Tear down ‘Fortress Europe!’

During the European summit in Seville on June 22-23, 400 migrant workers staged a hunger strike to demand that they be given work permits and the right to stay in Spain. For their pains they were locked in Seville University, while anti-globalisation protestors staged demonstrations in their support.

Mainly because of opposition from Sweden and France, the summit did not adopt the proposals originally put forward by Spain’s Aznar and our own Tony Blair – that countries that refuse to co-operate with the European Union on asylum and immigration should be penalised by cuts in their aid payments.

But there can be no doubt that the walls of Fortress Europe are getting higher all the time. The summit itself laid plans for harmonisation of anti-asylum procedures, for stronger measures to get cases dealt with in the first country in the EU in which someone arrives, and for greater co-operation between border officials.

Most individual states are also introducing more restrictive measures themselves.

None of this will do anything other than give succour to the far-right across Europe, by legitimising their polices and rhetoric.

The way to undercut their growth is not through restrictive asylum policies but rebuilding public services and investing in the polarised communities in which they have sought to develop and base

We say, ‘Fortress Europe – tear it down!’ (See inside pp 10-11)
Stop the War Coalition steps up fight
Build a massive march on Sept 28!

Paul Wilcox
The Stop the War Coalition, with the support of the Muslim Association of Britain and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign are building for the biggest anti-war demonstration yet on September 28, the second day of Labour Party conference. Up and down the country local groups are getting behind Bush and Blair's war.

A number of events have already taken place as part of the build up. In Hackney the local Stop the War Coalition has organised a showing of the film 'Taxi for Gaza', where over 200 turned out to watch and to debate the ongoing build up to the situation in Palestine.

On Saturday the Coalition organised a activists conference in London, where over 150 people from Peter the country discussed the political and moral case against the US and Britain's war drive, as well as how to build the Labour Party conference. Speakers from the Iraq Workers Communist Party, Militant, Socialist Alliance, Asad Radwan of the Socialist Campaign and Andrew Murray and Jeremy Corbyn MP addressed the meeting. At UNISON conference the second day of the conference a successful fringe meeting attended by 140 delegates and activists opposing the war on Iraq (Stop the War Coalition) Bob Gram (UNISON) and Betty Hunter from Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The discussion from the floor focused on how to build the coalition in branches and to organise in local areas to give UNISON activists in the Labour Party conference an effective approach to stop the war. The coalition (such as the RMT, ASLEF, NASUWT) needs to be on the Labour Party conference table.

It is vital to build inside the trade unions. This is not a case of waving the union flag to get some sympathy, but to work with the issues that concern them. We need trade union branches to mobilise their members and bring their banners to the demo. Let's make it clear to Blair the trade unions are against his war.

The next step in building for the 28th is a week of action from July 15th. All local groups are being asked to organise in their areas to really get the momentum going for this demonstration.

Biggest

Britain has seen the biggest anti-war demonstrations in Europe. Last month when George Bush visited Europe, it was no surprise that he did not visit Britain despite the fact that Tony Blair is Bush's closest ally.

Since last September some of the largest protests in Britain for many years have followed Blair and his New Labour cronies. The first demonstration last year received little press coverage, but a short piece in The Guardian mean that the Government was worried at the size of the demonstration.

Now well over 100 Labour MPs have signed a letter calling for a protest. Many may laugh at motion against the war on Iraq, and the mobilisations against this no called war against terrorism have put New Labour on the back foot.

Opinion polls show that there is a majority against a war on Iraq. So the reason Bush did not come to Britain was because of the rising anti-war feeling. With Blair as George W. Bush's closest ally, campaigners have an important job to break Blair from Bush.

The US government has said that to bomb Iraq they need Saudi Arabia and Britain on their side of the war.

This of course will not stop Bush, but we can make a difference by mobilising and telling the people in this country about the real war and unmasking the spin that is being spread.

The US government is not concerned about international law.

Bashirism is not just coming from the mad Texan in the White House, but is being spread by sections of the British media. We have no right to help the US media, but we have to get the message out about the truth about the war.

When Northern Ireland Minister John Reid spoke at UNISON conference he told delegates how caring the government is and how much they care about child labour. This 'care' doesn't appear to extend to the million children in Iraq who have been killed by sanctions. The children in Afghanistan who have been killed in the so-called war against terrorism.

Iraq bombing

This "caring" government which supposedly stands for social justice is pursuing a right wing reactionary agenda and lining up to support the US Government's so-called precision bombing in Iraq.

And today, US and British troops are bombarding the world about a war and unmasking the spin that is being spread.

The US government is not concerned about international law.

The US and British governments do not even respect international law and blatantly ignore UN resolutions that condemn them.

When Saddam Hussein sent the UN Weapons Inspectors home, the US government bombed Iraq. But when Israel refuses to allow a UN team to visit the Gaza Strip, but occassionally kills its agents, they don't even protest.

And now Bush is breaking the American constitution (not a first in US politics) when he says that the US is sending in teams to assassinate Saddam Hussein, even though it states in the constitution that no foreign leader can be murdered or government toppled.

The cover that is used is to call this a "pre-emptive" strike, they imagine that what Bush would say that if Iraq pre-empted this attack by sending its agents to kill him?

With the racist Israeli state terrorising the people of Palestine, the threat of nuclear war between India and Pakistan, CIA-backed murders in Colombia and a list a mile long of US and British-backed atrocities around the globe that we build the biggest anti-war demonstration in Britain that has ever seen.

This anti-war is for the future of US Imperialism's drive to totally control the region politically and militarily. Building for the demo on the 28th is an important and significant part of the global struggle against war, tax dodgers and death capitalist system.

Blairite stitch-up ensures Health Committee report slams PFI critic

John Lister
AT FIRST SIGHT it may be hard to see how the Commons Health Committee report on the New NHS Bill ties in with health care. The coalition report, The Role of the Private Sector in the NHS, published in mid May should, have been greeted with delight by Alan Milburn, and by the various banks, construction firms, property developers and, well, the Blairites, looking to make profits from the Private Finance Initiative. The report is not a detailed plan to simply privatise the growing NHS budget - it finds that this is not yet our case of private shareholders. But ministerial eyes were focused on the report's most contentious - para graphs (45-69) of chapter 6. These were written by Blairite stodge Julia Drown, and written by David Nicholson, the head of NHS Estates. Under cover of Parliamentary privilege, these paragraphs effectively hijack the Committee's name to mount an extraordinary, personalised and baseless attack on the credibility of detailed research by one of the eminent academic historians of PFI, Professor Alison Pollock.

The three Labour members of the Committee who wrote the paragraphs declare themselves "unimpressed" with much of the research presented by Professor Pollock and her University College London's Health Policy and Health Services Research Unit.

But they propose no documented argument to refute Prof Pollock's work, and have been presented over the past nine years or so not only in detailed articles in academic journals but also in verbal evidence and an extensive submission to the Committee itself.

To ensure that the political significance of the government's attack on Pollock was made clear, the committee members explicitly argue that:

"We found the lack of sound analysis from the HPA/RSU additionally worrying because it has been the source of advice for many groups including unions and professional associations, all of whom have used parts of the Unit's work as a justification for their antagonistic attitudes towards the private sector" (para 61)

By attacking Alison Pollock, the clear intention is - without presenting any coherent alternative evidence or argument - to undermine every reasoned criticism of PFI, and every organisation which continues to uphold those criticisms.

In part this clearly stems from a sense of weakness, while Prof Pollock's research has won the support of trade unions including UNISON and the GMB as well as the BMA, and has been published subject to peer review in academic journals, the government has been unable to produce any counter response.

Not one paragraph argues the case in favour of PFI as value for money has been published in any academic journal - indeed the only substantial study endorsing PFI was a blackpasted piece by consultants Arthur Andersen, at a time when they were already making large sums of money by advising in PFI deals.

No substantial organisation representing health workers has endorsed PFI.

Despite the local attempts by a minority on the Committee to lighten off criticism - calls for 'a more informed debate' - the remit of the report feeling under the widespread popular concern in the way in which the government is increasing the role of the private sector within the NHS.

Even the section dealing with PFI repeatedly calls - in the paragraphs preceding Julia Drown's so-called 'enhanced spin' section for "more transparency, openness and accountability", for more investigation by the Department of Health and the Office of Health Economics, and on any questions key aspects of the proposals which PFI deals have been claimed to represent 'value for money'.

In addition the opening section examining the use of private hospitals to treat NHS patients under the so-called 'Concordat' drawn up by Alan Milburn repeatedly questions whether such policies offer value for money, or threaten to undermine staffing levels in NHS hospitals.

The Committee urges that the Concordat should be seen as a step in a temporary measure to bridge a gap in capacity until NHS provision can be expanded - asks Trusts to investigate whether they would find it more cost effective to use their own pay beds to treat NHS patients, rather than buy in operations from private hospitals.

Predictably these recommendations have been brushed aside contemptuously by ministers: indeed Milburn has since staked up two fingers to the Committee by vowing that the Concordat is a permanent arrangement, so "for private hospitals to borrow money and invest in extra capacity would be out of the question".

The Report lends the Government the highly controversial "Reduction of Employment Model" under which most support staff in PFI hospitals would be employed in NHS employment, but would not contribute to the payroll of the private hospitals, as is the case with "zero hour" contracts in the fast cat and death fasciotomy health workers.
New Labour: new barbarism?

I n a stark reminder of the long-term threat, the US has made a move forward to socialism or a lurch backwards into barbarism. Geoff Hoon has nailed his colours firmly to the mast of barbarism. Hoons’s repeated insistence that New Labour is not far from any previous Labour or Tory government — would be prepared to use nuclear weapons in a pre-emptive nuclear strike, even on a country which does not itself have nuclear weapons, will bring warm smiles among George Bush’s warmongers. The 1950s’ notion of fear-feeding to thinking people everywhere.

Hoos’s first warning that a new policy was emerging on what appeared to be a largely forgotten and almost academic question of the use of mass-destroying weapons during the Cold War to counter an alleged Soviet nuclear threat, came back in March.

Questioned by the commons defence committee, Hoon expressed fear that in four “zones of concern” (Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea) the regime may not be deterred from mounting a chemical or biological or two or three chemical and biological weapons attack on Britain by the UK’s stock of 185 nuclear missiles.

“In those kinds of states, the wishes and needs and interests of citizens are clearly mass murder, as they are systematically calculated so that they are willing to sacrifice their own people to make such a provocation occur.”

Hoon made it clear that in such circumstances, Labour’s defence policy would be willing to sacrifice those innocent lives on their behalf.

Hoos’s absolute confidence that in the right conditions we would be willing to use our nuclear weapons.

Hoon’s promise to match Thatcher and Reagan, and that life displayed by Saddam Hussein and his allies after the announcement of the state department and to consider nuclear weapons as a strike-against by non-nuclear states which are claimed to have nuclear weapons, and in 1982, the United Nations Chartered that nuclear weapons.

But just a few days after MPs heard the new policy, the shaky and unreliable basis on which nuclear attacks might be justified was exposed. Hoon’s defence ministry’s labelling of chemical weapons laboratory” which Downing Street itself last December, turned out to be a fadiment of minister’s imaginations.

Even Washington denied any knowledge of such a laboratory, and soon afterwards British investigators, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office were denying it too.

But by then the decision had been made to dispatch the troops who have since returned having fired not a single shot in anger, after several months of a hair of a Talibah or Al-Qaeda fighter in their tour of Afghan mountains.

However if ministers had decided to respond to this alleged threat by dispatching not troops but nuclear bombers, countless innocent lives could have been lost, and untold damage done to the planet for generations to come.

Hoon, however, is unperturbed and utterly committed to the notion of threatening nuclear destruction.

Asked in the Commons on April 29 if the government had abandoned the long-standing policy of successive governments that nuclear weapons must be regarded as “weapons of last resort”, Hoon stressed that while the form of words had been found in policy the government had changed indeed.

For that to be a deterrent, a British government must be able to express the view that, ultimately, and in conditions of extreme self defence, nuclear weapons would have to be used.

So what, asked Diane Abbott, was “extreme self defence”? Hoon’s reply again reaffirmed the willingness to push the nuclear button: “I accept that there are those — some of whom may well be sitting on the Labour benches — who do not believe in the use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances, but this is not the position of the government or of the Labour Party.

“It is therefore important to point out that the government have nuclear weapons available to them and that it is conditioned specifically to conditions which I have referred to — would be prepared to use them.”

Given yet another chance by Tony Lloyd in the Commons on June 17 to make clear that he was not talking about a pre-emptive strike, Hoon again refused to do so: “I have made it clear before how important it is to recognise that they would be used only in what are described as extreme conditions of self defence, I want to emphasise that they do not help to deter the effect of nuclear weapons to spell out precisely what those circumstances might be.”

Worse, Hoon went on to claim that “nuclear weapons would be used proportionately and consistently with our obligations in international law.”

Even how Hoon imagines that the mass slaughter of a nuclear strike can be carried out “proportionately” is beyond me, and I may not be the only one.

The legality of the threat is also in doubt: under the UN Charter, both pre-emptive action and even retaliatory nuclear attack are illegal.

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which in turn would be feasible, has been made in 1978 by the US, Britain and the Soviet Union never to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. But George Bush is into tearing up treaties that stand in the way of his new, fearsome US war-drive that has followed on the September 11 events.

The ABM treaty has been scrapped to make war for the “star wars” project, which in turn would be feasible, within up to 800 US with impunity to threaten any other country with nuclear annihilation.

Washington has openly threatened to fire on major cities in the event of a nuclear attack on the US, the combination of a US military and any other country with nuclear weapons.

To use nuclear weapons is to unleash genocide — and wipe irrevocably irreparable environmental damage for generations to come.

A nuclear strike can never be a “proportionate response” to anything. There can be no justification for using such weapons either pre-emptively or as a retaliation.

How does Hoon imagine British and other ministers can hope to convince the governments of India and Pakistan to set aside the threat to use these instruments of barbarism while the leading western powers are openly threatening the same themselves?

