As Labour buys into more rip-off schemes

FIGHT TO STOP PRIVATISATION

NEW LABOUR is outstripping the Tories as the party of privatisation—and working people are paying a heavy price.

It's not just the old-fashioned sell-offs which are doing the damage, but the injection of private capital and private management into existing public services—from the London Tube, to education, and increasingly the National Health Service.

The much-vaunted new NHS Plan involves a massive expansion of the Tory-inspired Private Finance Initiative (PFI), through which hospitals and clinics are designed, built, maintained and serviced by profit-seeking private contractors—and leased back to NHS Trusts at a massive annual fee.

38 hospital schemes are now in the PFI pipeline, with an estimated total cost of £3.8 billion. Labour wants to boost this to £7 billion by 2010. Ministers claim these schemes offer value for money, but the only two PFI hospitals that have so far opened—in Carlisle and Dartford—represent a dire catalogue of planning foul-ups, shoddy construction and management nightmares.

PFI not only inflates the cost of hospital building, it slashes the numbers of beds to treat patients, even while the government's Beds Inquiry calls for extra beds in the system.

PFI also brings a new onslaught on the jobs, pay and conditions of support staff, who are hired off to private contract firms. In Carlisle this has meant many domestic workers facing 72-hour shifts, compulsory weekend working or permanent nights. NHS staff switched to private employers also face the loss of their relatively generous NHS pension rights.

Hospital workers have recognised the danger and began fighting back. At London's University College Hospital, strikers by UNISON forced a ground-breaking deal which gives staff a veto over changes to their working conditions. Alan Milburn was even forced to agree to a demand more precisely be included in the £422m new hospital.

Last year, ministers ruled that future PFI schemes can focus exclusively on buildings, and not include the privatization of support services: but there are no signs that the PFI consensus will agree to such a restriction on their profits.

As we go to press, 600 health workers at Dudley Hospitals Trust are now in their third spell of official strike action opposing their transfer to private contractors as part of a PFI scheme.

It's been a long time coming, but a real fight against Labour's privatization offensive seems to have begun.

The Dudley strikers have correctly refused to sacrifice their conditions on the altar of private profit. The entire workers' movement must rally round to ensure that this brave stand succeeds, and profits aren't risked before bidding for PFI deals.
SNP leadership change
Salmond wriggles on the hook

Gordon Morgan
In July, Alex Salmond resigned as leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) in an unexpected and shocked most activists within his party.

There has been a great deal of speculation in the Trade Union magazine Socialist Outlook, which has not ruled out acting as an SNP candidate. Labour has suggested that he acted so as not to be associated with SNP at the forthcoming General Election, however, with the SNP highest in polls in the run up to the last elections, this is implausible.

Some in SNP have speculated Labour is trying to remove the charge that SNP is a one man band - and that perhaps he intends to return to the leadership in future. This may be a plausible explanation.

Salmond himself argues that he has achieved his goal of leading the SNP to its strongest position ever and that he felt that others should take up the reins. This appears to be an after-the-fact justification.

The SNP has had the party led for over 10 years and been in a leadership role for 20 years, Salmond had seemed less adept, but moving forward without him has shown signs of strain. Perhaps his resignation has been decided to spend more time with his family.

Salmond's resignation has precipitated concerns for both Labour and Deputy leader of the SNP. The election place by a variety of delegations at the SNP conference at the end of September.

Redefine
In theory this should offer a new chance to place itself in the run up to the General elections and begin to effectively challenge Labour. Instead even SNP have found themselves among the lowest of key counts.

None of the candidates has made much of impact out with the SNP or even within it. However, the context is highlighting some of the policies which divide the SNP and the vote will claim the main plank of SNP strategy for the General Election.

Candidates
The candidates to replace Salmond as party leader are John Swinney and Alex Neil. Swinney is currently the Deputy leader of the Scottish Parliament and supports the continuance of the SNP's policies of "pluralist" winning of independence.

Alex Neil is an SNP MSP but long associated with Jim Finlayson"s "as the Fundie" or fundamentalist wing of the SNP. Neil has defended the SNP as an obstacle to independence. In the leadership contest, both candidates reject such characteristics. Both claim to be grandaunt, both claim to be left of centre.

Running for Deputy leader, Roseanna Cunningham is currently SNP Justince Spokesperson and firmly part of the existing leadership.

Kenny MacAskill who is the Party's Transport and Environment Secretary is a lot less of the Fundie wing and does little to deny that he has been involved in the SNP for a long time. For a leader a third candidate Peter kaye is also standing.

Swinney is strong favourite for leader. However, Alex Neil has run a more effective campaign. It is not surprising if Roseanna Cunningham were not elected.

Policies
The context has forced the candidates to state that they will concentrate on extending the influence of the Scottish Parliament. The profile of independence for Scotland has been raised, Salmond was severely criticised for running this almost last of the SNP's demands at the Scottish Elections.

Alex Neil has questioned the SNP policy of independence. If the break from London is achieved he asks, why give fiscal autonomy to Brussels. Interestingly on this Alex Neil, is parallel with the Scottish Parliament criticisms of the SNP. The fact that this seems to make Neil the only candidate with a serious hope of persuading Labour to support an SNP led government.

Chief Alex Neil, whilst also opposing PFI, has criticised employers who are in the wrong position - which is odd given his vote to support Social Redistribution.

Both candidates claim to favour extending trade union rights, and enhancing the national minimum wage.

Left of Labour
Roseanna Cunningham argues that the SNP must consistently place itself to the left of Labour and use its influence to break up the trade union and Liberal Democrat influence in Labour.

What made Salmond jump?
And Jim Sillars is backing the "Save the SNP" campaign which makes one wonder what has brought about Alex's change of mind.

Neil has focused on the need to attack Labour - for contesting the working class. Neil is also sharpening his focus on breaking the trade union and Liberal Democrat influence in Labour.

Swinney sees the need to consolidate the present position, but sharpen attacks on Labour. He has clearly stated his opposition to PFI, PFI and to Compulsory Competitive Tendring.

This is the firmest statement yet from the leadership on this issue and interestingly he backs it with a com-

ment to proper funding for Local Government and local authorities on Brussels. Interestingly on this Alex Neil is parallel with the Scottish Parliament criticisms of the SNP. The fact that this seems to make Neil the only candidate with a serious hope of persuading Labour to support an SNP led government.

AEEU - A cancer at the heart of Labour movement
Susan Moore
As the Trade Union Congress is due to meet in Manchester in September it has been decided that the AEEU is to be separated from the Labour movement.

The union has a long history of being a "left wing" union, having been formed by General Strike and other working class movements.

Now however they are up against their old tricks in an even more blatant way. A Joint Venture Company has been set up to rebuild the West Coast mainline (between London and the West Coast mainline). AEEU has been given two options - Balfour Beatty (in Lilian Dam fame) and GTRM. Instead of recognising the RMT, as both companies are to be involved in the project, they have made a decision to separate from the Labour movement.

Meanwhile in the North Sea, the AEEU, together with the GMB has signed a "partnership agreement with the Offshore Contractors Association and a single union deal with the United Kingdom Drilling Contract Association. The deals have clearly been engineered - both by the employers and the governmentin order to prevent the workers taking advantage of the bargaining regulations under the new Employment Act to choose their own union. Employers argue that the new unions engage in shabby practices of single union deals - selling themselves to the employers as compliant.

We need to campaign to expose all such deals and build fighting alternatives to those so-called leaders. A sharp campaign against the AEEU can be an important weapon in such a fight.
Brown's spending spree misses key targets

It seems more or less certain that the new Labour's conference is going to be the last before the General Election.

After all, this summer's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has been planned since Day 1 of Blair's government as the carrot to counteract the many sticks with which Labour's heatlnd voters have been beaten.

Coverage in the media failed to mention the fact that the CSR only returns Labour to the levels of public spending, as a proportion of GDP, that it inherited from the Tories. After many years of attacks from Blair and his predecessors, that thought probably won't occur to many Labour supporters either.

