

Socialist OUTLOOK

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Council cash squeeze sparks mass protests



Stop Labour making Tory

cuts!

**Unions must
fight for jobs
and services**

TORY cuts imposed on council budgets have triggered an angry fightback throughout the country.

In NEWCASTLE, 6,000 council workers and 2,000 teachers staged a 24-hour strike on February 1 in protest at a £20m cuts package. 12,000 marched through the city.

Thousands have also been on the streets in demonstrations and lobbies in TAUNTON, OXFORD, BIRMINGHAM, COVENTRY and other towns and cities, as the scale of the cuts in education, social services, fire and other key council services hits home.

But what are Labour councillors doing? With a few honourable exceptions, instead of leading this popular revolt against Tory policies, many have been actually drawing up packages of cuts.

The old argument that Labour's "caring" cuts are less painful than Tory cuts has been wheeled out again, but with less credibility than ever.

The timid councillors doing the Tories' dirty work reflect the wretched right wing politics of Tony Blair's front bench. Instead of leading the opposition they are leading the retreat.

It has been left to the unions to express the growing tide of anger, as they have in Newcastle. They must demand that Labour councillors vote and campaign against the cuts; that Labour councils defy Tory spending limits; and that the party leadership commit a Labour government to reverse the Tory cuts.

Assembly unites anti-racists

By Terry Conway

A SMALL but important step forward was taken by the anti-racist movement at the National Assembly Against Racism which took place on February 4.

Around 700 people at the conference (which took place in plenary sessions and did not take resolutions) heard a host of speakers.

These included Labour MPs Gordon, Shore, Grant, Abbot, Cohen and Livingstone, MEP Pauline Green and TUC leader John Monks, who said that the TUC would shortly be calling another march against racism, this time in the North.

Of the MPs, only Livingstone called for the repeal of all immigration laws, and none attacked the Labour leadership's bi-partisanship on these questions.

There were speakers from organisations such as the Asian Chamber of Commerce and the Churches Commission for Racial Justice.

But the tenor of the day was set by the moving testimonies from those at the sharp end of racist policing; those campaigning around deaths in custody and those raising the failure of the police to pursue people involved in brutal racist attacks.

Anti-deportation campaigns were also given a voice, and the testimony of Ivory Coast activist and former detainee at the Campsfield immigration prison, Francis Dickson-Braoua, who is due to be deported on February 5, was particularly poignant.



Anti-racist struggle needs black leadership

The lessons of Auschwitz were on the lips of many, and a refreshing number put forward a class analysis of the rise of fascism. Dave Landau of the Jewish Socialist Group raised the lessons of Cable Street, while Ken Livingstone argued that divisions on the German left aided Hitler's rise to power.

Charter

The conference saw the launch of an anti-racist charter for the new millennium, drafted by Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee (THARC), which will be the focus of a recall conference.

While the Assembly did not adopt or formally consider this document, it was the focus for many contributions from the platform and in the limited session for speakers from the floor.

The need to build unity across the different sections of the black community – African, Caribbean and Asian – and for black leadership of the movement was a key theme for many.

There were some attempts to draw lessons from the split in the Anti-Racist Alliance, through warning against self-proclaimed leaders, and recognising the importance of giving a voice to those like the family campaigns who are actually confronting racism in practice.

Black nationalism and separatism were fairly muted, and the need to win the labour movement to the anti-racist struggle was given prominence.

Many of those who argued for legislation outlawing racial harassment, such as Harry Cohen MP, at the same time pointed out that one could not

pointed out that one could not rely on the law and supported the right to self-defence.

Azim Hadjee from NUCPS, while welcoming the concept of a charter, said that his organisation was not convinced that creating a new offence was the way forward.

A key strand of opinion, most clearly motivated from the platform by the Newham Monitoring Project, argued that the existing charter was too detailed and what was needed was a series of much more limited principles.

He cited No Platform, Self-Defence, and the necessity to confront racist ideas and practice in what ever context they occurred, as vital to this.

Socialist Outlook supporters were heartened by the day's proceedings. We have long argued for unity in the anti-racist/anti-fascist movement and believe this task is becoming daily more urgent as the racists grow in confidence.

Dangers

The present charter rests too much on reliance on the state to be an adequate vehicle for this process, but we are aware of the dangers of those on the far left who want to make agreement with every dot and comma of their ideas a precondition for action.

We will be participating in the forthcoming discussions around the charter.

While we argue for the most extensive and democratic debate, we will also be working locally and nationally to promote unity in action against the rise of racism and fascism.

South Wales unites against racism

By Ed George

2,000 people braved torrential rain in Cardiff on January 28 to demonstrate against racism in South Wales.

The march was led by the family of Mohan Singh Kullar who died in December after being found in a pool of blood outside his shop in Neath. Three men have been charged with his murder.

The march was one of the biggest ever mobilisations against racism in Wales.

This kind of unity in action against racism is needed now more than ever. Although Mohan's death is the first racist murder in recent times, it did occur in a climate of increasingly well-organised activity by racists.

The South Wales valleys now experience some of the worst housing, lowest wages and highest unemployment anywhere in Britain. This is the breeding ground of racism.

Wales ARA has monitored a dramatic rise in the number of racist attacks across South Wales. There have also been a number of physical attacks and death threats made against leading anti-racist activists in Cardiff.

We must now build upon the unity achieved in the demonstration and put pressure on the Wales Labour Party and TUC to mobilise the greatest numbers against racism and fascism in Wales.

This will send a clear message – what happened to Mohan Kullar must never be allowed to happen again.

ANTI-RACISM

Campsfield on Sea?

HASLAR prison in Gosport is one of several new 'detention centres' for asylum seekers, the best known of which is at Campsfield, Oxfordshire.

It is being used to hold more than 100 migrants - mainly refugees fleeing brutal regimes. None of these people have committed crimes, yet they are imprisoned without trial, with very little access to outside support.

Saturday 28 January saw the campaign to free the Haslar detainees hold its first public demonstration. Portsmouth Trades Council has set up the campaign in order to fight this disgrace.

Last week the Home Office obtained an exclusion order allowing the police to herd protestors onto a small piece of grass, some distance from the prison entrance. This scene epitomises what the racist laws of the new 'Fortress Europe' are all about.

More Arabs face police harassment

By Robert Race

In apparent coordination with Israeli intelligence, the British authorities have arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act several Palestinians who have lived for many years in London.

Although most have been released without charge, two – Nadia Zekra and Jawad Botmeh – have been charged with conspiracy to cause explosions. The evidence presented against them is entirely circumstantial.

Police continue to harass Palestinians living in London, many of whom have been interrogated about the explosions, and about their political views.

Police have also contacted

employers seeking information about Palestinian workers. This harassment has been supported by the racism of the gutter press towards Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Muslims.

There have been many previous attacks on the rights of Arabs in Britain.

During the 1991 Gulf War, dozens of Palestinians and Iraqis were held in prison and threatened with deportation. Algerian refugees are among the scores of alleged 'illegal immigrants' held at Campsfield and other detention centres, while dissidents from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are currently threatened with deportation after pressure on the British government from these regimes.

In response to this harassment, a new campaign has been established. Called *Action for*

the Rights of Arabs in Britain, it aims to oppose and publicise the criminalisation of Arabs, to support the victims of such victimisation and their families, and to ensure their freedom of speech.

It plans to issue a Rights Guide in Arabic and English, to expose the use of immigration and security laws against political refugees, and to organise a 'Hotline' of lawyers who will offer support.

Members of the campaign will picket Bow Street Magistrates Court at the next remand hearing for Jawad and Nadia - 10.30 am, Thursday 16 February. Further information from Action for the Rights of Arabs in Britain, 25 Horsell Road, London N5.

NO PLATFORM FOR FINI!

Protest against visit to London of Italian fascist leader Gianfranco Fini

WEDS FEB 15
4.30pm
Chatham House
St James Square,
London SW1

Blair's blast from the past

THE CHAMPAGNE corks were clearly popping in the offices of the *Observer* and the *Guardian* after Tony Blair's latest keynote speech in his campaign to scrap Clause IV of Labour's constitution.

Under the euphoric and completely misleading headline 'Blair puts faith in clear-cut socialism', the *Observer* (January 29) welcomed him aboard as a fully committed liberal who has publicly jettisoned any pretence of socialist politics.

Barely able to contain his enthusiasm, political editor Anthony Bevens drooled over every weasel word, declaring that:

"Tony Blair yesterday offered his party a crystallised version of socialist values ..."

Of course on closer examination the "personal statement of faith that could yet form the basis for a revised Clause Four" proves to be a forthright renunciation of any aspiration to remove and replace capitalism now or even in the indefinite future.

Anachronism

Clause IV, argued Blair means the "anachronism of a command economy, common ownership with no boundaries."

"Not a mixed economy of public and private sector. But common ownership of industry, retail and finance. Now that just does not make sense – either on the grounds of socialist principle or economic reality."

So in the name of 'socialist principle', Blair insists on the need to retain not only capitalism (politely termed the 'mixed economy') – but also *capitalists*:

"We believe in success. We believe in enterprise. A just society cannot exist without its public servants and private entrepreneurs."

Poor Tony cannot imagine a 'just society' without its Robert Maxwells, its Rupert Murdochs, its Cedric Browns and other such pillars of 'social justice'.

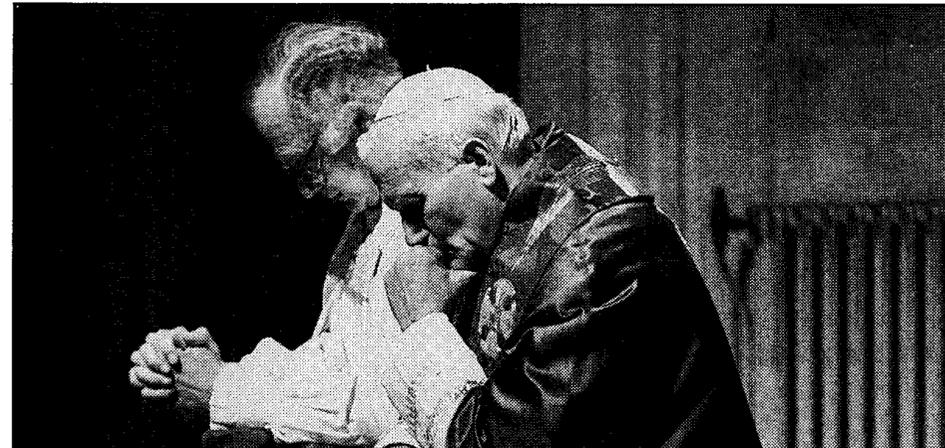
Of course an *unjust* society also needs exactly the same personnel: Blair gives no hint as to how he imagines their embarrassing excesses could be restrained. His vision is of a fantasy world in which the lion lies down with the lamb, and capitalism is somehow per-

sueded to act not for profit but in the public interest:

"We need both dynamic markets *and* strong public services; and both public and private sectors should be properly responsible to the public good."

What is the 'public good'? If it is different from healthy profits, who is to impose it on Blair's cherished entrepreneurs? Canute-like, Blair appears to imagine he can stem the tide of capitalist profit-seeking.

Missing completely from Blair's blinkered world view is any understanding that the exploitation of labour is central to the drive for profit. His idea of reform is restricted to making capitalism more democratic.



