, each of which the TUC has monumentally failed.

These include the miners’ struggle, vital local struggles like the Tipton dispute and Burscough, the 1.5 per cent pay freeze in the public sector, rising unemployment and closures, rail privatization and more attacks on the NHS, the question of the Labour-union link and the effects of the 1990 anti-unions law.

By any yardstick this was a full agenda for the TUC to get its teeth into, and one full of opportunities for delivering blows against the Tories.

But where there were victories, as over school testing, it was entirely because the TUC had nothing to do with them.

At the same time major structural changes are taking place in the union movement: the NASGO-NUPE-COHSE merger has taken place to form UNISON and the TGWU and GMB are discussing a merger.

These changes are in the process of rendering the TUC semi-redundant as three of four major union federations dominate the movement.

The most gigantic failure of the TUC has been the miners’ struggle, a fitting epitaph to Norman Willis’ period of office.

The days when the TUC brokered relations between the unions and the state, the unions and the Labour Party are finished. Thus the Congress House bureaucracy is reduced more and more to a research, education and information role.

Ilusions that the TUC’s problem was Norman Willis will be shattered by the experience of a few months of John Monks as general secretary.

The fact is that the TUC had a role when it could deliver deals with government, since the advent of Thatcher such a role has been excluded.

Alternatively it has a role when it could, on rare occasions, act as the "general staff" of the labour movement (and that only because of irresistible pressure at the base).

The threat of a general strike over the imprisoned Peterloo Five in 1972 was the last occasion it played this role.

In the epoch of new realism and mega-federations, relations between the unions and the Labour Party will go directly via individual union leader and not the TUC. Bill Morris, John Edmonds and Bill Jordan don’t give a fig what the TUC thinks.

In this new order of the labour movement, debate on the left about how to respond is underdeveloped. The creation of new mega-federations is a major challenge, and this is highlighted by developments in UNISON.

The new federations are potentially extremely powerful weapons of struggle. But the gap between potential and reality is enormous as in the short term the grip of the bureaucracy is strengthened.

In UNISON the previously strong NASGO left can find itself marginalized as the NUPE leadership increasingly takes political control.

The conflicts between leaders like Morris and Edmonds with the Labour leadership over the link demonstrate that British trade unionism is some way off collapsing into American-style business unionism.

But it would be foolish not to understand the trend. The new realist right has made all the running over the past decade. The NUM is all but destroyed; the left is very weak.

In Brighton at the beginning of September the assembled bureaucrats will go through the pantomime ritual of portentous resolutions and amendments whose only function is to fill up the basement of Congress House.

The sleep-walking will only start to be broken by a fight from the left and the organisation of the left.

Monks: behind Willis

"Illusions that the TUC’s problem was Norman Willis will be shattered by the experience of a few months of John Monks as general secretary"
**New World Order equals ethnic cleansing**

GEORGE Bush proclaimed a 'New World Order' in the wake of the Gulf War. By this he was announcing two things simultaneously, the proposed political and military domination of the United States as the world's only superpower, and a new era of peace and freedom in which injustice would be quashed by the 'international community'. Of course only the first was the reality, the second pure propaganda. Since the two things are indeed congruent, Bush's vision was always likely to unravel as people saw the reality.

**Somalia**

Where have the propaganda hype unravelled more than in Somalia, where it is becoming obvious that the US intervention is far removed from any attempt to secure aid for the ordinary people. The New World Order is being exposed in numerous other places. In ex-Yugoslavia western intervention has meant an arms embargo on Bosnia, disabling resistance to Serb and Croat 'ethnic cleansing'. But ethnic cleansing is the fate of the people of Kurdistan and of the marshlands of southern Iraq as well. The Marsh Arabs face the short-term destruction of their community, one which has existed for at least 5000 years. The Kurds are under threat on three sides. And the West, above all the United States, is complicit in the genocide being stored up for these peoples.

The Marsh Arabs have been under furious assault from Saddam Hussein's forces for months. They are being targeted as a dissident force because of the role of the predominantly Shia community in the post-war uprising against Saddam. The marshes are being drained, depriving the Arabs of their livelihood and even drinking water. Unique ecology is being vandalised to destroy a people, and open new areas for agriculture and oil exploration. Daily the Arabs are bombed by shells and missiles. Tens of thousands have fled to Iran. Saddam's forces have continued to exert pressure on Kurdistan, preparing an all-out assault which the West 'is in no fly zone' will not prevent.

**Offensive**

Turkey and Iran both have continued military operations against the Kurds in northern Iraq, while Turkey continues its military offensive against the Kurdish community in its own country. Thousands of people are dying, and hundreds of thousands could die in the marshes of southern Iraq. But the West is not sympathetic to their plight, and actively opposed the uprising against Saddam after the Gulf war. Why? Suggest Bush wanted Saddam removed but only from inside his own country. Public rebellion against Saddam, especially one aided from Iran as the revolt in southern Iraq undoubtedly was, sent shivers down the spines of the Gulf oil sheikdoms which the West was defending.

And an independent Kurdistan threatens to destabilise the imperialist order on the borders of Turkey, Syria and Iran.

Like the Palestinians, both Kurds and Marsh Arabs, as well as Bosnians, are entirely dispensable as far as the West is concerned. Far from being identical with the New World Order, the ideals of peace, freedom and justice are in complete contradiction to it.

The West in general, and the United States and United Nations in particular are not just failing to prevent ethnic cleansing, they are its active agents.

**Sanctions**

The Kurds and Marsh Arabs, the Palestinians and Bosnians, the Iraqi people suffering disease and hunger at the hands of UN sanctions.

All these people need active solidarity from the working class movement in the West. That's why we need a new anti-imperialist movement.

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**Challenge state murder of Joy Gardner**

THE CONSISTENTLY combative Steve Bell published one of his most savagely brilliant cartoons in the Guardian on 11 August. It showed 'Little Irma' being brought into an airport, passing by a gagged and manacled illegal immigrant being carried out. The connection is very direct: Britain has allowed in a tiny number of Bosnian refugees, let alone severe medical cases, compared with any other major European country, an index not only of ruling class cynicism towards the fate of Bosnia, but of blanket racism over immigration and towards black people here. Public inquiries over Joy Gardner's death are beside the point: Joy Gardner may not have been deliberately killed, but her death was a by-product of the casual brutality meted out by the police and immigration authorities to black people.

**Barbarism**

And in a sense, the medivel barbarism of the restraining belt, manacles and plastic bag is not the key point either. Liberal hand-ringing over what kind of force is 'permissible' in dealing with 'illegal immigrants' evokes the fact that Britain's immigration laws are an exercise in racist bigotry and a glorification of harassment of the black community.

In June more than 50 'illegal immigrants' were rounded up on a fruit farm in Kent. Many were from ex-Yugoslavia. They lived in tents and were paid pitiful wages. They wereenuminated by the immigration squads. But harassment goes beyond such desperate groups of people. Immigration offences, particularly suspensions of overstaying, is the new 'Sus' law which is being systematically deployed against the black community. Black motorists stopped by the police (and if you are young and black and drive a car then you will be stopped by the police) will now be routinely checked to see if they are 'overstayers'. Illegal immigration is the excuse for growing numbers of raids on sweatshops and factories, and the excuse for violating the homes and communities of black people.

**Racist state**

Recently the anti-racist movement has been focussed on racist murders and the role of the fascists. However justified that is, Joy Gardner's murder is a reminder of the deeply ingrained racism of the British state. State racism remains the key enemy of black people and a key ruling class weapon to divide the working class.

Media coverage has been grotesque, and not just the openly racist papers like the Sun and Standard. The 'liberal' Guardian published an odious piece which concentration on attacking the far left and apologising for the police. As Trotsky put it, when liberals talk about morality, hang on to your wallet. To grasp the racist hypocrisy of British officialdom and the British media, compare the death of Joy Gardner with that of PC Blakelock. Official enquiries will bury this case, and the police who killed Joy Gardner will get off scot free; and the media will forget it.

The left and anti-racists must prepare a massive response. The Unity Demonstration on 16 October provides the opportunity for a huge display of protest against racist murders and all forms of racist violence and harassment — by fascist thugs or the thugs in blue.
Burnsall strikers in GMB appeal

By Bob Smith

THE BURNSALL'S strikers are appealing against the decision of GMB regional organiser, Geoff Wheatley, to call off their dispute. To publicise their demands, the strikers decided to picket the GMB HQ last Monday afternoon along with London and Birmingham supporters. They hoped to get a better response from GMB General Secretary John Edmonds who was "indisposed" on a previous visit when a flunky was sent out to say it was a shame that nothing could be done. Edmonds praised the strikers' courage and determination and pledged support at the GMB's conference. The strikers are demanding he fulfills his pledge and the GMB gives full support for the continuation of their struggle.