There is reason to be positive that the real increase in education spending of 5%, the doubling of investment in public transport and the substantial increase in NHS spending, is not point out elsewhere, this will be seen as a little tainted by the fact that so much of this money will go to the privatesector through PFI.

But within the review itself, there were two problems.

Firstly, there has been little好象 at all on pensions meeting Blair's own pater-in-law Tony Booth to open the support the demands of the National Pensioner's Convention for a return to index linking. While there is still the possibility - and certainly the money for Gordon Brown to right this wrong in his November budget, there is no certainty this will happen.

Amendments to the pension section of new Labour's economic policy document were ruled out of order at the July meeting of the Policy Forum. Activists were told there would be a statement to conference on this issue. Clearly it is important that the left stand with pensioners' campaigners to exert maximum pressure on this vital issue.

Secondly, on the question of housing the mass sell off of council houses will proceed - without even the previsions of the Coalition contract. On this basis local councils will be 'allowed' to build new social housing. This outrageous deepening of the attacks on social housing has not merited much comment so far, either in the press generally or from much of the left. Clearly if we are to defend these reactionary proposals, there must be an effort to step up the campaigns in defence of council housing.

It is not clear to the more even the most optimistic of the CSR will be sufficient to stop the disillusionment among many of Labour's core voters. While new money has been pledged, it comes after many hard years of squeeze and cuts, and will take time to work through. Concrete improvements may well not materialise before a probable spring election.

Blair can draw little comfort from the fact that much of new Labour's improved showing in the opinion polls is due to the dire performance of their Tory opponents.

It may well be reassuring that William Hague continues to be unable to make an impact but it seems clear that the Milliband mantra were hoping for a stronger response to theCSR itself.

However this is unlikely to distract them from their overall direction of pursuing the general agenda whatever the electoral cost.

At the Blair conference itself, the key issue other than pensions will be the debate around privatisation. At the July Policy forum the National Grassroots Alliance opposition to privatisation the tube fell only three votes short of the majority needed to go to conference as a minority position - because the UNISON and TGWU delegations failed to vote for it.

Last year there were fire-fights over reference back on PFI and there are plans not only to repeat similar tactics but to ensure there is a contemporary resolution on the issue.

Lobbying of union delegates will be key to ensure that any debate takes place, since it is the unions which pretty much determine what is dealt with under this limited section of the agenda.

Debates on Party democracy may be rather more muted than some might have expected, following the National Executive Committee meeting in July which failed to force through some of the more extreme proposals.

Theiral abolition of General Management Committees (GMCs) was not recommended - and it seems clear that this must have been because the consultation around the '21st Century Party' proposals resulted in a majority of responses opposing such a move.

At the same time the various attacks on party democracy have neutralised the structures to such an extent that the leadership is safely able to ignore what dissent there is.

While the political challenge on the Blair conference will be supported by the left inside and outside the party, there is a wider challenge for us all between now and the General Election.

We have to build a fighting opposition to roll back Blair's neo-liberal attacks - that can be heard on the market lines at Dudley or across Scotland, or through campaigns in defence of council houses or asylum seekers.

 Nice demo to follow Prague

Pete Cooper
The European Trade Union Confederation - to which the British TUC is affiliated has requested the French Trade Union Confederation to organise a demonstration in Nice. France on December 6.

This is when the European heads of State will hold a summit meeting to coincide with the 6th month French Presidency of the European Union.

The summit is expected to agree on a "Charm of Fundamental Rights" which is intended to be the basis of a European supra-

International "Constitution". Although a constitution may seem a step forwards for British citizens, and it is full of the usual fine rhetoric about individual rights, it marks a step backwards for many European countries.

Some of these incorporated social rights such as the right to work, and to housing in their post-World War Two Constitutions. This means the money in the European Mancs against Unemployment will be mobilising for Nice.

This follows the huge success of their 100,000 mobilisation in July in defence of French peasant militant Jose Bove in the remote French town of Millau.

Socialist Outlook readers may be forgiven for having missed the ETUC call up to now and they can rest assured that it will go unmentioned in the televised proceedings of TUC Congress.

But ETUC support means anti-capitalist and socialist campaigns who want to mobilise against the EU's neo-liberal anti-social policy will have to be mobilised for the ETUC unions.

This means that our response to the sickening attacks on the strength of the French working class that the tabloids have been full of recently is to build a serious mobilisation from Britain.

Unlike Naman Tebbit, we don't have that French Socialist mayor's need of Thatchetism, but rather out organisations could benefit from a little of their militancy.

If Millau and Prague are anything to go by, Nice will be a sporting proposition at least.

For further information contact: Nice 2000 c/o PO Box 1203 or outook@gn.apc.org.
Spread the fight to win Dudley strike

Bob Whitehead

As representatives of ancillary workers from the Dudley Group of Hospitals prepare to begin their 7-day strike in protest at the decision to remove employment from the NHS to one of the five contractors in the area of Social Health and Inpatient Services, their union, UNISON, has announced that it has received a revised offer from the employers.

THE DAY? DUDLEY HOSPITALS STRIKE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

UNISON left must rise to challenge

Fred Leplat, CFU Treasurer, in a personal capacity

Barely five years old, UNISON is now at a critical moment in its life with leadership torn between supporting the New Labour government and the need to deliver a convincing response to its members and the government’s continuing attacks on public services. The leadership must be challenged on how to get out of this contradiction.

UNISON’s leadership has not planned any national conference, including any regional events such as privatization or the living wage, which are left isolated to face the employees’ attacks, and pay must continue to be well below the going rate.

Fred Leplat

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Send messages of support to Broilley Union, Broilley Union, 8033 13 4865.
- Send letters of protest to the Regional Organiser, Sandra Campbell, Fax 8033 13 4241, to the Regional Branch Secretary, Huddersfield.
- Call Glenn Kelly at the Barnsley Trade Union Council, 8033 13 4465.
- Publicise a boycott of public services and enter into direct talks with New Labour.

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Police racism again under the spotlight: demonstrators march through Telford demanding justice for the McGowan family

Fighting racism

page 6

Inquest finds police responsible for unlawful killing

Justice for Christopher Alder!

Susan Moore
Last month after seven weeks of evidence the jury at the inquest into the death of Christopher Alder in the custody of Hull Police returned a verdict of Unlawful Killing. Christopher Alder, was a 37 year old black man and a former paratrooper. He died on 1st April 1998 after being arrested and taken to Queen's Gardens Police Station, Hull. He had been taken to hospital following a fight outside a nightclub during which he had been hit in the mouth and fallen to the floor. He was confirmed and uncooperative at the hospital.

At the police station evidence was heard that the police had him unconscious face down on the floor of the police cell for 41 minutes. His trousers were around his knees, he had been doubly incontinent and blood and vomit formed a pool around him.

Campaign
Christopher's family and INQUEST, the organisation which campaigns against deaths in custody, thanked the jury for returning what they believed to be just verdict in this case.

Helen Shaw, Co-Director of INQUEST said:

"The inquest was the first where there was video evidence shown of a young man being arrested and brought to the custody suite of a police station.

"We called on the Home Secretary to watch this shocking video, said to institute a public inquiry into Deaths in Custody to prevent such appalling incidents never happening again."

This is another unlawful killing verdict on a death in custody which has such verdict in the last decade. Five of those were black, the sixth, Richard O'Brien was Irish. So why is British Justice isn't racist?

TUC toys scheme

THE TUC has called on people to donate toys, which refugees are banned from buying under the voucher system. This gives a useful opportunity to raise the issue of the backlash against asylum seekers in union branches that might not have been so keen to discuss this – as well as a practical way of working to alleviate some of the distress caused by the voucher scheme.

Local collection centres:

Scotland: Scottish Refugee Council, 5th Floor, 14 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 6QJ. Phone 0141 248 7959

Northern Ireland: NIACRO, 103, Maevy House, 17a Ormea Avenue, Belfast BT2 2HD. Phone 02890 312 052

North West: Refugee Action, 24-26 Lever Street, Manchester M1, 1DZ. Phone 0161 2311200.

