Afghan civilians die in Blair and Bush terror campaign

Stop the Bombing!

Stop the War Coalition PO Box 3739, London E5 8EJ 07951 235 915
**Medical secretaries strike again!**

Gordon Morgan

The dispute over the pay levels of Medical Secretaries looks set to continue with other Scottish NHS Trust staff considering joining the walkout. In the North Glasgow NHS Trust, there are 300 medical secretaries, made up of 12,000 staff in the Trust. Over the years the skill requirements of their job has increased but not their pay and they are engaged in an increasingly bitter dispute.

October 1-5 saw yet another wave of strike action. There are picket lines at all the main hospitals in the trust. The threat of the secretaries is high yet they are being starved of funds to continue the dispute.

The Scottish Executive knows that they lose this dispute they will be forced to concede pay awards. This would expose the executive’s current NHS spending plans and force them to find new resources whilst cutting some areas to develop others. The strike highlights the limited room for manoeuvre of the Scottish Parliament in terms of setting needs based budgets. For this reason pressure has been brought to bear on the Trust not to concede the secretaries’ claim.

In the meantime the UNISON Scottish full time staff are behaving to New Labour and are actively undermining the dispute. The secretaries are fighting back.

**Glasgow housing stock transfer to go to ballot**

Suddenly the minister Jackie Baillie finds more money £450 million new money is to be given to build the 25,000 houses of the council to think about. A new report is produced on September 28 the same as the previous - except the conclusions are changed from reject to support.

As no funders are yet in place, the council has not fully endorsed it. The ballot date has been delayed to January or February. The council has been instructed to make it work. They are considering council employees - who could face redundancy if the scheme goes ahead - to go round the doors explaining how nice the council is.

Tenants and Unions remain opposed to the scheme. If £1.5 billion is lost if the scheme goes ahead. If it revolves with the council. Hundreds of millions in transfer costs, VAT, interest charges and the council not being saved.

The repair work can be carried out in less time and rent paid.

The STUC and unions will be running a campaign to ask ten-

ants to reject the blackmail.
A we go to press, the bombing of Afghanistan by Bush and Blair is continuing. On October 7, cruise missiles rained down on the cities of Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad, together with missiles fired from heavy bombers. On the morning of October 8, Home Secretary Jack Straw informed the world that the bombing would continue for weeks, rather than days.

The first reports of the offensive on the BBC World Service referred to this as an American attack, but within minutes Britain’s role had been acknowledged. Socialists and trade unionists stand in complete opposition to the attacks on September 11 in New York and Washington and Pennsylvania. We deplore the tragic loss of life that occurred on that day, but we do not believe in any war to end the struggle of working people across the world for emancipation.

But we say with equal vigour that a military assault on Afghanistan can do nothing to bring about an end for the loss of life that occurred on that day. This was not progressive or anti-imperialist about the terrible attack on the WTC. This is not just because the mass slaughter of office workers in this way is a reactionary and indefensible, but because it has influenced world politics sharply to the advantage of George Bush and the American right.

These events have brought Bush’s presidency from the discrediting shadow of a botched terrorist attack, and increasing internal isolation after his rejection of the Kyoto Treaty on climate change and his plans to privatize the US victory in Iraq, into an unavoidable position, with polls showing over 90 per cent support from the American people.

This has allowed him to seize the initiative world-wide, and increase the authority of US imperialism at every level. It threatens a period of reaction in which socialists and progressive forces will have to defend their interests in their own countries and their rights face the possibility of serious defeats.

For Afghanistan, after decades of war and repression, the war seems certain to trigger a human rights disaster of unimaginable proportions. This has widespread and prolonged the bombardment, the casualties of the war will have been tens of thousands or hundreds who may be directly killed and maimed by missiles and bombs, but also huge numbers of those who are being driven from their homes, or already face imminent starvation, or death from exposure as the cold winter approaches.

In this context the military operation by Bush and Blair to manipulate as “generous” bringing about “humanitarian” relief, is simply a drop of pitiful token quantities of food in the aftermath of the bombing runs out as the war continues.

But the hypocrisy runs alongside the suppression of information that does not suit the war plans of London and Washington.

Most of the media have obediently ignored the offer by the Taliban – over a week before the bombing started – to hand over bin Laden to a court outside Afghanistan. The Taliban have been two minutes from proving that some Islamic jurists be involved, and that they be given evidence of bin Laden’s involvement in the September 11 events.

The fact that the US never seriously responded to this proposal shows their lack of interest in justice. This is confirmed by their continued arrogant refusal to present any convincing evidence to anyone to prove that bin Laden is guilty as charged. The US and British governments have come to be seen by many as war criminals.

The US and Britain claim to be coming as liberators to free the Afghan people from the Taliban, even though it is clear that western military strategy helped create both bin Laden and the Taliban, and now involves promoting the murderous thugs and rapists of the so-called “Northern Alliance” in their place.

We have no reason to believe that this war will have any more positive results for the people of Afghanistan than previous imperialist interventions. While the reactionary Taliban may well be toppled from power, all history shows that any attempts by outside force to install a government against the wishes of the peoples of Afghanistan will simply result in more continuing bloodshed.

But this is not only just beginning. It already threatens to widen on new fronts.

The labour movement should take warning from the careful words of George W Bush, who in his address to the nation as the bomb- ing started made clear that “the battle is broader than Afghanistan itself”.

This has now been underlined as we go to press by the US from the US administration to the US Security Council, which also declares Washington’s intention to wage its “war against terror” in other countries and above Afghanistan. Many hawks US officials and politicians have urged that the war be widened to Iraq, Syria and even Sudan.

Any such offensive would risk destabilizing the governments of the “coalition” of governments painstakingly assembled by Blair and Bush, but this is no reason to assume that the US will hold back if it feels it can industrially press home its advantage.

The American ruling class have been all too nomic and trading systems is vital to trade... produce the very values at the heart of this pro- tracted struggle”.

In this barbaric attack on a defenceless people, in every way and turn in developing the so-called “alliance against terrorism”, Blair has been at pains to promote himself as the closest possible ally of American imperialism.

Now the task for all socialists and for the labour movement as a whole must be to strain every sinew to build the biggest possi- ble anti-war movement. We have to stop this murderous assault on the poorest countries in the world.

It is not the offensive movement which has no respect for those who died on September 11, but those in power, who use their suffering to push through yet more attacks on working people world-wide.

That is why we must openly oppose the bombing of Afghanistan, but also stand firmly against the accompanying attacks on civil liberties at home and abroad.

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Tony Blair’s speech to this year’s truncated Labour Conference in Brighton has been hailed by his admirers in the media as his finest hour.

Generously sparing his party members a few moments in between running errands for war- mongers, Blair has the “good” news that somehow he has called a visionary state- ment of a new world order, and our country is the one Promised Land as deluded fantasy.

Comedian Andy Hamilton summed up the Government’s glowing talk of a new world alliance that would solve all the problems of poverty, suffering, poverty and hunger: “I recog- nised that speech: it’s the one I give in the pub when I’m passed.”

To string together a few platitudes on what might be done after this current war is nothing new for social democracy: “holiday speechifying” and promises of a land – or in this case a world – “fit for heroes” has been the stock-in-trade of social-policies for over a hundred years.

It has never meant anything other than a subservient commitment of the speech-maker to the cause of the rich and the “freedoms” of the capitalist.

The problem is that the system is Blair is going to war with George Bush to defend is precisely the same system that creates inequality, poverty, exploitation, hunger and environmental destruction – and which indeed also fuels the frustration and oppression that are the breeding ground of religious fundamentalism.

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Protestors brave rain - and police intimidation

Around 5,000 people demonstrated outside the LP in Brighton last Sunday despite torrential rain, which continued for most of the day.

The aim of the action, which had been originally called by Globalise Britain, the Green Party, and the Socialist Alliance against new Labour's neo-liberal policies, became, in effect, a protest against the current drive to war and the impending military exercise against Afghanistan.

There were banners on the demonstration from a wide range of campaigns as well as from the trade unions. The most banners and placards, however, were from Globalise Britain and the Socialist Alliance - which has its national banner as well as the presence of a dozen or so members of the transportation sector.

The police presence at the demonstration was massive - gone are the days when they walked along the side of the demonstrations trying to make conversation. Fully equipped riot police lined the route and, while this was probably necessary in which large numbers were snatched by the police and dragged away before the demonstration had even started. The conference centre itself was fenced off, with three separate police cordons, a line of horses and an air-raid siren standing by.

Green party MEP Caroline Lucas, told the rally before the start of the demonstration: "We have to start to be effective. We have to start saying, 'Enough is enough.'" The Labour Party Development Movement told the rally: "I hope this demonstration can be the beginning of an anti-war movement in this country and around the world."

Labour Party Conference 2001

An uneasy truce

The UNISON-sponsored comittee on public services that emerged from intense negotiation and government lobbying was a complete dog's breakfast, so feeble that it could be shredded by a political constituency who sang the praises of Privatisation and carried out the recommendation of the NEC.

The GMB had wanted a much stronger commitment to public services, to a commitment to remit rather than push for privatisation, to demand what appeared in their name, but was not debated, called for conference proposals for encouraging private companies to run state schools and plans to extend PFI beyond hospitals into primary care and other services.

The GMB report also noted that a recent survey commissioned by the GMB showed that 90% of the GMB's members did not understand the concept of public services, and that a government proposal to remove the pay rates for private sector contractors. The Fairness at Work composition proposed by the GPMU print union, and was very wide ranging.

Potentially, the demand made in our paragraph was probably the most powerful, calling for a public service review to pull out a fundamental review of existing employment legislation, to look at the object of ensuring that the caring services are in line with ILO conventions.

If implemented, this would remove from the statute book many of the extra anti-trade union provisions, and bring British law into line with international standards. The motion also welcomed the government's withdrawal of its plans to impose charges for applications to Employment Tribunals, and added that "there should be no place for costs awards." Predictably, the GPMU agreed to remit the motion to the February conference.

The most hard-hitting of the contemporary resolutions, though, was without doubt the TUC composi on on Asylum Seekers.

It called upon the Home Secretary to abandon the voucher system immediately and to restore cash payments to asylum seekers.

It also called for an end to the destitution of asylum seekers and for the reform of the dispersal system.

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The other international speaker was Oscar Lopez, a leader of the victorious struggle against state water privatization in Bolivia. He said: "We had a victory for all those fighting for a different world - we expelled a multinational from Bolivia!"

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Counter conference success

At least 1,000 people attended a successful day-long demonstration in London, organised by Globalise Britain, on Saturday September 29th.

The venue was split between the former Hammersmith Palais and the nearby Alexandra Palace. Three rallies were held during the day in the grounds of various workshops in the Alexandra Palace studies.

