

89

50p fortnightly
9 September 1995
5 FF • \$1 • 2DM •
1500 lire • 30BF • f1

French fight
HiroChirac's
Pacific nuclear
tests p11

Trade Union
Congress '95,
Tube strike
success p4

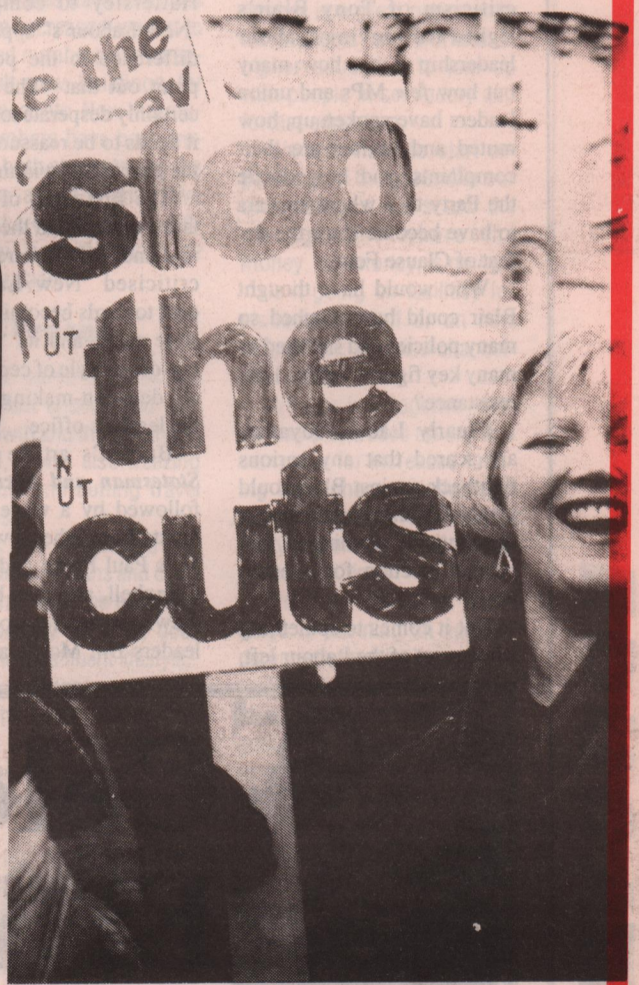
theory+practice
Fighting Back
For Socialism
centre pages

Sri Lanka
women
strikers hit the
roof p9

Socialist OUTLOOK

Back to school... Back to cuts...

Back to FIGHT!



By Roy Leach, NUT National Executive, personal capacity

THOUSANDS of teaching jobs lost; class sizes at their largest since 1979; classroom support for children with special educational needs slashed; an ever-growing backlog of repairs for crumbling schools.
No wonder parents, teachers, governors and

school students are calling for at least an extra £1 billion for education!
But what has been the Tory government's response? Not only have they given no clear commitment to restore this year's cuts (let alone begin to redress the damage done over the last few years), but all the talk during the recent leadership contest was of **more cuts** in public expenditure!
A close reading of Chancellor Clarke's plans for the local authorities that provide education is that we

could be in for **at least two more years of cuts** as deep as those inflicted on 'Middle England' this year.
Nor will it just be the shires that suffer next time. Services in metropolitan areas such as Leeds, Birmingham and London which are coming through this year relatively intact will also be in the firing line.
What is obvious is that we can't simply sit back and wait for the government to inject into education the resources that are so desperately needed.
We have to force their hand:

and the best way to do this is to support the September 30 National Education Demonstration called by FACE.
We need to build on our success on March 25, when 15,000 parents, teachers, governors and school students marched through London. We have to make this into the

biggest pro-education demonstration ever.
■ No class over 30!
■ Stop all education cuts!
■ Fund education to meet needs!
Join FACE in London on September 30. Together we can win!

FACE demo London
Sat September 30
Assemble 12.30, Embankment
March to Hyde Park Rally

What we think

Unite to fight for minimum wage!

IT'S BEEN another case of the dog that didn't bark.

What is most surprising about the summer outbreak of criticism of Tony Blair's rightward-moving Labour leadership is not how many but how few MPs and union leaders have spoken up, how muted and limited are their complaints, and how docile the Party as a whole appears to have become since the defeat of Clause Four.

Who would have thought Blair could have ditched so many policies and snubbed so many key figures with so little resistance?

Clearly Labour loyalists are scared that any serious fightback against Blair could jeopardise the Party's hopes of eventually winning its first general election for over 20 years.

But it comes to something when most of the Labour left,

including most of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, remains silent, leaving it to old-style right winger Roy Hattersley to complain at 'New Labour's' apparent indifference to the poor, and point out that "The party is certainly desperate to win, but it needs to be reassured about the purpose of winning".

The first signs of a resistance came when the obscure midlands MP Richard Burden criticised 'New Labour's' drift towards becoming a US-style party, and its 'stalinist' top-down style of centralising all decision-making around the leader's office.

