ALL OUT TO SMASH RACISM!
Anti-racists build support for 19 March

By Jeff Lowe and Chris Brooks

TRADE unions have been leading the united nationwide mobilisation for the upcoming march against racism in East London.

Organised by the TUC for 19 March, over one hundred thousand people are expected - making it the biggest expression of anti-racist sentiment in the UK since the 70s. Large amounts of publicity are available from regional TUC offices - their telephone numbers are listed under 'Saturday 19 March' on page 15 of this issue.

Reports from around the country give a flavour of the broad forces united by the demonstration, and the anti-racist movements that will give the march its militancy.

East London

IN A SPATE of racist attacks in recent weeks, Bengali school-students have been attacked by gangs of 15 to 20 white youths. These are planned and organised attacks by thugs travelling around in a mini-bus who pile out when they find a victim.

These attacks have all taken place away from the electorally sensitive areas where the BNP is standing candidates. However on the Isle of Dogs, where the BNP won a council by-election, even the police admit that there has been a four-fold increase in racist attacks on the last year.

The BNP are trying to push the idea that Derek Brockway is a 'local councillor' and available for 'local people' in an attempt to portray him as an upright citizen.

Sensitive

Whilst the TUC march goes through East London it is avoiding all 'sensitive' areas, with the sole exception of the place where Qaddas Ali was viciously attacked. Tower Hamlets Trades Council is building for the demo but, unfortunately, there is no organised campaign across the borough.

YRE called for a school students' strike on 3 March to protest against both racist attacks and the way in which some school administrations have portrayed these attacks as 'inter-school rivalry'.

In February 70 people took part in a petitioning campaign organised by the local Labour Party, demanding that unused land belonging to the London Docklands Development Corporation be made available for social housing at affordable rents and that the government should make money available to build houses.

The BNP are planning to stand candidates for the local elections in Mile End, Wapping, Stepney and Canning Town - the areas which will form the new Parliamentary constituencies of Docklands and Stepney.

It is quite likely that if the council elections were held now the BNP would win all 3 seats but they can be beaten if there is an organised campaign for Labour. The Labour Party is campaigning on the Isle of Dogs on 10 April and needs active support. There is a strong possibility that one of the Labour candidates will be from the Bengali community.

Brighton

IN JANUARY, after the racist murder of Sudanese refugee Ali Ibrahim, 500 demonstrators took to the streets in Brighton.

Money was raised for funeral expenses by public subscription after an appeal by Brighton Council's Equalities Committee.

Meanwhile the plight of homeless Sudanese refugees in Brighton is ignored by the Labour council. After the Millwall by-election the leader of the Labour group Steve Baslam purported to racist prejudices, saying that the Council's policy was "right for Brighton for Brighton people".

There will be coaches and a chartered train going up from Brighton to the TUC 'Unite Against Racism' demo on 19 March.

A meeting with George Silson from the Winston Sinnott Defence Campaign was recently held by Brighton Young Labour. More than 20 people attended and will continue to take up the issue of state racism.

Top fascist Tyndall, who lives locally in Hove, has attempted some 'respectable' meetings in Brighton and has been met with pickets by anti-fascists every time.

For example he tried to hold a meeting in the Royal Aberdeen hotel on the same day as the demonstration against the murder of Ali Ibrahim, which was prevented from going ahead by demonstrators.

Leeds

THE SOCIALIST Campaign Group agreed at its AGM to set up a meeting to try to bring together different anti-racist groups.

Their efforts were rewarded at a meeting on 15 February which brought together supporters of ARA, ANL, AFA and YRE as well as unaligned individuals.

Agreement was reached to leaflet together for the TUC demo. Leeds Trades Council is also actively building for the demo and has organised coaches.

There appears to be a desire to try to continue with the unity in action that has so far been achieved, though no formal agreements have yet been made.

Huddersfield

ANTI-FAVASTIC activists are calling for the sacking of a health worker, a BNP activist and member of UNISON, at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. A campaign is being mounted throughout the local labour movement and demonstrations are taking place every Saturday outside the hospital.

UNISON is building for the TUC demo. Material has been distributed to every office where UNISON personnel work and Kirklees Housing branch is paying for people to go. Huddersfield Trades Council is organising coaches.

West London

Coaches for the TUC demo are being organised by UNISON and Southall Monitoring Group. Ealing Trades Council is co-ordinating the building of the campaign.

Manchester

ARA held a rally on Friday 4 March. Speakers were Joan Ruddock MP, Alan Manning (N.W. TUC), Eddie Newman MEP and someone from the 'Checkpoint Charlie' campaign. This campaign is in response to a violent police raid on 'Checkpoint Charlie', a Black club, a few weeks ago.

Anti-racist activists are mobilising for the TUC demo and for the 'Communities of Resistance' conference on 9 April at the Pakistan Community Centre in Manchester.

This is a national conference bringing together campaigns involved in struggles against a wide range of racist activities across the state.

It is organised by the Rahman Family Campaign. In the last few months, activities like stop-and-search, face-deportation and the closure of Muslim centres have been stepped up. Activists have been arrested, in some cases for no reason other than the colour of their skin.

The Rahman Family Campaign has been running for a year and has provided an important example of how uncompromising anti-racist work can be carried out.

Sheffield

THE TRADES Council and ARA are the main forces involved in building for 19 March. Union branches throughout the country have been circulated and encouraged to mobilise. Sheffield Trades Council and UNISON are playing a key role in the campaign.

The Trades Council has decided to resurrect its May Day march, with the slogan 'The Fight Against Racism.'
The TUC demonstration on March 19 will be a huge show of strength for opponents of racism, race violence and the fascist scum of the BNP.

Socialists will welcome the fact that at least on this one occasion all of the principal campaign groups fighting racism and fascism — the Anti Racist Alliance, the Anti Nazi League and Youth Against Racism in Europe — will be participating in a single event, alongside much wider support from the trade unions and labour movement.

This very fact will increase the aspirations among many for more initiatives that unite rather than divide the various active anti-racist forces, at local level as well as on one-off national demonstrations. Others, particularly Labour Party activists, may feel inspired to demand a much more aggressive Labour profile against racism. It is inconceivable that it has been TGWU leader Bill Morris rather than Labour’s Tony Blair, who has supported the struggle to close down the Campfield detention centre.

Local campaigns

The demonstration will underline the importance of building local campaigns against BNP candidates wherever they run on their nazi ticket in May’s council elections or in June’s European elections. The scale and strength of the turnout from the length and breadth of the country on March 19 should also make us take stock of the much more fundamental political problems within the labour movement which have fuelled the rise of racism and hardened the fight against race violence.

As the 1990s showed, the breeding grounds of racist prejudice and fascist currents are recession, depression, frustration and despair. Fifteen years of brutal Tory rule has certainly created these conditions, as well as in the crumbling inner cities and economic backwaters of a collapsing economy.

Dumbed

Millions of youth and adult workers have been dumbed down on the scrapheap, with no future, no hope, and no sign that anyone cares.

Instead of tapping this vast pool of anger and alienated energy, the TUC and Labour leaders have turned away, dropping any hint of radical policies, and sticking up to the middle class.

The most demoralising factor for sections of the working class has been the abject failure of the labour movement to learn the lessons of the 1930s. Like their ignominious predecessors, they have refused to lead any concerted opposition to the Tory offensive, even as jobs and crucial public services have been destroyed.

Labour councils ten years ago ran up the white flag, surrendering to Tory cutbacks under the infamous “dented shield” policy of implementing “caring cuts”: the result has been a huge crisis in housing, social services and education.

Queues

The queue for jobs and housing, the brutal squeeze on benefits and the austerity regime in schools create the material conditions for racial tensions. Victims of the system search round for someone to blame for their suffering, and too often simplistic racist prejudices fill the vacuum left by a prostrate Labour leadership.

Black workers in public services suffer a double squeeze: thousands face attacks on their jobs and conditions; while others, such as front line nurses and NHS staff, are obliged to suffer the wrath of racist racism has in practice left one section of workers after another — steelworkers, plant workers, rail workers, dockers, miners — isolated in the teeth of the Tory offensive. The repeated defeats and betrayals have reduced Britain to the lowest-ever level of strikes, with the NHS and welfare state under renewed attack, and union strength reduced from 51% of the workforce to just 36%.

With an opposition unwilling to oppose, and union leaders too scared to fight, workforces have been decimated and working class resistance apart by the brutal forces of Tory market economics. The fascists have been eager to exploit this situation.

But there is another argument. Racial barriers can be broken down in class struggle against the common enemy.

Mounting anger among public sector workers over the Tory pay freeze must be turned into the most radical action: opposition to mass cuts in NHS, London, Birmingham and other big cities must be met by determined union resistance that will link up with a groundswell of public support. Campaigns and mass action must oppose privatisation in British Rail and the civil service, and defend the welfare state.

Fight on

Delegations returning from the March 19 demonstration must also carry forward the fight against racism — building support for the campaign to close Campfield, building local campaigns and initiatives which aim to link the various anti-racist organisations, building support and solidarity for black community campaigns defending themselves against racist attack, and campaigning to expose the racist policies of BNP candidates.

But it’s not enough just to build opposition: millions of alienated and downtrodden working class people need to be offered something positive to fight for.

The struggle must be stepped up in the Labour Party and the unions for radical socialist policies that can unite opposition to the Tories and the fascists, and offer a means to mobilise the widest sections of the working class to get rid of this vicious government and the system it represents.

Week 3 of asylum seekers’ Hunger Strike

by Bill MacKeith, President Oxford Trades Union Council

DURING January the British government held six hundred people under the Immigration Act. There are asylum seekers. Hunger strikes by over 30 people have been released. Others remain in custody.

