Race hate ploy by desperate Tories

FEARING that the tax hand-outs planned for Kenneth Clarke's Budget will fail in their objective of buying back the Tory government's lost electoral support, John Major's government has resorted to the basest form of rabble rousing - racism.

Amid a ragbag of odds and ends in the Queen's Speech, the focus of media attention will be Home Secretary Michael Howard's reactionary Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Despite Howard's weasel words, carefully citing only cases from Eastern Europe to create the impression that "Our proposals have nothing whatsoever to do with race", the crackdown on an alleged rising tide of 'bogus' asylum seekers, and restrictions on their right to appeal against refusal to admit them, coupled with Peter Lilley's moves to cut their access to benefits, are clearly designed to appeal to racists inside and outside the Tory Party.

Only racists react with alarm to Howard's hysterical warning that if the numbers seeking asylum were to go on rising for the next five years it could mean as many as 100,000 applications a year in 2000. Many more people leave Britain each year.

Much more alarming is the fact that the vast majority of hounded and desperate people who apply for asylum in Britain are - often after a lengthy period of detention in jails like Campsfield in Oxfordshire and Haslar in Portsmouth - rejected and deported by Howard's hard-faced Home Office gang.

Howard admits that: "Only four out of every 100 people claiming asylum in Britain are deemed to be genuine by the Home Office."

Among these are many fleeing from repressive regimes deemed friendly to British imperialism: almost all Nigerian refugees are refused asylum.

The attempt to make it even harder for asylum seekers to find refuge in Britain is of course part of a European-wide crackdown, the 'Fortress Europe' policy spelled out in the notorious Schengen agreement, in which liberalised internal EU borders are combined with tougher action to prevent entry from non-EU countries.

Deportations

Deportations from Britain have climbed to record levels - often carried out with extremes of brutality and occasional tragic consequences, as the case of Joy Gardner demonstrated.

But the Tories have added their own refinements.

Howard has introduced a new 'racist charter', obliging teachers, doctors and others to snoop on and inform the police about families they feel may be here 'illegally': naturally the finger will tend to point first at black people.

The Immigration Service, relying on what Howard describes as 'intelligence and liaison with other agencies' - snoopers and racists - has stepped up the harassment of suspected 'illegal immigrants' in the workplace.

Last year they 'caught' 10,000, most of them in low-paid sweatshop jobs: Howard does not say how many innocent black British citizens and legal immigrants were also harassed in the process, or much this petty and vindictive operation costs.

There is no doubt that creating a new hue and cry over a handful of asylum seekers is a deliberate attempt by the Tories to stoke up the fire of racism so ably exploited by Thatcher in the past.

Black and ethnic minority communities have a right to demand that Tony Blair's Labour Party, supported by the TUC which last month called a national demonstration against racism, lead a full-scale counter-attack against Howard's cynical pack of lies, half-truths and repression which is intended to drive new wedges between black and white.

Labour should pledge to scrap the battery of racist immigration laws brought in since 1979, close down Campsfield and the other immigration prisons, and tear up the Schengen accords.
What we think

Taxing questions for Labour

AS CHANCELLOR Ken- neth Clarke put the finishing touches to his 1995 Budget, hospitals throughout- out Birmingham ran out of beds and nursing staff. All non-emergency opera- tions have been cancelled for 24 hours as the first few cold days of the winter created in- sistent chaos in an under-re- sourced NHS.

The NUT, published fig- ures to show that over 9,000 teachers lost their jobs this summer through the impact of spending cuts. As class sizes have gone soaring, the "indepen- dent education standards authority Ofsted tried vainly to argue that larger classes do not mean a drop in educational standards.

Even the Church of Eng- land has got in on the act, underlining the grim and un- changed reality of grinding poverty in Britain's inner cit- ies. Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley, not known for his soft spot for the poor, was revealed in a leaked docu- ment expressing his "de- spair" at cuts of £1 billion in his department's budget, hit- ting benefits to lone parents and children.

Buy votes

Yet none of the commen- tators is in any doubt on the main thrust of the budget. Clarke has in press through further cuts in public spending in order to free up cash to buy votes with a series of tax cuts.

He needs to cut spending, because the sluggish growth in the economy leaves no other room for a giveaway.

and because the entire Tory electoral strategy rests on the popular appeal of tax cuts - placing the richest at the ex- pense of the poor.

He has little leeway. The government is set to exceed in its targets for public sector spending and overshoot the limits laid down in the Man- nistich Treaty. And in anticipa- tion of a rash of give-away Budget and possible cuts in interest rates, the pound has plunged in the foreign ex- changes.

Guess on which taxes he will cut has varied widely: some believe he will cut or abolish inheritance tax - which raises £1.5 billion a year by levying tax on the estates of the wealthiest 3% who die without having taken steps to evade it. Few work- ing people ever dream - short of a lottery win - of leaving assets of over £154,000.

Others expect further cuts in corporation tax - which is already extraordinary low. To raise it to the EU average would bring an extra £4.5 bil- lion a year.

But most eyes will be on the question of income tax - the one with the greatest po- tential to con working people that they are really getting something back.

**Basic rate**

For £3 billion of cuts, Clarke could give away up to 2p on the basic rate of income tax. The Tories dislike in- come tax because it is inher- ently progressive - taking most from those that earn most: successive Tory gov- ernments have shifted the tax burden insensitively from in- come to indirect taxes on spending (VAT) which hit hardest at the poor.

This same view has now been echoed by the Labour Party. First we heard Tony Blair assure the fat cats of the Confederation of British Ind- ustry that a Labour govern- ment would not restore higher rates of tax on top incomes - and that he was committed to ensuring that employers can become wealthy.

This policy closes the door on an easy source of cash to improve health, education and welfare: if income tax for those earning over £40,000 a year were increased to 55% (the EU average), it would generate an extra £6 billion a year.

 Barely had the applause for Blair subsided when Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown popped up with a double whammy: a Tory-style worker's system to compel unemplo- yed youth into "training" schemes on pain of loss of benefits on the one hand, and a tax-cutting plan to axe income tax by up to 60% - to 10-15p.

Blair's team rules the roost Labour's only real selling point to its core electoral sup- port is the fact that they are not the Conservative Party. The fight for a socialist al- ternative, which will priori- tise the creation of new, properly paid jobs in a pro- gramme of useful public works to tackle things such as the housing crisis, and the need for new schools, hospitals, and expanded public transport, must be supplied in the labour movement.

The vast profits and wealth being accumulated by capi- talist monopolies, banks and finance houses and the run- away salaries of top bosses (at the expense of continuing re- dundancies and casualisation of the workforce) are the ob- vious source of the cash re- quired to finance these schemes and raise pensions and benefits.

Brown recently put for- ward the plan for a "windfall tax" on the companies: it's time to go further, exploit the public anger at the utility bosses, and raise again the need for renationalisation.

Scargill: wrong formula, wrong time

THE LABOUR left has had its worst period in recent mem- ory. After defeat on Clause Four in the spring, it faced a commo- dity of the Brighton conference, los- ing every single fight with the platoons.

Compounding the damage done by union black boots has been the sea-change in the view that one- sitter delegates, swinging be- hind Tony Blair's right wing wing, often for no particular reason.

In the biggest public sector un- ion, UNISON, over 65,000 voted for explicitly left wing candidates chal- lenging Rodney Bickerstaffe, though nobody would seriously claim they are all ready to vote for partisanship in the left of Labour in a general election. Indeed many of Bickerstaffe's 150,000 votes came from workers responding to his left stance on the whole of union wage and Clause Four.

