UNITE AGAINST RACISM

BRITAIN'S most dangerous racist is the State. The front-line in the fight against it is the battle against racist immigration controls.

In Britain today, the Conservative government are making black people the scapegoat for cuts in social security. The police are responsible for a mounting number of black deaths in custody and racist attacks. Black people are systematically discriminated against by the courts. Special Home Office departments aim to seek out and remove black people from Britain.

Home Secretary Michael Howard will announce new restrictions on the rights of people coming to Britain at the Tory party conference on October 12. It follows months of increasing state racism. Now proposals are being made to restrict the right to appeal against deportations, to cut the social welfare rights of people seeking asylum and to introduce “internal” immigration checks. These checks — comparable to the racist pass laws of apartheid South Africa — will mean that many thousands of black people will have to prove their immigration status before they can gain access to health care, employment and other rights: forcing some workers to act as immigration officers.

Other measures will lead to fines on employers of undocumented workers, a "white list" of countries from which no-one will be granted asylum, more visa restrictions against countries from which asylum seekers come and removing the right of asylum seekers to an oral appeal.

These new measures arise through an atmosphere of racist hysteria from the media against people seeking asylum in Britain. While Michael Howard claims that Britain is being swamped by "bogus asylum seekers", the reality is very different. Europe accepts only five per cent of the world's refugees — a disgracefully low number when compared to Europe's riches, and its historic responsibility for creating political and social persecution worldwide.

Last year just 825 people were granted asylum in Britain. Britain was built on imperial conquest and exploitation. People who seek asylum are fleeing from torture, war and devastation, often from governments supported politically by the British government and its allies. Thousands of immigrants and refugees are held in prisons and detention centres without charge, conviction or access to the courts.

The racist government offensive gives real authority to fascists and racists on the streets, in the workplaces and schools, in the media and in the police. The TUC demonstration in Manchester on October 28 will let workers, students and black people demonstrate their opposition to racism. However, we need to get organised if we are to make that opposition felt.

The National Network Against Detentions and Deportations will provide an important focus. While we still lack an authoritative and active black-led anti-racist coalition, the Network has played a crucial role in developing demonstrations, pickets, days of action and other campaigning work aimed against state racism. Its next protests will happen in five different cities on Saturday October 14: including a noon demonstration outside number 10 Downing Street.

The TUC and local labour movement and student bodies should learn from the Network. We need to develop on-going anti-racist action to turn the racist tide in society. October 28 must be the start.
What we think

Unite to reverse education cuts

10,000 PEOPLE joined the FACE (Fight Against Cuts in Education) demonstration in central London on September 30.

It was the second show of massive national support for FACE, a campaign built by parents, school governors, and teachers across the country despite the lack of official backing from the TUC, most unions or the Labour Party. Although one teaching union, the NASUWT, has given support, leaders of the largest, the NUT, have set out to sabotage FACE.

The Labour Party leadership did not attend either march. ‘New Labour’ has made no commitment to reversing cuts in primary and secondary education: instead Labour councils across the country are wiping the spending axe on behalf of John Major.

Labour has caved in to many of the Tories-market style reforms in education, not least with Blair’s decision to send his son to one of the tiny minority of open-air schools. They use the same arguments — about ‘failing teachers’ and bad parents – to justify education cuts.

Rather than tax the rating class, Labour wants to cut taxes even further than the Tories have done. They pretend that a one-off levy on water, gas and electricity monopolies can reverse unemployment. Labour won’t cut subsidies to private schools or take hundreds of thousands of pounds out of state schools to help

Despite its endless rhetoric about training and education, Blair’s reluctance to fix a minimum wage shows that Labour essentially agrees with the Tories on the need to convert Britain into a low-wage sweatshop for the European Union.

The FACE demonstration is a symbol of massive dissatisfaction with the state and private education – the GMB, UNISON, NASUWT – did back the demonstration, showing that unions can be won.

FACE gives us an opportunity to turn the unions around

Linked to the NUT with campaigns of parents and governors, and to demonstrateFACE as an “SWP front”. Despite his efforts, the number of NUT members on the FACE demonstration showed that members are keen to link up with others to fight the education cuts.

Opportunity

FACE gives us an opportunity to turn the unions around, so that we act to support working class people, not Labour and the rating class. A link-up between education unions and a broadly-based organisation of parents, governors and school students would challenge both the Tories and “New Labour”.

The decision of FACE to remain non-party political reflects more than its broad support from across the social and political spectrum: it also reveals a widespread dissatisfaction with the Labour Party’s inability to lead the fight against education cuts.

Behind new Bosnia peace talks

DESPITE their bombs and cruise missiles, NATO and the UN have failed, at this stage at least, to force the partition of Bosnia which has been the strategic aim of western policy. The US-backed peace talks have floundered into meaningless abstractions.

The NATO raids coincided with the Bosnian and Croat offensive in the north and had the effect of making it more successfully than it might otherwise have been. NATO peace talks have floundered into meaningless abstractions.

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Bosnia is not a “warring faction” as claimed by much of the left in Britain, but a sovereign state fighting for the retention of a multi-ethnic society, despite pressures towards partition and the multi-ethnic collapse of the state.

The Greater Serb project of Milosevic and Karadzic is for an “ethnically pure” i.e. ethnically cleansed state, the truth is further shown of this was clear in the genocide around Srebrenica and Zepa and is becoming evident as mass graves are uncovered in the liberated territories.

It is this policy which has created the tens of thousands of ethnic Serb refugees who have fled in advance of Bosnian and Croat forces. They fear reprisal attacks from the Serbs previously carried out by their own Serb leaders.

The Serbian government however, has a big responsibility to create the conditions that encourage their return, and to protect the home of all refugees in this war. Every refugee, worker, socialist or parent must start where they can do it for it, developing a breadth coalition spanning trade unions, the Labour Party and community organisations of all types that are willing to fight for education.

Reinforcing the General Strike?

FRANCE’S RECENTLY elected conservative government has opened a series of attacks on public services.

