A NEW probe has revealed clear evidence of life on what had been thought to be a barren and desolate landscape. Many had argued that the poisonous atmosphere would make it impossible for even the most basic molecular life-forms to survive on the surface or in the deeper structures of what used to be known as the “red party”.

Especially after the catastrophic eruptions of the last few years — which swept away many of the old landmarks and sheltering spaces and the massive landslides, culminating on May 1, most observers had given up hope of finding any signs of life or activity. But they were wrong.

Despite the efforts of the Millbank Mafia to tighten their centralising grip on the Labour Party and crush any form of dissent as they cut the remaining links with the trade unions and the working class and float off as a US-style Democratic Party, stubborn activists are refusing to concede defeat.

The first signs of rebellion have come from the trade unions, where a succession of conferences and policy-making committees during the summer have been vot- ing with surprising strength to reject the controversial “Party into Power” document, through which Tony Blair’s team seeks to neutralise the party’s rank and file and quash the remaining powers of Labour conference.

But a much greater surprise to the Millbankers must have been the massive revolt against “Party into Power” by the section of the Party which Blair’s New Labour offensive seemed to have totally invaded and subdued — the Constituency parties, which have given the scheme a massive thumbs down, and re- fleeted this in resolutions to this year’s conference.

There are even promising signs from the Parliamentary Labour Party, where an increasing number of MPs — from a range of different standpoints — are beginning to defy the threats and pressure of the whips, and to speak out independently against government policy on issues including the “Welfare to Work” proposals, the Maastricht Treaty and support for strikes. Ken Livingstone has even attacked Gordon Brown’s Budget.

The unions, too, are showing the first signs of digging in to defend policies which run counter to Blair’s policies. As we go to press thousands of BA staff are headed for a showdown with a scab-herding, union-busting management that is relying on the Tory laws which Blair public services. And that’s why the left — in the unions and in the Labour Party — must rally to defend the rights of those brave enough to take a stand, and prepare the policies and campaigns that meet the needs and demands of working people.

* Budget comment, page 3
Friend of Blair’s is no friend of labour

BA strikebusters pose awkward questions for unions

As we go to press we do not know whether the planned strike by British Airways ground staff and cabin crew will take place, although it seems increasingly likely.

Even if it does not, it has raised important issues for the whole of the labour movement.

BA, in trying to maintain its edge in the highly competitive world of air travel, is trying to drastically reduce its costs at the expense of its workers.

It wants to cut out catering (along with all other ground services, including engineering) and impose changes on flight staff.

In the old game of divide and rule, it has got the agreement of the small breakaway union representing some cabin crew to accept the changes, and is now saying it will negotiate with the TGWU over the catering sell-off but not the cabin crew conditions.

On top of this has been the training of BA’s managers to teach the line and cabin staff to do ground staff jobs, and said it will bring in a cab workforce and some individual strikers for up to £400 a day.

No-one seems quite sure what to make of this line, but it is a clear indication of the strength and arrogance management feel after years of working class defeat, backed up by the most vicious anti-union laws in Western Europe.

It also shows that all the delays built into the anti-union laws between a decision to ballot for action and the action itself are designed to allow management to make preparations for a dispute.

Bob Ayling, chief of BA, has been bitten by Tony Blair and is said to be a personal friend. So is Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, which organises BA staff.

Chris has been going out of his way to avoid a strike by resuming negotiations, no doubt hoping for a deal that would enable him to keep BA what it wants while offering a few sops to the workers.

Blair has been saying the standoff is nothing to do with the government. But it is starkly shown that no government can be a friend both to big business and to its workforce, and how the anti-union laws, which are very much a government matter, back up one side against the other.

Campaigners take on uphill task
Stop the witch hunts!

Dave Amos

Officers from Leeds North East CLP called a national meeting in Leeds on 7 June, the eve of the inquiry into the suspended Leeds NE constituency, to discuss the widespread disciplinary measures being taken against the left of the Labour Party.

It was from across England turned up to spend the morning exchanging experiences of the measures taken against individuals, branches and constituencies throughout the country.

Inevitably, common themes emerged as members described how the clampdown was put in place in front of "inquiries" without being given information about the allegations against them or the procedures to be adopted.

The wide-ranging powers given to the NEC and regional officials by the Labour Party rule book were a concern.

This is placed in the context of the increasing centralisation of decision-making in the party, which will get worse if the "Party into Power" document is adopted.

Set against this, members outlined how, even when parties were suspended, they had managed to maintain local organisation and meet regularly.

At the same time, there were reports of members dropping out because Blair’s landslide victory, saying that there was no prospect of fighting disciplinary action successsfully.

Having analysed the nature of the problem, the meeting moved on to the question of how best to fight it, starting with a discussion on the use of the courts. There were differences of opinion, but the consensus view was that such a tactic was of limited use.

National link-up

The priority for the meeting was to try to construct a national organisation to fight the witchhunts. This is urgent in view of the likely outcome of the forthcoming Labour Party conference.

A small organising committee was set up with representatives from different areas affected by disciplinary action. The first task for this committee is to organise a further, broader based meeting before Conference, probably in September.

They are to contact other organisations in the Labour Party with experience of fighting such measures or who might be sympathetic to such a campaign.

At the September meeting, an intervention into Conference will be planned. The form of this is yet to be decided: one suggestion is that other organisations should be approached to allow speakers at fringe meetings and articles in bulletins.

The meeting also decided that information about what is going on in the localities should be collated. A press release is to be prepared.

The campaign deserves the support of all socialists within the Labour Party, particularly as the impetus for it comes from those who have had direct experience of action being taken against them.

Given the current climate in the Labour Party, such an initiative faces an uphill task, but all the participants in the meeting felt positive about linking up.

Chris is a member from Birmingham commented: "This meeting has given me a real boost!"

The more such opposition to the Blairite project is organised, the stronger the left’s position will be.

Local ‘old Labour’ candidate dumped in Uxbridge

Bert Pitchard

In MANY ways, it seems that Uxbridge has never recovered from the general election. This is particularly true for Labour Party members who continue to have the haunted look of people who can’t quite believe what is happening to them.

For them, this bollweiderism does not stem from Labour winning the election (this is old news) but from the death of the Uxbridge Tory MP a week after the election, and the subsequent deselection of the popular local Labour candidate, David Williams, who came just 724 votes from taking the seat.

David Williams is not well known nationally as a figure on the left of the Labour Party because in many respects he is a truly local figure.

The campaign gained the support of all socialists within the Labour Party, particularly as the impetus for it comes from those who have had direct experience of action being taken against them.

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Stop the witch hunts!
After 18 years, Brown unveils the long-awaited first Labour Budget ...

Was that it, then?

GORDON Brown has produced the most needed respite for 50 years. A Gallop poll for The Daily Telegraph showed 82 per cent of the public would have liked to see a Labour Budget. While there were no detailed questions which might have shown reservations beforehand, the overall welcome, the political significance of this should not be underestimated.

Brown set a conundrum for the media at the start by saying that he would stick to Tory spending limits, he then produced extra funding for health and education from reserves. These, together with the promised cut in VAT on fuel and the windfall tax ensured it felt very different to a Tory budget.

Although even by the end of the broadcast notes of caution were beginning to be heard, they barely rose above the applause. £1 billion for education will not reduce class sizes, nor fund the teachers’ pay claim. £1.3 billion for school refurbishment over five years will tackle some of the worst problems but still leave decay and disrepair in our schools.

The £1.2 billion for the NHS is not available until near April, and while Brown is putting reserves aside, the increase (equivalent to just 2.2 per cent – well below projected inflation) will do nothing to prevent a winter marked by further crises and bed shortages.

House of Commons

The release to local authorities of £200 million capital receipts this year and £700 million next, will be used by councils to reduce their debts but not stem the rising tide of homelessness.

David Fotheringham, principal policy officer of the Chartered Housing Management Association, said it would be ‘charitable’ to criticise increased spending on social housing – but added: ‘It would be far better if we had a bit more – £1 billion a year for five years is what we were asking for.

Brown is increasingly looking to the Tory Private Finance Initiative to stave off deeper crises. At first glance, this can seem an innovation in meeting the need for increased capital investment without raising taxes. But the apparent short-term savings are countered by the – still unknown – long-term costs of servicing private loans for the next 30-60 years. The real impact of the schemes on the unit costs of NHS Trusts has yet to be revealed, but several Trusts have already ditched PFI schemes as too expensive.

In the terms of conventional capitalist wisdom Brown’s measures may not do sufficient to take the ‘heat’ out of the economy – although many working people have hardly begun to feel any warmth at all.

The most pernicious aspect of the budget is the one that has so far aroused least adverse comment – the ‘welfare to work’ proposals.

The programme remains co-eradic, despite what the TUC says.

Brown has ensured that it will now go down to Bank of England governor Eddie George to make the decisions on interest rates. There can be little doubt that the base rate will go up quickly soon.

Some believe that 500,000 jobs could be threatened by the soaring pound as interest rates rise. Brown raised £67 billion for the year and £5.7 billion next – at the lower end of what was felt would be necessary to avoid the dangers of another boom and bust cycle.

The impact of this will be felt faced by the 450,000 council capital receipts (mostly from the Tory sale of council housing) and the spending on some proceeds from the windfall tax, which will pump £400 million into the economy this year and £1.9 billion next.

Critics have also focused on where the taxes were raised – the one-off windfall tax and the abolition of tax credits on pension funds will not affect what the City sees as dangerously high levels of consumer spending.

Brown assumes that continued economic growth, together with his tight spending measures will produce the stability that will be key to improved performance.

He has reasserted the ‘golden rule’ of public finances abandoned by the Tories during the recession of the 90s. Over the course of an economic cycle the Labour government will only borrow to invest, and current spending will be met from taxation.

Together with the expected fall in the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement, it seems that he is so far on target to ensuring that Labour is well within the Maastricht criteria for European Monetary Union.

This means Labour will almost certainly be able to decide on political grounds to whether to go into the first round of EMU in 1999.

The most pernicious aspect of the budget is the one that has so far aroused least adverse comment – the ‘welfare to work’ proposals.

The TUC welcomed “the development of active labour market policies... The government’s approach to the problems of unemployed people is correct... offering a choice of options marks a break with the coercive policies of the old government”.

The TUC make useful comments about people being paid the rate for the job – though this should apparently be established creatively. They want to ensure that training programmes should allow apprentices to achieve at least NVQ level 2 and that child care costs are paid.

While some of this is to be welcomed, it misses the point. Labour may well come up with training programmes that are superior to Tory ones.

They may even assist a small number of insecure, decent jobs. But the programme remains coercive, despite what the TUC says.

Look at what is happening to disabled people. £200 million is allocated as part of Welfare to Work for training people with disabilities to get jobs.

Within days however Harriet Harman announced an inquiry to curb the £24 billion per annum spent on benefits to the long term sick and disabled.

Targeting supposedly fraudulent claims for incapacity benefit when the existing rules have seen many fail the over-stringent tests and lose all benefits when they also can’t meet the requirement for the Job Seekers Allowance is yet another vicious attack on people with disabilities.

Tories pick a doomed dome to see in millennium

William Hague’s election as leader of the Conservative party holds little promise of stemming the tide of their decline, which was marked but not created by the general election defeat.

His victory, followed by the refusal of various advocates of moneuy union to serve in his cabinet indicates the ascendancy of the Eurosceptic right.

Hague’s recent announcement that he was joining the campaign to save the hunt shows once again to what lengths his colours are nailed.

Whether any other outcomes of the leadership contest could have helped Tory spins and reversed their crisis is highly questionable.

The deep divisions in the Tory party have manifest themselves time and time over the last few years – most sharply, though not exclusively, on the question of European integration.

The pro-European position was championed by Ken Clarke in the leadership contest and by others in the party, such as Ted Heath.

It is based on the fact that big business, on which these politicians rest, favours European integration as the best way to achieve competitive profit margins against Japanese and American imperialism.

Losers

Conversely the position of the sceptics is based on a mortal fear that the British economy, crucial to the historic electoral base of the Tory party, will lose out in an integrated Europe.

These vital economic interests which produce the deep and unpleasant jingoism propagated by these forces rather than the other way round.

The divisions in the Tory party are heightened by the fact that the big bourgeoisie, deeply wedded to the cause of European integration have come increasingly to see Blair’s Labour Party as a better bet.