The case for a left wing regroupment of class struggle forces to develop policies and solv- edly in the unions is as strong as ever, as workers brace themselves for the right wing policies of a Blair government.

In such a project, Arthur Scar- gill, who gave such firm and princi- pled leadership in the miners' strike, could play a key role. The policies and dynamic of such a re- groupment would have an impact on the key unions whose block votes have hobbled Blair, and on the rank of the Labour Party itself.

Socialist Outlook would wel- come and support such an initia- tive, as would wide sections of union activists. In the struggles to come, such a broad 'class struggle' left wing regroupment may form the platform to reform the Blair regime and free the left of the movement as a whole would focus: depending on the struggles to come, a new left party with genuine mass roots might eventually emerge from it.

Unfortunately, Scargill has pro- posed instead to launch a new party, the Socialist Labour Party, committed to running electoral can- didates against Labour.

Set up in this period, such a breakaway would carry with it only the reduced ranks of the existing far left at the left of the unions. It could even help to en- hance Blair more firmly, by weak- ening the left in the Labour Party.

While opposing Labour, the SLP would continue to campaigning at best for a protest vote. It could not hope to secure the election of even a single MP. The SLP has been run before in Britain, and it's time to go further.

We urge Scargill and those sup- porting his new party to think again about how best to build on the successes doubted following he still has in the unions, and how best to win broad sections of workers to the fight for socialism.
McAvoys's ballot: bid to dump NUT democracy

By Roy Leach

WHILEST parents, governors & students organised inlace groups have been increasing the pressure on CWU in unproar

THE RULES revision conference of the Communication Workers' Union saw scenes of uproar as the union's rank-and-file delegation repeatedly vetoed rule changes supported by the majority telecom engineering and postal sections.

Under the terms of this year's merger each rule change has to have a majority of both sections agreeing in order to be passed. A majority of the CWU's 10,000 members can change rules supported by changed branches supporting CWU over 200,000.

The clerical section first voted down a rule that would have helped end and deals made by the postal executive with the NUT or other militants.

In the ensuing uproar General Secretary Alan Johnson was forced to promise to bring forward a rule change limiting the vote to constituency members on major items of policy.

Given that the main beneficiary of the existing set-up is the national executive - these large and unknown sections clearly coincided with the Labour Party - it is questionable whether they will end the vote.

RMT fight against victimisation gains pace

THE CAMPAIGN for the reinstatement of victimised RMT militants has moved centre stage in the union's struggle against British Rail's attempts to break the union.

Ballot papers for strike action have now gone out to train drivers at the Piccadilly line and Piccadilly station and cleaning staff at Longbridge depot. The strike, which begins on Tuesday, November 20, will last for 24 hours.

Tory MPs and the government have been acting on its own in an increasingly bitter interminable struggle against the NUT.

General Secretary Doug McAvoy, still smarting from a humiliating string of defeats at the union's Easter conference, has had his hands tied as he attempted to consolidate his control over the union.

NUT members have been acting on its own in an increasingly bitter interminable struggle against the NUT.

At the end of conference McAvoy明确 his intention to oust or over-turn decisions he didn't like. Nothing unexpected here, but what was unexpected was the viciousness which he embarked upon his task and the extent to which he was prepared to use union resources to meet his ends.

The ballot for a one-day strike - which he had provided as part of the threat to mobilise support against the NUT to this conference. The first ballot was well up on the 100 people.

Over £50,000 of union money was spent on a succession of unanswerably biased communications sent directly to members' home addresses and to schools for display on NUT notice boards.

Well spent

From McAvoy's point of view the members' campaign was well spent, with 4:1 vote against action.

The result has been cynically and unashamedly used to "bash the left", which has been characterised in the main as "out of touch" and "unrepresentative of the membership", branded "extremists with their own narrow political agenda."

"Encouraged by the success of this plebiscite McAvoy has gone on the offensive and has initiated a ballot on "extending democracy" in the NUT. Every member has received a letter urging them to vote "yes" to six questions whilst an issue of NUT News has implied that 14 named executive members are opposed to consultation with membership and to internal democracy.

The fact that they actively promoting an alternative form of consultation, aimed at addressing the very real problems that members experience in trying to meet decisions, gets no support.

Whilst the ballot material pays lip-service to encouraging members to participate in the existing representative democratic structures of the union (add one last stage by some unashy right-wingers) it is clearly intended to endorse the further formalisation of branch meetings and, more particularly, annual conference.

Six questions asked members whether to endorse the use of ballots to determine every single thing from who may be nominated to national office to which decisions of annual conference should be implemented.

One man band

Of course the ballot remains silent on the fact that both the questions and the accompanying material will be decided by General Secretary surely the ultimate "one man one vote".

There are positive signs, however, that the McAvoyite steamroller may be running out of steam.

In the National Office elections which overlapped the "extending (sic) democracy" ballot, left vice-presidential candidate Christine Blower swept the poll, whilst Ian Murch, standing for treasurer, increased his vote and the right-wing incumbent failed.

In the short term McAvoys is likely to win the current Plebiscite (since with a margin below the 80% in the one day strike ballot).

Elections

The forthcoming Executive elections therefore take on a particular significance.

A left majority on the Executive is needed more than ever to put a brake on his excesses, his right wing supporters no longer able to exercise any sort of control on his conduct.

If McAvoy can get away with reorganising the NUT and stuffing out any oppositional voice, then other union leaders will no doubt be encouraged to follow suit.

The future direction of the labour movement hinges very much on this "clash of titans": the best organised union left against a extreme right bureaucrat. Socialist Outlook will keep you informed.

In an important initiative, the STA is writing to other union broad lefts to discuss possible areas of co-operation.

Battle over Birmingham college axe

By Anthony Brain

Matthew Boulton College Edgbaston is about to make 40 workers redundant. Tensions are in the air in the administration department, the rest are lecturers.

NATFHE members working on support for the students. The union is currently being asked for strike action and contacting UNISON.

It is important that there is the maximum unity amongst the onslaught of college management.

Students are establishing an anti-cuts society that should be involved in the Free Education Campaign, bringing up with students and lecturers around the country.

In order to be effective in defeating these cuts we need the mass participation of the members of NATFHE, UNI-

SON and the NUS. We should link it to a national fightback.

After Semon on national November 23 we must continue to build upon the gains won by the left on grants at the special conference in May.

The right are doing everything to sabotage the democratic decisions of the conference - including closing NUS offices, attacking other regions where the left is strong and a money wasting PR exercise.

The student right is following the policies of the Labour Party leadership.

When the masses of student mobilise they have an impact on the labour movement.

The left in the NUS must now bring broader forces into the Free Education campaign, using it as a way of fighting for democracy within student unions.

Campaigns battle to avoid split

A 24-hour vigil is the formula under which competing lobbies of parliament by two campaigns on the welfare state will be sandwiched together.

The original call for a "Budget Day" lobby came last April from the Welfare State Network. Now a series of events involving a wide range of groups - health, education and benefits - has been organised by the Network to span the 24 hours between the Campaign for the Welfare State's head on Ken Livingstone, the GM and backed by the Morning Star, put out a call for an "Eve of Budget" lobby, having apparently reactivated from the New Left for joint campaigning.

But in October, the Campaign to Defend the Welfare State headed by Robin Dawson, and the GM and backed by the Morning Star, put out a call for an "Eve of Budget" lobby, having apparently reactivated from the New Left for joint campaigning.