The conference has originally been called to report back from London base and to discuss the conclusions of the discussions understandable returned to that subject.

The event was refreshingly open and more so than some previous. Globalise Britain resolutions. These were also stalls from a wide range of campaigning and political organisations.

A popular feature of the conference was the video of the Gannex events - which drew a huge response from the audience. There were also a number of speakers hosting workshops which gave the event an international dimensions.

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Rail unions say no to war

ASLEF Emergency Resolution to 2001 Labour Party Conference

"Conference condemns the terrorist attack on New York and Washington on September 11 and sends its deep sympathy to the families of all the victims of all nationalities. Conference believes that concerning an on-going widening war will sow the seeds of a prolonged conflict between the USA and Britain, on the one hand, and, millions of people in the world, in the Middle East and beyond, on all, the other. Further casualties among innocent civilians will be the result. Conference believes that any action taken should conform with international law and be under the auspices of the United Nations and in particular the resolution by Tony Benn on September 25 that the United Nations General Assembly should hold an emergency session to discuss the present international crisis. Conference believes that any lasting peaceful settlement in the Middle East must be based on a diplomatic solution, and an ethical foreign policy, as well as a halt to all terrorist activity. Conference urges our Labour government to use its influence to explore every possibility for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, and to refrain from any military action which would exacerbate international tension or put the lives of civilians at risk."

The RMT's Council of Executives adopted this policy statement on September 27

We condemn the attack in the USA which took place on September 11th 2001. We deplore the appalling loss of the of the lives of so many workers and the workers, emergency services and people of New York and Washington. This Union sends its most sympathies and condolences to the bereaved families. Our Trade Union, in the historical tradition of trade unionism, unconditionally rejects terrorism or any other forms of aggression, racism and militarism. Therefore, we oppose any war and we call upon the British Labour Movement to oppose any attempt by the British government to pursue any military intervention must be sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. We remain vigilant and actively opposed to all racism and violence. We also oppose any Government crackdown on civil liberties including the imposition of compulsory identity cards, any fast track extradition procedures or watering down of the Human Rights Act.

Further, we as a Trade Union totally reject any suggestion that we should moderate or give up our primary responsibility to protect our members' interests in all sections of the Union. Specific attention is given to the safety of members who may be caught up in hostilities. We completely reject any attempt to allude our right to take industrial action in defence of our members. We reiterate our Socialist beliefs and pledge our Union to this course of action and support the CND demonstration on 13th October 2001 in Trafalgar Square and invite Branches and members to attend with Union banners.

Adnan Harrow

A local Stop The War coalition has been set up in Brent and Harrow (NW London). The initial impetus for the coalition came from a statement circulated by Brent UNISON.

The coalition now has the backing of Brent Trades Council, Brent and Harrow Green Party, Brent and Harrow Socialist Party and local supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, International Socialist Group and the Labour Party. Brent East Labour Party had passed an anti-war resolution to be sent as an emergency resolution to Labour Party conference.

Unfortunately, like the success of such resolutions, it was ruled out of order and not debated.

We are kicking off with a series of street stalls in shopping centres across the two boroughs and aim to collect signatures for a petition against the war and to publicise the national demonstration on 13th September and other Stop the War Coalition activities. We aim to work with Brent Trades Council to Defend Asylum Seekers and other local organisations to oppose any backslash against asylum seekers and the local Asian and Muslim communities.

Keith Sinclair

"One, two, three four - We don't want your racist war!" Around 150 people marched through Hull on October 6, to launch a public campaign against the war plans of George Bush and Tony Blair. The march was called by the Hull Campaign Against War and World Trade, a local broad based campaign, which has been set up following an initial launch backshell on the night of forty people.

The march attracted support from the organised left and locally, the Trades Council and those who have been involved in other local campaigns such as the fight to defend local asylum seekers.

The march was therefore successful in pulling together the various elements that can come together to build a serious anti-war movement in the area.

As well as local speakers, the end of march rally was addressed by Stewart Richardson who brought solidarity greetings from the Anti-war movement in Birmingham.

The main speaker was Bruce Kent who explained his campaign to fight against the war and addressed recent developments.

CND member Kent was well supported when he highlighted the role of state terror in the world today.

The march and rally were a good start to what may well be a long campaign against war. Weekly meetings are being held locally to plan future activities and the ground is being prepared for an escalation of the campaign in response to escalation of the war.

Greater Manchester rallies against the war

Chris Edwards

Over 350 people crammed into the Friends Meeting House in Manchester on Thursday September 27 to hear the Greater Manchester Declaration of Peace and to launch a Coaltion for Peace.

"A better world is possible," concluded Ra Re, the Great Manchester Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) who organised the meeting together with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Globalise Resistance, and other local campaigns, trade unions and individuals.

The meeting was also addressed by Ben Howarth, Chair of UNISON's North West Region, local GP Dr Arvind Patel, Councillor and President of the Medical Association, Peter Hemsley, Chris Bamberg, of the Socialist Workers Party, and Tariq Masood, who was a key member of the Muslim Action Front.

Peter Hemsley, the Senior Medical Officer from the audience when he said that "President Bush is the last man left standing with the number in the bank account of Bin Laden - since his father probably set them up."

Annez Esmail gave a poweful presentation on the cutdown the audience about the atrocities committed by Israel, supported by the US, against the Palestinian camps in Lebanon in the early 80s. This had been well documented on the US on the part of the Palestinians.

Chris Bamberg pointed out that the cost of one steel building block in the US is greater than the GNP of Afghanistan.

Rae Strange spoke of information received by CND about discussion among military hawks in the US about the possible use of small tactical nuclear weapons in the coming war.

The audience included two Americans who told how they had been affected personally by the attacks on the USA. The whole meeting was very lively and there was a large measure of agreement. The meeting approved a statement which called on "peace and to end the war."

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Islamicists play useful role for imperialism

Osama Bin Laden was a creature of Saudi and CIA forces

Osama Bin Laden was recruited by Yousuf al-Qatai, a Saudi who had worked back in the late 1970s or early 1980s, and became the CIA's chief organizer of the Islamic faction in the left wing government of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The US and the CIA were already in a process of a financial backing of this operation - apart from Saudi Arabia and the CIA - mainly came from UNOCAL and the big US oil companies. They had their own vested interests in getting oil and gas pipelines from Central Asian republics - mainly Turkmenistan - through Afghanistan down to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. This deal was served as one of the pieces of the then US under-secretary of state Ms. Roslyn Raphael.

Ironically this took place under Benazir Bhutto's non-communist rule. The American and financial backing of this operation - apart from Saudi Arabia and the CIA - mainly came from UNOCAL and the big US oil companies.

The Americans were not at all disturbed by the ruthless and barbaric acts perpetrated by the Taliban upon the poor Afghan peoples. They had no complaints about the repression of the Taliban. In fact, after coming power the Taliban started playing with various oil multinationals and oil pipelines from the Arabian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. The Taliban went two delegations to the two competing bidder, UNOCAL and Bridas (an Argentinian giant) to Tierra and Buenos Aires. At the headquarters of UNOCAL in Caracas, all the female staff were asked not to wear skirts, but to put on long trousers and cover their heads with scarfs. Similar instructions were issued in Texas, USA.

The Taliban, however, denied both: they took the advantages and then destroyed the deals. The Pakistani dictator, who benefited enormously from the American and British military war during the 1980s. They not only got economic privileges to stabilize the economy and to attract chauvinist of financial aid and weaponry to their regime by the Islamic fundamentalists during this period. The Afghans were crushed by the Taliban and the war destroyed the country and the economy of Afghanistan in a way that was not seen before.

But no matter how much the imperialists may claim that the Taliban was an enemy of the West, they were wrong and arrogant. The Afghans were crushed by the Taliban and the war destroyed the country and the economy of Afghanistan in a way that was not seen before.
**Economic Outlook**

**Will war drive world deeper into recession?**

Andy Kilmister

The media these weeks have been endless speculation about the likely economic effects of the Vietnam war and the possibility of a recession. But this view is misleading and overdrawn.

It implies that global capital-

isms basically stable before September 11 and can be thrown into crisis simply by the loss of a few billion dollars.

In reality, the impact of what has happened on the economies needs to be seen in the context of increasing instability over the last few years. This is already well underway.

It is also important to dis-

turb the scale of the impact of the American economy on the economies of

other countries, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

Firstly, there is the immediate recession in the Japanese economy, caused by the events of September 11.

This has been dramatic for the companies located in the New York Financial District, but it is not generalized.

Secondly, there will be repercussions over who should pay for the reconstruction, which will largely involve the industrialized world, but again the impact will be different in the individual countries.

It is also important to note the impact of the attacks on particular industries, such as the airline industry. It is possible, though by no means certain, that there will be a significant decline in the growth of air travel as a result of fears of terrorism.

But two things need to be remembered. First, the airline industry was already in difficulty in the US and internationally, before September 11. Second, the government's support of the industry is likely to add to the instability of the world economy.

To a large degree, airlines and civil aerospace companies are companies that are in a climate of fear where businesses cut down on travel, for example.

In the third level, there are the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the financial market, which has already resulted in a significant fall in the stock market.

The psychological effects of the attacks have already been significant, and the events of September 11 will only add to this.

Interestingly, the impact of the attacks on particular industries may worsen the overall impact of the attacks.

**Will war drive world deeper into recession?**

The impact of the attacks on the US economy is likely to be significant, with the loss of a few billion dollars and the uncertainty caused by the immediate aftermath of the events.

The impact of the attacks on the Japanese economy is likely to be significant, with the loss of a few billion dollars and the uncertainty caused by the immediate aftermath of the events.

However, the impact of the attacks on the economies in the long run is likely to be significant, with the loss of a few billion dollars and the uncertainty caused by the immediate aftermath of the events.

The impact of the attacks on the European economy is likely to be significant, with the loss of a few billion dollars and the uncertainty caused by the immediate aftermath of the events.

The impact of the attacks on the world economy is likely to be significant, with the loss of a few billion dollars and the uncertainty caused by the immediate aftermath of the events.
Rulers gear for war, an anti-war movement emerges

Mass shock and outrage in USA over terror attack

Steve Bloom

October 4, 2001—In the wake of the terror attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, the US government and mass media have been working overtime to arouse patriotic war fervor. Troops and vigilante attacks were widespread against Muslims, as were racist attacks against Arab residents in the days immediately following the tragedy. Bush and anti-war forces began organizing a serious opposition.

