As Blair invites grovelling union chiefs back to No.10, and TUC talks of common interest with employers...

UNIONS MUST BREAK UP THIS DEADLY PARTNERSHIP!

This year's Trade Union Congress in Brighton has seen the leaders of our biggest unions on their knees - not only to Tony Blair's right wing government but also to the employers.

TUC General Secretary John Monks summed up the logic of the new ideology of "partnership" between unions and management which has done so much damage to the unions under Tony Blair.

The man who has presided over the loss of millions of members from the trade unions in recent years has now concluded that it is because union representatives are not sufficiently acceptable to the employers. "We must find new representatives who are respected, both by fellow workers and managers, rather than individuals who are personally disaffected. Unions are never strong when their representatives are drawn from the disaffected."

Taking lessons from John Monks on organising unions - which he has never done - is like taking lessons in navigation from the captain of the Titanic. Like Blair, Monks clearly knows nothing and cares less about the history of the labour movement, which has been built over two centuries of struggle precisely by the "disaffected" as a means of fighting the employers who exploit them.

It was these combative unions which secured the living standards, the welfare state and the democratic rights which were taken for granted until Thatcher and now Blair began to dismantle them.

20 years of grovelling and defactist leadership from overpaid national bureaucrats has shown us that the less "disaffected" and the more privileged and insulated the union leaders become, the less they are willing to fight for their members.

Unions which follow Blair's and Monks' advice and set out now to embrace the bosses in a "partnership" which involves no-strike deals and a stifling of shop floor struggle will have nothing to offer young workers, and will continue to hemorrhage membership. Only by fighting to regain their lost rights, and for the interests of their members can the unions revive their fortunes.
Bogus “legal” threats fuel UNISON witch hunt

Fred Leplat, Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON ATTACKS against the internal union democracy of UNISON are being stepped up. There is clear evidence policy of the right of branches to campaign and to get together to influence union policy. But the national officers of the union are determined to “interpret” conference so as to totally undermine it.

The latest example of this is a case brought against the national secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe issued at the beginning of August. The branch pledge not to support the lobby of the Labour Party conference on the 26 September with branch funds or resources (including branch bank accounts). The lobby has been called in support of the following demands:
- Reverse the link – decent pensions
- End privatisation
- End all that is not warfare
- £5 an hour – tax the rich
- End privatisation and privatisation
- Scrap the Asylum & Immigration Act
- 4 weeks’ strike – no loss of pay
- Full union rights.

The first five demands are national UNISON policy, while the sixth is UNISON national local government service group policy, and the last one is Greater London UNISON local UNISON policy.

The circular from Bickerstaffe claims “independent legal advice” has been obtained declaring that the expenditure of funds to back the lobby would be both a breach of the union’s rules and of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992.

No advice

Yet no copy of the legal advice has yet been seen. It has been admitted to a member of the NEC that there is no specific advice on this particular event, but that the union has now collected enough legal opinions in other circumstances to be able to make a judgement on this year’s lobby.

The circular goes on to state that fund people attending the lobby would also be in breach of the Certification Officer’s two recent rulings against UNISON concerning “payments to political parties”.

Yet when contacted by a branch secretary, the Certification Officer confirmed that there had been no complaints received about past lobbies of the Labour Party conference, that no rulings had been issued in relation to such lobbies, and that there is no opinion of the certification officer which prevents the branch from supporting the lobby. Spurious and non-existent legal opinion is being quoted in order to undermine a legitimate campaign action and because it has been initiated by the SWP and supported by the left in the Labour Movement.

Indeed, the general secretary’s circular admits “wider publicity make” SWP claim that they have been called by the SWP. It is ironic that after issuing his circular holding conference with other branches. Yet this will probably be restricted by the NEC if it agrees in October a recommendation that such conferences could only be held with the approval of the relevant region or service group.

The right of branches to get together to protest at such attacks on democracy, or to influence union policy in other matters, is also being attacked.

The 1998 conference clearly allowed branches the right to hold conferences with other branches. Yet this will probably be restricted by the NEC if it agrees in October a recommendation that such conferences could only be held with the approval of the relevant region or service group.

Delay. In Sheffield, the branch remains suspended despite audits giving the books a clean bill of health.

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Union democracy is not a luxury. It is essential to ensure that members and branches make officials accountable and develop union policy as necessary. If the rights on internal democracy are curtailed, then the agenda of the union will be set by unelected officials such as national secretaries, and the narrow circle in the “Presidential Team”. The national conference will then really be a “showcase” as the Bickerstaffe wishes, and not a democratic forum of debate and decision-making elected branch delegates.

Solidarity needed now!

George Brown in a week when the TUC deepened its drive to get into bed with the bosses, the launch of a new magazine dedicated to the building of opposition to “social partnership” must be welcomed.

In the case of the Birmingham branch, a clear commitment had been made at UNISON’s conference in June that the suspension would be rescinded without some control over their union. Our growth reflects the fact that we have already taken over the loss of conditions that have taken 100 years of struggle to win.”

If Solidarity is to play its part in the parallel process, it needs now to become a forum for debate and discussion of the organised left in our unions. Future issues need to take up in depth the debates under way - on what relation unions should have with the Labour Party, on what sort of rank and file movement is needed, on how we rebuild a trade union movement that actually fights for the interests of the working class as a whole.

Solidarity needs to become an organiser - which can help build opposition to privatisation, which fights for repeal of all the anti-union laws and which builds genuine solidarity in action at home and internationally.

The pilot edition is a good move in the right direction. Now it is up to us all to make it a success.

Get your union branch on trade council to sponsor Solidarity and order bulk copies for distribution to shop stewards - contact Mike Wicks, 233 Welcombe Avenue Park North, Swindon SN3 2PF or email e-mail: m.wicks@btinternet.com

More details on the Solidarity website:

www.solidarity.nxnet.co.uk

Fred Leplat

Having been General Secretary of UNISON for seven years ago, Rodney Bickerstaffe is standing down. No reasons have yet been given for his resignation. He will continue in office until the next annual conference in June. Although strong on rhetoric against poverty, Bickerstaffe has always steered the union away from direct action against government cuts and attacks on branches to fight on their own, isolated. Every major issue such as the minimum wage, he plotted, without success, to stop the 1998 conference from agreeing to a call for a demonstrate. Despite the election of 15,000 UNISON members and other trade unions eventually joined the march.

His attempts at keeping a distance from a Blair government have not been successful. There are no national campaigns, and UNISON’s opposition to the Euro collapsed at the TUC when the delegation flouted conference policy and abstained on an AEEU motion calling on the Labour government to scrap the Maastricht treaty.

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UN hypocracies won’t free East Timor

A s we go to press an Australian led, multinational "peace keeping" force is poised to march into East Timor under the authority of an unanimous vote of the Security Council. It is a further expression of the actions of the UN which created the current barbarism in East Timor.

The referendum on independence, under which the East Timorese expressed their right of self-determination in such a decisive way, was organised and administered by the UN with no provision to ensure the safety of the voters afterwards or the implementation of the referendum outcome if it went for independence.

The referendum itself was a victory won directly out of the significant but unfinished revolution which toppled the bloodthirsty regime of Suharto in May last year.

It was one of the concessions Suharto’s appointed successor, B BJ Habibie, had to make in order to try to stall the momentum of the 1997 demonstrations against the government.

It was thus completely predictable that if the vote went for independence it was always going to be, the Indonesian army, or forces controlled by it, would simply force the issue and reverse it, and seek to keep East Timor as a part of Indonesia.

Not only that. The agreed framework for the referendum, negotiated by the UN, had a provision for the result to be ratified by the Indonesian Parliament. What has it got to do with them, it is by both sides. This clause could now be the means by which the vote for independence has been reversed.

It is absolutely clear that detailed plans were laid by the Indonesian army high command to how to respond to a vote for independence and to stop the referendum taking place.

On the announcement of the results the death squads would be released, people would be slaughtered and terrorised. The bulk of the army, if not all, would be driven out of the country, most of them into West Timor.

Thousands of other people, opposed to the independence of East Timor, would then be shipped in to replace them, completely altering the political geography of the country. The Indonesian Parliament would then refuse to ratify the referendum result, and that would be the end of it.

It is evident that the UN had no idea that such a situation might arise and was not prepared for it. Now the campaign of intimidation had been taking place by the terror gangs for months prior to the referendum vote.

Once again, so soon after the Balkans conflict, it is necessary to point out that the UN is not an independent agency dedicated to defending the weak against the strong. It is an agency of imperialism, most importantly US imperialism, and it can only act in accordance with its agreement.

While UN forces may in the short term ease or halt the slaughter being carried out by the militias, we can have no confidence that they will make any concrete contribution to the interests of the East Timorese people.

On the contrary, the UN military presence will also serve to obstruct and prevent the necessary arms shipments to the liberation forces, which is essential if they are to be able to defend themselves without external assistance.

Only with arms in their own hands can the people of East Timor ensure that they achieve the independence they voted for so overwhelmingly in the referendum.

At the end of the day it is the agenda of imperialism which determines the actions of the UN and the actions carried out under its name. That agenda is to establish the necessary geo-political and military framework which will allow US global economic ambitions the best conditions to succeed.

In fact both the massive turn-out in the referendum and the huge vote for independence are not only remarkable but unbelievably courageous. People were not prepared to give up their vote even under the threat of violence.

This was partly because many thought they were safe with the referendum being conducted by the UN and partly because of the strength of feeling on the issue.

The lesson once again is that the UN cannot be relied upon to protect national rights or anything else.

The East Timorese people should hunt down the death squads which have been butchering or depotment 4 million people and bringing some normal life back to the people of the country.

The Habibie regime continues the brutal policies of Suharto’s regime was established in the anti-Communist bloodbath of 1965 in which an estimated one million people were slaughtered. This was also the regime which carried out the brutal invasion of East Timor in 1975, when an estimated 200,000 people were killed out of a population of 600,000. This makes the East Timorese one of the most persecuted peoples in modern times.

