NATO out of the Balkans
Serbia out of Kosovo!
2. SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

Fight now for NUT strike vote on pay formula!
Let's teach Mr Blunkett a lesson!

By a delegate to NUT conference

THE ISSUE of Performance Related Pay (PRP) and the teaching union conferences held over Easter weekend. This issue is at the heart of the governmental proposals in the Green Paper on teachers' pay and conditions.

The last teaching union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) voted to oppose the Green Paper and to initiate a campaign to boycott applications for PRP.

Appraisals are important, as they will be the way that teachers are selected to receive additional payments related to performance. The National Association of Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses of England (NASSWU) leadership has taken a conciliatory position towards the linking of appraisal and pay, whilst the moderate Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) now makes unusually militant-sounding noises from its conference in Harrogate.

Socialist Outlook teachers are active in the NUT. This conference's immediate aim is to divide and therefore weaken the trade-union movement. In this they are being aided by newspapers like The Guardian, which has attacked the NUT's approach.

NUT activists need to reach out to rank and file members of the ATL & NASUWT as part of our campaign. There are clearly thousands of NASUWT members who are deeply unhappy with the suggestion of linking appraisal and pay.

Education Secretary David Blunkett addressed NUT conference - the same conference that, only a year ago, appeared to be on the cusp of a lasting victory. This year, Blunkett got a much tougher reception, with only a lukewarm round of applause from a minority of conference delegates.

Provocative

Blunkett was deliberately provocative, and seemed determined to portray himself as standing up to the "dangerous militants" of the NUT. He had little, if anything, to offer to delegates.

Teachers are massively disillusioned with the education policies of New Labour, although around 60% vote for them. Not only do teachers continue to feel disillusioned by government, they also are witnessing policies that are more in keeping with Conservative days. Extra funding has been made available to the 25 Education Action Zones (EAZs), but that money has not been felt at the chalkface. There have not been reductions in class size in the EAZ areas which, by and large, are in the most deprived areas of England.

New Labour - New Privatisation!

Andy Richards, Convenor - Business Services, ATL, Brighton and Hove Council

COUNCIL TAX and Benefit workers on Brighton and Hove Council have reacted with horror to the Government's plans to privatise the service. They have voted unanimously for an industrial action day not to be announced.

For years on end Brighton and Hove, as a "Best Value" pilot authority, has been working with three other local authorities on increasing joint working to save money. The ultimate aim was to create a joint processing centre. All along we were assured that we would remain local government employees in a public sector organisation.

Turn-around

Just a few weeks ago there was a sudden turn-around and it was proposed that the centre should be run by a company which would be controlled by Capita, a firm long regarded by UNISON members as a bad employer in many other local authorities. It is also proposed that the joint service be relocated to Ealing, on the outskirts of London, and be run as a call centre.

We have no consultation with what Best Value jargon calls the "stakeholders" (the staff and the service users) and this is supposed to be a requirement of the Best Value Act. And only 15% of the members of the Labour group on the council did not know about this until it was announced.

Council leader Steve (Lordi) Bax- sam, actually works as a consultant on Capita. He claims to have recently resigned, but the employe-

RMT elections signal steps forward for left collaboration

Paul Fleet

JIMMY KNAPP has been returned as General Secretary of the RMT. After value for money, left challenger Greg Tucker polled 34% of the vote. The RMT's runner-up shows the ongo-

MSF conference in May will take place under unusual cir-

RMT elections signal steps forward for left collaboration

Paul Fleet

JIMMY KNAPP has been returned as General Secretary of the RMT. After value for money, left challenger Greg Tucker polled 34% of the vote. The RMT's runner-up shows the ongo-

RMT elections signal steps forward for left collaboration

Paul Fleet

JIMMY KNAPP has been returned as General Secretary of the RMT. After value for money, left challenger Greg Tucker polled 34% of the vote. The RMT's runner-up shows the ongo-

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.

I want to thank all those activists throughout the Union who helped me in my campaign. It was clear from the beginning that I was able to travel around the country talking to RMT members. It was clear that many were very frustrated by the way the union was being run. The negative campaign that was run by the union was not helping the members.

I am delighted to say that the AGM elected me as the new general secretary. The decision of the members was a triumph for the RMT, and a victory for the left.
Why NATO is a problem, not the answer for Kosovo

A NY SOCIALIST worthy of the name ought to feel revulsion, outrage and anger at the savagery of Slobodan Milosevic and his regime's reactionary determination to subjugate the people of Kosovo.

The Serbian regime's record of support for ethnic cleansing, and the use by Serbian nationalists of the most barbaric methods to drive out other nationalities in Bosnia give additional credence to what sometimes seem to be exaggerated media reports of events in Kosovo.

In a humanitarian disaster, hundreds have been killed and hundreds of thousands have become refugees in the course of the Serbian attack. Thousands of Kosovar men have been arrested by Serbian forces, from the experience of Bosnia, we can assume that many have been summarily executed.

This is the latest stage in Slobodan Milosevic's efforts to achieve a 'Greater Serbia', which began in Kosovo ten years ago and has caused devastation in the former parts of former Yugoslavia.

The exodus of what has become a tidal wave of refugees began before the NATO bombing, and now appears to have evacuated whole areas of Kosovo.

The pictures of the crowds of displaced and uprooted people being herded about by batons and police in Macedonia, crammed into uncomfortable camps, and distraught families force-marched onto places to be flown out to unknown distant destinations have triggered a wave of public sympathy in Britain - as shown by the large response to the appeal by the leading charities for funds to aid the refugees.

It is inevitable that under such pressure, socialists will want not just to denounce what is happening, but want to do something to stop Milosevic.

This is why many people who would normally be seen as opponents of imperialism and imperialist alliances have gone along with the NATO bombing of Serbia and why, some, notably Ken Livingstone, have gone even further, and called for a 'coup' in the war, in which NATO troops drive the Serbs out of Kosovo.

The irony of socialists looking to an imperialist military alliance - this one which brought us the spiralling costs of Trident and the controversial stationing of nuclear-armed US Cruise missiles in Europe - to secure human rights may seem strange enough.

As Geoff Ryan points out (p7) NATO has never taken any stance in support of democratic rights. Nor, as Tariq Ali has argued, (p11) have the leading imperialist powers shown any willingness to support struggles against imperialist regimes. More often the US has been urging busing like Shusho and of course Pinching to crack down on popular movements.

But the idea that the mobilisation of a mass anti-imperialist campaign and its way into Kosovo could in any way win the national self-determination of the Kosovars is even more bizarre.

Even assuming that the angry Russians stood by and allowed this new frontal attack and that the people of Kosovo were successfully carried through the remaining weeks with the help of a massive international effort for disarmament, it is still hard to imagine how, after years of imperialist military doctrine for its survival - like a grotesque land-locked version of "Fortresses Falklands" in the eastern part of Europe.

The fighting of a land war would inevitably kill or displace even more of the remaining Kosovar population, with the likely end result being a massively-guarded "Fortress Kosova", containing troops from the US and several European countries - but few if any Kosovars.

Any refugee who could be enticed back to the smouldering ruins of their homeland - and any "government" they might be allowed to form - would be subject to the political dictates of their NATO sponsors.

The record of western capitalist in investing even in relatively advanced Eastern European economies such as Poland suggests that there would be little if any "operation of NATO to rebuild the country or its economy. The best job prospects for Kosovars returning "home" would be serving burgers and refuelling planes and tanks in what would have to be a permanent and huge NATO garrison.

A straightforward military victory is by no means guaranteed, however. This would be no repeat of Operation Desert Storm. As many as 200,000 troops would be required - equipped with heavy armour and artillery - and they would need to fight their way in over difficult, mountainous terrain, with long and awkward supply lines, using surrounding countries as little more than a thoroughfare.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.

The Greek government, the most unreliable of the NATO allies on the Kosovo issue, has from the beginning called for a halt to the bombing. Without Greek support, the only obvious access to Kosovo is through Albania, which has already closed NATO's airtransit access to its territory, and is trying to stand against the NATO - thus blocking any real resolution of the crisis.
New A-Z of “Great British” chauvinism

Welsh Labour plumbs new depths

Ceri Evans

THE ELECTION of Alan Meale as the new Secretary of the Welsh Nationalist Party has one immediate and spectacular result – Labour support in the opinion polls has tumbled by a remarkable 10 percent.

Peter Hain, Michael’s campaign manager, was defending the leadership campaign, claiming that the party had been “looking downwards... to an excruciating degree”.

In reality, it was not the leadership contest that was the cause of the drop in support, but rather the undemocratic way in which it was conducted, leading to the inevitable outcome.

Most of the 10% transferred their vote to Plaid Cymru, leaving Labour on 51%, Plaid on 25% and the Tories on 10%.

The response of the Labour leadership was to launch a vitriolic attack on Plaid, entitled “The A to Z of Nationalist Madness”.

This is a truly dreadful document, reminiscent of the worst kind of negative campaign conducted by the Nationalists and their allies and the “No” campaign during the Assembly referendum.

The attack is based on a series of equally false statements, each of which is a point scored invarably tripped over by sensible debates.

The “A-Z” is exactly that kind of petty point-scoring and illustrates what the new “inclusive ness” really means: inclusive to the right and the Liberal Democrats, abusive to the left, in this case Plaid Cymru.

