Bombs hit coaches, villages, factories...

INNOCENT PERISH IN NATO'S DEADLY BLITZ

STOP the BOMBING

Serbia out of Kosova!
NHS fury as Trusts say no on millennium bonus

HEALTH workers are scaring wild at the arrogant refusals by management and Labour ministers to make any national pay offer for working through the millennium festivities. UNISON and the other health unions had tabled a claim for a flat rate £500 to be paid by all staff working over the night of the hyped-up holiday — modest in comparison with some of the deals being squeezed out of management in private industry and the utilities.

After a prolonged conspired silence the NHS Executive responded by insisting that there should only be “stand down deals”, leaving unions to negotiate piece-meal with management in each local Trust.

This was enough to convince UNISON’s health conference to ignore the platform’s call for a moderation and vote 3-1 for a half lot on strike action over the two days of the millennium weekend. The Trusts of the two all very quiet at UNISON Head Office: but NHS management have sensed that union officials are a soft touch by putting the boot in. One major Trust, the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, has just announced that it will pay no more than basic bank Holiday Incapacity Benefit for anyone up to work while all their friends and relatives are welcoming in the new year.

Personal boss Mike Fleming, apparently oblivious to mass vacancy rates and staff turnover, demanded that the Trusts would depend on the “public service” ethics of health workers.

One London Trust has offered different patronising approach, trying to foist staff off with a handout of tickets to the Millennium Dome instead of a decent pay packet.

The NHS London Region is seeking to take some of the heat out of staff anger by offering doctors and nurses a £150 bonus for the Millennium Eve: even this would cost £7m across the capital, and raise financial problems for cash-strapped Trusts.

As the NHS heads for a nervous winter, the one certain factor is that while the sky is apparently the limit for pay rises in the boardroom and private industry, anything more than a pat on the head is apparently too much for the staff who keep front-line pub services running.

Labour attacks disability rights

Mark Jansen

Prior to the general election, the Labour Leadership promised ‘fairness not favours’. This in practice has meant a government prepared to stand up to everyone except the rich and powerful.

The most vicious attacks have been saved for the most vulnerable within society — first single parents and then asylum seekers.

The focus of New Labour’s newest assault is people with disabilities, a group that the government draws up proposals to slash £750 million from disability benefits.

Up until now New Labour have had an easy ride, being able to force through parliament anything they like with barely a whimper of opposition from supposedly left MPs (not even a single Labour MP voted to vote against the Asylum and Immigration Bill at its second reading).

Refusal

Alistair Darling’s refusal to accept any amendments to the current proposals may have laid the ground for future significant rebellion within the Labour ranks to date.

A dozen non-governmental charities have withdrawn from the government’s Disability Benefits Forum, complaining that they have simply been used to give credibility to a government policy that they disagree with, whilst the government has refused to take any notice of their input into the forum.

Organisations such as RNIB, Scope, the National Association of CABs and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People say no longer feel they can participate in the government forum.

Some 47 Labour MPs have stated their opposition to two key points to the Welfare reform Bill: the mean testing of benefits for anyone with a pension of over £50 per week, and the ending of the Disability Benefit for anyone who hasn’t paid National Insurance for two years.

Disability charges

Many disabled people have already been forced off benefits through counter-reforms under the Tories and the introduction of the hated All Works Test.

Whilst it is encouraging that a number of Labour MPs have stated their opposition to the government, Darling has said that he will not back down.

It is absolutely vital that a mass campaign is built to ensure that the MPs vote against the Bill, that can win the support of a much wider layer of MPs and that can force the government to back down.

The Disability Action Network is already preparing to campaign against the bill with direct action tactics. Disability organisations, Trade Unions, Labour Parties and Benefits Rights organisations can form a powerful alliance that could force a retreat.

Neil Murray

THE LIST of Labour’s ‘approved’ candidates for the new Greater London Assembly has recently been released, and it makes dismal reading. Rather than seeking nominations from constituencies and trade unions, those wanting to be candidates merely had to put themselves forward.

A panel then looked at the nomination papers, invited some to interview, and drew up a list after hearing appeals against rejection.

It was a fix from the start. Self-nomination was supposed to ensure a better ethnic and gender mix of candidates. In fact only 27% of those on the list are women. Rather self-nomination and vetting was designed to ensure that left and independent-minded candidates who might be popular in the party could not get onto the assembly.

The list established by the Greater London Labour Party Board was stacked with Barries, candidates with ‘independents’ such as arch witch Hustler Joyce Gould. Candidates had to submit papers ‘vying out’, among other things their ‘life experience’ and ‘vision for London’.

Many were rejected for having the ‘wrong kind’ of life experience and vision for London, despite the Party never having spelt out what was expected. Others were rejected for not submitting sufficient information, despite it never having been made clear how much was expected.

The vetting panel supposedly looked at nominees papers “blind” (without knowing the names), but it does not take a genius to read such a submission and work out the politics and even identity of the candidate.

All this is an attempt to cover up political decisions with pseudo science.

Among those rejected for inclusion in the list are Geoff Martin, London Region convener of UNISON, and Christine Shawcroft, 13 years a Councillor in Tower Ham-

Greater London Assembly candidates Reject the Millbank fix!

action

National Assembly Against Racism, is excluded, as is Menetha, the London Labour Party’s own Ethnic Minorities Officer.

The most disgraceful decision of all is to include Kathryn Smith, Bexley Labour Group leader, despite a reported submission that her membership was not continuous for 12 months, while excluding Lee Jasper, Chair of Operation Black Vote for the same reason.

The list does, however, include 8 Council leaders, obviously looking for a step up the career and earnings ladder. Overall the list is bland, with an extremely limited political range.

The nomination process for candidates is due to start in June with trade union and constituency branches making nominations to constituency parties. Instead, branches should refuse to nominate from this sanitised list and send in reservations condemning the whole procedure and calling for the process to be re-opened.

Activists should point to the election results in Wales and Scotland (particularly Dennis Canavan’s) as showing where such manipulation only reboinds against the party.

Action stations on Labour NEC poll

BALLOT papers should be sent out to all Labour Party members in the week beginning Monday 17 May for the Constituency places on the National Executive Committee and National Constitutional Committee. The leadership has done its best this year to ensure this is a low key affair compared to last year, probably in the hope that their candidates will do better than last year, when they only won 2 of the 6 NEC places.

This makes it very important that Party members circulate the material from the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance as widely as possible. Nor is it too late to organise meetings at which the candidates speak.

Leaflets can be obtained from the Campaign for Labour Democracy (01812 458 1951), the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance or from the NEC: Ann Black, Bill Butler, Liz Davies, Mark Seddon, Christine Shawcroft, Pete Willsman. For the NCC: Teresa Pearce.
No coalitions... Scrap tuition fees and PFI

As expected the elections to the Scottish Parliament left no party with an overall majority. The failure of Labour to win a majority in Wales was more surprising, showing the extent of the backlash against the failure of the Labour government to deliver any improvements to depressed Wales and the resentment at the virtual imposition of Alun Michael on the Welsh Labour Party and vo. vo. After the results were declared, the horse-trading was in the open. Michael set his mind against any coalition in Wales - this may be because the Assembly, unlike the Scottish Parliament, cannot pass legislation rather than for principled reasons.

Negotiations between Donald Dewar and the Scottish Liberal Democrats began well before polling day. It looked briefly as if they might find common ground on the Liberal Democrats opposition to student tuition fees. However, for the sake of having a couple of ministers the Liberals have caved in and accepted an independent review which will be binding on the coalition.

The irony of this is this that the Liberal Democrats were really concerned to scrap tuition fees, they could have ensured they were voted down in the Parliament, given that all the parties except Labour committed themselves to abolishing them. Such is the price of principle.

Scottish Labour is in principle to workers' parties forming coalitions with bourgeois parties. While the Labour Party remains based on the unions it is still a workers' party, even with its current rotten policies and despite Blair's wishes.

The fact that elements of the Liberal Democrats election manifestos were to the left of Labour does not alter the fact that it is a bourgeois party, and while Labour is liable to pressure from the unions and the working class, the Liberals are not.

Some on the left, including in the Labour Party, looked to a Lib-Lab coalition in the hope that it would carry out policies to the left of Blair. The Liberal Democrats collapse over tuition fees shows this is not to be, that a more direct fight is necessary, linking up with those campaigning in the labour movement, colleges and on the streets for policies in the interests of the working class.

The fight against coalitionism has to be linked to a fight for socialist policies which could enthuse the Scottish working class and win an absolute majority if the other parties brought down a minority administration. Within the Scottish Labour Party and even among Labour Members of the Scottish Parliament, there is significant opposition to the policies of Blairism, whether tuition fees or the Princes Finance Initiative.

The massive vote for Dennis Canavan, ejected by the Labour Party for standing as an independent after he was declared not up to seeing a Party candidate, showed the significant sections of the electorate agree with the left, and certainly saw him as a perfectly good candidate to represent them in the new Parliament.

Tommy Sheridan of the Scottish Socialist Party was also elected as an explicitly socialist candidate. The demand has already been raised within the Labour Party for Dennis Canavan to have his membership restored.

This must be supported, but activists should go beyond this to call on Labour to break the coalition with the Liberals and form a minority administration on radical policies.

Tommy Sheridan and other activists outside the Labour Party should add their weight to this call, with Sheridan spelling out the policies a Labour administration would need to carry out to win his support.

Such calls will also strengthen the hand of the Scottish Socialist Party in the lead up to June's European elections, where they should be supported by all socialists.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

This is the second issue of Socialist Outlook to be reduced in size from our normal 20 pages, as we wrestle with financial problems. We only make this cut reluctantly, but to produce and distribute the paper each month costs far more than the 50p cover charge, and the demands on our organisations have for the moment outrun our resources.