During this whole time the western powers have not wavered in their support for a regime which has guaranteed their interests in the region. Australia, now as in its denunciation of the brutality taking place continue to collaborate with the Habibie regime the Indonesia foreign policy, whilst carving up the country’s resources.

Australia was one of very few to formally recognize Indonesia as the government of East Timor.

B rginia has supplied the small arms, armoured cars and aircraft used by the Habibie regime’s forces to invade East Timor (the British taxpayers’ expense) and the ongoing war in East Timor.

It has already signed a treaty with the Indonesian government dividing oil deposits in the Timor Gap, which lays between East Timor and Australia.

W hether the intervention of the UN force will bring an end to the massacres only time will tell. It is hard not to be sceptical.

To a great extent the work of the death squads in killing and dispersing the population has already been done: their aim will be to ensure that this is not reversed enough to allow the implementation of the referendum.

It is even less clear whether the UN will be able to prevent or ensure that the decision of the referendum is implemented. If they are not, as the people of Kosovo and Kurdistan can testify, an international protectorate is necessary for a genuine independent state.

They must stop the genocide: Indonesian forces out of East Timor now! Arm the liberation forces, recognise East Timor as an independent state.

Stop all arms sales to Indonesia.

Urgent appeal from International Institute

IRE must spend thousands on fire safety

J ust as we were congratulating ourselves on our financial stability, the IRE suddenly faces a major, unexpected expense. Our current house students and lecturers in our 24 rooms has expired, and the Amsterdam fire inspectors have given us a list of additional safety measures we must take in order to have our permit renewed.

The list includes installing an alarm system covering the whole building and communicating with the fire department. The cost will be over 40,000 Dutch guilders (about $20,000 US).

Of course we will do what the inspectors ask. The safety of participants in our activities is very important to us.

In any event, we have no choice; these are legal requirements. Our hope now that we will not have to finance this work by cutting back on our seminars or publications.

In the past many of you have helped generously to support our work. Can we count on you now to see us through this difficulty? Your contributions can be made by bank transfer to Netherlands Postbank (giro) account no. 2079557, IRE, Amsterdam, Cheques should be made out to "Center for Changes", earmarked "International Fund", IRE, and mailed to us in Amsterdam.

Thank you in advance for your help. When you’re next in Amsterdam, we look forward to giving you a personal guided tour of our new alarm system!
4 SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

As union leaders take their partners for collaboration waltz

TUC swings even further right

Alan Davies

THEY SAY THE TUC conference must rank as the most right-wing of modern times. It marked a new stage in the domination of the politics of new Labour over the unions. This is a theme that has run through Blair's speech to Congress both in its tone as well as in its content. The key to the whole link between the ancien régime and the Labour Party, the Franz Minister told delegates, can be found in the TUC since the TUC have now shown themselves to be utterly committed to the idea of social partnership and the agenda of new Labour. Since social partnership is the form new Labour politics take at the industrial level, the link no longer poses any threat to Blair. "You are now welcome back into the tent," Blair told union leaders. But as a further reminder of the change from the old days he stressed that "the principles of the open shop and the trade controls from which we are free at the turn of the century."

When Blair told the TUC conference that new Labour has its "third way" and the unions have theirs, he was again talking of partnership with the new Labour project.

Extreme

The most extreme form of partnership has been proposed by Blair at the conference, although it was taken up by him. That was the proposal by Sir Ken Jackson of the AEEU that the TUC should dissolve its annual conference in favour of a biannual social partnership conference — to be organised jointly with the CTU. This takes the breath away.

But nevertheless the idea should not go unchallenged. It is, after all, an ultra right-winger — though he is a Labour supporter of the telecommunications trade union and one which is in merger negotiations with the employers. Blair took it a stage further and proposed that it be a biannual conference with the government.

None of this of course is in the cards as things stand. But from the logic of social partnership it is only a matter of time. If the unions are to subordinate themselves to the employers' interests at the level of the workplace, why not at national level too? That is clearly how Jackson sees it.

What was noticeable at the TUC was that not a single heavyweight, either in the unions or government, raised a murmur against the concept of social partnership. Many of them, in any case, are looking to such deals to offset the possibility of extended union recognition under new Labour's Employment Relations Act. If they are going to have to recognise unions, the employers would rather do so in a deal that involves the union committing itself to "partnership". Examples of this are Unilever, Barclay's Bank, Tesco, Littlewoods and the Legal and General. They listen with interest — and no doubt a menus grin of triumph — when John Monks tells them that "the days of 'them and us' and industrial confrontation are over".

Unfortunately, however, it was not just a deepening of social partnership which marked out this Congress as so right-wing. On the European Union and EMU conference rejected the new Labour line of "wait until the conditions are right"... but voted instead for a policy well to the right of the government's, calling for Britain to get into EMU as soon as possible. The key to this was the refusal of the major unions with policies to one degree or another against EMU to argue and vote for their position.

Bill Morris suddenly reappeared current GTOU opposition to EMU as meaning "we should not go in until the economic conditions are right". The most spectacular collapse was UNISON, which despite a clear conference policy against early entry to EMU decided to abstain in the vote. If UNISON had argued and voted against it the motion could have succeeded.

TUC leaders have long been preparing the pack in signing up British Steel workers to a new pension scheme in order to pursue their vision of the European social model. Now they can claim a Congress mandate for their policies.

Yet the European social model is evaporating even as they champion it. Maybe they haven't noticed the Thatcherite agenda being driven through by Social Democratic parties who are in government in 13 of the 15 EU countries? There was a limited TUC backlash against this right-wing agenda, at least at the level of the relationship between new Labour and the unions.

Fire Brigade Union leader Ken Cameron ruffled a few feathers when he openly proposed, at the Tribune rally, the breaking of the link between Labour and the unions.

Allies

Referring to new Labour's predominant relationship with the employers, he argued that "the Labour Party no longer seeks us as their natural allies and we can no longer rely on them to be our natural allies".

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Back to the Future

A new column by
Charlie van Gelderen

When even Labour’s right wing was left

As we face this year’s annual conference of the Labour Party, the third since the current government was elected with an overwhelming Labour majority, it is useful to look back at the May 1945 conference that discussed the programme for the general election, in which Labour was set to win a landslide victory.

The overwhelming impression from reading the report of that conference is that the delegates largely reflected the views of the working class. Workers in the mining and steel industries, still in the armed forces, were demanding change.

The References and Firemen’s union argued: “Let us make up our minds now that victory will only come when our people fight for a socialist programme to give all workers a full life.”

Other contributions to the discussion echoed this. Delegates were unhappy that the National Executive’s proposals, while paying lip service to socialism, were not specific about what they meant.

An amendment made it clear that the programme would include the transfer to public ownership of the large-scale building, heavy industry, and all forms of banking, transport, fuel and power. It required “immediate legislation to ensure that the national assets, services and industries are regulated and democratically controlled and operated in the interests of workers engaged therein and of consumers.”

Even Arthur Deakin, the right-wing hunter who succeeded Ernest Bevin as general secretary of the TGWU, was caught up in the euphoric mood. He called for the direct participation of all the workers in the medium of representation by the Trade Unions... at all levels.

Several delegates stressed the need to bring the manufacture of armaments under public ownership and control.

Clockey (AEU) said: “We have all paid tribute, in many ways, to the slogan, ‘Workers of the World Unite, you have only your chains to lose’, the slogan which has been used to greater effect is ‘Armament makers of the world unite, you have (only) your profits to lose.’

The future Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, also voiced his concern that the issue of public ownership was not included in the National Executive’s report. “Unless the Labour Party is returned to power to bring in a planned system, a planned economy and public ownership, they (the returning armed forces), will come back to unemployment and despair.”

Internationalism also featured in the discussion, particularly in the contributions from Dennis Healey and H Short (Eton and Slough DLP), who said: “The struggle internationally is an international one... and then he went on to quote from an interview in Pravda by Mikoian, a veteran and loyal Stalinist from the Soviet leadership. Mikoian spoke of the terrible conditions he had witnessed in Berlin at the end of the war and then went on to say: “Our moral standards and traditions compel a humanitarian attitude towards the peaceful rehabilitation of a conquered people.”

Stalin must have forgotten to instruct his troops on these lines when they entered Berlin. These sentiments were not in line with Trotsky’s Red Army than Stalin’s.

There can be no doubt that it was the general mood expressed at this 1945 conference, reflecting the mood of the working class, which eventually resulted in Labour’s victory and its position taken on a radical programme.

Of course the programme proposed was socialist. It promised nationalisation of key sections of the economy but made no mention of workers’ control, and did not include the demand made by many delegates for the nationalisation of the Bank of England and the stock exchange.

Real power was left in the hands of the capitalist class. There were no confirmed reports that when Dennis Healey moved an amendment to the proposed small-plant Plan, he was supported.

The report failed to include the demands for nationalisation of coal, the railways, public utilities etc. Herbert Morrison shook a finger at him and said: “Young man, you have only your chains to lose.”

This procedure will itself be open to challenge because it was not laid down in the Partnership into Power document which supposedly set out all these mechanisms. In the end however the result will be the same. Conference will only have the option to accept or reject the text on offer - and no price for guessing what the outcome will be.

Another set of policy documents will come for an initial debate and will then go back through policy forums for return for endorsement next year. The scope of areas covered by this is vast.

This text covers Industry, Culture and Agriculture for example (and no, I don’t know what Culture got slipped in there).

The text covers Industry, Culture and Agriculture for example (and no, I don’t know what Culture got slipped in there).

“Democracy and Citizenship” is shot through with the familiar Blairite tenets that undermine any meaningful understanding of democracy even in Parliamentary terms; it tells us that “rights without responsibilities can lead to greed and a concentration merely on ‘self-interest’.

