Organise for Livingstone!
BREAK FREE FROM MILLBANK MAFIA

With the politics of New Labour increasingly exposed, the coming year must be a time for the left to build the fight, and organise a systematic challenge to the politics of Blairism, wherever they can be found.

In this context the London mayoral battle has become a touchstone for many Labour activists across the country.

Labour’s leaders are still conducting their own gloomy post-mortem on the disastrous electoral consequences of stitching up the electoral college for the Welsh Assembly leadership, and imposing Alun Michael as Tony’s chosen one.

But even as they do so, Millbank droids are lining up yet another shambolic and highly visible attempt to foist an unpopular candidate on an unwilling membership and public.

A successful challenge to this new gerrymandering exercise could begin to stop the rot, and help regain control of the trade union and labour movement.

Let’s organise to get Ken selected and elected: let’s make it a militant millennium and a Happy New Year for the left!

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Livingstone speaking on the demonstration for Rail Safety on November 6: he is the only candidate to have opposed privatisation of rail and tube.
Why we have to re-nationalise railways

By a rail worker

The LEFT press has been good in its response to the scandal of rail privatization. Rail defenders have given a renewed voice to the outrage felt by millions at the neglect of our railways, which led to the Paddington railway crash. Privatization must be exposed, as does the Labour Party's coup-out: "Public Private Partnership" for the London Underground.

The Third Way is evidently a continuing saga. The line which Mandelson and friends cannot extricate themselves - as into tunnel and upheaval.

I am a Labour Party member, trade union representative, and health and safety representative. The members I represent maintain the West Coast mainline from just north of Wigan to just north of the Denver Mountains. Threats against our rep have become two-a-penny since rail maintenance was privatized in April 1996.

Industrial checks

Recently, I friendly lost an Industrial Tribunal case after they tried to prevent me attending to Health and Safety courses. They are also trying to prevent me carrying our 3 months safety inspections, despite warnings that they may be about to break down. I have arbitration, but have changed the way track patrols to detect faults are done, despite previous lessons.

Southall, Paddington, Warsaw, Wavendon Junction: just four among many in recent years. So far the privatized companies have been lucky - even if the victims haven't. But now the game is up.

All this at a time when any decency or intelligence is now clear: privatization compromises the safety of staff and travelling public.

At such a moment, Railtrack plc are also facing charges in the 100+ cases, the contractors are vulnerable. A recent Guardian poll shows 65% of people seeing a conflict of interest between the railway companies and the owners themselves.

That suggests the Labour Party should be allowing the cowboys to buy time until the outrage blows over.

Obviously Mr Prescott is serious. "I'm told that very few others are with the likes of Jarvis, whose shares have fallen 25% in two weeks following the Paddington crash - at the prospect of getting their hands on the repair contract no doubt.

What crediibility can honest members of the Labour Party and trade union movement retain in the face of such mendacity? We may even say of betrayal of confidence.

Companies like Tarmac, which got involved in the Tory rail sell-off in order to make a quick killing, have also got involved in a situation where they may contribute to real killings. This firm is not exactly a byword for safety outside the railways.

Recent statistics show that it has had to pay out more than compensation because of workers killed or injured in its service than have other companies of the same type. This is not a record to impress confidence from staff or passengers.

The collapse is not unique however. The RMT is still handling the terrible sea disaster which became gratefully a lack of trains on the bulk carrier MV Derbyshire in the North Sea.

We must not lose "the big picture". The dogmatic drive for profit is shown on the railways worldwide. Yet terrible as the disasters are, the transport crisis presents socialism, and especially Marxists, with the greatest ever opportunity.

The privatization of rail was in the 1980s an integral part of the Ridley strategy devised by monopoly capital in the late seventies.

Competition

The hidden agenda was to nullify or reduce any form of competition to the dominant international car and petroleum manufacturing industries. It is not for nothing that Mrs Thatcher trumpeted the "great car-owning economy". To her, the world had to be made safe for the car-petrol combinations and their hangers-on.

Yet now road gridlock and air pollution are leading to global warming, and many other problems have paralysed this hidden agenda. Millions have got wise to it all. Thus the manifestly absurd idea of privatizing the railways as well as the carnage on the roads and at sea become weapons in our armories against our class enemies.

In Volume One of Capital Karl Marx puts his finger on the problem.
F ANYONE still cherished the illusion that the New Labour government was more than just a more palatable version of the old one, they had a rude awakening in June when the government was forced to make a U-turn on a long-standing policy, signalling an end to Tory-era policies on pensions.

But New Labour is not the only government in recent years that has had to backtrack on its policies, including those on pensions and other benefits. In fact, the history of British politics is replete with examples of governments changing course in response to public pressure.

The claimed "fairness" consists in even-handed cuts — on the one hand cutting taxes on big business and on the other cutting the value of pensions, axing the student grants and slashing benefits for the poor and disabled.

New Labour has overpriced the Tories in devising new ways and more draconian regulation to press-gang the unemployed — including those who are on welfare or playing its disabilities — into low-paid jobs or laughable "training" schemes: but there is more to come.

Brown chose his pre-Budget speech to suggest that unemployed people suspected of "moonlighting" may be called upon to sign on even fewer benefits. Of course there is no sign of any comparable enthusiasm to get tough with high-flying tax-evaders who are directors and top bosses defined the Inland Revenue as "people in the political class" for the first time.

As Guardian economics editor Larry Elliott pointed out, Brown's statement was "heavy on empty commitments and light on delivery". It went on: "In political terms, very little of it will go down well with the public. The shadow Chancellor will have no choice but to ignore the tax cuts and public sector pay rises of the government in power, and will be forced to impose even greater austerity policies than Brown's"

The SAGA of the first ever Censure motion for London Mayor is reaching epic proportions. Ken Livingstone has not even onto the shortlist but the deadline for Labour's electoral college has been extended until Monday, almost stopping the election itself.

Even the Tories, forced to run their contest after Archer's withdrawal after yet more blunders have selected their second candidate before New Labour has chosen its first.

Tony Blair launched a vitriolic — and at times almost incomprehensible — attack on Livingstone just after the shortlist was agreed. Despite their best efforts to vilify Living- stone and his record at the GLC, the London electorate refuse to be dissuaded from supporting a candidate who opposes TUBE privatisation.

This is its popular support — and the clear indication from the polls that it would be maintained even if Livingstone were to stand as a candidate independent of the Blairites to carry on instead.

Of course they dressed it up — claiming that the stand against the thorough-going Dobson had intended not that Ken should be allowed on. Well, of course he did not stand because he would have looked completely foolish if Livingstone had been independent and won.

At this point, the outcome of the electoral college itself is not certain. Millbank clearly think they need more than a couple of the other hand on the extended timetable, it means voters must be asked to vote for the unions: to keep up the key of key candidates for the election. For not paying 98 subscriptions in time.

Nor does their cry that they want to be free of the influence of policies ring very true. They are not winning the key battle on transport — and even if the mem-

Millbank's skilful re-packaging of Frank Dobson has already begun to in the way that this leader of the Tories is going to bring this leader. They are not going to try the General Election manifesto which is broad enough to encompass Liv-

ingstone's suggested — and London's option at all parties.

Margaret Thatcher's attack on Liv-

ingstone for tolerating his policies for women more than a little hollow from the woman who single-handedly demolished nursery provisions in Islington when she was leader — while herself earning a nanny.

The Labour loyalists led by Michael Meacher, have tried a clumsy attempt to pin the blame on Livingstone for the introduction of Section 28, which is his "extremism" that led the Tories to introduce this legislation. This seems instead to have reminded many lesbians and gay people of the community in the country, offering no guarantees of patients rights. Few of Labour's right-wing policies are bal-

anced by even a hint of liberalisation or pros-

per reform: the much-vaulted Freedom of Information Bill is so restricted in application that it has generated a storm of hostile criticism.

Police powers are to be further increased with a new anti-terrorism bill, while even the police are wary of Jack Straw's plan for them to carry out mandatory drugs tests on young people, any arrest under a new right to trial by jury will also be curtailed — and it doesn't even a genius to work out whether that will have most effect on richer or poorer defendants.

The only gestures towards a more liberal regime are in the proposal to reduce the age of consent for gay sex to 16 and the long-promised abolition of Section 28.

Whether on matters of economic or policy, the government's drift is con-

sistent — it has stepped into the shoes of the government of the last 15 years, (as it is (as one "nation") Toryism) with the empty rhetoric of "partnership", and "social jus-

But Labour's ambition is to discred-

A new leadership, whose political votes and whose block votes helped him seize control of the party, is hanging by a thread. Although Clause 4 and push through its abolition of internal democracy, have done nothing to protest as New Labour turns its back on its union members.

A few scraps have been contemptuously disposed of in their direction — the minimum wage (albeit at a pitiful level), the minimal rights to union recognition in the work- place: but they are now in the past. Union chiefs are already struggling to justify Labour's support for privatisation of Air Traffic Control and the London Under-

ground, the closure of the Private Finance Initiative in the NHS and education, the cash starvation of key public services, Brown's insulting 75p per week increase for pensioners, the imposition of student fees and a host of unpalatable measures. But ministers are sticking up two fingers — and demanding more.

Make no mistake: union bureaucrats are still key to Blair's control of the Labour Party. Predictions that the electoral college voting on the London mayor may possibly turn up a victory for Dobson, is not likely to rely on the determination of union bosses to suppress democracy in their own ranks — whether (as in the Welsh Assembly) union leaders, with such disastrous consequences — by casting old fashioned block votes as directed by Mill-

bank, as in the Labour party on the Conservative Party, the union lead-

ers will — by commission or omission — have played the crucial role in preventing the organisations they claim to represent. They must be challenged at this time.