The French revolution struck a devastating blow against clericalism and obscurantism

Relying again and again on the idealistic notion of 'social justice' within a capitalist society, Blair insists that it represents a 'left of centre view' "That a nation must be governed not for a small elite, but for the broad majority of people."

But when the small elite own the vast majority of the wealth and means of production, retail and finance, the reality is that they will continue to call the shots over the 'broad majority' who are forced to work for the means of subsistence.

Property relations

The exploitation of workers under capitalism is not enshrined in explicit laws which declare them unequal, but in the economic system, the property relations of capitalist society.

For Labour to renounce any intention to confront this root of exploitation would be to deprive millions of the hope that eventually the capitalist system would be replaced by something better.

Blair has of course cynically retained the word 'socialism',



Timid echo of the classical bourgeois democratic demands

even while he strips it of any meaningful content. His aims and values are quite explicitly restricted to those of liberal (bourgeois) democracy.

His rallying call is the idealistic notion of 'social justice' within a capitalist 'mixed economy'. It is hard to see this as a slogan for mass mobilisation. "What do we want?" "A mixed economy with social justice!" "When do we want it?" "As soon as the entrepreneurs agree!"

His speech argues that social-

then.

Far from looking forward to the next century, Blair's minimalistic political aspirations are a pathetic, timid echo of the democratic demands which fuelled the great bourgeois revolutions – and which have led not to socialism but to *capitalist* states and governments.

While Blair invokes 200-year old slogans in his quest to ditch any call for nationalisation, we should recall that one of the early blows struck by the French revolution in 1789 was

There is no collective social expression of the needs of both classes.

The property and interests of the wealthy are protected by the state, which is a *capitalist* state, its laws, its police and armed forces, its judiciary, its civil service and its machinery of government.

In case Tony Blair hasn't noticed, far from sharing any common 'society', the interests of the exploited, the working class, are counterposed to those of the capitalists who exploit them. They will always be counterposed.

The trade unions and Labour Party were set up as part of the fight to challenge that exploitation. Clause IV, for all its limitations, represents the aspiration for a fundamental change of system, an aspiration to genuine socialist values. This is why Blair is so opposed to it.

Preemptive betrayal

In seeking to slam the door on this hope of something better, Tony Blair is breaking new ground in only one respect: instead of seeking election on radical policies and then betraying later, he seeks to get the betrayal over *before* the election, and run for office offering nothing more as a platform than the fact that he is not John Major.

Almost 100 years ago, Rosa Luxemburg, leading revolutionary in the German social democratic party, fought the ideas of an early Tony Blair. Her words ring terribly true today:

"The final goal of socialism constitutes the only decisive factor distinguishing the social-democratic movement from bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois radicalism, the only factor transforming the entire labour movement from a vain effort to repair the capitalist order into a class struggle against this order, for the suppression of this order."

For genuine socialists in today's unions and in the Labour Party the fight for socialist politics begins with the battle to defend Clause IV, but must lead on from that to the development of a fighting programme going well beyond the illusory quest for 'social justice' under capitalism.

the *nationalisation* of church property!

The new, rising capitalist class which derived the principal benefits of the new regime are today the enemies of any extension of democracy. They saw the end of absolutism simply as a means to strengthen their power and enrich themselves.

We now see their system in world-wide crisis and decay. Unemployment, poverty, brutal exploitation, mass starvation, environmental destruction, racism and a succession of vicious wars spell out the bankruptcy of a system which produces only for profit and in which the market is the new absolute ruler.

'Social justice'

Tony Blair tries to persuade us that the system can be tamed, planned, and redirected to deliver 'social justice'. Socialism, he insists, is no more than 'a belief about society'.

This concept of 'society' is an empty abstraction, an illusion. We live in a *class* society. That's what capitalism means.

Job-seekers Allowance: wage-cutters' charter

By Terry Smith

DRACONIAN new elements of the Tory Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) are emerging each week as Peter Lilley's moves to scrap the dole grinds its way through Parliament.

Not only will tens of thousands of unemployed be immediately denied benefit under the new scheme, but thousands more each month would be ruled ineligible under brutal new restrictions.

Claimants will be forced to

enrol in a laughably-named 'Jobsearch Plan', in which they declare the lowest wage for which they would be willing to work.

This opens up a Dutch auction in which cheapskate employers looking to push down wages take their pick of the applicants with the lowest expectations.

But it also offers another pretext on which claimants who declare more sensible aspirations can be denied benefit. Those asking for too high a wage will certainly be deemed as not genuinely seeking work.

To make matters worse, the

Jobsearch Plan would also require an unemployed person to be able to work at just 24 hours notice - in a new step towards to complete casualisation of labour.

Disqualified

Failure to meet this deadline - even if this is because they cannot find care for children or elderly dependents at home - would result in the claimant being disqualified from Jobseekers Allowance.

Stringent conditions will also be imposed on the number of times claimants are forced to ap-

proach local employers, scour newspaper ads and visit local Job Centres seeking work.

Benefit staff, working to tough new targets for savings to be made through detecting 'fraud', will be pressurised into the most callous reading of these tight rules.

Already most claimants face a reduced rate of benefit because they are assumed to have lost their jobs through their own fault.

But the JSA will not have a reduced rate: many will lose out on benefit altogether.

Amid this carnage - and the imposition this April of the new

system of Incapacity Benefit designed to strip benefits from 250,000 people with long term sickness and disability - Labour's front bench remains eloquently silent.

Some of the Tory proposals are horribly close to the plans dreamed up by Labour's own Commission for Social Justice.

The unions must do more than whinge at the injustice of the JSA: they must join forces to fight the Tory offensive, demanding a Labour government reverse these savage attacks, increase benefits and implement a minimum wage.

NHS cuts: some victories for the good guys

By John Lister

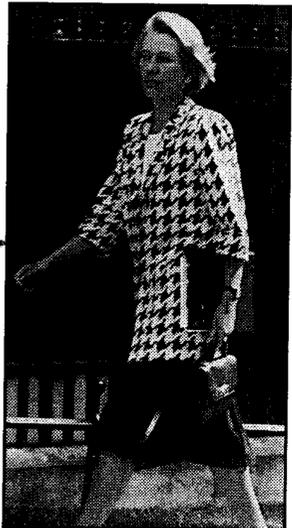
WHILE Virginia Bottomley wrestles with a tide of statistics showing that her market-led policies are bringing chaos to the NHS, some important victories are being notched up by campaigners.

The most glaring weakness of the market system is its failure to recruit and train sufficient doctors and nursing staff to keep vital services going.

Nurse and midwife training has been drastically cut back, prompting serious staff shortages in parts of London, while early February has seen casualty units in various parts of the country forced to desperate measures for lack of junior doctors.

Now figures produced by inner London health authorities reinforce the long-standing claims by campaigners such as London Health Emergency that the closure of 1,000 acute hospital beds in the capital every year for the past decade has reduced many key hospitals to state of crisis.

Even before the closure of A&E services at Barts hospital,



Bottomley

the nearest hospitals (Homerton and the Royal London) which are expected to take the strain were running with their beds consistently around or even over 100 percent full.

The new report adds weight to the growing demand for a halt to further hospital closures, which are generating a new wave of agitation across London.

A conference on February 18

on the state of London's health services sponsored by the *Evening Standard* has already attracted over 1,500 applicants for just 850 tickets.

Elsewhere, too, pressure is being intensified to block further hospital cuts. After the success in defending London's Central Middlesex Hospital, a massive outcry in Hertfordshire has apparently persuaded health chiefs to shelve plans to close two of the county's four A&E units.

No new closure proposals are now expected until after the next election. A similar retreat by health chiefs in the North West has lifted the threat to 'rationalise' acute hospital services in the Morecambe Bay area.

And protestors in Birmingham are celebrating the reprieve of services after South Birmingham health authority retreated from imposing £1.5m cuts on the local Community Trust.

For the first time in years, there is confidence among health campaigners that some of the cuts can be fought and defeated. But the fight must still be waged.

In London, efforts will now be focused on halting the threatened run-down of Guy's Hospital.

No return to the 11 Plus!

By Ann Hudson

SATs - government-imposed tests in English, Maths and Science for 7, 11 and 14 year olds - were successfully boycotted by the NUT for two years.

Suddenly, in December the NUT leadership met with Gillian Shephard and announced its intention to end the boycott.

NUT activists believe that the leadership has lost its fighting spirit because it has decided to embrace the 'new realist' orientation of the Labour Party leadership.

With Tony Blair sending his son to a (non-union) Grant Maintained school, and David Blunkett indicating that Labour will do little to undo the damage Tory policy has inflicted on education, this is bad news for Britain's youth.

Grant Maintained Schools and SATs are all part of an attack on the notion of equal opportunities and comprehensive education itself.

Many NUT members were deeply disappointed by the re-

sult of the leadership's lightning ballot in early January. Half the membership voted, with 3 to 1 voting to end the boycott and cooperate in the government's Review.

The ballot was timed in such a way that members had little time to organise meetings and discuss the real issues, and worded in such a way that many thought a 'yes' vote would mean continued union protection against excessive workload and the continuation of a campaign against SATs.

There was a barrage of propaganda for a yes vote - enough glossy leaflets for three times the union's membership.

Despite the reverse, NUT associations and divisions all over the country are actively campaigning against the tests.

The campaign is supported by the London Associations for the Teaching of English and the growing network of Parents against the SATs.

We need to look to the example of Scotland where parents supported the anti-SATs campaign, and won by withdrawing their children from the tests.

GMB splits Newcastle fight

HE MAY be strong on rhetoric for social justice and a founder of the Campaign to Defend the Welfare State, but where does GMB leader John Edmonds really stand on the fight for council jobs and services?

The question has added weight following the GMB's instruction to its local government members in Newcastle to

cross UNISON picket lines on the February 1 Day of Action.

Newcastle's Labour council is threatening to axe 200 teachers, 40 social workers, six homes for the elderly, three day centres and 50 percent of meals on wheels.

But instead of joining UNISON in balloting and campaigning for action, Edmonds' union did nothing.

Tony Blair would be pleased.

New storm over education cuts

By Harry Sloan

WITH SCHOOLS facing a cut in real spending power and 120,000 extra children entering the education system, there is no sign of the 'peace in the classroom' promised by Gillian Shephard.

Thousands of teaching posts are at risk, bringing the threat of class sizes rising to all-time record levels - many will be 40 and above, making a nonsense

of any talk of quality in education, and turning the national curriculum into a sham.

Though morale has been knocked back after the surrender on SATs tests, unions have begun to resist.

Ballots

In Oxford both NUT and NAS/UWT are balloting on one-day strike action to lobby the crucial County Council meeting on February 14.

Strong pressure for action has come from angry parents, many

of whom joined the 3,000-strong march through Oxford last month, and thousands more of whom have since been attending a series of packed local meetings across the county.

At least one school's governors have adopted a deficit budget, while others have joined the call for schools to be closed to back the lobby on February 14.

Elsewhere NUT ballots for one-day stoppages are also being held in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Islington in London.

3-way Tory squeeze on jobs

by Harry Sloan

COUNCIL services are facing the worst spending cuts for 30 years as they fall victim to a three-way squeeze from the Tory government.