We need more - both in one-off donations to get over a number of short-term cash pressures, and more long-term supporters to help us sell and sustain the paper.

As Europe is wracked by its biggest war since 1945, and the labour movement faces the onslaught of Tony Blair's reactionary Millbank machine, there are as great a need as ever for socialists and internationalists to speak out and organise in Britain.

Socialist Outlook is determined to continue to keep you in touch with the news, views and campaigns of the Fourth International, the struggles of the oppressed and the action in the unions. That's why we are asking every reader and supporter to help us by making a donation to our appeal and by stopping the fight to sell the paper.

We need £1,500 for a new laser printer to replace the one that has just died of over-work, and more to help us strengthen our coverage, buy more and better photography and improve the appearance of the paper.

Please send as much as you can, as soon as you can, to Socialist Outlook (Fund Appeal), PO Box 1109, London N4 2UQ.
You can’t kill us all!

Jane Kelly and Susan Moores
Three nail bombs exploded in Lon-
don within two weeks. Three died in the first week, which also caused
more injuries. Many people have been badly
injured, with several traumatic
amputations and people badly hurt
from shrapnel, flying nails, glass,
and dirt from the bombs that has
caused serious secondary infec-
tions.

The first two attacks were tar-
geted at areas with large black
communities: first Brixton in South
London where about 40 per cent of
the population is Afro-Car-
ibbean, then Brick Lane in East
London, home to the Bangladesh
community.

On Friday 30 April, the third
bomb went off in a packed gay
bar in Old Compton Street, in Soho.
The bombing of a gay bar was not
expected, as it seemed the police
had been warning leaders of the
lesbian and gay community to be
on guard against possible fur-
ther attacks.

The police were initially reluctant
to accept that the Brixton bomb
was racist in intention, but after
calling in Combat R, the White
Wolves and later several other
neo-Fascist groupings, that they
were responsible and then the sec-
ond bomb in Tower Hamlets, it
turned out that these vicious
acts were aimed at the traditional
targets of the far right. Prominent
members of the black community
had received a series of particularly threatening letters in the weeks
leading up to the attacks warning
them to get out of Britain to save
themselves. The hand of the far right was apparent.

The day after the Soho bomb an
arrest was made and the man is
still being held. Police are claiming
that explosive material was found
in his house in London. They
say he has no connection with any
far right organisation and was not
responsible of the bombs made.
The brief police statement,
seemed designed to suggest that
this was an individual “crazk” act-
ing for “personal motives”. Since
the betrayal there has been silence in
the media.

Whether or not the individual(s)
involved are members of any
known far right group, there can
be no doubt that the bigotry and
hatred that led to these attacks is
indelible with that propagated by
these groups.

There has also been: an
going escalation of hate letters to
lesbian and gay and black organisations
since the arrests.

Why has this happened now, and
what does it mean about the state
of the far right political groupings?

One significant element was
the publication of the Macpherson
Inquiry Report into Stephen
Lawrence’s murder, with its far-
reaching criticisms of the police
and the labelling of the Metropolitan
Police force as “institutionally
racist”, has given the black commu-
nity greater confidence.

The founding meeting of a new
National Civil Rights Movement in
Britain, held in March this year and
modelled on the American exam-
ple, proved yet again how neces-
ary it is for the black community,
along with the Irish and those
seeking political asylum in Britain,
to organise together to fight
racism. Numerous family cam-
paigns, fighting for justice in cases
of deaths in police custody and
racist murders were represented at
the meeting.

While the “New” Labour govern-
ment is following Tory policies
with regard to economics and
employment as well as continuing
the programme of privatisation, on
some social issues such as the gay
age of consent (in the process of
being equalised with the hetero-
sexual age) they are more progres-
se. Of course even on social issues
their policies and actions are con-
tradictory. While the Labour Party
in opposition promised to set up
the inquiry into the Lawrence
affair, which they did elect to
attend, at the same time they are
putting in place legislation against
asylum seekers which is even
more draconian than that intro-
duced by their Tory predecessors.

This is the context in which the
far right finds itself extremely iso-
lated and on the defensive. They
due to have been able to kill and
maim with their lethal nail bombs,
the response by the population of
London has been to boycott public
meetings and demonstrations and
to argue that an attack on any one
section of the community is an
attack on us all. This letter has
been the line adopted by gov-
ernment ministers too. This
was the theme behind the
demonstration held in London
on May 1.

Traditionally a labour move-
ment demonstration, it was broad-
ened into an alliance of the
working class and the oppressed,
with a march from Brixton to the
May Day demo in Trafalgar Square
and then continuing on to Soho.
Such a coalition has not been seen
since the great Miners’ Strike of
1984-5, when solidarity with miners included the labour movement,
women’s groups, lesbian and gay
organisations, black and asian
groups.

One debate which has
resulted is the question of whether
to ban the far right groups associ-
ated with these outrages. Ken Liv-
ingstone has called for the
introduction of a Prevention of
Terrorism Act against the right,
and for the banning of all groups
banned. Home Secretary Jack
Straw has said he is not persuaded
that banning would be of any help,
since banning would simply drive
them further underground.

Some Labour leaders opposed
to any introduction of further state
measures, including the banning of
political organisations, which would
inevitably then be used
against the left as well as the right.
Instead street demonstrations and
defence must be the response.
It seems that this is the route one
of these groups directly targeted
and most of the rest of the
Labour Party have been taken.

The Times, in an article of May 1,
said “DON’T KILL US ALL” and the
posters put up around Soho after the
bomb went off.

Fight go on for answers on death
of Roger Sylvester

Fred Leplat, islington

UNISON

ROGER Sylvester was a 30 year
old healthy black man who lived in
Tottenham. He worked as an
administration officer for a drop-
in mental health centre in Ilfing-
ton and was a UNISON member.

On the night of 11 January
Roger was restrained by eight
Metropolitan Police officers out-
side his home in Tottenham.
Roger was detained under Sec-
tion 136 of the Mental Health Act
and the police told the family
that he was restrained ‘for his
own safety’.

They said that he had not
been violent towards police or
anybody else. Within 45 minutes
he had sustained numerous
injuries and remained in a coma,
effectively dead until his life
support machine was switched off
days later.

From the outset the Metropoli-

tan Police spin doctors have
done a concerted effort to susi-
mance public by placing into
the public domain partial, inac-
curate and deeply prejudicial
accounts of Roger’s character in an
attempt to deflect attention away
from police behaviour.

Furthermore, a pattern that
has been seen repeated time
and again in controversial deaths
in custody.

The smears: included:

- Scotland Yard issued a press
release describing Roger hanged
on a neighbour’s door in an
“aggressive and vociferous man-
ner”.

- It was quickly established
that he had in fact been hanging
on his own door and that there
was no evidence for the assertion
that he was acting aggressively.

- The pathologist for the Coro-
ner, Mr Fredrice Patesh barked
Roger a crack cocaine addict in
an off the cuff briefing to journal-
ists outside the Coroners court
- an allegation subsequently re-
produced in newspapers. The Tim-
es newspaper ran an article which
claimed police officers believed
he was motivated by a heart
being “swollen by crack cocaine”.

Three months after making a
complaint, Roger’s family
received an unprecedented apol-
ogy. The Metropolitan Police
have now withdrawn the state-
mements which the family consid-
ered smears but have refused to
accept that meant they were inac-
curate.

The death of Roger Sylvester is
yet another black death in cus-
tody followed by the use of force.

The evidence that black people
are over represented in statistics
of black deaths in police custody is
borne out by INQUEST moni-
toring. This is particularly true of
the Metropolitan Police.

In 1994, 5 out of 14 deaths were
of black people (35%) whilst in
1996, 7 out of 20 recorded deaths
were of black people (35%)
The total ethnic minority population
of Greater London is 13.36% (1991
Census).

Roger Sylvester’s family is still
campaigning for justice. They
want an independent inquiry into
the circumstances of his death,
legal aid for their representation
at the inquest, and the suspen-
sion of the eight police officers
who restrained him in such a way
that he later died.

Since Sir Paul Coton has been
Commissioner of the Metropoli-
tan Police we have seen the vio-
 lent deaths of Joy Gardner (1993)
Shaji Lapite (1994) Brian Dou-
and Ibrahim Sey (1996).

The Metropolitan Police has
not learnt any lessons from these
appalling deaths — and in none of
them have those responsible been
brought to account.

The death of Roger tragically
demonstrates again that the police
is riddled as an institution with
racism.

Useful addresses:
The Roger Sylvester Justice cam-
paign, PO Box 25908, London,
N18 2UJ

Inquest, Alexandra National
House, 330 Seven Sisters Road,
London, N4 2PJ

Islington UNISON, 257-258
Upper Street, London, N1 2UD

End the Nightmare
Socialists against racism and fascism
Ending the Nightmare
Socialists against racism and fascism

§5 including postage

Socialist Outlook, PO Box
1102, London N4 2UJ

Life in pictures
Election gains for socialist Left

Dave Packer

T he local elections in England and the elec-
tions to the Scottish Labour and Welsh
Assembly show that there is a space beginning to open up for
socialists in the left of Labour. In some working class areas elections were prepared to
turn their backs on the Labour Party and vote for socialist alter-
atives. In England as a whole the socialist candidates challenged up
nearly 100,000 votes, with a simi-
lar number going to the Greens. Dennis Canavan, excluded from Blair’s New Labour had a tremendous result in Paisley and Stirling, besing his New Labour opponents almost three times over.

The most revealing fact in these
elections was that the majority of the 7.8 million votes did not come to vote Labour but stayed at home. In England the turnout was only 29% and in most places Labour got in on around 10% of the eligi-
ble electorate.

