Ministers flounder, Labour stranded by Blair's policies

OUT OF THEIR DEPTH!

Floods, protests and a collapsing rail network have shown the weaknesses of Tony Blair's apparently all-conquering team. They have shown that they don't sound so big or so clever once the Tory press and sections of "Middle England" turn against them. We follow the crisis:

- Rail p8
- Student fees p7
- Fuel protests p8
- Brown's pre-budget p3
A firm line in 1997: now Ford workers must again face a load in defending jobs

Ford workers can lead fight to save jobs

A BMW worker

CAR WORKERS all over Britain are producing the goods. Key to this is Ford's Dagenham, where the productivity is due to be ended. The company has reduced to back down from closure, but they are offering a few engine production jobs.

In the face of this challenge, the official position is to call a mass meeting on the November 15, and issue strike ballot papers the same day. But this is not the strategy for action, and which workers will they involve?

If they only intend to have one day strikes, then this would obviously be a completely inadequate response to the scale of the attack.

Their model is already produced in Germany, and it is more ridiculous to say that's because Ford couldn't face the cost extra there.

If they also intend to involve engine plants workers at Dagenham, then the problem is that engine are also produced at Bridgend, and at Valencia in Spain. These losses would not be so easy to cover, and this shows that a real crisis is involved in the whole site.

Dagenham must not be left to fight alone.

The announcement that Dagenham was no longer going to share the production of the new Fiesta with Cologne should have led to the calling of a meeting of representatives from all Ford European plants, especially at the package involved Valencia losing jobs to Dagenham.

Instead Woodley demanded that those that buy the cars in pieces from it, which considering the British's record reduces about as many cars overall as it buys, seems more ridiculous than it would otherwise be.

Then he argued that Dagenham produce the new Volvo, and not Ghent in Belgium. Did he discuss this with any of the European management teams in Volvo? Are slogans like this likely to build international support?

As with the Jobs at Ford's plants in the UK are not in any danger under threat. So rather than talking, all the unions should hold bal-

ons at all their component plants. This would have a major effect on the wider European production.

Jaguar workers have just rejected 2 year deal negotiated by Woodley: is there no chance of a Workers' Council as Jaguar is owned by Ford?

Ford have also recently bought Land Rover, where there is tremendous anger over the banking hours scheme. The recent wage deal would have been thrown out if Woodley had not been able to manoeuvre successfully.

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Has Gordon reached out to Blair?

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Socialist Outlook

Editorial

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The New Labour tax cuts – offering substantial reductions on the lowest rate of income tax – have been a disappointment, creating in only one tenth of filling stations – and on excise duty for lorries (with exemption for the tractors of our 100,000 farmers) – are said to be worth the equivalent of a 4p per gallon difference in petrol. This means that this tax reform will only be enough to cut the base of support from the fuel price protests.

Labour has been digging Labour out of a hole in its general election campaign, with the BBC featuring on it. It has been widely reported that since Blair went to power on a tide of anti-Tory sentiment, promising change.

The Labour government is being criticized for its handling of the economy, with a growing number of businesses and individuals expressing concern about the impact of austerity measures.

The government has been accused of “squeezing the middle classes” and of failing to tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality.

The implication is that the government is not doing enough to help those who are most in need, and that it is more concerned with protecting the interests of big businesses and wealthy individuals.

The government argues that while it has made progress in reducing the deficit, it is necessary to continue with the austerity measures in order to prevent the country from slipping back into recession.

Some people argue that the austerity measures have had a negative impact on the economy, with unemployment increasing and living standards falling.

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Top Eurocrat leads neo-liberal challenge at Nice summit

AyalA

Susan George
EUROPEAN UNION
Commissioner Pascal Lamy and the transnational corporations close to the Commission have good reason to believe the Inter-Governmental Conference that will be held in Nice 7-8 December will modify Article 133 of the Amsterdam Treaty. If this happens, the struggle against corporate-led globalization will receive a serious setback. Although treaty revisions may sound technical and boring, the implications are of the utmost gravity.

Article 133 covers the relations between the Commission and member countries with regard to international trade. Trade, according to the Treaty, is an area of "mixed competence" between the Commission and the 15 member states, at least in the crucial fields of services, intellectual property and investment.

This means that national parliaments are free to approve bilateral Agreements concerning these subjects and member country governments can veto them. A 1994 judgment of the European Court of Justice guaranteed mixed competence in these three areas [services, property investment, whereas industrial goods are governed by the "qualified majority voting" system which gives lead powers to the Commission. The French government, which until recently opposed any changes is now proposing to modify Article 133. Since July, Commissioner Lamy has undertaken a campaign to obtain broad powers and qualified majority voting for services [including health, education, audio-visual, transport, environment and all public services]; real estate property [including Genetically Manipulated Organisms]; and investments [along the lines of the failed MAI].

In September, he announced to a French Parliamentary Commission that "only France and Spain remained convinced of the need" to change Article 133 to give the Commission far greater power. We have now learned that the French government is espousing the "socialist" Commissioner Lamy's cause.
The preparatory texts for the IGC, under the French Presidency, no longer even suggest that Article 133 should be left as it is; that member states should retain the veto and national parliaments the power to ratify future trade agreements.

In the texts now circulating propose three "options," each of which would significantly widen the powers of Article 133, and dramatically reduce democratic space and citizen involvement.
The differences between the "options" France is now proposing concern mainly points of detail.

Option A has two variants: the first places only services intellectual property under qualified majority voting; this doesn't matter greatly, since the services agreement in the framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) protects the investments of foreign service suppliers anyway. Option B proposes that member states can change Article 133 by qualified majority voting, in order to include the three presently excluded areas of services, intellectual property and investment.

Here is a question for legal specialists: since the European Court has said that Article 133 does not apply to these three areas and that any decision concerning them has to be unanimous, how can this change be qualified majority voting? This sounds suspiciously like a conjurer's trick.

The ideas consist in a Protocol of 8 articles and paragraphs in all which would apply only to negotiations within the WTO, which is, of course, by far the most important forum for trade negotiations. In this case the Commission would have far greater powers than today—not just over the three areas of services, intellectual property and investment but over all the Agreements now covered by the EU.

The Commission's negotiating mandate would be set by qualified majority voting, and the Commission would represent the European Union in the Dispute Resolution Body. Commissioner Lamy wants trade liberalisation across the board: what he is asking for is compared to the fast-track powers which the US Congress refused for the Uruguay Round agreement.

President Clinton's threats to reverse the Uruguay Round if the United States is not treated fairly could have been read as a threat. The US government has now committed itself to the WTO. The US industries have long been treated as the "king" of the world. If it was a threat to say that the US government, which has been so keen on the WTO, could demand a change in US law. In this respect, the eurocrats who have been pressing the Commission to sign the IGC might be acting out of fear.

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One of the key objectives qualifying for the demonstration in Nice on December 6-8 is to back the ATTAC (Association for a Tobin Tax to Assist the Citizen). Together with the European network, ATTAC is also calling further action for the preparation of the European summit itself on December 7.

On October 21 representatives from ATTAC from a dozen countries met in Paris to discuss plans for these activities PETE COOPER reports:

The meeting discussed the state of the anti-neoliberal globalisation movement after Prague. While international financial institutions and European governments are accommodating the agenda towards free market policies, the resistance demonstrated in Bratislava, Helsinki, and Prague has begun to create cracks in the profoundly ossified edifice of global capitalism.

But divergences of aims and methods amongst the anti-neoliberal movement, made the trade unionists to turtles unity achieved in Seattle exceptional. The trade union movement, at stake is an exceptionally coherent, as the fires of the East, the conflicts between the global and the local, and over the radical Roadmap the Streets layer and NGOs such as Friends of the Earth who denounced the "violence of the military". The risk of losing our local roots to "global crotchet" to the next summit was highlighted.

None of this takes away from the major successes the movement has had both in the number and the power that has entered into action and work has been so triggering of so many of the convergences brought by globalisation among so many of the broadest layers that have made it. However, the worst way to stop the current strength of the movement is that it is a strong enough force and has been to prevent or hold back some new assaults, but it has not so far had the ability to impose its own agenda. In looking particularly at what we were about at the Seattle Summit, the discussion focused first on the Charter of Basic Rights, our core demand drawn up by the European Marches.

They are primarily individual rights already enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights to which all EU governments are already signatories. These have not always been incorporated into English and Welsh law. The social and economic rights constitute a revision by comparison with the constitutions of several EU states (which guarantee the right to work, housing, social security and to strike). The United Nations Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man (1948) and the European Social Charter.

The ETUC on the other hand is supporting the Charter of Basic Rights, simply demanding that the additional of the charter at the European level. The delegation from Denmark explained that this support implied solidarity for the EU, which meant that the Danish Trade Union movement is not mobilising for it.

Others advocated an alternative European Charter of Basic Rights drawn up by the European Marches. "Best practical" was invoked, i.e. the best. One social and economic rights of any country in Europe should be adopted by all. It was agreed to oppose the Charter as the best basis for unity. The other main issue raised was the proposed amendment to Clause 133 of the Treaty of Rome, which threatens to extend the commission's trade liberalisation powers, of which the US Congress refused for the Uruguay Round agreement.

The Ecofeminist Charter of Women's Rights, drawn up by the European Marches. "Best practical" was invoked, i.e. the best. One social and economic rights of any country in Europe should be adopted by all. It was agreed to oppose the Charter as the best basis for unity. The other main issue raised was the proposed amendment to Clause 133 of the Treaty of Rome, which threatens to extend the commission's trade liberalisation powers, of which the US Congress refused for the Uruguay Round agreement.

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The WSF's Brazil conference
The World Social Forum will take place in Porto Alegre, Brazil on January 25-30, 2001, at the same time as the World Economic Forum is held in Davos, Switzerland. The World Economic Forum has been one of the key think-tanks behind the drive to neo-liberal globalisation.

The World Social Forum, backed by the independent trade unions, the MST (the movement of landless peasants in Brazil) and radical NGOs will go against this trajectory to build a counter-movement to map our alternatives.

As Naom Chomsky recently wrote: "The World Social Forum offers opportunities of unparalleled importance to bring together popular forces from many and varied constituencies in the South and Poor countries alike, to develop constructive alternatives that will defend the overwhelming majority of the world's population from the attack on fundamental human rights, and to move on to break down illegitimate power concentrations and extend the domains of justice and freedom." Registration will be closed at the end of November. For more information about the World Social Forum, see:

www.worldsocialforum.org or www.forumsocialmundial.org.br
No tears as Woodhead jumps ship

Gill Lee, President Lewisham teachers' association (personal capacity)

Chris Woodhead who made his name in the 1980s and was kept on by Blair to continue a policy of bullying teachers into, ostensibly, "raising standards". The result of the 1980s Labour Policy Labour continued, and the macho management style continued. Ofsted is increasingly bearing its own malformations: a growing teacher shortage while the average size of an 11-year-old pupil in schools on 4-day weeks and will inevitably end with thousands of pupils failing to get the exam results they need.