■ The level of central support grant to councils is being slashed by 0.4 percent in cash terms, while inflationary pressures demand an increase of up to 3 percent to stay level.

■ As if that cut were not enough, most councils also face tough 'capping' restrictions limiting the amount they can raise from the council tax. After years of ruthless clampdown in London, this is having the heaviest impact this year on the shire counties, triggering anguished squeals of protest from Tories as well as Labour and Liberal councillors.

■ To put the boot in, ministers have disregarded warn-

ings from Education Secretary Gillian Shephard that as many as 10,000 teaching jobs could be axed if the teachers pay award, expected to be 2.9 percent, is not fully funded by the government.

Council cash pays for 60 percent of school budgets, most of it on pay. As Mrs Shephard pointed out in a leaked letter to cabinet colleagues: "If teachers' pay went up by 2-3 percent, schools would need to find resources equivalent to the loss of 7,000-10,000 teaching posts to fund it. This further tightening of staffing ratios would mean class sizes would shoot up."

Main target

Education, taking the largest share of council spending, has been the main target for cuts, triggering a growing revolt by school governors reluctant to impose sackings, and adopting varying tactics from setting (illegal) deficit budgets to threatening mass resig-

nation to force the blame back onto councils.

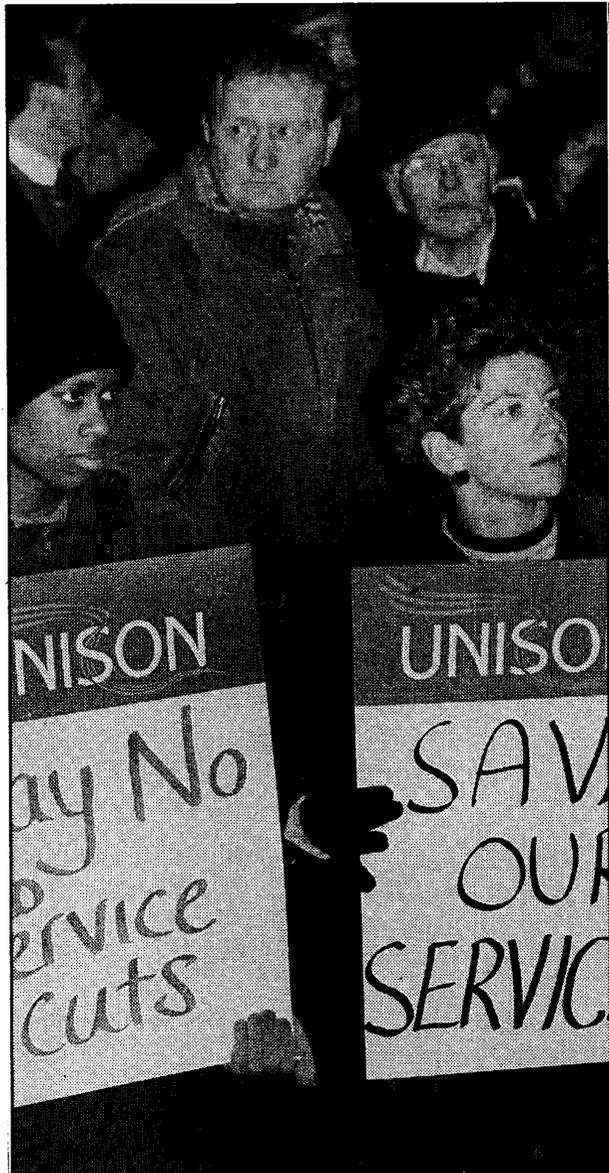
But social services – notably services for the elderly, fire services and other important support services are also facing brutal cuts.

The scale of the actual shortfall facing each council varies widely, but Oxfordshire faces a shortfall of up to £23m this year, Taunton £20m, Birmingham £41m and Newcastle £20m over three years.

But while Birmingham's right wing Labour council leader Theresa Stewart has looked unashamedly to axing 600 jobs (hoping for voluntary redundancies), other councils have opted to defy Tory spending limits.

Shropshire's Lib-Lab council has adopted a deficit budget – with the backing of local Tory MP John Biffen. Now what would Tony Blair have to say about that?

● IN SCOTLAND, a separate budget squeeze threatens cuts of up to £230 million.



Birmingham fights cuts

Birmingham's community fights back

By Bob Whitehead

BIRMINGHAM Community Conference has taken the lead the defence of local services and jobs.

Following the Labour Group's meek acceptance of a £45 million cut in the government grant, it organised a lobby of a group meeting, with 150 people. Both events generated substantial press coverage. Both

were built with posters, leaflets and street stalls.

And now March 25th has been named as the day for a city centre demonstration with the theme of defending public services and jobs.

The Community Conference will seek to involve the RMT, who are campaigning against rail privatisation.

The shock of the savage cuts ordered by central government seems to have generated a new mood of resistance, at last!

There is a lot of talk of industrial action. But we cannot shake off the years of defeatism overnight.

Confidence needs to be carefully built and organised. In particular, many sectors are cautious about going into action on their own.

The role of the Community Conference is to overcome this by uniting the different areas in common activity. So far, the strategy seems to be working.

Victory for Postal worker solidarity

By a postal worker

A TWO DAY walk out by 15,000 London postal workers put the brake on management's offensive against conditions, jobs and union organisation.

When management suspended all 150 delivery staff at North West District Office Camden on January 19 all district offices in London - bar one - struck in response. The next morning most delivery offices in London were out too.

With millions of mail items held up management quickly backed down promising to lift the suspensions and take no further disciplinary action.

The dispute stems from the introduction of the Computer-Assisted Delivery Revision System which involves a massive

increase in workers' workload.

In early January around 650 workers walked out when a union member was suspended for refusing to get into a dangerously overloaded van.

They returned to work only after immense pressure from union officials and promises of legal action and improved health and safety.

In a single week 50 workers were suspended for alleged "slow working". Hundreds of casuals were brought in to take over deliveries.

After a further one hour strike delivery staff were instructed to sign a declaration waiving their right to strike. Refusal was met with suspension, and then the spreading industrial action.

None of the key issues were resolved in the back to work agreement – which only went through after pressure from the national leadership on their

membership.

A major opportunity for the whole workforce to go on the offensive over CADR, job losses and new duties was rejected by a leadership more concerned about the union's bank balance and its good relations with Royal Mail management.

For postal workers the lessons are clear – there will be more fights over jobs and conditions. General Secretary Alan Johnson and the national leadership will not lead a fight.

We have to build an alternative leadership in the union which has the respect and support of the membership.

For all workers and the labour movement as a whole, the postal workers' action shows how solidarity action can win, and that faced with widespread strikes the anti-union laws are not worth the paper they are written on.

Brighton ballot

BRIGHTON borough council is proposing a six per cent cut in spending for next year – £1 million and compulsory redundancies. UNISON is in the process of balloting for industrial action – including a one day strike at the end of the month.

The East Sussex county council is going for a £1 million cut in social services. This involves closing down the residential unit at Richmond Place which will involve redundancies.

Welfare State Network Working Conference

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Benefits for Youth and Students
- Workshops and discussion

SATURDAY
February 18
University of London
Union
Malet St London

Speakers include: ● TONY BENN MP ● ALAN SIMPSON MP ● JILL MOUNTFORD (Welfare State Network) ● SARAH WELLINGS (NUS) ● KEVIN SEXTON (NUS) ● JOHN LISTER (London Health Emergency)

Credentials/details ring 071-639-5068

TRADE UNION NEWS

Socialism key in fight against oppression

Don't let Blair play 'equality' card!

By Peter Purton

THOSE WHO wish to abandon Clause IV argue that it says nothing about the kind of equalities that a modern Labour Party should have at the centre of its concerns.

True enough, and it could be scarcely argued that the Labour Party of 1918 would have considered adding the objectives of equality for women, black people, lesbians and gay men, and the disabled, had they been suggested.

But the reasoning of "modern Labour" is thoroughly fallacious. Socialists have always understood that *genuine* equality for those many who suffer from oppression in society can only be achieved by a fundamental *change* in society itself.

Liberals – even some Tories – can support such individual measures as an equal age of consent for gay men, or equal pay for women, or rights of access for the disabled, or condemning of racist violence.

Campaigning for all these is vital in itself. But while society as a whole is unequal because of the underlying *economic* sys-



tem, it is impossible that fundamental equality can be won.

Hence the socialist commitment contained within Clause IV is not counter-posed to the fight for an equal, fair and just society. On the contrary, to achieve these goals demands a combined struggle in both spheres.

The capitalist market operates on the basis that the few

profit from the labours of the many. Some exploit, and the rest of us are exploited.

Inequality is basic in capitalism. That inequality occurs in social existence too, and not by accident. For example, the inequality of women, and of lesbians and gay men, is rooted in the privileged position occupied by the patriarchal (male-dominated) family system.

Women are the home-making, child-rearing, pin-money-earning, sex-object majority.

Lesbians and gays, whose acceptance as genuine equals would undermine the domination of the much-promoted (if increasingly mythical) "Persil family", continue to be marginal, second-class citizens, at best tolerated providing we stay out of sight.

Divided

Discrimination and oppression designed to keep us in our places also serves to reproduce a divided and docile workforce, as likely to blame fellow workers, "Europe", or those of another race for our woes as to pin the blame where it really lies.

An economic system which seeks to achieve equality, however, is also a society where these oppressions have no place.

Clause IV, certainly, does not in itself address these questions. But it does create a framework in which the struggle for equality for ALL sections of society has its rightful and logical place.

The modernisers will seek to

tinker with the system. They will propose some fine phrases. But until and unless Labour is willing to tackle the fundamental questions of the way society operates – in 1995 just as it did in 1918 – it will only treat the symptoms and never deal with the causes of oppression.

Socialists always argue for Labour to state its support for equality, and justice, loud and clear.

It should start by promoting the wide range of equality policies it already has. It should throw its support behind the struggles against racism, against sexism, for lesbian and gay and disabled rights.

But far from representing a different approach from the vision of Clause IV, this really represents the same fundamentals.

If we mean to win equality for all who are denied it in capitalist society, it can only be as part of the struggle to win "the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of common ownership" for (and by) the workers.

Add Clause IV to UNISON Rule Book!

THE CAMPAIGN for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON is urging branches to submit the following Model Resolution for this year's conference.

It would add in to the union's rule book the formula which was in the old NUPE Rule book and similar to Clause IV.

It should have been in the UNISON Rules agreed at the first conference.

"Add new point 4.6 in section B

"To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service."

Clause IV can block the road to ruin

By Eileen Gersh

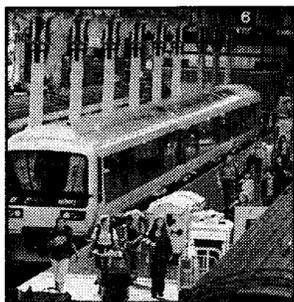
ALL OVER the country people are fighting against government road-building programmes.

All kinds of people are involved; young and old, well-off and poor. If your home is being demolished to make a road, you're not going to take it lying down, unless you're lying in front of a bulldozer.

The names of these battlefields – Twyford Down, Oaklees Wood, "Wanstonia", Stanworth Woods – are becoming well known.

