Demand real Trade Union action

FIGHT AGAINST RACIST LAWS

CABINET DIVISIONS meant Michael Howard did not announce the details of new immigration legislation at Tory party conference as expected. But that doesn't mean that this attack has been shelved - though it is unlikely to contain fines for bosses who employ those without status.

Certainly we know from Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley's announcement that a huge swathe of asylum seekers will have their benefit stopped from January 8, 1996 - a change doesn't require an Act of Parliament, just new regulations.

In addition, the Queen's speech at the opening of the new parliamentary session is likely to contain proposals to:

- IMPOSE immigration checks on those claiming benefits, health care, housing and education
- DENY these services to a large number of people whose status is not settled, as well as to so-called 'illegals'
- LIMIT the number of countries from which asylum requests will even be considered
- IMPOSE further visa restrictions on countries from which asylum seekers come
- WITHDRAW the right of oral appeal from some asylum seekers

The impact of such changes, with their emphasis on 'internal controls', rather than border controls, would be an extremely negative one not only for refugees and asylum seekers but for all black people in this country. The proposal for checks on the status of service users will require policing by working people, many of them active trade unionists.

While many anti-racist organisations have been organising conferences and meetings to discuss the likely changes, very little has happened so far within the unions - which must be a central focus for organising resistance. UNISON did organise a conference in October but it was not seriously built.

Over the last decade there have been some successes in forcing trade unions to fight racism; most notably in taking up deportation cases affecting their own members, but also in pressuring the TUC itself into calling demonstrations such as that on October 29.

Now task for every trade unionist in unions whose members will be called on to implement these pernicious measures is to fight for their organisation to back measures of non-cooperation against these proposals. Many workers will be angry about the idea that they should police service users, but without trade union organisation there is a danger that they will either feel impotent to achieve anything or will end up being picked off individually.

Collective action with official trade union support could make internal controls - inoperable - it must be fought for vigorously.

INSIDE:
Behind the Tories immigration witchhunt: pages 8 & 9
What we think

‘National security’, electoral insecurity

THE TORIES may hold the election in the spring of 1995, but October’s party conferences showed the general outlines of the campaign to come.

On the right, a Conservative government which has brought real success to Britain’s export-oriented class but — risen top to bottom on European integration — is likely to show a way forward.

In the centre, a Labour Party sufficiently from Blair’s blight to brink the left, those dispa-rate bands of those who de- the real political challenge real interest are the Conservatives and the opposition.

The real political challenge facing the Conservatives is how to hold on to power.

They’ve done their bit by their class. The British econ-omy, growing at three per cent a year, and the govern-ment will try hard to re-duce income tax even further.

Last week, the FTSE index, which measures the value of shares, reached an all-time high.

Most working people don’t see any improvement. It’s a ruling class investors who feel the benefit, not workers, pensioners, parents, students or the unemployed.

Less income tax and more profits means worse education, lower pay, worse welfare, health and social services and higher indirect taxes, like VAT.

Security

To win back the votes of working people, the Conservatives are trying to launch a new propaganda war. They want to show that the Tory party is the party of internal and external security: against criminals and asylum seekers at home, and against “Eurocrats” and potential invaders abroad. It is a natural exten- sion of the law and order policies of Michael Howard.

On compensation rules, infor-mation for prisoners, pa-roles for IRA prisoners, police author-ities and more Howard has been offended by his jurid-ical review.

The damaging war on Howard by sacked Prison Service chief Denis Lewis is a product of the government’s high-handed attempt to whip up fear-driven appeals for stronger state powers in the aftermath of the Parkhurst jailbreak.

At the Conservative party conference, Michael Howard announced tougher sentences for burglars and sexual of- fenders, Peter Lilley brought in £200 million cash in welfare aid to those seeking asylum.

Defence Secretary Michael Portillo — fiercely opposing defence spending cuts — in- vited, and then denounced, a series of non-existent EU pro- posals: common military uni- ons, a 40-hour week for the armed forces (quite a good idea); a common military pol- icy.

This may be very good for the Tory party conference, but it doesn’t convince working people. In fact, it is no longer convinces the ruling class either.

Economy

For the bulk of the ruling class, it no longer matters whether Labour or the Tories win the general election. Chancellor Clarke plans a third billion pound cut in in- come tax — but Labour could easily cut the same amount with its windfall levy on the profits of privatised utilities.

Neither party will return public spending on capital and infrastructure even to the modest levels of Thatcher.

Labour’s clear advantage is Blair’s solid support for Europe integration. When Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind announced the gov- ernment’s goal of a free trade zone linking the EU with Can- ada and the USA, he reflected the Euro sceptic opponents of European integration.

No-one, except perhaps Mr. Rifkind, is convinced by that. As the Los Angeles Times noted last week, the US Presi- dent’s trade representative Micky Kantor now argues that the US needs to base itself on the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) bloc: “You know where our real strategic concerns are? They’re in Asia — China, Ja- pan, Korea.” Kantor went on, “The Pacific, for better or worse, is our destiny.”

Europe

Britain’s ruling class has no practical alternative to European integration. They must force massive cuts in social spending and state bor- rowing quickly enough to meet the criteria for full eco- nomic and monetary union or be caught out in the coming world trade war.

Labour is the party that will do that, the Tors are the party that will try to do it, if the right wing of the Tory party can be outflanked.

Ironically, the Tory ‘strong state’ offensive — which is so essential to their electoral for- mation — could stand in the way of the workers and oppressed of Britain — or anywhere else in the world.

Democracy in the NUT

EVEN THE most vicious dictators need votes once in a while.

The plebiscite — a one-off vacancy and a certain candidate or proposal — is their favourite tool. While giving the illusion of choice, the lack of any practical alter- native means the outcome is almost always assured.

This is why Doug McAvoy, the General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, is seeking to use the same method to manipulate the members of his union. He has already over- turned the policy of the NUT conference and Spe- cial Salaries Conference in this way — overturning a planned one-day strike against the underfunding of education.

Pension and postal bal- lots do not produce the same results as considered discus-sions in the union’s confer- ences and local divisions. Voting by post, teachers have no idea of the opinions, confidence or ideas of teach- ers in other schools and other parts of the country.

McAvoy now plans to keep these cautious postal plebiscites coming. He plans for decisions of Annual Confer- ence to be referred to plebiscites, and for changes to the union’s rules to be cut di- rectly to the union’s mem- bers. Of course the ballot papers and subsequent sur- veys will be written by Mr. McAvoy himself. In order to ensure the most cautious re- sponse possible comes back.

As working people gear up to place their demands on a future Labour government, other union leaders will at- tempt to replace union de- mocrazy and real discussion with these undemocratic plebiscites. Working people must prepare now to fight back against such attempts in the future.

Ernest would have approved

THREE HUNDRED and forty people participated in the Ernest Mandel memorial rally and sympo-sium two weeks ago.

Many of Ernest’s friends and comrades came to the rally and a smaller, slightly younger, audience attended the following day’s symposium, which consisted of a series of detailed discussions on the contributions made to Marxism by Mandel and the Fourth Interna- tional.

Billed rally speakers Terry All, Robin Blackburn, Charlie van Gelderen and Hans Thor- netz were joined by three leading Fourth International-ists. Tony Conway, Danny Duggan and Francois Ver- cammen. Annie Conway, of the Irish section of the Fourth International, was particularly warmly wel- come to the platform.

