It's got to be the limit!
March to stop Tory education cuts

THE ANGER is building again over cuts in education just a few weeks into term, as parents, teachers and school students survey the damage done by last year's cutbacks.
The mood is building for the national demonstration against cuts in schools called by Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) on September 30.
Thousands of teaching posts and thousands more support staff have been axed over the summer – many of them through 'voluntary' surrender, early retirement, 'natural wastage' or the non-renewal of short-term contracts.

However they went, the loss of these staff has pushed up class size in schools across the country. But there is worse to come.
Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is searching for yet more spending cuts to finance budget tax handouts. Even Education Secretary Gillian Shephard is warning her colleagues that the Tories are not spending enough to sustain standards in education.

Class sizes
Every further cut will mean more teachers will be lost, and class sizes will increase. More than a million children are now being taught in classes of over 30.

But angry parents, governors and teachers are beginning to fight back and organise for September 30.

In Devonshire a county-wide 'council of war' to link local campaigns and coordinate action for a new school year attracted over 75 enthusiastic representatives, and a 150-strong conference of secondary school head teachers and governors gave a standing ovation to FACE National Chair Sue Lister, who spelled out the determination to fight on.

Ten coaches (including one sponsored by a local UNISON branch) are already booked from Oxfordshire for September 30.

Groups of students and school students are organising contingents for the march, which has been backed by UNISON, the GMB, the NASUWT and many branches of the NUT.

FACE demo LONDON SATURDAY September 30 Assemble 12.30, Embankment March to Hyde Park

No cuts
The FACE demands are simple: halt and reverse the cuts, and no classes larger than 30. Governing bodies are again urged to refuse to make cuts, and to draw up instead budgets based on the educational needs of their schools.
This fightback could be a focal point of anger against the Tories, and key to the next election. Be there on September 30 – and bring your banners!
What we think

TUC's Monks in apparent switch of habits

Blair sets collision course with unions

DESPERATE to attract attention to a Congress that threatened to become a low-profile side-show, TUC General Secretary John Monks dressed up himself unequivocally in the mantle of militancy.

To the delight of the media, and the surprise of most trade unionists, he was an article in the ASLEF journal to declare himself 'a political militant'.

In most an-TUC-type language he argued that the tide has turned against the Tories, he proclaimed. "Bosses have been lining their own pockets with scant regard to the wider interest, and some need to be challenged. Militancy reminds us not to be complacent... so some of this militancy is to be welcomed."

The words themselves betray Monks's limited political horizons: but for a TUC General Secretary to do anything other than denounce militancy is so unusual we should notice the change of tone rather than the continuing illusions that somehow the bosses should be expected to respect the needs and interests of the workers they exploit.

"If workers are treated badly, they will react," Monks wrote. "Of course partly he was pointing to the increased number of successful strike ballots, more notably among rail and tube workers: but his speech is if anything a warning to Labour's right wing leadership that the full fury of years of frustration by workers beaten down by employers since 1979 could make itself felt once the Tories are removed from office.

Academic

Monks's militancy is largely of this academic and speculative kind. Although he may, hypothetically, be 'counting among the militants' at some time in the future, he is not militant now—opposing any fight for a specific minimum wage figure, and joining the efforts to gag TUC unions demanding a much higher Labour commitment to uphold union rights at work.

Monks, in alliance with Vince Fox, took a hard line against the National Union of Journalists, and upheld Tony Blair's immediate over-ride of fair union recognition would be extended only to 'bargaining units' where a union had more than 50 percent membership.

The fact that this could subsequently be used by employers in many places (notably most NHS Trusts) as a pretext to withdraw recognition of unions falling below the 50 percent mark was brushed aside by unions, including the TGWU, which could find themselves drastically undermanned.

The NUJ, whose bargaining power has been hammered by a systematic employers' campaign of derecognition, argued that recognition should automatically be guaranteed to any group of workers who wish to be represented by a union. But attempts by NUJ General Secretary John Foster to organise support around this demand found no support even from 'left-led' unions. TGWU leader Bill Morris rejected the call from the 'bakers' and miners' unions to refuse to co-operate with laws which deny union members' democratic rights.

TUC's Congress was also taken a far from militant line on demanding repeal of other anti-union laws, and rejected the call from the 'bakers' and miners' unions to refuse to co-operate with laws which deny union members' democratic rights.

It led to a limited call for the legalisation of 'solidarity strikes', but making it clear that this meant strikes against the same employer, not industrial workers striking in support of one union. At each stage, it has to come to the crunch, the limits of TUC policy have been set not by the needs of militancy of union members, but by the willingness or otherwise of Tony Blair's right wing Labour leadership to accept the policies on offer.

But while union leaders are surprised to jump through hoops to show the unions' commitment and subservience to Blair, Labour's leaders go ever greater lengths to put 'clear blue water' between their party and the unions.

The leaked documents from Blair's office published at the start of the TUC Congress undermine the unmistakable trajectory of Labour's leadership towards a complete severing of links with the unions. This was further highlighted by his speech to the Congress, in which, as Arthur Scargill summed it up, he came 'to tell us to get stufed': Blair made just one personal pledge:

"There will be no repeal of all Tony trade union laws. Strike ballots are here to stay. No mass or flying pickets, all these ghosts of time past. You are exercised. Leave them where they lie...."

No doubt delighted to have heard Monks, Morris and other top union leaders one-speech denial that the unions wanted to run the country under Labour, or even had any policies to promote, Blair spelled out quite clearly that while he is in charge Labour will pay no more attention to the unions than they will to the employers:

"We have no obligation to listen, as we do to employers. You have the right to protest, as we do too. But the decisions must rest with us. We will govern for the whole nation — not any vested interest within it."

Of course the powers of persuasion are not equally distributed between workers and bosses. The class that owns the media, the banks and the voice of Labour is confident that — day to day and in the longer-term shaping of policy — they will have more influence on a reckless Labour government than union members seeking bargaining for jobs and wages.

The fact that Blair received an up roar from those not-smart- sounding oaf after his deliberately insulting speech should sound the alarm bells. The TUC Congress is far from the most radical gathering of union activists — yet even here sections are beginning to get restless and reject the line that every policy and principle must be sacrificed to get the Tories out.

Offensive

Unions that bankroll and look to Labour to fight politically on their behalf will be propelling their members into the leading edge of the offensive against the inevitably right-wing policies of a new Labour government.

Nobody need hold their breath waiting for Comrade Monks to lead the militant charge — but the seeds of conflict are being sown with every speech and policy emerging from Blair's office.

While Blair prepares for a government that will make no bones about serving the interests of capitalism, it's time for union activists to organise genuinely broad left alliances that will press home the fight.

Unions still have a crucial voice at Labour conferences — instead of buttering their lips and hoping for the best after the next election, union leaders like UNISON's Shirley Bickerstaffe, Bill Morris, John Edmiston and others who like to see as left-wing wing must be called upon to fight from front and openly for their unions' policies.
Battle lines drawn

FLASHPOINTS of what threatens to be a remarkably dull Labour conference, with the left still reeling from the Clause Four defeat, will centre on issues where it is possible Blair’s leadership could be tested by a combination of CLP and union votes.

That is likely to be the subject of further debate, with moves before the conference to reduce the union block vote to 50 per cent – and the implicit ambition of Blair and co to reduce it still further as they cut the Party’s links with the unions.

On policies, the most likely setback for Blair is on the minimum wage, with strong CLP support for raising an hourly figure of £4.50 above.

But there could also be a row over the Motion for a fee‐

able policy statement on Ed-

ucation and the leadership’s failure to side unambigu-

ously with the parents, go-

vernors, teachers and students fighting Tony cuts.