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Liverpool dockers dig in against sackings

By Simon Day

Five hundred dockers have been on strike and picketing hard for seven weeks against being sacked by Mersey Docks & Harbour Company (MDHC) for refusing to cross a picket line.

The conflict began with attempts to bring back the system of casual labour. Casualisation of labour is a major part of the capitalist re-structuring of society. Workers in sectors as unrelated as banking, heavy industry and education are all suffering its effects.

Liverpool dockers are one of the most profitable and successful ports in the country, with profits in excess of £35 million, handling more cargo than its heyday in the 1950s.

Last year the MDHC imposed a work contract on dockers after issuing them with 90 days notice. They adhered to the job in the Liverpool Echo and interviewed 1800 unemployed from Merseyside.

None of them was given the job. It was a disgraceful box to enforce new contracts on the existing workers.

The dockers fighting for reinstatement have won back 20-30-40-60plus Euro MPs and the local community.

Two thousand marched through the city centre on September 7 and ten thousand on September 21. Since 1989 the government has helped featherbed the directors of the company.

Over £200 million will be needed to make the 1989 wave of redundancies.

To get the Liverpool dockers to agree to go back to work the government, the employer and union gave assurances that they would suffer no job losses or attacks on their union organisation.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. MDHC have inherited vast property rights worth billions of pounds. The government has a 20 per cent stake in the company and was prepared to walk 112 million of debts in the 1989 strike.

MARCH: Saturday December 2nd, 10.30am Assembly at RC Cathedral, Hope Street, Liverpool.

MAIL - St George's Hall 12 noon.

Send messages of support and donations to: J. Davies, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Make cheques out to: Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards Committee.

Get in touch with the Liverpool Dockers Shop Stewards Committee or TUC, Islington Liverpool.

Defending the last unionised port

SOLIDARITY with the Liverpool dockers has been pouring in from Britain and internationally.

Hall Trades Council and the local TGWU dockers' branch have established a Liverpool Dockers Support Group. At its inaugural meeting, sacked Liverpool dockers Danzy and Paul spoke about the dispute.

KEITH SINCLAIR interviewed Paul, one of the sacked dockers:

What's the background to this dispute?

As you know, it goes back to the abolition of the Dock Labour Scheme in 1989. Liverpool was the only port that held out and remained unionised.

From then on was a company set up in 1991 to prevent the use of casual labour on the dock. But Torpedo sacked some of the young dockers and then the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company sacked all the dockers for refusing to cross a picket line.

What has been the response?

The man have been magnificent. I wasn't surprised though, Liverpool has always had a strong socialist base.

The response in Liverpool generally has been brilliant. We've had excellent support from all sorts of people.

We have also had excellent international support. Americans with $10,000 have promised to refuse to unload any ships diverted from Liverpool.

What's next?

Given the support we've had, we think we're winning. It's just a question of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company realising that.

Less than half back Bick Challenge for UNISON left

by Fred Lopat

The outcome of the recent UNISON's General Secretary turned out to be a cause célèbre for many people.

On a 23 per cent turnout, Rodney Bickerstaffe, current Associate General Secretary with Alan Tinkerman, only got 48.9% of the vote, polling 151,893 votes.

Bickerstaffe was the favourite and his support believed him to be so popular that he would romp home.

His nearest rival was Peter Hunter. A former Tory Party member who apparently has now applied to join the Labour Party. Hunter's campaign was promoted through the Catholic Church.

His election address was anti-abortion, homophobia and racism (no money for self-organised groups or political solidarity).

To everyone's surprise, Hunter got 134,952 votes or 29% of the total. This vote reveals that there is a significant reactionary layer that is as yet unorganised.

The CFUD (the main left currents in UNISON) candidate, Roger Bannister, obtained 58,982 votes or 18%.

This strong vote indicates that he was a very credible candidate and appealed to a wide layer of UNISON activists who have been disillusioned by the national leadership's sell-out on compulsory privatisation and pay in health and local government.

Industrial action

The main call by the CFUD for national campaigns including industrial action against Government attacks was seen by this layer as the only way for UNISON to defend its members.

The SWP candidate, Yummi Bashk, came ahead fourth with 131,939 votes or 5% of the total. The SWP must be sorely disappointed with this result, as they were confident of beating Roger Bannister.

The polarisation of the union to the left and right immediately posed Bickerstaffe with a dilemma. He was let down by the "soft left" in the union who did not campaign hard for him.

The Blairite wing of the union bureaucracy sat on its hands, not wanting to give a boost to the Labour leader.

In the short term, Bickerstaffe cannot rely on this section of the union. He has therefore immediately made some concessions to the left to take the pressure off.

He announced that he would not take a pay increase from his current salary of £57,000 to £60,000 (this was one of the main points of Bannister's campaign).

He also stated that UNISON was not in the "pocket of the Labour Party".

However welcome these statements are, they do not indicate that Bickerstaffe has shifted to the left.

Nevertheless the left in the union, including the CFUD, will need to continue to support Rodney Bickerstaffe against Tony Blair when he is speaking up for UNISON's policies such as the minimum wage or against privatisation.

But we will also have to campaign to focus Bickerstaffe and the national leadership on this.

No walk-over: Bickerstaffe ship to organise national campaign including industrial action in defence of UNISON's policies and here and now for members jobs and conditions.

Pete Firmin (Socialist Campaign Group Officer)

ABOUT 150 people at attended the conference of the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network in Manchester on November 18, 1995. The discussion was a geographical spread, there was a useful sharing of experiences around both campaigning and inner party issues. Although the nature of the MPs to attend left a political gap, there was a striking contribution from a Liverpool Dock shop steward on their strike (and £250 was raised in a collection) as well as useful political debates.

On workshops at the welfare state, anti-racism and democracy, there were useful discussions. The CFUD conference on November 9 in Leeds (see box) will be the first opportunity to bring the left together nationally since the election and to prepare a way forward.

Labbour left regroups to battle on

Campaign for a Fighting Democratic UNISON

2nd National Conference


SATURDAY DECEMBER 9 1995

Swarthmore Centre, 4, Woodhouse Square, Leeds 3. Affiliation fee (£25) nominal to CFUD c/o Paul Hargreaves, 6 Woodhouse View, Leeds LS2 2LA.
Hillingdon Hospital strike: it's official!
LOW PAID workers for private contractors Pall Mall Services at Hillingdon Hospital have voted to strike against the imposition of new contracts involving a 20 percent pay cut. The workers, mostly Asian women, are now set to start their 'official' strike on Monday November 27, joined by other Pall Mall employees in UNISON, who have not been sacked by the company. The strike is a major step forward for the sacked workers, who have been picketing the hospital for more than 7 weeks with only very limited support from the UNISON leadership.
A complaint and strengthened strike, involving all workers employed by the company, will increase pressure on Pall Mall to back down and reinstate the workers on their old contract. Support groups have been set up. A demonstration is planned for Friday November 24-12-2pm outside the main hospital entrance. There will be a daily picket at the hospital every morning. Please send messages of support to the UNISON office, Hillingdon Hospital.