President Chirac’s first target is the privatisation of France Télécom. Half of the company is being sold off to a cartel headed by Deutsche Telekom and the US Sprint company.

The privatisation follows a series of attacks by Telecom managers. Chirac’s predecessor found a 1995 dispute in which three-quarters of Télécom workers were on strike, too hot to handle. Now the right is restructuring.

Chirac’s attacks aim much more widely than Télécom. His government intends to privatise pensions for public sector workers. Now public sector unions are fighting back.

A general strike in defence of the public sector is planned by France’s seven trade union federations for mid-October. It is a long overdue. Public sector wages in France have fallen nine per cent since 1982. The minimum wage is the public sector is now less than the youth training allowance.

Major opening

Our French sister organisations, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, are the planned public sector general strike as a major opening in the fight against privatisation and for decent wages and pensions. The LCR points out that it is historic: the first such strike for decades.

In recent years Europe’s unions have organised general strikes, just when the tactic appeared to have been nearly forgotten. In Spain, Italy, Belgium and elsewhere a new wave of militancy is being forged by the state.

Across the European Union, governments are trying to cut state spending at the cost of working people.

They are increasing the wealth of the rich and the huge multinationals at the cost of public services desperately needed by working class people and families.

Only the trade unions can turn back the offensive. To do so, they must take up the responsibility locally and nationally to unite all the victims of the new offensive in a determined fight to defend welfare rights, free education, wages and pensions.

Though no general strike in recent years has gone beyond protest action to draw out the potential of a bid for power, they have allowed the unions to show their strength and back much of the attack on social rights.

Most members of Britain’s unions don’t agree with the need for general strike action, or even the idea that it can be effective.

If trade unions take up their responsibilities to lead the fight against austerity, they will see why the general strike is coming, once again, the strongest weapon of Europe’s working class.
Benn: "Tony Blair is a conservative"

The intellectual fashion of the past two decades suggests that class has lost its meaning to describe political action. Should we take it seriously?

IT IS TRUE that the social democratic element in the Labour Party has abolished class. They speak about serving the nation. It is, however, totally unrealistic in terms of people's actual experiences.

The term 'working class' has been deliberately associated with something with dirty fingers doing a manual job, but you get people quite high up the scale who depend for their lives on selling their skills. On this basis, the working class goes up to 80 per cent of the population. What they now is to turn everybody theoretically into "middle class", and have an underclass, who they speak of as if they had chosen to opt out of society—they prefer to live in cardboard boxes, they do not want jobs.

The very clever word they developed is consumer. If you do not do any money, you cannot be a consumer.

They found a word which demeans and depersonalises the poor. They do not exist. They are the slaves in society.

In this way, by telling the mass class that they are all right, because they are middle class, they have created a completely artificial structure.

Behind the new political discourse there is a new political agenda.

IT IS VERY important to understand the nature of a society based on fear. Those who deny class, invent illusions and denounce anyone who talks about full employment, universal welfare or free health care and education as an extremist, in reality work completely at the command of the international financial markets.

When sterling drops three pence, they close hospitals and "confidence is restored".

It is not hard to realise that this is not an attack on socialist ideology but an attack on democracy. There is an article in the Financial Times, written by the BBC World Service economics correspondent, saying that in Africa it would be better if the countries were run by companies rather than governments.

The more you think about it, the more you realise that the world financial markets are the new Raj—the new capitalist empire.

How you get out of it is the next question, but I think we have to be absolutely clear, that a century of tentative progress by working people in controlling their economic destiny is being reversed. It is a massive counter-revolution, and that is why the social democrats say, "We cannot do anything about it. The world has changed, you are a dinosaur...etc".

Globalisation is an attack on democracy. What they say about a short period of hardship is on the agenda just as an illusion.

The new leadership of Labour have quickly accommodated to this new agenda.

TONY BLAIR is a conservative; he is a nice man, but he is a conservative. He is not just not a socialist, he is not Labour.

He does not believe in the organic link between the unions. He is the most popular conservative in Britain. He could have applied for the leadership of the Tory Party. This is the failure of the social democrats. They have failed as much as the communists. The communists failed by being authoritarian, undemocratic and bureaucratic, but the social democrats very largely have collapsed into the arms of capitalism.

So when we look back on the twentieth century, and see the different types of socialism, all of them have failed.

Do you expect that the next government will be very unpopular?

I THINK when they win the expectations will go up very sharply. Then the disillusion will set in very quickly. Then all sorts of things may happen.

The Conservative Party may split, because there are already two conservative parties: the old and the new, of whom Blair is a natural member together with the Liberals.

There then is the right wing now with John Redwood, and there are the trade union and socialist and green left, still in British politics, keeping its head down now because of the desire to defeat the Conservatives.

If you had proportional representation we could have a complete realignment of politics.

I think the British establishment now actually wants Blair in order to make the cuts in the welfare state, which he would be stronger to make than Major, because Major is weak and unpopular.

The fall of communism and the crisis of social democracy leave the left with the task not only to reorganise but also to re-invent itself.

THE COLLAPSE of communism is comparable to the Reformulation, when Martin Luther attacked the Vatican, which was utterly corrupt and centralised. He created a more popular type of Christianity which was more democratic.

There has to be some real change. Because anything less than a real change in the course of world politics would be a disaster. Politics could move to the right.

Passion is a product of two forces. It is the failure of capitalism, and a failure of the left to provide an alternative. Both ingredients are integral.

That is the real failure of New Labour. They have no explanation other than the Conservatives are wicked. We do not discuss socialism. We do not discuss capitalism.

To build up understanding and support for a real change is difficult; it may take decades. But this is an inherently unstable situation we are in.

Blair launches new witch-hunt

By Neill Murray

AFTER A LULL of several years, the Labour Party bureaucracy has restarted the witch-hunt against the left.

The lull did not mean that they had become more tolerant. Rather they hoped that the weakened left would censor itself, give up in despair, or be swamped by the wave of redundancies which are expected to toe the Blair line.

The atmosphere of witch-hunting has not been much below the surface. Critics are dismissed as being "in need of therapy".