In some inner city wards the turn out was as low as 12%—this was reported in the Newcastle’s Evening Chronicle. This shows two things: first, a growing alienation of the workers who are disillusioned with Labour and feel disfrocked and second, the socialists’ workers are not yet per-
cieve a credible alternative.

In Scotland and Wales in con-
trast the nationalist parties, and even the Liberal Democrats, were seen as far more radical than the socialist candidates. The two main Left forces, the SSP and the Greens, provided the beginnings of a credible left alternative. The Greens were also seen by many disillusioned Labour supporters as a left alternative. In some areas exceptional votes were recorded for socialist candi-
dates. In the Glasgow region Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) received 18,581 votes (7.2%) in the top up vote, and in Coventry Socialist Party (SP) candidate Karen McKay was elected to the council to join Dave Neilson, gaining just under 50% of the vote. In Glasgow Pollock the popular SSP leader Tommy Sheridan came third after Labour and the SNP with 21.51% of the vote and was elected to the Scottish parliament by the top up vote.

I n Wales, which was a disas-
ter for Labour, the socialist candidates also did less well. This is partly because the Plaid Cymru adopted a left-
influence and worked with most of the left leaning protest votes, inflicting stinging defeats on Labour in its heartlands of Llanelli, Islwyn and the Rhondda.

The United Socialists averaged 1.76% where they stood in South Wales Central but with some can-
didates gaining over 2%. The SLP did marginally better, while the CPB, who only stood in two seats, gained an average of 1.35%.

In England there were some
spiralling of support for socialist candidates. In some cases there were gains but there was no concerted effort by the Six Strik-
ing Tame-
side workers standing as ‘Defend
Public Services’ polled 14000 votes. With an average of vote of 10%, containing in one word and beating Liberal Democrats and People’s Alliance (disen-
chanted ex-Labour councilors) in others, they had made a serious impact on the people of Tame-
side. Labour recognised that the careworkers campaign had been the most serious opposition they had faced in a long time. Hospital candidates in Wyre Forest, intending to oppose the closure of the Midhumber Hospi-
tal, won seven seats, meaning that Labour lost control of the coun-
ty. In Sheffield, another Labour heartland disaster, which went to the Liberal Democrats, the left stood eleven candidates, includ-
ing the Sheffield Socialist Alliance, which achieved between 2% and 3% of the vote. In Bootle on Merseyside SP can-
didate Pete Glover did well with 15% of the vote.

In all the elections, the picture was marred by the sectarian refusal of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) of Arthur Scargill to collaborate with other left coaliti-
ions or direct socialist candidates. Sometimes the SLP chose to stand against other socialist candidates in order to compete with them and split the vote, for example in St Michael’s ward in Coventry, where Karen McKay’s success left them with a dudery vote—which they deserved.

These clashes weaken the left as a whole because they reduce the total potential vote for the socialists who are seen negatively by work-
ing class voters as divided and sectarian. This is why the London Socialist Alliance withdrew when the SLP put Scargill at the top of their slate for the European elec-
tions, even though we had built up an impressive coalition and the SLP had little organisation in London.

The LSA would undoubtedly have agreed to have Scargill as the top of a joint slate, but the SLP’s domination of the Labour leadership makes proposing discussions on this led to our withdrawal.

These elections show that it was known candidates and parties with track records in struggle and cam-
paigning which received credible votes, while those unknown or parochialised in, usually per-
formed to reach 2 per cent.

In Scotland as a whole we got no more top up votes than the SSP even though the Socialist organisa-
tion was very weak. This is because of the SLP’s association with
Arthur Scargill and the great mistake that unexperienced ex-
miners voted for Scargill’s candidates. Labour’s mistaken SLP-ES-
cialist vote which can always be relied upon to vote for the SLP. The SLP’s campaign got new strength in precisely those areas, mainly in the central belt, where it had been in the campaign of a period of time.

Its supporters would undoubtedly be younger and more dynamic than those of the SLP. The SLP have built themselves a new campaign and hopefully will build on this in their campaign for the European elections.

It is clear that space exists in some parts of these islands for left candidates. Labour is still prepared to vote for a united socialist alternative, if a credible alliance can be worked out. The organisation with New Labour spreads as its projects becomes clearer, this will be the case more often and more widely.

Post-mortem needed as
Welsh voters punish Labour

Ceri Evans

Cerese Evans

T HE RESULTS of the first Welsh Assembly elections is a shock to everyone in Wales. Plaid Cymru achieved success beyond the hopes of even their wildest dream, while Labour activists were left stunned, “crushed” in their own words, and without a majority in the Assembly.

The Assembly was elected using an additional member system, with 45 constituency seats and 20 additional seats used to ensure greater propor-
tionality. Welsh voters had two votes in these elections, the first for their constituency representative and the second to allocate the addi-
tional seats.

The election was characterised by a low turnout, a collapse in the Labour vote and a significant upsurge in Plaid Cymru support. It was Labour’s lowest share of the vote in Wales since the 1930s, with Plaid Cymru only five per cent behind. Plaid’s most astonishing successes were won in their heartlands of the Rhondda, Islwyn, Llanelli and Conwy. These results show that not only did Labour voters stay home in significant numbers, but that many voted Plaid. It had been predicted before the election that Labour vot-
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Bickerstaffe fronts growing UNISON witch-hunt

Fred Leplat, CFDU national treasurer

DEMOCRACY is under threat in UNISON. Two branches – including the largest branch in England – have been suspended, activities are being investigated, "unauthorised" placards were banned on the April 10 Living Wage demonstration and finally a conference decision allowing branches to campaign in the union is being rewritten interpreted through a "consultation." This attack on democracy has been going on for a year since the national officials around General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe attempted to ban donations from branches to political organisations and prevent branches from organising together to develop union policy. The national leadership was partly defeated on this issue when last year’s UNISON conference adopted motion 184. This confirmed the right of branches to campaign to change or develop union policy, but stopped the controversial donations. National officials were also defeated at national conference when they used every trick in the book to prevent a decision being made for a national demonstration for a proper minimum wage, which would have put them in conflict with the Blair government. Given the obstacles put in the way of an effective demonstration, 20,000 people demonstrating in Newcastle for a proper Living Wage was certainly a warning that union members want more than a Labour government, whatever the tactics of just rehashed Tory policies. This is not the message that Bickerstaffe or the clique behind him which runs the union want UNISON to be put out of business.

Since last year’s UNISON conference, national officials have attempted to roll back lay-member democracy through a whole series of attacks.

They are now preparing the union for a sanitised conference which will be in their eyes a "showcase" for the union, and where they will not be "ambushed" as they were last year with the vote for a demonstration for a minimum wage.

The attacks started seriously after the UCLH branch organised a very large lobby of the Labour Party conference for the minimum wage. The UCLH branch was never accused of calling an event which was in breach of the rules of the union. But branches were asked by the General Secretary to account for the money spent in sending members onto the lobby.

Since the formation of UNISON, a small but increasing number of activists have been investigated – such as those from the Liverpool, Leeds and Newham branches. Some still are. This has often occurred in branches where former NUPE branch officers were reluctant to merge, and was reputed to depict former NALGO activists as "busted." This gave the opportunity for regional officials to remove "troublesome" left activists.

However, the current state of investigation is directed essentially at SWP activists such as Dave Cory and Candy Udwon of the UCLH branch, Brian Butterworth of Brent and now Annette Carey of Sheffield.

The national officials have targeted the SWP as they believe that they can attract much sympathy beyond their own support, and have been criticised for some of their tactics by others on the left such as the CFPU campaign for a Fighting Socialist Democratic Union.

The SWP, despite some wrong tactics, have attempted to organise a fightback against the attack on their political and against privatisation of housing benefit in Sheffield. It is this fighting leadership which national officials want to crush. And after having dealt with the SWP, they will undoubtedly launch a wider witch-hunt which will include the CFPU and others on the left.

The recent suspension of Birmingham, the largest branch in the union by a body called the "Presidential Team" confirms this trend. Birmingham UNISON, with 18,000 members, is not led by the SWP, but has a varied left leadership which has tried to resist national officials. Some members made complaints against the branch officers – but instead of letting the members decide who should lead them, regional officials cancelled the branch AGM and subsequently suspended the branch.

Complaints against individuals are no reason for suspending a whole branch. The real motivation for the suspension is that the Birmingham branch leadership did not agree with a reorganisation into sub-branches being proposed by national officials.

Unfortunately, when this matter was raised at a recent NEC, only six CFPU supporters and the three West Midlands NEC members voted for lifting the suspension. Now the suspension of the Sheffield UNISON branch, again by the Presidential Team, takes this matter further. Complaints against the SWP supporters on the Sheffield branch leadership are being used to demonstrate that "good governance" of the branch has broken down.

Regional officials are now running the branch, and all stewards have been asked whether they agree with the actions of the Presidential Team and will co-operate with the organisation of the branch before being allowed by regional officials to continue as stewards.

The attacks on democracy also go hand in hand with an attempt to prevent any political alternative being presented to the members. There is no national opposition to privatisation – whether through "Better Housing" or PFI schemes, or to the imposition of mergers with other unions working the Millennium New Year in the NHS, or to the miserly pay rises being offered in local government.

National officials are trying to prevent the left from winning a conference to a fighting strategy and to keep a national demonstration on issues of concern to membership and which could place the union in conflict with the New Labour government.

The national leadership has therefore drafted guidelines on the right to campaign in UNISON which would, if adopted, restrict this right by preventing any branch-based initiative, such as a conference on Best Value, if it does not have the support of the NEC.

Fortunately, a number of branches and the CFPU and SWP are resisting this attack on democracy. One of the proudest founding principles of UNISON was that it was to be a "member-led" union.

We must not let the Bickerstaffe and his clique ditch these principles to create a union in which all the hard work is in the hands of full-time bureaucrats.