What has this to do with Clause IV? Well, in whose interests are these roads being built? This is not just a perverse idea of the Tory government, that they will ease traffic problems and accommodate more cars and lorries.

Someone – not the car owners – benefits from the roads programme. The car manufacturer keep turning out cars and persuading people that driving conditions will be improved by new



roads, (when in fact they will be made worse)

When it is clear they have over-produced they to complain that they can't sell off their stock. The car industry is a powerful lobby, and it is backed up by another arm of heavy industry, the road construction businesses and quarrying companies, which hack out huge chunks of countryside for their materials.

Like the roads, these quarries destroy areas of natural beauty and scientific interest. Add to these the petroleum industry, which fuels the vehicles and road building machines.

Of course the Tory Party, the party of capitalism, listens to and serves powerful lobbyists: these

are the kind of people from whom the party receives its funds.

It is much less responsive to the people who are victimised by the road-building programmes – those who are left homeless without adequate compensation; those whose health is ruined by asthma triggered by the toxic emissions of vehicles; those whose scientific or aesthetic pursuits are interrupted or wiped out; victims of road accidents.

What is the way to stop this depredation? To properly restrict the activities of big business would require innumerable specific laws prohibiting various types of action on their part, laws without loopholes that they could dodge through.

There would have to be regulatory bodies to appeal to that were representative of all the people, not like the present quangos, appointed by the government, and therefore sympathetic to big business.

All this is unimaginable isn't it? It was recognition of the problems of fighting for change in a myriad of individual laws that led women and their supporters in

the United States to demand an amendment to the constitution, the Equal Rights Amendment.

So that's where Clause IV comes in, as apart of the Labour Party constitution. The companies that are involved in the road lobby should be owned and controlled by the people, with boards not appointed by the government but elected.

Then they could be held responsible and recalled if necessary. It's obvious, anyway, that a nationwide system, like transport, must be planned on a nationwide scale, not privatised and given over to numbers of different companies, each under independent control.

A good national system of public transport, buses and trains, would greatly reduce the need for car travel and provide a cleaner, healthier environment, saving some of the beauty for the future generations.

Retention and improvement of nationalised British Rail should therefore be one of Labour's high priorities.

That is the one of the reasons we say: No more privatisations! Retain Clause IV.

Clause IV fight finds groundswell of support

By Dave Packer

THE CAMPAIGN To Defend Clause IV has developed a spontaneous momentum amongst grassroots activists across the labour movement.

This was confirmed at the campaign's national steering committee meeting held on January 28th in Manchester Town Hall.

Many trade unionists were amongst the 60 people present.

John Nicholson introduced the meeting with a report which showed the growing number of commitments and resolutions backing the Defend Clause IV Campaign.

Blair has been forced to launch his own campaign, himself heading the bandwagon in the constituencies, while Prescott sets to work on the un-

ion bureaucrats.

Over half the Party's MEPs, the Socialist Campaign Group of left MPs and many others from the so-called soft left, supporters of Tribune, CLPD, and the political centre have come in behind the campaign to defend the Clause.

Abusive

The growing anxiety in the Blair camp is illustrated by the abusive tone of Peter Mandelson and other right wing ideologues. Blair was forced to apologise for a press statement made by Mandelson which referred to their opponents as 'muddled and infantile'.

Blair's hopes lie in a combination of media backing, bureaucratic mis-leadership, manipulation of delegations to the Special Conference and individual balloting (OMOV) of members.

Even if he succeeds in carry-

ing the day for the right wing offensive against socialist policies and values, and this is by no means a forgone conclusion, his will be a Pyrrhic victory.

The right wing will not only have angered the great majority of grass roots activists in the party and the unions, it will have significantly revived and rebuilt the links amongst the left in the movement.

The revival of the left was a theme of Lord Monkswell's speech on behalf of the Campaign Group at the Steering Committee meeting.

He stressed that we have already changed the terms of the debate. It's not about loyalty or confidence in the leader, he said, but about Labour's principles.

A series of reports from the campaign in the trade unions was briefly introduced. Comrades were reminded that we won on Clause IV at the last



Labour conference, and that the groundswell of support for the present campaign showed that the Labour Party was not dead for the left.

We can expect a serious increase in constituency support at the special conference, but crucially we must hold on in the unions.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on the special conference. It was generally agreed that it was no longer possible to get this conference, deliberately

timed to pre-empt most of the union conferences, called off.

Therefore, we must raise demands to make it as representative and democratic as possible.

The left are not afraid of a genuinely open and democratic debate, unlike Blair and the right wing, who plan to have only one item on the agenda – the leadership's (still unpublished) redraft of Clause IV, and one vote, for or against the redraft!

Lyons tamed as fight waged in unions

REPORTS to the Clause IV campaign steering committee showed the scope of activity in more than a dozen unions.

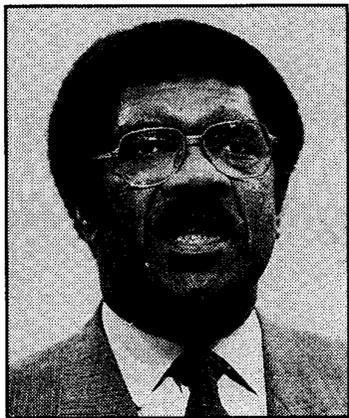
● A flavour of these reports is shown by an incident in the white collar union MSF. A press statement put out by MSF General Secretary Roger Lyons in support of a Blair redrafting of the Clause was withdrawn within 24 hours.

This humiliating public retraction was due to an explosion of protest from the membership across the country.

The rank and file 'Left United' is now on the offensive in MSF, and is calling for a recall conference and trying to win as many regions as possible – five have been won so far, but eight are needed for a majority. In the London Region there was a unanimous vote to retain Clause IV together with a call for Lyons' resignation.

● A similar press statement by shop workers' union USDAW was also retracted for the same reasons.

Here, as in other unions, the broad left is mobilising support for retention. Already there are several resolutions – some from traditional middle of the road branches – in defence of the Clause on the agenda of the USDAW conference, one of the few union conferences which take



Bridling under insults from Blair team: T&GWU leader Bill Morris

place before the special conference, and where Blair is an invited speaker.

● The rail union RMT will continue to support Clause IV, a position that has been reinforced partly by government plans to privatise the railways, and partly by the campaigning work of Rail Workers in Defence of Clause IV.

Despite statements by the Labour leadership, there are real dangers of a Blair climbdown on Rail nationalisation.

A speaker from the RMT's North East Regional Council gave an illuminating insight into the social composition of the Blair roadshow.

He described how his local CLP and the Trades Council had requested tickets to the Blair

meeting, but were both refused on spurious grounds – apparently the CLP had not asked in advance, and the Trades Council was not recognised as an official part of the trade union movement!

● In the telecoms union NCU, the broad left, which is affiliated to the campaign, feels confident that it can keep its NEC in line, but needs a big campaign at grass roots level.

● The London district of the Fire Brigades Union has already affiliated to the campaign and donated £250.

● In the TGWU, several regions have also come out for retention, although the Midland Region 5 will be a tougher nut to crack.

● Meanwhile the leadership of the GMB have made it clear that if there is no commitment from Blair to renationalise water, they will vote for the retention of Clause IV.

● The delegate from public sector union UNISON reported that they had a good chance of winning a majority of the Affiliated Political Fund committees. London and the Midlands were assured, but again he stressed the need for a campaign in the rank and file.

Blair's 'Bambinos' crated for slaughter

TONY Blair has given us a taster of how decisions are going to be taken in New Labour – by unelected full time officials.

The Brighton Young Labour conference was an exercise in how to prevent discussion.

Even before the weekend had got underway left delegations were being ruled out of order. The left-inclined RMT were prevented from taking part on a technicality.

Student groups – bastions of Blairism – were allowed to affiliate twice; once as Young Labour Groups, once as student groups.

This gave them twice as many delegates.

When the Clause Four vote

was called, the result by show of hands was too close to call. But by the time of the card vote this had miraculously turned into a 4 to 1 majority in favour of Blair.

Diane Jeuda marched the whole USDAW delegation into her bedroom to let them know that anyone who voted for the retention of Clause Four had no future in the union.

The TGWU abstained on the vote, and many left unions were not present, including the NUM, FBU and BECTU.

Given these circumstances the Clause Four result is not so disheartening.

A truly democratic conference would have come up with a different result.

Blair Dance

We put the Clause 4 in
You take the Clause 4 out,
You stamp on all our principles
And shake the lefties out,
You smile at everybody
As you spin around the floor:
That's what it's all about.

OH Tony, Tony, Tony,
OH, Tony, Tony, Tony,
OH, Tony, Tony, Tony,
Right foot forwards
Blair, Blair, Blair.

by David Laurence Bishop

CLAUSE 4



Chechnya and the eclipse of the Russian Liberals

By Boris Kagarlitsky

IF SOME reckless analyst had suggested a year ago that admirers of Yegor Gaidar would be joining on Pushkin Square with followers of extreme nationalist Victor Anpilov to shout "Put the Yeltsin gang on trial!", he or she would have been dismissed as delirious. But Russian life is stranger than any kind of delirium.

Beginning on December 11, columns of tanks and 40,000 troops burst on to the territory of the mutinous Chechen Republic, along the way shooting up peaceful villages and killing the health minister of neighbouring Ingushetia. Aircraft and artillery dumped tonnes of bombs and shells on the Chechen capital, Grozny.

Despite a television propaganda campaign, the anti-war movement quickly began to gather strength. Nor were the government's hopes of exploiting the racist prejudices of Russians against Chechens borne out.

On the contrary, surveys showed that the attitude of Russians towards Chechens, who had become the victims of aggression, became more favourable. Press reports of the bombing and shelling, from which the Russian population of Grozny suffered as much as anyone, played a considerable role.

The weakest spot in the authorities' new scenario was the lack of combat readiness of their own army — demoralised, poorly trained and without the slightest idea of why it was supposed to fight against citizens of its own country.

The war on Chechnya was still more absurd for the reason that the Russian government had spent three years allow-

ing the Chechen regime of General Dzhokhar Dudaev to do whatever it liked. After proclaiming independence from Moscow, Dudaev had done nothing to make independence a reality.

Russian laws continued to be enforced on the territory of Chechnya and the Russian rouble remained in circulation. There were no border checks and the Chechen government did not set up its own customs system. The inhabitants of Chechnya remained Russian citizens, dealing with their problems through the structures of the Russian federation. Chechnya did not pay taxes, but other regions of Russia also refused to forward tax revenues from time to time.

The only thing that Dudaev did that was at all out of the ordinary was to set up armed formations under his personal control, just as Yeltsin and the Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov have done. In addition, he delighted philatelists by issuing a series of Chechen stamps bearing his portrait, and with a quality reminiscent of matchbox labels.

It is quite clear that Dudaev was not so much seeking independence as aiming at winning special status for Chechnya within the framework of Russia or of a future Eurasian Union, the need for which the Chechen general stressed repeatedly.

The Moscow politicians for their part watched events in Chechnya without particular alarm. The semi-independent republic was an ideal place for laundering millions stolen in the capital and for cutting deals in smuggled weapons.

However, the crisis of the Russian regime, the economic collapse and unrelieved failures in all spheres of domestic and foreign policy, forced Yeltsin's associates to look for a way out. While the



Yeltsin government had bungled any attempts it made at constructive activity, it had invariably emerged victorious from political crises.