The refusal to endorse Liz Davies, selected by Leeds North East CLP as its prospective parliamentary candidate, is another expression of this mood.

She has been accused of all sorts of things. The latest dossier "proves" that she was a Trotskyist because she has been on the Labour Braining board.

Several attempts have been made to submit emergency resolutions to party conference demanding Liz's endorsemen.

The Walsall parties have also encountered the rough edge of Blair's hand—out for making redundancies among the council workforce (New Labour has no problem with sacking workers), but for trying to make the Labour Group accountable to the District Labour Party.

The biggest witch hunt of all has been against black members. Four Birmingham CLPs are suspected. The Black Socialist Society in Manchester Gorton has been suspended, along with several individuals.

Witch-hunt victim Liz Davies

It is estimated that as many as 5,000 people have been either suspended or had their membership refused, with 90 per cent of them black.

The Campaign Against Labour Party Suspensions (CALPS) has been recently formed to fight these injustices.

Photo: Tribune

It is clear that the party leadership is moving on from hoping to marginalise the left, black members and trades unions to a policy of actively crushing dissent.

We need to make sure they meet the maximum resistance.
Left challenge in UNISON ballot

By Fred Laplat, Ixlington
UNISON 'A'

FOUR candidates have secured enough nominations for the ballot paper as UNISON elects a new General Secretary.

The frontrunner, Associ- ated General Secretary Rod- ney Bickerstaffe, won nominations from 283 branches; SWP member Yvonne Baksh has 47 branches behind her, while Milipol supporter Roger Bannister, the candidate of the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON has 43. Tory anti-abortion- ist Peter Hanson also scraped enough nominations to get on to the ballot.

The combined total has resulted in an acceptable 90 nominations across all parts of the union, indicating a real fight for a leadership alternative to the current UNISON leadership. Despite calls from the CFPU the SWP has consistently refused to build a united front.

The election campaign takes place against the sell-out of the NHS pay claim, and after Bickerstaffe bulldozed the union's TUC delegation into ditching the union's policy of a £4.15 per hour minimum wage, ensuring a vote on a mean- ingless composites. For the sake of the pro-election Hydeout, Bickerstaffe ensured Tony Blair an easy ride and ditched the union's policy.

Alternative

A fighting and demo- cratic alternative needs to be raised in this election campaign, to move forward in the union. To confront attacks on pay, jobs, and conditions and the privatisation of public serv- ices, a strategy of national industrial action is essential. A strong vote for Roger Bannister would signal the need for a change of course. Bannister stands for strike action against the NHS deal, a national fight against cuts and privatisation, defences of the anti- union laws, renegades of union- ism, support for self- organi- sation and the election of UNISON officials.

To invite Roger Ban- nister to speak at your meetings, or to obtain election leaflets and posters, contact the CFPU c/o Bromley UNISON, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close Brom- ley, BR1 3UJ, or phone 0181 464 3333.

1,000 new recruits in strike aftermath

RMT reaps rewards

By an LUL worker

Membership has become decisive in the struggle between LUL and the RMT. This is because the RMT has ruled that individuals not bal- lotted can't strike—even if they join the RMT. This rul- ing is an attack on the right to picket. Management is threatening to sack anyone not protected under law.

Last year management stopped accepting paybill re- ductions for RMT dues. While continuing to operate the system for other unions. Nevertheless, by its ad- visive effort, we have main- tained our strength over the workforce and have been able to challenge manage- ment over the current pay and productivity struggle.

The membership has now reached its former level and is still climbing.

ASLEF split

The latest offer by LUL was successful in splitting off ASLEF. LUL removed the problematic question of part- time drivers from the package. This was a move closer to separate pay bargaining for different grades.

Despite a two to one vote against the deal at the last ASLEF leadership meeting, it eventually accepted it. This was hardly a surprise, since the manage- ment and ASLEF bureau- crats had worked it out in

FACE shifts to local campaigns

By Roy Loach, NUM Executive, personal capacity

TEN THOUSAND buoyant parents, students, governors and teachers marched through Lon- don on 20 September as part of FACE's campaign to secure adequate fund- ing for education.

The pressure on the government in the run-up to the autumn state- ment will be a major success, despite be- ing held to a greater extent than the one held on March 25.

With massive cuts al- ready implemented in Oxford- shire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Sheffield, delegations from these ar- eas made up the backbone of the protest.

Mobilising support in ar- eas in which cuts are yet to have a major impact — in- cluding the metropolitan ar- eas — was more difficult but most areas of England were represented. There was even a small contingent from Wales.

The demonstration was officially supported by the NUM, the Amicus, James Na- tory Grunsky admitted at the rally that his union had initially been sceptical about FACE, but the NAUSW will give it full backing now it was estab- lished at the forefront of the campaign, said the union. With support for FACE now growing among NUM branches, the pressure on Doug McAvoy to drop his op- position will continue to grow. FACE's focus will now inevitably shift to local cam- paigning, and the next stage of the settlement for local gov- ernment is known.

Provisionally up to 5,000 teaching jobs have been lost this year. Demands upon councils not to implement government cuts will grow as well as calls on gov- ernment bodies to set 'needs related' deficit budgets.

A national campaign of indus- trial action by teaching unions backed by parents, students and governors is the real solution.

Publication schedule

The next issue of Socialist Outlook will be dated 25 October. The one-week gap is necessary for us to keep to our schedule of two issues a month. The gap also allows our staff to participate in the Ernest Man- del memorial events. Issue 92 will be mailed out to distributors on 26 October. The paper will be fortnightly from then until our December double issue.

If you like our paper, get in touch

Socialist Outlook is a fortnightly newspaper produced by British supporters of the Fourth International, the world-wide so- cialist organisation. If you like and agree with what you see in this issue, why not find out more about us and our ideas? Simply clip out and return this coupon.

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TRADE UNIONS

Safety strike by BT engineers

By a BT engineer

BT ENGINEERS in the Communication Workers' Union who work in the streets have voted to strike against management plans to force them to work alone or up poles in the dark.