With the London mayoral battle as a touch-

stone for many Labour activists across the country and the possibility of New Labour increasingly exposed, the coming year must be a time for the Labour party to stop the rot, build the fight, and organise a systematic challenge to the politics of Blairism wherever they can be found.

Millbank creates another line mesmerising what he meant by saying he would stand on the manifesto and bring it to the country. Of course it is right that there needs to be a major battle over that, not just the Labour party and trade union leaders in London should be demanding the widest possible consultation — and the extension of the deadline is not a maximum possible debate.

But the lesson of Blair's leadership indicates that although we have been successful, we have also been successful in having our people elected we have not succeeded — even when they have won the election — in imposing our policies. And policies are no longer on a Policy Forum on which the Blairites have a clear majority it is not clear that this could be any different.

In any event it is important that those who were making plans to stand socialist candidates for the Assembly election continue to do so.

And of course this must go hand in hand with the key task of mobilising the biggest possible force for Labour in the electoral college. And of course we must also ensure that the same resources to the consultation on the Man-

ifesto take a clear view opposed to PFP/PPF as well as arguing for pro-

gressive policies throughout.
Winter crisis looms for cash-strapped NHS

Harry Sloan

Unlike Frank Dobson, new Health Secretary Alan Milburn doesn’t even look like Father Christmas: and health workers know to their cost that he does not come bearing gifts.

Estimates vary on the exact size of the growing mountain of cash deficits confronting NHS Trusts and health authorities. A recent poll by NHS financial managers conservatively estimated that – partly under the impact of pay pressures, millennium costs and the ongoing long term deficit – the national shortfall could be £200 million.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that when compared with a survey by London Health Emergency of fewer than half of the capital’s Trusts, which revealed deficits of £660m – suggesting that the capital’s NHS alone is over £100m in the red – and the revelation that one London health authority, Heston, Sutton & Wandsworth is closing wards as it struggles with a £20m deficit.

Stephen Thornton of the NHS Confederation representing Trusts and health authorities said that the situation may be as high as £400m, while the Guardian headlined a warning of a £1.1 billion deficit by next April. However large the shortfall, the pressures are mounting as the NHS – with staff and services stretched to the limit – heeds into the winter period which traditionally brings a peak in emergency admissions.

After years of bed cuts, more beds have already begun to close through a combination of cash problems and staff shortages. When the first cold night of the autumn struck early in October, hospitals in many parts of the country immediately ran out of beds to admit emergency patients.

Even the usually Millbank-friendly Guardian has strayed “off message” to urge Labour to come up with an “emergency package of extra cash to avert embarrassing problems in the NHS.”

Milburn has tried to shrug off the cash crisis but he faces a massive credibility gap not only with the public but also with the wider public, but even with NHS chiefs.

A recent opinion poll of over 200 NHS managers for the Health Service Journal found that three quarters of them did not expect to get the extra staff and resources they require to deliver the growing list of government priorities.

The poll also revealed a dramatic contrast between their priorities and those perceived to be government priorities: for example 77% of managers thought staff shortages to be a major issue, but only 23% of them thought ministers had the same view.

Perhaps the most ridiculous contrast is between the tiny handful (7%) of managers who regard the government’s much-touted “NHS Direct” phone advice line as important, compared with the 63% who recognise it as a service widely used by patients at every opportunity.

There are also signs that the interests of GPs seeking to balance the books of the newly-created Primary Care Groups can run sharply against those of NHS hospital Trusts, and potentially threaten their financial viability.

And as cash pressures mount, with PCGs running deficits on their drug budgets, some GPs are openly debating schemes that would save money by prescribing second-rate drugs for patients.

It didn’t have to be like this: the instant acquisition of the Keogh bombing campaign and rumours of a £12 billion Treasury pre-election “war chest” are a reminder that the government has choices – and the resources – to pay the health workers, stop the cuts and put the waiting lists.

Isn’t it time the left turned up the heat to help make them do so?

400 Scots debate at Socialism 2000

Morgan Gordon

Over 400 socialists attended a weekend of discussions organised by the Scottish Socialist Party on November 6. The conference attracted a wide spectrum of the left in Scotland, not just SSP members, but also Labour, SNP and unaligned.

The range of speakers was very impressive and reflected the increasing standing the SSP holds within Scotland and by repute internationally.

The weekend itself comprised a series of plenary sessions and workshop discussions which began to explore in depth responses to some of the complex issues facing Scottish socialists and trade unionists.

Everyone I spoke to agreed that the conference had been a success and had helped consolidate the leading role of the SSP within the Scottish left.

The weekend was the first major forum of the SSP since the Scottish and European Elections. The first session on Friday was a rally with Tommy Sheridan MSP, Dennis Canavan MSP, Margo Macdonald SNP MSP, the Aswan Chokar Family Justice Campaign and others. This was followed on Saturday morning by a discussion on Socialism & Nationalism which included Labour MSP John McAllion.

These sessions drove home the point that in Scotland socialists in different parties – SNP, Labour and SSP – have more in common than divides them, and that they can unite in common cause on many issues outside as well as outside Hollywood.

John McAllion made the point that the Cuban Revolution was both nationalist and socialist. The need was to build democracy in Scotland. There were socialists in the LP although not in great numbers. The left was defeated by an establishment coup, not the voters.

Rallying the left: Dennis Canavan proves there can be a real link between discussion and action.

PR had given voters freedom to vote for parties and candidates they wanted: two-party politics is finished. Socialists in the Labour Party must fight now, the argument to wait until after the next General or Scottish Election no longer applies.

If after 2 years of fighting the leadership the left find they have been defeated then they must draw the lessons and leave. His son is in the SSP.

Several hours were spent in a plenary and workshops on Ireland. Sinn Fein, the Socialist Party, Women’s Coalition and the Progressive Unionist Party were on the platform, and Socialist Democracy also had a workshop.

The largest workshop was led by Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party. It was the first time many had had an opportunity to discuss with the PUP and many were interested to hear how a current leader of the UVF could still claim to be a socialist.

His hatred of the leaders of ‘big house Unionism’ was clear, and he expressed admiration for and claimed to have copied methods of community organisation from Sinn Fein, to have his family at integrated schools and to be promoting anti sectarian and anti fascist policies and supporting the PUP. Many questions remain.

The issue of PFI is critical in Scotland. Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (RIE) has been “PFI’d”, and come under enormous criticism not least from the Scottish Parliament and the controller of Audit.

Glasgow is about to enter a disastrous PFI deal for all its schools as well as effectively trying to dispose of its stock of 100,000 houses. The SSP is involved at community, trade union and political level against all PFI schemes and the UNISON abstract from RIE and others discussed approaches to this.

Social Partnership schemes are attempts to incorporate union leaders and workers into restructuring proposals. Some lessons on the effects and dangers as well as limited successes in opposing these were discussed, however further meetings on both topics are necessary and will be organised.

The final session on the Saturday day was on international socialism, and speakers included Ken Coates, the Danish Red Green Alliance and Alain Krivine of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French Section of the Fourth International.

Ken Coates spoke of the need to build a comprehensive peace movement. He argued that a cold war is restarting and we need to start a movement across Europe - hold a conference of the left.

The Danish Red Green alliance have 5 seats in a 179 seat parlimentary caucus to SSP and Greens in Scotland but a bloc vote in parliament. They feel that the EU cannot be reformed, it must be dismantled and we should work for a democratic alternative of European countries co-operating.

We should form an alliance to combat Neo Liberalism.

Krivine was the best received speaker of the day. He analysed the state of the European left, the decline of European Social Democracy, the failure (with exceptions) of Communist parties and the beginning of a reconfiguration of the left with space to build a broad party.

The conference concludes after an evening of plenaries discussing internationally is key task facing revolutionaries, he says, for the year ahead.

The final session on 'do you need to be Red to be Green' reflects the fact that the SSP has been active on anti motorway, anti hunt, anti GM foods campaigns as well as local campaigns against toxic dumps.

The Greens and the SSP essentially agree on most issues although there is a distinctly pro science strand of some SSP members. Discussions on GM foods in particular are always lively.

The conference closed with the Internationales, with general agreement that it had been a success and a resolve to make the
MSF leaders step up their witch-hunt against London left – and Livingston

Terry Conway

ONE OF the manoeuvres in the desperate battle to prevent Ken Livingstone becoming Mayor of London has been the dearring of four unions from the electoral college before the October 2000 London mayoral election. And, what a surprise, MSF, RMT, AST and Recto are all thought likely to cast their votes for Ken.

The exclusions were supposedly for late payment of affiliation fees – a fair enough reason you might think. Well certainly, that was what you were supposed to believe: but the reality is a little more complex.

Firstly it is a common practice for affiliation fees to be paid in advance, in any event in the case of MSF, by the time it was excluded from the electoral college on October 21 both in 1999 (in July 1999) and in October 1999 the fees had already been paid. The cheque sent in July had not been returned, and the union had thus been treated in all respects as an affiliated union.

Secondly there is a complete difference between the way individual members have been treated. In the case of the switch trade union levy payers a Ms H. Mason, General Secretary of the Labour Party, wrote to CLP Secretaries recently urging them to assist the party in changing up members in subscription arrears and

Ken Livingstone has quite rightly made the future of London Underground a key theme of his local campaign. The fight is now on to get a London Labour Manifesto that reflects the needs of Londoners. The catalogue of failings that became clear on the Tube, like the Brooke Grove disaster has highlighted why Railtrack cannot be allowed to take over running of the trains.