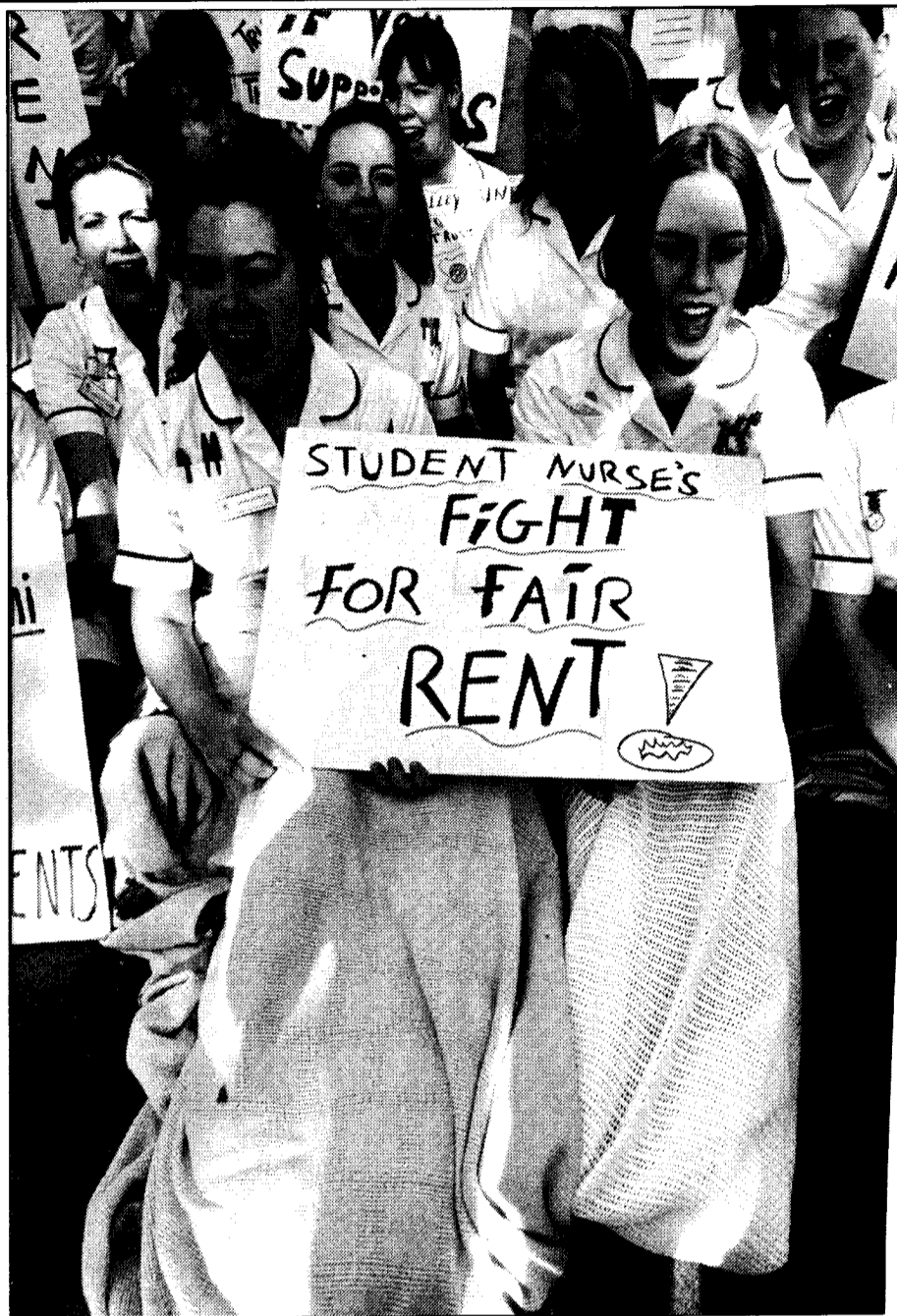
Burden's article in *New Statesman and Society* was followed by a wave of outbursts from other low-profile MPs Paul Flynn and Ronnie Campbell, and then by interviews and articles from union leaders Bill Morris and John

Edmonds.

Since then the field has widened, with Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone, Dennis Cavanagh and George Galloway getting in on the act, echoing in various ways the unease at the party's rightward drift and increasingly authoritarian stance, its lack of membership involvement, and the domination of Blair's inner circle by arrogant middle class refugees from the SDP, lacking any commitment to or respect for the Labour Party's working class roots.

Discarded

But as the heap of Labour policies discarded under Tony Blair mounts to mammoth proportions, there is still no sign that these sundry individuals have any intention of leading or joining a coordinated fight back for radical or socialist policies.



A more radical line could win support among low paid workers such as student nurses seen here at Charing Cross Hospital in a sleep out protest against rent increases

Blair's offensive has left the Party stripped of any radical appeal to the electorate on the key issues of the day.

In a summer of droughts and water company rip-off scandals the Party has abandoned its commitment to prioritise renationalisation of the water industry.

As the gulf between rich and poor widens to record levels, Blair has snubbed the unions by setting his face against putting any figure on a minimum wage. Amid rising anger over the huge salaries of top bosses, Labour has scrapped its pledge to lift the ceiling on national insurance payments for top earners. The Party shows no such concern for the poorest, however: Blair's team have dropped any commitment to increase pensions and child benefit.