Socialists can’t sit idly by in the vague hope that good sense will prevail, or that hithertoainless Blairite ministers will return to their CND past and challenge this latest switch of policy.

Labour Party members need to fight this hijacking of the Party to embrace a crazy, irresponsible policy that nobody has ever been asked to vote for.

We need to raise now, within the trade unions, wider and in anti-war campaign work, the demand that ministers renounce any threat to use nuclear weapons.

Far from seeking the fires of the US war drive, the international Labour movement should be seeking to build links with US workers to oppose the star wars programme, which social research and Bush’s military build-up.

Labour’s naivety now is that if this fight is not stepped up, New Labour really could unleash unashamed horrors on the world.

Dangers in Labour’s decline

Tony Blair’s party is just in time to be a party of national shame. Early in the 1997 election campaign, the then leader of the opposition, in a speech on the future of Britain, underlined the role nuclear arms should play in the fight against terrorism.

After winning a landslide win on the Labour Party’s lowest ever share of the vote in last year’s general election, Tony Blair’s team has been plugging in the popularity stakes based on the question: “How will the world end?”

The beloved: slashing of the shaky and terminal useless transport Secretary Stephen Byers has not been enough to salvage the mounting credibility of a government that is no longer to be taken seriously.

The government has been forced to change its position on the issue.

The council has now changed its mind, with the links between the two being threatened by the party’s stance of the public.

The party has also been_surfaced in the Labour Party’s line that the report was not so different from those on the content of the European Union, where failed social democratic governments have been ousted one after another by voting against respondents.

Even before the inflated demands of football success were so loudly punctured by the skills of a clearly superior team it was obvious that Labour was, in the words of Alastair Campbell, not missing a trick.

Early in June, just after Byers’ resignation it was announced, an ICM poll for Radio 4’s Today programme showed 34% of respondents had lost trust in the government for the first time.

B1% said Labour had failed to meet expectations on transport policy, 68% on health and 51% on education.

Perhaps even more worrying for Blair as he cutters ever closer to his new pal George W. in the USA, opinion polls also reveal voters to be majorly majority opposed to any military attack on Iraq.

New Labour’s policies are unwavering, and the opposition to them is growing, with signs to gain strength, with the prospect of more strikes to come from public sector unions.

But the lesson from Europe must be learnt by the left, too: it is not enough to see social democracy as a mere slogan — a credible alternative must be built, or the only beneficiaries from Labour’s decline would be the far right, and IDS’s hopeless, reactionary shower of Tories, seeking to destroy Blair from the right.

Tories gain as more see Blair’s party as untrustworthy
PCs: Blairite union baron threatens union democracy

Paul McGowan
The attempt by former General Secretary of the PCS Barry Reamsbottom and his Movement to prevent Mark Serwoda, his socialist successor, from taking office is a serious attack on the democratic rights of all trade unionists.

The actions of Blairite Reamsbottom and his cronies has led to a situation where the courts will decide whether the Union not PCS members.

In October 2000 Mark Serwoda was elected PCS General Secretary with 42,000 votes in a postal ballot. However due to an agreement between Reamsbottom and the Union, Serwoda was only to take over all the General Secretaries duties after May 31 2002, when Reamsbottom should have retired.

Unfortunately Reamsbottom refused to go quietly. Having had a legal opinion stating Serwoda’s election was illegitimate he stood in his post position until 2004. His supposed leaderships of the NEC Executive Committee claim to have removed Serwoda and reimposed Reamsbottom as meeting at the end of May.

The President of the Union, Janet Godchin, ruled this meeting was unconstitutional as notice of it was not properly served. In order to defend the democracy of the Union, Godchin and Serwoda have taken these issues to court.

So far the court has ruled that Serwoda should remain as General Secretary until a full hearing in July 2002. In the meeting and represent their members interests.

So far Serwoda’s leadership has been instrumental in leading a growing membership and growing militancy in the union. He is openly a supporter of the Socialist Alliance.

According to The Sun, Tony Blair was ‘delighted’ with Reamsbottom’s coup. Blairite MPs feel Serwoda is heading a growing discontent among the NEC’s leadership.

The NEC leaders have often seemed more concerned in the past with protecting their positions as left bureaucrats rather than representing members willing to fight.

Even with a victory for Serwoda in the courts, the Moderates on the NEC will remain. The Moderates are rated the highest of all the sections of the Union, if the left can inspire the membership.

The left must ensure members are mobilised around the huge issues of the day, as well as the NEC dispute. In the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), management are attempting to shut a third of old and ES offices and introduce outsourcing sickness and disciplinary policies.

Despite what is happening elsewhere, the Left Unity DWP branch insists on leading a fight against such plans.

Members voted for Serwoda as they could see he had a record seconded to none of struggle on their behalf.

Left Unity most demonstrate it can lead a fightback against management, and is not just a vehicle for Left Democrats to gain positions. Only then can it start to make real progress in the PCS.

Hopefully Reamsbottom and the Moderates are courting disaster. Mark Serwoda and PCS members deserve our support in their fight for a democratic Union. Trade Unions can exert pressure on their leaders to isolate Reamsbottom. His breed has no place in the labour movement.

MSF left squeezed since AFE merger

Terry Conway
The first conference of ami
cably agreed to the merger.

While this partly reflects a real relationship of forces on the left, the question is very unfortu
nately divided over the leadership of the new union from MSF and others.

This conference not only didn’t see its recovery, but its further weakening with the defeat of the left candi
dates for the NEC.

Unlike the few last confer
ces of MSF prior to the merger with the AFE, there was no debate that dominated the week.

However, it is fair to say that while the platform did not get it’s way on every issue, it was not undermined on any issue.

The biggest success for MSF was in getting an agreement on a new NEC. A new NEC was passed, committing the union to a programme of week of action. In opposing the motion, the NEC hypocritically stated that they supported the ‘spirit’ of the motion, they called for it to be reformed or rejected because there was not time to carry it out. They added insult to injury they sug
gested that to show their ‘goodwill’ they would make a donation of £1000 but not to the organisations appealing the week of action to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. Despite this conference over-whelmingly agreed to support the Midlands, however while this was important - and while the number of NEC banners on the June 23 march was pleasantly high, there was no sign of the national ban
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On privatisation, delegates agreed that the proposed MSF policy opposing APP in the NHS had not been implemented and called for a hard line. Conference commi
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On service Unfortunately it also decided that the privatisation of public service. It was that a number of years, by mid-afternoon the gloss had been rubbed off. Many delegates could not connect his picture of the world with the one in which they lived and worked.

While this seems to be the case, Gordon Brown has become Prescott’s replacement in attempting to keep some connection with Labour’s traditional working class base.

On pensions, the union opposed the government plan to cut pensioners’ benefits, but supported the Labour for a National pension scheme.

On national bargaining, General Secretary Roger Lyons launched a campaign to defend occupational pension schemes, including possible strike action. The union’s press office made sure this was in the hands of the NEC.

Again Lyons took the micro
phone to lecture conference about how Margaret Wall did not could not be accountable to us, because the government’s whole trade union movement. He failed to see how, after the motion was passed. Probably the low point of conference was the eventual failure to exert any degree of control over all the other motions. Margaret Wall, MSF’s repre
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This was first raised by a delegate in the FPIC discussion. When Margaret Wall was not on the platform and Roger Lyons responded below, making asymptomatic comments about what a wonderful job Margaret was doing. He told delegates how important it was but on no committees, but refused to say anything about the issue that had been raised.

Subsequently delegates supported campaign to get a section of the NEC report on the Labour Party which had no political content but only listed the committees on which Margaret Wall sits.

Gordon Brown at MSF

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One year on: 500 rally behind Friction Dynamics strikers

Jack Johnson
Over 500 demonstrators, most of the FBU, and a group from Caernarfon's metalworkers' union assembled in Caernarfon's main square before marching through the town in support of the sacked strikers at Friction Dynamics.

Delegations had come from England and Scotland as well as all over Wales, and the march was applauded by local people who lined the route to the centre of the town.

A rally was addressed by Labour and Plaid Cymru MPs, each of whom promised to support the campaign by the TGWU for a change in the law, which currently allows strikers to be sacked after eight weeks in dispute.

The main speaker at the rally was TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris, and the best received part of his speech was when he attacked the lack of support from the Blair government.

"It cannot be right for people to be sacked for defending their conditions. How can it be right for our Labour government to stand idly by for 12 months and do nothing?" he asked.

"I call on a Labour government to support British workers, not let employers attack them."

The march was addressed by Labour MP for Caernarfon Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth, who described the TGWU's action as "right and proper".

AN estimated 12,000 firefighters from across the country poured out on June 11 to show their support for an FBU rally in London to press home their pay demands.

The FBU has been demanding an increase in the basic wage from the current £23,500 to £30,000, and General Secretary Andy Gilchrist drew massive applause when he warned the employers that the union had a strong mandate to take industrial action if no progress is made in negotiations. He had already told the FBU conference that the union had a strong mandate to take industrial action if no progress is made in negotiations.

Firefighters seek £30k basic

The militancy on pay has not been matched by political developments inside the FBU, which this year saw a bitter conference argument over the democratisation of the union's political fund.

Following a hard-line intervention by Gilchrist, who argued that democratisation was equivalent to disaffiliating from the Labour Party, delegates voted for a leadership proposal which effectively overturned last year's policy of preparing the rule changes necessary to democratis the fund.

Events will show how his loyalty to New Labour is rewarded by Blair's team.

and telling the Labour government to "lose the chains of the CBI".

The best received speaker was striker Gerald Payne. He insisted that even after a year out the strikers were not going to give up. But he pointed out that even if the legislation was changed to prevent strikers being sacked, it might mean that employers would lose tribunal cases - but tribunals cannot force reinstatement.

Though the march and rally were very militant, there was nothing to do with any more than their support. No future plans were announced for more demonstrations - and there was certainly no mention of trying to get a boycott of the products being produced by scab labour at Friction Dynamics.

The only future event mentioned was the tribunal on October 7.

It is up to the left in the unions to sustain this fight. Cash must be raised for the strikers, and visas should be made to the picket line (though this is difficult from many areas).

But above all there must be a discussion within the TGWU on how to get the help that can hurt the employer and force a victory.

For details go to www.frictiondynamics.co.uk

Lynskey: some of the 500 demonstrators who have stayed loyal to the Friction Dynamics strikers

Left turns up heat on UNISON chiefs

July strike
A further day's action may take place on the 17th July with the GMB and TGWU.

The conference of local government branches, held for two days before the main conference, agreed to a campaign of nationally co-ordinated action against privatisation including a one-day stoppage and a demo.

The effects of privatisation, in particular the "two-tier" workforce and low pay was at the heart of these two days.

Delegates rejected a voluntary code of practice negotiated by UNISON with the government. Under this code, private sector workers are supposed to offer new employees in private sector terms and conditions which are "broadly comparable" to those of transferred staff.

Delegates recognised that this voluntary code was not even worth the paper it was written on.

A conference heard of the tremendous victory of tenants in Birmingham and Southwark voting against the stock transfer of their homes. UNISON is now committed to affiliate to the Defend Council Housing and to oppose Arms Length Management Organisations running housing.

Tracy Twist of Birmingham said that "we won a tremendous victory by uniting tenants and the council workforce. The national Defend Council Housing played a key role."

Low pay in local government is being challenged by regional and national industrial action. Over 250,000 UNISON local government members in London have already taken three days strike action for a £4000 London Weighting claim.

was donated to New Labour over and above the basic affiliation.

Last year delegates agreed to have a review of the union's two political and had instructed the NEC to bring a report to this year's conference. Instead the NEC has just started the consultation.

Delegates therefore passed overwhelmingly a motion censoring the NEC for the slow pace of the review of the political funds. Desperate attempts by the NEC to save its skin from aailing failed as it described the motion as a "Trojan horse" for disaffiliation from the Labour Party.

The mood of the membership and of delegates at conference is more critical of New Labour and UNISON's NEC for its lack of action against the attacks on services and members. This has been translated into an increase of the strength of the left on the NEC.

So concerned was the majority of the NEC about the development that it attempted to introduce a rule change preventing NEC members speaking in conference against the NEC. Delegates, who clearly saw this as an attempt to gag the left, also rejected this.

United Left
The strength of the left at conference was reflected by the United Left holding a 300-strong fringe meeting and selling nearly 500 copies of its bulletin.

Racism and the attacks on asylum seekers by the government was also an important feature of the conference. In the debate, delegates repeatedly condemned David Blunkett, Home Secretary and UNISON members over his use of the word "illegal" in reference to asylum seekers "swamping" schools and GP practices.

UNISON is now committed to support asylum seekers' right to work, against the Home Office and for the closure of detention centres.

Delegates recognised that New Labour is laying the seeds of racism through many of its policies which have increased poverty. Conference therefore agreed to campaign against the BNP and to call with the TUC a demonstration in Manchester against racism.

On international issues, the conference also unanimously agreed to support the Palestinian people and work with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, to oppose any attack on the European Social Forum and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to oppose neo-liberal globalisation and support the Stop the War Coalition, and to continue to opposes o-neto-
**SSP democratises its party structures**

Dethawing the fine print of the reforms: National Secretary Allan Green (left) and Alan McCoombes

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**Plan to campaign against the Euro**

The SSP special conference overwhelmingly voted to campaign against the single currency in the referendum on the Euro.

Gordon Morgan

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**Implemented changes.**

SSP'S regional party communications have significantly increased in recent weeks.

Plan to produce 10 mailings to all members a year.

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**Special Conference**

The annual party meeting was always going to be sparsely attended.

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**Implement changes.**

SSP regions and central offices have expanded and set up new local campaigns.

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**Policy Effect**

This conference was a significant opportunity for bureaucrats. Regional organizers have played, and will continue to play, a critical role in building the party, have been challenged by the demands of this into political control. Conference will decide the leadership future of the SSP.

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**Retain their right to automatic membership of the Executive.**

The proposed changes to the National Council flowed from an automatic membership of the Executive would continue to be the case. In effect, the National Council would have been prevented from effective scrutiny of the Executive. This amendment to the National Council would have failed to be considered in a special resolution of the Executive or the Regional Councils, with the regional organizer automatically elected. These proposals were defeated by 10 but one regional organizer.