Blair has – so far at least – been much more successful in uniting his party behind his quest to join the single currency than the pro-European Tories are ever likely to be.

Of course support from the key sections of the ruling class for Labour is by no means permanently assured – the class struggle, and how Blair reacts will doubtless affect how long the present stance is maintained.

But even if Labour ceases to be a safe pair of hands it is not at all clear that the Tories will be in any shape to fill the gap.

While it would be too premature by far to say that a split in this party is inevitable, neither can it be ruled out. William Hague will need more than a spin doctor who it is suggested might rival Mandelson.

In the end politics is determined by much more powerful forces than cosmetics.
Has Labour decided to braze the anger of unionists and campaigners and are more hospitals? Why Dobbo runs from health workers

Harry Sloan

FRANK DOBSON might have been expected to ride in triumph into this year’s UNISON Health Conference. He was the first Labour Health Secretary for 18 years, addressing an audience that had longed for the outing of the Tories, and speaking for a government with a massive mandate to rescue the NHS.

In the event, things were very different. Labour’s health policy was made clear. Dobson sneaked into the conference, refusing to meet even the handful of Blairites selected by the UNISON bureaucracy as a supposedly “loyal group.” He gave a nervous, low-key speech – and then he was gone, refusing to answer any questions, running from even the hint of criticism or accountability.

Dobson’s door may be closed to health workers and the unions, but it appears to be open to all kinds of unseavvy and right wing academics: the conference is declared to a conference of NHS managers that “professional opinion” was “agreed” that we need fewer hospitals. This went down well with health chiefs themselves embroidered in hospital caps and clo- sures, but Dobson really should get out more, and find out what people committed to the NHS are saying.

Same speech

With this exception, Dobson’s UNISON speech was very similar to the one he gave to the NHS bosses. Speaking just two days be- fore Gordon Brown’s Budget, of- fered only two gimmicks of popular radicalism – promising to work with Jack Straw to jail people (many of them mentally ill) who use violence against health work- ers, and calling on NHS Trusts to open their meetings to the public.

Dobson offered no clues on how Labour plans to wind up the chaos of the Tory internal market system, no detail on what system is to place the two-tier nonsense of GP Fundholding, no hope of any end to the daily £1 billion on NHS pay, and no promise of any let-up in the tide of service cuts and hospital closures. Labour has inherited from the Tories.

Delegations who concluded from this that they should expect the worst may have been pleasantly re- lieved by Brown’s announcement of an “extra” £1.2 billion for the NHS – until they realised that none of this money is available until next April, and that it takes the place of the normal autumn spending round.

While it represents a consider- able (2.2%) increase on the stand- still 1998/99 allocations proposed by Kenneth Clarke last November, this money falls far short of the real terms increase required to preserve front line services, and the jobs and living standards of 1 million NHS staff.

Worst crisis

Despite Brown’s apparent gen- erosity, the NHS faces possibly its worst crisis ever. In the wake of deaths with many health authorities and Trusts already reduced to little more than an emergencies-only service for the foreseeable future as they struggle to deal with new cuts on top of £300m in deficits carried over from last year.

Brown’s limited cash handout also carried a sting in the tail: he in- sisted that the money was only be- ing made available on the strict condition that a new National Health Service would begin next Spring.

A key factor in Labour’s elec- toral success in London on May 1 was public opposition to the Tory plans to desacrate hospital services, with 14 on the list for closure: Tory MPs toppled nine nieces around threatened hospitals, notably Edg- ware, Queen Mary’s (Romfords) and Oldchurch (Romford).

Brown has had to placate a moratorium on hospital closures and an in-depth 12-month review of health services in the capital.

In the events, to the anger and ex-asperation of campaigners and La- bour activists, the incoming government decided within days to rubber-stamp the closure of Edg- ward’s hospitals. The Health & Emergency unit, allow a suc- cection of small-scale closures of wards and services around London, and restrict the review and the moratorium to just four months. Although the review panel in- cludes a number of noted critics of Tory health policies, notably Pro- fessor Brian Jarman who openly challenged the continued reduction in numbers of beds, Gordon Brown’s declaration that its find- ings are expected to result in a fur- ther rationalisation raises serious doubts on how detailed and objec- tive the review will be.

Cospicuously by their absence from the list of hospitals to be ex- amined by the review are the threatened Guy’s Hospital (where Trust bosses are accelerating to- wards closure) and children’s serv- ices in Hackney, which could be axed without replacement.

Another moment of irony in the Tories’ Tomlinson Report of 1992, is in- viting written contributions from individuals and organisations.

No holds barred

More ominous, perhaps for those who live outside London, Brown has also pleaded to complete the root and branch “no holds barred” financial review of the NHS. This is the review which has triggered speculation that charges will be introduced for services for “wealthy” pensioners, for seeing GPs, or for stays in hospital.

All these options have previ- ously been surveyed – and rejected – by the Tories as not offering suf- ficient revenue to justify the huge po- litical backlash that would be triggered by implementing them. But the day after the Budget La- bour went on to implement another Tory policy which many govern- ment failed to get off the drawing board – the Private Finance Initiative.

In the background, right wing think-tanks and empire building consultants are flooding schemes for fewer, bigger hospitals, for selective charges, for “hypothe- cated” tax – anything but the single- ple answer, the proper funding of health care mainstream pro- gressive taxation.

Brown may have cheered up some of the troops, but the battle lines in defence of the NHS will inev- itably begin forming up again as soon as the temperatures begin to drop in the autumn.

Escalators are causing problems, sig- nalling disaster day after the Housing Staff in all areas have been cut to a minimum.

That is to say, we thought it was a minimum but the bosses are looking for 4% cuts in the final period of Maastricht. Bankers have decided on these criteria which keep the public borrowing to three percent of gross domestic product. So Labour won’t break their limit by investing in the tube. How- ever, a public sector banks partnership al- lows investment to take place within the rules. It’s no wonder the term “merchant banker” has another meaning to Cockney.

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Young guinea pigs wanted: just say no!

George Thompson

THE PICTURES of Tony Blair announcing his welfare to work scheme surrounded by smiling, fresh faced youth remind one of Mao Tse Tung's propaganda in China promoting himself as the 'Great Leader' whatever he does. Yet who'll thank Blair when they find themselves conscripted into a cheap army of labour for the bosses?

Will his plan continue to be "economically grateful to the 'Great Leader'" whatever he does. Yet who'll thank Blair when they find themselves conscripted into a cheap army of labour for the bosses?

Yet Blair cannot silence a debate is society. Much of the electorate voted against the man who would make even former leader John Smith turn in his grave.

By Blair to Blair's neat democratic strategy, Blair hopes the people are in a position to make a call on the real world. The effect of Labour's benefit cuts on youth and the maintenance of their lives is an area of housing to reduce the ability of youth to live independently from their families.

Youth are being treated by Blair as guinea pigs. Drinking their poisons will lead to collective insanity. Don't just say no for real jobs, wage rises and a better Welfare State must be fought now.

Curfew

The Labour Party has had very little debate on fees for students, ILS for taxpayers for teenagers or workfare for the unemployed. Blair is hotly adopting a whole gamut of ideas which would make even former leader John Smith turn in his grave.

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Jowell misses real target on abortion

Gill Lee

TESSA Jowell, Labour Minister for Health, has relaunched the Chief Executive of the Marie Stopes Clinic for suggesting that quick abortions could now be performed "during a working woman's lunch break."

The real problem with abortion is not how fast the operation can be performed but how long it is actually taken to get on the NHS.

The waiting time to the NHS in South London for example is currently five weeks for a scan to confirm dates, with the abortion performed some days after this. As a result many women choose to have their abortions within days in the private 'charity' sector.

An abortion under 14 weeks costs £350 with an organisation like Marie Stopes. The abortion pill, RU486 costs more because, unlike in other European countries, where it is treated as a normal drug, there is a clinic are required. The cost of an abortion rises to £500 with the number of weeks gestation. Consultants for Marie Stopes say they are seeing many more young women than the past and this can only be because of cutbacks in the NHS. Women who attend private clinics are not typical clients of private medicine.

They have been forced into private abortion because of the waiting time on the NHS. Tessa Jowell was quoted as saying "the decision to seek a termination is a difficult and almost always agonising one for any woman."

For some women it is. For many others, abortion is a welcome relief from the demands of society which feel guilty as there is social pressure to feel that abortion should be a difficult choice.

For women who are unclear about their decision a waiting time before an abortion can provide a space to think. But this waiting time should be a choice.

For women who have made a clear decision to have an abortion a wait can be traumatic: five weeks during which the woman's body changes to adjust to the pregnancy and after which the operation can only be of a physical shock and which is more risky.

For some women who have irregular periods, for example because of the demands of menopause, five weeks could mean the difference between being entitled to a legal abortion or not.

For women who seek abortion after rape, five weeks can mean the psychological trauma.

Tessa Jowell should be cencerning her energies on ensuring the NHS meets women's demands for free, safe and legal abortions not criticising doctors who want to make the procedure easier for women.

Youth camp: why Graham and others need your support

"My name is Graham Morris and I am from St Helens. I was happy to take part in the Euromarch. I marched all the way from Preston to Amsterdam. I wanted to protest about the large number of people unemployed."

"The rough estimate is that there are 5 million unemployed in Britain and 20 million across Europe. What we need is full employment across Europe."

"There were 30 marches from 17 different countries taking part in the long trip to Amsterdam for the Intergovernmental conference on June 14." "About 50,000 people protested against the single currency and for full employment. We were opposing the massive policy changes that exist and demonstrating in defence of the Welfare state."

"We had a lot of press coverage — I thought that was tremendous."

"We were supported by the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers, the 300 sacked Magnet workers and the 53 Hillington women who were sacked because they would not take a pay cut. The bosses only think about themselves and no one else."

"I think we did a good job. People should be proud of what we have done. It was the best experience I have ever had. Now I can't wait for the Youth Camp in France so that I can tell people my story."

GRAHAM Morris is one of a group of young people who were involved in the Euromarch who are desperately keen to attend the international youth Summer Camp organised by the Fourth International in late July. He hopes to be part of the biggest delegation going to the Camp from Britain for some years.

There is only one problem — and that's money. When I rang the JSA, finding the money even a cheap week away is pretty high. Impossible.

That's why Socialist Outlook are appealing to our readers to our appeal to make sure all those who want to go can. We've already raised £500 in the last few days before we want to press: we need another £500 in the next fortnight.

Please rush your cheque to Liberation Publishing, PO Box 1108, London N4 2UU

How easily they change sides! Now in government, New Labour seem to think that Project Work might be part of the solution to long term unemployment.

The reality is that Project Work always was and remains an attack on the unemployed. Hull TUC unemployed activists Geoff Collier is currently on Project Work, he told Socialist Outlook, "Labour should abolish Project Work immediately. The scheme I am on is teaching me nothing that could help me get a job. What's required are real jobs at reasonable rates of pay."

Geoff added, "My problem is the lack of a job not my ability to read and write. Holding basic skills should be available to all and not mixed up with this failed Tory scheme."

Pressure should immediately be put on Labour to scrap the ending of Project Work. In Particular, campaign need to be launched (or re-launched) in the 29 areas where Project Work extension will now be implemented. (*)

(*) Hull Trades Council can help with your local campaign. Ring 01482—853813 (day) or 01482—802050 (evenings)
Party into Power: Blair's bridge too far?

Blair's proposals on restructuring the Labour Party, 'Party into Power', are coming under increased fire. 

Some of the pressure is coming from inside CLPs and Trade Unions to submit resolutions denouncing the proposals. A new national executive committee, the Joint Policy Committee, could have an in-built majority, and deny the CLPs the right to vote for MPs for the National Executive.

It was also hoped to ram the proposals through the back door of post-election euphoria and a lack of time for discussion.

They are part of Blair's plan to prevent the Party, and in particular the unions, being able to revolt against unpopular government policies.

While they attack party democracy in general, proposals to give greater importance to accountable Policy Forums, on which the unions are seriously under-represented, show the link to be under particular threat. 

Responses to the 'consultation' on Party into Power had to be returned by 7th July, and the July NEC will be considering the submissions and drawings up final proposals to put to conference in October.

No doubt we will be told that some large percentage of those who responded to the consultation 'welcomed' Party into Power. This doesn't mean much, since many respondents were asked the consultation - and then go on to reject some of the central proposals.