MSF Conference 1999

Left stranded as Chowcat is thrown to the Lyons!

Veronica Fagan
MSF’s annual conference failed in its most crucial task of forcing the leadership to account for its actions over serious allegations of financial malpractice at the top of the union. Apparently General Secretary John Chowcat had brought forward charges against General Secretary Roger Lyons and Head of Finance Nelson Mendes in February. The union has sacked the champion of white blazers, suspended Chowcat, while those alleged to have had done wrong remain at work. Now he has apparently been sacked, and is appealing. The leaders remain silent as to whether the charges are founded or not. The Emergency Resolution was concerned with how the union had dealt with the subsequent investigation. The whole process was shrouded in secrecy, with even the National Executive Committee being denied detailed reports and union bodies forbidden to discuss the matter.

Despite the fact that some resolutions jumped the barrier of the standing orders committee, conference was undemocratically denied the right to discuss them. The President made a lengthy statement which failed to deal with the key issues of accountability and natural justice addressed in the emergency motions. He then ruled that no further discussion could take place.

The floor needed a two-thirds majority to overturn this – and the motion to overturn goes to the vote without any discussion. Legitimate points of order questioning the interpretation of the rules were ignored and democracy silenced.

Later on however delegate heard Lyons admit that he had had two salary advances totaling £6000 in the last two years without the NEC’s knowledge – this to a man who earns around £90,000. He was pressed to explain why he is not giving the £15,000 he earns at the Monopolies and Mergers Commission back to the union.

It is not in the end surprising that Lyons survived – he is simply the only one of the TUC leadership but also Blair’s New Labour. But the conference was one-sided and unconvincing as a whole at this conference, despite attempts by Labour and UKIP to raise issues which are to the right of the text, must find its way back to the left.

Without a serious frontal challenge the left will become more suspicious of the TUC, and will be more likely to work for a new TUC only of the TUC leadership but also Blair’s New Labour. But the conference was one-sided and unconvincing as a whole at this conference, despite attempts by Labour and UKIP to raise issues which are to the right of the text, must find its way back to the left.

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Poison cloud over Balkans

FEARS of a massive ecological fallout spreading across the Balkans have grown with the intensifying NATO onslaught on Serbian military planes. Among other targets, NATO planes have deliberately hit plants manufacturing PVC which are highly toxic. Massive oil spills have been released into the river Danube from wrecked refineries, and Belgrade scientists have warned people not to eat fish.

Towns in northern Greece have been warned that poisonous dioxins released into the atmosphere by the bombing could affect their water supplies and crops. Dioxins can be produced by chemical reactions following explosions at pharmaceutical plants and refineries, fertiliser depots or electrical transformers. The fears that this carcinogenic poison could be affecting foods were increased when the French government warned shoppers to avoid its Greenpeace asparagus. There are reports that dioxin levels in Thrace have increased 15 fold since the bombing began.

The Union of Greek Chemists has echoed warnings of an "ecological catastrophe" in Serbia, while concerns are also growing in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania.

Serbia faces ecological disaster

"NATO intervention in Yugoslavia is increasingly gaining a dimension of retaliation. The number of civilian causalities rises every day. The destruction of economic sites has long-term dire consequences for civilian populations and jobs in cities, countryside and the entire region under constant danger. The bombing of the chemical plant in Pancovo, near Belgrade, has already caused severe ecological damage and seriously threatens to turn into an ecological disaster. In the last five days, chemical plants in Novi Sad and Belgrade have been bombed. Their destruction could lead to a tragedy exceeding the one in Bhopal, India. Those who are making the decisions must be aware of the effects of their actions. No subsequent apologies, or calling upon "collateral damage" could justify the action, the consequences of which could lead to the permanent destruction of civilian population and their natural environment. In the name of the people and in the name of Nature we demand that the use of force stops immediately and a solution is found to use negotiations for solving the difficult crises facing Europe and the world."

- Association of Citizens for Democracy, Social Justice and Support to Trade Unions
- Belgrade Circle of Trade Unions
- European Movement in Serbia
- Civic Initiatives
- Center for Transitional Democracy
- Center for Democracy and Free Elections
- District 220 (Florida)
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
- Women in Black
- Students Union of Serbia
- VUK Weekly Video News
- Group of 49 Lawyers
- Committee for Human Rights
- Foundation for Peace and Cross Management
- US in Novi Pazar
- Union for Truth about Anti-Serbian Resistance
- Forum for Ethnic Relations
- United Branch Trade Unions NEZAS/NOST

NATO out of the Balkans!

Car workers appeal ignored as bombs flatten Yugo factory

The television images showed a car assembly line reduced to twisted metal. The plant was Yugoslavia's biggest industrial complex, called Zastava, in the town of Kragujevac, some 75 miles from Belgrade. On March 27, workers there had sent out an appeal to people all over the world via the Internet. They said they had voted to remain in their plant day and night, acting as a "human shield" to protect it from U.S./NATO bombing.

Some 500 workers were employed at Zastava. Another 60,000 worked in the area in supporting jobs. The complex included Yugoslavia's only auto factory, which produced the Yugo car.

The workers' objective, according to their statement, was "to protect with their bodies what provides for their family and their families' living."

In their "Letter from Serbians to Workers Everywhere," they appealed to workers everywhere, but especially in the NATO countries, "to more loudly raise their voices" against the bombings.

The attacks, they said, were destroying hospitals and schools and attempting to reduce their industry to rubble.

The letter included the coordinates of the industrial complex, in defiance of the US/NATO war warnings. On April 9—Good Friday on the Orthodox Christian calendar—NATO stepped up its murderous air assault. Among its targets was the Zastava industrial complex. The missiles found their target. The complex was destroyed.

Some 124 workers of the "human shield" were injured, several seriously. The night shift was occupying the factory when the bomb hit. A year ago the workforce was a focus of opposition to the Milosevic regime: it will be a long time before they can go on strike again.

Radiation danger from NATO weapons

Assistant Prof. Dr. Radoje Laušević, Serbian Ecological Society

Belgrade University

The public in the UK and in Yugoslavia are largely unaware that bullets being fired by A-10 anti-tank aircraft and probably all Tomahawk Cruise missiles fired by the US contain depleted ura-

mum (DU).

The development of these radioactive weapons is based on the fact that uranium (atomic mass 238) is much denser than lead (atomic mass 207), and therefore its kinetic energy is sufficient to penetrate tank armour or concrete buildings more effectively than lead, prior to detonation.

The design of the bullet is to incorporate a long thin cylinder of DU housed in a plastic sheath or "casing". This means in turn that the very small leading edge of the bullet pieces with maximum impact. The same principle is used in Tomahawk Cruise missiles, with the aim of piercing concrete obstructions rather than metal.

The bullets were used in the Gulf War, and some 1 million of them still lie in the deserts of that region where subsequently the incidence of leukemia, cancer, and birth defects have risen sharply as a consequence of the ensuing environmental radiation.

The amount of DU scattered around the Gulf war zone is given as 550 tons, but including the nose cones of Cruise missiles and helicopter rockets, the figure is nearer 750 tons. This is 27 TBE- quivalents of radioactivity, one fifth of the total alpha releases from Sellafield over its entire operating history.

The same is happening in Bosnia, where DU was used.

Some 80,000 US Gulf War veterans now suffer from the so-called Gulf War syndrome, whose symptoms are identical to radiation's. The US military are well aware of this, and are on record as confirming that radiation from the surface of a DU shell carries a dose equivalent to a chest X-ray per hour. Each A-10 Thunderbolt 30mm cannon anti tank shell contains some 275 (10.1 Bq). A single 120mm Abrams tank DU shell contains more than ten times as much.

When DU bombs detonate, uranium oxide is formed in tiny particulars (less than 5 microns). These can be blown several hundred miles by the wind or suspended electrostatically in the atmosphere. The half life of Uranium is 100 (ten and nine noughts) years, so they do not decay.

One "hot particle" of this DU material in the lungs is equivalent to a chest X-ray per hour for life. It is impossible to remove, so the affected lung gradually irradiates the victim until death ensues.

In the use of DU, both ground-based combatant and their targets are almost certain to suffer long term radiation sickness and premature death. The Pentagon view is that the short term effectiveness outweighs the long term situation, but this is an error.

The public at large are unaware that these weapons are weapons of mass destruction and that there have been requests for them to be placed, like cluster bombs, on the Geneva Convention banned list.

It is said that the unprecedented use of Cruise missiles with DU inserts in Yugoslavia will have the same effect as the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island disasters. Again these calculations by eminent radiation physicists are not being released to the media.

In other words the action is likely to have a long term pernicious effect not only on that part of Europe, but on their own ground troops if deployed, and almost certainly on the refugees from the Kosovo region.

This may be partly why NATO is reluctant to engage ground troops. You will see from CNN and other news programs pictures that they are beginning already to wear special gas masks. The Yugoslav population, however, together with aid workers and ethnic Albanians are largely unprotected.
Kosova: eight decades of repression which spawned the KLA

Geoff Ryan
Kosova before Tito

At the end of the Balkan wars and the First World War the Albanian nation was divided between a number of different states: Albania, Greece and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). Kosova was allocated to Yugoslavia. During the Second World War Kosova was divided between Germany (which occupied the mineral rich northern part) Bulgaria in the east, with the rest going to Italy.

The Italian-occupied part was integrated into Albania, which had been invaded and occupied by German and Italian forces and brought under the control of the Italian monarch in 1939. After the fall of Mussolini, German forces occupied the whole of Kosova.

Many Kosovars welcomed the Italian invasion as it appeared to realise the desire of unifying all Albanians in a single state. The post war settlement has resulted in a majority of Albanians (about 60 per cent) living outside Albania, approximately 70 per cent in Kosova.