At Pentonville 13 Algerians were released after 12 days’ hunger strike, the last two days without water. At Harlow immigration prison near Portsmouth, asylum seekers of other nationalities have joined 12 Algerians on hunger strike since 13 February. Two days later at the new 239 place Campfield immigration detention centre near Oxford, 16 Algerians went on hunger strike (no solidifying fluids at night only). A lone woman hunger striker was transferred to Holloway prison then released after 12 days. On March 4 the hunger strikers were moved to Stockton Hall private psychiatry

The Home Office is calling for Campfield to be shut. Oxford City Council has called for the hunger strikers to be released and next month will debate a motion calling for the prison to be shut.

Over 100 Oxford university college heads, professors and other academics have signed the letter to the prime minister calling for the release of asylum seekers published in The Guardian on 3 March.

The Campaign To Close Campfield launched by Oxford Against Racism and Fas-
How much longer do we tolerate mass murder?

By Paul Walker

A MEDEA blitz accompanied the showing of John Pilger’s film ‘Death of a Nation – the East Timor Conspiracy’. A telephone number shown at the conclusion of the programme led to a peak of 4,000 calls per minute at half past midnight. It is estimated that over 100,000 people picked up a phone in reaction to the film in which the viewing public saw at first hand British complicity in the Timorese slaughter.

The call for the delivery of the Government – total silence for a day and then limp excuses. Hunt, Chalker and the rest were in retreat for 48 hours, using diplomatic speak to cover for the exposure of good old fashioned naked imperialist interest.

Conspiracy of silence

The British ruling class are holding the conspiracy of silence around the genocider in East Timor will be maintained and the Pergau Dam scandal will have covered thefts of trucks on their support for mass murder, repression torture and systematic sexual abuse of the East Timorese populace.

There is an opportunity for socialists and their allies to build a broad based campaign to stop the sale of Hawks and thus help the East Timorese struggle for self-determination.

The importance of this issue should not be underestimated. East Asia is the only dynamic sector of a recessionary world economy. There is a fierce scramble for Asian markets - both military and civilian.

The end of the Cold War and the economic growth in the region has opened up both a new period of economic expansion and regional military instability. The old strategic alliances crumble and new contradictions open up.

Indonesia is at the centre of these developments. The British ruling class’ stated ambition is to be the number one trading partner for Indonesia and it has 10 million inhabitants. What price then, 200,000 East Timorese murdered and 600,000 living in an island concentration camp?

No body should be under any illusions about the nature of events in East Asia. With expanding markets and imperialist stampede for those markets comes increased regional military budgets.

Every authoritative commentator – bourgeois, liberal, social democratic or Marxist is saying the same thing – there is a massive arms race underway in East Asia, fuelled by the major arms suppliers – USA, Britain, Germany, China and Russia. At the same time the recent discovery of significant oil reserves in the South China Sea has added a qualitative new turn to the situation. Six countries, China, Taiwan and Vietnam included are making a claim to those reserves. It can be doubted in which direction this is all leading – inter-imperialist conflict and tensions.

This explains why very meagre funds and major nations in the region is on a massive arms procurement drive. This is the real significance of the Malaysian and the sale of Hawks to Indonesia.

The cost to the workers and peasants of the region today is the lack of any social programmes in their interests and the deepening on the ongoing attack on the growing working class organisations. If the whole arms race is not stopped, workers and peasants will pay with their lives on battlefields in the cause of imperialist war.

All socialists must be at the centre of a campaign to stop this war drive. It is possible to slow down what is one weak link - that of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

After almost two decades of repression the East Timorese will not give in. Being bombed and strafed by British made Hawks has only re-inforced their resolve to resist. It is our duty to aid them in their struggle. The victory of the East Timorese revolution for self determination will be a victory for our class against the interests of British and US imperialism.

April sees the launching of a European wide campaign to stop military supplies to Indonesia and the British left has a crucial role to play in this campaign. Join the Campaign Against Arms Trade’s broad based campaign ‘Together We Can Stop the Hawks’, which aims to stop all future sales of Hawks to Indonesia and impose a complete military embargo.

Win labour movement organisations to support the campaign – invite speakers from the campaign to your trade union student union or Labour Party branch.

If there is a local CND or peace group get them to sponsor the campaign and to invite a speaker.

Sponsor models resolutions, wheres appropriate, calling for a military embargo on Indonesian imports.

Contact CAAT, 11 Goodwin St, Finchbury Park, London, N4 3HG Tel: 071 281 0297.

Support grows for new Tuzla workers’ convoy

By Eve Turner

THE THIRD meeting of International Workers’ Aid for Bosnia (IWA) in Amsterdam on 26-27 February clearly showed the growing support and international strength of the campaign, with representatives from groups in France, Germany, Sweden, UK, Holland, Belgium and Denmark.

A welcome development was the presence of two representatives of Par Alora (Peace Now) from Spain, who have themselves attempted to get a convoy into Tuzla but without success. If Par Alora does join with IWA they will send 9 lorries, with 25 tons of aid on each, to Split at the end of March.

With only 4 weeks to go before the convoy sets off to rendezvous in Split on the 7 April, much of the weekend was spent in sorting out the final arrangements.

An estimated 15 lorries will make the journey to Split where they will be unloaded into warehouse and onto 6 specially purchased ex-GDR army trucks, for their final journey to Tuzla.

These trucks, bought by the Danish, Swedish and German Workers’ Aid groups are vital to ensure the safety of the drivers and aid on the extremely poor and dangerous roads between Split and Tuzla.

It is envisaged that these trucks will, war conditions permitting, make regular trips to and from Tuzla, providing a regular flow of food supplies and strengthening the relationship between the workers and people of Tuzla and International Workers’ Aid.

All the arrangements for the arrival of the convoy and the transport on to Tuzla are being coordinated by Mick (Britain) and Unik (Denmark) who will staff the convoy to be opened International H.O. in Split.

Discussions have been taking place, despite considerable communication difficulties, with the Tuzla Miners Union to ask that they take responsibility for the equal distribution of aid in the city. One of the lessons learned by the first successful convoy to Tuzla was the need to make sure the aid is both practically and culturally suitable.

The aid distributed by the Tuzla Miners Union is largely basic food including near 1000kg of flour, sugar and tea.

All socially a ‘bread programme’ had been launched which aimed to provide the indigenous food for the Tuzla mines to be made in the municipal bakeries.

However due to lack of fuel the miners will instead distribute this to individual families to make the bread in their own homes.

Unlike the first convoy, each Workers’ Aid group will be responsible for campaigning in its own country and in towns on route, where no campaign exists.

An extraordinary amount of work and international cooperation has gone into the planning of this convoy.

Countless hours spent raising money to buy trucks and aid, numerous negotiations with officials to negotiate safe passage, detailed consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different routes, planning the bread programmes and, most importantly, the time and effort put into planning the details with the unions in Tuzla.

It’s not too late to get involved in the campaign. For details of your local group and/or how to send donations to the Tuzla Convoy send donations to the National Office at 12-14 Thornton Street, London SW6 OVL. Tel/Fax 071 878 8822.
Now teachers face Section 11 jobs axe

by Emma Teitelbaum

THOUSANDS of teachers' jobs may be saved by a govern- ment proposal to cut Section 11 funding to local authorities by about 25%. This will particularly hit schools in poorer multi-ethnic communities.

In the bulk of Section 11 funding is provided to local authori- ties by the Home Office, in order to make special provision for ethnic minorities. 90% is spent on the education of biling-ual pupils, particularly the teaching of English as a second language.

Section 11 teaching provides these pupils with the essential access to the National Curricul- um. There are currently some 10,000 teachers in England and Wales whose jobs are funded under Section 11.

Officially, only children whose families are from the Commonwealth are funded under section 11. But many schools can provide English teaching for Turkish speakers from Cyprus, but not those from Turkey. Nor are refugee children covered by Section 11 provision.

In fact, a good many schools have been sharing these meagre re- sources with other, less 'lucky' communities whose country was not part of the British Empire. Many schools have been raised from grassroots struggle to in- clude all the children who need the service. The NUT recently took up this struggle.

In November 1992, the Home Office announced its inten- tion to cut and cash this funding. The Home Office ac- cidentally cut schools in the Section 11 programme by 18% in 1994/5 and 25% in 1995/6.

In many many areas, however, the cuts will be even worse, with many areas expecting cuts of 25% for 1994/5. Many teachers have already begun res- pectful, and local NUT is ballotting for a pro- posed half-day strike on 15 May to fight the closure.

The attack on Section 11 funding is a racist policy, but although the first victims of these cuts will be the minority communities, this attack will af- fect them the whole community. In the first place, the status of those children who need this pro- gramme as second-class pupils will be reinforced, and their self-esteem will suffer. But all teachers and all pupils are to suffer from this further cut in educational resources. Re- sources in multi-ethnic schools will have to stretch even further. This of course, will influence the Tories league tables and tests results.

This is another struggle which we can win. We need to learn from the successful campaign held by teachers and par- ents, against the Tories' National Tests.

The campaign, and espe- cially the parental support, pushed NUT to support a con- tinuing boycott of the SATS and led to John Patten's humiliating climb-down.

What can we do? Local cam- paigns, involving parents and other residents, should be estab- lished to insist on adequate funding for their schools.

The NUT and local cam- paigns should support the na- tional conference on Section 11 funding on 12 March in Bir- minham.

Only such a mass campaign can force the government to re- turn these essential resources to the schools.

NUT hit by NATFHE ruling

By a Sandwell teacher

Following the injunction and court ruling against the NATFHE strike, the NUT has called off action in the Sandwell borough.

Without an injunction to see if there would be a simi- lar legal challenge to the NATFHE's Sandwell division, the proposed strike action against the 97 job losses at least 50 teachers has been post- poned.

However, while the TUC along with NATFHE leadership sees ways of chal- lenging the NUT's decision, and a rebalancing of Sandwell is being contemplated, waves of teachers are receiving redund- ancy notices, with no legal means to defend themselves.

The court ruling springs from the latest anti-trade union laws of last year, which require unions to inform manage- ment of the details of members being balloted.

Impossible barrier

Providing accurate names and addresses of members to employers is not only a fur- ther barrier and a further action, but probably impossible, under the dis- credited new national teaching mem- bership scheme.