Fourteen of the strikers have signed the statement: '...GMB officials...we are not on strike and we could not do nothing...They then said if we attended our rally 3 July, criticised them or talked to the press they would stop our industrial tribunals and court cases...We asked if we could discuss the issues democratically, and take a vote...They refused...During the strike we had little contact with GMB members and did not even have union cards or know what branch we were in. We feel if we had been white we would not have been treated to such a shabby way.'

Certainly the role of the GMB hardly encourages low-paid, unorganised, black, women, young and grossly exploited workers to take the labour movement seriously.

The strikers ask sympathisers to get resolutions through their organisations demanding the GMB reinitiate the dispute and carry out their demands.

Send copies to Geoff Wheatley, West Midlands GMB, Witton House, 2 Birmingham Road, Halesowen, B63 9HB, as well as to the strikers and John Edmonds at GMB HQ, Woolple Road, Wimbeldon, London SW1.

For further information Babvir Singh on 021 - 565 5416 or write 82 Rosefield Road, Smethwick, B67 6XJ. Donations to Burnsall Strike fund c/o 27 Threave Road, Lindale park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 3CN.

Crucial struggle of Burnsalli's workers was sold out

UNISON – council staff must prepare strike action

THE 500,000 white collar local government members of UNISON have voted to the government's 1.5 per cent pay limit.

This is despite the offer being put out to ballot with no leadership recommendation. The outcome has triggered another bitter round of industrial action. Its outcome will be known at the end of September, and if there is a 'yes' vote then action will start on 4 October.

The UNISON ballot result was rapidly followed by the leaking of a letter apparently written in February from then-Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine to Michael Portillo.

This accepts a 3.5 per cent limit on any increase in local government spending, which implies big cuts in services.

The letter warns that unless pay is held down the cuts will be enormous. Whether the letter was deliberate is not known. But it is certain to be used as ammunition by the local government employers.

The implication will be that if they have to spend more on pay, it will translate into even bigger job cuts.

Firefighters are holding a special conference on 2 September to discuss industrial action against the 1.5 per cent limit.

The implication of this effectively tears up their pay formula, which links them with manufacturing workers.

A huge majority thousands of BBC workers in BECTU have also rejected the 1.5 per cent offer.

Timex crunch

By Helen Shaw

TIMEX STRIKERS FACE defeat unless union leaders are prepared to act in the face of the imminent closure of the plant.

Despite calls for an international boycott and messages of solidarity the process of closure continues. At the Monday 9 August demonstration speakers and many of the strikers spoke of occupying the plant.

Much of the work to close the factory will have to be done by unionised workers and their leaders must defy the anti-union laws and call on them to refuse to work for Timex.

Already the laws have been challenged. Donner postal workers have refused to deliver mail to the factory. BP workers struck in support of the Timex strikers, and Strathclyde bus workers refused to do anything to do with Timex supplier Young and McMillan (the catering firm that supplied their company's forcing management to go to another firm. The anti-union laws have not been used against this action.

The sacked workers are speculating that the plant may be closed in two weeks as another 49 people were paid off by the company on Friday 13 August.

A demonstration, backed by the STUC has been called for Saturday 21 August assembling at 10.30am in Duddhpe Park.

But despite the dispute is not on the way to defeat, occupation and refusal by ununionised workers to have anything to do with Timex is the way forward.

‘No, minister!’

CPSA bites back

By Shaun Cohen

WORKERS in the Department of the Environment and Department of Transport held a successful one day strike at the end of July. The mood was buoyant and the strike solid with CPSA and NIPCF members out.

The strike was about three issues: market testing, privatisation of services and redundancies agreements.

Support for the strike surprised even union activists with areas that had never taken action before coming out.

However the stakes are high. According to a leaked letter between Waldenrave and McGregor the creation of new agencies through privatisation and market testing is intended to lose jobs.

Also in the pipeline, from April '94 each agency will be responsible for negotiating pay and conditions. Already in place in the Inland Revenue this will mean the end of national collective bargaining.

This creeping process of privatisation is pushing people into action who have never been on strike before.

Activists must now concentrate on building nationwide strike action on November 5 which involves all unions and departments.

No shift by Cardiff UCW strikers

By Helen Shaw

1,000 POSTAL workers are on strike against the Royal Mail's decision to impose new shift patterns.

They have been out for over two weeks.

The Cardiff workers are furious about management trying to treat them like robots introducing fixed duties without any consideration about friends, family and social life.

The changes they want to introduce mean workers would be assigned to one shift permanently. At present most workers rotate their shifts which means no-one works unsociable hours or in bad delivery areas all the time.

Fixed duties would make it easier for management to cut bonuses for evening and night workers.

Solidarity

Solidarity has been widespread with offices in Bristol and Bournemouth launching an unofficial overtime ban to make sure no Cardiff mail passes through their area.

Newport, Swansea, Barry and Bridgend offices have said they will not handle Cardiff mail and at Worcester and Oxford workers have voted to strike if asked to touch work from Cardiff.

UCW activists must push for the strike to be supported nationally - Cardiff is the first to be attacked and if defeated the same will happen across Britain.

Messages of solidarity and further information from UCW Cardiff strike HQ, phone or fax 0222 458988.

REVELL & GEORGE
Support GPMU strikers

SAT SEPT 4
Cow Lane, Salford
(0t Oldfield Rd)

Bylan Shaw
Labour lets Tories cheat on ‘Happy Families’

by Peter Purton

TORIES in trouble seek easy targets. Their concerted attack on single parents, driven by the budget deficit, is a rare combination of two of their favourite themes: that poor people are parasites on the ‘productive’ part of society, and that moral values can only be secured by ‘proper family life’.

The Labour front bench has once again shown no policy the Tories promote shall pass without being emulated by the opposition.

Recent attacks by spokespeople such as Tony Blair and David Blunkett have reflected a media campaign by liberal columnists denouncing a Labour ‘family policy’.

Child care

In fact, both of all families are single-parent (involving 2.2 million children). Nine-tenths are headed by women, and the vast majority would work if childcare were available.

Although the teenage birth rate is high, only 4 per cent of single parents on benefits are teenagers. The chief cause of single-parenthood is divorce and separation, accounting for 70 per cent.

For the Tories, this is a problem. Even though the individual benefits payments leave most of their recipients in dreadful poverty, the total bill is large.

The Tory solution is to attack the victim, the most recent measure being the Child Support Act. But the situation also defies Tory philosophy. John Redwood (Welsh Secretary) says ‘the natural state should be the two-adult family caring for their children’.

The Tory position is traditional. Labour’s echo of it establishes a consensus which leaves the vast numbers living outside the ideal Tory family without a voice, and subject to whatever further material and ideological attack comes next.

The Tories know they can rely on Labour not to challenge the fundamentals, for fear of (alleged) electoral unpopularity.

Failure

Tony Blair – one of Labour’s Bible-bashing ‘modemisers’ – declares that ‘the lack of a modern policy for the family is to develop public policy that helps create the best circumstances for the family to prosper’. He recognises that one parent can be as good as two, and that the balance between men and women has changed – but the fundamental question of the family itself remains unanswered.

Tories argue that social breakdown and disorder and high crime rates are caused by the breakdown of the traditional family. Labour’s version is: they are caused by the breakdown of the family, which is caused by poverty and deprivation.

The argument not only discredits all except working class crime, it also ignores the other side of the question: an immense proportion of crimes are committed inside the family, as has been frequently proven. Rape, abuse of all kinds, and indeed a high proportion of assaults and murders, are committed between family members – and always have been. The idea that if we just get people jobs and better housing family life will be restored to its 1950s ‘Pearl’ image is ipostatic.

That preaching by politicians, church and community leaders will ‘restore’ the sanctity of the family is demonstrably mythical.

Campaign

From the left, the response should be to campaign for measures such as a woman’s right to control her own fertility and proper childcare, and equality in all spheres for lesbians and gay men, and everything else which enhances the struggle of women and of lesbians and gay men against their oppression.

