IRELAND

The REAL enemies of peace

EDITORIAL – Page 3
FEATURE – Page 6
Bosnia: International Workers Aid lays new plans

By Alan Thornett

International Workers Aid was formally constituted to build international solidarity with the people of Bosnia, and the workers of the Balkans, in Manchester last week. The formation of a properly organised international campaign was a big step forward. Adopting a resolution from the Scandinavian delegations, the meeting decided to establish an international co-operation on a minimal political basis, although campaigns in particular countries would be free to adopt their own slogans. This included:
- Solidarity with the workers of the Balkans
- No to ethnic cleansing and racial partition
- Solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia
- Asylum rights for those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia

The meeting called for political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia, and for an international co-ordination based on a loose structure and decisions based on consensus.

Immediate plans of the international campaign include the following:
- To take responsibility for the three trucks currently in Split, trying to go to Tuzla.
- Develop on-the-spot contacts, knowledge, channels for aid to unions, as well as women's groups and peace groups, who resist the war and national chauvinism.
- Launch a campaign demanding the opening of Tuzla airport to humanitarian aid.
- Prepare for a new, larger, convoy at the beginning of next year.

WRP sectarians divide Workers Aid

Slovenia and Croatia and in other parts of Europe.

Three vehicles, with 40 tons of aid from Denmark and Belgium, continue to try to reach Tuzla, they are currently on the southern route through Split. Other lorries have unloaded in refugee camps and returned to Britain.

The WRP’s highjack of the campaign.

The WRP highjacked the campaign.

The Saturday conference of the British campaign was a sectarian jamhoree from the start.

Dot Gibson from the WRP, who gave the opening convoy report, abused her position by immediately stressing that she was speaking a member of the WRP’s “Workers International”.

She used her report, 57-minutes long, to attack sections of the campaign not controlled by the WRP – especially those from parts of Europe in which the WRP has been involved.

It does not make sense, he argued, to hold back lorries, like those in Scandinavia, which are ready to go. There are lorries in London not being used and aid which can be taken.

Union links

He called for continuing to build the links with the trade unions in Croatia and Slovenia, and projects around education, women’s groups, refugees, and a campaign around asylum laws which prevent Bosnian refugees entering other European countries.

It is a crucial battle and the trade unions are all together.

Steve Myers (left) addresses Workers’ Aid conference

Steve Myers, the elected international coordinator of the campaign, presented a very different report, effectively counterpoint to Dot Gibson’s report. He supported the call for a big convoy in March but argued that everything should not be left until then.

He proposed a number of smaller convos between now and then given the overwhelming need which now exists.

The elections rejected

The decision to reject elected structures for the campaign was in reality a formula for total control by the WRP over the campaign. The democratic claim that this will empower large numbers of people is nonsense.

The lack of elected structures is always in fact a formula for control by an underrepresented minority who control the apparatus – the office, the bank account, the telephone number, the addressess and the knowledge of what is going on. It is a typical accountable bureaucracy.

Instead of seeing the campaign in other European countries as a big extension to the campaign the WRP saw them as a threat to their own control.

Worse, they then claimed that the Saturday conference, one third of which was made up of people from Manchester, was in fact a series of different compositions from week to week and decisions disregarded by the WRP.

To get away from this anarchy Socialist Outlook proposed to the conference the election of a steering committee - 12 from the floor of the conference plus one from each local group and sponsoring organisation to be elected later.

This was opposed by the WRP who argued for a non-election committee open to anyone – just as it had been before the conference.

The majority of the international delegations - there were delegations or representatives from France, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, Australia, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia – announced that they would not be voting on resolution, since it was clearly a conference of the British campaign.

The WRP proposals were then carried on both counts - for the northern route campaign and for no elected steering committee.

The large delegation present from the Manchester Bosnian community were persuaded by the call for a 1,000 money. In the end they were the decisive vote in the conference.

International Workers Aid

All money collected for International Workers Aid and its projects should be sent to: IWA, PO Box 30, London SE15 9EP. Telephone 081 694 8848.
Loyalist death squads target peace process

"Tribal warfare" is the term used by the press to describe the spate of killings in northern Ireland. The image conjured up is one of crazed sectarian killers on both sides. This is a hypocritical lie, part of the 25-year-old disinformation campaign about Ireland.

The starting point of the present wave of killings was not the IRA bombing of the UDA headquarters in the Shankill Road. That bombing, however, foolish in its disregard for the possibility of civilian casualties, was an attempt to assassinate the leadership of the UFF loyalist death squads.

These death squads, and those of the UVF, have been responsible for over 60 per cent of all deaths in the Six Counties this year — and that in a country where there is a military struggle going on against British imperialism.

One hundred and forty six people have been assassinated by loyalist killers since 1988.

Military

IRA attacks, by contrast, are in most cases against the military, those who work for the military or against the loyalist death squads.

The UFF and UVF regard all members of the Catholic nationalist community as "guilty" and thus fair game for murder.

The Shankill bombing was a response to dozens of murders of Catholic civilians by the UFF. The retaliatory UFF killings at the Rising Sun bar at Greysteel were typical of the callousness of the loyalist death merchants.

The two thousand-strong turnout for the funeral of the IRA volunteer killed in the bombing was a sign of the sympathy in the nationalist community for an attempt to take defensive action to halt the sectarian murders.

Doubtless the Shankill bombing was born out of frustration in the IRA at its inability to effectively defend the nationalist community against the sectarian killings. This failure is no surprise.

The military situation makes it absolutely impossible for the IRA to patrol the streets and mount an armed defence of them, even if the IRA had that ambition. The Catholic areas are wide open to murderous night-time attacks.

Bombing the Shankill Road on a Saturday afternoon almost inevitably resulted in civilian deaths.

This was a political disaster for the forces and the loyalist paramilitaries has been proved over many years, the names and addresses of republican sympathisers are handed over to the killers as part of the "low-intensity warfare" strategy, to terrorise, intimidate and demonise the nationalist community.

The response of Major's government to the crisis has been to give further political ground the two main loyalist parties, the Ulster Unionists and the Democratic Unionists.

The proposals agreed in the dialogue between Sine菲's Gerry Adams and SDLP leader John Hume, widely reported to imply an end of the IRA military struggle in return for a place at the negotiating table (although Adams has denied this), have been rejected out of hand.

Censorship

Further censorship of republican views in Britain is being considered. These are the typical responses of an imperialist power.

Nothing will come of John Major's promises to bring forward his own plans for peace talks, because nothing the government is prepared to consider deals with the root causes of the strife — the denial of Irish national rights, and the oppression of the nationalist community.

British socialists must continue to insist that there is no British solution, and that British imperialism offers no answers for the Irish people.

Market collapse threatens cuts

THE SHARP fall in the world's stock markets is a sure indicator that world capitalism has failed to overcome recession. One year ago, when Clinton came to power in the US, expectations were high that the US economy would lead the way out of the mini-slump.

These expectations were wrong. Clinton economics is already a total failure.

Slowdown

Continued economic recession in Britain, worsened by the slowdown in Britain's key export markets in Europe, means that the financial crisis of the British state has deepened.

Tax revenues have fallen and social security spending has spiralled upwards. The result will be huge anti-working class attacks in the 30 November budget.