Charlie van Gelderen, one of the founding fathers of the Fourth International in 1938, opened the meeting recalling Mandel’s contribu- tion to Mandel’s work on the strategy of permanent revo-

Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund.

The Fund aims to raise over £3,000 to wards the costs of building an Ernest Mandel Study Centre and helping to secure the publications of the Fourth Inter- national. Importer, Internal Vineyard and Importer para Latin America. So far, over £1,000 is in for the Memorial Fund — mainly from donations at the rally. The Fund ends in De- cember, when leaders of the Fourth International’s sec- tions in Europe meet in the Amsterdam building which will house the Ernest Mandel Study Centre.

Socialist Outlook read- ers and supporters

groups around Britain plan to raise nearly £400 a week to complete the fund by 3 December.

Make your donation payable to ‘Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund’ and post to EMMF, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Alan Thorne, Annie Conway, and Tariq Ali said that the struggle for self-determination. Danny Duggan dis- cussed the strengthening of the FT through its feminist politics and the effort, much supported by Mandel, to build revolutionary youth or- ganisations and common work between them, like its successful annual summer camp. Terry All, former editor of Socialist Outlook, re- called how Mandel was a link between the generation of the Fourth Inter- national in the 1970s, and the experiences of the early communist movement.

Like the rally, the sym- posium’s meetings were hom- est and good-hearted, with a high level of discussion and presentation. Some people became Socialist Outlook sell- ers after the symposium, and others joined the Fourth International’s Supporters’ Association. Ernest would have warmly approved it was a modest but real step forward for the Fourth Inter-

Photo: Andrew Ward
'New Labour' prepares for government

"Blair 10 - Labour Left 0"

By Dave Packer

SOCIALIST Outlook argued that this year's Labour Party Conference we would see Blair move further onto the offensive, building on his victories against the left over Clause 4. However the scale of Blair's triumph took us by surprise. A 10-0 victory over the left (as the Observer put it - adding that 'Old Labour' was lucky to get nil), was unprecedented in recent history. With the help of the trade union bureaucracy he was able to set the left up, knock it down, and ring it firmly into a corner.

We argued that CPL delegates led by the organised left would find it difficult to commit Labour to even minimal socialist policies that could address the problems of the low paid, sick, elderly, jobless youth and the oppressed in our society.

Attempting to recover ground lost over Clause 4 and organised in the Socialist Campaign Group Network and in other co-ordinations, the left challenged Blair with a good daily delegate's bulletin and rightly focused on policy issues such as support for a commitment to a £15 minimum wage, resolutions designed to stop the erosion of the trade union link.

Class basis

They correctly recognised that this battle was at the centre of Blair's aim to shift the class basis of the Party. The left opposed the leadership's concessions on grant-maintained schools, its willingness to countenance the development of a multi-tiered education system and its new rule book. It also organised to defend Liz Davies, who was set up just before Conference, to no avail.

At the end of the day the socialists were engaged in little more than a rear-guard action. With the help of John Edmonds of the GMB and Bill Morris of the TGWU, the Blair bandwagon won all the votes taken at conference. Conference avoided speaking the minimum wage and even defeated the Constituency left on Trident, while a call for defence spending to be cut to the European average was effectively headlined off.

Orchestrated

It was one of the most successfull stage-managed conferences ever, which provided the media with choice soundbites and slick images. Bloody noses for the left were orchestrated over Liz Davies and in Socialism's tactically responsive efforts to rerouse Clause 4.

Worst of all, Dave Short's speech against Liz and the Leeds North-East CLP on behalf of the NEC railing, has set the scene for a possible new round of witch hunting. But stage management is not new. It was the weakness and failure of the left to challenge it that was new.

Blair delivered a visionary speech which mobilised the delegates and won widespread acclaim. There is no doubt that his emotional and psychological appeal and vacuous rhetoric was effective. Even many Tony MP were impressed, one even crossed the floor of the House to embrace Tony Blair's New Labour.

Scargill: "Start spreading the news, I'm leaving tude-a-a-a-a-a".

Blair unashamedly pilfered the ideas and even the language of Wilson, Kennedy and Clinton, but also of Vest ginglish, the high-tech ideologue of the US right. Blair's biblical references and the ideals of Christian socialism, juxtaposed with a constant, rhythmic repetition of key words like "you", "me", "new", "young", "farmers", "the future", jarred on some of his audience, but not in all cases for the right reasons.

This was particularly so amongst the ageing ranks of trade union bureaucrats, who today provide over-plumping union memberships and a situation in which only 4 per cent of employed youth under 20 are organised in trade unions.

Evangelism

Despite the evangelism, morality plays and one-off windfall taxes, none of this can make much ice in the inner cities or on the housing estates: nor will it cure the county's disillusioned and angry youth, less than half of whom voted at the last General Election.

Blair's unswapped triumph was bought at a price. But the trade union bureaucracy, frightened to rock the boat, wanted only a small prize for their loyalty: a fragile agreement from Blair not to force their share of the Conference vote below 50 per cent in the foreseeable future, an end to compulsory competitive tendering in local government, a cleaner commitment on union rights of recogni- tion and representation, as well as restrictions on the use of 'check off' schemes by employers for the payment of union subscriptions.

Another carrot was thrown by the leader in his Conference speech. The RMT was given an ambiguous 'guar- antee' for the existence of a publicly owned rail network under Labour. According to the Daily Telegraph, one union baron described the outcome of Conference as "troubles all round!" Unfortunately the promises on rail have already been put into question, with new Labour transport spokesperson Clare Short explain- ing that "regulation", not renationalisation, will be Labour's immediate goal for rail after privatisation.

Scargill: "At the end of the conference, Arthur Scargill, smarting from his 11-1 defeat, questioned his future membership of the party (where he had already been reported to resignations of active party members in some fringe meetings, eg, by the editor of Tribune)." Despite Tony Benn's assurance that Scargill would not leave the fold, his well publicised stance undoubtedly flags up a discussion taking place in parts of the left about the need for a new party of Labour. Some, perhaps in our view, see as immanent the demise of the Labour Party as the party of the working class. Others just feel that there is an urgent need for a socialist pole to the left of Labour.

However, the conditions are not ripe for the development of a new left party today. The faultlines in the Labour movement are not yet ruptures and the masses want a Labour Government not a split.

Socialist Outlook insists that the task is to build a consistent revolutionary current not prematurely establish a vacillating party that does not know whether it is meant to be the living soul of 'Old Labour' or a revolutionary departure from Labour. If it was based on this contradiction it would soon go the way of the old ILP into the dustbin of history.

Even if a few years' experience of a 'new Labour' government radically changes the perceptions of the vanguard, calling today for a new socialist party is simply the luxury of armchair revolutionaries and a diversion from the task of fighting the Tories and fighting Blairism, a fight that must be focussed on where it counts most, in the unions and amongst the social movements and the youth.

Labour's future

By Dave Packer

IT IS CLEAR that sharp tensions exist between Blair's project to transform the Party and sections of the union bureaucracy and Parliamentary Labour Party.

In particular there is an anxiety about their exclusion from future privileges, but their fears were allayed. As one boss of a big union explained, "It has proved easier to police under cover of Blairism than it ever was in the old days."