**Link defended**

The comments submitted by MSF, for instance, strike a positive note and support the idea of a rolling policy programme (designed to restrict what can be discussed at conference) and the representation of all stakeholders (PLP, EFL, Cabinet) on the NEC - but then go on to denounce the Trade union/party link, including the 50% vote of the unions at conferences, and will not support CLPs and unions to put motions direct to conference.

The party conference endorsed a statement from its executive which outlined the possibility of using the direct submission of resolutions. 

In practice, this included the RMT, GPMU, ASLEF and CWU rejected the proposals outright at their conferences. This however, did not stop the CWU bureaucracy attempting (unsuccessfully) to discourage resolutions at conference. 

RFT conference followed, TGWU conference is about to happen, but there will certainly be a likely debate thrown around the issues in a bid to show Prosser's role in promoting the proposals.

UNISON, however, has wholeheartedly welcomed the proposals, in line with the line of the left in UNISON have played no role in the union's affiliated Political Council, and the NEC conference was almost immediately af- fected by the weight of the response from CLPs.

The response from CLPs has been overwhelming. 40 resolutions have been submitted to conference rejecting Party into Power outright, while a further 60 call for a year's deferral to allow for further discussion.

**Alienate**

In the short term it isn't possible to conceive of UNISON's leadership making this concrete demand of the new government.

There was also the great debate that never was: a motion of censure of the executive for putting the plug on the Hillingdon Hospital strike. 

The standing orders committee did, in the end, as an attempt to overturn this was lost on a card vote.

In many ways Hillingdon stands as a symbol of what happened to public sector workers and unions during the Tory years - low paid workers, sacked by a private company operating in the Health Service; a union bureaucracy conveniently intimidated by anti-union laws and giving no support to members in struggle.

Now we should be demanding of Labour that all this should change, not standing up and applauding.

Don't stand up, fight back!

John Stevenson on the UNISON Conference

When last month David Blunkett came to address local government delegates to UNISON's conference it was rather embarrassing for the platform. Leaping to their feet the protest marched to a standing ovation - but everyone else stayed firmly glued to their seats.

Overall the conference was a low key affair. Where might you expect when activists carry few illusions in Labour but are at the same time not quite sure what is going to happen in the future.

And about some of it there was a distinct air of unreality. The left pushed for a reaffirmation of the union's existing policy of re- nationalising the privatised utilities.

But in the short term it isn't possible to conceive of UNISON's leadership making this concrete demand of the new government.

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MSF welcomes Labour but not its policies

Veronica Fagan

MSF conference in Hove in June passed a whole range of policy which were well to the left of Labours manifest commitment. On this several was the support of the unions leadership despite General Secretary Roger Lyons previously sympathetic relationship with Blair.

MSF leaders, together with many of their co-thinkers in other unions, are becoming less paper frustrated with Blair's stance than the public.

For Lyons, the particular ten- sion has been on the question of trade unions and himself on being the architect on TUC policy on this issue and has been more than a littleizards at the fact that beyond GCHQ Blair has been nothing. 

On the issue of pensions, the top table tried to hold the line for New Labour, attempting to isolate it, it seemed they might get their way, eventually conference backed index linking and the restoration of SERPS.

Politically this middle ground felt like a political deadcat - but were unsure as to whether to give Blair the benefit of the doubt or to attempt to push for the imp- rovements they felt his govern- ment should be introducing.

On 'Party into Power' the Lyons group were ready to debate the issue to some extent through the production of a statement which while welcoming the document made sharp criticisms of most of its key proposals. 

Conference essentially agreed this approach while adding further areas in which the status quo should be retained. 

**Sacked Hillingdon workers: still fighting on for justice**

by Ellie Dee

The Hillingdon Strikers Support Campaign (HSSC) has called a mass lobby at the House of Lords on 13 July to discuss the way forward in the campaign for the sacked Hillingdon women's reinstatement.

Until recently the bus drivers at Metropolitan Bus Services. The union leadership knew at UNISON conference in June that the women had been sacked but said nothing as resolutions on the issue were put down. 

The Hillingdon Hospital workers and their supporters feel betrayed by this attitude, 

especially, after 22 months of strug- gle.

The organisers of the confer- ence asked that 'it is unfair to not attend as delegates, then please attend as observers - but please attend' 

Conference: Session 13 July, Civic Centre, Ulbrooke (Ulbrooke is the former Metropolitan bus depot and Pickleaddy lines) from 11am to 2pm.

The sacked Hillingdon workers still need your support - send a cheque to HSSC, 27 Townsend Way, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1TB.

The conference also succeeded - after countless campaigns and ma- neuvers to prevent them even being discussed - in passing im- portant motions against the witch hunts of two MSF full time officers who have fallen foul of the Lyons machine. 

Dave Peters was sacked more than a year ago and conference stated that if he legal challenge proved that this was an 'un- fair dismissal' he should be reinstated. Joe Bowers stood against Lyons who there was General Secretary election and has faced problems with disciplinary ac- 

Conference demanded this should stop, and that the union who had championed an anti- bullying campaign should stop bullying its own employee.

Fairly mild you might think - but the vitriol with which it was opposed demonstrated how bit- terly the leadership and their Blairite cronies are determined to silence us.

The outcome was thus patchy over all - as was the showing of the left. Despite divisions on the left have opened over past months, especially on the ques- tion of the merger.
For Blair, the future is Orange -

David Coen

The difference between Tony Blair and the Ulster Unionist Party is stark. The answer lies partly in Blair's recent side agreement with the Republicans telling them what they can do, and partly in the fact that the Ulster Unionists who are the British loyalist movement. There is no one can do anything about it, as in a society where the British government is forced to go along with a peace process.

**Surrender**

And that's it: in return for IRA surrender there will be a specially adjusted political process within the government. The Unionists are the beneficiaries of the devolved government, a new power sharing executive with limited powers including the status of Office of the First Minister. Tony Blair rushed to Belfast to assure the Ulster Unionist Party that the future was Orange and that the outcome of the peace process would be the continuation of partition for generations to come. In doing so he abandoned what remains of Labour's policy of unity by consent. On a day on which a victim of loyalist sectarian violence was being buried, he shackled the loyalist Community with a false sense of security and a false sense of security for the future. Blair's only difference withTrimble is that he uses tactics his reforms are much less radical than Heath's 1974 Power Sharing Executive, brought down by the Loyalists with active encouragement of the British government. The Thatcherean兼顾 of the British ruling class. Trimble and the Unionists can be more confident of Blair's unionism than they were of Major's. As such they'll probably go along with the plan.

Nationalists are however left unimpressed, and do not believe there is any real chance of achieving "partition of territory" within a revamped Six County State. Nor will Blair's chances of reform be displayed more clearly than at Drumcree on July 6. The march at Drumcree is the focal point of a campaign by the Orange Order for the right to strut their ballymen anywhere in the Six Counties. Immediately after the election the new Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam signed an order extending the legal notice required for marches from 72 days to 30 or 21 days after the election. The catch is that this does not apply to traditional sectarian marches but will act to block any protest against the Orange Order.

The events at Drumcree and the Lower Ormeau Road last year blew away the illusion sown by John Hume of the SDLP about British even-handedness. One of the main reasons for the increase in Sinn Fein's vote in the recent elections was the clear perception by nationalists that the Unionists would not honour their agreements with the RUC - and behind them the British - would capitulate to them. Trimble's grovelling acceptance of Blair's terms for the "peace" talks is based on the quid pro quo that the Orange marches will go ahead unimpeded, though with of course, some token concessions to the Nationalists. Trimble does not want Sinn Fein in the talks, which is why he keeps demanding an IRA surrender. He knows that reform of the

Undoubtedly a significant section is opposed to calling off the armed struggle just to get a new Stormont replacing the one abolished by Heath following Bloody Sunday in 1972. These militant republicans have however a difficult choice to make. Do they follow the Adams leadership into talks in which the ending of partition is already ruled out or do they return to war? The latter is not a serious option. A divided movement would have little chance of inflicting a military defeat on the combined forces of Britain and the South. Most likely there would be a bloody military, followed by political defeat. This is in fact the outcome of a strong politician the Unionist and the ruling parties in the South and in Britain. Republicans should not bow.

"To see the future only in terms of a choice between capitulation or war is a false perception. Republicans should begin to develop a programme which will win loyalist workers away from the already fractured Unionist bloc."

The Six County State is impossible and, like Paisley and the Democratic Unionist Party, wants to smash the Republicans once and for all. He fully supports the Orange men in banging their drums through Nationalist areas in order to demonstrate their ascendancy. He wants to reassure them that this will not be threatened by any movement to end partition. Meanwhile, the Republican movement is also warning what to make of Tony Blair's commitments.
Deportations increase under Labour

Terry Conway

THE ELECTION of a Labour government in May was preceded by the biggest campaign ever in the black community in Britain to make its voice heard in that arena – Operation Black Vote.

While black people have traditionally voted in growing numbers they have become disillusioned with politicians cynically taking their support for granted and then ignoring their needs in office. Along with other sections of the working class, particularly in the inner cities the black community has increasingly stayed at home. Operation Black Vote set out to reverse that trend and has some success in doing so. Their intervention, together with the deep hatred of the Tories undeniably played a part in delivering Labour’s victory.

While Labour had made a few promises on questions of racism and immigration as on other issues neither the black community nor those who had been involved in the fight against the Tory Asylum and Immigration campaign expected that things would in fact get worse.

It’s true that there have been some positive moves – although the reformulation of the ‘primary purpose rule’ is less progressive than it seems, the Bill that has become increasingly worrying as the weeks have rolled past is that the race relations act was greatly strengthened.

Some have pointed out that the Tories had massed a much larger army that was already processing and waiting to be called through London on election day. It may of course be true but misses the point.

Under a Labour government, black people have been subject to attacks on the growing list of the police leading to instant removal to the airport and from there to destines where they may face serious dangers.

These racist and reactionary policies need to be opposed not only through support for the campaigns around the individuals concerned but also in a more general political level.

The particular outrage that best typifies the stance of the government – and its hypocrisy – has been its decision to deport Abdul Onibio.

Below we print the appeal from the defence campaign which explains eloquently what has happened and what needs to be done.

"To all those opposing deportations. We write today with the shocking news that the Home Office have taken the decision not to grant any clearance to Abdul Onibio. Clearly, this is a decision which places Abdul at great risk.

The family’s solicitors are preparing for a Judicial Review at the High Court and when we have a date we will be calling on all our supporters to join a demonstration outside the Court."

In the meantime we need to show the home office the huge level of support for Abdul and his family and we are asking all those opposing the deportation in facting Mike O’Brien urgently to ask that he uses his powers of discretion to allow Abdul to remain in Britain. Below is a model letter which you can copy or amend."

Please FAX your letters to Mike O’Brien at the Home Office, Fax number 0171-273-2043, quoting Abdul’s Ref. number 0107625.

Please send copies of any faxes to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, 22 Berrers St, Birmingham, B1 2DR.

You can also contact the campaign on Tel 0121 534 6947 Fax 0121 501 1567

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Re: Abdul Onibio

Ref: Number 0107625

Abdul settled in Britain in 1984 with Joyce, his wife and has 5 permanent resident status in 1976 but lost this when he fell in love with Joyce, the eldest of whom were born here. He was granted a socalled of the ‘2 year rule’ during his leave in Nigeria.

The Onibio family have been visibly torn apart by the actions of the deportation of his son Ake. The threat of deportation still hangs over them. Many Labour MPs, including Cabinet minister, are opposing the deportation of Abdul and a Letter to Abdul’s friends, family. Jack Straw made representations pointing out that Nigeria was not a safe place. Now they are in Justice in joint asylum.

Abdul was handed over into the custody of Nigerian officials at Lagos Airport on Wednesday, the was forcibly removed 26/10/95. Is in fact of the split in the fact that he was an active pro-democracy supporter and opponent of the Nigerian military regime, was arrested and imprisoned in Lagos.

He attempted to fire Nigeria, once public opposition against the government’s policies and succeeded in health both mental and physically and needs urgent medical attention.

The Nigerian government is publicly attacked the Onibio family in the British press as traitors, and their asylum has left the produced a letter which argued that Abdul was not in detention but was living happily in Nigeria.