The death toll stands at more than 6,000, with 660 billion of estimated dead. No one was found alive in the rubble of the collapsed twin towers more than one day after the attack. The New York and American Stock Exchanges were forced to close for at least a week due to the destruction of telephone service and utilities in the downtown New York City area. When they reopened, stocks took a severe nosedive.

President Bush immediately declared that the US is now at war with terrorists. He called for an "immediate" campaign, arrogantly proclaimed "Operation Infinite Justice," which is expected to last for years, though the details of what is planned remain sketchy.

The one specific action taken so far is a diplomatic effort designed to isolate the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In a joint declaration through Pakistan, to turn over Osama bin Laden for prosecution.

Proof

This initiative failed when the Taliban demanded clear proof of Bin Laden's involvement in the September 11 attacks before complying. Bin Laden, a Saudi millionaire and resident in Afghanistan, was originally trained under the intelligence of the CIA and operatives to work against pro-Soviet forces in that country.

But he later turned the tools he was taught against the United States and its allies in the Middle East.

The US was working hard to pull together an international coalition, including Arab and Islamic regimes to pursue its military aims.

Clearly, no "war against international terrorism" can ever be launched without their collaboration. In his speech to the nation on September 20, Bush took pains to explain that Islam is not the enemy.

Rather the USA considers itself at war only with terrorists who, Bush stated, distort the teachings of Islam by acting in its name. In another apparent effort to appeal to those regimes US rulers have made it clear that Islam will not be part of any joint military effort.

On October 2 NATO issued a statement saying that it was ready to act in alliance with the US after being provided with "clear and compelling proof" of Bin Laden's involvement.

But in a subsequent interview with the New York Times, Secretary of State Colin Powell stopped short of asserting that the US actually had such proof.

He said the assertion of the link was based on "pretty good information" and acknowledged that "it is not evidence of the form of a court case." The paper quoted a senior diplomat for one closely allied nation as saying that there had "been nothing particularly new or surprising," in the NATO briefing and "it was descriptive and narrative rather than forensic. There was no attempt to build a legal case." The Pakistani regime, an important US ally in this situation, said explicitly that the proof offered to them was far from conclusive.

The White House and State Department apparently do not plan to share even that evidence which they do have with the general public, claiming that it is "classified." So the American public is being asked to endorse a war based on faith in the judgment of their leaders. Right now, in the immediate aftermath of the WTC attack, this confidence level is high.

Credibility

But historically such a stance has tended to create serious credibility problems, which could easily reassert themselves this time around as the immediate shock of what happened on September 11 recedes.

In a statement on September 25, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney of Georgia expressed a sentiment shared by many: "Before the use of force occurs, the American people must see this proof too."

But so far all that has been offered are hints and suggestions, despite an extensive release of public information about the conspiracy as reconstructed by law enforcement officials. Some of those alleged to be involved met with people "linked to" bin Laden. Or they frequented clubs and mosques which bin Laden's supporters also attended.

No one, apparently, wants to remember that the track record of US presidents acting, along with the "intelligence community," as judge, jury, and executioner in cases of terrorism is not particularly encouraging.

Particularly noteworthy in this regard was the cruise missile attack, ordered by President Clinton, on a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant. According to "pretty good information" from US intelligence, this factory was involved with making chemical weapons for bin Laden. It later turned out that this "information" was completely false.

On Friday, September 14, the US Congress passed, with one dissenting voice, a resolution authorizing President Bush "to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons who do or support acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons."

The one courageous vote against was by Democratic congresswoman Barbara Lee of California, who explained: "I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States."

Civil liberties

Congress is also considering legislation which would supposedly tighten domestic security by curtailing civil liberties. But here there is at least some resistance in Congress. The Bush administration wanted a provision which would allow the detention of foreign nationals indefinitely without trial. In the legislation which is likely to pass, however, this is being scaled back to permit such detention only for a specified period. At the same time there is complete agreement to expand wiretap and other eavesdropping powers, including the indiscriminate monitoring of international communications by government agencies.

Bush is also asking for authority to resume economic and military aid to nations which had previously been cut off due to their record of human rights violations, provided only that they now enlist in the "war on terrorism."

Clearly the rulers of the USA want to use the events of September 11 as an excuse for expanding domestic repression, even when the actions taken have no relation to whatever is to any "legitimate" security concern.

In the days after the WTC attack all of the political prisoners held in federal jails were placed in isolation. In many cases they were being denied access to mail, or the right to see their own attorneys and"spiritual advisors," actions which are in direct violation of the constitution.

And yet one could possibly imagine that any of these individuals was involved with the events of September 11, or with any other threat against US security. Included in the crackdown are those imprisoned for completely nonviolent crimes, even those who adhere to nonviolence as a personal creed.

The international intelligence apparatus also wants to use this crisis to begin implementing murderous policies that have been responsible for the deaths of millions around the world in recent decades.

For the last 26 years it has been the official policy of the US to "sneak" CIA agents onto the territory of states that are enemies of the US.

A national average of support for the war in Afghanistan has dropped to an all-time low, even as the US population is now less likely to engage in war-related activities such as donating money or volunteering for the military service.
"terrorism," though the figures decline considerably when the question includes the less dramatic effect that causes substantial civilian casualties in other nations. It seems reasonable, and a positive sign, that even 10 percent of the UN's population is still not buying the war propaganda under the present circumstances.

Every major sporting event and cultural activity were cancelled for almost a week after the attack, including the 2001 World Series and the National Football League. Political cancellations were called off as well, though the reasons varied.

Union Poles Out

When the AFL-CIO pulled out of a planned demonstration on September 11, 2001, at the end of September to protest meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, its president, John Sweeney, issued a statement which declared that this was a time for "bringing people together to begin the process of healing and renewing our sense of community and solidarity.

He called on the IMF and World Bank to cancel their meeting as well (which was subsequently done), but announced that the AFL-CIO would withdraw from the demonstrations no matter what.

By contrast, the organizers of a major protest in the case of former Black Panther and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, scheduled for Philadelphia on September 15, planned to go ahead because it would go ahead, as far as the union leaders could see, on the Friday, hardly counting the time. It is not clear that the safety of demonstrators could not be guaranteed in the given prevailing atmosphere. Among other problems, organizers cited "numerous attacks on both Arab and Muslim people" in the city.

The bomman was attacked by a group of men, and when she tried to report it she was told to get out of the way. The local talk radio is filled with threats, all of which are answered with threats to them what we did to the laps of the dead Americans. They didn't let them clean all the Arabs and Muslims to the internment camps, that'll solve all these problems.

"Several businesses owned by people from the Middle East or even just with employees from the Middle East have had windows smashed.

This kind of anti-Arab and anti-Islamic fervor was widespread after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, raising questions about the sinister aspects of the popopular response.

Alarmed at Racism

Much of the establishment press and many politicians became alarmed. The reports they were issuing called for a halt to activities claiming that Islam itself is not the enemy. No doubt this, too, was partly a political move to present Bush's remarks to the same speech.

Nevertheless, threats of attacks continue to be made. In Chicago, for example, reported, "Hassan Ahmed, manager of an Arab-owned candy and grocery store on Broadway across Upper Manhattan, said about 10 people had come in shouting, 'Go gays did us!' and other accusations.

The original article told of an incident in Dearborn, Michigan, where the publication of an Arab-American newspaper reported hostile phone calls and death threats, including one death threat.

Mosques across the country were the target of bomb threats in the immediate aftermath and, all across the nation were subject to threats and harassment.

In a Chicago suburb approximately 350 people, some wearing American flags, attempted to march to a Mosque, though police intervened to prevent any violence.

In Chicago itself a man was arrested after he attacked an Arab-American gas station attendant with a machete, accusing him of being an Islamic school. (It involved outside, horse-riding doing damage. One article counted dozens of incidents nationwide reported to police.

Afro and Greens

By contrast on the positive side of the ledger, traditional left forces from the Green Party to explicitly revolutionaries, organizations, while universally expressing their shock, outrage, and condemnation of the human tragedy, have rejected the calls for war.

They have begun organizing a movement to combat both the war fever and racist attacks against Muslim and Arab people.

This sentiment extends well beyond the left. The National Council of Churches, for example, declared: "We must not, out of anger and vengeance, indiscriminately retaliate in ways that bring on even more loss of innocent life.

On Friday September 14, a contingent organized by "Not In My Name" (NIMM), a coalition which includes Arabs and Jews among others, participated in a large vigil sponsored by Arab of the city of Chicago. NIMM's signs read, "Arabs and Jews, We Refuse to be Enemies" in English, Arabic, and Hebrew.

Participants reported an enthusiastic welcome from others present. On September 16 an antiracist rally, reportedly attended by 2500 people, was held in Portland, Oregon.

In Detroit, the city whose metropolitan area has the largest Arab population outside of the Middle East, hundreds marched on Monday, September 17, under the protection of the Student Center where windows had been smashed. Their banner said "Arab Peoples Are Our Brothers and Sisters -- No War!"

In New York a vigil took place in Union Square on September 15, around the theme, "Islam is not the enemy. War is not the answer.

The following Friday a march from the same site to midtown Manhattan attracted thousands, and occurred close to the Direct Action Network (one of the main groups behind the anti-globalization protests in the US) has called for a weekly vigil every Friday evening.

Another New York City coalition, made up of more traditional left organizations as well as unaffiliated activists, has been holding planning meetings of up to 400 people. It is calling for a major march in New York City on Sunday, October 7.

Students around the country organized a day of action on September 20, with more than 130 colleges and universities participating. At the University of California, Berkeley campus, a rally was reportedly attended by 4,000.

The themes of the action were: opposition to any military response; to racist attacks; and to attempts to roll back civil liberties.

In general these same calls have constituted the political basis for unity expressed by antiracist forces, along with the idea of seeking peace and counteracting terrorism through economic and social justice on a global scale.

There have been some attempts to discuss more specific alternatives, including the idea of bringing the torments to "justice" through the application of international law rather than a military response.

But some raise objections to this, not wanting to make it seem as if the legal institutions of global imperialism, which also help to sustain capitalist domination, are any kind of legitimate alternative. This political discussion is still in the process of working itself out.

Coordinated

The first nationally coordinated protests took place in Washington D.C. and San Francisco on Saturday September 29, with marches in both locations attracting 5,000 to 10,000 participants. Students from campuses across the country were again in attendance. There were also smaller protests in other cities, including Pittsburgh, Madison, Wisconsin; Durham, North Carolina; Columbus, Ohio; Chicago, New York, and elsewhere.

Labor activists and even official union bodies have begun to raise their voices. The San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO) adopted a resolution which declared, "The tragic attacks of September 11 should be treated as a heinous crime rather than an act of war. As we mourn this tremendous loss of life, we declare our resistance to efforts to use this tragedy to engage in military actions that can lead only to more carnage and senseless loss of life."