(Sunday Telegraph, 8.10.95)

However, there is also a fear that they won't be able hold the line if Blair goes too far, especially when in government. But these fault lines are not open ruptures today. They want a Blair government at any price. Nor are they likely to rock the boat until well into a Labour Government when open fissures could appear under mass pressure from below.

Even left bureaucrats Rodney Bickerstaffe, when questioned about the left's weak challenge to Blair, sneered angrily at the camera, "What do you expect? We can't make the Party look like a floppy rabbit just before a General Election."

That says it all.

Conference confirmed the two main goals of the Labour right. The first is to reassure the bosses that Tony Blair is their man - a reliable servant; the second is to win sections of the professional and middle classes.

Central to achieving these goals is Blair's unconditioned acceptance of the capitalist market and his desire to sever the historic links of the Labour Party with the trade unions.

The core of their plan is therefore to transform the Labour Party into a social democratic party like the German SPD, at best.

The spectre of continuing witch-hunts against the left is an inevitable consequence of this policy.

The new rule book consolidates OMW and even provides for leadership plebiscites (yes, like Stalin did), both of which are designed to by-pass the local party structures and representative democracy, in the name of 'real democracy' - the amination of a passive party membership which is subject to direct appeals from the leader from Walworth Road and through the media.

Scargill: Whether or not the Blair government will have a clear majority in the House of Commons, the Labour Party is no longer the party of the working class.
Job centre bosses use courts to block CPSA strike

By Nigel Danby, North Humberside ES CPSA, personal capacity

ON TUESDAY October 10 Employment Service management were granted a High Court injunction preventing CPSA taking strike action over pay. The strikes were due to start on October 12. Management claimed that some CPSA members had voted who were not entitled to take part.

General Secretary Barry Reambottom says, “We are not about to go away simply because they have resorted to legal manoeuvring. The court injunction is not a victory for Management, but an admission of weakness.”

Despite the fighting talk, members fear Reambottom is inching towards a sell-out. He sees his job as one of partnership with management. He talks of how the CPSA must “explore how the current crisis can be replaced by a new climate of industrial relations in which there is proper respect for the legitimate interests of each party.”

Cosy chats

The problems of the Employment Service cannot be solved by cosy chats between bosses and trade union bureaucrats.

CPSA members in the Employment Service will soon be re-balanced on strike action. A massive yes-vote will show management just what we think of them and their legal antics.

These striking DSS members don't listen to Reambottom's sell-out antics

FACE looking forward

By Roy Leach
NUT Executive, personal capacity

BEFORE now and the November 28 budget is a crucial period in FACE’s campaign to reverse education cuts.

Recently published figures show that between 1994 and 1998, 315,000 primary aged pupils were jettisoned into classes of over 30 (Times Education Supplement 21.10.95). This was before the year’s round of cuts and redundancies.

It is quite possible that we could see the majority of primary pupils in impossibly large classes by this time next year.

FACE is mapping out its strategy up to the general election. Up to budget day MPs are to be deluged with letters and post cards, culminating in “Fax jams” of Downing Street.

Local marches and rallies will further help to maintain the pressure to keep education centre stage.

On November 27 territorial vigils will be held outside Town and County halls up and down the country. Even with a loosening of Treasury purse strings it is likely that some schools will be unable to balance their books without sackings. As an alternative governors and head teachers can refuse to implement cuts and set “needs related” budgets.

Despite the dire warnings, no governors have so far been penalised for pursuing this course of action.

FACE is organising a conference on February 10; one of the purposes of which is to give practical guidance on saving deficit budgets.

FACE goes for strength and has no intention of letting up the pressure – it now looks certain to outline this thoroughly discredited government.

Pressure mounts to reinstate RMT militant

By Simon Kennedy

AS WE go to press the campaign to reinstate Chris Jones is escalating. Jimmy Knapp is meeting the Managing Director of West Coast Inter-City to demand reinstatement. An interim industrial tribunal will take place on Friday 29 October and the RMT is holding a referendum ballot at Chris’s Longsight Manchester depot.

Support from members and branches has flooded in. Everybody fully understands the sacking as an attack on union organisation. Pressure is mounting for a strike ballot. At last week’s public meeting the mood was clear – action will be necessary to defeat management’s plans.

Chris was joined on the platform at the meeting by Mersey docks shop stewards Bob Ritchie who pointed out the connection between the dockers’ case and Chris Jones: management attacks on the right not to cross a picket line.

Donations and messages of support to Stockport and district RMT, Department 61, 1 Newton St., Manchester.

Liverpool docks strike builds

FIVE HUNDRED dockers have been in dispute with their employers for a month. It began as a dispute about overtime, involving five workers.

Now the 500 have been dismissed for refusing to cross picket lines set up during the original dispute.

Causalisation of the workforce and the breaking of the Mersey docks and harbour joint shop steward committee are behind the dispute.

The TGWU has fought shly of official involvement. The support throughout Merseyside has, however, been magnificent. There have been two demonstrations of over two thousand. Picketing has been well supported and substantial donations have been received from Ford and Halewood car workers and Sefton City council.

The pressure is already beginning to tell despite some scales being brought in and some work being transferred. The company has offered the dockers back and a £10,000 pay-off. This has been rejected.

This is a major national dispute which needs massive support, especially financial.

Money and messages of solidarity should go to: Edgbaston Park docks club, Townend Lane, Liverpool. Cheques payable to: Merseyside docks shop stewards appeal fund.
Cruise O’Brien cruises loyalists

By David Coen

AFTER HIS election as leader of the Official Unionist Party, David Trimble had a visitor from the South who brought advice on how the Unionists should deal with Dublin.

Shortly after, he put out a statement saying the Unionists would talk to Republicans elected to a new Northern Ireland Assembly. In other words, bring back Stormont and talk.

The visitor was Conor Cruise O’Brien, columnist in Heinz boss Tony O’Reilly’s Independent Newspapers and fierce critic of Republicanism. O’Brien’s aim was to try to split the alliance between Dublin, the DUP and Washington in which the Unionists have put their trust. It was a clever tactic.

All of the so-called pan-nationalist alliance accept, to a greater or lesser extent, the Unionist veto and what flows from that. A recognition that there will eventually be a government in the North with some involve ment from Dublin to safeguard the nationalists.

The Dublin Government under Fine Gatl’s John Bruton would happily go along with elections to what would be a Unionist dominated Northern Assembly except for the difficulty that would cause for other members of the “nationalist family” - Sinn Fein. Nobody fell for Conor’s trick but it shows the weakness of Sinn Fein’s position.

If Dublin had accepted Trimble’s offer, the Republicans would be forced either to break with Dublin - which they cannot afford to do, or, openly admit that they accept the Unionist veto with all that involves and risk a split. In the long run, that is precisely what they will have to do.

British provocations over the “peace process”, apart from being necessary for Major’s survival, are all to do with testing the Republicans’ commitment (and re- ducing their expectations) in advance of any negotiations about what will be a new partitionist settlement in Ireland.

There is an alternative to the armed struggle/irish Peace Initiative divide on which the Republican movement is breaking itself. It flows from the fact that no reform of the Northern State is possible; for the Unionists to make the most minimal concession would fatally damage their cause.

They will not concede on the “right” of Orange big-ons to march through Nationalist areas let alone the disbandment of the RUC or power-sharing.