There are over two thousand teaching vacancies across the country, a thousand in London alone. Morale among teachers is at an all-time low, and the working through of performance related pay and performance management will make things even worse. By the year 2020, half of all teachers will be over 50. Labour has incoherently resorted to desperate measures to recruit: training salaried £50,000, extra £4,000 for studying a 'shortage' subject and from next September £5,000 for 'fast track' trainees. But recruitment figures are still around 2,000 under target in dimensions thousands. Woodhead will soon be able to regime Labour for failing standards from the safety of his leader's column in 'The Telegraph', omitting of course to mention that the demonstration, stress and fear of failure that has driven many teachers out of the job, were once his favoured tools of control: "An element of threat is not necessarily a bad thing. It is personally repulsed with threats. The education system has been immune to any kind of threat for too long," he said in September 1989.

Blair needed Woodhead to help implement and police policies teachers would have previously seen as unimaginable coming from a Labour Government. Labour teachers' unions are dominated by the centrist right, which Blair, who won the election with a landslide and campaigning on a platform of "socialism", now has to consider to bring to heel. The TUC, once a force to be reckoned with, is now reduced to a whisper in the ears of the Government. The government's education spokesperson is House of Lords, said in a letter to the Guardian that "generous House" (sic) were available to students.

Gobbled up
In fact, the loans available are £3,400 each in the first two years, and £3,300 in the third. In many areas this would all be gobbled up by students' rent.

Most landlords make students pay for 10 or 11 months. So how would the Barones like to live on a few hundred pounds a month?

This has to cover food, clothes, travel, (with rains fares soaring, and with the cheapest housing usually being a bus ride to college), books, entertainment, everything.

He argued that affairs between teachers and staff formers could be "educators'" and that the same tenure Labour was making the public service. Concern was also expressed over pay. For, Labour figures about the regulations of the contract, teachers expected pay and concern which may come to a head. Woodhead for review being sought by Crown Woods School in Greater London. Mr Woodhead in the midst of the Ofsted failure which resulted in it being placed in special measures.

But what will really change with Woodhead's departure? His immediate successor Mike Tomlinson previously told journalists he didn't give a "monkey's toss" about teachers. But Blair will surely use Woodhead's resignation to reshape Ofsted's image and put it in his own new-Labour strategy.

Even though his go to a great length of the effects of a crisis in teacher morale, and the re-nationalisation, he cannot be unaware of the growing dissatisfaction among the education, education... Teachers' trade unions should take this opportunity to demand the abolition of the National Curriculum and increased education funding, against the proscripive measures that the Conservative government has placed in special measures. Only then will the crisis begin to hit education be truly averted.
Socialist Outlook

Socialists must say no to Leeds purge of SWP

Alan Thornett, (For International Socialist Group)

The development of the Socialist Alliance in England since the Congress concluded in September, which marked the launch of a major campaign for the forthcoming General Election, has been impressive. In most major cities where the Socialist Alliance has not previously existed, well attended public rallies have been held, while in places where there was previous organisation activists are getting through to decisive audiences and candidates for the challenge.

Within this very positive move forward, however, there have been some problems particularly with the attitude of the Socialist Party (SWP) which has sought to protect its own sectarian interests before that of the Alliance as a whole.

In addition there has been a split within the Leeds Left Alliance, a formation which developed in parallel to the first round of Socialist Alliances and was created by a group of people mainly expelled from Leeds Left Socialist Party by Blairite witch-hunters.

Witch hunt

Now they are conducting their witch hunt in the SWP in a tone reminiscent of the late Woodward Wyatt, and his notorious anti-communist rantings in his Sunday Mirror column.

It all started with a proposal the Executive to reduce members of the SWP from full membership to 'associate' membership, thus explicitly denying them the right to vote in meetings or to hold elected office in the LLA.

This was 'justified' on the basis that the SWP supposedly packed the Socialist Alliance Conference in Coventry into a miasma of over-centralised structure against the will of the majority of the rest.

This outrageous proposal was never put to a vote at full meeting; instead a postal ballot was held. Neil Kinnock should be proud of them.

The witch hunting tone of both the Executive resolution and an accompanying letter from the Executive, combined with the sheer volume of misinformation and downright lies involved ensured that they would win.

The SWP were allowed to make a statement went out with the ballot paper, but this could easily be dismissed on the basis of 'they would say that wouldn't they?' but the defence of the SWP would have been much more effective were not allowed a statement.

Rigged ballot

Even the question a ballot paper were rigged. Voters were not asked to vote for or against the Executive proposals, but to vote for or against the decision of the Executive of the LLA to safeguard the group against takeover by the SWP.

The idea that the SWP packed the Coventry conference is in the face of both simple arithmetic and a half rational assessment of the facts.

In fact the biggest single group campaign, the Socialist Party, with about 150 present. Of the rest, the SWP had about 120, and there were about 50 from other far left groups. The remaining 100 were either from other campaigns or individual activists.

This make up was demonstrated by the fact that no single organisation could win anything without support. The SWP lost some resolutions saw as crucial, the WP won some it believed vital.

This most obvious example was on the controversial issue of the make-up of the election committee, where the SWP and SP had different positions, and that of the SP was agreed.

Further the structure adopted was not highly centralised, but a decentralised, flexible one specifically designed to accommodate groups like the LLA which want to keep their own name or run a distinct campaign, but as a part of the Alliance.

Of course it is a matter of political judgement what is centralised and what is not. In this case it is relative, as they say.

Certainly the Socialist Nellist: hatched hunt against Leeds witch-hunt

Party who are opposed to the Alliance being a politically cohesive initiative with any real form of national direction have criticised Coventry along these same lines. They have launched the Leftest possible arrangement in order to stand their own candidates irrespective of the wishes of others in a locality.

For the International Socialist Group on the other hand, the way to build the most effective alternative to Blairism and the get the best result in the election is to build the broadest possible unity. For us the decisions of the Coventry conference are the minimum necessary for a serious and coherent General Election challenge.

Found out

In Leeds itself the SWP have never faced a meeting of the LLA. It would have been counter-productive for them to have done so. The only meeting in which they ever had a majority was after the Executive had adopted its resolution, and the SWP had found out about it - although not from the EC itself.

By relying on a report of a meeting that most members of the LLA were not at, the Executive were able to whip up fear and paranoia.

The Executive won the ballot to exclude the SWP by 38 votes to 34. This was not surprising given the extreme bias in the 'information' made available. But the whole exercise had dealt a heavy blow to the cause of left unity in Leeds.

So what are the politics behind this bureaucratic manoeuvre using the methods of the right?

There seems to be knee-jerk resentment that the SWP have come into the Alliance late and are encroaching on 'our patch'. There is a complete inability to recognise when organisations like the SWP break out of their traditional sectarianism and join with the rest of the left to build an alternative to Blairism.

Any attempt to drive revolutionaries out of the Alliance could be disastrous. This was the first of Arthur Scargill's many mis-steps in attempting to build the SLF. It became an irrelevant vanguard and the Socialist Alliance would go that way as well.

Of course the revolutionary organisations have a responsibility to not seek to impose their own revolutionary perspective onto the Socialist Alliances in an arbitrary way. But that has not happened, either nationally or within Leeds.

All this raises the question of the role of the Socialist Party in the events in Leeds, particularly since it has a very strong presence in the LLA, and the letters and statements from the Executive repeatedly stress that all its decisions were taken in the interests of the CPS.

Notable omission

It is also significant that a statement adopted by the Socialist Alliance nationally, strongly objecting to the moves against the SWP was signed by all the officers except Dave Nellist.

The current edition of the Socialist (November 3) is merely muffled about the developments in Leeds, to say the least.

Whilst it says that the decision of the ballot was unfortunate, and that the measures involved were opposed by the members, it goes on to politically justify the ballot and the result.

It argues that the result highlights the mistrust that exists over the methods and motives of the SWP and a fear of the Alliance being swamped.

It goes on to attack the SWP for (allegedly) not being prepared to accept a voting restriction in order to avoid the action which has been taken.

If the role of the SP in the decisions of the Executive of the LLA to move against the SWP is not properly understood, the implications of the actions of the SP in the period since the ballot leave little room for misunderstanding.

Candidate

Since the ballot result was announced the SWP excluded, the LLA has met to decide a general election candidate.

The SP member of the LLA, Executive, Dave Jones, was adopted as the candidate, in - and will now stand for the LLA in the general election.

This shows the SP in practice going along with the exclusion of the SWP and will not do much to try to reverse it.

There has been a move from within the LLA to challenge all this, but it does not include the SP. It is a letter signed by Garth Frankland, an important individual activist and long standing Labour councillor in Leeds, and Mike Penfold from the SWP.

It pledges to "continue to seek to challenge the current ban on the SWP in the interests of democracy and the LLA.

The Socialist Party are playing a dangerous game in taking a ambivalent attitude to the witch hunt in Leeds. This could threaten the unity of the Alliances nationally.

It is also unfortunately one of the worst example of the Socialist Party's attitude in a number of localities. However it should be stressed, it is by no means the case in all alliances where SP members are working.

In many areas there is a good working relationship between all the organisations involved including the SWP and the LLA. It is these latter experiences which need to be built on, as the significant turn out for meetings once again that we have the best opportunity for a long time to build a real alternative to New Labour's Tory policies, on the streets, in our workplaces and at the ballot box. Don't let sectarianism throw away this opportunity.
Dewar’s death heralds nits of leftward swing

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for all council tenants in Scotland.

Overtures to the left

Henry McLeish is one of the least charismatic characters in the parliament. He has made few enemies, but no one knows his policies on anything. Unlike Dewar, who was always of the right, McLeish appears to be a rank opportunist.

The Left Labour Covey over the issue of Warrant Sales has drawn a response. McLeish has added Margaret Curran to the cabinet, and at least not opposed Cathy Jamieson for deputy. Further overtures are possible in the light of the leadership.

Of course these changes have a material basis. Labour’s poll rating has failed to hold up the SNP, cooperation of the left across parties was growing; the Scottish Socialist Party was appealing to Labour MPs to join, and John McAlpine was talking of ‘one last fight’. All these overtures are at the level of patronage and posts. No significant policy changes have occurred. For some, unfortunately, such trinkets are enough.

Dennis Canavan

Dennis Canavan was shamefully treated by Labour. Rejected by a selection board comprising his political enemies, he was described by Dewar as “not good enough” for selection for the Scottish Parliament, despite being the choice of his constituency.

His decision to stand as an independent for Falkirk in the Scottish Parliament was widely applauded throughout the movement, and he was elected over 12,000 votes.

Left on line

Duncan Smith has been re-elected as leader of the Scottish Conservatives. However, the SNP has elected its new leadership and changed its ministerial team. This conference will now be the annual conference, with elections.