This was disgracefully used by Anne Widdecombe in her attempts to deport Abdul to Nigeria in May 1998. Thanks to the massive support he has now in your hands. We are appealing to you to urgently review your decision and allow Abdul to enter Britain as soon as possible, to save his life and allow him to be re-united with his family.

Yours Sincerely

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OUT NOW!

MAASTRICHT MISERY

A new Socialist Outlook pamphlet setting out all you need to know on the background to the Euro-marches and the new-arrived socialist leadership of the European Community.

* The bosses’ strategy for a single currency and a super-state

Why Maastricht is driving a fresh offensive against jobs, living standards and welfare rights across Europe

Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

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E-MAIL
johno@ncadc.
demo.co.uk
Web Site:
http://www.popp
tel.org.uk/ein/a

Onibio family
anti-
deportation
campaign c/o
 Lambeth Uni-
sion, 6A Acre
Lane, Brixton,
London, SW2.
Phone 0171
737-2134 Fax
0171 501 9670

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Indonesia arms sales: Britain tops table

BRITISH firms are set to increase sales of equipment to the Indonesian armed and security forces in 1997, despite the worsening human rights situation in Indonesia and East Timor.

Britain is the most important arms supplier to the Suharto regime. Indonesia is a key test of Robin Cook’s pledge to put human rights at the centre of Britain’s foreign policy.

Two recent World in Action documentaries exposed the special relationship between Britain and the repressive apparatus of Suharto, in particular KOPASSUS, the elite counter-insurgency force spear-heading the crackdown in East Timor, and security police, the regime’s first line of attack against internal protest. Photographs of Tukita water canons in use against student protestors in Bandung in June 1996 neatly illustrate this relationship.

Shady figures

The British side includes captains of industry, the SAS (Special Services), the security industry and shady figures operating in the twilight world of military equipment training and with advantageous contacts in the export licensing section of the Department of Trade and Industry. The catalogue of exporters includes:

- The Roper Group: Hundreds of landrovers, made in Solihull, supplied to KOPASSUS, later mounted with heavy machine guns.
- GKN: Nearly 300 armed vehicles, including Tornado and LANCE, supplied to the Indonesian army.
- Atkins: 50 Scorpion armoured vehicles, made in Coventry, licensed in December 1996.
- Itron: Goldingham-based firm headed by Royal Marine and MOD Mike Hitchcock OBE, supplying “Ubiquitous” weapon training systems and close quarter battle houses to KOPASSUS. Computer simulation exercises targeting civilian protestors ("moving targets"), shopping drains and discussing accompanying these sales.

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Procurement Services Internation- al, headed by a captain in the Scots Dragoon Guards and based in Salisbury, PLS acts as an agent for GKN’s ATKINS. It claims to be the largest European supplier of equipment to the Indonesian army and police, with sales totalling £400 million since 1993 and an order book of £200 million.

The SAS train KOPASSUS, whose counter-insurgency tactics are modelled on Britain’s colonial war in Malaya.

Meanwhile the wave of repression against the pro-democracy movement continues, with the recent sentencing of People’s Dem- ocracy Party (PDP) president Budiman Sucipto to 13 years in prison. There is mounting evidence of the torture and extra judicial killings of East Timorese prisoners.

Both Budiman Sucipto and José Ramos Horta, leading representatives of the East Timorese independence movement, have refused to follow the new Labour government to halt all arms sales to Indonesia. Robin Cook has stated that arms sales to Indonesia are likely to be used for internal repression or external aggression.

This would include armoured vehi- cles and water cannon.

However, this position differs more in emphasis than in substance from the previous government which also claimed to use human rights criteria in granting export li- cences. It falls for short of the full embargo demanded by the liber- ation movement in Indonesia and East Timor.

Options open

It leaves open the option of selling military equipment which has not been directly linked in photo- graphic evidence to repression, including Hawk jets.

In fact there is evidence from eyewitnesses, and statements by Indonesian officials, that Hawks have been used for bombing in East Timor.

The Indonesian Minister of Tech- nology, achieved that “the planes will be used... also for ground attack” (The Times, 16 April 1993).

Cook will come under enormous pressure from Britain’s arms manu- facturers to back out on his commitment to human rights. It is vital that campaigners in the labour movement counteract this pressure and fight to hold Cook to his commitment.
Spectre of Europe's workers haunts Amsterdam summit

Counting the cost of failure

Harry Sloan

BANKERS, bureaucrats and politicians are still reeling from the damage done to their dream of a European super-state after the failure of June's Amsterdam summit.

No sooner had the forged documents been driven home towards the confessional communiqués issued than the real scale of the problem began to emerge.

One top German banker has attacked the Amsterdam Treaty as a "ragbag" and "patchwork" of decisions which do nothing to tackle the problems that workers' movements are taking on single currencies.

The drive towards greater political integration, and the reform of the EU's decision-making institutions, was: "It is vital if it is to open its doors to up to 10 new countries in eastern Europe, came to a grinding halt."

Instead new divisions have begun to emerge, under pressure of mass resistance to the austerity programmes forced on the convergence criteria for the single currency.

Austerity

The Euro marches may have been kept well away from the summit meeting, but each national delegation was painfully aware of the growing mood of opposition to austerity measures that has taken various forms across the continent.

So much so that the tension was said to be national governments' attempts to fend for their own interests at the expense of their previous commitments to the development of the EU that some analysts talking already of a process of "dissociation".

Ironically it was one of the keenest previous advocates of a greater integration, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who helped stamp on the Brussels project which was struggling to salvage his hopes for a single European currency.

Because of the first substantial break in the crucial Franco-German axis that for 16-15 years has been the driving force towards the strengthening and expansion of the EUL and more recently the single currency progresses towards a single currency.

The liaison was rudely interrupted in both countries in the last 12 months, by a wave of opposition in Germany involving workers' protests and increasingly outspoken criticism by conservative financiers worried at the potential weakening of stability if the Deutschmark is dissolved into the euro, and in France by the mass strikes against austerity, leading to the shock defeat of the right wing government by a Socialist Party critical of the Maastricht Treaty.

Although France's new Socialist Prime Minister Jospin met Kohl as usual before the Amsterdam proceedings, for the first time they failed to agree on a common line, with both governments feeling the heat of popular opinion at home.

Jospin clung firmly to his electorate of demanding the Stability Pact agreed in Dublin last December be renegotiated to include a specific commitment to growth and job creation.

Kohl for his part opposed any measures which would lead to state spending on job creation, and attempted to undo the political damage caused by his government's the working week, and to limit the right of private employers to sack workers.

The latest French financial statistics also show a worsening in the economic situation: the French and Spanish entered a recessionary period; and everyone praised a new employment chapter, which is long on exhortation but short on guidelines on what the governments, rather than Brussels, should take the initiative.

Indeed the British government's most popular export during the summit was the Thatcherite policy of deregulation and "flexibility" of labour it inherited from the last 18 years.

The employment and growth pact pledges EU member states to review their tax and benefit systems to get rid of disincentives to job creation, increase the "adaptable" of labour markets, and increase the "employability" of their workforce through training programs.

Platitudes

The policy was lifted wholesale from the New Labour platforms of Tony Blair's manifesto and Gordon Brown's budget, and is of course a recipe for the spread of British-style low-wage, insecure, and part-time working throughout the continent.

Worse, according to these vague and evasive phrases was sufficient to pull in the French and Swedish governments which had been the most outspoken critics of the Maastricht Treaty, and thus keep the wheels on European Monetary Union, even if the gearbox is jammed.

A stalemate has developed over the single currency while France, Germany, Italy and Greece wrestle with intractable deficits as the clock ticks down towards the deadline for convergence.

“A stalemate has developed over the single currency while France, Germany, Italy and Greece wrestle with intractable deficits as the clock ticks down towards the deadline for convergence.”

“...you could say we have rescued EMU,” a minister told the FT, “although I would be grateful if you did not say it too loudly.”

Gordon Brown was a bit more up-front on the EMU question when he pointed out that his Budget would enable the British economy to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria.

Blair's team has always seemed likely to look with greater enthusiasm than the Tories on the single currency.

But the last chance of Amster-
dam is likely to come on its political failures, and on the emergence of popular pressures within member states as a factor in policy de-
bates, obstructing any real prospect for enlargement to the greater political integration.

With key governments singing in different tongues but from cross-purposed hymn sheets, the chances of any leading the way in the political gamble of monetary union must be reduced.

A senior member of the Bundestag's governing central council, Roland Jochems, spelled out the problems facing Helmut Kohl when at the end of the week, he might launch his EMU a decade of economic and political foundations "may lead to the disaster of political disintegration.

Pointing to the French government's admission that it cannot get its public deficit down to 3% Maastricht maximum, Mr Jochems warned that Germany too will find it hard, and it could be "almost impossible" to meet the additional criterion of cutting the public debt to 60% of GDP.

To wriggle round this (and other problems in other countries') by creative accountancy, he warned, would "build EMU on very shaky foundations" while "pure political opportunism" would risk "a serious crisis of confidence.

Resistance

The antics of Europe's political leaders are a visible result of the growing internal resistance to austerity. That fight is likely to grow as the squeeze on welfare spending and drive for speed-up is intensified by employers.

Despite Tony Blair's cynical hi-jacking of the phrase "Peo-
ple's Europe" originally raised by campaigners opposed to the Maastricht criteria and the projec-
tion of a capital, but ultimately controlled by bankers, big business and bureaucrats, it is clear that there is a growing will among the political parties and the people.Franco-German paywalled
Internationalist campaign blocks drive for bosses’ Europe

Success of Euro marches

Alan Thornett
FIFTY THOUSAND people joined the demonstration in Amsterdam on June 14 at the climax of the European marches against unemployment, job insecurity and social exclusion. Slogans against Maastricht, the single currency and unemployment across Europe rang out in a dozen different languages. "The people united will never be defeated" - "Maastricht - con trick" and "decent jobs and decent pay - single currency no way" were the favourite slogans of the British delegation.

The demonstration brought together a wide coalition, ranging from the trade unions - the largest single component - to large numbers of young people and environmental campaigners. The demonstration was the first internationalist event of its kind. The Dutch organisers estimated between 15,000-20,000 people from 70 countries participated. The demonstration therefore constituted a broad coalition of international delegations. These included 5,000 from France, 4,000 from Italy, 3,500 from Greece, and delegation from every country of the EU and beyond. Around 500 people were from Britain. Alan Simpson, the president of the British campaign for the marchers, joined the demonstration and rode through Amsterdam.

Free trains
The Italian delegation, organised primarily by Refoundation Communists, provided the most remarkable story of the day. 4,000 unemployed people had turned up at Milan station and demanded the government lay on free trains to take them to Amsterdam. They got their trains!

When they arrived in Amsterdam - hours late because of border delays - 200 were held by police due to alleged graffiti damage to one of the carriages. The rest refused to leave the station and were then attacked by riot police.

The Italian delegation eventually marched into Dam Square at 6 pm on Saturday evening - four hours after the assembly time and just in time to catch the tail end of the huge circular march returning. They then had an unplanned overnight stay in Amsterdam waiting until 11 am on Sunday morning until the last of the two hundred held by Dutch police had been released.

Despite the huge and vibrant demonstration on the Saturday for the 500 core marchers, many of whom had been on the road for two months, the joining up of the marchers on the previous day was probably the most emotive and memorable part of the whole campaign.

The marchers had already amalgamated into two columns of about 200 each - one entering Amsterdam from the north, the other from the south. The columns comprising the Irish, French, Belgian, Spanish and British legs arrived in Dam Square first after an inspiring march into Amsterdam.

Twenty minutes later they were charging down the road to meet the other column which had appeared in the distance. There was then a joint march through the city before being welcomed by the mayor at the Town Hall.

The strength of the marches was their enduring political relevance. The process of European integration and the project of the single currency and the response of key sections of the working class to the effects of these plans of the bosses and bankers with mass strikes and demonstrations has been headline news through much of the last year. The marches addressed the central political issue in Europe today - mass unemployment - and the biggest single factor which is set to increase it still further - the current plans for a single currency.

It is remarkable that the political relevance of this focus was not only maintained but increased during the year from the launch of the campaign to its conclusion in Amsterdam. Indeed the issue will continue to be central to the foreseeable future.

Solidarity

The most important political gain of the campaign across Europe was to lift the increasing road towards internationalism and international solidarity to a new level. This was symbolised most strongly on the demonstration by the delegation of Renault workers - who themselves have been taking international action to save jobs.