Anti-union

With public opinion swinging back to support for trade union rights, Tony Blair's team remains resolutely anti-union, more concerned to seek the views of top employers than union leaders on the minimum wage, and stubbornly opposed to repeal of Tory anti-union laws.

As the health service descends into new crisis over pay and the rationing of care, Labour has junked its pledge to pump an extra £1 billion into the NHS, and retreated

from its promise to scrap the bureaucratic purchaser-provider split.

And while thousands of parents, teachers, governors and school students march in protest at education cuts, Labour has made no pledge to increase spending, and reneged on its pledge to bring opted-out schools back under council control.

While the policies are bad enough, it's the less definable issue of Blair's style of leadership that has provoked a the most widespread tide of anger among local activists, not all of them traditionally on the 'left'; they feel that the Party has lost its way, sacrificing its core support in the search for the floating voter.

Yet the only way this can be confronted is through battles on particular policies. The £4.15 target for a minimum wage is a policy that could potentially unite dissident CLP activists and trade unionists to deal Blair his first major setback at this year's Party conference.

Such landmarks will be important for the future, encouraging the left and setting out markers for battles to come.

Whatever its formal policies, millions of workers will vote Labour at the next election in the naive hope and expectation that a Blair government would reverse some of the Tory attacks, and

make a real difference to the way they live.

This remains the most dramatic contradiction of all. The first few months of a Labour government on Blair's policies would quickly shatter the illusions and rouse the anger of important sections of the working class, not least in the public sector.

Encouraged by the removal of the Tories, workers would be less prepared to accept insults at the hands of British capitalism's 'second team'. Clashes between the unions and Labour in office are almost certain.

Contemptuous

Contemptuous though they are of the working class and its organisations, much of Blair's right wing base in the Party will have little stomach for a fight when the tide starts flowing against them.

But the question is whether a credible left wing alternative will have been developed to lead the fightback. That why it is important that no the silence has been broken Blair's left critics go back to prepare for government.

That does not mean standing idly by as the Party is politically it means fighting back now, building a coordinated left wing response, and challenging each of Blair's policies as and when they occur.



Celebrate the life of Ernest Mandel

Speakers at the Memorial Rally include:

Catherine Samary, Fourth International, Duncan Hallas, Socialist Workers Party, Charlie Van Gelderen, Socialist Outlook.

Invited: Tariq Ali, Mildred Gordon MP, Ken Coates MEP

7.00pm-9.00pm Friday 13 October. Friends House, London, by Euston BR. Tickets £4 (£2 UB40, students) to 'Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund', PO Box 1109, London N4.

EDITORIAL

UNISON backs FACE demo

SUPPORT for the FACE demonstration is building up as the new term begins. Official support from the GMB and UNISON means that two of the biggest unions will circulate details to all their branches.

Speakers invited to the September 30 march and Rally include the Merseyside FBU, currently involved in strikes against cuts in jobs and services.

The FACE campaign has also received a £1,000 donation from the second biggest teaching union, the NAS/UWT. Support is still rolling in from top branches, despite the opposition of General Secretary Doug McAvoy and the right wing majority of the NEC.

Fringe meetings

FACE's national committee met on September 2 in Coventry and has mapped out a series of activities stretching through into 1996. These include fringe meetings at all three party conferences and at the TUC, and will support the Budget Day lobby of parliament called by the Welfare State Network.

A FACE Conference in the New Year will take the theme of promoting Needs Related (i.e. deficit) Budgets, and 'Turning the General Election into the Education Election'.

NHS pay dilemma

THE result of the UNISON ballot on NHS pay strikes is awaited as this issue of Socialist Outlook goes to press.

It appears that a majority will be in favour of action, but on a small turn-out.

The dispute has been dragged out for so long that there is little momentum among activists in the hospitals; the abandonment of UNISON's original 6 percent claim and acceptance of the Tories' 3 percent limit has reduced the whole fight to one in defence of national pay agreements.

Smaller unions have voted in favour of industrial action short of strikes, while only the Society of Radiographers has registered a resounding vote for strike action.

UNISON members are likely to pay a heavy price for the inaction of their leaders, who have set out to run a low-key campaign, and now seem certain now to lead the way towards a face-saving 'compromise' deal at talks convened by NHS management.



A big fight against school cuts is the best basis to fight compulsory opt-outs

Tories scorn 'choice' on opt-outs

By Harry Sloan

NEVER MIND parental choice: John Major's government has grown so impatient at the refusal of parents and governors to support school opt-outs he is set to make it compulsory!

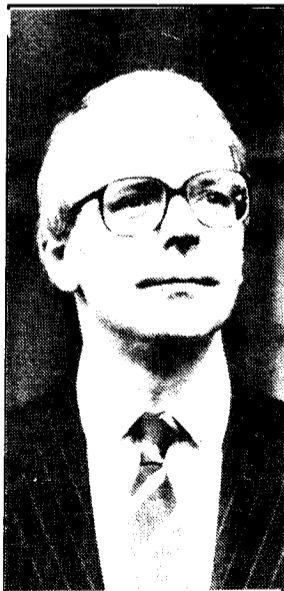
Seven years of cajoling, encouragement, bribes and blackmail have so far had pathetically little effect in persuading most schools to seek 'grant maintained' status.