Rather than give legitimacy to the latest attempt to stabilise the Northern Ire land state, Sinn Fein could seek to mobilise against it. In the past that meant coming up against the British Army. But there is no mili tary solution either.

Mass mobilisations around civil rights or the of the very forces who fa vor partition - the Southerners need older Conor Cruise O’Brien may be a poseur eccentric but he says what he think.

Hillingdon strikers take on bosses and bureaucrats

Cleaners at Hillingdon Hospital are on strike after their new employers, Pail Mall Services, tried to cut their wages by 20 per cent. Rod Marshall spoke to them for Socialist Outlook.

RM: Why did you go on strike in the first place?
Jagir: Well we see they wanted us to sign this new contract which we didn’t sign.
RM: What did the contract ask you to do?
Jagir: They said that our terms and conditions will be different, they will cut 20 per cent off our wages.

That’s why we didn’t sign the contract. When we asked Peter Barry, the UNISON official, “where do we stand now?”, he said nothing to us, and he has not even supported us here.

We’ve been standing here for nearly three weeks in the cold and nobody has taken any action to support us.

Q: is this an official strike?
A: Yes. The UNISON leader, Peter Barry, keeps saying that it is not an official strike, that it is unofficial. But according to us it is an official strike because we didn’t sign the contract being negotiated and what have you done so far?

Jagir: We’re going to take them to court. We aren’t going to give up.
RM: Where can people send donations, to the local UNISON branch?
Jagir: Yes, we can’t cope any more.

UNISON are not doing their job properly - we’ve been paying them all these years - why?

They said we were going to get £8.50 every week hardship money but we don’t want that - we’re not slaves or beggars - we want our strike money.

We’ve had nothing for 3 weeks. They’ve given us nothing at all.
RM: Have you got a message for UNISON?
Jagir: Yes, please write to Peter Barry and tell them to make it an official strike, and to give us support and money as well.

We aren’t going to give up, we will stay here as long as it takes and we’re going to make it official. We want these people to help.

Write to chief executive of Hillingdon Hospital Philip Brown to protest at the treatment of the cleaning staf at: Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3NW. Telephone 01895 238382.

Send letters of support to: UNISON office, Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 3NW.
Noel Gallagher from Oasis speaks to Ken Loach

The ‘New Lad’ vanguard?

If Blur symbolise the cynical and self-indulgent South in popular music, Oasis echo alienated, drug using, Northern unemployed. Who better to meet Oasis songsmith NOEL GALLAGHER than world-famous marxist film-maker KEN LOACH?

Noel Gallagher

I come from Manchester, Middleton to be precise. Ken Loach Do it like it there? Me, I have a weakness for Manchester.

Noel Gallagher

When we began to be successful, we realised that it’s really a little hole. That’s why I’ve moved to London, Manchester is too frustrating for me now. When I was young, it was frustrating enough because there was no work and only three usable pubs, but I amused myself there. I go back there at weekends, that’s enough for me at present. Of course I’ll have to go back there to live one day.

Ken Loach

As for me, I live in a little dump in the Midlands. All the London trains pass it but never stop. Originally it was a mining city, then it had car factories, a tentative wave of high-tech industries, and now... nothing.

Noel Gallagher

Where do you find the characters in your films?

Ken Loach

I don’t really have to look very far, they are all there, all around us.

Noel Gallagher

“Kes” was always a reference point for me. I was born in ’67, at the time it was re-released, and I still haven’t seen it at the cinema. However, I remember perfectly having seen it on TV. I remember the ending was very sad but, at one moment, a scene took place on a football pitch and that pleased me enormously. Why didn’t you set this film in Manchester?

Ken Loach

You, you don’t have a structure, a framework for your life.

Noel Gallagher

The bloke who wrote the scenario wanted it at his place, near Sheffield. I have never written my films, I always work with collaborators. And you, are you your team job or do you work by yourself?

Ken Loach

Do you support Manchester City or Manchester United?

Noel Gallagher

I’m afraid I’ve only won the championship once, and I was one year old. Manchester United only interests people who don’t live in Manchester, the people from outside. True Mancunians are only interested in Manchester City.

Ken Loach

At Sheffield it’s the same problem with Sheffield Wednesday and Sheffield United. Sheffield United is the club for those who live in Sheffield, Sheffield Wednesday is for the expatriates in London.

Noel Gallagher

Because of George Best, United is the club of the local Irish. All my family came from Ireland originally and my grandmother would kill me if she knew that I didn’t support that club. But because we were six brothers in my family, Liam and I, to distinguish ourselves and shut the gobs of the other four, we chose to support City.

Ken Loach

People ask me what my films and your records have in common. I think they share a proletarian culture.

Noel Gallagher

It was certainly true during the 50s and 60s, perhaps during the 40s too, when everyone worked, when Manchester was still an industrial city. Now, it’s less true. When people of my generation left school, they only had three choices offered them: football, music or the dole. That’s why there are so many big rock groups here in the North. When I travel in the rest of the country, I notice that people have a more sophisticated culture, more artistic than ours. Northern culture is very urban. In fact, we have developed

Ken Loach: days of hope caught on film

Ken Loach has shot to global fame in recent years. Vincent Ostria spoke to him about his life and work.

“I WAS born in Nuneaton, a Midlands ex-mining town. My father was an electrician in a tool making factory. He was never involved in trade unions. Like millions of others, my family was neither rich nor poor.

From the age of 14 I used to cycle to Stratford-upon-Avon to see Shakespeare plays. I still read light plays – they are extremely rich, varied and sensitive.

In the sixties after being a theatre director, I was lucky enough to get a job at BBC 2. We had to produce a film every week. We had really good script writers and a great time slot. Everyone looked at our plays.

The team was very much on the left. In those days it was impossible to avoid politics.

In the 1980s I made documentaries for television (Questions of Leadership 1984-1986), but they were never transmitted because they were too political.

They showed the political view of the left regarding the trade union leadership. For us, they were not doing their job. They did not organise any opposition to Thatcher at the time when her politics were leading to mass unemployment.

My politics was too much against the current. For a while I had no work.

Happily there was then Hidden Agenda and Riff Raff. Hidden agenda was submitted to the Cannes film festival and won the Prize of the Jury.

The next year, Riff Raff won the critics’ prize. It was a new beginning for me.

I decided to make a film on the Spanish Civil War because it was one of the big moments of the twentieth century; when people took power – the workers took control of the factories and the farm workers occupied the land.

We tend to forget that there have been times when ordinary people have been in power. These moments should be remembered.

And we also have to say that their hopes were betrayed – not only by the fascists, but also by the Stalinists.

It was the Stalinists, not the fascists who returned the land to the original owners.

What happened in Spain in 1936 shows that it is possible for people to take control.

There were 3 million unemployed in Britain in the 1930s. Today there are 4 million. The far right is on the rise across Europe. There are many things which link the two periods.

A film about the past should attempt to understand the present. Before making a film on the creation of a union of immigrant workers in Hollywood I am making two other films.

That will be about what is happening in Nicaragua. We will start filming in November. A film about the past, the one above, translated from les inconnues by Peter Purcell and Fred Leplat.
Spain's civil war: fighting chance of real change

'Land and Freedom' Directed by Ken Loach.

Reviewed by KATHRYN MARSHALL.

THE COMBINATION of political and evocative qualities in Land and Freedom make it completely compelling viewing.