In Britain, the marches have helped to shift the debate on the single currency within the Labour movement, particularly the unions. The TUC opposed the marches, sending out a letter to affiliates. The TUC Committee of unemployed centres went further, conducting a nasty campaign of vilification against the marches right through to the end, on the political line of the TUC.

In the face of this, the marches themselves have helped to develop a serious challenge to the official line of the TUC on Europe and the Maastricht Treaty, with the support of trade union and unemployed activists.

The FBU was committed to the TUC line at the start of the marches. By the end, the leadership line had been challenged at FBU conference by a supporter of the marches, several regions supported the marches, and the national union sponsored a marcher.

While the marches were on the road, NATFHE conference voted to support the marches, making NATFHE one of five national unions supporting the initiative; the others were the Bakers Union, the RMT, the Professional Footballers Association and the FBU.

Nearly 100 Trades Councils backed the marches, and this was carried unanimously at Trades Council conference.

The Trades Councils’ role in providing practical and logistical support for the marches on the road was crucial, as they organised receptions, food and accommodation for the marches.

There were debates and pressure at every level within trade union and other organisations over support and sponsorship of the campaign.

The marches in Britain also achieved a degree of media attention which was out of proportion to the size of the marches at that time, reflecting the campaign’s European dimension.

During the Eurotour campaign, links were made with workers involved in current disputes. The Liverpool dockers and their supporters backed the marches from the start and sent a strong delegation to Amsterdam. The Magnet strikers organised for the North East leg in Darlington and supported the events. The marchers organised several Magnet showroom tours, staged an occupation of the Project Aerospace plant and visited the Hillington jockey line on the way into London. The Hillington women spoke in Amsterdam and marched with their banner on the demonstration.

Achievement

Keeping the two legs of the march on the road through Britain without any major breakdown was a major achievement in itself. Of the 34 towns and cities where the march stayed overnight, only two or three fell through.

Altogether, the march passed through 90 cities and towns, linking up with various struggles and campaigns taking place along the way. A key activity was the occupation of Job Centres, protesting against the Job Seekers Allowance and low pay, together with solidarity actions in support of the various strikes.

The campaign itself and above all the experience of being on the road were definitely exhausting.

But any sense of tiredness is superseded by the renewed energy generated by the impact of our ideas and the sense of solidarity we built.

It is that spirit which is taking us forward into discussions as to what the next steps are both here in Britain and internationally.
A powerful guide to the emerging Europe

The Question of Europe, Edited by Peter Gowan and Perry Anderson, Verso, 414 pages, £15.00
Reviewed by Duncan Chappie

"MOUNET wrote 'We are starting a process of continuous change which will shape tomorrow's world more drastically than the policies of revolution so widespread as to stand outside the west.' Who can deny the genius of this conception?" (Perry Anderson on the 'father of euro-federalism' Jean Monnet.)

Peter Gowan and Perry Anderson are two of the most important British writers on European affairs. Their book, 'The Question of Europe,' provides a powerful guide to the emerging Europe.

The book contains four major themes, each of which is explored in depth:

1. The links between economic development and welfare generation are discussed, and Peter Gowan forcefully argues that British approaches to integration have been continually subordinated to domestic political concerns.

2. The economics of monetary union are examined, with particular attention paid to the issues of German hegemony and the implications for the EU.

3. The book addresses the question of how the integration process is affecting the nature of European politics and society.

4. The book concludes with a critique of European integration, identifying the ways in which it has failed to address key issues of social justice and democratic governance.

The book is highly recommended for all those interested in the future of Europe.
A look at the campaign behind open letter of European economists

Winning new allies against EMU

SO: Why did the three of you decide to launch this open letter?

RW: This European wide initiative followed an initiative that we took four months earlier in The Netherlands.

There was no serious discussion in our country about the social, political, and economic consequences of the euro-project and we were horrified by the idea that everyone could lose freedom of choice, decide on the new money provoked discussion.

So we decided to try to get Dutch economists to sign an appeal against this project and partially to our surprise 70 signed, among which were several well-known professors and six trade unions.

The head of the Ministry of Finance said on TV that we are "dangerous" and other politicians said we were "silly" and "too late", but our statement provoked a real discussion in the press and in all kinds of meetings for the first time. Since then we have been referred to as "the group of 70 euro-sceptical economists"

Politically this discussion has been very important, because we state that we are not against a common currency itself, on the contrary, but against this project with these criteria, central bank, policy goals and consequences. This is a threat from right-wing nationalist criticisms and helped create the space for a progressive international opposition against this project, this Europe, for a social, ecological and democratic Europe.

Our Dutch statement got some press coverage in other countries and colleague economists from other countries contacted us to try to do something similar on a European level just before the Amsterdam summit. As the Dutch held the presidency of the EU, we were asked to coordinate that and so we did, again with a lot of success given the short period in which this had to be done.

SO: Was it easy to get support? Did many of you approached reject what you were saying?

RW: In Holland we were surprised by the support (we now have over 100 supporters) and internationally I was struck by the number of economists that signed from Britain (the biggest group), Greece and also Italy, where our national organizer expected that it would be difficult.

In several countries we did not have enough economists with time to work on the signatures, otherwise I think we would have had over 500 names.

As for negative reactions, I don't know about other countries, but I find it striking how few economists tried to defend the existing project publicly.

Many more seem to have doubts and are arguments in favour are also getting more and more catastrophic, to de-politicise the debate. "We cannot stop now after all the work and money invested, or get involved in a political and economic crisis in Europe", they say.

The positive reasons to be in favour (more work, growth, saving of transfer costs) that were given in the beginning for the project are not credible any more, because we see the results are the reverse.

Since the Maastricht Treaty was signed unemployment in the EU increased with almost 4 million: who wants to explain that 20 million is less than 16 million?

SO: Why do you think you have so much success in getting media coverage?

RW: More and more people begin to get doubts about the project and it is not at all certain that they can force it through.

As a Green Finnish member of the European parliament recently said to me in a panel discussion in Amsterdam, the importance of our statement is that it makes clear that you can be against the euro without being against Europe. Think that position is new for many journalists and that helped to get a good echo in the press.

SO: The debate in Britain has tended to focus on the restrictions and limits in the Maastricht treaty and the impact the resulting cuts are having and will continue to have on jobs and services. You seem to argue in the appeal that we also need to pay attention to the further regulations agreed through the Dublin stability pact. The debate following Josipin's victory in the French elections in the run up to this summit also tended to focus more on this question. Can you explain where the Dublin agreement fits in to the process?

RW: The stability pact that was agreed in Dublin and finalised in Amsterdam is indeed very important, as it lays out how the future common currency will function.

According to Maastricht all government deficits have to be reduced to 3 percent Gross Domestical Product (GDP).

The Stability Pact is there to make sure that no country that is allowed to participate in the common currency will ever go over this 3 percent, which is as we explain in our letter a completely arbitrary figure.

The pact therefore says that all countries must reduce their deficit even further to "close to balance", i.e. 0 percent or even 1 percent, which means that all the cuts and austerity policies that we have had over the last few years will continue until far in the next century.

It also means that new recessions will be even deeper than they already were. This pact is a pre-cyclical straightjacket that in reality prevents regulatory policies in periods of economic ebb.

There are severe sanctions in the pact, including penalties that can go up to 0.5 percent of GDP, for countries that go over the 3 percent deficit. Socially this is of course totally unacceptable, and even from an orthodox point of view nobody can give an economic justification for it.

SO: What assessment do you make of what happened at the Amsterdam summit? To what extent were there real disagreements between Josipin and the rest? What does the employment chapter mean? What do you think about the role played by Tony Blair?

RW: I think there are real differences, but unfortunately most gave in almost immediately. As one of the major Dutch papers said in an editorial, it took Mitterrand two years, Chirac six months and Josipin only two weeks to change their policies.

Tony Blair is one of the main opponents of even the moderate social-democratic changes that Josipin was fighting for. There was a conference of European social-democratic socialism in Malmo in Sweden before the Amsterdam summit and nobody there supported Josipin.

The Dutch minister of social affairs, who is the social face of the government and social democracy in Holland, said he supported Blair's proposals for more flexibility in the labour market and more competitive policies, and suggested that Josipin would soon have a lot to explain to his voters that he did not dare tell them.

What happened in the end with the stability pact in Amsterdam is scandalous and an insult for the unemployed and poor in Europe. Nothing is changed in the rigid stability pact and there are only some vague intentions added about job creation, without one penny to do something real. This is the sixth "employment plan" since the mid-eighties and again it will create almost no jobs.

Everybody knows this: Robin Cook asked by a French paper how many jobs this will create said "At least eighty"!

SO: Do you have plans for any further initiatives?

RW: We are only starting to discuss that now, so I can't tell you what we're going to do. I am sure that after all the support and encouragement that we got, that there will definitely be new initiatives.
The last British colony in Asia

Bobby Chan

Since the beginning of this year, media coverage of Hong Kong has been steadily increasing. Last month, just before the handover of the colony to China, it reached a crescendo. Most newspaper articles criticised China's lack of democracy and forecast that many problems remain unresolved in Hong Kong faced repression. The clear implication was that Britain should have never agreed the handover.

There was very little mention of how Hong Kong came to be a British colony. Clearly the British do not wish to be associated with their ugly and imperialist past. However the colonisation of Hong Kong also represents the end of the Imperial China and the beginning of a new era in Chinese history.

The Opium War

Before the Opium War in the 1840s China was isolated from the rest of the world. Governed by the Manchurian dynasty, it's foreign door policy existed because it believed it had all it needed. A limited amount of overseas trade was routine. However the British government wanted to change that.

However the need to trade with China increased - in particular tea and opium. Because China was a cash based economy, the opium was seen as a cash inflow.

The British government needed another product which could be exported to China in order to prevent this. The product chosen was opium - imported from India. The British first tried to sell it to India but could not due to social and economic problems. Various elements within the Manchurian dynasty were not ready to sell off the Indian trade to be used for the purpose of opium.

What is commonly referred to as the Opium War raged from 1840 to 1842, the end of which China's defeated rulers were forced to sign the Nanjing Treaty. Hong Kong island was given to Britain as a base for trade with China. Britain was also allowed to import opium and open five open ports with China losing control of its customs.

Manchurian defiance

From here on, massive industrial products were purchased from China as a consequence local production was destroyed. For the Manchurian dynasty it was the beginning of the end. In the centuries after it faced a number of insurrections, most significantly the Taiping rebellion.

At the same time China was again subject to imperial aggression. Between 1857 and 1860, Britain, France, the USA and Russia, together raised war against China.

British demands included the continued legal importation of opium. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing and the further annexation of the Kowloon peninsula to Britain.

Following China's defeat in the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese war the Manchurian Dynasty was forced to bow to the pressure of overseas trade. China was forced to open up to Hong Kong and the other "New Territories" on a 99-year lease.

Unilateral rule

Throughout most of the twentieth century the British ruled Hong Kong through traditional repressive colonial methods. During this period the most radical challenge to British rule was the 1967 protest in Guangzhou and Hong Kong.

After 1967 the British Government realised they had to change the way they ruled Hong Kong and that some local Chinese had to be included in the decision making process.

However the nature of colonial rule didn't change at all. Until very recently white superiors continued to control all levels of government. While British citizens had the right to seek work in Hong Kong without restriction, citizens of the Empire had no such reciprocal right in Britain.

It was clear from the beginning that the British government did not want to hand Hong Kong back to China. Margaret Thatcher argued that the three unequal treaties were all valid. When she realised that the Chinese government would not accept this and that she could not do what she had to do against the Palikains, she began to ask another question - the British government would accept the sovereignty of Hong Kong but would carry on administering the colony for a further period.

Eventually when the British realised they had to hand Hong Kong back they were only interested in what for Hong Kong citizens to choose which country they wished to live in. This was enforced through the 1981 British Nationality Act, which created a new category of British National (Overseas) with no right of settlement in Britain.

Only 50,000 families of "essential" Hong Kong citizens (mostly rich and high and middle ranking bureaucrats) were allowed to settle in this country.

Unilateral rule

From the 1970s onwards a small number of Chinese were picked to join the Executive and the Legislative Council as unofficial representatives of the Chinese population. These were usually the rich and famous. However the Council had no real power, they were restating with the British-appointed governor.

