Back to school...
Back to cuts....

Back to FIGHT!

By Roy Leach, NUT
National Executive,
personal capacity

THOUSANDS of teaching jobs lost; class sizes at their largest since 1979; classroom support for children with special educational needs slashed; an ever-growing backlog of repairs for crumbling schools.

No wonder parents, teachers, governors and school students are calling for at least an extra £1 billion for education!

But what has been the Tory government’s response? Not only have they given no clear commitment to restore this year’s cuts (let alone begin to redress the damage done over the last few years), but all the talk during the recent leadership contest was of "more cuts” in public expenditure!

A close reading of Chancellor Clarke’s plans for the local authorities that provide education is that we could be in for at least two more years of cuts as deep as those inflicted on "Middle England" this year.

Nor will it just be the shires that suffer next time. Services in metropolitan areas such as Leeds, Birmingham and London which are coming through this year relatively intact will also be in the firing line.

What is obvious is that we can’t simply sit back and wait for the government to inject more money from the resources that are so desperately needed.

We have to force their hand:

and the best way to do this is to support the September 30 National Education Demonstration called by FACE.

We need to build on our success in March 25, when 15,000 parents, teachers, governors and school students marched through London. We have to make this into the biggest pro-education demonstration ever.

• No class over 30!
• Stop all education cuts!
• Fund education to meet needs!

Join FACE in London on September 30. Together we can win!

FACE demo London
Sat September 30
Assemble 12.30, Embankment
March to Hyde Park Rally
Unite to fight for minimum wage!

What we think

IT’S BEEN another case of the dog that didn’t bark. What is most surprising about the summer outbreak of criticism of Tony Blair’s rightward-moving Labour leadership is not how many, but how few MPs and union leaders have spoken up, how muted and limited are their complaints, and how docile the Party as a whole appears to have become since the defeat of Clause Four.

Who would have thought Blair could have ditched so many policies and snubbed so many key figures with so little resistance?

Clearly Labour loyalists are scared that any serious fightback against Blair could jeopardise the Party’s hopes of eventually winning its first general election for over 20 years.

But it comes to something when most of the Labour left, including most of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, remains silent, leaving it to old-style right wingers Roy Hattersley to complain at New Labour’s apparent indifference to the poor, and point out that “The party is certainly desperate to win, but it needs to be reassured about the purpose of winning”.

The first signs of a resistance came when the obscure midlands MP Richard Burden criticised ‘New Labour’s’ drift towards becoming a US-style party, and its ‘stalinst’ top-down style of centralising all decision-making around the leader’s office.

Burden’s article in New Statesman and Society was followed by a wave of outbursts from other low-profile MPs, Paul Flynn and Ronnie Campbell, and then by interviews and articles from union leaders Bill Morris and John Edmonds.

Since then the field has widened, with Peter Harris, Ken Livingstone, Dennis Canavan and George Galloway getting in on the act, voicing in various ways the unease at the party’s rightward drift and increasingly authoritarian stance, its lack of membership involvement, and the domination of Blair’s inner circle by arrogant middle class refugees from the SDP, lacking any commitment to or respect for the Labour Party’s working class roots.

Discarded

But as the heat of Labour policies discarded under Tony Blair mounts to mammoth proportions, there is no sign that these sundry individuals have any intention of leading or joining a coordinated fight back for radical or socialist policies.

Blair’s offensive has left the Party stripped of any radical appeal to the electorate on the key issues of the day.

In summer of droughts and water company rip-offs scandal the Party has abandoned its commitment to privatisation rationalisation of the water industry.

As the gap between rich and poor widens to record levels, Blair has snubbed the unions by setting his face against putting any figure on a minimum wage. Amid rising anger over the huge salaries of top bosses, Labour has scrapped its pledge to lift the ceiling on national insurance payments for top earners. The Party shows no such concern for the poorest, however, Blair’s team have dropped any commitment to increase pensions and child benefit.

Anti-union

With public opinion swinging back to support for trade union rights, Tony Blair’s team remains resolutely anti-union, more concerned to seek the views of top employers than union leaders on the minimum wage, and stubbornly opposed to repeal of Tory anti-union laws.

As the he-she service descends into new crisis over pay and the rationing of care, Labour has junked its pledge to pump an extra £1 billion into the NHS, and retreated from its promise to scrap the bureaucratic purchaser-provider split.

And while thousands of parents, teachers, governors and school students march in protest at education cuts, Labour has made no pledge to increase spending, and neglected on its pledge to bring open-schools back under council control.

While the policies are bad enough, it’s the least defensible issue of Blair’s style of leadership that has provoked a most-widespread tide of anger among local activists, not all of them traditionally on the left: they feel that the Party has lost its way, sacrificing its core support in the search for the floating voter.