For the first time Albanian became the official language of instruction in schools and was widely used throughout the administration. Serbs and Montenegrin settlers - those who had moved to Kosova during the colonization in the 1920s and 1930s - were attacked by Albanians.

A number of collaborationist organisations developed amongst Kosova Albanians; but with the exception of the small number of Albanians who joined the "Skanderbeg" volunteer movement, most of these organisations were not primarily pro-Nazi. They were motivated mainly by Albanian nationalism often combined with a marked anti-Communism. Kosova contained the area of weakest support for the Partisans. In the Summer of 1940 there were only 239 Party members in Kosova, of whom only 25 were Albanians. In August 1943 a large report written "Albanian" informed the high Command that Albanian masses, the Communists were regarded as having sold themselves to the Serbs.

As a result of the weaknesses of the Partisan liberation the liberation of Kosova was carried out to a large extent by Bulgarian and Soviet forces, particularly in the east. There was a widespread Albanian uprising in early 1945, and Kosova was placed under martial law: thousands of Albanians were killed by the Partisans in the course of suppressing Albanian resistance.

Kosova under Tito

Kosova was incorporated into Yugoslavia largely against the wishes of its inhabitants. The decision to join Kosova to Serbia was passed by acclamation at a meeting in July 1945 of the Regional People's Council of Kosova, at which only 33 out of the 142 delegates were Albanians. Under the 1946 Constitution Kosova was recognised as an "Autonomous Region" of Serbia, giving it a lower status than the "autonomous province" of Vojvodina. Albanians, despite being the third most numerous people in Yugoslavia (behind Serbs and Croats) were not recognised as a "nation" but merely as a "national minority''.

Only 'National' could have their own republics within the federation; and only 'National' could secede. Unlike Vojvodina, Kosova did not have its own independent legislature or its own supreme court. Its local administrative units were deprived of any independent decision making power.

Both the Albanian and Yugoslav CP leaders were, after 1945, in favour of building a wider Balkan federation and there is no reason to suppose that they did not believe that the question of Kosova's future and that of other Albanian communities in Yugoslavia could not be settled amicably within this wider federation. Enver Hoxha produced plans for the unification of the Albanian and Yugoslav armies and, as late as March 1948 was urging Tito to take concrete steps towards the unification of the two states.

After the initial repression the CPY also took steps to meet some Kosovar demands. The Albanian language was given equal status, at least in theory, with Serbo-Croat and in legal and official matters. These small but important measures came to an end when the Stalin-Tito split in 1948 when the Albanian leadership became one of the most implacable opponents of the Yugoslavs.

Effects of the Stalin-Tito split

The split with Stalin, and consequently Albania, led to a period of increased repression of the Albanian population of Yugoslavia. Belgrade was afraid that the Albanian CP would try to mobilise the large Albanian population in Yugoslavia to overthrow the Tito regime. At the same time the Hoxha regime in Albania accused dissidents of being Titoist agents.

The border between the two states was scaled, leading to virtual isolation of Albanians in the autonomous provinces. Many of those demonstrators were arrested.

Kosova was also given its own university and flag (that of Albania). The 1974 Constitution made Kosova (and Vojvodina) a Republic in all but name. Following this came increased Albanisation of the province, with bilingualism a necessary qualification for employment in public services and four fifth of available posts reserved for Albanians.

In 1976 Adem Demaci, along with 18 other defendants, was again put on trial, charged with various 'crimes' including 'organising against the people and the hostile propaganda' and forming the 'National Liberation Movement of Kosova'. The defendants were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. After Tito's death the massive expansion of higher education at the University of Prishtina was not matched by increased job opportunities.

In 1981-2 demonstrations by Albanian students broke out throughout the province. They were brutally repressed, with over 30,000 soldiers. The protests soon spread beyond students, with increasing numbers of Albanian workers joining, and took on a more political significance. The demand for a Kosova Republic was raised along with slogans such as: 'Unification with Albania', 'We are Albanians not Yugoslavs' and 'Long live Adem Demaci'.

Although martial law was lifted after two months there was a steady erosion of Kosova rights. In September 1981 strict censorship was imposed and teaching of Albanian history was prohibited. The quotas for Kosovan students were gradually reduced, but this was confined to Kosova. Hundreds of Albanians were jailed in Macedonia and an attempt was made to make displaying the Albanian flag illegal - despite the fact that there had been no riots in Macedonia.

The Rise of the LDK

The overturning of Milosevic of Kosovo's Constitutional position in 1995 was opposed by virtually all sectors of the Kosovar community. The forces of Kosova were influential in forcing the Serb miners went on strike, including a hunger strike underground.

After the Kosovo Parliament's decision to surrender Kosovan autonomy (a decision made with the Parliament building surrounded by tanks, and helicopters and war planes flying overhead) 14 out of 121 Albanian MPs met on July 2, 1990 in the street outside the locked Parliament building and declared Kosova 'an equal and independent entity within the framework of the Serbian state'.

On September 7 the same delegation met in Kacanik and issued the proclamation of a constitutional law for a 'Republic of Kosova' which laid down provi-
SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

NATO out of the Balkans!

Imperialism's favourite Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova (left) ingratiates himself with Italian premier d'Alenio, while (below) KLA fugitives try to liberate their country by more direct means. But Blair (opposite) and NATO will oppose independence.

Supposedly 87 per cent of eligible voters participated, with 99 per cent of them in favour. Accordingly Kosovo was proclaimed independent on November 19, 1991. On May 24, 1992 elections were held, using private houses as polling stations.

The current that gained the most from this was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) of Ibrahim Rugova. The LDK won 96 seats; the Parliamentary Party of Kosov (led by Adem Demaci) 13 seats; the Albanian Christian Democratic Party 7; the Albanian Peasant Party 7; and 2 seats were won by independents.

Five other seats went to Slav Muslim representatives. An additional 14 seats were held open for representation of the Kosovans and Montenegrins in Kosovo, although these were not filled as only a small number of Kosovans and Montenegrins participated in the election. Ibrahim Rugova was elected as President.

The Parliament never actually met. Decisions were, therefore, taken by Rugova and his closest associates without ever having to be debated in front of Kosovo representatives.

The basic strategy of Rugova was to avoid conflict with Belgrade, hence a policy of passive resistance. More militant actions were denounced as the work of provocateurs, acting on behalf of Belgrade. The hope was that western governments would reward the restraint shown by the Kosovars with recognition of Kosovan independence.

Such futile hopes were to be rudely shattered at Dayton, which encouraged wide sections of Kosovars to believe that they would only achieve their aims of independence through violence. The Rugova project not only failed at an international level; it also had serious consequences inside Kosovo itself.

The LDK decided to boycott all elections to the Serbian Parliament. As a result Arkan became MP for a Kosovo seat and Milosevic remained in power. Albanians who advocated participation were denounced as traitors.

The attempt to create a parallel state increased the already greatly developed system of 'apartheid' in Kosovo. By 1996 there was virtually no communication between Serbs and Albanians. They did not even use the same forms of transport: Serbs took the train while Albanians used buses. Most Albanians under twenty could neither speak nor understand Serbian. The responsibility for this situation lies, of course with Milosevic: nevertheless the policies of the LDK actually exacerbated it.

The LDK believed that the attacks on Rugova were an indication of a growing opposition to the LDK policies. By 1996 there were 15 different Albanian parties in Kosovo. The most vocal attacks came from Adem Demaci, who characterised democracy in Kosovo as a caricature and denounced the LDK for its monopoly on power.

He was also savagely critical of the institutions of the parallel state. Demaci went on to argue that engagement with genuine Serbian opposition forces was more important than attracting Western attention.

Many of these weapons found their way across the border to Kosovar. Among those leading the resistance are many former officers of the old Yugoslav People's Army and Kosovar Territorial Defence Forces, from the period previous to 1989.

Volunteers, arms and money have also come from the 600,000 Albanians working in Germany, Switzerland and other countries. The same people who have largely financed Rugova in the past, are now financing the 'liberation'.

The US launched its efforts to force the Kosovars to accept the plan KLA finally capitulated. Demaci resigned from the leadership and is now in Slovenia. It is rumoured that the new KLA leadership have threatened to kill him as a traitor.

The 'illusions' of Demaci spoke of flow from the political weakness of the KLA leadership, which has a 'militaristic' tendency to reject political struggle, identifying the failed politics of Rugova with politics in general. The KLA's political demands do not make no mention of the Serb minority, except to say that it is in the interests of 'peace' in the Balkans, for both the Serbs and the Albanians to end the occupation of Kosovo.

In general, the KLA expresses little in the way of ideology, claiming last September, 'We do not fight for party or political

Given the Albanians' natural dis-belief that they could feel secure within Serbia; without their own armed forces and land, the KLA disappeared, the US now offered a NATO 'peacekeeping force' to police the deal.

Despite the original left-wing leadership of the KLA it has now clearly moved to the right, relying on NATO rather than its own strength.

It is, of course, easy to understand why many Kosovars see NATO as their salvation at the moment. The lack of any alternative leadership within the workers' movement - not to mention the military power of NATO - would very easily push them in that direction.

Nevertheless Demaci and others pressured the Kosovan delegation at Rambouillet to reject this attempt to 'con-vince Albanians to accept capitulation, by launching illu-sions, by making bad promises'.

However, under massive pressure from pro-Western Albanian forces, the leading wing of the interest, as do the political parties in Kosovo and Albania. That is in serious weakness.

It is possible that the supposedly more "militant" militant faction ended up accepting Rambouillet while the "moderate" Demaci wing, which advocates dialogue with Serbs rejected Rambouillet as a capitulation to imperialism. Certainly if Kosova is to gain independence it will be by following the lines advocated by Demaci rather than the present leadership of the KLA. NATO has made it plain on many occasions that it will not countenance an independent Kosovo, and any NATO troops would be there either to prevent Kosovan independence or to enforce a partition they have negotiated with Milosevic.