The government's Public Private Partnership, in the words of the three rail unions united campaign, Living to London, "is an expensive folly that will fail to meet the needs of Tube users". This is why 66 per cent of those who believe that the Underground should be adequately supported by public funding and not given away to private companies.

It is hard to find out who actually supports tube privatisation, apart from Blair, Brown, Prescott and the far cars who will get the credit of the prides Even the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee's report on Railtrack, New Labour, was forced to recognise, "that the Treasury rules have forced the adoption of PPP which is rather a convoluted compromise in other financial solutions might have been more sensible."

Which is a polite way of saying that handing the tube over to Railtrack and privatisation will cost over £8 billion more than merely borrowing the money for investment directly. What away all this money does not even remove the current uncertainty over funding it was meant to resolve.

But at least the service will improve if a little such luck. Whilst the Select Committee has warned that fares will have to rise and service levels decrease to pay for Railtrack’s profits, we can already see Railtrack wresting control of the rail services from the private railcos and railroad on the mainline railways. Delays have risen, broken rails are up by 21 per cent, and other standards of maintenance have fallen, leading to complaints reaching record levels. The only thing that continues to improve is the value of Railtrack shares.

At a recent hustings meeting for the Mayoral candidate selection, organised by the rail unions, Glenda Jackson tried to defend the government's position. She had at least had the bottle to turn up whilst Frank Dobson hit round the corner in a "private meeting with supporters" she made two claims – firstly that there was no other option for raising investment, and secondly that the tube was not being privatised at all.

On the first point it is true that the government does not expect its own Treasury rules makes it impossible to tender for big projects. But, of course, it could always change its rules. In fact, it has already done so with the decision to issue bonds to the fund the Channel Tunnel.

And the second point got a clear response from the six hundred or so rail workers who over the government says about who ultimately owns their jobs will be transferred to the private sector. And the experience of London commuters shows what will be in store for them – a consistent drive to maximise profits by cutting wages, jobs and conditions.

This is the key reason rail union leaders campaign of politic lobbying of the government has to be combined with a more forthright campaign based on the rank and file workers themselves, and why all socialists should take a stand Against Tube Privatization. Clearly, the unions’ London Supreme is right to call on the government to “think again.” The determination of Labour’s Manifesto for London must be made a central part of that campaign.

But it would be wrong to put all their eggs in that basket. Even were Ken Livingstone to beat Ken Livingstone to be successful in winning the Labour Party nomination and even if London Labour members vote to make a rail to take over a part of their manifesto there is no guarantee that this will be the position that goes forward into the council. Tube workers have to maintain their independent political campaigning and also prepare for industrial action, if necessary, to force the government to back down.

No votes for MSF: Roger Lipton, extending the deadline for doing so until November 5. They argued that was needed to be done so that the widen number of members could have their say. Indeed the electoral college was treated as an opportunity to exert more influence on the candidates including from 1998 – from individual members.

This has rightly been taken up by both the RMT and activists in MSF to highlight the fact that their exclusion should be overturned.

Within MSF, the late payment has been used in a desperate and incomprehensible way to bring financial pressures and technical difficulties on the NEC to concentrate on getting the back of the votes of our members.

In the meantime, six individual members are pursuing action in the courts to see if the decision to exclude can be overturned.
Free Satpal — forgotten victim of institutional racism

Terry Conway

At one level the last few weeks has been breathtaking in terms of lesbian and gay politics. First there was the victory in the European Court against the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the military - a victory for civil rights - if not one most of my friends would have any wish to exercise.

The media gave a lot of exposure to the story about the two British gay men in a relationship who were having surrogacy twins - but that most lesbians in particular must have shuddered to read.

Certificate

The victory there was the right, won in a US court, of the pair to have their names on the birth certificate.

Still, it's not a path that many of either gender could afford to go down whether or not their survival was the intent, especially, in the area that remains most taboo for lesbians and gay men was the statement of Dame Elizabeth Butler Sloss, President of the high court family law division who in October said that children could be successfully brought up by gay couples.

The most significant decision however came with the redenomination of "family" by the law lords following the battle of a gay man over succession rights. On October 29, Martin Fitzpatrick won a ruling that he could inherit his partner's tenancy. Legal experts have stated that the ruling can be the basis for challenges in other areas of the law where the concept of "family" is used.

Many on the left may assume that the right to inherit is only important to the ruling class. They take for granted that property - including a home bought or rented jointly - will go to a surviving partner. They do not expect that people will fight over things with little material value but great emotional significance.

But that is not the experience of many lesbians and gay men, who despite relationships that may be decades long are spurred on by their partners' biological family, sometimes by the state - and sometimes by both.

This is difficult to deal with at the best of times - but when the grief of losing a lover is compounded by becoming homeless, for example, it is truly heartbreaking.

As a child of the sixties, I still have to redefine the family because I would prefer to replace it in a way that was much broader than pairs of lovers of whatever gender, with or without children.

Victory

Despite this, it is clear that the court decision is an important victory - which will materially improve many people's lives - and those victims of homophobia under the homophobia suffered by far more.

These victories, and others - for example in the immigration field - were the results of long battles. These not only involved the individuals now in the news and their supporters, but countless others who wage the same or similar battles previously but were not successful.

The most recent developments in the battle for lesbian and gay rights - the announcements in the Queen's speech that section 28 will be abolished and the age of consent equalised are also the product of long campaigns. (though marred by the introduction of the so-called protection of minors law being brought in along-side it)

Messages of support

Dear Friends

On the 12 December 1997 the parole board rejected my application for parole. I have served an additional two years over my tariff and I now have a parole hearing in December!!! of this year 1997.

I have now served over 13 years in prison primarily for defending myself against a racist attack.

Abolition

The abolition of Section 28, as proposed by the Conservative government, was a huge victory. Though no cases have been brought under the act, it has resulted in self-censorship by local authorities. If anyone doubts its impact then just look at the rise of suicide amongst young lesbians and gay men denied not only positive images but any images at all.

But there is a key area in which campaigners are disappointed by the Queen's speech and determined to put a good deal of further energy - the absence of proposals for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. It remains perfectly legal at work and in the provision of goods and services to discriminate against lesbians and gay men.

The government has suggested a voluntary code of conduct but this will do nothing to change the situation - those that will imple-ment it are not the ones that back us! The battle will con-tinue - with new energy from these recent successes.

Reel injustice, Met racism

Veronica Fagan

There was in the middle of a shop in Amsterdam on November 9, shrinking with delight. People looked at me and asked, "You, I'd just picked up that day's Guardian and there on the front page was the announcement that the perpetrators of the racist attack on the Met and the journalist who confronted him were to be charged.

Even after the Lawrence inquiry, few lessons are being learnt by the powers that be. "It takes an enormous amount of energy from dedicated campaigners, usually with the family at the centre of the struggle to prove what was obvious at the outset - that yet another black person, someone else's child, someone else's loved one - has been the target of a racist attack.

The grief of loss is compounded many times over. The failure of the police to take any of you tell them that it is the experts - you - the garden victims.

Abuse

Despite the fact that Ricky and the three friends he was with had been subject to racist abuse and been chased by white youths, the police refused to take the seriousness of the worry of the Reef and were unable to return home the next morning.

The body was not recovered for a week after his disappea- rance on October 14. It was finally found by the family who spent 16 hours a day scouring the Kings Norton area where he was last seen.

Then the police maintain- ed that he must have fallen into the river while rowing - despite assur- ing that he was afraid of open water.

Anyone who has heard his mother, Sudek spok could not help be moved by her lone moment - and like me jubilant that at least some justice has been served.

Louise Christian, the fami- ly solicitor has called for the arrest of the Police Com- plaints Authority report into the Reef and for the Racial Com- plaints Authority to be made public.

It is an outrage that this report, part of which has been revealed in the Com- plaints Authority inquiry, that the Racial Com- plaints Authority has so far been allowed to make public in any event.

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Refugees injured in escape attempt
Pardeep Kumar, 21, nothing on bashed feet cut on the razor wire which tops the 18-foot fence that surrounds Campfield, spoke to Diane Taylor. He and fellow Sikh Amrik Singh had tried to escape because they were both facing deportation back to the Punjab. Kumar said that the choice facing the two men was a stark one: "We knew that if we went we'd be sent back home to our deaths. Although escape meant risking injury or recapture it was our only hope. We had both been tortured by police in the Punjab and told that our escape bid was our only hope."

National Protest "Close Down Campfield" 8th Anniversary Demonstration Saturday 27 November 1999 12.00pm to 2.00pm Main gate, Campfield Detention Centre Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxford
Join the demonstration, bring your banners and plenty of noise to let the detainees inside know that we on the outside want them released immediately.

For further information ring:
Bill MacKeith on 01865-558145
Transport to the Demo:
From LONDON: (ring Zinka Brain) NACODA, 0171/701-5197.
WEST MIDLANDS: (John O. NACODA, 021/264-5694
NORTH WEST: (Tony Doherty, NACODA, 061-740-8206.)
The Irish nurses' strike was called off by the leadership of the nurses' union and the government on the same day that the nurses had voted to continue the strike. This was a major victory for the nurses who had been fighting for improved working conditions and better pay.

One of the key arguments of the nurses was that the government's proposals did not go far enough. The nurses were demanding higher wages and better working conditions, but the government was only offering small increases.