Yet the only way this can be confronted is through debates on particular policies. The G415 target for a minimum wage is a policy that could potentially unite dissenting CLP activists and trade unionists to deal Blair his first major setback at this year’s Party conference.

Such landmarks will be important for the future, encouraging the left and setting out markers for battles to come.

Whatever its formal policies, millions of workers will vote Labour at the next election in the naive hope and expectation that a Blair government would reverse some of the Tory attacks, and make a real difference to the way they live.

This remains the most dramatic contradiction of all. The first few months of a Labour government on Blair’s policies would quickly shatter all illusions and force the army of important sections of the working class, not least in the public sector.

Encouraged by the ‘revolutions’ of the Tories, workers would be less prepared to accept the insults at the hands of British capitalism’s ‘second team’. Clashes between the unions and Labour in office are almost certain.

Contemptuous

Contemptuous though they are of the working class and its organisations, much of Blair’s right wing base in the Party will have little stomach for a fight when the tide starts flowing against them.

But the question is whether a credible left wing alternative will have been developed lead the fightback. That it is important that no the silence has been broken Blair’s left critics go back in preparation for government.

That does not mean standing idly by as the Party is pithically means fighting the now, building a co-ordinate left wing response, and chumming each of Blair’s policies retreats as and when they occur.

Celebrate the life of Ernest Mandel

Speakers at the Memorial Rally include:

Catherine Samary, Fourth International, Duncan Hallas, Socialist Workers Party,
Charlie Van Gelderen, Socialist Outlook.
Invited: Tarig Ali, Mildren Gordon MP, Ken Coates MEP

7.00pm-9.00pm Friday 13 October. Friends House,
London, by East End. Tickets £2 (£2 UB40, students) to
Students must get organised

By Ricky Paul

THER CAN BE no doubt that the recent expansion in student numbers in higher education has resulted in an expansion in student debt and in a reduction in spending by universities on each student.

Although universities and colleges are still funded by central government and through local authorities, they now, even more than before, act as profit-making organisations (many are now independent corporations).

Fast education is the result - increased the level of profit by increasing the throughput of students. Invest just enough in books or facilities to satisfy... not students but the funding councils.

Universities have used this profit on increased wages to increased numbers of managers, built new buildings for conferences etc. Now that student numbers have been frozen it is both students and the lecturing and administrative staff that are suffering - cutbacks in lecturing staff are commonplace.

The fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) demonstration in London on 30 September is a great opportunity for students and workers in higher education to join up with people in secondary and further education.

We also need to start organising on the ground in our own colleges. Let's ask the management where the money, our money, is going? Is it going on fees for students or staff or on new carpets for the vice-chancellor's office?

We can join together with the campus trades unions in a campaign for increased funding for higher education and put pressure on the Labour Party leadership in the run up to the election.

The Free Education Campaign is already planning an autumn demonstration against cuts.

This pressure also needs to be directed at the NUS, where a genuinely broad left coalition needs to be built to oppose the conservative NUS leadership.

This is our future: these are our colleges. Now is the time to start massing this — but it is easier to do that if we join together in collective action.
SIXTEEN years of retreat and cuts by top union leaders have decimated the strength of organised labour in Britain, and re- duced this year’s TUC Brighton Congress the most irrelevant yet. On some of the key issues affecting working people — unemployment, low pay, cuts in public services, rampant privatisation, or even trade union rights at work — has the TUC not any serious campaigns or had anything of significance to say.

Figures from industrial tribunals give a glimpse of the reign of terror in many workplaces in which staff are unorganised or unions denigrated: successful un- fair dismissal cases have more than doubled in number since 1978, while the days of strike action have fallen to an all-time record low.

But union leaders have in- timidated activists at local and national level. And now union leaders are further reinforced by their reluctance to cross swords with Tony Blair’s increasingly union friendly government. The strategy for strategising remains the same: strategically distancing themselves from the Labour Party’s historic roots in the run-up to the next election.

Small wonder the levels of unionisation have fallen to the lowest levels in Britain for over 50 years.

Still 6.9 million workers — less than a third of the work- force — are now in TUC-affiliated unions — of whom only a minority are manual workers. Even this figure is likely to be an exaggeration, based on notoriously inflated totals for unions like the TGWU and UNISON.

Despite the evidence of the dire consequences of end- lessly retreating before the government and employers, and welcome signs of new resistance from rail workers, fire fighters and sections of health workers among others, there is little sign that the TUC is preparing any policy shift.

Headed up by Blairite John Monks, it has guaranteed to the bosses of the CBI to sat quietly back and watch “New Labour” stroke the bums into the unions, tamely accept- ing the pitiful offerings of Labour’s employment policy, while pleading for an ex- panded ‘role’ under a Labour government.

According to Monks, this means having “an influence on these aspects of economic policy relevant to unemployment, pay, competitiveness and the labour market”.