It is clear that NATO would allow Kosovo to become part of Albania. A political line that relies onMilosevic and fails to open discus-sions with non-nationalist, anti-Milosevic Serbs is likely to lead to disaster.
Social democrats line up behind USA

Francois Vercammen reports

In September 1998 Gerhard Schroeder promised that "Germany would not go outside our frontiers if they have a UN mandate." But at the most recent NATO Congress the Chancellor blocked a left-wing motion opposing any NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and successfully imposed a motion approving the bombing campaign through climbing the counting of the votes for and against.

In response, the left within the SPD went public with its opposition to the war. Federations in Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Schwerin, as well as the "Frankfurt Circle" and eight SPD members of parliament, including Andrea Nahles, president of the Party's youth wing (Yujo), former minister Oskar Lafontaine has also condemned the war.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has had little difficulty containing dissidents within the ruling Socialist Party. The Socialist Left Current (Gauche socialiste) of Gerard Filoche, Jean-Luc Mallory and Julien Dary has spoken out against the NATO bombing and in favour of Kosovar rights. But they focus their criticism on the US rather than on France's SFIO-led government. Likewise, Jean-Luc Melenchon's Citizen's Movement (MDC), a dissident faction outside the socialist party, has condemned the government, has a much more clear anti-war position, though MDC leaders continue to stress their loyalty to the Jospin government.

There was little initial support for the NATO intervention in Italy, though a majority of voters seem to support NATO bombing. The first, albeit weak, opposition to the bombings were the Refounded Communists (PRC) and the Pope. Italy is a key base for the NATO intervention, and centre-left Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema has maneuvered hard to maintain elite consensus and public support for the intervention. Italy's government is an unusually broad coalition, within which a number of left currents have criticized D'Alema, though not stop short of anything that could bring down the government. 119 of Italy's 630 MPs have demanded a NATO ceasefire, opposed a ground intervention, had condemned ethnic cleansing — though stressing their "loyal and total support for the government" in its "war against terrorism." This dissident platform has been signed by all the Green MPs, supporters of ex-PRC leader Armando Cosatua, and dissidents within the DS and PPe.

With fanatic pro-NATO leaders like former Prime Minister Filipe Gonzalez and current NATO president Javier Solana, Spain's social democrats (PSOE) support the conservative government's pro-intervention discourse. Only three PSE MPs, from the Socialist Left current (US) abstained in the vote approving Spanish participation in the NATO campaign.

 Castro backs Kosovar rights

Extracts from speech by Cuban leader Fidel Castro on May 4, after some remarks to the Cuban baseball team "ON THE EVE of the next millen- nium Europe that is, NATO and its members, the United States of America included — is involved in what can be described, whether they like it or not, as genocide.

That is what results from depriving one million people from el- ectricity and heating services, dawnright and in winter. Also from cutting off all communications, sources of energy and trans- portation; destroying non-military facilities providing crucial services to all the population and tearing to pieces all the means of life created by a nation.

Such destructive frenzy, either by mistake or by design, directly killing or injuring thou- sands of civilians while trying to submit them and destroy their ultramar, their mass media and the intensifi- cation of the psychological warfare with overpowering technology and bombs. Unquestionably, this is a major genocide.

Europe is involved in a conflict hazardous to itself and the world. An extremely serious precedent is being set in defiance of interna- tional law and the United Nations Organisation, is succeeding in increasingly complicated the situa- tion.

We are of the view that in such a predicament only a political, and not a military, solution is possible based on respect for the rights of every nation in that region, and every religion, ethnic group and culture: a solution for both, Ser- bians and Kosovars.

I am deeply convinced that the problem cannot be solved by force, that the military technology will crash against the will of any people determined to fight. I firmly believe that when the peo- ple are willing to fight — and this is how I feel for my own people, too— no power, regardless of its might, can throw them down on their knees.

"Unquestionably this is genocide" their knees.

("Europe and NATO have become the hostages of a subjec- tive factor: the decision the Ser- bians might adopt —or not—to resist to the end, although it is to be admitted that after such destruction they are not going to be much inclined to give up. What is happening there was obvious to us from the beginning.

This does not mean that we are against anybody's rights; we sup- port both, the rights of the Ser- bians and the Kosovars' rights.

When we were recently informed that Guantanamo Naval Base would be used to accom- modate 20 thousand Kosovar refugees, we immediately agreed, and I think it is the first time that we have agreed with anything the United States of America has done in that base.

We said that we did not only agree that 20 thousand Kosovar refugees were sheltered there but also that we were willing to coop- erate as much as possible in pro- viding care for those refugees, that we offered our hospital services if required, our doctors and any other cooperation within our capabilities.

In the end, the refugees were not sent in. The truth is that none of the NATO countries, which have dropped so many bombs there, really want to receive refugees.

Italian anger as US bombs drop near Venice

HUNDREDS of deadly cluster bombs dropped by US warplanes after abortive NATO missions over Serbia have been causing havoc in the sea near Venice.

One Italian fishing boat has been destroyed by exploding bombs caught in nets and several fishermen have been badly injured.

The most recent episode came the day after NATO admitted killing up to 200 civilians in a bombing raid, and a month after cluster bombs and laser-guided missiles were dropped into Italy's Lake Garda.

Mealy-mouthed NATO propagandists would only grudgingly admit that the bombs which fell as close as 7 miles from Venice were "certainly similar to NATO's stocks."
A young refugee’s tale

VLORA is a young, well-dressed, and speaks perfect English. A few weeks ago she worked for an international organisation in Pristina and earned a good salary. On Monday she was walking along the road in front of the UNHCR when she was stopped by the police and told to return to her family in Kosovo. She does not know where they are, but she believes they are still in the area.

New Labour shows hypocrisy on refugees

War certainly exposes hypocrisy. Last week the Queen Mother unveiled a monument to the “heroic” citizens of London who lived through the “blitz” in the second world war. But now the citizens of Belgrade have to be shown to be deserving of a similar “blitz”, which is constantly being stepped up.

For the government’s own reasons we are told the truth about what it is like to be a refugee: driven from one’s home, witnessing murder, escape, imprisonment or brutality, left without possessions, afraid and traumatised. The response to this is the massive public support for refugees from Kosovo. One Scottish paper had the headline in Albanian “You are welcome”. People have stood at airports with welcome banners. People have phoned the hotline and “bogus asylum seeker” seems to have disappeared from the lips of politicians who used to start every speech with it.

The word has gone out to clear the remaining Kosovars out of the detention centres and prisons, although there are still two in Campsfield who, the government claims, can’t prove they are Kosovars.

The new voucher system will not apply to these refugees. They will be allowed benefits, and the right to work. The government has even talked of allowing 1000 per week into Britain, even though they will have arrived in another country before coming to Britain (Albania or Macedonia).

While the experience of the Kosovars since the bombing is one of terrible cruelty, it is no different from what refugees have experienced in other parts of the world, or what Kosovars experienced before the bombing. Earlier in the year, when we demonstrated outside Campsfield in support of large numbers of other refugees inside, the government used every kind of excuse to try to discredit them, saying they were really Albanians. Now they admit that Milosevic’s troops have been driving them out of their homes for a long period of time, and that is why NATO was “forced” to act.

What about the Kurds, whose villages have been destroyed, and whose relatives are still trapped in Kosovo? Or the Albanians opposed to the multinational who work with the military? Or the Palestinians, Timorese, Tamils, Algerians and others, who are fleeing regimes supported and armed by NATO governments? If their stories were told, like the Kosovars, they would be seen to be human beings as well, in need of support and sustenance, and not just victims of war and dictatorial regimes. They deserve to be seen and treated as the Kosovars arriving in Britain now, and not as the new asylum seekers.

They are not guilty of crimes and therefore do not deserve to be locked up. [This is an edited version of a letter written for The Campsfield Monitor]

Protests gain strength

Pete Firmin

As the bombing escalates and the numbers of Serb and Kosovan casualties increases and the flight of those expelled from Kosovo worsens, the anti-war movement is growing.

The second national anti-war demonstration on May 8 was significantly bigger than the first on April 11, although still no more than about 10,000. Central London public meetings are packed with hundreds of people and规模 meetings and demonstrations have been organised around the country.

Organisations have come together in a loose coalition around the slogans “Stop the Bombing, NATO out of the Balkans”, “Stop the Ethnic Cleansing, Self-determination for Kosovo” and “Open the Borders”.

The participating organisations (Socialist Outlook, Workers Power, Workers Action, Communist Party of Great Britain, Socialist Democracy and Workers International) held a public meeting in central London on May 11 (also supported by the Socialist Party and Cheering branch of VIVSIKON) which was attended by over 100 people. Platform speakers included not only supporters of the three slogans of the coordination but Kosovars, Kurds and Bosnians.

The meeting listened to and debated seriously with Kosovars, even though we are not able to support the NATO bombing. This meeting, together with the support won in various trade unions and other bodies for the policy it advocated, shows the response these slogans can have in the movement.

This coordination is committed to building the broad anti-war movement while making sure it gets a hearing for its slogans which address not only the military might of imperialism but also the terrible repression the Kosovans face.

It will be taking further initiatives and will certainly be present again as a contingent on the June 5 national demonstration.
Ahehne ducks pledge on NATO referendum

Why Ireland must say no to this anti-socialist alliance

Paul Flannigan

T he Republic of Ireland was one of only a few European states not to attend the recently convened 50th NATO anniversary summit in Washington. Today NATO comprises 19 full member states and 25 PFP members. When NATO was first formed, the Irish state was put under immense pressure by the United States to join. Marshal Aid was linked to support for NATO. The offer was declined because the six counties was still under the occupation by British military forces, one of the prime movers within the new alliance.