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The proposal amendments to the Executive, Alan McCoombes and members of the Executive for the legislative and the local party conference were made clear the need to break the received hold of the SSP over the party apparatus for political pluralism.
Seville protests show the way

Stuart Piper reports from Seville

100,000 anti-protestors mostly from Andalusia but with significant cross-party support across the rest of Europe marched in party mood through the streets of Seville on the hot summer evening of the last day of the European summit.

The Aznar government and the mainstream media tried to claim there were only 20,000 - but no one believed them.

Though the protests were as big as those in Barcelona which marked the beginning of the anti-capitalist Presidency, they were bigger in Seville.

They brought an upbeat close to three days of protests against the European of Capital and War represented by Aznar, the CBD, CEN and labour barricaded inside their air-conditioned conference suites.

No windows were smashed and the only things that rained down on the protesters was tear gas but showers of the electrical type, the hosing of residents from the roof of demonstrators desperate to cool down in the blazing heat.

We drove through the street-chains of the slogans of the Seville social forum: "Another world is possible against the Europe of capital and war" and "no one is illegal." This second slogan of course was particularly important since the focus of the Seville summit in erecting the walls of Fortress Europe, though fortunately the most restrictive proposals were not agreed by Aznar and Blair were not discussed.

The tone of the resistance was set on Thursday when millions of workers brought most of the Spanish State to a standstill. The day saw massive huge demonstrations in Barcelona, Madrid (where estimates suggest 500,000 marched) and Seville, with comparable processions in many other cities.

In many parts of the country, the pickets were accompanied with cacerolazos - the banging of pots that has been made popular from the mass movement in Argentina.

The considerable trade union presence in final demonstration was just one sign that alliance between organised labour and youth is asserting itself as the backbone of the anti-globalisation movement. This was clear in Genoa, in Barcelona and now again in Seville.

This is a remarkable achievement given that one of the targets of Bush, Blair and their friends after September 11 was to silence like that of the migrants workers in Spain and the solid occupation of the church in Seville by anti-capitalist protestors need to be encouraged.

In the meantime, there is a big question facing the European Union is how to deal with impending enlargement - and what constitutional changes to make to streamline decision making in its wake.

Structures that had just about coped with a single tier EU of 15 will not meet the needs of a larger membership - and one in which it is clear that not every country will have the same weight. EU President Romano Prodi takes this into account with his proposals for an inner cabinet.

All of these questions will have to be addressed with sharper focus under the forthcoming Danish Presidency.

Blair, Aznar count cost of summit failure

The Seville summit will not be remembered as a success by either Tony Blair or Spanish's Jose Maria Aznar. Aznar certainly was not pleased that the trade unions had no say in the end of his Presidency of the EU with a success rate of 0/12.

In any event, it was clear that the anti-globalisation protestors greeted the summit as a death knell for the old numbers.

The question of asylum and immigration was a key question facing European leaders, and the one that has dominated media coverage. Britain's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw declared that all countries agreed on the importance of tackling the asylum issue, pointing to the need to debate on the electoral success of the far right across Europe. "We are mobilising ourselves against the virus of the far right across the continent. What matters is that the far right are being defeated on their own terms."

The leaders of the rich Europe are those with the greatest responsibility for the policies of globalisation that hold sway in their respective countries, policies that put the profits of multinational, militarism, sexism and racism before the life and health of working people.

The Social Forum of Seville identifies with the underprivileged, those who bear the brunt of the self-interested and unjust policies implemented by these gentlemen.

For this reason, as citizens of Seville, we ask the Andalusian government to join us in our request for the aforementioned summit to not be held and to support the demands we make of the Spanish and European government.

Among the most urgent demands, we should like to stress the following:

■ Immediate and energetic intervention in the Palestinian conflict, condemning the terrorism being exercised by Sharon's government against the Palestinian people and putting pressure on its government to respect UN resolutions. For suspending diplomatic relations with Israel and imposing an economic boycott on its products; suspending arms sales to Israel and imposing an arms embargo; offering support and aid to the Palestinian refugees; denouncing the complicity of the United States in these events.

■ Abolition of foreign debt, which amounts to a total debt of more than two billion dollars with the IMF, which is selling third world economies, as shown by the devastating crisis in Argentina.

■ Our immediate withdrawal from NATO, the termination of the bilateral treaty with the United States, demanding the withdrawal of US military bases in Spain, Morocco, Gibraltar and all the other European enclaves.

■ The recognition of immigration as a right belonging to any human being, and of the free circulation of persons, rights that are violated in European immigration laws and the Schengen agreement.

■ Economic policies that lead in the opposite direction to the one being taken at present (Maastricht, economic and monetary union, Lisbon agreements, stability packs etc.). We want guaranteed employment and the right to housing, an end to the privatization of public services, and an end to the pockets of poverty and social exclusion that affect women and young people in particular; and the Spanish government's immediate withdrawal of its project for a labour reform law.

The Social Forum of Seville believes in a new, more egalitarian set of economic and social relations, in a Europe that is committed to the environment and those who live in it; that defends the equality of men and women; that defends Peace, the rights and liberties of its citizens and its national communities.

For all these reasons, we should like the institutions of Andalusia not to agree to receive the heads of government of the EU in our city, thereby also saving us the considerable inconveniences and costs that this will represent for the citizens of Seville.

Nonetheless, given that the central and Andalusian administration remain resolute in their intention to host the aforementioned summit, the Social Forum of Seville will show its opposition, convoking for the days in question various acts of protest and alternatives to the neo-liberal policies of the aforementioned summit. Alternatives for a globalization of solidarity and justice.

We call upon the people of Seville and Andalusia to take part in this social mobilisation, starting by supporting our opposition to the above summit taking place.

3 May 2002.

DECLARATION OF THE SOCIAL FORUM OF SEVILLE
Putting democratic principles into practice

EDINHO: As soon as we won the elections in October 2000 we started a series of discussions to decide our priorities. We settled on three main areas – participatory policies, to promote social inclusion, and more efficient delivery of services to the population. Later on we wanted to wrest back the idea of modernity from the right, and show that it was possible to apply measures of efficiency and technology with a completely different logic – to promote popular interests.

But of course the first two, popular participation and social inclusion, were to be our strategic priorities. The popular participation had two main aspects, the participatory budget and municipal councils. The social inclusion was centred on the idea of workers’ self-organisation – that is that workers are capable of organizing themselves to generate jobs and income without being entirely dependent on the whites of capital.

So, for example, we’ve encouraged the formation of co-operatives. One of them, a recycling co-operative, formed by families who used to live on the council rubbish tip working through garbage, has now become the basis of the town hall’s recycling programme and has gained national recognition. These and others – popular participation and social inclusion – were the strategic axes because they were the ones which, within a capitalist society, could show the city as a whole that it is possible to build relations based on very different ideas.

We had a long debate on what kind of popular participation we wanted to promote. How much power do these municipal councils have to make decisions? And what about the new bus contract – should we say what the council should do? The new bus contract does what the popular council says.

So we’ve already lost a number of arguments in the town council’s council – areas we really didn’t think were priorities for new routes, but the council insisted – and the town hall had to carry out their decision.

It’s the same in health and education. We’ve seen up users’ councils for each hospital and health centre, for each school...

So we’ve adopted a model where the town hall administration stimulates the organisation of the population, and where these popular organisations have decision-making powers and are autonomous. These popular councils are separate from the Participatory Budget program, because everyone in the PB cannot cope with all the population’s demands. The Participatory Budget is not a panacea that can solve all problems. There are some services that need to be managed on a permanent, permanent basis, by the population.

Aren’t there likely to be conflicts between these popular councils and the participatory budget process? Not really. The transport council can demand a new route for a sector in the community that’s not properly served. But it can’t demand that the road to that neighborhood be asphalted. That’s a question of investment and has to go through the Participatory Budget.

So what is the debate? Because in many PT municipalities it’s not 50% of the investments. In others it doesn’t have decision-making powers. In others it’s merely consultative. In other words it simply expresses an opinion about where the town hall should spend its money, but in the end the local government decides. And there are other, mixed variants. But we went for 100% of the budget from the very first year.

Our model was based on what applied in Caxias do Sul (the second city in Rio Grande do Sul state, where the movement also from the DS tendency), but we’ve changed some things. It’s not that there are big differences with Porto Alegre – that’s why Kyoto is such a big issue all over the world. But we studied the experience in Caxias do Sul because it’s much similar to our situation, in terms of size, social makeup and so on.

Do you have the same list of priorities for people to choose from – education, health, roads, sanitation, etc. – as they do in Porto Alegre?

No we don’t provide a list, we want people to come up with their own. In that sense ours is more open than in Porto Alegre. If people decide landscape gardening is the priority, then we’ll do what they say.

So then the administration has to come before the assembly and argue its own case. And we were defeated in several regional assemblies last year. For example, we would come forward with all the technical arguments to explain why the priority had to be education, but we lost. People voted for health. Sometimes this year, too, this year, because the PB is a process which is still under construction. Before, for example, once the assemblies in the regions and sub-regions had decided their priorities, it was the delegates elected by these assemblies, who went away and decided in the Regional Delegate Council how the resources should be split between the different regions and sub-regions and which schools, health centres, roads or whatever should be built.

But we discovered that people on the ground were complaining they never found out how the money was spent. We saw there was a real danger of the PB delegating too much control to the people who elected them.

So now the delegates will decide on how the money should be spent, but it’ll go back to the regional assemblies to decide whether or not to approve the project, and which schools, health centres, roads or whatever should be built.

It’s a process and we’re learning. But the fact our model of PB has decision-making powers means we’re expanding the democratic space. When we said that from the first year we would open 100% of our investments to a PB with decision-making powers, people thought we’d leave it to the assemblies to come up with their own priorities of choices from which we were heavily curtailed by some other administrations.

People said we were mad, that the fact our model of PB has decision-making powers means we’re expanding the democratic space. When we said that from the first year we would open 100% of our investments to a PB with decision-making powers, people thought we’d leave it to the assemblies to come up with their own priorities of choices from which we were heavily curtailed by some other administrations.

We said we would have to go into those plenary sessions and defend our proposals, as a local government...
we mustn’t be afraid of direct democracy. And of course we often lost last year, and we’re often losing again this year.

I went just the other day to one of the assemblies — we KNOW the region needs a creche, I went with all the figures, but the assembly voted in favour of earmarking the road! So they won’t get their creche. Will the mothers complain? Yes they certainly will. What can we say? Only that it’s the PB that decides, and you’ll have to go back into that assembly next year and argue for it. It’s an educational process too.

I got it in the neck in one neighbourhood. The majority of the population only took part in some of their local assemblies. So it was a particular minority that got to decide which streets would be the priority. The others went to the press and accused me of being irresponsible.

So what could I say? Simple. Next time you make sure YOU take part and decide. That’s the way people learn. In fact they were right. The other streets were much more of a priority, that’s where the asphalt should have begun. But they didn’t go to the plenaries, and they didn’t argue their case.

If I back down, accept their argument, over-ride the PB, even in the case of one single street, then I undermine the entire participatory budget. So it’s a permanent political dispute.

Are there clear differences between a revolutionary way of implementing the participatory budget and a reformist way? There certainly are. If you want to apply it in a reformist way, with a social democratic approach, then the participatory budget is in fact easier to apply in that way. Then the revolutionary way?

How is this? If you have consultative assemblies, if you create mechanisms for indirect representation, hold discussions on participatory forums, then you ARE mobilising the population; but you’re not actually building a structure of power. Because when the PB is revolutionary in that case it’s what it’s doing.

It’s beginning to build a power structure — an autonomous power structure within the society. From a theoretical point of view what you’re doing is building structures of control within the state apparatus, whereby civil society begins to exert control over the state.

It demystifies the notion that the budget is something technical, fixed in stone, out of reach, and shows it to be something very basic that can be controlled and supervised by the population, month after month.

So the model of which Participatory Budget you choose is absolutely fundamental.

So are you saying that a participatory budget with decision-making powers is incompatible with a reformist approach?

Yes, it is incompatible. A budget is the expression of a government’s priorities. It’s the expression of the economic class that dominates the state apparatus. That’s the same whether it’s the state at municipal, state or national level.

As soon as you create the space for the majority of society to control this instrument, it becomes incompatible with any rights project, because the working class and other sectors that are excluded from power will begin to express their class interests and not those of the capitalist class.

So when the World Bank and the UN praise the participatory budget as an example of transparent, efficient local administration ...? They don’t understand. Not that they’re being ingenuous, but they don’t understand that when the model is a decision-making one, and when the state structures stimulate the popular classes to exercise that power, they don’t grasp the significance of that.

The World Bank can praise you when you organise forums and debates, invite civil society to spend two days discussing housing, two days discussing health and education, hear what they have to say. But the difference is if you create a structure of power, where people discuss the income, discuss the expenditure and decide the investments. That is incompati-

ble.

And so the participation of the European Anti-Capitalist Left.

A Tony Blair and Spanish prime minister Aznar put together their final plans for building Fortress Europe in Seville, key elements of the anti-capitalist left from across Europe have met in Madrid to affirm that another Europe is possible.

The fourth Conference of the European Anti-Capitalist Left, hosted by the Spanish Espacio Alternativo brought together representatives from parties and currents in eleven European states including the English Socialist Alliance, the Scottish Socialist Party, the Danish Red Green Alliance, French LCR, Portuguese Left Bloc and Rifondazione Comunista from Italy. Previous meetings in Porto, Paris and Brussels had opened up discussion between groups, begun to map out points of common analysis and set out basic agreements on joint action. Madrid has taken the debate a stage further.

Key to this was the deeper involvement of Rifondazione Comunista, Gennaro Migliore of RCI opened the conference outlining the profound crisis of the traditional left and the need for unity across Europe of the alternative anti-capitalist left.

