INSIDE: SPECIAL PULL-OUT SUPPLEMENT

Don't scrap South Africa sanctions!

Another taste of Bush's post-Gulf War order. US sanctions against South Africa are lifted, the republic is back in the Olympics, and to cap it all they are back in international cricket. These are massive victories for FW De Clerk's campaign to convince the world that South Africa is really changing.

Change there is. Petty apartheid is being done away with. But the real structure of South Africa - racial capitalism - is not being changed. The overwhelming majority of the black population are in the worst jobs or unemployed, and living in the poverty-ridden townships and 'homelands'.

 Millions of blacks live in fear as Inkatha and the security force terrorise the townships, murdering thousands. Real equality in South Africa is light years away. Even 'one person, one vote' has not been achieved.

Sanctions hurt. The labour movement must demand no further retreat. The oppressed and exploited majority in South Africa still need to support and solidarity of the working class internationally.

Yugoslavia – pp2-3 BCCI – back page Europe – Centre pages
YUGOSLAVIA is heading inexorably to war. Probably sooner than later, the drive by Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic for a 'Greater Serbia' will lead to a renewed attack on Slovenia and, especially, Croatia. What are the historical roots of this crisis? Socialist Outlook talked to MICHEL LEFEBVRE about what lies behind the Serbian drive for domination.

SO: When Tito's Communists came to power in 1945, how was the national question defined?

ML: The Communist approach to the national question was determined before and during the war—already by 1943 it was clear that the new Yugoslavia would be a federation based on national equality. In other words, on the area of Cominform, we followed Lenin. The old Yugoslavia had come into existence in 1918 through the joint efforts of political representatives of three Yugoslav nation only—Serbs, Croats, and Serbs. The idea was that Yugoslavia would ensure their common freedom from foreign domination, while allowing their individual national unification. The Communists went further and talked of national self-determination as a universal right, which should be granted also to the Macedonians, Moslems and Montenegrin serbs.

Hence the partisan war was a triple war—for liberation from foreign invasion and fascism; for the overthrow of capitalism; and for the establishment of national states of the six South Slav nations, within the framework of the Yugoslav federation.

This in practice meant limiting the power of Serbia, which had dominated pre-war Yugoslavia. In the war, the Communists appealed directly to the Serb population, arguing that they had everything to gain by Yugoslavia becoming a state of equal nationalities. This policy was translated into the federal system. The borders of the partisan command-areas followed the borders of present-day republics and provinces. It should be said that the Albanian population wished from the start to be joined with Albania. After war there were plans to create a broader Balkan federation, within which there would be an Albanian federal unit. Once this plan had fallen through, the Yugoslav government had to solve the Albanian national question within Yugoslavia.

Despite this federal structure, for the first fifteen years or so political power remained centralized. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a shift of power to the republics and provinces, resulting in the adoption of a new constitution in 1974. This constitution was revolutionary in the sense that it elevated the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina to the status of full federal members. It is this arrangement of 1974 that Milosevic and co. destroyed, starting with its forced incorporation of Kosovo and Vojvodina into Serbia.

SO: What is your assessment of Yugoslavia under Tito—was it Stalinist?

ML: Yes and no. The revolution which brought the Communists to power was a genuine, popular revolution—communist rule in Yugoslavia (or Albania) was not imposed from outside, as in other countries of eastern Europe. But at the time of the revolution the working class was weak, amounting to less than ten per cent of the total population. This meant that, in a sense, the Communist Party made the revolution on its behalf. Moreover, the party's need to build a base among the peasantry influenced also its political and cultural outlook.

On the other hand, Tito himself was a product of the Stalinated Comintern. He remained convinced that the revolutionary gains of 1941-5 could be preserved only by the party controlling all political and economic life. More generally, the authoritarian features of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later League of Communists) were enhanced by the fact that the revolution took place in war-time conditions.

SO: What lay behind the split between Moscow and Belgrade during the late 1940s?

ML: Simply that Stalin wanted to control the Yugoslav party. He wanted the same relationship with Yugoslavia, one of total subordination, which existed with other East European countries. This was a matter of life-and-death for the Yugoslav party, and also for Yugoslavia. Domination by Moscow would have meant not only direct placement of Stalin's chosen people in power, but also an end to national equality within Yugoslavia, i.e. the return of Serbia to its pre-war dominant position.

It is worth mentioning in this context Tito's special relationship with the army. The army always had a strong party organisation: over 90 per cent of the officers were party members. The army came to political prominence in the early 1970s, when it backed Tito's decision to institute a mass purge of party leaders in Croatia and Serbia, and to a lesser extent in Slovenia and Macedonia. In the re-organisation of the party structure that followed, the army gained a place on the party presidency. After Tito's death, Yugoslavia politicians had quite the same influence.

SO: How do you assess the Yugoslav experience with self-management?

ML: Yugoslavia's attempt to escape the problems of excessive economic centralisation through the introduction of self-management was also a very important social experiment. It involved tens of thousands of blue and white-collar workers in the running of their enterprises. The experiment failed for several reasons. The first reason is that one cannot have socialism, even self-managing socialism, in one country. In the 1960s, it became clear that Yugoslavia had to integrate itself more into the world economy, and this meant also accepting many of its rules. This strengthened the hand of management at the expense of the workers' councils. The second reason is that the introduction of self-management did not run in parallel with the expansion of democracy. The party continued to take all the important economic decisions.

SO: Is the form of the current crisis the drive by the Milosevic leadership for domination, and the building of a 'Greater Serbia', really a truth behind it all? Why did Yugoslavia go into crisis?

ML: There are several reasons for this, of which perhaps the most important was the growing economic crisis. Once the first phase of industrialisation had been completed (by the late 1960s), the next stage involved most of it being on-sell to the West, creating new industrial floor, which in turn meant that the necessary investment came from heavy borrowing from abroad. Yugoslavia was affected by the global debt crisis by the early 1980s. As the economy worsened, there was growing unemployment and general lowering of living standards. Also, the gap between the more and less developed parts of the country grew, intensifying the struggle over distribution of resources.

The economic problems were joined to political ones. When Tito died, in 1980, there was a political vacuum, leading to a power struggle among the federal units. As a part of this struggle, a coup took place within the Serbian Communist Party, organised by a group of generals and party-state functionaries, bringing Milosevic to power.

The Yugoslav army (i.e. its high command) decided to back Milosevic, possibly accepting any of its independence. The army did not like the introduction of the multi-party system, so it was hostile both to the reforms in the Slovene and Croatian Communist Parties and to the governments that emerged out of the multi-party elections of April 1990. In these conditions, the Communists' loss of power everywhere except Serbia and Montenegro led to a political pact between Milosevic and the Slovene and Croatian Communist parties because they favoured a re-centralised Yugoslav, partly because he was/is a Communist conservative, partly because they wanted to safeguard their material and political privileges and partly because they believed it was in their interests.

We thus witnessed a complete turn around. The original Communist project was to safeguard the unity of Yugoslavia by limiting the power of Serbia, as far as the generals and party-state functionaries were concerned, the unity of Yugoslavia could be guaranteed only by Serbia's dominance.

Today, the process of 'Serbisation' is in full swing. Non-Serb offices are being removed, any non-Serb is regarded with suspicion.

SO: What was Milosevic's strategy to destroy Yugoslavia? Is he prepared to destroy Slovenia out of the federation? And would it be irrational, given the concentration of wealth in the western part of the country?

ML: There is an impression that Serbia wants to drive Slovenia out in order to be better...
Yugoslavia: what position for socialists?

The political situation in Yugoslavia today is immensely complex. None of the major political forces at play want to resist capitalist restoration, none of them stand for democratic socialism. The failure of the Yugoslav model of 'socialism' has led to a struggle which takes the form of a battle between national groupings.

But this does not mean that socialists can be neutral in the conflicts taking place. The main feature of the situation is the drive by the Serbian leadership in Belgrade, under ex-Communist Slobodan Miloševic, to create a 'Greater Serbia' by subjugating the other nationalities.

Since he came to power in the Serbian CF in 1987 Miloševic has attempted to gain the position of the party elite by appealing to ethnic rivalries. The main target of this offensive is Croatia. Now, as Michelle Lee explains on these pages, the federal army is in a de facto alliance with Miloševic. The army's attack on Slovenia is directly in line with Miloševic's plans to dominate the whole federation.

Every day there are new clashes in the Croatian territories bordering on Serbia. Groups of 'Chetniks' - Serbian irregulars are fighting to drive Croatia out of town of mixed Serb and Croat population.

No form of socialism is likely to come out of the present conflicts. What is at stake is the right of self-determination of the Croats and Slovenes. For socialists, their right to national sovereignty, and if they want it independence, must be absolute.

The prospect of any form of confederation has been sabotaged by the intransigence of the Serbian leadership. Socialists are never neutral in the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities. The key aspect of the struggle today is the fight for Slovene and Croatian independence.