Many Plaid supporters in Wales were appalled by the blatant stitch-up of the Labour leadership. They should be equally concerned by the latest turn in the campaign.

Labour’s NEC elections 99

Vote early, vote left!

Neil Murray

This year’s election to the Constituency sections of the Party NEC is being held earlier than previously, probably in May and June.

Officially this is because the result distracting attention from the key issues at Party Conference. The Blair cutie was certainly ushered in at the moment of victory of Four Grass- roots Alliance candidates and then announced just before Blair’s ‘heartache’ session with the Welsh at the beginning of last year’s conference.

However, the cynical also believe it is also because Blair and his parties will be closed down for most of April, May and June, with a goal for local, Scottish, Welsh and European elections, thus hindering campaigning. Is this the real Blair? Michael Cashman, elected last year on the Blairite slate, to stand again as a ‘rank and file candidate’ just before becoming an MEP in a favoured position on the West Midlands list.

In order to defer interest, the NEC announced that nominations would also be brought forward to April 9th, and that not many activists found out early.

The time of going to press it looks certain that 6 Grassroots Alliance candidates – Ann Black, Bill Butler, Malcolm Lounsbury, Bill Seddon, Christineashcroft and Pete Wilman will – get the requisite nominations and will be put forward.

What is unclear is precisely what the opposition is.

Diana Jones and Michael Cashman, the two successful Blairites last year, are standing again, but it is unclear whether there are even 4 other Blairite candidates. There is certainly no sign to date of another ‘Members First’ campaign. While Blair and the Welsh leadership election the Blairites have decided they can’t stand as the NEC is so marginalised from decision-making they can perhaps be left to their own devices.

This seems particularly so as they currently don’t face the same scrutiny from other NEC members.

Members of affiliated unions should look to do the same, but even more effectively, this year.

Is Plaid a left alternative?

Recent events have led many people to consider voting Plaid as a leftwing alternative to Labour. In response to this, it is not enough to attack Plaid Cymru by counterposing socialist internationalism to its Welsh nationalism.

Internationalism has too often been used as a cover for the worst aspects of Plaid’s politics. And internationalist credentials the Labour Party are vitally necessary to both the positive aspects of Plaid politics.

The positive aspects are its rejection of interference by the British state, its long-standing anti-imperialist and pacifist tradition and its defence of the Welsh language. More positive is the wide-ranging support that Labour’s various (what could be called “in Wales”) has been better than those made in “England”, and a consistent failure to identify internationalism is the real culprit in the criminal neglect of the people of Wales.

Other problems include the extremely heterogeneous nature of the party, particularly at local government level, where it often acts more as an anti-Labour bloc than as an alternative. On a European level, Plaid shares with Labour a support for the Maastricht Treaty and the single currency. The contradiction is between supporting mon- etarist policies on a European level and Keynesian policies on a Welsh level is left unresolved.

As a result, there has been no real debate in Wales on the future of the European Union. There is also a danger that Plaid will not function as an effective opposition in the Assembly, given their stated aim of trying to “make the Assembly their own” in order to establish their own legitimacy among the Welsh people.

United socialists

The other group standing to the left of Labour in the Assembly elections are the United Socialists, an electoral alliance composed of Plaid Cymru (Miliwnt), Cymru Goch, the SWP and various non-aligned socialists.

Socialist Outlook does not believe that such a grouping offers a credible alternative to Labour, not least because the groups involved do not appreciate the importance of the Labour Party in Welsh politics.

Socialist Outlook support the establishment of the Welsh Assembly, in part because of its potentially to reinvigorate Welsh politics. It has certainly begun to do this, especially to labour restricted to a party-political level at present. It is also a fact that despite the failure to support of 50 percent of the Welsh electorate.

This support expresses the hopes and aspirations of working class people in Wales for a better society. The “yes” vote for the Assembly was a vote for change – the Labour majority in the Assembly must be forced to deliver that change.

Plaid shares with Labour a support for the Maastricht Treaty and the single currency.

Pete Firmin

The March Labour Party NEC yet again had no proposals put to it on the procedure for a candidate for the Party’s candidate for London Mayor.

No explanation is given for this, but there are several possible reas- ons: the leadership do not want bad publicity about carving up Ken Livingstone in advance of the many elections coming up; they have not yet formed up a loyal can- didate; and they are hoping the longer they postpone the issue the greater the chance of it dying a death with the media.

Although there has been speculation that the MP Mowlem may stand, prompted no doubt by Party indi- cations, Mowlem herself has given no such indications. There are serious obstacles to standing, including despite her general popularity.

For a start, no connection with London. She probably prefers to stay in the Cabinet, hoping maybe to get a deputy leader one day. She also has important unfinished business in Ireland. Rumours have it that Party indi- cations are falling back on Nick Raynsford, the chairman of the Architecture and the Built Environment Committee.

Livingstone has done a good job keeping the issue in the headlines. The 1,000 plus public meeting in January was followed by a “Let

Ken Stand” benefit, which raised £10,000, and a series of hard-hitting attacks on his opponents are being planned by the campaign across London.

Organisations and bodies are being encouraged to step up the flow of resolutions in support of Livingstone’s right to stand and copies are sent to him.

As well as passing resolutions supporting his right to stand, organisations should also act to make it clear that they disagree with his stance on the Balkan war, (see below).

Meanwhile, the voting process for Labour candidates for the Greater London Assembly has shown once again what such pro- cesses are about.

The self-nomination process was claimed to be biased in favour of candidates ready to stand for the Greater London Assembly has shown once again what such pro- cesses are about.

The self-nomination process was claimed to be biased in favour of candidates ready to stand for the Greater London Assembly has shown once again what such pro- cesses are about.

The self-nomination process was claimed to be biased in favour of candidates ready to stand for the Greater London Assembly has shown once again what such pro- cesses are about.
For Socialist Unity in the European Elections

Dave Packer, London Socialist Alliance.

Today the mood for cooperation among the socialist left by its various components is unmistakable. This manifests itself in numerous ways, including on the electoral terrain.

It is therefore a tragedy that the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and its leader Arthur Scargill, have so far remained silent on all appeals and letters from a united platform in the up-coming European Elections in June (see box for a recent letter).

The political basis of unity of course needs discussion, but we see no grounds for pessimism on this score. We in the Socialist Alliance, which includes a number of the left organisations, have managed to develop in a creatively manner a joint anti-capitalist election programme and other publicity material and agreed on a broad outline of a campaign.

Much more work still needs to be done, included raising money, but we are all agreed that division on the left only helps our enemies, weakens our cause, empties our pockets and divides our vote.

We consider that in the present right-wing political climate it is essential that the old sectarian reflexes are dumped and that we work on the basis constructively on the new mood that exists.

David Packer

When combined with the imposition of a bureaucratic internal political climate inside the Labour Party, which has effectively evacuated party democracy and accountability, many party members and other socialists in the unions and among the left, have begun to seriously consider the task of building a new mass workers party.

There are many ideas and strategies to discuss and test out, and we will need to take the lead in discussion to meet the challenges before us. But it is essential

that the British left – notorious throughout Europe for its sectarianism – begins to seriously address this historic problem.

Today we must not only build a broad based united front campaign in action, but we need to construct united electoral alliances that can have an impact, raise the banner of socialism and offer a real, political alternative to the working class and its allies to the capitalist offensive continued by this “New Labour” government.

Trade unionists, young people the excluded and the doubly oppressed, i.e., the working class, still need an independent voice to represent their interests.

Tony Blair’s agenda does not meet the needs of the working class. It combines modernisation of the capitalist state (mainly in the interests of capitalism) and reactionary social attack and erosion of the historic gains of the working class both here and in Europe.

This followed-on from a series of well attended preparatory national meetings, all of which involved representatives from local groups, individuals and other socialist organisations.

We are still at a very early stage, but the reaction of the UNISON leaders showed that some local alliances are beginning to do serious campaigning activities, as well as emulating the London Socialist Alliance elections initiative.

This latter group over the past several months, has been establishing its net to stand in London in the European Elections. A successful launch meeting was held in Friends Meeting House at the beginning of the year.

London Socialist Alliance has the support and sponsorship of many experienced trade unionists, campaigners, socialists, comedians, media people and film makers such as Ken Loach. More recently in the West Midlands a similar process has been repeated with a slate headed by Dave Nel list of the Socialist Party.

These developments represent an unprecedented co-operation between left organisations and groups, and are living examples of the mood among activists as a whole.

Unfortunately, despite appeals and letters for unity to the SLP they have so far refused to be part of any electoral front – or to give any political reasons for their isolationism.

One can only draw the conclusion that, as on other occasions, Scargill and the leadership of the SLP reject such collaboration on principle, even though the benefits for developing class struggle and rebuilding the left are obvious.

This year’s European election will be the first in England and Wales to be fought under a system of proportional representation (though one system will already have been used in the Scottish Assembly election).

This provides an opportunity for socialists. A platform obtaining around 8% of the vote in the new London wide constituency could win a seat. This is certainly excluded now and in the future if the left remains divided.

We have responded to this opportunity by establishing an unprecedented alliance which includes the Independent Labour Network, Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party, International Socialist Group, Alliance for Workers Liberty and the Communist Party of Great Britain.

This alliance should include the SLP. London Socialist Alliance appeals to the SLP to answer our letters and clear the way to a common, united socialist slate for London.