On top of this, NATFHE notes that a two-thirds ma- jority of the total membership must able to vote in order to receive strike pay. Also ballot papers have to be sent irrefutable to members' home addresses and be counted by the Elec- toral Reform Society.

It was the same Electoral Reform Society that refused to endorse the 70% majority for action, as being illegally.

While the bureaucratic nightmare has been going on, there has been promised redundancy, huge increases in class sizes, and re-replying for their own jobs but with less pay and promotion.

The TUC must challenge to avoid the cut. Teachers are willing to fight to get that money. All that is lacking is the will to fight from the NUT leadership.
Age of consent: 
Back to Basics bites back!

By Peter Purton, Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights

THE DEFEAT of the cross-party amendment to equalise the gay male age of consent was a victory for Back to Basics and a setback for the lesbian and gay community.

Although the extreme right of the Tory Party, the Ulster Unionists and a tiny handful of unrepentant Labour MPs were opposed even to lowering the legal age to 18, and have made much noise of their annoyance, the result is not a compromise but a defeat. There is fury among lesbians and gay men, illustrated by the unprecedented attempt to storm parliament by thousands of outraged lesbian and gay rights demonstrators when the outcome was announced. They understood that you cannot 'compromise' on equality.

The votes of 39 Labour MPs brought about the defeat of '16'. Although 212 voted in favour, the whole of Stonewall's strategy must have been based on a naive estimation of total support from the PLP.

There is a severe anti-Labour backlash being orchestrated by both lefites and liberals in the community, which will benefit only the Liberal Democrats.

Key vote

Yet the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights knew well that winning the whole Parliamentary Labour Party to vote for the position of equality won at five Labour conferences since 1985 was not something which could be achieved in a couple of weeks of letter writing.

There were severe weaknesses in the campaign. Although the lobbying was well organised with representatives from Stonewall, there was no attempt to motivate the lesbian and gay community as a whole in public activity which could have brought massive pressure to bear on MPs as there was during the campaign against Section 28 five years ago.

There was no time to mobilise through the labour movement. The public activity which did take place were narrowly targeted at the gay male 'scene' in London. So lesbians, black people, and the whole wider movement which supports equality was left out of the picture, reduced to sending letters to MPs whose minds, in most cases, were already made up.

Anger

There will be anger in the labour movement over the result. This anger must be channelled positively. Labour MPs can get their organisations to discuss the issues of lesbian and gay equality, to invite speakers, to affiliate to LCLGR, and support the LCLGR model resolution for this year's Labour Party conference.

They can also take up other current attacks on the lesbian and gay community by supporting the Jane Brown Defence Campaign.

We may have lost this vote, but not surprising given the odds in the House of Commons, but the issue will not go away and if the labour movement shows a little more interest in lesbian and gay equality, lesbians and gays might show a little more support in return.

For speakers and information write to LCLGR at PO Box 306, London, NS or telephone 081-574 2429.

Scargill slams sabotage

OVER 300 people marched through Broadway, South Wales on Saturday 5th March to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of the miners' strike.

This was an impressive turn-out since the march was organised at only two weeks notice.

Eastern miners packed a local hall to hear Arthur Scargill attack Neil Kinnock and Neil Kinnock for their sabotage of the miners' struggle.

Scargill argued that the trade union and Labour leaders should have called for national strike action to support the miners, a call which would have met with massive support.

He also criticised those who want to remove Clause 4 from the Labour Party Constitution as being guilty of acting against the interests of the party.

Other speakers at the rally included Tyrone Sullivan and Phil Pemberton, HNUA, and Former miners from the Campaign Against Open-cast Mining, which links support for the NUS campaign to the destruction of the countryside.

There were also anti-fascist speakers. The BNP is making serious efforts to build a base in some of the former coalfields.

Middlebrook Mushroom struggle wound up

By Keith Sinclair

The Middlebrook Mushroom dispute is over. Meeting on Thursday 24 February the majority of sacked workers voted to accept the offer of a total of £50,000 'compensating' from Booker plc, the parent company of Middlebrooks.

They face an uncertain and entirely avoidable end to a bitter dispute that was fought bravely by the 68 sacked mushroom pickers from Whitley Bridge, near Selby. The dispute joins the list of struggles, such as Bourns and Times, that have been lost when they could have been won.

The women have waged a vigorous campaign throughout the labour movement to mobilise support. Pickets have been organised, demonstrations held, thousands of workers have boycotted damaged pickets put the case for their reinstatement by the giant Booker empire.

This time the women have waged an energetic campaign that gained respect from all who followed its progress.

What was lacking however was a fighting and Therefore the winning strategy from the leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union.

In the summer of 1993, serious attempts were made to prevent the sack coach from entering on Saturday mornings. Pickets of up to 3-400 fought with the police to stop the sacks. However brave the women and other pickets were, the required numbers were never really there. This was due to the total failure of the TGWU to mobilise for the mass pickets.

Socialist Outlook is in favour of open defiance of the anti-union laws and believes that the TGWU should have called for mass mobilisations. But the mobilisations were left to the women, various left wing trades councils and union branches plus members of different left groups.

Mass pickets

The issue of mass pickets was very important in this dispute. The geographical location of the farm - down a narrow country lane - meant that a thousand strong picket would have been able to block the sacks and bring victory.

The lessons of the defeat are clear but unfortunately not new. The anti-union laws will be used against workers in dispute, they need to be defeated by winning mobilisations.

A dispute such as Middlebrooks shows the urgent need for a rank and file organisation within the Transport and General Workers Union to mobilise its members to defend their interests.

Telecom strike ballot

By a BT worker

THE NATIONAL Communications Union's Telecomunications Industry Committee (TIC) is balloting its 25,000 London engineer members for one day strike action over BT's introduction of 150 outside contractors into the local network.

Last year the union concluded a redeployment agreement with BT which resulted in 1,100 London BT staff being declared surplus. BT has refused to transfer most of these staff into shortage areas on the local network, whilst upping its requirement for 'warm bodies' doing this work, thus justifying its requirements for contractors.

Written into this agreement was a company commitment to 'consider' replacing contractors with direct labour.

Management has predictably not honoured this clause, going in the opposite direction.

Contracted out

This is in line with the real policy of cutting direct labour staff to around 100,000 by 1997, replacing them with cheaper, more flexible contract workers.

The TIC has set the strike for 16th April: balloting opens on 7th March.

THE energy and enthusiasm of the Section 28 campaign is needed today...
Revival of military industrial lobby as rebels released

Yeltsin's Russia:
from a tilt to a lurch

RUSSIA'S hard-drinking president Boris Yeltsin must have thought he was hallucinating when he saw his defeated opponents Alexander Rutskoi and Russian Khabsulatov walk free from Moscow's Lefortovo jail at the end of February, reports COLIN MEADE.

Rutskoi and Khabsulatov were the leaders of the disobedient majority of the Parliament in its former incarnation, dissolved by Yeltsin and dispersed under a hail of gunfire last October. After this blow for democracy, Yeltsin expected new elections to produce a docile legislature.

As a second line of defense, Yeltsin organized a plebiscite to grant himself as president sweeping powers of rule by decree and veto.

Release

In the event the elections produced a parliament one of whose first acts was to order the release of Rutskoi and Khabsulatov along with the authors of the 1991 coup attempt against Mikhail Gorbachev.

Supporters of the release of Rutskoi and co. were able to line up the two-thirds majority needed to override Yeltsin's veto and the president's attempts to get the prosecutor general to block the move came to naught.

Recent results in the prolonged series of regional elections now underway have also brought no comfort for Yeltsin, with big victories for former Communists in a number of industrial areas.

Real power

A nod towards the Atlanticists would keep the West happy, but there was always an accompanying wince towards the real powers that be. Yeltsin kept aloof from the Atlanticist camp in the election campaign and its leading lights such as Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fedorov have left his new post-election government.

Fedorov has signalled his assessment of his side's prospects by leaving Russia for a highly paid job in an international agency.

Noteworthy, despite what is looking more like a lurch than a tilt towards the MIL, strong factions in the western establishments are maintaining their support for the Russian president.

Commentators are urging policy-makers to show 'understanding' for the need to respond to Russian nationalist sentiment.

Mole unmasked

However, the recent unmasking of Russia's super-mole in the CIA, Aldrich Ames, may signal the opening of a campaign to undermine Clinton's pro-Yeltsin policy by elements of the US establishment's nostalgic for the halcyon days of the Cold War.

Despite the justifying for position at the top there is a considerable degree of consensus emerging between Yeltsin's government and the majority in the two houses of parliament.

Virtually everyone who matters in Moscow now talks sternly about the need to defend Russia's interests and embattled Russian minorities in the 'near abroad' – the former Soviet Union and its erstwhile sphere of influence.

All are broadly in favour of sustaining the military industrial complex and keeping national control of the country's massive raw material wealth.

Close contacts

Yeltsin's prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin maintains close contacts with leaders of the industrial and agricultural lobbies.

The largest parties blocs in the lower house, the State Duma, are Gaidar's Russian's Choice and an unstable array of 'pro-reform' factions headed by ambitious individuals, Zhirinovsky's far right National Liberal Party, and the Communist Party and its close ally the Agrarians.

The upper house, the Council of the Federation, is dominated by regional officials, many of them Yeltsin appointees, and is also said to contain a significant number of businessmen.

The chair of the State Duma, Ivan Rybkin, is a representative of the collective farm lobby and his counterpart in the upper house, Shumetko of big industry.

Assuming there are no further coup attempts, Russian politics will in the immediate future be dominated by the run up to the presidential elections due in 1996. Gaidar, Rutskoi, Zhirinovsky, Chernomyrdin (with Yeltsin's backing?) and many more besides all have at least one eye on the prize.

Zhirinovsky, unlike other anti-Yeltsin politicians, supported the strengthening of presidential powers, hoping one day to exercise them himself.