It is the first ever vote by BT engineers for national ac- tion on a safety issue. Traditionally, BT "exter- nal" engineers worked in day- light hours. BT recently al- tered hours to stop as late as 8.30pm. In the winter, this will be extended up to five hours in the dark.

All trails and training for engineering work place in day- light. Floodlighting equip- ment used for working in darkness entails working in shadow much of the time, multiplying chances of falls and injuries. Working alone in the dark makes engineers more vulner- able to injury or attack; police use of BT 'vehicles for sec- urveillance means engineers are seen by some as fair game for assault. Injured staff can lie in the dark undetected for hours after an assault or injury.

Refused

Even so, the Health and Safety Executive has refused to intervene on the workers' behalf until there is a serious accident. The dangers are so clear to engineers, however, that the vote for strike action was never really in doubt. The union's head office position on the question taken should be refused to use the floodlighting. This leaves BT as the only body of working alone in the dark, ex- cept perhaps in some 'exclu- sions' area.

It is vital that the union presses home its case in no- mising on both demands be- ing met in full.
Support grows for memorial events

By Duncan Chapple

HUNDREDS of Ernest Mandel’s comrades, friends and readers will meet on October 13-14 for two important memorial events in London. Around 8,000 leaflets advertising the rally and International Symposium - advertised last - have been mailed out to many of the people in this country whose lives Ernest touched in over five decades of revolutionary leadership.

Over 400 people are expected to join a Friday-night rally at Congress House, the headquarters of the Trade Union Congress. Tariq Ali and Robin Blackburn, of New Left Review, will speak alongside Duncan Hallas, a long-standing leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and Fourth Internationalists from Belgium, Britain, France and Ireland.

The rally will also see the launch of Ending the Nightmare, a volume of essays on fascism and racism, to which Mandel is a major contributor.

Tickets are selling quickly for a 150-seat International Symposium to be held the following day. Speakers at the Symposium will include FI leaders Penny Duggan and François Ver cammen. Plenaries and workshops at the symposium, introduced by present and past leaders and supporters of the Fourth International, will look at the contribution to post-war Marxism made by Mandel and the movement he fought to build.

Ernest Mandel Memorial Rally

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED:
Tariq Ali, Robin Blackburn, Ann Conway, Penny Duggan, Charlie van Gelderen, Duncan Hallas, Alan Thorntt, François Ver cammen.

7.00pm Friday 13 October
Conference Centre, Congress House, Great Russell St. WC1.

International Symposium

1.00pm Saturday 14 October
Upper Hall, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1.

Includes first showing of Tariq Ali’s biographical film of Ernest Mandel. Workshop and plenary speakers include: Duncan Chapple, Penny Duggan, Ellis Hallman, Charlie van Gelderen, Jane Kelly, Andy Kilmister, Gill Lee, Rick Simon and Geoff Ryan. Tickets £7 (£3.50 US$40/NUS). For more details, phone 0181 800 7460.
Mandel on Trotsky's Marxism

JUST AS Leninism possesses definite characteristics and constitutes a definite stage in the development and enrichment of Marxism, so Trotskyism appears today with its own specific traits as a broadening of the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Trotsky is the Marxism of our epoch.

The working class movement by the disappearance of a whole generation, which was corrupted and physically broken by Stalinism, demoralised by the succession of defeats, and annihilated by the mounting waves of reaction and fascism.

Trotsky's work from this period continues to be studied by thousands of young workers and intellectuals throughout the world. Fascism, engrossing as it was, did not represent the Marxist tradition in this dark period in the history of humanity. Like any method of investigation and systematisation of the facts of experience, Marxism can be maintained only on condition that it is continually enriched. Any attempt to fall back defensively on "tradition", without any effort to encompass the new developments which are continually taking place through the sieve of the materialist dialectic, is certain to bring about a fatal ossification of the theory and to end in its certain death.

Trotsky represents the only serious effort to interpret in the light of Marxism those disconcerting phenomena of the last three decades, namely: the development of fascism, the usurpation of power in the USSR by the bureaucracy, the rigid evolution of the Soviet Union's economy, the monstrously accelerated development of the capitalist world, and the general crisis in the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

On Trotsky has fallen the heavy task of enriching the heritage of Marx and Lenin in the epoch of reaction and triumphing counter-revolution.

That is why, from the age of fifteen, he devoted himself to what he regarded the central task for today — the building of the Fourth International.

He was severely critical of those who characterised as suffering from the disease of "national communism", who subordinated the interests of parts of the world proletariat to what they considered the priorities flowing from the needs of party building, in their own country.

Sophism

He regarded the argument of the British Socialist Workers Party, that you first had to build the basement and the floor before you could build the roof (the international) as a crude sophism. What architect or group of workers, he asked, could ever build a roof without knowing from the beginning of the building project, what it is going to be and how it is going to be built, not just through a blueprint but through the current experience of building.

"National communism", even when proclaimed by comrades with the best of intentions, is but a variant of the reactionary utopia of "socialism in one country".

For Ernest, to be a Marxist, a proletarian revolutionary was first of all, to be an internationalist. This he was.
with every fibre of his being. When dedicating one of his books to comrades who had died, the highest praise he could bestow on them was that they were internationalists.

Some of the intellectuals, some of them erstwhile members of the FL, who rushed into print with obituaries after Mandel's death, were scornful of his revolutionary optimism. Typical of this was Tariq Ali's piece in the independent (July 21). These people, overcome by the current situation, the temporary success of capitalism in pushing back the frontiers of socialism and curbing the militancy of the working class, have retreated into reformist politics or to their ivory towers. They take the doomsday scenario which they regard as permanent, or, at best, for the foreseeable future.

Tariq accuses him of hiding the truth of "masking the fact with heady rhetoric". This shows how little he knows Mandel, who he probably confuses with the nasty sexist caricature, Ezra Einstein, in his tasteless fictional satire Redemption.

"One would have to be blind and deaf", Mandel wrote, "not to see that the world situation is still very bad for the wage-earning classes, still clearly on the offensive the world over". (World Socialist Today B/DOM No. 125, May-June 1995).