Our goal is not the ‘restoration’ of family values, because the family is itself oppressive, but ultimately the liberation of social relations and the development of better forms of organising our lives as part of a socialist society.

Is prejudice inherited?

Born to be gay?

by Pete Purton

SO SOME scientist claims he has found the gene which ‘causes’ homosexuality? How now, we can... what? ‘Prejudice’! Eliminate gays at source? Or since we can’t help it anyway, seeing as it genetic, should we treat it as any other inherited misfortune?

The media explain about this ‘discovery’ demagogically only that rational debate on sexuality is almost impossible. Rational people substitute prejudice for reason, see the bigots relish another opportunity to revile in their ignorant vitriol.

Some gay newspapers, radio stations, TV stations and ‘invisible interviewers with respectable names from the Stonewall Group’ relied on them all.

And most of it was a load of nonsense. The scientific nature of the discovery is, at best, questionable. They found that some of a sample of brothers who were both gay had genes which ‘predetermined’ them that way. What a surprise! In truth, scientists have made similar discoveries in the past and again only for the research’s conclusions to be proved fallacious, or lead nowhere.

What about lesbians?

But what about lesbians? Do lesbians have any special genes as gay men? If they do, why haven’t they been discovered? If they haven’t, does it mean that lesbians aren’t homosexual?

What about the countless numbers of people who are lesbian or gay who aren’t related to one another, or who haven’t or can’t come out, for reasons of feared discrimination or because they are trapped into a heterosexual relationship?

It seems pure prejudice that no one has drawn another possible conclusion: if sexuality is genetic, surely most harmful deviant behaviour in the world comes from heterosexual males, so maybe its the heterosexual gene which is defective.

There has been a predictably depressing response from so-called spokespersons (actually men) from the lesbian and gay movement. The sad, lobbied Stonewall and the radical direct action group Outrage share a common view for all their differences. They also think sexuality is biologically determined.

Peter Tatchell of Outrage, in arguing that we are a valuable part of society, repeated the unoriginal myth that gays are predisposed to be more peaceful, artistic and creative than heterosexuals.

Lesbians apparently don’t count. It’s merely the other side of the popular myth that all ballet dancers are ‘fairies’. The political method involved is that of accepting that society is as it is, and that all we can do is to accept it.

Revolutionaries have a different approach. We do not have a pet theory as to the ‘cause’ of homosexuality. Or indeed of heterosexuality, which is a no less valid question. But there is plentiful evidence – such as thousands of years of history – that all sexuality is socially constructed, not biologically determined.

There is also ample evidence that the oppression of homosexuality is not an accident. We believe it is a consequence of the establishment of heterosexuality as the dominant sexuality, with the nuclear, straight family as its current form, deliberately upheld and secured by the state as part of the structure of society which best serves the needs of the capitalist class.

While struggling to gain every possible improvement in the legal and social position of lesbians and gay men, we believe such reforms are steps on a road and will not in themselves totally eliminate discrimination.

Liberation

Our liberation can only come about through a transformation in the social order brought about by socialist revolution. In a new social order, things which now appear ‘natural’ and ‘inevitable’ like the family and heteronormativity will undergo dramatic changes.

Then we will be able to create conditions in which human sexuality can develop in directions which we cannot now predict.
Anglo-Irish accord in tatters

Labour’s plans for partition

By David Coen

THE LEAKING of the Labour leadership document ‘Options for a Labour Government’ in the run up to the Maastricht vote came as no real surprise. It was not that the document or the proposals were new: it was prepared in expectation of Labour winning the 1992 General Election.

Of other ‘options’ we haven’t heard, it contained only one – joint London/Dublin sovereignty over a legally independent Northern Ireland for a period of 20 years.

The nine Ulster Unionists led by James Molyneaux saved the Tories from defeat on the Social Charter opt-out clause in the Maastricht Bill and kept Major in office.

The terms of Major’s deal with the UUP seem to involve a parliamentary select committee on Northern Ireland and some more consultation on ‘security’.

But most important of all for the Unionists is that the draft agreement gives them leverage over policy. ‘There’ll be no more of that John Hume/Dick Spring nonsense’, Ken Maginnis of the UUP, was quoted as saying.

The Mayhew talks are now seen to be dead. The British can hardly continue the pretence of neutrality, and the Unionist veto is back at the centre of British policy in a manner not seen since the breakdown of the Conservative and Unionist Party of Great Britain and Northern Ireland after Heath abolished the Stormont Government in 1972.

The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, hated by the Unionists because of the involvement of Dublin, is also under threat.

Six month deadline

The McNamara document tried to break this logjam by threatening that if no agreement was reached in six months, a Labour Government would talk to Dublin about joint sovereignty. The venemous tone which greeted McNamara’s document was surprising given the mildness of what was being proposed.

In essence, his proposals mean the continuation of British rule for another 20 years with the active involvement of Dublin, which would be required, in return, to drop its claim to the North. The North of Ireland would be given independent legal status with EC recognition and governed by a five-person Executive Joint Authority, three elected from the North by Proportional Representation and two each from London and Dublin.

‘Security’ would be under joint British and Irish control and there would be a Bill of Rights.

Inbuilt majority

So, instead of a bold step towards facing down the Unionists the Options document is another attempt at a British solution. This is a partitionist solution. The original border was drawn so as to give the Unionists an inbuilt majority and their policies of discrimination.

After 20 years of direct rule from Westminster and with up to 45 per cent of the workforce employed directly or indirectly by the British State, discrimination in employment has hardly changed.

Several Unionist local councils have recently been prosecuted for their discriminatory policies.

In other words, a Labour government is simply not going to be able to make the sectarian statist work in such a way as to bring about its own demise in 20 years. The record of the past 20 years is against it. Sooner or later it would have to face down the threat of armed action by sections of the Unionist population.

“In essence, Labour’s proposals mean the continuation of British rule for another 20 years with the active involvement of Dublin…”

To succeed, the Unionists would, as with the Curragh Mutiny of 1912 or the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974, have to rely on support in Britain – the Tory right and some elements influenced by the Orange Order in England and Scotland. But these elements are now much weaker than in the past and could be defeated politically.

A Labour Party which campaigned for Irish unity would attract massive support. After all, opinion polls, even after IRA ‘mistakes’ such as Warnock, show a majority in support of withdrawal.

To succeed, Labour will need to state openly that it will not allow the Unionist veto to stop progress to Irish unity. There is a possibility that some elements in the state apparatus will try to obstruct such a policy in the manner of South Africa but the only way to minimise this risk is an open political campaign.

There should be no hidden agenda which can be looked at the whim of the Secret Service for purposes of political de-stabilisation.

Dangerous

McNamara’s proposals are dangerous even though they may not even become Party policy. While they represent for the first time an attempt to confront the Unionist veto and break with the bipartisan approach which has characterised British policies since Partition, their effect would be to copper-fasten British rule and partition.

It is this light we must also look at the proposals coming from the Labour Party, the Irish Society, many of whose members have come from the virtually defunct Labour Committee on Ireland.

Their recent document, ‘Ireland – Time for Peace’ is almost the same as the McNamara document (not surprising, given that some leading advisers to the LS are also members of the LPS), the only substantial difference being that the LPS call for withdrawal after 20 years of joint sovereignty.

The PTA is not mentioned and the document evades the issue of the Diplock Courts, shoot to kill and the whole apparatus of repression which underpins the Unionist veto. Presumably a more ‘carrying’ version of the same policies would be implemented under Labour.

It is not surprising that in the massive policy vacuum following the obvious failure of the latest British initiative, many other forces should now be attempting to force their way on to the stage.

Opportunities

The closet Unionists of Democracy Now, the Campaign for Labour Representation and the various peace movements all recognise the opportunities presented by the political upheaval in Britain.

Supporters of withdrawal and Irish unity in the Labour movement, and there are many, could well face an onslaught designed to persuade them that joint sovereignty is the only realistic path to unity.

The big danger is that, given the absence of leadership and organisation, these people will be attracted by the McNamara bandwagon or its lesser versions. The LPS.

The latest crisis of British rule provides us with a historic opportunity, we shouldn’t let it slip.
Poverty sparks cholera, diphtheria outbreaks

A PREVIOUSLY unknown strain of cholera is sweeping Bangladesh. World Health Organisation officials are warning that it could become a world epidemic.

The new strain is believed to have originated in the squatter of Calcutta and spread across the border. Meanwhile, holiday companies have cancelled trips to Russia because of an outbreak of diphtheria in Moscow and St Petersburg.