All enquiries about LSA, sponsorships and donations to: Socialist Alliance, PO Box 23323, London, SE16 1YR or ring 0171 582 9575, 0171 231 0415, or 0171 358 0419

20,000 join demo against poverty wages

Simon Deville

Over 20,000 people marched through Newcastle upon Tyne on April 10, demanding a living wage.

Although supported by 14 national trade unions, only UNISON made any real attempt to organise its members.

Even within UNISON, it was overwhelmingly the left of the union who were actively trying to organise. Given these ‘imitations’, the demonstration was an outstanding success, proving that there is a real basis amongst rank and file trade unionists for campaigning against low wages.

UNISON’s NEC tried to keep politics off the march. They sent out instructions that no political literature would be allowed, and refused to organise any speakers at all, before, during or after the demo.

Not only could they not in the end keep left placards and newspapers off the march, but Bickersstaff was mightily embarrassed by the behaviour of the lead contin-

Embroiled: Bickersstaff's gent of young people, who rightly insisted on chanting more militant slogans than those sanctioned by the offi-

Get your copy!

INSIDE COWLEY
Alain Thorndett's first-hand account of trade union struggles in the car industry from the 1970s, with serious lessons for trade union activists today.

448 pages, illustrated. £11.95 plus £2 post and packing, from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

Newcastle, April 10: the UNISON march against low pay was dominated by the left, underlining the need for unity.
Build the National Civil Rights Movement

Simon Deville

The six years of campaigning around the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence have had a far greater impact than the MacPherson recommen-
dations themselves.

First and foremost, an understanding of the racism throughout society. Speakers from the Ricky Reid Michael Menson and Stephen Lawrence Campaigns among others movingly described the horrendous indifference and hostility they had received from the police in response to these racial murders.

Campaigns such as that of Roger Silverstone emphasised the need for the NCRM to take up the demands of those killed whilst in custody.

The conference heard how those who resist racist attacks have found themselves prosecuted, such as Sarpal Ram, who is serving a life sentence for defending himself against racist thugs. Many of the speakers addressed other areas of racism that the movement would need to address, including Britains Asylum and Immigration laws.

Irish dimension

The conference had an unusually strong Irish dimension, opening with a minutes silence for Rosemary Nelson and others who have been murdered. Rosemary herself had been due to address the conference. Dianne Haillil explained how the RUC stood by as Robert Hamill was kicked to death by a loyalist mob in Portadown, and how the security forces have refused to prosecute anyone, to carry out an inquiry into these failures.

The conference agreed to establish itself as a national network of campaigns, individuals and communities committed to the struggle for racial justice and human rights.

The Lawrence campaign has clearly shown to all that the collective strength of all the various campaigns is far greater than the sum of their parts.

Alliance of activists

Equally as important, the long campaign for justice for Stephen Lawrence has created an alliance of activists across the country in a way that has never previously existed. Many of the campaigns and organisations that have worked together over the years campaign or any serious investigation into those failures.

The conference agreed to establish itself as a national network of campaigns, individuals and communities committed to the struggle for racial justice and human rights.

The Lawrence campaign has clearly shown to all that the collective strength of all the various campaigns is far greater than the sum of their parts.

Black motorist stopped 21 times in 26 months

Oxford campaign fights racist policing

A new campaign - the Campaign Against Racist Policing (CARP) - was formed in Oxford last month after charges were brought by the police against a black motorist who had been stopped and searched 21 times in 26 months.

A lobby was organised when Harold Macfarlane, born in Oxford of African Caribbean parents, appeared at Oxford magistrates court on Thursday March 18th, accused of obstructing the police in the course of their duty and of threatening behaviour arising from a stop and search incident at the beginning of the year.

The police offered no evidence and the case collapsed - the second time Harold Macfarlane had faced that situation. Whilst he was pleased the case had been dropped, he felt that he had been deprived of the opportunity to expose the actions of the police in public.

Harold Macfarlane's case is an extreme one, but it is only one of many happening regularly in the Oxford area.

To begin to combat this the Campaign Against Racist Policing (CARP) has also called a public meeting on 'STOP and SEARCH' and racist policing on April 15th at 7.30 pm at the Church of the Holy Family hall in Cuddesdon Way, on the Blackbird Leys estate. CARP is calling on the Black community to attend the meeting and in particular black people who have been subjected to stop and search checks by the Thames Valley Police. The meeting will discuss how to combat this in the wake of the Lawrence inquiry and what rights exist to deal with the situation when it arises on the street.
Naked Aggressive Terrorist Organisation

Geoff Ryan

In two weeks time Nato will celebrate its fiftieth birthday in Washington. Nato leaders hope by then to be celebrating victory in the Balkans. Present at the birthday party will be the three newest members of Nato: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was founded in April 1949 during the Cold War. Nato claimed to be fighting on behalf of the ‘Free World’. From its first days to the present, the alliance has been controversial. Among the twelve founder members was Portugal. Then Portugal’s King Salazar ran one of the most oppressive states in Europe and fought some of the most brutal colonial wars in Africa. The right to self-determination of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau was clearly not part of Nato’s concept of a ‘free world’. Nor was Portugal an exception. Although Spain did not formally become a member of Nato until the 1980s, as early as 1950 Nato was regularly in discussions on mutual military aid with the fascist government of General Franco. Nato thus the military accompaniment to the Marshall Plan – not least since the author of this plan, George Marshall, was a key military figure in the Truman administration. The devastation of the Second World War had left western European economies seriously weakened. In France, Italy and virtually all west European countries except

Labour’s leading Cold Warrior, Ernest Bevin, was an architect of the anti-communist Nato alliance

in 1948. Huge amounts of money were sent to the Christian Democrats, arriving just in time to prevent Nato’s victory present from America’. The US made it plain that in the event of a PCI-PSSi victory such ‘presents’ would immediately be withdrawn. The Catholic Church threatened excommunication for anyone continuing to support the Communists. US warship and all NATO military aid to Greece and Turkey could not be maintained. The US made clear that the commitment of its forces would be conditioned on the independence of the Greek government. The US’s ultimatum was effective. The Greek government capitulated under international pressures.

A number of Mafiosi, of whom Lucky Luciano is merely the best known, were released from US jails to help organize the anti-communist campaign. Not surprisingly Frank Sinatra, and a number of other American entertainers, added their voices to the anti-communist chorus. The British Labour Party and TUC also did their bit to prevent a left-wing electoral victory. The TUC played a central role in breaking up the united trade union federation that Italian workers had created after the fall of Mussolini, while the Labour Party was instrumental in engineering a right-wing split from the PCI.

Old Labour

The Labour government played a central role in the establishment of Nato. Labour was in the forefront of setting up the Brussels defence Pact in early 1949, which within a few weeks had been transformed into Nato. The severe post-war economic crisis meant Britain could no longer function as the world’s policeman. In 1947 Attlee’s government had been forced to announce that its troops could no longer continue to suppress the developing revolution (in Greece), while Stalin’s part for his part was also doing his utmost to sabotage the revolution. The virulent anti-communist Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin demanded that the US step in. President Truman duly obliged.

It was the economic and military significance of the western European states that allowed Truman to side-step strong isolationist tendencies in the US. But equally Truman had to take into account a Soviet Union that had emerged as a rival super-power, and strong Communist and Socialist movements in the west. American capital was necessary to rebuild shattered economies: but Europe could not be rebuilt in America’s image. Undercapitalism, especially if it was seen as US domination of the European economies, was likely to lead to massive working class struggles. Welfare states were, therefore, the order of the day throughout western Europe.

Nato was the military counterpart to this. Marshall aid was designed to allow the European economies to develop to head off working class demands and isolate communists and socialists. Nato was designed to allow the Europeans to defend themselves, with American backing, against perceived Soviet threats by preventing military conflicts among the European powers. Such threats were, of course, the product of fevered anti-communist brains, but were, nevertheless, seen as real by many people.

Throughout the Cold War Nato did, indeed, remain primarily a defensive alliance. It was not involved in trying to regain eastern Europe for capitalism. When Soviet troops invaded Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Nato issued instructions that its troops should not interfere.

The end of the Cold War has changed all that. Without the Soviet ‘enemy’ Nato has had to rethink its role. It is no longer an organisation of states pledged to defend one another if they are attacked; it has adopted a more aggressive stance and greatly expanded its field of operations. But that is not simply a result of the military collapse of the Soviet Union. Today’s capitalist feels itself triumphant. The dominant capitalist power, the United States, no longer needs to rebuild shattered European economies. Welfare states are obstacles to unfettered capitalism.

The new, aggressive role of Nato goes hand in hand with a new aggressive capitalism. While the US was, perhaps reluctantly, dragged into Nato in 1949 today it is absolutely determined to impose its policies and needs on its European partners.

Shortly before Nato’s attacks on Serbia the US was engaged in a trade dispute with Europe over sales of bananas. The war in the Balkans may have removed that dispute from the headlines but hasn’t eliminated it. Similar economic disputes are bound to arise in future as the US tries more and more to impose its vision of uncontrolled capitalist competition on the rest of the world.

In the past the Europeans have been largely content to let the US run Nato. Only France has occasionally protested. However the EU now has its own agenda – it would like to expand to the east. Alongside that goes an expansion of Nato. The US, however, is essentially worried about the east: that is why they limited the expansion of Nato to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic – against European protests.