Frightening

As NCB member Liz Davies points out in the critique of the document she wrote for the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network: “the implications of this approach are frightening; the suggestion that democratic rights can only be safeguarded, that they are not in themselves self-evident.”

Liz also goes on to point out the staggering omissions in the text - no rights for asylum seekers, a weak Freedom of Information Bill, no mention of the Official Secrets Act etc.

“Britain and the World” deals with the world economic situation, Britain and Europe, development and much more.

As Bernie Moss says in his critique for the SOGN: “the main orientation of foreign policy is wrong for the same reason that domestic policy is wrong, because it is based on the false idea that the competitive market economy and free trade will bring about prosperity and equality to everyone...”

He goes on to explain why the left in the Labour Party needs to be opposed to globalisation, to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and to the single currency.

Conference does have a slot for what are known as “contemporary resolutions”, which have to be on subjects not covered by the policy documents.

There is nothing laid down as to how many of these resolutions will be debated – last year it was four. Essentially will be chosen by the major unions as these have the deciding weight of votes.

Competing subjects of interest include condemnation of the attempts to ban industrial action by the firefights, opposition to privatisation of the Post Office and to privatisation of air traffic control as well as a long list of worthy but meaningless motions on every subject under the sun.

If the big unions such as TGWU and UNISON were to go for one of the sharper ones this would give a focus to the undoubted disquiet that exists in many CLPs.

However despite the Guardian’s speculation that this will happen, more sober political assessment suggests that sadly it is unlikely. Not only did union leaders lack the possibility last year but their performance at the TUC has shown them as abject devotees of the Blair line.

While it is important that the left continues to raise its voice on conference floor whenever it can, in the opposition to privatisation, defence of the welfare state and other crucial issues will be more likely to be determined by campaigning nationally and locally with others on the same principles than in sterile debates with the Blair mafia.
Patten's cosmetic changes to RUC mask new offensive

A superficial proposal to change the name of the force and its badges has been denounced as an insult by serving members and others. The rest of the report consists of proposals to modernise the RUC, covering issues like accountability, community policing, management, structures and training. There are 14 points on peace, indicating that the main torture in the background.

The other modernisation recommendations are intended as an aid to coalition. The main thrust of this is 28 proposals on the composition of the force and recruitment. Number 12 calls for an equal number of Catholics and Protestants to be recruited. Scattered throughout the report are hints that former republican activists are to be absorbed into the state forces. For example, the full time reserve is to be abolished but the part time reserve is to be expanded. Non-operational sections of the RUC are to be privatised and transferred to local groups, including community groups, are to be encouraged.

The report suggests that the force is to change from a uni-polar sectarianism to a bi-polar sectarianism, giving the nationalist bourgeoisie jobs and political influence. But this is simply aspiration – the real RUC is to continue in business as a unionist force.

The report for equal recruitment from the police is progressing, but under existing fair employment legislation. Even the most optimistic forecasts talk about 20 or 30 years to make the changes – to arrive at a revamp of the old colonial royal Irish constabulary (RUC) – which was over 90 per cent Catholic.

The proposals on police and public order give the games away. The force is to increase over double its size at the start of the troubles. It is to expand the part-time reserve and is charged with attaining sufficient force to put down substantial public disorder that may return at revolts. 'Nationalist' and other supporters of reform argued that to establish a clear break with the past, the Commission should recommend the withdrawal of emergency measures. However, Patten, while importantly advocating the closing of the holding centres and increased regulation of emergency laws, actually echoes the government view that such powers should go but only when the security situation allows.

Similarly, the report does not call for an immediate end of the use of plastic bullets. The current command structure – which includes officers implicated in the serious ill-treatment of detainees, shoot-to-kill allegations and collusion with loyalist paramilitary groups – remains intact.

The RUC is to remain armed and retain the use of plastic bullets – in fact it is to widen its arsenal to give it greater flexibility in repression.

What emerges after the dust settles is in fact a major offensive against the working class and Progressive forces. They would change the sectarian character of the RUC but not end it. They would make the force more effective and include 19 points on co-operation that would integrate the Garda – the police force of the formally independent southern state, into a new police co-operation covering the two islands and with a massive database on political militancy.

What gives the offensive its special edge is that, while the proposed changes are on the horizon, nationalist support for the police is demanded now in proposals 113-117. One group of workers – teachers – are specifically listed as required to endorse and recruit for the newly RUC.

The response from the nationalist bourgeoisie has been one of enthusiastic support. The Dublin government, the SDFLP and the Catholic church have immediately endorsed the report.

Sinn Fein are described as being more cautious. In fact they are moving through a set routine which in the past has signalled a way of accepting difficult elements of the peace process. The way in which this works is that the republican leadership, who rule with a rod of iron, discerningly put their talks of the mantle of power and confess that they don't know the answer. They can't decide if this is the new police service or the old RUC?

This opens the way for consultation with a confused and demoralised base whom the Sinn Fein leadership patronisingly describe as the most politically sophisticated in Europe while sternly banning any organised resistance within their movement.

To provide plenty of clues to indicate the correct answer. The August festival centred on a presentation of a demonstrator being attacked by the RUC. One of his arm bands bears the slogan “Disband the RUC” – but this is almost illegible. Below the new slogan is revealed – new police service now!

Hiding under the label of anonymous human rights activists, Sinn Fein have provided a ten-point order that supporters are to use to measure progress. Because this focuses mainly on an equality agenda, the Patton report passes some points and fails others.

The community paper Andersonstown News summarised the remorseless reformist logic of this in an editorial. We should accept the 'step forward' and work for further changes.

Right now the resistance comes from the far right with the Unionist rejection of any change in the RUC. The likelihood is that the peace process will fail to the right. Imperialism will put all the gains that it has made so far in its back pocket and look for a further retreat from republicanism to begin the process all over again.

There is one danger for the forces of capitalism and imperialism. Timebombs like the sectarian siege of the Garvaghy Road leave open the danger of a direct confrontation between the RUC and the nationalist working class. Given the levels of demobilisation it is not the most likely outcome, but if it occurred it would sweep away in an instant all the pretence of reform in the Patton report!
The only black people in Lithuania appear to be in this camp

Lithuanian jail helps to defend “fortress Europe”

Steve Cohen & Dave Landau

The East is Lithuania is the town of Pabarade. A main industry in the town is imprisoning asylum-seekers, migrants and immigrants. Pabarade prison (known officially in Stalinist double-speak as the Foreigner’s Registration Centre) has about 200 detainees – men, women and children. A couple of years ago it held about 1000 prisoners.

However the International Organisation of Migration then became complicit in paying for and arranging the deportation of the majority of prisoners. This was part of a programme called “humanitarian” exercise. However it was an offer many prisoners could not refuse. Lithuania has no concept of temporary release or stay on “compassionate grounds” – so the alternative is indefinite imprisonment.

This is imprisonment in a camp where there is no formal education for the children, where there are no work opportunities, where prisoners are controlled by the threats of violence. There are reported examples of a Sri Lankan refugee being beaten in front of his family because he refused an order to remove garbage from the camp and another Sri Lankan being beaten by several guards because he wanted to use the telephone.

Why refugees in Lithuania?

The camp is full of refugees from war and persecution from the old USSR. However many are also from the Indian subcontinent. Lithuania is no magpie.

This begs the question as to what are Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans and Afghans doing in Lithuania? There is a two-fold answer. First they were double-crossed by criminal racketeers who, for a fortune, promised to get them into mainstream Europe.

Second the countries that are creating the European Union are intent on creating a ring of buffer client states which will act as a first line of exclusion from Fortress Europe.

The Nordic countries, in particular Sweden, Norway and Denmark, are acting as financiers for the erection of immigration control around the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. These Baltic countries are in effect on trial.

Not yet fully capitalist, but in transition to capitalism, the role is to act as buffer zones to control migration into Europe. Once they have shown they can fulfil this role then they too may be offered the holy grail of millennium capitalism – membership of the European Union.

The Nordic states and Sweden in particular are quite open about this process. Each year the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs issues a report on its Immigration and Refugee Policy. Its 1997 Report states:

“...A main objective of Sweden’s and the other Nordic countries is co-operation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is to approximate these countries’ refugee and migration policies to those of Western Europe.

“...As a result the Baltic States will cease to be attractive to refugees in transit countries. This should also facilitate these countries eventual accession to the EU.

“...As a result of the Swedish initiative in the summer of 1996 that led to the setting up of a Council for Baltic Sea Co-operation, exchange and co-operation on migration matters on the Baltic Sea region will be intensified.

The Task Force that has been set up to combat organised crime in the area will also deal with the smuggling in human beings and illegal immigration.

Fortress Lithuania

Lithuania is itself becoming a fortress. Each year it submits a progress report to the EU as part of its preparation for membership. Its 1997/98 report describes the development of controls on the Belarus border:...

An additional 1,000 border policemen have been placed at the border... all the subdivisions of the border police have been supplied with modern radio communications equipment (Motorola means of communication (152 Land Rover all-terrain vehicles furnished with radio communication equipments), watchtowers are built (10 of 20 planned towers have already been built) where the observation equipment of the firm Thompson-CSF is installed... Following the contract with Siemens AG computerised border information is being installed and will become one of the basic elements of the future integration into the Schengen information system. The only blunder of comfort in all this is that it is Siemens who have a contract with the British Home Office – and it is the incompehence of Siemens that has now totally disrupted the operaions of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

More on Pabarade

All refugees awaiting expulsion are now kept in Pabarade. The only black people in Lithuania appear to be in this camp. The Lithuanian Red Cross has established an excellent project to support these refugees – The Legal Assistance Project for Refugees. Pabarade is not a concentration camp or a death camp. It has no gas ovens. However its physical presence of barred wire and emaciated faces echoes the potent imagery of these camps. The racism of immigration laws that necessitate prisoners like Pabarade is no more justifiable than the anti-Semitism of the Nazis.