Somewhat overshadowed by the events in the Labour Party, the SNP has elected its new leadership and changed its ministerial team. This conference will now be the annual conference, with elections.
New Labour takes on the fuel protesters

Alan Thornett

As the fuel protesters’ 60-day deadline approached, new Labour launched a concerted attack, challenging protesters to show themselves. Campaigners who previously supported them were being accused of being amongst the protesters. They were portrayed as disbelievers. Across the country, the attacks on protesters were being neglected. The protesters were not being treated with respect.

First, the government announced that it would no longer tolerate any form of protest. This was a direct threat to the protesters and their right to peaceful assembly. The government also announced that it would no longer allow any form of protest in the vicinity of the London Underground. This was a clear indication that the government was not prepared to accept any form of protest.

Once the government had asserted its authority, it began to implement a range of strategies to undermine the protesters. The government announced that it would no longer provide any financial support to the protesters. It also announced that it would no longer provide any legal advice or support to the protesters. As a result, the protesters were left with no choice but to accept the government’s demands.

The government also announced that it would no longer tolerate any form of protest in the vicinity of the London Underground. This was a clear indication that the government was not prepared to accept any form of protest.

As a result, the protesters were left with no choice but to accept the government’s demands. They were forced to accept the government’s demands, or face the consequences. The government’s tactics were effective, and the protesters were forced to give up their campaign.

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In conclusion, the government’s tactics were successful, and the protesters were forced to accept the government’s demands. The government’s tactics were effective, and the protesters were forced to give up their campaign.

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Unionist crisis - Sinn Fein feel the squeeze

John North

The mythology of the Good Friday agreement in Ireland presented a simple picture of the October meeting of the Ulster unionist council. According to the mythology, plucky moderate David Trimble would confront and defeat his bigoted opponents inside the Unionist Party, moving forward with his nationalist and republicans in government towards a new non-sectarian future.

Unfortunately for David Trimble he did not play by the script. As Socialist Democracy predicted prior to the meeting, he applied his favoured strategy when in a corner - to come charging out as the leader of the most bigoted and reactionary elements, advancing the main elements of their programmes.

The corner was a little tighter than usual. So David had to go a little further that his partners in government had expected.

By banning Barbro de Beauin from a North-South health meeting he launched a dangerous sectarian attack and threatened the talking shops that the republicans held out as proof that the Good Friday agreement contains democratic and progressive elements and would lead eventually to a united Ireland.

He also supported what was essentially a January deadline for an IRA hand over of weapons. Yet again he brunt the good Friday agreement out of shape and precipitated another crisis.

We should however be alert to the nature of this new conflict.

The threats to the agreement comes from right-wing reaction. This reaction is filled with rabid sectarian hatred, but current history is not one of uncompromising opposition to the agreement. It has been held back by a growing realisation of the moral and political triumph of the right that the good Friday agreement represents and the tendencies that the restoration of the Stormont executive makes possible.

It is likely that the crisis will provoke a left-wing backlash from the republicans.

The republican leadership, a generation long, demolished its support and took itself out of the equation. They are not an entity that the restoration of the Stormont executive makes possible.

The meeting was downgraded to talk and sympathy with Sinn Fein. By November 5, Gerry Adams was able to announce that Sinn Fein would mount a legal challenge to the ban.

In other words, the battle was not in place, and there was no real political response.

It might be better to say that the standard strategy of nationalist Ireland - lobbying the British - will be applied.

This will probably prove effective, given that Peter Mandelson, the British Secretary of State, has expressed himself delighted with the outcome of the unionist meeting and has gone so far as to say that both sides must now all give a little.

This is another familiar mechanism of the process which always ends with a move yet further to the right.

Given the constant duplicity that the good Friday agreement involves, what is not reported as often as important as it is. It's noticeable that in the background a law was adopted compelling Sinn Fein ministers to fly the union Jack on designated public days.

This is much more important than mere symbolism. Sinn Fein told its supporters that the new executive was transitional to a united Ireland and that it would celebrate unionist and nationalist traditions, instead we find an unreconstructed British colony in which Sinn Fein serves in the government.

Looked at in this way we can put the crises of the peace process in context.

The structures may be downgraded and untenable, but nowhere do the contain the threat to British rule implicit in the last 50 years of struggle.

Stop harassment of republicans!

Democracy - A campaign for freedom of expression

We, the undersigned, wish to express our concern in the following respects: for free political initiative and political participation of all political persuasions.

The facts are these: Following the killing of Joe O'Connor, a member of the Real IRA, on the 22nd of October 2000, members of the Republican Writers Group were calling for a new line in political relationships.

The writers, Tony Gorman and Tony McKevitt, indicated a belief that the Provisional IRA might be responsible for O'Connor's death. Since then the writers have been the target of an ongoing harassment campaign. They have been put under cease and desist orders.

We call on the leadership of Sinn Fein to stop the harassment of these writers and demand that the right to freedom of expression be protected.
Behind Putin’s sinister turn to Russian nationalism...

“Reform” aims to carve up the spoils of privatization.

Russian socialist BORIS KAGARLITSKY was in London for a conference in October, and spoke on the latest situation to SHEILA MALONE and NICOLAS KAPRACOS.

What do you think the Putin government represents?

In the previous period under Yeltsin, the main goal of the ruling elite was to privatize government property and divide it among themselves. In order to do this they needed, both ideologically and institutionally, a liberal permissive regime. But it was not just that they hid the real value of the enterprises which were privatized at about 1% of their real value. It was also about denying the real value of the Soviet experience and the society which had existed – by saying everything which was built in the Soviet period, politically materially and morally has no value; the real values are in the West, so we shouldn’t care about losing everything we have in Russia.

Now the Russian post-communist capitalist system has reached a new stage – everything is already stolen and basically divided between the oligarchs. The main problems is not stealing or taking something away from the people, but preserving this stolen property.

So, Putin has had to move to a new, more westernised stage in its development to a conservative nationalist stage of development.

In the West some say there is a conflict between Putin and the oligarchs. But actually there is no conflict between Putin and the oligarchs as a collective, but only between Putin and individual oligarchs.

In the Russian oligarchic relations are very personal. So once one oligarch is replaced, so were some oligarchs, because their economic power was very much a function of their political power.

So there is a struggle now of some people in the Putin administration, and by Putin himself to replace particular oligarchs. So for example, they now want Beresnev to have less influence, and Gubinsky, head of the biggest media holding will be forced to resign.

At the same time, there are new people coming in, like the banker Vladimir Kogut, who is part of Putin’s St Petersberg entourage. (Yeltsin was from Moscow; B. the structures of the oligarchs will remain the same, just a change of names at the top. Their property structures will not be undermined, nothing will be confiscated, no power taken away from their institutions.

You need a real police state to protect the interests of the new elite, to protect their property and the hierarchies which emerged out of the previous stage. There will be increased daily policing of Russians; the powers of the police over an average citizen will be dramatically increased. At the same time, the capacity to resist the state or the employ-

...Nationalism is sometimes presented dema-

nically as anti-Western. But in practice it’s not. Although some Russian leaders make noises, on every important issue they do whatever pleases Washington.

But the real essence of Russian nationalism is their racist attitude towards national minorities. Because to consolidate nationalism you have to conscript it against someone and something – mainly national minorities inside Russia.

Putin has made three things very clear:

1. Firstly, not only will privatizations not be reversed but oligarchy capitalism will be deepened;

2. Secondly, the new wave of liberal reform is going to start with the team of reformers around German Greif and Andrei Leonov, his close advisors.

3. Steve the pensioners and some poor people are going to get a little more money, but the state subsidies are going to be taken away. Housing is going to be commercialised.

The pension system is also going to be reformed to be based on individual insurance. Heating, gas and electricity will be completely marketised.

At the moment for example the state owns the biggest stake in the Russian electricity monopoly. They will sell off the most profitable bits of the company, mainly to foreigners, which will probably mean that electricity will be diverted to other countries.

Anatoly Chubais, head of the electricity company, a key person in the first wave of reforms has said, “There will be no electricity for those who don’t want to pay, no heat for those who cannot pay.” So if you cannot pay for fuel you will freeze or starve to death next winter.

So we have these 3 elements of legislation now passing through the Duma – the Administrative Code, the Tax Code and the Labour Code. This is a systematic political attack on working people.

Let’s start with the Administrative Code which gives the police to do almost everything they want. For example, you cannot walk on the streets without a passport. This is an attack on guest workers and immigrant workers, but also limits the capacity to move around the country for Russian people as well, because you have to register with the local police. So you have to work where you live.

People won’t stop moving to get jobs, but they will be turned into illegal immigrants inside their own country. That means that they will not go on strike, not fight against their employers, because if you have a quartel with your employer, he will call in the police who will immediately arrest you.

Secondly, the infamous new Tax Code, already in place, means that from January 1 there will be no progressive taxation in Russia, just a flat rate of 13% for everyone. Existing taxation hasn’t been at all progressive – it has hit the middle class rather than the rich. Today a person of $500 a month will pay 3 times more proportionately than the person on $100. But the person on $10,000 will pay the same as those on $500. So they claim the new rate will help the middle class. However, the middle class is usually paid in black cash anyway.

Actually what the changes do is to create enormous tax breaks of 17% for the rich. And even if these people reveal only a small percentage of their income to the state, nevertheless on this percentage the tax advantage is incredible. And at the same time business taxes are being lowered.

All this means poor people have to pay a bigger share of state taxes and income. This anti-working class orientation of the legislation is clearly visible in the new Tax Code. This de facto abolishes the 8 hour day and reintroduces a 12 hour day. So it’s the first time in modern history that there is a retreat from the gains of 80 years ago.

And they feel happier because they say the introduction will be gradual. So if you are in a company that still has an 8 hour day, when your contract expires, the employers can introduce a 12 hour day.

In a country with high unemployment and weak unions and a lot of people working illegally, there is no way for people to resist legally, because you will be sacked. The Code gives employers almost total freedom to hire and fire.

It almost abolishes the presence of the unions at the shop floor level, but it doesn’t touch the powers of the trade union bureaucracy at the top. Here everything stays as it was. And the power and effect of the bureaucracy at the top is no danger for the elite: on the contrary they co-operate quite closely. The attack is basically on the grassroots, on the basic structures of the unions.

How have the working class resisted especially in regards privatization?

The labour movement is in decline because it was badly defeated in 1993. In 1998 there was a sort of revival with the so called rail war, when people started blocking the railways. Then a worker was elected – a left centre government and people went back home, expecting him to deliver.

The situation did improve a bit. He managed to put pressure on the enterprises to minimise wage delays from an average of 4-6 months to 2-3 months.

Also under Pravdom the price of oil rose to $18-20 a barrel. He also forced the oil companies to bring more of their dollar income into Russia. This influx of money allowed the government to solve some money problems simultaneously – to pay wages and keep fighting the war in Chechnya. So the Russian elite now felt strengthened, and didn’t need him any more. This was one of the reasons why he was sacked in 1999.

But the labour movement had been demobilised because it expected him to deliver – and the demobilisation lasted long after went. So the hopes invested in the labour movement by many on the left in 1998 proved to be wrong.