The US, for all that, only interested in defending the interests of US capital.

The US is, after all, only interested in defending the interests of US capital.

From ‘Voices of democratic Serbia’, a group of activists who participate in the pan-European Marches against Unemployment

"BOMBING will only strengthen the present disastrous regime. The military occupation will be reused by the regime’s media to create a ‘stamped’ of xenophobia and give additional impetus to the fast-growing extreme form of fascism."

The UN sanctions only helped the Milosevic clique to accumulate greater financial and property power over the rest of society. Human suffering and disaster will continue. Evil cannot be opposed by a negation of the fascist society and more sanctions.

A better strategy would be to engage positively in improving communication and free media in Serbia, and by greater support to democratic forces inside the country – those groups which kept alive solidarity and support with similar groups in the other ex-Yugoslav republics, even during the most dramatic moments of the recent wars.

The only effective way towards a real democratic non-interference is not through diplomacy ‘from above’, with bombing and hi-tech action from a distance."
Imperialists shed crocodile tears: socialists demand independence for Kosovo!

Jim Lowe

Socialist Outlook has, ever since the beginning of the break-up of Yugoslavia, supported the right of the peoples of ex-Yugoslavia to self-determination. This does not mean that we actually supported the break-up. Unlike the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was not a "prison house of nations". We do mean that we have always advocated independence for the former Republics of Yugoslavia. However, whenever there has been a clearly expressed desire by a majority in the former Republics we have supported their right to independence.

Our attitude has been in total contrast to that of the western leaders. Right from the beginning of the crisis in Yugoslavia the west attempted to maintain its territorial unity. Their entire strategy has been to maintain the status quo.

In Kosovo it was patently obvious even before the war that the majority of the population wanted independence from Yugoslavia. Even if that were not the case it is highly unlikely, to the least, that after the mass expulsions and murders Kosovars would want to be part of the same state as Milosevic. Yet NATO still refuses to recognise the right of the Kosovars to independence. That is not surprising.

The US and the EU - including Germany, despite what some on the left would have us believe - rejected the demands for independence by Slovenia and Croatia. Germany only gave recognition at the end of 1999, after the NATO had destroyed Yugoslavia. The EU did not follow suit until January 1992.

The US did not recognise Croatia and Slovenia until April that year, when it also recognised Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia.

Kosovar independence can only be guaranteed by the Kosovar people themselves. That means arming the KLA - not allowing NATO troops to prevent self determination

where NATO insisted that the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) must disarm. After the KLA's initial refusal the Ram- bouillet agreement it was bullied into reversing this decision by the US. So much for the right of representatives of the Kosovars to self-determination.

If NATO was really interested in self-determination for Kosova they would have massively armed the KLA. Instead the Albanian population are expected to put themselves under NATO 'protection' - after having first been threatened with military violence if they fail to do what they are told by the US.

We have already seen in Croatia and Bosnia what NATO (or UN) protection means. UN troops were sent to Croatia at the request of Sloboadan Milosevic. The United Nations Protection Areas guaranteed Serb control over areas that had been "cleansed" of their Croat inhabitants. In Bosnia UN troops stood by while Serb forces carried out the massacre at Srebrenica.

Milosevic's renewed war in Kosovo is a direct result of the Dayton "peace" imposed by the US, which saw the introduction for the first time of NATO troops into the Balkans.

Dayton did not only legitimate the de facto division of Bosnia into two 'entities' - it also declared that Vojislav Seselj's SDS was a "dangerous and illegal" movement and that the USA had a "right of intervention" in the "interests of the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia".

The government of Greece can certainly be expected to oppose Kosovan independence. Since Greece is the least reliable NATO power in the war against Serbia, anything that is likely to weaken Greece's half-hearted support is going to be stamped on. Blair will no doubt end up supporting Fischer's proposals.

Despite all the crocodile tears shed over the brutal expulsion by Milosevic of the Kosovan Albanians, the West has no intention of accepting any real independence for Kosovo, whether or not it remains part of Yugoslavia.

This was absolutely clear at Ramboville when NATO insisted that the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) must disarm. After the KLA's initial refusal the Ram- bouillet agreement it was bullied into reversing this decision by the US. So much for the right of representatives of the Kosovars to self-determination.

If NATO was really interested in self-determination for Kosova they would have massively armed the KLA. Instead the Albanian population are expected to put themselves under NATO 'protection' - after having first been threatened with military violence if they fail to do what they are told by the US.

We have already seen in Croatia and Bosnia what NATO (or UN) protection means. UN troops were sent to Croatia at the request of Sloboadan Milosevic. The United Nations Protection Areas guaranteed Serb control over areas that had been "cleansed" of their Croat inhabitants. In Bosnia UN troops stood by while Serb forces carried out the massacre at Srebrenica.

Milosevic's renewed war in Kosovo is a direct result of the Dayton "peace" imposed by the US, which saw the introduction for the first time of NATO troops into the Balkans.

Dayton did not only legitimate the de facto division of Bosnia into two 'entities' - it also declared that Vojislav Seselj's SDS was a "dangerous and illegal" movement and that the USA had a "right of intervention" in the "interests of the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia".

The government of Greece can certainly be expected to oppose Kosovan independence. Since Greece is the least reliable NATO power in the war against Serbia, anything that is likely to weaken Greece's half-hearted support is going to be stamped on. Blair will no doubt end up supporting Fischer's proposals.

Despite all the crocodile tears shed over the brutal expulsion by Milosevic of the Kosovan Albanians, the West has no intention of accepting any real independence for Kosovo, whether or not it remains part of Yugoslavia.

This was absolutely clear at Ramboville

The Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) may be supported by Milosevic, and NATO may only be "neutral" from NATO: but Kosovars can only achieve true independence if they win self-determination through their own struggles.

Anti-Milosevic democrats caught in Belgrade crossfire

[Belgrade, 5 April 1999] The thirteenth night of bombing smashed buildings in central Belgrade, the headquarters of security forces, some barracks, factory plants, shops and some bridges nearby etc.

We have heard that the TV pictures from the Kosovo crisis are too horrific, encouraging people abroad to support NATO intervention in the "cause of the Kosovars". But as people in Yugoslavia do not see these pictures, conditions are very harsh for those of us who consider ourselves the "democratic forces of Serbia".

We are exposed to various dangers and threats. The nationalistic, xenophobic homogenisation of street life is increasing. It has reached an early stage of military, with "spontaneous masses" smashing the windows of foreign cultural centres, embassies, offices of western airlines and MacDonald's restaurants.

Suspicious neighbours are looking for "spies" - a wartime psychology is at work. Anyone who tries to develop an alternative scenario has no chance to say even a word against the leader and the clique that actually produced all this.

This morning the spokesman of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, commenting last night bombing, said "in Serbia now, we have 1 million Milosevic's" frustration and desperation are increasing. A state of war has been proclaimed. All free media are censored and harassed. The war is engaged in vulgar propaganda. A growing number of people are consulting with radio stations, and short wave radio stations like the Serbian and English broadcasts of Radio Free Europe and the BBC.

But this is just a drop of information in a sea of ignorance, irritation and anxiety. The human suffering in Kosovo is coupled with a growing frustration of the democratic forces in Belgrade. We are unameled. Any mean- sug of resonance would place us in greater danger.

The opinion newspaper "Vreme" has just been broken. This newspaper for civic self-liberation cannot be sold in the shops, the post office and kiosks. But the postal service will agree to deliver it to subscribers.

This morning an immediate ceasefire is followed by an international conference attended by the European Union and the United Nations.
French socialists organise opposition and demand: Stop the bombings, self-determination for Kosova!

THE FOLLOWING letter was signed by 25 prominent French socialists including Catherine Samary and Daniel Bensaid of the French section of the Fourth International, and published in Le Monde, March 31.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT the following false dilemmas:

● "Either support the NATO intervention or support the reactionaries of the Serb authorities in Kosova?"

The NATO bombing raids, which made necessary the withdrawal of OSCE personnel from Kosova, created more favourable conditions for a ground offensive by Serb paramilitary forces, rather than preventing it. They encourage the worst forms of ultra-nationalist Serb desire for revenge against the Kosovar population.

They consolidate the dictatorial powers of Slobodan Milosevic which has muzzled the independent media and succeeded in uniting Kosovo; it is not the Serb or Albanian consciousness which must, on the contrary, be broken if a path to peaceful and political negotiations on Kosova is to be opened up.

● "Either accept as the sole possible basis for negotiation the "peace plan" drawn up by the governments of the United States and of the European Union or bomb Serbs?"

No long-term solution to a major internal political conflict can be imposed from outside by force. It is not true that "every attempt was made" to find a solution and an acceptable framework for negotiations.

The Kosovar negotiators were forced to sign a plan which they had initially rejected, after they were given reasons to believe that NATO would become involved on the ground in defiance of their cause.

This is a lie which fosters a total illusion: not one of the governments which have supported the NATO air strikes are willing to wage war against the Serb regime to achieve independence for Kosova.

The strikes will perhaps weaken part of the Serbian military machine, but they will not weaken the mortars which are being used against Albanian houses, nor the paramilitary forces which are executing UCK (Kosova Liberation Army) fighters.