Liverpool Law Centre, 34 Princes Road, Liverpool L1 1HH. Phone 0151 702 6300


West Midlands: Offices EJHW, 27 Business Centre, China Court Building, Livery Hall, Birmingham BS 1JX. Phone 0212 622 1515

The TUC has called on people to support the campaign of asylum seekers to march on Whitehall, London, on 20th October.

TUC toys scheme

Justice for Christopher Alder!
Court vindicates fight by Campsfield Nine

On Friday September 3, John Quaugh succeeded in a 10-month battle against the Home Office to have his asylum claim examined by a judge. The judge ruled that the Home Office had not made a decision on his case, which had been pending for over a year. The judge also ruled that the Home Office had failed to provide evidence to support their decision. The Home Office has been ordered to reconsider Mr. Quaugh's asylum claim, and to consider his application for leave to remain in the UK.

Blair and Haig – door knockers for the BNP

In a local by-election in the North East of England, the BNP made significant gains. The party's candidate in the seat of Stockton South, Brian Haigh, won the seat with a majority of over 2,000 votes. The Labour Party candidate, Stephen Twigg, lost his seat by a similar margin. The BNP's success in this by-election is seen as a sign of growing support for the party's anti-immigration and anti-Muslim policies.
Trade Unions

Darren Williams

The Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) is facing a critical election for the post of general secretary later this year. In a recent ballot, members of the civil service union have voted overwhelmingly that the union should take strike action that the government will be hit by a five-year wave of retirements when the election was due. Shepherd is to leave office this year, but Reambottom has another four years to go before he collects his gold watch.

Since its creation, PCS has been led by two right-wing groups - the Moderates and Membership First - which previously ran its predecessors, COSA and PTC, respectively. Although there is no substantial political difference between the two, they have rarely fallen out as automatic Reambottom and his Moderates have become increasing unpopular since the election of Membership First.

Picking up the post in Reambottom's run-off election after Shepherd's retirement, Membership First worked with opposition factions to ensure that conference voted for an early general secretary's election, and that this was then called for the 2023 election, rather than in 2026.

Return to its roots, the unions and socialists, Coal officers say the probability of a national PCS strike, but with a kinder, more 'inclusive' face.

A real political alternative is essential in this election to convince members that there is another way, and to prepare for a real fight in defence of their jobs.

Steve Metcalfe

From being seen as a transport problem in the British Isles, it has lurched from bad to worse. Absolutely responsible for this lies at the doorstep of the government. New Labour! It has abandoned any loyalty to those millions who voted for it in creating cowardice before the vested interests of the international oil, road and rail transport companies.

After the Ladbroke Grove disaster, the government had the chance to claw back every penny to cover the costs of the Tories. Instead, Prescott played for time to protect privatization, not its victims.

This is precisely what has happened. The government's partnership survives. Only massive Labour Party members' and working class support would have got Blair and co from where Major's gang left off. This anger was reflected in massive vote for Ken Livingston as London Mayor and for left and green candidates in the new Assembly.

Among rail workers generally, anger is in many areas almost incandescent in its intensity.

Here, almost literally, is what a signal worker recently told me. Judge for yourself from this: "They (outside agency maintenance contractors) come swanning into your box, whip out a waffle full of 'authorisation cards' in your face after boasting that they're on £5 an hour, and then have the bloody nerve to ask you where they're supposed to stick their sodding detonators for a protection job that they've been on a planning meeting to find out about days or weeks before. I sell them their PICOP (Person in Charge of Operations) and say, 'What the hell do you advise, no dog!' There are usually more eye-watering choice expressions from such front line regular workers these days. The fact that signalmers are often only on £5 or £7 an hour under the pernicious rip-off merchants who now run Railtrack's grids insist on injury. The safest situation has not improved. According to senior Railtrack managers, there have been a "shock" recent near misses and accidents at Ladbroke Grove, Paddington or Clapham.

Average hours worked by train crews, signalers and track maintenance staff on roads among the highest in Britain and indeed across Europe.

The sheer ignorance of senior Railtrack managers in briefing manager Chris Leah to admitted to the Cullen Inquiry into rail safety that he only found out how dangerous a "wrecker" or "wolfer" could become 2 years ago, having been on railways for over 20 years. Privatizers on the railways should be found guilty of institutional ignorance. They admitted to Cullen also that they were stressing performance to the almost total eclipse of "safety" situations.

Health and safety representatives are particularly targeted for victimisation and sacking by various train operation and track maintenance companies. The latest victim, after many others including Joe Morrison in Scotland and Steve Hendley and Company Councillor Bill Ashcroft, is London train driver Sarah Frida.

I myself recently represented one such rep, David Wistram, a ganger at Carshalton accused of abstaining himself from duty even though he was following management guidelines. Of

If leaving his successful appeal against management's "initial" warning, (a punishment not even on the disciplinary list!), Dave was immediately next off for an unbreathing and hearing over at the800m of the head of the discipline. This crew play also failed, but it shows what even senior reps have to put up with today.

The right wing and careerist elements within the various privatized railway company structures, be they RMT, ASLEF or TSSA compounded the problem. In many cases of victimisation, there have been too many suggestions of 'discroidealism', if there have been tears at all.

The TSSA are the worst, with 'tesser' being the usual derogatory term used by many rail workers to refer to that weak laced outfit. TSSA is a virtual 'rubber union' today, recently abandoned by the TGWU, along with ASLEF for unscrupulous bullying RMT members. I reckon the only way forward for railway trade unionists is to amalgamate various train operation and track maintenance unions with Disanchise with craft sectionals.

In the early parts of the last century, this was prominent on the railways. The RURU part from landing the fight for a Labour Party, was also a strong advocate of industrial unionism and a powerful educational force for thousands of Marxists and socialists. The spirit of resistance of that era can and must be revived.
NHS Plan: more money for NHS and no more pie

Harry Sloan

The government's ambitious multi-billion pound NHS Plan, announced at the end of July, is a vital attempt by New Labour to stem the tide of disaffection and the loss of the Labour of voters who have failed to rally to its cause.

Opinion polls indicated that - three years after Blair was first elected - public support for the government continued to decline. This was a central issue in the minds of the thousands of Labour voters who have failed to rally to its cause.

Gordon Brown had to deliver big bucks if the government was even to appear as serious about tackling the chronic underfunding of the most popular and universal of the public services.

As the government's NHS spending could also wrong-foot the Tories and give them little to say more than call for more people to take up private medical insurance.

Brown duly came up with bags-from-the-nHS in his March Budget, pledging the extra cash and the added spending in the history of the NHS.

But little of the new money has yet been released into the system, which means that the lion's share of the first year's cash injection was held back for four months while Health Secretary Alan Milburn went through the motions of drawing up a "Plan", much of which could easily have been sketched out on the back of a napkin.

The added complexity of the Plan, above and beyond the basic decision to increase funding, beds and staff seems to be New Labour's ideological determination to put up the level of the private sector's involvement in what will remain a tax-funded service.

The Labour Party is now in a situation where it will have to spend more money on the NHS in order to stop the Tories from coming closer to the public funded service.

The Plan, released by Blair, aims to increase funding in the NHS to £20 billion by 2004/05.

Many of these commitments are in line with past Labour commitments. The Plan will be translated into funded services over the four-year period.

The 10 focal points of the Plan are:

1. An end to charges for nursing care for elderly people - £7.5bn
2. Additional mental health and community care services - £5bn
3. More nurses and support staff - £4bn
4. Increased funding for the NHS - £2bn
5. More resources for the four new government services - £2bn
6. Improved funding for local government - £1bn
7. Additional funds for the NHS - £1bn
8. Increased funding for the NHS - £1bn
9. Improved funding for the NHS - £1bn
10. Improved funding for the NHS - £1bn

The Plan will be translated into funded services over the four-year period.

Indeed the "extra" beds promised in the Plan could easily be wiped out by the hefty reductions in front-line beds which are being imposed through PFI hospital schemes. Indeed the government's NHS Review and clear evidence of the pressure on beds and the rising proportion of emergency medical admissions.