This outbreak is obviously connected to the growth of mass poverty, homelessness, food shortages and the semi-collapse of many health services in the ex- USSR.

The new epidemics come hard on the heels of the cholera outbreak which swept much of Latin America in the last three years.

Cholera is carried in dirty water; the only sure way to stop it is to provide clean water — something which billions in the 'third world' have no access to.

If AIDS is included, the new epidemics are the third and fourth in the past decade. The cholera epidemics are certainly attributable to worsening economic conditions, as is the diphtheria epidemic in the ex-USSR.

It is difficult to imagine a more damning indictment of the effects of the world capitalist crisis.

By Roland Rance

Israel’s latest blitzkrieg in South Lebanon left at least 150 Palestinians and Lebanese killed, with about 500,000 driven from their homes.

But this has been followed by renewed US shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East and talk of an imminent agreement between Israel and Syria.

Meanwhile, Israeli cabinet ministers have for the first time had an official meeting with a PLO representative, while prominent Palestinians have threatened to withdraw from the delegation to the Middle East peace talks.

What is happening behind these apparently contradictory events?

Political targets

In fact, it is precisely these political developments, rather than any territorial gains or the destruction of Nakhalot, which were the purpose of Israel’s attack.

Israel has shown its intention and ability to dictate the terms of any agreement in the Middle East.

It expects Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to bring Hizbollah under control and accept a US-brokered settlement on the lines of the 1978 Camp David Treaty between Israel and Egypt. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote to Arafat: ‘The single most important economic interest of the United States in the Middle East is to achieve a peaceful settlement.’

Unlike delegation leader Dr Hader Abdul Shah Shuff, a veteran nationalist respected by the Palestinian left (who had previously resigned but been coerced into returning, the three were considered Arafat loyalists.

Many believe that their threat, and Arafat’s reported promise to cancel the delegation more safely in the future, were a play designed to restore the delegation’s waning credibility.

According to a recent poll, half the Palestinians in the occupied territories favour withdrawal from the talks.

A key to understanding recent developments was unwittingly given in the Jewish Chronicle by writer Chaim Bermant, who argued that dictators such as Assad, like Sadat at Camp David, could find it easier to make peace with Israel than with the relatively democratic PLO.

Repression

The truth is that ‘peace’ on Israel’s terms can only be enforced by military strength and domestic repression.

The latest machinations demonstrate clearly that the rights and liberation of the Palestinian people are inseparably linked with the struggle for the liberation of the whole Arab world.

By Duncan Chapple

With our own brand of beer, our own currency and state power for one week in a Swedish forest, the Fourth International’s July youth camp was a massive success.

More than 800 young rebels from 15 countries came together to debate the way forward for revolutionary youth.

Now in its tenth year, the camp marked a new stage of success — it was the youngest camp and the most politically lively.

The average age of the 200 Swedish Young Socialists, for instance, was just over 17. Only a minority were already members of the Fourth International.

To maximise the potential values of European currencies, we produced our own money — the Peng. The less rich the country you came from, the more Peng you got for your money. This meant that young people from Eastern and Southern Europe could buy things at the camp more cheaply.

As well as our own food, Revolution beer and Cuba Cola were made for camp — sold at special bars run together by all the different national delegations during our licensing hours.

To keep the fun going, there were discos every night, a concert with two popular Swedish rock bands and a lesbian and gay right with a French rapper, a wild Portuguese group and lots of fun party games.

Even Jon Hammerlund, the Scandinavian Billy Bragg, dropped by to do a gig in English, French, Castillian and Swedish.

With so many people at the youth camp for their first time, the political differences were largely proved too. Ideas were explained more clearly and vividly than before.

Police political tasks outlined more sharply.

Speaking at the final rally, Claude Gabriel, from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, explained that a new political generation is arising in Europe. We have to be the most subversive, the most international, uncorrupted by capitalism.

The unique feature of the camp is its democracy. The camp is run by representatives from every delegation and the cleaning, cooking and other work is shared between the campers, it means everyone has an incentive to make sure problems get sorted out quickly.

All in all, the camp is a unique and fantastic experience. Next summer the camp will be a lot closer to Britain and cheaper to travel to.

To get your name down for a brochure for next year’s camp, write to Liberation now P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UJ.

Enraged youth plot revolution

Anger at Israeli attack pressurised PLO leaders

Arafat

Warren Christopher is now working out the details.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, by apparently signalling his willingness to accept Israel’s terms for Palestinian autonomy in part of the 1967-occupied territories, sparked off a resignation threat by three members of the Palestinian delegation to the ‘peace’ talks (Faisal Husseini, Hanaa Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat).

Unlike delegation leader Dr Hader Abdul Shah Shuff, a veteran nationalist respected by the Palestinian left (who had previously resigned but been coerced into returning), the three were considered Arafat loyalists.

‘The most subversive, the most international, uncorrupted by capitalism’
Joy Gardner – another victim of ‘Fortress Britain’

By Kathy Lowe

POLICE burst into Joy Gardner’s house at 7.40am to deport her because she was an ‘overstayer’. The police were unable to do that because under the 1988 Immigration Act overstaying has been made a criminal offence, and thus overstayers can be arrested without a warrant and quickly deported.

There have been several cases where solicitors have had to try to intervene on the airport tarmac.

As well as ‘overstayers’ there are several other groups of people who can be rapidly expelled. These include people who have come into the country for a specific purpose and are deemed to have stayed beyond it – for example students who get a part-time job.

Then there are asylum seekers who can be immediately kicked out. The fourth group is non-British citizens who have served prison sentences whose presence can be deemed ‘not conducive to the public good’ and thus immediately removed. But police have most licence against overstayers because it is a criminal offence.

Deportation figures have been rising sharply.

In 1991 more than 5000 people were deported, more than twice the number in 1987. The use of the deportation weapon has been much simpler by the severe restrictions put on the right to appeal by the 1988 Act. Deportation is part of the government’s ‘Fortress Britain’ strategy. It’s a dual strategy; it aims to severely restrict immigrants and asylum seekers coming into the country, and at the same time to enable those who have made it into the country to be quickly ejected.

Apart from the 1988 Immigration Act, the new Asylum Act is a key part of that strategy. The key point of this Act is to speed up the process of rejecting asylum applications, to institute a ‘fast track’ approach to turning people away. Once an asylum application has been turned down, there’s only 48 hours to lodge an appeal – something which many applicants don’t know.

In addition there’s a new policy of treating asylum seekers already in the country as ‘illegal entrants’. Of course you are meant to apply for asylum before you enter the country, which many asylum seekers don’t know.

The basis of the ‘Fortress Britain’ approach is racism pure and simple. There is no other rational economic or social basis to it. This racism hits people who try to come into the country and black people here.

New ‘sus’ law

Suspicion of overstaying is being used as a new ‘sus’ law. It is now very common for black people to be stopped on the street and taken into custody – even kept in jail for several days – on ‘suspicion’ of being overstayers.

Unless they can produce proof of identity immediately which can be checked, black people are in effect subject to random arrest and detention.

In addition there have been a lot of cases where people have been kept in custody for several days, thinking that the sole basis of their detention was an alleged offence, only to be suddenly rushed to the airport and thrown out – without time to pick up their belongings or tell their family and friends.

The Fortrose Britain strategy is being reinforced with the massive use of detention against potential immigrants and asylum seekers with up to 10,000 people locked up at any one time. The London prisons are being used as an overspill for the detention centres.

People locked up can be held for anything from a few days to 18 months. They don’t know how long they will be detained, and often find themselves summarily deported at the end of it. Usually they find it very difficult to get information about the progress of their case, even if they have been detained for months.

Detainees find it very difficult to get help, and frequently no one knows that they are being detained, or where they are. Sometimes they are put in places which are very remote from any family and friends who know they are being detained, for example in the Verne

Clash on Portland. They are often moved around between prisons frequently, so their solicitors and immigration advisers find it very difficult to keep track of them.

Those who do get ‘help’ are often ripped off by unscrupulous solicitors who take the legal aid money and then do nothing to help them.

In effect, in 1993 Britain we have a form of internment without trial. It is used not only against people who are newly arrived, but also against people who have been here some time. Once again, detention is being used disproportionately against black people.

There is a lot of evidence that the threat of detention is being used to force people out of the country. They are threatened with prolonged detention unless they agree to a ‘supervised departure’ – ie to go quietly.