The attacks will take two forms: massive cutbacks in the transport, local government and housing budgets, and the imposition of VAT on a range of previously exempted consumer products. Threats by chancellor Clarke to cut back the defence budget has been predictably dropped in the face of backbench Tory opposition.

Following the decision to put VAT on domestic heating bills, the government has moved to impose the tax on fresh orange juice, a step towards VAT on all food products.

Books

Other targets could include books and newspapers and children's clothes.

VAT is a tax which hits the poor. But local government and housing cuts will also hit workers' living standards. And a new assault on local government jobs is a certainty.

The strikes in Europe (see page 5) and the civil service strike last week are a sure sign that economic recession is leading to a massive assault on jobs and conditions continent-wide and that this will result in huge new struggles.
Hidden strength of civil service unions

Remember, remember the strike in November!

By Sean Geoghegan, CPSA Branch Exec, Department of Health London HQ, (personal capacity)

MORE THAN a quarter of a million civil servants stopped work on Friday 5 November against privatisation and "market testing" in the first national strike for 12 years.

Over half the benefit offices in the Treasury and departmental offices, along with hundreds of other government offices, ports, courts, Workmen's offices, museums, art galleries, employment and benefit offices were picketed.

The 24 hours stoppage also saw Yeomen warders at the Tower of London join the stoppage which united the five civil service unions.

Public support was high as was support from other trade unions particularly those working in local government.

In Leeds, union members reported people were asking to join the union in the previous few weeks so they could join the strike. There was a real mood change with workers feeling the time had come for something to be done.

7,000 jobs have already been lost in a process designed to destroy union organisation and to undermine current pay and conditions already weakened by the creation of "agencies" such as the Child Support Agency and the Benefits Agency.

"Market testing" is part of the relentless Tory drive to privatise, in the name of better quality services and "choice" for the consumer. It is the same process as COMPULSORY COMPETITIVE TENDERING in local authorities.

Job losses

In fact contracting out of services results in more workers thrown onto the dole, under re-sourced services, union derecognition and those still lucky enough to have their jobs working harder, for less money and no job security.

The response of the union leadership so far has been poor.

Until they were pushed into this strike they had put their weight behind winning "in-house" bids as the strategy to fight "market testing".

This is doomed to failure - local council workers and NHS manual workers have found to their cost that winning an "in house" bid often means the same assault on pay and conditions. Reliance on "in-house" bids plays into the hands of the government.

Though fighting "market testing" on the Tories' ground will not work, without strong leadership from the unions many workers see it as their only chance to save their jobs.

Some of the greatest losers in the process will be women and black people who form the majority of the basic and low-paid grades throughout the civil service.

With union derecognition, negotiated equal opportunities policies will cease to exist. Agreements on pensions, holidays, maternity and paternity leave, sickness benefits, rates of pay and hours of work, part-time working, job sharing, special training programmes will be smashed.

There is also an ideological battle to be fought. The Tories have created the agenda which means privatised services are perceived to be more efficient than state run services; that privatised services 'empower' and provide choice to their users.

The opposite is true. It is the dagger of cuts hidden under the cloak of efficiency, empowerment and choice.

Less money, fewer resources and fewer workers mean worse services and less choice. The experience of the local government has seen a deterioration of services after contracting out, with some services being brought back in-house after malpractice and suspicions of corruption.

The success of the strike on the 5th shows the potential for increased industrial action. The Left needs to fight for an open, democratic, alliance across the public sector.

This should link up with council workers in UNISON who face the same attacks on their jobs. It must draw in service users who also suffer as a result of cuts in the public sector workplace.

BT staff ‘on-line’ for redundancy

By George Blessing

175,000 British Telecom workers face the loss of job security at a stroke.

Employment in BT has been reduced by 60,000 in three years but management want to lose at least another 80,000 jobs. To do this they plan the introduction of a vicious example of the "new management techniques" called the "alignment/realignment" programme.

Then, in reality, is an assessment system which aims to designate nearly half of Britain's telecoms workers as "superfluous" - and thus targeted for the sack by 1997.

All BT employees will be "rated" on a 90 point scale - a scale originally designed to assess employees for performance related pay.

Depending on their points rating staff will then be informed whether they have been "appointed" to a job with the company, or whether they are "superfluous" - in other words in line for redundancy.

This process will take place every year. It amounts to a draconian annual system of intemiptation. Not only will it have the effect of putting staff permanently in fear of being put on a redundancy list, but for the employers has the added advantage of forcing workers to work harder and compete with one another.

If this system is introduced it will not only devastate telecoms employment but effectively destroy trade unionism in BT.

A further aspect of the "new management techniques" introduced by this programme is that of disposing of permanent employees and putting work out to contractors with cheap labour forces.

In fact BT in most departments is now understaffed. The desire for further redundancies can only be explained by BT's intention to further casualise its workforce.

This is partially to compete with the casualised, low-paid, and non-union situation of their Mercury and Cable company competitors.

The recently elected National Communications Union NEC, dominated by the Broad Left, has failed to respond adequately to this attack.

Major branches of the union have been told to co-operate with this system in return for talks and minor concessions.

The first annual AGM of the Broad Left since the election of the BL controlled NEC was attended by about 70 people. It had as its main discussion the Alignment/Realignment process.

Speaker after speaker criticised the NEC for failing to instigate the membership to boycott their Annual General Meetings.

The main response from NEC members was to blame the Head Office bureaucracy which is frustrating them at every turn.

However proposals to use the BL itself as a campaigning vehicle with regular publications explaining the issues were firmly rejected.

The AGM was united in supporting the NEC position in calling for an industrial action ballot if BT does not back down from selecting people for their own jobs on a performance related basis.
Workers fight austerity drive

New tide of struggle sweeps Europe

By Paul Clarke

LABOUR UNREST is sweeping Europe. While the struggle at Charles de Gaulle airport in France has been widely reported in Britain, events in Germany, Belgium and Italy have been equally dramatic.

Much of the present strike wave is against defending job security against cutbacks and restructuring, as governments move to cut the number of workers and demand ‘flexibility’ in state-run industries.

In both France and Italy this is connected to the privatisation drive.

At the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, Air France workers scored a partial victory at the end of October in forcing the withdrawal of the restructuring plan which would have cost 4000 jobs.

Resignation

Several days of strike action and clashes with riot police on the tarmac also forced the resignation of Air France boss Bernard Aniol.

On 29 October all Italian public services and much of industry was shut in a four-hour general strike against government economic policies.

The mass demonstrations in all large cities protested against 11 per cent unemployment, a government wage freeze and the tax system which allows employers to evade contributions, whereas all workers pay very high taxes.

Plant occupied

The new surge of labour militancy in Italy peaked in September by the mass occupation of the Enichem chemicals plant in Cremona, in southern Italy against a restructuring plan which would have cut 20 per cent of the workforce.

On 27 October 120,000 German building workers demonstrated in Bonn against government plans to scrap winter lay-off payments. This followed the occupation by miners of the Haus Aden-Monopol pit at Bergkamen of the nearby power station, which is threatening to switch to cheap imported coal.

The miners also organised a 60,000-strong demonstration against threatened job cuts.

This was followed on 29 October by simultaneous demonstrations by unemployed workers in 200(!) German cities.