The film opens in modern Liverpool where an old man, David Carne, dreams of the past. He is wearing a suit and tie, and he is talking about the past, describing the events that led to the Spanish Civil War. He is remembering the time when he was a young man, fighting for the Republicans against Francisco Franco's Fascist regime in Spain.

We learn about the democratic functioning of the POUM militia, "everyone votes on decisions", he tells us, and we see that there is no substitute for this when you are forging a team seriously thinking in terms of being a part of a revolutionary change. A Spanish woman, Mate, convinces her conrade to remain at the front rather than returning home to deal with domestic troubles. These people respect one another as comrades in this most important of struggles.

Throughout the first half of the film Loach also hits us with the tremendous positive energy that swept through them all as they took villages back from the fascists and began to plan together how they were going to run their land. This is one of the major achievements of the film. You not only feel this energy when guns are being fired and fascists are on the run; Loach also manages to convey it in the context of a new kind of political debate. No one stops the people from deciding either way on the question of whether or not to collectivize immediately the village land.

Having real responsibility sets the debate on the noisy, it's animated, it is people deciding for themselves about their lives.

Loach does not romanticize the experiences on the Front or all positive. Comrades die, other have to cope. Loach argues that the revolution was betrayed by its supposed allies from the Communist Parties; the arrivals of various of the characters how Stalin had quite a different vision of the future from the comrades trying to build a revolution.

We learn about the anti-fascist movement, and we are left wondering who to believe, he shows what went on in the Communist International Brigade through Carne's eyes, who is a carrier of the Communist Party card temporarily joins them.

He hears how the POUM and the anarchists were accused of collaborating with the fascists and he sees them being shot at. It is not long before Carne is back with the POUM and we know he is right. But it is too late: the fascists arrive to arrest the leaders of the militia.

If everyone who sees this film goes away understanding the nature of Stalinism and its anti-revolutionary manouevrings, an important step away from the miseducation which says that socialism died with the collapse of the Soviet Union will have been taken.

Loach doesn't locate this film in the past. He uses flashback to make it clear that these struggles remain our struggles even in a period where things seem quiet and where people feel there is no hope.

The film opens with the symbol of the National Front draped on the wall of the block of flats where Carne lived. But it also shows an anti-fascist, anti-racist poster on bright red paper next to it. It closes with Carne's granddaughter, raising up her red scarf. This deliberate use of colour links the past with today. There are important messages, of having a fighting chance of real change, to be heard from the past and important lessons for the future strongly articulated in this film.

As she reads his descriptive letters, we return to the days of revolutionary struggle which Carne joined.
Britain's racist state

By Rod Marshall

MICHAEL Portillo’s appeal to the Tory right and nationalistic forces at Tory Party conference was another example of the xenophobia and racism at the heart of the Tory party. The ‘have nothing to do with Europe’ sentiment of Portillo is in line with increasing attacks by the Thatcherite wing of the government on migrant workers in Britain, as announced by Peter Lilley, the social security minister.

The proposals, overshadowed by Portillo’s jingoistic rhetoric, seek to further restrict the ability of asylum seekers to claim benefits on arrival to this country. Asylum seekers who are already in Britain will be excluded from claiming any benefits, while new entrants will not be able to claim benefits between the time of initial claim and the time of their appeal.

These new proposals follow in the trail of a decade-long increase in the detention and deportation of asylum seekers and refugees by the state. The government justify these attacks on the grounds of a large inflow of migrants into the country, but not to reveal that immigration from Britain is more than matched by emigration. However it is not the fact of this situation that is the key factor in the Tory determining policy but instead the increased willingness of both the Tory Police and state authorities brutally enforce racism and Labour parties to play the race card.

The shameful record of Labour in government and in opposition shows them close behind the Tories in their support for racist policies on immigration and asylum.

Asylum

The Tory government’s 1992 Immigration and Asylum Bill involved a clampdown on people seeking asylum including mandatory finger printing of all asylum seekers, reduced provision for housing and a quickened procedure for deportation. Rights for appeal if asylum rights were denied was also further restricted.

Since 1987 there has been a massive increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees held in new detention centres such as Campfield and Doncaster, along with increased detention centres such as Harmondsworth in West London. Only ten per cent of people seeking asylum are granted it, while many are given ‘exceptional leave to remain’ with the constant threat of jail and deportation.

The true nature of the racism of the British state can be seen in the overwhelming proportion of detainees who are black or are from non-ECC or NATO countries.

Murder

The murder of Joy Gardiner was a vivid example of the brutal behaviour of the police and state authorities in enforcing these laws. In detention centres like Campfield, refugees and asylum seekers are held without trial for six months or more and access to food, clothes and medicine is severely restricted. Families are split up and children placed in local council care. Suicide is an increasingly common response to the dual threat of continued detention or deportation.

The holding and treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been taken up by a number of local anti-deportation centre campaigns including the Close Campfield Campaign, Close Doncaster, Harmondsworth Campaign, Free Haras Detenues Campaign, West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign, Hull Asylum Seekers Campaign and a campaign against detentions in Doncaster.

In addition there are specific campaigns around particular detainees such as Saleh (Iraq) and Adbuk (Ostfold). Nationally activity is coordinated by the Campaign Against Immigration and Asylum Bill, National Coalition of anti-deportation Campaigns and the fledgling National Network Against Detentions and Deportations.

On top of the already inhuman treatment of asylum seekers and refugees comes draconian plans from Michael Howard, not yet fully revealed in public, for further restrictions on the right to appeal against detention and denial of asylum.

Force

The Tories are also planning to force public sector workers to enforce the increased restriction on benefits announced by Lilley. DSS workers, teachers, lecturers and council workers will all be expected to finger suspected ‘illegal immigrants’ who may be claiming state benefits.

A successful week of action was built by anti-deportation and detention centre campaigns and by CARF (Campaign Against Racism and Fascism) which included a picket of Downing Street against Lilley and Howard’s new proposals on 14 October and a demonstration outside Tory Party conference.

It is vital that nationally co-ordinated action continues and that campaigns in this country also link up with campaigns against state racism in the rest of Europe such as SOS Racisme and MRAX.

DESPIE Michael Portillo’s anti-European Union sentiment (designed to increase his support on the Tory far right) it is clear that the European Union itself is very effective in limiting the free passage of migrants and in persecuting refugees and asylum seekers.

‘Fortress Europe’ has been constructed through the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 gave the European Community the ability to determine policy on immigration in the form of rules concerning visa control across the EEC whereby the Council of Ministers can impose visa controls for six months without consulting the European Parliament. Such an imposition is to be used where there is a "threat of a sudden influx of nationals from a particular country".

This supports the sentiment of the Commission in 1991 in approving measures by member states to make "the material situation of asylum seekers less attractive while their case is being considered: withholding of certain social security benefits, restrictions on employment and freedom of movement".

The racism of the Tory government is therefore actively endorsed by the European Union.

Indeed the Schengen agreement, supposedly drawn up originally to allow free travel between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (it now includes most member states but not Britain) has been used to justify tougher rules on exclusion of migrants from 120 countries outside the EU.

‘Negative list’

The EU at the 1986 Madrid summit to draw up this ‘negative list’ of countries whose people require a visa for entry into the EEC. This has recently been updated by the idea of a ‘white list’ of safe countries from which no-one will be granted asylum.