NATO is not only the only, nor above all, the best foundation on which to base an agreement. It would have been possible to find the conditions for a multinationnal police force (including Serbs and Albanians) within the framework of the OSCE, which would have been the precondition for the application of a transitional agreement.

It would above all have been possible to enlarge the framework of the negotiations by including the Balkan states destabilised by this conflict: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania.

One could at the same time have defended the Kosovar's right to self-government of the province and protected the Serb minority in Kosova; one could have sought to respond to the aspirations and fears of the different peoples concerned through links of cooperation and agreements between the above-mentioned states, with Serbs, Bosnian-Herzegovinians, Macedonians, Albanians.

No such attempts were made.

W] do not accept the arguments with which it has been sought to legitimate the NATO intervention:

● It is not true that the NATO air strikes will prevent the conflict spreading to the region, to Macedonia or Bosnia-Herzegovina: they will on the contrary encourage this.

● They will further destabilise Bosnia-Herzegovina and no doubt endanger the multinationnal forces responsible for enforcing the fragile Dayton Agreement. They have already fanned the flames of conflict in Macedonia.

It is not true that NATO is protecting the Kosovar population or their rights. Nor is it true that the bombing of Serbia is NATO's way to a democratic government.

The governments of the European Union and of the United States perhaps hoped that this demonstration of force would force Slobodan Milosevic to sign their plan. Does this reveal on their part naivete or hypocrisy? Whatever the case, this policy is leading not only to a political impasse, but also to a legitimisation of the role of NATO outside any framework of international control.

For this reason, we demand:

● an immediate end to these bombings;

● the organisation of a Balkans conference in which representatives of the states and all the national communities in these states would participate;

● the defence of the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, on the sole condition that this right is not obtained by the detriment of another people and through the ethnic cleansing of territory;

● a debate in parliament on the future participation of France in NATO.

Learn lessons of Slovenia

Jim Lowry

ON THE LEFt there are all sorts of confusions about the break-up of Yugoslavia. Much of the Left has been supportive to various extents of Slobodan Milosevic. They claim that Germany deliberately set out to destroy the Yugoslav state by encouraging Slovene and Croatian secession.

This is essentially the view of Tony Benn who also makes the bizarre claim that Kosova has been "part of Yugoslavia for centuries" since the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes only came into being in 1918 (the name was changed to Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929) such a claim defies all historical accuracy.

Hostility to Croatian nationalism is widespread, with memories of the war time fascist Ustaše often being invoked as explanations for why Milosevic was able to war with Croatia in 1991.

Amongst all the conflicting views on the responsibilities for the Yugoslav crisis lie two glaring illusions. Firstly it is not understood that from 1990 onwards Milosevic was intent on creating a Greater Serbia. Secondly the role of Slovenia is ignored.

To a large extent these are not seen as two different questions. The reality is that far from opposing Slovene secession, Milosevic welcomed and encouraged it. Only about five per cent of the population of Slovenia were Serbs. Milosevic was therefore able to keep Slovenia within Yugoslavia because it got in the way of his aim of a Greater Serbia.

The Slovene leaders, engaged in a cynical manoeuvre with Milosevic who allowed them independence after a token display of hostility from Belgrade. Troops were rapidly withdrawn from Slovenia into Croatia.

The Slovene leaders were almost certainly aware that Milosevic would not let Croatia go so easily. They were not aware that if Slovenia left the Yugoslav federation Croatia would not stay. Yet all the while the Slovenes were making preparations for their exit. In July 1991 General Radko Tudjman of Croatia the man who Milosevic had sought to destroy in the war in Croatia was elected President of Croatia. The Slovenes were aware that Milosevic had no interest in their fate.

Consequently when Slovenia took the first steps to independece the military intervention by the Yugoslav Peoples’ Army (JNA) was felt to be a threat. The JNA was spread too thin to deal with "separatist" movements.

Milosevic had no interest in the fate of Slovenia. His aim was to keep Slovenia within Yugoslavia because of his aim of a Greater Serbia. The Slovene leaders, driven by national selfishness, were happy to see Milosevic go on his way. They are now saying that Milosevic's decision to leave Tudjman in charge of Croatia is the one thing that Milosevic did right.

Indeed, the evidence suggests that Tudjman had very little intention of quitting Yugoslavia - independence for him was simply a bargaining chip to get the stronger position for Croatia within a revamped Yugoslavia. Slovenes under his leadership pushed Tudjman into declaring Croatia independent of Yugoslavia.

The Slovenes are now saying that Tudjman, and even more so for millions of people throughout the former Yugoslavia, had no interest in an independent Croatia.
NATO out of the Balkans!

Alan Thornett

The NATO bombing campaign in Serbia and Montenegro has been met with some dire responses from important figures of whom we would normally expect better. Ken Livingstone and Michael Foot, for example, not only support the bombing but call for NATO troops to be sent in. They argue that opposition to ethnic cleansing can only effectively be carried through by these means. Tony Benn, on the other hand correctly opposes the intervention, but refers to the struggle of the Kosovar people for self-determination as a "civil war".

The Western allies on the right side as far as the bombing of Serbia is concerned opposes Milosevic's dirty war in Kosovo. Being on the right side in the bombing, however, whilst providing the basis to campaign against it, does not mean there is a common view on a solution to the war or as to the strategic aims of NATO or US imperialism — which ultimately controls NATO.

In fact there are widely diverse views within this camp, and it is that it is "very difficult because of the ethnic mix in the region", or that arming the KLA would "make things worse". They are left with little between their immediate demand for the ending of the bombing and their ultimate demand for a Socialist society to be achieved by "workers' unity across the Balkans".

Socialists, of course, are in favour of worker's unity across the Balkans. We are also in favour of it across Britain; but that does not in itself resolve the issue of the denial of legitimate national rights. It is true that the demand for independence now for Kosovo is fraught with political problems, not least who any should deliver it. The KLA, and most Kosovars will not support the idea of NATO troops to establish and protect an independent Kosovo — something which we should oppose. But we cannot refuse to support the call for independence on the basis that our enemies might support it as well.

We have to support the Kosovar people in their demand for independence, and they should be listened to and not having the means to achieve it. Anything less denies a solution to the problem, and would simply leave the ethnically cleansed in the refugee camps for the foreseeable future. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the stance of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. They seem to be soft on NATO, and argue that the overwhelming most important issue in the situation is the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs and the resultant plight of the refugees.

The AWL argue that Serbia is "sub-imperialist", and that it is the actions and aspirations of Serbia which are the key factor in the situation, not the acts of NATO or US imperialism. They argue that the absolutely key demand therefore is Kosovar independence now.

The AWL oppose the NATO bombing (on the basis that it is not effective in protecting the Kosovars) but argue that it is a very secondary issue. They deny any overarching agenda of US imperialism to strengthen its role in the world and such kind of military intervention and deny any policy of NATO to strengthen its influence in the Balkans region.

What the majority for socialists needs to be mobilising opposition to the war, this can only effectively be done by those who are genuinely concerned about the horrendous situation that the Kosovar people are in.

Socialist Outlook took a position of support for Kosovar independence before the imperialist offensive - our conviction that this is the right position for socialists has been further strengthened by the events of these last weeks.

Left divided on Kosova struggle.

Alan Thornett

The NATO bombing campaign in Serbia and Montenegro has been met with some dire responses from important figures of whom we would normally expect better. Ken Livingstone and Michael Foot, for example, not only support the bombing but call for NATO troops to be sent in. They argue that opposition to ethnic cleansing can only effectively be carried through by these means. Tony Benn, on the other hand correctly opposes the intervention, but refers to the struggle of the Kosovar people for self-determination as a "civil war".

The Western allies on the right side as far as the bombing of Serbia is concerned opposes Milosevic's dirty war in Kosovo. Being on the right side in the bombing, however, whilst providing the basis to campaign against it, does not mean there is a common view on a solution to the war or as to the strategic aims of NATO or US imperialism — which ultimately controls NATO.

In fact there are widely diverse views within this camp, and it is that it is "very difficult because of the ethnic mix in the region", or that arming the KLA would "make things worse". They are left with little between their immediate demand for the ending of the bombing and their ultimate demand for a Socialist society to be achieved by "workers' unity across the Balkans".

Socialists, of course, are in favour of worker's unity across the Balkans. We are also in favour of it across Britain; but that does not in itself resolve the issue of the denial of legitimate national rights. It is true that the demand for independence now for Kosovo is fraught with political problems, not least who any should deliver it. The KLA, and most Kosovars will not support the idea of NATO troops to establish and protect an independent Kosovo — something which we should oppose. But we cannot refuse to support the call for independence on the basis that our enemies might support it as well.

We have to support the Kosovar people in their demand for independence, and they should be listened to and not having the means to achieve it. Anything less denies a solution to the problem, and would simply leave the ethnically cleansed in the refugee camps for the foreseeable future. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the stance of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. They seem to be soft on NATO, and argue that the overwhelming most important issue in the situation is the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs and the resultant plight of the refugees.

The AWL argue that Serbia is "sub-imperialist", and that it is the actions and aspirations of Serbia which are the key factor in the situation, not the acts of NATO or US imperialism. They argue that the absolutely key demand therefore is Kosovar independence now.

The AWL oppose the NATO bombing (on the basis that it is not effective in protecting the Kosovars) but argue that it is a very secondary issue. They deny any overarching agenda of US imperialism to strengthen its role in the world and such kind of military intervention and deny any policy of NATO to strengthen its influence in the Balkans region.