From their different experiences delegates outlined a common process. In 1998/99 social democracy led 12 of the 15 EU member states and was able to dominate the main EU institutions. But rather than use this exceptional power position to break with neo-liberal policies it deepened this drive. Now we are faced by an EU dominated by an aggressive, xenophobic and reactionary right (led by Tony Blair!). But this is not a simple electoral move strengthening social resistance movement, seen on the streets of Nice, Tienen, Brussels and Barcelona. The question is how to give these social struggles a political form.

As a representative of the LCR put it, “we used to say we were blocked by the SP and CP but with their collapse we have space to operate in. We are in a race with the far right to occupy this space in the working class.

“Our class is not beaten - our task is to organise its defence and link it up with the anti-capitalist globalisation movement. These are complementary tasks.” The Conference outlined an alternative programme for Europe:

Against the Bush-Blair war drive and the growth of a European army - no war in Iraq, withdrawal from Afghanistan and for Israel troops out of Palestine; Against Fortress Europe - freedom of movement and equal rights for all; Against the undemocratic plans to build a small strong EU Executive directly in the service of European big capital, a war machine against the people."

For a radical democratic constituent process from below to allow the peoples and the working classes to truly decide what sort of Europe the want to live in.

Against the neo-liberal offensive - putting people before profits.

Confident that an alternative is possible, that for the first time in ages a political polarisation to the left of the social-liberal left has begun, the conference looked to the future deepening of collaboration between its participating groups.

Among other things this means mobilising with the social movements for the European Social Forum in Florence and planning further discussion for our next meeting at the end of the year in Copenhagen.

This will particularly focus on whether it is possible to prepare a common European platform for the European Parliament elections in 2004.

The Socialist Alliance and SSP must see themselves as part of this process - building a real common European anti-capitalist left identity.

Practically, in finally deciding to try to mount a collective campaign against Fortress Europe and in defence of the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers the conference outlined one way in which militants from right across Europe can work together in common cause.

Migrant workers protesting at the Seville summit, demanding work permits and the right to stay in Spain
Scandal of Labour’s war on asylum seekers

Terry Conway
New Labour have launched a veritable war on asylum seekers over the past few weeks, ably helped by their friends in the media. This government is preparing for the biggest assault on the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees that this country has ever seen, with the fourth “crack down” on asylum and immigration that we have seen in a decade.

The response of New Labour to the rise of the far right across Europe is to repeat the lies of the racists. But such a pandering to prejudice by the governmental parties is partly responsible for the growth of the SNP and their like in other countries in the first place.

Their racist and reactionary policies give credibility to the idea that asylum seekers are to blame for the real problems that other poor people experience – unemployment, bad housing, lack of services. In fact immigrants contributed more in taxes in the financial year 1999-2000 than they used in services.

We need to build on campaigns like that in Sighthill in Glasgow, where after the murder of a young Kurdish asylum seeker the local community united with the asylum seekers who had been dumped in the area, behind the banner Sighthill United against Racism and Poverty.

Blair and Blunkett don’t tell us that Britain takes far fewer asylum seekers than much poorer countries like Iraq and Pakistan.

The press doesn’t point out that the number of refugees and immigrants who came to Britain last year make up a miniscule 0.12% of the population and that the number of people seeking asylum in Britain fell last year.

Armed by Britain
Now we need to demand that many refugees and asylum seekers – fleeing from wars our government has backed, or that have been fought with arms sold by Britain are being locked up in soul-destroying immigration prisons.

And those that are fleeing poverty and starvation are also often running from the effects of policies imposed by governments of the rich and powerful countries and the institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, which they control.

Globalisation has meant an increasing gap between rich and poor. Structural adjustment has led both to the decimation of what little public services existed in many parts of the world, but also in mass starvation as crops are diverted to export in order to pay off debts, rather than to feed local people.

But then when refugees and asylum seekers flee this devastation in search of a better life – sometimes in search of life itself, they are met with draconian laws and with racism.

Already under the previous law brought in by New Labour.

Asylum seekers, including women and children, are imprisoned in detention centres and prisons though they are not accused of any crime.

Although the hated voucher system is being abolished, people are left to live on only 70% of impossibly low income support level.

Asylum seekers are being forcibly moved to parts of the country where they are isolated from their own communities and have no support services.

The proposals in the new Immigration and Asylum Bill currently going through parliament are even worse.

As well as increasing the number of people who are in detention so that at any one time 4000 people will be imprisoned,

They want to segregate children of asylum seekers into separate schools.

They plan to use the RAF to beef up deportations, and to move the navy to patrol the seas.

They seek to disperse children and young people who have fled to this country on their own.

The immigration service is being told that it can reject applications from particular countries – reintroducing the Tories’ hated “white list” (which Labour opposed when they were in opposition) through the back door.

Quotas are being set for the numbers of deportations. But the flight back is only just beginning.

Prisoners from Yarl’s Wood

Keyode Abdul HMP Bedford EMM674
Emmanuel Konkore HMP Bedford EMM675
Marcus Jacobs HMP Bedford EHS392
Taneka Kuba HMP Bullyingdon GJ7444
Nana Montefioro YOI Gipsy Parva HPF505
Kloes Gaba CTR540
Yasmine Bidun Gibe HMP Chelmsford FM9619
HM Prison St Loyes St, Bedford MK40 1HG
HM Prison St Loyes St, Bedford MK40 1HG
PO Box 50, Homerton, E06 2WD
PO Box 50, Bicester, OX25 1WD
10 Tiger’s Rd, Wigston, Leicester LE18 4TN
PO Box 547, Hatfield Rd, London SW1 3HS
200, Springfield Rd, Chelmsford, Essex, CM20LQ

The prisoners above are detainees from Yarl’s Wood who have been transferred to prison following their removal from the Yarl’s Wood detention centre. You can add your name and address to the back together with the detainees name to a petition that will be delivered to the Home Office.

In your covering letter please mention that you have been put in touch with them via the Campaign to Stop Abribitary Detention at Yarl’s Wood.

For further information contact Campaign to Stop Abribitary Detention at Yarl’s Wood 07786 517379

Key things you should know about immigration detention

Immigration prisoners have not been accused of or convicted of any crime.

Immigration prisoners are rarely given full written reasons for their detention, making it very difficult to challenge the legality of that decision.

The UK’s detention is for an indefinite period – sometimes over 2 years. Malta and the UK are the only European countries to have no time limits.

The procedures under which detention takes place are arbitrary and unaccountable and not subject to judicial oversight.

Medical provision for detainees is completely inadequate – there are a number of cases where asylum seekers have not been treated correctly when they needed it and have then subsequently been taken to hospital in hand-cuffs.

Detainees are neither provided with adequate legal representation or the financial means to access it appropriatel.

Some asylum seekers are in actual prisons usually being locked up for 22 hours a day.

Some detainees have been coerced into signing forms to drop their asylum appeals.

Detention criminalises asylum seekers and thus feeds the reactionary idea that all refugees and asylum seekers are either not or they are detained – are criminals.

"Freedom is the sound outside the gates" End immigration detention!

A SUCCESSFUL fringe meeting at UNISON conference on the question of detention of asylum seekers heard Haynes and Harlington’s Labour MP John McDonnell make an impassioned attack on government policy.

McDonnell has been one of a small group of MPs who have met regularly with Barbed Wire Britain and is an active supporter of the Campaign to Close Harmondsworth.

He suggested that if Labour supporters had been out of the country for a number of years and recently returned they would find it very difficult to believe that there was a Labour rather than a Tory government in office.

He argued that policy on asylum was the clearest indication of how far new Labour have travelled to the right, and that far from undercutting support for fascists, the government was doing their work for them.

Arguing for open borders, McDonnell also called for wealth to be globalised so that people are not forced to leave their homes because of starvation conditions brought about by unfair trade.

McDonnell backed up his arguments with real-life stories of human tragedies amongst asylum seekers in his constituency. He quoted a poem written by children in Harmondsworth detention centre: "Freedom is the sound outside the gates".

The meeting also heard from Nigerian-born Seun Oropo, an ex-Yarl’s Wood detainee, who emphasised what a huge difference campaigns on the outside could make. He called for people to contact those detainees from Yarl’s Wood who are currently languishing in prisons.

Practical discussion focused on the possibility of branches adopting detainees as a concrete way of developing solidarity.

Bill MacKeith of the Close Campfield campaign (right) speaking at the present outside Harmondsworth detention centre.

Extension of eligibility for family reunion

The Home Office has announced that their proposals to extend the eligibility for family reunion in immigration law will now also apply to those seeking asylum in the UK.

The changes will apply to refugees from the countries which are targets of the 1996 New World Fund Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and to those asylum seekers from the countries which have been identified by the UN as having responsibility for the tramp steamer disaster.

The changes will also apply to those asylum seekers from the countries which have been identified by the UN as having responsibility for the tramp steamer disaster.
**Week of action spreads message on asylum rights**

Before Blankett launched his war on asylum seekers, campaigners had already put in place plans to mount a fightback against the crackdown on asylum seekers.

Though no-one could have predicted the ferocity of what would ensue, New Labour has made it plain since being elected in 1997 that it would carry out - and strengthen further - the policy on asylum and immigration.

Knowing roughly the timetable of Blankett's plans in the immigration legislation, a conference in Manchester called by the major organisation designing the laws was a result of this campaign.

The fact that Blankett's plans have been denounced by reactionary rhetoric, which can only give succour to his cause, has thus further strengthened the importance of any alternative approach.

Campaigners up and down the country have built the week of action with street level vigils in many localities that have challenged government and media racism. Activities during the week have built on successes in most major towns and cities.

There has been some work in the trade union to build a successful emergency resolution at amicus-MSF conference, carried overwhelmingly despite the opposition of the TUC and the fringe meeting at UNISON conference on which we report here.

But trade union work needs to be developed on a more systematic basis. The support is there amongst activists, but work around asylum is unlikely to be a spontaneous priority for shop stewards fighting privatisation, low pay, low dependency and low pay, unless campaigners from the outside are there pushing it.

The lesson of the partial victory in职业 action, however, is that substantial trade union support is vital in turn back attacks on the government.

At a national level, the week of action started with a demonstration at Harmondsworth detention centre, one of the largest in Europe, which gave activists the opportunity to expose their practical solidarity with those facing a threat as the sharpest end of government policies - immigration prisons.

Some of the men, women and families at Harmondsworth detention centre were able to show their pleasure at seeing and hearing their counsellors by waving from their prams.

The ingenious of some of the protesters in getting through the fences, which are protected by a moat, may mean that future actions and negotiations may be permitted to follow the same route.

Several extra yards definitely make a difference, because they obstruct the closer communication that is possible by a range of Campfield detention centre near Oxford, where some detainees have been able to respond to our chants or hold up their own messages in a way visible to supporters outside.

The Harmondsworth protest was followed on Saturday by a huge march in Dungavel, the only immigration detention centre in Scotland, where speakers called the STUC to lead a mass campaign against immigration detention.

The same day there was also a picket of the new detention centre in Dover. Promoters there particularly focused on the fact that this new centre was opened immediately after the fire at Yarl's Wood, without any inquiry into its cause.

**London protest**

The culmination of the week was on Sunday, the demonstration on June 22, which saw nearly 5000 march in colourful protest through central London.

It was good to see such a range of banners parading through areas off the normal Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square march, with local campaigns mixed in with trade union banners and those of particular immigrant communities.

The march took a minutes silence in China Town to mark the anniversary of the 164 Chinese migrants who were found dead in a container in the Port of Algeciras in Spain. The silence was aimed at reaching the supposed safety of this country.

There were rallies at both ends of the demonstration, but much of the mood was reflected by a range of speakers of whom a majority were themselves asylum seekers, who told first hand of the realities of Britain's asylum system.

Many also pointed out that Britain's government had been key actors in causing the wars at which the asylum seekers were fleeing from them and others had flown in the first place.

The final rally was closed by Jeremy Corbyn MP, who also brought messages from Bill Morris, General Secretary of the T&G, who apologised for his absence. He had prior union business in Oxford. Given Morris' role in the fight against vouchers, his continued support was for not unexpected, but extremely welcome nevertheless.

All the events during and in the lead up to the week of action have meant that campaigners have been out putting the argument as to why asylum seekers should be welcome here to greater numbers of people. This begins to act as an effective counterweight to the racist rubbish spewed out by government and mainstream media.

More people have developed a greater understanding of the nature of the debate. But we face on immigration and asylum and the realities of immigration detention.

Asylum seekers and detainees have had to develop a campaign to confront the heartrending stories of their flights from terror and persecution, and the unwelcoming arms of the British state. Our activists need to inspire many through the resilience and courage of not just their resistances to these outrages.

The week was planned and executed through growing collaboration between four sponsoring organisations: Barbard Wire Britain, The Campaign Against Asylum Seekers, the National Civil Rights Movement and the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns.

Each of these campaigns fulfils a valuable and distinctive role, but it will be vital that this co-operation continues and deepens in the months ahead in batteling against the racist legislation this government is introducing and in combating its effects.

We need a massive political and media campaign of opposition to what the government is proposing, within which asylum seekers themselves are given the opportunity to take a leadership role.

This need to be combined with continuing work in support of the families and individuals whose lives have been devastated by the racist legislation and practices already in place.

Behind all the racist rhetoric of the government and media are myths claiming that there are no asylum seekers to house and feed.

**Defend the Roma Seven Stop ethnic cleansing**

The Roma community in Britain is facing attacks from several directions at the same time. There seems to be a concerted decision by the government to refuse asylum applications from Roma lieder in an attempt to undercut the increasing political effectiveness and cohesion of the community.

This is despite the fact that the Roma people have been targets of some of the most racist and xenophobic attacks in history in France, Italy and Germany.

In a deputation to Downing Street on June 6, The Trans- European Roma Federation told Tony Blair: "In the present political climate, we have become the scapegoats of right-wing extremists in all parts of Europe."

Including the UK.

TERF urged the Prime Minister to take on board the fact that Roma are the target of neo-Nazi groups bent on ethnic-cleansing of Gypsies. Several hundred Roma have been murdered and tens of thousands made to flee their homes.

