Gordon Brown's £40 billion welfare illusion

Now you see it...
Now you don't!

LABOUR MINISTERS know how it's done: many of them spent almost 20 years exposing Tory claims to be "spending more than ever" on health, education and social security. Now, like a tired old Paul Daniels routine, they are using the same seductive tricks themselves in government.

They know that the real spending figures can be inflated to create a popular public image one day, and then business can revert to the normal routine of cuts and conflict. Gordon Brown's claim to be pumping extra billions into health and education in the long-awaited Comprehensive Spending Review centred on two key deceptions:

* The "increases" over the next three years include every pound spent above the current budgets - effectively counting each increase twice. (See page 5)

* The "real terms growth" rests on the assumption that nurses, doctors, teachers and others will effectively subsidise public services for another three years through a further pay freeze.

Labour hopes to have ended debate on resources for three years. But as the media headlines subside and the rave reviews are overtaken by the harsh reality in the classrooms and on the wards, it will take more than Brown's conjuring prowess to prevent an angry backlash.
Noon workers still waiting for recognition

BEFORE the publication of the 'Fairness At Work' White Paper, the RMT told the workers of Noon Products that the prime example of the need to change the union recognition.

Noon Products is a very profitable company, the biggest supplier of curry products to supermarkets Sainsbury and Waitrose and also supplies France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

A conflict has been building up for 10 years at its Southall base which employs 310 workers and is management-united.

In September 1997 the whole workforce joined the GMB. Management refused union recognition and said they would make their own union or forget the GMB.

They offered 50p incentives on pay if they left the union, which was rejected. Management also recruited new posts of floor manager which they perused some shop stewards to take.

Despite a big demonstration of support, the GMB at Noon have not resigned. A legal action was launched in the Small Claims Court. An official was served.

Counsellors, New Labour or Liberal Democrat, seek to break the will of the unions

Councillors will run it and that pay increases will be limited to 2 per cent, unless funded by "additional savings". Many workers face privatisation in the guise of "Value and joint venture PFI partnerships with the private sector.

For the councillor’s local New Labour or Liberal Democrat, breaking the will of the unions in the borough to resist is essential to drive through these plans. Dealing with those who fight back with unprecedented severity is an integral part of this process for management and for elected councillors.

Council trade unions in the borough will need courage and determination, and a clear strategy of resistance.

This will involve:

- linking the struggles of different sections of workers against cuts and privatisation together;
- putting pressure on local politicians and Labour Party activists;
- making connections with local campaigns by users against privatisation, for example tenants organising to oppose housing sell-offs;
- working with other local labour movement and community activists.

What happens in Islington does have significance for others. If Islington Council succeeds in driving through the cuts, other councils inside and outside London will be looking for ideas on how to do the same. They will steal their ideas and experiences on "best practice". We need to share ours on "best fightback".

Rail: vote to fight on

Infrastructure workers on the rail network have now taken 11 days of industrial action. The maintenance of railways has lost millions of pounds in delayed contracts and lost work.

A successful conference of infrastructure workers on 250 delegates has now decided to continue the action with a mixture of minor, weekday overtime bans and weekend strikes.

A fund on key activists morale remains high. Support committees should be set up and assist the strikers financially.

Islington council staff ballot on jobs fightback

Elkie Dee

AS WE GO to press, Islington Union awaits the results of a branch ballot for a strike action in support of the 12 Housing Needs Officers sacked for going on strike in protest at job losses.

While there is sympathy for the strikers in the branch, confidence has been lowered by a period of restructuring and job-losses.

Many other workers are being moved to new offices and subjected to a reselection process in which some will lose their jobs, and be told they are "unanswerable" to their own jobs.

Islington plans £80 million cuts over the next 4 years as the council, now Labour-led by a tiny margin, fails into line with government spending controls.

The council has stated that a "much smaller staff group" will run it and that pay increases will be limited to 2 per cent, unless funded by "additional savings". Many more services face privatisation in the guise of "Value and joint venture PFI partnerships with the private sector.

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Unions and tenants unite to defeat Council house sell-offs

Glenn Voris, UCATT member (Secretary of St Helen’s TUC, personal capacity)

A CAMPAIGN has started to resist attempts by St Helen’s Council to privatise 800 council houses this September.

Next year they plan to extend this to over 4,000 Council houses. Socialist Outlook took the lead in fighting back, by getting a motion passed within the joiners’ UCATT branch calling for a joint campaign between unions, tenants, and community groups.

The first campaign meeting was held on 22 July. Already at time of writing, it looks likely to be well attended. However, the Communist Party led Union branch has evaded the campaign so far.

A vigorous NO campaign involving byposted, leafletting and public meetings on council estates is required.

It is vital that this round of council house sell-offs is defeated to give confidence to the campaign before next year’s elections.

Nationally, New Labour has announced its plans to sell off 85,000 Council houses this year and double this next year.

This is combined with an attack on Direct Labour Organisations (DLOs - Council run direct works departments) under the new "BestValue" regime which has replaced Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

Best Value is a rebranding of the privatisation of local services, a less threatening name for something even worse.

Combined with Labour’s stated intention to enforce tight spending limits on local authorities, it will mean wholesale sell-offs of every asset or service that can be sold, if not defeated by campaigns involving tenants and other service users.

This move of privatising the DLOs has stepped up a gear with Labour’s plans to privatise all DLOs in Scotland, which has already begun in North Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire, which has been met with mass DLO trade union meetings.

The response of tenants and trade unions to fight Council house privatisation is now gaining ground. UCATT has said in its national journal that "members and tenants can unite to resist transfer (privatisation) of council houses in 1999-

Conference

Tenants are also getting organised. A national conference was held on 18 July with representatives from all the 70 local tenant campaigns attending — this is a big step forward.

However, UCATT and the other DLO trade unions need to unite with this organisation to resist wholesale privatisation and destruction of the DLOs nationally, to safeguard tens of thousands of jobs.

Locally, privatisation of services continues with the news on 1 July that St Helen’s Council has lost the tender for its school meals service, affecting over 500 jobs. This latest attack needs to be linked with the council house sell-offs to build one united campaign against privatisation.

The Trade Union Network/United Campaign to Repeal Anti-Trade Union Laws’ meeting from Birmingham to Blackpool Labour Party Conference in September is an ideal opportunity to build a real fightback between workers, tenants and the users of public services.

Get your copy!
Tameside strikers lead national struggle against privatisation

Adam Hartman

ELDERLY residents are being used as guinea pigs by Tameside Care Group (TCG) in an exercise of cost-cutting and management intransigence.

Striking care workers and their supporters are calling for a public hearing to highlight the deterioration in care of residents and to break the council's cover-up of information black-out on the dispute.

The council has closed libraries from displaying information about the strike, and is charging £40 for a document on the running of the homes which should be in the public domain.

The council has launched a legal action to stop the strike, and is showing no sign of any willingness to negotiate.

The workers have stood firm and have received strong support from the local labour movement and UNISON members nationally.

The strike is the result of a long-running dispute over pay and conditions. The council has refused to negotiate and has imposed a series of pay and conditions changes without agreement.

The TCG is part of a larger national dispute involving more than 100,000 workers across the country.

The workers are demanding an end to the imposed changes, better pay and conditions, and the right to negotiate.

The union is calling for a national day of action to support the Tameside strikers and to demand an end to the council's intransigence.

Linking up the Left

The launch conference for the Network of Socialist Alliances in England takes place on Saturday September 5 at 3:30 p.m. at the Unions Railway Club in Rugby (close to the station). Full details and agendas can be obtained from the Liaison Group, c/o John Nicholson, 58 Langland Rd., Manchester M1 4SP.

EDITORIAL

Beyond this even among militants there is a vacuum of perspectives. A whole layer of shop stewards don't remember the last Labour government. Rebuilding confidence in the current government is not straightforward.

Industrial action remains at a low ebb, despite important actions in a series of long-standing disputes and important new ones.

The leaderships of a growing number of unions, not confident of their continued hold on the reins of power as the bosses' offensive bites deeper and forces their members to contemplate action, have launched or stepped up vicious witch-hunts.

Under the guise of assaults on the far left, they seek to stymie any militancy by the union members to act or organise independently of the official union bureaucracy, and especially to make it harder for them to take effective action to defend jobs, conditions and services.

In this context effective campaigning is paramount. The anti-union laws are the central obstacle to militant action. The TCG strike recognition package is not only an insult to trade unions. As he so proudly trumpets, it leaves Britain with the most unregulated labour market in the advanced capitalist world.

And it is quite clear that without a substantial campaign of mass action to force further changes that is all that is on offer from New Labour. This is what we were all told we must behave for during the years of Tory rule.

This is why the development of the United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Union Laws is such a significant initiative. After a shaky start the recent recall conference took important steps forward on the questions of structure - making participation from a broader layer possible, whether or not they were win support from their national union.

Support for the campaign needs to be built up everywhere in the Labour movement. The decision to make the London May Day demonstration a national event focused on the demand the laws are repealed deserves the backing of every trade union branch in the country.

Resolutions will not be enough - detailed plans will need to be laid out to get the maximum numbers involved and down top London. That is why the development of the United Campaign at a regional level will be key.

No "fairness" without a fight!

The role of the Labour Party in Tameside has been scandalous. Local MP Andrew Bennett, who is a trustee of TCG, has failed to intervene, at least publicly, on the strikers behalf.

Labour Party members must expose the role of the council and put pressure on the MP to stop sitting on the fence. This is a national issue. What is happening in Tameside is already happening - or will happen - throughout the country, and more and more services are sold off to balance the books of cash-starved local authorities.

Appel: Help us raise the roof!

Flood damage to the Socialist Outlook offices

must be urgently repaired this summer - and we need extra cash to help us through.

We have to keep buying materials, rent scaffolding, and pay for the work to be done.

We need £1,000. You can help.

Please send as much as you can afford: Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109 London N4 2UJ. (Please make cheques to Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund)
Women gain ground in CWU

Marian Brain

WOMEN members of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) held their second successful strike and conference which attracted women from across the country on the eve of the union's main conference last month.

This followed the first conference held last year after a long campaign by women activists. The theme was "encouraging women into the trade union movement". The need for the event was made clear when General Secretary Derek Hodgson opened the conference. He pointed out the dearth of women in union position - only three of the 96 postal branch secretaries are women.

Perhaps the most powerful contribution came from Crichtleby striker Sue Watkins who explained how her life had changed during the course of the dispute.