Less than 1,100 out of 25,000 schools in England — and just one school in Scotland — have so far signed up for the Thatcherite dream of deregulation.

A mere handful have applied for GM status in the last 12 months, despite the lure of additional capital for development and extra hand-outs of revenue funding.

Faced with such embarrassing rejection, the Tory response is, as ever, to compel schools to 'choose' the way they are told.

According to the Chair of the Grant Maintained Schools Foundation, Sir Robin Balchin, the only way John Major



Issuing the order: Major

can achieve his goal of making all publicly-funded schools opt out would be:

- telling governing bodies to opt out without consulting parents;
- telling schools they must opt out unless a sufficiently large petition of parents opposes the move;
- simply making opt-outs compulsory.

Sir Robin is understandably opposed to these moves to coerce schools down a path that parents and governors have repeatedly rejected

— and for good reason.

He knows that once GM status becomes the norm rather than the exception, then the privileges of the first few, the bribes and hand-outs designed to win over sceptical head teachers and governors, will come to an end.

This has already happened with opted-out NHS Trusts, which rapidly discovered that none of the promised 'freedom' to borrow money actually materialised.

The new Tory offensive has met an unusually robust response from Labour's limp Education spokesperson David Blunkett, who has warned that a Labour government would block further opt-outs:

"Any school that believes it could dash for grant-maintained status and carry it through after we get in will be gravely mistaken".

The biggest possible mobilisation of parents and school students against the new round of cuts in education will create the best defence of schools against the imposition of GM status, which leads inevitably to more centralised government control, and a new drive for selection of pupils.

Students must get organised

By Ricky Paul

THERE CAN be no doubt that the recent expansion in student numbers in higher education has resulted in an expansion in student debt and in a reduction in spending by universities on each student.

Although universities and colleges are still funded by central government and through local authorities, they now, even more than before, act as profit making organisations (many are now independent corporations).

Fast education is the result — increase the level of profit by increasing the throughflow of students. Invest just enough in books or facilities to satisfy... not students but the funding councils!

Universities have used this profit on increased wages to increased numbers of managers, built new buildings for conferences etc. Now that student numbers have been frozen it is both students and the lecturing and administrative staff that are suffering — cut-backs in lecturing staff are commonplace.

Frozen

At the same time as the government encouraged student growth and then changed its mind, it was also freezing our grants and cutting travel expenses.

It has also encouraged students to take up loans and overdrafts. This, with the exception of the wealthy minority, does not lead to an affluent lifestyle.

Many students now are forced to work during the week as well as at weekends (full time education?). This still does not lead to an end to debt.

It is not surprising then, that many potential students are deferring for a year after their 'A' levels or deciding against higher education alto-

gether.

Maybe it is a little surprising that the student movement and NUS in particular has been so quiet over the last few years. This might be something to do with the people who run NUS and student unions as a fast track to well paid jobs in business or use it to try to become Labour (eg. Phil Woolas) or even Tory MPs.

Rock the boat? No it is easier for the union leaders to organise freshers fairs with the local night clubs so that we can fall further into debt rocking the night away.

However we can do something. There is a growing anger at the state of higher education, as there is about education as a whole.

Link up

The Fight Against Cuts in Education' (FACE) demonstration in London on 30 September is a great opportunity for students and workers in higher education to join up with people in secondary and further education.

We also need to start organising on the ground in our own colleges. Let's ask the management where the money, our money, is going?

Is it going on facilities for students or staff or on new carpets for the vice-chancellor's office?

We can join together with the campus trades unions in a campaign for increased funding for higher education and put pressure on the Labour Party leadership in the run up to the election.

The Free Education Campaign is planning an autumn demonstration against cuts.

This pressure also needs to be applied to the NUS where a genuinely broad left coalition needs to be built to oppose the conservative 'do-nothing leadership'.

This is our future: these are our colleges. Now is the time to start reasserting this — but it is easier to do that if we join together in collective action.



Action is needed to challenge do-nothing NUS leaders

EDUCATION CUTS

TUC '95: Now's the time to stop the rot!

By Harry Sloan

SIXTEEN years of retreats and betrayals by top union leaders have decimated the strength of organised labour in Britain, and rendered this year's TUC Brighton Congress the most irrelevant yet.

On none of the key issues affecting working people – unemployment, low pay, cuts in public services, rampant privatisation, or even trade union rights at work – has the TUC run any serious campaigns or had anything of significance to say.

Figures from industrial tribunals give a glimpse of the reign of terror in many workplaces where staff or unorganised or unions derecognised: successful unfair dismissal cases have more than doubled in number since 1989, while days of strike action have fallen to an all-time record low.

Anti-union laws have intimidated activists at local and national level. And now union leaders are further constrained by their reluctance to cross swords with Tony Blair's increasingly anti-union team, who are strategically distancing themselves from the Labour Party's his-

Fire fighters strike hots up

MORE than a thousand Merseyside fire fighters attended the mass meeting to vote for escalation of their action against redundancies and loss of holidays.