Protest vote

His strong showing in the elections was partly due to the fact that Rutskoi was in jail and other parties that could have captured the protest vote were banned.

All other parties in the new parliament have been refusing to support his nominees for important committee posts. But, even if he is not about to seize power, Zhirinovsky has a real social base and a programme adapted to growing exasperation with the lack of effective decision making at the centre.

The main reasons given in Russian surveys for supporting Zhirinovsky are the need for a restoration of discipline, strong state controls and the elimination of the threat of anarchy.

At the same time, hePackage both the new pro-western rich and the old Communist schemecologists, making the telling point that the two poles are not so far apart as they might want to appear.

Zhirinovsky's success is thus a result of the failure of pro-democratic forces in Russia to find ways of challenging the old order that appeal to the interests of the Russian people and its working class.

"Zhirinovsky's success is a result of the failure of pro-democratic forces in Russia to find ways of challenging the old order that appeal to the interests of the Russian people and its working class"
by Gill Lee

JOHN MAJOR's campaign of 'Back to Basics' in British standards of morality and financial probity has been exposed as a hypocritical sham which has rocked the Tory's increasingly weak government. But current 'Back to Basics' Tory policies represent a massive attack on the working class and women in particular.

The fathering of illegitimate children by Tory MPs became a matter for public scandal and outrage because of the explicit moral nature of the campaign launched by the Tories at their annual conference last October, a campaign aimed in particular at single mothers.

'Back to Basics' began as a thinly-veiled call from the right of the Tory Party. While right-wingers like Education Secretary John Patten had long been vocal on morality, for example warning against the loss of a belief in sin, defeat over Maoism prompted the Tory right into an explicit moral campaign.

In the run-up to Conservative Party Conference in October, ministers such as Treasury Chief Secretary Michael Portillo, Welsh Secretary John Redwood and Social Security Minister Peter Lilley made a series of speeches calling for a mixture of greater self-reliance, less dependency, more selective welfare benefits and the like.

The problems of the British economy were to be dealt with by cutting taxes and slashing the welfare state. Single mothers became a particular target of Conservative abuse, blamed in a series of speeches for an increase in juvenile crime, failing educational standards and living off the welfare state.

'Back to Basics' was just a force in which an ideological attack launched on single mothers and absent fathers collapsed in the popular perception that 'Ministers appeared to have been fathering more children in secret love nests than the medieval pope', as the Guardian put it.

'Back to Basics' was a desperate attempt by a desperate government to paper over fundamental problems for British capitalism in dealing with its historic decline as an imperialist power, and the very real crisis it has been hit into by the economic choices of the Conservative Government. It was an attempt to provide ideological support for a whole series of measures aimed at cutting the welfare state and propping up the traditional family.

'Back to Basics' also represents an attempt by the Conservatives to reconcile the irreconcilable. Long before Major assumed the Tory party leadership the Conservatives had been grappling for a family policy which would reconcile its traditional rhetoric with its increasingly coherent free market ideology.

As the party of traditional values the Tories have governed over fourteen years of soaring crime, crisis in the economy and the erosion of the traditional family: as a proportion of all families, single parent families nearly doubled between 1976 and 1991, from 10 to 19%. Fewer than one in four British households now conforms to the traditional image of a married or cohabiting couple with children. 'Back to Basics' was an ill thought out attempt by the Conservatives to deal with a dilemma of their own making.

Bankruptcy

The changes wrought on British society by monetarist policies have left the economy 'technically bankrupt' according to Ken Livingstone MP. They have produced fundamental shifts in employment patterns which have undermined the traditional family values the Tories claim to support and which many in their constituency base fiercely defend.

The expansion of the service sector after the Second World War, with women as a key component of this workforce, and the erosion of Britain's manufacturing base, in which most men worked, are responsible for a sharp decrease in the male dependency rate. Since 1970 98% of all new jobs created in Britain have gone to women.

The number of women at work exceeds the number of men in 11 regions of the country. Male unemployment is at 14.1% of the workforce, the highest level since the 1930s. By contrast just 5.6% of the female workforce is unemployed, but half of women workers are in part-time jobs, often very poorly paid.

Women's entry into the labour force, and high unemployment among men, undermines the traditional family. Recent television documentaries have shown that many young women in areas of high unemployment, such as the pit valleys in Wales, and the steel towns in Northern England and the St Mellion's housing estate in Cardiff, see little use in having a young man live with them and their children.

Single mothers are now a 'normal' part of society, representing 20% of all households. The acceptance by many people that single mothers do a good job looking after their kids and that the traditional family cannot simply be glued together again is shown by the response of a police officer on St Mellion's to Redwood's political attack in July. 'We spend half our time sorting out domestic disputes on the estate, removing violent fathers. The thought of forcing absent fathers back is pie in the sky.'

But the breakdown of the traditional family under Tory policies, and in response to women's increased economic independence, has caused anxiety among some of the more progressive representatives of the ruling classes, who are afraid of a breakdown in society, as shown in the increase in crime.

Even before the outbreak of Conserva-tive hysteria aimed at single mothers, the 'Observer' had said: 'The sad truth (is) that children brought up by a lone parent are more likely to be poor, do badly at school, have a drug or drink problem and end up in jail.'
"17% of women are carers, saving the state an estimated £24 billion a year"

Cuts in health and social services have resulted in a "re-privatisation" of care back into the family. Psychiatric hospitals have been closed and long-term hospital care slashed. 6.8 million people in Britain are carers for adult relatives or friends. 17% of women are carers and the estimated savings to the state of that unpaid care is £24 billion.

Nursery provision in Britain is amongst the worst in Europe, maternity leave is not a universal right, the state pension age has just been equalised by raising women's retirement age to 65 and wages councils which protected the wages of millions of the poorest paid have been abolished.

Deregulation

"Back to Basics" was to be an ideological justification for further deregulation and cuts in the welfare state, individuals were to take the responsibility for themselves.

The attacks on single mothers and irresponsible fathers made explicit in "Back to Basics" were not new and had been the case in form of Child Support Act (CSA), introduced the previous April. At the time of its introduction, critics like Ray Marshall, ideal way to link the Conservatives twin aims of cutting social security spending and ideologically reinforcing the traditional family.

Feminist campaigners against the Act pointed out the increased risk of violence to women from their ex-partners and argued that the Act posed the risk of renewed custody battles for lesbian mothers.

They also argued that the Act was implicitly racist. Half of black families of Caribbean descent are headed by single mothers. Men of African, Asian and Caribbean descent - who because of racism are more likely to be unemployed, imprisoned or on low wages - would be most vulnerable to the Child Support Agency; and "failure to maintain" could be interpreted as grounds for deportation.

Since the Act came into operation the main opposition has come from affected men and their affected families. This partly represents the weakened state of the women's liberation movement but is also a response to the glaring injustices suffered by men on the receiving end of the Act.

A number of suicides have been linked with the Act, two in Sheffield in just one week. In one case a separated father and his two young children were found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in their car; while in the other the car had been set alight burning to death the man and children inside.

Portillo: Deficit crisis drives basics battle

The response of the Labour Party has been lamentably deficient. While there are rumblings of discontent around the CSA, there is little in the way of organised opposition. As with many Tory policies, the Labour Party has failed to offer a coherent alternative. The Labour Party has criticised the working of the agency but refused to commit itself to scrap it. This reflects a much wider retreat by Labour on the question of the family: 'For too long, the Left has let the issue of the family become the domain of the Right' argued Harriet Harman, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Her colleague Marjorie Mowlam told Labour women's conference this year that the party must have policies with a high 'family friendliness' appeal.

Age of consent

The Labour party leadership refused appeals from lesbian and gay activists to instruct MPs to vote for the amendment which would lower the age of consent for gay men to 16 resulting in its defeat. And Labour is allowing the Conservative right to make the running on 'political correctness' as witnessed by Labour controlled Hackney council launching a witch hunt against Primary School Head Jane Brown.

Education Secretary John Patten used the incident to slam 'political correctness' and teachers who 'overreach' to 'Little Black Sambo' books.

Failure to oppose the Tories on this family reflects Labour's wider inability to oppose them on the economy and dis-agreement within the Labour Party on welfare state policy. There is a growing economic consensus between Conservatives and Labour over the need to limit spending on welfare.

Refusal

Labour leader John Smith and his Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown refuse to make firm spending commitments on Labour's behalf, arguing that spending should be on the basis of what the country can afford.

They are also introducing proposals for private funding of public services in their recent policy paper 'Financing In-\ exacerbation - Promoting a Partnership between Public and Private Finance'.

"Back to Basics" has represented a further stage in the implosion facing the Tories but has yet to be taken full advantage of by the Labour or the working class.

The second year running, 1993 saw the lowest number of days lost through strikes since records began.

However, big increases in taxation and the announcement of a three year pay freeze for public sector workers, combined with the open crisis of the Tories, may yet push the masses into action.

In fighting to defend the welfare state against 'Back to Basics' broad alliances of the working class and oppressed will have to be built and women's interests pushed to the forefront.

Solidarity with women of Tuzla

'OUR LIVES are composed out of thousands of small and big tragedies. Yesterday I dropped a lot of matches in a pan of water, I cried for more than an hour from anger and despair. That is not reality."

Everyday reality for a member of the Women's Union of Tuzla (WUT) who met with members of the first International Workers Aid convoy in November last year.

Women in Bosnia have been particularly affected by the war. They have been systematically raped as part of the process of ethnic cleansing. They get lower priority food than men on the same incomes and they have primary responsibility for looking after the vulnerable and for trying to hold their communities and families together.

The Women's Union has 10,000 members and is central in organising the over 1,000 women forced into Tuzla by the war and in organising to support women. The WUT's programme and principles of the organisation are:

- Women's movement - praxis whose goal is to struggle effectively and creatively for the establishment of a world in which every woman can live to her full potential;
- The necessity of women's self-determination and independence on all levels and the need to actively promote and defend women's rights;
- Liberation of women from the domination of men, their subordination and exploitation in all social aspects, both public and private, and in the same way freedom for all women to all forms of discrimination, including religious, cultural, national and racial;
- The need for women to be equal partners in the decisions for the future of the world and for a participatory democracy that will ensure the autonomy and respect for the diversity of women, as an irreversible factor in society, that no one will ever dare to threaten';

The women's union of Tuzla, in a non-partisan, non-governmental organisation which unites the women of Tuzla without regard of nationality, belief, age, suffering or patrons.