But already the TGWU and GMB — fearful of conflict with Tony Blair’s foot-bath — have broken the unity around the £4.15 figure as the basis for a new minimum wage; engaging in a cynical debating section in the countdownto this autumn’s conferences.

In fact Blair is opposed to specifying any figure at all. The reality is that the un- ions will only regain influ- ence based on their willingness to lead strikes and confront employers and the government of the day.

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The incredible shrinking unions

The level of unionisation has plummeted from 52 percent when Thatcher took office in 1979.

Consequently, wretched re- turns by the main unions, left first the printworkers and then the miners isolated and eventually defeated in their defiance.

Many big bastions of man- ufactural work and union strength (steel, shipbuilding, mining, docks, print) have since been hacked back, some to the point of ex- tinction.

Clerical and sales staff, and professionals such as teach- ers, nurses, social workers, science and engineers, and the self-employed are now making up 60 percent of all union- ish members.

Industrial workers (45%) and craft work- ers (40%) are now less strongly union- ish than professional staff (50%), but these newly-un- organised sectors have not estab- lished any track record of militancy.

A whole generation of younger workers has been largely ignored by the union- ish leadership: only 25 percent of workers in their 20s is a union member, compared to 60 percent of those over 40.

While more people than ever recognise the need for trade unions and a majority of workers are now opposed to the balance of forces created by the vicious battle of Tory anti-unionism, there has done little or nothing to build on this sentiment and march out to the low-paid and unem- ployed.

The abject failure of the GMB and TGWU to recruit staff in the expanding hotel and catering sector, for example, has enabled the em- ployers to force wages rates even lower than they were.

Defeat of miners led to jobs massacre

when the wages councils abolished in 1993.

40 percent of vacancies advertised in the former wages council industries, which employ 2.5 million workers, are now offering pay of less than £3.03 per week — the national insur- ance threshold.

Even unemployment figures show that 1.3 million full- time workers were paid less than £2.50 an hour.
A world in crisis: Fighting back for socialism

1991 London demonstration for cancellation of third world debt won widespread labour movement sponsorship

Unemployment

Consider the following facts. 40 million people are unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries. Across much of the Third World there has been a decline in living standards, not a stagnation but a regression. All the hard won gains of the anti-salvion struggles increases in literacy rates, health standards are being eroded. This of course has a tremendous negative impact on the working class and oppressed sectors of society on which our movement bases itself and which we believe will be the moral force for revolutionary change for the better.

15 million children die each year from poverty related illnesses. Toxic waste produced to satisfy over-consumption in the rich countries floats about on our oceans looking for some poor country on whose people it can be dumped. That soon, unless an imperial power can be stopped in its tracks, nuclear testing will resume in the South Pacific against the will of the people of those countries and when the serious health risks are well known. That food mountains exist in Europe and yet there are manufactured food shortages in other places.

There are two processes at work. On the one hand we see an integration of the economies of the advanced capitalist countries. This can be deduced from studying trade flows, their origin and destination. Most world trade now takes place between the advanced capitalist countries. The share of world trade of these economies has risen from 60 per cent in the early 1980's to 75 per cent now.

But that latter figure is also about the average of the share of export from the rich countries to other rich countries. Vast sections of the world are simply excluded from these trade movements. The business press crows about the large middle class consumer markets in some poor countries. For example, India's is estimated at 600 million but they ignore the 700 million others.

So on the other hand, the world market is not exploiting but abandoning billions of people. It's a crude joke which contains a brutal truth, that it's only one thing worse than being exploited by capitalism - and that is NOT to be exploited by it! There are only consumers in this society, not citizens; and if you are not a consumer you might as well not exist.

The second process seems to contradict my earlier point. There is also a binding together of the fortunes and lives of people across the world. Global capitalism is not about to break the chains on the dominated countries.

Samir Amin among others has suggested that poor countries may be able to delink themselves from the tyranny of imperialism, and by integrating the dominated world make their economies serve their peoples, not the other way around. I applaud sentiment but doubt that he is mistaken.

Dependence

There is no sign that the dependence of the poor countries on the rich is being weakened, in fact the reverse is true.

The issue of Third World debt is a case in point. Every year without exception larger and larger sums are transferred from the Third World to the First, in excess of the paltry sums being invested or loaned or granted. Without servicing the interest on this debt, leave alone repaying it, no new funds are disbursed to these countries. Yet to pay the debt when the low value of your exports and devaluation of your currency lead to a trade balance deficit, encourages social sector spending to be cut.

While we support democratisation in all sectors, what does it matter if there was one party there are now fifteen but regardless of which comes to government they all have the same eco-
nomic programme? Identical because regardless of whether one is in Buenos Aires, Jakarta, Warsaw or Dar Es Salaam, it has been drafted for them in Washington, D.C. by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Here are some of the features of late capitalism which are of particular interest to socialist revolutionaries.