When the British government finally accepted that Hong Kong had to be handed back these "British allies" were never consulted. Realising they had been sold out, they shifted their allegiance to the Chinese government.

Many of them are now members of the People's Committee established by China in order to administer Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: fight for democratic self-rule!

By our correspondent

In the 155 year period of occupation, British rule was exploitative of labour in Hong Kong as well as politically repressive in order to maintain its domination.

Activists fighting against imperialism have been struggling against repression through such laws and regulations as the Public Order Ordinance.

The fact that British rule over Hong Kong ended until the end of the century and was not, as with other British colonies, terminated sooner after the Second World War, is due to the ruling Communist Party of China's determination prepared to tolerate its continuation.

After 1949, economic developments in China were slow. In contrast, Hong Kong took a faster path of growth. This did not happen, however, due to the superiority of British rule but a combination of measures. One measure was the hard work put in by Hong Kong workers.

The end of British colonial rule and the removal of constraints should mean the people of Hong Kong having more self control of their lives.

However, such possibilities have been thwarted by the imposition of domination and repression from the authorities in Beijing who are taking over control.

The formula of "one country, two systems" is used rhetorically to promise there will be no change of the social system. Yet its formulation and implementation from above is a devolution of the right of the people of Hong Kong to decide on the social system they desire.

Anti-democratic

The whole process of transition has been both undemocratic and anti-democratic. The Basic Law Drafting Committee was appointed by Beijing. It proposed laws in the interests of Beijing bureaucratic rule and corporate capitalists.

The Chinese government and the Provisional Legislative Council were not elected democratically. Some repressive parts of the Public Order Bill have been restored to intimidate and resist the people for their rights.

Now that the change-over has taken place, the minority of Beijing bureaucrats and corporate capitalists are imposing their further repression of political freedoms and the social and economic rights of the people.

The new government has already demonstrated its reluctance to implement social welfare or increase public expenditure on health, education, housing. This is a handover of a reserve of $10 billion by the outgoing government to the new one.

The amount of money spent on the handover "celebrations" was obscene. The fireworks display alone cost $40 million.

The people of Hong Kong must actively take matters into their own hands rather than wait for benevolent changes from above. Both political and social issues are closely linked.

The fight for more spending on health, education, housing and social welfare is an order to improve the quality of living cannot be separated from the fight for democracy.

To gain the majority and political and democratic rights of decision making, access to information, free association and political organisation, and so on.

People's Congress

We propose that the focus of the fight for political democracy must be concentrated on the demand for democracy election to a Hong Kong People's Congress. This would make major decisions relating to the self-rule of Hong Kong by the people.

In the struggle for political and social rights the people of Hong Kong are now much more linked to the people of the mainland. Facing common enemies their joined hands may be the best Party bureaucrats and corporate capitalists is now made much more possible.

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How India forced the British to quit

Geoff Ryan

IN 1914, when King George V declared war on Germany on behalf of the British Empire, India was invited to join. One and a half million Indians fought on, on every military front, on behalf of their imperial master in the Great War. Twenty-five years later the imperial Viceregal List included India as a constituent country. The transition was very different. Not even all the rulers of the supposedly autonomous Princely States enthusiastically endorsed Britain's war effort. In those areas of India under direct British rule there was no question of a popular war; the outbreak of conflict was met with very mixed emotions. The fact that too much had happened in India between the two Wars gave Indians for whom it meant the creation of a new path.

The massacre at Amritsar in 1919, the suppression of every challenge to British rule and, for Muslims, British defeat in the Middle East had greatly strengthened nationalistic feelings. This was fuelled by the memory of the Second World War when British troops were found in retreat in the various Indian territories of the inter-war years. While the former was little more than a military exercise the latter allowed the British to decide for themselves who was to play what role in the 1939-1945 war.

The all-white Simon Commission in 1927 in a vain attempt to moderate Indian politics, while the 1935 Government of India Act only gave Indians some say at a local level. It maintained separate seats for religious minorities, a provision opposed by Congress but supported by the Muslim League. In 1929 the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, had announced that India would be 'given' some form of self-rule - though not just yet - how. However many of these changes reflected British determination to maintain the Empire, they did not reflect the development of political consciousness.

The consequences of this shift became clear during the war. In 1942 Stafford Cripps, a leader of the Labour left and a member of the wartime British cabinet, was sent to India to try to negotiate active Indian support for the war. His Draft Declaration was rejected by Congress.

The British government offered only Dominion status and a constituent assembly whose members were to be elected by regional assembly or nominated by the rulers in the case of the 'princely states'. It also made concessions to the demand being made by the Muslim League for a separate state, Pakistan. Moreover, none of the proposals were to be implemented until after the war. Congress rejected the Cripps proposal and launched the 'Quit India' movement in August 1942.

Arrests

On August 9 1942 the main leaders of Congress were arrested. Mass protests took place throughout India, with women and young people playing a prominent role. Police stations, post offices, railway stations, courts and other symbols of imperial authority were attacked. National flags were raised on public buildings. Railways lines were blocked and trains were blown at telephone and telegraph wires were cut.

In Ahmadabad million workers struck for three and a half months. In Madras by the end of the year there were a general strike for a week, and in Jamshedpur for two weeks. In Ahmednagar and Poona strikes lasted for more than three months. School and college students joined the strikes and often became victims of violence for the underground movements that developed in response to the arrests of the known leaders. Although the mass protests subsided after two months the underground movement continued, with its activities broadcast over the clandestine Congress Radio. In a number of areas the underground movement developed parallel governments.

In Tamil Nadu the parallel government lasted from December 1942 until September 1944, while in Saurashtra it lasted from August 1942-1943. These parallel governments organised education and helped with famine relief. They carried out some land redistribution, set up people's courts and organised sabotage activities against the British and their local collaborators. Though they did not support their supposed adherents to Gandhian principles, they set up armed formations.

The 'Quit India' movement was met by savage repression. By the end of 1942 over 60,000 people had been interned; nearly 45,000 were detained under the Defence of India Rules. Only half of those had been convicted of any offence, in a situation where obtaining a conviction was not difficult.

When Gandhi began a 21-day fast on February 10 1943 the British government ignored all appeals - including from the US government - for the release of Congress leaders. The troops were placed on standby to deal with any uprising if it emerged.

The following year terrible famine hit Bengal, and the British government exacted revenge. The wartime coalition government refused to send aid. Not one Labour member of the government dissented. Five and a half million died.

The importance of the 'Quit India' Movement must be seen against the background of the Second World War in Asia. By August 1942 Japanese armies had captured Burma and Singapore, and were on the threshold of India. British confidence was shaken. The defeat of European armies by Asians was a massive blow to Indian self-confidence. In this situation arose one of the least understood by the British movements in Indian history, the Indian National Army. The INA was founded in Malaya by a former officer of the British Royal Army, Mohan Singh, who had defected to the Japanese for help rather than serve with the British soldiers.

By the end of 1942 thousands of Japanese prisoners of war had joined the INA. What had been claimed it would only go into action at the request of the Indian National Congress. This was also seen as a means of protecting the Japanese occupation of Burma.

The INA is usually associated with Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the leaders of the left-wing Congress alongside Nehru. Chandra Bose followed the old nationalist maxim that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Hence it was that he was arrested by the British for the supposed treason.

In 1943 Bose was brought to Singapore by German and Japanese submarines. However there were clear differences between the aims of the INA and the Japanese military. The former wanted an independent India, the latter an Indian-Asian empire. Though they met often, the INA was the only unit.

The success of the INA was certainly related to its links with the Japanese; once the Japanese armies were in retreat, the INA had little chance. Nonetheless, despite the massive British propaganda attack at the time (and since) Chandra Bose was not a stooge of German or Japanese nationalistic politics. He was an Indian nationalist who had considerable success in uniting Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims within the INA. This was duly noted by Congress.

When Bose died in a plane crash in 1945 Nehru, Gandhi and others defended him against British attempts to portray him as a fascist agent.

In the UK the British organised trials of former members of the INA, mass demonstrations supported the accused. Congress, the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India and smaller parties, alongside some of the Indian 'primes' demanded the release of all INA prisoners.

Nehru acted as lawyer for some of the accused. Even large numbers of traditional 'loyal' Indians - in Government service or the army - opposed the INA to divide India.

This was just one aspect of increasing discontent in the Indian armed forces. In February 1946 naval and army recruits in the RIN Tawar went on strike in Bombay in protest against racism, inedible food and abusive treatment.

Airforce strikes

Further unrest: 1,000 ratings from 78 ships and 20 shore bases, followed. Strikes also took place in the Royal Indian Air force and the army.

There were also strikes amongst British military personnel, particularly aircrews. Whilst the main demands were for demobilisation and repatriation, many of those taking part expressed disgust with the newly-independent Indian government.

Not all actions, however, were progressive. There was also considerable fighting between and within different communities between the supporters of a united India and those who favoured Pakistan.

Foundations of Indian division. This was a result of the Labour government's policy of immediate partition, the Labour government moved rapidly towards British disengagement and, with the others, the Indian National Congress, the British had exploited them to divide and rule.

Separate seats

They had consistently defended separate seats for Muslims, and during the war the Muslim League had a privileged relationship with the British. However this was because Congress refused to support the British war effort whilst the Muslim League gave it full backing.

The Muslim League leader Jinnah believed that his, correctly, that by 1947 the British were in a hurry to get out of India. All he had to do was wait and the British would cede to the demand for Pakistan.

All the evidence suggests that the British wanted to maintain a united India. It was the objective result of past policies, not a conscious decision as the end of the Second World War, that led to the division of India - in the course of which another half million Indians died.
Irish workers reject “Celtic tiger”

John McNulty

In the recent general election in the 26 counties a number of interesting patterns were apparent. The first and most obvious was that of an unbroken tradition going back 20 years—the defeat of the governing coalition. The fact that on each occasion working class voters have taken their revenge is a stark comment on claims that the southern part of the state is a “Celtic Tiger.”

There was also a clear dismissal in advance of the programme of the Fine Gael-Progressive Democrat coalition. The junior partners, advocates of a program of deregulation and privatization, won only four seats. The new administration is relying on the voice of independents. Above all there was the classic situation of the left paying for the programme of the last coalition. This was a successful programme for capitalism that the right-wing Fine Gael party actually increased in voice while the Labour party voice halved.

The need for self-organisation of the working class was thus posed anew. It expressed itself in a turning away from the major parties and an increased vote for smaller parties and the independents. The inability of the Greens to tap into this was expressed in their call for water metering—a cost that would fall on the working class. Sinn Fein stood up as a credible alternative, with a significant electoral base in Dublin and Joe Higgins was elected to the Dáil. They have built up their base with local campaigns rather than by appealing to the major parties’ workers’ vote.

They must now be pressed on their reactionary positions on the national question. The construction of a genuine party of the working class rests on opposition to the present Labour policies of political coalition with capitalism and to industrial collaboration through “partnership” agreements.

(John McNulty is a member of Socialist Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International).

Essential reading or union activists facing hard Labour

Trade Unions in the Nineties: A Strategy for Socialists, Socialist Outlook pamphlet reviewed by John McIlroy

SO FAR, Tony Blair has had little time available to help Britain’s trade unions. He has been too busy with the really important political tasks—consulting Mrs. Thatcher, appointing businessmen to his government, attacking teachers and single mothers and lecturing EU leaders on the need for more deregulation and greater competitiveness.

Thatcher’s anti-union laws are now being introduced and if the government has its way they will remain on the statute book forever.

The speedy restoration of union rights to GCHQ workers shows what the government will do. Yet on the minimum wage from the Low Pay Commission has not even commenced its deliberations—which will, of course, be subject to an employer veto. A White Paper on Union Recognition will be published in the autumn, with legislation promised by...summer 1999.

The closest of the TUC’s legislation, including bans on solidarity action condemned by the International Labour Organisation will remain.

Public sector wage restraint will continue. The proposals in the document “Labour into Power,” which will marginalise the unions’ influence in the Labour Party they spent so much to bring into government, will be pursued at this party’s conference.

Those who oppose government policy in the unions must urgently get together to exchange ideas, discuss alternatives and organise for them. We must do all we can to support the struggles already taking place. There are small disputes—the dockers, Hillingdon Hospital and Magnet workers—but also the redundancies in Sheffield and the education cuts promised by John Prescott capping council budgets.