"We appeal to you to allow Roma leaders, actively engaged in combating human rights abuses both here and abroad to stay in the UK so that they can continue these efforts," they continued. "This is contributing to the real, long-term solutions."

It is just as futile and inhuman to deport Roma back to countries in Eastern Europe who are applying for membership of the EU, as it is to allow local authorities to "move on" travellers who likewise have nowhere secure to live.

Declared government policy is to encourage Roma to buy land and set up private caravan sites. One such group purchased "Woodside", a site in Bedfordshire already licensed for 150 caravans.

"This is ethnic cleansing. UK style," says Cliff Codone, organizer of "Woodside" and chair of the National Roma Travellers Action Group. "We appeal to all those in the pro-asylum and anti-Nazi lobby to support the Roma Seven and Woodside."

A tent city has been set up and the campaign is appealing for support, as the eviction is expected any day.

Contact TERF at: ustbem2.motworld.com

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**Statistics to answer the damned lies**

**Home Secretary David Blunkett's speech in which he talked about the children of asylum seekers as being "aggressive" whose cases are the most despicable pieces of racist rhetoric**

"Screaming dirty words... "sewers of blood" speech in 1968. The fact that it was made by a Labour politician makes it doubly offensive.

But fortunately there has been a massive wave of protest in response. The National Union of Teachers agreed to stage a strong coordinated protest in 1999, and many local associations have launched petitions.

Teachers who work with asylum seekers know that many contribute a great deal to the schools where they are important political realities.

They also know first hand the trauma that many have suffered both in their home countries and from the injustices of the asylum system.

The opportunity to study and develop friendships with children of asylum seekers is of benefit to all our children.

Don't let David Blunkett take this away from them.

Let's swamp him with our opposition.**
Palestinians: On the wrong side of the road!

This was my first trip to Israel. I've read widely on Palestine and know a fair amount about it, yet seeing the reality before your eyes gives you a much more graphic sense of the political, social and economic situation than just reading from the printed page.

I went as a guest of the Workers Advice Centres (WAC), which was originally an information service, but that also provided legal assistance for Arab workers, who comprise nearly 20% of the population. It ran practical campaigns on securing welfare for unemployed people in East Jerusalem, after the authorities closed down the benefit office. It also continued to provide legal assistance for individual workers.

After a number of years of this activity it decided to try to organise a new trade union.

Histadrut is the internationally-recognised trade union, yet it is not a real trade union. It originated as a Zionist labour organisation to create jobs for Jews in Palestine. Until 1956 it did not allow Arabs to join, and even since it has done little for them. The government decided to introduce foreign labour, Histadrut agreed that they could be employed at lower rates than Israeli workers.

Histadrut used to be a major employer itself, but faced a big crisis when all its companies were privatised recently and as a result lost most of its membership. Riding on the tram from Tel Aviv to Haifa, the first thing that struck me was the militarisation of Israeli society. Everywhere there were men and women in uniform, some with heavy weapons nonchalantly slung across the shoulder (hoping with the safety catch off).

Israel is a paranoid society, in which "security" is a big industry. There are guards everywhere: many of them civilians, who check your bag when you enter a railway station, public buildings or even gardens. Indeed, you can imagine an economic crisis if peace reigned and all these people were put out of work.

I visited Majd al-Krum, an Arab village, really a large slum, with a population of 11,500. It sits on the slopes of a valley where five Arab villages are spread. Through the valley runs a road that splits it in half.

On the other side, on a higher site, lies the city of Carmel, a Jewish city built on confiscated Arab land. In this valley there are two communities, as different as night and day.

On the Carmel side is a sea of opulence, covered with greenery. There is no shortage of water here. On the other side you see an arid picture, a neglected landscape, houses rising on the craggy, barren slopes. There is a water shortage, not because of any technical difficulties but because these people are Arabs.

The flow of Carmel is treated better than the Arabs on the other side of the valley. Even though they are Israeli citizens they are denied the same rights as Jewish citizens and they are denied the resources which the Jews have.

The richness of Carmel looks down on the other side of the valley seemingly mocking the Arabs and filling them with envy of their true place in Israeli society - at its very bottom.

But even this is not enough. There are some Arab houses on the wrong side of the road further down the valley. Carmel wants them to cross the road to be supposed to belong. They want to develop the Jewish "side" but keep the Arabs in the way. They have bought some of their houses, and they are seeking to pressure the rest to move from homes in which they have lived for years.

No Arabs can live in Carmel. They must cross the road to where they belong! Samia Khobab, a woman activist in Majd al-Krum, described the situation as "third world over here, first world over there".

This is Israel, a colonialist and deeply racist society. The same traits are reflected elsewhere, in different ways.

I was shown around Jaffa, originally an Arab city (with a small Jewish population), by Asma Aburah, a young Arab Israeli woman, who is the chairperson of WAC. Jaffa is just outside Tel Aviv. As Tel Aviv expands, Jaffa is needed for housing for Jews, and the town is being "developed" with luxury apartments.

In the shadow of one big block I saw a couple of rough and poor one storey houses of bloody minded Jaffa Arabs who will not move. As you walk around Jaffa, a neglected city, you see islands of opulence, as if you have a "first world" city co-existing with a "third world" city in random arrangement, which makes a mockery of the word planning.

Jaffa is an old port that has been left to rot. In the harbour is a fishing fleet that supplemenst the needs of families. Outside Jaffa, again these people are in the wrong place. The fishing fleet has to move to redevelop the harbour as a marina for rich Israelis. Capitalism will, of course, take the money of a few Jews, but to show there are no hard feelings.

This fleet might have to travel further for their fish, but no matter. Such is the path of progress in Israel.

While the Arabs suffer national oppression in Israel there is also a class divide which cuts across communities. The Arab leaders of the council in Jaffa, associated with the Israeli Labour Party, have gone along with the plan to "re-develop" Jaffa. This will bring plenty of money into the town, but it is unlikely that many Arabs will see much of it.

Everywhere there is national oppression, some members of the oppressed minority will make their peace with the ruling power to further their own interests at the expense of the majority. In South Africa for example there has been the entrenchment of a small number of black people whilst the majority remain in shanty towns.

I visited the WAC office in Nazareth, the only predominately Arab city in Israel. However, it has suffered the consequences of a new Jewish town, Upper Nazareth (or Nazareth Il), built near-by, overlooking it from a hill-top, like a fortress.

Two activists of WAC, Khitam Na'amneh and Manal Jbour showed me around. They told me that Nazareth used to have a thriving market but since the building of Upper Nazareth and the arrival of hypermarkets this has declined. When I visited, the old town centre, where the market used to be, was lifeless.

The WAC has mainly but not exclusively concentrated on organising Arab workers (it was involved in a campaign in a Heftion Factory which involved both Arab and Jewish workers). Arab
**Key role played by Israeli ‘Refusers’**

The crisis in Israeli society has been deepened by the Israeli incursions into the West Bank. A statement by 52 young people refusing to participate in the oppression of the Palestinian people marked the first collective refusal to serve for some years. It was followed by a statement of over 50 army reservists that they would not serve in the occupied territories. A substantial section of the population is determined to refuse to accept the call to serve in the settlements’. Military service is compulsory for Israeli Jews, save for the ultra-orthodox, who may choose to serve in the Orthodox community. But even they are forced to serve in the army. The propaganda of the Israeli war machine presents this service as defending ‘Israel democracy’.

I met with a young number of students, from 16 to 18, involved in the Forum in Support of Conscientious Objectors. They were somewhat shy with somebody who had travelled from abroad to meet them. However, once they opened up, the discussion showed that unlike the reservists they were asking questions about the very foundations of Israeli society. They told me about the racist attitude of many of their fellow school/classmates, most of whom never come into contact with Arabs, except when they go to an Arab village to buy some cheap goods at a market, or maybe one of them serves them. "They don’t deserve water and electricity," was a comment summed which this attitude up. They feared that change would be very slow to come about because of what they considered to be the brainwashing of young Israeli Jews.

Nasimi commented that ‘Instead of the army being a tool in the hands of the country, the country is a tool in the hands of the army.’

While their views on a solution were different they all agreed that the starting point was Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. They also believed that Arab Israelis should be full citizens, with all the rights that Jews have.

My impression was that these young people tend to feel somewhat isolates, pointing to the fact that there are few people in their classes who have taken their stand. There is a lot of anger against them from their fellow students. But they are taking a stance which they feel they are morally obliged to take whatever the consequences. Although many of them have parents who are sympathetic, their decision, nevertheless, has the potential to turn them into social outcasts.

Yet they represent a trend in Israeli society which runs far deeper than might first appear. It struck me that these young people do not really have any other option. They desire the support of the international labour movement to give them a sense that there is an international movement which is with them, recognising the courage of their stand against the injustice and racism which is a cancer in Israeli society.

In particular, those who suffer imprisonment as a result of their refusal should receive letters which show that there is an international movement growing which supports their stand.

At the time of writing two members of the Forum, Yigal Rosenberg and Yair Hilou, have been given their fourth and ten-day prison sentence. Send letters of support to them via the Forum (e-mail: matzpoon@yahoocom).

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**Palestine Solidarity**

In Britain: Orthodox Jews join Palestine Solidarity demonstration

Orthodox Jews in London have joined Palestinian Solidarity with a demonstration outside Palestine House. The demonstration was largely made up of members of the Orthodox Jewish community. The demonstration was organized by the Orthodox Jewish Council for Palestine.

The demonstration was led by Rabbi Shalom Aron, the head of the Orthodox Jewish Council for Palestine. The demonstration was attended by several hundred Orthodox Jewish supporters, who held signs reading "Free Palestine" and "Boycott Israel".

The demonstration was met with a counter-demonstration by pro-Israeli supporters, who held signs reading "Support Israel" and "Boycott Boycotts".

The demonstration was peaceful and lasted for approximately one hour, during which time speakers from both sides addressed the crowd.

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**TyneSide Palestine Solidarity**

A new branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign was launched in May, initiated by a secondary school teacher who recently worked in Palestine with the International Solidarity Movement.

Our first meeting was not only well attended but also influential. The meeting was chaired by John Holman, Director of the campaign.

Our first public event was a stall in Newcastle City Centre. We had a good reception from shoppers and good discussions with people about the issues. We also distributed leaflets and talked to shoppers. Local trade unions and several trade union branches were affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Local campaigns have sprung up around the country, extending the Genea of the campaign.

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**International Solidarity**

The key role played by Israeli ‘Refusers’ has been highlighted by the recent crisis in Israeli society. The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories has been met with widespread resistance, including a growing number of people refusing to serve in the army. This resistance has been supported by a range of groups, including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and local groups across the country. The crisis in Israeli society has been deepened by the Israeli incursions into the West Bank, which have been met with widespread opposition and resistance. The key role played by Israeli ‘Refusers’ has been a significant factor in this resistance, highlighting the need for international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people.
Wrong to vote for Chirac (1)

SHOULD socialists have voted for Chirac in the second round of the French presidential election? I quote from ‘Left Mikado’, an electronic bulletin produced by the Voix des Travailleurs current in the LCR (my own anarchist translation):

“The slogan ‘blocking the road for today’, which becomes the starting point of all the confusions and manoeuvres. The false evidence becomes gospel truth, and the charge is those who do not vote Chirac support Le Pen. The far left is the target of this political campaign, as are all those who, whatever they did with their ballot paper, immediately voted to preserve the street in their thousands. “Breaking with this political absolutism — used as an indictment, by the guilty and responsible themselves — against their own victims, the population — is a vital necessity for the workers’ movement, for all those who want to make concrete an instrument of freedom of expression and control and not a machine for duping the masses.

“Workers have no interest in giving their vote to Le Pen, as it would mean destroying their independence and their dignity. Some Communist Party militants are right to argue that the Constitution has a move without consequences. Wrong, there is no move without consequences.

“We understand those who sincerely do not know another way to block Le Pen except voting Chirac, but they are wrong to believe that this move will not turn against them, that it will not be used tomorrow, as it is today, to silence the discordant voices of the women and men who want to oppose the neo-liberal policies of the future government which we may get. “However together we may make something of this experience. It will open people’s eyes, and free their consciences from these strange delusions which want to convince us that it is in our interest to vote for our enemy. We will say to the republican front, and prepare the united front of all the workers and the youth.

“Are we inevitably in favour of stopping fascist candidates at any price? Should socialists have voted Conservative in the Clapier on Wednesday, and fascist in Brest, a normally Conservative ward where the FNF won a seat? If opinion polls in France have predicted that Le Pen would beat Jospin for a place in the next round, then Le Pen and Laguiller have stood and men in favour of whom?

Campbell MacGregor

Wrong to vote for Chirac (2)

In the first round of the French Presidential elections, the Trotskyists made an historic breakthrough in getting three million votes, with the LCR getting the biggest portion of the youth vote.

It was also a good development that Trotskyists got more votes than ever before. Unfortunately the LCR made a major mistake in supporting a vote for the conservative bourgeois candidate: Chirac in the second round.

The Revolutionary Manifcest tradition is not to support bourgeois candidates or parties, but to argue for the workers to fight independently for their class interests in the industrial, political, and social fields.

Chirac should not have been supported in the second Presidential round. He represented the conservative wing of the bourgeoisie, which is planning massive attacks on workers, ethnic minorities, and youth.

Chirac is proposing to lower the penal age from 13 to 10, and go after third generation immigrants by integrating the National Police with the gendarmerie. Maltreated people, especially children, of the ethnic minorities may have cheered when Chirac won the elections. They won’t long for as the Chirac administration’s plans become clear.

Since when did Revolutionary Manifets follow the mistakes of oppressed elements? To take two extreme examples: certain Jews voted for Hitler in the 1930s thinking that he would rein in the extreme Nazi anti-Semitism, and there were Black people on the FN demonstration on May Day.

The bourgeois press in France are calling Raffarin’s government ‘Juppe’s revenge’.”