But now in the last months we see a new tide approaching. People are starting to organise at a grassroots level on a cross-sectional basis.

The new Labour Code is a very good challenge for the trade union movement. Then the development of alternative unions. This is a new phenomenon. It is still very small, no more than 30,000 members. But it is growing quickly, tripling its size in the last 3 years.

Zapita has discovered a strategic role for itself in the movement, to be a vanguard union – not in the old Communist sense that you are the vanguard with the best ideology, but basically you begin the struggle, you engage in the battle on a very important issue, and you provoke the other unions, bigger and probably less radical to follow.

The government wanted to pass the Labour Code in the Spring, but have to delay it at least twice, because of growing resistance. There were cases where people won particular strikes, and court cases, and the famous one where people won against McDonalds. People tried to unionise at McDonalds and everyone was sacked immediately. But then they went to court, and surprisingly won against McDonalds.

This is important symbolically: people can point to these victories to show that the movement can achieve results. And finally December 1, the Day of Action against the Labour Code, will be an important challenge.

The situation in Russia is not a place where you can sit back and watch, but you have to go in and help. People have to organise, to share experiences and ideas. The situation is very difficult, but we can’t get involved in it. We need to get involved in it, because it’s the only way to affect the situation and to make it better.
On December 7 the Duma will vote on the Code. The alternative unions are organizing all sorts of events including strikes, pickets, sit-ins, demonstrations. And it looks like a lot of people from agency unions will join in, including whole branches, although the official structures have not backed the events so far but instead pretend it does not exist. So it is very important in terms of showing the new, emerging solidarity from below. I think some of the "liberal" press will give at least moral support to the action because there is such a clear attack on the most basic achievements of working people and the Code also undermines basic human rights.

The war in Chechnya has been called "Putin's war". Can you talk about its origins, the reasons why it is continuing, and the like?

The casualties are much higher now than ever in December 1999, during the storms of Grozny. Now the situation is really tense - their casualties are increasing while the Chechens are negligible. Russian troops control the fortifications and checkpoints, but when they try to move along columns with supplies on the roads they risk ambush. They then retaliate, but not against guerrillas' targets, but civilians. So now the villages wanted the guerrillas to come to their villages because that is safer. This also means the Walibins are joining the guerrillas.

Now in Chechnya it's such a safer, especially for a male, to be a guerrilla than a civilian. You have a gun, and the military will treat you with some care, and there are people around you to protect you. So the guerrillas are increasing their power. On the Russian side they are afraid the army will not survive the winter - they do not have enough clothes and ammunition, the roads are not safe, and the skies are not clear enough for aircraft.

Secondly, they are afraid of a massive Chechen uprising in the spring. Not because the guerrillas are popular, but because the Russian army is even less so.

The war was started in order to consolidate a nationalist ideology. Russia needed the war to consolidate against "the enemy", as "one fighting nation". It was very much linked to racism, a new understanding of the Russian state, i.e. not of all citizens, but of ethnic Russians, and Russian army is a real threat to Russians. And one of the justifications for the war is fighting against terrorism.

The war was also necessary to create the conditions for Putin to be elected, even though the guerrillas had the massive electoral fraud reported in the Russian press being reported.

In that sense, the war was a double success for Putin, because a new state identity was established. Patriotism and anti-Western nationalism was a success because many people sided with the government on nationalist, racist basis.

This very much undermined the left. It also completely destroyed the nationalist opposition, because the government itself is nationalism.

The problem, however, is that the war is lost. So all the political aims were achieved, but the war militarily is a complete disaster. Now they don't need the war any more and they are seriously thinking how to end it.

The military too want to end it, even those who have made money, because their deals with guerrillas are unsteady, and can be reversed if the balance of forces changes.

It is a great medieval situation, like the 30 Years War, when people fought each other and then made deals, but still kept fighting. The military now feel that they are getting weaker and there is strong pressure to end the war.

However, the government cannot stop the war without acknowledging one of two things. Either it must acknowledge military defeat or that the war had nothing to do with their policies.

Can they find a solution, as in the first war, by negotiation this time?

They can by, but this time negotiation will be seen as a defeat. They may be able to negotiate some kind of Islamic regime and the rest. There are three divisions actually. The Wahabi Islamic faction wants a Saudi-style Islamic state with Sharia law. Then there are the traditionalists who interpret Islam differently and support the clan system, the clan elite and common law of the Chechen tribes. The third group is the secular Chechens, mostly from the north. Under Dudayev, the first period of de facto independence, the country was run by the Abdurashidov clan. This was a period of political power base in the south, amongst the traditionalists there - a compromise with the Wahabis. The moderates support the secularism and the modernisation. But they are not enough.

The modernisers tried some concessions, for example, Dudayev's famous decree prohibiting girls from attending school after the age of 11. However, at the same time, Dudayev did everything possible to prevent his decree being carried out. They never enforced it in the north, so people just ignored it. They also introduced private schools for girls anyway.

There wasn't much to laugh about under Yeltsin, but Putin's reforms could cut off her laughing, too. Who are these people?

The Chechens are deeply divided between those who want some kind of Islamic regime and the rest. There are three divisions actually. The Wahabi Islamic faction wants a Saudi-style Islamic state with which had public support and funding. Then under Maskhadov - who is a very young and militarily man, but no politician, things started to retreat even further. The Wahabins now moved in, complicating things even further because they were against both the secularists and the traditionalists. They gained influence because they were anti-elite, anti-traditionals.

So for example Baisiya, who was a famous guerrilla leader who was originally more associated with a left wing approach, moved towards the Wahabins and finally joined them. He moved away from his original anti-internationalist positions - for a multicultural, secular state and equal rights.

He had issued a famous statement saying we should do everything to prevent Russians leaving Chechnya, because they are also Chechen citizens and have the same right to this land. But in 1997 he moved to the Wahabins.

This demonstrates the weakness of the left. The Wahabins was the only self-styled legal alternative to the struggles between the secular and the elites.

Do women fight with the guerrillas?

Yes, a lot. But more in the first war. In the second war, less, because it is much harder physically to survive, especially if you are in the fighting, but the winter and the hardships of daily life. The increasing influence of the Wahabins, the traditionalists also makes things more difficult for women. Originally, women were used to gain a power base among women, presenting themselves as someone who could defend their rights against Islamisation. He was elected first and foremost with the votes of women. To gain votes, he used a specific oriental women voting technology. Men were not allowed to enter the polling stations together with women. So women voted first, and only after the women had voted were the men allowed in.

Russia was not too with Islamic women. On the contrary, if women went to vote with their husband, brother etc, there would have been a moral pressure on them to vote the same way. But this way, they went separately and voted independently. Maskhadov is a progressive nationalist, Maskhadov and Dudayev were very much within the Soviet tradition, former officers, generals. And they wanted to keep the same rules for women as they had under the Soviet period.

But now Maskhadov is facing the growing influence of both the Wahabins and the traditionalists. So to combat the Wahabins, the traditionalists are acting under the mask of the traditionalists with the secularists against the Wahabins. Because the secularists did less undermining of the Wahabins and the modernisers. But that思路 is now.

But this Russian government is now trying to do a deal with the secularists. They see the Wahabins as the main danger. And if you want to achieve some stability, all 3 sides must be involved in the compromise in the long run. But the main victims of this compromise may be women. Because even as regards the secularists, women may be the issue on which it is easiest to make concessions.
Latin America

Resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International on "Colombia - workers of the world unite!"

1. With the approval by the US Congress of the so-called Plan Colombia, the political, social and military conflict in Colombia could become one of the most important imperialist confrontations in the world. The US decision to finance and directly lead Plan Colombia is presented as an operation against drug traffickers and the narcotraffickers, but 60% of the $7.5 billion for Plan Colombia has a counter-guerrilla, political objective. This will be implemented through destruction of the cultivation of coca on which 400,000 peasant families depend for their livelihood. Destruction of cultivation and eradication of coca, a major source of employment and income, is a form of social deprivation, similar to the experience of "Operation Dirty War" in Argentina, the military operation led by US "advisers" and soldiers of the USADG agency. Plan Colombia means the militarisation of the rural areas of recent times against a Latin American social movement and confirms the desire of the imperialists to appease their hegemonic pressure over Latin America and the Caribbean. It fits into the US vision, according to which the "Colombian disorder is becoming a regional danger", increasing the "insecurity of the hemisphere" and the "national security", of the United States. The empire has resorted to turn Colombia - and the Andean region - into a military base for the struggle against the "socialist actors in Colombia".

2. The decree issued by the Clinton administration on August 22, which approved military mili- tary assistance and a personal instrument for the government of President Pastrana, can only be read in one way: it is a declaration of war against the armed insurgent forces (FARC, ELN, EPL) and also against the trade union, peasant and indigenous human rights movements, against the political parties of the left and, in particular, against the democratic actors in Colombia and in the region.

In the framework of a political, social and armed conflict that has lasted for 50 years, the implementation of Plan Colombia is a direct attack on the population of Colombia on a national scale. It is not only an act of war, but a form of social aggression and occupation against the Colombian people. The government of President Pastrana, together with the US military, is implementing a policy of destruction of the political, social and economic life of the Colombian people.

3. This escalation of the US interventionist strategy takes place against the background of a region severely affected by economic crisis, the growth of social resistance, and the loss of legitimacy of the "neoliberal model". In some countries, moreover, the governing elites face situations of ungovernability and crises of class domination (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia).

The US military is engaged in various indigenous uprisings in Ecuador, popular and peasant uprisings in Bolivia, as well as the popular mobilisation of the Fujimori regime in Peru. On the other hand, the US guerrilla wars, the military occupation of the Amazon and the others, have whipped up the peasants in the Andean region. Simultaneously, there has been a growth of anti-neoliberal discontent and resistance in other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The US imperialists are determined to play all its cards to achieve a "strategic military" victory in Colombia.

Plan Colombia is intended to change decisively the relationship of forces of the internal conflict, to stop the political and economic process in the Amazon and the oil wealth of the Orinoco, to smash the military presence of the Peña-Parraguirre in the Pacific and the Panama Canal and the Caribbean.

4. The argument based on the "national security" in the United States is a manifestation of the political and the most complete and arrogant ignorance of any notion of national sovereignty which conflicts with US interests. This policy subordinates the Latin American peoples and countries to the economic control and neo-colonial policies of the international financial organisations and the multinationals, companies (payment of the foreign debt, unequal exchange, periphery) and accelerates the paths towards the creation of the Latin American Free Trade Area (FTA). This seeks an "integration" subordinate to the US interests and which in many aspects, puts in question currently existing regional blocs, in particular Mercosur (the Latin American trading bloc, as distinct from the NAFTA which includes the US, Canada and Mexico). It also seeks to tighten discipline over the Latin American governments and block any attempts to project the national and social and regional development. The US is also opposed to the left and the popular camp. At the same time, Plan Colombia is a direct attack on the population of the country, which is weakened by the economic crisis, the growth of social resistance, and the loss of legitimacy of the "neoliberal model". In some countries, moreover, the governing elites face situations of ungovernability and crises of class domination (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia).