In contrast to these intellectuals, who were drawn into the FL in the heady days of 1968 and the Vietnamese campaign, and who now believe that the working class no longer has a role to play on the political stage, Mandel, the dialectical materialist, took the long view.

From that longer-term point of view, "several important factors are working in our favour. On a world scale, the wage earning class is still growing, and growing in an impressive way, although not in all countries and all sectors at the same pace. Internationally, it has long passed the billion mark."

From the age of fifteen, he devoted himself to the fight for the Fourth International.

"If you add to this the semi-proletariat of landless peasants in important third world countries, you will already reach the figure of two billion" (ibid).

While the pessimists and back-sliders could see only retreats and defeats, like Marx after the collapse of the First International, Lenin after the betrayal of August 1914, and Trotsky in the dark days after Hitler came to power, Ernest Mandel, in the best Marxist traditions, analysed the current situation and came to quite a different perspective:

"We believe that we have passed the lowest point of the working class's and mass movements' retreat. The fight back is now rising" (ibid).

He based this optimistic outlook on the growth of these layers of the wage earning class in sectors like telecommunications, banking and the so-called service industries, as well as those in semi-automated industrial plants.

Strike action in these sectors in these sectors could paralyse the capitalist economy more effectively than the "classical" strikes in mines, steel or auto plants. The incompetence and corruption in the top echelons of these concerns is already affecting the financial outlook of those who live only on their salaries.

For Ernest, the building of the Fourth International was the primary purpose of his life. All of the groupings which claimed allegiance to Trotsky and to the FL is the only one which has succeeded in establishing itself as a genuinely internationalist, world-wide movement, with sections in 50 countries and sympathetic associations in many more. None of the sects which claim Trotskyite orthodoxy can equal this.

As he has written many times, it is during non-revolutionary conjunctural phases of the class struggle that revolutionaries conquer the capacity to lead their class when the possibility of revolution begins to appear. It was in the period 1912-1914 that the Bolsheviks gained the capacity to lead the revolution of 1917.

Ernest Mandel, Marxist, revolutionary, internationalist, fought all his life to change the world, but to change it with a specific purpose to eliminate all social conditions in which human beings are debased, downtrodden, mutilated in their possibility of developing all their human potential.

This is what he fought for when he joined the resistance in Belgium during the war. It was to remain his goal right up to the moment when the fascist heart attack struck.

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**£5,000 Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund is launched**

**Global effort aims to establish Ernest Mandel Study Centre**

By Aldan Day

**SOCIALIST OUTLOOK is launching a £5,000 Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund.**

As part of an international campaign by supporters of the Fourth International, the money will go towards strengthening International Viewpoint and the Fourth International's International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam.

The Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund has also organised the rally and Syposium advertised elsewhere in this issue.

Ernest Mandel founded the International Institute for Research and Education (IRE) in 1983 as a unique study centre for activists in the labour and liberation movements. Hundreds of people have participated in its initiatives. In order to achieve a truly democratic society it is necessary not only to learn the lessons of past struggles but also to develop a analysis of the present that will guide future militants.

The Institute aims to develop research in education in socialism and democracy. It organises courses and seminars on a wide range of subjects, including Marxism, economics, political theory, trades unionism, national liberation, women and emancipation movements.

Mandel centre

The IRE has recently decided to create an Ernest Mandel Study Centre on the premises of the Amsterdam school to foster non-dogmatic, open-minded and revolutionary theory and Mandel fought for his life.

Participants and lecturers come from all over the world to work in close collaboration to exchange ideas and information and to forge a broad framework for international solidarity education.

Alongside practical education the IRE has an important publications programme. It is running two series: the Notebooks for Study and Research and a number of Working Papers.

All Notebooks are in French and English. Some have also been produced in Portuguese, Dutch, Italian and Turkish.

They are comprehensive studies of depth, open-minded and critical contributions made by and for activists.

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Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund

The Fund aims to help establish the Study Centre and to develop the work of the Fourth International. Please make cheques payable to 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund'.

Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund

Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund

Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund

Please contribute to the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund
Before the Wall – and after
Mandela on Stalinism and Eastern Europe

One of the toughest tasks of the post war Fourth International was to fill the immense gap left by the death of Trotsky and to repel a coherent political response to the complex changes taking place in the Eastern European "buffer zone" – the countries liberated by the Red Army.

Much of this fell to the young Ernő Mandel, whose document "The Soviet Union after the War and the Policy of the Communist Parties", drafted in 1946, was adopted as the position of the FI's International Secretariat. The document, written before the Cold War lurched towards nationalisations and the consolidation of the monolithic rule of Stalinist parties – and without our benefit of hindsight – strongly rejected the notion of a new "bureaucratic imperialism", and also the growing insight that abandoning or promoting a "bureaucracy" was "objectively" carrying out the socialist revolution.

Here we print some extracts.

**Defence of the USSR against imperialism**

LET US first precisely what "defensive national defence of the USSR does not mean for a Bolshevist Leninist:

1. It does not mean to be silent about, to hide, to excise or to avoid condemning any crime of Stalinism, whatever it may be or wherever perpetrated.
2. It does not mean being silent about or hiding any political difference with Stalinism, or about the policy of countermeasures unmasking the Stalinist leaders as proved enemies of the proletarian revolution.
3. It does not mean supporting any given movement of Soviet troops, any district on any question in which these go against the interests of the proletariat.
4. It does not mean abandoning anywhere, any principle of the class struggle.

Whereas the Red Army may intervene to support the bourgeois state or proletariat, the FI will assist the proletariat in opposing by every armed means, including arms, such counter-revolutionary intervention.

5. It does not mean the slightest abandoning of revolutionary defections in the capitalist countries allied with the USSR.
6. It does not mean automatic acceptance of any given political, economic or military threat made by the bureaucracy in the course of a war with imperialism...

**The struggle against the bureaucracy**

This propaganda can be carried on effectively only if we were treasured concepts of Stalinist interventions in the buffer countries; only if we show, with concrete examples, that Stalinism or that the USSR is as fatal for the proletariat; only if we endeavour by every means to dissociate the cause from the consciousness of the USSR from Stalinism, the gangrene of the workers' movement and of Soviet Russia.