"I think we were all a little selfish at Crichtleby before the strike. As long as everything was OK for us we didn't care about the rest of the world. That made it difficult to understand why people would support us.

"When Executive member Michelle Emerson spoke at our first meeting to confer the strike started, she broke down and cried and I just couldn't understand why.

"I thought it is me that is going to lose my job, not her. But since then I have come to feel the same about other industrial disputes".

The conference included a final session which was a 'mock meeting', in which inexperienced women had the chance to work through procedures, practice speaking etc in front of a supportive audience.

A further major step forward: the motion on women's rights - and the real involvement of women in the trade union movement - when CWU's annual conference passed a resolution, which gave women's conference considerably more power.

With the support of the union's Broad Left and against the opposition of the Executive, the resolution called for women's conference to take resolutions from branches and to have the right to submit two resolutions of its choice to annual conference.

The expectations of the trade union movement in a number of key areas, such as the proposed 40% of the workforce for recognition ballot, did have positive features.

General Secretary Derek Hodgson went to great lengths to justify the climb down, arguing that the previous policy had left them isolated from other unions.

This was a very passionate debate but出台 of the best speakers was sacked Crichtleby striker, Wendy Williams. She criticised the failure of this paper to enforce the right to reinstatement for those who, like herself, had been sacked for taking part in legal industrial action.

The MAC National Leadership of MSF is attempting to discipline President and Secretary of its London Regional Council, Sue Michie and Hugh McGrillen in a blatant political attack on the leftest region.

Their 'crime' is that London Region Council called for a 'No' vote in the May referendum against a directly-elected London Council.

The President and Secretary were summoned without being informed of any allegations or evidence against them. On the advice of the NEC they refused to attend, insisting that they had not done anything which were accused of any copies of material.

In response they were given a new date and copies of a letter from Terry Ashton, General Secretary of the Union of Post Office Employees (Group) of Greater London Labour Party.

This claimed that London region MSF was a constant threat in the side of the London Labour Party, had disrupted a consultation conference on the motion to London Assembly, and committed the ultimate sin of adopting a policy different to that of the Labour Party.

Ashton never raised these allegations with the regional executive of the Greater London Labour Party, raising the question of what authority he had to condemn them.

He seems to consider it out of order for a union body to adopt policies different to those of the Labour Party. MSF has the right (even duty) to decide its policies.

Is the National Leadership of MSF in London Under-ground, since this is government policy?

Speculation is rife as to whether Roger Lygon, MSF General Secretary, is witch hunting Labour Party at the behest of Ashton, or Ashton wrote his letter at the request of Lygon - who would like to be better than to discipline a regional body which has challenged him for years.

Whatever it is, this episode shows the symbiotic relationship between the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracies and the path they would like to go down if this is not challenged.

Greater London Regional Council of MSF is outraged, and is asking all of its members to join London Labour Party to take up this issue. If Ashton and Lygon succeed in this attack on the white paper it would make it easier for them and their ilk to repeat elsewhere.

UNISON's leaders scorn conference votes

Paul Worzy

A FEW short weeks after the annual conference of the new National Executive Council, key conference decisions were overturned or ignored.

The National Minimum Wage set at half the median male earnings has been a key demand of UNISON since its foundation. However, the conference voted for a much lower figure when the Low Pay Commission announced its decision.

The National Minimum Wage was a historic victory for UNISON.

They soon dropped that line when it was pointed out by members of the National Executive Council of UNISON. The Conference was told that the decision was not expected to have any impact on members. That anger turned to disillusionment when it was announced that the decision on the AMC would not be taken any further, despite the recommendation of the Commission.

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Spin doctors' treatment bad for health

Dobson plays double your money!

John Lister

The creation of a real terms real special account, as announced by the NHS Central Board at the 2001 Budget was expected to increase the resources available for hospitals by £1 billion in 2001-02. `This Budget', said John Dobson, `will increase NHS expenditure by £1 billion.' That was how the Treasury had persuaded the Chancellor to give the NHS a special treatment.

But Dobson did not have the resources to offer hospitals. He was forced to admit that the savings from the special account had not materialised.

The key figure is the "real terms" increase announced in the Budget. This is based on the assumption that the Chancellor will be able to find £1 billion to boost the NHS's spending power, even though he has already said that he cannot afford to do so.

The real terms increase is based on the assumption that the Chancellor will be able to find £1 billion to boost the NHS's spending power, even though he has already said that he cannot afford to do so.

Hospitals like Kidderminster and community hospital beds across the country are still faced with closure despite Brown's breaks. The other obvious casualty of the new situation is mental health services. Early indications from ministers last year suggested that a cash injection of up to £500 million might be available over three or five years.

But the promised announcements have been postponed, and the funds for vital developments - not least the development of new 24-hour sued accommodation for patients with dementia and severe mental illness - appear to have evaporated.

Whether the limited flow of funds can be directed to ensure that Tony Blair's promise on waiting lists is fulfilled remains unclear.

What is certain is that however much it is hoped that the 3-year settlement is not enough to tackle the growing problems - and the combination of measures could lead to the opening of all new, privately-financed hospitals for which there are no nursing staff available.
As Home Office's Show Trial collapses
Fight goes on for justice for Campsfield 9

Bill MacKeith
CHARGES of riot and violent disorder against nine former detainees at Campsfield Immigration Detention Centre were thrown out at Oxford Crown Court on June 17 1998. All nine men seek political asylum as a result of persecution suffered or feared should they return to their home countries in West Africa.

But, instead of walking free, five of these entirely innocent men were immediately transferred into Rochester Prison, Stanley Nwadike, Enahoro Esenuwa, John Quosah, 17-year-old Sambu Marong and Harrison Tubman. The three free men are Nigerians Stanley Ozidede and Edward Onbanjo Agoro, student leader opposed to this regime who have been granted political asylum in the UK, and Lucky Aghbebasu, who received exceptional leave to remain in the UK on the day the trial collapsed.

Guilty: Jack Stott's victims
Home Office team

The ninth defendant, whose case was stopped because he was found not fit to stand trial, is another lad (minor) now in a north London mental hospital receiving treatment for illnesses caused by the abuse he has suffered under Britain's barbaric methods of treating asylum seekers.

During the trial, Group 4 prosecution witnesses perjured or contrived themselves, caught out by the video evidence of their own CCTV spy cameras inside Campsfield - and the Chief Immigration Officer at Campsfield, a civil servant, confessed that, contrary to his previous statement he could not identify any of the defendants.

The trial's collapse shows that the charges should never have been brought. The motivation for bringing the charges on the basis of non-existent evidence was clearly political. On the day after the prosecution collapsed, on August 20 1997, Home Office junior minister Michael O'Brien issued a press statement in which he made remarks prejudicial to the possibility of a fair trial.

A lawyer present in Banbury police station reported that charges were only made following a phone call 'right from the top' in the Home Office to officers at Campsfield urging them to keep the trial going.

In view of these facts the Campsfield Nine Defence Campaign, whose participants include the only three former defendants who are free, called immediately after the trial for:

* The immediate release from Rochester jail of the five men found innocent of all charges (John Quosah, Enahoro Esenuwa, Stanley Nwadike, Harrison Tubman and Sambu Marong) and the granting to them and Nosia Imanure of urgent status or exceptional leave to remain.
* The resignation or sacking of immigration minister Michael O'Brien for his role in setting up this shameful show trial;
* For prejudicial remarks before the trial started;
* For perversely minimizing the Chief Inspector of Prisons' report on Campsfield during the trial;
* For impropriety and provocation in travelling to Campsfield to meet Group 4 with an award for 'excellence in training' from the Heart of England Training and Enterprise Council.
* Home Secretary Jack Straw to apologise to all nine of these innocent men (two of them in fact fled Britain before they were found guilty and wrongful prosecution to which they never agreed).
* Home Secretary Jack Straw to agree immediately that all nine innocent men should be granted an appropriate financial settlement as a token of compensation for the wrongful charges, wrongful detention and suffering and persecution endured.

Compensation to be included for such treatment and mental suffering that on three occasions led defendants to attempt to take their lives, and the handcuffing to a guard of one of the defendants throughout a three-day stay in a hospital during which he was in a coma.

The laying of criminal charges against Group 4 employees who stated in court that they transported detainees on the head on 20 August.

The laying of criminal charges against Group 4 employees who confessed in court that they, not the detainees, smashed up windows at Campsfield on 20 August, as stated in public by Michael O'Brien.

The immediate suspension of Chief Immigration Officer John Graham and all the Group 4 guards whose unreliable evidence in court and in police statements provided the legal basis for the prosecutions.

The immediate scrapping of the contract between the government and Group 4 to run Campsfield.

Finally, the British government has so far failed to respond to the urgent requests of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Amnesty International, national trade unions in the UK, Churches Commission for Racial Justice, and the report on Campsfield of the Chief Inspector of Prisons.

We call for the immediate release of all the immigration detainees imprisoned, wrongfully and without being tried or convicted of any offence, at Campsfield and other UK detention centres and in prisons, and the closure of Britain's detention centres.

Roland Rance
THE GOVERNMENT's decision to cease reprocessing activities at the Dounreay nuclear power station in Scotland, and to start to close the plant, is welcome news as far as it goes.

But the cost of this decision is incalculable. The environment, damage unknown but devastating, and the legacy of this white elephant will sour for tens of thousands of years.

Dounreay contains both a prototype reactor, which is fuelled by plutonium rather than the more usual uranium, and a reprocessing plant, which extracts uranium and plutonium from nuclear waste material.

The reactor has been closed since 1994, following the government's decision to abandon the fast breeder programme. The decision to cease reprocessing comes after a series of accidents at the site, raising growing evidence of massive pollution and contamination caused by its activities.

One of the main concerns was the practice of dumping an uncontrolled mixture of nuclear and other waste in a 65 metre deep shaft. This dumping was halted in 1972, after a major explosion which blew off the 12.5 ton lift of the shaft, and showered the area with vast quantities of radioactive matter.

Experts believe that the risk of a further explosion is still great, and cannot rule out the possibility of "criticability" - the accumulation of enough fissile material to cause an uncontrolled chain reaction, or a nuclear explosion.

This risk is compounded by the admission by Dounreay management that they "cannot account for" 170 kilograms of highly enriched uranium - enough to produce 12 bombs. Management has attempted to reassure the public that this material has been dumped in the waste shaft without being recorded. The more disturbing possibility, that Dounreay is implicated in the development of the Indian nuclear bomb programme.