They are taking a series of nine hour strikes over management's threat to cut three days leave and the equivalent of twenty jobs.

The Labour-controlled Merseyside fire authority has paid thousands of pounds to the army to help break the strike. Although the chief fire officer claims that the army can provide adequate cover, it is clear that the overriding objective of the local authority is to end the action on their own terms.

The next strike is planned for September 12, and will escalate further. There could also be resistance to plans by Warwickshire council to make £3 million of cuts.

It is crucial now that the national union takes a lead in coordinating solidarity.



Left stranded by TGWU inaction: strikers at Mainland Car Deliveries in Oxfordshire voted narrowly to accept a £3,000 pay-off after 14 weeks in dispute

toric roots in the run-up to the next election.

Small wonder the levels of unionisation have fallen to the lowest levels in Britain for over 50 years.

Just 6.9 million workers – less than a third of the workforce – are now in TUC-affiliated unions – of whom only a minority are manual workers. Even this figure is likely to be an exaggeration, based on notoriously inflated totals for unions like the TGWU and UNISON.

Despite the evidence of the dire consequences of endlessly retreating before the government and employers, and welcome signs of new resistance from rail workers, fire fighters and sections of health workers among others, there is little sign that the TUC is preparing any policy shift.

Headed up by Blairite John Monks, it has grovelled to the bosses of the CBI and sat quietly back and watched 'New Labour' stick the boot into the unions, tamely accepting the pitiful offerings of Labour's employment policy, while pleading for an expanded 'role' under a Labour government.

According to Monks, this means having "an influence on those aspects of economic policy relevant to unemployment, pay, competitiveness and the labour market."

But already the TGWU and GMB – fearful of conflict with Tony Blair's front bench – have broken the unity around the £4.15 figure as the basis for a new minimum wage, engaging in a cynical dutch auction in the countdown to this autumn's conferences.

In fact Blair is opposed to

specifying any figure at all.

The reality is that the unions will only regain influence based on their willingness to lead struggles and confront employers and the government of the day.

The only way the echoing emptiness of Congress House can again become the corridors of power is by unions taking a radical stand in defence of their members and working people.

Nothing could be further from the minds of the main union leaders as their researchers draft empty tub-thumping speeches for Brighton.

The more feeble the genuflections of do-nothing bureaucrats to Blair and the capitalist market, the more the TUC presents itself to workers as an expensive, anachronistic irrelevance.

The incredible shrinking unions

The level of unionisation has plummeted from 52 percent when Thatcher took office in 1979.

Continual, wretched retreats by the main unions, left first the printworkers and then the miners isolated and eventually defeated in their defiance.

Many big bastions of manual work and union strength (steel, shipbuilding, mining, docks, print, cars) have since been hacked back, some to the point of extinction.

Clerical and sales staff, and professionals such as teachers, nurses, social workers, managers, scientists and lawyers now make up 60 percent of all union members.

Industrial workers (45%) and craft workers (40%) are now less strongly unionised than professional staff (50%). But these newly-unionised sectors have not established any track record of militancy.

A whole generation of younger workers has been largely ignored by the union bureaucrats: only 25 percent of workers in their 20s is a union member, compared with 40 percent of those over 40.

While more people than ever recognise the need for

trade unions and a majority of voters are now opposed to the balance of forces created by the vicious battery of Tory anti-union laws, the TUC has done little or nothing to build on this sentiment and reach out to the low-paid and unemployed.

The abject failure of the GMB and TGWU to recruit staff in the expanding hotel and catering sector, for example, has enabled the employers to force wage rates even lower than they were



Defeat of miners led to jobs massacre

when the wages councils were abolished in 1993.

40 percent of vacancies advertised in the former wages council industries, which employ 2.5 million workers, are now offering pay of less than £58 per week – the national insurance threshold.

Even government figures show that 1.3 million full-time workers were paid less than £2.50 an hour.

Solid RMT action staggers tube bosses

By an RMT member

The first one was bigger than management expected. The second one bigger still.

Despite the media denial and government pressure, the two London Underground strikes have been great successes.

A bit like a bully who picks a fight and then realises he has chosen someone strong enough to fight back, London Underground management have been shocked by the response to their pay and conditions offer.

Now it looks like they will have to go through with the confrontation at the risk of losing face. The government will not let them do anything else.

The strikes have broken the myth fostered by management that RMT workers have no muscle of their own and have to rely completely upon oth-

ers. In Oakwood and Morden depots the bulk of ASLEF membership have recently come over to the RMT, including one worker who had only two weeks to go before retirement.

Cosy deal

The strikes threaten to break up the cosy relationship the ASLEF leadership have had with management – last week they even issued letters to individual members telling them (falsely) that they would be sacked under the law if they went on strike.

A "triangular" relationship of collusion has been established between management, the media and the ASLEF leadership. All are willing to go to any lengths to avoid industrial action.