Other European wide measures include co-operation between EU countries in policing the borders of the union and exchange of information concerning refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition the ‘Ad-hoc group on immigration’, made up of interior ministers from EU countries, drew up proposals to limit asylum seekers to single applications to one EEC country (described in the 1990 Dublin agreement) and proposed sanctions against airlines carrying unauthorized asylum seekers. It also proposed the compulsory finger printing of asylum seekers (as supported by the Tory asylums act).

The continued increase of racist measures by European governments comes at a time of continued growth in fascist parties.

New anti-immigration laws are being adopted by fascists as justification for their racist and supremacist ideology. The state therefore employs as its racist foot soldiers not only the police and anti-immigration officials but also fascists and their supporters.

Unemployment, the planned result of liberal capitalist economic policy, is blamed on immigration. The ‘enemy within’ is identified by the government or continued racist attacks. This enemy is not only black people but is increasingly seen as anyone from the ‘norm’ of white middle class heterosexualism.

It is a pity that this is this ‘norm’ of a media myth of the soap opera which Blair is constantly championing. It is also a pity that despite the welcome self-organisation of black people represented by the Nation of Islam that it continues to divide the black community along the lines of gender and sexuality.

State

The racism of the state is the act of a tired and desperate capitalist class looking for excuses for low pay, unemployment and the continued poverty faced by working people.

Workers must unite against the increased attacks on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers represented in Michael Howard and Peter Lilley’s proposals.

We must also build a united anti-racist, anti-fascist movement which not only recognises the crucial importance of black self-organisation but also the fundamental need for a united anti-racist class offensive against racism and all forms of oppression. The demonstration on 26 October was a welcome move in that direction. The fight must continue including in the struggle against the detention and deportation of migrant workers.

Fighting racist ‘Fortress Europe’
Record of Labour’s appalling racism

By Kathryn Marshall

THE LABOUR Party has often paid lip service across the floor of the House of Commons to attacking racism. Behind their words, the party has actually been responsible for making the anti-racist, anti-fascist cause harder to fight.

Their appalling record speaks for itself.

In 1965 it was a Labour government which abolished the rights of unskilled Commonwealth immigrants to work in Britain.

In 1968 it was the same Labour government which zoomed the Commonwealth Immigration Act through parliament in 6 days. This display of haste was in order to prevent British citizens of Asian origin, who were being expelled from Kenya, from entering Britain.

A year later the Immigration Appeals Act imposed new requirements on those who wanted to join the rest of their family in Britain and prevented fiancés of British women entering the Commonwealth.

The 1974 administration failed to repeal the Torte’s Immigration Act which they had introduced in 1971.

The story has continued in the same way. In 1988, Labour did not take the opportu-nity to attack the Tory Immigration Act which included the abolition of rights of appeal for most people facing deportation. Then in 1992, Labour front benchers made a deal to enable the Asylum Bill to go through.

Abstained

The party even abstained on last year’s vote on the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. This act abolished the right to silence. It introduced the ‘Stop and Search’ law whereby police have the right to search the public if they have ‘reasonable grounds’ for thinking that they may be carrying offensive weapons or that individuals might be going to take place.

In December 1994 even the Home Office revealed that in London alone over 46 per cent of those who were stopped and searched came from members of the black community, despite the fact that the black community makes up only about 20 per cent of the capital’s population.

The Act also increases police power to attack the right to protest and the right to hold outdoor cultural and musical festivals. This was an act that animated and angered the nation but the Labour Party saw fit to abstain.

Within its own ranks, the Labour leadership has also demonstrated a distinct lack of commitment to black representation let alone self-organisation. The party has no black or anti-racist officer. A staggering high proportion of the equally struggling thousands of people who are currently facing expulsion from the Labour Party come from the black and Asian communities.

The latest comments from members of the front bench show that now even the lip service is becoming increas-ingly unconvincing.

Labour’s Jack Straw has recently stated that Britain needs, but has not got a just and robust system immigration rules and controls. Whatever its sympathy, this country cannot sustain a large influx of economic migrants’.

Abdul and Ade Onibyo must stay

By Rod Marshall

IMAGINE living and working in Britain for over 20 years. Then imagine visiting another country for a couple of years. When you return to your country after that short break in residency you are welcomed back by being thrown in jail with the threat of deportation.

Sounds ludicrous doesn’t it? Well it is the harsh reality of the government’s racist policies which has faced Abdul and Ade Onibyo, currently detained in Campfield Detention centre.

What makes this particular example of victimisation particularly ridiculous is that Abdul Onibyo actually visited Nigeria for two years over 11 years ago. Before and after this visit, for 22 years, Abdul has lived and worked in this country as a council worker in Manchester. He also brought up his family, including his son Ade, in this country.

The Immigration Board are telling both Abdul and Ade that they are no longer entitled to residency in Britain.

In March 1995, without warning, Abdul and Ade were arrested and impris-oned in the Harmondsworth Detention Centre in West London. As with Campfield this centre is run by Group 4 security on behalf of the Home Office. Behind the barbed wire on the Great Western Road, Ade was forced to take his A-levels. Abdul, in common with many detainees at the centre, was denied access to a GP when he was thrown into Harmondsworth, despite being beaten up in a police cell just beforehand. Paul Condon’s police service have left Abdul Onibyo with feelings in his left arm.

Cruelty

To add to this cruelty is the ebb and flow of hope and despair that has been experi-enced when Abdul and Ade were temporarily released before being re-detained by the authorities first in Stansted and now in Campfield. The rest of the Onibyo family are devastated and heart-broken over the treatment.

It is clear that the immi-gration authorities have tar-geted the Onibyo’s as part of a racial crackdown on sup-posed ‘illegal immigrants’. But there is nothing illegal about wanting to live and work alongside your friends and family. There is nothing illegal about deciding to visit other countries and to decide stay there. Unless of course you happen to be black and this is where the government is keen to thoroughly neg-lect in its practice.

The crime is hitting black, and the many other examples of ra-cial victimisation that go on daily, should not themselves go unpunished.

- Protest to Michael Howard, get involved with the campaigns against detentions and deportations and give support to the Onibyo Family Anti-Deportation Campaign.

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US scientist-engineer ROD HOLT explains why...

Capitalism is bad for your health


WITH A TITLE like "The Coming Plague" and a flaming yellow and orange soft cover, one expects a sensationalist, pseudo-scientific hand wringer. Surprise! You will find no false pouting here. No Doomsday agitating, just a sober clarity.

"The Coming Plague" is an astonishing look at the environment that humans live in, at the ecology of people. It is a scientific work and its particular measuring device is the well-being or sickness of the peoples of the world - or, to be more accurate, the measure is the vulnerability of our well-being to challenges by micro-organisms; challenges not a bit different than many others that have occurred over the last million years.

Garrett presents her views indirectly at first, with a series of exciting narrations of the dangers, struggles, with, and resolution of the most significant epidemics of recent years.

Afraid

Her scientists have names and faces; some live, some die. All of them are afraid at times. Many retire exhausted. For all her protagonists, the budget cuts, staffing, and inadequacies of nickel-and-dime research rankle.

To illustrate the relationship between health, environment, and disease, Garrett focuses on the appearance of new diseases, drug-resistant strains, and the spreading of disease in new ways. These are the major factors that enable micro-organisms to overwhelm the body's natural defenses.