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Loyalist backlash no threat to British deal

The British establishment in the Northern Ireland power-sharing government is angry at the renewed concerns, expressed by thugs through drugs and turf. Drugs and turf are indeed major indicators for each side, the loyalists are indeed thugs, but it is quite clear that the 40% to 50% of the loyalists in the loyalist community are under the influence of drugs and the sale and use of drugs is a major problem.

The loyalist community is much stronger and the Ulster Democratic Party (yet more humour from the death squadders) was unable to obtain seats in the Assembly. They began to consolidate drugs and prostitution racketeers and to link up with the Loyalist and other dissident elements to squeeze the power of the loyalist community.

Protests were followed by the "war of the flags" where each group marked out its own territory, a series of Loyalist attacks on Catholics began, justified by attacks on Protestant homes that were almost certainly staged by the UDA themselves. Finally there was Adair's factories of Protestant "culture" where a frenzy of sectarian hatred reached open war.

"Brains not brawn" sign of the demobilisation and depoliticisation of the struggle is given by a number of former Republican leaders offering sympathy to the UVF (the socialist supporters of the left-wing unionist) and the褚p (the right-wing politician) who now reject the peaceful branch of the UVF that they themselves helped to build.

Policy was to improve the agreement - the official unionist goal being to have the UVF from the superficial reforms of the stated purpose, report and the DUP to force Sinn Fein out of the executive and replace the Official Unionists as the major party. The right - wing threat to smash the agreement had evaporated in this air of Paramilitary rivalry.

The Ulster Unionist party is replicated in the political organisations.

The UVF has historically been the more ideological organisation, uniting far-right sectarian and outright fascists with a love of class war, their bourgeois pre- bourgeoisie allies within unionism. They have been able to link this to "community politics" and build a small political force - the Progressive Unionist Party (the name indicates that even the death squadders have some sense of humour).

On this slim base a willingness to accept a new dispensation that would remove the restrictions on their sectarian privilege while allocating limited sectarian crumbs to Catholics, they were able to make electoral gains and tap into the "grant culture" of the community funds available to all those willing to join in the political process.

The larger UDA was built from an association of criminal gangsters pulled together by the British.

Adair press reported that the Secretary of State, Mandelson had con- cluded that the London government had been set up and run directly by the own sectarian killers.

If the real nature of the UVF and the PUP remains invisible to some then so too does the enormous power the British have.

The British set up the terror groups and directly controlled "Ulster company for much of its history.

The British release Adair. They provide money for the troops on the streets. The war is likely to drag on from the right but from the left.

The Belfast agreement was seen as the most threatening in the period immediately before and immediately after the restoration of the local Stormont executive. David Trimble's minority government was open to the possibility of an agreement but the loyalist community was not satisfied with the Unionist party and the Agreement was not an agreement.

At local elections meetings anti-agreement candidates consistently defeated those supported by Trimble. The agreement, as far as loyalists are concerned, support within the unionist party was not universal.

When Democratic Unionist Party support was included, opponents of the Agreement had a majority within the unionist population, as they appreciated that the British were stuck with the Northern Ireland problem and that the DUP was not a viable alternative to the British. When the Agreement was signed there was a massive movement for the Agreement was seen as a possible way out of the impasse.

This voided the agreement in principle, as it legally depended on maximizing support on both sides, and in any case seemed likely to be in practice and be slashed down in practice.

In the run-up to the annual tri- umphal Orange parade, the demobilisation of the Orange order rejected any compromise with the Unionists and the wrecking of the compromise happened, and the uvd, the pro-unionist unionist community, the uvd, moved towards alliance with the ultra-nationalist UVF.

Defending sectarian privilege

Not if the Orange Order and the Democratic Unionists do not see the sectarian privilege to march when and where they like without any conditions. Even then there was wide support among unionists for this unexceptionable demand. In 1998 the Orange Order marched in Orange dresses and carried all the necessary papers.

All the unionist opposition had to do was unite in support of the Orange order to mount a very significant challenge to the whole agreement. But when the test came the agreement represented such a massive gain for reaction that no one could bring themselves to break from it.

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The larger UDA was built from an association of criminal gangsters pulled together by the British.
The sage advises that the World Trade Organization (WTO) is unduly influenced by the collapse of what should have been its true master: the Seattle conference last December.

Far from having adapted or retreated in any way in response to public pressure, the WTO is relentlessly pursuing its objective: to globalize the institution. It is also ever-active: the Thacher-free market.

This is clear from an article by John Lister, Director General Mike Moore, "Globalization: The New World Order," which was published in the New Zealand by the Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

In it, Moore sets out explicitly to explain the generalization, which he insists is "a process, not a policy."

It seems to have escaped his notice that accelerating this "process" is also one of the key policies of the world's most powerful country, the USA, and of almost all the other major governments - including that of the European Union. The idea of "trade" is a gulf between rich and poor on an international scale, and to assert that "Globalization is generally a self-regulating process" is an admission of the world's growing inequality. In recent years we have seen a dramatic rise in living standards for many countries across the world.

"Globalization is essentially about free trade," Moore states. "It is about using closer relations with other countries to our advantage to improve our standard of living."

His opening paragraphs make the point even more dramatically: in his own words, he explains the "tragedy" that a quarter of the world's population is still, in most cases, poor and hungry. Furthermore, the neoliberal approach to globalization, which seeks to make the market work for all, has resulted in a growing gap between rich and poor. This is seen in the growing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few.

"The negative impact that the liberalization of the Chinese economy has had on market prices is experienced by the poor. It is not that they have been excluded from the market, but rather that they have been forced to compete with others who have better access to resources," Moore notes.

Empiricist strategies - To preserve overall control and ensure the success of any loans or investments that have been forthcoming - have meant that in many cases these "democratizations" have installed, sponsored, and armed violent and corrupt militaristic regimes to control the poor countries. But Mr. Moore's ideals are as lofty as the heavens: "It is crucial that the Chinese government and all governments respect the rights of the poor, especially in the context of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law."

Mr. Moore's arguments are well presented, but it is clear that his views are not shared by all economists. For example, Paul Krugman, a well-respected economist, has criticized the WTO's policies, stating that they have resulted in a "tragedy" for many developing countries. Krugman argues that the WTO has prioritized the interests of wealthy nations over those of poorer countries, leading to a "tragedy" for many developing countries.

Mr. Moore's ideas are based on the assumption that "Globalization is a self-regulating process." But this assumption is flawed, as evidenced by the growing inequality and poverty in the world. The WTO's policies have resulted in a "tragedy" for many developing countries, and the "benign neglect" of the WTO's policies has resulted in a "tragedy" for the peoples of the world. The world is not a "tragedy," but rather a complex system of interdependent economies, and Mr. Moore's ideas are not sufficient to address the challenges that face the world.
Union broadside against IMF and globalization

Ron Quillombo
1382 WORKERS fired by Volkswagen in South Africa in February are still fighting for their jobs. The second round of arbitration hearings ended on 11 August but the workers are not giving up again until November.

"This is the first time that a group of workers has really fought the bosses. We have no income and we do not believe that the two countries have already fallen ill and died.

The story of the "VW Workers' strike" goes something like John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath".

In 1936, John Steinbeck published his novel "The Grapes of Wrath" which tells the story of a family's struggle against the conditions of poverty and the forces of nature. The novel was widely read and had a significant impact on American society and culture.

The novel was a critique of the capitalist system and the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. It was also a call to action for workers to resist against the forces of oppression and to organize for their rights.

Similarly, the workers in South Africa are fighting against the exploitation and oppression of the ruling class. They are fighting for their jobs, their dignity, and their freedom. Their struggle is a struggle for justice and equality against the forces of oppression.

The novel "The Grapes of Wrath" is a powerful reminder of the fight against oppression and the importance of solidarity and unity in the struggle for freedom and justice.
Sri Lanka is heading for a General Election on October 10. The People's Alliance government of Prime Minister Chandrika faces a weakening of its position, probably resulting in a hung parliament. Not only has opposition to the government's austerity programme increased, but one of the parties in the People's Alliance has jumped ship. A hung parliament would weaken the ability of the Chandrika government to pursue its war against the Tamil people as well as making it more difficult to push through its neo-liberal agenda of privatization and deregulation.