1. Growing concentration and centralisation of capital within some countries and regions

IN OUR DISCUSSION of the national question in the British state there is an emphasis on the centralisation of capital and power. There are examples of building societies on our own streets are dwindling with mergers and takeovers.

In the US, Walt Disney — a giant in itself — has bought Capital Cities/ABC which owns the largest network station ABC, for US$11 billion. In contrast to America’s national income in 1990 was US$1 trillion. While trans-nation corporations mushroomed in the past, it is questionable how long they can survive today without facing up with other companies removing competitors.

2. Intensification and extension of capitalist exploitation

INCOMES ARE FALLING, working hours growing longer, attacks are made by both conservative and social democratic governments on social welfare provisions like free education and health care, pensions and benefits. Every gain and victory of the working class this century is under daily siege. This is one reason why defending the welfare state has and will continue to be a priority in our political work.

The average US worker was working 163 hours more in 1987 than her counterpart would have twenty years before. It is no longer simply the Japanese worker who is forced to work more, take fewer holidays and do overtime to maintain international competitiveness. This trend is being generalised even across the advanced capitalist countries.

3. Class inequalities widen

THE RICH GET richer and the poor get poorer. Remember when in Latin America we were told that capitalism could work and Brazil and Mexico were vindicated in proof?

Interesting how no one mentions them any longer. Instead the new ‘miracle’ economy is Chile. However, the neo-liberal ideologues cannot explain away the fact that the poorest 20 per cent of people are subsisting on 20 per cent of what they had in 1970 and they face growing immiseration.

5. Inter-imperialist rivalries

THE EMERGENCE and development of trade blocs centred around one or more imperialist power and the rivalries between them which came to the fore during the GATT negotiations reveal the tensions among the brotherhood of thieves.

A US-Japan trade war always seems imminent only to be narrowly averted. We are not in a Kautsky ultra-imperialist age. Meanwhile neither does the US appear to be the super-imperialist power that some foresaw in the aftermath of the 1992 Gulf War and the break up of the Soviet Union.

Its economic difficulties will complicate the world to moderate its ambitions. In El Salvador and Yugoslavia economic conditions in ex-Yugoslavia indicate competing pulls in its foreign policy.

Further, there is competition for the world and regional markets between the trade blocs but also within them. The British bourgeoisie doesn’t know that its Atlantic alliance and the US military presence in Latin America, the Middle East and the Far East could yet rip the Conservative Party apart.

Meanwhile the countries of the Third World have

Globalising a capitalist economy trapped in recession

SINCE THE first generalised recession of 1974-1975 the world capitalist economy has gone into a recessionary long wave from which there seems no escape.

In these selections from a resolution of the recent World Congress of the Fourth International, MAXIME DURAND explains the consequences of capitalist globalisation. The translation, from the Belgian Fourth Internationalist paper La Gauche, is by Duncan Chapple.

Phases of the long wave

THE 1970s SAW the end of a long expansionary long wave in the capitalist economy. The generalised recession of 1974-1975 clearly marked this turnaround, sending all the capitalist countries into a crisis which still persists. The development of several phases within this long wave need to be analysed, if we are to clearly identify where we are. The first phase immediately followed that recession; it corresponded to the pursuit of the Keynesian policies after the Second World War. Simultaneously petro-dollars were recycled to be disbursed to Third World borrowers in an attempt to boost the economy.

Neo-liberal turn

THE INADEQUACY of this therapy became clear with the explosion of the second generalised recession at the start of the 1980s. This is the second important turning point, from which neo-liberal policies—with remarkably similar objective and means—spread around the world.

For a few years the Third World counties had served to lessen the slow-down of the world economy. They were then violently hit by the debt crisis and the rise in interest rates. A period of profound restructuring in the imperialist countries opened, accompanied by the rise of unemployment—especially in Europe.

This neo-liberal phase, which we are clearly still in, can be separated out into ‘sub-periods’—the offensive (1980-1986), the apparent successes (1987-1990) and the relapse and revival of 1990 and 1991.

There was a systematic offensive against workers in the first half of the 1980s pursued under the watchword of ‘flexibility’. This not only concerned the production of goods, but, more widely, workers’ overall conditions: social security, the right to work and so on.

The advance of, and resistance against, neo-liberalism varied, but the generalisation of those policies and the formation of an opposition provoked by the smothering of the world-wide demand for labour.
World continue to be subordinated to those of the rich countries, their natural and mineral resources plundered, their markets propped open, their people made dispensable units of labour, their exports discriminated against in western markets by protectionist barriers.

We are not in a post-imperialist age. Imperialism is alive and kicking.