The nurses' strike was a significant event in Irish politics, and it was watched closely by workers across the country. The nurses' victory was seen as a boost for trade unionism in Ireland, and it encouraged workers to stand up for their rights.

In the weeks following the strike, nurses' unions in other parts of the country began to organize and demand better working conditions for themselves.

The victory of the nurses was a reminder that workers have the power to fight for what they want, and that trade unionism is an effective tool for improving workers' lives.
Can unionist right block the final peace deal?

The commentators analysing the last and final stage of the Irish peace process speak of a process on a knife edge. They neglect to explain that the most serious challenge is from the right – from the most reactionary elements of unionism.

But this opposition obscures the reactionary nature of the forces who have crafted the deal under the cloak of secret diplomacy.

The SDLP, the Dublin government, US imperialism and the British government, representing the largest unionist organisation in Ireland, are presenting as their protectors. Sinn Fein, the erstwhile opponents of imperialist rule, are co-opted as junior partners to defend the facades.

The right wing opposition also clouds the complete capitulation of Sinn Fein. The one line that they were told they would never cross – the surrender of weapons, is the central aspect of the final agreement.

The signs on the walls in the nationalist ghettos state Sinn Fein’s initial position: “No Terror, No Deal.” Thus, in the rightward drift of the process, the right-wing elements are the first to decimate the agreement.

The agreement involves the handover of weapons immediately after the executive is formed and the total disarming of the IRA within a few months.

Marxists have always understood that the militaristic core of the Republican movement rests on the foundations of the war.

However, the application of the main condition of stability of the IRA, that they would not capitulate, is far from known.

Their surrender is now all the more obvious as the nationalistic working class, despite the fact that the history of the North of Ireland is of resistance and revolution, capitulated and by pogroms.

Opponents of the agreement are accused of clinging to the past. In reality they are the more conscious of the future. The Republican armed campaign, as a whole, is a blood-letting by loyalism, supported by the British forces. Pogrom is implausible today simply because of the nationalist-populism of Republicanism. The return of class struggle will also be the return of the threat of pogrom and full-scale sectarian terror.

However, the issue of decommissioning fades into insignificance when compared with the direct political challenge presented to the republican leadership. They have:

-partition,
-the return of Stormont,
-the unionist veto.

Sinn Fein are working within the agreement at the very heart of the occupied area of the six counties and to include in it the area of the Irish Unionist Party – spokespeople for the UVF death squads.

For Sinn Fein, the only way forward is, of course, British triumph.

So now for Marxists: if Sinn Fein do not demobilise, there is no longer even the subject of discussion.

At a result:

-There is no end to repression and anti-democratic PTA laws simplified.

-The RUC is modernised, the police are strengthened and become permanent parts of the state.

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The right to assemble and march is strictly restricted for the population as a whole, while complex formulae are found to justify such an act.

For socialists, the Good Friday agreement contains genuine reforms then socialists should support them and try to build a mass organisation to go beyond them. There is however no evidence to support such a view.

Sinn Fein will not “double-cross” him. It takes very little imagination for even the most loyal republican supporter to work out who is being double-crossed in the face of constant threats and promises.

It urges its readers not to be taken in by the new con.

In the medium term the economics of the peace process have been as suspect as its politics.

The economics today are described as a “Globalisation solution” – British, US and European money is used to buy off any potential opponents and employ them in a newised, swollen, and community sector.

For socialists, the strategy of multi-national investment by savage controls on workers’ pay and conditions is the same as the “Celtic Tiger” economy, in which workers are faced to the fact that they will not share in the new prosperity – but in fact the prosperity depends on continued suppression of working-class living standards and conditions and a savage programme of de-regulation and privatisation.

The resurgence of the problem in the south will not happen easily. The unionist strategy is to try to get the power and null to continue in their reign of terror by the British state.

Meanwhile the British state is clearly in the process of suppressing the IRA and the IRA is a statement of con.

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The complex statement of conflicts in Sinn Fein – the statement from US chair Mitchell and General De Chassan make it clear that the entire edifice of imperialist republicanism must fall.
More sword than shovel,
as Yeltsin plays waste to Chechnya

Sheila Malone

S

ome people were surprised when bombs hit a crowded market-place, forty as a passenger bus was hit, sixty as they fled in a refugee convoy. Roads are jammed as 200,000 are driven from their homes and forced to survive in desperate conditions in border camps.

Such scenes remind us of NATO's indiscriminate bombings and their after- math in its war in the Balkans. The invader this time is Russia, whose air and land forces have been battering the small Chechen republic of Ichkeria (Chechnya in Russian) for the past three months.

With the same savagery as NATO in the Balkans, Russia is now waging its war in the Caucasus, aimed at inflicting the maximum damage to the area's infrastructure and therefore to civilian life while minimising Russian casualties. Thousands of men, women and children have been killed or injured and hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and water supplies destroyed.

A Russian resident of Chechnya (actually a Kos- saik) interviewed during Russia's last war there in 1994-5, in which an estimated 50,000 people died, complained: "God knows why the army came here. To protect Boris Yeltsin, to keep the oil pipeline from the Caspian, to line someone's pocket - only for us, that's clear!"

The mountainous region of the North Caucasus has always been of vital geopolitical and strategic importance to Tatar and Soviet now and post-Soviet - Russia. In its quest to subdue it, Russia has used the "sword and the samovar" tactic to divide and rule and play off one people against another.

The brutality and cynicism with which this was carried out has led to centuries of oppression and resistance. Perhaps the most savage episode was the mass deportation of the Chechens and other nationalities - the Ingush, the Karachais, the Balkars, the Kabysians, the Meskhetians and the Tatars - after the Second World War. Fearing opposition and the exposure of his own criminal role during the war, Stalin simply wiped these entire peoples off the map.

Though tens of thousands died of cold, starvation and disease during the exodus it was a tribute to the Chechens that when Khrushchev allowed them to return in 1957, they were able to rebuild their nation. Never the less, a bitter legacy remains from this and other oppressions.

Chechnya was incorporated into the Soviet Union in the 1920's and in 1936 given the status of an autonomous Republic within the Russian Federation, i.e. not full regional status as was, for example, Armenia and Turkmenistan. The "knife" under Kruschev and the later growing economic difficulties of the 1970s and 80s, first to demands for greater autonomy and later to the formation of movements such as the Popular Front of Chech- nya and Ingushetia.

By 1991, influence by events in the Baltic States and in response to Yeltsin's mishandling of the situation more radical Chechen dissident leaders - among them the late President Wakhshor Dudayev - had seized power and declared independence. No serious attempt was made by Moscow to put down the revolt in Chechnya for another three years. But when invasion did come, it led to a humiliating defeat for Russia.

Much of the reason for this was the continuing col- lapse of the Russian state itself and the decay and demoralisation within the military. But Moscow also decided to con- cede victory to Chechen forces because the revolt did not lead to further destabilisation in the North Caucasus, despite the reasons for support from neigh- bouring Republics.

A peace treaty was there- fore agreed to which stated that Chechnya should have full special status that would not contradict two conditions - the integrity of the Russian Federation and the principle of self-determination. How- ever, as most Chechens wanted by now to use self- determination to leave the Federation, these two principl- es contradicted each other in practice.

The immediate causes of the present Russian invasion in August this year were firstly a series of bombings in apartment blocks in Moscow in which 300 people died and secondly the incursion of some Chechen fighters, led by Shamil Basayev, into neighbouring Dagastan.

The Chechens immediately blamed "Chechen terrorists" and "Islamic fundamentalists." The Chechens have denied any involvement in the bombings and the Dagest- an episode seems mainly to have been a handful of previ- ous independence fighters backed by some arms and rhetoric from the Middle East. However, the fear and racism that Moscow whipped around both gave the excuse to intervene.

Thus the contradictions of the 95 peace agreement have been in the open, with the Kremlin claiming Chech- nya as an "internal matter" for the Russian Federation. In doing so, Russia has renounced its traditional fore- ign policy vis-a-vis the Cau- casus. What was blurred last spring by Moscow's marginalisation during Nato's war for influence in the Caucasus has now become clear in Russia's claim right to intervene in its own sphere of influence in the Caucasus, with the West tacitly endorse- ment.

Forced being a natural southern border to Russia, the geopolitical importance of the Caucasus lies in its rich natural resources of oil and gas. The Chechen capital of Grozny was once the second biggest oil centre of the Soviet Union - the second largest country in the world. Chechnya's own oil reserves are now almost exhausted but its importance still in the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline from Azerbaijan to Russia which flows straight through it.

With the recent discovery of other reserves in Azerbaijan, both East and West will soon have to seriously consider the value of the Chechen pipe- line as a source of oil to Russia. It seems likely to face the samekind of problems that have been facing the "Chechen disease" to neighbouring Republics.

Western leaders, equally interested in this in their interests in seeing Moscow's efforts to keep the peace buttressed, are watching closely with a keen interest in the effectiveness of the Chechen resistance. It will be seen in the future if the Chechens are to continue with their efforts in the Chechen cause and the Kremlin to continue to support its dominance in the region.

This summer's prolonged talks between Russia and Chechnya on the future of the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline broke down. Although one of the less public- ized, this is certainly a fac- tor in Russia's decision to invade.

Much is at stake both for the Kremlin politicians and the previously humiliated armed forces, who this time cannot claim they can win the war.

But whatever the aims and machinations of the political and military elites, this is a war to subdue a small residual nation that has been once more under Russian domination.