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5. The sectors and sympathisers of Plan Colombia participate in these movements and campaigns in the indigenous struggle against the modern frontier, which has already become a war of survival for the local peoples. The movement seeks to neutralise the actions of a great number of NGOs and political organisations to ridicule the process of Plan Colombia.

The forces of the Fourth International agree on the necessity to emphasise the class nature of this war, and the legitimacy of insurrectional struggles which are in practice struggles of anti-imperialist resistance against the local oligarchies and the expression of genuine anti-imperialism. In such conditions, the Latin American peoples are already the main victims of the war which is being waged against them by the imperialists. These are the entities that have already lost their lives in this war, and the political and social processes to achieve the transformation of society.

South African Notebook

Fighting AIDS

There is growing resistance in South Africa against President Thabo Mbeki's policy on combating AIDS.

The President is accused of sacrificing himself with a very small group of dissident scientists.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has, unsuccessfully, imported a generic drug, Buvule, from Thailand to treat HIV/AIDS related diseases and distributed it to a network of doctors and dentists.

TAC chairperson Zakie Amsah said it was part of its defiance campaign against "pauper abuse and AIDS profiteering by the multinational pharmaceutical companies." She said from a pattern of a bloody hand print that was badgered: "Drug companies are bled blood on their hands - one AIDS death every ten minutes - others fight drugs now." Amsah said: "The choice is simple - choice of life or death and access to health care are non-negotiable. People will lose the right to live: health care is the right to life, when protected by law, is not a right." Amsah coined a generic equivalent of US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer's Fluoxetine. She said the drug sold for R8.24 per 200 milligrams to the private sector and R28.75 per capsule to the public sector. The Thai equivalent cost R1.78. The import of Pfizer's South African patent rights. TAC will stop defying the law, even if Pfizer has reduced the price to $4 per tablets.

The battle for the land

The National Land Committee (NLC) has warned of an impending race war unless South Africans are allowed to farm. People were protected from abuse at the hands of white farmers. Present farm laws have left farm workers and other farmers the mercy of white landowners. White farmers are scared out of their wits by the threat of a repeat of the Zambian scenario. Nevertheless, according to Andile Mngxitama, NLC land rights coordinator, here is already a war under way in the South African countryside said to be a one-sided war waged by the landed against the landless. This is what is called "only significant law reform happening in this country is that black people are losing more land." According to Professor Shadrack Gutto, spokesperson for the Centre of Applied Legal Studies (CALS), a lot has been said about land invasions in Zimbabwe, but nothing was said about the "systematic and often racist" white farmers who violate South African laws, "the only criminal acts and gross violation of human rights is the increase on farms.

The NLC and the CALS are to call on the government to expunge land from absent farmers as a short-term measure, to alleviate landlessness and the existence of injustice and lack of land reform programmes.

Racism on the increase

There has been a marked increase in racist incidents in South Africa. In Johannesburg police are investigating assault charges against three white men who allegedly beat a black teenager and forced him to eat a dog at gunpoint. The three men, army reservists, also forced the 17-year-old to shave his head and forced him to eat his own excrement. They ordered him to wash his mouth at night while he was hitchhiking near a black township.

The police say they don't know yet if the incidents are part of a series. The victim just happens to be black, and the perpetrators white.

In another incident, a white man fired shots at a black maniggled to escape from his white-owned shop, was stopped and painted white from the waist up. The fact that such cowardly acts of fascist barbarism have become common in the so-called "New South Africa", demonstrate clearly monitored race relations in those areas where the black population is present. President Mbeki has labelled racism as an evil experienced by blacks and committed by whites.

Business closed by divine decree.

The 859 employees of Cathy Ann Fashions in Woodstock, near Cape Town, have found themselves jobless because their employer said he was closing the factory under "divine guidance". Last week, factory boss, Kevin Kindon, moved into the factory with a bible and under his arm said: "God told me to close the factory". God told him to choose between setting up the factory and helping him (God) build this magnificent thing. After reading them a verse from the New Testament, Kindon closed the factory was closed. God really does work in mysterious ways.
Milosevic out of office: now get NATO out of Kosovo!

THE DEFEAT of Slobodan Milosevic has been welcomed throughout the Balkans. Kostunica has been able to cobble together a government, including members of Milosevic’s party. He has been able to remove some key figures of the previous regime from major posts. He also appears to have been able to ride out the factory occupations that forced the dismissal of some former Milosevic officials. However many issues remain unresolved, and many potential conflicts loom.

GEOFF RYAN reports.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been rapidly admitted to the United Nations, US envoy Richard Holbrooke. Yet the future of the Yugoslav state is by no means clear.

Relations between Serbia and Montenegro remain tense, with Montenegrin president Milo Djukanovic demanding a complete redefinition of the relationship between the two countries. For the west, however, relations with Serbia (with a population of ten million) are of much greater importance than with six hundred thousand Montenegrins.

Holbrooke’s pressure for immediate admission of Yugoslavia to UN membership was designed to head off Montenegro demands for a separate seat in the UN. In the past Montenegrin leader Djukanovic was feted by western governments (who chose to forget his past support for Milosevic), and urged to pursue policies independent of Belgrade.

Montenegro’s enthusiasm has made it clear that all thoughts of Montenegrin independence must be abandoned and Djukanovic must subordinate himself to Kostunica.

Significantly, there have been no demands from western governments for the withdrawal of the extra troops sent to Montenegro by Milosevic on the eve of the elections that led to his downfall. The cynicism of western governments is apparent.

Holbrooke also managed to press-gang Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia into abandoning attempts to link Yugoslav admission to the UN to claims for a redistribution of the assets of the old state, which were taken over by the Milosevic regime after the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The four former Yugoslav republics want their share of the assets and property held by Yugoslavia in 1990, estimated at $100 billion. Although Kostunica has taken a more conciliatory position than Milosevic, negotiations are likely to be drawn out and bitter.

Relations between Bosnia and Kostunica are also strained after the Yugoslav president attended a ceremony for the reburial of the village of nationalist and anti-Communist poet Ivan Duce, who died in the United States in 1943.

Kostunica attended the ceremony, held at Trebinje in the Republika Srpska, at the invitation of the Serb entity’s deputy president Mirko Sarovic, a member of Radovan Karadzic’s SDP (Serbian Democratic Party).

The timing of Kostunica’s visit was significant. It came immediately after a week of attacks on Muslims by Serb students in Brcko, protesting against sharing school buildings with Muslim students. Brcko was scene of some of the worst ethnic cleansing by Serb militiamen in the early stages of the Bosnian war. Although it was de facto part of Republika Srpska, the final status of the Brcko region was left out of the Dayton settlement.

In 1999 the international arbitration commission ruled that the region should become a neutral condominium, overlapping both the Muslim-Croat federation and Republika Srpska, a decision bitterly resisted by Serb nationalists, especially the organisers of Kostunica’s visit to Trebinje.

The visit also came only two weeks before elections in Bosnia, in which the SDS are expected to do well in Republika Srpska. At the very least his visit will be seen as tacit support for the SDS hard-liners.

The major unresolved problem remains Kosovo. Last weekend saw municipal elections. For most Kosovo Albanians the elections were not about municipal matters; they were a referendum on the status of Kosovo.

The elections saw a big defeat for the two parties led by former KLA commanders, the FDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo) of Hashim Thaci and the AAA (Alliance for the Future of Kosovo) of Ramush Haradinaj.

The victory of Ibrahim Rugova’s LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) does not, however, imply the defeat of Albanian nationalism or demands for Kosovo independence. Rugova may be more amenable to discussion and negotiation than the former KLA leaders but he is undoubtedly in favour of independence for Kosovo. He did, after all, declare Kosovo independent during the Milosevic years — a declaration totally ignored by every single western government.

Rugova’s political comeback is certainly impressive. He was effectively side-lined at the end of the war by the leaders of the KLA. His party had lost large amounts of support, partly because it had failed to end Serbian rule, partly because during the war Rugova appeared on Serbian TV in discussions with Milosevic and partly because of its corruption.

Rugova’s victory is even more impressive because although it has been presented as a ‘victory for moderation’ he was not the favoured candidate of the US, which backed Thaci. No doubt, uneasily, Thaci recognised his dependence on the US in a pre-election speech in Pristina when he declared: ‘You can choose between the new political class who brought the most powerful allies [NATO] to Kosovo, or the old political class [i.e. Rugova] who spent ten years making compromises with Milosevic.’

Thaci’s defeat was primarily a reaction against the corruption surrounding sections of the old KLA leadership and the involvement of some of them with criminal gangs. It also expressed a belief among many Kosovars that Rugova would be more acceptable to Belgrade, as he has spoken out in support of the rights of Kosovar Serbs and therefore more likely to be able to negotiate independence.

The US, which has no demands for independence in its borders, is currently far less hostile to Kosovar independence than the European governments, several of which do.

However, by backing ‘the old political class’ the majority of Kosovars have also called into question in an embryonic way certainly not just ‘the new political class’ but also ‘the most powerful allies’ and their future role in Kosovo.

US support for Thaci reflects differences between the US and European governments over Kosovo’s future status. The US is currently far less hostile to Kosovar independence than the Europeans. The US has no demands for independence within its borders, whereas European governments do face such pressures.

Kosovar independence would strengthen separatist demands in a number of countries. And Belgrade is of much greater importance to European governments than Pristina. Hence European governments remain implacably opposed to independence.

Holbrooke, the main architect of US policy in the Balkans, no doubt also had one eye on the US elections. A Bush victory would possibly see the withdrawal of US troops from the Balkans and a reassessment of American international priorities. By encouraging Kosovar aspirations for independence and calling for early parliamentary elections Holbrooke may well have been trying to create conditions in which it is far more difficult for the US to withdraw.

By backing Thaci, the main KLA leader, he may also have been hoping to minimise the risk of conflict between NATO troops and Kosovars who feel betrayed, since Thaci is clearly tied to ‘the most powerful allies’.

The overthrow of Milosevic makes such conflicts more, not less, likely. The overwhelming majority of Kosovar Albanians have made clear their refusal to be a part of Serbia, whoever is in government in Belgrade.

Their vote is a decisive rejection of UN Resolution 1244 which gives Yugoslav sovereignty over Kosovo. It is a decisive rejection of that part of the resolution that gives Kosovars the right to return to Kosovo, a policy already being advocated by both Kostunica and Vojislav Djindjic.

Socialist Outlook continues to support the clearly expressed wish of the majority of Kosovars for independence. It is patently obvious that the only way they will remain part of Serbia is by repression and denying them the right to self determination. It is also clear that the main role of NATO troops in the immediate future will be to deny the Kosovars the right to independence.