6. Class struggle is not dead

THE CAPITALIST CLASS is mercilessly attacking the working class in a class war in which the latter is on the defensive. Much ground has been and is being lost to the advantage of Capital, the combativity and militancy of the class is fast becoming a memory of the distant past.

However in none of the imperialist countries has the working class suffered such great defeats that it is completely out of the equation. In fact aside from the inherent need of capital to open up the globe, the so-called "flying geese" strategy of capital, whereby it migrates from country to country looking for lower paid workers, bigger tax breaks, non-unionised or repressed labour movements, poor environmental standards and so on, is because it is unable to push down its costs in its home countries below a certain limit. It hasn't given up but it hasn't succeeded yet either.

Socialist strategy

ON THE LEVEL of socialist strategy, certain conclusions should be drawn from the analysis above. These trends suggest that the nation state will remain a terrain of struggle between Capital and Labor. The struggle will be fought mostly within the borders of the nation state. The locus of political power will be for the foreseeable future reside there as well. We are not facing a global state or even at the Western European level a supranational state. There has been a redefinition of the state and its functions in the present phase of capital accumulation. It has also become much more cleaner particularly in the Third World that the state which was seen as a shield against neo-colonialism has all along been subordinated to the local ruling class.

The state does not have a neutral class character nor can a worker's government aim to change the inequalities of power and wealth in society without confronting and changing the capitalist state. Important battles will take place between global capital and the working class at the level of the state because that is where the tensions are most pronounced. Therefore it is also an important lever for change and tool for transformation of society.

Campaigns around work must become part of the agenda of the British Left. Our comrades in France have a radical reduction in the working week is a pre-condition for a democratic pluralist, self-managing society run by and for a regime of the associated producers.

A radical reduction in the working week is a pre-condition for a democratic, pluralist, self-managing society run by and for a regime of the associated producers.

Reasons for the passing success

BECAUSE OF the demand increase which followed Reaganist policies, especially the military spending, the outbreak of the third recessionary wave was delayed. The world economy developed an asymmetrical set-up, in which Japanese and German capital financed the substantial US deficit by increasing interest rates to unprecedented levels.

At the same time the cracking and collapse of the bureaucratised societies made it possible to present capitalism as the unsurpassable horizon of humanity.

Only the Marxists pointed out the limited and contradictory character of this recovery rather than sustainable growth it was a cyclical movement based on an almost mechanical kick-starting of investment founded on the restructuring of production worldwide.

The relapse

THE THIRD generalised recession set-tled this debate and opened a new phase, marked out by very important reversals. Seen this way, the role of the Gulf War was secondary - the recession began before the oil crisis in several countries and continued long after the war. It had limited economic repercussions.

The characteristics of this recession clearly illustrate the current period: deep, durable and costly in terms of jobs. Much more than in the previous recessions, it has revealed the growing contradiction between economic globalisation and the survival of national trajectories.

International Finance

THE FRENZIED neo-liberal economic deregulation in the 1980s underlay and amplified the globalisation process.

Contrary to all the theory's forecasts, this did not lead to reductions in the real interest rates. They have remained at record levels.

Inter-imperialist rivalries

GLOBALISATION of the world capitalist economy is unmanageable, and not just because of the instability of exchange rates and finance. The principal source of the disequilibrium lies in the quite new situation - which has established direct relations between economic zones with very different levels of productivity.

This is different from the internationalisation of capitalism: multinationals used to be the agents of a single imperialist centre. The dominant countries had one-to-one relationships with these multinationals, completing a system of mutual exploitation.

With Globalisation, the relations start off as multilateral, and the group of multinationals have come to another stage of internationalisation which leads, bit by bit, to them getting more autonomy in relation to their country of origin. This is new.

What some have called the "Tread" does not just signify the tri-polar (US, Japan, Europe) domination of the world economy, but also a certain kind of relation between these three poles. Nothing in this configuration is stable or harmonious. Each is accompanied by fundamental imbalances. The three are endowed with very different cohesiveness.

The Asian zone is the best protected and the best organised, while Japan and Korea are present in all the world markets, the penetration of their interior markets is, in practice, extremely difficult.

The organisation into concentric circles of the region's economies and China's involvement have achieved formidable economic efficiency and commercial aggressiveness.

Europe differs completely from this plan. It is an amalgamation of post-imperial capitalist nation-states which are largely open to external competition. Europe is less present in the third-market markets and, above all, has shown itself to be incapable of a dynamic structuring of its natural periphery: the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe.

As for the US, its vocation to direct the American continent was reaffirmed by the treaty signed with Canada and Mexico. However the differences in development between the north and south of the continent are too important to be simply secondary considerations for much longer.
Contradictions in building Europe

**Conclusions**

Europe is playing the game of free trade alone. The permeability of its economy weakens its attractiveness. However, the capitalist coalition has the potential for internal conflict because of its multiple imbalances. Unless it breathes life into a European "nationalism"—something which won’t correspond to the interests of the dominant groups, the other poles of the "Triad" are organised hierarchically around one nation-state, which remains the bastion of the dominant groups.