Raffarin’s government is proposing to raise the retirement age for workers. If the G8affairs from the government workers will lose the 35-hour week, which despite its watered down character and cut-out clauses for the (Employers) represented a major concession

Le Pen: correct to mobilise against him

that the most radicalised working class in Western Europe had evaded from the ruling class. There is obviously a distinction between conservative bourgeois politicians and fascists. However, there is no real possibility of a fascist government at present. Rather the fascists are being used as a spectre to disentertain workers from the need to fight the bourgeois programme.

The workers should be alert for a boycott position, or better still an organised spoiling of ballot papers, preparing the working class for the battles against both anti-working class and anti-ethnic minority politicians. The balance of forces was in Chirac’s favour. The balance of forces was in Chirac’s favour. Due to Le Pen getting into the second round the Socialist Democrats and Stalinists managed to get the working class tied to a viciously anti-working class politician.

It was correct to initiate and participate in demonstrations against Le Pen. Trotskyists will fight for this to be the beginning of a campaign of strikes and demonstrations against the programme of a right wing government.

Fascism has been strengthened by the drift to the right in the second round. They gained another 700,000 votes. Unless the working class puts up serious resistance to Chirac’s attacks, fascism will be further strengthened. Fascism grows out of the despair of the middle class and growing lumpen proletariat, who are taken in by their anti-capitalist demagogy.

Gaulism will grow in the parliamentary elections among the middle class because the main workers’ parties supported Chirac in the second round of the Presidential elections. Layers of the middle class will vote Gaulist because they see them as all-powerful, and follow them because they feel that’s the only real force in French politics.

The correct lesson of the first round result was that the disappointed reformist and Stalinist parties are on no way forward.

In the present situation workers’ interests can only be defended by extra-parliamentary action, and a boycott was the clearest way to express this.

Marian Brain.

A reply to SWP’s Chris Harman

left abstention would have boosted ballot share for Le Pen

The June edition of the SWP’s Socialist Review carries a rather vitriolic attack by Chris Harman on the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) over its call for a vote against Le Pen (and thereby for Chirac) in the second round of the recent presidential elections. Chris Harman insists that this was the political equivalent of support for the treacherous popular front in France in the 1930s. To compound such a ridiculous allegation he then goes on to compare the policy of the LCR with the call by German social democracy (the SPD), in the presidential elections in Germany in 1932, for a vote against Hindenburg against Hitler.

This reflects a rather sterile approach to the application to political principle, taking it out of its context and repeating it by rote.

The popular fronts of the 1930s involved strategic alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie, and bourgeois parties, as a conscious alternative to promoting the mass actions of the working class. But how can the mass political slogan of the French presidential election “vote for the crook rather than the fascist” be seen as an alliance with thrives (strategic or otherwise) with Chirac or the RPR?

To ask the question is to answer it. Chris Harman goes on to imply that a vote for Chirac would sow illusions in the workers, but how can “vote for the crook rather than the fascist” or having yourself sprayed with disinfectant, as many did, after voting for Chirac, be seen as sowing illusions in him? It makes no sense. And these were the actions, and slogans, not just of a few left voters but the mass reaction of millions of people who were determined to cast a vote against Le Pen as well as confronting him on the streets.

How does this compare with the vote for Hindenburg in 1932 — which was, by the way, a three-way contest between Hindenburg, Hitler, and the German Communist Party (KPD)?

Not all. The issue then was to strengthen the KPD as a bulwark against Hitler. The SPD called for a vote for Hindenburg as a conscious alternative to the mobilisation of the working class to stop Hitler — who was choosing his moment to
France

Credibility and division

Yvan Lemaître

Our candidates got 1.25% of the vote (1,634 in the areas where we stood, 320,094 in total). Olivier Ourisson got 1.19%, 304,500 votes. The Lamberists who stood 183 candidates got 0.81% and 81,597 votes. The total of 2.76% is far below the 10.44% the far left got in the Presidential elections, but it is necessary to compare like with like.

In the legislative elections in 1997, the far left received 2.2%. Thus there is a progression because of an essential revival of militancy that made it possible to present a much more significant number of candidates.

The far left was not able to find a unitary framework that would have enabled it to resist the political process through its own antidemocratic character. It is a lost opportunity.

We were not able to take the measure to maintain the momentum of the presidential elections.

It is confirmed that it has become a national political force with weight.

If there has been a failure, it is relative and must be analyzed in the framework of the country's political forces and their evolution. The division of the far left, visa-avis the extreme right and the governmental right, was defined by many of our party leaders.

The effect of the useful vote on the left was also a persistence of the political system. The overwhelming majority of voters who were well known in their areas was certainly a factor – as was shown, in reverse, by the excellent result of 5.47% for Le Pen.

From this point of view, the results of the legislative elections confirm the relationship of forces: the dynamism of the far left was not enough to compensate for the weakness of its local base. Only a daring policy aimed at regrouping the forces of the left and the extreme left of the plural left, which perhaps would have made it possible to compensate for local weakness. It was thus the result of an agreement with LD.

However, there is a confrontation when it could have taken initiatives itself. LD thought it could use the presidential elections to confirm its supremacy on the electoral front and the majority of voters – in agreement with their candidate – to appear as a new party with candidates in every constituency in the legislative elections. This reasoning is not consonant with the actual movements.

The issue was not that LO could have abstained in the second round of the presidential election, because by the first round votes for Olivier that showed the error of their reason.

This electoral-bloc realignment of our two tendencies corresponds to an affirmation of the need for unity, openness, democracy. The agrarian and monarchical way in which LD defined its programme of state should be received.

The general majority of those in which we were, in competition, not with a theoretically democratic and non-marxist party opening operates within the same working class and popular electorate, indicates clearly for openness and transformation, for renewal corresponding to the major social and political evolutions.

New responsibilities

This re-balancing between LO and the LCR must be understood as a development since 1995, when Arlette Laguiller, for the first time got more than 5% in the face of the eruption of the vast movement of November-December.

These were the first two great demonstrations of a revival of social conflict and rupture with the parties of the government left. This revival has limits but it was also confirmed at the political level by progress of far left – as well as by the growth of the social movement in all its forms.

This right was frustrated by this revelation, it is not used to present itself as a minority opposition in the face of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the trade-union blocs. It does not know how to relate to the new social movements. On the contrary, it tends to retreat into itself.

At the moment when social democracy is becoming neoliberal, and where Stalinism is collapsing, the construction of working class and popular unity of the day. The results of the presidential and legislative elections must be assessed in this light.

Today it is necessary for us to take the initiatives necessary to contribute to the emergence of such a front to break support from militant realities. These elections were based on the relationship of forces created by twenty years of class offensives, which can be read through the distorting prism of electoral results. These are only optical filters.

Things are less unfavourable in the world of work than it appears. They show primarily the shift between the potential of the social movement itself, and consequently our tasks. It is time for debate, and measurement and through this the formulation of a policy for the battles ahead and a regroupment of those who are the breaking with the parties of the governmental left.

(From Rouge, weekly paper of the LCR)
The Socialist Alliance – a united front of a new type? A reply to Alex Callinicos

Alan Thornett

Alex Callinicos’s article ‘Socialist Diversity’ in April’s Socialist Review raises a number of interesting issues which are the subject of detailed analysis in this article. Thornett discusses the various radical movements that have been thrown up in response to capitalist globalisation since 1989, and argues that the US war drive since September 11th, and then goes on to discuss the role of the left, and the Socialist Alliance, within these movements. He focuses, in particular, on the United States, or as he puts it “the relevance of the united front today”.

This article certainly confirms the positive development the SWP has made in recent years in seeking to break from a sectarian and isolationist past. It is a development which has come, most importantly, through the SWP’s involvement in the Socialist Alliance, the Socialist Alliance and Globalist Alliance (RSA). The Socialist Alliance has undergone an important development since, given its size and resources (as well as the scale of the SWP), and the SWP occupies a pivotal position on the British left, and carries a prime responsibility for its future. Alex Callinicos characterises the political period we are currently in as “a new era of mass movements” which developed during the 1990s. This is true, but it needs more definition.

In fact the new period arises out of changes in economic conditions in the mid-1990s (the end of the post war boom), which created a more defensive situation for the working class internationally. This was followed by the rise of neo-liberalism under Reagan and Thatcher in the second half of the 1980s. The early 1990s saw the fall of the Berlin wall, the collapse of the USSR, the crisis of most of the Western European social democracies, and the rightward march of European Social Democracy – which accepted the neo-liberal agenda whole-sale under pressure from European integration and the Maastricht project. Most of the left, internationally, was disoriented by the collapse of Stalinism, but began to regenerate by the end of 1990. This process was boosted, in Europe, by mass strikes open up previous such initiatives, again reflecting the positive political outlook of the SWP.

After September 11th US imperialism responded with a war drive designed to reshape the world in its own strategic interests. We now have a single super-power with virtually unchallengeable military force to back up its neo-liberal offensive, and support a worldwide alliance on democratic and civil rights and the world is a much more dangerous place.

Crucially, however, this has not disturbed the anti-globalisation movement. The events at Porto Alegre were as big this year, and 500,000 people demonstrated in Barcelona. In Italy we have seen the huge success of the Genoa Social Forum reflected in massive demonstrations of anti-racism unity and powers movements and the USA movement is regrouping.

The fight-back against the US war drive has been the tremendous resistance of the Palestinians, alongside the anti-war movement itself – which has partly merged with the anti-globalisation movement. In Britain there has been a series of major demonstrations against the war and in solidarity with the Palestinians.

We, therefore, face a contradictory situation. The world is in a much more dangerous place, with increased military spending as well as imperialist power than any imperial power in history. Yet, certainly in Britain, there is an important radicalisation, particularly amongst young people. This reflects itself in the’two trends, people power and the various resistance movements; in particular the anti-war, anti-globalisation, movement, and solidarity with the Palestinians.

The potential for growth and regeneration of the left has never been greater, and has never been greater, and has never been greater, and has never been greater, and has never been greater. This is a key issue in the SWP’s policy. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role.

The aim of the SWP is to campaign and organise on a mass scale to defend the Shinseki government, the AFA, and the Campaign for Palestinian Rights. The SWP’s new perspective is that the SA is simply a number of currently existing united fronts – the anti-war coalition, the Anti-Nazi League, and the Campaign for Palestinian Rights. The SA’s aim is to campaign and organise on a mass scale to defend the Shinseki government, the AFA, and the Campaign for Palestinian Rights. These are new, non-standard fronts which have been created by the new political situation.

This is an important point about the SA’s political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role. It is important that the current direction of the SWP is in line with the rest of the left, particularly in its anti-war role. This is its political role and its organisational role.
that of a party as a united front campaign. The choice of leadership is not just based on the requirements of campaigning activities but on the political considerations of running a political organization.

Alex Callinicos's purpose, in this article, therefore, seems to be to make acceptable to the SWP's membership an attempt to make it more defensible. His answer is to argue that whilst the SA is indeed a united front, it is united front of a special kind. Whilst some of the other 'mass movements' of today - such as Globalise Resistance and the Naza League - correspond to the classical united front organised by Leon Trotsky in the early days of the Communist International (Comintern), he argues, the SA is different - but only in so far as it is a 'united front of a special kind'.

This doesn't hold water, at least in the political of the united front as argued by Trotsky, or Callinicos rightly points out, insofar as the differentiation of united fronts between mass parties - communist and social democratic - in defence of the working class, or again the threat of fascism.

Such mass communist parties do not exist in Britain today, and where they do, such as with the Communist Party in France, it has been in coalition with social democratic parties to attack the working class.

Callinicos also argues, to sustain this viewpoint, that both the Comintern and were minorities.

But the SA, as a political party, the parties of the Comintern in the early 1920s had the massive authority of the Communist Party and a potential of 5 or 6 years old, behind them. Much of the activity of the SA in Britain left to the people the Comintern could address them in a way which is incomparable with today's movements.

The issue, however, is not what corresponds today to the classic united front in Britain, to the Comintern of the early 1920s, or fought for by Trotsky against fascistism, nor to the German Communist Party of the late 1920s and 30s. We can draw the general lessons from those experiences, but we cannot reproduce them.

The united front, as developed by the Comintern, has not been based specifically on united front alliances within the mass party - as it did within social democracy. But alliances between revolutionary organisations and reformist currents on the left of social democracy or with non-revolutionary forces outside of social democracy, with some same principles apply - such as the situation of the party, but the forces involved are more limited because the party are in different political conditions.

So where does this leave the debate? The united front as we understand it today - the non-clas-sist united front or bloc - is a coalition of forces, reformist and revolutionary, organised around a particular issue, and a democratic and inclusive framework.

This fits the ANL (although many would question the democratic framework), Globalis Resistance, and the Campaign for Palestinian Rights.

It does not fit the Socialist Alliance or the SSP. As argued above, the SA is a political party with an extensive political programme and a separate party in the political issues. It does not just mobilise in elections, but also in the trade unions and on a full range of campaigning issues.

"March separately strike together" makes no sense as a policy for a political organisation - only for a single issue campaign.

Even Globalis Resistance - which sees itself against global capitalism - is a single issue campaign in this sense. It does not have a manifesto like a political organisation. It does not offer a solution - other than "we want different world". And it is not ideological, in that you don't have to be a socialist to join it as you do the SA.

So why do Alex Callinicos and the SSP stick so hard on this point? The answer lies in the future. The development of the SA into a full blown political party is seen as an incompatible with the existence and functioning of the SSP itself. Callinicos wants to defend the "organisational independence" which a united front provides, rather than the organisational integration which a new party implies.

Callinicos is rightly very positive about the Scottish Socialist Party, which SWP members in Scotland joined a year ago. He rejects the SSP, however, as a model for SA and since it requires the agitational activity of the component parts to go through the SSP, SSP members in Scotland, for example, sell Scottish Socialist Voice public and not Socialist Worker.

Alex Callinicos says that the problem with the SSP model is that the SWP in England is too big for it! It is true that the relationship is different and therefore the exact model may not fit. But the idea that the main problem is that the SSP is too big makes no sense.

To argue that if the SSP in England was, for example, 1000 members, it would be all right to have a new party of the SA, but because it is five or six thousand it is wrong, is hardly a political argument. The logic of this position is that in the end it will be the SSP which will itself build an alternative to Blairism, and not a broad party.