In the buffer countries the cause of "defence of the USSR" demands the liberation of the workers' movement from the killing weight of Stalinism, unless the class struggle is completely carried on in these regions, integral assimilation of the countries into the imperialist bloc is only a matter of time.

A slogan of "immediate withdrawal of the occupation troops", tied to the slogans of carrying on and broadening the revolutionary struggle against the tottering bourgeoisie, is required both in order to achieve the liberation of the workers' movement from the Stalinist grip and to halt the increasing bureaucratisation of the proletariat, which results from the reactionary policy of police, counter-revolution and counter-revolution of the Stalinist occupation.

This reactionary policy will inevitably throw the petty-bourgeois masses into the arms of the parties which are agents of imperialism – unless the revolutionary proletariat itself resolutely fights this policy.

**Bureaucratic realisation of the Socialist revolution?**

"The facts prove the complete falsity of the theory that the Stalinist bureaucracy would be compelled "objectively to carry through the socialist revolution in other countries".

This theory is a complete petty bourgeois perversion of Lenin's concept both of the state and of the proletarian revolution.

One cannot deny that a sizeable part of the personnel of the state apparatus is not what determines the nature of the state: on the contrary, the nature of the state derives from its structure, which is determined by the relations of production on which it rests.

"A policeman who is a 'socialist' is only a bourgeois policeman," said Trotsky.

Even if the majority of officials of the bourgeois state were members of the Stalinist party – which is not so in any of the buffer countries – the nature of the state would not be qualitatively different.

The Russian state, it is true, long ago lost the structure characteristic of a workers' state: in "The Revolution Reburied," Trotsky emphasised the fact that the occupation was approximately more and more closely that of a bourgeois state. But what we are dealing with there is a generalisation of the situation characteristic of an "established workers' state". In 1917 the workers and poor peasants completely destroyed the framework of the bourgeois state, and they consummated this...

**Chief grave-digger of world revolution: Stalin with successor Khrushchev**

50 years on: refuting 'state capitalism'

Mandela continued the battle against 'state capitalist' theories on class nature of the deformed and degenerated workers' states up to the end. Almost 50 years after writing his careful analysis of the Eastern European buffer countries and his rebuttal of the notion of 'bureaucratic realism', he again took up the fight – in a polemic against the British SWP.

"THE ATTEMPTED neo-Stalinist coup in the USSR, and its dramatic aftermath ..."

... and set up the sole criterion for determining the social nature is absolutely contrary to this method."
Manchester RMT militant victimised

Rail bosses attack the right to picket

Last week Chris Jones, general secretary of the passenger traffic, carriage and wagon grades conference of the RMT was sacked for not crossing an ASLEF picket line. Sacked himself, he asked me to explain the events behind his dismissal.

"I went to work on the Friday morning of the ASLEF strike and came across a picket line. I hadn’t expected to, but when I found it I decided not to cross. I stopped for a while to talk to the ASLEF picketers and then cleared off home.

Six weeks later a manager approached me very informally to explain what I’d meant by ‘ASLEF picket’ on a note explaining my absence. I realised then that they were going down the road of discipline. Charges were soon presented.

They clearly came from the highest level of management. I was in fact charged the very day after the current management of Inter City West Coast had been told that they were not going to be allowed to buy the company until after the general election.

Perhaps it was coincidence, but maybe they took a decision that was not of such a short time to do a bit of union busting - now that it was not going to impair upon a short-term sales plans. These things are in manager’s minds.

I was charged with failing to go to work, taking unofficial industrial action in breach of my contract of employment and taking actions likely to induce other people to break their contracts of employment.

At the hearing I was sacked.

People say it is not as not just an attack on me, which of course it was, but a collective attack on the shop stewards. This was understood straight away by everybody.

The relations between the various unions are very good in the complex. For five or six years we have had what is now called the joint shop stewards committee, which have done a very good job.

One of the reasons I’m being got rid of is because the shop stewards are very effective in the depot and further afield.

Whether the management have a strategy as such, in terms of employing anything is hard to say. But certainly they do want to get rid of us. We’ve been a thorn in their side.

The whole system is being fragmented.

In my depot itself, Longsight, part of the West Coast line, there is serious possibilities that this can be broken down even more. People serious believe that we could see a fragmentation down to a local level.

There’s a joke going around that we’ll end up with "Longsight Limited": a maintenance outfit.

They’re already talking about maintaining buses and lownow."

The head of West Coast Inter City was actually the appeals officer when the "Pickadilly Four" were sacked three years ago. At the industrial tribunal he said that he had been involved in the provocation of strikes in order to get rid of shop stewards. He publicly admitted it.

I am sure he said it because he wanted people to be aware that what was he was willing to do. He used the tribunal statements to scare people. Maybe that is what is going on now.

It is certainly the case that one of the biggest obstacles to privatization is the continued existence of the RMT.

There’s no doubt about it. They are trying to destroy the union’s executive, forcing the full-time members back to work next year. This is a major attack on the union’s structure. Getting at the reps at a local level is part of it.

My own RMT branch has been brilliant. A lot of the shop stewards on the depot have been running around with the petition for my reinstatement.

I went to the depot last week and was given a letter from the NWP. It said that I had their support, that more would have signed, but the leadership has been issuing threats to anyone associating with me.

They are clearly worried.

What we need now is a national campaign for my reinstatement that defends the right of workers not to cross picket lines."

A campaign has been launched for Chris Jones’s reinstatement. Backing the fight is leading members of the RMT.

Contact the campaign at Department 13, 1 Newton St, Manchester M11HW.

Anti-racist ammunition

Ending the Nightmare. Socialists against racism and fascism.Published by Socialist Outlook, £4.95

Reviewed by Martyn Owen

DISTILLING many of the key lessons of the struggles against mass fascist movements in the 1930s, and looking in detail at the fight against fascist violence and state racism today, this new book offers a wealth of information for campaigners and socialists.