A victorious little war seemed like an attractive way to increase the popularity of the authorities, to crush the opposition and at the same time, perhaps, to postpone the elections and get rid of the faint hearted within the governments own ranks.

As military actions began in the country for a second time in little more than a year, the nerves of many "democratic" politicians gave way. Gaidar and the majority of the Russia's Choice parliamentary fraction began to protest. Against all their expectations, they found themselves in the same camp with the left.

The social democratic politicians generally preferred to remain silent, and did not show up at demonstrations. The leadership of Russia's largest trade union federation, the FNPR, limited itself to expressions of "concern" over the bombing of Chechnya.

It is paradoxical that this time, unlike 1993, Yeltsin has acted strictly within the framework of his constitutional powers. The leading defenders of these powers once included people like Gaidar. They, of course, imagined that these provisions would be used only against leftists. But "justice" triumphed. The time has at last arrived to recognise that to a police baton all heads are equal.

It has been striking to observe how Gaidar and other liberals from the President's circle, who themselves took part in preparing earlier provocations, have proven so helpless when the provocations have been directed against them. They have been driven swiftly and unerringly into the same trap in which earlier

parliamentary oppositions became enmeshed.

The need for a constant struggle against internal and external enemies is part and parcel of authoritarianism. This is why former allies and fellow travellers of the regime have become its victims. The circle has continually contracted. First the Communists were defeated; then wavering democrats were thrown overboard; now the turn has come of the privatising "Westernisers" themselves.

The task of seizing property has been fulfilled. The ideology of liberalism, which allowed the regime to create a mass base for itself, has been totally exhausted and discredited. This has made the ideologues themselves unnecessary ballast for the regime.

"Serious people" understand that the time for seizing property has come to an end, and that the era of consolidation has begun. It is therefore time to replace liberal slogans with conservative ones. The idea of change is being replaced with the idea of order, and human rights by a police state.

The situation is complicated, however, by the presence of democratic institutions. On the one hand, the new social order is incompatible with democracy, while on the other, open dictatorship is impossible as well. Moreover, a certain heed must be paid to the West. The organs of repression, meanwhile, are unprepared for really broad and systematic work. They are capable only of episodic actions—raids, assaults and blockades.

The regime has been forced constantly to create democratic structures, and then, when they have fulfilled their immediate purpose, to abolish them.

If these structures were to survive and acquire strength, they would be dangerous and destructive for Russian nomenklatura capitalism. The Duma is less dangerous than was old Supreme Soviet, but it has begun to take on an independent significance as well.

Appearing now in the unaccustomed role of an opposition, the right-wing liberals are repeating all the errors of Yeltsin's earlier adversaries. By contrast, the leaders of the Communist Party, after suffering two defeats, appear a good deal. They appreciate that you cannot frighten the authorities with hysterical declarations and with little gatherings on Pushkin Square.

The crisis in Chechnya has confronted the Communists with a new political situation. They are now losing some of their allies in the "patriotic" camp. But in speaking out against the war, they are once again acquiring their own face as the leading party of the left.



Getting heavy: masked Russian Interior Ministry troops police a checkpoint in Grozny

The Muslim mountaineers who never climb down

By Gerry Foley

CHECHNYA is a state based on the Chechen people, who number somewhat less than a million.

They are one of many small nationalities in the Caucasus mountains who have a Muslim tradition and a history of resistance to Russian conquest.

Russia began to expand into this area at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the Muslim mountaineers were not subdued until the middle of the century. Historically the Chechens have been the vanguard people of the Caucasus.

In the period of the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary Soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky won over the Chechens by offering them the right of national self-determination. The mountain people proved to be invaluable allies of the beleaguered revolutionists.

On his march towards Moscow, the counter-revolutionary General Denikin had to leave behind a third of his army to guard the area inhabited by the Chechens and the closely-related Ingush people.

The mountaineers, Denikin later wrote, had created a 'seething volcano'. In reprisal, the counter-revolutionaries burned down one out of every

five Chechen and Ingush villages.

The Chechens were brutally repressed by Stalin. During World War II the entire population, along with the Ingush people, were forcibly exiled to Central Asia.

About a quarter of them died on the road. After the war, they managed to force the Soviet authorities to allow them to resettle in their homeland. Subsequently the Chechen-Ingush autonomous republic was reconstituted.

So it is not surprising that the first battle fought by the Russian troops sent to Chechnya actually took place on the territory of the Ingush people.

In 1991, however, the Chechen regime, headed by Dzhokar Dudaev declared independence from Russia.

At the time, the far less numerous Ingush were not ready for such a radical step, and therefore formed an autonomous republic of their own.

The Russian republic in the old USSR was formally a federation. Some 17 percent of its people lived in national autonomous republics. In the Russian state that has emerged from the break-up of the USSR, the autonomous republics remain, but their status and prerogatives are now in dispute.

The autonomous republics were set up in the period of the Russian Revolution to represent peoples that were granted the right of self-determination but were apparently too small or isolated for full independence to be an option.

These units were supposed to offer their titular peoples the opportunity to develop a national life. But the Soviet constitutions did not grant them the formal right to secede, as they

did to the republics.

The Yeltsin government is now claiming that it therefore has the right to use military force to oust a Chechen regime that rejects Moscow rule.

Many of the small autonomous governments (some of them have even lesser status than autonomous republics) formally preside over territories with very important natural resources. Thus the Chechen capital of Grozny is now the most important centre of the petroleum industry in the oil-rich Caucasus area.

In fact the line between the full republics and the autonomous republics has never been a clear one.

The Volga Tatar people, for instance, who have an autonomous republic (although only about half the Tatar population were incorporated in it) are more numerous than the Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians put together. But the latter three peoples, nevertheless, each had a full republic.

The Chechens, moreover, have a stronger tradition of resistance to Russian rule than many of the peoples of the republics that have gained independence.

When Dudaev proclaimed the independence of Chechnya in 1991, this was the most radical of the steps towards self-determination taken in a number of autonomous republics.

The Russian authorities feared he was starting a snowball rolling which could lead to the break-up of the Russian Federation, just as the USSR had disintegrated.

The current Russian intervention is Yeltsin's latest attempt to restore what Lenin called 'the great prison house of nations'.

CHECHNYA: an urgent appeal

A DEMONSTRATION outside the Russian Embassy in Brussels last week delivered the following appeal from the Belgian workers' and socialist movement against the military intervention into Chechnya.

The appeal was published in Rood, the Dutch-language fortnightly of the Workers' Socialist Party, Belgian section of the Fourth International. The translation is by Duncan Chapple.

THE WAR in Chechnya is a war against the Chechen people. The fight against the mafia is just a pretext. The opposition by the militias enjoys obvious and great legitimacy with the people.

The population possesses a strong national consciousness against an opponent that is better equipped. Whatever our opinion of the national consciousness,

the methods used by Moscow are unacceptable.

We are concerned by the rise of a strong power in Russia. The manner by which the intervention was announced, the rising of a strong Great-Russian chauvinism, and the measures against the freedom of the press are alarming symptoms.

We condemn the Western complicity with Moscow. Their hypocrisy is unacceptable - while they call for the right of the peoples of Slovakia and Croatia to self-determination, they consider that the war in Chechnya is an internal matter for Russia. With formalistic arguments, they are coming to tolerate the developing bloodbath.

We must, therefore, remember that Chechnya was forcibly annexed by Russia under the Tsar in 1859 after 25 years of colonial war, and that a majority of the Chechens were deported between 1944 and 1957.

We consequently demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

There must be a peaceful solution to the conflict which respects human rights and the rights of the Chechen people.

Signatories include: François Vercammen (United Secretariat of the Fourth International); Jacky Moraël, Isabelle Durant and Dany Josse (Federal Secretariat, Belgian Green party); Pierre Beauois (Chair, Belgian Communist Party); Pierre Galand (Oxfam); Elisabeth Marian (author); Anke Hintjens (Committee for the Cancellation of the Third World Debt); Nadine Peeters (Antwerp Municipal Councillor, Movement for Social Renewal); Pauline Cornille (Assembly of Women for Peace); Nelly Maes, Willy Kuypers and Germain Dufaour (members of Senate); Hugo Ongena, Louis Steenwagen and Jan De Corte (members of Parliament); Magda Aelvoet (MEP).

CENTRE STAGE

Clinton bails out plunging peso

By Mark Wallington

IN MEXICO City the peso tumbles. The country's ruling elite stumbles close behind in a vain bid to shore-up their ailing currency.

In the besieged southern state of Chiapas, the Zapatista-led "rebel government" continues to assert its political legitimacy, an important reminder that more than a year since the Zapatistas took up arms against the Mexican state there is still a vibrant opposition beating at the heart of the country's new crisis.

It is a year on since the Zapatistas' own inimitable welcome to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), embracing the US, Canada and Mexico.

Now the mass-based Convention for National Democracy, led by the civil and human rights activist and former presidential candidate Rosario Ibarra, has launched an international appeal, calling for opposition to the violent repression with which the Mexican state replied to the demands of the peoples of Chiapas.

The appeal states that the "only way of avoiding war breaking out in Mexico would be to meet the economic, cultural, political and social demands expressed by [the Indian] communities."

And in Mexico City the peso continued to plummet.

Now, the 'international community' believes it can breathe again - confident in the belief that a 'global crisis has been averted'.

Yet a week's frenzied activity from bankers and the US President could never have achieved anything other than a short-term resolution to the country's liquidity crisis.

Default

Mexico, alongside Brazil, has been heading towards 'default' for the past few years. The \$50 billion rescue package will be gobbled up all too quickly.

Three years ago, when the 500th anniversary of Columbus's conquest coincided with the creation of the European single market, the significance was not lost in Latin America.

It is a continent deeply marked by a conflict of historical identity: part-European, part-indigenous, part-African and wholly at the bottom of the international priorities of its European progenitors.

It is a crisis of identity which is particularly marked for Mexico. Their deformed integration into NAFTA, alongside the US and Canada, is only the most recent attempt of its most profit-hungry bourgeoisie to resolve



Clinton: digging in to US kitty to save Mexico's bacon

BRAZIL's government has underestimated the country's December trade deficit by 'somewhere between \$47m and \$1.3 billion', it has been revealed.

The right wing government has unveiled a package of \$5.3 billion in government spending, including cuts in health, education, transport and the closure of two ministries.

this conflict.

At the time there were two arguments: one was that the consolidation of the industrialised world's largest market could only mean an expansion of trade and development.

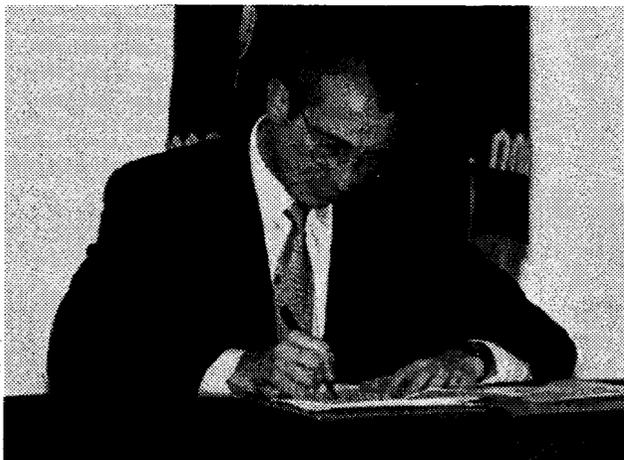
The other feared the creation of "fortress Europe", entrenched behind tariff barriers to protect its weaker regions, and immersed in internal disruption.