The brutal bombardments should be stopped immediately, but once the population has been drawn and the Chechen population given the right to determine their own future. Economic sanctions must be lifted, neighbouring bor- ders opened to refugees and massive aid given to alleviate their terrible plight as winter approaches.
Politics by other means

Dave Packer

The brutal wars of nationalist oppression in Daghestan and Chechnya, and the Russian state bureaucracy, are key strategic geo-political and economic concerns for the Russian state. These include the securing of the Caspian Sea and regional oil and gas reserves, securing the Black Sea, and the Turkic-speaking unity and implicitly combating US imperialist aggression in South Asia. In Davos, Reuters has painted a picture of a US-imperialist-ruled Russia with a strong, but isolated, economy and a powerful, but isolated, military. The strategic goals of US imperialism and NATO are clear: to contain the geopolitical threat of a strong, autonomous Russia that is not dominated by US interests. In Davos, Reuters has painted a picture of a US-imperialist-ruled Russia with a strong, but isolated, economy and a powerful, but isolated, military. The strategic goals of US imperialism and NATO are clear: to contain the geopolitical threat of a strong, autonomous Russia that is not dominated by US interests.

NATO enlargement, along with Russian military build-up, has been accompanied by an increase in threats from the West. This has resulted in Russia's decision to develop its own military capabilities and to strengthen its relations with other countries in the region. The Russian military build-up is seen as a response to the perceived threat from NATO expansion and the US military presence in the region.

For the moment, the war in Chechnya continues, as does the military and political preparation, which is funded by a variety of means. The war has now reached its second year and the military and political situation in Chechnya is considered to be improving living conditions, but by their own state political and economic standards.

The war in Chechnya has been compared to the war in Afghanistan, and the policies of the US and NATO have been criticized for their role in the conflict. The war has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, as well as the loss of lives and property. The war has also had a significant impact on the economy of the region, with the closure of businesses and the loss of jobs.

The war in Chechnya is considered to be a test case for the effectiveness of Western policies in dealing with conflict. The war has also been seen as a test case for the effectiveness of Western policies in dealing with conflict. The war has been a test case for the effectiveness of Western policies in dealing with conflict.

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The economic crisis in Pakistan is part of the world economic crisis. Pakistan depends on foreign assistance, especially aid from the IMF and World Bank. During the Cold War it was getting a lot of aid especially during the 60’s. But now the Cold War has ended, aid has been seriously reduced. Worse now the IMF and World Bank want debt repayments. It is this issue of debt repayments that are the major problems on the Pakistani government.

The other issue is that the army is the most powerful institution in Pakistan, the most organised and as a social force it is the most important power to be reckoned with.

It is the biggest industrial group, it has a strength of half a million – if you include the military it is 1.1 million. It has generals who have become feudal landlords, who get huge feudal earnings on their land. So it’s a hugely important social force.

But since the early 80’s US imperialism does not need the Pakistan army in the way it did during the Cold War and according to their new priorities they want to see a reduced defence budget for Pakistan.

Of course they still need the Pakistan army – they do not want to abolish it all together. They needed it in Afghanistan and in India where there were Pakistani soldiers who were killed and there may be other cases where they need it in the future.

Pakistan has a strategic importance for the US because of its borders with India, China, Iran and Afghanistan.

S o Nawaz Sharif was asked to reduce the budget deficit and to reduce the military, to lay off military staff and to reduce the size of the armed forces. This was linked by the economic agency to cut in the number of extended families living on the family.

The mass of the people had big illusions in Nawaz Sharif, especially in the Punjabi because this is where he is from.

During his first period in office from 1990-3 he had carried out some major projects like building a motorway and other schemes that were big opportunities for the people and people thought that there would be more of the same this time, especially given the size of his majority. But this time the situation was very different because he was not getting IMF/World Bank funds like before and was instead under pressure to repay the loans. So he was increasingly cutting subsidies and this led to a big crisis for the economy.

The Pakistan economy mainly depends on cotton and sugar cane – which are cash crops. It is a common practice in Pakistan that if you will have good cotton, you will have good sugar.

So the cut in subsidies for these crops led to an increase in prices and this created a whole cycle of crisis with growers refusing to plant and a decline in exports etc etc.

The other pressure was the reduction in tariffs which made the trade gap very big. It could have been bigger still but there was a fall in export of these big machines because lots of small firms – especially those linked to the new anti-industry – closed down because of the cut in subsidies and the reduction in tariffs.

So there is a whole cycle of economic crisis which led to a political crisis. Then at the end of last year, Recruitment was frozen, and the size of army has shrunk.

But the army manoeuvred to have people moved to work in different government departments so they do not lose their job all together. So for example thousands of troops were sent to work in the Power department supposedly to chase up unpaid bills.

As present many major departments are being run by either retired Generals or serving Generals.

So for example there are serving Generals running the Power department for this for a brief time in May 1998 when he made the decision to recognise the army.

Nawaz Sharif against Nawaz Sharif. He was able to use some of this for a brief time in May 1998 when he made the decision to recognise the army.

Nawaz Sharif against his own party, the PML(N) and the PPP.

When Nawaz came to power in 1997 he tried to implement this IMF agenda, to implement a cut in the army budget.

After he had been in power 8 months there was a big strike in Pakistan because they were an attempt by the army to go down through the courts. They used the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Pakistan to agree some verdicts to remove Nawaz from power.

Initially they perhaps did not want to remove him – they just wanted to scare him but the fight went too far and then it was either Nawaz Sharif or the army. And then because of international national pressure there was a compromise and Nawaz handed down terms of the IMF agenda on defence and the President and Chief Justice who had been supporting the army were removed.

This summer Nawaz was in a tight sick between the army and the IMF so this meant that in order to carry out the austerity ordered by the IMF he had to accept the whole burden on the masses.

Petrol prices doubled during the two years and a half years he was in office, utility bills went up massively, over 200,000 people lost their jobs in the public sector.

Whole sectors of what had previously been in the public sector were completely shut down and abandoned, particularly in transport. There were also significant redundancies in Banking, power and Telecommunications.

So there was a massive disaster against Nawaz Sharif. He was able to recognise some of this for a brief time in May 1998 when he made the decision to recognise the army.

Nawaz Sharif against his own party, the PML(N) and the PPP.

Workers’ Congress (DWC) has agreed to join our campaign which will boost up our campaign among the Kashmiri Indian.

The four signatory parties have agreed on a common programme:

1. To defeat Chandra Shekhar’s government. As a powerfull step towards that, to abolish the election in the country and to transfer power to the parliament.

2. To appeal for a mandate to establish a left regime which will release the Kashmiri people from the trap of destructiv war, to which it has been trapped, eradicating that led to the emergence and the growth of the national question, construct a permanent, honorable peace, and eradicate discrimination while establishing autonomous regions for the minority nationalities within a socialist rule where democracy is fully established.

We decided to put forward a common left candidate primarily on the above basis. Considered in that sense, this is an understanding among four main left parties, which correctly represent several fundamental objectives.

We believe on this principled basis, you also can contribute to the objectives of victory of the left.

In the provincial council elections, the JVP obtained around 500,000 votes and the NSSP standing on 5000 candidates gained closer to 100,000 votes. So we are starting the Presidential elections with around 600,000 votes.

We need to raise £3500 to run this campaign. Please send cheques payable to YKK Khushate, c/o Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London NW 2AU.
Colombia: US steps up intervention as peace hopes fade

Adam Hartman

IN JULY 1998 the newly-elected Conservative President of Colombia Andrea Paez announced a new peace initiative.

There were high hopes of an end to the country's 35-year-old civil war between the state and left-wing guerrillas which has displaced over one million people and left nearly 20,000 dead since 1985, 85 per cent of the hands of the armed forces and paramilitaries.

Paz had met with the leader of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the largest guerrilla organisation. They agreed to begin negotiations in January 1999. The government agreed to demobilise five of the guerrilla groups, the UC-ELN (Camilla United Left National Liberation Army) began its own peace process, entering into discussions with representatives of the country's popular movement on the key issues facing the Colombian people.

Today the peace process is on the rocks. The paramilitary violence has continued unabated and the guerrillas have extended their operations. Talks broke down in July with the government accusing the guerrillas of abusing their powers in the demilitarised zone and the guerrillas accusing the government of not being interested in tackling the root causes of the war: the extremely unequal distribution of wealth between the country's elite and the majority of the population, and the exclusion of the poor from the political system and from the benefits of economic growth, especially in the countryside.

Above all the guerrillas are demanding the abandonment of the neoliberal economic model - the full opening of the country's economy in the early 1990s to foreign trade and investment. The talks were resumed in October.

The hope of peace fading, a new cloud hangs over the Colombian people: the threat of joint military intervention in Colombia by other South American countries under the leadership of the United States.

The US government formally supports the peace process. A government official even met with a representative of the FARC in Washington. However, there have been increasing calls within the Clinton administration for an external military solution to the war involving a regional intervention force. In July Clinton said that Colombia needs a U.S. national security interest and that Colombia faced an "internal threat".

US intervention

Over the past eighteen months the US has increased its military intervention in Colombia under the guise of strengthening the so-called drug war on drugs. It also has encouraged the militarisation of the region by sending military lift to Colombia in recent weeks. The US has become the third largest recipient of US military aid, with US$80 million approved by Congress in October 1998, a threefold increase over the previous year. In July US Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey asked for an extra US$1 billion in emergency counternarcotics assistance to the Andean region with half of it for Colombia. There are 240 US personnel in Colombia providing high-tech intelligence support to the Colombian armed forces and training a new counternarcotics battalion of 1,000 elite soldiers.