It is true that the SSP is not the only model for a new party of this type. It was shaped for the specific situation in Scotland, just as the Iranian equivalent, the FTR was shaped by Iranian realists. But there are some general principles that apply to the building of such parties that are not specific to the local situation.

There has to be a democratic and inclusive structure - which allows the existent revolutionary organisations to be structured into it. Democracy must not be seen as a luxury, or a secondary issue, but an essential prerequisite for effective coalition building.

This means transparency in decision making, the accountability of leaders and the space for political debate as to the tactics and strategy for the movement. In the SSP this is achieved by means of political platforms, whereas in the SA it is achieved by means of a protocol on their inclusion on the executive committees as the time of elections.

There needs to be a centralisation of agitational work. It may take time to achieve this - and the route may not be the same or as quick as in Scotland - where the Scottish Socialist Alliance had built a reputation through mass campaigns such as that over water tax - but it is essential it happens.

Such a party needs to have a public and programme. It may be difficult to go quickly to a single paper sold publicly, as with the SSP; given this, the policy of the revolutionary organisations in the SA and the greater overall weight of the SWP. But if the Alliance is deprived of its own paper it is also deprived of the political development and common experience which the paper and its accompanying newspaper provides.

There needs to be a regular forum for political discussions, at every level of the organisation, as issues come up, and a paper can help provide that. There is an ongoing debate on this between the SWP and the other forces in the SA on this issue.

The SA in England is not ready yet to become a full blown party. It has moved significantly in that direction, but further development is necessary. But becoming a party needs to be seen as the next goal we are working towards. In the end an organisation like the SA will have to go forward or will be forced to go backwards.

Alex Callinicos is right to argue that the SA or the SSP should not become revolutionary parties at the present time, since in current political conditions this would simply reduce them back to their revolutionary components.

He is right to stress that the best way to win those in the Alliance today who are not revolutionaries to a revolutionary position is to work with them within a broader formation.

Those left groups within the SA who argue that it should become a revolutionary party immediately potentially jeopardise the existence of the Alliance - since of they were successful it would break up.

But this does not mean that the revolutionaries within the SA do not want it to become a revolutionary party when that becomes possible. It is essential that they remain organised in the SA as in the SSP, otherwise the revolutionary component can be lost. The aim of revolutionary tendencies must be to win the whole party to revolutionary Marxism when political conditions are ready for that.

And that means remaining organised inside such a party in order to play an active political role in the development of the organisation and in order to make the difficult decisions as to when to propose that it adopts a revolutionary programme.

The dynamic of recomposition which creates the SA and the SSP is also a dynamic towards revolutionary unity. And the evolution of the SWP is to break free of that direction as well. There is no previous example, that I am aware of, of an organisation of the size and importance of the SWP breaking from one such a situation. The SWP is attempting to do so.

At this time one of the many of the issues which have traditionally divided the British far left - in particular the class nature of the USSR and entry into the Labour Party which were the main divides on the British far left for 50 years - are losing their significance.

The Labour Party exists, and the vast bulk of the far-left is outside of the Labour Party. The SNP in Britain has had discussions with the SWP; the IST (the trade union grouped in the SWP) is having discussions with the Fourth International. Even the exchange of views represented by these articles represent a new level of engagement between the various components of the far left. (1)

Further developments will not happen overnight. But times are changing and opportunities must not be missed and develop ourselves. Meanwhile the task is to re-establish contact with all new broad parties that can be useful to the working class in today's conditions.

In practical terms the SWP leadership should reach out to local elections that it did not want a repeat of the difficulties after the General Election - where the dynamic created by the campaign was allowed to continue. Organisations like the Socialist Alliance did not function.

Team built in maintaining a much higher profile as a national and local level - around a whole myriad of events, such as the recent decisions of the National Council to hold a trade union activists' meeting, a conference on Europe and a conference on world politics aimed at SWP putting people will strengthen that healthy trajectory. In practice the Alliance will become more and more of a party.

The SWP needs to grasp the nettle on the future of the Socialist Alliance - and support that development, at least as well as sometimes in practice.

(1) Versions of this article and the Globalis Resistance letter will be published in Critique Communist - the theoretical magazine of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Globalis Resistance and anti-capitalist campaigns can also build on the basis of less defined and more limited policies than the Socialist Alliance

The Socialist Alliance is now considering its position in the Labour Party general election campaign.
Ireland electorate’s thump down to opposition parties

Joe Craig

S

o, despite the brown

cheques, the off

acounts and tax
evasion, the
disatisfaction over health ser-

vices and growth in inequa-

ty, Fianna Fáil (FF) are back in government following the
election on May 17.

Their vote increased from 38.9% in 1991 to 41.5% but because of clever
vote management and trans-

fers from other parties it will

obtain around 49% of the
electorate but 56% of the seats,
just short of an absolute
majority. If five independ-

ents, who might more accu-

rately be called Independent

Fianna Fáilers, are included the

FF majority rises to 59 and

has its majority.

It is noteworthy that despite that he formed a new coalition with
the Progressive Democrats (PDs) – Ireland’s unashamed
Thatcherites. Noteworthy because despite their success, it is widely recognized that the
economy that brought Fianna Fáil the election has
declerated sharply and the

severe challenges loom

sharply.

This is what lies behind

Aherne’s remark that he seeks a strong government

aument. He knows that the

populist strategy of the

ousands are to be

millionaires, not to

in the 1 to 2 billion euro

the public finances and with

lack of a new Treaty referendum. As a strong government as

ilable will be necessary and the

PDs can help provide the

political cover.

Fianna Fáil

I

an election studied

significant

now is saying that ‘the

Government (could) be a one

party state in which Fianna

Fáil (is) the only credible

candidate for power’ (Fintan

O’Toole, Irish Times).

It commands the allegiance of a significant section of the

working class and its vote in

Dublin and other urban areas is

not a great deal below that in the rest of the

state. This means a signifi-

ant section of workers
deploy no evidence of political

sciousness of themselves

as a class and accept the

political arguments advanced by their class

enemy. While Fianna Fáil is

its coalition partner the

Progressive Democrats pre-

ented themselves as the

only party that could ‘mind’

FF and prevent its arrogance

and corruption getting out of

control. Such a cynical plat-

form doesn’t respect the bar-

iards but trust us to put

them into government – doesn’t
do justice to the many charac-

ter of this party.

It is an election, one reflection of the
growing inequality that has
characterised the-

boom economy, although its

vote actually fell by 0.72% to

3.96% even while it doubled

its seats from four to eight.

Its election platform of

income tax cuts for the rich,

from 42 to 40 percent, and its

promotion of wide scale

privatisation allows it to be

the perfect foil to FF which still

like some quarters to pre-

sent itself as a party of the

people, a party of the left.

Fianna Fáil

T

he election ushered in a period in

which FF is the

only one to take advantage

of the collapse of Fine Gael,

leading to confident

announcements of ‘the end of

civil war politics.’

Fianna Fáil can only offer ‘change’ – while SF’s TD backed Aherne.

This party has also been in

in long term decline, receiving

its lowest share of the vote

since 1948. Its drop of 5 to

22.5% only makes the
effect of its fall. FG lost 23 seats, down to 31 – only 19% of the seats and actually worse than

1948, including a whole

swathe of its leadership – its
current deputy leader, a for-

mer leader of government,

its current leader, and a

further ten front benchers.

The party’s
downsize is

exposed within the
capital – falling from 12 seats to 4 and

eight of its ten weakest con-

stituencies are in Dublin, if

it includes Dún Laoghaire.

That it doesn’t have a TD in the latter has been described as

similar to the British

失败 at losing Kennington or

Chelsea. Its support held up

among its large 

Design Leader Michael Noonan has

resigned, and no one is sure
too might replace him.

Fine Gael seems finished as the alternative pole of

government, not least because

FF will have many suitors for coalition among the so-
called opposition parties. For a capitalist party this spells

real problems. What
careerists want to join party

that cannot promise the

Merits and perks of office?

and there never was any funda-

mental difference between

the two ‘civil war’ parties and

in this election the realiza-

tion that Fine Gael, with

nothing to offer to an unpopu-

lar leader, could not form an alternative govern-

ment persuaded many of its middle
class supporters to go for

other parties. For socialists this is a welcome
development. It clarifies the

choices facing workers.

An exit poll conducted for

RTÉ revealed that one third of

FG defectors went to FF, one

third to Labour and one third

to independents with only

4% going to the PDs. That

will be true if you look beneath

the surface greater changes are

taking place, with FF

posibly losing some of its

working class support to be

replaced by defectors from

FG. This may also be true of

the Labour Party, which had a

very poor election.

While it retained its total of

21 seats its vote fell by 2.14% to

10.77%, in circumstances

where other perceived “left”

parties made gains.

When we realise that

the combined force of the

Labour Party and Democratic Left that are now

merged lost over 13% of its

vote on the 1997 result and

since 1992 its vote has

nearly halved, we can see that

it has faced even worse

risen Dick Spring, its

previous leader and very nearly its

current leader, Ruairí

Quinn. Its result fits a pat-

tern across Europe in which

social democrats have been

punished for implementing neo-liberal policies that have

hurt their working class sup-

port.

This is no less true of Ireland despite their lack of

working class support in

the first place, their entire dhub-

ning in 1997 for entering

coalition with FF, and the

economic boom that did not

allow limited increases in

living standards while

inequality increased.

Labour fundamentally

failed to identify or be iden-

tified with the disfunctioning of this
ing this inequality and the crisis of public ser-

vices which became its most

open expression.

Its failure, along with that of

FG, revealed the election as a

vote of no confidence in

this ‘official’ opposition. Indeed this is perhaps, for

socialists, the most signifi-

cant feature of the political

landscape.

A crisis of perspectives has been opened up for all those

claiming opposition to the returned governmental

majority. It’s just that some
don’t yet recognise it, and in

failing to do so reveal only

their short term horizon and

ultimately failure to represent

a genuine opponent.

Greens and Sinn Féin

This is certainly true of the

Green Party and Sinn Féin (SF), which are

credited as the winners in this election. Both

Greens increased their vote by

1.09% to 3.85% but increased their seats from

two to six. However it was Sinn Féin, for whom we

were undoubtedly the real

winners increasing their vote from 2.5% in 1997 to

6.51% and adding four seats to their existing one.

However while the figures

may be relatively impressive, the politics are not:

and while the Sinn Féin especially British, press sounded some

alarm at Sinn Fein’s rise, the

Irish establishment had reason
to take a relatively relaxed view, which is perfectly
understandable.

Waving the tricolour doesn’t

have the same effect in the

South, though some Sinn

Fein members appear not to

appreciate this.

All Gerry Adams could promise both during and after the election

was an undefined ‘change’ which

could be interpreted in the

bantal sense of today being

different from yesterday and

tomorrow being different from today – but which in the

North has meant a reac-

tionary politics completely

compatible with coalition with

the most bigoted parties of unionism.

The vote for other candidates

increased by 1.12% to

10.94%, but these range from

Fianna Fáilers who failed parish of the Sinn Fein as candidate for

the Socialist Party’s Joe

Higgins, who was returned with

6,642 first preference votes

almost the same total as in 1997.

Noteworthy was the emer-

gence of a real socialist can-

didate campaigning on health

and peace issues, without the

neglect of the service des-

pite, or rather in many ways as a result of the boom
economy.

It is notable that the

emergence of this vote ran parallel to, and not through those

voters who voted in Cavan-

Monaghan where SF had its

singing TD. SF was obvi-

ously not seen as an adequate vehicle for expressing these

concerns.

While reflecting genuine anger and a desire to oppose establishment parties those
candidates cannot in any way be identified as socialists, or even left wing, and often
reflect the mixture of concerns.

To lump together all the independents in one cate-

gory of ‘radicalisation’ as we can expect some of its left to do obscures what is

happening as much as it informs. It is certainly no
guide to future strategy.

Crisis of

Perspective

A crisis of opposition

now exists. This has been

been advised by a call for

position on itself on the left,

captured the perceived radi-

calisation of its voters to

Fianna Fáil but the
to an extent on the left.

that the left have no credibility.

Others recommend it being

used to reject cooperation

that FF will build at attacks on the state – something corrected to

the public finances, advance

the primacy of the unfeasibility of both strategies shows the
depth of problems.

The Labour Party may con-


The Greens have not been asked to go into coalition with Fine Gael, despite being in government with the Greens, but the Greens have been asked to support Fine Gael and the Greens have agreed to do so.

Workers in the Irish state are facing a difficult time, with unemployment rates high and austerity measures being implemented. The Irish socialist movement is calling for support for its members who are working in difficult conditions.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED wish to declare our absolute opposition to the growing apartheid and sectarianism within our society. We object to the policies of the Fine Gael government and we call for the establishment of a People's Republic of Ireland.

In this regard the left made a miserable contribution.

The Irish socialist movement is calling for solidarity with the people of South Africa and for the boycott of goods from South Africa. We support the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED call for the establishment of a People's Republic of Ireland. We reject the policies of the Fine Gael government and we call for the establishment of a People's Republic of Ireland.

The Irish socialist movement is calling for solidarity with the people of South Africa and for the boycott of goods from South Africa. We support the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa.

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UN junkets can’t solve world hunger

Phil Ward

Amid almost total indifference from major imperialist media and politicians and behind a cordon of 16,000 police protecting the politicians from 30,000 anti-globalisation demonstrators, the second World Food Summit of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation took place in Rome on June 13. Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi closed the meeting 2 hours early in order to see the football.—

This symbolic act powerfully marks the beginning of the end of UN-sponsored summities as a means of defusing the demands of the masses of the South for an end to hunger, environmental degradation, exploitation and oppression.

As one of the delegates to the Civil Society Forum for Food Sovereignty (CSF), an organisation of third world farmers, fisherpeople, forest dwellers and aid workers, put it: “We should have no more food summits.

The summit declaration is otherwise full of pious words but no serious concrete measures are suggested to advance their aims. Instead of answering farmers’ demands for land reform, protection of biodiversity and ending the dependence on international markets and transnational corporations, the declaration, at the insistence of the US delegation, committed the FAO to “facilitate the responsible use of biotechnology in addressing development needs.”