However, both projections were underpinned by the fear that, if Latin America misses its footing among the megablocs of the emergent re-organisation of the world economy, it could be heading for what some have described as a "new dark age of marginalisation".

The facts are clear. For twenty years, Latin America and the Caribbean has been the developing world's worst regional economic performer. In the 1980s per capita income fell back ten years.

Interest payments on its gargantuan external debt make this impoverished region a vast net capital exporter to the developed world.

Today - and Mexico is no exception, quite the contrary - exports are still largely primary products with shifting prices



Sign here: Mexico's new premier Zedillo

and low added value, and its internal economies are bogged down in underinvestment, bureaucracy and bloated fiscal deficits.

In relation to Europe, the ambiguities of the past have deepened. Political contacts grew with the flow of exiles during the period of military dictatorships, and the regional presence increased in political internationals such as the Socialists and Christian Democrats.

Economic links with Europe weakened. The region still supplies almost half Europe's agricultural imports from the Third World, but overall trade with Europe has plummeted compared with that with the US.

Common Agricultural Policy restrictions, high tariff and other barriers, and discrimination in favour of imports from other regions such as the Mediterranean and Africa, are blamed.

Resentment

The treatment of Latin America's external debt causes particular resentment.

Europe accounted for a third of the \$415 billion total in 1990, about as much as the US, but because of better reserve provi-

sion its banks could more readily contribute to a solution.

Instead, they defer to their US colleagues.

As far as public debt is concerned, European governments have shown less than even the minimal willingness to help which some have extended, for example, to sub-Saharan Africa.

Nobody expected 1992 to change any of this. Extrapolations from even the most optimistic EU projections of the impact of the new market showed minimal expansion for existing imports from the region.

Opportunities

Latin America's ruling elite knew that if they were to take advantage either of European opportunities, or, closer to home, moves towards greater regional integration, they had to find ways of disciplining their unstable macro-economies.

They have to curb capital flight, stabilise their currencies, and improve the number and quality of their manufacturing goods.

And they must do all of it without deepening the region's

gross social injustices and tearing their own societies apart.

They feel they have a right to demand European co-operation above all over the debt - a brake on development beside which all others pale.

It was Mexico, above all, who believed it possible to break out of this economic and cultural cycle. Its bourgeoisie cherished the vain belief that an easily convertible currency was one of the most important planks of a bridge which would lead the smiling nation to join the first world.

That myth has now been smashed and without any other emotional props it will not just be the Mexicans who will be facing the medium to long-term future with a certain degree of pessimism.

Coughing together

The next time Mexico's peso catches a cold, the US and Canada will have little choice but to cough along with it. No amount of 'vigorous debate' about alternative currency regimes will stop that.

Three options have emerged:

- A currency board, in which the central bank issues currency only when it is backed by foreign exchange reserves. Proponents claim that the advantage actually lies with the Mexican government abandoning all pretence at conducting monetary policy.

Necessary, they say, because the roots of the current crisis lay with the excessive credit expansion allowed by the central bank in the last few years.

However, little room for manoeuvre will be allowed. A run on any bank will result in a run on the central bank - resulting in a contraction of monetary policy.

- The central bank propose repegging the exchange rate. The question however - at what rate?

Five pesos to the dollar would be unsustainable. Six pesos to the dollar would bring the US out in a rash because Mexican exports would be so cheap.

- The third option - rumoured to be the favourite at the finance ministry - is a 'managed float' where the exchange rate would be manipulated between broad bands.

Favourite or not its drawback is substantial. Given the considerable amount of time required for the central bank to replenish its reserves (if it can), a 'managed' uncertainty will not restore any credibility internationally for Mexico's domestic monetary and fiscal policy.

How long before a group of merchant bankers next have to throw \$50 billion at Mexico?

Bhopal: the second tragedy

ITV January 31 1995.
Written and directed
by Mark Tully

**Reviewed by
Bala Kumar**

Ten years on from the gas leak at a Union Carbide factory in Bhopal Mark Tully revisits the scene of the world's worst industrial disaster.

The report focused on how the big companies have shed all responsibility toward the communities of the poor.

Union Carbide's pay out to the victims was far less than the sum that would have been required if the US based firm had committed its crimes at home.

Corporations will be able to use this precedent to hide from every wrongdoing committed abroad.

Tully suggests that the Indian government has been complicit in moving the case to India as a

result of pressure from the Reagan administration – Carbide is an important partner in the US nuclear industry.

The Indian government compounded its crimes by arriving at a settlement over the heads of the gas affected people.

The survivors have formed their own organisation, the Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan (BGMUS), made up of women. Abdul Jabber Khan is its convenor.

Only a quarter of the claims have been settled. The documentary showed how claimants are pressured by officials to accept low awards. Most can't afford the delay. One person dies of gas related illness every day.

In a welcome break from the fake "objectivity" of reports like this Tully makes some hard hitting comments about the leverage that large companies enjoy in their dealings with governments.

He indicates the likelihood of repeats of such disasters in Mexico – where US companies have moved their most dangerous plants. We have been warned.



After Deng's demise.

Will China break up?

By Aidan Day

ACCORDING to the CIA China has a "50-50 chance" of falling apart after the death of Deng Xiaoping. The day of reckoning cannot be far off given his daughter's recent confession that his health worsens daily.

The succession crisis that is about to erupt is only one of the changing factors in the politics of the country. The prospects of a trade war with the USA loom large. And China's economy is beginning to show signs of overheating.

First in line to take over is President Jiang Zemin. He was Deng's third choice as successor – Hu Ziyang was dismissed for being too liberal and Zhao Ziyang was purged because of his sympathies with the Tiananmen protesters.

Jaing has his base in the army. He is chair of the military affairs commission. The People's Daily has recently issued statements calling for the people to "rally round" his leadership. He has lately taken to wearing his Mao jacket in place of his business suit.

Li Peng the Prime Minister is also hoping to benefit from

Deng's demise. He is worried that a reassessment of Tiananmen may be made post-Deng – he would inevitably come out badly from this because his known enthusiasm for martial law.

The CIA's Pentagon report says that "the political fate of China is up for grabs".

The balance is delicate: "there is a 50-50 chance that China would disintegrate under a post-Deng diffused leadership and internal conflict. Power in general will gravitate away from the centre."

The waiting game is made even more tense by the trade standoff with the United States. Michael Kantor the US trade representative has threatened 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese exports worth more than \$2 billion.

Although the USA has never actually acted upon its threats of trade sanctions the warnings serve as an important intervention into the political life of the country.

As well as rising inflation and a flood of immigration from the country to the cities the disparities of wealth and income are beginning to cause social tension.

At the September 1994 Central Committee of the CCP Li Peng launched a fight to

strengthen the power of the centre against localism and centrifugalism.

It seems that at the subsequent meeting called to discuss the economy some serious differences emerged.

The Xinhua News Agency produced only a brief report. Contrary to usual practice none of the speeches were published in full.

Three areas of difficulty were identified: "a relatively weak agricultural base, difficulty in production and management of some state enterprises, and poor social security in some regions". All these are related to increasing inflation.

It is clear that market stalinism is beginning to run into serious problems. The future is, indeed, up for grabs.

China prices crisis

SINCE MAY 1994 inflation has accelerated further after many years at high levels. At the end of 1993 consumption prices for all residents broke the 18 per cent danger line.

By September 1994 the retail price index rose to 24.6 per cent and the consumption price index for big and medium cities rose to 24.6 per cent – which was the highest since 1949.

Food prices were 61.6 per cent higher than the same period a year ago. In October new peaks were reached. The State Statistics Bureau announced that consumption prices for all residents rose by 27.7 per cent compared to the same period a year ago, and was 1.7 per cent during September.

Of the 35 big and medium cities, 9 saw the consumption price index increase more than 30 per cent. Chongqing even witnessed 38.2 per cent. The rural scene is even worse than that in the cities.

Zhang Kai

October Review December 1994

100 years after the Dreyfus affair, DAFYDD RHYS explores marxism and the 'Jewish Question'

From Dreyfus to Auschwitz

ONE HUNDRED years ago a large crowd gathered in Paris to witness the public humiliation of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army who had been convicted of spying for the Germans. The crowd spat and shouted "kill the Jews" as Dreyfus was stripped of his insignia and his sword ritually broken. Once deported to Devil's Island his case unleashed a violent outpouring of anti-Semitism across France.

It took 11 years for the French government to admit that he had been framed and to admit his innocence.

Fifty years after the case Dreyfus' granddaughter died at Auschwitz. Such is the dreadful unity of these two events, which mark the beginning and mid-point of our imperialist century.



Paris demonstration following 1980 anti-semitic bombings

Leon Trotsky's re-evaluation

The deepening wave of anti-semitism led Trotsky to re-evaluate his views on the whole matter during the 1930s. He saw that the expected assimilation had not occurred and that the Jews had developed further the Jewish language and created a vibrant Yiddish press.

He decided that therefore the Jews could be called a nation and that they therefore had the right, if they chose to exercise it, of a homeland of their own. Nevertheless he continued to oppose both Zionist and the Bundist ideas.

He opposed colonisation of Palestine because "there is no such thing on our planet as the idea that one has more claim to land than another". He argued that the only way a Jewish nation could be brought into existence on the basis of mutual understanding would be under international socialism.

To those who argued that this was utopian Trotsky replied that the immediate task was to campaign for the right of asylum for

all those Jews menaced by fascism. This call was taken up by a number of socialist groups under the slogan "open the gates". Suffice to say the western government chose to keep them closed.

For Trotsky the rise of anti-semitism was a product of the crisis and decay of capitalism, further proof that it could no longer contribute to human progress — "anti-semitism is today one of the most malignant convulsions of capitalism's death agony".

In a prophetic statement of 1939 Trotsky predicted that the next stage in its development may result in the "physical extermination of the Jews".

These views are of particular importance because they combine a commitment to a homeland for the Jewish people with a total opposition to the Zionist colonisation of Palestine.

The choice between assimilation and Zionism is shown to be false. Neither complete denial of Jewish identity nor its affirmation on a racist colonialist basis is necessary.

Zionism or assimilation?

With hindsight the Dreyfus case can be seen as an ominous foretaste of the power and ferocity of anti-Semitism in this century. Not least because it occurred not in feudal Russia - the land of the pogroms - but in modern industrial democratic France.

It lead Theodor Herzl, who witnessed the affair, to write his famous book *The Jewish State*, which has become the founding text of modern Zionism. He concludes that it is impossible for Jews and non-Jews to live together - instead an exclusively Jewish state should be established.



Israeli left continues to fight expansionist Zionist project

The social democrats of the time rejected this. They saw it as a self-imposed isolation - a diversion from the socialist struggle. They saw anti-semitism as a feudal product destined to die away. Under conditions of advanced capitalism the Jews would be

gradually assimilated and absorbed. Eventually they would cease to be a distinct group.