The situation differs in Europe, especially since the multinationals rarely aspire to function with a European logic. The Treaty of Maastricht was, perhaps, the fastest route to a solution. It was also the most constraining.

Its failure results not only from misunderstanding the specific details of national economies but also from the different balances of force between the social classes within each of those countries making up the European Union. The incoherence of the European Union is shown whenever it finds itself in a confrontation with the other two imperial powers. The **...**
Zone of women's misery

Women working in Sri Lanka's free trade zones face a variety of oppression and maltreatment. Although Sri Lankan women retain their dowry, they have to have a dowry to get married. Many women in the zone work intensely hard in order to get together their dowry money. This means that they may not be married at all or they may have to marry a woman who is not of their choice. Most of them face a variety of oppression and maltreatment.

The women sleep in shifts in dormitories, facing a high incidence of rape. They are seen as 'bad women' in their home villages, and women are frequently robbed of dowry money by men who make a specialty of relationships with women who work in free trade zones.

The largest source of foreign revenue in Sri Lanka is remittances from workers in the Middle East, many of them married women. Care of children in Sri Lanka is by extended family structure, which allows women to be superexploited as domestic servants in the Middle East.

Home working is also widespread. Outside Kandy, women make 'local' cigarettes - they pay 75 rupees ($1) per day for hand rolling 1,000 cigarettes, which sell for 0.5 rupees ($0.01) in the local market, and the 'local' rolling leaf is imported from India.

United Federation of Women, Chandrani Jayawardane, Chairwoman, Colombo, Sri Lanka, has campaigned against the legalisation of prostitution, domestic violence, and the importation of peasant girls from the Middle East.

What has been happening to Chinese girls?

China is one of several Asian countries, including India, Taiwan and Korea, where women's circumstances have become more difficult due to the overwhelming desire for male children. This is the case of China, which is a country where there is a strict one-child policy, and where abortion has become common. A massive 85 percent of all abortions are of female fetuses.

This is largely due to the increased access to ultrasound equipment and the desire for male children. Furthermore, the government has introduced a policy of 'one child per family' to control population growth. The enforcement of this policy has led to a gender imbalance in China, with a surplus of male children born to families who have already had one girl. This has caused a shortage of women in rural areas, and has led to higher marriage and dowry costs for girls.

However, the situation is improving as the government has recently lifted the one-child policy in some areas. Furthermore, there have been efforts to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality and to promote education for girls. Despite these efforts, the issue of gender imbalance remains a challenge in China, and more needs to be done to address the problem.
After 50 years of ‘independence’, Vietnam banks on capitalism

By N. C. Darwin

EIGHT YEARS ago the Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina, a French-run bank, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. It is the second oldest bank in Vietnam and was founded in 1892 under French colonial rule. The bank was originally established to facilitate the exchange of money between the local population and the French settlers. Over the years, it has played a significant role in the economic development of Vietnam. It has also been a symbol of colonial domination and exploitation. Today, the bank operates under the supervision of the Vietnamese government and services the needs of the local economy. The bank's history reflects the tumultuous changes that have occurred in Vietnam over the past century, from colonial rule to independence and war, and finally to the current period of economic reform and development. The bank's role in the Vietnamese economy continues to evolve, with a focus on providing financial services to support the country's growing economy. The Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Vietnamese people, as they strive to build a prosperous and stable future for their country.

USRB

Vietnamese banks are critical to the country's economic development. They provide essential financial services to individuals and businesses, facilitating trade and investment. The banks are also important sources of employment, with thousands of Vietnamese working in the banking sector. The future of Vietnamese banks is uncertain, with many questions remaining about their role in promoting economic growth and development. The current economic climate in Vietnam is characterized by rapid growth and expansion, but also by significant challenges, including political instability and environmental degradation. The Vietnamese banking sector must adapt to these challenges in order to meet the needs of its customers and to contribute to the country's overall progress.

Private sector

The Vietnamese government is implementing economic reforms to promote private sector growth. These reforms include the liberalization of the banking sector, allowing for greater competition among banks and increased access to credit for businesses. The government is also working to improve the regulatory environment for businesses, reducing bureaucracy and red tape. These efforts are aimed at creating a more conducive environment for private sector growth, with the goal of increasing productivity and reducing poverty. The Vietnamese government is taking steps to implement these reforms, but progress is slow and many challenges remain. The private sector is expected to play a key role in driving economic growth in Vietnam, and the government is working to create a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

An international conference on the role of private sector in Vietnam's economic development is to be held in Hanoi in November. The conference is expected to bring together government officials, business leaders, and international experts to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Vietnamese private sector. The conference is an important opportunity for stakeholders to share insights and experiences, and to work towards a more inclusive and sustainable economy in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina has a long and storied history, with a legacy that reflects the complex history of Vietnam. As the country continues to develop and evolve, the role of the bank and the banking sector must be redefined to meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy. The Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina is a symbol of the resilience and adaptability of the Vietnamese people, and its future is one of promise and potential.