Battle against Fast Food union-buster
By Inbar Tamari
On Tuesday 31 October, 40 Turkish and Kurdish workers at J.J. Fast Foods in Tottenham were sacked. Their only "crime" was joining a union.
J.J. Fast Foods is a distribution company supplying food to schools and many other workplaces, mainly around the South East. The workers had a 60-70 hour week, six years ago they were paid £101 a week, now they are paid only £130.
There is no overtime pay, no sick pay, no holiday pay. The drivers have to pay parking fines and the first £50 of any damage to their trucks out of their pay. It is therefore no surprise that more than half of the 75 workers decided to join the TOU, elected a shop steward at a mass meeting, and made the following demands:
1. All workers to have contracts and be in the union.
2. Holiday Pay
3. Sick Pay
4. No money to be paid by drivers out of their own pockets.
5. Two shifts to be introduced in the freezers, where people work at 30 degrees below zero.
The workers were sacked as soon as the employers learned that they had joined the union. The workers and a union official went to see the boss, who refused to negotiate or even meet with the union.
The sacked workers were then attacked by hand holding wields sticks and knives; three workers were hospitalised. The next day a 100-plus strong picket of the sacked workers and supporters was attacked by the police.
So far, six more workers have joined the union and the picket line. The TOU has been supporting the workers from their victimisation fund; they have also received money and messages of support from other unions and from their local MP, Bernie Grant. Islington UNISON 'A' has already voted to contribute £1.000 to the strike fund.
Several schools have cancelled their contracts with the company. After three days, the boss requested to meet the union, asked for 24 hours to reconsider their demands, and then refused again. Making clear that his business is suffering. Further loss of contracts could force him to cut the workers' demands. Many workplace canteens are supplied by J.J. Fast Foods.
1. Join the picket, Millmead Road, Tottenham, London N17, every morning at 6:00am (Saturday, 8:00).
2. Jenny's Restaurant and Jenny's Burger are franchises contracted to J.J. Fast Foods. Don't eat there, preferably get in and tell them why;
3. Send letters of protest to Mr. M. Kaimil, Managing Director, J.J Fast Food Distribu-
tion Ltd, Unit 16, Lockwood Industrial Park, Millmead Road, London N17 9QP. Fax 0181 880 9904.
4. Money and messages of support should be sent to J.J. Fast Food Locked Out Work-
ers Support Group, Un-
waged Centre, 72 West Green Road, London N15 5.
Deportation threat over jailed journalist
Release Rabghir Singh
By Jeremy Dear, NUJ Secretary Birmingham, personal capacity
NUJ member Rabghir Singh continues to languish in Winstone Green prison Birmingham, threatened with deportation on the grounds of "national security". He has been imprisoned without trial for over eight months. The British government claim Rabghir is an "international terrorist" despite never presenting any evidence. Despite requests from MPs and his legal team no evidence has been forthcoming.
It is extremely difficult to build a defence case when you do not know what you are being accused of.
Amnesty International have expressed their grave concern over the case. They claim that by refusing the right to an independent judicial hearing and by not telling Rabghir the specific allegations against him the British government are breaking UN Principles of Detention.
Amnesty are also concerned because Rabghir was editor of Awaz-e-Qaim, a Punjabi newspaper which campaigns for an independent state in the Punjab. He should not be deported for his views.
As a result of incarceration Rabghir's family have split, his wife sacked from her job through stress-related illnesses.
Since his arrest the NUJ have staged three lobby's of the prison and a local demonstration of about 100.
An Early Day motion of Parliament tabled by David Winnick got the backing of around 125 MPs.
Michael Howard continues to insist on deportation.
The forthcoming Birmingham demonstration needs to be built to put maximum pressure on the Tories and on the Labour Party front bench in order to force them to take up the case officially.

December pickets against racist immigration laws
By Rod Marshall
ALGERIAN and Ivory Coast asylum seekers will join a hunger strike outside the Social Serv-
ices Advisory Committee on December 6.
They are opposing new regulations restricting bene-
fits to asylum seekers and immigrants, which will be under discussion by the Committee. The hunger strike will also be supported by CARF, the National Network Against Detentions and De-
portations, the Colin Roach Centre, the Close Campfield and the Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign.
The SSAC offices are at New Court, 48 Canary St, Lon-
don WC2.
More details of the lobby from CARF, 0171-637-1458.
ON DECEMBER 18 Peter Lilley is due to an-
nounce new regulations on social security and other benefits in the Commons. The Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill and the Asylum Rights Campaign have jointly called a lobby of parliament the following day outside the Commons and at a meeting 1pm-6pm in Committee Room 14.
December 19 marks the point from which MPs can re-
quest a vote on these regu-
lations (which could otherwise be automatically accepted).
If they do so, the vote will occur early in January (be-
fore January 8, when the new regulations are de-
signed to come into effect).
More details CAAB, c/o CAPA, St Hilda's East Com-
munity Centre, 18 Club Row, London E2 7EY.

Ending The Nightmare:
Socialists against racism and fascism
Socialist Outlook has published this new collection of articles, including Ernest Mandel's "Learn the lessons of Germany: to examine the roots of racism and fascism and outline a strategy to defeat them.

- How strong are the far right today? Why are racism and fascism on the rise in Europe? What lessons are there for anti-racists from the experiences of the 1930s? Can the "ethnic cleansers" of ex-Yugoslavia be called "Fascist"?

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HISTORY never repeats itself precisely, but it certainly has lessons for socialists, and unless we learn from them we will repeat the mistakes of the past.

There have been many attempts to form left breakaways from mass socialist political parties, but with varying degrees of success. For revolutionaries, the problem of socialism is, in part, a question of organisational strategy. The left breakaway movement has, in general, been characterised by a lack of clear and consistent leadership, which has often led to organisational schisms and internal disputes. The left breakaway movement has, in general, been characterised by a lack of clear and consistent leadership, which has often led to organisational schisms and internal disputes.

Left wing splits from social democracy: Historic battle or dead end?

The upsurge of the Russian Revolution inspired mass left splits from social democracy.

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Clause Four is not enough for a new left party

Scargill’s false start

HARRY SLOAN looks more closely at the document put forward by Arthur Scargill on November 4 as the basis for a new Socialist Labour Party.

Many of the left, especially in the trade unions, share the sense of frustration that animates Arthur Scargill’s scathing analysis of the state of ‘New Labour’ undertaken.

Some will inevitably be attracted to the idea of launching a new left party; but the conditions for building a left-wing, class struggle, breakaway from the main party of the British working class have seldom if ever been less favourable.

Scargill’s claim that there is no hope whatever for a revival or successful struggle by the left in the Labour Party appears also to echo the views of prominent members of the Communist Party of Britain – who have never been in the Labour Party – and Militant Labour. Our last issue carried a lengthy response to such ideas (Militant Fails to Define the moment, Socialist Outlook, No 93).

The difference is that Militant pulled out of the Labour Party several years ago – long before Blair became leader or Clause Four was scrapped. They announced that they were now building a ‘massive’ left challenge to Labour. This tactic has – like other such experiments by the British far left – led to a rapid decline in Militant’s political membership and influence in the labour movement.

They may have come to the same point from different directions. Scargill and Militant both face the same colossal contradiction: the very conditions which have paved the way for Blair’s crushing victories over the Labour left are also the most unfavourable for promoting any kind of left wing split from the Labour Party.

Political allies

Scargill’s text ably catalogues the successes of policies overturned by Blair; but it does not discuss the political coalition within the Labour Party that gave Blair the votes he needed to make his political changes.

Indeed so keen is Scargill to argue that ‘New Labour’ is the new ‘social democratic’ party – from the Democratic Party in the United States… or, nearer home, the Liberal Democrats – that he omits the scandalous – but crucial – role that is still being played by the trade union bureaucracy in sustaining Blair.”

New Labour” is very different indeed from the Democrats and Liberal Democrats: it still maintains a political link with the trade unions which founded it.