Reprocessing is an essential part of the nuclear weapons programme. By the turn of the century, 1,400 metric tons of plutonium extracted in the course of reprocessing will have been produced in the spent fuel of nuclear power reactors, and some 300 tons of it will have been separated into weapons usable form. Less than 18 pounds (8 kilograms) is needed to build a Nagasaki-type bomb. The amounts will continue to grow rapidly. By 2010, there will be 550 tons of separated plutonium in commerce, more than twice the amount now contained in the world's nuclear arsenals.

When the former British nuclear reactor at Calder Hall was opened in 1957, the public was told that it would make the country "too cheap to meter". It has now become clear that the economic figures were falsified (with no consideration, for instance, of the costs of decommissioning and waste disposal), while the environmental and social costs were completely ignored.

Life is cheap.

In a 1993 application to increase its waste disposal limits, the UK Atomic Energy Authority used an implied value of a human life of £400,000, compared to the EU Commission's value of £2 million. It is only these distorted figures that appear to economic case can be made for nuclear energy.

The environmental damage is overwhelming, and will continue for hundreds of years. The civil liberties implications of continued reliance on nuclear power are immense.

The decision to begin the closure of Dounreay - and apparently of the notorious Sellafield plant in Lancashire - should be welcomed, and we must continue to press for the complete decommissioning of all nuclear energy plants. We simply cannot afford them.

Dounreay's grim legacy will haunt future generations.
Spotlight on police racism

As the first stage of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry draws to a close, police racism, indifference and incompetence has been widely exposed, reports SIMON DEVILLE.

A survey conducted by the BBC revealed that around half of Londoners had less faith in the police than they did at the start of the inquiry. Whilst the first stage of the inquiry has focused on the role of the police during the investigation, the next stage will move on to the lessons to be learned.

Throughout the inquiry, the Metropolitan police have been shown on the defensive. Initially claiming that their investigations were met by a "wall of silence" from the local community, they were later forced to concede that 26 people had given them the names of the five suspects.

Police went from spending the time investigating Stephen and his friend Duwayne rather than looking for the killers. They even asked the Lawrence family and their solicitor for the fact that they themselves had all the evidence that would have led to a successful prosecution.

Finally the police were forced to apologise to the Lawrence family, five years after Stephen's murder, despite the fact that their own internal investigation had pronounced a clean bill of health.

Inquiry

Jack Straw, not particularly well known for his stance against police racism, was quite happy to agree to a public inquiry, apparently confident that the inquiry would not be sufficiently independent to undermine the police.

The last time that relations between black people and the police were placed under such intense scrutiny was following the civil unrest of 1980/81 - the so-called "inner-city riots" - with the Scarman inquiry. Scarman's conclusions were widely seen as a whitewash. He was prepared to accuse some lower ranking police of racism, but characterised them as a few bad apples. The hated "sun law" which gave the police the power to stop and search whoever they felt like was scrapped.

The main lesson we have learned, though, were how about the police manage their PR rather than bringing about real change to the police force. Just over a decade later the powers in the sus laws were re-introduced through the Criminal Justice Act.

Black people are far more likely to be stopped and searched, more likely to be prosecuted than whites for the same offence and are more likely to be imprisoned. The lastest lessons from Scarman are that where the police used to use such statistics to argue that black people are inherently more prone to criminality than whites, now they simply avoid referring to such statistics.

Whilst waiting for the findings of the Lawrence inquiry to be announced, others are already drawing own conclusions.

Many black people and anti-racist campaigners extended the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

When Stephen Lawrence's killers were flown out of a Gatwick police station, police exercised their right to bear arms so that a video link had to be installed so that those who couldn't get in could watch the proceedings from another room in the building.

Media attention was focused on the presence of the NIA, whose choice of dark suit, white shirt and red tie made them so visible in their uniform.

Articles on their reactionary separatist politics were a convenient distraction from the anger of so many black people mobilised against racism, not just that of the killers but that of the state and its uniformed representatives.

A central problem of the Lawrence inquiry is that its remit is focused on the police response to racist violence rather than the role of the police.

In an internal inquiry leaked to the press earlier this year showed that powers to stop and search have been overwhelmingly used against black people. All statistics have consistently shown that a racial bias exists throughout the police force.

The police have consistently failed to tackle racism, preferring to protect the BNP and others from anti-racist pressures.

The most significant factor is the absence of a mass anti-racist movement, independent of the state, that can hold the police to account for its actions.

The divided nature of the anti-racist movement allows racism to continue.

The most significant factor is the absence of a mass anti-racist movement, independent of the state, that can hold the police to account for its actions. The divided nature of the anti-racist movement allows racism to continue.

The mobilisation of black people around the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, and the links established between a number of anti-racist campaigns, must be built on.

The current outrage at the death of Stephen Lawrence and at the conduct of the subsequent investigation into his murder, must be used to help develop a movement to ensure that there are no more cases such as this.
2,000 challenge EU austerity
Cardiff Euro-protest breaks the silence

Terry Conway
OVER TWO thousand people marched through Cardiff on 13 June in a spirited and noisy protest to mark the holding of the European Summit in the capital of Wales.

So far, in both Welsh and English, declared - Unite across Europe for jobs and democracy - the largest number of protestors in the city since the anti-poll tax movement. It was particularly pleasing to welcome demonstrators from across the European Union: from France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Ireland, and the Spanish State.

The largest delegations were from the ACI, unemployed movement in Belgium and France and special thanks are due to them for their efforts. For a few hours at least, the flavour of recent French protests was brought to the streets of Cardiff.

The Cardiff demonstration did receive excellent press coverage in the Welsh media. Several radio and television interviews were conducted by march organisers in the week prior to the demonstration, and many reports appeared in newspapers too.

The Counter-summit organised by "Reclaim Europe" was also positive, involving a layer of mainly young people in a series of useful debates about the nature of the bosss' project of European integration and the various strands of an alternative.

Unemployed activists from across England and Wales mounted a further protest on Monday 15 June when they occupied the offices of the Welsh Labour Party in opposition to the Job Seekers Allowance, the New Deal and the pathetically low minimum wage.

Organisers had hoped that perhaps more people would have participated, particularly after the major success of last year's protest in Amsterdam. Mobilising was not helped by the fact that there was so little press coverage in the run up to the Summit itself - a complete contrast with last year when Amsterdam dominated the media for two or three weeks. After the rows over who was to head the European Central Bank, it seemed that the Eurocrats wanted to dodge further exposure for the time being.

Lack of press attention was not the only factor. The campaign to build support for Cardiff did succeed in deepening the debate on European integration within the labour movement: nevertheless this remains a difficult issue to mobilise around in Britain.

After many years of Tory rule, the real effects of the anti-Maastricht convergence criteria for the single currency are not as apparent as they are in France and Germany. This problem will need to be tackled in the next months, both in order to build an internationalist "No" campaign if Blair calls a referendum on the single currency itself, as well as to build for further international action such as the demonstration in Cologne next summer.

Financial Appeal - Unfortunately, the campaign's accounts after the Cardiff march show a deficit of over £600. We realise that you may have already contributed financially to the Committee but need to ask you to consider a further contribution to meet our costs.

Our debts are the price of a well organised event, and most of the outstanding amount is owed to individuals on the Committee. Any further financial support would be greatly appreciated. A copy of the Committee accounts is available on request. Please send donations to: Cardiff Socialist Outlook, c/o CCTUS, 131 Crwys Rd, Cathays, Cardiff, CF2 4NH, Wales.

Neil Murray
ORIGINALLY scheduled for the end of February, the Greater London Labour Party conference finally took place over the weekend of 13/14 June. It had been postponed unilaterally by General Secretary Terry Ashton. Claims that this was because a venue was not available were disproved at the time - rather it was because many resolutions opposed a directly-elected mayor for London.

Ashton, no doubt at the behest of the national party leadership, wanted to avoid the conference taking this position in advance of the May referendum.

Ashton then used the intervening period to attempt to change the rules of conference. Just as he failed to convince the regional executive of the wisdom of having a directly-elected mayor, they were not convinced that the conference should comprise work-shops and only two resolutions decided by ballot.

The executive told him that any rules changes should be voted on by conference.

Lo and behold, Ashton ignored this, and sent out the new standing orders to CLPs and affiliates anyway. He also changed the basis of the election of the regional executive (renamed 'board'), presumably in the hope of getting a more compliant set of people elected.

To prevent any immediate challenge to these standing orders, delegates were packed straight off to workshops to discuss bland policy documents.

When the conference finally convened in plenary session the chair, Jim Fitzpatrick (ex-FBU leftie, now MP) had to apologise for a series of omissions on the documents listing nominees for the new executive.

Unbastened however, he refused to put a reference back of the new standing orders to conference, which would have required a simple majority.

Instead, his ruling had to be challenged, a notoriously difficult vote to win, not just because it needs a two-thirds majority, but also because it is seen as divisive.

When the result was finally announced some hours later, Fitzpatrick had scapped home. The challenge was reportedly supported by 65.59 per cent of the votes, including 86.7 per cent of those of the unions and affiliated societies. The fact that it is easy to check the votes of the unions but not the CLPs left delegates extremely suspicious of the result.

Ashton had yet more or less retained their strength on the regional executive, and the two motions the conference was allowed to discuss were passed overwhelmingly.

Candidate
The first defended the right of the London Labour Parties to have a resolution-based conference at least every two years, and the second (carried with only two votes against) supported the right of any London party member to be Labour's candidate for mayor in an OMOV ballot. The latter was a signal that party members will not easily accept a dictate from the party leadership on who can stand for mayor.

The new standing orders meant that crucial resolutions on the privatisation of London Underground, cuts in the fire service and racism could not be discussed, although fringe meetings did discuss them.

The conference showed serious disquiet across the London Labour Party at the machinations of the leadership, while the Left is able to win key votes, but not yet strong enough to seriously disrupt the leadership's plans.

London Labour stitch up
Cronygate: the real scandal is the politics of Labour's leadership

Monsters or Frankenstein?

In reporting the activities of lobbyists and their claims of access to key ministers, the media have by and large swallowed the government's line. This is apparently about outsiders not Blair's new Labour Party. Draper and friends are merely bad-tempered young men flattering those in power for their constituents. Blair argues that the bulk of the claims of access are by a minority of lobbyists and that the government has no case to answer. Yet the ministerial line is that people are lobbyists as that they can provide access to ministers. Someone opening up as a lobbyist who can't provide that isn't going to make much of a success. The House Builders' Federation has dropped the lobby firm GPC because it lacked Draper. GPC was of use to them precisely because of the access Draper could offer.