The CSF suggested that this was the key decision of the summit. It presages a major offensive by biotech companies to promote GM crops as the answer to world hunger at the upcoming “Bio Plus Ten” WSSD in Johannesburg in August and at a US-hosted ministerial-level International Conference on Agricultural Science and Technology early next year.

The CSF rejected the declaration, with the claim, not that it lacked political will, but that it had too much will to promote globalisation, trade liberalisation, GM and military domination that are the main causes of global hunger.

The aim of biotech and agribusiness is to increase their control over world food production. There has never before been so much food produced and production methods are now so intensive that land degradation threatens an even greater disaster than the 85m people officially classified as hungry.

Another major threat is global warming: possible sharp changes in local climate could make some strains of crop currently grown unusable and also increase problems from pests. Biotech companies promote GM to combat this (e.g. introducing genes for pest or drought resistance or salt tolerance).

It is reported that there are to be 45,000 delegates to the Civil Society Forum in Johannesburg, and there are complaints about delegations from Western NGOs lodging it in an exclusive white suburb right next door to the township of Alexandra.

Hopefully, the large majority will have no illusions in the ability of imperialist-controlled talking-shops to rectify the problems of world food security and environmental degradation and will make sure in future that their campaigns for land reform and debt relief are addressed on the fields and in the streets.

FAO World Food Summit Declaration: (http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/EN/004/Y694E.HTM)

Calling all young activists...

Brioude, France from Saturday July 27 to Friday August 2

“This globalisation is not ours, let’s build another world”

The Fourth International Youth summer camp gives young revolutionaries from across Europe the chance to come together for a week to share experiences from the campaigns in which they have been involved.

What is even better is that this takes place in the context where having fun is also part of the official programme!

The camp is organised on the basis of collective living – with its own currency – with participants taking responsibility both for the political programme and for the practical tasks that need doing.

This year the camp takes place in the context of:

◆ The recent Presidential election in France where the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, got 4.2% of the vote - and 13.9% of the vote amongst 18-24 year olds.

◆ The growth of an anti-war movement in response to the so-called “war against terrorism” and the continued development of the anti-globalisation movement.

◆ The build up to the European Social Forum in Porto Alegre next month.

Certainly the elections in France have resulted in many people, including many young people rushing to join the LCR and its youth organisation – the JCR. A lot of these people will be coming to the camp, making it even more interesting than usual.

Among the sessions planned:

SATURDAY
Opening meeting of the 19th international youth camp, with Olivier Besancenot, LCR Presidential candidate

SUNDAY
Forum on the international situation. Speakers include Catherine Samary

MONDAY
Forum against privatisation
Speakers include Michel Husson

WEDNESDAY
Forum: New period of imperialist wars
Speakers include Gilbert Achcar

THURSDAY
Forum: Roguing to overthrow this society
Speakers include Francois Verscammen

FRIDAY
Forum: The socialist world we want
Speakers on self organisation, workers control

Closing meeting: It’s all ours - everything belongs to us

Speakers include Penelope Duggan

How the camp works

Each day apart from the first and the last will begin with a morning forum, after which there will be a series of workshops, organised in four cycles which are women, neo-colonialism, ecology and a day off. On some days there will be additional workshops linked to the theme of the forums. There will be a series of 5 educational sessions on Basic Marxism. There will also be two women-only discussions: one on “Women’s place in revolutionary organisations” and one on “Women and Work”. Comrades from Britain will meet every day as a delegation to talk about how we think the sessions have gone. We will elect someone to serve on the leadership of the camp. We will also meet collectively with delegations from other countries.

If you want to find out more. get in touch.

RING us on 020 8800 7460.

email outlook@gn.apc.org or write to Youth Camp c/o Po Box 1109, London N4 2UU
Global Action Against Incinerators

Susan Moore

On Monday June 17 some 125 groups from 54 countries launched the first Global Day of Action Against Waste Incineration. Events around the world were co-ordinated throughout the week including in Turkey, the Philippines, New Zealand and Argentina.

The Global Day of Action challenged governments to stop a up to incineration plants, which emit dioxins and disposes, and move towards sustainable waste production. The UK's "world" recyling record. A meeting took place in Parliament on June 18 to launch a Zero Waste Charter and Ten Point Plan supported by Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, SERRA, Common Action Against Toxics and the UK Zero Waste Alliance.

Recycling experts demonstrated that elsewhere in the world 60% of waste is recycled and conserved. Claire Wilson, incineration campaigner in the UK, said: "Incinerators in the UK are fighting vigorous campaigns to prevent incinerators being built in their area. They are deeply worried about the health impacts on their health and recognise that burning our waste is harmful to the environment."

Although modern incinerators are designed to reduce pollution, they still emit chemicals that cause concern. Smoke, gases and toxic fumes that are either released into the atmosphere or released into the ground which can cause serious illness wherever they travel.

Recycling campaigns in some 54 countries, including Britain, North London, Sheffield and others, call for an end to the locataed by the growing worldwide attention this issue is black anti-troop.
Stephen Jay Gould, evolution theorist, dies aged 60

Stephen Jay Gould, whose Darwinian ideas and his major contributions to macroevolutionary theory, "It is a heavy weight work," wrote Dr. Mark Ridley, an evolutionary biologist at University of Oxford in England. And despite some

times "noting pathological of logotherapy," at 1,433 pages, Richard Dawkins, "It is still a magnificant summary of a quarter-century of influencial thinking and a major publishing event in evolucionary biology." Gould was dogged by vociferous, often high-pro

file debunkers who argued against his theories, like punctuated equilibrium, were so mal

able and difficult to pin down that they were essen

tially nothing more than microevolution played out over long periods. Gould also had beaten bat

es with sociologists, researchers, using a partic

ular method of studying ani

mals, and there are many who reject his ideas as well.

Gould had received him for championing theories that were in the modern Darwinian framework, an act some see as aiding and abetting creationism. Yet Gould was a visible oppo

nent of efforts to get evolution out of the classroom.

An entertaining writer and critic with saving the dying art form of the scien
tific essay, Gould often pulished typo back to back, never making use of ideas or things. (He began one essay by noting that Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin were born on the same day.)

A champion of the underd

gog (except in his support of wounds), he favoured theories and scientists that had been forgotten or whose reputations were in disre

t.

Gould would also popularised evolutionary ideas at Harvard, he explains his lecture halls filled to standing-room only. But his adventures typically took place in the library, colleagues said that Gould was so much a Cassianer loins snails in the Bahamas, was also impres

sive in the field.

Noting that in graduate school Gould was a "bryanite" and drug runner to collect specimens and feed his "addiction," Dr. Sally Stowe, a professor at the University of Georgia, once said, "That gave me a side of the road," which is required in the Bahamas, "You jump out the door and find Cerion when you don't know what's happening." Then, she recalled, this multilingual student of clas

sical music and astronomy and countless other eccentrics might joyously break out into a "good" song.

Gould was an earlier battle against cancer in 1982. When abdominal mesholisms was diagnosed, he reacted by 

dragging himself to Harvard Medical Library as soon as he could walk.

In a well-known essay titled, "The Meccanism Not the Message," he described discovering that the median survival time after diagnosis was a mere eight months. Rather than giving up hope, he wrote that he used his knowledge of statistics to translate an apparent death sentence into the hopeful realization that he might be one in whom the disease was diagnosed, survival longer than eight months, perhaps much longer, giving him the strength to confront the disease. "When my skin runs out, I hope to face the end calmly and in my own way," he wrote. "Death is the ultimate enemy - and I fear I might be reproachable in those who rage mightily against the dying of the light."
Tony Southall Peace campaigner, Labour activist, Marxist

Gordon Morgan

Tony Southall, the socialist and peace campaigner Tony Southall died on May 22 at the age of 59. Tony became known to most of his friends through his work for the Peace movement, the Labour movement, the IMG and the Fourth International.

In 1959 age 16 Tony got involved with the Young Socialist and with CND and the Aldermaston matches.

He also joined Croydon Youth CND, then became a student at Cambridge University CND. The involvement of young people in the campaign at that point played a crucial part in building a popular movement against the bomb.

At this time the committee of 100, led by Bertrand Russell was organizing sit downs protests against the bomb which led to many arrests. Tony was added to the 100 in 1961/62 he became full-time acting Secretary of the committee in 1961 and 1962.

In 1962 whilst a student at Cambridge Tony got involved with a Nottingham Trotskyist group called The Week which was the forerunner of the International Marxist group.

Every weekend for nearly a year, Tony caught a milk float to Nottingham for Cambridge for discussions and political activity. His association with the Fourth International and his close friendship with Charlie van Gelderen, which was formed then, lasted for 40 years.

In 1963 Tony came to Glasgow as a lecturer and throughout the 60's became a core member of the Labour and Peace movement. He was very handsome, charming and self-assured but above all excellent as an organiser of campaigns and other activists. Osgo QUICKLY became the nerve centre for left activists in Glasgow and Tony became known for doing business throughout Scottish socialist circles.

He toured across Scotland giving talks on Marxism to Red Circles, and was the central builder of the IMG in Scotland in the 60's.

Tony remained an activist in the Labour Party throughout this period, Janey Buchanan reminds us how when the Scottish Labour Party tried to hold a beauty contest, they asked branches to nominate their best looking member.

Woodside Labour Party nominated Tony for Beauty Queen. His nomination was then supported by several other branches. Strangely the Scottish Labour Party has never again held such a contest. In the mid 70's Tony was a founder member of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, and a key organiser of the anti Vietnam War movement. Tariq Ali recalls how, unlike many in Glasgow IMG, Tony was always sober and pleasantly organized and when in Scotland he relied on him to ensure he got up to attend meetings or demos.

In the early 70's Tony and his family went to teach in Africa. Tony continued to work on the Africa Commission of the Fourth International contributing to the struggle against Colonialism and Apartheid. Tony wrote many articles for the Fourth International and New Left Review under the pseudonym John Blair - he had used his Christian name the articles would have been attributed to Tony Blair.

On returning to Glasgow Tony resumed his work with CND and the Labour Party and joined the IMG. He founded Scottish Labour CND and through tireless work ensured that the Scottish Labour Party remained committed to Nuclear disarmament.

Norman Latchet recalls Tony staying with Tony in 1992, that Tony commented he was getting tired of all the rigmarole over the issues he analysed politically such as events in and individual politicians manoeuvring here in Scotland. He was often surprised by his knowledge of football and the characters and plots of the TV soap opera Coronation Street.

An impressive example of his determination was that he continued by wheelchair from South side of Glasgow across the river Clyde and was eventually forced to take early medical retirement in 1993 after his wheelchair 'copped' in rush hour traffic in mid winter.

The loss to formal teaching was Scottish CND's gain as it established offices nearby. This enabled Tony to be even more the living embodiment of the United Front in practice as his home was a centre for people of different parties as well as all ethnic groups and religions who agreed to campaign against the threat of nuclear barbarism.

Tony then became Joint Secretary of Scottish CND.

When he lost power to his hands he continued to write letters and organise protests using a computer with voice recognition. He continued to participate in the Falkland demos and recently pointed out this is the 40th anniversary of his first Falkland march.

Despite deteriorating health Tony participated in the demonstrations against Afghanistan and spoke at a major peace conference in January. He also participated in the ISG pre conference discussions.

Tony remained politically involved to the end. He urged nurses to Ban the Bomb and insisted on getting a Palestinian flag for his hospital bed. He counted Tony as a comrade and friend for 30 years. I will remember him as a stalwart fighter and organiser for Peace and Justice.

Socialism on the internet

Socialist Outlook web site: www.labournet.org.uk/so
International Socialist Group: www.3bh.org.uk/ISG

Letter

Surrealist problems for women

Congratulations on the article by Jay Voelich on Andre Breton and the politics of Surrealism (SO No.53 May-June 2002).

It showed clearly the political intent of Breton and revealed how the famous Breton speech in collaboration with Trotsky, and with Diego Rivera's name appended, is indeed a model of surrealism in the sense as it does the necessity for an artistic experimentation and cultural freedom within the socialist revolution and after.

It is true that Surrealism came very close to Trotsky's politics in the 1930s, rejecting Stalinism, at a time when it was difficult to do so, but we should not be totally uncritical of Breton and Surrealism. In one area in particular they were less than radical. Attracted to Surrealism by their literary ideology, and in particular by their critique of marriage and the bourgeois nuclear family.

Breton (left) with Diego Rivera and Trotsky

many women artists - painters, sculptors and writers - were attracted to the movement. Some, such as Meret Oppenheim and Leonora Carrington, were younger partners of more established artists, others also younger than most of the originators of Surrealism, were part of the wider circle, but, like Leonor Feijó, found Breton in particular an impossibly egocentric and dominating personality, and kept their distance from membership of the group.

While Surrealism had revolutionary ideals, their views on women in general and sexuality in particular were not so revolutionary. Breton was homophobic, and in the discussions on sexual practices (attended only by men) he condemned homosexuality. Women were depicted as mute or feminine infant (twonKEYKE½), as passive, erotic objects, and many women Surrealists, finding these representations oppressive, but failing to find alternatives, retreated into masquerade (Carrington) or equating women with nature (Age).

Few confronted their own female sexuality in the way that Beltrão, with his "Déesse"; investigated his male sexuality. Only Feijó, who shared Breton's Surrealism in practice, explored her sexuality in such an open way, showing women capable of all sorts of practices, active and passive, sadistic and masochistic, both in drawings, illustrations for erotic novels, and in some paintings.

The rediscovery of the work of women Surrealists by feminist art historians over the last 20 years, has led to re-readings of Surrealism as remarkably enlightening on the shortcomings of the movement.

It was Trotsky, after all, who said in order to change the conditions of life, we must learn to see them through women's eyes. "The Surrealists simply failed to do: after all, while his women's liberation without socialism, nor a socialism without women's liberation.

Jane Kelly Southwark

Surrealist problems for women

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Stop the Blair-Bush war drive!

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