The US has expressed concern over the ability of Ecuador and Panama to defend their borders, citing cross-border operations by members of guerrillas and drug traffickers. Under pressure from the US the governments of Peru and Ecuador have moved troops up to their borders with Colombia.

Brazil has strengthened its military base on the Amazon River and expanded radar along the entire length of its border with Colombia. Panama has moved 1,500 police to its border to guard the Panama Canal zone. And for several years the Venezuelan Army has conducted military exercises close to its border with Colombia.

According to press reports the US has increased its own presence along Colombia's southern border. In early August Inter-Press Service reported that the US had stationed a contingent of special forces under the US Army Southern Command on the Peruvian and Ecuadorian borders with Colombia.

US plan

On 29 July a report in the Argentine daily Clarin said that the US has drawn up a "naval plan" to intervene in Colombia from its bases in Peru and Ecuador.

The US government is already closely concerned about the Colombian drug trade which accounts for most of the cocaine and heroin entering the US. However it is hard to believe that the US is sincere about its war on drugs. The threat to stop Colombia's drug trade by destroying the coca plantations has failed.

The area under coca cultivation has doubled in the past five years with planters clearing forests to make way for new coca fields. For most growers coca is now the only way of making a living. The scrapping of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989 (which kept prices stable) at the insistence of the US drove thousands of small-scale coffee-growers out of business, forcing them to rely on other sources of income.

The "drug war" waged by the US and Colombian governments is targeted against the farmers and the farmers who grow coca under their protection.

Drug barons

Yet the barons who control the drug trade are left alone. Their paramilitary activities work closely with the army in waging a dirty war against trade union, peasant and civil organisations. Yet despite their role in the drug trade they operate with total impunity.

Although the drug barons have amassed colossal wealth, most of the money from the sale of Colombian drugs in the US is accumulated in the hands of dealers at various points of the supply chain in the US. This money is deposited in the US banking system.

Despite all the hysteria about "narco-guerillas," no US drug imports into the US from Colombia have actually fallen over the last four years. Behind the "war on drugs" lies the desire to end Latin America's longest-running guerrilla insurgency. The FARC and UC-ELN are growing in strength. They control about 40% and are active over 60-70% of Colombia's territory.

The guerrillas provide essential services, protect the population against the army and paramilitaries, regulate disputes and administer justice in the sparsely-populated areas under their control, in which the state has historically been weak or absent altogether.

The guerrillas are not likely to overthrow the Colombian government in the short term. How ever the existence of elements of an alternative guerrilla state over a large part of Colombia is viewed as a threat to US security both in its "backyard" in Central and South America - the guerrillas could be an inspiration to other popular movements in Latin America - and in Colombia itself which occupies a highly strategic loca

Colombia is bounded by the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and occupies the point of entry for South America. It has abundant natural resources, a large industrial sector and a growing market to which US companies enjoy unrestricted access. It is also very close to the Panama Canal which the US will hand back to Panama at the end of this year.

The US is seeking to establish new military bases in the region to replace the Howard Air Base in Panama, which the US recently left in accordance with the 1978 U.S.-Panama treaty.

Naval base

The US is negotiating for a naval base in the Ecuadorian city of Manta. According to a report in Clarin it is also seeking to extend US "extraterritoriality" in Argentina from the US embassy to include an airport in the north which would serve as a base for US operations in Colombia.

The US is trying to win the support of South American countries for a regional intervention force in Colombia. At a meeting of the Organization of American States in June it proposed a "defence of democracy" resolution calling for the creation of a "Group of Friends" as a multinational force to intervene in Latin America in cases of "democratic" safeguards.

This resolution was seen as a threat to national sovereignty and a cover for US intervention and was defeated. However Argentina indicated that it would participate in such a force if asked by the Colombian government.

A regional intervention force might defeat the guerrillas. But it would not bring about a lasting peace, justice or genuine democracy for Colombia. Far from tackling the underlying causes of the war it would reinforce those causes.

If it were to strengthen both the Colombian elite, including the drug barons, and the army and paramilitaries which protect it against pressure from below for change. This pressure for change is the only route towards an alternative to the violence and poverty which blight so many lives in Colombia.

For more information on the peace process and the guerrillas see International Viewpoint No. 309 (March 1999).

For background information on Colombia inside the labirinth by Jenny Pearce, published in 1990 by Latin America Bureau. In December LAB is bringing out a new book on Colomnbia.
Tilting the Exploited to Their Exploiters

LENIN argued strongly against the writer Maxim Gorky's book, God in Russia, and defining "the idea of God as a lie." Gorky had written that: "God is the complex of images which exist within the tribe, the nation, mankind, which awaken and organize social feelings, having as their object to link the individual with society and to bridge zoologically individualism." Lenin, in a blunt reply argued that "the idea of God is clearly wrong and clearly reactionary. Like the Christian religion, it is a combination of "socialism" and its worst aspects, of the idea of a method which (despite your words) is repeated the hocus-pocus of the priests.

...the outcome from the idea of God everything about it is drawn from real life (rich, prejudiced, ...) and is based on fictitious ignorance and limited intellec- tion, on the one hand, and on a false, plundering monarchical, and on the other hand, Lenin.

...Instead of the reality of his- tory and life there is subtlety (false, ...) and a gentle petit-bourgeois egoism (God) which awaken and organise social life..." Your wish in so doing is to say something "good and holy", i.e., to point out "truth and justice" and the like. But God is the idea of your personal affair, a subjective "innocent desire"..."

...The question is written in it down, it goes out among the people: how is the idea of God determined not by your good wishes, but by the relationship of social forces, the objective relationship of society.

By virtue of that relationship it turns up (irrespective of the independ- ence of your conscious- ness) that you have put a good colour and a sugary coating on the idea of the clericals, of Nicolai, since in practice the idea of God helps them keep the people in slavery. By being the idea of the God, you have beautified the chains with which they fetter the masses, with a God to which the masses have been addicted.

It is certain that God is the complex of ideas which awaken and organise social feelings. That is idealistic, that is the idea which supresses the mate- rialistic side of things.

God is (in history and in real life) first of all the com- bination of two things: 1) the brutal subjection of man by brute nature and by the class yoke - ideas, which constitutes that sub- jectivistic life and tenebrous-knowledge, and 2) the combination of both in Europe and in Russia any, even the most refined and best-inten- tioned defence or justification of the idea of God is a justification of reaction.
Christianity: A cobbled world held on by the masses

Friederich Engels

T he religious schism originated from the free-thinkers of the Middle Ages to the Enlightenments of the 18th century, was that all religions, and therefore Christianity too, were almost nothing from the whole content of the Gospels turns out to be historically prov- ed so and so and the existence of a Jesus Christ can be questioned.

But Bauer has, thereby, only clarified the gnosticism, which, reaching its culmination point in the conclusion that the Alexandrian Jesus of Philo, who was still living about AD 40 but was already very old, was the real father of Christianity, and that the Roman stoic Seneca was, so to speak, its uncle. The numerous writings attributed to Philo which have reached us only through a fusion of allegorically and rationally conceived Jewish traditions with Greek, particularly stoic, philosophy.

This image of a western and eastern outlook already contains all the essentially Christian ideas:

1. the Logos, the Word, which is with God and which becomes the mediator between God and man.
2. atonement, or sacrifices of animals, by which bringing one’s own heart of God.
3. and finally the essential feature, that the more religious philosophy reverses the previous order of the world, seeks its disciples among the poor, the miserable, the slaves, and the rejected, and despises the rich, the powerful, and the privileged, whence the precept to despise all worldly pleasure and to mortify the flesh.

On the other hand, Augustus himself saw to it that not only the God-man, but also the so-called immaculate conception became formul- arii imposed by the state.

He not only had Caesar and himself worshiped as gods, he also spread the notion that he, Augustus Caesar Divus, the Divine, was not the son of a human father but that his mother had conceived him of the god Apollo.

As seen, we need only the keystone and we have the whole of Christianity in its basic features: the incarnation of the Word become man in a definite person and his sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of sinful mankind.

Truly reliable leaves we have uncertain as to when this keystone was introduced into the stoic-philosophic doctrines. But this much is sure: it was not introduced by philosophers, either Philo’s disciples or stoics. Reli- gions are founded by people who feel a need for religion themselves and have a feeling for the religious needs of the masses.

As a rule, this is not the case with the classical philosophers. On the other hand, we find that in times of general decay, now, for instance, philosophy and religious dogma- tism are generally current in a vulgarized and shallow form.

While classic Greek philosophy in its last forms - particularly in the Epicurean school - led to atheistic materialism, Greek vulgar philosophy led to the doctrine of one god only and of the immortality of the human soul.

Likewise, rationalistically vulgarized Judaism in mixture and intercourse with aliens and huns- fend introduced by the ritual and transforming the formerly exclusively Jewish national god, Jehovah, into the one true God, the creator of heaven and earth, and by adopting the idea of the immortality of the soul which was alien to early Judaism.

Thus, monothestic vulgar philosophy was forced into contact with vulgar religion, which presented it with the ready-made one and only God.

One can get an idea of what Christ- ianity looked like in its early form by reading the so-called Book of Revelation of John. Wild, confused fanaticism, only the beginnings of dogmas, only the mortification of the flesh of the so-called Christian morals, but on the other hand a multitude of visions and prophecies.

The development of the dogmas and moral doctrine belongs to a later period, in which the Gospels and the so-called Epistles of the Apostles were written.

In this, at least, all regards morals - the philosophy of the stoics, of Seneca in partic- ular, was unerringly made use of. Christian early Christianity had to beg, steal and borrow from Judaism and stoic philosophy.