"We reject the idea that entire nations should be punished for the actions of a few. Bombing raids and military strikes will only fuel this endless cycle of revenge that can only bring the deaths of more innocent civilians, both here and around the world."

The council endorsed the September 29 protest actions in San Francisco.

Union Letter

In New York a letter that has been signed by more than 10,000 workers and union activists from various unions:

"War will inevitably harm innocent civilians, strengthen American alliances with brutal dictatorships, and deepen the poverty -- just as the United States and its allies have already inflicted widespread suffering on innocent people in such places as Iraq, Jordan, Israel and the Occupied Territories, the former Yugoslavia and Latin America."

It demands:

"NO WAR. It is wrong to punish any nation or people for the crimes of individuals -- peace requires global solidarity and economic justice. Justice, Not Vengeance.

An international tribunal to impartially investigate, apprehend, and try those responsible for the September 11 attack.

A DECLARATION TO RACISM -- DEFENSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES. Stop terror, racial profiling and legal restrictions against people of color in more serious areas, and defend democratic rights.

AYS FOR THE NEEDY, NOT THE GREEDY. The government had to vicisisms' families and displaced workers -- not the wealthy. Return New York City with union labour, union pay, and with special concern for new threats to worker health and safety."

Despots, Rivera, the President of Local 1199 (Service Employees International Union, who went to jail as part of the protests against the US Navy's use of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques as a bombing range, announced that the union's delegate assembly had voted to oppose "launching war against any nation because of the actions of a few."

He also condemned terrorism and demanded that those guilty of the WTC attack be brought to justice.

Bob Jewett, Allied Electrical Workers Director of International Labor Affairs issued a statement which read, in part, "As we mourn and as we rage, we also declare our resistance to efforts to use this tragedy to curtail our civil liberties or engage in military adventures that will lead only to more carnage and senseless loss of life."

Chairman of the Democratic and Republican party political platforms, an exception of Barbara Lee have eagerly lined up behind Bush's prowar campaign. Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate in the last presidential election, declared at a rally: "We must have the freedom of our minds to comment, reflect on the state of the back because our government can make some serious mistakes, as they have in the past.

We have to begin putting pressure in a way to the innocent, brutalized people in the Third World and ask ourselves, why do they dislike our foreign policy?"

Clearly ongoing processes are being projected from many quarters, with some efforts to establish coordination and a coalition approach on a local level.

Even before the bombs have been called for clear that while there may be unanimity in the halls of the UN, there remains considerable questioning and some outright opposition among the broader American public.
Sept 11 means good times roll for Pakistan's generals

Pakistan's generals reaching Headquarters in chauffeur-driven cars, wearing starched- uniforms studded with military medals, must be all smiles. Pakistan's Army headquarters are situated in Rawalpindi city - only half an hour drive from the capital city of Islamabad. And the generals are also the incumbent rulers of Pakistan.

Since independence from British imperialism in 1947, generals have directly ruled Pakistan through martial law, for 26 years. All of a sudden, things have turned good for them. Every new day, since September 24, has brought them good news.

September 24: Bush administration lifts sanctions against Pakistan that were imposed because of its nuclear programme and a subsequent nuclear test in 1998. Japan and Australia had already promised to lift sanctions. Colin Powell, in a meet the Press' programme on NBC television, says that the US has no concern over its nuclear programme and "guarantees" that the Musharraf government will not become nuclear.

September 26: Thirteen countries reschedule debt repayment for Pakistan. These countries are USA, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Australia, Canada, Great Britain and Switzerland. Japan also releases $40 million grant for Pakistan.

September 27: IMF releases first instalment of $1.15 billion under a one-year stand-by arrangement. Negotiations had been going on for this instalment for long time. IMF was not satisfied with the military government's economic performance.

September 28: The US releases $50 million grant for Pakistan. This is all for Pakistan's support for the "international community" against terrorism.

The present military government, headed by General Musharraf, overthrew the democratically elected civilian government of Nawaz Sharif on October 12,1999. The army coup was a reflection of the economic and political crisis facing the rotten capitalist system.

Throughout the Cold War the Pakistan ruling class was the apple of the eye of US imperialism. A trustworthy ally against the Soviet Union, Pakistan under its corrupt ruling class, was generously granted IMF and World Bank loans and grants.

The process reached its peak during the 1980s when the USA was engaged in Afghanistan. Pakistan became the third largest recipient of US aid after Israel and Egypt. But these enormous sums of money did not in any way improve the miserable living conditions for the working masses. These grants would end up in offshore bank accounts of military generals, bureaucrats and corrupt politicians.

The Pakistan working class became radicalised for the first time in the revolutionary decade of 1960s. The year 1967 witnessed a pre-revolutionary situation in Pakistan. Firstly, Pakistan military dictator Field Marshal Ayub Khan was forced to resign. Subsequent to this revolutionary movement, the first ever general elections were held in Pakistan in 1970.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), promising socialism, emerged as the party of working class. Under a tremendous pressure by the working class, the PPP government introduced land reforms and nationalised some industries as well as financial institutions.

Bhutto, himself a feudal lord, was a bourgeois populist and Bolshevik leader. Following his anti-IMF election in March 1977, a military coup on July 3 sealed his fate. He was hanged two years later.

The working class had not forgotten the reforms carried out under Bhutto. They offered heroic resistance to this military regime, led by General Zia ul Haq. General Zia ruled the roost till August 16,1988 when he along with his close aides died in a plane crash/tambourine.

In December that year, the PPP, now headed by Bhutto's daughter Benazir, was voted in power.

This Benazir government disillusioned the masses by its anti-working class policies. The party had moved much to the right. Now it wanted to be an obedient servant of the IMF and maintained its working class base would not allow her to implement the IMF plans.

Her government was dismissed in 1990. Her political opponent, Nawaz Sharif, a corrupt capitalist politician, was put in charge following a rigged election.

The last decade of 20th century unfolded a new international scenario in the wake of Soviet Union's collapse. Pakistan was no more needed as a base camp against Soviet Union. Now the time was to "pay back" the loans.

Pakistan is an agriculture-based economy. But a feudal system dominates its economy. The feudal industrial base is very weak. Debits servicing is possible only by IMF dictated "economic reforms" namely increased taxation, privatisation and massive cutbacks of public sector employees, an end to state subsidies.

The civilian governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif failed to implement these "economic reforms", but their policies grew bitter misery, poverty, and unemployment. During last 20 years, poverty has doubled in Pakistan. The per capita income of Pakistan that was $460 in 1990 is now $340.

The IMF also wanted the civilian governments to slash defence budget. Forty per cent of Pakistan's annual fiscal budget goes to the army (another 40 per cent goes to debt servicing, i.e. interest on loans given by IMF, World Bank and other international donors). According to an estimate, Pakistan has paid $12 interest for every $1 it has borrowed.

The justification for maintaining this military big budget is enmity with India. Kashmir is the personalisation of this enmity. The ruling classes in India and Pakistan encourage this enmity as it helps justify big war budgets.

However, competing with the IMF regional agenda, in 1998 both India and Pakistan normalised their relations. The Pakistan army, fearing any normalisation process, decided to keep them in Kashmir without getting permission, or even informing the civilian government.

This contradiction subsequently resulted in the army coup on September 24.

The masses, disillusioned by democratic politicians fighting against hope, developed illusions in the military junta that found itself in a difficult situation.

The international scenario was not so conducive for military dictatorships. The US and UK were no more in support to such regimes as it had done in 3 countries during the Cold War.

Now being the champion of human rights, the US, despite the efforts of the Indian lobby, it had to slap 528 restrictions against Pakistan following an agreement. Already the US, RU, Japan and Australia had imposed curbs on Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Also, to save power it struck a deal with the IMF. The deal was: the IMF would not demand a cut in Army's budget, while the military regime would keep paying back the amount of loans wanted by the IMF at the expense of the working class i.e. through privatisation, increased taxation, massive redundancies and so on.

Over a hundred thousand workers were laid off, taxes on toiling masses were increased. Within a couple of months, the military regime became really unpopular among the masses. The government had been dissolved.

The democracy movement started to build up. And in August 2001, the military dictator announced a schedule for elections and restoration of democracy. But, all of a sudden, following September 11, everything began turning out good for the military regime.

The USA would like to have an authoritarian government in Pakistan during and after the election of democracy will not be raised.

It's hard to say right now if Musharraf, like his predecessor General Zia, will stay in power for ten years. It depends on a number of factors.
Dictatorship's U-turn signals all change in Pakistan's politics

By Farooq Tarig, General Secretary

Labour Party Pakistan

The 11th September military takeover has had a devastating effect on politics in Pakistan. Polarising forces to an extent never seen before. The Pakistan People's Party, the party of the Bhutto's, is now openly supporting the stand of the military regime in support of the Americans. So is the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the party of the immigrants with a mass base in Sind cities.

In the North West Frontier province, the National Awami Party, the largest party in the Pashtun has also changed sides— from opposing the military regime to openly supporting it.

Before 11th September the PPP and MQM openly opposed the military regime and were part of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD).

The PPP also tried its best to oust the military regime by participating in demonstrations on the so-called "Solidarity day" called by General Musharaf on 27th September.

Some of the smaller alliances of the radical and Stalinist parties are also openly supporting the stand of the military regime. The US must be supported to root out terrorism which comes from these left parties justifying their support for the regime. "Left" parties include the National Workers Party and Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party (Communist Workers Pakistan Party). They have now abandoned their anti-imperialist positions. The Muslim League of ex Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the other hand is trailing behind the religious fundamentalists, and has been openly supporting the Taliban and opposing the military regime's support for Bush.

The religious fundamentalists are now working on gaining control for all out support. "Left" parties including the PPP have joined in. The PPP, which has abandoned its anti-imperialist struggle has called for the "total" support of the US. They have called for the "total" support of the US. The "left" parties have joined in. The PPP, which has abandoned its anti-imperialist struggle has called for the "total" support of the US. They have called for the "total" support of the US.

The military regime has for the first time, hypocritically and denned the terrorist attack on the Indian held Kashmir assembly where in a suicide attack, 32 were killed.

The Jaish Mohammed, a religious fanatic group, which has claimed responsibility for this brutal attack, has a base in Pakistan. The regime could no longer say the attack in Sri Lanka was part of the "national struggle" but that the attack in New York was a "terrorist attack". Jaish Mohammed's leader Masood Azhar was released only two years before from an Indian jail on the demand of the hijackers of an Indian plane. After his entry to Pakistan from Afghanistan, he was allowed to form the Jaish Mohammed group, collect funds from all over and to train the terror organisation in the name of the "national struggle".