In 1994 Ireland was invited to join Partnership for Peace. The conservative Fine Gael party was eager to take this up but the populist nationalist party Fianna Fail was more cautious, wary of getting too far out of step with a deeply rooted and popular sentiment which supported the established position of neutrality. The Fianna Fail led coalition has used the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo to prove that Ireland will become a full PFP member in the autumn. The government, supported by Fine Gael and an array of media outlets is busy conditioning the Irish people to drop their traditional neutrality in favour of a brave new world of association in NATO.

Ireland must rise to a supposed new moral challenge as a modern European partner and participate more fully in international affairs - this means of course association with NATO and WEU.

The Attorney General has been wheeled out to assure everyone that there is no conflict between association with NATO and a policy of neutrality. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, David Andrews recently listed the PFP objectives as:

• The facilitation of transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes, ensuring the democratic control of defence forces
• The maintaining of a capability and readiness to contribute, subject to constitutional considerations, to operations under the authority of the UN or the CSCE
• The development of co-operative military relations with NATO for the purposes joint planning and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the area of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations
• The development over the longer term of forces that are better able to operate alongside those of NATO.

He summed up both the government’s and the Attorney General’s view in that there is no legal basis for a referendum because "the state will maintain its freedom and flexibility to refuse to contribute to any operation should it consider that such participation is not in the interests of the common good."

Moral challenge: Ahehne

T his is typical Fianna Fail lies to avoid a national referendum debate on the profound shift in foreign policy direction being undertaken by the former leaders of the anti-colonialist republican movement. Joining NATO-PFP is not the innocuous venture Fianna Fail politicians would have us believe.

PFP is supposedly to be dedicated solely to humanitarian goals. But the PFP has no recognised legal mandate to do with international peacekeeping - that task defaults to the UN. It certainly isn’t a partnership, its decisions are all made by the United States and Britain.

Now that capitalism no longer has Stalinism to justify NATO’s continued existence a new legitimisation for has to be found to license imperialist foreign policies. Global military interventions take place under cover of bogus claims to be pursuing humanitarian ends.

What role will Ireland play within the framework of NATO’s imperialism? The US ambassador to NATO recently described the PFP as working towards "the difference between being a partner member and being an ally of NATO member razor thin". For some states PFP is clearly intended as a stage leading to full membership.

Small states like Ireland with little military capabilities will be asked to play a useful secondary role. It is a bit like the "hard cop-soft cop" routine.

Ireland, with its anti-colonial credentials is ideally placed to give a soft humanitar- ian look and feel to the same old hard cop brutal imperialist methods in interna- tional affairs. It is no surprise to find that Mary Robinson as the UN spokesperson on human rights.

The strategic plan for the war in the Balkans tells us a lot about where states like Ireland are to be fit in. Phase one is to establish complete air supremacy over the region. Phase two, if Milosevic remains defiant, attack Serb ground forces in Kosovo until he or one of his cronies is ready to make a deal based on a Rambouillet type proposal. Phase three, after a cease-fire, policing the deal that NATO has bombed into existence.

It is only in the third stage when small states like Ireland will be asked to make a contribution. They may have to take responsibility for disarming what remains of the Kosovan liberation fighters. They will go in to bandage the wounds of the oppressed and to police an undemocratic settlement Skype to the miserable Dayton Agreement. Two million are still in exile as a result of that accord.

They will do as much good as flies do in an abattoir.

The NATO war in the Balkans is the first big test of this new "strategic concept" which includes NATO operating outside of its traditional territory and taking over tasks previously the preserve of the UN. The United States wants a more global role for NATO and talks about extending its geographical remit into Africa and Asia, as well as combating international "terrorism" and drugs trafficking.

"NATO has started the war it cannot afford to lose" is the consistent message from people who should know like Henry Kissinger. Ireland should stay well clear off NATO’s war bubbles and its globocop dreams.

But at this crucial juncture only the Green party and the Labour party has called for a referendum on membership of PFP. Socialist Democracy of course is in favour of a campaign to keep Ireland out of NATO. But we are also in favour of the defeat and the break up of NATO.

NATO is a deadly instrument in the hands of big capital against socialists everywhere.
Party line leads to Irish Telecom sale

Kevin O’Neil

I WAS NOT inevitable that Sid would arrive in Ireland to look the public purse and sell it cheap. As an asset has been built up over generations, so it was the logical consequence of the policies pursued by both the Dublin government and the trade union leadership. Ireland has been on the wave of privatisations that took place in the 1980s in Britain thanks in part to the example set by Thatcher. The only party to openly endorse Thatcherism in Ireland, the pro-Democratic coalition, trouble getting itself elected and may very well disappear at the next general election.

Privatisations then are not popular in Ireland. But what a ruling class could not achieve by force they have achieved by stealth and the trade union leadership has been their invaluable ally in achieving this.

Support for privatisation fits neatly into the policy of Social Partnership. The government has joined the privatisation of the Irish trade union movement. The word friend is in the correct word in this case as there has been no open democratic debate about the nature of social partnership or its implications. The government has blocked moves for such a debate and intervened in struggles such as those in TEE and Aer Lingus to contain them within the parameters of Social Partnership. This has meant the defeat of those struggles, which are now later dressed up as victories. This is the case in the Rairdair case which saw other workers in the airport engage in unofficial action in support of the Rairdair baggage handlers.

The airport was closed down and the dispute threatened the future of Social Partnership which requires working class participation in the face of attacks and resignation (top inevitable defect). The reference to the issues to the Labour Court (Ireland’s equivalent of ACAS) was unfortunately enough successful. The sale of Telecom takes place in the context of a trade union leadership which cannot and will not even defend the right to trade union recognition. Instead of this, they have gone one step further in any way to strike down Telecom.

The workers currently employed by Telecom will get shares in the company totalling 5% of the total. However, they are not being given these shares now – they will get them at some unspecified future date. Meantime their hands will be tied in negotiations with the company. Future employees of Telecom will not be share holders and will not even benefit from the sale but will suffer any worsening in pay and conditions.

Workers who are not part of the share deal will not be able to turn to their union for protection. The Communications Workers’ Union has taken out an £85 million loan to buy a stake in the company thus binding the solvency of the union to that of the company. They will be like a stock holding company – their future and the future of the workers they represent will be subject to the vagaries of the stock market. Any demands by workers that will not be permitted by profits of the company will also affect the solvency of the union.

Given the trade union leadership’s existing willingness and ability to stab workers in the back through Social Partnership, how much more willing will they be when they have a direct stake in the matter?

Social Partnership has meant working class passivity. The Telecom sale has been presented as a fait accompli and has to date met no resistance and it seems unlikely that it will. This case is used to pave the way for further privatisations such as Cablelink, Aer Arann and Aer Lingus (national air travel and airline).

Telecom has been in the sights of the government for some time; first they proposed selling it in 1996. The union launched a national poster campaign with the slogan ‘keep the fat cats’ hands off Telecom’. The government ended up selling 35% to Commerce, a Dutch and Swedish company.

The union backed down and began to talk about ‘strategic alliances’ in the world market. Swallowing the greenshoes logic of Social Partnership, they have accepted that the uncoordinated competition of the global market means unity with “our employers and competing with workers in other countries. National Assets are to be booked with not only the co-operation of the unions but their active participation.

The Irish trade union movement is possibly the only one in Europe whose leadership has totally absorbed the logic of Social Partnership for the reorganisation of European capital and the building of a fortress Europe. It is a not surprising then that they should back privatisations which are a significant part of Maastricht.

At the May Day rally held in Dublin this year none of the trade union bureaucrats speaking even mentioned privatisation. The war in the Balkans and the unification of the EEC’s secret of the new working class political slogans that are being used to later dress up the sale of Telecom and try to glamorise any opposition that might arise.

The opposition to this move is developing. It is a movement that is spreading from the large companies to the smaller firms. It is spreading from the engineers to other trades, the clerical and the office workers.

The union leadership has been attempting to persuade the workers of the benefits of the privatisation. This has been partly successful. However, there are now hints that the union is trying to contain the movement of the workers.

The financial picture is unclear and the union has been trying to persuade the workers that the privatisation will bring an improved financial picture.

Socialist Outlook is written and sold by socialists committed to this struggle. We are the British supporters of the world-wide rank and filers organisations and the International. We stand on the revolutionary foundations of the socialist movement. A socialist world is possible. The overall goal which we pursue is the emancipation of all human beings from all forms of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence.

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

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

The movements of women, lebanons and gay men, and black people to fight their particular forms of oppression make an essential contribution to the struggle for a different society. They are organised around the principle “None to be broken the chains that those wear them”.

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

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

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Taliban and torture chambers at Punjab University

Pakistan women fight back against fundamentalism

Women at the Punjab University in Pakistan have launched a movement against the Islamic Jamiat Talba (JIT), the student organisation affiliated to the fundamentalist Jamaat Islami.

This started with protests on May 2 and May 5 in immediate response to public attacks on a male Philosophy student, Ijaz Butt, by fundamentalist thugs. His supposed "crime" was talking to a young woman.

This was not the first assault by the JIT. Punjab University is mini-Afghanistan ruled by the JIT.

On April 29 JIT thugs beat up male History students because they were sitting with women from their department watching a student cricket match. Meanwhile, the JIT prevented English students organising a farewell party for graduates at a nearby hotel, on the grounds that students might enjoy "immoral fun."

A month before this, some men from the Education Department were set upon at a restaurant outside the university campus. They were all male students who had been invited to celebrate the birthday of a fellow student.

Female and male students cannot talk together or sit together at libraries, canteens or cafes. The JIT's response to such acts has been to back up guns, so for a long time nobody dared resist them.