It is not accidental that Draper and his cronies have close relations with people at the heart of government. They have spent the last 15 years laying the foundations for the policies and practices of 'New Labour' in close cooperation with many now in the Cabinet such as Robin Cook, David Blunkett, Jack Straw, and Blair himself. Many of them have been, and still are, involved in the powerful Labour Coordinating Committee. When first formed in 1978 this was a conservative organisation of the left constituencies. However it moved rapidly to the right away from Benn) in the early '80s and played a major role in the witch-hunting of Militant. It was no longer the Tories who were the enemy, but the Left.

The late Lord Kinnock as leader who was used to get rid of left policies such as unilateral nuclear disarmament. It championed passive voting in the form of One Member One Vote. It provided the campaign backing Blair in the abolition of Clause IV of the party's constitution and first proposed the use of a referendum as a way of pressuring conference on this issue and the special conference into endorsing this. 'Modernisation' was their watchword and they put forward proposals similar to those adopted by last year and first proposed by the Labour Party in Power for 'reforming' and downgrading the NEC and conferences, They have argued for the abolition of the union link.

The NEC provided a platform for Blair at party conferences and fringe meetings when he was not well known and many of them worked as researchers for key Labour MPs.

Ben Lucas, one of those at the centre of the allegations, used to be a researcher for Jack Straw. He now works for the lobbyists LLM and is still chair of the LCC. Mike Craven, long-standing LCC activist, now an adviser to John Prescott, was previously managing director of Parker Access, a firm which merged with GPC. The Observer has shown a long list of those now working in lobbying who previously worked for MPs or the Labour Party. Lindsay, now a policy adviser in Downing Street, had his own parliamentary influence. He played a role in launching the breakaway from the SDP in 1981, and stood as a SDP candidate in the 1986 Fulham by-election (saying 'Labour will never govern again'). He rejoined the Labour Party in 1995 and was instantly taken into the inner circle, through his old friend, Mandelson. When Mandelson and Lindsay wrote their book 'The Blair Revolution', they paid fulsome tribute to the role of Draper. Draper worked for years as Mandelson's assistant. The chair of GPC is Ian Wrigglesworth, an ex-SDP MP. Draper founded the magazine Progress, rallied free of tens of thousands of Labour Party members, and rumoured to be funded by David Cameron, previously the SDP's main backer, now a Labour peer. Blair is said to have got the money by persuading the SDP to return Sambah Samuels, Dewi Wrigglesworth and Sambah Samuels have had no problem finding political soulmates at the heart of 'New Labour' after leaving the SDP. The Left has been pointing out the pernicious roles of these people and their undemocratic practices for years, from the time many of them were active in the National Union of Students and the National Organisation of Labour Students.

There they employed all the dirty tricks possible to prevent the Left having any influence. The ethos of the NUS has to do with helping to defend students' interests, first against the Tories' introduction of fees, now against "Labour's abdication of grants and introduction of tuition fees. Blair loyalist MPs like Stephen Twigg, Jim Murphy and Lorna Fegin are still on the NEC committee; they are all ex-NUS presidents. Blair has been chosen to be the Labour Party for 'bringing it into disrepute', if the leadership believe that to be expedient.

The Left certainly aren't going to

Pete Firmin

BALLOT PAPERS will be going out to all Labour Party members from the end of July for the election to the Constitution section of the NEC. The slate put together by an alliance of the Left (Network of Socialist Campaign Groups, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Campaign for Socialism (Scotland), Labour Left Briefing, Labour Women's Action Committee and Socialist Campaign Group News) and Centre have been put forward by an organisation that has already had some significant successes. Despite the leadership setting a supposedly insurmountable mountain to climb for nominations, the 6 candidates break this easily. They required nominations from CLPs in three different Party regions - they got them from a total of 128 CLPs, many not generally associated with the Left. Candidates have been speaking at local meetings to promote the slate and at fringe meetings at union conferences, and more are planned in the next few weeks. Some candidates have been able to break through the media silence to get coverage. The leadership has a problem. Last year's election, when Ken Livingstone best Mandelson, showed that a candidate too closely associated with the leadership has a problem. They are determined to see the Left defeated.

Rather than use a by-election as an embarrassment for them if Liz Davies, who they refused to allow to stand as a candidate in the general election, were to get elected to the NEC.

Rather than see the Left's slate defeated, there were 13 other candidates nominated (although some have since withdrawn). All are attempting to portray themselves as independent, but all are known to be unwilling to challenge the policies and undemocratic practices of the leadership seriously. Rumours abound that the leadership intend to employ Labour students over the summer to ring party members urging them to vote for anyone but the left. These are of course denied. These groups have been rather thrown out over recent weeks because the person said to be organising them was one Derek Draper. An organisation, 'Members First', has been formed to promote Blair's candidates and has been given large advertising space in the magazine, Progress, which Draper founded. The contempt with which the leadership treats the membership is obvious. The main person arguing in the press that the Left's Centre slate does not represent ordinary members is Steve Bassom, long-time leader of Brighton Council - and now a member of the House of Lords. Despite the Whips' office initially giving MPs pre-printed nomination papers with the names of their favoured candidates for the MP/MEP section entered, Dennis Skinner and Alex Smith MEP have achieved sufficient nominations, and although they are unlikely to win they could garner votes from a wider section of MPs than usual who are disaffected with the leadership's performance.

Over the next weeks the Left needs to pull out all the stops to publicise the Left's Centre slate and achieve a good result. The biggest problem faced is the recognition factor compared with previous years when MPs were allowed to win. Win or lose, the election should be used to initiate the demands for the Left, and in particular Campaign groups in the Party, linking up with campaigns for social change outside.
Drumcree: finger of blame still points at Britain

The Drumcree standoff of 1998, as reported by the British media, read like the plot of a badly constructed thriller. The wise British colonists hold peace talks and get the tribes to shake hands. We then have thechner of the referendum, followed by the chaffinger of the assembly elections, followed by the chiffer of Drumcree. The tragedy of the sectarian murder of the Quinn children leads to a reconstruction of "moderates" and the defeat of "extremists" as if it were as simple as setting a table and an order in the sunset, solved at last.

A transaction with reality is totally fortuitous. The real winner in the present situation is the British Bênignity. They are not to blame as their victory can be measured by the fact that they and those on the far right are now in a bell-hole in the North of Ireland that has become irrevocably "moderated". Britain's bloody, costly and costly war over the past 30 years with the IRA and the people of the North is over. The British army and police are staying in Ireland. It means to do so by resubmitting the undermilitarized part of the entity. It represents the maintenance of the sectarian privilege which is the base for unionist support for the British presence.

The peace process rests on two big opportunities:

* The first, arising from the Sunningdale agreement, involves a new willingness by Irish capital to support partition.
* The second involved the collapse of the Ulster Unionist party, the willingness of the republican leadership to enter service under the direction of Irish capital.

There was one big obstacle – the Ulster Unionists'program, which essentially boiled down to the military suppression of nationalism and the recreation of a full-blooded supremacy, was not a realistic basis for a settlement. The three years of the peace process gave time for the Unionists to refigure the office which the British required of them. The office which the Unionists became accustomed to the little that was on offer from the process.

Sir British realized they were in a position to split the unionist forces and be prepared to lose Paisley and his loyalist way of life. However, they were also determined not to fragment nationalism and the majority of their base outside the North, within the state. Winning nationalism to a junior partnership by releasing some of their absolute control for them.

The crucial aspect of the peace process has always been the lack of "unionist consent" - in reality a veto over the whole process, only constrained by British pressure and the knowledge that the traditional unionist programme could not be implemented.

The breakthrough and actual agreement was when David Trimble of the Ulster Unionists, supported by the Loyalist paramilitaries of the UDA and UVF, agreed to this shift.

The referendum to accept the deal illustrated the widening nature of that veto. It became clear early on that the overall outcome would depend only on the unionist vote. So an outcome that looked like a total triumph for Britain, with over 70% voting for the agreement, was in fact the closest of close shaves. The only vote that counted to the British was between the Unionist right and left wing, split 45%/55% in favour of the deal. The referendum vote illustrated the fragility and real power of the unionist base that Britain was struggling to maintain. The big gains were reduced to campaigning on prison release and the likelihood that the republicans would win a place in government.

Fundamentally the deal was a pro-unionist one that they were unable to win any fault with it, and were not reduced to opposing it because it was a deal rather than a military offensive.

The British were able to take comfort from the massive nationalism vote in favour, the notional republicanism collapse to a reformist program and the consequent vote for the modification of articles 2 and 3 to indicate southern Irish support for a partitionist solution.

The Assembly election

Next the ten was the Assembly election (See table and graph on page 3). The result did not result in even starker form.

The Ulster Unionists were humiliated by achieving a lower vote share of the SDLP, though managing to win more seats, because of the effect of transferred votes in a PR election.

Their minder in the parties representing the Loyalist paramilitaries – the URF and UUP – lost their vote, reducing the effect that their muscle had in keeping Paisley and the rest of the ultraright at bay. Paisley's DUP were written off after the referendum, held their vote while the UK Unionists mixture of reaction and "socialist" popular made inroads in the protestant working areas that the paramilitaries had hoped to hold.

This bloc, along with 5 Independent NO unionists, fell just short of the magic 30 seats needed to abolish the complex working of the assembly. Given the public divisions of Trimble's official unionists and the hidden no vote within that party, it was clear that the threat from the right was maintained.

The divisions within unionism were also at variance of support for the agreement from the nationalist community. A nationalist overall vote of 19% illustrated one of the totally reactivational idea behind the vote - the idea that Catholics in the North of Ireland will simply breed their way to a united Ireland.

The lie page of what biology would determine politics is conditioned by the fact that the 50% were in fact voting for an agreement that enabled British rule and partition, and one that included within itself a unionist veto which, with British support, could be made impossible even if Ulster unionists were to become a minority.

The 17.65% vote for Sinn Fein was an increase of over 2%, was greeted with delight by the republican leadership. It indicated the success of their campaign to hold their own supporters - a policy of rank opportunism that allowed a "Free Vote" in the referendum, followed by the patient lobbying of each individual to make sure that they then joined in the voting and got their hands dirty in the election.

This process of the success this indicates the total marginalization of the Unionist position. They have been unable to explain the collapse of the republican programme in sport and from the nodes of the 'nationalist family' with the bourgeoisie - the only alternative that they have offered so far is back to the failed statist strategy of bombing London and the "long war". This prospect is so unappealing that it made Sinn Fein leadership's reformist strategy look good.