A FAGE fringe meeting will seek to galvanise delegates into action.

Another resolution which will go well beyond the twin line of Blair and Jack Straw in op-

posing racist immigration laws and state racism, in-

cluding a motion calling for the closure of the notorious Colnbrook immigration prison.

Labour’s policy for the National Health Service, which effectively accepts the Free Market reforms complete with NHS Trusts and the imposition of a pur-

chaser-provider split, could also prove controversial.

Life on the Party fringes

Key fringe meetings for the left will include:

• Clause VI Policies for a Labour Government – Mon-

day, 7.00pm.

• Labour Campaigns for Lesbian and Gay Rights – Tuesday 6.00pm.

• Campaign Group Rally – Tuesday 7.00pm.

• NUS – Wednesday, 6.00pm.

• FAC – Wednesday, 9.00pm.

• Socialist Campaign Group – Network – Thursday, 7.00pm.

Details of speakers and venues, with a day‐to‐day guide to fringe meetings will be published in the Daily Bulletin of the Socialist Campaign Group Network.

Learn lessons on education fight!

By Harry Sloan

THE TORIES know they are exposed and on the run; the public, led by precisely the normally conservative layers of ‘Middle England’ which Tony Blair appears obsessed with courting, is demanding radical action; but Education remains yet another missed opportunity for New Labour and its blundering spokesperson David Blunkett.

Anger at this failure, and at the fiasco over school option-

outs, in which Tony Blair un-

handedly reversed party policy after deciding to send his son to an opted out school, could make education another of the flashpoints of this year’s conference. Indeed Blair’s side would probably be even harder if the teaching unions were affiliated to the Labour Party and able to ar-

gue their views directly at confer-

ence.

The campaigns to defend education are almost nowhere led by Labour activists: instead it has been left up to parents, governors and teach-

ers unions to lead the fight on what should be a vote‐winner for Labour.

Why is this? Gillian Shephard’s leaked memoran-

dum was not far from the mark when she summed up the total confusion created in Labour’s ranks by Tony Blair’s cow-

ardly and conservative lead-

ership.

‘Labour is hopelessly con-

fused and divided. ‘Foundation

schools’ are all to get 90 per cent funding. This is ab-

surdity of GM by the back door, while paying lip service to them because of the position of Blair and others. They have no real policy on Higher or Further Education their thinking stops at 16.’

Shephard cynically distin-

guishes between ‘New La-

bour’ which seeks to maintain Tory policies, ‘Old Labour’ which does not support Tory policies but is confused, and ‘Labour in power in Town Halls’, which she claims is ‘still promoting left wing policies’.

Of course Shephard’s words were written before her own policy background was foiled by John Major, who has blundered in Blair‐style, blunting out a series of new proposals for encouraging more schools to join the tiny handful that have so far taken the proverbial plunge to opt out and seek Grant Maintained status.

But it is clear that Labour policy is a total shambles.

As long as ‘New Labour’ continues to dodge any kind of commitment to spend more money on education and re-

verse the Tory cuts, and holds back from the necessary of-

fensive against the Tories’ two‐tier system, the party will be fighting at a disadvantage.

A classic example was the Oxfordshire conference of head teachers and governors from secondary schools throughout the county, opposing cuts: all three political parties were invited to send a speaker – but only the Liberal Democrat turned up.

A backlash from delegates at this year’s Labour confer-

ence is need to pre‐empt an even more vigorous backlash from voters.

On present form it seems likely to face a new round of cuts administered by Labour led councils, helped locally by Liberal Democrats, whose party nationally has been the only one willing to commit itself to raise taxes to spend more on schools.

Straw’s war on poor

By Terry Conway

THE COMMENTS from Shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw on how Labour would deal with “in‐

jurious begging” and “squee-
gee merchants” is the latest in a long line of attempts by Labour politicians to steal the Tories’ political clothes and outdo their attacks on the homeless and unem-

ployed.

Neither on Straw’s speech, nor in Labour’s policy papers on housing are the causes of rising homelessness analysed, never mind addressed.

Labour’s role in government is to apply a few stinking plasters over the worst signs of decay in society – in case such unpleasantness offends those on Labour’s front bench wants to woo.

Blair’s New Labour is in-

terested in home owners and potential home owners – not in those it sees as a lost cause, whose feelings and rights it is quite happy to trample upon.

Straw’s answers consist of the carrot and the stick: the lives as possible: this includes having the right to drink openly.

But we also have to go be-

yond this and demand the right for permanent, secure, cheap housing for all – not assume that there is a category of people (the homeless) who are fundamentally different from the rest of us, and for whom second‐class accom-

modation will do.

The big stick of increased police powers to stop these people’ off the streets is a fa-

miliar continuation of La-

bour’s right wing law and order theme.

Similar policies applied in the USA have led to a massive increase in imprisonment – and a jail population of more than 1.5 million.

Jack Straw clearly does not agree with The Big Issue, which points out that the streets belong both to the housed and the unhoused. It used to be Tory MPs who had to be challenged to try living and surviving on bene-

fits: but Straw and his Labour colleagues clearly have no more idea than the Tories of the misery of being unemployed or homeless, let alone both.

Ernest Mandel Memorial Rally

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED INCLUDE:

Tariq Ali, Alain Krivine, Robin Blackburn, Charlie van Gelderen, Mildred Gordon MP, Jeanette Habel, Duncan Hallas, Alan Thornett

7pm Friday 13 October

NOTE NEW VENUE:

Conference Centre, Congress House, Great Russell St. WC1

Doors: 6.30pm for start at 7.00pm sharp.

Tickets: £3 from ‘Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund’, PO Box 1109, London N4 2BU.

International Symposium

Saturday 14 October

1.00pm-6.00pm ULU, Malet Street, London WC1.

By Harry Sloan

How low can you go? That must be the question as Labour’s leadership claims a commitment to a minimum wage, but refuses to name a figure.

The issue could prove the focus of the biggest challenge to Tony Blair’s leadership at this year’s Brighton conference.

It is an issue which gives grassroots support to the consensus parties as well as backing from trade unionists and union leaders. As a poll commissioned for one of the civil service unions has discovered, “Judge a judge to a minimum wage of £4.15 per hour would also be popular, a vote win in Labour’s basket.”

In a squall deal, the biggest unions – led by the GMF and TGWU – slashed off 15p, cutting the target to £4 as a foilie gesture to Blair.

But there can be no real unity on the issue, because the minimum wage requires legislation by a Labour government, and it is well known that Blair is opposed to naming any figure in advance of the next general election.

Open door

As the employers and Tory leaders step up their propaganda, arguing without any proof that a minimum fixed at as low as £4.15 figure could result in the loss of “up to two million jobs”, it is clear that as far as Labour’s right wing leaders are concerned the bosses are ready to open the door: the argument is not contested.

Instead Blair, claiming to arbitrate “fairly” between the competing class interests of capital and labour, is searching for a figure which will seem an increase while containing minimal disturbances with low-paying employers.

In fact New Labour, more or less openly agrees with bosses of firms like textile giant Clarendon Garments manufacturers for Marks and Spencer, who want that to increase their lowest rates from £3 to £4 per hour might hurt them.

While Blair’s team is eager to take distance from the unions, it has nothing but respect for the employees. This is why Blair has already explained that he would only fix a minimum rate after fully consulting firms like Clarendon, who are very nicely from paying sweatshop wages, with profits up 10 percent this year.

No doubt Blair is also grateful to the right wing leaders of the employers’ and engineers’ and technicians’ union, who declared that if the minimum wage was raised to £4.15, then their members might demand increases to “restore differentials”.