Increasing numbers of people have been told that their appeal has no chance of success, that they will be imprisoned for months one end, and thus have opted for a supervised departure.

‘With over 10,000 people being detained for immigration and asylum offences, Britain is operating a form of internment without trial – on a massive scale.’
‘Because of the 1988 Immigration Act overstaying is now a criminal offence, allowing people to be arrested without a warrant and summarily deported.’

The procedures and strategies discussed so far relate to the domestic end of the Fortress Britain strategy. But the first outputs of Fortress Britain are the embassies and consulates responsible for issuing visas to those who want to come to Britain.

Visa applications are dealt with in an utterly racist way, with black countries – the Caribbean, Africa and the Asian sub-continent – targeted with cumbersome procedures, endless forms, prolonged and detailed interviews, before visas are issued.

**Fraudulent**

The aim of course is to trip people up; to try to prove they are not coming to Britain for the stated purpose, that they are lying when they say their family is here, that they are making a fraudulent application.

Once asylum or refugees selectors get a visa, of course that is not the end of the matter. In the past an application for asylum overrode every other consideration; they were given ‘exceptional leave to remain’. Now, if they come to Britain, even with a visa, they can be treated as ‘illegal entrants’ even if they make an asylum application.

Faced with this Fortress Europe strategy the anti-racist and labour movements cannot limit themselves to protecting against the most brutal tactics of the police and the state. The whole framework of immigration legislation has to be challenged. This means doing something that’s outside the law.

**Symbol**

It is a symbol that Britain intends to continue its policy of internment people without trial in large numbers – the Tory policy of Fortress Britain.

A further campaign which needs highlighting is the Manchester-based Campaign Against Double Punishment, which is fighting the deportation of people who have served a prison sentence.

Double punishment is a symptom of the ruthlessness with which the Fortress Britain strategy is being implemented.

Kathy Lowe is the author of ‘Britain’s Forgotten Prisoners’, published by the Detention Advice Service.

Build 16 October demonstration

Unite forces to fight racism

OVER THE last month it appeared that there would be two major anti-racist/fascist demonstrations taking place on 16 October – the Unity demonstration to the BNP’s south London headquarters and another organised by the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) in central London.

This was the unfortunate outcome of an attempt to get unity between three main anti-racist organisations, ARA, the Anti-Nazi League and Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE).

Two competing demonstrations on the same day would have been an absurdity. Thankfully, this situation has now been resolved by the cancellation of the ARA demonstration, apparently because of the withdrawal of support by the family of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

ARA however has made no statement of support for the Unity demonstration, and on past form is unlikely to.

Since the development of the new wave of anti-racist organisations and activity, this newspaper has argued for support to ARA but also to initiatives of the ANL and YRE. Factional divisions disrupting unity in action only weaken the impact of the movement.

There are a number of factors which made the creation of ARA a big step forward. The breadth of its support has been impressive, including national trade unions and a wide range of other organisations. Its commitment to the leading role of black people has also been important.

Although with significant mobilising potential, both ANL and YRE are tightly controlled by the left groups behind them – the SWP and Militant respectively. They are not committed to a genuinely open and united front approach. The ARA in particular is little more than the SWP with yellow tassels.

Seige mentality

On the other hand ARA has little democracy either; and some of its leaders are developing a paranoid siege mentality against the ANL and YRE. Alarming evidence of the distribution of unsigned factional atta’s on the ANL and YRE circulating in the labour movement has come to light.

Irrespective of the causes of the original plan to have two demonstrations, ARA should now come behind the Unity demo.

The murder of Joy Gardner has spotlighted the evident need to build a movement which combats state racism and not just fascism; such a movement needs to construct the maximum unity in action.

But anti-racism/fascism is such a gigantic question in British politics that there is an enormous political space. This means that no single organisation can present itself as ‘the’ anti-racist movement. This kind of self-aggrandisement will not only increase divisions, but in the end, fall flat on its face.
Strange Passions - men and hobbies

Some thoughts after reading Feverpitch by Nick Hornby.

By Helen Shaw

IF YOU WALK into any large newsagent to look for a magazine, it is obvious what takes up the most shelf space; a large section of mostly generic 'women's' magazines - and row upon row of specialist magazines on men's interests.

Set aside the soft and not so soft porn for a moment; the range of less noxious obsessions is staggering. Fishing, guns, football, trains, cars, different categories of cars... the list is endless in its categories and sub-categories.

Surrounded

Entitled 'general interest', these shelves are nearly always surrounded by men flicking through the pages.

Why do men have such obsessions? Why are men's hobbies invariably concerned with knowing vast amounts of fact and detail? And what does this say about the socialization of girls and boys?

Why are men's hobbies invariably concerned with knowing vast amounts of fact and detail?

Football is a good example. Nick Hornby's excellent book 'Feverpitch' provides an interesting insight into this phenomenon. Writing about the difference between boys and girls he says:

'...most of us were defined only by the number and extent of our interests. Some boys had more records than others, some knew more about football; some were interested in cars, or rugby.

'We had passions instead of personalities, predictable and uninteresting passions at that, passions which could not reflect and illuminate us in the way that my girlfriends did... and this is one of the most inexplicable differences between men and women."

'I have met women who have loved football and go to watch a number of games a season, but I have not yet met one who would make that Wednesday night trip to Plymouth. And I have met women who love music, and can tell their Mavis Staples from their Shirley Browns, but I have never met a woman with a huge and ever expanding and neurotically alphabetized record collection.

'They always seem to have lost their records, or to have relied on somebody else in the house - a boyfriend, a brother, a flatmate, usually a male - to have provided the physical details of their interests. Men cannot allow this to happen...

'I am not saying the analysing, repressive woman does not exist, but she is vastly outnumbered by her masculine equivalent; and while there are women with obsessions, they are usually, I think, obsessive about people, or the focus for their obsessions changes frequently'.

This is a phenomenon which also rife on the left. There always seem to be men in organisations who can quote chapter and verse from the historical writings of various class heroes. Or men who can recite the family tree of left wing groups and their divisions of sub divisions as easily as falling off a log.

Obsessions provide the opportunity for social contact without intimacy. The feeling of belonging and comradeship without the prospect of having to talk about yourself.

In a dysfunctional capitalist society this may be the only opportunity some people have for any of the enjoyment and warmth that comes with human contact. It is safe to debate about different types of aeroplanes, about who won the League in 1956, about which car has the better fuel injection engine.

Many men become fanatics about their chosen hobbies and spend all their spare time and money to its pursuit. This attention to and obsession with detail serves a purpose. It makes people experts, it gives them power and social standing in their particular milieu. It can also give structure, meaning, purpose and fulfilment in what otherwise would be a pretty dull and empty existence.

To be the most knowledgeable amongst a small group gives a sense of power. Again Nick Hornby is illuminating.

'I am aware, sometimes, in my group of Arsenal-supporting friends, of an undeterred but noticeable jockeying; none of us likes to be told something about the club that we didn't know - an injury to one of the reserves, say, of an impending alteration to the shirt design, something crucial like that - by any of the others'.

Many hobbies are fun, and the social contact is good. Some interests have a purpose which is useful and necessary.

Detail

What is interesting though, is the particular way men go about pursuing their hobbies. There is a premium on absolute detail and ability to remember obscure bits of information; it is amazing - a quality and skill which could be used to real advantage.

It would be foolish and paranoid to believe that this manner of socialization is all some sinister plot hatched out by the bourgeoisie; but it does serve a useful function. Where people are atomized, each absorbed with their particular obsession, and spend every available minute of spare time becoming more expert, they are not thinking about anything else.

A friend tells a story about a visit to France. On arrival at Charles de Gaulle Airport by morning, standing next to a group of five or six very ordinary looking men in their 30s and 40s. He was able to overhear their conversation and discovered that they were plane spotters, on a day trip to spot some more planes for their records. The yappy version of train spotters?

What possesses a group of men to spend by no means small amounts of money to travel to airports to spot planes?

And what of a friend who recently had to wipe the game 'Civilisation' from his computer because being "Red Empereor of the Trotskyists" was becoming more important than getting down to work?

Some people would say this phenomenon and the oppressive nature of its consequences is evidence of inherent badness in men. But it isn't inherent in anyone to be isolated from other people or to be so attentive to detail - it arises from the ideological nature of childrearing and the reproduction of social functions which benefit the ruling class.