The fact that the Sinn Fein vote increased is an indication that the organisation is still suffering up new voters in the ghetto who in the past would not have bothered to vote.

It has escaped the attention of the organisation that the vote probably means that they are already outside of some mass moves in the political situation, to achieve their ambition of replacing the SDLP at the major nationalist party. To do that they would have to make inroads now, as the parties of youth and peace, authors of the Stormont agreement.

In fact the agreement was so bad that their manifestos were mostly of things they would not have liked to see in the agreement. It was the SDLP who unabashedly endorsed the annual deal, and who increased their vote also.

As the party of the bourgeoisie they will be of their home ground in the assembly and in government. Sinn Fein will find themselves in the politics of both, especially when further concessions have to be made to unionists.

Drumcree

We did not think the nationalist YBS voted was a clear thing for the Orangemen to be stopped at Drumcree.

Drumcree symbolized all that was rotten with the old system -

John McAnulley surveys the results of the referendum and assembly elections
Workers’ Liberty parades confusion on referendum

“Definitely a critical maybe”

David Coveny

THE JUNE issue of Workers Lib-
ertv devoted 12 pages to a dis-
cussion of what WL supporters
should have advocated in the May
Referendum in the North of Ire-
land.
The majority, for a series of
dodgy reasons, advocated a "Yes" vote, while their chief theoreti-
cian, Sean Magampa, appears
to advocate abstention: having
strongly argued against a "Yes"
vote, he cannot bring himself
to call for a "No" vote.
The staggering point for the major-
ity is that the futil call problem
in the North of Ireland is the division
between Catholics and Protes-
tants: "at worst (what the Storm-
spont Agreement does) is to
institutionalise the sectarian con-
flit at the heart of Northern Ire-
lnd Society. At best it is a new
framework in which the lead-
in committed politicians on each
side can manage the conflict." The
only alternative "is a return to sec-
tarian war." Of course, it's a critical "Yes".
The WL majority declare them-
selves against this "...continuation
of the long bourgeois attempt to
create what they (the bourgeoisie)
consider to be an irrating and
violent national problem" (my
emphasis).
The discussion that follows con-
tains some real gems such as this,
from Martin Thomas:
"The Yes meant not "Yes to a par-
tial or limited step in working class
activity, but "Yes to the London and
Dublin governments as the
accredited active forces in this
stage of development, after
which there will come the workers
state."

The majority for the WL is
correctly identified by Magampa —
how do you vote for a bourgeois
solution without taking responsi-
bility for it? An even bigger problem is if this is a bourgeois solution, why
doesn't Magampa advocate a voice
against?

Of course, we are not against
any and every proposal from the
bourgeois: stopping the Orange
men at Drumcree would be sup-
pported by all socialists.

However, WL's public ang
about voting "Yes" — which, it
has to be said, is the logical
consequence of their position
on Ireland —
comes from precisely this flawed under-
standing of what the British bourgeoisie is up
in Ireland.

For all the sophistica-
tion with which both
sides appear to weigh the
sub-
ties of voting "Yes", they are
strangely crude in their under-
standing of the British State. It is
assumed on both sides that the
British want reform so that they
can get on with the business of
exploitation.

Imperialism seems to have dis-
appeared, and what's left is a rather
benign and put-upon British ruling
class pressing change on a reluc-
tant, unresponsive (and ungrateful)
region.

The point of course is that, like
the Great Britain of 1911, the
current deal is designed pre-
cisely to prevent working class
unrest (slightly reformed and updated) the cross
class alliance which is
unified in its opposition to tie Irish
workers, "Protestants" and
"Catholic", into an ongoing alliance with the British ruling class. The
fact that some Unionists such as
Ian Paisley do not see that "I value
the Union" Blair is attempting to
create the union in order to pre-
serve it, shouldn't confuse anyone.

Because WL focuses on sectorian-
ism simply as an idea in people's
heads rather than making a serious
materialist analysis they run them-

in to being accused of being sectarian.

Workers' Liberty parades confusion on referendum

"Definitely a critical maybe"
Capitalist crisis deepens ...

Anarchy rules!

Anyone wanting evidence of the irrationality of capitalism as an economic system will have found plenty of material over the last month. Two examples are the contrasting developments in Britain and Japan. By ANDY KILMISTER.

JAPAN is currently in its most serious recession since the mid-1970s. Output fell by 5.3 per cent in the year up to the first quarter of 1998. The government budget deficit is estimated at about 7 per cent of GDP. The USA government has proposed a major operation to support the value of the yen.

Meanwhile in Britain manufacturing output continues to decline. Despite a brief rise in profits firms put up interest rates again last month and another rise is expected, leading to a further fall in spending. Profit growth is falling away, and the financial balance of UK companies is at its weakest position since 1992. The reason is that orthodox commentators give exaggerated importance to these two sets of problems. The Japanese crisis is attributed to too little spending by consumers and too much saving. In Britain it is the inflationary effects of higher consumer spending that are blamed for interest rate rises, while the government and employers claim that high wages are feeding into inflation and affecting profits. In each case commentators claim that a bit more precision in government policy, adjusting expenditure, would have removed the problems.

In Japan, however, the problem seems to be that people are putting too much money into the stock market, which is on the decline. It is no surprise to see that increased saving in Japan is one of the reasons for the country's better economic performance.

Stagnation

So the explanation of the capital- ism means the system in Japan demands more spending and in Britain it demands less. But there is no way of transferring the spending in Britain across the globe and the result is increasing stagnation in both countries.

This process is made worse by the increasing integration of each country in the global market. But current developments are likely to increase that integration even further.

The problems of Britain and Japan spring from the nature of the System

One of the main recent developments in Japan has been the movement of US companies into the troubled Japanese financial sector. The Travelers Group paid $1.6 billion for a 25 per cent stake in the Nikko Securities company, while Merrill Lynch bought up 30 branches, including staff, from present owner Yamaichi brokers.

At the same time Japanese companies are taking advantage of the crisis elsewhere by buying up South Korean firms. This is an example of how the system works.

Kosova: the case for self determination

Geoff Ryan

WHEN the Kosova Liberation Army first emerged some two years ago, Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosova, argued that it was a Ser- bia-inspired gang designed to discredit the pacifist policies. This is somewhat rich, since it is widely believed that Serbian President Milosevic more or less per- mitted Rugova's activities until recently, although the Serbs did not have him to look to whom they would search for leadership among other, more militant, candidates.

Rugova's guidance the LDK and other Albanian parties in Kosova declared independence and began setting up parallel structures of government, health care and education. Rugova was elected president in semi-under- ground elections while a "government-in-exile" shunted between Germany, Switzerland, Albania and Kosovo.

Six months of renewed Serb repression has radically changed the balance of power in Kosova's Albanian majority. The Kosova Liberation Army is rapidly becoming the dominant force. Rugova is even losing members of his own party to the KLA, including official KLA spokesman Jakub Krasniqi.

Rugova is caught in a double bind. In a bid to shore up his political position, he recently convened the 120-member Kosova parliament, elected in March but never autho- rised by the Belgrade government. The LDK contrôle 90 per cent of the seats, in part because pro-KLA groups boycotted the election. No sooner had Rugova taken his oath as president than Serb police raided the LDK headquarters, where the session had taken place.

Like the KLA, Rugova supports independence. His pacifism has won him international support. But his commitment to non-vio- lence has failed to rally the bloodied or win self-rule. Negotiations with Milosevic in Paris proved abortive. An alternative to the most Kosovars from Rugova.

His international popularity is an important factor in his declining support in Kosova. The govern- ment that lifted Kosova's paci- fism are totally opposed to Kosovar independence. The Day- ton Accords, which supposedly ended the war in Bosnia, simply left Kosova at Milosevic's mercy. Since passive resistance has clearly failed and the west, despite occasional denunciations of Milosevic, shows no support for their struggle, Kosova's Albanians have concluded they have no choice but to fight alone.

Liberated areas

The KLA has been the main ben- efitary. It has shown an increasing ability to take on Serbian forces, to create liberated areas and is reported to be organising clandestinely in the Kosova capital Pristina.

The success of the KLA has led US special envoy Richard Holbrooke, the architect of Dayton, to meet with the KLA and argue that they must be included in any dis- cussions with Milosevic.

He has even rejected the use of the term 'terrorist' to describe the KLA. He qualified this, how- ever, by saying that the real pur- pose of the meeting was to discover who actually controlled the KLA and that this contact did not in any way undermine Rugova's position and authority. At the same time the Contact Group - Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the US - has made it clear it will not recognise Kosovar independence, which they fear could trigger rebellions in other states with substantial Albanian minorities, such as Greece and Macedonia. They are currently working on another Dayton-style 'agreement' to impose on region.

Only Kosova's Albanian popula- tion has the right to decide whether or not it wants indepen- dence or accepts some form of autonomy within Yugoslavia. Socialists must support their right to self-determination.

There are forces that have advo- cated Kosova becoming a third vate, alongside Serbia and Montenegro, in a federation. These include Adem Demaci, who spent 28 years in Yugoslav prisons and heads the Parliamentary Party of Kosova and Mahmut Bakhali, for- mer head of the League of Communi- stes of Kosova, sacked in 1981 for supposedly being responsible for the rise of Albanian unrest.

On paper such a scheme has appeal. A genuine federation, unit- ing different nationalities on an equal basis, would be a big step forward in rebuilding unity amongst the different nations of the Balkans. However the level of Serb repression - which con- tinues despite the threat of western sanctions - has made such a solution almost a non-starter.

Socialists must also support the right of the Kosovar Albanians to unite with Albania if they so choose. We do not necessarily advocate it. The right of nations to self-determination does not mean that all nations must be grouped within a single nation state.

There are many nations - the German, Hungarian, Russian etc. - that are divided between several different states.

There is no reason why the same could not be the case for Albanians. Indeed the KLA has recently released itself from advocacy of unification. However we reject any attempt by imperialist powers to deny the right of Albanians to unite in a common state.

Whatever state the Kosovar Albanians eventually achieve it will almost certainly contain non-Alban- ian minorities. Socialists must not only support Kosova indepen- dence but fight against Albanian chauvinism for national rights for non-Albanian minorities - just as we defend the rights of national minorities in whatever state they are found.
Nigeria: hypocrites, sigh with relief

Susan Moore

TWO DEATHS of prominent Nigerians in a month could have been easier.