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FOR THE bourgeois, history, we are variously told, is a backward-looking science, whether as "a way of accurately predicting the past" or in the words of Henry Ford, simply listing "one damned thing after another".

But as a marxist journal, Socialist Outlook sees the analysis of the past as a means better to understand the motor forces of history, and grasp the new situation and the potential for change today. And we also have to attempt to forecast how events will develop: it can be useful to look back and see if we were right.

Ten years ago the fall of the Berlin Wall represented a watershed in the collapse of the power of the Soviet Union — and with it the ability of other Stalinist bureaucracies with Soviet military and economic backing to control the working class in the grotesquely deformed "workers' states" across Eastern Europe.

Everyone now knows that the pro-market, restorationist forces won the day. Even now the brutal impact of this is being felt by the working class in Eastern Europe. In Russia, average life expectancy has fallen by over 10 years; in many East European countries living standards have fallen. Global capitalism has in general been reluctant to invest the capital required to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure left by four decades of Stalinist rule.

It is comparatively easy to look back now at the changes which have occurred in Eastern Europe since 1989 — not least the reunification of Germany — and to see them as somehow inevitable. It is easy with hindsight to identify the stronger forces at play in what for a time have been a less obvious situation: according to this reading of events, the ossified bureaucracies were toppled by a movement demanding market freedoms — summed up at the time as "shopper's rights" — and capitalist restoration.

But this reading of events loses sight of the apparent strength, especially in East Germany, of socialist currents among the opposition forces which mobilised to challenge — and defeat Eric Honecker's Stalinist regime. Had these currents persisted they would potentially have opened up a very different way ahead for the struggles throughout Eastern Europe.

It is this possibility of things being otherwise, the possibility of a coherent, anti-capitalist, working class, internationalist response — and the need to build an organisation and a leadership to take it forward — which must be the starting point for socialists.

This is why we are reprinting here our original analysis of the events drafted as they were unfolding, and seeking to address the issues for socialists on the ground. The document was drafted in the autumn of 1989, before the fall of the Romanian Ceausescu regime, and published early in 1990 in Socialist Outlook magazine.

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Extracts from a resolution unanimously adopted by Socialist Outlook supporters in January 1990.

1990 will be the year of elections in at least, Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and probably Bulgaria as well. In each of these countries the election will in effect be a plebiscite on the continued rule of the Stalinist parties. In each of them, the Stalinists will certainly suffer crushing defeats. It is the end of an era.

The eruption of the mass European masses in an attempt to overthrow bureaucratic rule, together with the events in the Soviet Union, represent the most important development in world politics since the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. At stake is the continued existence of Stalinism as a significant force in world politics.

The whole world order which arose out of the defeat of Nazi imperialism, culminating in Yalta and Potsdam, is now in question. The division of the European working class imposed by the 'great powers' is rapidly being swept away. The bipolar character of world politics, dominated by two armed camps, has been shaken to its foundations.

As we approach the 21st century a fundamental turning point has been reached: there is the historic opportunity for the victory of the political revolution, but also great dangers that the working class could be robbed of the social gains inherent in the bureaucratised workers' states.

The revolution underway has shattered Trotsky's critique of the Stalinists called 'actually existing socialism'. Trotsky's watchword of defiance towards what was then an ascendant and victorious Stalinist -that the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus' - has turned from a slogan to a dramatic reality. To turn this crisis into working class victory, Trotsky's abiding concern - the 'crisis of working class leadership' must be resolved.

The roots of the crisis

The mass upsurge against bureaucratic rule now affects every East European country. What has clearly sparked this crisis is the growing realisation that the Gorbachev regime in the USSR lacks either the will or the capacity to intervene militarily in Eastern Europe to save Stalinist rule as it happened in Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

December's meeting of the Gorbachev in Moscow was symbolic in this respect: Gorbachev in effect told the Eastern Europeans to go their own way: the Soviet Union can no longer afford its huge subsidies to the other Eastern countries.

The removal of the protective cover of the Red Army rapidly revealed the fundamental weakness and instability of bureaucratic rule. As a parasitic layer, and not a social class, the bureaucracy lacks the deep social roots and mechanisms of support enjoyed by the imperialist bureaucracies. Its rule has relied entirely on its monopoly of politics, imposed by force. The challenge now faced by the Gorbachevite leadership is that of reforming the bureaucratic apparatus of the other Eastern countries.

While the last military action to crush a workers' revolt - the December 1981 coup by General Jaruzelski in Poland - was carried out by the party police forces, it was backed by the perceived threat of direct Russian intervention under the "Brezhnev doctrine". Now this doctrine is an anachronism.

Underlying the revolt is the near-exhaustion of hundreds of millions of East European citizens at the failure of the bureaucratic system to deliver either material prosperity, or political and social freedom.

Despite repeated subventions from the Soviet Union, and vast borrowing from Western banks in the 1970s (especially by Hungary and Poland), the East European economies failed to develop beyond basic industrialisation and the provision of a social welfare system.

With the exception of East Germany and Czechoslovakia, even these gains have been put in question. Every East European citizen understands thoroughly the waste, inefficiency and aletorism of the centralised bureaucratic command economy.

These failures have been especially highlighted in the past 15 years, as the gap between these countries and the advanced capitalist countries has increased, both in terms of productive technique and the standard of living of the employed sections of the working class. Bureaucratic rule, unlike capitalism in boom periods, contains no fundamental mechanism towards innova-```
Socialist Outlook

Living History

Socialism with democracy, nonetheless the restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe - especially if combined with a similar outcome in the USSR - would be a world historic defeat for the working class. In this respect it is absolutely irresponsible to ignore - as do state capitalists and bureaucratic collectivists - the weight of the deformed workers' states in the world relationship of forces. With their defeat, the continued existence of the Cuban workers' state and of the revolutionary government in Nicaragua would be in peril. Imperialism would be much more likely to engage in adventures, not only for example, towards Vietnam, but against the whole third world. Imperialism rampant would rapidly lead to resurgent militarism, especially in Japan and Germany. New inter-imperialist wars could be ruled out. The reimplantation of the imperialist yoke in Eastern Europe is a nightmare scenario. An opposite scenario, the possibility of the emergence of new democratic socialist states, or even a militant fight in that direction, could have an explosive impact on the working class in every country, but especially on the workers of the advanced capitalist world, including Europe.

In Europe, the danger for imperialism is not just that of the attractive power of democratic socialist states if they are established, but of the loss of mass mobilisation. Already there is no doubt that political freedoms are greater in Eastern Europe today than they are in any advanced capitalist state.

The right to demonstrate is unbriddled, and everyone can inspect their own passports, if it hasn't been destroyed. The power of the secret police, including the right to surveillance, is completely destroyed. The dangers of those lessons spilling over into Western Europe are immense.

To maximise the opportunities for the working class in this situation requires the construction of revolutionary political leadership - there can be no political revolution without it. We do not define such a leadership as necessarily explicitly Trotskyite; but it must engage in a struggle around the main themes and demands of the political revolution, on the axis of socialism with democracy.

This must include a rejection of marketisation as the main form of economic restructuring, and the building of organisations of workers' power at the level of the factory and throughout society. Through the fight to build organised bodies of support, revolutionary currents and parties in every east European country, and, through ceaseless contacts and political intervention, we and our co-thinkers internationally can make a major contribution to the creation of such a leadership.

The programme of political revolution

The programme of political revolution which we advocate must go beyond attempts at 'reform' of the system and the establishment of parliamentary-type democracy. Key to our demands must be the fight for the self-organisation and political independence of the working class from Stalinist and bourgeois forces. While we do not write off reform Communists at the base of the Stalinist parties, history has already answered the question of whether these parties can be transformed into instruments for socialist democracy; by and large they are finished, their working class base will increasingly look elsewhere. The fight for workers' self-organisation must involve the fight for independent trade unions and workers' councils independent of the Stalinist parties. The most important example of development of this kind was the mass working class movement and an extensive network of workers' councils which characterised the emergence of Solidarnosc in Poland.

Under these conditions the working class across Eastern Europe, and in Hungary, were the driving force in the process of political revolution. It involves the fight for new political parties based on socialist democracy and the programme of the workers' self-management.

Solidarnosc marked the end of the fight for socialist democracy with a struggle around transitional demands in defence of the material interests of the workers which will eventually be realised. The key among these demands are a sliding scale of wages to protect the workers against the ramp of inflation in several East European countries, and a 35-hour week against the long working hours and growing unemployment. This fight must be complemented by the demand for radical egalitarianism and the end of all vestiges of bureaucratic privilege.

In great part the fight for political revolution is the struggle, as in the case of Solidarnosc, as opposed to ideological equality, for women in the East European countries women are completely integrated into the workforce - in the GDR for example they are 51 per cent of the labour force. But in general real equality does not exist, either in terms of employment opportunities or in the socialisation of domestic labour. In several countries abortion and contraception are de facto restricted.

The fight against ecological catastro- phes assumes particular force in eastern Europe. Stalinism's abolute priority to expand production and largescale industry has created the most serious ecological problems in the world.

In several parts of eastern Europe the national question increasingly raises its head. Socialism is used to mask the right of national self-determination, of a national liberation movement, for oppressed nationalities.

Above all, the programme of political revolution must be centred on the fight for a democratic society, for independence, for democracy, under workers' control. The first stage of this is the fight for workers' councils, the separation of the state and a regime of workers' control at the level of the state bureaucracy.