The Kashmiri Muslims have nothing to do with the national struggle of Kashmiris, but plans to make Kashmir another Afghanistan, controlled by a new Taliban. They had the full support of the Pakistani state under the military and under the previous civil government of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

From a position of full support of the Taliban and Muslimhadeen, the military regime has taken a U-turn to suppress the movements of the genuine anti-American, anti-imperialist forces in the country.

The military regime has not only suppressed the movements of the genuine anti-American, anti-imperialist forces in the country. It has also arrested and tortured all those who have spoken out against the U-turn.

The Bhutto's have been arrested. Asif Zardari, the son of Zulfikar Bhutto, has been arrested. Asif Zardari, the son of Zulfikar Bhutto, has been arrested. The military regime has also arrested and tortured all those who have spoken out against the U-turn.

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Terrorism, condemning both the US, the IMF and Pakistan, the military regime has taken a U-turn to suppress the movements of the genuine anti-American, anti-imperialist forces in the country.

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Attacks derail plans of Italian campaigners

Flavia D'Angeli
In the first few days of September it seemed clear that we were heading for a number of sanctions and actions against Genoa.
After Genoa itself, there were the huge demonstrations at the end of July against state repression. The Italian anti-globalists have been constantly in the headlines of the newspapers for the whole of August.
In the first days of September, it was apparent that all the ingredients were present for the beginnings of a strong social movement against Genoa itself. This embryonic movement, which has been gaining momentum by the day, is putting the Berlusconi government in difficulties.
In every town, and also small villages, Social Forums were formed to protest against the Genoa Social Forum which had been called for in the run up to the international demonstration in July.
These alliances have united together various community organisations and centres, unions, and political organisations and, as well as a large number of people not involved in any organisation.

- The initial meetings showed what great potential there is, with more than 1,000 people attending each of the Rome, Naples, and Milan meetings.

At the same time, the General Social Forums (GSOs), for their part, meeting on September 9-10, decided to initiate a process of creating an Italian Social Forum.

The most recent achievement has been Genoa itself. To be made up of the national organisations which have co-ordinated the Genoa demonstrations, but also involving the various local Forums, and thus the construction of a broader and broader movement.

In this context, the events of September 11 in the United States and the dynamic of Nato towards war came as a real shock. The movement was not immediately able to react to the international crisis and place these issues at the centre of its thinking and of its mobilisations, both rejecting terrorism and opposing war.

The movement thus represented a difficult moment. The anti-Nazi and racist crusade, of which Berlusconi has made himself the spokesperson, which has not been able to move forward from the moderate left.

On the other hand, there has been the concrete possibility of a new anti-war movement. This has been the subject of many discussions and debates, and the result has been a new anti-war movement. This has been the subject of many discussions and debates, and the result has been a new anti-war movement.

Pacifism has remained a strong sentiment in Italian society since the Korean war.
On the other hand there is the concrete possibility of a new anti-war movement. This has been the subject of many discussions and debates, and the result has been a new anti-war movement.

From the National Secretariat of Rondazion Comunista, Italy

The national secretariat confirms our strongest condemnation of the terrible attack which has convulsed the cities of New York and Washington in which thousands of people have been killed.
Our opposition to terrorism is indomitable and absolute. Our grief for the innocent victims and our solidarity to their families and to the people of the USA hit by this tragedy are sincere convictions.

The news have been shocking and frightening.
On the other hand there is the concrete possibility of a new anti-war movement. This has been the subject of many discussions and debates, and the result has been a new anti-war movement.

We need to encourage war from history, to find new responses to the piercing contradictions of the world today.
We believe that the movement against capitalism globalization confronts the crucial question, representing a possibility of beginning a process of criticism and...
Palestinians under fire as Zionists exploit war drive

This article was written for the early October edition of the US newspaper Socialist Action. What have been further twists and turns in the situation both on the ground in Israel and Palestine, and in the relations between the Israeli state and the US government since, the fundamental issues that are examined here remain pertinent.

Gerry Foley

The unilateral ceasefire decreed by Yasir Arafat on Sept. 18 and the subsequent order by the Zionist government to withdraw Israeli troops from the areas ceded to the Palestinian Authority reflect the political pressures facing both sides. US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, speaking on the World Trade Center and the President’s Day Memorial, said: “It’s the right time to engage.”

Since Arafat apparently got no promises of any new real concessions in return, his unilateral ceasefire was a retreat that is likely to have cost him his moderate image. He announced his intention to join the UN’s “Campaign Against Terrorism” sponsored by the United States.

But Arafat’sodiocesan had to pull back from the offensive he had launched in the wake of the slaughter in New York.

The ruthless tactics of their onslaught was highlighted in the remarks of the Israeli minister of defense, Binyamin Ben Eliezer, who boasted to the Hebrew daily Yedioth Ahronoth on Sept. 14: “It is a fact that we have killed 14 Palestinians in Jenin, Kabri, Betunia and Ramallah, with the world remaining absolutely silent.”

It’s a disaster for Arafat’s ceasefire, and the prospects for any renewal of negotiations seemed precarious indeed.

The U.S. rulers have had some success in exploiting the reaction against the ruthless assaults on American civilians to inflict a political setback on the national liberation movements in the Middle East. But they are not yet in a position to launch a major military assault on these movements, despite their bloodthirsty rhetoric.

Therefore, US imperialism still has to manoeuvre, negotiate, and offer some concessions, to the apparent disappointment of the right-wing Zionist government, which had taken advantage of the shock created by the slaughter in New York and Washington to step up its attacks on the Palestinian people.

A precarious game of alliances

The Israeli paramount, Ariel Sharon, had gone so far as to equate Arafat with the Israeli zealous Osama Bin Laden, noted by the U.S. administration as the author of the murderous attacks on civilians in the United States.

But well-informed and critical news media, like the British Guardian, reported that the U.S. authorities considered Sharon’s denunciation of Arafat as Sophie’s Choice and sought instead to drag the Palestinian leader into their “anti-terrorist alliance.”

For the moment, the American rulers seem to have achieved this objective. But they have not overcome their fundamental dilemma.

Disillusion with the fruits of the Oslo Peace accords forced Arafat to go along with the Palestinian uprising against Israel for fear of being swept aside.

Critical Palestinian observers have pointed out that he is not in control of his uprising, and has not even tried to lead it. For the lack of an alternative leadership with an effective program, they have warned, the movement is in danger of oversupply and exhaustion.

In order to win the support of the Palestinian masses, Arafat has to show some significant fruits of “negotiations.” But he cannot do that so long as the Zionist rulers of Israel refuse to give up their historic ambitions of maintaining a state for Jews alone.

That is shown by the actual results of the Oslo Peace Accords. The Zionists really gave up nothing and in fact inflicted more suffering on the Palestinians.

U.S. imperialism has always played and continues to play a precarious game of combining an alliance with the Zionists, along with collaboration with reactionary and opportunistic forces in the Arab and Muslim world in order to hold back national liberation movements in the area.

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Indian left opposes drive Why Marxists oppose terror

As Revolutionary Marxists we unreservedly condemn the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. The killing of thou-
sands of innocent civilians, the absolute criminality and nothing to do with the struggle for human liberation in any form in any part of the world.

Indeed, this atrocity will undoubtedly make this struggle more difficult and aid the forces of capitalist reaction, something that progressive Indians have been seeing over the years in Pakistan. There, too, the rise of extremely communal and terrorist forces has weakened the progressive struggle for Kashmiri's national unity and independence.

In occupied Palestine, there is apparently no short-
sight. The military has been willing to sacrifice themselves as human bombs against the Israeli population. However, apart from being morally repugnant, such acts are a complete political disaster.

Each suicide bomber who carries out his or her mission indeed strengthens the weakening Palestinian regime and it can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the hand of the Israeli regime and its US backers.

Such acts as indiscriminate blast attacks, the use of suicide bombers, etc, fail in their objectives, because even when the event results in the death of a few notorious oppressors, the ruling classes find replacements while they exploit cynically the event to divert attention away from the far greater acts of terrorism their state perpetrates against 'legitimate' violence.

Thus, were the mass action based on the fact that it can't be replaced by such acts, the likely consequence would be the death, not only of a few hated figures, but also of innocent civilians, which in turn would be powerful elements in driving the Israeli masses towards the most reactionary and oppressive forces fighting for liberation from this inhumane system.

By those who have organised these attacks are not part of the genuine anti-imperialist struggle. In a struggle between two extreme reactionaries, both products of large capitalist, an age of political, economic, moral degeneration of world capitalism, it is not the duty of revolutionary Marxists to choose between the lesser of two evils, but to point out that the way ahead lies through fighting both of them.

It might be argued that even such terrorism is de facto anti-imperialist. This is to confuse the objective and subjective conditions that gave rise to such political movements, and their actual character.

There is a need to distinguish between the anti-Shah struggles of the Iranian masses in 1979, and the recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and its allies on the alleged terrorism and/or states that are not the US-backed regimes by the terrorist opposition and the terrorist groups. The terrorists of organisational acts of the World Trade Centre type.

We condemn the diplomatic and military games being played by India and Pakistan. Both sides are trying to justify their acts of violence, oppression and exploitation. The only force which can end this vicious and diabolical historic task is the strengthening of class-manipulated masses of the world.

We condemn the acts of terrorism in Pakistan and the ones which have followed the attacks of September 11. We condemn the racist and communal attacks in Muslim and other countries which have led to the killing of innocent civilians as well as the acts of terrorism against the countries which have provided support to the war on terrorism. We condemn the racism and communal attacks.

We condemn the war on terrorism which does not depend on the race, the countries concerned, and the perpetrator or victims; and we strongly set up opposition to International Criminal Court, as resolved in 1998, which can try and free convicted perpetrator of acts of terrorism and other crimes against humanity, as well as those who provide them with material support.

We call upon trade unions and workers everywhere to support these demands in order to expose any attempt to link violence and terrorism worldwide.

The Trade Union Solidarity Committee (TUSC) joins the international trade union movement and the TUC in appealing to the leaders of the Afghan Opposition and to the US and UK governments to respect the dead and the injured and to facilitate the return of peace and security to the region. We urge the delegates to the conference to reject any proposal that will lead to continuing civil war. We condemn the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, which have completely different kinds of terrorism: the wanton and indiscriminate killing of civilians is part of the methodology of imperialism and its ac accomplices, not of the progressive forces fighting for liberation from this inhumane system. We condemn the attacks that have organised these attacks are not part of the genuine anti-imperialist struggle.
Chechens pay price of Bush’s coalition with butcher Putin

A Dirty War, by Anna Politkovskaya, Harvill Press, £12
Reviewed by Sheila Malone

Russian President Vladimir Putin has always claimed his present war is a defensive one to prevent independence fighters in Chechnya from joining a “war against international terrorism”. His stated pretext for this was an incursion into Chechnya by some Chechen separatists claiming allegiance to Wahhabi Islam, and a series of bombings in Moscow which killed over 200 people. The government of its own accord decided “Chechen terrorists” said to be linked to none other than Osama bin Laden — although they are widely thought in Russia to be the work of Putin’s own secret police, the FSB.