As an organisation of volunteers, the WUT stands open for all women who are deeply committed to Bosnia Herzegovina as a sovereign state and as their native country, to Tuzla as a multination European Centre, as well as to the interests of women within their own different cultures of humanity.

Among its aims are equal rights for women, defence of women and child rights against violence within society and the family, the 'exclusive right of women to decide over abortion, family planning, the status of their wardrobe, individual and other questions concerning independence and dignity.'

As one of the women told Jenny Mans in November, 'the most urgent task is to bring our loved ones home. We don't need food. Almost nothing is coming through because there's a blockade around our city. Don't ask for natural water..."

As the Tuzla airport remains closed and the lines are under solidarity and support, the International Workers Aid is organising a Women's Appeal to help support women of Bosnia find their way to Europe and to the nearest convoy.

The women of Tuzla need solidarity and material aid. Contact International Workers Aid for more information, 12 Northolt Rd, London, SW6 OVL, Tel. 071 878 8622.
Ten years after the miners strike

Lessons learned: the hard way

By Alan Thornett

The 1984/5 miners strike evokes powerful memories. The tenacity and courage of 150,000 miners out on strike for a year. Massive confrontation and mass pickets - some up to 10,000 strong. The police trap and burning barricades at Orgreave. The 7,500 miners arrested during the strike.

40 were jailed - including two young South Africans for the Ted French for five years. Davy Jones was killed while picketing out scabs at Olterton. Thousands marched behind the coffin of Joe Green, killed on picket duty at the Ferrybridge power station. Remember the cold-class hatred of a state which took his house and estate (he was single with his own house) and refused to pay for his funeral out of it.

There was tremendous class struggle leadership by Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield and the historic Women Against Pit Closures movement which mobilised 10,000 women from the pit villages to march through London in June and represented something new and important in the class struggle in Britain.

Ten years on the picture is very different. Arthur Scargill wasn't just right. He was right in every right that now there is no longer a coal industry and only the remnants of the NUM.

Naked class hatred, the Tories' thirst for revenge for 1974, the privatisation of power generation, the dash for gas, and the rigging of the market have meant that the NUM has suffered the fastest decline of any union in history. At the time of the strike the NUM had 210,000 members in 170 pits, now the total labour force has shrunk to 10,000 in just 17 pits - and they are still being closed. Privatisation is through Parliament and private mines are already operating.

Biggest since 1926

The defeat of the strike, in the biggest confrontation between the trade union movement and the state since 1926, was a huge blow to the whole trade union movement.

The attack on the miners was preceded by the NUM's battle of Warrington (and the TUC collapse in front of the anti-union laws) and followed by other militant actions such as Wapping and the seafarers strike. But the defeat of the miners was by far the most important victory for the Tories during the 1980s.

The NUM had played a vanguard role in the modern trade union movement from the 1930s and again in the 1970s. But the smashing up of the NUM and the mining industry was inevitable even after the end of the strike - that depended on the continuing betrayals of new realists and the fate of a series of defensive actions which were to follow.

Next was the defeat of the strike itself inevitable. Far from it. In fact the strike was a potential winner. At the time of the NACODS vote to join the strike the government was actively preparing for a U-turn - not that many miners held out much hope that NACODS would stand firm. The line was only just held despite the scabbing UDM operation in Nottinghamshire - which was eventually betrayed by its Tory backers.

Arthur Scargill was the most determined national trade union leader the British trade union movement had ever produced. The strike, however, faced an unorganised state.

"What lost the strike was the treachery of new realism, the TUC and Neil Kinnock, which ensured the isolation of the strike, and the Communist Party, which in the end organised the back to work move."

From the start a serious problem - isolation from the rest of the trade union movement.

The union leaders had moved to the right since 1979 and new realism - the idea that strikes were a bad thing for Labour's election chances - was gaining an increasing hold in the movement. The Labour Party now had the 'dream ticket'.

Faced with this, the unspoken strategy of the strike from day one was the model of 1972 and 1974 - when the miners could win by their own strength alone, when the lights went out after a few weeks and the government was forced to concede.

This was a difficult road to travel. Apart from the scabbing in Notts the state had learned the lessons of the previous strikes and a repeat of Sidley Gate was not on.

The NUM's march in defence of the miners in October 1983

This time the key was an extension of the strike into other sections of the trade union movement - the opening of a second front. Mass picketing was correct and in many ways the life-blood of the strike, but it was not an adequate strategy for victory.

And such a strategy was viable. Throughout the strike repeated possibilities of it spreading presented themselves. In the first stages there were numerous opportunities for other unions to join the miners through pursuing their own wage claims with vigour.

But not a single union took such a hard line and compromise after compromise was reached. The government even intervened directly to broker a compromise settlement on rail and the NUR executive could not grab it fast enough. Some union leaders even argued that it would be a "barmatic" to be on strike at the same time as the miners.

Later, two national dock strikes over the movement of coal by unregistered labour presented the chance to break the isolation. It was the perfect issue. Both groups of workers were fighting for their jobs and their industry and Tory ministers were already making it clear that they intended to abolish the National Dock Labour Scheme.

It was in the interests of both groups to fight together (and very difficult for either to win alone) yet the dock strike was called off with no settlement just at the point that the government began to panic...

Arthur Scargill was the inspiration of the strike. He fought it until the bitter end and his defence of militant miners against media attack was exemplary: "I will never condemn brave young miners whose only crime is to defend their jobs'.

His weakness, however, was his deal with the TUC and the other union leaders - who held the key if the isolation of the strike was to be effectively broken. The funds of the South Wales Area

Scargill: fought through to the end

were sequestered just before the 1985 TUC congress and demands for solidarity action were at their strongest. The night before the Congress he agreed to the withdrawal of resolutions calling for strike action in support for the miners in favour of a disastrous policy of boycotting coal going into the power stations - a very difficult policy to make effective even with the will to do it.

These mistakes, however, did not lose the strike. What lost the strike was the treachery of new realism, the TUC and the Neil Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party which ensured the isolation of the strike. Add to this the role of the Communist Party, which in the end was the force which organised the back to work move, which was still opposed by Scargill.

Ten more years

Far from recovering from the defeat of the miners, ten more years of new realism (with the retirement of Len Murray and the advent of Norman Willis) have compounded the problem. Every chance to turn the tide has been squandered. "Stop strikes to get Labour in office" has remained the clarion call of the right-wing - yet they still have no Labour government to show for it.

The Tories recognised that the defeat of the miners was the green light for wave after wave of anti-union laws which have been introduced without a finger lifted from the TUC.

Ten years on we have seen the loss of four million trade union members, the lowest level of strikes in history and the employers pushing in massive changes in the workplace with the wholesale introduction of zero hours and zero hours and a huge army of low-paid and unprotected workers.

With the miners strike, as with so many other issues, the left have been proved to have been right. It was a watershed issue which determined the political and industrial situation for the next decade or more.

Support movement

A victory for the NUM would have meant a big rise of a Scargillite left in both the unions and the Labour Party. The possibilities of this were shown by the support movement for the miners - a real rank and file movement - and the development of many of the miners' sympathisers, for example the NUM supporters on the 1985 gay pride march. A defeat on the other hand has left the movement fighting its way back.

Though the results were worse than the left had thought, that did not mean them wrong. Those who were wrong were the new realists who have created this situation and now have no answer to the monster they have created.

The future lies not with them but with new generation of militant workers who can rebuild the movement and repair the damage which has been done. They are already there in the background. Their time will come.
Angola's bloody killing fields

by Bala Kumar

ONE THOUSAND people will die in Angola today and every day in the human tragedy which evades our television screens and therefore our awareness.

Since UNITA forces began their murderous bid for power in October 1992, an estimated 250,000 have been killed and two million displaced out of a total population of 10 million.

About two thirds of the country is controlled by UNITA, much of the human population is forced to leave and businesses and medicines have to be channelled through them.

Hospital supplies outside the capital, Luanda, are poorly equipped and stocked and increasingly people are reporting on patients on whom who lose their limits to mines planted by UNITA.

The worst reports last year from the town of Menongue that people were eating cats, dogs and mice to keep alive food either doesn't get through or is prohibited by UNITA.

The Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), loyal to the democratic and elected Government, have regained the military initiative in recent months following substantial arms purchases and a recruitment drive.

Their strategy has been to cut off UNITA's supply routes from the Zairean and Namibian borders to prevent restocking of food and arms as well as cut off finances of the South African military in supplying arms to UNITA and allowing a conduit out of Angola for illegally mined diamonds. (See S0 30)

United Nations sanctions on sale of arms and fuel to UNITA have been ineffective and Angolan solidarity activists in Britain have been demanding more severe measures, including the freezing of UNITA funds in western banks and its political isolation through closure of its offices abroad.

The swing in opinion against UNITA has forced it to negotiate a deal in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, though little progress has been made over the last three months.

Savimbi is unlikely to take control of the whole country but he also knows that the explicit matched military strengths of the two sides means a political deal will have to be struck sooner or later.

While even some Angolan cabinet ministers are resigned to giving Savimbi a field in order to stop the bloodshed, the military leadership of the FAA is against any concessions.

They believe they will soon have UNITA on the defensive and Savimbi in a weaker bargaining position.

Meanwhile in South Africa and Mozambique, where elections are due this year, politicians and people alike are scrutinising the lessons of the killing fields of Angola.

Rank and file left in dark

by Liam Mac Uaid

JOE CAHILL, one of contemoporary Republicanism's most famous names, suggested at this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis that the fulfillment of the Republican dream was 'close at hand'.