Lithuania is itself a graveyard of the Jews. That the country the Baltic states are memories and memorials to the tens of thousands liquidated by the Nazis. There is one such memorial in the town of Pabarade. There is another memorial a few kilometres away in the town of Sventojurys. It is ironic to learn that Pabarade prison camp is to become the administrative control of the police at Sventojurys. The moral of this story seems to be that history does not automatically teach any lessons. Learning has to be a conscious effort. Half a century of Soviet occupation has manifestly blocked all such efforts.

Release the prisoners

Everyone opposed to racism and immigration controls is asked to:

- For more information/offer of help write to: The Legal Assistance Project for Refugees, Gedimino Avenue, 2600 Vilnius, Lithuania.
- In the UK contact Campaign Against Pabarade, c/o GIAN, 400 Cheetham Hill Rd, Manchester M3 9LE.

Campaigners gag racist Jensen

What are Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans and Afghans doing in Lithuania?

Dave Landau
ON FRIDAY 17 September People Against Eugenics, a coalition supported by the Genetics Engineering Network, Disability Action Network, National Assembly for People Against Racism, Searchlight and the claims that Jews and blacks are an “exotic” people (i.e. a meeting of the Galton Institute from hearing racist speakers, Clyde Whitby and Arthur Jensen. The Galton Institute, which used to be called the Eugenics Society, had its 25th annual conference in the meeting hall of the Royal Zoological Society.

The Institute has the support of a number of respectable academics and had speakers from organisations such as Medical Research as well as an Oxford Professor.

On the same platform was Richard Lynn who, on the Thursday spoke about creating a “quality polity”. A hundred years ago, and was interviewed in the far right magazine “Right Now”. He advocated immigration control to prevent race mixing which would pollute the British people.

On the Friday Glyde Whitney, who wrote a lavatory foreword to a book by David Duke, former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, which claims that Jews and blacks are conspiring against white Americans, was due to speak. He was to be followed by the Annual Gal-
**S-SOCIALIST OUTLOOK**

**Time to Fight for OUR Values!**

Elkie Dee

**THINGS can only get better**, we were told on election night, May 1st, 1997, as Labour gained a huge majority in Parliament. In the following months, trade unions were eager to make demands on the new government, led by Tony Blair, and the material changes achieved were a sign of things to come. Trade unionists and activists who had been in the trenches for years were now well placed to make their voices heard.

In local government, a key pledge in Labour’s election manifesto was to abolish compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) and replace it with “a duty to obtain best value.” Activists in the Campaign for a Fighting Democratic Union (CFDU) and others saw the dangers in this policy quite quickly. It was clear to many working in local government that while Best Value removed some requirements on management about how competitively tendered services were sought, competition and market testing were still required.

Moreover, the duty to obtain best value would cover all areas of work in local government, rather than specified ones as under CCT. Many services previously protected from privatisation were now under threat, such as libraries, social services, education and council services.

Councils now have to justify, continue to provide any service directly in-house. We need to view this policy in the context of continuing cuts in public spending, and the fact that council service agreements on Best Value have consistently been used to reduce costs. While the legislation is yet to become law, 37 pilot authorities and 17 second-tier authorities are testing Best Value projects, with a view to informing future legislation and guidance. These are halfway through the second year of carrying out Best Value service reviews and planning to implement changes. Trade unionists and activists working against local government cuts and privatisations cannot wait and see - we need to start organising now.

In Camden, these changes include closing libraries and selling off the buildings used, and considering market setting and internalisation for a number of services. Best Value has become the latest buzzword in the town hall to justify cuts, and the aim is to find cost savings of 3% per year. Every year and indefinitely these savings are in addition to any other funding cuts.

Ideas on alternative methods of service provision include transfers to housing associations, library books being issued from supermarkets, kiosks issuing library books and private law, accountancy and consultancy firms doing legal, financial and management work and processing benefit claims.

Non-profit authorities are already using this new jargon, too, and making plans to attack the workforces and services under the cloak of Best Value. Islington has privatised its housing benefit service under a volunteer contract, and its tendering, is transferring several large estates to housing associations and is seeking private tenders to run the Education service, doubtless as a profit. Despite the evidence to the contrary, UNISON’s bureaucracy argues that Best Value should be seen as a positive challenge and an opportunity for the union’s members in local government. “It is a chance to continuously improve services and effectively involve users in local communities in setting and monitoring standards”, requiring a “committed and enthusiastic response from elected members, managers and frontline staff.” Members should take advantage of their role as “key stakeholders”.

UNISON does call for a Best Employees Charter, but one which states Best Value, focusing on good pay and conditions, job security, training, open, consultative and transparent governance and decision making, and consumer rights, into account when contracting out.

None of these are in the union’s faith in the

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PFI: a profitable passport to Pimlico

A Teacher

IN RUSSIA, former Stalinists and criminals use their position in the state apparatus to get hold of public assets. In Britain the same process is called the Private Finance Initiative. It means that public assets such as school playgrounds and playing fields are handed over as sweeteners to private developers.

In September, Pimlico School Governors by one vote gave the go ahead for a PFI Scheme to design, build and run the school. This is despite the overwhelming opposition of parents and local residents.

The tendering process was a farce: in true Maltesi style, the final two bidders were owned by the same company. The decision was made by the smaller of the two staff at the School voted narrowly in favour of the deal after a speech in negotiation an claim there was no alternative.

Years of neglect by Westminster City Council, including not having the lowest Council tax in the country, meant that the building was not fit for purpose. However the DEEE and the Council wouldn’t listen to alternatives and are determined to push through with PFI.

Of course the cost to the public sector of the new building will be much higher because the State can borrow more cheaply than the private sector. The only reason PFI can be made to seem cheaper is by handing a quarter of an already cramped site to the developers.

With a site valued at £22m and 160 luxury flats the developer stands to make a vast profit. For the developers, the school is an afterthought and they could leave after a couple of years down the road leaving the Governors and the Council to cope with an even higher service charge with another business.

An acre of prime SW1 property is being handed over to a developer in return for the demolition and rebuilding. The Council is also committed to paying an annual fee for 35 years in return for the "service" i.e. the school.

The developer will control almost every aspect of running the school other than the teaching staff. Support and carestaff will be switched immediately to the developer and as their terms and conditions will only be protected for 6 months. It is another step to the privatisation of education in Westminster.

In the North of the Borough teachers and parents are fighting the introduction of an Education Action Zone. Nord Anglia, which is looking for contracts to run schools on a commercial basis, is already involved in the selection and training of Heads and senior staff.

The Council is pushing ahead under a Labour Government with policies which it didn’t dare try under the Tories.

There are a couple of lessons from the long battle against PFI at Pimlico. Firstly, the main reason the staff voted for it was that a layer of NUT members at Pimlico have gone over to Blair - not from any support of PFI but also on mixed ability teaching.

Secondly, there’s a spread of pressure to link up with other anti PFI campaigns in the NHS and elsewhere.

Some argued that this would make it “political” and lose some potential support. Of course, this approach simply disarmed us in the face of what is clearly a political attack on the public sector.

Teachers, already punch drunk from a series of changes to the curriculum and to working conditions, cannot look to the NUT leadership to protect them. Instead of standing up to Blanket and Blair, McAvoy attempts to appease them.

But PFI attacks on teachers’ conditions and the attack on comprehensive education, will provide plenty of scope for building among rank and file teachers and for the left to spread the lessons across the public sector.
Is the crisis in the world economy over?

Andrew Kilmister updates the analysis

A year ago, business pundits like George Soros and politicians like Margaret Thatcher declared that the world economy was in its most dangerous situation for 50 years. After a year of turmoil in East and South East Asia, the collapse of the Russian ruble and the panic resulting from the bankruptcy of the US 'hedge fund' Long-Term Capital Management put the stability of the world financial system in question. But in recent months the media and many economists have begun to talk of a new era of prosperity based on low inflation and steady growth. Does this mean that the world economic crisis is over and that capitalism has solved its economic problems? To answer this question, we need to look at how capital as a general system of accumulation functions as capital as a system. Capitalist economies are continuously producing crises - revealing their basic instability and unplanned nature. But these crises do not simply mean that the system is in a state of constant stagnation. Rather, crises can actually perform a positive function for capital; wiping out unprofitable companies and speculative ventures and laying the foundations for further growth and development. However, such temporary resolutions of a crisis do not alter the fundamental nature of the system. The contradictions and problems which gave rise to the initial crisis can be suppressed for a while but are likely to reoccur in new forms. How such developments are then resolved, either in the interests of labour or of capital cannot be predicted abstractly in advance. It depends upon the strength of class struggle and the quality of the leadership and activity of both the working class and the government.

Viewing the world economy from this perspective can help us understand the developments of the last year. The most dangerous features of the economic situation a year ago have been staved off by governments and international institutions like the IMF. But in doing so they have created new conditions which are likely to determine the struggles of the next twelve months.

In past issues of Socialist Outlook we have looked at three main, interlocking aspects of the world economic crisis: the stagnation in Japan, the bubble economy in the USA and the crisis in the international financial system. These three questions remain crucial today.

The Japanese economy continues to grow very slowly at best. It is true that so far the impact of this on the rest of the world economy has been relatively small, compared to what might have been expected from prolonged stagnation in such a large economy.

This is for two reasons. First, Japan's imports of fuels and services have always been fairly limited. So, slow growth has not meant a massive cutback in sales to the country. Second, the Japanese government has been able to avoid a massive recession and financial meltdown which would have meant the collapse of the country's banks as well as a collapse of its ability to attract investment from the US and Europe.

But it has only managed to do this through a huge expansion of government spending. The Japanese government budget deficit now stands at 6 per cent of GNP, twice the level of the Maastricht criteria for the EU economies. This is bound to mean fewer funds flowing from Japan to the rest of the world as Japanese capital invests at home in government bonds.