We have been standing on picket lines with the station and its trains at a standstill behind us listening to the radio tell everyone the Underground

was "working as normal". As one of our managers confessed to us recently, "truth is the first casualty of war".

Management are prepared to compromise safety in order to weaken the strike – cutting basic maintenance work on the trains and track, leaving stations completely unstaffed and operating signals themselves.

As well as a cut in hours and opposition to the three per cent pay ceiling we have been making specific proposals designed to increase job security. Privatisation will mean savage job cuts.

Despite Treasury opposition, London Underground have been allowed to operate a "lease-buy" arrangement for new trains on the Northern Line, the policy championed by the Labour Party for some time.

As it becomes increasingly clear that this is no more than a privatisation policy by the back door, we are demand-



At a standstill: strikes are gaining ground

ing that workers who find themselves transferred to private contractors are given the right to transfer back into London Underground. These "kidnapped" workers should also be allowed to return if they are made redundant by the private firms.

Management are countering a productivity package to our demands. It will mean increased part-time working for train operators and line by

line divisions among the workforce.

Unfortunately ASLEF and the management dominated TSSA have gone along with the deal. Despite a three-to-one vote in favour of strike action ASLEF's leadership are proposing a ballot over the company offer which, depending on its outcome, will then go to another ballot over strike action: any prevarication to stop action.

theory+practice

A world in crisis: Fighting back for socialism

Summer School success

VISITORS from Ireland and Sri Lanka were among those attending another successful *Socialist Outlook* residential Summer School in Aberystwyth during the August bank holiday week.

This year's school, extended to five full days, the only event of its kind on the British left, took as its theme the continuity and development of revolutionary programme and politics from the early days of the Bolshevik Party through to the present day.

Lively plenary sessions, notably those on the national question and socialism, women's liberation and 'socialism after the fall of the wall' were complemented by a full programme of over 30 workshop discussions.

In addition to daily educationals, those attending managed to consume large enough quantities of beer, wine and spirits to cover all the overhead costs and produce a small surplus for the Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund launched by *Socialist Outlook*.

This speech by BALA KUMAR, of the *Liberation!* editorial board, closed the school with an overview of the key questions of socialist internationalism today.

Several more of the keynote contributions to the school will be published in coming issues of *Socialist Outlook*. Video tapes of some of the main discussions will shortly also be available.



1991 London demonstration for cancellation of third world debt won widespread labour movement sponsorship

By Bala Kumar

THIS SCHOOL has reminded me of why I joined one of the smaller organisations on the British Left - and why I remain in it.

CLR James in an interview once commented "I learned my Marxism in the Trotskyist movement". I certainly learned how, in concert with co-thinkers, to use it to understand, and act upon the world we live in.

The writings, the lives, the activities of generations of Marxists opened up for me a universe of ideas, possibilities, experiences and friendships, I had never known existed. I am and will always be grateful for that.

What I'd like to do is to isolate some defining trends in late capitalism and to explore how revolutionary Marxists can overcome the crisis of credibility of socialism. I have drawn heavily from the writings of Ernest Mandel for what fol-

lows, which is no bad thing for a school being held to honour his memory.

Unemployment

CONSIDER THE following facts. 40 million people are unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries. Across much of the Third World there has been a decline in living standards, not a stagnation but a regression. All the hard won gains of the anti-colonial struggles increases in literacy rates, health standards - are being eroded. This of course has a tremendous negative impact on the working class and oppressed sectors of society on which our movement bases itself, and which we believe will be the motor force of revolutionary change for the better.

15 million children die each year from poverty related illnesses. Toxic waste produced to satisfy over-consumption in the rich countries floats about on our oceans looking for some poor country on whose people it can be dumped. That soon, unless an imperial power can be stopped in its tracks, nuclear testing will resume in the South Pacific against the will of the people of those countries and when the serious health risks are well known. That food mountains exist in Europe and yet there are manufactured food shortages in other places.

There are two processes at work. On the one hand we see an integration of the economies of the advanced capitalist countries. This can be deduced from studying trade flows, their origin and destination. Most world trade now takes place between the advanced capitalist countries. The share of world trade of these economies has risen from 60 per cent in the early 1980's to 75 per cent

now.

That latter figure is also about the average of the share of export from the rich countries to other rich countries. Vast sections of the world are simply excluded from these trade movements. The business press crows on about the large middle class consumer markets in some poor countries. For example, India's is estimated at 150 million but they ignore the 700 million others!

So on the other hand, the world market is not exploiting but abandoning billions of people. It's a cruel joke which contains a brutal truth, that there's only one thing worse than being exploited by capitalism - and that is NOT to be exploited by it! There are only consumers in this society, not citizens: and if you are not a consumer you might as well not exist.

The second process seems to contradict my earlier point. There is also a binding together of the fortunes and lives of people across the world. Global capitalism is not about to break the chains on the dominated countries.

Samir Amin among others has suggested that poor countries may be able to delink themselves from the tyranny of imperialism, and by integrating the dominated world make their economies serve their peoples, not the other way around. I applaud the sentiment but fear that he is mistaken.

Dependence

THERE IS NO sign that the dependence of the poor countries on the rich is being weakened, in fact the reverse is true.