Such bravado should be taken with a pinch of salt. The AEEU has shown no willingness so far to fight for the lives of its skilled members.

Gap

The reality is that sixteen years of Tory rule have seen the employers dominate the workplace, and paying millions of workers at poverty levels, subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of £2.2 billion a year in social security income support payments.

The popular wish to change this situation is one of the reasons the Tories are lagging in the polls and millions are willing to vote Labour.

Unfortunately Labour’s leaders appear to need reminding that the task of the unions – and the reason they pay to support the Labour Party – is to defend and improve the living standards of the working class, not to line the pockets of cheapskate, profiteering employers.

A strong conference vote for the £4.15 minimum will fire a necessary shot across the bows of a leadership that has abandoned any radical commitments.

Panicked Tube chiefs get tough

By an RMT member

BOSSES at London Underground Limited have decided to play hard ball.

As we go to press they are taking legal action against the RMT and have written to all 2,000 who supported the last one-day strike threatening disciplinary action.

The Tories have told their chiefs that they are on the line unless they can sort out the Tube. The management threats, intimidations, and murrinings about privatisation are the result.

Well, it’s nice to see them panic as strikes are going ahead.

Other unions

We need to step up the fight by involving more members in the decisions. If we are knocked back, LUL will only have beaten the workforce in a straight fight, but they will have forced a series of production loss and coordination measures – in particular the introduction of part-time workers on trains, more ‘flexible working’ on the stations, privatisation of engineering staff and line by line productivity plans which would undermine us in the future.

Our bosses are never going to stop attacking our working conditions and set- tle down to run a railway. They are paid to run the subsidy and privatising, not run a servive.

So far we’re doing well. By organisng teams of militi- ants through the RMT’s London Transport District Council we have forced supplies of class conscious locals, we’re keeping ahead of the latest moves and it is of course political as well as industrial management are merely Tory puppets.

Dinosaur

The Tory media pump out the line that ‘Dinosaur’ Jimmy Knapp is leading militi- ants but greedy workers in a fight for extra cash. But we’re figures the upsurge in coordination and we’re not led by Knapp; we’re doing it our- selves.

Most ASLEF members – despite the do-nothing line of their leaders want to support the strike and respect our pickets. It is time to forestall any such unit that management has issued their sacking threat.

NHS pay deal: UNISON ‘wins’, the worst of all worlds

AFTER MONTHS of half-hearted campaigning, procrastination and back-peddling, the biggest health union, UNISON has eventually signed a sell-out deal on NHS pay.

Gone without trace is the union’s original 2.5 per cent claim. Gone, too, is the principle that was the real sticking point, the demand for a campaign leading up to a ballot vote for strike action: the demand linked to the imposition of local pay bargaining.

The new deal agreed by UNISON combines the worst aspects of local pay bargaining with the pre- tence of a national deal. In a highly controversial clause which has baffled activists (and requires a diagram to explain it to managers in the Health Service Journal), health unions would be forced to negotiate pay locally on a Trust-by-Trust basis: but at the end of the year the level of settlements would be assessed, and those who had fallen behind would be brought up to the ‘average’.

The problem remains that management may retain the whip hand. It is more than likely that Trust chairmen, squeezed by cash limits, could form a cartel to control pay below the minimum if any increase – resulting in a minimal ‘average’ increase across the country.

The Tory objective – of ending any national action on NHS pay – has been conceded. But without the possibility of national support, local strikes are all but unlikely. Few sections of health workers are strongly enough organised and led to go it alone in a serious off-ensive on pay against their own Trust. UNISON’s desperation to do a deal – and avoid calling strike action from what appears to have been a very weak mandate – was no doubt received with relief by most other health union- ions, few of which had any real appetite for a national strike.

And it has delighted the Scots of the Royal College of Nursing, who will now posture as the main oppo- nent of local pay bargaining.

With UNISON’s health sector conference due to open later this month in Blackpool it has been concealed. But without the possibility of national support, local strikes are also most unlikely. Few sections of health workers are strongly enough organised and led to go it alone in a serious offensive on pay against their own Trust.

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CPSA Job Centre staff strike ballot

By a Job Centre worker

AS WE go to press thousands of CPSA members in the Civil Service Management Services are voting on strike action to pursue their pay claim.

The management offer is below the rate of inflation, and is entirely linked to performance. The union’s claim was for 9 per cent for all staff, regardless of performance, plus two hours off the working week with no loss of pay.

Management have already backed down once on this pay. Chief Executive Mike Fogleman described the pay offer – which was even worse – as ‘generous’. But CPSA members thought otherwise he came across as another £4.5 million to make a revised offer. Maybe he found it down the back of the setter? If Job Centre workers strike, they will do so with the full support of their Broad Left-led Section Executive. Even non-CPSA right-winger Barry Reambottom, CPSA General Secretary, has expressed sup- port for a programme of industrial action.

Employment Service manage- ment have nothing but contempt for the CPSA members who deliver the service at the sharp end. While management peddle their falsehoods in glossy in-house newspapers and ‘personal’ letters from the Chief Executive, union members are not even allowed work time to meet and discuss a full offer.

This year’s ballot is a referen- dum on EU management. It’s time for Job Centre workers to show they have enough, and vote YES to EU management. It’s time for Job Centre workers to show they have enough, and vote YES to EU management. It’s time for Job Centre workers to show they have enough, and vote YES to EU management. It’s time for Job Centre workers to show they have enough, and vote YES to EU management.

RMT militant victimised

AN RMT member has been dismissed from Longsight British Rail depot for refusing to cross a picket line in the recent rail dispute.

A campaign for Chris Jones’ reinstatement is being launched. The RMT is being requested to hold a strike ballot over the issue. Interestingly, the West Coast RMT management oversaw similar stickings in Manchester exactly three years ago. Contact the campaign at: Department 1, Newton Street, Manchester M1.
Free Oliver Campbell

By Pete Bloomer

AT LONG LAST! After nearly nine years of wrongful imprisonment, Satpal Ram has been granted an appeal.

Satpal was the victim of a violent racist attack and has been the victim of Britain's racist legal system.

The granting of an appeal, to be heard at the Court of Appeal on 20 October, is an admission that there were serious errors in the original trial. Now the courts are endorsing what Satpal and this support has said all along - that Satpal's conviction and imprisonment are the result of a shameful miscarriage. A key issue is that Satpal's barrister was negligent in failing to advise a plea of self-defence.

The appeal will also address the lack of interpreters for Bengali-speaking witnesses in the original trial which meant that the full facts of the case were never brought out in court. The judge acted as translator despite having no knowledge of the Bengali language.

Contact the campaign on (021) 507 1618, (0114) 235 2618 or (0771) 837 1450.

Camphell's campaign, like many other anti-racist campaigns, is a sponsor of 7 October 'Demand Justice' march.

By Mark Jason

OLIVER CAMPBELL is a Black man with severe learning difficulties. He was convicted in December 1991 of murder and conspiracy to rob. He has been locked up since November 1990.

On 22nd July 1990 two Afro-Caribbean men attempted to rob a Hackney off-licence, the shopkeeper was killed in the struggle. Shortly after Oliver's arrest he stood in an ID parade. One witness who was only a few feet away from the gunman failed to pick anyone out from the parade.

Another witness, who had only a distant view of the robbery, failed to pick anyone out in December 1990 but changed his mind some 3 months later. The four witnesses to the murder and the escape placed the height of the man the Police claimed was Oliver at between 5'8" and 5'11", whereas Oliver is 6'.