The first, historical, section of the book examines the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and Spain, exploring the roots of this most brutal backlash of a crisisridden capitalism. An extensive chronology helps set these events in a wider context.

As an article by Dave Packer sums up the special nature of fascism: "Fascism is not just reaction, it means civil war, mass slaughter and the physical elimination of whole social groups, 'Midnight of the century' was not really a strong enough phrase to describe the period unleashed by the 1933 victory of German fascism."

Packer distinguishes between fascism and a straightforward military collapse: "As war on the workers movement, fascism mobilises the most desperate layers: The distinctive thing about fascism is the building of a plebeian alliance, a mass movement, to crush the organisations of the working class. This was not fundamentally what General Pinochet did in Chile in the 1970s."

"If we put the label 'fascist' on every militia dictatorship, then the word starts to lose any specific meaning."

The article on Germany from Ernest Mandel explores the way the once prosperous middle classes, squeezed by the power of big capital on the one side and the trade unions on the other, could be whipped into a frenzy by the Nazis' conspiracy theories.

But Mandel also underlines the criminal role played by the trade unions and social democratic leaders in Germany, who obstructed working class resistance and offered no policies radical enough to win over the petty bourgeois: "What they did at that time cost mankind 80 million deaths. It is not the fault of our class. It is not because of anything inherently wrong with the German labour movement. The fault lies in the two leaders and exclusively with them.

The ultra-left sectarian line of the German Communist Party, which turned its back on Lenin’s united front tactic to wage a hysterical campaign, denouncing the social democrats as 'social fascists', was a tragic repetition of the errors of the young Italian CP in the early 1920s, examined in an article by Geoff Ryan.

A frightening article by Peter Porter examines the continuity between the barbaric hostility of fascist Inwards homo-nationalism and today's 'mainstream' of right-wing bigotry.

"The hatred of the fascists for homosexuality was not, and is not today, the whim of a twisted mind of a Heinrich Himmler or Jean-Marc Le Pen, but part of an ideology which took to a murderous conclusion the already existing oppression of homosexuality prevalent in capitalist society."

A second section of the book examines movements of the far-right in Europe today with special reference to the British BNP nazis, Le Pen's French National Front, and the nationalist far-right in ex-Yugoslavia.

The third section of the book looks at the fight against racism and fascism in Britain today, pointing the finger primarily at the growing power of some fascist laws now being built up by the Tories, with active, shameless conformance from Labour.

"The result of this whole barrage of legislation was to create a host of measures for keeping back immigrants and to the same time to give the police and immigration authorities powers which intimidated and harassed sections of the black community living here."

A fitting tribute to the memory of Bob Smith, a Socialist Outlook supporter and enthusiastic fighter against racism and fascism who died last year, the book represents a genuine contribution to the political armoury of the left.

It offers in easy and accessible form many of the key points from a wide range of experiences spanning 70 years of struggle by socialists.

It deserves to be widely read by all those continuing that fight today.

Order your copy, £5 post free, from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1169, London N4 2UJ.
The election in Sweden shows how Sweden is becoming less and less an internationally renowned welfare state, and more an ordinary West European country with a weak welfare system and state-dependent parties without active memberships. Whether the political vacuum will be filled by left radicals like the List for Justice and right-wing populists is still an open question.

New Somalis skimmishes

IN SOMALIA the warlords are getting restless. Over the last month several prominent Somalis, including General Farah Aideed, launched attacks on other militia feuding fears among Somalis that war and industrial famine may visit them once more. Since the US pull-out a fragile peace has been maintained which rested on decentralised forms of government involving clan leaders, religious leaders and clan-based militias.

Aideed's personal role remains unclear. He was neither one of the main figures in the civil war nor a contender for power. However, he is considered to be a key player in the current political scene. His influence is significant, and his actions can have a major impact on the political landscape.

What's Happening

FOX'S: A woman本轮的愤怒

by Antoine Bouvier

THE MYTH that people in France were indifferent to the thermo-nuclear tests: that it has been thoroughly scotched in the weeks since President Mitterand suspended French nuclear tests in the Pacific. The wave of militant opposition to the tests in French Polynesia itself has attracted wide publicity, within metropolitan France polls show opposition to the tests rising to more than 60 per cent.

At least 145 organisations have come together across an international appeal which constitutes the basis of the “ACDC” campaign. ACDC organised protests throughout the country following the first test on September 6, and is organizing a big national demonstration in Paris on September 30.

Apology

The campaign’s “internationalisation” is designed to increase the immediacy and definite halting of nuclear tests and seeks to show “in defiance of French and international public opinion, President Chirac has undertaken a series of nuclear tests in the south Pacific.

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Eyewitness report by Bosnia aid worker

Tuzla bears brunt of war

Jenny Mee, with the mayor of Tuzla (centre-left). Photo: Tim Wise

Tuzla bears brunt of war

Jenny Mee, a founder of International Workers Aid, recently returned from an extended visit to Tuzla. She gives a vivid picture of everyday life in the city and the pressures caused by the continuing war.

IT IS DIFFICULT to form a balanced opinion while in Tuzla, with so many contradictory impressions. The region, especially the town of Tuzla, is still a multi-cultural and democratic society that we should support.

A lot of undemocratic machinery is in place. The fall of Serbienica caused a shock in the Tuzla region, not only because of the horrors of the event, but because of the further strain it put on the town's meagre resources.

The new refugees were distributed among various areas of the region. By the end of July, nearly 5000 had arrived — including 15 Serb families from Serbienica. Tuzla is awfully crowded.

Earlier refugees from Serbienica have formed a kind of council to deal with the problems of the new refugees, such as tensions between the "old" and "new" refugees, and with the Tuzla municipal authorities.

Trades unions

Many of the activities had been active in trade unions before the war, and, although they are no longer employed, are trying to integrate into the Tuzla trade unions.

There were several incidents after the arrival of the refugees. One Serb citizen was brutally murdered and several Serbian families were forced to leave their homes. These incidents — about 100 altogether — were in the surrounding municipalities and not in Tuzla itself.