One solution

Vietnam has made significant progress in its economic development over the past decades. The country has adopted free-market policies and implemented structural reforms to attract foreign investment and promote growth. The Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina has played a key role in this process, providing financial services to both domestic and foreign investors. The government has also implemented policies to reduce poverty and increase access to education and health care. Despite these achievements, Vietnam still faces significant challenges, including inequality, corruption, and environmental degradation. The Vietnamese National Bank of Indochina must continue to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy.

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French campaign
against HiroChirac

By Pierre Rousséau

There is a very deep fear about the nuclear threat and a general sentiment that nothing in the present world situation justifies maintaining nuclear weapons.

Within two weeks of Chirac's decision, 80 organisations political parties, trade unions, environmental groups, NGOs agreed a common appeal to demand and to nuclear tests and French signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

For the first time in a decade, the conditions are very favourable. Ten years ago, at the time of the terrorist bombing of the French government's Greenpeace (Rainbow Warrior), the international reaction was very big, but Greenpeace (France) was completely broken by the French secret service.

Stopping the nuclear tests will be extremely difficult to win. Chirac has put all his presidential authority on the line. Here we have a huge question of democracy: one man can make a decision of intractable consequences for humanity.

The nuclear tests raise the question: will be 21st century be nuclear? We know all the nuclear powers want to keep nuclear weapons, but the majority of counties (and people) want to see nuclear weapons destroyed. That's why we demand in an immediate signing of the test ban treaty.

No European government will ever negotiate peace directly with the French government. They know that the French and the British are using the fact that they alone have nuclear weapons to strengthen their position in Europe. Only if mass movements develop the diplomatic initiative of Paris can be very great.

Over the summer we aimed to convert the appeal into a million-person petition with more than 100 component organisations doing its best to have the appeal signed as widely as possible. This will put us in a position to react massively at the end of the summer.

Pierre Rousséau edits Rouge, the French Fourth International weekly.

Sydney, Australia, protest on Hiroshima Day drew hundreds

Remember Tuzla's Serbs

Despite the best efforts of the British media to give the impression that all Bosnian Serbs are in favour of a Greater Serbia, a significant minority of Bosnian Serbs remain opposed.

Tuzla—currently under attack from supporters of the Serbian nationalist project—contains a considerable Serbian population. The same is true of Sarajevo.

We publish an interview with a leader of the Tuzla Serbs to present the side of the story of the political partition would prefer kept quiet.

Tuzla—"The Serbs are the key to the peace in the former Yugoslavia," says Miso Bozic, the chair of Tuzla's Serbian Union.

"The current Serbian leaders, Milosevic in Serbia itself and Karadzic, the leader of rebel forces in Bosnia, are both following a policy that puts the notion of a Great Serbia above all other considerations.

"Such a policy is outright fascist. It is based on war crimes, repression and ethnic cleansing. Along with similar trends in Croatian policy, this has led to there now being more than two million Bosnian refugees."

The ethnic cleansing policy, in Milo Bozic's view, is not going to lead to peace but to endless conflicts. The objective for the Serbian union in Tuzla and for similar unions all over Bosnia is, therefore, to develop another kind of understanding among the nation.

Tuzla's Serbian union represents the city's Serbian population. Before the war Bosnia was home to 130,000 Serbs, but this has been rejected by the Muslim government.

Third, they are fighting to be recognised by the international community.

Together with Serbs in other parts of Bosnia that are under the control of the Bosnian government's army, Tuzla's Serbs have formed a consultative council. The first meeting of this council in Sarajevo in 1994 represented about 200,000 Serbs. The council also has contacts with Serbian nationalists.

Miso Bozic and the other representatives of Tuzla's Serbs are bitter about the international community's view of Karadzic as the only representative of the Bosnian Serbs.

Only building an alternative to Milosevic and Karadzic, giving all the Serbs an opportunity to choose sides, can bring real peace.

But the problem has been that these forces, like the peace forces in general, have had great difficulty in meeting, in being able to discuss together, and in putting things forward.

Miso Bozic has been in Germany and talked with many emigrants and refugees: "I see generally, they didn't know anything about the real situation."

But he takes a hopeful view: "We are soon going to have the ability to appeal directly to the entire world. Tuzla is soon going to get a satellite station that the Serbian nationalists cannot jam.

So, we are developing contacts with other opposition groups in Serbia. Soon, we will send a delegation of Tuzla Serbs to Belgrade itself in order to discuss with opposition parties."