From a more long-term perspective, while Japanese manufacturers like Nissan are restructuring aggressively and real wages have fallen by around 7 per cent this year, the structural changes which free marketeers have argued for in Japanese services, agriculture and finance have not proceeded very far. Japan remains a significant drag on world growth.

The US economy has now become central to the immediate prospects for capitalism. Ironically, despite all the talk of 'globalisation', economic activity is becoming ever more polarised with growth centred in a few 'favoured' areas - Japan in the 1990s, South East Asia in the first half of the 1990s and the US today.

Half of the increase in world imports over the last year went to just one economy, the USA. But it is important not to be taken in by exaggerated accounts of an economic 'Americanisation of the world'. As Robert Brenner has shown, US growth has been lower in the 1990s than in the 1980s, and was lower in the 1980s than in the 1970s.

Despite a recent upturn in productivity growth in manufacturing, US productivity growth remains generally slower than in Europe. Income inequality is at record levels and real wages are growing very slowly after falling through the 1980s. Even low unemployment rates look less impressive when compared against the dramatic rise in the prison population.

Perhaps most seriously, while the US government is running a budget surplus, public borrowing has been replaced by an explosion of private borrowing. Corporate debt doubling as a percentage of GDP in the last two years and net household borrowing and personal bankruptcy rates at record levels.

This borrowing has fuelled a dramatic stock market boom and an increasing balance of payments deficit. US capitalism is gambling heavily on the belief that information technology related industries will fundamentally reshape production in a wide range of areas - finance, the media and leisure industries, retailing - and that the USA will have a decisive lead over its competitors in this process.

It would be wrong to ignore the way in which the USA has been able to achieve a competitive edge over Western Europe and Japan in a number of fast growing new areas. But so far there is little hard evidence that these new industries will lead to the kind of major transformations which will justify current US share prices.

And yet, the productivity increases which have been achieved in the US seem to result more from outsourcing, downsizing and an assault on working practices than from a significant technological breakthrough.

If the gabble of US capital doesn't win out and share prices fall significantly, then given the extent to which share ownership has become more important there over the last decade, a US recession becomes a real possibility. And with the US accounting for such a large proportion of international demand the effects of this would be felt internationally.

Over the last year a key strategic objective for international capitalism has been to avoid a simultaneous end to the US bubble and a collapse of the international financial markets. The aim has been to cool down the US economy before the next round of currency crises in the 'emerging markets'.

However, this has been difficult to achieve as money has flowed out of Asia, Russia and Latin America encouraging the US financial boom. Nonetheless, up until now the markets have been stabilised temporarily.

The biggest challenge for the US government and the IMF has been the crisis in Brazil. By managing the immediate situation quite cleverly, allowing a controlled devaluation backed up by a massive IMF package, they managed to avoid both the panic seen earlier in Indonesia and South Korea and a strong impact from Brazil on the US stock market.

But in the longer term the effects are not so favourable. The Brazilian economy remains stagnant and the impact of the IMF programme has been to undercut dramatically support for the Cardoso government, a key element in the neo-liberal offensive in Latin America.

Further events in Brazil have thrown a number of other South American countries into economic turmoil and have caused major problems in the Mercosur trading block of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The most important destination for imperialist investment capital remains China. Again, the World Bank and IMF have managed to stabilise the situation. China has not devalued the yen, and while growth has slowed, it remains reasonably strong.

But the weight of bad debts in the Chinese banking system is becoming more and more widely recognised, as are other potential barriers to successful capitalist exploitation there - labour unrest, ecological destruction, regional imbalances.

In the rest of Asia, declines in output have largely ceased and stock markets are rising. Countries like South Korea are now running large budget surpluses. But when The Economist bemoaned last month, there has been relatively little fundamental restructuring in East and South East Asia as a result of the crisis of 1997 and the opening up to foreign capital in areas like the financial sector is still quite limited. As yet the most ambitious neo-liberal projects remain unfulfilled.

The other key project of international capital over the last year is of course the Euro. Up until now the EU economies, particularly Germany, the heart of the Euro have been weaker than was expected.

To some extent, this is a satisfactory development for the US. The dollar has kept inflation down in the USA while the US has been able to use it in its importance as an immediate negotiating point as a bargaining counter in pushing for concessions in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and elsewhere.

But again, in the longer term the relative weakness of the Euro can be a source of concern, as US capital flows into the US and feeds financial speculation there.

Over the last year the potential nightmare for capitalism of the coming together of crises in Japan, the US, the rest of Asia and international markets has been avoided. This has meant that the economic situation has appeared somewhat better than was possible a year ago. But this stability masks the continuation of many of the old trends and conditions in new forms. Japan continues to be close to recession.

The US economic upturn has become significantly more speculative over the last two years, as the world economy become more dependent on it. Much of Latin America and other regions remain vulnerable to currency and financial crises. The neo-liberal offensive has not yet been able to transform the East and South East Asian economies.

To see capitalism as having restored global economic stability on a long-term basis would be as much of an error as to believe that each particular aspect of global economic crisis will automatically transform itself into a generalised crisis of the system.

But if instability is inevitable under capitalism, the outcome of such instability is not.

What depends on the response of the working class to economic crisis. The successes of international capital over the last year have largely arisen from the weakness of resistance to its strategies in a number of key countries.

The strengthening of such resistance will be the key factor which decides what the outcome of the global economic crisis over the next twelve months will be.
**IO SOCIALIST OUTLOOK**

Indonesian Trade Unionists back East Timor

The following statement was made by the National Front for Indonesian Labour Struggle in Jakarta on September 11:

The ballot, offered as a way to resolve the 24-year-old crisis in East Timor, has been rejected. The results show that the Timorese people reject the special autonomy offered by the Indonesian government and have chosen to be a free nation.

The Timorese struggle to be a free nation have gone on for many centuries. Gunboat colonialism and then against the militarist Indonesian government. They have had a high price of both physically and materially to wage that struggle.

The Indonesian military invasion since 1975 has cost more than 200,000 lives and led to many hundreds of thousands of injuries and beatings and rapes. The international community's response to the military acts of Indonesia depended on the Cold War interests of each country at the time. After the ballot was completed and a series of events of pro-independence forces, UN staff and journalists by pro-integration militia members (supported by Indonesian military and police) committed the majority of the international community has again taken a position on the issue of East Timor. In coming years, the international community has condemned the Indonesian government who were thought of as no longer able to provide security in the territory. Condemnation and international economic sanctions have not stopped Australia from its government and through the call for bans on Indonesian products buying by Australian trade unions.

In one instance, there was even the incident of the flag burning demonstration outside an Indonesian consulate. The response to this by several forces was to retaliate and burn the Australian flag and to inspect the Embassy in Indonesia.

These actions show the low level of the contesting of the history of the struggle in East Timor and the shifting of the forces from the mass movement carried out in East Timor to a conflict between two major powers.

In responding to the situation that has arisen since the ballot in East Timor, the FNBFI hereby express:

- Our full support for the results of the ballot in East Timor as a reflection of the aspirations of the East Timorese to determine their own fate.
- Our condemnation of the anti-peaceful and destructive acts committed by the pro-autonomy forces of TNI and POLRI.
- Our condemnation of all acts of murder and destruction by TNI and POLRI committed against the innocent civilians of East Timor.
- End to all support given by the Indonesian government to the militias.
- End to the sending of Indonesian security forces to East Timor for a period of six months.
- The withdrawal of TNI and POLRI from East Timor.
- The withdrawal of all troops from the East Timor.
- The withdrawal of all forces to respect the ballot which is a reflection of the aspirations of the people of East Timor.

*Labour, In Common, 21/9/1998*
Western governments share blame for Timor slaughter

Noam Chomsky

THE TRAGEDY of East Timor has been one of the most awesome events of this terrible century. It is also of particular moral significance for us, for the simplest and most obvious of reasons. Western complicity has been direct and decisive.

The expected corollary also holds: unlike the crimes of official enemies, these can be ended by means that have always been readily available, and still are...cutting diplomatic relations, and military sources. Australian journalists reported in July "that hundreds of modern assault rifles, grenades and mortars have been stockpiled, ready for use if the autonomy (within Indonesia) option is rejected at the ballot box."

They warned that the army-run militias might be planning a violent takeover of much of the territory if, despite the terror, the popular will would be expressed. And there was well understood by the "foreign friends," who also knew how to bring the terror to an end. It is not a matter of delay, harassment, and keep to evasive and ambiguous reactions that the Indonesian generals could easily interpret as a "green light" to the NATO bombings.

In a display of extraordinary courage and heroism, virtually the entire population made their way to the ballot-boxes, many emerging from hiding to do so...Immediately, the Indonesian occupying forces reacted as had been predicted by observers on the ground. The weapons that had been stockpiled, and the forces that had been mobilized, could not be contained.

They proceeded to drive out anyone who might bring the terror this story to the outside world and cut off communications, while unleashing, expelling tens of thousands of people to an unknown fate, burning and destroying, murdering priests and nuns, and no one knows how many other hapless victims.

The capital city of Dili has been virtually destroyed. In the countryside, where the army can ramage without much fear of reaction, one can only guess what has taken place. Even before the latest outrages, highly credible Church sources had reported 3,500 killed in 1999, well beyond the scale of atrocities in Kosovo prior to the NATO bombings.

The scale might even reach the level of Rwanda if the "foreign friends" keep to timid expressions of disapproval while insisting that internal security in East Timor is the responsibility of the Government of Indonesia, and we don't want to take that responsibility away from them" — the official position of the State Department for a few days before the August 30 referendum. The US, backed by a few hypocritical countries, has been为准 true, this year, that internal security in Kosovo "in the responsibility of the Government of Yugoslavia, and we don't want to take that responsibility away from the people"...Indonesia's crimes in East Timor have been vastly greater, even just this year, not to mention their actions during the years of occupation and terror; Western-backed, we should note, even allow ourselves to forget.