The biggest mass demonstration in Belgium in many years, 150,000 strong, took place in Brussels on 31 October against the attempt of the government to impose a ‘social pact’.

This pact is similar to one being proposed in Spain, which proposes limiting wage rises to create ‘jobs’, and to cut costly redundancy payments which hinder the bosses’ restructuring plans.

The debate on alternatives to redundancy, focusing on work-sharing and cutting the working week, is very strong in Germany and France, although almost absent in Britain.

Volkswagen employers in Germany are proposing a four-day week as an action against job cuts - but with a 20 per cent cut in pay.

General strike shakes Belgian bosses

Last week’s one-day general strike suggests the post-war ‘social pact’ between Belgian employers and trades unions is over. CHRIS BROOKS reports from Brussels after a 60,000-strong trade union demonstration was called in four days.

FACED with a massive public debt, the coalition Christian Democrat/Socialist Party government in Belgium has threatened to scrap a system of guaranteed pay-rises as part of a series of attacks on young people and workers.

Belgium has a strong post-war tradition of ‘united’ government-employer-trades union agreements. The ‘social pact’ produced by these negotiations has always produced small gains for the working class.

Hard class struggle could have gained more, but with the highest productivity in Europe Belgium has massive social security and welfare rights.

Central to all this is the inside, a system where most workers get guaranteed pay rises in line with the rise of the cost of living.

The index is the product of an agreement between the employers federation, the FEB, and the two trade union federations. It’s one of reasons why trade union membership in Belgium is high.

This longstanding arrangement is threatened by the mass state debt. Last year the government paid £14 billion in interest payments - nearly four times more than it pays towards social security.

Under the pressure of the recession, the government wants to cut both wages and employers’ National Insurance contributions. They aim to end the index and introduce a layer of new, low paid, jobs for youth.

The response of the working class has been massive.

The FGTB union federation, unprepared to compromise on the index, has walked out of discussions with the employers and government.

With just four days notice more than 60,000 members of the Socialist Party-aligned union joined a noisy and confident Brussels demonstration to mark a 24 hour strike.

Linked to the attacks on organised labour, the government plans to introduce new ‘little jobs’ for the jobless, especially the youth - like ‘companions’, nannies, gardeners and supermarket bag-packers - on tiny wages and with poor social welfare rights. It’s an arrangement that will deepen social inequality and insecurity.

Working people in the Brussels demonstration were eager to read and buy the literature of the Workers’ Socialist Party, the Belgian section of the Fourth International.

The bosses government, argues the Party, must be replaced with a socialist government based on the workers’ and other mass organisations. The solution to the crisis is to cut the working week, with no loss of pay, and to ruthlessly attack both the financial fraud of big business and the current level of military spending.

These practical solutions have been eagerly heard. The Party sold out of a double-issue of its French-language journal to La Glauche, dedicated to fighting the social pact.

At the same time, a radicalisation of youth is being marked by a 24 November strike of school and college students against cuts and fascistic. Especially strong in Flanders, where the far right Flemish Bloc got 11% of the vote in 1991, the strike is being enthusiastically built by the Socialist Young Guard, which also supports the Fourth International.

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Why is Irish nationalism in crisis?

By David Coen

The crisis in the Six Counties and the various peace proposals have cast a spotlight on the evolution of the whole of Irish nationalist tradition. Irish nationalism took its main reference point from 1916 Proclamation, which called for an Ireland "not merely free but Gaelic as well". But its practical application and most visible shape came from the Fianna Fail Party and its founder Eamon De Valera, which ruled almost without interruption from 1932 to 1973. De Valera's austere vision was much mocked by the historical 'revisionists' like Roy Murphy and John A. Foster who came to the fore in the late 1970s. As the economic crisis of the 26 counties began, they raised doubts about the wisdom of the original break with Britain.

Though the Six County State was dismissed as a failed political entity, the same seemed to becoming true of the 'Free' State.

Aided and abetted by some of a more left wing persuasion, they explained the causes of the great famine, not so much by the actions (or rather the inactions) of the British, but by the internal relations of class and politics in Ireland. The correction (perhaps necessary) of the 'imbalance' in the teaching of history in De Valera's Republic, soon led to an attack on Republicanism and even a nostalgic yearning on the part of some of the Dublin intelligentsia for a return to the United Kingdom.

Recanting

The latest to beg forgiveness for the fervour of his nationalist views is Tim Pat Coogan, author of a famous book on the IRA and long-time former editor of the De Valera's Irish Press newspaper, who sets out to debunk the De Valera role in 20th century Irish history.

Such was the influence of the revisionists and the self-doubt among the mainstream Fianna Fáil historians that there were no official celebrations in 1991 of the 25th anniversary of the 1916 Rising which led to the foundation of the state.

It is against this background that the prospects for a so-called 'pan-nationalist alliance', stretching apparently from the IRA, through John Hume's SDLP to Dick Spring and Albert Reynolds in the Dublin Government, can be assessed. Hume's talks with Adams were agreed out of his desperation at the fact that in the Brooke/Mayhew talks, he was being offered a deal worse than the 'power sharing' but short-lived Sunningdale Agreement of 1973. Hume knew that a return to Unionist/Government with a token input from Dublin.

The general perception that the nationalists are willing to make concessions has led to calls on Major to take the Hume/Adams talks more seriously - some believe Major's original stance was a negotiating ploy to re-shape the Unionists in advance of more talks - and not to miss a 'historic opportunity for peace'.

It is here that Ireland plugs into the crisis of the British state. It may be the right time for a deal, given the perception of weakness and demoralisation among nationalists.

The terms of such a deal may be obvious and the price to be paid by the British may be small in comparison to what the war has cost them, and not just in monetary terms.

But there is no certainty that the British are capable of making such a deal even on such favourable terms. This is after all the Conservative and Unionist Party. It is weak and divided, relying on the Unionists to survive in parliament.

Even the mildest concessions to nationalism would cause screams of betrayal from the section of the Party.

In the last century, the Tories wrecked Home Rule for Ireland, despite the Liberal Government's belief that Home Rule would save the Union. It may be that the divisions in the Tory Party will, once again, block a settlement which is in the interests of the British ruling class and thereby save the nationalists from the historic subjugation for which they seem to be preparing themselves.

The second historical precedent is even bleaker: the 1921 Agreement, which led to the partition of Ireland and the creation of the Orange State, led also to civil war.

Peace is a long way off.
TORY WAR ON NHS JOBS

THOUSANDS of jobs are being axed in piecemeal cuts and closures by NHS Trusts throughout the country: and even more are at risk.

In London, the big totals are well-known. University College Hospital plans a new wave of 500 redundancies, bringing a 12-month total of 700. Guy’s-St Thomas’s plans to slash 2,000 jobs (30% of the workforce) to cut £75m from spending: already the redundancies are being pushed through — in batches of 25, to deny staff the 90 days notice due to groups of 30 or more.

In Glasgow, 3,500 jobs are at risk, and in other big cities thousands of NHS jobs are threatened. But smaller Trusts throughout England, Wales, Scotland and the north of Ireland are also cutting jobs in smaller numbers, after decisions taken by secretive Boards behind closed doors, and without attracting big headlines. In Warwickshire alone, 700 jobs have been slashed this year.