A particular responsibility now falls on the Yugoslav position inside Serbia itself. Miloševic is increasingly unpopular; in March there were mass strikes and demonstrations against him. However, unfortunately the opposition has not distanced itself from Miloševic's aggressive attitudes towards Croatia; indeed many key leaders explicitly support him on this.

The attitude of political leaders in the West, including the Labour Party, has been utterly cynical, defending the integrity of the Yugoslav federation against the rights of nationalities. While this may be changing under the pressure of public opinion, there is no doubt that their key objective is a stable political framework for the restoration of capitalism.

If the expected attack on Croatia comes during the summer the whole region could experience a devastating tragedy. There could be genocide against the Croats. The Albanian army is mobilised on the southern Yugoslav border to intervene in support of the Albanians in Kosovo, also victims of Miloševic's aggression.

The key now to any social progress in the region is the fight for Slovene and Croat independence, and the revolutionary overthrow of the Miloševic regime.
Will Kinnock's witch-hunt save Major's bacon?

HARRY SLOAN weighs up the political impasse facing John Major as the media begins speculation on a November election.

NOBODY will have been longing for Parliament's summer recess more than John Major. His months as Tory leader have been an almost unmitigated failure, with the grim wreckage of a decade of Thatcherism hanging like an albatross around his neck.

The run-up to the MPs' holidays has been littered with disasters and embarrassments—soaring unemployment and bankruptcy statistics, bank collapses, jail breaks and outrage at sky-high pay-offs to privatised industry bosses.

Final solution

Major's only light relief has been afforded by the Labour leadership embarking on a new witch-hunt as they seek the 'final solution' to the problem of Milliitan—though the Tory Party's share of votes in the Walton by-election, their lowest since World War One, was far from comforting.

Gone are those crazy halcyon days after he took over from Thatcher, in which cynical media hype about a 'change' in line and style produced a temporary, unreal Tory revival in the polls.

Gone are his giddy days of great power, the reflection of glory of the US military effort and victory. Now the dark threats of renewed US air strikes against Saddam Hussein are ever present on his horizon and the grim toll of human misery facing the masses of Iraq and Kurdistan remains as a reminder of imperialist savagery.

B almy

Long gone, even before Major took over, was the balmy heyday of ascendant Thatcherism, with the giveaway privatisations, rocketing house prices and a booming service sector diverting attention from the collapse of manufacturing industry.

Major has inherited only the hugely unpopular Poll Tax and NHS reforms, the scandals, the astronomical mortgage costs, the housing crisis, and the collapse of developers and retail chains as the recession wipes out much of this superficial 'growth'—to reveal a desperate, weak economy, now locked into the European Monetary System.

Even the victories of Thatcherism—her imposition of brutal anti-union laws and the success of her denunciation of the working class—offered little consolation to John Major.

The Tories may be able to kick around a servile TUC leadership, and management may feel stronger than ever in confronting workers on the shop floor, but the economy is in the deepest, most dangerous recession for many years.

Dashed

Hopes of an early June general election were dashed by a string of by-election defeats and dismal results in May's council elections. Since then Labour has been consistent in winning elections, though their margin has varied.

Now, like the captain of a sinking ship, Major is drifting inexorably towards a decision on when to play his last, desperate card, and drop anchor by calling an election.

Major's choice has been made harder by divisions in his own party. Thatcher may have eventually announced that she will quit at the next election, but she has spent much of the summer piling on pressure, stirring the pot of internal Tory factionalism.

Her more radical supporters—led by Nicholas Ridley—continue to harry Major's men, especially on Europe. The wounds opened up in the ousting of Thatcher continue to fester.

Failure

Not least of his problems is Major's failure to convince anyone inside or outside Tory ranks that he offers any serious threat to the leadership of a party that is so alienated from the public.

Many of the key Thatcher policies—in particular the Poll Tax and Major's nebulous, dithering 'alternative', the Council Tax, the NHS reforms, education, energy and housing policies—have created crisis situations which can only worsen as time goes on.

This is why Major and co are now gleefully weighing up their prospects if they go for a November election. They would have to trade primarily on the reverse of Labour's threadbare and politically conservative manifesto, but also on the disarray arising from Kinnock's new post-Walton witch-hunt against Milliitan.

Preview

A glance at the antics of Liverpool's Kinnockite Labour council—turning viciously against its workers and shamelessly using redundancies and privatisation to implement Tory-imposed spending cuts—offers a mini-preview of a re-elected Labour government, which would come to office pledged to capitalise policies.

Yet the bitter truth of the present situation is that the working class desperately needs to get rid of the Tories in order to rebuild its fighting strength. Twelve years of Thatcherite onslaught, of redundancies, closures and a barrage of anti-union laws, has just about extinguished the last vestiges of the class struggle.

Labour's politics of decades after decades has ground down workers' resistance, and brought a disastrous tail in the combativeness of the trade union movement.

*Strikes*

1990 figures show numbers of strikes down to the lowest for over 50 years; days lost in strikes are down to 1967 levels; and numbers of workers involved in disputes are down to less than a third of those for the 1980s.

Many of the industries—mining, docks, print and engineering—which provided the leading edge of trade union organisation have been decimated. And the destruction of much of the militant 1960s and 1970s shop stewards' movement that had been based on manufacturing industry has weakened the position of the rank and file while strengthening the increasingly right-wing officials, who have reinforced the impact of Tory anti-union laws by refusing either to challenge them or to support any action that might possibly run up against the law.

A change of government—even to elect Labour under Kinnock—would create a unique opportunity to change this situation. Despite Kinnock, a Labour government would generate mass expectations while workers' confidence would be boosted by a Tory election.

Though we should not predict strikes immediately, it is clear that Kinnock's government would quickly run into conflict with the unions over pay, jobs and many of those issues where the Tories have already created a crisis—nationally as the NHS, reviewed in crisis by Thatcher's 'market-style' reforms, and education.

As struggles emerge, Kinnock and the union leaders who support him will also find themselves at loggerheads with a mobilising union rank and file, creating fresh opportunities to build a fighting left in the trade unions.

This is why the task of ousting the Tories is central in strengthening the left and building a class struggle against Kinnock. For this reason socialists should be campaigning for a Labour government and a Labour vote not only in England, but also in Wales and Scotland, to meet the demand for national assemblies in Scotland.

The most favourable terrain for socialists is in the only big working class is mobilised in defence of its own interests, and can learn political lessons in the struggle with the class enemy and its own leadership.

Socialist policies

In this context alternative, socialist policies can find the most receptive audience, and the best chance of becoming a practical guide to action rather than inert propaganda and point-scoring against the right wing.

The point has been accepted that Kinnock's vicious new witch-hunt—which will be exploited to the full by the Tory press and mass media—could offer the Tories an unexpected chance of knocking back Labour's lead in the polls, to clinch a shock fourth term.

That's why socialists should fight the witch hunt against the witch hunt, the fight to kick out the Tories and elect a Labour government, and the fight to regroup a class struggle left wing in the unions and Labour Party must now run hand in hand.
The outcome of the Walton by-election confirmed what many of the left said on this issue - that the candidature of 'Real Labour' Lesley Mahmood was a tactical mistake. It was a mistake because the Broad Left look on Kinnockism in a by-election, under the national spotlight, where the demonstration of opposition to Kinnockite policies could only be minimised rather than maximised.

In this general, a normal by-election 6.6 per cent for a far left candidate would be considered very good. But this was not a normal by-election. It was set up, both by the Kinnockites and the Broad Left, as a test of strength inside the Liverpool working class.

Mahmood's supporters claimed they would show really mass support for their policies of resistance to cuts and redundancies, rather than for those of witchfinder general Killool. But they chose a terrain where such a demonstration was impossible.

But it was worse than that. Militant and the Broad Left, by claiming that Kinnockite policy was the cause of the council workers and all those opposing cuts and redundancies, have effectively delivered a defeat to the council workers' struggle which will weigh heavily in the Harry Rimmer cuts and redundancies leadership of the council.

In a by-election period many workers want to vote for a 'credible' candidate - in other words one from a party which has the possibility of forming the government. Many workers who hate Kinnockism and all its works vote Labour to keep out the Tories and Liberals. The Broad Left is not a nationally credible alternative.

Standing against the official Labour candidate would have made sense if there had been a real chance of winning. But despite the Militant byline, formed by a chorus from the SWP and other far left groups, there was none. If there had been, the campaign would worth having it would have shown a completely different relation of forces inside the Labour movement nationally.

In explanation to their Liverpool supporters, the Broad Left leadership held the perspective of Liverpool 'Real Labour' soon being joined by similar developments around the country. This would have meant that the time was right for a split from Labour, a new party, with a significant base in the working class. But that is absurd in the present political situation.

Walton is an area of particular strength for Militant, in the most politically radical city in Britain. 2000 odd votes in this highly special situation does not, and cannot, translate into the base for a new party to the left of Labour.