The fundamentalists take these violent actions and intimidate people who support the banner of Islam. They claim that mixed activities are un-Islamic.

In the late 1960s and 1970s the Punjab University had a strong left tradition. The National Students Federation was the main left force, not only in the Punjab University but throughout Pakistan.

But in 1977, militant dictatorship was imposed in the country. Jamaat Islami was hand in glove with the military dictator General Zia. Left wing political parties, unions and student organisations were the prime target of the military dictatorship. The teaching staff were also active in opposing the regime.

Meanwhile, Pakistan had become a military base camp of CIA against USSR intervention in Afghanistan. Campuses became a nursery for the recruitment of so-called Mujahideen to send them in Afghanistan and JIT was the chief recruiting agency.

In 1983 union activities were banned by the regime. When democracy was restored in 1988 elections were held at campuses but in 1990, Nawaz Sharif again banned student and trade union activities. But in practice the ban is only for those who do not have guns — the Taliban are free to organise.

Punjab University is the role model that JIT presents across the whole of Pakistan where education is taught according to Islamic values. But using the veil of religion the JIT is able to claim many benefits for itself and its supporters.

The Punjab University provides jobs to thousands of JIT youth. It is a recruiting ground for people who go on to become Jamaat Islami activists. It is a refuge for absconders, as police do not dare enter the campuses. In 1992 police entered the campus to end a protest, and as a result, lost a cop who was gunned down by JIT.

JIT has on-campus torture cells where anybody daring to violate their so-called code of ethics is tortured. At Punjab University campus JIT is widely hated, yet it maintains power because the entire administration is in its control.

Since 1977, 90 per cent of teachers recruited in the university belong to JIT. That is why they are most obedient servants of JIT instead of the college. Other staff are also recruited on the recommendation of JIT.

On May 2 about 60 women from the departments of English, Philosophy, Education, Geography and Library took to the streets. They marched to the Vice Chancellor's office to protest about JIT successes (Outsiders if he did not know in advance). The demo was unprecedented.

Never in the recent history of Punjab University had anyone dared challenge the JIT's gun-toting thugs.

This really infuriated the JIT. Next day they beat up male Philosophy students. On May 3 the JIT thugs held a demo outside the Philosophy Department, chanting "Down with Jamaat!"

The women left their lecture to come and start chanting "Down with Jamaat!"

Three bourgeois newspapers published the news of May 2. These were not explicit, but some newspaper stands on campus on May 3 and in some hostels, they were only available with the controversial articles cut out. This shows the absolute control of JIT.

The women are not ready to sit idle. "We will not tolerate Talibanisation of Punjab university", said one History student.

Although it is not easy to fight Jamaat Islami, it is necessary to do so, with commitment coupled with good strategy.

Women's March 2000

Terry Conway

AN INTERNATIONAL women's campaign culminating in an demonstration on October 17, 2000, the day of struggle against poverty, is planned. Women's March 2000 is being started to support and inspire campaigns of women against violence and poverty which are those at the women at Punjab University.

The campaign, starting with various initiatives around the world on International Women's Day (March 8), has three goals:

- Challenge the reactionary violence between men and women
- Stimulate a broad women's movement in the world
- To denounce patriarchy, capitalism and racism against a liberal form and put forward alternatives based on equality and justice.

The idea was born out of the experience of the successful "Bread and Roses" March against poverty in 1995 in Quebec.

In October 1998, 140 women from 65 countries came to Montreal and adopted an international platform of demands. Over 1,625 women's groups in 119 countries are already involved.

The final decision has yet to be made regarding the target of the mobilisation - the UN in New York or the World Bank in Washington? There were sharp divisions in Quebec. Those arguing for the UN received slightly more votes, focusing on the issue of violence against women.

For women in many countries, though, to speak of violence automatically means to speak of poverty because the struggles are so closely intertwined. The few women from Europe who made it to Montreal were enthused and agreed to organise back home.

On April 17-18 more than 100 women from virtually every European country attended a meeting in Paris.

We agreed that there should be a European demonstration in Brussels as well as other activities. European participants on the International co-ordinating committee were agreed and a further meeting set for Brussels on October 1 and 2.

Unfortunately I was the only woman present from Britain, though others have expressed interest. A meeting is being arranged in September to see what is possible here, before the Brussels meeting.

For further information contact Terry Conway, Middle Fat, 10 Windsor Rd, London N7 6JG. Contact the campaign web site at www.if8q.cq

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An overview of the Turkish election
Designer fascism or rebirth of the Grey Wolves?

Kurdish votes at arms of their leaders Abdullah Ocalan: It has triggered a right-wing terrorist fervour in Turkey.

A German women's group went to Diyarbakir to discuss raising funds for a women's project there. They were heavily intimidated, with security personnel sitting at the same table as them so that no one could talk with them in any confidence. They were swiftly forced out of the town.

Turkey has long been seen as an important ally of both Britain and the US, who routinely ignore its human rights abuses.

Again within the war in the Balkans it is playing a key role supporting NATO's intervention.

So it was little surprise when the well known democrat Tony Blair, announced the day after the election, that Turkey was now a candidate for entry into the European Union.

Fight the frame-up: support Samar and Jawad

Roland Rance and Susan Moore

TWO PALESTINIANS serving twenty year jail sentences after the bombings at the Israeli Embassy and the Zionist offices in London in 1994 have been granted leave to appeal.

This decision is based on the non-disclosure of potentially vital evidence, which prejudiced the fairness of the trial.

Samar Aluni and Jawad Botmech are Palestinian activists wrongly convicted in 1996 in connection with the bombings. Paul Foot explains in his introduction to Justice Denied, a detailed pamphlet on the case, how he became convinced that the two had been framed up.

Samar had a cast iron alibi for the embassy bombing. She was making a phone call from a phone box - from which (unusually) calls are recorded. But she forgot about this when she was first arrested and did not tell the police.

As her solicitor, Gareth Pierce explains, if she had anything to do with the planning of the bombing she would have made sure she knew where she was.

Among the evidence withheld at the trial is a report referred to by ex-MI5 agent David Shayler. He has revealed that the authorities had definite information about the bombings beforehand, but, whether from negligence or calculation, failed to act to prevent them.

This report, if true, would be devastating for the prosecution case, since it would establish that the bombings were almost certainly carried out by a state or organised group, rather than by two independent activists.

However, the defence case is still hampered by the refusal of the High Court to overturn the Public Interest Immunity certificate issued in respect of this report. A PIL certificate means, in effect, that evidence cannot be tested in court, even revealed to the defence.

Other possible grounds for appeal, including the attempt by an Israeli journalist to interfere with sources, and the judge's biased summing up, were rejected by the courts. This is despite the fact that there is no concrete evidence at all linking the two young people to the bombings.

Shayler's statements, and the desperate attempts by the state to prevent them being raised in court, strengthen the suggestion, raised by journalist Paul Foot in a Guardian article, that the Israelis bombed their own embassy, and used a provocateur, the shadowy Rifa Mughrabi, to entrap innocent Palestinian political activists.

"Mughrabi" was the person, who persuaded Jawad to go with him to buy the car which was used in the bombing, and who handed Samar a bag of explosives before vanishing into thin air. But the authorities took no interest in him: they were not even asked by the police to provide a photo fit picture of him.

Justice Denied is a compelling account of the way jawad and Samar's involvement in the struggle for Palestinian human rights was used to mask the lack of concrete evidence.

As Jawad said: "We were involved in that process no matter how little our contribution meant to the result. But under such circumstances we would put that at risk because it fundamentally goes against our ideology, policy and practices. It would be self harm. Or else why would I, or Samar, ever get involved in student politics and NGOs and spend years campaigning peacefully if we really wanted to do was use violence against the Israelis in London? They (the bombings) are totally counterproductive."
As thousands of workers from across Europe prepare to join a massive protest at the austerity policies ushered in by the Maastricht Treaty, evidence is growing that Britain’s New Labour government is losing the battle for support to join the single currency.

The demonstration, called as a follow-up to successful Euromarches on EU summit meetings, will be in Cologne on May 29. Coaches from all parts of Britain will be taking hundreds to participate in the fight against unemployment and cuts in welfare state provision.

British sponsors of the Cologne demonstration include the public sector union UNISON, which is one of the few major unions to have taken a firm line against entry into the single currency, although this is now under fire from the union’s Blairite bureaucracy.

The British TUC has been amongst the most eager proponents of Britain joining EMU, but a recent survey shows how hollow is the basis on which this policy rests. An ICM survey of 1,000 trade unionists found just 15% supported the pro-EMU line spouted by TUC boss John Monks, with 61% opposed.

Nine out of ten trade unionists said they had never been asked their views on the Euro by their union, and almost 80% had seen no union information on the issue.

Of the major unions surveyed by the New Statesman recently only two, the AEEU and GPMU, reported that they were in favour of early EMU entry, with most others having no position at all.

It is high time union activists demanded a proper debate and a vote on this key issue rather than allowing the unions to be “bounced” into policies by the unelected John Monks.

Meanwhile there are rumours that Tony Blair’s top spin doctors are pessimistic about the chances of delivering the necessary Yes vote in a referendum to join the Euro.

One factor in this is the continued recession, privatisation, and economic dislocation in the Euroland countries – including Germany, once the power-house of European capitalism – since the single currency lift-off in January.

The institutionalisation of the Thatcherite Maastricht criteria, effectively tying EU economies to a regime of permanent monetarism, is proving to be costly for workers and the unemployed everywhere.

The strength of the Cologne demonstration is that it not only underlines the need for an internationalist resistance to monetarism and austerity, but begins to organise it.

We urge any readers who have not yet arranged to do so to join the march.

For travel details ring Glen Voris on 01744 765889.