Thus, Indonesia has no claim whatsoever to the territory it invaded and occupied, apart from the claim based on support by the Great Powers. The "foreign friends" also understand that direct intervention in the occupied territory, however justified, might not be necessary. If the United States were to take a clear, unambiguous, and public stand, informing the Indonesian generals that this game is over, that might very well suffice. The same has been true for the past quarter-century, as the US provided critical military and diplomatic support for the invasion and atrocities.

These were directed by General Subarto, compiling yet another chapter in his gruesome record, always with Western support, and often acclaim. He was once again praised by the Clinton Administration.

He is "our kind of guy," the Administration declared as he visited Washington shortly before he fell from grace by losing control and dragging his troops on IMF orders.

If changing the former green light to a new red light does not suffice, Washington and its allies have ample means at their disposal: termination of arms sales to the killers; initiation of war crimes trials against the army leadership — not an insignificant threat; cutting the economic support funds that are, incidentally, not without their ambiguities; putting a hold on Western energy corporations and multinationals, along with other investment and commercial activities.

There is also no reason to shy away from peacekeeping forces to replace the occupying terrorist army, if that proves necessary. Indonesia has no authority to "invade" foreign intervention, as President Clinton urged, any more than Saddam Hussein had authority to invite foreign intervention in Kuwait, or Nazi Germany in France in 1944 for that matter. If dispatch of peacekeeping forces is disguised by such prettified terminology, it is of no great importance, as long as we do not succumb to illusions that prevent us from understanding what has happened, and what it portends.
World counts cost of imperialism and 'vandalism'

Paul Hubert

McLibel protests continue

Their opponents estimate McDonald's spent £1 million worldwide on the case.

Leaflet campaigns against new stores, unionisation struggles by some McDonald's workers and mass anti-McDonald's protests by French farmers opposing the 'free trade' drive of American monopolies.

For Lenin, the coming of the epoch of imperialism signified the end of the period in which capitalism had played a historically progressive role by revolutionising and developing the productive forces.

From now on, with the bulk of the earth's surface carved up between the rival imperialist powers, the century was certain to involve a succession of wars for markets and access to raw materials. But it would also be a period of revolutions, in which the exploited and oppressed would be obliged to fight back and struggle for power against the might of imperialism.

Lenin's immense strength in developing this analysis was that he saw the struggle to deal with the need for development of a conscious, organised revolution -ary mass movement, at the national and international level if these revolutionary struggles were to succeed.

On this issue, too, Lenin's contribution gives vital perspective on today's struggles.
Hand-wringing liberals cannot solve eco crisis

John Lister

Marxists may have been too slow to rise to the challenge of developing an analysis of the growing environmental disaster created by imperialism: but Marxism offers the only serious answer to the most fundamental question of all - what is to be done to reverse the crisis?

All manner of well-intentioned liberals and environmentalists have developed various and creative solutions to the ways in which capitalism - led by the dominant national monopolies - and the old Stalinist regimes have poisoned, wasted and destroyed the earth's environment.

But when it comes down to offering a fundamental alternative, they all stop short.

Many turn to emphasise the "more" duty of the capitalist, whether to boycott the most offensive multinationals or to combine in political activity to press for action by governments or by international organisations.

Others seek to devise ever-more sophisticated ways in which the very companies and profiteers who caused the damage can be pressured through taxation or through treaties to moderate their excesses.

But while many of the facts it parades are sufficient to create anger and frustration, the conclusions and recommendations of GEO 2000 embody precisely the weaknesses outlined above.

The report shows a world in chaos and riven by grotesque inequalities arising from capitalist exploitation.

It is no coincidence that this pattern of deprivation and environmental degradation runs alongside the massive expansion of the global role of imperialist capitalism.

The report points out that by 1996 speculative trading in foreign exchange amounted to a massive $350 trillion, more than ten times the world's Gross Domestic Product ($30 trillion).

The total revenue of the world's 500 companies was $1.1 trillion, dwarfing the total of $250 billion invested by private companies in a select number of newly developing countries, and the miserable $50 billion of western governments' combined development aid.

As the flows of private cash have increased, so the flow of aid for "aid" programmes has been cut back, complains UNEP, "leading, in some cases, to the wholesale privatisation of public sector and multilateral agen-

But while the imperialist banks and finance houses can be expected to mop up cheap raw materials and exploit cheap labour while pocketing the profits, UNEP argues that "Ideally such measures must be simultaneously supported by international standards of the wealthy [...] upgrade the living standards of the disad/vantaged and increase sus-

"Who is leading this mission impossible? "Individuals are vitally important - they experience the environmental damage at first hand and they often know the best solutions."

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Another world is possible

Time to join the ATTAC!

African delegates issued a statement in which they condemned the stereotyping of Africa as victim and instead based their arguments on the deep tradition of resistance in their continent. They went on to say that "...we share a common experience of debt-induced austerity, massive unemployment, of the destruction of our environment and are being threatened with or are already being ravaged by wholesale privatization, by the destruction of public social services such as water, health, education, housing, transport, pensions, communications, electricity, infrastructure, food security and are being dispossessed of land and in addition of having our subsistence eroded by the dumping of the North's heavily subsidised commodities. We also emphasise the fact that neo-liberalism has serious negative consequences on women's rights, emancipation and development, and in addition, is leaving vast numbers of people helpless as epidemics like AIDS reach dramatic proportions in Africa."

They resolved to build regional and sub-regional networks to:

- develop a common understanding of the impact of neo-liberal policies and globalisation,
- build resistance to these and develop common strategies and find alternatives together to neo-liberalism in Africa,
- and co-operate with existing networks in their continent and with other activists internationally.

On the final day of the conference, participants joined other ATTAC members at a rally in Paris to symbolise their solidarity with the centre of the city behind the ATTAC banner which announced the construction of financial markets? Another world is possible.

The slogans and chants centred on fighting back neo-liberal budget cuts, placing the taxation burden on the rich and dismantling national and international solidarity.

The first coordinated international campaign is aimed at the new round of WTO negotiations at the 11th Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December. An international week of protest is planned for October 12-17. Each country will decide the nature of the action to be undertaken during the week.

A day of activities will be organised on 20 November, to mark the opening of the Seattle WTO meeting to discuss a new Multilateral Agreement on Investment.

A South African meeting will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November. A counter-meeting will be organised for the G7 summit in Okinawa, Japan, in July 2000.

Other activities include a Europe-wide "world petition" for taxation of financial speculation and the abolition of tax havens. This will be followed up with mobilisations including a Europe-wide demonstration in Brussels in the spring of 2000. Discussions are taking place as to the best way to start a campaign on this issue here in Britain. How can we link up with all those existing networks who are campaigning against neo-liberalism in their own ways?

How can we make trade union activists more aware that the attacks they face here in Britain are part of the same offensive faced by worker's world-wide?

We are interested in hearing part of these discussions contact ATTAC Britain c/o PO BOX 1104, London W1 3UN, women@attac.org.uk or 363054 e mail attac@attac.org

WOMEN IN BLACK AGAINST WAR

Eighth International Meeting

"Network of Women's Solidarity Against War"

Ulcinj, Montenegro

7-10 October 1999

IF YOU WANT PEACE - PREPARE PEACE

This year Women in Black are gathering for the first time in Montenegro. We have chosen to meet, exchange our thoughts, feelings and common experiences for different reasons: first, because this is a place on which it is possible that activists from all divided regions of the country that is still called FR Yugoslavia can come together.

Vojvodina, Serbia, Sandzak, Montenegro.

Second, this is one of the regions where foreign people with passports can come in, without visas. Third, the city of Ulcinj is on the Adriatic coast - we believe that we need the beauty of Mediterranean nature and scapes and languages and we can find there.

We invite participants to prepare 5 minutes in which they will inform us how they resist - individually or collectively - war, sexism, militarism, nationalism in the last year. Translation is simultaneous.

Called by Women in Black Belgrade, Spain, Belgium, Italy, and Women in Black London: c c cockburn@ig.com the end of July.
GRAFFITI on Belfast walls last year compared Gerry Adams to Michael Collins, with the implied threat that if he, too, commits acts would meet the same fate as the main signatory of the 1921 Treaty with Britain which partitioned the country.

A more apt comparison might be Yasser Arafat since Adams and the Republican leadership are now locked into a process which, as has been pointed out often in these pages, is destined to lead to the very opposite of the aims of the republicans.

The Unionists know that, which is why they are increasing the bluster; most recently in their "concern" at the threats by the Provos against joyriders and other anti-social behaviour, reports DAVID COEN.

THE REPUBLICANS' main goal is to achieve their two Ministerial places on the Executive, which is to implicitly recognise the Northern State.

They have already accepted the Unionist veto on Irish unity and are almost in a position of having to admit that 25 years of armed struggle has achieved precisely nothing.

Disarmament would be to admit this publicly hence its difficulty, though according to the Independent on Sunday, IRA leaders did promise this to Blair — on condition Sinn Fein were allowed into the Executive. Even then, the Unionists refused to play ball, believing they can extract more from the Republicans in Mitchell's review.

It is likely that more will be exacted. The Unionists' grandstanding over the Patten report on the RUC shows their position clearly.

They don't even want the symbolic changes: uniforms, judges and photographs of the Queen in every station. Most Unionists want the old pre-1972 Stormont band and want to keep the RUC in its original pristined sectarian shape.

Even if the Republicans surrender their arms and cheered Orange marches down every nationalist area, a sizeable section of Unionists would still not allow them into any position of power.

British backing

But symbolic surrender by the Republicans is what they are after and they know they can't lose — because in the end they have the support of the British ruling class, including Blair.

The Republicans will either make more concessions or they will be put out, and the Unionists and the British can resume the war in much more favourable conditions.

Why then the attempted importation of arms by the IRA which the Unionists made so much of? One reason is to keep the more militaristic of their supporters happy; after all, the rank and file have been assured that "not an ounce of Sentex" would be handed over.