Socialist Worker explicitly draws the conclusion that the result of the election justifies the decision to stand, and is a 'proof' for the building of a new party. That new party turns out to be the SWP itself! Yet the intentions of 'Real Labour and Militant' have not changed. Lesley Mahmood claimed in a radio interview to have 'recruited' some 300 supporters during the campaign, and suggested that Walton was 'just the first time around the course' in their electoral campaigning.

By standing against Labour when the situation was far from ready for this type of challenge, the Broad Left has handed the Labour leadership witch hunters a gigantic opportunity for a purge - on a plate. Terry Fields is sure to be deselected. Socialist from all over the country who canvassed for Mahmood were photographed and will be expelled. Now the left is faced with a massive defensive struggle against this witch hunt.

The real relationship of forces is shown by the many supporters, won away from the SWP and for the Liberals. The pathetic Tory vote showed the utter rejection of what Thatcherism has done to Liverpool.

It is grotesque without saying that this vote no way share the sickening gloating of the Labour leadership and their sidekicks in Tribune that they have 'smashed' Militant. But the lessons have to be drawn from both the real tasks in defeating the attacks on the workforce and the community.

Above all it required building unity in action, as expected, as a basis for the left. That unity has to reach deep among those workers who have not yet drawn firm conclusions about Kinnockism, or the need to build an alternative party to Labour. By making that task
Amnesty for all Poll Tax prisoners!

by Nigel Fisher

THE POLL Tax is so discredited that many Tory MPs want it to be scrapped. However, this undoubted victory has been won at some huge cost to many individual non-payers and protesters.

The ruling class wish to punish those who dare defy their unjust laws. They have whereby possible, made people pay heavily for any resistance to the Poll Tax. People who were committed to prison for non-payment on a now regular basis. Also the government has handed down savage sentences to those who were arrested and dragged through the courts because they fought back against police brutalization. APT demonstrations.

In order to contain the non-payment campaign, it is vital that those victimized by the state are given the utmost solidarity. Along with the demolition of the Poll Tax be brought about, the APT should demand that there should be an amnesty for all those who are defendants or prisoners as a result of the Poll Tax. No protestor should be in prison for standing up to the Poll Tax or police attacks upon anti-Poll Tax demonstrations.

Practical steps

Every APT group should be making it their main priority to support those facing the bailiffs or imprisonment. People need both practical help and political solidarity. Practical help ranges from legal advice to fund raising for prisoners and their dependents.

Political solidarity is more important. It helps to know that there is a strong movement behind you if you are defining the state. It is also political solidarity that can stop the victimization of individuals.

The savage sentences imposed on people arrested after the Battle of Trafalgar are the result of the attacks upon them in the media by Haytonley and by the ‘leaders’ of the APT. Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan. If the APT and the Labour Movement had been quick to defend these people, they would have received completely different treatment by the state.

All the people arrested and imprisoned as a result of the APT demonstrations need the full unconditional support of the movement. The APT has challenged the Law with the non-payment campaign. Large, militant demonstrations calling for defiance of the Law are always going to be in danger of attack from the cops. The APT needs to swing its whole weight behind the Trade Square Detainees’ Campaign and the various Poll Tax prisoner support groups. It is these organizations that provide the example of how to organize solidarity for Poll Tax prisoners. It is vital that the work of these organizations is sustained over the next few years. It is a test of our principles.

The next such conference takes place on July 27, focusing on taking the struggle for abortion rights into the unions.

In the last year, there have been changes in the abortion law, drastic cuts-backs in family planning provision, the establishment of the Medical Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (SHEA). And the announcement that the abortion pill, RU486, has been approved for use in this country by the Safety of Medicines Committee. The coming conference will be looking at these issues, with a number of expert speakers as well as trade union speakers to look at the campaigns that arise from them.

The conference will also be addressed by Jolanta Palkiewicz of the Polish Anti-Abortion Association, which has been heading the legal challenge to the Abortion Act. The Polish campaign, which has been leading the legal challenge to the Abortion Act, has remained a campaigning issue.

In 1975 the Working Women’s Charter Campaign was one of the groups which founded the National Abortion Campaign (NAC). Since then, most of the major trade unions have affiliated to NAC. and a number of special conferences directed to the Labour movement have been held.

by Leonora Lloyd

SINCE the 1930s when Labour and Cooperative women first called for the legalization of abortion in this country, the campaign has remained a campaigning issue. In 1975 the Working Women’s Charter Campaign was one of the groups which founded the National Abortion Campaign (NAC). Since then, most of the major trade unions have affiliated to NAC. and a number of special conferences directed to the Labour movement have been held.

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Algeria - fundamentalists fail in bid for power

by Patrick Baker

THE BID FOR POWER launched by the fundamentalist Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria now appears derailed. Though the FIS, led by Mr. Abou al-Ballah and Abassi Madani, succeeded in its aim of toppling the Chadli regime, it has now lost most of its base. Both main leaders have been arrested and the front's apparatus smashed.

Though the fundamentalists were able to win support for gun-on-militia during the Gulf war, they have found it difficult to overcome the machine of the ruling FLN, which has had a solid grip on the vote for more than 30 years. The FIS was able to take advantage of popular discontent at falling living standards and control of the majority of local councils.

But once in power, they found themselves in no position to alter the economic status quo. In addition, the FLN's political system in Algiers meant that for any party to win a majority of deputies required a massive majority. Though the FIS won double the FLN's vote in the June 1990 elections, the FLN could still win double the number of seats if it were to be repeated in a general election.

In addition, the fundamentalists have contributed to their own problems. While the main Algerian socialist federation, USTA, called a general strike in defence of living standards, the FIS issued a statement to ignore it. But it was the fundamentalists who were ignored - the action was overwhelming support. And the FIS were discredited.

With Medail and co on the defence, prime minister Chadli decided to go for a general election on 27 June. The fundamentalists' loss of credibility was reflected when they tried, in turn, to call a general strike in protest at the economic system. Large factories were unaffiliated - only Islamic markets and town fairs were shut down.

It was in this context that the state of emergency was announced. With tension already high, police assaults on working class areas of Algiers set off an explosion. The FIS were pushed to prominence in the absence of any alternative leadership for popular discontent.

The outcome of the state of emergency appears very similar to the previous status quo, but with a new FIS flagbearer. With both main fundamentalist leaders imprisoned and imploded in legal arms imports, the FLN is seriously weakened. But there is still no workers party capable of organizing popular support in a positive direction. Building one is the task faced by Socialist Workers Party and other left organizations, recently unaligned.

Based on an interview with Chawki Salhi, a prominent FLN leader.

Mandela's pragmatism dominates ANC congress

by Charlie van Gelderen

It is too early for a definitive analysis of the national congress of the ANC in Durban. But it is clear that the 'pragmatic' line has dominated. This was acknowledged as down the congress as the one that marked the end of sanctions.

The ANC conference on July 4 that it was losing support among South Africa's blacks, threatening it's appeal to form the country's first post-apartheid government. Secretary General Alfred Nzo bemoaned the fact that the ruling National Party was gaining support from non-white communities. This appeal was repelled by Mac Maharaj. The National Party has the strategy for winning over the black community. Can we counter this with other strategies? he asked.

This was the big issue that the conference had to address. In the run-up to the congress, there had been consistent criticism of the 'leftism' of the outgoing leadership and disillusionment with the way that it was constantly overshadowed by President De Klerk. He has maintained the initiative of this bloc to be announced the "end of apartheid in February 1990.

There was also some criticism of the ANC's relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP). ANC spokesperson for the fundamentalist SACP, ANC spokesperson for the SACP's relationship with the SACP was one of several factors that led to this block in recruitment in 'other race groupings'.

But these criticisms do not appear to have led to any breach between the two organizations. Joe Slovo and other prominent SACP members were elected to the new ANC executive.

The election was expected to bring to a head the factional struggle between the 'pragmatists' associated with Thabo Mbeki and the 'radicals' under the leadership of Chris Hani. It was expected that the outcome would emerge in the election of the Deputy President, seen as the heir apparent to Nelson Mandela.

Mandela's election to the Presidency, in succession to Oliver Tambo, was endorsed unanimously. But a compromise candidate for his Deputy, avoiding any conflict, was found in veteran Albert Shabu.

Grass roots victory

The election of the new executive was a victory for the grass roots branches and regions. The ANC became identified with outstanding leadership, dominated by blacks. The new executive will be dominated by leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Broad Democratic Movement - those who continued the struggle inside the country in the teeth of the State of Emergency regulations.

The biggest cheer when the final results were announced greeted the name of "Terror" Lokotla, former number two in the UDF. During the conference he denounced Mandela from the floor for his authoritarian tendency to impose his will on the internal decision-making process. But there was big disapproval among women delegates when the proposal fell to the ANC members should be women.