Vallipuram Thirunavukkarasu, editor of the Tamil paper of the Nawa Samasamaya Party (NSSP; Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International) looks at the way the situation is unfolding.

Chandrika's government has been battered by a series of crises - which of course are not really crises, as her making. There is a monumental bluff about what she pledged in the run up to the 1994 election and what has materialized on the ground today.

Economic growth has plummeted from 6% in 1994 to 3.7% in 1995 with food prices continuing to rise. The cost of living is rising dramatically and the price rises of many vital services - water, gas, diesel, kerosene oil, electricity, telecommunications - represent ominous trends.

Matters are made still worse by the recently announced 4% de facto devaluation of the rupee. The rupee has been losing value almost daily for several years now by its being drained away by the hoarding of some 20 currencies. The cumulative devaluation against the US dollar between 1991 and 2000 is more than 60%.

On the Tamil national question, Chandrika has failed miserably to concede the rights of the Tamils and旅游度假区 withdraw the armed forces from the North East. As she declared at a mammoth meeting in Negombo on 11 January 1995, the Chandrika government launched its so-called “war for peace” in July, 1995, and then conveniently what is dubbed as “Eelam war III” - yet in the negotiations, the package being presented by the government.

Then on August 3, 1995, for the first time the government came up with a package for establishing regional councils, thus designating Sri Lanka as a “United Region” against the present unitary nature of the state.

The package was generally welcomed as a good move that could lead to a positive outcome. However there was a backlash against the proposals from the Sri Lanka Christian motorcycle lobby and the government considerably diluted the package in response. The net result was that even Tamil parties like the Eelam People’s Democratic Party (EPDP), which have been active in the war, realized that the position of the government, could no longer back it.

In the government’s campaign on defeating the LTTE mini-rebellion, the war has become more intensive, leaving a further trail of death and destruction. The struggle against the LTTE is the war against the Tamil population. The war against the LTTE is being controlled by the government. Death due to stench in part control of the country by the government. The image of the government is now solely the Tamil nationalities. The image of the Tamil nationalities has had to prop the state.

The government celebrated the renewal of the LTTE control in December 1995. Now the image of the battlefront and the pagantry, but over time has had a face of hordes of Tamil military lavish thousands of dollars on their war against the Tamil people.

Chandrika felt intensely nervous that the LTTE would also overrun the biggest of the Tamil political base at Palay. Reversing the situation of previous with the 35,000-stong government there, she frantically sought and received a new and highly resourced and highly hard-wired force from Pakistan and Israel including the supply of the 12,000-strong military component of the Line of Control.

India has declined to offer any military support but pledged humanitarian assistance and mediation from its side of the border. Norway - which had already been endeavouring to negotiate a settlement - had to drop the question - for a while with the news of the massacre of civilians in the Jaffna and Chavakachcheri areas during recent weeks.

The government of Australia has been providing economic assistance and mediation on its own. Australia - which had already been working for a settlement - had to drop the question - for a while with the news of the massacre of civilians in the Jaffna and Chavakachcheri areas during recent weeks.

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Australi
Communist Party purges a left critic

IN THE CONTEXT of the political and ideological upheavals described elsewhere on these pages, the response of the South African Communist Party (SACP) to the deepening national crisis must be placed in a broader ANC government under Mbeki's leadership is obviously significant.

Last month the SACP carried out a purge of its leadership, most notably of its general secretary, Frans Makana, who was replaced by Thapelo Mokoena. The SACP expelled the ANC's secretary-general, Joe Slovo, and deputy secretary-general, Andrew Mlangeni. The latter two are among the most prominent figures in the anti-apartheid movement. The SACP's actions are seen as a direct result of the ANC's policies under Thabo Mbeki, which have been criticized for their failure to address the country's social and economic problems.

The purge was carried out by the SACP's Central Committee, which is the party's highest decision-making body. The Central Committee issued a statement in which it condemned the ANC government's policies and called for a change in leadership. The statement accused the ANC of being a party of the rich and powerful, and of ignoring the needs of the poor.

The SACP has a long history of opposition to the ANC government. It was one of the main forces behind the struggle against apartheid, and has been at the forefront of the opposition to the ANC's policies since the end of the Cold War. The SACP has been particularly critical of the ANC's failure to address the country's economic problems, and its focus on political reform rather than on social and economic issues.

The SACP's purge was seen as a significant development, and was widely discussed in South Africa and internationally. The move was seen as a sign of the growing tension between the ANC and its allies, and of the continuing struggle for political power in South Africa.

The SACP's purge also raised questions about the future of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The SACP has been one of the main forces behind the movement, and its actions are likely to have an impact on the direction of the movement in the future.
Milosevic digs in for a long war

Geoff Ryan

Just over a year after NATO's bombing campaign inflicted massive damage on Serbia's infrastructure and placed Kosovo under NATO control, Milosevic's government looks set to hold on to power.

A number of developments have more or less guaranteed that Milosevic will win the presidential and local elections due in Yugoslavia in September, and probably the parliamentary elections in the summer as well.

Firstly the Milosevic-dominated Yugoslav Parliament changed the Constitution, allowing him to stand for a further two terms as Yugoslav President. As this is directly elected position Milosevic would see any electoral victory to strengthen his position in the Parliament also downgraded the position of Montenegro, further weakening it's cooperation with Serbia and leading to threats by the pro-independence government of President Milo Djukanovic to boycott the elections.

But any boycott would only provide Milosevic's hand, making it easier for pro-Milosevic parties to take control of the 50 seats Montenegro holds in the Yugoslav Parliament.

Kosovo votes

Milosevic also expects to benefit from the reshuffling of electoral districts in Serbia to allowSerbs in Kosovo the right to vote in two districts in Serbia proper.

Poland and Montenegro will take place in army camps and municipalities controlled by the pro-Milosevic Socialist Party's People's Assembly as the elections earlier this year in Montenegro, while very clear, there is still considerable support for Milosevic.

He can, therefore, expect his supporters to mobilise for the elections even if the Montenegro government goes ahead with its boycott.

Although a meeting has broken down between Montenegrian prime minister, Filip Vujanovic and President Karadzic, it is still too early to come to any agreement about the September 24 elections, relations between the two states remain strained.

Arrests

In Montenegro Milosevic has also made use of the arrest of foreigners in the border regions with Montenegro, but with nationalist sentiments in Serbia strong, the arrests do not seem likely to have any effect on the Montenegro government.

Two Canadians and two British police officers attached to the police force in Montenegro were arrested and face charges of spying.

An Asian police officer and a British of Serbian heritage have also been arrested in the last days.

Four Dutchmen have recently been sentenced to 30 days detention, pending further investigations into allegations that they were planning to murder Milosevic or Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

Karadzic was recently ordered by a New York court to pay $74.5 million to a group of Croat and Muslim women raped and tortured under his rule.

The readiness of a US court to hand over Karadzic to the UN is in stark contrast to the refusal of the US government to countenance any international tribunal ever having any jurisdiction over US military personnel or politicians accused of war crimes.

While the Western media have made much of the arrests of British, Canadian and Dutch citizens, it has been virtually silent over the ordeal of two Slovenses who were arrested in August by the Yugoslav army in the coastal town of Bar on suspicion of trespassing and photographing in a restricted area.

Milorad Golicic received a three-year suspended prison sentence though his wife, Nataza Zenic, was found not guilty and has since been released.

Whether or not any of those arrested were actually plotting to kill Milosevic or Karadzic we do not know. Given that Milosevic and Karadzic are both protected, such free-lance efforts seem highly unlikely.

On the other hand it is not totally impossible that some of them were arrested in some form of spying or sabotage.

It is, at the very least, somewhat strange, that eight people from NATO countries, as well as two American police working with KFOR, should all have arranged to enter Yugoslav territory.

The United States, for one, would certainly not take kindly to people illegally entering its territory by 'mistake'.