Desperate to cut spending to balance their books, all Trusts are looking at ways of cutting numbers of qualified and highly-skilled staff.

Amid a massive increase in numbers of managers on telephone number salaries, thousands of nurses, health visitors, and qualified support staff are being thrown out of work through ‘skill mix reviews’, sometimes to be replaced by less qualified, lower paid staff.

More and more students are completing nursing or other professional training to find there is no job for them. But these staff are not ‘redundant’. There is work literally waiting for them to do. As waiting lists soar above the million mark and hospitals struggle to cope with a new winter ‘flu epidemic, it is clear the NHS is being stretched to breaking point.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! The unions have already let too many jobs disappear without a fight. The TUC demonstration on November 20 must mark the start of a concerted fightback in every hospital and Trust.
Symptoms of Tory market fever

An epidemic of hospital closures

RUMOUR has it that the new Department of Health head office in Leeds employs a senior manager with the exclusive task of promoting massive bed and hospital closure programmes along the lines of London's Tomlinson report.

The effort hardly seems necessary. Even in London, Tomlinson's proposal to axe ten hospitals and 4,000 beds has already been overtaken by the galloping cash crisis created by the Tory internal market system.

So far 24 hospitals are under threat of closure in London, with more looking to make cuts, as tens of millions of pounds are removed from health budgets in the capital. No less than 13 of London's 17 purchasing health authorities stand to lose out, some losing as much as 10% of their budgets, as a result of the new funding formula introduced by the Tories.

But cash pressures are increasingly being felt by Trusts throughout the country, forcing managers to contemplate similarly massive cuts in hospital services.

Especially hard hit are the big cities. Hospitals in Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Cardiff, Belfast and other cities are being forced to close vital wards, beds and services for lack of cash.

Naturally, as they look for ways to dress up these cuts for public consumption, Trust bosses and health authorities are reaching for the rhetoric of the Tomlinson report, which asserted (without a shred of evidence) that improved GP and primary care services could make hospital beds unnecessary.

Tomlinson went on to argue that irrespective of its exceptional health problems, inner London's hospitals should be expected not only to match but to exceed by almost 50% the "throughput" of the most efficient hospitals anywhere in Britain.

His 'target figures' for the use of hospital beds, again invented without any supporting evidence, are being widely touted by desperate health chiefs seeking to save money by closing hospitals.

In reality, treating patients is still expensive, and in the wacky logic of the new NHS market, it is cash limits and not patient care which is the top priority. So we find Trusts are being penalised for treating too many patients.

Already the market system is creating a crop of avoidable tragedies. Three patients from Greater Manchester, aged 50, 62 and 40, have died within a week because of a lack of intensive care beds. They were transferred 50 miles by ambulance to Blackpool, not to vacant beds in nearby Liverpool because their health authority had no contract with Liverpool!

The crisis-ridden Ealing Hospital Trust, which hit the headlines recently when its Chief Executive suddenly publicised the plight of patients forced to spend the night on trolleys in the corridor, has since announced it can only accept "blue light" emergencies. Meanwhile, Rosie Furnich, after her day of glory in the press as Ealing's Chief Executive with a conscience", (or 'the fart with a heart', as one health worker described her) has opted out of the NHS - and taken a job running a plush private hospital in Windsor.

Where have health unions been since '88?

Wake up the sleeping giants!

IT IS FIVE years since the TUC last called on health workers and campaigners to join a national demonstration for the NHS - and then had the nerve to offer a platform of speakers devoid of health workers, and headed by 'Agony Aunt' Clare Rayner.

Even that demonstration was only glibly called, under pressure from a mass movement of nurses which began in January 1988 with strikes in Manchester and spread across the country.

In 1989, a much more limited demonstration was called in support of the ambulance pay dispute, but then...nothing.

There was no demonstration or TUC campaign against the NHS & Community Care Act which introduced the controversial 'market' system and opted out Trusts to the NHS from April 1991. There was no challenge to the introduction of the Community Care reforms, which in April of this year removed the long-term care of the elderly from the NHS, making patients liable to means-tested charges.

It has appeared that in many areas the health unions have completely given up the ghost, allowing dozens of Trust bosses carte blanche to carry through brutal cuts in beds and services, a massacre of jobs, a two-year virtual pay freeze, and fresh rounds of privatisation. Fighters have been few and far between.

Health unions have merged to become bigger, but so far show little sign of increased strength or militant activity. The biggest of the sleeping giants, UNISON with 500,000 members, can point only to the courageous fight this summer at London's
What's so good about the NHS?

Despite 14 years of Thatcherite attacks, the British National Health Service remains one of the most egalitarian healthcare systems in the world. In providing to each patient treatment according to their needs, while being funded from direct taxation which varies according to ability to pay, it embodies a basic tenet of socialism.

Indeed the NHS is virtually unique amongst capitalist countries in delivering comprehensive care, funded from taxation, and free to all citizens at point of use.

By contrast many other health services are based on more expensive insurance systems, and many levy charges on patients for treatment and hospital stays as well as prescription drugs. In France, for example, charges on patients amount to a massive 19% of health spending.

Pushed through in 1948 by left wing Health Minister Aneurin Bevan, the NHS legislation effectively nationalised the existing hodge-podge of charitable and municipal hospitals. The state took over the funding of treatment from a ramshackle collection of insurance and other funds, which had left millions, not only women, without health cover.

Family doctors were brought in at first grudgingly - as self-employed sub-contractors. Like all post-war nationalisations in Britain (such as coal, rail and other utilities) the NHS was set up with serious problems. It established social ownership, but not social control. Instead, many of the old managers who had shamefully neglected and almost bankrupted the hospitals were left in charge. New health authorities were set up to replace the discredited Hospital Boards - but the authorities were always unelected and undemocratic.

Profits

Private drug companies and other suppliers were allowed to milk profits from the state-funded system, which from the outset was starved of the capital it needed to build new hospitals in expanding centres of population, and under-funded on its annual budget. In its first year the NHS cost £402 million, compared to a budget of £180m.

The new NHS could never achieve the dreams of the socialists who had campaigned hardest for it. It could not create an island of socialism in the midst of crisis-ridden capitalist society. Nor, for this reason, could it eradicate disease and ill-health, especially from working class communities wracked by poverty, poor housing and brutish working conditions. Some of the biggest advances in public health since 1948 have come from rising living standards rather than medical treatment.

However the NHS did make extremely important advances, and though Labour soon retreated and prescription charges and means-tested fees for dental treatment and spectacles were soon introduced, the vast bulk of NHS treatment - including all consultations and in-patient treatment - is still free of charge.

The attachment to this principle runs very deep: the unelected, Thatcherite Michael Portillo is one of very few top Tories who now openly argue for 'holy charges' to be levied on patients in hospital.

So while it is correct to highlight Tony under-funding of the NHS and to expose the problems created by growing waiting lists for treatment, it is important that socialists defend our health service.

Just remember: Bill Clinton's new plan for extending health insurance in the USA would leave working people liable to pay up to $3,000 a year in charges, including $10 for every visit to a doctor.

Even after 14 years of Thatcherism, we are far better off than that!