Few have mourned the death of military ruler Sani Abacha, as few were confident that the promised transition to civilian rule he said he would introduce on October 1 would be any more meaningful than the other twists and turns in Nigeria's tortured past over the last three decades.

When Tony Lloyd of the British foreign office and later Kofi Annan visited Lagos after Abacha's death, their demands that successor General Abdulsalami Abubakar move more quickly to restore democracy did not come out of any concern for Nigeria's history or for Nigeria's geography. They wanted to normalise relationships with the oil-rich state, Africa's most populous country.

The Commonwealth, EU and US had been pressurised into imposing sanctions on the Abacha regime after the execution of Ogoni leaders and the murder of journalist Dele Giwa.

Abiola died on July 7 aged 60, apparently of a heart attack, when he was meeting an American delegation. He was an outspoken activist for democracy in Nigeria. The body was examined by American pathologists who said that poisoning was very unlikely, suspicions have not been quelled.

Lawyers for Abiola are calling for an investigation into his death, which was brought shortly before his military arrest.

According to media reports, he was beaten to death by police during a protest on the day of his arrest. His widow and lawyers said that Abiola had been denied proper medical care and that he had been tortured.

In 1980 he launched the Concord newspaper group which he hoped would influence his campaign to win the presidential nomination for the then ruling National Party. When his friend General Ibrahim Babangida took power in 1985 after overthrowing the last civilian ruler, President Shehu Shagari, he was again close to the inner sanctums of power.

When elections were again declared in June 1993 he succeeded in winning the presidential nomination for the Social Democratic Party and won almost 60 per cent of the popular vote.

Despite Abiola's own limitations - he had no vision of building a representative government but was only interested in his own power - his rule could have provided a breathing space in which more radical change could have developed. This was why the elections were annulled and a transitional government put in place.

Three months later Sani Abacha came to power following yet another coup. Abiola was imprisoned by Abacha in 1991 on a charge of treason when he declared himself president of a secret ceremony in defiance of the military. Within a year he was in solitary confinement.

Since his death Babangida, one of the closest friends of Shehu Shagari, the regime that has called for democratic elections to be overseen by the military to take place in between six to nine months. This is his, and probably the regime's favoured alternative to the proposals for a civilian transitional government.

Recently released political detainees Mr Agbaje and Mr Otedola were released, having been held incommunicado by commenting that they were being held for security reasons. "They are just hypocrites," he said. "We have seen prisoners being released on grounds that the international community was eager to re-establish trade with Nigeria but in fact the permission to leave was obtained by commenting that they were being held for security reasons."

"It is a clean up in which socialists should not take sides. We must call for an immediate end to the fighting, and insist that issues at stake be resolved by peaceful means. We must oppose any foreign intervention."

Ethiopia and Eritrea at war - the bitter legacy of imperialism

Roland Rance

THE CONFLICT between Ethiopia and Eritrea is not one that has been ignored by the national media, threats to turn out some of the major publications. The conflict, which has been a major source of tension between the two states, is being watched with a keen interest.

The conflict, which has led to fighting in the Red Sea town of Assab and Eritrean oil fields in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, has now been a border dispute. Each side accuses the other of occupying several small disputed border areas, and disputes over the interpretation of a 1994 peace treaty.

However, the background to this war is far more significant, rooted in the legacy of the 19th century European carve-up of Africa, and the impact of the Cold War on the African continent on the two impoverished countries.

Ethiopia was the only African country to colonise by Europe. As an Italian attempt to occupy the country was defeated in 1895, Ethiopia's annexation lasted only five years. Indeed, the Amharic rulers of Ethiopia were able to use this period of the Ethiopian expansionary era to carve out their own mini-empire, subjecting Tigreans, Oromo, Somalis and other people.

In contrast, the United States, which was described as an imperialist country by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, has a long history of intervention in the region.

The United States has been involved in the conflict between the two states since the 1980s, providing military and financial assistance to both sides.

In 1990, the United States supported the EPLF, which had been fighting for independence from Ethiopia.

The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), which was formed in 1958, was the EPLF's precursor. It was established in 1958, and became the main force in the liberation struggle. In addition to the military struggle, the ELF began to create the institutions of civil rule in 1983.

In addition to the military struggle, the ELF began to create the institutions of civil rule in 1983.

The new Ethiopian regime, claiming no Israeli connection and eventual independence, the alliance between the states was based on ideological agreement, common interest, and the close ethnic ties between the peoples. (Zenawi's mother is Eritrean, while the mother of Meles Zenawi is from Tigrean and Somali). In 1991, the EPLF withdrew from the war.

In 1993, the EPLF and the ELF agreed to a cease-fire, ending the war.

This is a war in which socialists should not take sides. We must call for an immediate end to the fighting, and insist that issues at stake be resolved by peaceful means. We must oppose any foreign intervention.
Czech workers reject Thatcherite project

The dream is over!

The Czech Republic is, among the ex-Soviet bloc countries, one of those playing the first league (with Poland) in its effort to catch up with NATO. After 1989 and the "death of Communism" commentators claimed that Czech society including the working class was enthusiastic about capitalist restoration. The international financial organisations waxed lyrical about the fast privatisation project and shock therapy of the conservative government of Vaclav Klaus.

Below we print an article written by Czech militant Pavel for Socialist Outlook. Pavel is one of a group of prominent anti-capitalist militants who recently left Socialisticka Solidarita, the Czech sister organisation of the British SWP as a result of the bureaucratic paternalism of that international current. They have formed a new organisation - the Socialist Workers Organisation. In the next issue of Socialist Outlook we will carry material on the direction of the SWP international current.

In the 1996 election the myth of public support for the Thatcherite policies of Klaus was deflated when in the so-called "Democratic elections" lost its majority in parliament and the socialist democrats won their best ever result (26.5 per cent compared to 25 per cent in 1992).

Klaus was able to form a coalition government just when the first results of "Democracy" showed that the "Central-European tiger" was just a castle of cards.

The new government found it difficult to continue the privatisation and liberalisation with the same speed as before. The workers' hostility towards the ruling class was growing.

The repression of this was the railway workers' strike in February 1997 which paralysed all railway transport for five days. The government threatened the rail union (OSZ) with a court order, but the metal workers' union (KOVO) and the miners' union stated they were ready to go on solidarity strikes, and agri-
cultural workers were prepared to organise a blockade of the railways with farm machinery if there was a snatching operation. The government was forced to retreat.

The South-East Asian financial crisis last spring automatically affected the East-European economies. In the Czech republic speculative capital ran away from the country and the central bank had to massively intervene in favour of the Czech currency. This resulted in implementation of two austerity packages in a period of three months - in March and June 1997.

The unprecedented floods in July moved the public attention away from politics and the government tried to hide a mask of "we care too much", using the floods as a justification for even more cuts. But it wasn't long until the workers' response came. The Czech TIC (CMKOS) called a major demonstration in Prague on November 8. About 100,000 trade-unionists gathered in heavy rain at one of the main squares in Prague and many of them called for a 24-hour general strike (the demand of the tiny Czech left at the time). Union leader Richard Fallar was forced to adjust the tone of his speech, and ended up calling for the government's resignation. Three weeks later the govern-
ment collapsed in the wake of a series of financial scandals.

The night of the trade union demo was the last for Sudomist student Hassan, who was attacked by two young Nazis. The police had withdrawn off ready in many places. There was already an atmosphere of intense political debate and sharp criticism of racism in the Czech Republic by the EU, the US senate and the British and Canadian governments, after the mass emi-

bration of Romanians.

A series of protests continued to be organised and despite the declines in the numbers attending, the anti-right wing group IPRA (Initia-
tive Against Racism) was established and remains active today.

After the downfall of Klaus, president Havel succeeded in forming a government composed of his pro-market Civic Democratic (KDU-CSL), the defectors from ODS (now called US - Private Initiative), ODS (Civic Democratic Alliance) and "independent (i.e. Right-wing) specialists".

Tosovsky, ex-governor of the central bank, became the new prime minister. From the begin-
inning it was clear that the new government will continue with the policies of Klaus.

They wanted to do as much as possible before the election victory of CSSD (Czech Social Democratic Party), but in the face of the working class they were very weak.

Their initial populism was failing substantially and two weeks before the elections a one-hour strike of state employ-

ers erupted. Half a million workers participated and road service staff set up road blockades for an hour.

The results of the most recent elections in June 1998 were sur-

prising for many. Social democrats were 32.5 per cent, ODS 27 per cent, KDUCSL 11.2 per cent, CSSD 9 per cent, US 8.6 per cent. The

The Socialist KSČM (160,000 members) is one of the two main parties in the Czech Republic whose centrist is of its membership is very con-

servative - mainly pensioners. The leadership was always against occasional radicalism, is well accommodated in the new regime.

Its political line is often national chauvinistic and conserva-
tive (e.g. on issues like drugs and criminality) as well as its electoral base. They maintain their electoral support among workers mainly as protest vote against the weaknesses of social democracy.

On the other hand, the fascist threat is still there. A recent,

lobby organised by the 'social democrats in cooperation with Stefanik Solidarita and a small left reformist party SDS under the slogan "no coalition with socialism is a Nazi gang linked to SPR-CSR.

In this situation it's a priority to maintain the memory of the left in action - in campa-
gains, protests and strikes against the social-democratic govern-
ment and the bosses in anti-
racist work.
US car workers dig in for a long battle

Elkie Dee

General Motors' car manufacturing operations are being shut down all over the US and Canada in a strike against job insecurity.

The strike began on June 5 with a walkout by 3,400 workers in a factory in Flint, Michigan, in America's mid-west. This was a response to the company defaulting on its promise to invest in aging factories in America and demanding concessions from the UAW, while investing billions of dollars setting up factories in developing countries. They were joined by 1,800 workers at the Delphi parts factory in the same town.

Flint has a history as a union town, and General Motors put down their tools and occupied the GM factories for 44 days. Their action led to the first union recognition agreement in the US car industry and sparked the mass unionization of industrial workers throughout North America.

Flint has experienced years of job loss and has been hit hard by the recent economic downturn. This outcome and aftermath of the workers' fight have serious implications not just for car workers and the people of Flint, but GM. The US$75 million each day the strike lasts, and is taking an increasingly tough stance.

It is through a legal action to have the Flint strike declared illegal and brought to a halt, and to block the movement of unemployment benefits to laid off workers. This looks set to be the first in a series of actions the company is likely to take in response to the strike.