Lenin

This assimilation was seen as a desirable outcome. The Jews were not considered a nation because they did not

possess a common language and territory. Such an outlook was shared by socialists as diverse as Kautsky, Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky.

Russian social democrats assumed that assimilation would proceed in their country in the same way as Western Europe and North America.

Opposition to this approach came mainly from the Jewish Bund. This organisation developed a programme opposed to assimilation demanding recognition of the Jews as a nation.

At the 1903 congress of Russian social democrats they demanded the right to be recognised as the sole repre-

sentatives of the Jewish workers within the party, proposing to turn it into a federation of national groups. This was bitterly opposed by the majority and led to a split.

Exact opposite

It seems today that the assimilationists were wrong - the Nazi terror of the 1930s indicates the exact opposite of the process.

The crisis of capitalism, linked to the failures of the revolutionary wave that swept through Europe in the century's second decade, produced a new kind of anti-semitism: a product not of feudalism but of imperialism.

New vampire movie lacks teeth, but Cruise Carries On Biting

AIDAN DAY reviews
Neil Jordan's film
*Interview with the
Vampire*

IT TRIED to be sombre and lugubrious, a melancholy lament of those denied the release of mortality. It ended up as Carry On Biting – but without the tongue in cheek.

Instead the tongues are dripping with blood. Gory neck chews follow superficial spectacle follow dull plot lines follow fake gothic big budget backdrops on which the characters issue lamentations at their immortal predicament.

Jordan's rendition of Ann Rice's almost-cult novel has just had too much money spent on it.

He would made a far better product with fewer dollars – the attempts at languorous frailty might have turned out less rambling, more focused.

Perhaps it's just impossible to make a horror movie that isn't a horror movie. If you're going for splatter then you do it properly – leave the lyrical gloom to others. Two hours of leaden murk is boring.

All attempts to raise the pace fail. Tom Cruise just does not cut it as a tragi-comedy actor. Unfortunately the funniest thing about him is his blond wig.

He barks his lines to Brad



Love in vein: they don't know much about arteries but they know what they like

Pitt in an aghast monotone reminiscent of Rick Mayall in the Young Ones – “so now we're in the cemetery sleeping on graves, happy now are you?”

The first section of the film is framed around Cruise's portrayal of a lordly vampire's initiation of a younger soul mate to share his night life.

Unhappily for him his new blood brother is not so keen to go out on the town gouging jugulars.

The Brad Pitt character wrestles with his guilt, trying to avoid taking human life to feed his hunger. He must be the world's first veggie vampire.

Well hidden

Any hint of sexual attraction between the two is well hidden. Aside from a few lingering caresses – “oh, you are so beautiful” – this is a pretty dull encounter. If this is homo-eroticism then bring back Kenneth

Williams.

The one opportunity to introduce some genuinely interesting sexual tension arises when Claudia, played by Kirsten Dunst, is “made-up” to vampire.

Betopped with a mop of gold ringlets, the precocious Dunst comes between the two male protagonists. She is the best character by far – as long as you can keep Bonnie Langford out of your mind.

Like all of her breed she is

condemned to eternal life – but unlike her two bloodsucking friends she is stuck in a twelve year old's body. The realisation of eternal physical immaturity is devastating.

Her relationship with vampire number two is under-explored. It would have been massively laden with complications and ambiguities – precisely the sort of things that make for good drama. Which this isn't.

Laughable merde

Killing Zoe, Cert.18,
director Roger Avary.

By Steve Smith

THE SUCCESS of Quentin Tarantino will mean the cinema-goer is going to have to put up with many a half-arsed imitator. Step forward Tarantino crony, Roger Avary, and his laughably crap French film, *Killing Zoe*.

Avary is a 27-year-old American best known as the co-writer of *Pulp Fiction*. *Killing Zoe* is his directorial debut. It presents the exploits of a gang of low-life Parisian bank robbers whose heist goes horribly wrong. Sounds familiar? “Reservoir Frogs” was a jaundiced description by one French writer.

In fact the film only resembles Tarantino's work in highly superficial ways. Tarantino's films are always superbly structured, economically crafted, contain a rare literary quality stemming from the brilliance of the dialogue and reveal a dizzying universe of pop cultural styles.

Killing Zoe is a negation of all these qualities. It is akin to one of those seedy tenth-rate plane hijack films, where the only ‘drama’ arises from the anticipation of the hostages being shot one by one.

Avary's film is structured around an unconvincing emotional triangle between three characters, Zed (Eric Stolz), Eric (Jean-Hughes Anglade) and Zoe (Julie Delpy). Zed is a professional American safe-cracker summoned to Paris by his childhood friend, the Franco-American, Eric.

Eric is every *Daily Mail* reader's nightmare vision of a

French revolutionary. An Algerian-loving, fascist-fire-bombing, drug crazed journalist, he leads a gang of gun-toting, left-bank hippies on a mission to rob Paris's biggest bank on Bastille Day.

A messianic psychopath, he develops an homo-erotic bond with the naive Zed, thumping any woman who so much as claps eyes on his American friend.

Zed bed

But Zed tumbles into bed with a classy art-loving prostitute, Zoe. A rhapsodic night is ended when Eric violently boots her out. Zoe, however, has a day job at the bank.

When the heist goes disastrously wrong, Zed is forced to choose between loyalty to his fellow gang-members or saving the life of his new lover, now one of the hostages.

Most men have the good sense to keep their adolescent wet dreams to themselves—

but not Roger Avary, who inflicts them on us with remarkable candour.

It is very hard to take the film seriously from the moment when Zed (who Avary describes as a self-portrait!) gives Zoe, the tart-with-an-art degree, her first ‘on-the-job’ orgasm.

French cinema gave birth to the modern ‘lad’ movie some 20 years ago with a young Gerard Depardieu behaving badly in *Les Val-seuses*, and it is easy to trace this misogynistic lineage in Avary's decision to give his boy's fantasy some self-indulgent French art-house chic.

The absurdities of *Killing Zoe* are too numerous to detail, but Avary defends his film on the grounds that it “reveals the living-for-the-moment nihilism of my generation.”

No, I'm afraid not. The nihilism plea is always the last refuge of the scoundrel direc-

tor bereft of any moral purpose or control over his work.

There are some funny moments. Zed and Eric trying to pet a dead cat will surely amuse even the most po-faced Shoreham protester.

Audition

And Jean-Hughes Anglade who has that Depardieu-like quality of appearing in every commercial French film, overacts magnificently. He wisely treats the role of Eric as an extended audition for the next Euro-villain in an Arnie or Sylvester Stallone blockbuster.

But no prizes for spotting a very in-jokey piss-take of Tarantino himself, with one of the gang members being portrayed as a pop cultural obsessive, wittering endlessly on about the best episode of *The Prisoner*.

Oh, how Roger and Quentin must have laughed together at that one.

REVIEWS

WHERE WE STAND

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

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

The capitalist class, driven and politically united by its own crisis, its requirement to maximise profits at the expense of the workers, has been given determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal class-war Tory high command.

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

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while ditching any pretence that they offer a socialist alternative. Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the government has simply fuelled and encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

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

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

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

We are a *marxist* current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by armchair academics, but the

revolutionary tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change. We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class – the overwhelming majority of society – to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish 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 fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world.

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

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

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

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

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

If you agree with what you see in *Socialist Outlook*, and want to join with us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in towns across the country.

Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

CONTACT US NOW!

Please tell me more about *Socialist Outlook*
 Yes, I want to become a *Socialist Outlook* supporter
 Name
 Address
 Post code Phone
 Send to *Socialist Outlook*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

FeedBACK

Socialist Outlook welcomes readers' letters. Send them to Feedback, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Letters over 300 words may be edited.

Back Serbia or Thatcher?

I CONTINUE to find your coverage of the Bosnia crisis a source of confusion. You devote half a page of issue 75 to an attack on Militant, yet in truth they have given greater space to alternative viewpoints than *Socialist Outlook*.

I also find many of the formulations in your article deeply unconvincing. For example you suggest Bosnia has existed as a 'historic nation' for 2,000 years. This introduces the un-marxist concept of a nation above people, since this 'Bosnia' pre-dates the Slav occupation of the Balkans by some 1,400 years.

You completely fail to place the struggle in its historic context, namely the break-up of a deformed workers state into a series of imperialist dominated, capitalist mini-states. And as you yourself admit, the differences between Serbs, Croats and Muslims are not of a national character.

Nor do I find the argument that an independent Bosnia would be multi-ethnic at all convincing. Those fighting for a truly multi-ethnic solution to

Serb Chauvinism would have fought to defend the integrity of Yugoslavia.

It is certainly true that the Yugoslav constitution allowed for the right to self-determination of its constituent republics, but this does not mean that marxists advocated its break up. Surely we stand for a truly democratic and voluntary socialist federation? It is one thing for socialists to oppose the reactionary Chetnik war against the Croats and Serbs. But it does not follow that socialists should advocate Bosnian or Croat independence. That logic leads you straight into the camp of Helmut Kohl and Thatcher.

The logic of the *Socialist Outlook* position on Bosnia is that fraternisation between the working class of Yugoslavia is impossible. This is a down-right capitulation to bourgeois nationalism and precisely the kind of view that capitalism seeks to propagate in order to maintain its rule world-wide.

**John Laurence,
Harrow.**

Warton 4

ON WEDNESDAY 23 February 1994 myself and others entered a British Aerospace factory at Warton, Lancashire, where

300 CLUB

For just £5 a month you get a chance to win £50. You can have as many chances as you want, safe in the knowledge that you have a far better chance of winning our bumper jackpot than in the National Lottery!
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 Signed
 Date
 Please return to 300 Club, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

Hawks are finally assembled.

We were there to protest about the latest sale of Hawks to Indonesia. However we were prevented from progressing with banners through the plant and were arrested and charged with going equipped with the intent of causing damage.

We are defending ourselves at Preston Crown Court. An aspect of our defence centres on a section of British law that implies one can commit one crime in order to stop a bigger crime. In our case, we believed we could stop the greater crime of Hawks being used in the genocide of the East Timorese.

For more information, phone me on 01457 871609, or Email: banem@es-sex.ac.uk.

**Michael Bane,
Colchester.**

Soft on 'Labourism'?

WHAT a misleading article you carried by Ellen Moore [Why Blair picked fight on Clause IV, *Socialist Outlook* 76]!

In this article we read that the activity in defence of Labour's 'traditional social democratic, collectivist framework' by a broad alliance 'in defence of social democracy' is a 'struggle about Marxism or Liberalism as the predominant ideology amongst those opposed to the Tories.'

There are three significant problems with this view.

Firstly the forces that defend Clause IV are not marxist or objectively defending something that is marxist. To suggest this fight to defend social democracy objectively defends marxism conceals the fact that the movement to defend Clause IV is not marxist. Isn't marxism for building a party which can act as the preparer and director of a workers' revolution? Do many Clause IV defenders concur?

Secondly marxism is not the same as collectivism. Marxism is more than collective action or collective ownership. The Labour 'traditionalists' defend a 100 per cent class collaborationist idea of collectivism. They want the *collective subordination* of the workers' movement to the survival of the ruling class and the rule of the bosses' state. They want to go back to having union leaders in at central levels of the state machinery. They need the Labour party to get in.