Get the facts for the fight

- **FUTURE** issues of *Liberation* forthrightly sister paper *SOCIALIST OUTLOOK*
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University College Hospital

In many cases health workers appear daunted by the sheer scale of the financial problems faced by Trusts in the new internal market. The UCH management, for example, faces a massive £13m shortfall, South Birmingham £24m, and Guy's-St Thomas' £75m over five years.

Workers embarking on industrial action against such odds need to feel part of a movement, feel sure they will not just be isolated and defeated.

That is why the TUC demonstration, opening the way to link up the rival health unions with other sections of workers and build a common national campaign, is important. It shows what could be achieved through joint action targeted on a common enemy.

The intermediate links that have been formed in building for the November 20 demo must be continued and extended, with further initiatives at local and national level aimed at defeating NHS cuts and closures, and scrapping the crazy, anarchic market system.

Union officials who obstruct this fighting must be challenged and pushed aside. Health workers must organise to defend themselves, and link up with other campaigns and community groups. After all, we can't afford to wait another five years for the next TUC demo!
Scandal as black health workers face discrimination

NHS: Britain's biggest (racist) employer

BIG DEMONSTRATIONS have recently challenged the Nazi-style racism of the BNP in East London and the 'state racism' of the government's Asylum Act and other legislation. The biggest health union, UNISON, encourages its black members to organise themselves in groups to ensure their demands are heard.

But as Britain's biggest employer of black workers, the record of the NHS on fighting racism remains poor.

Each round of cuts and privatisation has struck first and hardest at black health workers.

In the early 1980s, tens of thousands of black workers were employed in NHS ancillary services – catering, domestic and laundry. One survey suggested 80% of ancillary workers in London were black or from ethnic minorities.

But ancillary staffs have been decimated by privatisation. NHS numbers employed fell by 90,000 (40%) in the 1980s, with many forced into part-time working. Hours worked were cut by almost 50%.

Thousands of ousted ancillary staffs were forced to work for the cheapshack cowboy firms which took over after offering hospital bosses the lowest tender price. As a result they lost job security, holiday pay, pension rights, sickness benefits and often union rights.

Thousands more still work for the NHS but on shorter hours and worse conditions. The picture is also bleak for any black nurses, thousands of whom were encouraged to work as unqualified nursing auxiliaries (NA) or to seek the less academic Enrolled Nurse (SE) qualification.

Now a new system of nurse training offers promotion only to registered nurses. Yet for 100,000 SEs only 3,000 places are available on conversion courses; selection procedures are tough, and some SEs are even being asked to pay for their own training. But if they are put out, they can find their jobs wiped out as Trusts replace them with cheaper, less qualified staff.

Promotion

Black nurses, whether RNs, SEs or NAs have tended to wind up working in the less attractive areas of the NHS, caring for the elderly, the mentally ill, or working nights and unsocial hours. Black nurses once qualified find it harder to gain promotion.

And black nurses also lost out under the 1988 'clinical grading' exercise which set pay levels for each job. In one area, 70% of the appeals lodged by the unions came from black members: appeals are still being heard.

Black staff in post often find little support from an overwhelmingly white NHS management structure. All of the Chief Executives and 98% of the directors of the 57 first-wave Trusts were white, most of them men.

The new Trusts are not bound by previously negotiated equal opportunities agreements, nor obliged to publish any monitoring of the ethnic breakdown of their staff. An example of the kind of problem that can arise is the case of Aniek Cooney, a black NUPE member employed by the Royal London Trust, who was sacked for 'professional misconduct' after responding to racial abuse from a man later arrested and prosecuted. Months later a vigorous local campaign secured her reinstatement – just as the Trust opted to save money by sacking its Community Recruitment Officer.

A similar episode cost Hounslow health authority £27,000 in compensation after they suspended a black health visitor who complained of racial discrimination, then sacked him for complaining to his MP.

Even now some areas of the NHS remain largely white enclaves. According to an inquiry into the London Ambulance Service, only 50 (1.8%) of its 2,700 staff are black or from ethnic minorities.

But information on NHS racism is depressingly sparse. Health unions persistently fail to monitor and campaign on problems as they arise. Here is an urgent task for black members' groups.

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THOUSANDS of young workers and students are falling victim to the racehorses of the runaway NHS cash crisis.

Many working in support services like catering, portering, cleaning and laundry have been caught up in the privatisation process, seeing their jobs axed or their pay and conditions hiked back.

As a result those that remain face low-pay, low-grade jobs as the afflicted new 'Project 2000' scheme widens the gulf between qualified and unqualified nurses.

In some areas the cuts in nurses' jobs have led to a reduction in the intake of new students. In Barnet, the near-bankrupt Wellesley Trust has had to cut back on its College of Nursing to save money.

By failing to recruit, train and retain young workers, the NHS market system is jeopardising the future and quality of health care.

It is more vital than ever that young NHS workers get active in the fightback against the Tory attack.
The impasse of municipal socialism

Dispatches, Channel 4, 27 October: Going to the Dogs

Reviewed by Phil Hearse and Helen Shaw

WHAT REALLY lies behind the election of BNP councillor Derek Beacock in Millwall? Channel Four’s 27 October ‘Dispatches’ programme, Going to the Dogs? attempted to answer this question.

While the programme left out crucial facts, the underlying material basis for racism on the Isle of Dogs and in many other working class communities was highlighted.

This points to problems whose solutions lie way beyond the ‘scope of anything which could be done by Tower Hamlets council, whichever party had control.

The key question is housing policy. The town hall’seryl dearies, the council priorities housing homeless people above rehousing long-term residents living in crowded and run-down accommodation. The result is this often means - quite rightly - priority to homeless Bangladeshis families.

Not that the Liberal Democ rats would do any better. Lib 1992-94 councillor explained how they had tried to give priority to ‘long-time residents’ or those whose parents come from the island’ - ie white people.

BNP voters knew very well why they voted for the fascists. Not because of their ideology, but because of the ‘right for whites’ slogan, because their perception is that Bangladeshis are getting new housing, while they have waited for many years to be rehoused.

In addition, a conscious policy of rehousing Bangladeshis from all over the borough on the Isle of Dogs seems to be in operation.

As the yuppiboom of the 1980s crashed many flats in Docklands remained unoccupied, 500 and the young council, inhabited in some by the Bangladeshis. Tenamention over housing doesn’t explain everything. The culture of racism in a small, run-down, white work ing class community also has to be explained. It is an area where the fascists have long been active.

Neither do big social problems in the white working class explain why social services have to pay for taxis to take some Bangladeshis kids to school, or rented a small number of these have been sold to Tower Hamlets. Large extended Bangladeshi families have been housed in some of these.

Rentment over housing doesn’t explain everything. The culture of racism in a small, run-down, white working class community also has to be explained. It is an area where the fascists have long been active.

Neither do big social problems in the white working class explain why social services have to pay for taxis to take some Bangladeshis kids to school, or.

What was left out is the fact that there are 1000 empty flats in Docklands, owned by the building societies and big financial institutions. Lacking yuppibuyers, they stand unused. And of course workers can’t afford them.

Many of the gleaning office workers are also empy. They too are likely to be converted to housing, but that too poses the question of ownership and control.

But of course how to get the homeless and poorly housed working class people into these flats is a problem beyond the control of any local authority. That is a problem not only at the level of govern ment, but at the level of power.