[This interview was conducted by Vago Rasmussen and published in Internationalen, the Swedish Fourth Internationalist paper.]

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WORLD OUTLOOK
Bosnia: no to NATO bombings

Lift Arms
Embargo

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK is opposed to NATO's bombing of Bosnian Serbs. The objective is not to liberate or unite Bosnia, but to enforce its partition.

The latest imperialist 'peace' plan involves handing over 50 per cent of Bosnia to the Serbs, making the rest a Croatian dependency.

Unlike some who have denounced the bombing - such as MPs Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell - we do so as defenders of Bosnia. We have always defended the right of the people of Bosnia to secede from former Yugoslavia and to create an independent, multi-ethnic Bosnian state. Many of the British left, by refusing to 'take sides' in what they dismiss as a 'civil war', in essence, support the Greater Serbs project.

We understand why residents of Sarajevo cheered NATO planes dropping bombs. After suffering 4 years of siege, bombardment, and being denied weapons to defend themselves, such a reaction is hardly surprising.

NATO's bombs have been dropped on people living in the areas controlled by Karadzic. Many Bosnian Serb civilians have been killed. However, main objective of the military action has been to repress and intimidate those Muslims, Serbs and Croats committed to fighting for an independent, multi-ethnic Bosnia.

NATO 'solution'

NATO's actions are designed, despite Michael Portillo's denials, to force a 'diplomatic solution'. They are also designed to head off criticism in the West, particularly in the United States, of the continuing arms embargo on Bosnia, and resolve the differences between the imperialist powers. That is why the United States has asserted itself as the architect of the current bombing campaign. Bosnian Serbs have been killed in order to provide Clinton's flagging credibility.

Far from being designed to preserve multi-ethnic Bosnia, the NATO bombing campaign aims to force the acceptance of the latest 'plan' which, in common with all its predecessors, aims at the carve-up of Bosnia.

All the signs are that, perhaps under some pressure from Serbian President Milosevic, the leaders of the so-called Bosnian Serb Republic would be willing to negotiate a settlement which cinks with dividing lines but leaves them controlling 49 per cent of Bosnia. NATO's bombing campaign is to warn those in Bosnia who want to continue to fight for an independent multi-ethnic state that they will get no support.

The bombing is also intended to strengthen those forces in the Bosnian government who are prepared to accept partition into a Bosnian Serb area - which will probably include the supposed 'safe haven' of Gorazde -- and a Croat-Muslim federation.

Oddly, given western demonisation of Islam, this is an intervention designed to bolster up the most Islamist currents against the defenders of secularism. It is an intervention in support of Bosnian President Izetbegovic and Foreign Minister Sacirbeg against Prime Minister Haris Siljadic.

Yet it is not as odd as it seems. Clearly the 'rising star' in the Bosnian government is Sacirbeg who, as former ambassador to the United Nations, clearly has the strongest ties to the United States. Sacirbeg and Milosevic (who also has strong personal ties with the U.S. and is clearly seen as the best vehicles for implementing a solution in the interests of U.S. imperialism. Those who continue to argue for a multi-ethnic Bosnia are seen as obstacles to western plans.

Over the summer Siljadic briefly resigned in protest at attempts by Izetbegovic and Sacirbeg to force through a constitutional change reserving the post of President for a Muslim. Significantly Sljadic was backed by much of the army. In the Tuzla region every single military commander supported Sljudic's continued insistence on a multi-ethnic Bosnia. It was no doubt this military support that persuaded him to withdraw his resignation.

NATO's bombing campaign aims to isolate these forces in favour of the Redjelis of carving up Bosnia.

Swallowing up

The division of Bosnia between a Serb area and the Muslim-Croat federation will eventually lead to the swallowing up of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia - though the bombing campaign no dores also serves to remind Milosevic and Tudjman of Croatia that they should allow a decent interval to pass before embarking on such ambitions. The ultimate losers will be the Bosnian Muslims, despite the intentions of Izetbegovic and Sacirbeg.

Yet, in many ways, the biggest victims of NATO's offensive will be the hundreds of thousands of Serbs who have remained loyal to a multi-ethnic Bosnia.

There will be no place for them in a Muslim-Croat federation, particularly a federation swallowed up by Tudjman. Nor will Greater Serbia offer much of a prospect.

In the long run only the overthrow of Tudjman and Milosevic by the Croatian and Serbian working classes can bring about a solution.

In the meantime socialists stand with all those forces resisting the carve-up of Bosnia. We stand for the right of the people of Bosnia to preserve an independent multi-ethnic state.

That means total opposition to the NATO bombings and a continued campaigns for lifting the arms embargo so that the people of Bosnia can defend themselves and determine their own future.

Krajina recapitulated: see p 11