Women would be more powerful had they the time to become experts. Instead many wind up washing, cooking and cleaning for a man whose every leisure moment is consumed by a hobby.

Men would be less alienated if their hobbies were shared and less obsessive. Capitalism divides us from one another and alienates us from our lives. The magazine and leisure industry, with their massive advertising role, certainly serves that boss, reinforcing and exploiting our perceived needs.

Buying a magazine will never feel the same again!
What real changes for Chinese women?

Wild Swans: Three Daughters Of China by JUNG CHANG Published by Flamingo (£6.99)

Reviewed by JODLEY GREEN

THIS STORY of three generations of Chinese women starts in 1909 at the time of the Manchu Empire with Jung Chang’s grandmother’s feet being crushed by binding.

Chang goes on to tell the story of her grandmother (Yu-fang), mother (De-hong) and herself from the days of the Chinese republic through to Mao’s death and the fall of the Gang of Four.

The personalities and policies of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are described but remain distant.

Similarly the peasant communities in which Jung Chang did her ‘Thought reform through Labour’ remain anonymous.

These funny images on the edge of the family world enhance Chang’s portrayal of her isolated upbringing as the daughter of two Communist Party officials.

Two chapters cover the period 1938-42. One documents the famine which accompanied back-yard steel production during the Great Leap Forward. The other, titled ‘In a privileged cocoon’ records Chang’s own experiences in those years.

Bureaucrat

Bureaucrat

Throughout Wild Swans the experiences of women are at the forefront. Yu-fang’s lack of power as a concubine and then a wife contrasts sharply with De-hong’s rise as an official in the Communist Party.

However, the family remained the organising principle of society with little change for the position of women within it.

This book highlights the failure of the Chinese revolution to encourage the emancipation of women, especially in personal relationships.

Told in almost detached tones, the majority of the book is a tale of great hardship, terror and violence.

Brief descriptions of De-hong’s work for the communist underground during Japanese and then Kuomingtang rule, of the short period after the revolution and before the Anti-Rightist campaign, and of the Chinese landscape prevent Jung Chang’s painful rendition becoming intolerable.

Weaving together the disintegration of normal life during the Cultural Revolution and the disintegration of her father’s sanity, Jung Chang describes her gradual disillusionment with the regime.

Heroin

Heroin

It is only when both her parents are detained in camps that she dares to blame Mao for their suffering. Having suffered greatly and survived without losing their humanity, who can deny the heroin of Chang’s parents?

This book is beautifully written, moving, evocative and serves as a crash course in twentieth century Chinese history and geography to the initiated, but I am left uneasy about its tragic-heroism and the references to Chinese tradition as an explanation.

All great tragedies demand heroes, but was the heroin of Chang’s family – a passive resistance for the most part (for example turning in fewer names than the quota during the Anti-Rightist Campaign) – so singular an occurrence amid other more enthusiastic praise and denouncements?

It is far too poetic, not to mention simplistic, to equate survival with heroism. Mao with past emperors and to explain the cruelty of ordinary people as a particularly Chinese characteristic developed under centuries of arbitrary rule.

Tony Benn’s faithful road to socialism

The moral basis of socialism and its relevance today. The Eric Heffer Memorial Lecture – by Tony Benn.

Reviewed by HELON SHAW

THIS PAMPHLET is a little gem encapsulating the humanity, passion and style of Benn’s socialism and a fitting memorial to his comrade Eric Heffer.

It begins with an overview of Heffer’s life and commitment to socialism and is a fitting tribute to a man who in Benn’s words ‘got very, very angry at any oppression or any injustice. He fumed like a volcano, like Mount Etna before it spewed forth its molten lava’.

It goes on to refute those who saw the fall of the Berlin Wall as the end of socialism and like Fukuyama proclaimed the end of history.

Benn says: ‘I happened to be in Calcutta when his [Fukuyama’s] book came out and there were the hungry, starving people on the streets.

If the book was to be believed they were always going to be hungry, and always going to starve because history had ended and capitalism had won. Socialism and the ideas of socialism are out of date, we are told.’

Anecdote is liberally used throughout the pamphlet and makes particular impact when talking about the reasons people become socialists.

Central to the text is the analogy Benn draws between socialist morality and ‘true’ Christianity.

He claims that the book of Genesis in the Christian bible introduced to the world a revolutionary idea with its statement ‘I am my brother’s keeper’.

He also highlights the difference between a hierarchy which is concerned to protect its powers and the faith that brings a church or political party into existence.

He states that at the root of all socialism is a perception that you should judge decisions that have to be made not by profit and loss but by right and wrong.

As in many of Benn’s speeches, the subject matter covered is vast and touches on many common themes that appear in toto of his speeches – democracy, the heritage of the Levellers, the lack of democracy in the Labour Party.

It encapsulates Benn’s politics, and the Christian socialist tradition in which he is rooted. It is worth reading for all that is good about Benn’s politics and – for Marxists – illuminating about what is wrong with a socialism based on faith.

Commitment, sense of moral indignation and a feel for history may not be enough – but they are all valuable commodities for socialists.

(Available from North Oxfordshire Socialist Campaign Group)
Slow progress for Yeltsin’s counter-revolution

THE LONG running Punch and Judy show between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the majority of the country’s Congress of People’s Deputies seems set to reach a climax this autumn. The Congress now routinely countermands Yeltsin’s decrees and has set up parallel constitutional, economic and anti-corruption initiatives. COLIN MEADE reports.

ACCORDING to the speaker of the Congress, Ruslan Khasbulatov, at issue are two economic models, ‘one advocating radical reform, the other socially orientated reform under strict state control’. The heavy battalions of the military industrial complex assembled in the Congress are challenging the restrictions on their freedom of economic and political action imposed by Yeltsin’s abortive kowtowing to Western interests.

Recently, for example, Yeltsin was ready to bow to American demands to cancel a rocket technology deal with India which Washington insisted infringed disarmament agreements, while Russian arms exports are at an all-time low.

Abolish forum

Yeltsin, meanwhile, is planning to abolish his critics’ forum; he has announced a new draft constitution, which would enable the president to dissolve the Congress and call elections and which does away with the post of vice-president, currently occupied by one of his leading critics, Alexander Rutskoi.

Beneath the grand reform plans and rhetoric about democratic procedures issuing from both sides lies the frustration of the military industrial complex, with their country’s loss of status and their ambition to regain control of the territory of the former USSR. Vice-President Rutskoi for example openly looks forward to the day when his country will ‘again become a superpower that can guarantee peace’.

Developments over the past two years in the so-called Dnieper Republic, a region of the newly independent republic of Moldova are instructive. This region, which borders on the Ukraine is occupied by the rogue Russian 14th Army under General Alexander Lebed, backed up by Russian and Chechen volunteers.

Last August Yeltsin sent in some 3,000 Russian ‘peacekeeping’ troops but no attempt had been made to recall Lebed, a vocal proponent of the need to reassert Russian domination throughout the former Soviet Union.

The peacekeeping force is accused of siding with Lebed by the Moldovan government who are now calling for an international force to intervene.

Something similar is happening in Georgia, with reports of freelance Russian involvement on the side of the Abkhazian separatists and a proposal from a Yeltsinite minister for a ‘three-way force’ to defend peace.

Lebed played a key role in the August 1991 coup attempt by military conserva
tives against Yeltsin - on both sides. He led a paramilitary battalion to the Russian president’s White House, allegedly in possession of a plan to storm the building. However, under orders from General Pavel Grachov, now Yeltsin’s defence minister, he joined the defenders. Subsequently he went to join the troops in the Dniester Republic before being appointed to the job by Yeltsin.

Army reform

Grachov, along with his deputy Boris Gromov and Lebed, is a veteran of the Afghan War. Based on what he was involved in there, which included extensive experiences of what is politely described as ‘pacifying the civilian population’, rounded out with conclusions drawn from the Gulf War, he favours a radical reform of the army.

He foresees the formation of rapid intervention forces with particular attention to the threat of Islamic fundamentalism - thereby neatly dovetailing Russian military doctrine with current US obsessions.

As Grachov explains, ‘one cannot forget that on the territory of Russia there live some 20 million inhabitants who profess Islam. If the flames of war are not put out in Tajikistan (which borders of Afghanistan and where Russian troops are already in action), then there are possible dangerous consequences even in Russia’.