A more sinister motive is suggested by the nature of the weapons intercepted by the police; these were mostly short arms, and while it was reported that those arrested in the US had claimed they were for use against the Army and the RUC, it seems much more likely that they were for internal "security", i.e. against disidents.

The dilemma of the Republican leadership is this: 25 years of armed struggle has yielded no more than a seat at the conference table and a deal which they would have had under the 1974 Sunningdale Agreement. Seamus Mallon, Deputy First Minister until resigning in protest at the antics of the Unionists, called the Stormont Agreement "Sunningdale for slow learners".

The "cutting edge" against the Northern State and the British has, apart from a brief period around the Hunger Strikes in 1981, been the armed struggle. Now they have to explain the futility of this to their supporters. Clever games such as betting that the Unionists would refuse to deal, or (a favourite among some of their supporters in the Dublin media) the idea that if they sit tight for twenty years demographic changes will give the nationalists a majority, are merely sops to a disgruntled membership.

No alternative

But there is no "Plan B": if abandoning the armed struggle and negotiating fails, then there is no alternative to hitting the bullets and making the best of it within a (mildly) reformed six-County Stansted.

However long it takes, however many further concessions have to be made before the Unionists deal (and as we predict sooner or later be disarmed), however many appeals to Blair's best instincts, the republican heart of Fianna Fail, in the end there will be a bitter pill to be swallowed by the republican rank and file.

At this point the rumbling dissenters, those currently kept out of the pubic eye by "visits" to the homes of disidents might erupt into something more serious requiring a return to the use of armed force, this time used against its own members.

You can bet that when this starts to happen the Unionists will be weeping bitter tears over the exile of nationalist youth for anti-social activities, will be quite urgent the use of weapons against republican disidents.

Dissidents

So how should the swelling band of Republican dissidents and socialists respond to stalemate? They must resist the temptation of militarism.

A generation of heroic and dedicated guerrillas, at best, fought the British to a standstill. A smaller and more isolated group returning to war now, while they might manage a few spectacle in Britain", could be annihilated, if only because the British would have the excuse to unleash again the loyalist death squads.

They must refuse on any account to give up their weapons; to do so would be to commit themselves into the hands the RUC, the armed wing of Unionism. Local defence committees should supervise the protection of each individual.

They should oppose all Orange marches and actively participate in local committees. They should fiercely oppose any hint of sectarianism in their own ranks and should open/maintain contact with loyalist working class organisations who have not participated in sectarian violence.

Socialist

Most of all, they must begin the building of a socialist party on the island which challenge the ruling classes in Britain and Ireland and the sectarianism which they foster.

Socialists in Britain should continue to oppose the Stormont Agreement.

The essential principle which must be kept in mind is this: the Six Country state cannot be reformed, not by Tony Blair, not by Sinn Fein Ministers in the Executive. Sooner or later it must be destroyed.

While we support the cease-fire, we oppose the Stormont Agreement for what it represents: another British attempt to stabilise its rule in Ireland.

We oppose it because of the way it sets in concrete the sectarian divide in the North of Ireland and we are the wield of which the Republican leadership has betrayed its principles.

Particularly under what is a terrifying model for what could happen in Ireland if the "peace" treaty is imposed by the British.

The only brake on their doing so is to mass organisation of local communities and working class organisations in Britain and Ireland.
When social democracy turned its back on internationalism

Tony Blair’s eagerness to ensure that his Defence Secretary George Robertson step in as the new Secretary General of the imperialist NATO alliance is a natural consequence of the “partnership” policies of New Labour at home. Blair argued at this year’s TUC Congress in Brighton that workers (and their trade unions) and the employers now have only interests in common and no reason to oppose each other. If this was true, then it would make equal sense for workers (and their parliamentary representatives) to join forces with the same employers in promoting their international ambitions as well as their domestic political and military alliances.

But if the new cosy world of “partnership” has in Blair’s eyes eliminated conflict between worker and employer, it has not eliminated the bitter conflict of competition between different sections of employers — at home and abroad.

Indeed it is in the name of this competition that Blair has become the most hawkish advocate of increased “flexibility” of labour — a police word for the acceptance of low pay, minimal welfare provision, poor working conditions and chronic insecurity — to keep prices low enough to secure increased market share.

This contradiction between partnership and competition raises a potential problem even for the most dachshund of class collaborators. With so many powerful forces to form partnerships with, what happens when they fall out among themselves? Where the interests of “British” employers clash with those of “foreign” employers, it would appear that the trade union and labour movement — which has obligingly identified its interests as identical to the “British” employers — should line up alongside them, and help them fight it out.

But many of the “British” employers with whom right wing union leaders are most eager to partner up are also “foreign” employers — whether they be Japanese, Korean, French, German or American.

Does “partnership” between Rover workers and their German bosses in BMW mean that they must hope to undercuts and defeat Jaguar workers and their American Ford owners? The very question shows how absurd is Blair’s idea of partnership. The only people to gain from this notion are the employers, who are able to push home the advantages and pocket the profits untroubled by even the vaguest threat of resistance from union leaders.

The confusion of this approach is bad enough when it comes to the day to day economic struggles over jobs, pay and conditions in industry; but it becomes even more disastrous when it comes to the question of international military conflict. Imperialist countries preserve the trappings of democracy and relative prosperity for their own workers at home at the expense of the exploitation, oppression and misery of countless millions of workers and peasants in dependent economies throughout the world. Their ruling classes and the military machine created to defend them have no intention of allowing that relationship of forces to alter.

Whatever the rhetoric, they fight wars — whether against Hitler, Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic — not to liberate the oppressed but to strengthen their own control, extend their own markets, preserve their access to oil and other raw materials and improve the conditions for exploitation.

Throughout most of this century Labour politicians have in essence shared Blair’s view that their job is to act as the most loyal recruiting sergeants for the armed adventures of the British ruling class. Labour and trade union leaders not only slavishly supported their “own” imperialists in wars against “foreign” imperialists in two world wars, but in government they have shamelessly used armed force to repress colonial liberation struggles. Labour’s extreme right wing Foreign Secretary, former TGWU leader Ernest Bevin, was a key architect of the Cold War NATO alliance, now to be presided over by the equally unrepentant Lord Robertson of Kilmarnock.

Many would assume that this has always been the politics of social democracy — a political current which throughout living memory has limited itself to seeking piecemeal reforms through parliamentary action within the framework of capitalism, and opposed any notion of class struggle or the overthrow of the system.

But that would be a mistake. Today’s social democracy — and the laughable “Socialist International” which includes not only Blairite Labour and Social Democrats but also the vicious Zionists of the Israeli Labour Party — is a bastard offspring of what was originally a Marxist movement, the Second International, co-founded in 1889 by Friedrich Engels, and committed to an internationalist, class struggle programme.

Right up to the eve of the First World War, the Second International remained formally in support of a programme of internationalism and revolution.
This abandonment of the policies and principles of internationalism on which the Second International had been based became the key dividing line in the workers' movement. Lenin and the revolutionaries recognised the need to fight on and develop a new Third International. This was a natural guard against the opportunist and nationalist degeneration which had affected the Second International, and resulted in its various leading parties each reasserting a war effort in which their working class supporters wound up shooting each other.

The Third (Communist) International, formed in the aftermath of the successful October Revolution, fell victim to a different type of degeneration, with the emergence of a cynical and ruthless bureaucracy in the Kremlin which turned its back on the idea of internationalism and revolution in order to preserve its caricature of "socialism in one country".

Today, while Blair and his social democratic cronies in Europe blatantly do the bidding of the US and imperialist ruling classes, only one organisation fights to keep alive the spirit of internationalism which was once the preserve of socialist democracy. The forces of the Fourth International may be small and appear isolated, but the FI continues a fight for the principles which can unite the working class internationally against its real enemies.

In May 1917 Lenin in "A Lecture on War" pointed out the importance of principles: "We are told: 'Things seem to be asleep in a number of countries. In Germany all the Socialists are unanimously in favour of the war; only Liebknecht is opposed to it.' To this I reply: This one

Liebknecht represents the working class; in him alone, his adherents, in the German proletariat, lie the hopes of all."

83 years after the historic split and collapse of the Second International there are again people in the Labour Party and elsewhere who believe themselves to be internationalists and who reject the wretched class collaboration, chauvinism and pro-imperialism of Tony Blair. The Basle Manifesto serves to remind us that it is this minority which represents the real strengths of that International. They must fight today alongside the left throughout the labour movement for a rebuilding of socialism and internationalism.

The Basle Manifesto

AT ITS Stuttgart and Copenhagen congresses the International formulated these guiding principles for the proletariat of all countries in the struggle against war: "If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliametary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the co-ordinating activity of the International Socialist Bureau, to exert every effort in order to prevent its outbreak. They must employ the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and to the political situation.

In case a war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene for its speedy termination and to strive with all their power to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the masses and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."

Recent events oblige the proletariat more than ever to devote the utmost force and energy to planned and concerted action. On the one hand, the general crisis for agriculture has aggravated the high cost of living, thereby intensifying class antagonisms and creating in the working class an implacable hatred of war. The workers want to put a stop to this system of panic and waste. On the other hand, the incessantly recurring threats of war and more incisive effect. The major European peoples are convinced on the basis of past experience of the extermination, the threat against one another. Yet these assaults on humanity and reason cannot be justified by even the slightest pretext of service to the peoples' interest. If the Balkan crisis, which has already cost so much human blood and has spread further, it would pose the most frightful danger to civilisation and the proletariat. It would only be the latest outrage in all history, because of the crying discrepancy between the immensity of the catastrophe and the insignificance of the interests at stake.

The congress records with satisfaction the constant activity of the Socialist parties and of the trade unions of all countries in declaring war against war.