In most Third World cases, the roots of disease, particularly those that cause sweeping epidemics, could be addressed by the traditional means of the public health department. But they are not.

The World Bank has determined that it is cheaper to vaccinate than to provide sanitation, clean drinking water, and adequate nourishment.

For example, supporting Garrett's thesis, Robert and Freeman state in the 1984 Scientific American, "Vaccination programs are less expensive, easier to implement, and sometimes more effective than other public health approaches now being pursued to

In the current International Viewpoint

Bosnia: land and liberty

Catherine Samary on the imperialist carve-up of Bosnia, Kit Adam Waliner on Clinton and Bosnia, plus a discussion and a lively debate. Also: reviews and features on Cuba, USA, Sri Lanka and Transcaucus.

Single copies £2.00 plus 50p postage from 'Outlook International', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UJ. Still available: Ernest Mandel Memorial Issue. £2.50.

What's Happening

OCTOBER

Until 9 Dec

'RECYCLE II' - a show of prints by Stuart J Bullein, the Greenhouse, The Drill Hall, 16 Chelms St, WC1 1am-6.30pm Mon-Sat; 1pm-5pm Sun; Mon eve women only.

Sat 28

TUC demonstration: Unite against racism. Meet 12 noon Platt Fields for march to Albert Square. Leaflets in bulk available free from Kay Carbury at TUC on 0171 636 4039.

NOVEMBER

Sat 4

STUDENT Assembly Against Racism conference 10am-5.30pm Tower Halls, Brunel College, Poplar High St, E14, by Poplar DLR tickets £5/23 from SSAU, PO Box 3782, London N1 0DD.

SOCIALIST Campaign Group Supporters Network Forum 1pm.

Sun 5

IS THIS where we came in? - Jewish Socialists' Group day school 10am-5pm Caxton House, Archway, N19 with Steve Cohen, Bill MacKeith, Helen Bamber and others tickets £12/£5 from JSO, BN 3729, London WC1N 3XZ.

Tues 7

OPPOSE fascist 'National Democrats' Centotaph planning. Meeting 7.30pm Colin Roach Centre, 56 Clarence Road, E5.

Thurs 9

MANCHESTER Socialist Outlook Forum on Bosnia. 7.30pm Manchester Town Hall with speaker Geoff Ryan.

Sat 18

SOCIALIST Campaign Group Supporters Network AGM, Manchester Town Hall.

Sat 25

STOP hospital closures conference sponsored by London HealthEmergency and 11.00am to 4.00pm ULU, Malet St, London, WC1.

DECEMBER

Sat 2 & Sun 3

PAPER making course held by Stuart J Bullein at the Drill Hall 0171 631 1533.

Sun 3

CLOSE of Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund.

El Salvador: urban overcrowding and poverty breed disease

Photo/ParisDaily!

Monster slum cities re-create the conditions of the medieval city. With those conditions return plague-like diseases doctors thought centuries past.

Imperialism

As the Third World began to feel the effects of imperialism, people were forced from the countryside to the cities to look for work in overcrowded sweatshops, to sleep in cardboard lean-tos, to live polluted one atop the next without toilets or drinking water. Those slums became the Third World miasmas.

El Salvador: urban over crowding and poverty breed disease. By 1995, 23 of the world’s top 40 cities (those over 5 million people) were Third World cities, as were 11 of the world’s 16 cities topping the 10 million mark. All these cities are public health nightmares.

Garrett devotes a chapter to the consequences of official indifference to living conditions in the megacities, explaining how diseases that until recently were confined exclusively in rural areas are now urban scourges.

A diverse group of urban parasites, round worms, tape worms, protozoa, filaria, and a host of varying degrees.

If one looks at humanity as if time stood still, and people are only here to run a price shop for dollars, then that view may be justified.

One of the central points of her book is to demonstrate that the human condition does change, microbes change, and science tries to keep up.

Garrett conveys as very early in her book that microbes cannot be trusted. From time to time, a drug-resistant variant simply appears. In an equally arbitrary manner, a new microbe strain will infect vaccinated individuals. She tells the terrifying story of dengue fever viruses #1, #2, #4, and #43. And sometimes a mutant will appear, such as HIV or the Hanta virus.

She also convinces us that pronounced changes in humanity's way of life opens the door to "new" diseases that may really be old, formerly harmless ones.

Revolution brought by imperialism to the undeveloped world created monster slum cities that in turn re-create the conditions of the medieval city. And with those conditions returned plague-like diseases that the doctors had thought were centuries past.

Third World

The author continues this theme in an examination of health conditions in wealthy industrial cities. Here she introduces a most awkward term, "third-worldisation".

She describes the process where the causes of capitalist society must live under certain conditions no better than those found in the slums of Caracas, Sao Paulo, or Manila. The constant stress on their immune systems makes them susceptible to once rare diseases. To make things worse, " official " get them off the streets" police harassment herds these people into close contact where diseases can only spread. Where the HIV virus has further weakened the immune system, it was found that 51 percent of indigents had Multiple Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), an essentially incurable disease that any of us can contract by casual association with a carrier.

The Coming Plague is a prodigious work of 350 pages, 1306 notes, numerous charts and graphs, and an index.

It is accessible to anyone with a good dictionary, a medical dictionary, or a volume such as "Professional Guide to Diseases." Springfield, Pa. (updated regularly). The book is very well written, with jargon at an absolute minimum.

Reprinted from the US monthly, Socialist Action.
US presses for partition of Bosnia

By Alan Thornett

SINCE THE NATO bombings, and partly because of it, there has been a change in the current course of the Bosnian war. Although the Bosnians still face an arms embargo and a massive imbalance of heavy weapons, Government forces have taken the initiative and Serbian forces are suffering serious losses. The aim of the US backed bombing was to force the ethnic division of the country rather than to fuel a Bosnian offensive. It did serious damage to the military infrastructure of the Serbian forces at exactly the time when the Bosnian army was in any case going onto the offensive. The result of massive military gains in North West Bosnia for the joint Bosnian and Croat offensive, which has now halted all short of Banja Luka. Serbian forces have counter attacked. Arkan and regular units of the Yugoslav army have been sent into the region by Milosevic. However, gains have not been reversed.

Having got an unexpected outcome from the bombing western governments, particularly the US, launched a major diplomatic offensive. This established a shaky ceasefire. Now they are pressing ahead with pressure to achieve a permanent "settle- ment" of the war.

Partition

At the end of October they will meet the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and the CROAT although they have started the process toward a solution which will, one way or another, partition Bosnia on ethnic lines. The meeting will be held at the Wright-Patterson Airforce base in Ohio USA.

Whether partition is likely is impossible to predict, and will depend largely on the Bosnian Government whether it accepts some kind of partition or continues the war to maximise the territory it can lib- erate. There are clear divisions in the Bosnian Government on whether to fight or do a deal.

Certainly the idea that a unified Bosnia under which a central Government would have jurisdiction over a Serbian entity was controlled by Karadzic can be achieved through such negoti- ations is excluded. Realisti- cally there are only two possible variants: the Bosnian Government liberates all the territory; or there will be ethnic partition un- der what ever name it is given.

Since the recent gains by Bosnian and Croat forces, the battle lines have recently passed the 49th 51st partition long proposed by the five nation contact group. This, however, does not necessarily mean that a settlement is closer. Pre- viously the Bosnian Govern- ment was being offered territorial gains as an incen- tive towards partition, now they have the 51% and are likely to ask for much more if such a settlement is to be contemplated.