Newly-emerging political forces in the community pose both a promise and a threat. The politicisation of Bangladeshi youth, evident in Youth Connections, is an immense promise for the future. But groups of white residents organising against both the BNP and Labour showed the potential, not only in Tower Hamlets, for a reactionary threat emerging, in some ways more dangerous than the BNP.

A BNP voter explained openly that he was a ‘protest’ vote. Despite that, in the long term the programme showed clearly that the material basis for growing fascism cannot be combated solely by raising anti-fascist and anti-racist consciousness.

The community and local workers organisations have to be united in struggle around demands relating to their material problems. That is the difficulty in the situation. It is not just a matter of direct party-political organisation, but of a movement of struggle.

The two occasions in the 1980s when such a movement existed, apart from the miners strike, were in the rate-capping fight and the anti-poll tax movement.

Now that local government and housing are going to bear the brunt of Clarke’s budgets cuts, the real resources to address local social problems are being further devastated.

This casts a spotlight on what role can be played by Labour councillors. There are no solutions at the level of Tower Hamlets. It is an illusion to believe that a Labour council, in itself, will solve anything - no matter how left wing its policies.

Labour councillors can help generate and build a movement of resistance - to the government and the fascists. But the material basis for ‘municipal socialism’, substantial local reforms in the interests of the working class, has disappeared.

Campaign against detention camp gains momentum

Stop Tories jailling refugees!

By Bill MacKeith

November. On the day the first detainees were bussed in, Campfield gates will be picketed and leaflets distributed in town. A meeting addressed by Jeremy Corbyn MP is planned to follow shortly.

A campaign for the closure of Campfield will need to develop other demands, in particular the repal of the UK’s racist immigration laws.

A large national demonstration should be called in the new year. For further information ‘phone 0865 724452.
A night full of hate

Naked

Film by Mike Leigh

Reviewed by Helen Shaw

WIDELY critically acclaimed - a "milestone in the British film industry" and a "masterly excursion into the heaven and hell of our existence" - Leigh's new Cannes award winner is a relentlessly bleak, hateful and misogynist film.

It attempts to comment on the cynicism and self-centred values of '90s Britain and their effect on relationships between men and women by following unemployed Mancunian, Johnny (David Thewlis), on a three day visit to London.

Johnny lumber through the film spewing forth his boring philosophical rantings about the impending apocalypse akin to those of an angry sixth-form grammar school boy.

It is beyond belief that the people he encounters just let him into their lives and suffer him for so long without protest.

During this visit to 72 hours of misery and hate we witness Johnny having a series of violent, emotional and sometimes sexual encounters with cardboard woman characters wafted in their powerlessness and masochism.

Whilst some reviews in the bourgeois press have commented on the misogyny by saying they don't want to get into the 'should you portray it or not', debate, they miss the point.

Leigh seeks to attribute all the male characters' misogyny to the the last 14 years of Tory rule.

But male hatred of women is not new, nor the sole prerogative of men socialised during the Thatcher years (whether at the margins of society or at the peak of success in the city).

And it has only a tenuous link to the decay and decline of a society and a lack of hope.

Many of the '90s 'angry young men' displayed the same degree of loathing for women at a time of increasing affluence, hope and opportunity.

Mike Leigh has in the past provided insight and thoughtful comment on working class life in Britain - not any more. This is a voyeuristic film. It fails in its attempt to show alienation in British society and its impact on men and women.

As a chance for the curious to 'experience' the lives of the marginalised 'underclass' and their exploiters, with some brutal sex thrown in for good measure, it succeeds.

One character in the film says to Johnny 'don't waste your life'. Unless you fancy a night out full of hate, listening to a boring quasi-religious rant peppered with inane sex that leaves you angry and frustrated, don't waste your money!

Reservoir Romance

True Romance

Film by Quentin Tarantino, Christian Slater, Patricia Arquette.

Reviewed by Alan Brief

THE FOLLOW-UP offering by the man who created "Reservoir Dogs" is a tense, engaging, violent film with dialogue to match.

It is brought to you with literally everyone who is anyone in Hollywood trying to pitch in with one of the cameo parts. The film has wrongly been compared to 'Wild at Heart' but in reality is only a road movie in the sense the two main characters flee the bad guys to arrive in Hollywood in a car.

The film is in one sense more of a reworking of "Brony and Clyde" except the heroes here are not ever proper gangsters (and this film is a lot better).

The plot centres on a very average man who works at a store and spends every birth-day watching Kung Fu movies by himself. So pathetic is this spectacle his boss fixes it for him to be picked up at the cinema, enter Arquette.

They fall in love, Slater decides to deal with her pimp, excellent bit part for Gary Oldman who manages to play the clique of a disreputable scarred drug dealer pimp convincingly, and mistakenly picks up a case full of someone else's cocaine when he leaves the building.

Cue mayhem.

For those who disliked "Reservoir Dogs" this film is less violent, no-one spends the entire film with the only acting skill required being to die slowly from bullet wounds to the stomach. However what both of these films have in common is that the violence is very realistic.

Here after all is where the controversy over Tarantino's work stems from. What you certainly do have in his work is a stripping away of the glamour of violence especially that concerned with the Mafia.

Even in some of the earlier films, even the better ones such as the "Godfather", dying is quick normally clean and the lifestyle lived is with codes and honour. Tarantino upsets people because his films do not go in for either type of bullshit.

Violence in his films has its own message, everyone in "Reservoir Dogs" lives violently and they nearly all die slowly and slowly.

So too in his latest film with an added touch of farce in the final shoot out. Furthermore he has an ability to get the viewer to accept acts they would not normally do, most clearly when Patricia Arquette brutalised by the mob finally manages to escape by skewering her tormentor's foot to the floor with a pair of scissors.

In fact Arquette has stated in interview that she only took the role because she believed it to be a 'feminist role'. It is certainly unusual for this type of film to have the narration, where there is any seen through the eyes of Arquette's character.

However in this film as before what goes completely unchallenged is the racism of his characters.

Whilst it is obvious American society is rife with racism it is really sufficient to simply therefore include it for the sake of reality in each film and fail to comment upon it.

In fact in "True Romance" we are presented with Dennis Hopper as a racist father hopelessly using racism to good a for his son, Christopher Walken, into killing him rather than inform the mob the whereabouts of his son.

Bad taste

These two characters are memorable, not least for Hop- per appearing to send himself up by playing the only 'normal' character in the whole film but the outburst simply left a very bad taste in the mouth.

As a whole this film is worth seeing, being crafted by one of the US's best independent talents, and someone who by all accounts wishes to stay that way.

His world of films is not the everyday life of everyone but probably closer to the more than earlier attempts to portray the segment of life that interests him.

The only question remaining is why does Christian Slater always pretend to be Jack Nicholson in whatever role he is playing?
1918: Germany's Red November

IT IS A NOTORIOUS myth that there has never been a socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist west. There has. In November 1918, 75 years ago this month, the German workers rose up and created soviet power -- the power of elected workers councils -- all over Germany. PHIL HEARSE draws some political conclusions.

THE NOVEMBER 1918 uprising came at the end of more than a year of increasing turmoil in Germany, as the defeat of the German army at the front became obvious and the privations of the workers at home became unbearable. In April 1917 there were mass strikes against food price increases, and then in January 1918 came a mass political strike against the annexations being demanded by the German government at the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations with the Soviet government.