This programme does not exclude all marketisation initiatives - for example the attempts at social reforms in the service sector with profits supervised by the state, or agricultural and other cooperatives. But the key to regenerating the economy is the displacement of the creative power of the masses, around the political objectives democratically decided.

Rational democratic planning assumes that the state, as an international division of labour. That is why the fight for an international federation of democratic political parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is vital. But the key to regenerating the market economy in those countries is the return of production and markets east and west which has been taken by the economies of the Soviet Union and Germany. This is the centre of the struggle for the new state: States of Europe.

In particular the programme of political revolution involves the struggle for democratic workers' councils (soviets), the separation of party and state and the smashing of Stalinist control of the police, military and secret police.
Rescuing Marx from ignorant "modernisers"

Karl Marx by Francis Wheen (Fourth Estate; London, £20) Reviewed by Geoff York

Rather surprisingly Francis Wheen has done the socialist movement a tremendous service by writing this biography of the great man. It is startling, because earlier this year Wheen made use of his regular Guardian column to attack those opposed to NATO's war against Serbia.

According to Wheen "It is time to strip away mythology and try to rediscover Karl Marx the man. In this he certainly succeeds." Mr. Marx that he claims from the pages of Wheen's book is a "figure of flesh and blood". He is not the "economic begetter of all evil" nor a "secular god" but a real human being, with all the vices, foibles and virtues of real human beings.

He exhibits many of the prejudices of nineteenth century men of middle class origin, especially towards women and non-European peoples. He is not beyond boiling the aziriacic or giving his wife Jenny. He struggles against poverty and frequent illness, both of which, to varying extents, are sometimes self-imposed. He wants his daughters to enjoy the trappings of middle class women of the time and, therefore, often lives beyond his means. His illnesses are often a way of avoiding concentration on a task, a product at times of self-doubt.

At the same time Marx can also be extremely arrogant and sometimes abusive and often devotes large amounts of time to writing vast tracts of unproductive argument, most of whom have long since disappeared into obscurity.

Wheen claims his purpose is to show Karl Marx the man he goes beyond this aim. He rescues Marx's ideas from both virulent anti-Marxists who seek to demonise him, and those who mis-use his ideas in order to justify their personal cronies. Wheen totally rejects claims that Marx's ideas inevitably led to Stalinism "Only a fool could hold Marx responsible for the Goulag, but there is, also, a ready supply of fools."

Wheen also takes issue with those who have tried to portray Marx as anti-Semitic, a still relevant issue today. He insists, that, although Marx frequently used anti-Semitic epithets against his political opponents, many of his reservations have taken shape. In fact Marx insisted on equal rights for Jews though he was hostile to Judaeism. But this was at one with Marx's hostility to all religions, not an example of anti-Semitism.

Wheen insists that is necessary to understand exactly what Marx meant by the much quoted, but frequently misunderstood, assertion that 'religion is the opium of the people'. Marx's attitude, in fact, is much more subtle and shows the importance of dialectics in his thought.

"Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of souls conditions. It is the opium of the people." This sense of Islamic fundamentalism, in response to grinding poverty, imperialism domination and corruption of local ruling classes, especially those who falsely claim to be 'secular' is a testament to the relevance today of Marx's ideas.

The strength of Wheen's book is that he rescues Marx's ideas by insisting that they are still relevant today.

"Today's pundits and politicians who fancy themselves as modern thinkers like to repeat buzz-word "globalisation" at every opportunity - without realising that Marx was already on the case in 1848.

"The globe-straddling democracy of McDonald and MTV would not have surprised him in the least. The shift in financial power from the Atlantic to the Pacific thanks to the Asian Tiger economies and the silicon boom towns of west-coast America - was predicted by Marx more than a century before Bill Gates was born."

Although Marx's work is often dismissed as 'crude dogma' Wheen insists this is usually by people - such as Tony Blair - who know no sign of ever having read him. As Wheen shows, Marx actually had a 'caressingly inquisitive, subtle and undogmatic mind'.

Marx recognised the tremendous achievements of capitalism. His analysis of the nature of capitalism drew on the writings of classical bourgeois economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Marx 'used their own words and logic to expose the shortcomings of their own theories' - in particular their belief that private property was 'a primordial human condition'. Marx showed that 'there was nothing fixed or immutable about it'.

When defends Marx against detractors by arguing that his economic predictions can be subjected to scientific examination. Marx predicted "we would see periodic recessions, an ever-growing dependence on technology and the growth of huge, multinational corporations spreading their sickly tentacles all over the world in search of new markets to exploit". As Wheen says: "If none of this had happened, we might be forced to agree that the old boy was talking poppycock." However, he continues, "The boom bust cycles of Western economies in the twentieth century, like the globe-girdling dominance of Bill Gates' Microsoft, suggest otherwise."

Wheen also takes issue with those who claim that Marx predicted the 'progressive' immunisation of the proletariat. He argues, quite correctly, that since Marx actually predicted a relative - and absolute - decline in wages under capitalism. Thus, as Wheen says, 'is self-evident in one way - however much the microwave ovens the workers can afford. Moreover, Marx was not solely concerned with material impoverishment: he also shows, unconsciously, a weakness in his analysis. Capitalism cannot be reduced to the advanced capitalist states of the west.

With one or two exceptions, the 1930s of Africa, Asia and Latin America are also capitalist in which the we don't have not been a relative but absolute pauperisation. Marx lived too early to see the rise of imperialism. His analysis, therefore, tended to be Euro-centric. Marx, of course, did write about imperialism and protested about the brutal treatment of the colonial peoples. But he also believed that capitalism was progressive, and that the suffering of the colonial peoples was a necessary stage in the development of capitalism. Hence Marx believed that British domination of India was historically progressive.

However, it is interesting that capitalist rule in India would be ended either by the British working class overthrowing capitalism in the imperialist heartland or by the Indian masses themselves developing sufficient political consciousness to overthrow foreign capitalist domination.

Francis Wheen has unfortunately opted for an approach diametrically opposed to that of Marx. Rather than advocating that the oppressed people of Kavva would be liberated either by the Soviet working class establishing a socialist society or by themselves defeating Serbian oppression. Those who supported imperialism intervention aimed at preventing the Kosovo independence. It is certainly tempting to conclude that Wheen's failure to criticise the weaknesses in Marx's economic theories, particularly the lack of a concept of imperialism, led Francis Wheen to such a wrong position.
Boxing clever

I didn't think I would be, from the moment I saw a copy - Verso have done themselves proud with the design. This maker book is easier to hold and has a wonderful photo of Ali and Malcolm X on the cover. And the style was typical - this was lips of closely argued political polemic and graceful metaphor. Most importantly, I was interested in the subject, despite my dislike of boxing. I was 9 when Cassius Clay became the World Heavyweight Champion and then became Muhammad Ali. I knew even then that something important was going on with both these. events and wanted - but had no means to find out more about. This was my opportunity to do that - and much more. The book is in some ways rather different from the author's previous works - because on the one hand it is a story - and a story that forms the basis for a number of arguments and ideas of one individual - although it interweaves this tale with many other personalities and broader political developments. That the boxing is done in an almost seamless way - making the man live for the more familiar with the background and for those drawn by the individual colouring in the equally vital context. There were sections that were more familiar to some who has read Mark's previous work. Early in the book, we are treated to a basic outline of the social history of boxing - which while not making us want to watch the fight, certainly did lead me to understand its class and racial basis in a way that I had previously not considered. For many readers, some of the topics dealt with were familiar to me but others were not. Whichever it was I remain engaged and felt pretty much the time - although I confess that my least favourite section was the one which made the comparison and contrast between Ali and Bob Hope. I'm not sure what jerry - perhaps its just that Dylan was important to my growing up and becoming active, so I resist the flow of stones even the same time later - but I think its more than that. On the other hand, the most powerful message from this section - and possibly from the whole book - was undoubtedly the way in which the perception of black people - including Ali himself - in the boxing world has been effectively ignored - the way so much else of Black History has been. I was nervous about how the question of the Nation of Islam would be dealt with, how Ali's fascination Rumble in the Jungle in Mobuto's Zaire would be depicted. But it is clear that Marquesue respects and is engaged by his subject, this is a book that does not fail to impress and to critically using it that there is a need. On the question of the Nation of Islam, Marquesue is not at all, enough to explain that the organization that Clay joined in 1962 was different in many ways from the Nation today. In many respects however the differences are products as much of the change in political circumstances as of the different personalities of the respective leaders. On the mythic fight with Frazier, while the title 'victory is a triumph of intelligence and sheer intensity of personality over imperialist bravado' (p274), Marquesue also explains that the political aspirations behind the contest to be a new era of internationalism among American were betrayed. The fight in Kinshasa proved a turning point in a path of development that would leave Africa in an even graver economic and political disaster. So Ball's 'Mobola's Zaire exemplified a degradation which seemed unthinkable during the early years of post-colonial independence.' He cited the murder of Lumumba (by Mobuto) as a 'turning point' in the downfall (p275-6).

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed the book and learnt a lot from it - but I still don't like boxing.

Long-playing Chomsky

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National Protest
"Close Down Campsfield"

Saturday Nov 27
6th Anniversary
Demonstration 12.00pm to
2.00pm Main gate, Campsfield
Detention Centre Langford
Lane, Kidlington, Oxford

Picket Harmondsworth
Detention Centre,
Saturday Dec 11,
12 noon - 1.30pm Take U3 bus
from Heathrow or 81 bus from
stop opposite Hounslow West
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of phone cards to give to
refugees

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