Secondly, we must build real living rank and file links between trade unions in Britain, Europe and beyond. The activities around the dockers’ dispute and the Euro-marshals are exemplary. We can learn lessons from the militancy which has spread across Europe since 1995.

Thirdly, we need to take up these issues not only in the unions but in the Labour Party—and here the proposals for weakening the unions role are of critical significance. They don’t break the link. They commit the unions to a new link, which by concentrating power over decisions in the hands of the Parliamentary leadership, turning conference into a Tory style party and diluting union strength on the executive. They silence the voice of the organised working class.

The unions still have 50% of the voice: we have to mobilise to turn back these measures.

Finally, the legislation. Recent TUC Congresses have supported resolutions committing the TUC to repeal the Tory employment laws— at least one of these resolutions was supported by the General Council. We have to uphold TUC policy and ensure its implementation.

But we have to be specific. Going round sloganising “Repeal the anti-union legislation” is insufficient. The best way is to prioritise the implementation of the Manifesto promises on the minimum wage and recognition.

The way they are implemented—the detail—will be important. We can use the fight for a minimum wage and recognition to launch recruitment drives and to rebuild workplace organisation.

We should try to mobilise alliances across the unions and on the Labour Left. We should highlight specific aspects of the Tory laws—the bans on solidarity action, the ‘social’ charter which prohibits unions from disciplining those who violate ballot decisions—in the context of seeking to replace the Conservative laws with a positive code of rights to organise strikes, take solidarity action, and so on.

In all this, the new pamphlet “Trade Unions in the Nineties” will be of great help. It provides valuable context, advice and ammunition for what will continue to be an uphill struggle.

It documents the depressing state of the unions after the long years of Tory rule. This highlights what we have to work with. TUC membership down 5 million since 1979, only a third of workers in unions, shop stewards in less than 40% of workplaces, strikes running at their lowest levels this century.

The authors vividly depict what we are up against—in changes in the world economy and European Labour markets hostile to trade unionism, barbarous new management techniques, and a debilitating web of anti-union laws. We face union leaderships whose only answer is to trumpet partnership with the employers—a partnership the employers just don’t want.

Yet if things look grim they are far from fatal. These changes create the classical conditions for the growth of fighting trade unionism in a casualised insecure exploited working class whose leaders deny them legal protection to defend itself.

There are useful sections on women in the unions, black workers and anti-racism and the vital question of the youth. Union membership amongst young people, the well-spring of our future, are dangerously low.

The framework is international, the authors repeatedly stressing the need for solutions at a European level. A renewal of union democracy is seen as central to any strategy to revive trade unionism. There is cogent criticism of rank and file approaches whilst starting from a separation of the struggle in the workplace and the struggle in the unions and Labour Party ends up in sectarian virtual reality on the borders of our movement. The short cut turns into a dead-end.

There is also a powerful emphasis on the need for broad working class alliances. The pamphlet contains material important to educating young people in the history and method of militant trade unionism as well as discussion of more immediate demands.

All trade unionists should read it and take it to heart its key message: “The way forward for the trade union is not in the gift of Blair, Brown or Brussels. It is in the hands of the working class itself.” Amen.

* John McIlroy is the author of a number of books including The Permanent Revolution? Conservative Law and the Trade Unions in Britain Today. He is a member of the AUT.

* The pamphlet Trade Unions in the Nineties is available (£1.50 inc post) from us at Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UH
A timely analysis of India in turmoil

The Furies of Indian Christianity: Religion Modernity and Secularization, by Achin Vanaki, Verso, £14.00

Reviewed by Terry Connors

The timely publication of “The Furies of Indian Communism” coincides with the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the official commitment of the Indian state to secularism would prevent the resurgence of communal tensions.

While initially this seemed successful, over the last 25 years India has become a no-man’s-land (Ghadar). Swatla, has transformed the concept of communalism, at least in his book (published in the 1980s), argues that the roots of communalism lie in the idea of communal identity, as opposed to the idea that communalism is a product of a particular political or social situation.

The idea of communalism as a product of political or social situation would be a more accurate representation of the phenomenon. The communalism of today is a product of political and social situation, rather than a product of a particular political or social situation.

Readers of Vanaki’s previous work “The Painful Transition” will be struck by the parallels between the two political movements he discusses in this work which engages with strategies for the future as well as analysing what is today.

Dominant

In the 1990s the threat posed by majority communalism has become one of the dominant questions in Indian politics. Vanaki conscientiously deals with the need for secularisation of the state rather than on the Indian state.

The secularism on which this book is based is different from that in the post-liberation west. In pre-independence India, Indian nationalism was perceived as the unifying principle between the different religious communities in order to forge a common struggle against British rule. In the post-independence situation the new secular state was to assert religious pluralism as a means of preventing communal conflict.

The rise to prominence of the Hindu communalist BJP (the Bharatiya Janata Party) has rarely been analysed outside the subcontinent. If the BJP were to take control of the government this would represent, in Vanaki’s words, “the coming to power of a reactionarizationg and authoritarianist yet populist political party” (p. 317).

The BJP’s overtly communal tactics may have been successful in the short term, but they have also undermined the political process. The BJP’s support for communalism and its various manifestations but not in the name of a supposedly Westernized concept of secularism as it is interpreted (p. 351).

Problems

This for me is the most problematic part of the book. The arguments both for the necessity of the project and how and why it could succeed are somewhat superficially sketched.

I remain unconvinced that this path, rather than the building of an explicitly revolutionary force in India and worldwide is either necessary or possible.

Vanaki in putting forward this scenario seems to confuse the need to forge broad alliances against communalism with the creation of a political and social force under this banner.

The number of steps in the argument are spelt out elsewhere which are then taken for granted in this exposition. Maybe future writings will clarify.

Despite my lingering frustration with these conclusions, “The Furies of Indian Communism” is a stimulating and valuable work which should be read both by those familiar with Indian politics and society and those who are inquisitive to find out more.

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Dealing with difference

Reviewed by B. Skanthakumar

Meera Syal skilfully conveys a sense of bittersweet wanderlust and bewilderment of being a child and of reading the world through those eyes in one of the best and funniest books of the year.

Anita and Me is a loosely autobiographical tale of a preteen Meena, child of the only Indian family in Tottington, and her exploits with her idol and sometime friend Anita.

The immigrant experience of dislocation, culture shock and racism is recent and raw enough to make it a rich seam, and Meera Syal the co-medienne and scriptwriter of "Bhaji on the Beach", excels in an original and humorous way in mining it in her first novel.

Take Meena's wry account of when her "aunties and uncles" come to visit on the weekend.

"...I don't like it, but family friends to whom tradition and community demand this honorific be given.

But as their cars roll up on weekends visits drogging the passengers and contents, Meena isn't sure her neighbours realise this.

"I could see our neighbours shift uncomfortably, contemplating the apparent size of my family and the fact that we had somehow managed to bring together one of them over here."

Her preoccupation though is with her neighbours in the former mining village of Tottington and the changes wreaked on work and community in the 1960s.

The colliery had long since closed and in its place as main employer is a new, ball-bearing factory.

"There isn't work for everyone there. Not the men who have been laid off and consequently lead an existential existence in their homes, the men in vests and braces, with rumpled hair who clutched half read papers and folded abandoned mindlessly with their teatwists while their wives flung them hurried goodbyes", as the left for work.

It was the women whose labour was wanted, "women who do piece-work and feel grateful, women whose nimble fingers would negotiate their machines, women who unlike their husbands, would not make demands or complain."

Meanwhile the motorway opens cutting through the fields bringing the outside world and suburbia ever closer while the colliery set and not the fire-place becomes the real focus of the home, in a two-up, two-down house with outside toilet and a shed doubling up as a bath."

The limboed for the troubled relationship between Meena and the exterior world is her on-off friendship with the older, worldly-wise Anita Ruster.

Meena is continually reminded that she is different, though she doesn't particularly want to be, and she spends much of her time trying to minimise that difference, through for instance exaggerating her broad black country accent, eating fish-fingers instead of Indian food and in embarrassing herself to Anita."

"It is almost as if recognition by Anita will mean acceptance from wider society as well."

For this is also the Britain where Harold Wilson's "white heat of technology" means Emlyn Powell's "rivers of blood."

As the cross-roads are boys like Sam Lowbridge, who believes Britain is for Whites only and doesn't share from "picketing" to "immorality presents itself, but is also puzzled when Meena despises him."

"I never thought you'd like it. Meena it was all the others."

How bitter-sweet that a white youth drawn to fascist ideas would deny that it was her he was talking about and commenting violence against when evoking her in the re-

actualisation that she is indeed one of the "others"."

Meena does not seek difference. She has difference forced upon her.

Wrestling with sex and lentils

Brian Gardner reviews Mira Nair's film Kama Sutra

IT'S A PITY Kama Sutra is not actually a film version of the famous and ancient sex manual of the same name. That would be more interesting.

In a fictional screenplay set in ancient India, Sarita Choudhury's Tara, a princess, is to marry the king of a neighboring state. However on her wedding night the king cannot snap himself from being enticed by the allure of Tara's chamber servant girl Maya (Indira Varma).

When Maya is discovered and exiled from the court and falls in with the sculptor Jai Kummar (Raman Tikaram - Fester in "This Life"). After a long flirtation they finally get down to it while covering each other in lentils.

The brooding Jai lives only for his art: "We can't be together...don't fall in love with me", he pleads. Abandoned by her lover Maya resolves to receive instruction in the art of being a courtesan.

Stumbling across Jai and some of his creations the king recognises one of them as bearing an uncanny resemblance to Maya. As a reward for finding Maya the king Jai is allowed to wangle with him.

I'm not sure why this is, but it does provide an excuse for Andrews and Tikaram to strip to their loincloths and get down to some manly sport.

So we have a love triangle - Tara loves the king who loves Maya who loves Jai who only loves himself. Maya becomes one of the king's courtesans but will not give him a heart.

Meanwhile the King blissfully ignores the fact that his brother-in-law has teamed up with the Shah and threatens to invade his kingdom.

The film looks good. It's beautifully costumed and photographed and leaving aside smutty references to lentils, the sex scenes are not ridiculous and have about them a raw sensuality. But those are the only virtues.

The acting is wooden and the characters have no real depth. There are some really awful lines - the sort that unintentionally make cinema audiences chuckle - such as when Maya says to her condemned lover: "You have to be very brave my love. They take you tomorrow and I will be with you always. Always!"

Stylistically there are more than a few problems with the narrative's continuity. Over half way through the film, it suddenly dawns on us that years have passed. A Maya who doesn't look any older tries to apologise to Tara when she says: "I was young. I had no idea that what I did would change your life forever."

The plot meanders all over the place and as with Tara's suicide attempts, there is no attempt to build up tension before dramatic events.

There is no real historical context and no exploration of how differences of class or caste might affect attitudes to sexuality.

The king's immiscible in sexual pleasures reminded me of another film in which an Indian ruler ignores the coming of an invading army, in this case British - I'm thinking Merchant's and Jefferies' "Ivy's" The Chess Players.

That film, however, is clearly located within the early days of British imperialism. In Kama Sutra, until they enter the sacred, the characters embalmed with the crescent moon, we really have very little idea who these invaders might be.

Were it not for the dialogue being in English we could be in Bul-

lywood and a lot of Bollywood is much better than this. There were several times after some of the hammiest lines when I thought the actors were about to break out into song.

How the director of the powerful Salam Bombay came to make this piece of vapid trash I'll be really sorry to say. Much more interesting than the film itself is her court battle with the Indian censors who have banned the piece.

In a recent Guardian interview she stated:

"Sexuality in Indian cinema is always cloaked in rape and violence, the women as whores or virgins, and never the twain shall meet."

There is certainly a conscious attempt to move away from this and perhaps one of the reasons for the film's failure is that Nair is not at this stage bold enough to place such a transference within a real historical or social context.
Socialist Outlook

Where we stand

IN THE NINETIES, millions of women and men have taken part in mobilizations against the evils of capitalism and the bureaucratic dictatorships. This reflects the fact that humanity faces widening dangers. Ecological, military, social and economic devastation faces millions of people.

Many more people recognize the barbaric nature of capitalism. In a situation where the inability of the social democratic and communist parties to provide socialist solutions is becoming clearer, the task of creating new leaderships remains ahead.

Socialist Outlook is written and sold by socialists committed to this struggle. We are the British supporters of the world-wide marxist organisation, the Fourth International. We stand for the revolutionary transformation of society and a pluralist, socialist democracy world wide.