Fifty thousand workers were sent to the front as a reprisal. The world war had led to a split in the mass German workers party, the SPD (Social Democrats). The anti-war left wing had been expelled in January 1917, and in April of that year formed the Independent Social Democrats (USPD). This party had hundreds of thousands of members, in the main revolutionary-minded workers.

The Spartakusbund of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht was the extreme left wing of the USPD, but only had a few thousand followers.

Collapsing

At the end of September 1918, with the German armies on the point of collapse, the General Staff officers visited the Kaiser, and demanded the handing over of power to a 'democratic' government (led by Prince Max von Baden) -- as the only way to prevent 'anarchy'.

But before this government could be stabilized, the sailors of the Kiel naval base mutinied on November 4. To prevent the sailors being crushed, the USPD leaders in Kiel decided to seize power in the town.

That evening a Workers and Sailors Council was formed to administer the local area. The signal for revolution had been given.

In the following days the revolution spread all along the northern coast. Hamburg rose on 5 November; Bremen; Altona, Rendsberg and Lockstedt on the 6th; Cologne, Munich, Hanover and Brunswick on the 7th. In each of these places, workers, and soldiers councils declared themselves the legitimate power.

The focus of events now moved to the capital, Berlin. The key forces here were the USPD left wing, led by Spartacists Liebknecht and Meyer, and the powerful Social democracy, when the crunch comes, will always side with the brutal repression of the workers, rather than with socialist revolution.

The Spartakusbund leader Karl Liebknecht addresses workers' demonstration

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Revolutionary shop stewards movement, the non-party Obstewer

The Obstewer decided to wait for 11 November to act, but Liebknecht persuaded them with a call for action on the 8th. The decision about the date was immaterial: the workers rose on the 9th. Thousands rushed to the Reichstag, the parliament building. It was now that the right-wing leaders of the 'old party' -- the Social Democrats (SPD) intervened, and a fatal blow was struck against the revolution.

As the workers besieged the Reichstag, at 2pm one of the two main SPD leaders, Schieidemann, rushed out and 'proclaimed' a republic -- and his support for the workers. The SPD was taking the leadership of the movement in order to head it off.

At 4pm Karl Liebknecht arrived at the Reichstag to proclaim the socialist republic -- but some of his thunder had been stolen by the SPD leaders.

Now the question of government -- who allowed a government to be formed which, with three SPD and two from the right wing of the USPD, gave effective control to the SPD. It was a fatal mistake.

A crucial conflict now developed between SPD leaders and the left. A national congress of workers' and soldiers' deputies was due to be held in Berlin on December 3.

The SPD leaders decided to propose the election of a 'constituent assembly'. This body was clearly going to be counterposed to the power of the workers' councils -- in effect it would be a bourgeois parliament which would be used to crush the councils.

While the Spartacists left demanded all power to the councils, the USPD leaders wavered.

At the congress itself, which the SPD packed with its supporters, and to whichLuxemburg and Liebknecht were unable to gain admittance, some USPD delegates voted both for the resolutions in favour of 'all power to the councils' and for national elections to a constituent assembly.

In consequence Ebert and Scheidemann won the day. National elections were called: the 'democratic counter-revolution' was under way.

Frustrated by the government's paralysis and capitulation to the right wing, the USPD withdrew from the government on 29 December, leaving the SPD in power alone.

The Spartacist left of the USPD, exasperated by the compromises of the party leadership, left the party, to declare an independent Communist Party.

Capitalising on their victory at the congress of workers councils, the SPD leaders now moved to provoke the left and induct a further defeat on it. On 4 January 1919, the Berlin police chief, a USPD member called Eichhorn, was dismissed.

Eichhorn's dismissal was met by demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them armed.

In this situation, sections of the USPD, Spartacists and revolutionary shop stewards decided to try to seize power on it. The revolutionaries in Berlin were intoxicated by the sight of tens of thousands of armed workers demanding that the government be got rid of.

But they over-estimated the relationship of forces. The workers outside Berlin were not yet ready for armed insurrection.

The Russian Bolshevik leader Karl Radek -- secretly in Germany co-ordinating with the Spartacists -- was firmly against the uprising. Rosa Luxemburg also saw the uprising as an ultra-left adventure.

Civil war

The January uprising initiated civil war. Fifty thousand workers lost their lives in the struggle. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by revolutionary troops with the connivance of the Social Democrats. It was March before the workers uprising was quashed throughout Germany.

The crushing of the uprising by the army's bullets signalled the end of the revolution, and the establishment of a bourgeois republic.

It also, together with further defeats in the 1920s, opened the path for Hitler's victory, the second world war and an historic setback for the workers movement.

The defeat of the 1918-19 revolution showed that social democracy, when the crunch comes, will side with the brutal repression of the workers, rather than with socialist revolution.
Why we don’t wear poppies

This weekend the annual Remembrance ceremonies take place. As usual, robins are being sold by politicians and many others have appeared wearing their poppies. The poppy, and the Cenotaph ceremonies which go with it, symbolise Britain’s ‘defeat’ in the First World War. But sociologists say that the slaughter of millions of mainly young men and women was far more complex and in the interests of the profits of capitalism.

We say that the ceremonies held each year merely the real character of the two world wars and glorify militarism.

In the first world war millions of young men died horrible deaths in the trenches in a war for dominance between imperialist powers.

The second world war occurred because of the defeat of the working class struggle in Germany in Italy, France and Spain.

Russian dead

We will remember the British soldiers who served in that second world war. We will also remember the 30 million Russians, at least 10 million of them civilians, who died before the Red Army. We will remember the millions of Germans who died. Including the hundreds of thousands of German workers who died at Dresden and other cities in allied bombing raids. We also remember the hundreds of thousands of Parisians, many from the Communist movement, who were killed in the initial stage of the French revolution.

We remember the hundreds of thousands killed in the Austrian and the Irish uprisings.

The fact of all this will remain a massive crime which will continue to haunt the ruling class.

The militarism of the system is on the upsurge, adding many more victims to the terrible toll. That’s something to be proud about.

Fingers

WHERE WE STAND

Facing mass unemployment, rampant employers equipped with huge 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 bureaucratic nature 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 unified by its own crisis, its requirement to maximise profits at the expense of the workers, has in turn given determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal class-war Tory high command.

The Tory strategy has been to shame the unions with legislation, to provoke them to attack themselves and undermine 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 defeatist politics of "new realism", effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while ditching any pretence that they offer a socialist alternative.

Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the government has simply fuelled and encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

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

Socialist Outlook rejects reformism, because we are against fighting for reforms, but because we see the need for a break with the working class — for full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy — can never be achieved under capitalism.

Nor, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers state and degenerate USSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing their own working class.