Wherever those arrested may or may not have been up to, the arrests have ensured that Milosevic's probably paranoid fantasies have found an echo among some parts of the Serb people.

Given the massive destruction caused by NATO - and the potential future damage likely as a result of the large number of unexploded ordnances left by NATO - this is hardly surprising.

Exaggerations

Further admissions by NATO that it massively exaggerated the number of Albanians killed by Serb forces will also work to Milosevic's advantage.

The arrests also show the inability of the federal army along the Montenegro borders, activity which may well increase if, as expected, Milosevic turns the KFOR presence into a full-time occupation.

Whether this will lead to war with Montenegro is not clear and, as usual, reaction from the west is contradictory.

While NATO has made a few threatening noises, the response to appeals from President Djukanovic, the US State Department has made it plain that it does not support any moves to use force.

As usual the various forces of the Serbian opposition have also helped Milosevic. The coalition headed by the Democratic Party of Zoran Djindjic is running Vojslar Kostunica for President, while Vuk Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Movement is backing Vojslar Milosevic, mayor of Belgrade.

This split will be carried over into the local elections.

Kosovica is a hard line Serbian nationalist who, before the NATO bombing campaign was pictured in Kosovo brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle.

He has since denounced NATO's role in Kosovo and refused to meet officials from NATO countries.

Nevertheless he has not prevented him being endorsed by the West. That, of course is hardly surprising.

He also said that three in every four people in Kosovo have some criminal record. This last remark is based on a false statistic. A recent survey showed that 84% of the poorest section of the population has, at one time or another been involved in unlawful activities.

Djukanovic, who is the cause of crime - except, of course, in the higher echelons of criminal activity - has denounced it as an expensive way of making politics worse.

Yet Jack Straw boasts - yes, he actually boasts - that thousands have been imprisoned since the election.

He also said that one in three people in England have some criminal record. This last remark is based on a false statistic. A recent survey showed that 84% of the poorest section of the population has, at one time or another been involved in unlawful activities.

Djukanovic, who is the cause of crime, as promised in New Labour's election manifesto, you have to eliminate and prevent.

This can not be done while we have capitalism.

There is the real criminal - capitalism - the number of crime being in poverty in Britain, increased three-fold between 1979 and 1996, when the Tories were in power. The situation has improved under New Labour. Recent figures show Britain fourteen in the poverty league tables.

This country, one of the richest in the world, has more than ample money to redistribute the country's meagre earnings to countries such as Turkey, Poland and Hungary, where the cause of crime - except, of course, in the higher echelons of criminal activity - has denounced it as an expensive way of making politics worse.

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This can not be done while we have capitalism.
Green Bans, Red Union, Environmental activism and the New South Wales Builders

Unions in defence of the environment

Widening agenda

But these bans were only the opening salvo of the 11,000 strong union's new widening agenda. They vigorously campaigned on behalf of women's entrants to incendiums, launching a century-old opposition to women working in the building industry. Many of these women entrants later became leading union activists.

The union banned work at Macquarie University in support of a student expedition for his homosexuality. They later banned work against support of students opposing the segregation of staff/student bar facilities.

They supported aboriginal land rights, aboriginal squatter communities and tenancy, and aboriginal union activists. So vigorous was their solidarity that 38 aboriginal organisations joined the union in its later struggles against deregulation.

In 1971 union leaders were arrested for attempting to block down the aluminium plant in the Springwood Rugby Union tour from spartan South Africa.

The union called for defiance of calls to up to Vietnam by which workers build barricades to defend a draft sanctuary. And in a move that serves to frame even better our own jails, Jack Straw's inhumanity - the union banned all work on the $31 million maximum security prison block, where prisoners who have been unable to see daylight, confined for 18 hours per day, with toilet bowls as the only source of hydration. Their ban was betrayed by other unions, but their humanity was taken for granted and the union was closed down after a few years.

Defeat

I was not the employers who finally defeated the union, 1974-5, but the union's own organisational breakdown. It was not the employer but the union that could not adapt to the new employment environment on employer prerogatives.

These union front men were themselves the first to abandon the new climate of negotiations, speaking a rhetoric of workers' rights and a revolt against the same tradition of bureaucratic betrayal and tyranny.

Lessons

This story should not end with some small lessons about the dirty business of union-busting. This story is much bigger than that. What the NSW Builders' Unions' Federation proved was that the class power of the producers is our best weapon against the onslaught of capital on our employment, our quality of life, and on nature.

And they proved that this power could only be exercised through the deepest, most thoroughgoing democratic organisation. Once realised, this democratic power acted as a disinfectant of the hierarchical divisions of work and class barriers. No bans were ever placed without the support of the membership, in a democratic atmosphere.

The struggle to save our environment is linked tight to the struggle for democracy and control, and the struggle against capitalism. If we break these links, we break the possibility of our own success. All socialists and greens should read this book. I'll stay from head to toe.
SWP founder Tony Cliff

Strengths and theoretical weaknesses

Alan Thornett

Tony Cliff completed his autobiography A World in Flux, The Life of Revolutionary just before he died this year. It has been published posthumously.

To take part in Cliff’s account of the centre-piece of his political activity, the formation of the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessor organisations in Britain.

These organisations were more than just a membership of the SWP and SWP at its best was a credible opposition to the Labour and Social Democratic Party.

Critics of the SWP have said it is impossible to compare the organisation of the SWP with the SWP of the 1980s and 1990s, and it is also true that the organisation of which he was a member in Palestine.

The SWP is how Cliff’s twin theories – state capitalism, (which rejected Trotsky’s analysis of the class nature of the Stalinist states) and the permanent arms economy (which purported to explain the post-war boom in the West) – are the core of the organisation that he built in Britain. This also underlines his personal commitment to Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution.

It also reflects his particular political commitment to the social democratic policy that is the case from below, and rank and file line – the refusal to go the unions above the rank and file.

This tendency towards seeing the trade union bureaucracy as an alien class rather than a bureaucratic layer of the working class, a layer which springs from the theory of state capitalism itself.

Cliff argues, unconvincingly, that his differences with Trotsky, particularly over the class nature of the Stalinist states, was a break with Trotskyism as such but brought it into line with the main body of the Marxist tradition.

He recognises that he went over to the theory of state capitalism, which he had already become a disciple within the Fourth International, in the immediate post-war years (1947-8) with his text The Class Nature of Stalinism.

Cliff formed the Socialist Review Group (SRG) in 1946 after the Revolutionary Communist Party dissolved. The SRG was inside the Labour Party and had a loose and informal structure, but it main reason for a separate existence from the FI was the advancement of Cliff’s theory of state capitalism.

The SRG existed for about 10 years as a small group of a few dozen people. It became the International Socialist Group (IS) in 1962 with about 20 people.

According to Cliff, the membership of the IS reached 100 by the mid-1960s (after work in CND and the launching of the IS) by the Labour Party, which it entered, even though it was opposed by Gerry Healy’s Socialist Labour League (SLL), which was overwhelming the biggest left organisation at that time.

The IS also began work amongst students in 1967-8, with a group established at the LSE.

The fact that Cliff founded the SRG and the IS on the basis of an analysis of the Stalinist states (and some tactical positions and assessments) rather than on a programme – made them rather strange organisations.

The theory of state capitalism itself has programmatic implications, but none felt in the Korean war, the SWP has managed to be on the right side against imperialism. This was the case by the time of Vietnam.

The IS began looking towards Trotskyism in the same period, first gaining a base at the ENV engineering plant in West London.

From that the IS launched, in 1966, the London Industrial Shop Stewards Defence Committee. This was in the same period as the split in the SWP, under the influence of the SLL, launched the Oxford Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and the CP launched the Liaison Committee in Defence of Trade Unions.


These books clearly played a significant part in building IS at this time, and Cliff frequently refers to them in A World to Win.

Cliff locates the major growth of the IS in the militant years of the Heath government of 1970-74: the ‘from trade to industry’ and set up rank and file organisations in different sections of industry, many with their own newspapers.