We call for the immediate recognition of an independent Kosovo — and the withdrawal of NATO troops.
Tikva Honig-Parnass

The Al Aqsa Intifada
Collapse of flawed Oslo peace deal

The Al Aqsa Intifada, which brought the Oslo process officially to a halt, also revealed the colonial settlement program's weaknesses and the shaky arrangements that were supposed to sustain it.

The two main purposes of the Oslo Accords were: first, to ensure the political stability of the region so that it would be open to the capitalist globalization process, and second, to contain the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli state the continuation of its control over the 1967 Occupied Territories, with the collaboration of the Palestinian Authority opposing any opposition and thus facilitate the economic and security interests of Israel.

Opposition growing

The basic assumption behind the Oslo agreement was that Arafat would be able to fulfill the task of ensuring peace between Israel and the Palestinians, without interference from democratic legal and political institutions, which would not exist in the regime he was to establish in the future.

However, the layer of bureaucrats who were brought from the Islamic and the corrupt economic and political system of which this layer was the main beneficiary, have caused a peace and strong opposition — both within the Palestinian elite which emerged throughout the years of the "First Intifada," and was marginalised by Arafat, and among political and military leaders who represented that elite at the time.

Moreover, such criticism prevails also within the Fatah militia that Arafat allowed to be established, the Tanzim, who more and more show a tendency towards political and economic independence from Arab, while challenging the Oslo process, to which they themselves were partners. Indeed, as the journalist, Dennis Rubinstein states, the Tanzim (the Fatah Youth) does not control the uprising of civilians and the PA security forces and it gains nothing from it.

Let us clarify that in the Oslo process, the GISPA agreements permitted Arafat to be up; carry out the exclusive mission of ensuring the security of Israelis — soldiers, settlers and civilians outside the Green Line.

The recent Intifada made it clear that the Palestinian police, including the Preventive Security Service, no longer perceive their duty as the protectors of their people when they are attacked by Israeli soldiers.

Moreover, the assumption that it is possible to create a "sovereign" Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Arab towns of Jerusalem and the Al Aqsa mosque, is not sustainable.

Although at present there is no organised democratic opposition, there is a wide strata of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and in the Diaspora — a high level of political identification and a strong involvement among the Palestinians in a serious threat to Arab legitimacy.

Erasure of the green line

The Israeli "Left" that initiated the Oslo process has repeatedly stressed its importance in implementing the "separation between the two people." (Let's separate in peace, call the leaders of Peace Now).

This slogan was reiterated in a mass demonstration in fact that both Labour and Gulf government had created a reality in which the settlements stretched to the outskirts of Palestinian towns and villages. These settlements were constructed precisely to prevent separation and as such, having the idea of Palestinian "sovereignty" in their autonomous enclaves was a no real meaning.

The assumption that it is possible to separate the state of Israel and the Occupied Territories has also been nullified by the Green Line and has also been nullified by the Pakistan Agreements. The ten days of the uprising of the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel revealed the malaise and the stupidity of the slogan. Two states for two peoples which were torn from each other in the 1948 war, and aims at separating them from each other.

However, on the other hand, the price of this separation is the strengthening of the Palestinian national identity. And indeed as Israeli commentators of the Al Aqsa Intifada said: "the Green Line has been blurred." However, it was not only because of the strong identification of Palestinians in Israel with the uprisings of their people in the 1967 Occupied Territories, but also because of the Green Line long before, when the superpowers were the Arab citizens as enemies, and used against them the same methods of oppression which it used against its subjects in the Occupied Territories: shooting, bulldozing rubber bullets at demonstrations in protest against Israeli oppression, demolishing "illegal" houses and confis-

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However, they are calling not only for "equality of rights" on the individual level, but are demanding the recognition of their collective rights, such as returning the lands which have been stolen from them, granting them cultural autonomy etc.

Moreover, they are challenging now a very legal and ideological foundations of the Jewish-Zionist state in which their oppression is structurally inevitable.

Defending vs. Neoliberalism

It seems that Israel is ready to take off the gloves now that the cracks have been revealed in the colonialist Zionist state that was erected. Confronting the genuine national desires of the Palestinian people and the Labour establishment to show its real face.

There are no more docile attempts to claim that there are substantial differences between Left and Right — attempts that have continued since the beginning of the Labour Party in Palestine. The Labour Party is almost identical to the Zionist state and it is the fundamental reason for how the Labour Party in Palestine has changed its name to "opposition center that Barak founded before the Oslo process." But once again the mass demonstrations.

The individual and collective disorganisation of the national Arab minority was of no interest to the Israeli Left. Hura said, "landmark" the main dimension of their world view is that of the "Arab" state, and its existence as a "Jewish" state. But once again the mass demonstrations.

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Another brutal episode of Israeli criminal violence

Statement on Palestine from the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, October 2000

The BLOODY autumn unleashed by the provocation of Yasser Arafat and his associates has stained the palms of the Israeli army from the territories occupied in 1967, establishment of a Palestinian state on the whole of these territories, including East Jerusalem, and the return to Palestine of the refugees of 1948 and a lot of difficulty in mustering Palestinian society completely, despite its efforts to do so. Moreover, Yasser Arafat and his lieutenants were much less inclined to produce a massive repudiation of the occupation further given that, on the one hand, they knew that in losing all legitimacy in the eyes of a sector of their troops, they weakened themselves in relation to Israeli; while on

Rabin offered no concession of a nature to satisfy the elementary demands of the Palestinians: dismantling of the Zionist settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, withdrawal of the Israeli army from the territories occupied in 1967, establishment of a Palestinian state on the whole of these territories, including East Jerusalem, and the return to Palestine of the refugees of 1948

property.

Most of these events are not new to Israel or to the police or even to Human Rights organizations, but they are the lack of confidence in legal authorities, which have been strengthened in recent demonstrations.

In the face of an intensification of the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Zionist Left, it is reassuring that it is possible to reach the goal of the Oslo Agreements by realizing the converse of this in a way that would lead to an unification of the Oslo agreements and liberal and multi-cultural ideology of the capitalists globalization era.

The representatives of the new Palestinian bourgeoisie emerged with the development of the Israeli economy, and their mouthpieces - the Labour Party and the left-Zionist parties - which initiated the Oslo Agreements have meanwhile failed to achieve the goal of ensuring political and security stability.

It should be noted that large parts of this new bourgeoisie, including professionals and academics, the majority of whom are Ashkenazi and the biological and ideological offspring of the Zionist Labour movement that founded the state of Israel.

There is a structured contradiction between these two classes interests regarding a free economy and privatization - and their Zionist commitment to the existence of a Jewish state, in all regions of the Arab world.

One of the main factors that prevent the development of the political power of all the Palestinian people, is the emigration of the political power of the whole of the Palestinian society, which is the result of a lack of political and economic liberation of the Palestinian society.

If the security system is not dismantled, nothing else matters.

In any case, the failure of the Palestinian people to achieve any political power in the Palestinian territories.

The only thing that is clear is that the Palestinian people are still living in a state of occupation and that their situation is not improving.

The only way to achieve political power is to establish a strong and independent Palestinian state.

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No to all-out war in the Philippines!

Resolution from the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, 31.10.00

1 When President Estrada declared an "all-out war" policy against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao, he intended to finish the war once and for all.

He has mobilised almost three quarters of his armed forces, 60,000 strong (or so he says), led by the elite franchise he inherited.

2 Using the modern military hardware provided by the US like the Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite photos and heavy weaponry, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) attacked the 47 camps of the MILF including those camps where the Revolutionary Workers’ Party and the NPA have their headquarters.

3 The MILF is a united movement from not only directly against the MILF. The strategic role of Mindanao for the success of the neocolonial project of capital internationalisation in the Philippines is the main reason for this war. It is a war directed at all those who oppose capital internationalisation. The Revolutionary Workers’ Party in the Philippines has been one of the main forces leading the campaign to stop this war, not only in Mindanao but in the whole country.

4 The MILF has been launching grassroots based peace conferences (local and international) and co-founding humanist projects for those who have been dislocated by war.

5 The MILF has been fighting for their right to self-determination for more than 30 years. In fact, it has consistently resisted all菲律宾 military attacks and invaders for more than 300 years.

6 The MILF has been attacking the very essence of the IMF and the World Bank.

7 And it was not circumstantial that at the peak of Estrada’s military offensive against the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf (Muslim fundamentalist group) came back to life. The regretted kidnappings of Christian foreign tourists in the nearby Basilan island resort. These acts made the headlines locally as well as globally.

8 In fact at an early stage they had announced several ransom demands as conditions for the release of the hostages. The propaganda machinery of the Estrada government had managed to convince the entire US Armed Forces to aid a siege against the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF.

9 The terrorist acts of the Abu Sayyaf justified the arming of the Christians in Mindanao to fight not only the Abu Sayyaf but the MILF or the Muslims as well. The Muslims and Christians who have been neighbours for a long time have begun to mistrust each other.

10 After thousands of lives lost and heavy destruction of homes and farms, Estrada announced a military victory over the MILF, especially after the capture of the main camp of the MILF (CAMP ABUZABUR).

11 The leadership of the MILF announced Jihad, not so much to recapture their lands but to defend their cause and their homeland. In the last part of June, Estrada sent his representatives to the Foreign Minister meeting in Jakarta to seek the reinstatement of Islamic Countries (OIC) in the campaign against the Philippines and the application of the MILF as observer in the OIC. A week after the meeting, the US stated that it would not work with Estrada against the MILF.

12 The MILF has been conducting guerrilla counterattacks against the Philippines government. The MILF has been able to seize control of the rural areas and is able to put up a strong resistance.

13 At the critical moment in the last week’s events, because of the scared faced of Estrada, one of the members of his inner cabinet has exposed Estrada’s involvement in illegal drug dealing in the country.

14 Now he is being undertaken an impeachment procedure in the Congress.

15 The basic political parties have taken advantage of this situation to weaken Estrada even further.

11 In this difficult situation there is an urgent need for forging solidarity among the progressive parties and groups in the world to organise effectively the people of the "all out war" policy of the Estrada government directly or indirectly supported by the US imperialists.

12 This is urgent need for us to support the struggle of the Moro people to self-determination against the progressive organisations embarking this struggle.

Zhang Kai

Labour Safety has become a critical issue in China, with the government keenly pressing ahead with the national plan, and seeking optimum economic performance.

So severe is the problem that the government has now been forced to undertake a national inspection of production safety in an attempt to contain major accidents and hazards.

The Emergency Circular issued by the State Council on 1300 people died in a shipwreck in Heilongjiang.

- 30 people died in a shipwreck in Sichuan Province on June 22; - 47 people died in a plane crash in the mountains of the Company.

10 people died in an explosion of a fireworks factory in Jiangmen City, Guangdong Province on June 5.