We are a Marxist Current, based not on the British totalitarian paranoias of state socialism, nor on the tame, toothless version of "realism" beloved by armchair academics, but which by the revolution in Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, 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 groups on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming our opposition to the system. 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 propagandists alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken up by 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 with us in the fight for a socialist future, readers’ groups meet in towns across the country. Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

YES, I want to become a Socialist Outlook supporter

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**What's HAPPENING**

**WANT YOUR event included?**
Send details by 19 November to
What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

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**NOVEMBER**

**Wednesday 10**
LOBBY fascist Beacon's
first meeting of Tower
Hamlets council 6pm (be
early) Town Hall Mulberry
Place E14

**Thursday 11**
ON THE RAMPART of a Police
State. Public meeting with Mi-
chael Mansfield QC and others
2.30pm Hackney Community
Centre 92-100 Stoke New-
ington High Street N16 1YQ

**Friday 12**
VIGIL to commemorate the
Santa Cruz massacre
5.30pm-7.30pm St. Martin's
in-the-Fields church Trafal-
gar Square

FREE East Timor Social
7.30pm Canton House St.
John's Way N19 tickets £3/£2

**Saturday 13**
DEMONSTRATE against the
BNP 11.30pm Read
School Park Bloxwich West
Midlands

Sat 13 & Sun 14
LIBERATION committee open
11.00am

**Sunday 14**
ANTI-NAZI mobilisation
12.00 noon Clifford's Tower
York
FREE East Timor fringe meet-
ging at GD national conference
Bradford

**Thursday 18**
POLICE Harassment is a
crime! United picket of
Plaistow Police Station
444 Barking Road E13
6pm-8pm
NAC evening with Jo Brand
Mark Thomas Donna McPhail
and The Brenda 8.30pm-2pm
The Rocket 166-220 Holloway
Road London N7

**Friday 19 - Sunday 21**
DISCUSSION weekend
sponsored by SGAS SU and
the Marxism University.
Tickets £12/£9/3 from
MUL. GSAS SU, Thom-
haugh St WC1H 9XG

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**Saturday 20**
TUC demonstration in defence
of the NHS. Socialist Outlook
meet at 11am Jubilee Gar-
dens (Waterloo tube) de-
tails/Safetets UNION: 071 388
2366

Rave for Justice Free
Oliver Campbell benefit
6pm till late One Love
Community Association 1
Bishops Avenue off Plaistow
Road Plaistow E13 22
Peace Education Congress
10.30am-4.30pm Friends Meet-
ing Hoste Easton Road Lon-
don

**Wednesday 24**
STOP the refugee prison!
demonstration against the
opening of Campfield De-
tention Centre 5pm Carl-
fax central Oxford

**Thursday 25**
EUROPE and Inward Troops
Out Movement Public Meeting
with Geoff Bell and Mary Ma-
son 7.00pm University of East
London Water Lane Stratford
E15

**Saturday 27**
MARCH against deporta-
tions organised by West
Midlands anti-deportation
campaign and UNION
Handsworth Birmingham
details 021-551 4518
MARCH and rally before
budget day assembly 10.30am
Forth Street by Newcastle Cen-
tral Station rally 11.30am Civic
Centre

JOHN Maclean 75th Anni-
versary Meeting 1.00pm
with Peter Berresford Ellis
Lucas Arms Graves Inn
Road Kings Cross
COMMUNITY demo against
the Nazis Dacorum near Mabbot
Glamorgan

**Monday 29**
MILITANT Labour Interna-
tional Rally doors open
7pm Conway Hall Red Lion
Square WC1

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**SOCIALIST OUTLOOK No. 51, October 30 1993, Page 15**

The Saturday 27 demon-
stration against de-
portations marks a big
advance for the right of
UNISON member
Prakash and his
son Prem to stay in Brit-
ain.

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**Birmingham anti-racists**
**rally for Satpal**

ON TUESDAY 16 Novem-
ber the rally will be held out-
side the Handsworth, Bir-
mingham, restaurant where
Satpal Ran faced a racist
attack.

He has been in prison for
seven years for defending him-
self from the assault. In Novem-
ber 1986 Satpal went for a meal
with a man and a woman friend
at the Indian restaurant.

A group of six white men who
had been drinking at another ta-
table objected to the music being
played. 'We don't want any
black music and it's black crap.'
When the music was not changed they
became even more abusive, shouting
racist abuse at the staff.

Satpal objected and the group
abusingly turned on him, throw-
ing plates and glasses at him.

The one of the racists walked
towards Satpal, took up a wine
glass, broke it against a table and
violently attacked Satpal who
was subsequently cut on his
wrists and face.

**Knife**

In order to save his life Satpal,
weighting only nine and a half
stones, picked up a knife and
defended himself against his
thirteen and a half stone attacker
who was five inches taller.

The attacker died in hospital.
He was so drunk he refused
treatment and bled to death.

The right to self-defence is
recognised in British law, but
only it seems if the person is
white. Satpal was charged with
murder. His defence counsel put
forward the argument of self-de-
fence. It was not considered by
the judge or jury.

Three key witnesses, Ben-
gali-speaking waiters, were not
provided with interpreters and
Satpal was not allowed by his
lawyers to give evidence. He
was convicted of murder by an
all-white jury. They appealed but
the appeal was turned down.

Self-defence is no offence. In
1993 at least 12 black people
have been murdered by racists.
For speakers donations and
further details contact the Cam-
paign at 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19
INR. Tel 021-551 4518.

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**DECEMBER**

**Saturday 11**
CENTRE for Alternative Indus-
trial and Technical Sys-
tems AGM with Jeremy
Corbyn and Caroline Tongue
11am 5.30pm London details
404 Camden Road N7 0SJ

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**Monday 13**
GLOBO-COP: The New
World Order SOCIALIST
OUTLOOK forum 7.30pm
Stations' Park Commu-
ity Centre Mayfield Road
off Weston Park London N8
Sat 18 & Sun 19
LIBERATION! editorial meeting

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**MARCH 19**
NATIONAL demonstration
against racism called by
TUC General Council
SEND US details of your lo-
cal events: listings are free of
charge!

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As Socialist Outlook went to press, news came in that the three remaining lorries of the International Workers Aid convoy were just one hour from Tuzla, the original objective of the convoy.

Deep inside Bosnian-held territory, nothing now stands in the way of their 40 tonnes of aid reaching the beleaguered town.

Socialist Outlook supporter Mick Woods and other Fourth Internationalists were with the convoy.

Other lorries of International Workers Aid are making ready to immediately follow-up this success.

This represents a major victory for the international campaign, formally established on 31 October in Manchester by delegates from many European countries.

The meeting decided to launch an international campaign for the opening of Tuzla airport.

Tuzla is the working class centre of multi-ethnic Bosnia. One million people in the town and its surrounding area are still under siege from Serb nationalist militias.

As the winter approaches their situation is becoming desperate:

- food, medical supplies and the other necessities of life are running out.
- The simplest and most direct solution to get the aid in is to open Tuzla airport. The failure of the UN to take this action amounts to an attempt to squeeze the Bosnian leadership to accept a deal which would carve Bosnia into three ethnically-based enclaves.
- International Workers Aid is launching an international day of action on 11 December in which the opening of Tuzla airport will be a central demand.

An office is being maintained in Zagreb to further consolidate links with trade unionists in the region. And preparations are being made to launch a new convoy next year.

Other projects to aid education for Bosnian children and give material assistance to women's and other self-organised groups will be launched.

There is no short term end of the war in sight. It is certain to go on through the winter. Every effort must now be turned towards building solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia and all the working people of the Balkans.

*Manchester conference reports, see page 2.*