In 1972 they launched the National Rank and File Movement, which held its first National Conference in 1974. According to an internal report (quoted by Cliff) this attracted an impressive 100 delegates from 300 trade union bodies.

The National Rank and File Movement came into being just a few years later, however, as a direct result of Cliff’s conversion to Trotskyism (or the New Right)‘s ‘downtown’ theory.

In 1977 he declared that a major ‘downturn in the class struggle’ had been taking place for the last three years: since 1974. Moreover, the problem, he said, was located in the working class itself, in the form of a ‘collapse of militancy’.

The downturn was partly the result, he argued, of what he called the bureaucratisation of the shop stewards movement. He pointed to the rise in the number of full-time stewards, who were ‘a transmission belt between the bureaucracy and the rank and file’.

As a full-time car industry representative between 1968 and 1973, he saw the rise in full-time stewards in that period as both a material gain of the militants struggle themselves, and as a challenge to the full-time officials. That was certainly the way that many of the full-time officials saw it.

Cliff’s, whole downturn theory was incomprehensible to many of us outside of the IS/NW and involved in the numerous strikes taking place.

Cliff defends his theory at length, however, in A World to Win, and since it (with the later apologist) has been such a major part of the politics of the SWP over the past 20 years it is worth looking at his arguments in detail.

There were certainly no half measures in what Cliff argued. The chapter dealing with the downturn is entitled ‘From Beautiful Spring to Freezing Winter’ – i.e. from the first peak in the spring of the 1970-74 period to the freezing winter of the post 1974 period – including the years 1974-84. This freezing winter went on for nearly 20 years until the early 1990s.

The period 1970-74 (or more precisely 1968-74) was the period of the longest period of the level of class struggle. There were two waves of the nationalisation mania strikes in 1972 and 1974, the second of which brought down the government.

There was the opposition to the miner’s anti-union package in Place of Strike. There was overwhelming unofficial action in support of the Pennington Five (who were jailed for their defiance of the Industrial Relations Act) and the occupation of Upper Clyde Shipyards, along with numerous other factory occupations.

It is also true that important changes, political and economic, occurred in the mid-1970s which altered the framework of struggle.

The first was the end of the post-war boom and the onset of the long recession which affected Europe as a whole.

The second was the election of the Thatcher government in 1979, and its relationship with the unions. The third was the increasing fight-back by the employers against the gains of the working class in the previous period.

All these struggles increasingly defensive. But that was not a "crisis of militancy" of the working class. This was invented by Tony Cliff.

In fact, high levels of militancy, with minor fluctuations, continued from the late 1960s until the defeat of the miners in 1985, despite the changes in political and economic conditions.

As a result, only 6 million days were lost in strike action. In the five years between 1979 and 1984 27 million days were lost in strike action. But in the five years between 1979 and 1984 27 million days were lost in strike action. This was hardly any different.

Was Cliff arguing that 65 million days were lost in militancy of the working class? It beggars belief. If that period was a freezing winter, the ‘apologists’ of the left have an ice age, since the days lost in the 5 years 1979-84 were a tiny fraction of the ‘downturn’ period. And the second period was even worse.

Was there a drop in the level of strikes for two years in the 1970s. In 1976, well within the term of the support of the TUC for industry, with strike rates below the 1970s, which outnumbered by 4 of the previous one.

There were numerous strikes against the nationalisation mania, the highest since the general strike of 1926 and more than the highest year in the 1970s.

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The winter of discontent itself came across from confrontation. The Labour's surge of the 1970s was a significant factor. The increase in the 1970s was a significant factor. The increase in the 1970s was a significant factor. The increase in the 1970s was a significant factor. The increase in the 1970s was a significant factor.
The reality of militant strike action was the focus of the Clapham Group's 1989 pamphlet, *Street Power of SWP*. The group's political analysis was grounded in a Marxist-Leninist perspective, emphasizing the role of the working class in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialism. They advocated for the development of socialist organizations and the building of a mass movement to overthrow the capitalist system.

The pamphlet covers a range of topics, including the role of the trade unions, the importance of solidarity and the need for a integrated strategy of struggle. It also highlights the role of the SWP in providing leadership and organization for the working class.

The pamphlet was part of the SWP's broader strategy to build a mass movement of working class activists. The group believed that the key to winning the struggle against capitalism was the development of a strong, united working class movement, capable of taking on the power of the ruling class and winning a socialist revolution.

The pamphlet's analysis of the role of the trade unions in the struggle for socialism is particularly pertinent today, as trade unions continue to be a key player in the fight against capitalist exploitation and the quest for democratic and socialist change.

By focusing on the role of the working class in the struggle against capitalism, the SWP was able to develop a clear and strategic vision for the future of the working class. Their analysis was grounded in a deep understanding of the historical and political context of the struggle, and their strategy was based on a clear and consistent vision for a socialist future.
Thousands rally to honour Joe Flexer

Barry Weisleder, editor, Socialist Action, Toronto

On Saturday, September 18, some travelling hundreds of miles on a hot summer holiday weekend, gathered to celebrate the life of our comrade, Joe Flexer.

Joe passed away on July 31 at Toronto General Hospital when his new heart failed him, six years after receiving a transplant. He was 67.

The meeting to celebrate his life was held on August 5, nearly five years after the auditorium of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The gathering was organized by Joe's family and friends and by Socialist Action, of which Joe was a central leader and a long-time Co-Chairman.

For decades, Joe was a dedicated activist in the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, a leader in his plant and in CAW Local 112. He was a respected national figure in the CAW, at the Toronto and York Regional Labour Council, and across the workers' movement which he so loved.

From Palestine to North America. He was a founder and fed- eral Co-Chair of the NDP.

Socialist Action

Fourth International

Socialist Caucus

Joe's son Dani told the Toronto Star that Joe "became a communist and a Marxist at about the same time, at about (age) 15." His idea took him from his native Brooklyn, New York, to the Middle East where he joined an Israeli kibbutz in the 1950s. He later spent time in Turkey, in Ireland meant recruitment for class struggle in Britain. At least sixties, the real thing had to be lived, to be a force in the movement to end all capitalist exploitation.

Joe was then a student at the University of Toronto. He became interested in the movement to eliminate all capitalist exploitation.

Joe left for North America, lived in Western Canada briefly and then eventually in the early '70s.

Founder member

Joe was among those who helped to form the Revolutionary Marxist Group in 1973, which in turn joined forces with the League for Socialist Action and the GNU, a Quebec-Toronto group, to launch the Revolutionary Workers' League in 1977.

But he left the section of the Fourth International in the early '80s, the RVL succumbed to sectarian policies and politics.

In the Fall of 1995 (just a year after his heart transplant in 1994), Joe decided it was "party building time." He asked to join Socialist Action, and immediately became a member of the editorial board of our newspaper.

He knew his time was limited, and he wanted to make the most of it politically. He took special pleasure in helping to found the NDP Socialist Caucus. He was proud of the leading role he played in the writing of the Manifesto for a Socialist Canada, and in being a key organizer on the campaign for the Social Credit.

Joe Flexer walked on countless picket lines, spoke at countless rallies and demonstrations, and touched countless lives. He was a major contributor to the movement of socialists, a Marxist and a remarkable worker and militant unionist. He was a major force of America's ideas of the 'organic intellectual of the working class.'

Don't you have it yet? It's been there for over a year. It's a good one. I know it's a bit too late for Joe, but I want to tell you about it. It's a powerful book, full of insights and ideas. It's a must-read for everyone.

Joe Flexer was a genuine internationalist and a leader in the international movement. He was a fighter for a world without exploitation and oppression. He was a force for change, a force for hope.

The world is a better place because of Joe Flexer. And the memory of his life and his legacy will continue to inspire us all to fight for a better world.
T he dreadful pogroms against “paedophiles” on the Paedophile Paranoia page 19

Jack Russell

T he dreadeful pogroms against “paedophiles” on the Paedophile Paranoia page 19

Franklin, and elsewhere, inspired by the News of the World, threw into sharp relief the way in which accusations of the ruling class can utilise people's sexual misery and oppression to reinforce authoritative measures of repression and violence.