Independence

One of the centres of the Rapid Deployment Force is to be the North Caucasus region where Chechenia has declared its independence of the Russian Federation.

As presidential advisor Sergei Stanishevich has explained Russia’s historic task is now to stabilize itself in its present borders and then conduct a gradual economic and cultural expansion into the ‘near abroad’.

Yeltsin is not merely a tool of the militarists. His recent denunciation of the Congress’s claim on the Black Sea port of Sevastopol, now part of the Ukraine, for Russia, is a sign of that.

His rise to power was based on a double-sided appeal to anti-bureaucratic sentiment and to Western imperialism, drawing the teuths of the former by promising miracles from the latter.

Why embark on an anti-bureaucratic revolution when Western aid and Western economic models were going to provide US living standards in a matter of a few years?

However it is clear that the military industrial party decided two years ago that they had to work through Yeltsin for the time being, owing to their own unpopularity - shown by the confident use Yeltsin makes of the ‘threat’ of elections and the convenience of laying the blame for the suffering caused by the first round of blows to the welfare system and falling employment on the hapless president.

Yeltsin’s popular support, however, is fading away under the emptiness of his extravagant promises becomes apparent. His response is to attempt to combine concessions to the programme of the military industrial party while ruling - or pretending to rule - by decree.

At the same time he rushes from summit to summit, extracting promises from Western leaders to underpin his position. Indeed, he has now gone so far as to contemplate American involvement in conflicts on the territory of the former USSR. American President Bill Clinton is reported as looking favourably on this idea.

Strike wave

Recent weeks have seen a brush fire of strikes protesting against the threat of unemployment in mining and defence-related industries. However, there is evidence of bureaucratic manipulation of these movements.

For example a recent one-hour warning strike of defence workers in the Urals came two days after a joint conference of managers and unions in the industry and demanded among other things a ‘clear strategic doctrine’.

Defence of the legacy of the October Revolution - social rights, especially full employment and the national rights which were the basis for the powerful nationalist movements that erupted in the late 1980s - requires political independence from the nationalist schemes of the military industrial party.

Nationalist mobilization against external and internal enemies would provide a propitious climate for finishing off egalitarian traditions and worker commitment.
Exposed: UN atrocities in Somalia

By Phil Hearse

THE LONDON-based organisation African Rights has produced a damning indictment of the role of United Nations forces in Somalia (UNOSOM). The report confirms in detail a catalogue of murders, beatings, robberies attacks on hospitals and children, by American troops and those of several other nations.

Brutality against the civilian population is much more widespread than generally reported in the Western media. African Rights' report has to be seen in the context of the political and military goals of the United States which have led to a re-interpretation of Chapter 7 of the UN charter which allows for the use of force in certain circumstances.

Enforcement

"Peace-keeping" has been replaced with the newly-proclaimed doctrine of "peace enforcement".

The most spectacular UN operations started in Mogadishu after the killing of 25 Pakistani soldiers in three battles with local militia.

On June 12 a US helicopter attack was launched on the headquarters of "warlord" Aidid. As African Rights reports: "In a remarkable display of precision bombing, the house next door to General Aidid's was comprehensively demolished."

Aidid's headquarters was almost undamaged. At the same time rockets were fired into civilan areas killing several people.

On the same day UN Pakistani troops fired on a small civilian demonstration on the Afgoy Road near the UN compound, killing several demonstrators.

Meeting

On July 12 another helicopter attack was launched on the house of Adhi Abdid, a senior Aidid aid. Inside a political meeting was taking place of which the UN had been told in advance.

Haitian police, including some civilians were killed. Among the dead were well-known political and religious leaders from different Somali clans. There is no evidence that there were weapons in the house, and the attackers were not fired upon.

On July 17 a combined force of French, US and Moroccan forces launched a combined attack on Digtor hospital in central Mogadishu, which they claimed was being used by militia forces, and killed nine patients and other civilians. UN forces used TOW missiles and artillery to attack the hospital.

The report details a long list of individual and, often random, killings of civilians by UN forces. Among the most brutal have been the Belgian garrison of Kismayo. More than 100 people have been killed by the Belgians in that town.

Despite the conflict between Italy and the US over the goals of the Somalia operation, Italian forces have themselves been involved in killings and acts of brutality in the town of Belet Weyn, where there are also numerous documented cases of theft from civilian houses by Italian troops.

Brutality by UN troops is par for the course in imperialist interventions. The UN's operation in Somalia, in addition to attempting to stabilise the regions for Western interests and fight Islamic fundamentalism (Somalis are Muslims), has detailed political objectives in the short term.

The American's hate figure-General Aidid is just one of several major clan leaders; he leads the Hawiye in Eastern accusations that his forces 'destroyed Mogadishu' are disingenuous.

Dictator

Aidid's forces were central to driving out the former Western-backed dictator Siad Barre, and it was during the final battles that the campaign that Barre's forces destroyed much of Mogadishu.

The US intervention aimed at siding the Hawiye clan and promoting the Majerteen. The Majerteen are a Darood clan, and Barre was also Darood: key Majeerteen leader Mohammed Absher, whose forces control part of the South, is pro-American and being promoted by the US as the "next president" of Somalia.

When the details of US strategy are examined, the precise aim of "Restoring Hope" can be clearly seen: it is about the time-honoured practice of putting the US's man in control.

Somali politics are clan politics. Aidid is a clan leader, and someone whom socialists would oppose.

But he is no more or less a 'warlord' than is Mohammed Absher, the US favourite, and his demonstration and effective UN death-sentence passed against him are part of a propaganda smoke-screen which is wearing increasingly thin.

Oppose all violence in the labour movement!

By Chris Brooks

THE AUGUST 7 Anti-Racist Alliance event saw over 20,000 anti-racists converge on London's Burgess Park.

But there was a bleaker side to this successful event. ARA stewards, backed by security men in para-military uniforms, violently stopped supporters of the 16 October 'Unity' anti-rac is march running a publicity stall outside the gates of the park.

The stall of one socialist group was smashed up, and attempts made to overturn another. Threats were made that money collected at SWP and ANL stalls would be seized and given to ARA.

The political motivation for these attacks was obviously hostility by certain sections of the ARA leadership to other anti-racist groups like ANL and YRE, and in particular to the October 16 demonstration (see centre pages).

Intimidation

While no one was struck, something which would have happened if ANL supporters had not made a hasty retreat, this use of intimidation is totally unacceptable and an attempt to limit discussion and democracy within the anti-racist and labour movements.

In some ways more serious than the ARAfest events is the allegation that two supporters of Socialist Organiser were assaulted by SWP members at Marxism '93.

Despite the publication of detailed testimony about these events, including by people who are not Socialist Organiser supporters, the SWP has made no public comment about the allegations.

This in itself is unacceptable behaviour from a revolutionary organisation. The allegation of the use of violence against members of other socialist groups is a most serious charge.

The SWP must make a public statement about these events, pledge its opposition to the use of violence in the labour movement and take disciplinary action against any of its members who participated in violence.

Endemic violence

Revolutionaries in countries like Turkey and Japan have explained many times how endemic violence on the far left, including assassinations, started with minor scuffles between different organisations which became the norm.

While of course we are a long way from anything like that, the wrong lessons are learned as soon as any form of violence is tolerated or winked at by the leadership of the groups concerned.

But there is a much wider and connected problem among the British far left. Loath and intimidating methods of debate and discussion are depressingly common; and this is a political problem.

Campaigns and organisations which attempt to engage in a dialogue with the labour movement and win wider support only repel people when they become the arena of hysterical factions.

The responsibility for dealing with this problem lies with the leaderships of left organisations.

But right now particular responsibility lies with the SWP leadership. Their members were instigated outside the ARAfest.

But how can they expect anyone to take that issue seriously when they refuse to take seriously allegations that their own members are responsible for violence?
Kate Truscott

THE MANY comrades in Britain who knew her will be deeply saddened by the death in South Africa of Kate Truscott, after a long battle with cancer.

Kate became active in revolutionary politics in Britain, but at the time of her death was a member of the Central Committee of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), the South African revolutionary organization.

She was responsible for WOSA's women's commission and helped produce its newspaper and theoretical journal. Her first involvement in rural women's organizations. Working with exile South Africans she entered that work as a miner, establishing contact with early COSATU and clandestine socialist networks before decamping to move to South Africa permanently.