Thirdly the view that the defence of traditional social democracy, 'Labourism', is simultaneously a defence of marxism suggests that social democracy is compatible with marxism, or at least with class struggle action. The opposite is true.

Surely marxists work in the Labour Party and defend Clause IV only in order to produce better conditions for denouncing reformism and to help us to win working people away from Labourite ideas?

**Julian Menear,
Haringey.**

What's HAPPENING

To advertise your event in *Socialist Outlook*, send details to 'What's Happening', PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU by first post on Friday 17 February.

FEBRUARY

Fri 10

CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill 7.30pm Union Club Pershore Road Birmingham.

Sat 11

HOUNSLOW anti-racist march and rally 12.45pm Thornbury Playing Fields by Isleworth tube.

INTERNATIONAL Day-school organised by Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network.

10.30am - 5.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Holborn tube. Registration/Creche - £7 waged, £3 unwaged from SCGN, 1 Gorefield House, Canter-

bury Road, London NW6.

SAVE London Chest Hospital! assemble 12 noon Weavers' Field off Bethnal Green Road for march to the hospital on Bonner Street E1.

DEFY the Criminal Justice Act - Birmingham demonstration meets 12 noon Victoria Square.

DEFY the Criminal Justice Act - conference 10.30am Strathclyde University Students Union John Street Glasgow.

Tues 14

OXFORD anti-cuts lobby 8.15 am County Hall Oxford

DERBY firefighters support demonstration assemble

11am Silk Mill for rally 12 noon Market Place.

SEDGEFIELD Defend Clause 4 meeting with Arthur Scargill 7.30pm Mainsforth Community Centre Ferryhill 'Station' on the A167.

Weds 15

PROTEST at visit of Italian fascist Gianfranco Fini 4.30pm Chatham House St James Square SW1.

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Alan Simpson Haywards Heath.

Fri 17

CLAUSE 4 rally with Arthur Scargill Cardiff.

Sat 18

WELFARE State Network working conference on benefits at University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

Sat 18 - Sat 25

YOUTH CND week of local DIY action details 0171 607 3616.

Sun 19

DEFY the Criminal Justice Act - National Mass Tresspass assemble 12 noon Windsor rail station.

Thurs 23

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Ar-

thur Scargill Liverpool.

Fri 24

CLAUSE 4 London rally.

Sat 25

DEFY the Criminal Justice Act - anti-M77 demo 12 noon George Square Glasgow.

Sat 25/Sun 26

GREATER London Labour Party Conference.

Sun 26

CLAUSE 4 steering committee meeting.

Mon 27

SYLVIA Pye national appeal meeting with Tony Benn, Sylvia Pye and Sue Wilson 7.30pm details 0181 520 5237.

MARCH

Weds 1

WEST London Defend Clause 4 rally with Tony Benn, Bob Crow (RMT), Ealing Town Hall. 7.30pm organised by Ealing Trades Council.

Fri 3

CLAUSE 4 questionnaires return deadline.

Sat 4

CLAUSE 4 debate hosted by Leeds Fabian Society.

Sun 5

LABOUR Party central region conference.

Fri 10 - Sun 12

SCOTTISH Labour Party conference, Inverness.

Sun 12

CLAUSE 4 meeting with Steve French, Leicester.

Weds 15

NEC meeting to discuss new Clause 4.

Tues 21

MASS lobby of Southwalk College governing body 5.00pm - 6.00pm Waterloo site The Cut SE1

APRIL

Sat 1 - Sun 2

LABOUR Party Women's Conference, Derby.

Sat 8

WELFARE State Network Conference.

Sat 29 - Sun 30

LABOUR Party special conference.

MAY

Sat 27

DAY of Action by Campaign to Close Campfield.

Coming up in 'Socialist Outlook'

The next three issues of *Socialist Outlook* are all scheduled to carry special supplements.

Our next issue will carry a pull-out on the fight to defend Clause 4. A four-page feature in issue 79, published in the week of International Women's Day, will celebrate that important event.

Issue 80 will include the tenth issue of *theory+practice*, our occasional review. It will be the first issue of *t+p* to carry more than one major article.

This *t+p* will look at the re-introduction of Trotskyist ideas into the USSR and will include a report from US Fourth Internationalist Marylin Vogt-Downey of an important conference on Leon Trotsky held in Moscow.

Translated extracts will also be included of a conference pamphlet on Trotsky by Micheal I. Voelikov, head of the Economic Institute of the Russia Academy of Sciences.

Socialist Outlook's Chris Erswell also attended the historic international gathering, held in November last year.

'Militant' pamphlet still available

Socialist Outlook's final reprinting of the 1978 *Socialist Challenge* pamphlet 'The politics of Militant' is selling out fast.

Most recent orders have been from supporters of the Fourth International overseas.

While *Socialist Outlook* does not criticise Militant in the same way today, the pamphlet remains a useful tool in educational discussions.

Order the pamphlet today for £1.00 from *Outlook International*, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

The politics of Militant

"...It would, of course, be a disastrous error, an outright deception, to assert that the road to Socialism passes, not through the proletarian revolution, but through nationalisation by the bourgeois state of various branches of industry and their transfer into the hands of the workers' organisations."

Leon Trotsky

The republished pamphlet

'Outlook' plans May dayschool

Socialist Outlook will hold a London dayschool in mid-May to draw together the new readers and supporters we are gaining through our activity in the defence of Clause 4.

The school will follow a series of local *Socialist Outlook* forums being held by readers' groups in many towns and cities in the period before the Labour Party special conference on 29 April.

Full details of the dayschool will be carried in the Clause 4 pullout published with the next issue of *Socialist Outlook*.

Publication schedule

The *Socialist Outlook* print schedule in the last issue left one issue out.

We currently plan for our next issues to be shipped out on 22 February, 8 March, 22 March, 5 April, 19 April, 10 May and fortnightly from then until our August double issue.

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12 issues: Britain £9, rest of the world £12 (air mail: £30, Australasia, Japan, China £38.)

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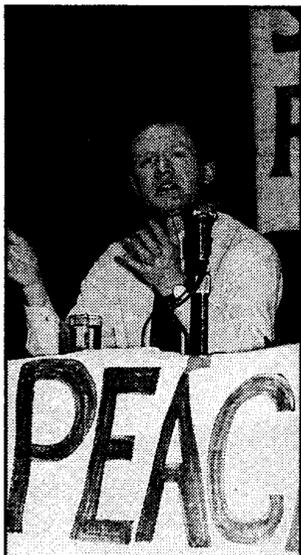
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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK



Republicans are left in the cold by Labour and Tories: Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness

Now Blair backs Loyalist veto

LABOUR'S leadership now thinks that the Protestant veto on Irish unity is 'common sense'. Tony Blair says we have to 'trust' the Tory plan for the occupied six counties in Northern Ireland.

His vision of 'new Labour' has no room for the needs of the oppressed nationalist minority. The party that sent in the troops in 1969 is quite happy to do deals which appease the most extreme elements by promising to preserve the Loyalist ascendancy.

Labour's move even further to the right followed a stormy week in which Ulster Unionists threatened to bring down Major's government, and Labour's northern Ireland spokesperson Mo Mowlem addressed an Ulster Unionist gathering in Derry.

Now that Labour's policy for Ireland is identical to that of the Tories, the Unionists are cynically using their flirtation with Labour to put more pressure on their preferred parliamentary partner – the Tory Party.

Why Tories want killer Clegg free

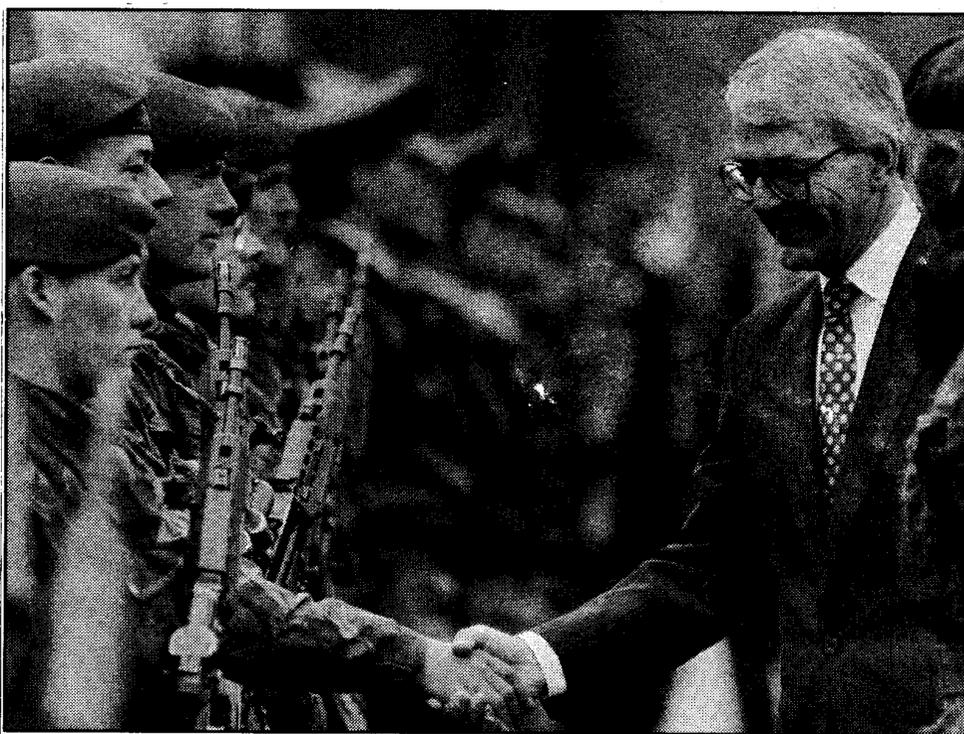
SINCE 1970, 300 people have been killed by Crown forces in the six counties of Ireland. Only two soldiers have been found guilty of murder for those killings.

In 1990 Karen Reilly and Martin Peake were shot dead by the 3rd Parachute regiment. Private Lee Clegg was sentenced to life imprisonment. Quite right.

How did 3 Para respond? Did they apologise to the families of Karen Reilly and Martin Peake? Quite the opposite. According to John Ware, Panorama journalist:

"3 Para constructed a large mock-up of the Astra peppered with bullet holes and displayed it in the canteen. In the front was a papier mache head with red paint depicting the shot that killed Martin Peake... the caption read 'Vauxhall Astra. Build by Robots. Driven by Joyriders. Stopped by A company.'"

The Parachute Regiment's murderous record in the six counties is legendary. They were responsible for the murder of fourteen civil rights marchers on Bloody Sunday in 1972. As with Karen Reilly, many of the Bloody Sunday demonstrators were shot in the back. No-one has yet been brought to trial.



Major and the Tories back murdering squaddies down the line

We should be clear about the issue involved: for once justice has been done. Neither the British government nor the tabloid press are able to stomach that. For them Irish lives do not count.

Oppose

The British labour movement should oppose the call for Clegg to be released.

If Labour's leadership – after years of indifference to such blatant

outrages as the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four – now wants to ride another Tory bandwagon and begin challenging abuses of justice, there is no shortage of victims of British imperialist frame-ups.

Following Blair's recent TV appearance appealing for us to trust Major's plans for Ireland, and Mowlem's guest appearance for the Loyalists, this will require a major campaign throughout the party and trades unions.