After an initial interview with a social worker and a solicitor present, the police said that they would inform the solicitor of any subsequent interviews. They did not, rather they obtained a written statement from Oliver's foster mother saying that a solicitor would not be necessary. It was after several of these interviews that Oliver was "confessed".

Support this campaign
Affiliate to the Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign, PO Box 6540, London SE1 5TB. Please inform the TUC of any further reporting in your trade union, Labour party, student union or community organisation.

Send messages of support to Oliver Campbell, MV3144, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London, W12 9AE.

Mobilise for 28 October TUC national anti-racist demonstration

Unite against racism

By Simon Deville

THE LAST FEW months have been marked by a significant increase in racism from the state.

The launch of "Operation Eagle Eye" has given the green light for police to step up their repression and intimidated communities.

Alongside this offensive the Tories are planning to open up a second front against black people, with even tighter immigration controls. It is almost certain that a further tightening of immigration rules is on the way this year's Tory Party Conference.

Proposals have been floated to increase restrictions on the right to appeal and speed up deportations, to reduce benefits to asylum seekers, and to introduce "internal" immigration checks which will mean all black people will be suspected of being "illegal immigrants" and will have to prove their immigration status before they can gain access to health care, education, employment, housing, social security benefits and any other areas the government may dream up. Clearly, prisons for immigrants like Campbell are set to grow.

The response of the Labour Party leadership has been to place themselves quite clearly on the side of the racists. Rather than to oppose this racist onslaught for what it is, Labour has simply tried to obscure the Tories in being the party of law and order. Jack Straw's new proposals will inevitably mean an increase of police repression on the poorest and most oppressed sections of society, particularly the inner city working class.

While the Labour leadership may occasionally point out that 'we Tories are playing the race card over their immigration policies, it hasn't stated precisely what in the Tory proposals it opposes, or how Labour policy will be any different.

It would be wrong to see these developments in isolation from other attacks on the working class.

State attacks

The state aims to smash the poor and gain the working class, most significantly with massive cuts in social spending. With an attack on race, the state can divide and thus weaken the working class.

The actual reduction in social spending from excluding asylum seekers is completely negligible, but its importance for the state is the ideological impact and the much wider cuts the government will be able to make in the future.

It is precisely for this reason that the anti-racist movement and the labour movement must provide a militant, united opposition to this offensive.

Divisions within the anti-racist movement have allowed the government to get away with its racist policies so far, and allowed the Labour leadership to get away with showing little opposition to the Tories. The failure of the national anti-racist organisations and the labour movement to fight around common areas of agreement has left individual campaigns to fend for themselves.

Next month there are a number of initiatives that can provide the basis for starting to build the much needed unity within the movement. On October 7 the Justice Demo will march from the notorious Stoke Newington Police Station to Tottenham Police Station.

In the following week the National Network against Deportations and Detentions will be demonstrating outside the Tory Party Conference on the day of any announcement of proposed changes to the visa legisla
tion, together with a day of action on Saturday 14, including a picket at Downing Street, and local actions across the country. On October 26 the TUC is calling a national Unite Against Raci

These initiatives cannot be left as one-off events, but must be the basis for a growing and unifying campaign of united action against racism.

In Manchester this demo could be the first step towards uniting the existing anti-racist movements to form a voice of the black community. It must place an uncompromising anti-racist agenda at the head of the labour movement. Only a united response can offer a serious challenge to state racism.
Down Peking road to Indonesia bloodbath

Thirty years ago a bungled coup in Indonesia by a small number of left-wing officers led President Sukarno and the army general staff to begin the savage and systematic slaughter of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The party had three million members and genuine mass support. Yet by the time the massacres had subsided hundreds of thousands of them had been slaughtered, thousands more imprisoned and the party all but destroyed as a political force. So many bodies were thrown into the rivers that they became a serious health problem. Piles of communist skulls were dumped in villages to set an example.

SIMON KENNEDY looks at the background to the tragedy of the PKI.

THE PARTAI Komunis Indonesia (PKI) did not fail to take power because the conditions of Indonesian society were not suited to a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. They did not find themselves brutally massacred because their organization was too weak. The primary factor in the destruction of the party was its mistaken understanding of the strategic problems facing revolutionaries in “Third World” countries.

The mistakes proved fatal. Fundamental in the PKI’s strategy was the idea of the “democratic national revolution”. Their activity was directed towards critical support and close collaboration with all those forces who were in favour of this policy. The movement for democratic revolution was therefore made up overwhelmingly of peasants and workers. But key to the PKI’s strategy was the winning of those elements of the bourgeoisie opposed to imperialism and feudalism—the layers who were frustrated by “bureaucratic capitalism” and the role of foreign powers.

They believed that the advance to socialism had to go first through the stage of European-style modern capitalism. This analysis had long been the position of the “official” communist movement. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Communist Parties around the world pursued the model.

In South Africa, for example, it has provided the backbone of the SAP’s analysis. The basic idea underlying this model was that the revolution and role of workers’ parties in underdeveloped countries must be “bourgeois-democratic” rather than revolutionary—must establish modern capitalist and democratic states. The problem with this scheme of development lies in the nature economies and societies that come “late” to the world capitalist market.

The growth of capitalism in Indonesia was very unlike the route taken in Western Europe. This has been true of almost all the post-colonial states created this century. European capitalism did not grow up in a world already dominated by bigger powers.

The heritage of colonialism affected not just Indonesia’s economic functioning, but also determined its internal class formation and politics.

The existence of a well-developed state, and its capacity to shape the economy at the onset on capitalism is unique to countries that are introduced to capitalism by colonial powers. This state bureaucracy usually plays a large part in politics.

The western European route involved a long struggle against feudalism and its political arrangements, conducted by a revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The PKI’s application of the line of class cross-alliances led it to make a central alliance with nationalist forces—mainly the PNI and the charismatic Sukarno. They believed this alliance expressed the interests of the bourgeoisie and could become the basis of a struggle against imperialism and domestic feudalist landlords. Indonesia’s economy was quickly hit by economic crisis caused by the PKI’s alliance with the colonial economy. In this crisis, the “national bourgeoisie”, instead of struggling to re-build a non-dependent national economy, used the opportunities to enrich themselves in the state apparatus.

Indonesia’s President Suharto on September 8, 1995 dismissed calls for opposition parties to be officially recognised, saying the move would be “inconsistent with the state’s ideology and constitution”.

Indonesia’s President Suharto on September 8, 1995 dismissed calls for opposition parties to be officially recognised, saying the move would be “inconsistent with the state’s ideology and constitution”.

Even now the brutal Indonesian regime is holding political prisoners from 1985

Their belief that its alliance could seize control of a feeble state and use it as a tool to overcome the army, factored into the “bureaucratic capitalist” and “bureaucratic capitalist” proved unfounded.

Instead of the workers driving out the Dutch and handing the factories to the anti-imperialist people’s government, the army inevitably proved the strongest force. Officers and their corrupt civil subordinates came to have a large degree of control over the economy.

The elections of 1957 had made the PKI the biggest party in the country. The nationalists, while willing to let the party support them in office, saw its huge popular support as a threat.

The general election of 1959, where the PKI was sure to win a big majority, was cancelled after pressure from the army. It became increasingly clear that, in contradiction to the PKI’s analysis, the nationalists had no interest in a genuine extension of popular sovereignty. They favoured instead what they politely termed a “guided democracy”.

Even while the government began to repress its party, the PKI stuck to its “democratic national revolution” strategy. The working class was directed to build an alliance with peasants against feudalism and a front with the “national bourgeoisie” in defence of democratic rights. This front however, cut across the alliance with the peasantry because it included some of the very same “patriotic landlords” who were expropriating the poorer peasantry. The nationalists refused to follow the kind of peasant mobilisations needed to cement the worker-peasant alliance.