The overall goal which we pursue is the emancipation of all human beings from every form of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence. Socialism must be under the control of ordinary people, democratic, pluralist, multi-party, socialist, ecologist, anti-militarist and internationalist. It must abolish wage slavery and national oppression.

The working class is the backbone of unity among all the exploited. The working class and its allies must uncompromisingly fight against capitalism and for a clear programme of action in order to gradually acquire the experience and the consciousness needed to defeat capitalism at the decisive moment of crisis.

The movements of women, lesbians and gay men and black people to fight their particular forms of oppression make an essential contribution to the struggle for a different society. They are organised around the principle "None so fit to break the chains as those who wear them".

The whole working class needs to fully commit itself to these struggles. Furthermore we fight for a strategic alliance between workers and these organisations which respects their legitimate autonomy.

By simultaneously building revolutionary organisations in each country and a revolutionary international we aim to guide and encompass the global interests of the workers and oppressed. By building a united struggle against exploitation and oppression we aim to ensure the survival of the human race.

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NEXT ISSUE
Socialist Outlook is taking a well-deserved summer break. Our next issue will be published in the first week of September. Letters and articles for publication should be at our office for August 25. For now, we will fight them on the beaches...

[Sorry, someone is going delicious, Ed]

Charlie van Gelderen reviews Freedom - The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James', by Anthony Bogue (Pluto Press £13.99)

C.L.R. James rightly takes his place in the pantheon of revolutionary thinkers of the 20th Century, with Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Gramsci, who have enriched Marxism with original ideas.

One can disagree with him on several issues but no one can deny the stimulus of his contributions.

This book by Anthony Bogue - the first of two volumes - maps James' political evolution from his youth in Trinidad in 1901 until his deportation from the United States in the early 1950s. It is a truly formidable odyssey.

While still in Trinidad James became interested, though at first not involved, in the anti-colonial movement. Yet he always maintained the boss of his political identity came from Europe and America: "I am a Black European, that is my training and outlook."

James always maintained that he came to Marxism through Trotskyism. It was Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution which first inspired him.

His first book after his adherence to the Trotskyist movement was World Revolution (1937), a critical history and analysis of the Communist International. Although the book was written from the perspective of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, it was by no means polemical of Trotsky.

While supporting a "formalist" view of the领导干部, James' book remains an important contribution to debates among Marxist intellectuals of his Marxist positions and stressed: "It is very important to convince James that his criticisms are not considered by any of us as an "enemy of human freedom" or as an obstacle to friendly collaboration in the future."

During his life James was to develop further his differences with Trotsky and to question the validity of the Leonidist Party. But he could not have written his magnum opus, The Black Jacobins, the story of the Haitian rebellion led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, without a profound knowledge and understanding of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, without a profound knowledge and understanding of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. His major critique of Trotskyism was presented in State Capitalism and World Revolution (1939): "Our position is that the chaos in the Fourth International is due to the fact that Trotsky's method of analysis and system of ideas is wrong and (this) will continue to grow until a new system is substituted for the present one."

Role of party

Differences between Trotsky and Trotsky were to lead inevitably to disagreements with Lenin, not only on the role of the vanguard party but also on the traditional Marxist paradigm that the socialist revolution could only be achieved through the seizure of power by the proletariat. Against this James postulated:

The revolution is not the means by which workers achieve new socialist institutions to replace the old bourgeois institutions. The revolution is the means by which the socialist institutions emerge and destroy the bourgeois institutions which restrain them.

This conception of the working class achieving consciousness through their own self activity — almost a theory of spontaneity — was to become central to James' theory of revolutionary politics.

This was to be developed further with his conception of the "inventive socialist society."

He also broke with Trotskyism on the class nature of the Soviet state, maintaining that it was a capitalist state, with the bureaucracy performing the same tasks as the Fourth International. We stand for the revolutionary transformation of society and a pluralist, socialist democracy world wide.

Even before he went to the United States, James was actively involved in the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia. He played a leading role organising campaigns against Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, even volunteering to go and fight in Haile Selassie's army.

His experience of Negro (sic) politics in America enriched his understanding of the dialectical inter-relationship of socialism and the liberation struggles in the colonies.

But it was Trotsky who taught him and the American Trotskyists that the "chaunism" of the Black Americans was not the equivalent of the "chaunism" of White America, just as he had previously taken the position that the "chaunism of Black South Africans was progressive, the first step to revolutionary consciousness."

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**Obituary**

**John Harris: Comrade and friend**

**Geoff Ryan**

John Harris, a former member of the International Marxist Group (the then British Section of the Fourth International), died recently.

John joined the International Marxist Group in 1969 and was actively involved in the main work of the organisation at that time: solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution.

He helped build a branch of the IMG in Norwich, where he was a student, before moving to East London where he was active in the squats and radicalism.

In the early 1970s John moved to Manchester and worked in the engineering industry. He tried to organise an opposition inside the AUEW to the Communist Party which had a strong presence on the union at that time.

In 1974 the Scanlon leadership of the AUEW, supported by the CIR, left Manchester engineers to fight alone in what was supposed to be a national strike. It was the only one of the few voices raised at national meetings of shop stewards against this betrayal.

In 1979 John began working on the bus garage in Manchester. By this time he had left the IMG but he remained a fighter for the interests of the working class. John was one of the so-called 'Gang of Four' who eventually forced the right-wing branch secretary to resign.

He also continued to involve himself in political activities — supporting the right of the people of Ireland to self-determination, defending black and gay rights and arguing for women's liberation.

Four years ago John had to give up his job as a bus driver because of ill-health. For much of the last few years of his life he suffered considerable back pain, probably as a result of his work.

For the last three years of his life John had isolated himself from former comrades and friends. Unable to walk even a few hundred yards to his local pub and no longer able to sit in comfort, he either had to stand, or lie flat on his back.

Since John was always a very sociable person, liking nothing better than a good argument over a few (usually quite a few) pints, this enforced isolation must have been very hard for him.

Tragically John died when his condition was gradually improving and he was able to emerge from his isolation, dying at an open air concert.

Music was one of his great loves and John's taste was extremely wide. I will always remember him for introducing me to the music of Bob Marley as a time when almost the only Reggae available was boring, repetitive stuff that forced its way into the lower tiers of the Top Thirty.

Many people remember John as one of the few revolutionary voices who could actually sing the International in tune and (and knew all the words).

John was born in Newport and he had no doubts that his home town was Wales. He was fiercely proud of his Welsh nationality, particularly when watching the Welsh Rugby Union team. However badly Wales had played they were always robed in John's eyes.

Appropriately his ashes will be taken to his beloved Wales to be scattered. John's funeral took place on June 20 and was attended by former comrades from the IMG, and by both political organisations and a delegation of bus workers.

A number of people travelled considerable distances to pay their respects to a working class fighter. John left the Fourth International many years ago but, unlike so many former members of revolutionary organisations, he never disowned his comrades. He would have been pleased to know that at his funeral a collection raised over £150 for the Liverpool Dockers.

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**LETTERS 19**

**FEEDBACK**

Send us your letters on any topic, to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UJ. Letters over 400 words may have to be edited for length.

**Bigots on parade**

**THIS SUMMER the marching season in the north of Ireland seems likely to attract controversy. I cannot write from first hand experience of the situation in Ireland, as I have only made 2 short visits to that country, but based on my own experience of having grown up as part of the Protestant community in the west of Scotland, where Orange walks do take place to some extent, I would say that the people of Catholic areas such as Drumcree and the Omagh Road are absolutely right to object to the Orange Order marching through their area.**

**Actually, there are some ran-**

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**No retreat on jobs!**

I AM NOT CONVINCED by Adam Hartman's argument that the left should drop the demand for Full Employment as one of the slogans we use when campaigning around the issues of workfare and unemployment.

The key point of the demand for Full Employment is surely to place the demand on the state to create jobs. We should reject any notion that full employment is no longer possible.

We should restate the basic arguments such as the obscurity of thousands being homeless at the same time as building workers are on the dole. Public sector workers are not being paid less than the private sector; they have suddenly no demand for teachers or house helps — they are being sacked because local authorities do not have the funding to pay them.

They want you for a restart interview Your Majesty!

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**WHAT'S ON**

**Friday 11 July**

12 noon to 2.00 pm, Picket for democracy and clean elections in Mexico, Mexican tourist office, 60 Trafalgar Square (south side), London.

**Saturday 12 July**

12 noon to 9.00 pm, TUC Respect Anti-Racist Festival (free), "Celebrating cultural and racial diversity" Victoria Park, London E3

**Thursday 17 July**

8 pm 'Redemption Song' performance featuring Sivam Theatre (£5/£3), benefit for the Close Down Harmworth Campaign, Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall, (Ealing Broadway tube).

**Saturday, 19th July**

'Socialists and the Assembly', 11.00-1.00 pm, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff. Speakers include Peter Hain, Hywel Dafis and Sue Essex, Cardiff Cllr.

**July 19-25**

International Youth Summer Camp, Southern France

**Saturday, 19th July**

Free Trades Union conference called by Liverpool City UNION and the Welfare State Network, 1.00-5.00, John Moores University Student Union, Maryland St.

**Saturday 19th July**

Steering Committee of Network of Socialist Campaign Groups

**Saturday 28 July**

11.30 am and 1.00 pm Picket Harmworth Detention Centre, Bus 81 from Hounslow West Tube or By A1 and Heathrow

**Sunday 3rd August**

Socialist Outlook North West region day school. For more details contact Steve, 01642 882 267.

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IN REFERENDA to be held in September, Scotland and Wales will be offered their own legislative bodies. In keeping with Labour's election manifesto, Wales will be asked to accept or reject proposals for an Assembly while Scottish voter are to decide firstly whether they should have their own Parliament and secondly whether it should have tax-raising powers.

This will undoubtedly be the most important political development since the Labour government took office and socialists should play a central role in the campaigns. The left needs to recognise the opportunity which the devolution proposals present.

Of course, no reform of the political process can ultimately solve the problems of the working class while remaining within the context of the existing British state whose limited democratic processes are constrained by the power of the capitalist class.

This does not mean, however, that socialists should not support democratic reforms. Any measure which gives the working class and oppressed some leverage over the exercise of power and which build their confidence and willingness to fight for more is to be welcomed.

The Parliament and assembly being offered are certainly far from perfect; both are intended to be subordinate to the Westminster parliament and the Welsh Assembly will have neither tax-raising nor primary legislative powers.

Nevertheless both offer far greater measure of democratic control than has previously existed in Scotland or Wales and socialists should campaign vigorously for a yes vote on this basis.

At the same time they should be putting forward the arguments for these bodies to have greater powers - and ultimately for them to decide their own powers and their relationship with the British state and with Europe.

Both bodies are also to be elected by a form of proportional representation (PR) which is a progressive development in itself and will add to pressure for the Westminster parliament to be elected on the same basis.

The left has always been divided over PR. Many have put the argument that by spreading parliamentary representation more evenly PR would diminish the prospect of a minority Labour government able to legislate for socialism. This argument is based however on the illusion that the existing state - essentially tied to the interets of the capitalist class - can be used as an instrument for socialism.

PR would in fact allow Parliament to reflect more accurately the real balance of forces in politics and society. By giving a voice to the broader span of the political spectrum it would create opportunities for wider debate and allow a challenge to the current concentration of power and wealth.

The 'left' opponents of PR hope to take a short cut to socialism by ignoring the inconvenient diversity of political opinion and the complexity of the battles to be won.

In Wales, Llew Smith MP belongs to this tradition. He opposes not just PR, but an assembly as such on this basis - that it would weaken the British state and divide the 'British' working class.

Socialists in Wales should challenge such arguments, but should also support Llew's right to express his views publicly and not rely on the bureaucratic methods unsuccessfully employed recently by Welsh Secretary Ron Davies to silence him.

In Scotland fortunately the left is more united in support of a parliament - the struggle for socialism and national rights have long been intertwined here.

There has been the beginnings of a realignment of the left around the issue primarily in the Scottish Socialist Alliance (SSA) which is taking mainstream political debate beyond the confines of traditional labourism and nationalism.

The SSA recognises that a Scottish parliament would give a vital weapon to the working class - as would the Welsh Assembly.

Socialists in both countries must fight determinedly through all the existing campaigns to win massive yes votes in September.