On the surface his optimism appears well founded. Gerry Adams went to America and was treated like a superstar; Sinn Fein members can now be heard on Irish television and radio after twenty years; the party's strab claims are scrutinised as closely as those of a government; and it is surging on a wave of cautious enthusiasm from the serious bourgeois press.

It may have to wait rather longer for a wave of enthusiasm. It seems to be setting the pace for the British Labour Government and the Irish bourgeoisie is tiring of it with unaccustomed deference. Things seem to be going its way.

There was an expectation before the conference, which the Republicans did nothing to discourage, that they would finally state their attitude to the Downing Street declaration.

The point for the bourgeois press was that they did not accept it. The point for anti-imperialist socialists is that they did not reject it. The Hume-Adams talks, references to the 'nationalist family', the attempts to identify themselves with the SDLP and Fianna Fail all signal the capitulation of the present Republican leadership to bourgeois nationalism.

Dividing line

A crucial dividing line has not been crossed. For Sinn Fein, Irish unity remains an immediately demand. For Albert Reynolds and John Hume it most definitely is not. Nevertheless, the political trajectory is obvious.

The Ard Fheis was a defeat for the Sinn Fein rank and file.

A strong demand in the pre-conference discussions had been for the publication of the Hume-De Clerk arms UNITA murderers financial support. UNITA's control of the oil and diamond producing areas and its involvement in ivory and timber smuggling net it an enormous income to purchase arms, lobby western governments and secure South African mercenary assistance.

So that it needs more arms: the considerable stockpile given it by the South African regime could keep the war going for another ten years.

Rural strength

Traditionally UNITA has been strongest at rural guerrilla warfare. Having encircled the countryside around a city or town it lays siege and, having worn down the defences, captures it.

The FAA are now trying to turn the tables by pursuing this strategy against UNITA-controlled towns like Huambo, the base of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi.

They have been frustrated by active collusion between the Zairian dictatorship and sectors of the South African military in supplying arms to UNITA and allowing a conduit out of Angola for illegally mined diamonds. (See S0 30)

United Nations sanctions on sale of arms and fuel to UNITA have been ineffective and Angolan solidarity activists in Britain have been demanding more severe measures, including the freezing of UNITA funds in western banks and its political isolation through closure of its offices abroad.

The swing in opinion against UNITA has forced it to negotiate a deal in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, though little progress has been made over the last three months.

Savimbi is unlikely to take control of the whole country but he also knows that the explicit matched military strengths of the two sides means a political deal will have to be struck sooner or later.

While even some Angolan cabinet ministers are resigned to giving Savimbi a field in order to stop the bloodshed, the military leadership of the FAA is against any concessions.

They believe they will soon have UNITA on the defensive and Savimbi in a weaker bargaining position.

Meanwhile in South Africa and Mozambique, where elections are due this year, politicians and people alike are scrutinising the lessons of the killing fields of Angola.

Israel soldiers block way into Jerusalem mosque

Zionist extremists get back to basics

AFTER the Hebron massacre, in which an Israeli settler murdered some 50 Palestinian worshippers in a mosque, Israeli troops shot dead dozens more in renewed clashes.

In scenes reminiscent of the early days of the Intifada, Palestinian citizens of Israel took to the streets in mass demonstrations.

Many were injured and at least two shot dead by Israeli police, the first Palestinians to die in demonstrations in the state of Israel since Land Day in 1976.

PLD leader Yasser Arafat sought minimal concessions from Israel in a desperate attempt to restore his waning popularity and the flagging credibility of the September agreement.

But Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin's red lines were clear there would be no disarming of the quarter million settlers in the occupied territories, and no dismantling of the settlements.

Rumours, expulsions, gentrificiation and ethnic cleansing remain the essence of Zionist colonisation of Palestine.

The latest events show the true nature of the agreement, in which the PLO accepted the legitimacy of Zionism and the state of Israel, and under took to collaborate in the control of the occupied territories, while receiving no concessions from Israel on the central demands raised by the Palestinian people in the Intifada.

Sinn Fein 1994 Ard Fheis keeps key document secret

Rank and file left in dark

by Liam Mac Uaid

His party has just been given its Westminster select committee, a long held ambition. It enhances the link between the British Parliament and its Irish colony. Secretary of State Mayhew is constantly saying how he would like to abdicate himself from the responsibilities of office and surrender them to local politicians.

A local assembly, son of Stormont, is the only dearest wish of both the major unionist parties and no anti-discrimination on oath will prevent these bigotry from re-living their sectarian fantasies from the old Ulster.

The history of Irish republicanism is also the history of its capitulations. The biographies of Michael Collins and De Valera are instructive reading for anyone who seriously wants to understand modern Republicanism.

Yielding to bourgeois nationalism inevitably leads to a surrender to imperialism and the only way to be watching history repeat itself.
Will it be limited democracy – or civil war?

THE ELECTIONS taking place in South Africa on the 27th and 28th April open up the risk of important political battles during the few weeks of campaigning, reports PIERRE FRANÇOIS.

Despite the accord between the National Party and the ANC the political terrain remains volatile. Of course there are some 'nostalgic' dreaming of the apartheid 'their fathers knew' who don't want even symbolic changes in the structures of power and who could derail the process.

In the middle of February, the white right-wing extremists, along with Inkatha, announced their refusal to participate in the elections.

The far-right is not the only cloud on the horizon. Danger also comes from the desire of the political and economic establishment of white South Africa to push the movement of Nelson Mandela into yet more compromises.

However, it is difficult to imagine what more concessions the ANC can make since they have capitulated on virtually everything, particularly in relation to the constitutional goals of the organisation.

Limited democracy

It is no longer a question of 'majority rule'. Whatever the outcome of the April election the NP-ANC accord means that the largest party has to include all parties which obtain more than 20% of the vote in the government.

In practice this will lead to an ANC-NP coalition government which will be in power for at least five years. Nor is it any longer a question of creating a unitary state.

The region, now called 'provinces' will have exclusive powers in a whole number of fields: notably agriculture, primary and secondary education, health, housing, local government and urban development, commerce and the police.

The central government will only have the power to lay down minimum 'standards' whilst the carrying out of them, including the important powers to raise the necessary taxes, are granted to the provinces.

The spokespeople of the NP have no worries about asserting that, in essence, their federalist vision has prevailed. The constitution, to be finalised after the April elections, will protect the power of the regions unless two thirds of the 400 MPs decide otherwise.

A 'necessary evil'

It is in this context that the 'great compromise' with the white establishment is presented as a 'necessary evil' by, among others, Joe Slovo, the historic leader of the South African Communist party and Mandela's principal adviser.

According to the Communist Party leader, the black liberation movement doesn't have the ability to overthrow the existing power structure.

Nor, according to Slovo, does it have the strength to confront this power, since a prolonged civil war could only result in leading the country into ruin.

The facts appear to support him. Since the 'liberalisation' of 1990 killings have resulted in more than 9,000 deaths, according to the Human Rights Commission.

Whilst there had been a partial decline at the beginning of 1993, since July of that year violence has increased at an even greater rate, with an average of 18 political murders per day. This violence results from the almost total inaction of the ANC in defending the populations of the townships.

The guerrillas of Umkhonto we Sizwe, who returned to the country as heroes, now find themselves confronted by their own leadership which is determined, above anything else, to demobilise and neutralise them, under the pretext of re-integrating them into 'civilian life'.

Frankenstein's monster,
South African style

The threat from the far right is not an illusion. United under the banner of the "Volkswar Volksmate" and led by the former head of the South African Army Constant Viljoen they constitute, along with the Conservative Party (a parliametary party which acts as the 'official' opposition to the NP) a considerable force.

But this force depends, in the final analysis, on the evident complicity of the security apparatus. If the army doesn't move against the ultra-right it is because inaction is, in a sense, part of the strategy of the ruling faction.

Since 1990, with the entrenchment of negotiations to determine the future of 'post-apartheid' South Africa, the NP has skillfully maneuvered to demobilise the ANC - with the full support of the white political and economic establishment. This destabilisation has largely been based on violence.

"It is no longer a question of 'majority rule'. Whatever the outcome of the April election, the largest party has to include all parties which obtain more than 20% of the vote in the government"

Whilst this violence is not carried out by 'official' forces it is only made possible, indeed is reinforced, because of complicity by the state. Now that the army is threatening to prevent the holding of elections they are getting worried.

As in the story of Frankenstein the creator is at risk of losing control of his creation - hence the apparent and potentially violent willingness of the Whites and between the government政权 on the one hand and Inkatha on the other.

The battle in Natal

Inkatha is the other piece in the game. Both the KwaZulu hierarchy, run by an iron hand, is threatening to lead 'his' province to secession unless the project endorsed by the ANC and NP is substantially amended.

The region of Natal-KwaZulu contains more than 25% of the South African population; for that reason it is the main battleground. Moreover, in Natal the violence is at its worst, with 53 per cent of murders according to the Human Rights Commission.

Inkatha can count on a by no means negligible base of support, most notably in the rural areas where traditional structures and the persistence of a hierarchical power structure (represented by 'King' Goodwill Zwelithini) combine to impose the de facto single party state of Buthelezi.

Whilst Inkatha is in a relative minority in the urban areas it has been able to strengthen itself in the last few years by taking advantage of two new factors.

Firstly, the migrant workers who originate from Natal, especially those concentrated in the great mining and industrial centers of the Transvaal, have been 'captured' to a large extent by Inkatha as a result of serious conflicts that have erupted throughout these areas since 1990.

Dumped in 'hostels' and isolated from the surrounding communities these migrants, who were already socially ostracised, have become both the casualties of the necessities of Buthelezi and the victims of attacks by young supporters of the ANC.

The conflicts in certain areas have become partly 'ethnic' in so far as massacres have created and aggravated tensions between migrant and resident, between Zulus and non-Zulus.

In certain of the worst affected townships, notably Thohoyandou (south-east of Ho- hannesburg) the conflict has taken on the air of a sinister 'ethnic cleansing'.