And the fighters in Dagestan turned out to have been financed by Kremlin insider, millionaire businessman and alleged arms dealer Boris Beresovsky.

Nevertheless, a government-led media campaign whipped up atrocities in Chechnya feeling throughout Russia and in October 1999 Federal forces were sent to the Caucasus. The brutality of the occupying forces and the imprisonment of a Moscow-friendly regime in Chechnya answerable to the FSB have met with sustained criticism and condemnation from the West.

Anna Politkovskaya is one of the few courageous Russian reporters who went herself to discover the truth about the war. Her book, A Dirty War, gathers together the articles she wrote for the Russian newspaper Novye Novosti between the summer of 1999 and autumn 2000.

The book does not give answers or overall solutions to the war. Instead Politkovskaya offers us a devastating critique and passionate condemnation of its realities, both in its own violations and through the voices of its heroes and villains, victors and victims, as they speak here for themselves.

During the build-up to the war, Politkovskaya writes scathingly of the cynicism and corruption of much of the Russian military already engrossed and determined by the previous war, together with complicity for the frightened, unwilling conscripts who were to be sent wholly unprepared into combat.

Then there are the Soldiers Mothers Committees — women in Russia who are not prepared to see their sons killed and maimed in a cruel, unwinnable war. Instead they take direct action and travel themselves to the battle zones and forcibly bring them back home.

Sometimes these are mothers who have already had sons lost or disabled in the previous war, like Lyidia Burnatsova: “I brought my sons up by myself. The state gave me nothing, not even a kopek. But when they needed someone to die for them, then they were at the door, in a flash. "The regime couldn’t resolve the conflict itself, so they decided to go to war. Now we must hand over our children to correct other people’s mistakes. Never."”

Nothing has really prepared Politkovskaya for the suffering she witnesses when she arrives in Chechnya. Grozny, the capital has been called “the Hiroshima of the Caucasus”.

The centre is completely flattened, a wasteland of rubble, peppered with lethal or horribly maiming landmines. Here the remaining population survive in cells or on the town’s outskirts.

Until recently no water, heating, sewage or communications systems remained intact, although efforts have been made to restore some gas and water supplies. Besides this destruction, people also live in fear of constant Russian sniping.

Then there are the “zachekhir” or clean-up operations — arbitrary arrests and detentions, usually involving beatings and sometimes deaths of anyone accused of supporting the guerrillas. And in the night the looters, allegedly from both sides, who have found no other way to survive in this chaos.

Given similar conditions in other towns and villages up to 250,000 — nearly one quarter of the population — have fled the country during fighting and live in appalling conditions of hunger, cold and disease in refugee camps in neighbouring Ingushetia.

One of the most shocking and saddening stories in the book concerns the refusal of evacuation of the Grozny Old Peoples Home — leaving up to 100 old, sick and infirm people to endure the bombardment of the city.

Politkovskaya’s anger boils over when she discovers this is not due merely to cold inhumanity, but because a local bureaucrat fears his previous embezzlement of funds will be discovered in the home’s files.

Yet his official explanation is that such evacuations could be highly dangerous because “terrorists might thereby enter Russian territory from Chechnya” — presumably disguised as bulldozers of pensioners.

Politkovskaya has a splendid zest for ferreting out those who are simply profiting from the economic chaos and social breakdown caused by the war.

But she also recounts many tales of self-sacrifice, solidarity and courage — like that of the most popular doctor in Chechnya, Salam Yandarov, who gave up his wealthy practice in St Petersburg to return to his homeland, and now daily risks his life working in hospitals treating basic medicines and equipment.

She describes the many teachers carrying on their lessons in bommbed out buildings and the workers who take it in turns round the clock to guard their ruined fac- tories from looters, while they wait for rebuilding material to arrive from Moscow — which never comes.

One reason behind Chechen separatists’ decision to fight for independence as the Soviet Union broke up in 1991 was that oil and gas reserves and a skilled workforce would help ensure viability as a separate state.

In reality, lack of recognition and therefore of aid and investment from Russia and the rest of the world prevented the new Republic from rebuilding itself.

But Politkovskaya also sees the weakness of Chechnya’s own leaders as partly responsible. She argues that both former presidents Dudayev and Maskhadov hanged out oil well as booby to their fellow fighters. In fact it is more likely that neither of them were able to control growing lawlessness and corruption caused by the war.

Chechnya’s own oil deposits are now much depleted, but oil revenue has financed the war, and an estimated 50,000 Russian soldiers a week and many more — mostly civilians — have died. Chechen forces in Putin’s so-called “war against international terrorism” today.

Yet this has always been a war largely ignored by world leaders and media coverage of the press. The Council of Europe did suspend (and then restored) Russian voting rights for a brief period of a few months, and anti-war representatives of the EU and US lobbies passed a resolution with a favourable vote. Now that their support for their war coalition is absolutely vital the talks between the Chechens and Russia will easily be granted, and the likely consequence, as with the hidden wars, will be another escalation.

Meanwhile Politkovskaya’s book is moving and valuable testament to the people who actually suffer from its cruelty and injustice.

The most common graffiti on the walls of Russian conscripts’ quarters are simply “I want to go home”, the most common plea of the Chechens is “Please leave us alone”. Their voices are the strongest arguments for an immediate withdrawal of federal troops and the granting of Chechen independence.
Terror as usual — Israeli style

Since September 13, 1983, the west bank has been filled with eye-witness accounts of the events of September 13 in New York and the aftermath. But this grim result of terrorism could not be allowed to obscure the daily reality of state terror wielded by the Zionist state in its efforts to maintain its control over the destinies of the Palestinian population. The following eye-witness account from a Palestinian woman — who for understandable reasons does not want her name revealed — describing recent events in Ramallah and its efforts to redress the balance.

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ou couldn’t believe what we had been through two days earlier. I was blind with my own eyes and to tell you the truth it was not pleasant. I thought to write you all about it just as an example of what people have to go through every day.

I finished my course in Birzeit on Monday, my last three days were very intensive where I had 15 hours of teaching. In celebration, I decided to go out with my mother and sister to my cousin’s on the outskirts of Ramallah. The building is on the edge of town, right opposite to one of the Israeli firing posts.

So we drove to her house and went to the third floor where we lived. We spent a really pleasant time and then decided to leave around 8:30 in the evening.

Reem, my sister, went first because she drives the car, and then my mother and I followed down the stairs.

We got to the bottom of the stairs, Reem was just inside the main doors of the build-

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ing and she switched on the car from a distance with the car remote key, at that exact moment, the Israeli soldiers fired heavily at us.

That seems to have happened. Reem was leaving the building, the Israeli soldiers were on some Palestinian policemen passing by the same building.

The Israeli soldiers shot at the security area of the building where they were and Reem fell. We did not see the police because they’ve already passed the main door of the building and only saw the showers of bullets fired at her.

By that time my mother and I were just a few steps away from Reem, but still did not react, we were just at the door.

We shouted at Reem to enter and the three of us just fell on the ground with the bullets still flying over our head. Really in our place we do not know how Reem managed to fall on the floor because if I were in her place I’d be bleeding to death instantaneously.

The shooting did not stop for a second and there was the three of us lying on the ground at the entrance of the building without any cover.

My mother and I were not sure that Reem did not get hit and kept on shouting till she raised her head and said something, so we were sure then that she was not hit. We did not see the Palestinian policemen and did not know what happened to them, but later found out that they escaped unharmed.

The bullets were coming inside the entrance of the building and we could not move back inside to get away from the bullets因为 the whole of the building were barely missing us. We shouted for someone to open their door so we can crawl into their flat, but no one could come near their doors, the bullets were going through everywhere.

I really do not know if the Israelis could see us, but the main doors of the building were open and the bullets kept on flying for while, which seemed like a lifetime for me. Then suddenly all the lights were on and around it went off, we could see the silhouette, which is attached to the flying bullets over our head.

That thing that followed was a huge burst of water, the Israeli bullets hit all the water tanks on the roof and there were rivers of water pouring down on my head and our terrace, and then the sudden burst made the Israelis stop for a second, then we were the nearest flat door and started screaming to let us in and they did.

What we saw inside was even more terrifying.

There was a mother and a father and their three very young children, the oldest child must be 3 years old. The mother and the children were in the bathroom and the father of hysteria. The father was trying to calm them down and seemed so helpless.

The room that we walked in, supposedly the bathroom, it was flat, no furniture but mantis were on the floor and a small table with a TV set on it, so there was no furniture that we could use to shelter behind. We realised that they could not open the door for us earlier because the kitchen door faces the flat’s main door.

Their kitchen is right opposite to the Israeli post and thus all the bullets were coming through the kitchen door and hitting the main door. So it would have been impossible for them to let us in without getting killed. It was not for water burst that made things calm down for a second, we would have surely been killed.

Anyway, the minute we walked in, we all clustered in a little space, next to the wall in the middle of the room, which seemed the safest in that flat own them all the doors. Then the firing started again. This time it was not bullets that were coming, it was shelling, the woman and the children were screaming. They were so terrified. For

u, it was heaven compared to a minute ago.

Then came a big shell to the roof where we were, and blew it out of existence, all of us flew off the Surface of the earth, but unfortunately we were not injured badly. Just rubble and dust covered our face and our terrace, and our shock and slamming into the ground of the walls.

Then a flying bullet hit the opposite wall and bounced back and hit the man’s leg who was sitting right next to us, for five minutes he did not say anything and did not want us to know. When his wife saw the blood coming out of his leg, she nearly died, the poor thing, we all were terrified.

But by that time the woman nearly lost it and wanted to walk outside the flat to run away, under the bullets. She was in such a state and one of us could do anything but try to calm them down and try to calm them down. The shooting and shelling went on for about half an hour.

With every shell fired we looked at each other and see if we were still alive. The scariest thing was Reem’s face, she was totally yellow, she wanted to cry but could not, she was in a state of total shock because initially she was the most exposed to the firing. I felt so bad for her, but could not do anything.

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remain until the day of our death, we have our own eyes and I felt so bad for them. We all knew deep in our hearts that it is not. So we stayed on the street and decided to move in. We did and we came and stood next to the doors of the building. We were not shot at and provided with cover as we all felt that building. It was the building that hit the bullet and not the flat that was damaged.