And while this link can be used in times of right wing domination to stitch up bureaucratic procedures against the rank and file, it can also, as we saw in 1978-82, result in dramatic upheavals if union leaders are compelled to fight back.

Even now, 50 percent of the vote at Labour conferences is controlled by the trade unions.

Workers look to the trade union leaders for leadership.

The problem is that most of the union leaderships – even those who between conferences have occasionally made ‘left’ speeches defended in the elections – have been so critical of Blair that they have been happy to cast their votes for his policies. Without their votes he could not have implemented the changes.

The outcome is therefore a product not just of the politics of Blair and his leading clique, but also of the trade union bureaucracies, who have been among the most avid exponents of the line that we must get the Tories out at any price, and elect a Labour government.

But the timidity of the top union bureaucrats, and their willingness to isolate and crush those who – like the miners in 1984-5 – step out of line and attempt a fightback, has over a period of years, also succeeded in damping down the militancy of the trade union rank and file.

Strikers are at the lowest level for 100 years. Trade union membership is in decline, trade union activism is at a low ebb, and shop stewards’ organisations have been ground down by 16 years of bosses’ offensive. This means that the union leaders feel little pressure from their rank and file, ready to do deals with Blair at their members’ expense.

We can expect these conditions to change with the defeat of the Tories and the election of a Blair-led Labour government.

The cost is the party’s massive class of the government will help regenerate the missing confidence and fighting capacity of key sections of the working class – especially in the public sector which is likely to be the first to feel the effects of Blair’s right wing policies. They will not be fooled by the policies nodded through by their leaders.

The challenge for the left is to ensure that the groundwork has been laid to give organised and political leadership to those who will be forced into battle.

Scargill appears indifferent to these issues. His document does not discuss the unions, and implies that the election of a right-wing Labour government would be an unambiguous disaster. The new party would, it seems, campaign against workers voting Labour.

Scargill’s conception of a Socialist Labour Party is one that would function primarily as a parliamentary party (“it should commit itself to fight every parliamentary seat.”)

The new party threatens to divert from the fight to organise the left at the base of the unions, and from the necessary challenge to Blair inside the Labour Party itself.

A longstanding opposition to the principles, values, hopes and dreams which give birth nearly a century ago to what has, sadly, now become New Labour?”

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK No 94 November 25 1995, Page 7

Scargill’s simplistic view of the politics of the Labour Party ignores the outrageous and reactionary policies of a succession of Labour governments, every one of which ignored the socialist window dressing of Clause Four and set out to collaborate with capitalism.

Atlee’s post-war Labour government, with its landslide majority and its sweeping nationalisations, set out not to establish socialism but to patch up British capitalism and to uphold its imperialist interests.

The Wilson and Callaghan governments of the 1960s and 1970s, built new nuclear weapons, supported the European Common Market, and paved the way for the policies of every one of Tony Blair’s current policies.

So it’s just not enough to build a new left party based on Clause Four and fund illusions of a past golden age of Labour’s ‘socialism’. A party to play a leading role for the left in the labour movement and the struggles of the oppressed needs to develop a comprehensive socialist programme, and agree policies and tactics. This is a very big task.

Supporters of Scargill’s suggestions come from a wide range of political backgrounds and experience. To build this heterogeneous support into a coherent party requires extensive, democratic debate.

Unfortunately democracy is one item not on offer from Scargill: the new party it seems, would be set up on a ‘take it or leave it’ basis: “I. Convening a special ‘Discussion Conference’, to which all those committed to founding such a Party should be invited with the aim of formulating a Constitution and structure…”

Advance commitment

In other words an ‘invited’ list would be asked to come in advances of any decisions on the political line of the party that they are ‘committed to founding’ it. And lest anyone should dither after internal democracy, Scargill has already insisted that the new party would require only “a simple Socialist Constitution and a structure to fight our class enemies. This structure would demand an end to internal wranglings and sectarian arguments.”

This advance commitment to a monolithic structure is a potential time-bomb beneath any initiative to launch the new party, and a serious obstacle to its possible political development.

By waiting off debate, it would preclude any clarification of the role of socialism, any deeper analysis of the politics of the trade union bureaucracy, any development of transitional demands to bridge the gap between today’s situation and the full programme of socialism, and any debate on constitutional issues – all of which will emerge as problems to be confronted, and potentially lead to splits if there is no democratic mechanism to permit differences to be argued out.

Today’s labour movement needs a class struggle, socialist leadership to combat the class traitors leading the Labour Party and TUC: but this role cannot be filled by a new party bogged down at the outset with the repetition of Clause Four, and which turns a blind eye to the real political problems of today’s labour movement.

It is not always wrong to build a left wing challenge to masses of reformist parties – even when these begin with a small minority. But the formula Scargill has proposed is the wrong answer and comes at the wrong time to deal with the result its supporters want.

Far from advancing the fight, it would weaken the left and strengthen the right wing. A more productive approach be for Scargill and his co-thinkers to spearhead an initiative to organise and politicise a broad left in the unions and Labour Party that can contest Blair’s key bureaucratic support, and prepare for the battles to come against a Labour government.
New ‘peace’ tactics aim to stabilise Zionist rule

ROLAND RANCE analyses the reality behind the rhetoric of the Middle East ‘peace process’.

FOllowing the assassination of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin, many commentators were exercised at the effect on the ‘peace process’. Such concern is misplaced. In fact, Rabin’s successor, the former Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, should be regarded as the true architect of this process, the man who convinced Rabin to swallow his doubts and attempt a different strategy.

And secondly, because despite the doubts of the extremists who plotted the assassination, this process truly serves Israel’s interests and confirms the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people.

Surrounded

The West Bank and Gaza are being canonicalized, with areas under nominal Palestinian rule being surrounded by Israeli settlers and settlers, who will control all access to the Palestinian zones, and communications between them. In the words of Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal: “Arafat was forced to sign in the White House an Agreement which includes Palestinian acquiescence, de facto and de jure, to the entire network of Jewish settlements in the (occupied) territories... If Oslo I gave the Palestinians in the interim period everything but the settlements, Oslo II reversed what had been agreed upon and has kept everything in Israel’s hands but the Palestinian cities.”

Such an agreement would simply restore the situation that existed before the war of June 1967. But the 1967 war was not an accident. Nor was it Israel’s regular propaganda claims – it was a war of defence against threatened Arab aggression.

Three weeks before the start of the war, Rabin, then Israel’s Chief of Staff, had warned on Israeli Army Radio: “The moment this comes when we will march on Damascus to overthrow the Syrian government.”

And after the war, he remarked: “I do not believe that Nasser wanted war.” Similar remarks were made by President Weizmann, then Israel’s Air Force chief.

Israel went to war in 1967 in order to seize Palestinian land and natural resources (particular water), and in order to destroy the nascent Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which struggled for the return of Palestinian refugees to the homes from which they had been expelled in 1948.

Zionism of the left as much as the right had seen the 1948 partition of Palestine as a necessary first step in the occupation of the whole of Palestine.

(Indeed, the Likud opposition still officially lays claim to the whole of Jordan as well.) 1967 provided the opportunity for the achievement of long-standing Zionist aspirations.

The so-called ‘peace process’ is simply a means of stabilizing and policing Israel’s continued rule in the occupied territories.

Left debate policy on Irish ‘peace process’

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK debated Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) and Workers Power on the question of Irish politics at a packed meeting in Birmingham last month.

A central theme was the current so-called ‘peace process’.

Socialist Outlook speakers made it clear that we do not welcome the process or regard it as a solution to the oppression of the nationalist community in the six counties.