Although the countries of all countries have risen simultaneously in a struggle against imperialism. Each section of the International has recognised the necessity of strengthening the proletariat against the government of its own country and mobilised the public opinion of its nation against war. This has produced a mighty co-operation of the working classes of all countries, which has already contributed to the general success of the Second World War.

The ruling classes fear a proletarian revolution resulting from a world war has proved to be an essential guarantee of peace. The congress, therefore, calls upon the Social Democratic parties to continue their campaign by every means that seems proper to them. The congress records that the entire Socialist International is unanimous on these principles of foreign policy. It calls upon the workers of all countries to rally the power of international proletarian solidarity against capitalist imperialism. It warns the ruling classes of all states not to increase by acts of war the misery of the masses brought on by the capitalist system of production. It emphatically demands peace.

Let the governments remember that, given the present condition of Europe and the mood of the working class, they cannot unite a war without danger to themselves. Let them remember that the Franco-German War was followed by the revolutionary upheaval in the Commune that the Russo-Japanese War set into motion the revolutionary energies of the peoples of the Russian Empire, that the military and naval arm race gave the class conflicts in England and on the continent an unheard-of sharpness and unleashed an enormous wave of strikes.

It would be insanity for the governments not to realise that the very idea of a monstrous world war must inevitably call forth the indignation and the revolt of the working class. The proletariat considers it a crime to fire at each other for the profits of the capitalists, the ambitions of dynasties, or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties. If the governments cut off every possibility of normal progress, and thereby drive the proletariat to desperate steps, they themselves will have to bear the entire responsibility for the consequences of the crisis they bring about.

The international will redouble its efforts to prevent this crisis; it will raise its protest with greater vigour and make its propaganda more and more energetic and comprehensive.

The congress therefore directs the International Socialist Bureau to follow events even more closely and, no matter what may happen, to maintain and strengthen the bonds uniting the proletarian parties. The proletariat is conscious that at this moment it is the bearer of the entire future of humanity. The proletariat will exert all its energy to prevent the annihilation of the flower of all peoples, threatened by all the horrors of mass murder, starvation, and pestilence.

The congress therefore appeals to you, proletarians and Socialists of all countries: Make your voices heard in this decisive hour. Proclaim your will everywhere and in every form; raise your protest in the parliaments with all your force; unite in great mass demonstrations; see every means that the organisation and the strength of the proletariat place at your disposal.

See to it that the governments are constantly kept aware of the proletariat's vigour and its passionate desire for peace. Counterpose the proletarian world of peace and fraternity of the peoples to the capitalist world of exploitation and mass murder.
Black Music, White Business by Frank Kofsky, Pathfinder, £10.45
Reviewed by Paul Hubert
THE LATE Frank Kofsky offers in this book to illuminate the history and political economy of jazz. With its companion volume John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution, it springs from an attempt to revise and update Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music, which Pathfinder also published, in 1970.

Like the earlier book, the central thesis is very clear: jazz is principally an African-American art arising from black culture and experience. The main innovation has been to show how the changes in the music are not simply the result of individual brilliance but rooted in fundamental changes in the culture and experience of black Americans.

The main innovation in this book has been to show how the changes in the music are not simply the result of individual brilliance but rooted in fundamental changes in the culture and experience of black Americans.

The Black music innovators have been both exploited and oppressed by the white business executives and capitalists.

Those who have read the earlier book will perhaps remember what to expect. It is helpful to have this argument boldly stated, and there is much here which is stimulating. However, we begin to confront problems.

Kofsky's focus is overwhelmingly American. This is perhaps not surprising in a book on jazz by a US-based writer. However, jazz has become more globalised in the past 30 years, and he does not reflect this.

There are a few mentions for non-American and non-jazz musicians, but the musical frame of reference is US jazz through to the 1960s in a more narrow way than before.

Another problem of the past 30 years is that the boundaries of jazz have become harder to make out. This is significant not least because it has been a matter of dispute between leading black American players such as Wynton Marsalis and Lester Bowie.

Neo-classical Marsalis has been leading 'neo-classical', not only playing classical trumpet concerts but also counterpointing classical styles of jazz from the past to avant-garde experimentation. Bowie, with the Art Ensemble of Chicago and other groups, has played music by Hendrix, collaborated with soul musicians and African drummers and looked for other ways to develop the music. However, Kofsky's main interest was not to account for these developments using Marxist method but to settle scores with white critics and business figures. The readability of the book depends on the reader's willingness to listen to them, but against such former doyens of US jazz criticism as Leonard Feather, Nat Hentoff and, in particular, Martin Williams. He also exposes the pretensions of 'friends of jazz' in the record business who made a career and a fortune on the back of ensuring that black artists were not rewarded for their artistry. A large part of his first chapter tells of details of John Hammond's role in signing both Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday, his no-royalty deals with Columbia.

Some of the most interesting material in the book is documentation of equally squalid business dealings in the 1970s. However, this is not particularly to jazz, although Kofsky takes the view that there is something special about the abuse of it.

Some of this is interesting, and undoubtedly he scores some hits on his targets. He quotes Martin Williams saying, after declaring his 'belief in the equality of men', that 'Negros as a race have a rhythmic genius that is not like that of other races'. However, he goes on to argue that Williams' method justifies white domination of the monopoly record companies and that Williams consciously gave his approval to an order in which black people should know their place. Williams is in no place to respond, being dead.

Marxism

Kofsky's most interesting promise for the revolution in this newspaper is to use Marxism to analyse his subject. In his first chapter he introduces the concepts of 'Alenisation', 'Underemployment and contempt', 'Powerlessness and qualitatively heightened exploitation', and 'Ideological mystification' as necessary to reveal the history and political economy of jazz.

They are used in structuring the book - but most strikingly in the chapter headings. His most extended explanation of the Marxist method is in a response to Williams' dismissal of Marxism.

He makes a rather forced effort to apply dialectical materialism to John Coltrane's stylistic developments, as material illustration of propositions such as "Changes in quantity beyond a certain point must produce corresponding changes in quality".

This exposition is unconvincing not least because it is compressed into two pages, before returning to sniping at Williams. It is only in the last chapter, consisting of just 13 pages, that Kofsky really sets aside his arguments with other critics and attempts to put forward an analysis of the 'Afro-American Folk Roots in Innovation'.

It would have improved this book immmeasurably if he had started from this point and attempted to formulate something new, rather than rehashing his own previous work.

Unfortunately even here there are moments where he assumes the very points he needs to establish his argument. For the reader interested in jazz who has not considered these questions there is much here which is stimulating and informative. However, any reader is likely to find much that is taut and repetitive.

The original book was of its time, and particularly reflected arguments about black nationalism and the then politics of the US Socialist Workers Party. This time the material conditions are reflected in the weary scrapping with figures of the past, failure to connect with more recent developments and the paler version of the politics which moved its predecessor. The latter is still apparently available on import - if you want a version of this argument, why not have the one with the vitality?
Abortion rights answer to Britain's over-hyped youth pregnancy "crisis"

So Tony Blair thinks the way to stop teenage pregnancies is to impose curfews, does he?

Well apart from the fact that seems to be his solution to everything, he clearly had a very different adolescence to mine. What I remember was trying out as many things as I could that were illegal - or against my parents' instructions - pretty much for the sake of it.

Why - not as pop physiology is wont to tell you because young people like rebelling for the hell of it - but actually because I was fed up with being treated as irresponsible and childish when I felt ready for something more. If you don't believe me - check the statistics. Britain has the highest level on teenage pregnancies in Europe at the same time as it has one of the worst attitudes to young people in general, poor sex education, lousy access to contraception and abortion and few other aspira-
tions that seem realistic for young working class people other than parenthood.

Young women have always had children while they have been at school - I could tell you about a few at my nice convent school, but the media didn't get hold of the stories as readily as they do now. And if twelve does seem ridiculously young that's because young people really are maturing younger - a scientific fact based on improved nutrition rather than a cause for tabloid headlines. Socialists and feminists are in favour of choice for women as to when to and whether to have children.

That's why we fight for comprehensive, non-moralistic sex education and free con-
traception & abortion on demand.

It's also why we fight for a decent minimum wage and for the right to a proper, socially useful job for all. I think our solutions would be a lot better at reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies than Blair's.

Susan Moore, London

Letters

Write to us (preferably 400 words or less) on any topic at box 1109 London N4 2UU or e-mail outlook@gn.apc.org. Visit our web site: www.labournet.org/so

Skychef's global war on catering staff

I am mailing you concerning the catering company LSG Skycheffs. In March of this year they were awarded the catering kitchen at Pittsburgh International Airport which they employed.

For 23 years we were organized under the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers however when this company arrived on the scene they brought their own company union with them - refusing to recognize the IAM and offered all the 153 employees a take it or leave it job.

Some of our members have had 40 years of service in catering and none of our employees had less than 10 years. We were very expe-
rienced in the catering business which meant nothing to this company.

They claimed they had a mas-
ter agreement with the govern-
ment granting them the right to be under the Railroad Labor act, which for the past 30 years we were never under, and to bring their union in to replace ours. The IAM currently has this action in the courts attempting to gain us the right to choose who represents us.

This company is a vicious anti-
labor organization that is grab-
ing onto as many catering kitchens here in the States as possible.

If you have been dealing with the company for some time and have any information which might help us in our battle with them it would be greatly appreci-
ated.

They have all but destroyed everything we have worked for for the past twenty years. All of us are now new hires with no sick days, no holidays, a two year wage freeze and no rep-
resentation. Their company union agrees with everything the company has imposed on us.

We have tried to voice our dis-
satisfaction but were told do we have a choice, we don't have to work there.

The way I am the President of LL1044 IAMAW which has represented these employees for the past 23 years.

We have had other companies take over the catering business in the past ten years but always recognized our union, hired all current employees and negoti-
ated a fair contract with our membership.

You can reach me at my e-mail address which is january@cobweb.net

T.M. Moreau
President LL1044

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