What the majority for socialists needs to be mobilising opposition to the war, this can only effectively be done by those who are genuinely concerned about the horrendous situation that the Kosovar people are in.

Socialist Outlook took a position of support for Kosovar independence before the imperialist offensive - our conviction that this is the right position for socialists has been further strengthened by the events of these last weeks.

Alan Thornett

The NATO bombing campaign in Serbia and Montenegro has been met with some dire responses from important figures of whom we would normally expect better. Ken Livingstone and Michael Foot, for example, not only support the bombing but call for NATO troops to be sent in. They argue that opposition to ethnic cleansing can only effectively be carried through by these means. Tony Benn, on the other hand correctly opposes the intervention, but refers to the struggle of the Kosovar people for self-determination as a "civil war".

The Western allies on the right side as far as the bombing of Serbia is concerned opposes Milosevic's dirty war in Kosovo. Being on the right side in the bombing, however, whilst providing the basis to campaign against it, does not mean there is a common view on a solution to the war or as to the strategic aims of NATO or US imperialism — which ultimately controls NATO.

In fact there are widely diverse views within this camp, and it is that it is "very difficult because of the ethnic mix in the region", or that arming the KLA would "make things worse". They are left with little between their immediate demand for the ending of the bombing and their ultimate demand for a Socialist society to be achieved by "workers' unity across the Balkans".

Socialists, of course, are in favour of worker's unity across the Balkans. We are also in favour of it across Britain; but that does not in itself resolve the issue of the denial of legitimate national rights. It is true that the demand for independence now for Kosovo is fraught with political problems, not least who any should deliver it. The KLA, and most Kosovars will not support the idea of NATO troops to establish and protect an independent Kosovo — something which we should oppose. But we cannot refuse to support the call for independence on the basis that our enemies might support it as well.

We have to support the Kosovar people in their demand for independence, and they should be listened to and not having the means to achieve it. Anything less denies a solution to the problem, and would simply leave the ethnically cleansed in the refugee camps for the foreseeable future. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the stance of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. They seem to be soft on NATO, and argue that the overwhelming most important issue in the situation is the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs and the resultant plight of the refugees.

The AWL argue that Serbia is "sub-imperialist", and that it is the actions and aspirations of Serbia which are the key factor in the situation, not the acts of NATO or US imperialism. They argue that the absolutely key demand therefore is Kosovar independence now.

The AWL oppose the NATO bombing (on the basis that it is not effective in protecting the Kosovars) but argue that it is a very secondary issue. They deny any overarching agenda of US imperialism to strengthen its role in the world and such kind of military intervention and deny any policy of NATO to strengthen its influence in the Balkans region.

What the majority for socialists needs to be mobilising opposition to the war, this can only effectively be done by those who are genuinely concerned about the horrendous situation that the Kosovar people are in.

Socialist Outlook took a position of support for Kosovar independence before the imperialist offensive - our conviction that this is the right position for socialists has been further strengthened by the events of these last weeks.
Double standards throw doubts over NATO’s motives in Baltic war

“The American President, his English factotum and various Euro-
pean hangers-on have been acting on the overwhelming majority of
the liberal media, tell us every day that Milosevic is Hitler’s clone
to crush such a leader it is necessary to wage war.
This is a lie. Milosevic is a brutal leader who has never been in doubt. But is he alone?
Israel’s Benjamin Netanyah is an equally brutal politician, who defies UN resolutions and regular
ly bombs targets in Lebanon.
And what of Milosevic’s counterpart in Croatia, Franjo Tudjman? His authorities have performed
a cleansing of Serbs and, on occasion, Roma. He presides over a regime which has rehabilitated
war time fascists who collaborated with the Nazi occupiers during the Second World War.
But Netanyah and Tudjman are on “our side”, and that’s all that
counts. “Our side” has practised atroci-
ties on a scale unseen in the second half of the century. In the name of freedom and democracy the
Anglo-Saxon allies have backed dictators much worse than Milose-
vic (who, we should remember, is an elected politician) and helped
them to power on every continent.
The Indonesian dictator, Suharto,
was being armed by Britain and America right till the day he was
topped by a popular uprising which received no support from
either Washington or London.
Indonesia, admittedly, is a far
away country, not visible from a
Turkish vineyard, but what about
Turkey? It can certainly be sig-
alled by a New Labour MP sunbathing on a Greek island.
What successive governments
in Ankara have inflicted on their Kur-
dish critics is as bad as, if not
worse than, the treatment meted out to the Kosovars.
The argument used by the
Turkish authorities is exactly the same as that utilized by the Serb
leadership.
In torturing, maiming, killing and denying autonomy to the Kurds they are simply defending the unity of the
Turkish state. How many TV viewers are aware of the fact that this is still taking place or that
Turkey is an important member of NATO?
It is the blatant double standard that compels any critical observer to look for those deeper
reasons that underlie this conflict.”
(An extract from Tian Qi, writing in the Independent, March 28)

Violence escalating in run-up to East Timor freedom vote

The announcement last month that the people of East Timor are to be allowed to vote on
whether to accept “autonomy” as part of Indonesia or to press for
independence has triggered a new round of violence.
Indonesian President Habibie had declared three months earlier
that he would let the former
colony have independence if they
rejected his offer of autonomy, and in March the UN was involved in hammering out
a formula acceptable to the popular
will.
But what appeared to most
democratized nations far away
was the long-awaited liberation of East Timor from the brutal 23
year rule of the Indonesian mili-
tary has inflamed new strains in the pro-Indonesian paramilitary
squads on the island, backed by the Indonesian army and police.
The simmering threat from
these forces has boiled over, leading to the mass murder of
three East Timorese refugees in a Catholic Church on April 6.
It now seems that as many as
300 may have died as gunmen
opened indiscriminate fire on
2,000 unarmed Timorese who had sought sanctuary with large num-
ers of bodies reportedly
removed by army lorries to con-
ceal the scale of the carnage.
This, after five months of
mounting indiscriminate attacks
on Timorese civilians by the
paramilitaries has now forced
Jose “Xanana” Gusmão, jailed
leader of the independence move-
ment to call on his followers toresume the armed struggle.
Of course there are no signs of
NATO or UN action to support
this effort by the Timorese
to break the bonds of oppression.

EU structure opens door to permanent corruption

The resignation of the
european Union’s 23 mem-
er executive last month,
after his European Commis-
sion was instrumental in
allegations of fraud, nepotism, mismanage-
ment and corruption — rep-
resented one of the most
severe constitutional crises
to face the institution since
its inception.
The report was compiled by a commission of five
“independent experts” appointed by the
European Parliament in a rare chal-
lenge to the Commission’s powers.
The various Parliamentary groups led by the Socialists
(by far the largest) had called for the Commissions to
crash and threatened to table a motion of censure if they
did not step down.
Since then the Commission has been reappointed
on a temporary basis, and Dutch
Prime Minister Romano
Prodi nominated as the new
President of the Commission
at a recent crisis meeting in
Belgium.
The appointment of Prodi, however, and the same
scourge of corruption in a number of the European Parliament
against those of the Com-
mission which may result from this affair, will not
resolve the problem, which is deeply rooted in the
institutions of the EU itself.
The project of the EU is to create a European super-
state with enough economic muscle and centralized political
control to challenge the
right of North America and
the United States.
Right from the outset this
has had a lack of democracy at the very core of it, a factor
which has been known as the
democratic deficit.
The EU has been con-
structed as a top-down insti-
tution, which cannot function
without any real pressure
from below.
Toothless
This means not only a
toothless European Parliament — with the real power
in the unelected European Commission and the Council of Ministers — but it also
means having an unelected European Central Bank which can equally act
outside of any democratic con-
text.
It means strengthening big
business and the multi-
national corporations who have nothing to do with
power and are not going
to do with it.
Such a system is custom-
made for corruption. The
idea that the appointment of
Prodi and the calling of a
few commissioners will change the situation is an
illusion. The lack of demo-
cratic accountability builds
the possibility of corruption
into the system.
And the situation is getting
worse all the time. The
European Court of Auditors
of the early 1990s and the
Amsterdam Treaty all increased powers to the
institutions of the EU over
the member states — not least through the introduc-
tion of the Single European Currency.
Not one of those Treaties, however, increased the
democratic control over these institutions by the
populations of those countries. No wonder the turn-
out in European elections is so
low. But it is not just to stop
corruption that democracy is
indispensable. It is indispens-
able if the social conditions
created and exacerbated by European capitalism — 20 million unemployed, 50 million
below the poverty line, job insecurity and long-term
and the scourge of racism
are to be tackled.
The European Marches (organiser of the
two demonstrations in Amsterdam on May 7) is
calling another major protest (50,000 or
more) in Cologne in June to coincide with the
Heads of Government Summit of the EU
under the German presidency.
Marchers will set out from every region
of Germany and from other European
cities including Prague, Luxembourg and Paris, to converge on Cologne for the event.
There will be a (1,000 strong) march from Brussels to
Cologne. Across Europe unemployment, job insecurity, social exclusion and poverty
are growing. The demands will be:
* A guaranteed job for all, and a decent standard of living.
* For an immediate massive reduction of working hours, coordinated on a European level, without loss of wages or purchasing
power.
* Opposition to compulsory part-time work, child labour, and social dumping.
* Opposition to the enrichment of the minority and the impoverishment of the majority.
* Yes to the redistribution of wealth.
* Opposition to all forms of exclusion and discrimination, including those based on gen-
der or race. Yes to the full right of asylum for the persecuted.
* Defend the welfare state Yes to social rights in all areas (housing, education, health etc.) with the necessary fund-
in.
The smell of collusion

The murder of Rosemary Nelson has been presented by the British and their supporters as yet another example of terrorist violence and hatred which supposedly inflicts the Irish of all persuasions. The jeering graffiti and the public grief which followed her death are certainly strong evidence of the almost limitless capacity for brutality within Ulster. Yet Orange bigotry is only part of the story. Socialists and Republicans in Ireland are well aware of another reality - the systematic sectarianism of the state forces which is becoming more and more difficult to hide.