Matters are now under control, but of course tension has mounted and harassment of Serbian citizens has become worse.

I met Miso Bosic of the Serb Civic Council (SCC) in Tuzla, who complained that "the international community gives aid to the Kastavac Serbs, but not to us". He said that the 13,000 Serbs in Tuzla were without means and were vulnerable and frightened.

There are many Serbian men in the army. They face no special problems. The SCC also aims to rebuild a cultural life. One problem faced by the community is the lack of an Orthodox priest who all joined the other side at the beginning of the war.

Noting the "Muslim euphoria", Bosic called for a political struggle against nationalism.

Bosic claimed that most politically active Serbs are members of the Social Democratic Party (which governs Tuzla but is in opposition nationally), and he repeated the demand of the Serb Assembly of Bosnia, that Serbs should be considered one of the three main constituent peoples of the Bosnia-Herzegovina federation and that they be a party to the negotiations.

I also met Jovan Djavovic, Vitoj Pavlovic and others in the Serbian Orthodox Humanitarian Association "Dobrotvor". They had quite a number of refugees.

I was one of the very few foreigners who had ever visited this association, which has no links with any organisations abroad, and has received little aid for the people which it supports — some 15,000, many from "mixed" families.

They were elderly, very poor and very sad. They were "finished with Bosnia and Tuzla".

According to Vesna Sebic-Jugovic, of the Tuzla Human Rights Committee, the region had been impoverished by the fall of Serbienica.

There were human rights violations and other matters; maybe, because of the war and the big problems.

But with the arrival of the refugees, who were being used as a political weapon against Tuzla's multi-culturalism, things had started to change for the worse.

No money

Food and most common daily goods are cheap, but most people have no money. Although only the most war-torn areas are really affected, nowadays, a lot of people don't eat well.

Those who can get an extra job to make some money (in addition to their regular, almost unpaid job) working for a foreign NGO, taxi driver, mechanic. Many people sell their own furniture and other belongings in the streets.

At the market and on every street people sell fruit and vegetables, mainly from their own gardens. All is available in small quantities, but 50 kilos of oranges were available in the market for 18 DM.

People with a job can usually get one meal at their factory or office. There is water twice a day. Electricity is available the whole day, but

IWA aid convoy goes to Sarajevo as well as Tuzla

Bosnian TV plays a big role, with its emphasis on the Muslim cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia.

Of course, many people stress that they are European with a European culture — but this is difficult. Europe has let them down, isn't interested in them. And what is "European culture"? To dress as people dress in London, and use a computer? A nation needs more.

If the war ends, if there is some kind of political solution for Bosnia, then this process can develop.

The Bosnian people can look for and develop their identity after the collapse of the Yugoslav federation.

But now? Somehow, I feel that (small) group of very active people who are fighting for the European, multi-ethnic and civic option are moving in a kind of emptiness, with no roots in the mass of the rest of the town — because this option seems so powerless, so without future, their answers and options so cut off from the possibility not-so-educated and enlightened ordinary citizens, let alone the refugees.

It is undeniable that the city and region have changed in their ethnic and cultural composition.

On the other hand, when prime minister Haris Silajdshinigrad [in protest at the growing Islamisation of the Bosnian government], the Citizens' Forum organised three days of petitioning for his reinstatement, with great success.

Because there is another reality: the tradition of living together and mutual understanding as good neighbours between the Bosnians, they are not at all fanatical and intolerant people, not even after these three years of war — if they are given a chance.

A lot of people want to survive, many want to make a way for themselves by betting on the SDA (government party). But also, many people want to show their affinity with their own, Muslim cultural heritage.

This is all stimulated in schools by some teachers, but also with the new books from the Sarajevo ministry of education.

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Education, racist laws, low pay, witch-hunt:

Stop Blair's lunch to right

THE LABOUR Party Conference gives delegates a chance to show - to the working class, particularly the low paid, sick, elderly, jobless youth and the oppressed in our society - that Labour is going to tackle the legacy of 16 years of Tory onslaught and offer some kind of an alternative.

This is not easy. At this Conference Tony Blair is building on his victories against the left over Clause 4. He is moving to further embrace a Tory consensus that has been established over the last decade by Margaret Thatcher and John Major.

Populist stunts like a windfall tax on the utilities are no alternative to re-nationalisation.

Worse of all is his shocking proposal, made just a few days before the Conference, to means-test child benefit - thus ending universal child allowances.

This shows not only his contempt for the poor (and for the left of course), but also indicates who he is relying on to win the next election. It is certainly not the ever growing millions of down-trodden and oppressed people.

The core of Blair's plan is therefore to transform the Labour Party into a social democratic party of the centre, or even a liberal democratic party like the US Democrats.

"New Labour", as Paddy Ashdown clearly understands, is not just a catchy slogan. A continuing witchhunt against the left is an inevitable consequence of this policy, as the axing of Liz Davies selection as parliamentary candidate has shown.

Blair wanted Conference to be little more than a pre-election rally which provides the media with choice soundbites, slick suited images, and some well publicised bloody noses for the left. The Labour left, organised in the Socialist Campaign Group Network and in other bodies, is challenging this offensive: attempting to recoup ground lost over Clause four by fighting on policy issues.

In particular the Labour left has focused on a commitment to a £4.15 hourly minimum wage, against the leadership's concessions on grant-maintained schools and its willingness to see the development of a multi-tiered education system.

The left is also backing resolutions designed to stop the erosion of the trade union link. This link in particular lies at the centre of Blair's aim to break the party from its roots in the unions.

Socialist Outlook is part of this fight against Blair. We put particular stress on the centrality of rebuilding the mass movement, in particular the trade union movement, which will be decisive in stopping the Blair bandwagon.

Every socialist needs to take up the broader issues facing the working class and promote not only current trade union struggles, but also build support for campaigns such as Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE), campaigning against the cuts and the network of campaigns fighting racist detention and deportation laws.

In this way the working class can find the way forward in the fight against the Tories today, and soon against a right wing Labour Government.