It is in this moment that Buthelezi is endeavouring to increase his military capabilities by trying to consolidate his political base.

Special training camps have been created in the forests of the province to form 'defence units'; several former officials of the police and South African army have taken part. If the ANC succeeds to follow the path of Jonas Savihini he could seriously destabilise the country.

But South Africa is not Angola!

The South African state, with its powerful army capable of rapid deployment into every region of the country, will not suffer the same vulnerability and could, if it wanted, eliminate all armed opposition.

To be concluded next issue
FACTS on Timor struggle

K. Govindan reviews East Timor: The Silence and the Betrayal, edited by John Pilger, in New Internationalist Magazine No 253, £1.90

ANYONE who missed the Central Treaty Organisation (CTO) memorandum and East Timor, Death of a Nation, or who was too engrossed in it to take down all the facts and figures, will appreciate this handy publication.

Guest-edited by our favourite Australian, and in the glossy and readable format that the New Internationalist has pioneered, are facts like 200,000 East Timorese were killed between 1973 and 1979 alone; that 160 babies out of every 1,000 will die there before the age of two; that there are 14 distinct languages spoken in East Timor; and that along with coffee, marabal querying provides a major export.

Entanglement

There’s a useful focus on Britain’s trade in arms with Indonesia, and the disclosure that in June 1993 British Aerospace obtained a £500 million contract for 24 Hawk aircraft – just two months after Douglas Hurd on a visit to Jakarta gave the impression of signing a 270 million loan. Could these two deals have become “entangled”, like the Pergau dam affair?

A short article traces the ascent to power of General Suharto in the 1960s coup. Having drowned a million communists, worker militants and Chinese in black and white, the regime continues the heavy-handed use of military force to press protests against the government.

If we’re however an important omission from the pamphlet: no mention is made of current attitudes among Indonesian activists, particularly the Marxism, towards the struggle in East Timor.

In Timor, the resistance led by FRETILIN continues its campaign in the rural areas and there has been an upsurge in urban non-violent protests by a new generation of youth. But these brave people cannot hope to match the mighty army of the Indonesian regime in its attempt to ensure support from Australia, Britain and the USA.

Indonesian opposition

It is vital that those workers agitating for independent unions in Java, students clamouring for political freedom on their campuses, and intellectuals keeping the wheels of Marxist socialist politics be convinced that Timorese self-determination should be taken up as part of their struggle, too. In other words, the nascent movement in Timor must use the overthrow of the military-backed regime must be convinced that they can never be a truly free people as long as they oppress another nation.

Revolution

Too PC or not too PC? That is the question

The ‘respectable’ face of sexism?

By Zoe Thomas

You can hardly turn on the television these days without hearing some politician or chat show host knocking ‘political correctness’. This anti-PC lobby, desperately campaigning to protect the privileges of white, heterosexual men, represents the respectable face of racism and sexism.

PC is accused of destroying freedom of speech, of being narrow minded and bigoted, and (the ultimate crime) of ‘spoiling our fun’. This is the freedom to tell racist and sexist jokes, to sexually harass women and the fun of deriding and dismissively generalising on the grounds of gender, race and sexuality.

The recent attack on ‘date rape’ was accompanied in the media by an attack on ‘politically correct’ ideas.

American college students were ridiculed for issuing sexual conduct charters and/or a concerted effort to place the blame for rape on the shoulders of the victims. This attack on collective action resulting from a recognition of shared experience and exploitation. But language is not irrelevant – not only can it reflect oppression;

It can play a role in upholding, perpetuating and legitimating it. How many English words are there for a promiscuous female and how many for a man? [forget many terms of abuse to put down a black person and how many for a white? Developing new terms free from the prejudices of the old, and finding ways to name our exploitation are political acts which can be used to unite people and spread common experiences of oppression. Describing the dissatisfaction of white middle class women, Betty Friedan in The Feminine Mystique (1963) talked about the ‘problem that has no name’. But, they were being harased on the grounds of gender, their gender, women campaigning for US civil rights appropriated the discourse of the movement.

Feminine Mystique (1963) talked about the ‘problem that has no name’. But, they were being harased on the grounds of gender, women campaigning for US civil rights appropriated the discourse of the movement.

JODIE GREEN considers the issues raised by Katie Roiphe’s book ‘The Morning After’.

KATIE ROIPHE has been heralded by Camille Paglia, Andrew Neil and Living Marxism as the new star of post-feminist politics. The Morning After, is seen as a stunning critique of the feminist orthodoxy on rape and the liberal consensus of political correctness.

But after all the hype Roiphe’s ‘radical thinking’ looks at today’s sexual politics doesn’t live up to expectations. In place of analysis, is a star-tired narrative, peppered by shallow college kids who have walked straight out of a film like Bret Easton Ellis and the likes.

Roiphe’s overly impressionistic snapshot of Ameri can campus politics simply reproduces traditional views about the fragility of the female body and will. Roiphe’s view of sexuality is repressing more than the use or threat of physical violence. Roiphe’s outsider view into sex, rape-crisis fem inism’s resistance traditional views about the fragility of the female body and will. Roiphe’s view of sexuality is repressing more than the use or threat of physical violence. Roiphe’s outsider view into sex, rape-crisis feminism’s resistance traditional views about the fragility of the female body and will. Roiphe’s view of sexuality is repressing more than the use or threat of physical violence. Roiphe’s outsider view into sex, rape-crisis feminism’s resistance traditional views about the fragility of the female body and will. Roiphe’s view of sexuality is repressing more than the use or threat of physical violence.

Yet in the next essay, she seems to confess that ‘real rape’ by a knife wielding stranger with ‘legs’ rape by a former friend.

This has nothing to do with the threat of violence (the aggression or otherwise of the ‘former boyfriend’ is unspecified in Roiphe’s example) and everything to do with longstanding definitions of rape based on the relationship of the attacker to the victim.

Does Roiphe really believe a former boyfriends cannot commit ‘real’ rape, investigated use or threat of physical violence? Or that it is not possible to have sexual sex with a ‘stranger’.

Of course not. But in her desire to adhere to the feminist orthodoxy, she comes close to endorsing the view that sexual crimes committed by strangers.

If personal experience of sexual violence defines rejections between men and women, and if the dominance of men over women is universal, then it follows that definitions of sexual violence must be inclusive of all ‘women’s experience.’ Roiphe correctly rejects the notion of rape as the central mechanism of women’s oppression, yet fails to give any alternative explanation. Her chief culprit seems to be the attitude of women themselves.

Roiphe accuses the rape-crisis feminists not only of damaging the woman’s.

We cannot throw all our shackles simply by the power of positive thinking.

Thinking that the rape-crisis women are being eroded by the offensive of right wing government in America.

This has inevitably reduced the power of women, divided men and women.

It is not, as Roiphe believes, that policing research.

The anti-pornography lobby and rape-crisis feminism are significant causes of the worsening position of women.

But they pose a danger.

For over ten years they have been placed at the stage of the feminist agenda, dividing and weakening the women’s movement, and pushing other issues to the sidelines.

Like Roiphe, I believe that some feminism are better than others. What we need is a mass movement which fights all attacks waged against class.

We press for the acceptance of the woman’s passive status.

We press for the acceptance of the woman’s passive status.

We press for the acceptance of the woman’s passive status.
WHERE WE STAND

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

Socialist Outlook exists to fight for a new type of working class leadership, based on the politics of class struggle and revolutionary socialism, to tackle this crisis.

The capitalist class, driven and politically united by its own crisis, has not been able to maintain profits at the expense of the workers, has been given determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal class-war Tory high command.

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

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively proclaiming a total surrender on every front, while clutching 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.

Realism is the latest form taken by the politics of retrenchment, seeking no more than improved conditions within the framework of capitalist exploitation.

Socialist Outlook rejects reformation, not because we are against fighting for reforms, but because we know that the needs of the working class — for full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy — cannot be achieved under capitalism.

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

We are a Marxist current, based not on the brute totalitarian paradoxes of state racism, nor on the same, boorish version of 'nationalism' beloved of armchair armchairism, but the revolutionary traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

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

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth — and of those living in 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 an organic world-wide.

Unlike other groupings on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be formed by proclaiming ourselves to be one. Too often this degenerates into sectarian posturing and abdication 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, of blacks, of gays or of the national demand of people in Scotland and Wales will be met by the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

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

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

If you agree with what you have seen in Socialist Outlook and want to join us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in many parts of Britain. Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

Please tell me more about Socialist Outlook

Yes, I want to become a Socialist Outlook supporter

---

Socialist Outlook 300 Club

More fun than lending us your rent

It used to be that supporters of socialist newspapers had to put their red money to help meet the printers bills. Now we'll pay you! In return for signing up to our 300 Club, you get the chance to win a big cash prize or a smart item. In February, the winner was Janet Dunn, Thomas Shephard and Ted Taylor: £300. Next month, pick up £5,000 a year for their endeavours. They are all married to sitting Tory MPs, namely John Biffen, Robert Davis, John Gummer, and the Taylors respectively. Just fancy that.

Mr Davis was yesterday appointed to Dartford and Greenwich Health Authority chairmanship. Of the other four, two are councillors and another is chair of a local political party.

I bet you can guess their motivations. Other MP’s non-exces include Lord Wade of Chorlton, joint treasurer of the Conservative Party between 1982 and 1990. And here is an update on the careers of former Tory ministers. What are Lord Barnett, the Rt Hon Patrick (now Lord) Jenkins, and Ian Grist up to, now that they no longer need to worry about the corridors of Westminster?

Lord H is chair of the Boys & Girls Trust (presidng over the closure of Gay's); Lord J is chair of the Forest of Dean Trust, embroiled in cash crisis in Walitham Forest, while Ian is chair of South Glamorgan District Health Authority. Each grandly in arrears £19,285 for a three day week.

Fingers out

"BUYING A Luxury Yacht" by Gillian Beach is a 352-page publication jam-packed with advice and experience on every aspect of superyacht purchase and ownership and includes profiles of the authorities around the world. At just £40, it is a veritable bargain.