Appointment among women delegates when the proposal fell to the ANC members should be women.

Perhaps surprisingly, Winnie Mandela attracted a large vote. This came mainly from the youth and more militant delegates, who admire her revolutionary ardor, whatever her faults. It was also a signal to the government - watch out, Winnie belongs to us. Hands off!

But in general the "pragmatic" course set by Nelson Mandela will continue to be followed. This is most clearly expressed in the soft line put forward on sanctions. While calling for sanctions to be maintained in the meantime, he added "We are calling for flexibility and imagination, for an approach which is realistic. These words mark a clear recognition that, for all practical purposes, sanctions are dead.

Boycotts

The ANC's agreement to the ending of the sports boycotts, which were psychologically more effective than trade sanctions, gives the green light to those - like the Tories - who want a rapid return to normal trade relations with South Africa.

George Bush and Douglas Hurd were quick to jump into this opening. Bush's statement that he was satisfied that demand made on South Africa had been met and that commercial links could be renewed will be hailed as another victory for De Klerk.

The ANC is now trapped in its own rhetoric. It has nowhere to go, except to carry on negotiations with the regime, with the initiative still firmly in De Klerk's hands.

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What kind of European unity?

By Peter Gowan

Since the fall of that Thatcher, the prolonged Tory crisis over European unity has not been resolved. The new stage of European capitalist integration poses a huge question mark over the whole of Tory political strategy. During the 1980s the Thatcher project combined the following elements: First to deliver major defeats to the labour movement, second to export large amounts of the capital gained from North Sea oil to more profitable areas abroad, and third to encourage inward investment in the US and Japan. In this framework it was quite possible to remain in the European Community (EC), while maintaining a nationalist rhetoric which was central to Conservative political ideology. Indeed, being part of the EC added inward investment, particularly in Japanese industry, which was a launch pad to penetrate European markets. The Tories could live with the single European market, but the problem became acute when it became apparent that the EC was serious about moving towards a higher form of economic and political unity. It was obvious that whole thread of the Tory party would disappear.

Tory nationalism

The dilemmas were acutely posed by Geoffrey Howe when he resigned from the Cabinet. Big sections of capitalist want to make sure Britain is not left out of Europe, and the City of London is also worried about being excluded. But the prospect of having major decisions made by new supra-state institutions in Europe strikes at the heart of Tory nationalism. It is a question of which institutions command popular loyalty – will they continue to be those of the Crown and Parliament, or European-wide institutions?

The political dimension of this is crucial. Toryism in Britain, like Gaullism in France, has always been distinguished by a strident nationalist trend. This is quite different to the German or Italian Christian Democrats, who are quite prepared to accept federalism. We should add that Thatcher and her supporters were particularly linked with sections of British capital dependent on the North American market, rather than Europe. But these sections of capital are a minority in the capitalist class, both in the CBI and the City.

Fear of ‘federalism’

While the Thatcherites are utilising the fear of ‘federalism’ to strengthen their fractional position in the Tory party, Major is really not making fundamental changes but attempting to hold the Tories together to win the next election. What are the real plans being developed for a unified capitalist Europe? It is important here to distinguish rhetoric and reality. The overall trend is towards an increasingly unified Western Europe dominated by its most powerful economic and political force – German capital. But the German ruling class wants this on its own terms – a ‘harmonisation of economics, especially monetary policy, with the harsh anti-inflationary policy of the German Bundesbank.

United capitalist Europe

No one should doubt what this means. A united capitalist Europe means devastation for huge swathes of industry, especially on the periphery of Europe, which cannot compete with the manufacturing strength of its German-dominated heartland. It would not be a Europe where suddenly all workers had the prosperity of workers in western Germany or where the Social Charter eliminates poverty. On the contrary, it would be a Europe of a very tough anti-working class regime. We would see permanent rates of unemployment much higher than the highest in Europe today like those in France and Spain.

In all the plans for European unity, it is German capitalism which will call the shots. And German capitalism will not go for new supra-national institutions which will have control of the decisive institutions, like a new European central bank. Jacques Delors’ vision of the European Commission and the European Parliament as really powerful democratic institutions is a non-starter.

The French government itself does not even support Delors. In fact, the type of European union being discussed today would even strengthen the power of the individual state apparatuses, against any form of democratic control. An increasingly united capitalist Europe will be a Europe which attempts to crush any democratic control of its institutions. It will be a harsh right-wing Europe, with real ‘political’ done behind the backs of the masses in the corridors of central economic institutions.

Labour Movement

The right-wing Europe which is in the making is not a ‘German-dominated’ Europe, but a Europe-dominated by German capital. This distinction is important because of the vital role of the German labour movement in future struggles.

Two of the crucial labour movement forces in capitalist Europe in the past 40 years have been the German and Italian unions, and their mass parties, the German Social Democrats (SPD) and the Italian Communists (PCI).

Now the Italian Communists are in full retreat and collapse. The Ochette leadership of what now calls itself the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) is collapsing rightwards at a horrendous rate, and their likely future is to be gobbling up by the right wing Social Democrats under Craxi. Of course, it is very good that the communist ‘rebond’, who have split from the PDS will have maybe 150,000 in their new party, but that is very few in comparison with the 1.75 million in the old Italian Communist Party.

The German labour movement has been an immense point of support for progressive policies like the 35-hour week, and is a major objective factor in the organisational strength of the European working class. It is nothing ‘anti-German’ in outlining the reactionary consequences of the domination of German capital.

This relates to the political development of the European workers movement. Much of social democracy has shifted to the right. But there is also a completely different appearance in the Communist and Ex-Communist parties all over Europe. Everywhere there are forces in those parties which don’t really want to collapse into social democracy or openly pro-capitalist politics. Socialists have to reach out to those forces. To that we have to break with knee-jerk Stalinist attitudes. We are in a post-Stalinist situation. To imagine that the central, or even a major task today is ‘the fight against Stalinism’ is to slog a dead horse.

Right wing

What will be the reaction of the right wing to a Europe-dominated by German capital? In Britain the Thatcherites certainly think they have a future on a nationalist anti-German basis. They have been extending their attempts to link up with the French right. The Bruges
group in the Tory party has been at meetings attended by deputies from the Front National. Chernier and the Gauvillers in France have drawn back from their enthusiastic Europhrenism, and are preparing to play the nationalist card.

What we are seeing is the possible birth of a nationalist-populist 'anti-federalist' right wing throughout Europe.

World system

How close are we to this vision of a united capitalist Europe? Despite the recent 'shocks', everything seems to have slowed down, for two reasons. First, Germany is insistent that monetary union will take place on its own terms, they have delayed monetary union from 1994 to 1997. Second, the German view is that the economic consequences in Europe of the Gulf war, which relate directly to ideas about a common European foreign, security and defence policy.

During the Gulf war and after, leading German politicians like Kohl, foreign minister Crouscher and defence minister Stoltenberg sent their clear message to Washington that on matters of high state policy limited consultation would not attempt to form a common European bloc as in the Cold War.

The core of the matter is this: will there be a common forum for developing a European foreign policy and security view which excludes the Americans? And crucially, will there be a military command structure based on Europe, outside the framework of the US-dominated NATO? For the moment at least, the Germans say no. Mitterrand says yes, but the German view prevails.

Despite the European security system being based on NATO, a joint European strike force will probably go ahead. This would be aimed primarily at supporting the United States in policing the third world.

"Despite the European security system being based on NATO, a joint European strike force will probably go ahead. This would be aimed primarily at supporting the United States in policing the third world".

Jacques Delors

First and foremost this means drastically cutting the huge unproductive drain which their vast military forces impose. But much of their political and economic power is linked to that military, and to give it up is a very big risk.

Co-operating spheres

After the Gulf war, we have to ask: are we drifting towards an 'ultra-imperialism', an arrangement between the major imperial powers in which everyone will be minimised, and the world carved up into competing spheres of influence, behind the US, Germany and Japan. These are real signs of this European, Japanese and US capital is not just competing, it is also fusing in important areas.

But for 'ultra-imperialism' to be successful, it has to forge new international political structures to police it. Here we come to the real dilemma, whose military and political authority will be imposed internationally? In Western Europe some capitalist politicians say that this new international power should be the 'European Union', not the US and the United States itself. But that has consequences; Germany and Japan would have to be permanent members of the UN Security Council, something which means

Mitterrand: struggling it out diminishing the power of Britain, France and the US itself. The Soviet Union, which backs Germany's entry into the Security Council, but the other major capitalist powers would block it.

In any case, in the Gulf war, through his rhetoric about the 'New World Order' George Bush stole the thunder of those who wanted the UN to be the focus of a new international order. It seems like a non-starter for the moment.

Socialist response

The left has to grasp that beneath all the changes taking place in Europe the cold war is still going on. By that I mean there is still a tremendous trade barrier against eastern Europe, which with the collapse of the state-nested economies is causing tremendous hardships to the peoples of eastern Europe. We saw that when the trade barriers come down, as they did partially in Hungary and Poland, then exports from those countries rise rapidly.