Kate was genuinely non sectarian, actively pluralist in her socialism, passionately anti-racist and uncompromisingly anti-sexist. She was an accomplished poet, singer, journalist and photographer. Before her death she was a founder of the foundation for the development of a socialist educational centre to promote the politics she believed in.

Kate Truscott was a founding member of the Zimbabwe Women's Action Group and worked as an organiser of women's organisations. Working with exile South Africans she entered that work as a miner, establishing contact with early COSATU and clandestine socialist networks before decamping to move to South Africa permanently.

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What's HAPPENING

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

As planned, we are about to skip our second issue this summer. We return to the fortnightly schedule in September. Deadline September 10.

AUGUST

Wednesday 18

SUPPORT Springfield Nursery's occupation - public meeting 7pm Red Rose Club Sevens Bridge Road N4 Finsbury Park tube WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting 7.30pm Leigh Miners' Welfare Twist Lane

Thursday 19

SUPPORT University College Hospital workers! Demonstrate 5.30pm-6.30pm front door UCH Gower Street. Euston Square or Warren Street tube WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting 7.30pm Manchester Town Hall

Saturday 21

SAVE SOUTH London's hospitals demonstrate 2pm Ruskin Park Denmark Hill SE5 DEMONSTRATE against Nigeria's military regime 1pm from Kennington Park to Trafalgar Square DEMONSTRATE against fascist terror in Germany!

1pm Piccadilly Gardens Manchester
Saturday 22

FIESTA with Maximo Jimenez and Rafael Peña organised by Colombian Committee for Human Rights 3pm-11.30pm St. Peter's Heritage House 510 Kennington Lane entrance on Tynes Street nearest station: Vauxhall 12.45pm

Monday 23

HARINGEY WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia discussion meeting with Geoff Ryan 7.30 Asian Action Centre 30 Willebridge Road Turnpike Lane tube

Wednesday 25

PTA and the irish community IBRG meeting 7.30pm Hand and Heart Great Bedford Street Coventry

Thursday 26

WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting 7.30 Bronté Town Hall Fount Lane Friday 27

LEICESTER WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting with Jim Marshall MP 6pm Highfields Youth and Community Centre

Saturday 28

SOCIALIST Outlook summer school opens north Wales tickets £35/£35 OILC conference opens Stirling details 0244 210118

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 1

WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting with Kevin Hargreaves Indiaksa Harper and Vaughan Thomas 7.30pm Haringey details 081-888 3421

Thursday 2

WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia public meeting with Glenda Jackson MP 7.30pm Camden Town Hall

Friday 3 - Sun 5

NATIONAL Hazards conference Aston University Details 021-238 8801

Sunday 5

WORKERS' Aid for Bosnia national march with convoy 1pm central London

Monday 6

TUC: RALLY in support of Workers' Aid convoy 9am NO PAY FREEZE in '94 lobbyists organised by Public Sector Alliance 9am and 12pm Brighton Conference centre rally 10.30am Fisherman's Hall START the fight now! March 11am The Level Lobby 12.30pm Brighton Conference Centre rally 2.30 The Dome New Road

Saturday 9

FIGHTING the employers' offensive conference sponsored by Oxfordshire Trades Councils 10am-5pm Ruskin College Walton Street Oxford £21

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

Saturday 16

CLOSE down BNP HQ! National demonstration called by ANL, YRE, Robin Adams & Rohit Duggal Family Campaigns

Saturday 23

RED-GREEN Network day-school 10am-5pm Vaughan College St. Nicholas Cirle Leicester details 0533 556389

Sat 30 & Sun 31

SOCIALIST Conference Chesterfield, freephone 0800 581011

Socialist Movement Network

Sixth SOCIALIST CONFERENCE at the Winding Wheel Chesterfield Saturday 30 & Sunday 31 October 1993

October 1993

THE SOCIALIST Movement/Network presents a weekend of non-sectarian discussion, debate, information, ideas (... and fun). Looking beyond the Age of the Individual and the Free Market, the theme of the conference will be Opting in...

• the fight for democratic public services
• and a sustainable and equalising economy to pay for them.

Confirmed speakers so far: TONY BENN MP, new book - Common Sense MOSES MAYEKISO South African National Civic Organisation HILARY WAINWRIGHT, new book - Arguments for a New Left

Plus many activists from trade union and community campaigns to defend and improve public services; and socialist, green and feminist economics working on alternative economic strategies, Space for self-organised workshops. Crookes: Disabled access.

Food and bars. Saturday night benefit for the Chesterfield Labour Club Appeal.

Socialist Movement/Network, 1 Newton Street Manchester M1 1HW or Freephone Answphone 0800 581101

Bush militant victimised

By Helen Shaw

LAST WEEK Willeton busworker Gerry Downing was sacked for 'unreasonable behaviour: intending to disrupt normal business and industrial relations!' Downing was charged on the evidence of four union members who believed he was "behind" an influential newsletter called 'Busworkers Pledge.'

"The newsletter was causing T&G members at Willeton to vote against deals with management over the introduction of worse pay and conditions," said the union.

There has been particular resistance at Willeton with workers rejecting the latest deal on 30 July despite pressure from union officials to accept.

Since July 30 management have stepped up their harassment of drivers at Willeston and several other workers have been victimised and sacked.

Willeston T&GU rep Elvis Vaughan solicited reports from two other union members about Downing and passed them on to management along with his comments and those of T&GU Metropolitan unit chair, Harry Foley.

It is obvious that the union officials and management had a common interest in getting rid of 'troublemakers' and militants like Downing.

The actions of these two union officials in going to management and asking them to sack a political opponent is scandalous.

A Defence Campaign is calling on activists to pass resolutions demanding the T&G acts to remove their credentials and fight to reinstate the victimised bus workers.

Resolutions should be sent to Region 1 Committee of the T&GU: Contact the Defence Campaign on 081-450 3161.

Social Solidarity with race victims

A PICKET will be mounted outside Birmingham's Victoria Law Courts to support the victim of a brutal racist attack. Joseph Gbibs, an Afro-Caribbean, went into the Queen's Head, Erdington, in April to play pool. A group of racists objected to his presence and hit him over the head with pool cues. Joseph was forced onto the street and battered unconscious into the gutter.

The picket will demand Joseph's attackers receive serious sentences and that this is clearly identified as a racist attack and not just another of the pub assaults prevalent in the area. Another picket, at Birmingham's Housing Department will demand that victims of racist attacks are adequately rehoused in secure accommodation in an area of their choice.
THE CONVOY will be in Greater Manchester: Wed-Sat 18-21 August.
West Yorks: Sat-Mon 21-23 August.
Sheffield: Tues-Wed 24-25 August.

worth of new tracksuits and trainers to the convoy and Muslim organisations in Newcastle donated £2,000 worth of dried milk. On Saturday 14 August £3,000 worth of goods were donated to the convoy at the Islamic Cultural festival in Chapeltown.

In the evening £5,000 was collected at a U2 concert and the band have offered the campaign the opportunity to have a Bosnian speaker at their next concerts.

The convoy will arrive at the TUC conference on Sept 6. It then sets off for France and travels through Europe to Bosnia.

On its way it will stop at many towns, picking up food and aid collected by the various local campaigns.

The convoy is to take food, medical aid, money and solidarity to the large mining communities around Tuzla. Tuzla is a multi-ethnic town where miners freely donated a day's pay each month to striking miners during the '94-'95 strike despite being impoverished themselves.

The message of the convoy, at a time when the ruling class all over Europe increasingly turns people against each other in classic divide and rule tactics is simple: it is for international workers solidarity and against this barbarism and denial of humanity.

The RMT in Dover have managed to negotiate free travel from Sealink for the convoy across the channel. In Liverpool and Leicester the T&G have managed to get free diesel fuel for the convoy.

Workers Aid groups are also being set up internationally - throughout Europe and in the United States. The campaign wants to build the biggest possible support for the convoy as it arrives at the TUC.

It is crucial to try to get more trucks onto the convoy, supported by as many trade union, Labour Party and community organisations as possible.

HUGE support is building up for the Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia. Not only has support been flooding in from Britain, but workers from as far away as Argentina, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden and the United States have signalled their support and begun collecting money and other material aid.

The convoy set off from the Timex plant in Dundee on 5 August with full support from the strikers. It has travelled from Dundee, through Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle and Leeds collecting thousands of pounds en route.

Workers from the threatened Swan Hunter shipyard donated £1,000

Back Bosnia aid convoy!

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