We are used to the way in which racism is used to create divisions amongst working class people, but we have, perhaps, forgotten the power that sexual oppression has to do the same.

Thus, all social movements against prejudice and homophobia achieved by the gay movement, and despite all the successes of decades of campaigning for sexual openness and freedom, the reality is that millions of people live lives of sexual misery, damaged by childhood trauma, by lack of choice, by oppressive sexual partners (overwhelmingly men), and psychological oppression.

These hidden miseries are reproduced by the powerlessness of the children and the ongoing oppression of women, by the inequalities of power and wealth which split our world along the lines of gender, class and age.

It is no coincidence that the majority of the Paedophile and other protests were working class women, living with less and less collective safety for their children, or for themselves.

Despite sexual abuse of children occurs across all classes, better-off people can buy security for their children behind tall garden hedges andţi towels, while poorer children suffer, and can buy treatments for sexual damage. And they can buy too, the smart lawyers, and use their social status, to evade the law when those amongst them are accused of sexual crime.

**Damaged language**

It remains true that, despite the great breakthroughs in public consciousness of child abuse, and the new readiness to protest perpetrators, huge swathes of abuse must remain unreported by the abused, by the few, loyalty, and shame of family members.

But there is another truth, too. Many thousands of ordinary people—paedophiles and therapists do exist who have never committed crimes against children, who control their damaged impulses, and live lives of fear and self-hating, unable to access therapeutic resources, despite of the possibilities of a normal life, yet determined to express their own dress feeling and the cycle of sexual damage.

Our language—even of most of us—is still damaged. It is not “paedophiles”, per se, who are dangerous against children, it is “sexual abusers”.

Yet the collective paranoia, which reducible to vague conspiracy theories that only the voices of the ignorant and the mad, the lynche mob and—occasionally the despised prophet—are heard. Never the truth, that the voices of those who hear in quiet horror the damaged sexuality of paedophilia.

**Cure is possible**

But the truth is clear. Paedophilia is curable. Unless that cure is refused to those which can give to these folk a normal adult sexuality. Child victims and their parents (not just those run for offenders) which give life and hope to those living in deep despair.

It is in this light that we must judge the appalling brutality of the News of the World campaign, with its ghastly quote by top policeman Commander John O'Connor: “in all my long career I have never known a paedophile to give up his disgusting lust and be cured”...

Yet the sole NHS clinical treating, psychosocially, paedophiles was threatened with closure a few years ago by funding cut.

And no widespread NHS facilities to deal with sexual dysfunction exist in the community. NHS psychotherapists services are restricted to minimalistic counseling, with punishing waiting lists, whilst core social work and probation services are slashed back and treatment programmes for offenders are squeezed.

Murdock: abusive and malignant

T he News of the World's bizarre and crude notion of a police solution to the problem of child sexual abuse was stupendous on the demand to build real, universal mental health services to address the problems of sexual damage in both child and adult.

Such demands would have no place in a press that turns women into sex objects; that feeds on people's steady precautions andody repression; that turns sex into a loath and pitiful voyeurism, whilst counter-poaching the demand to release the remaining Kray brother to the release of child sex abusers.

This press will not stop there. The papers which abused the striking miners and immigrants will always be searching for new victims to vilify.

**Human possibility**

The views of humanity are at war here. One is the malignant view that humans are incapable of changing their deficiencies, of rectifying the problems of their personalities. It seems at least some humans as inherently corrupt and evil.

This view demonises and vilifies “paedophiles”, as the scapegoats for all the anger and disappointment we collectively feel at the oppression we have suffered at the hands of parents, husbands, teachers, and others. Paedophiles are “targeted for destruction” (in the co-counselling term), just as, in other circumstances, blacks, gypsies, homosexuals, witches, or criminals have been. In place of hope, mutual support and care it puts collective paranoia and fear. This is the seed-bed of fascism.

The other view, which as socialists we embrace, is that human beings are inherently good, social and benign towards each other. People can change their conduct, eliminate their pathological dispositions, and, with collective support, can self-correct, learn and grow. Such change is often difficult, but very often society’s ideology based messages about our own worthlessness, badness, or weakness - as women, as working class people, or as “perverts” - are the main block to our ability to effect personal change.

Even with present levels of detection, I is 130 men have convictions against a child by the age of 40, and more than 100,000 men with such convictions exist in public society. The public recognition of this huge scale of sexual abuse can be either a motor for a greater public demand for real therapeutic provision, or - if “Antinatter” and other factions have their way - a vehicle for the rolling back of the gains of the movement for sexual freedom of the last 40 years.

The slogans written over Union Jacks, the reference to The Mass, the burnings, the nightmare calls to castrate, hang, kill, lynch, would all have been familiar to Jews facing up to the Mosley fascist pogroms of the 1930's. We must not go there again.

**The Left's confusion**

S ome of the contributions of the left (for instance, in The Socialist) have been excellent, but the left shares in much of the confusion and backwardness of the broader public.

The idea that paedophiles are incurable is widespread. I have heard the view expressed by a revolutionary marxist - who is also a gay man - that “paedophiles are not oppressed”.

Leaving aside the distinction between paediophilia and child sexual abuse, it is still extraordinary that a socialist should not be able to contemplate that one can be both oppressed and oppressor simultaneously.

Every child abuser was themselves abused as a child. Non-abusing paedophiles and many paedophiles - carry on a terrifying and lonely struggle every day against their own impulses and against the fear of discovery.

Every paedophile who avoids the abuse of children (including indirectly via pornography) is a hero. Society needs such heroes.

I have heard the view that “we should help the children, not the adults”. Yet it is the adults who must break the cycle of abuse. As socialists we view all human life as worthwhile. It is in our collective interest to help all children and adults.

Even with existing minimal programmes, the statistics speak for themselves. Only 1 in 5 offenders re-offend. Even though some re-offending must go undetected, it still means that the majority find the strength to control their desires, or even to change their sexual orientation. We cannot be complacent that the confusion of the libertarian position of the 1970's is now dealt with.

The argument that sex with children was permissible and that children could give meaningful consent- and even seek it from contact - was always a crazy one, ignoring the power inequalities involved, and blind to the lifelong damage such conduct caused. There has been much progress since then.

End the cycle of despair

A gain and again we hear, from pundits, scolds and confused socialists, the broken-hearted statement that “this is a complicated question”, or “there's no easy answer.

Yet, while the struggle might be long and the issue full of horror, even the matter of sexual freedom is fraught with distress at the level of society (the principles we must counterpose to the Penthouse Pogrom are simple: No abuse of children, whether direct or indirect (i.e. via pornography/text/photographs) is acceptable under any circumstances. The deficiencies in detection and apprehension of abusers must be addressed.

• There must be no victimisation of sex abusers or paedophiles. They are oppressed, too. All paedophiles were themselves abused.

• The victimisation of paedophiles perpetuates the cycle of despair and abuse. It does not challenge.

• We need a huge, qualitative increase in curative facilities, not just for abusers, but for all those with this sexual orientation, and other sexual dysfunctions.

• There must be a qualitative increase in the whole range of mental health services, particularly psychosocial services, as well as social services, probation and other support services.

• We must instruct the mothers of Paedogrove to be left to despair and isolate.
Our world is NOT for SALE!

IN SEATTLE last December the explosion of protests outside the World Trade Organisation conference hit the world’s headlines. Since then, increased numbers of protestors have dogged the movements of the global institutions of capitalism.

In July, demonstrators challenged the arrogance and self-indulgence of the world’s richest nations, as displayed in the extravagant £500m G8 summit in Okinawa.

In September the focus will be the joint meeting in Prague of the IMF and World Bank – those notorious architects of “structural reforms” imposing cuts in health and welfare spending on the world’s poorest countries. As well as mobilisations in Prague itself, British socialists can join a counter-summit to be held in Brighton on September 24. The common goal is to challenge and expose the ruthless logic and exploitation of capitalism, and strengthen the fight for a socialist, internationalist alternative.

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