The West, including the EC, is carrying on a cynical operation promising aid in return for privatisation, creating the basis for the destruction of native industries like the Polish steel industry, and they take over to the most profitable sectors by Western capital.

Then there is the twin attack being prepared on the peoples of Europe. The tragedy of capitalist restoration in eastern Europe, together with the building of a 'fortress' capitalist super-state under the domination of German capital on the other.

Socialist programme

Socialists must counterpose their own programme to this, and it must be an European-wide programme. First, we must defend basic working class organisations and fight to extend them. This means the fight against redundancies and austerity, against the effects of the Single Market. It means an international fight for the 35-hour week, and the generalisation of the social gains enjoyed by the working class in western Germany.

End blockade

A united Europe potentially creates the basis for the liberation of the productive forces and their use to reduce working time, boost prosperity, develop every aspect of social services, defend the environment and create a new order of peace and equality. The working class and its organisations cannot respond with neutrality to the bosses' plans for Europe, east or west. We have to argue strongly against the continued economic blockade of eastern Europe and against the privatisation and destruction of the industries in those countries.

For such a programme to become a reality it is necessary to rebuild efforts at Europe-wide working class organisation and co-ordination. The plans for a bosses' Europe cannot be fought country-by-country.
Evolutionary theories on the rocks

What would happen if we could zoom 3.5 billion years back and play the tape of evolution again? Would life have evolved in a similar way and inevitably thrown up a self-conscious, tool-manufacturing, language-using primate species like Homo sapiens?

In all probability, no — says paleoentomologist and science writer, Stephen Jay Gould in his book, 'Wonderful Life'. SAM INMAN argues that this approach exposes the limitations of human chauvinism in relation to nature — something which marxists are often accused of being guilty of by sections of the green movement.

THE EVOLUTION of our species, like the evolution of all the other major classes and groups of species we see today, is by and large a product of contingency, of lucky breaks. This is the central argument that Gould puts in 'Wonderful Life'. It is an argument that shoots right at the heart of the popular notion that evolution is an inherently progressive and ordered process. One that lifts simple life up to more complex forms, and ultimately results in that pinnacle of evolutionary accomplishment: us.

Much of the book is devoted to looking in detail at particular bunch of fossils from a place called the Burgess Shale in British Columbia. The fossils themselves have been known about for over eighty years now. But it is in the interpretations of them that Gould writes about.

Sudden appearance

The Burgess Shale was discovered in 1909 by the then leading paleontologist and top science administrator, Charles Walcott. The reason for their importance is their age. Modern multicellular animals make a sudden and dramatic appearance in the fossil record in rocks that are some 570 million years old. This period of life is known as the 'Cambrian explosion'.

Within 100 million years — the geological wink of an eye — just about all the major groups of modern animals had evolved. The Burgess fossils come from a period that was just after this explosion, and so provide a window through which we can glimpse this most important of evolutionary events. Walcott collected and classified some 12,000 Burgess fossils in his life. Every single one of these he 'shoehorned' into modern groups. Walton assumed that each type of Burgess animal was a primitive pre-cursor to later, more advanced forms of these groups. Life was wrong.

Good science

The story of how these fossils came to be reinterpreted in a fascinating example of 'good science'. Gould suggests that 'the greatest impediment to scientific innovation is usually a conceptual lock, not a factual lack'. Yet with the Burgess fossils, Gould is merely a commentator, albeit a highly informed one. The nuts and bolts of reclassifying the animals was done by Harry Whittington from Cambridge University and two of his graduate students, Simon Conway Morris and Derek Briggs. The work started in the early 1970s and continues today. Whittington and colleagues did not set out to radically reinterpret the entire history of life. This was the outcome of their work, not the motivation. Nevertheless, radical it certainly turned out to be.

About eighty per cent of all known species on the earth today are arthropods. Despite our rather egoistic belief that mammals (and particularly human mammals) are the most successful evolutionary invention since the Big Bang, the arthropods phylum remains the largest and most ecologically diverse of all. Taxonomists (the people who classify different forms of life) have classified around one million species of arthropods. All of these fit into four major groups — the trilobites (extinct today), the crustaceans (crabs, lobsters...), the chelicerates (spiders, scorpions, mites...) and the uniramians (insects).

Squeezed in

Representatives of all four major groups of arthropods are found amongst the Burgess animals. But additional to these are a further twenty or so that can only be classified as different arthropod designs, not represented in today's fauna. Walton, however, squeezed them all into modern groups when he shouldn't have done.

On top of this, there are further twenty Burgess species which cannot even be placed in known phyla, and should, therefore, be placed in their own separate and unique phyla. The traditional view is that phyla have evolved through a process of many speciation events, that accumulate differences over time. The 'discovery' of the twenty odd unique Burgess phyla fundamentally challenges this view.

The process of evolution is often diagrammatically illustrated with trees. Evolutionary trees were introduced in the 1866 by the German biologist, Ernst Haeckel. In fact the same guy also introduced the word 'ecology'. According to the conventional view, shared by everyone from Haeckel to Walcott to many todays, evolutionary trees look like big oak trees, that branch ever upward and outward.

Lottery

What the evidence from the Burgess Shale shows is that evolution does not occur by 'slow, continuous proliferation and advance, but [current patterns of life were] set by a pronounced domination [after a rapid initial diversification of anatomical designs], probably accomplished with a strong, perhaps controlling, component of lottery.' This turns the oaks into something more like a Christmas tree, with maximum diversity at the bottom not the top of the tree.

So, what do all these Burgess 'weird and wonderfuls' have to do with marxism? In a direct sense, not a lot. But evolutionary theory is, and always has been, an intensely political subject. Because it is an historical science, it has rarely been given the same status as so called 'hard' sciences like chemistry or experimental physics. Evolutionary scientists cannot possibly even run the tape of life again to check their theories. They must trust the patterns in the historical evidence they have.

The picture that the Burgess fossils give of evolution can be quite disconcerting for traditional human chauvinists. Life was not one long march of progress towards consciousness. Nor in evolution a comfortably predictable process. Mass extinctions throughout the history of life have profoundly altered the course of evolution and should give us, as a species, a chilling reminder of the impartiality of death.

Dinosaurs

Homo sapiens is a large(ish) animal inhabiting and dominating all parts of the land surface and ecology of this planet. But so did the dinosaurs, and they lasted for a good deal longer than we have to date. The lesson of evolutionary history is quite simple. It has often been the seemingly successful animals that have disappeared in periods of rapid evolutionary change. Often brought on by rapid environmental change.

It would be a dangerous and misplaced arrogance on our part to assume it would be different for us. Of course, in no way does this mean that we are destined to extinction. Destiny, God (in all its forms), and 'Casa' have nothing to do with it. There is no morality in nature. Humans have an ace card they can play in the poker game of evolution — their capacity to consciously direct the course of their own future. That's something the dinosaurs never had.

In 'Wonderful Life', Gould takes the reader on a journey that is both exotic in its imagery and scientific in its method. You don't have to be a biologist to read, enjoy and understand it. Hopefully, after reading it, many more people will have a little more understanding of some of the most exciting and, at the same time, humbling debates in science. Marxists can learn a lot from this approach. As Gould says, of humans, 'we are a thing, an item of history, not an embodiment of general principles.'
Post-modernism – what it is and how to fight it

You’ve probably heard of post-modernism, but if you’ve tried to read any of its advocates, you’re probably none the wiser. Here SEAN TUNNEY tries to unravel its meaning, basing himself on David Harvey’s book *The Condition of Post-modernity.*

FOR THE SAKE of simplicity we can categorise ‘post-modernism’ as combining three things – a philosophical movement, a stylistic reaction and an alleged new way of organising production under capitalism (also called ‘post-Fordism’).

There is no agreed ‘orthodoxy’ of post-modernism. But what unites its key thinkers, like Baudrillard, Lyotard and Foucault, is a rejection of the ‘grand narratives’ of social thinkers like Marx. For post-modernists, history has neither meaning and no subject.

The whole project of the Enlightenment, the tradition starting with the French revolution and reaching down through Marx, is fundamentally flawed in thinking that rational social organisation can be created. For many of the post-modernists these ‘grand narratives’ lead directly to Stalinism and the Gulag.

**Intelectual reaction**

Today, a period of intellectual reaction, defending the Enlightenment tradition, what might be called ‘rationalism’, is the principal task for Marxists. Irrationalism, the tradition which comes from the German philosopher Nietzsche, has at its core the rejection of any project for building a more sane human society. Its thesis is that any theory, any history, has nothing to do with an account of the real world or changing it; on the contrary ‘discourse’ is a game, a pure intellectual construct, even just ‘conversation’.