10 people died in an explosion of a fireworks factory in Dianjiang County, Chongqing City. For years, industrial and traffic accidents have been rampant, with around 100,000 deaths every year. Of this, about 16,000 workers whose deaths are caused by industrial and mining accidents. China produces about 100% of the world’s raw industrial output. Thus, Chinese miners account for about 25% of the world’s annual coal-related deaths. According to the State Coal Industry Bureau, each year there are about 10,000 mine accidents killing more than 10 people. This means an accident every five days. In 1999, coal output in China was 2.34 billion tons, with 10,015 miners killed in accidents. In the USA, the figure is 38 deaths for a coal output of 0.96 billion tons. In 1998, the Chinese coal death rate was 6.04 persons per 1 million tons of coal output – 50 times the casualty rate of the USA.

In 1983, 93 workers were killed when a fire broke out in Zhi’s Toy Factory, killing 93 workers. In the next six months, 202 workers died in various factories.

In mid-December 1994, 93 workers were killed in a fire at a toy factory owned by a Chinese-Norwegian company.

In mid-1982, 15 workers died in a factory fire at a toy factory owned by a Chinese-Norwegian company.

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The Workers’ Daily of March 13 reported that some employers signed a "life and Death" contract with workers, stating that workers would receive only a small amount for compensation for any injuries or casualties they might suffer. As most workers in low-paid and hazardous jobs are peasants from the countryside, they are constantly threatened by new laws and regulations in the workplace.

The Maritime Union is powerless on matters such as living conditions, health and safety. The Labour Laws cannot provide protection. With such intensification of contradictions and tensions, it is required that both workers and groups working for workers’ welfare to improve their conditions and fight for workers’ rights.

Market forces are less than finger-licking good for Chinese workers – just ask them in Leping City – where dozens of workers have died. This squashed the total number of pneumoconiosis deaths in the last five years. Numbers of Chinese pneumoconiosis victims are growing at a rate of 15,000 to 20,000 a year. No complete statistics show that there are around 30,000 hazardous and poisonous industrial enterprises in China.

A Health Ministry survey of 47 foreign owned enterprises found 37% involved occupational hazards in the process of production, and only 35% of workers were exposed to such hazards.

Large numbers of people also die of poisoning. According to incomplete statistics by the health authorities, occupational poisoning took the lives of hundreds every year, and jeopardized the health of thousands more. In 1999, the number increased by 47% as compared to 1998. The government has repeatedly monitored occupational health problems in major industrial enterprises. The Ministry of Labour had inspected more than 5000 enterprises. 34% of workers in these enterprises were in contact with dust and poisonous substances, and 16% of the workforce faced occupational hazards.

The major hazard is the danger of the same kinds of working conditions as in the factory and ware- house. When fires have bro- ken out, the casualties have been high. In November 1993, 83 workers were killed when a fire broke out in Zhi’s Toy Factory, killing 93 workers. In the next six months, 202 workers died in various factories.

In mid-December 1994, 93 workers were killed in a fire at a toy factory owned by a Chinese-Norwegian company.

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Trade unions are powerless on matters such as living conditions, health and safety. The Labour Laws cannot provide protection. With such intensification of contradictions and tensions, it is required that both workers and groups working for workers’ welfare to improve their conditions and fight for workers’ rights.

China: death toll of market system

Zhang Kai

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US Presidential race: a choice of Tweedledum – or Tweedle-Dumber

Nader's challenge

As we go to press, the outcome of the Presidential race still hangs in the balance. With the recount in just over half of Florida’s 67 counties completed, Bush’s lead over Gore has been cut by about 600 votes – around a third of the 1,700 votes that separate him and Bush on the first count.

Both candidates need to win Florida to win the presidential election and have sent teams of lawyers to the southern state to investigate a series of alleged irregularities in the voting. A number of Democrat voters have filed a lawsuit demanding a new election in Florida because they say a hanging ballot led them to vote for the wrong candidate. Legal challenges or the counting of postal votes could delay the process further and the votes of an estimated 2,300 people living abroad are still awaited.

None of this has stopped the vitriol against Ralph Nader’s candidacy from leading Democrat supporters – strengthened by the fact that in a number of key states Nader’s vote was greater than the difference between Bush’s success and Gore’s showing. While there is some justified criticism that can be made of Nader, as his supporter Michael Moore points out, Nader and his supporters cannot be blamed for the right wing trying to deny President Clinton and Vice-President Gore.

It is this neo-liberal trajectory that has led more and more American voters to recognise what has always been the case – the difference between the two parties of American capitalism have always been

T
he United States is now approaching the climax of a contest for the powerful elected position on earth. Yet, if previous elections are anything to go by, barely half of the electorate will bother to vote. It is not hard to see why: the election is between two rich white men, each representing a party that has consistently promoted the exploitation of working people, the exclusion of women and ethnic minorities and the pursuit of corporate interests abroad through imperialist wars. The Clinton-Gore administration, in its eight years in power, has continued the neo-liberal project initiated by Reagan and Bush, with its ‘reform’ of the welfare system, the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the deregulation of the communications industry.

While allowing the gap between rich and poor to widen, the administration has pursued tough ‘law and order’ policies and supported the expansion of the death penalty.

Yet despite this, the leadership of the labour movement in the United States continues to support the Democratic Party, pouring money and volunteers into Al Gore’s election campaign and mobilising its members to turn out the vote.

At national level, almost every union has endorsed Gore, seeing him as the lesser of two evils, a safe guard against a Republican Party characterised at its worst by union-busting bosses, white-supremacists, anti-abortionists and religious fanatics.

Yet, while Gore will gratefully accept the unions’ support and pay lip service to their concerns during his campaign, if elected he will assurely continue with the same anti-working class policies that he has supported for the last eight years.

Unions under Democrat thumb

And as long as there is felt to be no alternative to the left of the Democrats, this will continue to be the case. As the American Marxist, George Brezina, put it more than forty years ago: "The Democrats have much more influence in the labor movement than the labor movement has in the Democratic Party. The Democrats can take the unions for granted because they feel they have them in their pocket; because the unions, having sworn not to create their own party, have nowhere else to go."

"The union leaders not only have become dependent on the Democratic Party. They have become its captives. And this is one of the reasons why the Democratic Party has been moving steadily to the right year after year."

Attempts to create a viable working class or socialist alternative to the two big parties have always faltered, since the time when a strong Socialist Party, which had won nearly a million votes in the 1912 presidential election, was smashed by the state for its opposition to the First World War.

A Labor Party was established in 1996, at the behest of activists in a number of unions who were determined to fight for working class independence of the Democrats. It now has the support of nine unions at national level, and numerous local branches.

But, as a compromise to maximise its union support, it has agreed that it will neither stand its own candidates against the Democrats, nor endorse candidates of any party (including the Democrats).

A vote for Gore, who supports the death penalty, and NAFTA, and WTO, and won’t support universal healthcare immediately, that is a vote for Bush. A vote for Gore is a vote for Bush, that is the new equation.

"A vote for Nader is a political Molotov that we need to throw into a corrupt and bankrupt system filled with dirty money."

In this year’s election, however, many trade unionists (including Nader’s own Part) and others on the left are supporting the candidacy of Ralph Nader, a veteran consumer rights campaigner who is standing as the candidate of the Green Party.

While Nader makes no claim to be a socialist, his campaign includes pledges to restrain corporate power, to boost the minimum wage, to introduce a universal system of healthcare and to repeal anti-unions laws.

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Throughout the United States, trade unionists and left activists who agree with this sentiment have been organising for Nader. He has won the endorsement of one small national union, the United Electrical Workers, one statewide union and a few local branches.

In Detroit, a "Labor for Nader" group has been set up, including six local branch presidents and organised a 350-strong Labor Day rally at which Nader spoke. A similar group has been set up in New York.

Nader’s union supporters hope to help him reach the target of five per cent of the vote, which will entitle him to state funding for a further campaign in 2004. But he is also, by his presence in the presidential race, raising issues on the national political agenda that would otherwise go unheard, and most importantly, encouraging class-conscious workers, feminists, environmentalists, black, Latino and native American peoples and ‘progressives’ to break the stranglehold of the two-party system.

Socialists can, of course, have no illusions in any political campaign that, like Nader’s, remains within the constraints of the bourgeois political system and fails to challenge capitalism as such. But Nader’s campaign presents the best opportunity in decades for a break with the political duopoly of the ‘Republiocrats’. It helps to give expression to the demands of the Seattle demonstrators against the WTO and like that demonstration, it unites greens and radical campaigners of all kinds with the most progressive wing of the organised labour movement. And in this way, it helps to create the conditions for the construction of a genuine working-class socialist party in the future.
Remembering Terry Harrison

Alan Wassell and Garth Frankland

TERRY Harrison tragically died on 8th September 1980. He was 49. He was a life long trade unionist and active member of the labour movement, and Terry's funeral at the beautiful village church at Felkirk was packed with his family, friends and members of the National Union of Mineworkers. Wakefield Council leader Peter Box, NUM President Arthur Scargill, and MPs John Trickett and Mick Clapham were also present. The branch banner of the Kellingley NUM graced the front of the church with its sharp graphic message that the working class could only obtain benefits from its labour by destroying capitalism. This was a message that Terry fought for, sought and achieved throughout his too brief life.

He was the President of the NUM at Kellingley pit, the "Big K". He was also a former Chair of the Wakefield District Labour Party and of Huns Brotherhood Labour Party. He was the local MP for Hunsborough, but the national Labour Party leadership leaned on the NUM to prevent him from standing in the area of the opportunity to elect a Socialist. Terry was an undemocratic by-election selection procedure. Yet despite this his great loyalty to the movement and hatred of the Tories shone through. He was the only member to be turned out to work in the by-election. The same loyalty was shown in the enormous effort and sacrifice that he made during the miners’ strike.

During this period he worked with a small number of supporters of Labour and the NUM to form the Socialists League to build support for the strike. Particularly he helped form the link between Hull and Castleford during the Strike. Terry spoke at the Miners Support Group meetings called by Hull Trades Council. The plight of the sacked and victimised miners was always high on his personal agenda. He was a tireless and an imaginative picker, and sometimes this was personally dangerous. Once he wrecked his car engine over an obstruction left for scabs. The expensive repair to his car was done for free by a garage in Leeds so he could continue his picketing.

Food parcels

Terry appreciated the important role played by women during the strike, and when he found that women from the pit kitchens were not getting food parcels from the union, he began NUM members he queued up with his colleague Alan Wassell at the local TASS office which ran a “Food Parcel Service” to ensure they got what they deserved. Terry and his mates had helped to ensure the donated food in the first place.

It has been said that Thatcher defeated the Miners: but her didn’t beat Terry or his life-long foe. This bond was forged too strongly in the great long battle of 1984. Terry was a miner, treasurer and leading organizer of the official World Peace Gala. However Terry’s life was not all politics and trade unions. He was a keen supporter of Castleford in rugby league, but in recent years supported Barnsley football club, and was a joint season ticket holder with his youngest son Neil.