This problem is more complicated than just percentages of territory. Sarajevo remains divided and isolated and both sides have strategic territorial objec- tives essential to such a set- tlement. Top of that the Bosnian have to beware the role of Tufan in the north west where he may well have his own agenda for the territories jointly lib- erated.

Chirac: N-bomb 'for future generations'

By Pierre Rousset

WHEN CHIRAC appeared on television to lecture us about the Pacific tests he gave no impres- sion that his decisions would ever be democratically debated.

The massive opposition to the tests could only reflect the "irra- tional" fears of an ill-informed popula- tion, or the wicked manoeuvres of rivals powers. All the French require is a bit of education, the Polynesians a bit of repression, the Australians and New Zealanders the expression of contempt.

Chirac identifies the control of nuclear weapons with a presidency which is personal and sovereign, that is, with an extremely centralised state structure.

He wants a bomb for the 21st cen- tury - "for future generations" - and refuses to get rid of it. Chirac simply follows an old French policy - let the These, especially the Germans, pay, we'll intervene in their name and take the benefits for ourselves.

This policy leads to proliferation. If the bomb is necessary for "the security of France", other govern- ments will draw the same conclusion for their interests.

In the end there is only one way of avoiding proliferation - the universal banning of the weapons and the dismantling of existing stocks. But the powers of Paris, London, Wash-ington, Moscow and Peking have no interest in this.

Chirac intends to project nuclear weapons far into the next century.

The best treaty has no meaning and no chance of being enforced unless atomic weapons are banned.

The same applies to the anti-proliferation treaty; Chirac's option leads straight into a 21st century of nuclear terror.

By Duncan Chapple

LATEST POLLS in Canadian newspapers Toronto Star and La Presse indicate that the 'Yes' vote may win in the 30 October referendum on self-determina- tion for the mainly French-speaking province of Quebec.

Every section of the French speaking population, with the ex- ception of the capitalist class, backs the Yes vote. Canada's French-speakers have lower pay, worse health care, fewer openings for education and training and higher rates of unemployment than English-speaking Canadians.

Eighty-five per cent of Canadian French-speakers live in Quebec. Since 1976, Canadian govern- ment policies have aimed to obliter- ate French Canadian reality and reduce it to folklore. Today Canada is a strong imperialist state, founded on the national oppres- sion of the native peoples and the Quebecois. They have been sub- jected to over 200 years of eco- nomic, cultural and linguistic oppression and denied the right to self-determination.

Against this long-standing na- tional oppression, the Quebecois nationalist movement developed in the 1960s and soon the bourgeois nationalst Parti Quebecois (PQ) won the leadership of the move- ment.

This month's referendum puts the PQ and its allies under great pressure. The PQ favour tying Quebec into an EU-type federation with the rest of Canada. An unaccountable Council of Ministers would impose austerity policies which could assure the free circula- tion of capital and enforce a com- mon monetary policy.

This dead-end bourgeois nation- alism opens the door to ultra-right nationalism. The left forces for the Yes vote organise independently. The Parti de la Démocratie Socia- liste, within which the Quebecois comrades of the Fourth Interna- tional work, backs the Popular Net- work for the Yes vote, so that the sovereignty of Quebec is not just an exchange of one flag for an- other, but a popular and egalitarian sovereignty, based on solidarity and to end exclusion from society.

The Network's key demand is for a Constituent Assembly, 50 per cent women, elected by propor- tional representation.

Will Quebec vote for independence?

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Million Man March on Washington

THE REVOLT OF BLACK AMERICA

By Jane Kelly

'THE LARGEST march in American history', is how one marcher described the Million Man March on Washington on Sunday, October 16.

Over a million black, mostly working class men, and a few black women, went on strike to join the protest against racism and the huge cuts in welfare being carried out by the Republican-dominated Senate. Across the country, men who could not attend, stayed away from work and school to take action locally.

Led by Louis Farrakhan, of the Nation of Islam ( NOI), it was backed by an array of black organisations and leaders including Stokely Carmichael's All African People's Revolutionary Party, Jesse Jackson, civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, author Corneli West, writer Maya Angelou, singer Stevie Wonder and many more.

Bigger even than the great march led by Martin Luther King and without any support from liberal whites, it represented a massive expression of anger, solidarity and power by the oppressed. Everywhere committees sprung up to organise it and the day black people debated the way forward for black liberation.

"Trains carrying marchers to the National Mall were turned into Soviets", said one marcher, "each carriage elected a chair and anyone who wanted to speak was given a chance, each offering their ideas on the way forward, from religion to socialism."

Wrong Direction?

But other organisations stayed away - the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) refused support, although many of their youth councils built it. The national co-ordinator of the march was Benjamin Chavis, former head of the NAACP, fired a year ago for attempting to forge links between the two organisations.

Angela Davis, a former leader of the Communist Party in America, opposed it, as did the whole of the rest of the left including the SWP (US) and the ISO, sister organisation of the British SWP. 'A Million Man March in the wrong direction', they said, pointing to the contradictory character of the politics of the NOI, including its pro-capitalist, sexist and homophobic programme.

The sole left group in the US to support the march was Socialist Action. They explained that, despite Farrakhan's programme of black capitalism, because the overwhelming majority of African Americans are working class any mass mobilisation of the black community automatically tends to trigger an anti-capitalist dynamic. Along with large numbers of black people they supported the march without giving support to the NOI.

The march opened a new situation in the US. Blacks are under attack in a myriad of ways. Affirmative action programmes in education are being reversed; cuts in welfare and the $250 billion off Medicare - in a country where the top fifth control four-fifths of wealth and income - hit black people, especially women and children, the worst.

The G. J. Simpson trial revealed what all black Americans know (and most black Britans too) that the racist police will fabricate evidence to convict black people. In the tapes LAPD officer Fuhrman described how they routinely arrest without reason, destroy evidence that would exonerate defendants, plant evidence, beat confessions out of them and give false testimony - "testifying" they call it. Only Simpson's wealth enabled the evidence to be contradicted. The $300 allowed poor defendants for forensic investigation means they are usually found guilty.

Leadership

Last October 250,000 marched in Los Angeles against state legislation to deprive immigrants of health and welfare rights. This October thousands of students and teachers have been protesting against decisions to repeal affirmative action programmes - in Berkeley, San Francisco, UCLA and elsewhere. The Million Man March is then both the culmination of a lot of recent anger and activity and the opening of a new situation. We should not sow illusions in Farrakhan, nor the NOI; his interests are not ours. Both Farrakhan and Jackson will try to turn this mass revolt back into the Democratic Party; Farrakhan in return for more federal contracts to supply security in housing projects; Jackson for positions in the Democratic Party. The mass registration of black people as independents will lead to more black city mayors but no real change where it counts.

However the unity and solidarity achieved, Farrakhan's call for everyone to join local black organisations, including the NAACP, the verry numbers mobilised, will make it difficult to defuse the potential power it has triggered.

Farrakhan stepped into a vacuum and has taken the leadership of black America: it is of no use to stand aside and say 'We don't like your programme'. The battle for ideas and leadership is now one. To abstain is to leave the movement to pro-capitalist forces; to engage is to try and win for socialism those who will gain most from it - the poor, the working class and the oppressed.