The major post-modernists do not just convey pure irrationalism. Foucault, who wrote serious accounts of the history of sexuality, stressed the importance of the concept of ‘power’, as opposed to the Marxist ‘class’ and ‘class struggle’ for understanding history. This is the connection of a part of the post-modern tradition with some theorists of ‘new social movements’. But the connection is tenuous. Most social movement theorists, even if they reject Marxism, still see their project grounded in a revolutionary critique of society.

The irrationalism of post-modern theory is intimately linked to a rejection of the theories of truth, that all things are relative, and the social is a combination of individual, partial experiences. In this world, images and appearance are more important than the Marxists claim are ‘underlying realities’.

As can be seen, post-modern philosophers abandon any attempt at explaining the world, and regard attempts to change it as leading directly to despotism.

Why, if post-modernism is so deeply irrational, is it so influential? David Har- vey links this to changes in capitalism, and I think he is right on this. Post-modern social theories and artistic styles – those which predominated through much of this century – represent confidence in the future on the part of the bourgeoisie and the working class. Post-modernism is the pathological theory of a system incapable of confidence in the future.

What are the changes in capitalism – ‘post-Fordism’ – which post-modernism mirrors? They are the attempts, called by Harvey ‘flexible accumulation’, to transform capitalist production to deal with the long crisis which started in the early 1970s.

Work has been restructured so the full-time workforce gets smaller, and the number of workers on short term and temporary contracts has been greatly increased. In addition subcontracting by companies has increased in turn to older systems of production such as sweatshops and homeworking being reintroduced.

These features threaten the ability of the unions to organise. And, contrary to the view of some Marxism Today theorists who argue this is positive for women and black people, it is precisely these workers who are most exploited by these practices.

**Harsher exploitation**

Post-Fordism is an attempt to impose a new structure of production which is more flexible and imposes harsher forms of exploitation on the working class, while greatly increasing its insecurity. Coupled with this has been a massive redution in transport and communication costs. This has led to much more mobile international capital, and a new international division of labour.

In turn consumption has been manipulated to speed up the use of products. While a typical ‘Fordist’ product, a washing machine, had a turnover of time of around seven years, the average for post-Fordist goods, such as computer software or fashion-manipu- lated textiles, is 18 months.

Does this imply a new post-industrial era as some post-Fordists claim? Harvey says no, and I think he is right. The post-Fordist era represents a modification within the mass production, huge fac- tory, conveyor-belt capitalism which emerged in the 1920s and ’30s, and not a completely new order. Insofar as it attacks the basic job security and social security of the working class it is a mas- sive step backwards.

**Progressive?**

Post-modernist and post-Fordist theorists present the changes in capitalism as progressive. How can this be? They as- sociate the new period of capitalism as having the virtues of more social and g e o g r a p h i c a l mobility, more freedom for the in- dividual, and a bigger choice of consumer products, than the old capitalism dominated by the big fac- tory, the big bureaucracy, nationalised industries and the welfare state.

This is an individualistic (put crudely, ‘uppie’) view, if ever there was one. The new capitalism was highly liberating for young commodity brokers on 80,000 a year – but even they are in trouble. But for the mass of the working class, as opposed to uppies and salaried intellectuals, the new capitalism is a disaster. The freedom to set up your own small business (if you’ve got the capital) or choose from 2000 models of personal computers doesn’t mean a lot to most workers. Generally they put even more value on a functioning health ser- vice, lower electricity and water bills, and a secure job.

How are the ideologies of post- modernism and post-Fordism linked? Post-modernism is a useful ideological cover for justifying the phase of capitalism with all its aesthetics and ex- ploration. As Alain Callinicos explains in his Against Post-modernism, this ideology is typically popular among the new middle class intellectuals who see the new order enhancing their position.

How does this imply a new post-industrial era as some post-Fordists claim? Harvey explains that modernist styles, especially in architecture, were linked to mass production. Mass-produced post- war housing, needed to reconstruct the bomb-damaged cities, gave rise to the tower blocks and simple ‘hold downs’ – the kind of thing which Prince Charles calls ‘monomous carbooks’. Often this kind of architecture was deeply oppressive and depressing – especially for those living in working class council estates.

Post-modernist style on the other hand claims to promote the individual and the new, often making a pastiche of previous styles – so that your local Waitrose super- market often looks like a Roman Villa. But is post- modernist style really new? Martin Thomas has aptly described much post-modernist architecture as ‘moder- nism with twiddly bits’. Its claims to originality, to being a fundamental break with ‘modernism’, are as weak as the claims of post-Fordism to be a fundamental break with mass-production capitalism.

Modernism, and modernist social philosophies like Marxism, represented the tremendous growth of the produc- tive forces in capitalism in the 20th cen- tury. It also represented the ‘modern’ challenges to it – in particular the Russian revolution and the Communist movement.

Post-modernism represents not some- thing new, but modernism gone rotten.”
What's wrong with religion

By Sam Inman

AS THE LAST years of the twentieth century tick by and we get closer to the year 2000, the faint whiff of ‘millennialism’ in the air today is likely to grow stronger. For your average Christian fundamentalist, the time is rapidly approaching where the great historical battle between Good and Evil, prophesied in the Bible, is about to become reality on earth.

It is not difficult to scoff at this and other manifestations of religious fundamentalism. But we should be careful, this is no idle threat in a period of massive capitalist crisis. The rise of the Nazis in Germany was not merely a question of them brutally taking state power. It was also accompanied by a very strong ideological aspect, of which the appeal to Christian spirituality was a very important component.

Religious fundamentalism is on the rise and importantly it is becoming increasingly militantly. What then should Marxists make of religion?

Ritual

First of all it is necessary to look at what we mean by ‘religion’. Are all forms of human ritual, or even spirituality, necessarily religious? In a historical sense, no. Very early in human societies, tens of thousands of years ago, symbolic importance was attached to a great number of everyday objects and events. Food, water, fire, wood, rain, the sun, the moon, illness, birth and death were all part of the struggle for survival and often rituals existed around these things. But the symbolic rituals are not necessarily the same thing as religion. Rituals were used as part of learning the art of survival and of explaining the apparently unexplainable.

The development of religion came alongside the evolution of class societies. Spirits became promulgated to gods and goddesses, and rituals institutionalised. Religion then came to be used to ideologically maintain the domination of one individual or group in society over the rest.

Oppressed

The development of monotheistic (orthodox religions came much later on Judaism was the first, followed by Christianity and then Islam. The development of new religions has always coincided with revolts and upheavals in the societies concerned. At their inception Judaism, Christianity and Islam were all religions of the oppressed sections of those societies. All had popular leaders and prophets – Moses, Jesus and Muhammad – who dealt not only with spiritual salvation, but also with the everyday concerns of the oppressed peoples.

What all religions share in common is that first of all offer hope to people whose everyday existence is full of exploitation, oppression and despair. As the new religions became incorporated into the ideology of ruling classes, religious messengers became more and more concerned with salvation after death, rather than changes in the here and now.

These religions have constantly adapted to changing class circumstances. Christianity started off as the religion of slaves in revolt against the Roman empire. It then became the official religion of the empire itself – the Holy Roman empire. It has been used to justify slavery, feudal monarchies, and free unadulterated capitalism. Britain today is still a Christian state, which is why so many politicians are so keen to emphasise their Christian credentials.

For many, religion can be criticised on two levels. Firstly, on a philosophical level, all religion is essentially idealist. This means that explanations of the material universe are sought in supernatural causes, rather than in the material universe itself.

Religion of all kinds tell us that the answers to the problems of life are to be ultimately found with some supernatural being rather than in the here and now. The philosophical tradition of marxism, in contrast, is that of dialectical materialism, which was developed out of scientific criticism of religion.

Dialectical materialism supersedes religion in that it provides an explanation of all existence, including the development of consciousness, solely from the motion of matter itself – rather than by invoking God or spirits.

Reactionary

On a social level, religion is rather more contradictory. In most cases, the established religions act in a fundamentally reactionary way. The Anglican church seeks to maintain its current status as part and parcel of the British state.

The current Pope is arguably the most reactionary Pope for forty years. Judaic fundamentalism is the ideological core of the ultra-nationalist Zionist state of Israel. Similarly, Islamic fundamentalism provides the ideological prop for regimes in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

On the other hand, there are religious movements which consciously seek to fight imperialism. The popular liberation theology movement in Latin America is one example of this. This movement has formed through the struggles against US imperialism, where the Catholic church establishment has colluded with both the imperialists themselves, and the friends of imperialism in Latin America. Father Aris- tide, recently elected President of Haiti, is a liberation theologian, considers himself to be a Christian marxist, and has even released a rap single 'Capitalism is a Mortal Sin'.

Atheism

But is religion compatible with the struggle for socialism? The answer to this must be found in the dual character of religion. Even Lenin, whom no-one can accuse of shying away from philosophical polemic, insisted in 'Socialism and Religion' that atheism should not be part of the Party’s programme. He argued that ‘unity in the really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven.