Whilst not being opposed to a cease fire as such, we argued that Sinn Fein have capitulated to pressure from Britain, the Republic and the USA, and are trying to emasculate the IRA from a very weak position.

Britain’s objective in this is to disarm the IRA, as a part of a general offensive withdrawal from six Palestinian towns, and part of the other 450 Palestinian towns and villages in the occupied territories will be administered by the Palestinian Authority, although the Israeli military presence will continue.

66% of the West Bank will remain entirely under Israeli control. This, which is effectively being annexed to Israel, includes not only the hundreds of Zionist colonies in the West Bank, but the lands which they have stolen from Palestinian cultivators, the roads which link them all, the ‘strategic’ routes, and the whole Greater Jerusalem area.

Such an unlikeliness agreement would simply restore the situation that existed before the war of June 1967.

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So the agreement does not even begin to resolve most of the issues that led to the Intifada – the continuing misery of the Palestinian refugees, languishing in the camps of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Lebanon and Jordan, since the establishment of Israel in 1948; the theft of Palestinian land and natural resources, for the benefit of the Zionists; the lack of any social, economic, cultural or political prospects for the mass of the Palestinians in the occupied territories; the swagging racial arrogance of the Israeli settlers, backed up by the army of occupation.

Even an agreement on the lines hoped for by some Israeli liberals and Palestinian nationalists – complete Israeli military withdrawal from all of the territories occupied in 1967, dismantlement of all Israeli settlements, the establishment and recognition of an independent Palestinian state – would not bring an end to the conflict.

Except for the replacement of Jordanian rule in the West Bank and Egyptian rule in Gaza with rule by the FLO, such an unlikely agreement would simply restore the situation that existed before the war of June 1967.

But the 1967 war was not an accident. Nor was it Israel’s regular propaganda claims – it was a war of defence against threatened Arab aggression.

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Crowds welcome Palestinian police officers to West Bank town of Jenin

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French Tories put the boot in

by Charles Muller

FRANCE’s political cartoonists complain that their Gaultier Prime Minister Alain Juppé is hard to draw. His chameleon-like nature goes deeper than a lack of distinct facial features.

Back in May he announced that his first government (Juppé 1) would fulfill campaign promises to make a dent in unemployment and combat poverty within six months, now he is proclaiming that the new (Juppé 2) government will, in three months, make major strides towards bringing down France’s budget deficit.

Spending cuts

Whereas before cutting unemployment was the key to increased state revenues, the new line is that cutting state spending is the prerequisite for bringing down unemployment.

The formation of “Juppé 2” on November 7 was a media event aimed at reassuring the markets.

While the core personnel remained the same, the reshuffle provided an opportunity to trumpet the government’s determination to do the necessary welfare cutting and tax-raising to get France ready for the European single currency in 1999.

The government has been made smaller, with the removal of a large number of women junior ministers, to show that the time has come to get down to serious business.

The proposed attacks on welfare have already sparked off resistance, which may culminate in a general strike towards the end of November.

A previous protest on October 10 by public sector workers against wage controls saw unprecedented union unity and strike action by millions of workers. At the same time the new academic year has seen a powerful movement in universities against inadequate resources.

British readers bared to terminal scepticism by years of defeats and betrayals should not assume that these movements are doomed to failure.

While governments often get away with breaking election promises, there is usually a deeper “social contract” which they have to stick to.

The Thatcher governments made frequent “unions” by drawing a line at the exit and liquidating social gains in cash and property handouts for the middle and upper working classes.

The central thrust of Juppé’s – and President Jacques Chirac’s – election campaign, on the other hand, was to “modernize” France’s social wounds, above all by abandoning the so-called “pecuniary unique” (one-track thinking) on economic policy.

Bold measures to promote growth and create jobs were hinted at. This loose talk now leaves them with a major problem of legitimacy.

The iron fist must therefore be concealed in a velvet glove. The new minister for employment, social affairs and health, Jacques Barrot, is described by an “insider” as “a self-centred egotist with socialist leanings”.

“He believes it is better to give in to the unions than lose a single vote”. Both Chirac and Juppé are still insisting that the burden of reform will be borne equally by all sections of society.

Market forces

While Juppé may succeed in defining the present political stage of French union leaders, it is also quite likely that he will not be able to do enough to satisfy the markets.

Then the question of a new Prime Minister will be on the table. Beyond that, in the longer-term, looms the ruling class’s need to create a new hard right able to demolish expensive traditions of social consensus.

Out there in the twilight of reason, besides the explicit neo-fascist Le Pen, with his solid 10% of the vote, lurk such figures as Jean Marie Goldsmith’s associate, Philippe de Villiers, a “romantic” “gentleman” reactionary from the Vendee region, famous for his resistance to the Revolution of 1789-93.

There is also Alain Madelin, a “maverick” free marketeer, thrown out of the Juppé 1 government as a sop to assuage previous protests, and Charles Pasqua, the former Interior Minister.

Law and order, racism and family values (in France, essentially Catholic) are the traditional cement of the far right.

Here the present government, building on the achievements of its predecessors, has been blazing the trail with massive deployments of police and troops against immigrants, using the pretext of the recent bombings attributed to Algerian Islamic fundamentalists. The organisations of the working class will need to build on the success of the October 10 strike and forge a powerful united front to combat this desperate offensive.

Spirits of resistance still burning bright in East Timor

Aldan Salter

DECEMBER 7 will be an international day of protest marking the 20th anniversary of Indonesia’s bloody massacre of East Timor.

The Indonesian authorities have used every tactic against the East Timorese, ranging from genocide to cultural assimilation. But they have failed to crush their spirit. A new generation of youth is emerging to lead the struggle of the Timorese.

East Timor is important to British capital because of its substantial oil and gas reserves. Britain gave military aid to the Indonesian government as their best ally and believe that their interests would be threatened if East Timor gained independence.

For the British government and multinational companies, as price – not even 200,000 East Timorese deaths – is too high for continued access to East Timor’s natural resources.

By selling Hawk jets, Britain has direct responsibility for part of this blood price. But the price keeps on going up. British Aerospace is supplying at least 24 more Hawks to Indonesia.

The British government, which licences the export of Hawks to Indonesia, denies that they have been used against the East Timorese, and claims that the new Hawks are only for “training”.

Robin Cook, Labour’s Shadow Foreign Secretary, echoes this line. This is wishful. East Timorese leaders testify that Hawks have been used against their people. Jose Amorin Dias says that 4 of his cousins were killed in Hawk attacks. According to Jose Ramos Horta, 30 people were killed in September 1994 when a Hawk missile destroyed 6 houses.

On December 12th the Indonesian National Congress for Democracy (Kontra) held rallies in cities throughout Indonesia. TheConsole is available at the end of this message. Timor demonstrations have been attacked and Indonesian police have made several arrests.

A UN-sponsored body called the “Commission on Human Rights”, practically a U.S. arm, is looking into the situation in East Timor. That is the only hope for the plight of the people of East Timor.

World Outlook

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Lobby of Parliament No Arms to Indonesia Thursday December 7

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**SCLISTIC OUTLOOK No. 94, November 25, 1995, Page 10**

**Jaffna offensives don’t answer Tamil question**

By K.Govidan

ON OCTOBER 17 the Sri Lankan army launched its bloodiest assault yet on the non-military checkpoints of the Tamil separatist Lib- eration Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), code- named Operation Riviresa or Sunshine. Three days later the LTTE took the war into the capital city Colombo, when it destroyed the main oil storage depot causing damage esti- mated at over Rs.1 billion and striking fear into the heart of the government and business estab- lishment.