The issue of Third World debt is a case in point. Every year without exception larger and larger sums are transferred from the Third World to the First, in excess of the paltry sums being invested or loaned or granted. Without servicing the interest on this debt, leave alone repaying it, no new funds are disbursed to these countries. Yet to pay the debt when the low value of your exports and devaluation of your currency makes for a trade balance deficit, encourages social sector spending to be cut.

While we support democratisation in all sectors, what does it matter if where there was one party there are now fifteen but regardless of which comes to government they all have the same eco-

conomic programme? Identical because regardless of whether one is in Buenos Aires, Jakarta, Warsaw or Dar Es Salaam, it has been drafted for them in Washington D.C. by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Here are some of the features of late capitalism which are of particular interest to socialist revolutionaries.

1. Growing concentration and centralisation of capital within some countries and regions

IN OUR DISCUSSION of the national question in the British state attention has been drawn to the peripheralisation of Scotland and Wales in capital investment projects. The number of building societies on our High Streets is dwindling with mergers and takeovers.

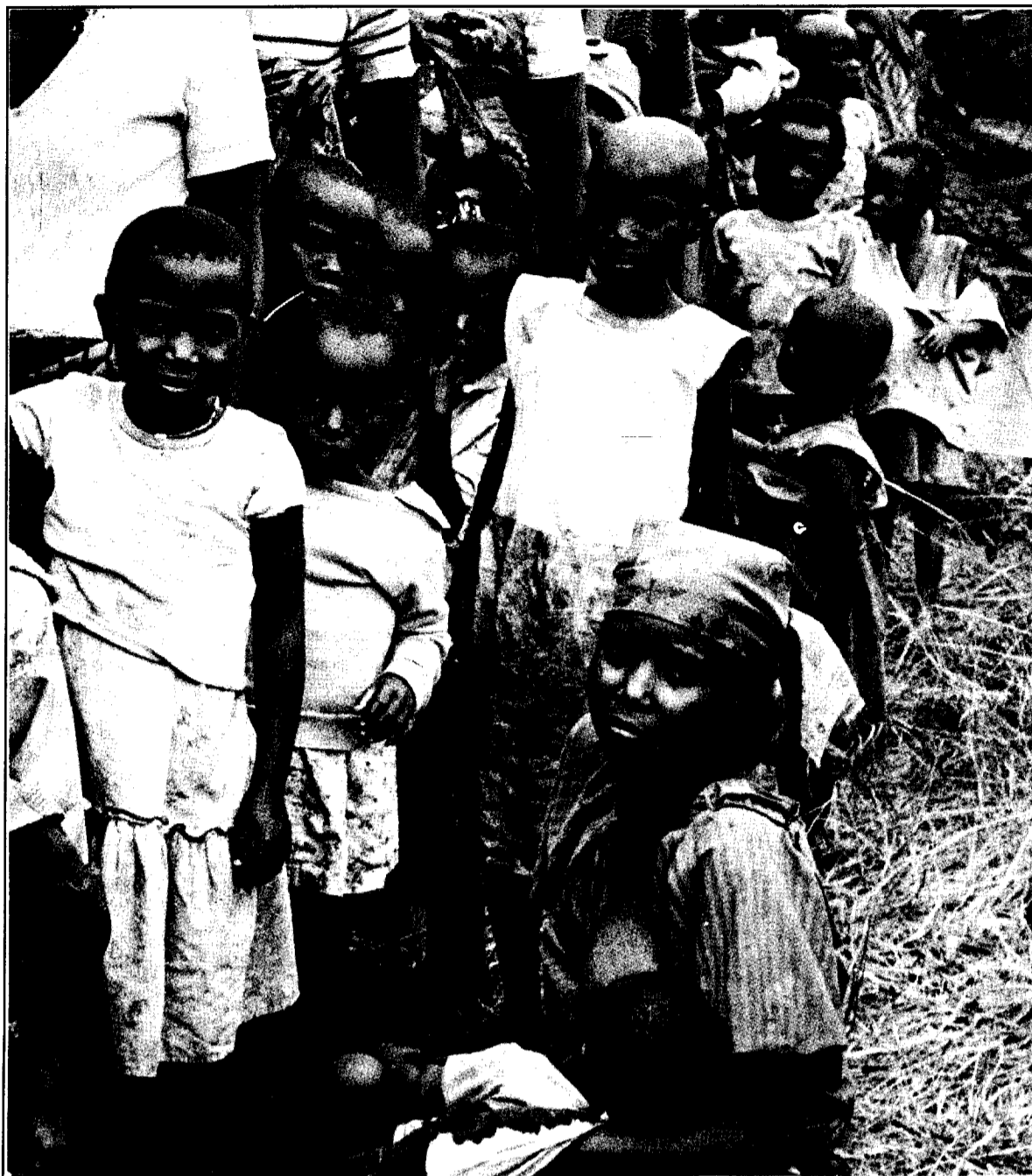
In the US Walt Disney – a giant in itself – has bought Capital Cities/ABC which owns the largest Network station ABC, for US\$19 billion. In contrast Somalia's national income in 1990 was US\$1 billion.