They told us to just calm down for another 15 minutes and then they will try to move in. We did and they came and stood next to the doors of the building. We were not shot at and provided with cover as we all felt that building. It was the building that hit the bullet and not the flat that was damaged.

I must say I am glad to be alive. For two days my entire body has been aching and I stayed in bed. But I am really really happy that no one got physically injured in that building, apart from the tears. Though I am sure the psychological scars will remain with everyone for a lifetime, especially the children.

I do not wish that you were here.
The good Friday agreement in Ireland is now officially in crisis. We go to press on the 30th March, 1997, it is increasingly certain that the Southern executive will collapse, and that the collapse will be, as Social Democrat deputy John Hume has put it, a "shock to the system", a right-wing sectarian reaction.

How will the reaction of the crisis be? The situation of the IRA is currently very complex. The British remain in charge and they will pick and choose each member of the community they put into cold storage and which they continue to suppress. They have just put under their belt one of the most significant gains of the last 30 years in re-establishing the RUC as the unchallenged state police. For the first time ever, it is formally supported by the local Catholic Church and the Dublin government.

For all that, the crisis is significant. It may not be the beginning of the end of the present, and all of the present, imaginary, imperialist offensive, but it is almost certainly the end of the beginning.

The previous attempt by the British to answer a genuine Irish question in Britain's favour, the Sunningdale agreement, also fell to the right. It was argued then that the devolved institutions had been unable to accept a power-sharing government. As the opposition in the all-Ireland dimension, on the ground it was quite clear that the republican bigotry drove the reaction and that the reaction was generated by a reassertion of the same bigoted drive reaction today.

Then the unionists almost dared be on the basis of a more than 100 years of unionist control. They were at the time willing to accept a power-sharing government. The Unionist and the DUP were willing to accept a power-sharing government. The Unionist and the DUP were willing to accept a power-sharing government. The Unionist and the DUP were willing to accept a power-sharing government.

The immediate reaction of the IRA is a direct attack on the Government and the opposition, and the collapse to the right of Sinn Fein and of the vast majority of its supporters in opposition, will take some time to build. The immediate reaction of the new society is being felt out on the streets - nowhere more so than on the Shankill Road. Here, behind the blockades, the grotto sectarian abuse of primary schoolchildren and their parents has been a continuing visible victory for the bigots.

Everyone concerned accepts that the sectarian logic of the situation. Alternative democratic or working-class logic has been rejected. The result is that a form of harassment that would cause outrage anywhere else is now considered normal. On any other ethnic group, news of the Shankill Road would be dismissed as a mundane "cross-community" dispute.

Tensions between the support of the state institutions, the police and the British government, and the sectarian norms, and the IRA and UVF, lives above reproach if they allow the children of go to school while simultaneously guaranteeing the right of the bigots to intimidate them. The British define their role as "bringing the two communities together" and preside extracting the programme of his crisis on the right. He intends to put a motion demanding that Sinn Fein be expelled from the executive. If this fails, the sectarian rules of Stormont demand that a majority of nationalists vote to expel Sinn Fein, which makes it clear that it is republican guns that are the issue and not those held by the sectarian thugs of the UVF.

Securitization logic applies here too. The resolution comes jointly from the Unionists and the DUP voice of the SDLP, making clear that it is republican guns that are the issue and not those held by the sectarian thugs of the UVF.

Sinn Fein without trace in the current situation in the central thrust of Sinn Fein's strategy. The nationalist family, stretching from Irish America to the Catholic church to Sinn Fein itself, was to face down the unionists and force the British to behave fairly.

Crisis in Ireland: Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!

A regular routine has seen the Chief Constable meet with the British Secretary of State to discuss the situation. If the IRA were still on ceasefire, only to decide that they were ready to come up with a "final warning" to the loyalist groups only to have the UVF murder reporter Martin O'Hagan by the UDA. This was a significant development as theUVF. Reid then appeared on the British Labour Party conference platform to announce that there would be a new law against seditious and inciting the people to commit the ongoing, unauthorised assembly. The message could not be clearer. The IRA are not breaking the Good Friday agreement. They are defining it. The agreement does not oppose sectarian intimidation. It includes as it says a ceasefire.

In the earlier argument between Paisley's DUP and Trúbhleáin 's UVF the RUC provided a reason for the DUP attempts to preserve an uncontrolled sectarian privilege while the PUP/UVD backed Trúbhleáin's argument that the agreement should be unenforceable for the nationalists. The trouble proved 100% right and has now achieved a police board with overwhelming unionist representation supposed to be successful in the Dublin government. However this is not enough to assure the reaction. It occurred at the meeting between the unionists and the Sinn Fein were ready to agree on the disposal of arms and the agreement was "improved" and the discussion was how to deflect criticism from their base.

The fact that they were able to present this widely-malign-mash as any sort of policy owes a great deal to the media, and substantially, to the Sinn Fein leadership, which presented the tugs in the authentic voice of the Provisional workers class.

As their political popularity waned the loyalist groups returned to what they did best. First they fought each other in a war over drugs and territory. Then there was an urgent need to intimidate Catholics who felt harassment and ethnic cleansing focused on North Belfast and extending across the North of Ireland. The role of all the players has remained the same - simply wide. The loyalists were bribed into supporting the Good Friday Agreement with a combination of peace grants and manipulation of the electoral structure to help enter politics. The RUC earned a blind eye to racketeering, protection and drug empires in loyalist areas. However the loyalists were not bound by any of their unionist masters. As an example they were able to do all they wanted at the Shankill Road and elsewhere.

Everyone concerned accepts that the sectarian logic of the situation. Alternative democratic or working-class logic has been rejected. The result is that a form of harassment that would cause outrage anywhere else is now considered normal. On any other ethnic group, news of the Shankill Road would be dismissed as a mundane "cross-community" dispute.

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However, the instability to be seen will be in the interests of the Irish working class would deepen into a mass opposition and, given the collapse to the right of Sinn Fein and of the vast majority of its supporters in opposition, this opposition will take some time to build.

The immediate reaction of the new society is being felt out on the streets - nowhere more so than on the Shankill Road. Here, behind the blockades, the grotto sectarian abuse of primary schoolchildren and their parents has been a continuing visible victory for the bigots.

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SWP and the left in anti-war campaign

It is important that the Stop the War Coalition has got off the ground as strongly as it has – and it is all credit to those who have been involved.

But the process by which it did so – an appeal by the Socialist Workers Party for an anti-war rally (which it organised) followed by an organising meeting to set up a campaign (chaired by Lindsey German) – effectively bypassed the Socialist Alliance and holds some lessons for its function and its future. ALAN THORNE reports.

The way this happened was not just the responsibility of the SWP, however. None of the organisations involved in the Socialist Alliance (including the ISG) or the independents took the initiative in the immediate aftermath of the attack of the US on Iraq, to call for an emergency meeting of the Socialist Alliance to discuss both the events and the Alliance’s response to them. But it is a problem.

After a few days Mike Marqusee drafted a statement on the war for the Alliance, which was quickly agreed, and then the CPGB called for an emergency EC where the issue was eventually discussed. By then the SWP had already called the rally and invited a platform of speakers. An Alliance speaker was agreed in retrospect.

This did not stop the Stop the War Coalition getting off the ground – and in the immediacy of the situation that was the most important thing. But it did make the process more fractious and does raise issue of what the Alliance is for between elections.

Surely this is an example of a time when the Alliance itself should have taken the initiative to convene the rally and launch the call for an anti-war coalition. It is a task which contains the bulk of the work of the SWP in alliance with independent socialists. John Rees argued that an initiative needs to be taken by a relatively highly organised party like the SWP – but does this argument hold water?

True the Alliance would need to be more politically geared up and organised (and probably with its own publication) but it is at the moment to play such a role, but why shouldn’t it be? If we are to build it as an alternative to Blairism? If the Alliance is not able to take such initiatives then its role between elections is one similar to supporting and mobilising the campaigns which exist around the various groups – BIR, Globalise Resistance and the ANL.

It is true that the SWP has the resources and the organising ability to do such things, and that is important today given the decline of the CP and the Labour Left. But there is a danger that the SWP will see the Alliance as just one of several united fronts dealing with aspects of the struggle – in this case electoral interventions. But the Alliance is not a “united front” in the way the ANL, and the GR seek to be, a political organisation with an extensive programme and an elected leadership.

Obviously it should support important initiatives like the ANL, and GR, but it is not the same as them. It has a global political view of the world and that means that there will be times when it takes initiatives, which are not elec, on its own right.

It may be that all this reflects the debate as to whether the SA should remain an Alliance in the longer term, or whether it should become a new party of the left. In Scotland, for example, it was the Scottish Socialist Party which made the call for an anti-war movement, rather than an individual component of the SSP.

If that is the case it needs to be discussed, because it is hard to see a long term future for the Alliance unless it establishes itself as a political force between elections as well as during them – and that means intervening and taking initiatives in its own right when it is appropriate to do so.

Unfortunately, in some places, there was a local expression of this problem as well. Some local Alliances (my own in Southwark for example) were active with anti-war meetings fully organised in advance by the SWP, and were given no more than the opportunity to endorse them.

Of course, many of these were successful meetings (including the Southwark one). But the issue is not the short term success of the meetings (important as that is): it is the long term development of the Socialist Alliance as a united political alternative to the Blairite party.

The emergence of the Stop the War Coalition was a broad campaign embracing a wide variety of political currents now gives an opportunity to build anti-war campaigns nationally and locally in a positive framework.

But this experience should serve to remind us of the parallel issue which will be crucial for the development both of the Socialist Alliance and the SWP and the wider British left: the importance of being able to build a united front against the war or on other crucial issues of British and international politics, on a correct political basis, and in an open and democratic way.

Obituary: Pat Jordan
Key to linking British Marxists with Vietnam Solidarity Campaign

Tony Southall

I n the early 1960s there were two organised Trotskyist currents in Britain. The Milburn group led by Ted Graze was buried in the Labour Party – in fact so deep it was scarcely visible to the outside world. By contrast the Socialist Labour League led by Gerry Healy which had left the Labour Party in 1961 had embarked on a separatist binge.

They proclaimed themselves the only true defenders of the working-class and denounced mass organisations such as CND, which experienced its first big surge then as “petit bourgeois” and “led by middle class intellectuals”.

World-wide there was a drive towards reunification of the Fourth International, to which both of these groups proclaimed their allegiance: but neither was likely to be recognised as its British representatives.

Pat Jordan was at the centre of the eventually successful attempt to reform the Fourth International.