Moreover, the front placed the working class in an impossible position. The more they backed the nationalists, the more they had to back the new capitalism that was systematically eroding their living standards.

The small bourgeoisie in which the PKI had put its hopes turned out to be a lot less revolutionary than its plan had suggested. Because it was so hampered by the strength of imperialism, so politically weak and inimical to the “national bourgeoisie” failed to become the leadership the party had expected.

It was unable to establish the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist democratic reforms necessary to build a national anti-feudal alliance. Its commitment to “bourgeois democracy” was insubstantial. And it was quite hopeless to come to a new deal with imperialism.

Contrary to both the Moslem and PKI view, it was entirely possible to build a post-colonial capitalism with a repressive state and a domestic base.

For hundreds of thousands of PKI activists, these errors were of the most costly nature possible.

The “democratic revolution” strategy failed completely. Sukarno was murdered under house arrest in 1970, and a new member took the reins of power. The party was proscribed and the army and right-wing gangs set about the systematic b che-thing of the party’s members.

The same dictatorship, headed by General Suharto, is still in power 30 years later, brutally repressing the workers of Indonesia and East Timor.

Olle Torpaqul’s book DI-lennas of Third World Communism: the destruction of the PKI in Indonesia, (Zed Press 1984) provides an excellent account and analysis of the tragedy of the PKI.

Fighting on ...

The Indonesian government continues to hold political prisoners from 1985.

TAPOH, The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign reports that twenty four remain in prison, three on death row.

There have been 22 executions of 1985 prisoners since 1985.

According to Hanny Utoyo Usman the Juen Poa newspaper that two political prisoners had been executed before the year was out.

Contact The Indonesian Human Rights campaign at: 111 Northwood Road, Thamesmead, Surrey, CR7 6WV. Telephone: 0181 771 2904

Since 1985, Juen Poa, Utah Usman, reports the death of two political prisoners in the year the year before was out.
Sri Lanka’s Popular Front government deepens racist anti-Tamil war

‘Left’ coalition opens war against Tamils

Sri Lanka’s Peoples Alliance coalition government recently made far reaching devolution proposals, tied to a veto by referendum in which the Tamils would be a minority.

The (Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International) as well the Tamil Tigers (the LTTE) view the proposals as a fraudulent attempt to legitimise and step up the war under the guise of peace proposals. Even while the proposals are made, new appeals are being made to foreign governments to step up arms supplies, arguing the legitimacy of the government’s initiative.

V. Thiruvavukkarasu is a leading member of the NSSF and the party’s coordinator on the national question. Alan Thorrnett spoke to him in Sri Lanka.

Why is the Peoples Alliance Government putting the devolution proposals forward at this time and what do they want out of it?

The PA government has been a year in office, on a very thin majority in Parliament. During the election campaign Chandrika Bandaranaike repeatedly said that the resolution of the national question was the single most important issue at stake, that it must be resolved by granting national rights to the Tamils, and that this must be withdrawn from the north eastern part.

She accepted that there should be maximum devolution of powers to the north eastern part. She said that she would have a framework for this almost ready. Her proposals, however, were withheld for a number of months - despite protests from the LTTE and other groups.

Instead Chandrika opened negotiations with the LTTE. These discussions were not on a solution to the war but confined to practical issues: roads, electricity, and so on. On this basis they reached an agreement on the ceasefire, which lasted three months.

During the negotiations the LTTE made demands such as the removal of the army base at Poonaryn (which cuts off the land route to the Jaffna peninsula) and freedom of movement for the Tamil population in the LTTE territory in the north east.

The Tamil government rejected the demands - only agreeing to shift the army camp involved a distance of 500 metres! The LTTE responded by giving two deadlines for the resumption of the war - March 25th and then April 19th. On April 19th the war resumed.

Soon after the truce had been broken, on July 9th, the government launched a massive military assault on the Jaffna peninsula code named ‘Operation Leap Forward’. They predicted that they would be able to defeat the Tigers with that single operation, but this did not happen.

A lot of people died but they were unable to penetrate the Tiger heartland. It was only after this failure that Chandrika came out with her package. She was never put on the table during the talks - which showed from the start that she was not serious about such a settlement.

Chandrika’s new package was to ‘continue the war in order to reach peace’. Withholding the package also meant that it was presented after an intensive post-war climate during which the Sinhala majority had gained some ground. The worst conditions for its acceptance had been created. The package is not a genuine attempt for a settlement but a shield behind which she can, through diverting the attention of the international community, pursue the war more brutally. This is their strategy.

What is the attitude of the NSSF to the war and the package?

The NSSF recognises the north east as the home land of the Tamil speaking people and defends their right to determine their own future.

Our position on the package is that it looks attractive and interesting its implementation is in a big major problem not only because of the way it has been introduced but because it has to have a two thirds majority in parliament before it is adopted.

It also has to be subjected to a referendum under conditions of an independent majority amongst the voters. This Chandrika says is the requirement of the constitution. In reality it is a veto on the package since it can never be adopted by those means.

This is what makes it a total fraud.

Instead of hiding behind the constitution the government should implement the proposals immediately through a constituent assembly. This would bypass the constitutional formalities and resolve the situation.

What form is the campaign taking against these proposals in which the NSSF is involved?

The UNP (the main capitalist party) has said they would consider supporting the proposals as long as they do not lead to separation. In other words they have made no commitment.

There is also extreme chauvinist elements who oppose any change in the current situation and the LTTE should be smashed by military means. This is the Buddhist clergy and a group of 23 Buddhist organisations.

There are those who support the Tamil people in their national rights, most importantly the NSSF and sections of the trade union movement. We are for the recognition of the country by the recognition the national rights of the Tamil people. We have launched a campaign against the referendum and for the implementation of the package through the trade union movement from a conference held recently in Colombo.

The main slogans of the campaign are: stop the war; no referendum; introduce the devolution proposals through a constituent assembly.

What is type of organisation is the LTTE?

The LTTE has a mainly petty bourgeois base. It adopted the armed struggle after two and a half decades of oppression of the Tamil people.

It has never been a democratic organisation and does not allow pluralism or opposition. They have assassinated other left leaders such as our own comrade Annamalai.

As a revolutionary party of course do not rule out armed struggle but their will to be a mass movement and mobilisation which has to be allowed to mature and there has to be democracy in the movement.

The LTTE has only the armed struggle. There is no mass participation or democratic expression. There are occasional demonstrations in Jaffna - a recent one of several thousand against the war - but they do not alter the character of the struggle.

The NSSF believes that the struggle of the Tamil people has been linked up politically with other struggles: for democratic rights, trade union rights and workers rights etc. The LTTE is militarily very powerful but this is not enough for victory.

Can you say something of the current sufferings of the people in the north east?

The sufferings have been and are enormous. Over the last 12 years not less than 50,000 people have been killed in the war.

There are 500,000 refugees in the refugee camps and 120,000 staying with relatives. There are another 125,000 in India.

In “Operation Leap Forward” 300,000 people were displaced - but most of these have returned. There is at the same time regular shelling and bombing of civilian areas.

There is a permanent shortage of food and medicine. There has been an embargo on petrol, diesel, cement, fertiliser and other agro-chemicals. There has been a ban on fishing in the north east waters.

There has been no electricity in the Jaffna peninsula for a long time. Even oil for domestic lighting is very restricted. A litre of oil for lighting is 900 per cent dearer than in the government areas. 90 per cent of the people have only one meal a day.