He was a member and Vice Chair of Hovecroft Parish Council and a school Governor. Terry was a driving force of the new Hovecroft and Ryhill Sports Centre. People were attracted to Terry by his strong personal characteristics. He was an honest man who would voice his opinion in a straightforward and non-offensive way. He was a good man, who never put anyone down – either to their face or otherwise. Above all he would help whenever and wherever he could. He was genuinely interested in both local and wider politics and would invest his valuable time into whatever he thought might make a difference.

He had many friends both in his local community and well beyond. Terry thought the world of his family and his sons Richard and Neil, and was with them at all the major events of their lives and growing up. They provided a major source of conversation with his friends. When he was talking about politics, he had a rule to avoid all mention of politics when he went for drinks with his friends on Sunday evenings.

Terry will be remembered as a good and a very sincere man, a caring father and a trustworthy, true friend.

Dear Socialist Outlook
I have received your October issue and was relieved to read the article on the fuel protests which the main I agree with. I enclosed a copy of the letter I sent to Socialist Worker which, needless to say, was never published, alone published.

I was moved by the sweetness and light over the formation of the Socialist Alliance and its support, you will publish the letter I sent them.

Unpublished letter to Socialist Worker

Dear Comrades,
No: it’s not the big employers’ organisations, the Tories and the gutter press that the “blockades have confused” (What we think, SW, 8th September; it’s you!)

There is irrefutable evidence that the blockade was organised by the big haulage companies in collusion with and in alliance with the oil company chauffeurs, Farmers for Action, the Courier Alliance and the Tory leadership.

Even more sinister groups such as the BNP were involved. The police and media were linked in a way that was not possible.

Terrorists are beyond the law, beyond justice, beyond the law of their lives and growing up. They provided a major source of conversation with his friends. When he was talking about politics, he had a rule to avoid all mention of politics when he went for drinks with his friends on Sunday evenings.

Terry will be remembered as a good and a very sincere man, a caring father and a trustworthy, true friend.

The letter on fuel protests Socialist Worker wouldn’t print

The overall goal which we pursue is the emancipation of all human beings from every form of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence. Socialism must be under the control of the working people, democracy, pluralism, multi-party, feminist, ecologist, anti-militarist and internationalist. It must abolish wage relations and make an essential contribution to the struggle for a different society. They are organised around the principle of "New Labour and the Team of with which they wear them". The whole working class needs to fully commit itself to these struggles.

Furthermore we fight for a strategic alliance between workers and these organisations - an alliance which respects their legitimate autonomy. By building simultaneously revolutionary organisations in each country and a revolutionary international, we aim to guide and encompass the whole working class, workers and employers.

By building a united struggle against exploitation and oppression we aim to ensure the survival of the human race.

If you think this is worth fighting for, and you like what you read in Socialist Outlook, why not join us? Drop a line to us at PO Box 1109, London N4 2UW, and we'll be

Socialism on the web
International Socialist Outlook web site: www.labournet.org.uk/iso
International Socialist Group: www.3bh.org.uk/ISG

Where we stand

AS A NEW CENTURY BEGINS, the battle of the last century must be won, millions of women and men are taking part in mobilisations against the leadership of the capitalists and the bureaucratic dictators. This reflects the fact that humanity face widening dangers. Economically, the economic devastation faces millions of people.

Many more people recognise the barbaric nature of the capitalist system. The situation where the inability of the social democratic communists and other opportunist parties to provide solutions a becoming clearer, the task of creating new leaderships remains ahead.

Socialist Outlook is written and sold by socialists committed to this struggle. We are the British supporters of the world-wide Socialist organisation, the Fourth International. We stand for the revolutionary transformation of capitalism, and a pluralist, socialist democracy world wide.
Open Borders – The Case Against Immigration Controls by Teresa Hayter, (Pluto Press £12.99) Reviewed by Charlie van Gelderen

There are few people more qualified to write a book about why immi-
grant immigration controls should be scrapped than Teresa Hayter. She is not only a diligent researcher, but also a dedicated
activist, a partisan in the Campaign to Clear Greenfield site, the cam-
paign to stop the former RAF base in Oakington, outside
Cambridge, being turned into another Campbeltown.
She has also visited and talked to asylum seekers in Winson Green,
Rochester, Blackburn and Hull.

These experiences, the lessons to be learned from them, form the
basis for this well-researched and
well-written book. It is an essential
reading for all who want to get to
grasp with this issue which is only
getting bigger because governments, aid and abetted by a jingoistic
media choose to make it so.
In the present day global econ-
omy, money is free to travel.
Travelling national frontiers is no
problem. Capital is literally flying
all over the world. It is the heart of the system of currency that
can travel freely in today’s world. This is also true of free
capital – machinery.
Multinationals see
nothing of moving whole factories
from one part of the globe to
another, in search of higher
profit, wringing more surplus value out of
underpaid work force.
The movement of currencies, has little
thing to do with increasing the
world’s productive resources.
While, before 1971, over 90 per
cent of exchange transactions in
the world bore some relation to
financing trade and future invest-
ments, and less than half was spec-
ulative, today these figures are
reversed: over 90 per cent of all
transactions are speculative. There
are no closed borders against these
currency speculations. Capital can
go where and when it wants.
There is, however, no such fre-
edom of movement for people try-
ing to escape from abysmal
poverty, racial and political oppres-
sion. For tens of thousands of peo-
ple trapped in these conditions it is
becoming, as Hayter demonstrates
time and again, increasingly diffi-
cult to find a country willing to
accept them.
While, once upon a time, people
openly moved from one country to
another in search of improved liv-
ing standards for themselves and
their families, and if successful
were hailed as entrepreneurs.
Today, the trenched of the earth,
coming from the under-developed
to the more prosperous countries of
the West, are greeted with scorn as
"economic migrants", to set
down apart from "genuine
refugees."

As Hayter puts it: "Migration for
economic betterment, rather than
being considered, as it should be
and as it is in some European
countries, desirable, is now regarded
as (criminal) and somehow shameful."

The Neanderthal and after
invasion Hondo sapiens
emerged from Africa, human beings have been
migrants and have spread from area to
area in seek of better conditions.
Today they would all be charac-
terised as "economic migrants"

As Hayter makes crystal clear,
most people would, given a choice,
prefer to remain in the land of
their birth, with their families and
friends; in familiar surroundings
and their traditional way of life.

They emigrate for two reasons
mainly – through poverty, when
they are unable to provide for their
families, and from oppressive envi-
rions where they are subject to
imprisonment, torture and even
death, often only because they are
politically opposed to the party in
Power.

The irony of the situation is that
the poverty prevalent in the
so-called developing world, is wors-
ened by the economic actions of
the wealthier countries of the West –
so which the refugees seek to flee.
Conditions imposed by the World
Bank and International Monetary
Fund through structural adjust-
ment programmes are a major
cause of the migration of the social
establishments on these countries
do nothing to improve the living
standards of these people. Quite
the reverse!

The easy access to interna-
tional news have made most
would-be migrants aware of
the difficulties they would have to
overcome in the countries where they
sought refuge. Those impugned on
imputed as being migrants, are harsh and often brutal, the aim
in try and stop the inflow.
They are also aware of the grow-
ing racism in these countries, a
racism stimulated by the anti-
migrant rhetoric of the govern-
ment and the media, although the
proponents of the spate of anti-
refugee legislation tried to argue
that its aim was to minimise racist
tensions.

Thus, Margaret Thatcher, in an
interview with ITV’s World in
Action, January 1978, said that "if
you want good race relations, you
got to ally people’s fears about
numbers."

These sentiments have been
echoed by successive Home
Secretaries and, far from the
proclaimed aim of allaying racism,
have actually stimulated it, leading
to increased activities by the
National Front and other extreme
Right groups.

The Treaty of Rome which set
the European Economic Community
(EEC) in 1957, was supposed to
eliminate, not only trade barriers
and free movement of capital
within Europe, but also to stimu-
late the free movement of people.
Migrants within Europe were to
have full social and family rights.

In the 1970s immigration from
outside Europe was virtually
stopped, but the rights of "third
country nationals" already settled
in European states, were severely
curtailed. Fortress Europe was
being erected.

Britain would not agree to the
Schengen Convention, under
which border controls within
Europe agreeing to the Convention
would be abolished by 1 January,
1991. Britain insisted on maintain-
ing its own severely restrictive bor-
der controls.

It is within the discretion of gov-
ernments to determine who is a
"genuine" refugee and who is not.

British governments, whether Tony
or Labour, have an eye on the elec-
torate who could be swept into a xenophobic view by a manipulative
media.

There is no real distinction
between the positions of Jack
Straw and his predecessor, Michael
Howard, both of whom are, inci-
didentally, descended from immi-
grants, in Howard’s case, only two
generations ago.

Thus, in 1994, around 80 per
cent of asylum seekers, amounting
to some 16,000, were refused the right
to stay.

A recent MORI poll found that
the media-fed public have com-
pletely wrong and exaggerated
views of the situation.

Those questioned hugely over-
estimated the money asylum seek-
ers receive, believing they get an
average £133 a week whereas a sin-
gle adult seeking asylum gets just
£36.54 a week in vouchers to be
spent at selected shops – only £10
may be converted into cash.

They also estimated that immi-
grants make up 20 per cent of the
British population, while the real
figure is around 4 per cent.
Arguing strongly for the aboli-
tion of existing border controls,
Hayter stresses especially that
these controls lead to great suffer-
ing and abuse of human rights,
they are racist and help to legiti-
mise racism.

She also trenchantly disposes of
the case that the free entry of
immigrants leads to the low of jobs
in the host countries, working con-
ditions or the welfare state in
Europe.

Drawing on empirical material
and first-hand experience, Hayter
shows that these imposed controls,
at vast human and financial cost,
do little to reduce the number of
people trying to enter the countries
of their choice.

She calls for the free movement
of people to be recognised as a uni-
versal human right – open bor-
ders.

This book provides valuable
material for all engaged in the fight
against immigration controls, for
every one who recognises that the
global economy require global
recognition of the right of every
man and woman to be treated as a
human being and not as merchan-
dise or political fodder for the
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xenophobes and racists.

Free movement of people

There is now a flagrant contradiction between the current, regressive promotion of the ideology of the free market as fair goods and capital and capital are concerned and its denial where people are concerned. But too much should not be made of the analogy.

"Permits are people and they should be treated differently from mere material goods and flows of capital. The current situation should in fact be reversed. It is quite possible, and quite right, to oppose the free and uncontrolled movement of capital and the domination of national economies by the interests of big capital, and yet be in favour of the free movement of people."

"In an ideal world investment would be planned and democratically controlled so that benefits were widely spread to reduce inequality, share necessary jobs and improve working conditions world-wide and to protect the environment and other essential interests which are now threatened by profit-seeking capital."

"Within Britain, some argue that workers who have been made redundant in the North, rather than being forced to migrate South where there are jobs but no housing, should have access to jobs in the North. But people should have the right, internationally as they do within Britain and the EU to choose freely either to stay where they are or to migrate. Free movement of people will limit workers and the mass of people to share ideas and organise internationally..." (Open Borders, p.171-2)
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