Based in Nottingham, a weekly duplicated magazine The Reporter was edited and printed at his tiny bookshop and largely financed by his skill in retailing second-hand books and comics. A tiny number of older comrades like Charlie van Gelderen, along with Ken Coates, and a lot of younger students from Nottingham University formed the embryo group, which would eventually evolve into the International Marxist Group.

It was recognised as British section of the Fourth International at the 1969 World Congress.

By that time the group had expanded enormously, partly by some of us moving around the country, but critically because under Pat’s guidance we had recognised the central importance of the war in Vietnam, and thrown ourselves into the Solidarity movement around support for the freedom fighters.

We were happy to combine our long-standing work in the Labour Party with building an open Solidarity campaign.

I first met Pat and Ernest Mandel at the summer school organised by New Left Review in 1962. But my abiding memory will be of his dedication to getting The Reporter, while living on a constant diet of boiled eggs! I visited Nottingham every weekend until early 1963. In his later years Pat worked for the International Marxist Group and then for the Fourth International, when he helped in the work of the Africa Committee.

In 1985 he was struck by a chronically disabling stroke, which not only from active political involvement. But he should be remembered as a person who played a crucial role in the 1960s revival of Trotskyism.

Catch up on the debate on the left of the Irish republican movement.

NEW issue of Fourthwrite, £1.30 inc p&p from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU
Over 100 Scottish Socialist Party members attended the International Socialist Movement conference which was held in Glasgow over the weekend of September 29-30. GORDON MORGAN reports.

The ISM is a revolutionary marxist platform within the SSParty. It contains many ex members of Communist organisations who opposed most of the non-SWP leadership of the SSP. In all it claims between 150 and 200 supporters. It produces a theoretical journal Frontline which is a worthwhile read for Marxists throughout.

Last year’s ISM conference had voted to leave the Committee for a Workers International. The group agreed with the CWI, led by Peter Tatchell, had lasted some years but the break was seen as allowing the ISM to concentrate more freely on building the SSP and a Marxist current within it. A group of around 30 ex-Scottish Militant split at that time and formed the CWI platform of the SSP.

At the February 2001 conference of the SSP the ISM was effectively relaunched, and the first issue of Frontline was produced. At that time, a number of Marxists within the SSP from a non-Militant background went over to join the party for the first time.

Since then the ISM has supported the discussions with the SSP which led to all of their Scottish members joining the SSP. This was a step which the SSP wholeheartedly approved of as the SSP as a whole and has resulted in there now being two significant marxist platforms within the SSP; the SSP and the ISM.

Upwards of 80 per cent of SSP members are however, in no platform.

In the run up to the conference, invitations were issued to socialist groups in other countries with whom the ISM or SSP has had discussions. A number of subscribers to Frontline from England were invited as well as groups, including the ISG, active within the Socialist Alliance in England and Wales. The meeting was also open to SSP members not in any platform. After discussion it was decided not to invite the SSP to the platform to the conference.

The agenda for the conference was changed within the last week to reflect the events of September 11. The lead item on Scottish perspectives was extended to reflect the need to analyse the impact of the war.

Perils of the New War

Alan McCoombs introduction and the documents analysing the events show an awareness of the US and UK foreign policy makers. The discussion however, was the most informative I have participated in, due to the range of experts who attended – US, UK, Canada, Brazil, France, Belgium, Ireland, Australia and South Africa.

One of the valuable points made was that the picture seen in Britain and the US is not common to mainland Europe, let alone Latin America, the Middle East or India.

Each country being brought into the ‘coalition’, has dusted off it favourite reactionary agenda – nuclear forces for Pakistan and India, a free hand against Chechnya for Putin, identity cards in Britain, freedom to assassinate for the CIA.

While we can see medium term positive developments in the consciousness of activists in the west or Latin America, the situation in poor countries is less encouraging. Repression will strengthen the hands of fundamentalists who can cater to the need for food and training and identifiable enemies.

Many contributions concentrated on the effects on the anti globalisation movement. The consensus seemed to be that anti globalisation has slipped down the agenda with defence of civil liberties, protection of union rights, of refugees, to be taken up within the movement.

It was suggested that some countries like Belgium, have begun to develop the anti globalisation movement and not building anti war movements. As there is in fact a pan European movement the media are attracted to the left with terrorism. Faced with currency collapse, the left is found on the right with terrorism and in effect taking a left turn.

A notable discussion on the likely effects of recession noted that Scotland is likely to be hit harder than UK overall, and that the national debt must be taken up – not least in presenting our alternatives to the SNP.

The key issues for the SSP will be defence of civil liberties and asylum rights, the right to strike and winning the battle for ideas. An SSP anti war pamphlet is being produced.

Workshops

Conference finished Saturday with a series of workshops on Cuba, the Middle East and the Scottish National Question.

The Scottish discussion focused on the fractures within the British state and the question of Europe and a referendum.

Alan McCoombs insisted we be up-front with our position on calling for an independent Socialist Scotland.

How socialists take up the national question will be key to the success of our SSP to develop a socialist consciousness within the Scottish labour movement, particularly given the divisions throughout sections of the bourgeoisie on Europe.

Internationalism

Having left an International current the CWI, but considering Internationalism, the ISM faces the question of how best to build Socialism internationally.

Internationally speakers from the USFT, the UFT (a left current of Maoists organises within the Workers Party of Brazil), the Front LCR, and the DSP in Australia contributed to this discussion.

The SSP has participated in two meetings that have been held with other European parties of the left held to co-ordinate with European Union summits.

A third meeting is planned in Brussels in November. The aim of these meetings is to increase active co-ordination of similar organisations at a European level rather than to try to launch a new International. The SSP/ISM also co-operates with the Labour Party of Pakistan and with the DSP.

At a wider level the SSP sponsors the initiatives around the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and sees the beginnings of an overt deal with sections of social democratic parties now participating in this forum.

The building of internationalism will take place on several levels.

1. The SSP from the Fourth International noted that the starting point of the discussion was our failure to build a mass international, but argued that it was wrong to give up this aspiration.

2. The proletariat is bigger than ever and more heterogeneous. The sections of the Fourth International have comrades playing a leading role in the workers’ social movements in many countries.

3. He welcomed the various international forums that exist which the Fourth International is fully committed to whether it be the European Conference of the Left or Porto Alegre, or discussions with individual leaders of other left parties.

The overall aim remains building a political international. He said that some groups would be invited to contribute to the Fourth International’s discussions through attendance at its leadership meetings.

Luciana Giro, the MP for Porto Alegre noted that in Porto Alegre, the leader of the Working Party (PT) may win the forthcoming Brazilian presidential elections. This would lead to the PT government confronting the working class, and the SSP was anticipating a split in the PCI.

The SSP works with groups in Argentina, Peru, South Africa as part of a broad international organisation. Fighting globalisation on a world scale requires united struggles.


The basis of an international democracy not centralism; it should be federative, and not exclusively Trotskyist. Europe needs Latin America and vice versa. We must start coordinating.

François Duval from the LCR commented on the difficulties his group had had with the largest section of the Fourth International. It is dangerous he argued for an international to be dominated by one organisation.

The LCR was building links with other parties, in Portugal, Denmark, the SSP the SWP – working together because each has a role to play in regroupment. Many hours are spent discussing the view that this has to be agreed. We agree the type of party we don’t want.

The DSP noted it had links with several dozen parties in Pakistan, France, Russia, Indonesia. These parties include ex Maoist groups so it would be difficult to insist on Trotskyism as a common starting point. It is better to develop internationalism and in the world and then put the question of regroupment in context.

In a wide ranging discussion it was noted that in the US many youth who created the anti war movement are now Marxists: these should not be excluded but brought into debates. We must reinvent presentation but retain essence of marxist methods and ideas.

The role of organised Marxists was key to building broader alliances e.g. the role of the SSP in the Social Forum is a blueprint for building the International. There seemed to be universal consent of the organisation required had more in common with the first and second international than the third.

The ISM will continue to forge links and collaborates.


ISM Organisation

Possibly the least satisfactory session of the weekend was that on ISM organisation.

The ISM is a current within the SSP whose main aim is building and strengthening the party as a whole. The role of the SSP would not exist without the ISM. But there was wide range of views as to how the SSP should organise within the SSP.

Some leaders of the SSP felt that platforms and currents are anachronistic and that the existing structures of the SSP were too loose.

It was necessary to delineate the role of the ISM from the SSP but there were differences on how to do this.

Some of this disagreement has become focused at the current split in the SSP.

The reason that the SSP plays such a prominent role within the SSP is that its members are trusted and even expected to be the SSP’s apparent commitment to build their organisation before the SSP has reduced their credibility.

But on the other hand the SSP were recruiting supporters and members equally amongst youth, while the ISM was less visible. Debates continue over the future of the SSP in the SSP there was no cacuusc.

It was noted that most SSP members don’t understand the differences between the party and the current. The SSP has to be open and tap into the thirst for discussion debate and unity. The ISM provides opportunities for participation and development, offer members the opportunity to join the SSP.

The ISM is probably in a transitional phase as a number of people argued. No one wanted to respond to difficulties with the SSP by acting in the same way. The SSP behaviour has in fact led to several SSP members joining the ISM.

It was pointed out that it was important to recognise the difference between the two. The ISM needs to have information about the experiences difficult in open SSP meetings.

The fact that this discussion took place against the clock left a number of these questions unresolved. It was however agreed that a new programme of work for the SSP was needed and that the SSP should focus on building the organisation.

Overall, the ISM conference was a serious and educational experience. The level of discussion and the quality of presentation had clarified how socialists in Scotland should respond.

I believe the SSP has shown its importance and the need proved why it should continue to exist in the SSP.
After student grants fiasco, council services chaos, Railtrack collapse...

Fight Labour's failing policies!

The Railtrack gravy train has hit the buffers. As the first bombs fell on Kabul, news emerged of the government take-over of the bankrupt infrastructure company, which had been siphoning off government subsidies and pumping them back out as profits for shareholders. Railtrack went to the wall owing £3.3 billion, after failing to persuade even Tony Blair's government to prop it up with another round of taxpayer's money. Ministers have been eager to argue that the body to take Railtrack's place will be another "private company". But it will be nationalisation in all but name: the company will impose no redundancies, will have no shareholders, will include trade union representatives on its board, and will recycle any 'profits' back into the rail industry: there is not even a promise to compensate shareholders in the now worthless company.

The lesson is clear: the collapse of Railtrack has destroyed any credibility for New Labour's agenda of "partnership" with the private sector. Rail unions must step up the fight to stop the imposition of the PPP scheme on the London tube, and for renationalisation of the remainder of the rail industry. And the fight on all fronts against Labour's privatisation agenda must be stepped up.

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