The long history of RUC collusion with the loyalist death squads.

The case of Robert Hamill, where the RUC sat with and as a loyalist mob beat him to death.

The revelation that RUC officers had threatened and issued death threats against Ms Nelson.

The fact that even the lickspittle complaisant press board had been open contempt by the RUC.

According to the republican leadership, this institutionalised bigotry can be resolved. The peace process will lead to a gradual demilitarisation and democratization of the Northern state.

But there is a level of reality ignored by almost everybody - the overwhelming evidence of British interest in maintaining and supporting sectarianism in the North. After all, it is what happened before. Part Finucane, a solicitor killed by loyalists, was publicly set up by a Tory minister shortly before his death. A British intelligence officer organised the assassination of the prize for his killing. The RUC admitted later that they had details of the murder in advance and did nothing.

International human rights organisations, including sections of the UN, have called for an enquiry and been publicly attacked by the British. The British Northern Irish bar stood aside as recently as last month when British bar associations called for an action in the Finucane case. Even today, the Robert Hamill case falls with the RUC conspired by the courts and no one was held accountable, for his very public murder.

Protestors in Portadown are savagely beaten but the RUC remain on duty. The RUC and the Kent constabulary alongside the primacy of the RUC when called in to lead weight to the RUC investigating itself.

While we support calls for genuine independent enquiries into the RUC’s behaviour we know that no enquiry by itself will lead to real justice. Even where British soldiers have been convicted of murder they have not been released. Nor will the Pat Finucane Act lead to the disbandment of the RUC. It is the political cover to allow the retention of the force in what is supposed to be a new beginning.

We already know the truth. The RUC is a brutal and sectarian force. It cannot be reformed.

All those representatives who declare opposition to sectarianism must be forced to put their money where their mouths are.

RUC must demand that they resign from the Assembly rather than take part in a political charade that would have us believe that the sectarian state has been reformed.

If not, they will be revealed as accomplices in the sectarianism the RUC has been guilty of since its creation over 75 years ago.

Rosemary Nelson, shortly before her murder, said that Portadown was not so much a place as a poisonous atmosphere. Partly of the death squads and the barely concealed collusion with the state forces.

Rather than deal with this, the Government is getting up the Labour-supporting Observer readership for one more round of the Orange hypocrisy.

His closing paragraph is chilling in its myopic, little Englander rhetoric. "But for the past 30 years our political life in the United Kingdom has been so compartmentalised and so damaged by the Irish conflict..." the twisting of judicial process, the corruption of policing, the huge sour expense of spirit and money, the sly corrupting of our civic order as we all acknowledge that thugs may rule some villages and that some people are fated to live by lesser rulers than others.

Marr perhaps forgets the exile of the Nationalists in Portadown, driven out of their homes by the loyalists around Drumcree or the attacks in other areas. He ignored the campaigning linked with the bombings in Dublin and Monaghan in 1974 and the British security forces. He could have written about the emerging links between the British Army, the RUC and the loyalist death squads.

I don’t remember a single article by Mr Marr in which he criticised banning orders under the PTA under which people could be legally sent to another part of the “United Kingdom”.

He appears unable to understand that to have weapons like Kossovans rely on the Serbs to protect them.

Marr appears unable to understand that to have weapons is like Kossovans relying on the Serbs to protect them.

Northern Ireland was a creation of British imperialism and is sustained by it. The fact that Nationalists want the RUC disbanded or for it to hand over weapons is like Kossovans relying on the Serbs to protect them.
Britain, Dublin demand entry fee from Republicans

Where's Plan B?

John North

The Good Friday "Hillsborough declaration" setting out the pacification process in Ireland has been presented as the final triumphant step in the implementation of the political settlement in Ireland. It was left to David Irvine, leader of the ultra-right Progressive Unionist Party, to be the mouthpiece for the death squads of the Ulster Volunteer Force, to spell out the reality.

The new declaration should be supported by unionism because it represents the best way to blow out of the water the nationalist family which linked Sinn Fein to southern capitalism and US imperialism.

In practice Irvine's observation comes after the fact. Finian has already been called on the fairy story of the "Nationality Act", on which the entire Sinn Fein strategy was based. They are left bereft of any strategy, with the choice of open capitalisation or repression and marginalisation by their erstwhile friends.

The grim reality of this long good Friday was telegraphed in February, when the Northern Stormont assembly met and endorsed a report outlining the new capital gains tax. In an interview with the Sunday Times, Irish premier Bertie Ahern, the titular head of the nationalist family, indicated that Sinn Fein would have to surrender weapons in exchange for seats in the new government.

The Good Friday agreement now requires this, and Sinn Fein have been clinging desperately to the assurances from these powers that they would stand by the letter of the agreement, but that was then and this is now.

For all Sinn Fein's illusions, the core of the pacification process is the restoration of partition. The heart of this is the unionist basis on which the British occupation rests.

The key task of the agreement is to stabilise that base with the aid of Southern capitalist and the Catholic middle class in the North, in spite of Unionism's constant longings for a full-blooded sectarian repression of the nationalist population.

Today that means preventing the "Faulknerisation" of Unionist leader Trimble. (Faulkner was a previous unionist leader who agreed to the Sunningdale settlement in the early 1970s, only to lose power as a majority support.) Trimble, for his own survival, needs the political defeat of republicanism to be made explicit, hence the significance of decomposition - an act which has no significant but massive political imputes.

The signing of the "Hillsborough declaration" which called for the nomination of ministers followed by an act of reconciliation involving putting "weapons out of use, was an attempt by capitalism and imperialism to provide a soft landing for republicanism - allowing the republican leadership to claim decommissioning as a voluntary act following a recognition of their place in the new structures. There were even hints that there would be minor changes in troop deployments to sweeten the pill.

The republican street graffiti: "Not a bullet, not an ounce of (Sinn Fein)" and the subsequent statements from the Sinn Fein leadership are a clear rejection of these calls for surrender. They immediately, however, bring to mind the question asked by Bernadette McAliskey at the beginning of the process: "What's Plan B?"

It is quite clear from the leadership statement that Plan B is a plan to save the peace process. The republicans are not involved in a process of constructing an alternative to the peace process but in civil disobedience within the process.

This strategy is likely to prove difficult. On the one hand, the British and southern capitalists will turn a deaf ear to these pleas. On the other, it will be difficult to mobilise their base to demand the implementation of the sectarian structures that they accepted only with the greatest difficulty.

In so far as the process faces a crisis it does so from the right. The marching season is under way. Orangemen are demanded to be put on the Garvaghy Road and intimidate and humiliate nationalists across the six counties. The British don't even pretend to have the aim of protecting nationalists, and constantly attempt to prevent the intimidation as cultural divergence, with nationalists under an obligation to come to an accommodation. A savage sectarian campaign of intimidation, including the murder of Rosemary Nelson, is under way. Needless to say, this is not even an issue in the decommissioning talks.

The unionist right will mount a strong campaign in the coming European elections and the British will have to come up with further shifts to the right to try and conciliate the Frankensteiner monster they have created in Ireland and to protect Trimble's base.

To some extent, the latest declaration adds to the insularity in the sense that it leaves open the prospect of unnecessary endless demands for capitalisation from the republicans even if they capitulate now.

The great traditional structures that would lead to a united Ireland have faded away to be replaced by Mickey Mouse committees like inland waterways.

The forces of sectarianism and the state will join to prevent even the most basic of legal representations.

The pacification process has reached a stage familiar in many other parts of the world. Illusion is replaced by a growing sense of a terrible reality. The peace process bumps along the bottom - quite clearly having failed but with many of the oppressed clinging on desperately for lack of an alternative plan B. Plan B remains what it has always been - not in pacification structures, not in capitalist influence, but in mass and class action.

What we need to do right now is build a socialist movement that can make these illusions a reality and end the dependence on the twin illusions of militarism and reformation.

You've seen some articles: now buy the magazine!

International Viewpoint offers special low rates (for new subscribers only!)

- UK £20: cheques to Outlook International, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU
- Also available in USA $35. Canada $40. Australia $35. New Zealand $35. South Africa R80. Sweden 330 SEK. Denmark 300 DKK. Hong Kong $120. (These and other agent addresses available on request.)

Still waiting for change.
Stand up now, Diggers all!

Through a long process of political differentiation the most radical element of the bourgeois, small freeholders and independent craftsmen, had formed a "New Model Army," under Fairfax and Cromwell, whose discipline and elan had swept the moderates and crushed the Royalists.