In order to win the minds of workers, you have to win their hearts as well. That is why marxists will continue to work where necessary alongside progressive religious currents in the fight against capitalism and imperialism, while making no compromise in defending and arguing for our materialist views, and combatting all forms of bigotry and ideology. No doubt the debate will continue.

Outlook for Socialism

Crisis in the Third World

William Collins School, Charrington Rd, London NW1
Friday November 29 - Sunday 1 December

The collapse of the Eastern bloc, economic recession in the West, US militarism in the wake of the Gulf war, and the debt crisis all add up to make the less developed countries a catastrophe. Catastrophe follows on from catastrophe as poverty intensifies the effects of ‘natural disasters’. All round the world, from South Africa, to Central America and Palestine, liberation movements are under heavy pressure. Cuba is in the US gunsights.

What future, then, is there for radical change in the third world? How can the imperialist offensive be fought? These are the themes for the Third Outlook for Socialism.

Key speakers include:

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Cheques payable to ‘Outlook International’.
Best way to get Tories out

Today the main problem facing working people is somehow to find the way to get the Tories out of office. Already the mobilisation against the Poll Tax, combined with the crisis among the bourgeoisie about their future and the problems of the European community or to US imperialism, led to the fall of Thatcher.

In a General Election, we can organise the mass vote to get rid of the Tories. Let the editors in Socialist Outlook be an unnecessary concession to opportunism. Mahmood's candidates obviously cannot weaken the mood to get rid of the Tories. It is the highest expression of it so far.

It shows people wanting to get rid of the government without the Labour apparatus showing them back. Advanced workers are already taking a step further than just relying on Kinnock to defeat the Tories. Votes for Mahmood, at this particular place and time, are the best contribution to getting the Tories out.

If Mahmood were badly beaten, that would really strengthen the mood of Walthamstow for the witch hunt. If she does well, it might encourage the healthy tendencies around Militant to question its long-standing advocacy of bad practices.

We obviously cannot ask anyone in the Labour Party to put their heads on the block and invite exclusion, where there is no need. But the whole left is going to be in crisis over Wal- thamstow, and the very existence of some currents may be at stake. But how can we look the workers of Walthamstow in the face without asking them "Where were you on the day?"

Tim Gregory
London SW16

Unshackle the unions!

"Unshackle the unions" is a campaign launched by the Socialist Movement, Trade Union Committee, the Hal- dane Society Employment Committee, the Solidarity Network, Labour Party Socialists and Trade Union News. It is a campaigning priority of the Socialist Movement.

The statement below is being circulated in the labour move- ment for support from activists. It will be publicised in the media as part of the campaign.

"We demand the complete repeal of all anti-union legisla- tion and that the British Government comply with the Conventions and Principles of the United Nations Interna- tional Labour Organisation for the full restoration of trade union rights. We do not accept the criminalisation of trade union activity and the attacks on civil liberties.

We reject the argument that a trade union movement of 8 million members has no alterna- tive but to conform to bourgeois union legislation.

We support trade unions threatened by use of the laws and those who challenge the law to defend their inter- ests."

Please send statements of support, saying whether you would like your name printed or not. Submit to demons- trations to: Carolyn Sikorski, 5a Green Road, London, E15. Literature on the anti-parliamentary campaign is also available at 5ip plus SAE.

Carolyn Sikorski
London E15

Fighting the ban on "Return"

An article by Andrew Berry in the April 9 issue repeated a libel put about by Tony Greenstein, editor of the anti-Israeli magazine Return. Return was banned (in the National Union of Students) by the NUS Presi- dent without a vote. This action was endorsed by Socialist Organiser's London Unit. Thoughtless repetition of libels, without checking their facts, is bad enough. At least Socialist Outlook noted a letter from Paul McCorry cor- recting Berry.

But Socialist Outlook no 53 has a letter from Berry refusing to apologise and trying to keep the libel going in a wussily sort of way. Two Left Unity sup- porters did sign a petition calling for the banning of Return. No attempt was made by either LUC or Socialist Or- ganiser to distance themselves from the actions of the two.

The letter from the hundred or so LUC supporters at the NUS Conference refused to sign the petition. The LUC organisers told the Union of Jewish Students, organisers of the petition, that they would not back it.

Since the ban — it was Easter 1990, not hot news as Berry im- plied in his article, and maybe believed — Left Unity has been the only faction in NUS to cam- paign against the ban! LUC sup- porters Colyer raised it in the NUS executive. LUC sup- porter Mark Sandall raised it at the December 1990 NUS con- ference.

Both Left Unity and Socialist Organiser have a good record of arguing against the view, common on the student left, that we should ban anything we find repugnant or offensive.

Berry should apologise. More important, Socialist Outlook should print an editorial retrac- tion, Fos insists— even exag- gerated or unfair polemic is one thing. Direct lying about your political opponents on the left is another: it poisons the whole environment, with bad results for the health of us all, including those who put out the lies.

Jill Mountford
Socialist Organiser

Which way for Sandinistas?

When I heard that Socialist Out- look was becoming a newspaper I guessed it would be — a good magazine being sacrificed for yet another Tory 'free' paper! I must admit to having been won over. Outlook has maintained a consist- ently high standard. But being non-sectarian and open should not lead to a refusal to take a clear line on important issues.

I think Gareth Mospyn's article on the Sandinista situation is good, but it has suffered from this falling. The harsh debate in the FSU shows that the Sandinista alliance is unraveling. While the Frente held power, and maintained a mixed economy and an alliance with the peasants' bour- geoisie, the cracks could be papered over.

But now the FSU is not in power, the basic question is posed: will there be a revolutionary, loyal opposition — or will it crystallise as a revolutionary, pro-Soviet party? The signs are not promising. Not just Sergio Ramirez, but the Ortega brothers ap- pear to be taking what is essentially a line for being a 'loyal' Sergio Ramirez, but the Ortega brothers appear to be taking what is essentially a line for being a 'loyal' Sergio Ramirez, but the Ortega brothers appear to be taking what is essentially a line for being a 'loyal'

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Jill Mountford
Socialist Organiser

National Abortion Campaign

Reproductive Rights

in the 1990s

CONFERENCE

Saturday 27 July 1991
10am — 4.30pm
WESLEY HOUSE, 4 WILD COURT, LONDON, WC2B 5AU.
NR Holborn Tube
GOOD ACCESS

- Impact of NHS reforms on abortion provision
- The future of contraceptive services and the new act
- Politics and Germany and the new act
- Joanna Redpath, Polly Morland
- Dr David Balfour, Polly Morland
- Jo with Richard Mason, Maureen O'Mara (NUPE), Ann Robertson (NCTU), Flo Wardle (MSF), Alison Hadley (Brook), Moira Brooks (PAS), Kathleen Frith (BHA), Tina Kaufmann (BPAS), Jolanta Flakus (Polish Women's Association)

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Beat back the right – fight the witch-hunt!

by Pete Firmin

The witch-hunt in the Labour Party will reach a new intensity over the next few months, not simply due to the leadership’s campaign to expel everyone they can vaguely associate with Lesley Mahwood’s candidacy in Walton, but also because various inquiries are reaching their conclusions.

A report will be going to the organisation sub-committee on July 15th aimed at the 13 suspended Lambeth councillors. The 13 were attacked for opposing the Gulf War and the use of ballots against Poll Tax non-payers. Two other Party members were also targeted for supporting the anti-Poll Tax Federation.

Now the case is to be referred to the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) on the grounds of ‘a sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party’. A similar report is likely on the six Brighton councillors suspended for their opposition to the Poll Tax and the CLP suspended for supporting them.

Of the 13 members of the Labour Party in Tower Hamlets referred to the NCC, accused of being supporters of Militant, seven were recently expelled (the other six cases are still to be heard). In Sheffield Central CLP, where a previous attempt to move against a Socialist Organiser seller was knocked back, a new proposal to investigate the presence of Socialist Organiser in the constituency was passed in the first five minutes of a General Committee meeting packed by the right for that purpose.

If the right have not exactly pulled their punches so far, the Walton by-election has them nothing at the mouth. The assistant regional organiser cancelled a ward meeting in Newham North-West on the grounds that ‘it is intended to build a discussion under item 5 on ‘the renewed struggle for socialism in Liverpool’. In the light of this I must instruct you to cancel the meeting on the matter can be investigated’.

Besides using secret police methods to gather information against the left and moves to remove Terry Fields MT as the endorsed candidate for Broad Green, the right will attempt to tar the whole left with the brush of Walton in their usual claim that we are ‘all the same’. Disagreement with the Liverpool pool Broad Left over standing Mahwood will be no protection.

The Left needs to build a single campaign in defence of all those being witch-hunted, drawing in those who will defend our right to fight for our politics and organise around them even though they disagree with them. The issue needs to be taken consistently into the movement at all levels, particularly the unions. Little work against the witch-hunt has been done in the unions so far, but they provide the bulwark of Kinock’s support.