From this invaluable volume, I learned that both Lady Diana Spencer and Princess Diana, from which Robert Maxwell went skinny-dipping for the last time, owned yachts. Confirmed by Gerard 'Guess trial' Ronson, were built at the same yard, with the detail about Princess Ilona being of Donald Trump, but apparently you don't have to be a crooked businessman to place an order.

Waste not, want not

REMEMBER David Ashley, the TUC man who slept in the same bed as a male friend during their hose in France? Viciously rejecting gutter press insinuations about his sexuality, Mr Ashley insisted that he was motivated solely by the desire to save a few pennies. Ashley's top tip:

FITF look at a tax on the last available accounts for a company, called Drimont Ltd, which lists Mr Ashley as a director and shareholder.

A further pointer that sales of over £3 million and profits of £18,593, after directors' salaries, mean Drimont's assets exceed £1.2 million, making Mr Ashley a millionaire.
What's HAPPENING

WANT YOUR event included? Send details by March 18 to What's Happening? P.O. Box 1309, London N4 2UW.

MARCH
Saturday 12
The new South Africa, Zim- babwe and the region: open forum 1pm - 4.30pm SOAS Lecture Theatre WC1 details Diane Jaeter 071 738 4495
Launch meeting of emergency line for victims of racist and fascist attacks and police harassment with Unmesh Desai, Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign and National Union of Refugees Organisations 4pm Room 8 Lambeth Town Hall Swo Joe Giltrap plays free Frank Johnson social 8-12pm Kenneth Hall Camden Irish Centre Murray Street NW1 Admission £3

Tuesday 15
Start of Operation Roadblock against the M11 link Join the national rally Bookings and action information pack phone 081 558 2538

Wednesday 16
Liberation NUJ supplement meeting 1pm - 4.30pm London

Thursday 17
Arab women speak out about their women and future 7pm Friends Meeting House 173-177 Euston Road London NW1 open event - men welcome details: Palestine Solidarity campaign 071 700 6192

Friday 18
Free Riaz and Qayyum! Human Rights for Black Prisoners picket the Home Office 10am - 2pm Queen Anne's Gate SW1

Saturday 19
National demonstration against racism in East London: call the TUC, Assemble 11am Spielfields Market off Commercial Street E1. Move off at 12 noon. Rally 2pm London

Campaign picnic 9.30am Thames Magistrates Court Bow Road

Wednesday 20
Angola Emergency Campaign Lobby of Parliament 7pm Committee room booked in the name of Bob Hughes MP details: 071 387 6771

APRIL
Tuesday 5
Demonstrate against the Child Support Act at CSA regional offices

Saturday 9
Communities of resistance against racism and fascism national public meeting 7pm SOAS Main Street WC1

Tuesday 22
Let Basant Live! International Workers' Aid public meeting 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall Brixton Demonstrate against fascist councillor Beackon! picket of Jack Dash House March Wall

Tuesday 29
Tower Hamlets 6 Defence

Campaign picnic 9.30am Thames Magistrates Court Bow Road

Wednesday 30
End the Blockade: Cuba Solidarity Campaign day-school Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1

Friday 21
Campaign Against the Arms Trade Candelight Concert 7.30pm St Martin-in-the-fields Trafford Square Tickets £12.50/E6 from 071 930 0099

Saturday 24
Mournful Angola Committee 11am - 3pm BLOF 22 The ivorys 6-8 Northampton Street Islington N1 tube: Highbury & Islington

Tuesday 26
Lobby of British Aerospace Marriott Hotel Grosvenor Square W1

Thursday 28
March to commemorate International Workers Memorial Day 12.00 Euston Station to Parliament details Construction Safety Campaign 071 735 7220

Campaign Against Hazards in London meeting 2.30pm - 6.30pm Church House Dean's Yard off Great Smith Street details 071 220 5436

Sat 30
Liberation! editorial meeting 11am Manchester

Leads TUC May Day march and rally 11.30am assembly outside the art gallery

MAY
Wednesday 11
Angola Emergency Campaign Lobby of Parliament 7pm Committee room booked in the name of Bob Hughes MP details: 071 387 6771

Sat 21
National free speech day - picket your local McDonald's details London Greenpeace 5 Cadogan Road N1 9DX

Saturday 28
Anti Nazi League Carnival Clapham Common London Noto new date

Indian jute workers take on bosses, state, corrupt unions

By Kunal Chattopadhyay, ICS, Fourth International

OVER 2,000 West Bengal workers have occupied the Kanoria Jute Mill since December 1993. The factory, at Phulbari near Calcutta, reopened under workers' control after management suspended work.

West Bengal's jute industry is remarkable for the massive profits made by the owners, the repeated, systematic and boldly illegal cheating of the workers' demands and the decades long plea of 'crisis' to increase the exploitation of workers.

The jute industry is also characterised by some of the most unions.

Every year owners cheat when it comes to depositing their share of workers' 'President Fund' (PF) social insurance payments and resort to periodic lockouts. Currently nine jute mills are closed, involving 37,000 workers. The total amount not paid into the PF accounts is over 809 million rupees (around £20 million).

The four recognised unions at the Kanoria factory had all agreed a plan for 166 job losses, a higher workload, and the financing of the company by a daily 3 rupee deduction from wages. To the workers this plan was not acceptable and it became only an added oppression as the union leaders collected union fees, lectured on the need for long-term struggle, and did nothing in practice. A year ago a majority of workers joined the Sangram Sramik Union (Militant Workers Union). In November the union called a one-day strike as management had not paid the House Rent Allowance.

Occupied

Workers occupied the factory after management threatened to suspend production, in the face of hostility from the state 'Communist' Party of India, whose Bengal daily Gomeshali called exemplary solidarity activity by people from all surrounding villages 'picknicking'. But over 50 trade unions and many established left activists, including veteran CPI leader Hiren-dranath Mukherjee, came forward in support of the occupation.

Already the occupation has made a permanent mark in the West Bengal. A High Court ruling stopping workers from producing and selling has shown the class nature of the legal system to many.

While the Kanoria struggle is in full swing, other struggles are preparing. Both moral and material support are needed from trade unions, political organisations and mass organisations worldwide.

Send contributions and solidarity messages to Secretary, Sangram Sramik Union, Sijariya, Phulbari, Nowabganj West Bengal, India or to Abhijit Roy, 69 Bijoyganga, Calcutta 700002, India.
Bosnia carve-up won’t bring peace

By Geoff Ryan

The American and German sponsored Croat-Muslim Federation is not a change in imperialist policy. It is simply a new form of partition. In some ways it is the worst solution since the emergence of Bosnian Serb control 40%. The federation will be linked to a looser confederation to Croatia.

The deal has been made possible by pressure, sweetened with promises of massive aid, on Tuzman to force him to choose between an alliance with Hranobogic or Milosevic.

John Major made it clear last week that the role of the US government should be to lean on Hranobogic to get him to make whatever concessions are needed. Berl Yeltsin is also known as an in the forces to pressure Milosevic.

Russian troops are the guarantors of partition acceptable to Serbia. Since both Tuzman and Milosevic are being offered considerary more than they could win on the battlefield they will not need too much persuading.

We are still a long way from a peaceful settlement. There is no guaranteed right for people to return to their homes. Indeed the proposed 'canteen' make such a right highly unlikely since they will be de facto ethnically based, whatever the promises in New York.

Internal battles inside all three communities are likely, as well as between nationalist forces and those defending a multi-national Bosnia. Former President of Herzegovina Mate Boban was removed by Tuzman to make this deal possible but his Herzegovinian supporters may well reject this federation with Muslims.

Moreover the fascist HOS has been in favour of maintaining a unitary Bosnian state - that the whole of Bosnia could be swallowed up by Croatia. Fears of the consequences of the deal have already been voiced by Serbs in the Croatian Krajina who believe that they will be abandoned by Milosevic.

The Croat-Muslim federation would cut off their supply routes from Morocco, while Tuzman has stated he will only allow UN forces to remain in Croatia if he is allowed control over Serb areas.

Since Serb generals continue to shell Bihac from inside the United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia any peace deal would depend on disarming them. Whether done by Tuzman or the UN it would be re-stated by the Krajina Serbs, indicating the difficulties of Milosevic's strategy of the Serbs of Croatia is under challenge.

Serbs who fought inside the Bosnian army or stayed in the cities to defend a multi-national state will now come under pressure from all sides since their position in a Croat-Muslim state is far from clear - particularly a federation linked to Croatia.

The fundamentalists minority of Muslims will obviously oppose the deal since it removes the possibility of an Islamic state in any form. But it is also far from clear that many Muslims would accept a divided Bosnia in which they would be under constant threat of annihilation by Tuzman.

The imperialists know that the imposition of 'peace' is not going to be easy. That is why General Rose is demanding more troops. But it should be under no illusions what the role of those troops will be: the partition of Bosnia by whatever means necessary.

Should newspapers take sides?

the United States, France, Australia - but our subscribers got them first.

And as a special offer for those who subscribe by direct debit, a combined subscription with International Viewpoint, costs just £24!

Subscriptions rates

For one year - 24 issues: Surface rate: Britain £17, rest of the world £22. Air mail: Australia, Japan, China £36, rest of the world £50.

For six months - 12 issues: Surface rate: Britain £9, rest of the world £12. Air mail: Australia, Japan, China £20, rest of the world £16.

Make cheques payable to Socialist Outlook Fund.

IWA Video now available

From Timex to Tuzla

This unique video of the journey of the International Workers Aid convoy - from the Timex plant in Dundee, through Europe to the besieged city of Tuzla - is a unique record of international solidarity with Bosnia.

The 45-minute film includes interviews with the activists, the confrontation with the UN in Zagreb and a host of interviews carried out in Tuzla. For your copy send a donation of £30 or more to International Workers Aid, 12-14 Thornton Street, London SW6 0BL. Tel 071 978 8622.