The Jaffna peninsula is under a state of siege, surrounded as it is by military bases at the following places: Palay, Mathagal, Kaniyagar, Mandavai, Kayts, Pooneryn and Elephant Pass. There is no safe passage to and from the peninsula and people have to use the hazardous and expensive Kilady lagoon route.

How are the Western powers involved in this?

They are the main target of this strategy. The package was crucial for the supply of arms to the Sri Lanka government.

It legitimises the arms trade. Since Chandrika can say that she has done everything possible to end the war but has been forced to pursue it. She will say that the only alternative is a military victory.

Many western countries have welcomed the proposals and accepted them as a genuine attempt to end the war.

Some have hinted that the package has created the conditions for the resumption of arms sales.

You must demand of the British government that it does not respond to this request. You must insist that left Labour MPs in Britain demand that the murderous war is stopped and that no arms are supplied.

SUPPORT HARAYA!

Haraya is the Sinhala language fortnightly paper of the Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International. It is the only paper in Sri Lanka which campaigns consistently:

- against the World Bank and IMF
- among the Sinhala majority

Majority to stop the war against the Tamils
- against the austerity measures of the Chandrika government

Haraya is facing financial problems and needs donations from Britain. Cheques should be made payable to NSSF UK and sent to PO Box 1109, London NW1, marked Haraya Fund.
30,000 attend fourth global assembly of women in Beijing

By K Govindan

"WOMEN HOLD up half the sky" goes a Chinese revolutionary saying, though to the hosts at the Beijing United Nations Women's conference it must have seemed as if the sky had fallen on their heads. Besieged by 30,000 women who arrived for the parallel Non-Governmental conference, some of whom were vociferously critical of the Chinese record on women's rights, they were led by Hillary Clinton, as speech leader of the US delegation to the official gathering.

The US First Lady first identified issues in the conference ranging from female genital mutilation to dowry deaths and domestic violence. She then mounted a thinly veiled attack on China when she asked that "it is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to protect their families." The rest of her speech was about how the family is the bedrock of society: the very same institution in which most abuses of women occur.

The expectation of the Fourth conference had been controversial from the start. Unsurprisingly, a decade long revolution had ushered tremendous economic changes with enormous strides in advancing the status and participation of women in work and society. However China's single child family policy which compels women to have abortions and has led to the reappearance of female infanticide reduces women's liberation to stigmatising. Amaya Seng has calculated that there are more than 100 million women "missing" in Asia alone, that is neglected, ill-treated, abandoned such that the girl child is the victim.

The marketisation reforms in China have also had a contradictory effect. Among richer women personal freedom and individual choices are easier to make but many are at the rough end of the new industries, unemployable, poorly paid, badly housed and harmed by the atrocious safety record at these transnational sites. The newspaper comments: "The radicals and pro-announcements in Copenhagen two decades ago and even Nairobi ten years ago have already been dissolved away.

The solutions for women in countries subject to structural adjustment policies, the role of women and girls' access to education and health services and the representation of women in government were areas of concern for progressive women.

The wording of the official declaration and the weakness of specific commitments particularly financial ones in the Programme Of Action indicated to Indian women's groups that "the statements are of good intention only. They do not identify the root causes for the discrimination in the status of women. They added "the draft document does not challenge global hierarchies and takes structural adjustment as a given. It accepts many current trends and policies as unchangeable". The radical ideas and pro-announcements in Copenhagen two decades ago and even Nairobi ten years ago have already been dissolved away in the neo-liberal tide and the scaling back of expectations.

There is no mention of the uprooting and eradication of poverty - the biggest killer of women worldwide. Instead the accepted terminology is 'alleviation' or 'management'.

The official delegations - particularly that of the United States - backed at one stage 40 per cent of the Declaration giving notice of objections to them. The final document will be used or ignored as much as it suits individual governments. Every one came away claiming victory from the Vatican to Saudi Arabia and the European Union delegations.

One Chinese taxi-driver commented, "As far as I am concerned, this conference is just a pain in the neck: a waste of energy and a waste of money. What do we ordinary people get out of it?"

For the non-governmental organisation their evaluation of participation in the conference must be mixed. They were exiled to a muddy field in Huairou, an hour's journey from Beijing. Visas were denied to some prospective delegates on political grounds.

Tibet

Tibetan women from overseas were harassed by police and organisations who followed them around, video-taped their meetings and so on. Many NGOs have long ceased to be organisations articulating the feelings of the poor and dispossessed. Some prefer the lobbying approach including becoming expert advisors to their governments, bashing the West but blind to their own failings.

Yet the question of Tibet has enjoyed some publicity. There is the recognition at least that gender based rights are human rights too and even sexual orientation cannot be dismissed any longer as irrelevant to discussions of women's rights.

How relevant though is Hillary Clinton and her message of universal siblinghood to women who aren't rich, middle class and own property, and how have the Clinton Administration's policies and its big business backers worsened the life chances of the average US woman?

Government reforms threaten revolution's positive achievements

By Zhang Kai

The recent arrest of the journalist Gao Yu and Tong Yi, secretary of the dissident Wei Jingsheng, shows how willing the Chinese government is to impose the same repression upon women as the regime exercises over men.

Amnesty International has recently reported that around 200 women have been arrested for participating in pro-Tibetan independence demonstrations since 1992.

Formally women in China have the same political, cultural, educational and social rights as men. The prominent role of women in the revolution enabled them to make important gains. Hence in 1949 when "New China" was formed the law stipulated equality in all spheres.

In February 1994 the Chinese government published the "National report on the People's Republic of China's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women". In June it published a white paper on the "Situation of women in China". Both documents talk of the positive achievements gained for women in China.

In March 2004 the Chinese government published the "National report on the People's Republic of China's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women". In June it published a white paper on the "Situation of women in China". Both documents talk of the positive achievements gained for women in China.

Improved status

It is certainly true that the status of women has dramatically improved since the revolution. Yet according to scholars at the Shanghai Social Sciences Academy cases of discrimination and abuse of women are on the increase. Incidences of domestic violence are rising.

Both documents either evade or gloss over the negative aspects of the situation of women.

The one-child policy is being rigorously enforced. Abuse and the killing of girls are everyday facts of life.

The male-female balance is being seriously upset. In the 20-44 age group there are 7.4 million unmarried men and only half a million women. This phenomenon will continue to worsen.

According to an international conference on women and education at the end of 1992 2.1 million girls are not in school. Most working women have received only primary education. The white paper reports a 32 per cent illiteracy rate among women.

Although there are 7 million women members of the Chinese Communist Party, comprising 14 per cent of the total membership, not one of the 20 members of the political bureau is female.

Since the reforms began in 1978 unemployment has been a central problem for Chinese women. According to the Labour Bureau in China over 70 per cent of the 20 million "redundant" workers in state and collective enterprises.

The Shenzhen Labour Bureau reported that 80 per cent of the unemployed above the age of 24 are women. St Chauvin, the deputy president of the National Labour Federation, commented that "according to many of our sample surveys, women constitute about 60 per cent of those dismissed in recent years... they not only suffer from physiological pressure but also find it very difficult to make a living".

Unemployment

Yet the report made no mention of large-scale women's unemployment.

Wang Jun, the head of the women workers section of the Federation pointed out that the surveys indicate serious abuses of women's legal rights in foreign owned enterprises - low pay, sexual harassment and poor conditions are frequent.

A 1995 survey of joint enterprises in Guangdong found that over half the enterprises did not adhere to the 44-hour working week, overtime was the norm and that in some businesses 137 hours of overtime a month were demanded of the female employees.

In a survey of 1,700 joint enterprises in Shenzhen Nanning and Guangxi in 1994 55 per cent said that it was normal to dismiss women before men. And in a survey of 200 joint enterprises in Tianjin it was reported that the ratio of male to female wages was 2:1.