That bombing campaign has continued.

Until now the Sri Lankan army had been taking island and peninsula of Jaffna, leaving the LTTE in control of most of the penin- sula and running a parallel ad- ministration there. While the LTTE and indeed Tamil re- garded the Eastern districts as part of their traditional home- land, LTTE control has been weakest in this ethnically mixed region.

Atrocities

Tensions between the three main communities in the East, Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils have been raised by the ongoing atrocities committed by the LTTE against Sin- norn-Tamils. In recent weeks 150 Tamils and Muslims, including infants and women, were killed by the LTTE in their own promised territory and cally way. These attacks, which out- rage all decent opinion, have two objectives. They aim to drive away Sinhalese and Muslims from their own land to prepare the ground for the expansion of the Tamil public place and Tamil religious and political practice of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. They are exclusive and authoritarian and at heart both reactionary and socially conservative.

Just recently the LTTE conducted the public execution of thirty-five civilians in Jaffna whom it accused of be- ing Tamil informers.

The background was an LTTE assault on an army camp a few months ago which left 195 of the camp’s 2500 men, including infants and children, dead. The LTTE has since killed more than 1000 more than in any other part of the pen- insula.

**Army terror**

While foreign newspapers have publicised LTTE atroci- ties against villagers in the East, they have not reported the Sri Lankan Army’s reign of terror there too. It has tor- tured and “disappeared” Tamil youths and goes on with its inhuman practices in which the LTTE is far worse.

On 9th July the Air Force blew up the Jaffna police station at Navy Point killing sixty-five and injuring hundreds more. This is not unusual. In this thirty year long war neither side has respected non-com- batants. The Armed Forces have frequently bombed and shellled civilian targets like places of worship, schools and hospitals. However people congregate there because the Air Force drops leaflets urg- ing civilians to leave their homes and seek sanctuary in these neutral places.

Quite recently on 22nd September, a crowded school- yard was bombed killing thirty-four children and severely injuri- ing dozens more. This is no way that chil- dren in their white uniforms could have been mistaken for LTTE soldiers for any dark green military fatalities.

This was no accident. It was an attempt to break the will of a defiant population who have braved food and water shortages, the ab- sence of electricity and basic services, even the expectation of death.

More than 400,000 have been forced by the LTTE to leave their homes as the army approaches Jaffna town. This is half the total population of the peninsula. Only those who are too old, too sick, and too stubborn to leave are left.

Many take the Sri Lankan Army spokesperson Brigadier Sarath Manzungehsera’s phrase when he said, “The operation is planned in such a manner that it will be a fight to the finish.”

Civilians have been moved to the LTTTE bases in three areas. T h e n h a m a r a c h i, Chavakkacheri and Kil- ligolly. The LTTLE itself has had to abandon its main base at Kondavil and has relocated to Tharamarachi where it hopes that the large dispersed population will be a human shield from the bombing raids of its enemy.

Relief agencies have ap- pealed for emergency shelter and food provision. There is a long running economic em- bargo on the North and though food is secretly imported by permission from the south, the quantities are never sufficient and military checkpoints are often long delays due to extortion and hostility of soldiers.

There is now censorship of the press, so Sinhala people in the south receive information filtered by the military, but lit- tle news of armed forces atrocities. Hard statistics are not easily available nor reliable. It is not as if the LTTE have lost at least four of its cadre (male, female and child) for every gun- nerman. Furthermore the LTTE have under 10,000 regular Forces have around 60,000.

Many fear that we have yet to see some of the worst. The LTTE has retreated from Jaffna town which the Army is besieging, but, it is ducking and trimmed. However the LTTE can open up a new front against the Army in other parts of the pen- insula.

**Pyrhic victory**

While losing Jaffna town is a psychological blow for the LTTE it may prove to be a pyrrhic victory for the Sri Lankan government. What is the point in being in a deserted town which it would be foolish to protect from the LTTE recapitulation? Neither has the LTTE been decisively defeated. It remains the hegemonic military and po- litical force in the Tamil community both within Sri Lanka and in the diaspora.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga an- nounced a radical set of con- stitutional proposals on August 3rd which, though short of allowing the right of the Tamils to secession (which revolutionar- y socialists defend) is a federation of regions giving Tamils con- trol over land, education and taxation powers. Whether in some details this package should be sup- ported in principle because it accepts for the country the devolution of powers while maintaining the territorial in- tegrity of the north-east.

However since it was an- nounced it has been greeted by condemnation across the board, from ministers to Tamil leaders and from political parties and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA).

Mr Hetton has not been alone in his condemnation. The movement for the LTTLE have to do the job. Mr Hetton has written a letter to all the newspapers, addressing the struggle between the ‘socialists’ of Militant La- bour.

When asked about his so- cialist party, he said he was in favour of a cross-party co-opera- tion on the FFLP.

**Proposals**

For the proposals are no near towards implementation since their an- noncement. According to the government they must go before a Parliamentary Select Committee, but the government and the party as a whole and a fai- tally to a national referendum.

The problem is that even the President’s own Sinhalese political parties which dominates the coalition gov- ernment doesn’t support it, a two-thirds majority in the parlia- ment is required, which the opposition United National Party minority has. Finally it gives the Sinhala people a veto over granting independence to a minority Tamil nation which has been oppressed by the Sri Lankan state for nearly fifty years.

**Worthless**

At every stage of the way it will be weakened and diluted at the elec- toral or otherwise by the un- violent elements within the majority Sinhala community who have nothing on offer to stop the war. Thus it will be yet another worthless document which will not be implemented but failing to meet the expecta- tions of the Tamils.

This suits the LTTE’s needs, giving ‘proof’ that the Sinhala alternative to separate state, Tamil Eelam, under LTTE domination and thus a two-thirds majority in parliament can be trusted.

The People’s Alliance government was just appointed a week ago in absence of any in August last year promising to respect media rights and thus to end the war. The consensus of military leaders has been destroyed by the media and confirmed in a prosecution of a new case a few days ago.

The Versailles settlement of the current struggle is a major step in the ongoing erosion of its major promise.

**Illusory**

The current military offensive- may win popularity for the government immediately in the south but it is only creating disas- ter among the Tamils.

It is now impossible to have the LTTE be uprooted in this way. Its influence can only now when the give- rance of the Tamils are re- duced and their aspirations betrayed by the presentation. The tragedy of this war is that both sides know that they can’t score a direct hit on the bases of the other. Our aim would be to close the ring around the LTTE within two parties neither of whom represents the aspirations of the Tamil masses. We are to articlulate and take forward the demands of the Tamils and the majority of people in between. They want an end to the war and self-gov- ernment.

**Letter**

I disagree with Joe Au- cello’s view on the Na- tional Front (NF). I must remind you that you are a progressive force in society and deserve no support from us, whether critical or otherwise.

Sure the NOI mobilizes the masses, but do ever Enoch Powell mobilise the East End dockers to march with reaction- ary slogans? So do the fascists and the communists in India, Ire- land, Algeria and elsewhere. Because we use the masses as a tool for political ends, we must intervene to win the leadership of the masses to a secular and socialist al- ternative. We need to stop the religi- ous trends, who represent support for the ruling class.

Which side?