The Electric Workers Union went on strike for three days, water authority workers struck for 24 hours, and the Teamsters paralysed the ports during the last week of the telephone strike. Students were too strong supporters of the actions. Rosello succeeded in unity everyone against him.

On June 28, more than 5,000 delegates from trade unions and community organizations for a national strike. The assembly of the Greater Committee of Labor Organisations (Comité Amplio de Organizaciones Sindicales, Civicas, Religiosas, Ecologicas y Culturales - C.A.O.S.) was made up of delegates from more than 60 unions and a number of student, community, and environmental groups that have joined in the struggle against privatization.

Shop stewards and rank and file workers were included, and 50 percent of the delegates were women. The organization's spokesperson is Annie Cruz, head of the Independent Brotherhood of Telephone Employees.

CAOS was formed last August in response to previous battles against privatizations and attacks from the bosses in other sectors. Workers in electric power generating plants, in the aqueduct and sewer authority, and education workers face privatization through different mechanisms, ranging from proposed voucher systems for private schools to subcontracting the work of electrical and aquatic workers.

CAOS organized a one-day general strike and a demonstration of 100,000 people against the privatization of the phone company in October – possibly the largest mobilization in the history of Puerto Rico. Since then, it has been at the forefront of the struggle and has provided a way for delegates and rank and file workers from many different unions to talk directly to each other.

About 200,000 workers took part in the general strike, mainly in the public sector. San Juan's International Airport was paralyzed by a massive blockade by thousands of unionists the morning of July 7, while all the principal shopping malls, government offices, public transport, all campuses of the University of Puerto Rico, and even banks were closed.

Pickets by government workers also stopped operations in several industrial parks and in private companies where workers are prevented from engaging in solidarity strikes by the infamous U.S. Taft-Hartley labor law, which applies to Puerto Rico. Private sector workers refused to cross picket lines.

Both the U.S. press and the international press reported that Puerto Rico was paralyzed on July 7 and 8. On July 11, 108 representatives of unions and organizations from C.A.O.S. met to plan for the future. José Juan Hernández, president of the Independent Union of Telephone Workers, said there will be a meeting of delegates from all 60 unions to discuss the possibility of another general strike, possibly in August.

The 12 regional committees of C.A.O.S. plan a series of local activities to continue supporting the telephone workers.

In eastern Puerto Rico, one of raised regional hospital and three health clinics closed down over the weekend when the private company that operates them declared bankruptcy. Privatization has meant, as Rosello said, the plunder of public assets by private corporations which do not operate efficiently.

The regional committee of C.A.O.S. held a demonstration on July 16 demanding that the hospital return to government hands. The Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de la Salud which organizes the workers there will join the strike. The phone workers have become the target for other workers facing the ravages of neoliberal privatizations.

Rosello has stated categorically that the privatization of the Telephone Company will end. However, it is negotiating with Spanish multinational telecommunications corporation TISA, who are apparently offering no redundancies and a better price.

Workers are speculating whether this represents a way of saving face in the context of a withdrawal of GTE, or whether it is a crusade. In any case, the offer by TISA would delay the sale for another 6 months.

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Marx’s battle cry of Permanent Revolution

Key lesson from 1848

"[The German workers] must contribute most to their final victory, by informing themselves of their own class interests, by taking up their independent political position as soon as possible, by not allowing themselves to be misled by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeoisie into doubting for one minute the necessity of an independently organised party of the proletariat. Their battle-cry must be: The Permanent Revolution."

Mars and Engels: Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League
(March 1850)

The term "permanent" (unbroken, uninterrupted) revolution has for decades caused confusion, even among sections of the Marxist movement. But it remains the key to the completion of struggles for democratic rights throughout the world today.

The period of wars of colonial independence may have passed, but in many countries the fight for democracy is still a driving force of mass struggle.

Only a few weeks ago mass resistance by workers and students toppled the Suharto regime in Indonesia. Central to any progressive outcome was — and is — the question of democracy — the destruction of the power of the dictatorial ruling minority; the question of the land and the peasantry; the establishment of rights for the labour movement and a democratic constituent assembly. The same is true of countless other situations in the less developed countries.

In bygone days, of course, the democratic revolution was seen as a task to be carried through by the capitalist class — or sections of it — in alliances with the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and even sections of workers. The "classical" example of this was the French Revolution of 1789, waged under the cross-class appeal for "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

In this, and the First of two articles on Permanent Revolution by John Lister

great (1848) bourgeois revolution which overthrew the monarchy of England, the bourgeois emerged on the stage as a disruptive, revolutionary democratic force.

As we have seen in Indonesia and in South Africa, even now there are sections of capitalists who proclaim themselves in favour of democratic change: so is it possible therefore to carry through the democratic revolution today without the overthrow of capitalism? Can the democratic revolution be achieved without a struggle of the working class with the capitalists — even with sections in the leadership of the movement? The reply to that question divides today's workers movement — between the reformists (comprising a wide range of nationalists and liberal forces, social democrats and Stalinists) who answer "yes"; and the revolutionary Marxist movement which, learning the lessons of history since the mid-19th century, answers firmly "no."

The reformist position is based on the idea that it is possible to achieve real democracy and to satisfy the demands of the population in alliance with the "bourgeoisie," but that it is done to concede that only the victory of the working class could bring the democratic revolution to a conclusion in Germany — and hence to put forward the battle cry of Permanent Revolution.

Since then the size and economic power of the working class even in many of the least developed countries has grown to be much greater than it was in Germany in 1848. The timidity of the bourgeois "democracy" has grown accordingly. Nor should we underestimate the potential impact of a full democratic programme: a weak bourgeoisie has every reason to fear the upheavals that might follow.

As part of their commitment to the German revolution of 1848, Marx and Engels developed a comprehensive programme of demands for the completion of the democratic revolution in Germany. A brief glance at the scope of these demands helps explain what so frightened the German bourgeoisie.

* The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic.
* Every German over 21 to be able to vote and be elected.
* MPs to be paid.
* The whole population to be armed.
* All feudal dues, tributes, duties, tithes, etc., to be abolished.
* Estates of princes and feudal lords, and all mines and pits to become state property, and collectively worked.
* One state bank to replace all private banks.
* All transport to be taken over by the state.

Crackdown: after the 1848 revolutions came the predictable conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the masses. In June 1849 the French National Guard took action to silence the left wing press.

It was this which caused Marx and Engels to conclude that only the victory of the working class could bring the democratic revolution to a conclusion in Germany — and hence to put forward the battle cry of Permanent Revolution.

First of two articles on Permanent Revolution by John Lister

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- One state bank to replace all private banks.
- All transport to be taken over by the state.
The Land is Ours!
Mass trespass success

Dave Bangs
The recent success of two big trespass walks on the South Downs, organised in support of the government’s freedom to roam proposals, proves that we can break through the passivity of the left on this issue. The government proposes a freedom to roam on heath, down, mountain, moor and common, which together constitute around 10% of the area of England and Wales.

Led jointly by a socialist and 2 Earth First! activists the first walk attracted 100 people (despite drenching rain) and the second, 200. The press and public took a strong showing from Justice(the local campaign group) and Earth First!, with walkers from the Trades Council, unemployed movement, and a number of left groups.

Both walks took place on the Brighton Downs, and brought people from Portsmouth, Hastings, London, and even Brussels!

Vacuum on the left
Both walks took advantage of the political vacuum on this issue to attract national publicity. Publicity, interviews and debates on national and local radio and TV. Whilst landowners organisations conduct a raucous campaign of misinformation in the Tory and farming press, the Ramblers Association fails to create the necessary opportunities to demonstrate its case. The politics of respectability means simply that our case is not being heard.

Trespass organisers made clear that they see the matter of access freedoms as closely tied up with the struggle to defend bio-diversity, as well as our cultural heritage of historic and prehistoric landscapes.

The second walk ended with a celebratory camp-over on the Offham Marshes SSsi (Site of Special Scientific Interest), near Lewes, where many of the walkers had participated the previous summer in two successful campaigns to prevent a farmer from ploughing out both ancient flower-rich chalk grassland and wet grazing marsh rich in amphibians.

Productivism
Until only 60 years ago walkers on the Downs had enjoyed a customary freedom to wander at will. But the lack of legal status for this freedom left no obstacle to the post-war productivist drive to eliminate semi-natural habitats in the interests of agricultural profits.

Clearly there is now a limited revival of the great pre-war access movement and its famous Pennine mass trespasses, but we must ask ourselves why the left and ordinary countryside users have been so slow to respond to one of the few government proposals with any serious progressive content.

Several factors are at work. The slow building up of a “conservation estate” of open spaces, country parks, nature reserves, heritage sites, and so on, has done much to contain people’s growing recreational and cultural aspirations.

And the massive destruction of nature and historic rural landscapes has seemed to have a finality which cannot be contested. “Once it’s gone it’s gone”, is the common refrain.

Jane Austen at work! Yet a third major factor operates more subtly. The rural land-owning class has managed only too successfully to reconstruct itself ideologically in the last half-century, so as to reinforce their rights to own and to exclude.

Television, Jane Austen, the cult of the stately home, and the marginalisation of the rural working class by inward migrating well-off folk have all helped to sanitise and legitimise ruling class control of our countryside.

The average country touring rural visitor can easily ignore a sea of corporate pasture fields in their drive to the preserved landscapes of historic house or picturesque village.

And the conversion of so much of our ordinary countryside to intensive productive systems has always been accompanied by the exclusion of ordinary country towns, children, local ramblers, picnickers, courting couples, and wildlife.

“Stewardship” To this we must counterpose our demand that the public be recognised as the true ‘stewards’ of the countryside. Guaranteed rights of access and enjoyment provides the best safeguard for its protection and sound management.

Two further trespass walks are planned on Sundays August 22 and 23. Come along!
After 1,000 years of oppression and exploitation

Will new millennium spell doomsday for Britain's landowners?


Reviewed by Adam Hartman.

RUNNING TO 483 PAGES, this book, an updated edition of Marion Shoard's This Land Is Our Land - The Struggle for Britain's Countryside, first published in 1987, is a treasure trove of facts about Britain's landowners - who they are, how they came to own the land they do, and how they have been able to hold on to it despite years of protest.

The book's arguments are well-made, with Shoard's writing clear and accessible. She is a master of the art of storytelling, and her use of anecdotes and personal interviews adds depth to the book.

In the opening chapter, Shoard explores the history of landownership in Britain, from the Domesday Book to the present day. She traces how the aristocracy came to own the land, and how they have maintained their grip on it.