The official trade union follows the government right down the line. Its women's section is also led by the party. All attempts of workers to organise independently have been met with repression.

Only female trade unions can effectively fight for workers. The further straitening of the cause of women will depend upon women fighting for their rights with their own strength.

- This article is taken from the Hong Kong Fourth Internationalist magazine October Review.
French colonialism behind nuclear tests

By Simon Kennedy

THE ANTI-NUCLEAR and pro-independence mobilisations in Tahiti on June 29, July 14 and September 2-3, and the uprising that followed the French explosion show the depth of resistance to the testing in the Pacific.

Oscar Temaru, the leader of pro-independence Tavini Huiraatira said "the majority of the Madis people refuse the resumption of nuclear testing in our backyard. We have organised the biggest demonstration in the street to show that we are the people of this country, not France."

Within two weeks of Chirac's decision to explode the bomb in the Pacific's "French territory" some 80 organisations-political parties, trade unions, environmental groups, NGOs-have agreed a common appeal to demand a halt to nuclear tests and French signature of the Comprehensive test ban Treaty.

The Australian government is bending over backwards to reassure the French government that it does not oppose its presence in the Pacific. The Minister for Pacific affairs said "It is absolutely no part of our agenda to boost the French out of the South Pacific. There is absolutely no reason why we would want the French out, and plenty of reason why we would want them to stay." But it is impossible to separate France's nuclear testing from its colonial role. The nuclear programme is only made possible by its domination of the economy of the region.

Tahiti
France first occupied Tahiti in 1842 and, after a bitter guerrilla war, eventually subdued the resistance. The latest independence movement looks back for inspiration to the nationalist Pouvanua Tetauopua Opihi. In 1947 he led militant demonstrations against French privileges.

Orangisation Pouvanua was banned from the radio and, using his Algerian emergency powers, De Gaulle sacked the entire cabinet. For Pouvanua, eight years in jail and 13 in exile followed.

Dependence
Once the opposition was subdued France was in a position to begin its testing programme. To establish Tahiti's dependence on France the economy of the region was transformed. Within a decade Tahiti was importing 80 per cent of its food. Military bases and tourist hotels were constructed denying precious land to the indigenous population.

As French historian Jean Chesneaux comments, "The whole of the South Pacific has suffered the same phenomenon-the imposition of a consumer society more like Hawaii than Europe, which has left 20 per cent of the population below the poverty line."

After a spell of imprisonment he was elected to the French lower house with mass support. Two years later his Democratic Assembly of the Tahitian People (RDPT) won a massive victory in the Territorial Assembly.

After 1958 the RDPT began to campaign on the slogan "Tahiti for the Tahitians...vote NO so that the enslaving yoke will be quickly removed from around our necks".

After divisions opened up in the organisation Pouvanua was banned from the radio and, using his Algerian emergency powers, De Gaulle sacked the entire cabinet. For Pouvanua, eight years in jail and 13 in exile followed.

Fissile
Nuclear power is produced by a fission process that involves the splitting of heavy atomic nuclei. The reaction releases a massive amount of energy, which is used to boil water. Steam produced powers turbines which produce electricity.

The reaction is controlled by separating the uranium fuel into thousands of rods held within graphite channels and cooled by gas or water. If the flow of coolant is obstructed, the fuel can fuse into a molten mass which can burn through the reactor. This is what happened at the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in the United States. Even if the reaction can be successfully controlled, fission creates further dangers: radiation, waste, and the power stations themselves.

Nuclear radiation consists of tiny rays or particles which are split out of 'radioactive' chemicals, such as uranium or radium. These rays, like tiny bullets, tear through living tissue. They can change the electrical charge of the tissue; killing it or changing its normal life cycle.

No level of radiation is safe: the world earth under which we contain much less radioactivity than a power station it can still damage cells, causing diseases like cancer. However a single commercial nuclear reactor contains far more dangerous radioactive material than exists on earth naturally. Only nuclear fission can produce plutonium, which fuels nuclear bombs.

FRANCE STAGED 184 nuclear tests between 1960 and 1989. Before moving to the Pacific France used Algeria for its nuclear explosions. Four atmospheric and 13 underground explosions were performed.

In 1983, when the French announced the establishment of the Pacific Experiments in 1974, the Madis people were unaware of the impending devastation that was to be inflicted upon them.

France promised that the bombs would be detonated only when the winds were blowing over uninhabited islands. The pledge was swiftly forgotten-in one incident the French even redrew the map of the Pacific in order to cover up their mistakes.

After 1966 international pressure eventually brought about the atmospheric testing after 44 blasts. The decision of the New Zealand government to send a diplomatic mission to the Pacific in order to cover up their mistakes.

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Near-meltdown at ageing nuclear plant

By Duncan Chapple

RATHER THAN stop production, a state-owned nuclear power company knowingly risked the meltdown of a nuclear reactor for nine hours.

Nuclear power is the next industry to be privatised by the Conser- vatives. Closing the reactor would have led to fines for the power company from National Grid, the electricity suppliers, and would have drawn attention to a series of safety problems at nuclear power stations.

Nuclear Electric were fined "a six-figure sum" at the Crown Court last year for negligence during the accident in 1993 at the plant in Wytho, north Wales. It is the world's largest Magnox-reactor, employing 500 people.

A 1320-ton crane grabbed itself into the reactor and cracked a channel containing a rod of enriched uranium fuel, a partial meltdown became likely. The court heard record levels of staff discussing the financial penalties, laughing and giggling as the accident unfolded.

A meltdown would have contaminated the gaseous uranium gas into the atmosphere, forcing the evacuation of the surrounding area.

After nine hours, and unable to monitor the condition of the coolant, Nuclear Electric closed the reactor. It remained closed for two weeks, costing £3 million.

The indifference of Nuclear Electric officials to the accident has heightened fears about the safety of nuclear power. In the run-up to the planned £3.5 billion sell-off of nuclear power after a programme of licensing plants for safety comes to an end in December this year.

Friends of the Earth's Dr Patrick Green asked "If these kind of considerations take over Nuclear Electric when it is in the public sector, what is going to happen when many stations are in the private sector?" Why are similar problems in nuclear reactors made greater by the threat of privatisation, nuclear fusion has always been unsafe.

Fission
Nuclear power is produced by at-tomising to control a nuclear chain reaction. Fusion - the splitting of atoms releases a massive amount of heat which is used to boil water. Steam produced powers turbines which produce electricity.

The reaction is controlled by separating the uranium fuel into thousands of rods held within graphite channels and cooled by gas or water. If the flow of coolant is obstructed, the fuel can fuse into a molten mass which can burn through the reactor. This is what happened at the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in the United States. Even if the reaction can be successfully controlled, fusion creates further dangers: radiation, waste, and the power stations themselves.

Nuclear radiation consists of tiny rays or particles which are split out of "radioactive" chemicals, such as uranium or radium. These rays, like tiny bullets, tear through living tissue. They can change the electrical charge of the tissue; killing it or changing its normal life cycle.

No level of radiation is safe: the world earth under which we contain much less radioactivity than a power station it can still damage cells, causing diseases like cancer. However a single commercial nuclear reactor contains far more dangerous radioactive material than exists on earth naturally. Only nuclear fission can produce plutonium, which fuels nuclear bombs.

Capitism's desire for cheap electricity, to break the power of oil workers and coal miners, and to produce nuclear weapons, does not extend to considering human safety.

No method has been developed for the safe long-term storage of nuclear waste. Nuclear power stations operate for about 30 years: no safe way has been found to dismantle them.