In particular, individuals and sections of the Party should be encouraged to sponsor ‘Campaign against the witch-hunt’, set up recently from a meeting with representatives from all the main areas of the witch-hunt. The Campaign is holding a conference on September 21st in Manchester and every effort should be made between now and then to ensure that this provides an effective springboard for serious defence of activists, something missing for many years.

Bulletins with model resolutions and information available from address below. ‘Campaign against the Witch-hunt’ can be contacted at CAC 108 Windsor Road, London N7.

Kurds arrested after protest at Turkish massacre

FIFTY-TWO Kurdish demonstrators were arrested last Friday after occupying the Turkish embassy in London in protest against the massacre of some 20 Kurdish people by the Turkish army.

The London demonstration was one of several protests across Europe on the same day. In Holland there were also clashes with the Dutch police outside the Turkish consulate in Deventer. In Brussels, around 50 Kurdish activists occupied the offices of Amnesty International.

The massacre took place in Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey on 10 July. Some 30,000 people had gathered in the town to attend the funeral of Vedat Aydin, a Kurdish leader who had been murdered six days earlier by the Turkish state’s death squads. Around 20 people were killed and over 200 injured when the Turkish army opened fire on the crowd. Over 500 people were arrested, including 8 foreign journalists. Diyarbakir is less than 500 miles away from where Bush’s ‘rapid Reaction Force’ has been deployed.

All of those arrested in London were released on bail after being charged with criminal damage. They will be appearing in court in the next few weeks. Meanwhile the protests continue against the actions of the Turkish state. Around 100 Kurdish activists have been on hunger strike outside Westminster Cathedral. A demonstration is planned in the next couple of weeks. For further information contact: Kurdish Information Centre on 011 880 1759.

Rail workers demand action for union rights

by an RMT conference delegate

In a series of overwhelming defeats for the union leadership, delegates to the main rail workers’ union (RMT) conference voted time and again for action in defence of their union rights.

The mood of the conference, and the votes taken, indicated that across the political spectrum rail workers understood that only industrial action will halt the management offensive. On receiving his retirement gift, Assistant Secretary Andy Dods commented ‘a flak jacket would have been more apt than a watch’.

Delegates voted for action around two key questions: the replacement of collective negotiating rights with individual contracts; and the ‘restructuring’ of the industry. It was clearly understood that the only possibility of rolling back this offensive was to achieve the unity of all grades of railworkers, as in the 1989 strikes.

But on pay, attempts by the white lie negotiators down to a specific sum failed. The conference agreed to campaign for a ‘substantial defeat’ thus leaving union negotiators a free hand.

Delegates reluctantly recognised that the federation between the RMT and ASLEF, the drivers’ union, had collapsed.

General Secretary Jimmy Knapp pleased for a continuation of the agreement, but scored just two votes. The possibility of any move towards a single union for railworkers unfortunately lies remote. But this is a fight that must go on, based on the recognition of the common interests of all railworkers.

Thus the key issue coming out of the conference is how to pressure the union leadership to carry out its mandate for industrial action. The 1990 conference agreed a resolution committing the union to uniting all grades of workers, avoiding the possibility of British Rail management picking sections off, one by one.

This was simply ignored by the RMT leadership. This must not be allowed to happen again.
The French contingent call for cancellation of the Third world debt. More than 1,500 demonstrators protested outside the G7 Summit, making the front page of 'The Independent on Sunday'.

TGWU gives Kinnoch an easy ride

THIS YEAR’S Transport and General Workers Union biennial conference was chiefly characterised by complete absence of controversy. Executive manoeuvres ensured that any debate that might produce something vaguely embarrassing was quietly dropped from the agenda.

As predicted, though new General Secretary Bill Morris attracted spokes out against income policy, the leadership managed to get the Labour leaders off the hook with a pledge on the question of anti-union laws, recommending support for two contradictory policies.

Marchers at Lesbian and Gay Pride 1991, the twentieth anniversary of the first Pride festival in Britain. Organisers claimed it drew more than 40,000 to the demonstration and over 55,000 to the festival — easily the largest ever.

Right wing sacks NUJ General Secretary

THE SACKING of the General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Steve Turner, by a narrow 10 votes to 9 on the union’s executive, is not just a surprise move but comes at the worst possible time for the union.

Contrary to the reports in Monday’s Daily Mirror the move came not from the left on the executive but from the right-wing. Turner is no friend of the left but the right-wing were desperate to get rid of him because of his opposition to mergers with other print and media unions.

It was this issue that led to Turner’s sacking, over the question of him floating union policy on merger.

The union is now set to enter a long and expensive period of battles in the courts as Turner attempts to get the decision overturned.

This will all serve as a bitter blow to many of the industrial disputes that NUJ members are involved in around the country, with a union already in financial crisis.

Employers will no doubt use this as an opportunity to kick media workers when they’re down.

However, the worst of all worlds is to be found in the misguided campaign supported by Socialist Workers’ Paul Foot for Turner’s reinstatement pending a Special Delegates Meeting of the NUJ. This is a formula for endlessly protracted internal rows at a time when unity is needed.

NEW EVIDENCE from former NUJ lawyers has shown that at least one of the so-called confessions of the Tottenham Three — that of Winston Silcott, and they have been tampered with. The families of the three men have demanded their immediate release.

Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Brathwaite were all convicted of the murder of PC Blakelock during the 1985 Broadwater Farm riots. They were convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated confessions, which were subsequently retracted. The media conducted a vicious racist campaign against the three, and all were sentenced to life imprisonment.

This latest evidence, which Silcott’s lawyers have submitted to the Home Secretary along with the demand for an immediate enquiry, uses the same forensic tests that led to the release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. New evidence is already being considered for Mark Brathwaite’s case and Engin Raghip has already been granted an appeal.

The shame that resulted from the Maguire Sevens’ appeal showed that the courts cannot be relied on to overturn miscarriages of justice. Support for the immediate release of the Tottenham Three must be won in the Labour Party and the unions, along with support for all other miscarriages of justice.
Lessons of BCCI collapse...

Banks means fraud!

The collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) will rob tens of thousands of their life savings and livelihood. Local authorities are losing over £100m of poll tax money. As in previous giant banking frauds, most notoriously Bernie Cornfield's Investors Overseas Services (IOS) in the 1970s, the rich and famous are deeply involved — Lord Callaghan, Tony MP's Julian Amery and Julian Ridsdale and former US President Jimmy Carter were all friends of the bank's owner, Agha Hassan Abedi. Fraud is endemic to the operations of finance capital — for the simple reason that finance capital, by definition, is based on usury and fraud. The distinction between 'respectable' banking operations and fraudulent ones is impossible to draw.

Most leading international banks are go to great lengths to get despite of 'flight capital' — hot money. In 1966 the US giant Chase Manhattan became the first of many US banks to go searching for hot money — rather than let it all go to the Swiss gnomes. The money comes from drug barons, corrupt government officials and the tax-evasive rich worldwide. Fraud is at the heart of the capitalist system. BCCI got caught in 1988 laundering drug money, especially from Panamanian dictator General Noriega. Their crime was serious indeed — to get caught. While the IMF and the World Bank impose harsh austerity on the world's debtor nations, unable to pay huge interest rates, there is enough cash to cover withdrawals, any bank can stay afloat, using the money from millions of deposits to for dodgy deals at high interest rates.

Legality or illegality is not the point. The point is that the poor pay and the rich make more profits. If you've got a £100 overdraft you can expect hassle. But a £100m of drugs money will get you nothing but respect and co-operation.

Bush, Major — hands off Iraq!

THE USA AND BRITAIN have launched a new round of sabre rattling against Iraq, threatening further bombing raids. Their excuse is the claim that Saddam has not destroyed Iraqi nuclear installations — a condition of the Gulf War ' ceasefire' — but, sanctions should not be taken in by this excuse. Though no-one welcomes Saddam's nuclear programme, this is just convenient whitewash for the Bush administration.

The USA has always been the main guilty party in terms of nuclear weapons proliferation. It has mad absolutely no attempt to stop the development of nuclear weapons in a whole string of brutal regimes, from South Africa to Israel. The real aim of George Bush and John Major is to safeguard their domination over the Middle East. The establishment of a 'Rapid Deployment Force' of Western troops in Turkey will do nothing to make the Middle East a more peaceful area. It will be a prop for those dictators — like the Kuwait Emir or King Faud of Saudi Arabia — who support Bush's 'World Order'.

As far as the threat of a new round of carpet bombing of Iraq, this will just deepen the misery of the Iraqi people, already suffering from poverty and disease in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Bush's priorities were made quite clear in the UN decision of July 11 — where Iraq was once again denied permission to use its oil revenues to buy medical aid. Socialists should campaign in the Labour party and the unions — Hands off Iraq! Western troops out of Turkey!