In a minority democracy not to be equalised again till the Russian Revolution in 1917 the rank and file soldiers elected "against" the war, delegated to form soldiers councils, or, who thrashed out new, democratic political ideas. In January 1649 King Charles was beheaded. Fierce clashes took place between the left-wing democrats — the Levellers — and the conservative army generals and Parliamentarians. In March both monarchy and House of Lords were abolished.

Diggers in action

In this time of hope, the Diggers exercised their chance. Through all the exactions and economic ruin of the war, they argued, the poor have stood firm against the greedy tyranny. But what had they gained? For jointly power is like a great spider web. If you drop the head or top bough and let the other branches and root stand, it will grow again and recover, stronger branch.

For a year they maintained a land occupation against the thuggery of the landlord class, negotiated and politicised with their enemies, and sought out alliances with rank and file soldiers, city radicals, and other like-minded rebels. They represent a pinnacle of achievement which the modern communist movement still only rarely equal.

Political background

When the Diggers founded their communistmovement, around April 1st 1649, the English Revolution had reached its battlefront point. For nearly 7 years the forces of the big bourgeoisie and moderating landlords had been fighting against the discredited abolutionists of King Charles.

Men were to work collectively, but take only according to the private needs of their families. Public store houses were to be created, overseen by annually elected officials, for the free distribution of goods. Local officials would be elected to control trades and education, and to act as dispute peace-makers. Both military officers and judges were to be elected. The Parliament was to be annually elected, and was to guarantee social ownership and defend the new republic.

For Winstanley was no pacifist. He had supported the successful war against the Spanish Armada. Winstanley believed profoundly that people are peaceful, co-operative and naturally loving towards each other, but he knew that the new republic would have to "beat down all that arise to destroy the liberties of the commonwealth."

Though, like all seventeen century revolutionaries, his discourse was couched in biblical terms and he described everything to an explicit isms, reeness, to the spirit of reason within all. He believed that science discovered its inventions would ease the cause of human liberation, and that what knowledge brings is all that we can know.

Friendly divinity was pure bunkum, "for many times when a wise understanding heart is assaulted with this doctrine of a God, a devil, a heaven and a hell, salvation and damnation after a man is dead...he...cannot attain to it: for indeed, it is not knowledge but imagination."

The Diggers today

The Diggers' programme for the collective reflection by the poor of the commons and the confiscated lands of the ruling class was a powerful and rational solution to the needs of the expanding population. Men of moderating, newly liberated capitalist agriculture was to unleash 2 centuries of landlord-led enclosure that was to utterly persuade the rural working class and drive them by the millions into factory wage labour and colonial exploitation.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century the economic struggle against the pressure of rural common rights merged with the new, urban-led struggle for the protection of the commons as space for recreation and the enjoyment of nature.

The Diggers would no doubt be the first to laugh with us at the irony that modern socialists struggle desperately for the preservation of those last remaining commons (that they fought to cultivate) as reservoirs of wild nature against the "improvement" of productivist agriculture.

In Britain now, land struggles are focused against over-production, and for the restoration of nature's place, not for its further taming and eradication. Many in the old social democracy and Marxist left correctly see the place of the Diggers as the return of modern collectivism. But in their practice they have interpreted the struggle as a route to board the rebirth of the politics of land and its radical potential. The matrix of the struggle for the preservation of nature and the creation of a sustainable system of exploitation. Many of the new land activists see the Diggers and Winstanley as just as original direct actionists, reclaiming the pure life of the cultivator against the evils of "industrialism."

But the Diggers were far, far more than that, or just the "pre-cursors of the communitarian revolution" as Marion Shoard, the radical countryside campaigner, calls them. On St George's Hill today lives General Pinchock, protected by high walls and top security. Those Chilean communists and socialists who chant at his gates for his extradition are the true heirs of Winstanley, as is every fighter — woman and man, black and white — who struggles against oppression and for a new world based on collectivism, equality and loving comradeship.
OBITUARY

Bernie Hines

OUR COMRADE Bernie Hines has died suddenly at his home in Leicester. He will be sorely missed. Here we reprint four short memories of Bernie.

Anti-fascist fighter

Bernard Hines died on March 31, in his early forties. Bernie was an out-standing socialist and interna-tionalist, who was active nearly all his life in Britain and Ireland, and locally in the labour movement in his home town of Leicester.

During the 1970s Bernie played a leading role in the National Front, which in the 1970s came within 60 votes of winning a seat on Leicester council and enjoyed 25 percent of the vote.

As secretary of the Leicester Anti-racism and Inter-Racial Solidarity (LARS), Bernie fought tirelessly against the NF, and for 10 years leading nearly every house in the city! His house was frequently attacked by the NF, but he was never intimidated by fascists. Bernie's mother was Australian, and he frequently spoke of his hatred of fascism, and how in Graz in Austria the Nazis had hung trade unionists from the trees for people to pass on their way to church. Ultimately in 1979 the fascists faced a pitched battle in Leicester when they attempted to march through the city — and then faded away. Bernie continued to fight racism wherever it appeared. He was a member of the International Marxist Group and a faithful supporter of the Fourth International in later years. Bernie was also a leading member of the Troops Out Movement, helping to organise the Bloody Sunday commemoration in Leicester in 1983, which went ahead despite being banned. He often visited Ireland, assisting Republican prisoners and their families.

As a life-long trade unionist in the Gas industry, Bernie was a prominent member of Leicester Trades Council, and worked all-out for the National Union of Mineworkers during the miners' strike for nearly a year. Bernie also organised Anti-Apartheid events, including a packet of the Tigers rugby ground during the apartheid era. Bernie sacrificed his whole life to the cause of humanity and socialism. In January 1999 he was speaking with enthusiasm about the gains for the USF in the Philippines.

To the end he was an outstanding Marxist fighter and a fighter for the working class.

Paul Winstone, Vice Chair, TGWU General Branch

Victimised UNISON militant

I had particular cause to work closely with Bernie Hynes last year when he faced serious victimisation by management as a result of his trade union work — he was a UNISON steward at British Gas. Management withdrew recognition and instigated disciplinary action for using company facilities to communicate with union members. Despite this Bernie was re-elected as a staff representative, with 90% of those ballots indicating support.

Management still refused to recognise Bernie. Bernie has experienced fighting his case by the lack of support from the UNISON Regional Officer, backed up by local officers who Bernie saw as in collusion with management. After internal company procedures were exhausted, and the de-recognition upheld Bernie fought an Industrial Tribunal case and was partially exonerated. I was impressed throughout.

Bernie's ordeal at the hands of both management and union bureaucracy was dragged on for several months at the way he contrived to involve and enrage the members he represented at every stage. He was determined to continue building opposition to British Gas management’s plans to drive down pay and conditions across the industry.

Pete Firmin, Socialist Outlook

Timeless supporter of trade union struggles

Throughout his adult life Bernie Hynes was a staunch fighter for the rights of working class and oppressed people. But in the course of his many battles he never lost his sense of humour. I first met him in 1984 in the midst of the miners' strike, where he was centrally involved in support work for the 'Dirty Thirty' — the striking Leicester miners. His easy-going personality and tireless work in the labour movement, both as a long time steward in his own union and in support of other workers in dispute, endeared him to all grass-roots militants he came in contact with. He will be particularly remembered in the Leicester Irish community and amongst Troops Out movement activists throughout the country for his unflinching support for the Irish Republican movement.

Unfortunately towards the end of his life he was hounded by certain people in the bureaucracy of his own union, UNISON, who to their eternal shame connived with management to remove him as a steward even though he received the continued support and confidence of his fellow workers.

Despite this Bernie’s fighting spirit remained undimmed until his death. He will be sorely missed.

Mark Shotton, Nottingham Socialist Outlook

You get a better view with

S O C I A L I S T O U T L O O K

Don’t miss an issue: SUBSCRIBE now! 20 pages of internationalist news, views and Marxist analysis each month, 12 issues delivered for just £10. OVERSEAS subscribers 12 issues for just £20.

SPECIAL OFFER (UK only): One year of Socialist Outlook, PLUS one year of International Viewpoint (Fourth International magazine) for only £30.

PLEASE send me 12 issues of Socialist Outlook
12 issues of Socialist Outlook plus International Viewpoint. I enclose £...

Name
Address
Phone
Post Code
Age
SEND TO: Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU
They’re still getting away with MURDER!

20 YEARS ago, Blair Peach, a teacher, attended an anti-fascist demonstration in Southall, West London. During the protest, against the National Front, Blair was knocked unconscious and killed by the police. He was 33.

A quarter of a century later, the Metropolitan Police are still covering up the facts of what happened on that day. There has been no public inquiry and no police officer has ever been charged with his murder.

Two decades later, the police are still covering up. In the north of Ireland, the investigation into the recent murder of civil rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson is being kept within the police force. And police remain stubbornly silent on the murder of Robert Hamill by loyalist thugs while RUC officers watched. (see page 6)

In England, too, a mounting series of suspicious deaths in custody have been met by a wall of silence, and only the tenacious fight of the Lawrence family forced a public inquiry into the bungled investigation of the racist murder of their son Stephen.

The Blair Peach memorial demonstration will reinforce the call for a public inquiry into his death as part of the fight to make the forces of the state accountable for their actions. (DETAILS: What’s On, page 15)

National Demo: APRIL 24, 1pm, Southall