After Wytho we can expect more nuclear accidents in the coming years. They can only be prevented if democratic control is strengthened to ensure that energy is created in sustainable and non-iatomable ways. That needs a social revolution.
Anti-Republican view of 'the long peace'

By Paul Walker

What's Happening

SEPTEMBER
Sat 29
LANDMONES day of action details phone/fax 01296 623506
Sat 30
FACE demonstration meet 12.30, picket CWU for agreement for march to Hyde park

OCTOBER
Sat 7
DEMAND Justice Demonstrate 12 noon Clissold Park Green Lyle House tube for march from Shoreditch to Tottenham

Thurs 12
DAY of action in solidarity with McDonald's workers picket Manchester Andale 5pm

Frid 13
CELEBRATE the life of Ernest Mandel Rally, note new Ernest Mandel Centre Congress House Great Russell St WC1 7pm to 9.00pm with music and dancing Tariq Ali, Danut Hallas (SWP), Jeanette Habel (USF) and Chandra Van Gelderen (Socialist Outlook), Tickets £3 from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Sun 14
SYMPOSIUM on the Marxism of Ernest Mandel 1pm to 6pm ULU, Malet Street, W1 ECL exclusive showing of Tariq Ali's film on the life of Ernest Mandel speakers include Andy Kilminster, Alan Krieve, Jeans Habel, Tickets £7 (CS 33.00/US$40) from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Nov 15
RACE, Class And Black Struggle 5.30pm - 9.30pm ULU, Malet St Tickets £3/£1, 0171 637 0041, COMEDY night for London Hospital campaigns 7.30pm Winbloom Theatre SW9, Jo Brand, Mark Thomas, Arthur Smith 0181 540 0362

Fri 29
FREE Saltpal Ram national demonstration 10am Court Street, Attack The Strand

Sat 29
TUC demonstration: Unite against racism, meet 12 noon Parliament Square, head for march to Albert Square. Leaflet from Kay Cartney at TUC 0171 636 6161

NOVEMBER
Sat 25
STOP hospital closures conference sponsored by London Health Emergency 11.30 Great Britain Club, Maitel St London, WC1
Serbs denounce Bosnia carve-up

By Roland Rance

ONE DIFFICULTY encountered by campaigning support of a multi-ethnic Bosnia is the apparent intolerance of the Serbs in the east, even if they point out that they are not nostalgic for the old. A definitive response to this distortion of the conflict was provided by the recent visit to London of a high-level delegation representing the Serb Civic Council of Bosnia.

This delegation, which went almost unremarked in the media and public, has three senior political, military, diplomatic and academic figures. According to GCC President Mirko Pejcinovic, the Council is 'the political representative of the Serbs to the West', and has been meeting with the international community since 1992. The Serbs, he explained, are not seeking a return to 'the old order in any way', but rather to maintain their territorial integrity and self-determination.

Pejcinovic went on to explain that the Serbs are not seeking a return to the old order in any way, but rather to maintain their territorial integrity and self-determination. The delegation's visit to London was part of their efforts to engage with the international community and promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

By Alan Thomsett

ABOUT 150 people attended the first UK screening of the film 'Bosnia Serbia, 1991-92' at the Socialist Film Circle, London, on Saturday September 9.

There was widespread agreement on the current political situation in Bosnia, with the main speakers in agreement on the need for a political solution. However, there was no consensus on the role of the international community in the conflict. Some speakers called for increased military intervention, while others advocated a political approach. The film itself received a mixed response, with some viewers finding it too graphic and violent, while others found it informative and educational.

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Post Code: Tel:...
The NATO-US plan to bomb a 46%-51% carve-up of Bosnia into existence appears to have failed. It was always a high risk strategy. If Karadzic and the Bosnian Serbs had collapsed after a couple of days, agreed to NATO terms on Sarajevo, and entered "peace" talks, the basis of a 46%-51% split of Bosnian territory, they could have claimed a breakthrough and Bill Clinton's election campaign would have been boosted.

It did not happen that way. The Pale regime stood firm, even after the US had blasted off a valley of Cruise missiles. The bombing campaign went into crisis, caught between two factors: the hostile reaction from Moscow and the Bosnian government's refusal to retrain from taking military advantage of the bombing.

After a week of bombing, the US was drastically seeking a way out and they soon found one: they simply required Serbian forces to pull back all "heavy weapons" over 88mm calibre for mortars 100mm for artillery pieces. How the remaining weaponry would be any less lethal was never explained. They also introduced flexibility in only requiring a "serious effort" to comply.

Initially the main pressure for such a deal was the reaction from the Russian Duma, where deputies offered themselves as human shields against the bombing, and a resolution was adopted, under pressure by Zhirinovski and the nationalists, for the unilateral lifting of the embargo against Serbia. Yeltsin only vetoed the resolution after the compromise deal to stop the bombing had been worked out.

These factors, however, were quickly overcome by the Bosnian and Croat offensive around Bihać and in the north west in Herzegovina. As we go to press, huge swathes of Serbian occupied territory have been liberated.

The Bosnian army 5th Corps broke out of Bihac, ended its isolation as an enclave, and took the towns of Sanski Most and Bosanska Krapa; it is pushing towards Prijedor and the biggest town in the Serbian army occupied territories, Banja Luka. At the same time Croat Federation troops took the town of Ključ and Mrkonjic Grad.

The offensives have created a huge exodus of ethnic Serbs from the territory regained. They fear reprisals for the ethnic cleansing pogroms carried out by the Serbian forces. As such these Serbs are also the victims of the pogroms and the policies of Karadzic and Milosevic.

But the Bosnian government, which is fighting a war in defence of a multi ethnic society, along with the Croation authorities, also have a big responsibility to create the most favourable conditions to encourage the original Serb families to come back at the earliest possible time.

The offensives have reduced Serbian-held territory from 70% of Bosnia almost down to the 51% which would have been ceded under the US plan.

This has blown the US plan out of the water, since the offensive appears to be continuing, and even if it stopped the figures are out of date as a starting point for negotiations. The Bosnian government has in any case always had an ambiguous position on the various "peace" plans. They have agreed to various proposals in principle under the pressure of events, while at the same time preparing for a military solution.

Their latest statement on the offensive is that they retain "an absolute right to liberate the occupied parts of Bosnia". Indeed they have.

In the same way that they have refused to trust those who have been talking peace whilst imposing the arms embargo on them, they should watch their back with Tuzla - whose intentions are far from clear.

It is a big military advantage to have Croatian forces with the Bosniacs in the offensive, but it will give Tuzla far more leverage in the eventual shape of Bosnia and the degree of real independence it achieves.

The international repercussions of the situation are hard to fully assess. Certainly the crisis of credibility of the UN - restoration of which was an other objective of the bombing campaign - is not resolved. But the big question is whether Bosnian and Croatian military gains will bring Serbia itself, still the most powerful military force in the region, directly into the war.

This would again bring the issue of the arms embargo, and the disparity of heavy weapons, directly to the fore.

IWA delivers the goods

Following months of preparation, International Workers Aid has managed to take a convoy to Sarajevo. The three trucks, loaded with flour, oil, salt and yeast for the Trade Union Federation of Sarajevo, arrived on 15 September. This was the first aid convoy to reach Sarajevo for several months. Members of the convoy, one of the drivers, reported receiving a fantastic response: "These people had waited for so long for this and now, finally, we could make it through. A woman even called us and thanked her home to stay there and receive us!" IWA has already delivered more than 500 tonnes of aid to the unions in Tuzla, and is now planning further convoys to Sarajevo, as well as to Mostar. To support this work, please send cheques, made out to International Workers Aid, to IWA, PO Box 1109, London N4 2AA.