AT A MEETING in Dublin on November 11, with Billy Hitchonson of the PUP by their side, Militant Labor activists unveiled their new policy - building a work- ing class party with sec- toral focus on the UVP. Unfortunately for Militant, Mr Hitchonson did not play by his script. He announced that he had killed Catholics, had been a member of the UVP and had no problem with the idea to anyone - to appeal from the ‘socialists’ of Militant La- bour!

When asked about his so- cialist past, he said he was in favour of cross-party co-opera- tion on the FFLP.

Mr John McCuntry Ireland Committee for a New Socialism (Free Ireland) PO Box 40, Belfast

world outlook

No truck with religion!

I disagree with Joe Au- cello’s view on the Na- tional Front (NF). I must remember religion is a tool used by the ruling class to divide the masses.

The NOI was involved in the campaign against the assas- sination of Malcolm X because he posed a political threat to the bourgeoisie. It was the role of an anti-capitalist strategy for Blacks, including black women and the working class allies. Islamic fundamentalists are in no way a progressive
Hollow monuments and exploded myths

Simon Kennedy reviews the Hayward Gallery's exhibition Art and Power

WANDERING around the Hayward Gallery you could be forgiven for believing that the 1930s in France and the Soviet Union were dominated by a competition between painters for depiction of the widest fore-arms. Both Stalin and Hitler seem to have favoured the "beefcake with attitude" depiction of their supporters to the point of obsession. But even among kitche parodies of heroically-built workers and valorous soldiers, the varying political context of the two ideologies can be detected.

The Nazi media wise out on muscles and tends to be more belliscose and mystical. Stalin's are more simple, without the ancient imperial evocations - they wear everyday clothes and clutch hammers rather than spears.

The Nazis celebrate masculinity. Hitler in particular was a big fan of the teenage modes of Adolf Ziegler, known to the Germans of the time as "the master of public bath".

Female nudity is explicitly non-erotic - figures are clean, healthy and wholesome. Blond and redheads resting in meadows contemplating the aesthetic wonders of the Arpian race, rather than showing the recorded output of tractor parts from their engineering factories.

The male youth of Germany were intended for slaughter rather than work. They are pictured passively, as if awaiting battle orders with fortitude and resolution. Their bodies are already dedicated to the bullet that takes their life from them.

The selflessness of these figures is striking. Nevertheless, they were still art. Indeed, one of the best things about this exhibit is its debunking of the liberal myth, current in most art appreciation in the last twenty years, that art is impossible under totalitarian regimes.

It is true then that there would be very little art in the world. The magnificence of Michaelangelo would be disowned. Even if democracy is taken to mean parliamentary representation, then most of the world's artistic achievement would be ruled out.

Serious questions can be raised however, as to whether the "art of the dictator" was good art. Stalin's party-line propaganda painting "Voronts to appeal the Kolkhoz from the collective farm is a romantic sketch - I can't say I was too impressed with industrial worker with collective farm girl either. Nevertheless, for all their crudity and outspokenness the images retain a real power. This was art for the masses - a conscious at social mobilisation. Terrazig's Mezina della Rivoluzione Fascissta is arresting and impressive. The canvases that hang in the Moscow Metro are a outstanding, if naive, way of bringing pulsies to the people.

The cult of youth and health is still very much with us - Baywatch is the most watched programme in the world.

HARAYA!

Haraya is the Sinhalese language forthright paper of the Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International. It is the only paper in Sri Lanka which campaigns consistently

Against the World Bank and IMF
Against the Sinhalese majority to stop the war against the Tamils
Against the austerity measures of the Chandrika government.

Haraya is facing financial problems, and seeking donations from Britain. Cheques, payable to NSPP UK and sent to PO Box 1109, London N4 2IU, marked Haraya Fund.

Support HARAYA!
Hit Nigerian junta where it hurts!

By Simon Day

Last week Anita Roddick wrote to the Financial Times demanding that Shell condemn the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa. "What power can stop it?" she asked 'Shell can stop it'.

The PR team at Shell must be reeling their hair. Only days after the Brent Spar dumping had disappeared from the headlines the company's misdeeds are again at the centre of world attention. After what John Major called the "judicial killing" of nine minority rights activists in Nigeria the company is once again in the firing line.

Despite its disclaimers, Shell can only make its profits by the closest cooperation with the military regime. Its work inevitably means joint ventures with the government, especially the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Just as importantly, the government provides a repressive apparatus with which to suppress opposition to its activities.

Money from oil makes up 80 per cent of the federal government's total revenue and 90 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. This is why the opposition in Nigeria sees their struggle as one against both the government and the big companies.

Compensation

One of Ken Saro-Wiwa's most important demands was for Shell to pay $10 billion compensation to the people of the Ogoni region for their destructive exploitation of the area's natural resources.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was a challenge to the partnership of Shell with the federal government. It combined the campaigns around environmental issues with self-determination: "the two things must go hand in hand."

Shell's power actually increases when regimes like Nigeria's go into crisis; the more vulnerable the leaders are, the more sway Shell has. Weakness means freedom to make profit.

The directors of Shell understand how Nigeria's economy depends on its natural resources. They are the mainstay of Aboh's position. Money from oil multi-nationals such as Shell, Elf and Agip keeps the military government in place.

The company accepts that it has caused some environmental problems, but that "these do not add up to devastation" it says.

Spillages

Greenpeace research shows that Shell spills 1.6 million gallons of oil in the delta region between 1982-1992 -40 per cent of its spills worldwide. The Times carried a better description of the environmental impact of the massive exploitation of the Niger delta: "looks like a tropical paradise halfway through the apocalypse.

The Shell Development Company, part of the Royal Dutch Shell Group, has been in Nigeria for over 50 years. The 300,000 barrels of oil it pumps out a country every day is 14 per cent of its worldwide production of crude oil, and half of the country's output.

In the mega-buck world of international capitalism Shell's profits are quite modest - a mere half a million dollars every day - but its commitment is long-term.

There is therefore, a world of difference between stopping the Brent Spar dumping and getting Shell to disengage from its destructive activities in Nigeria.

Greenpeace achieved a dramatic and inspiring victory in the Atlantic. But it was on a different scale to that needed to force Shell to back away from its vital international business interests.

As the Financial Times put it, "investment in Nigeria promises an important long-term commitment which can be closely distinguished from the probably short-term future operations".

Shell was prepared to put up with the opprobrium of the world in continuous investment in South Africa throughout the days of apartheid.

The future output from the proposed Sallah liquefied natural gas plant in Nigeria has, for example, already been linked to European utilities, even though it will not start flowing until 2000, and investor's dividends will not appear until 2007. The preparatory technical appraisals alone have cost $500 million. Four specialist ships have already been bought to take the fuel to Europe.

"Ethical consumption" has been an important movement in the last ten years. It expresses a deep-seated hostility, especially by young people, at the activities of multi-national corporations.

Barclay's links with the apartheid regime in South Africa were the first significant target of consumer boycott - mainly organised through student unions.

Other important battles centered around Nestlé's formula baby milk and the campaign for compensation in Bhopal deaths cases.

Yet in all years of boycott, Barclays Bank was affected little by students using different cheap books. Not so with Greenpeace and the Brent Spar - direct action had direct results.

Weeks

It took only weeks for the Greenpeace campaign against the proposal to dump the Brent Spar oil storage base in the Atlantic to make Shell back down.

Not only did the campaign score an immediate success, but - with the help of new technology - pictures of the protest were relayed all around the world.

Political protest, such as the picketing of Shell stations, remains the most effective way forward. The Labour and trade union movement must not leave the fight to environmentalists and a small handful of supporters, but must build the campaign for a boycott of Shell and all trade with the Nigerian junta.