In the following chapters, Shoard examines the impact of landownership on the countryside. She looks at how landowners have used their power to shape the landscape, and how they have used their wealth to influence politics.

The book is a call to action, urging readers to take a stand against the power of landowners. Shoard's arguments are well-researched and backed by a wealth of evidence.

Hans-Jürgen Schulz (7 June 1933 - 15 July 1998)

IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT WE REPORT THE DEATH OF HANS-JÜRGEN SCHULZ (ALSO KNOWN AS KARL KAREW AND FRED SOMMER), MILITANT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN GERMANY WHO DIED ON JULY 15.

Hans-Jürgen was well known for his close work with the revolutionary socialists of Sri Lanka and his involvement in German solidarity work at a time of severe repression of the Kurds in Germany.

He was known for always debating political differences, no matter how big, fairly and objectively and not treating personal differences as personal ones.

Before we print an obituary written by Gerd Kersten and Theiss Gleiss for the editorial board and the entire team of Jarrold, the German-language magazine of the Fourth International.

"Hans-Jürgen had been a comrade of the Fourth International for over 30 years, and was a long-standing member of the German and International leadership.

He contributed significantly to building the Fourth International in West Germany and to building and supporting the International in South-Eastern Europe and East Germany before and after the "Wende" (turn) in 1989.

His participation in the peace and anti-militarism movement, beginning with the early "Ostschwarze" (East marches in the streets) in West Germany, in activity at his workplace, the "Nahost News" (union-owned building company), in the anti-nuclear movement and the (anti-)"Aktionskreis Leben" (within the trade unions), and in底层 workers' and the unemployed's journals and theoretical work were immensely important for all of us. Countless books and pieces, reports, articles and letters were written by Hans-Jürgen.

Up to the very last moment he contributed to the activities of the "European Marches against Unemployment, job insecurity and poverty".

For more than ten years Hans-Jürgen fought against the racist camp. He has now lost this struggle. His life's struggle for just and decent living conditions for all, for democracy and socialism, for world-wide affirmation of exploitation and, truly international, will be carried on.

We mourn together with his wife and comrade Barbara and his son Jonas. We have lost a warm-hearted and ever-optimistic friend and militant comrade."

The aristocracy is still a major force, with just over 300 titled landowners owning 31.6% of land in the UK (2018). The Queen that she agrees to forfeit the title of the Crown Estate ($26.5 million in 1986, 111.3 million in 1988) to the Treasury in return for support from the taxpayer for the Royal Family ($5 million in 1985). She of course retains her income from the Duchy of Lancaster and her other private estates.

In 1987 13% of land in the UK was owned by the public sector. This figure has declined as a result of the privatisation of the utility and transport companies, and land sales by local authorities, the Forestry Commission and British Coal. The Ministry of Defence however has retained its land, owning 871 square miles in 1997.

Occupation of UK farmland is highly concentrated. In 1983 farm holdings under 30 acres (39.6% of the total) occupied just 4% of farmland, whilst those over 494 acres (68.1% of the total) occupied 47% of farmland.

British farmers may be struggling as a result of the EU's BSE crisis, but in recent times they have never had it so good. Farm incomes rose by 65% in real terms between 1991 and 1996. Farming exports are exempt from business rates, VAT, inheritance tax, and fuel excise duty.

Farming profits were exempted from the planning controls introduced under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. As a result, in pursuit of the high profits made possible by state support and tax breaks, landowners have been free to destroy wildlife habitats and harrow open country to plough it up or planting conifers over it. This is the opposite of what the post-war Labour Government intended when it passed the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949.

Shoard describes in grim detail how the Act has failed. She cites its reliance on voluntary agreements between landowners and local authorities, the reluctance of officials to use their power to make access orders for fear of unpopularity, the inability of the over-representation of landowners on the rural councils charged with keeping the Act in force, to act because of the exclusion of the urban working class from the decision-making process.

So what is to be done? Shoard outlines three proposals whereby the people of Britain can regain control of the land after a thousand years of dispossession, based on the principle that the landowners must be made to share the benefits of the land with the rest of the community.

Firstly, planning control must be extended to cover farming and forestry. Secondly, the public must have a right to roam over all uncultivated land and highways, as exists in other European countries, notably Sweden.

Lastly, a land tax should be introduced as a means of influencing landowners' behaviour. The tax would penalise landowners who damage the environment and promote conservation through tax rebates. Thus the public would pay for conservation, instead of landowners' organisation payments going to the public as they do now.

In themselves these proposals, especially the right to roam, are valuable. But from a socialist standpoint the overall approach falls down because it leaves the position of landowners, a key pillar of Britain's ruling class, intact.

Based on striking a balance between the rights and duties of landowners and people, this book fits neatly into the One Nation "partnership" ideology of New Labour.
WHERE WE STAND

IN THE NINETIES, millions of women and men have taken part in mobilisations against the evils of capitalism and the bureaucratic dictatorship. This reflects the fact that humanity faces widening dangers. Ecological, military, social and economic devastation faces millions of people.

Many more people recognise the barbaric nature of capitalism. In a situation where the inability of the social democratic and communist parties to provide socialist solution is becoming clearer, the task of creating new leaderships remains ahead.

Socialist Outlook is written and sold by socialists committed to this struggle. We are the British supporters of the world-wide Marxist organisation, the Fourth International. We stand for the revolutionary transformation of society and a pluralist, socialist democracy worldwide.

The overall goal which we pursue is the emancipation of all human beings from every form of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence.

Socialism must be under the control of ordinary people, democratic, pluralist, multi-party, and the ecologist, anti-militarist and internationalist. It must abolish wage slavery and national oppression.

The working class is the backbone of unity among all the exploited and oppressed. The working class and its allies must uncompromisingly fight against capitalism and for a clear programme of action in order to gradually acquire the experience and consciousness needed to defeat capitalism in the decisive moment of crisis.

The movements of women, lesbians and gay men, and black people to fight their particular forms of oppression make an essential contribution to the struggle for a different society. They are organised around the principle "None so fit to break the chains as those who wear them."

The whole working class needs to fully commit itself to these struggles. Furthermore we fight for a strategic alliance between workers and these organisations - an alliance which respects their legitimate autonomy.

By simultaneously building revolutionary organisations in every country and a revolutionary international, we aim to guide and encompass the global interests of the working class and oppressed. By building a united struggle against exploitation and oppression we aim to ensure the survival of the human race.

If you think this is worth fighting for, and you like what you read in Socialist Outlook, why not join us? Drop a line to the address on this page, and we'll be in touch.

WHAT'S ON

July

Friday 24
Vincent West CP meeting with Cathy Jamieson, NEC candidate.
7.30pm, Victory Hall, Saloon Lane, Upton 25-31
Fourth International Youth Camp, Denmark

Tuesday 28
North London meeting with NEC candidates, 7.30pm, House of Commons
Thursday 31
Manchester meeting with NEC candidates Liz Davies, Mark Seddon, Pete Wilman and Andy Howell and Audrey Wise MP, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Mount St.

August

28-31
Socialist Outlook/Workers' Action summer school, North Wales

August 6-10
Troops Out Movement delegation to Belfast
August 28-31
Socialist Outlook/Workers' Action summer school, North Wales

Sept

September 5
Network of Socialist Alliances conference, Rugby

DIMITROV: a stooge for Stalin

I MUST congratulate you for publishing David Landau’s Reuben Goldberg Memorial Lecture.

It is a fitting tribute to Reuben, who I remember well from his IMG period.

There is, however, a small historical error which I think should be corrected.

He seems to be under the impression that Dimitrov acted independently of Stalin when he threw out the Third Period with its tragic “Social Fascist” nonsense (and which was taken to extremes when Manuilsky proclaimed at the 7th Plenum of the ECCI that even after the victory of Hitler in Germany, Social Democracy remained the main enemy).

Stalin replaced Manuilsky with Dimitrov to capitalise on Dimitrov’s magnificent and courageous stand against the Nazis in the Reichstag fire trial.

But from then on, Dimitrov became as subservient to Stalin as all the other functionaries of the Comintern – which had long been transformed from being the General Staff of the World Revolution to a branch office of the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

Stalin realised that Hitler’s victory faced the Soviet Union with a very real military menace.

Instead of rallying the international working class to the defence of the Soviet Union, through his Foreign Minister, Litvinov, he sought alliances with the bourgeois democratic countries, principally France (with whom he had already come to an agreement with the Stalin/Laval Pact) and Britain.

Dimitrov’s Popular Front policies were simply the implementation of this same line in the Comintern.

After his arrival in the Soviet Union, Dimitrov never once opposed Stalinism, not even the Molotov/Ribbentrop pact or the dissolution of the Comintern. He became one of Stalin’s lackeys.

Charlie van Gelderen

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SOCIALIST OUTLOOK 19
Still no peace in the Orange sectarian state!

DESPITE ALL the weasel words about a “peace process” the real face of the settlement being imposed by the British government and its collaborators in the north of Ireland was revealed during the Drumcree events. While the British press selectively reported a small portion of the illegal violence of the loyalist thugs against the troops and RUC barring them from the Garvaghy Road, and focused on the brutal murder of the Quinn children in a petrol bomb attack in Ballymoneen, a full-scale pogrom was being waged by Orange bigots against the nationalist population across the six counties. Roy Greenslade in the Guardian was one of the few British journalists to draw attention to this, and catalogue some of the unreported incidents of arson, intimidation, hijacking, bombing, blockading and systematic terror inflicted by loyalist mobs.

* In Carnckergus, the last four houses occupied by Catholics on the Glenfield estate were petrol bombed, forcing them to flee.
* In north Antime, 1,000 loyalists blocked three roads to the Catholic village of Dunloy.
* In Lurgan eight fire bombs were set off in a mainly Catholic housing estate.

Greenslade’s long list is all culled from Irish papers. He concludes that in one 24-hour period “there were 191 attacks on police and troops, 412 petrol bombings, 73 houses damaged, 93 other buildings attacked and 136 vehicles hijacked. Hundreds of barricades – most of them ablaze – were mounted in dozens of towns and villages by men in balaclavas carrying baseball bats.”

It is a grimly familiar tale. The loyalist thugs had their venom of “ethnic cleansing” for decades: now, with the “peace” deal having consolidated the partition of Ireland they are again determined to assert their ascendancy over the nationalist minority.

The British press, eager to promote the illusion of a new “peace” cannot face up to the scale of the war that is being waged by the loyalist bigots. There is NO British solution. Instead there is silence as armed thugs unleash savagery in the name of the Queen.”