While trans-national corporations mushroomed in the past, it is questionable how long they can survive today without fusing with other companies removing competitors.

2. Intensification and extension of capitalist exploitation

INCOMES ARE FALLING, working hours grow longer, attacks are made by both conservative and social democratic governments on social welfare provisions like free education and health care, pensions and benefits. Every gain and victory of the working class this century is under daily siege. This is one reason why defending the welfare state has and will continue to be a priority in our political work.

The average US worker was working 163 hours more in 1987 than her counterpart would have twenty years before. It is no longer simply the Japanese



Hunger and under-development are creations of the imperialist carve-up of the world's resources

worker who is forced to work more, take fewer holidays and do overtime to maintain international competitiveness. This trend is being generalised even across the advanced capitalist countries.

3. Class inequalities widen

THE RICH GET richer and the poor

get poorer. Remember when in Latin America we were told that capitalism could work and Brazil and Mexico were cited in proof?

Interesting how no one mentions them any longer. Instead the new 'miracle' economy is Chile. However the neo-liberal ideologues cannot explain away the fact that the poorest 20 per cent of people are subsisting on 70 per cent of what they had in 1970 and they face growing immiseration.

4. Crisis, slumps and recession

DE-INDUSTRIALISATION has thrown millions of the most stable and best unionised workers on the scrap-heap, destroying entire communities in the process. Services and financial capital dwarf industrial

capital in the rich countries.

The Mexican financial crisis over December 1994 and the massive bailout that the US had to organise to protect its holdings in Mexico are an expression of this. A financier called George Soros makes one billion dollars in one day from currency speculation following the withdrawal of the pound sterling from the Exchange Rate Mechanism.

There is no end in sight for recession in the West as the growth rates of even the more dynamic economies such as Germany's is below two percent. While capital investments in a year in Eastern Europe are measured in the low billions, every day hundreds of billions of dollars change hands in currency conversions in leading financial markets.

The upturn in the economies decreases each time from the preceding cycle and it becomes more difficult to pull out of recession.

5. Inter-imperialist rivalries

THE EMERGENCE and development of trade blocs centred around one or more imperialist power and the rivalries between them which came to the fore during the GATT negotiations reveal the tensions among the brotherhood of thieves.

A US-Japan trade war always seems imminent only to be narrowly averted. We are not in a Kautskyst ultra-imperialist age. Meanwhile neither does the US appear to be the super-imperialist power that some foresaw in the aftermath of the 1992 Gulf War and the break up of the Soviet Union.

Its economic difficulties will compel the would be Colossus to moderate its ambitions. Its fiasco in Somalia and vacillations in ex-Yugoslavia indicate competing pulls in its foreign policy.

Further, there is not only competition for the world and regional markets between the trade blocs but also within them. The British bourgeoisie doesn't know whether to stick with its Atlanticist alliance and preserve its investments in the United States or play the subordinate to Germany within the European Union. And this tug of war could yet rip the Conservative Party apart.

Meanwhile the countries of the Third

Globalising a capitalist economy trapped in recession

SINCE THE first generalised recession of 1974-1975 the world capitalist economy has gone into a recessionary long wave from which there seems no escape. In these selections from a resolution of the recent World Congress of the Fourth International, MAXIME DURAND explains the consequences of capitalist globalisation. The translation, from the Belgian Fourth Internationalist paper *La Gauche*, is by Duncan Chapple.

Phases of the long wave

THE 1970s SAW the end of a long expansionary long wave in the capitalist economy.

The generalised recession of 1974-1975 clearly marked this turnaround, sending all the imperialist countries into a crisis which still persists.

The development of several phases within this long wave need to be analysed if we are to clearly identify where we are. The first phase immediately followed that recession: it corresponded to the pursuit of the Keynesian policies after the Second World War.

Simultaneously petro-dollars were recycled to be dished out to Third World borrowers in

an attempt to boost the economy.

Neo-liberal turn

THE INADEQUACY of this therapy became clear with the explosion of the second generalised recession at the start of the 1980s.

This is the second important turning point, from which neo-liberal policies—with remarkably similar objective and means—spread around the world.

For a few years the Third World countries had served to lessen the slow-down of the world economy. They were then violently hit by the debt crisis and the rise in interest rates. A period of profound restructuring in the imperialist countries opened, accompanied by the

rise of unemployment—especially in Europe.

This neo-liberal phase, which we are clearly still in, can be separated out into 'sub-periods': the offensive (1980-1986), the apparent success (1987-1990) and the relapse and revival of 1990 and 1991.

There was a systematic offensive against workers in the first half of the 1980s pursued under the watchword of "flexibility". This not only concerned wages — hammered by austerity and the attacks on cost-of-living agreements — but, more widely, workers' overall conditions: social security, the right to work and so on.

The advance of, and resistance against, neo-liberalism varied, but the generalisation of those policies laid the ground for a new recession provoked by the smothering of the worldwide demand for labour.

World continue to be subordinated to those of the rich countries, their natural and mineral resources plundered, their markets prised open, their people made dispensable units of labour, their exports discriminated against in western markets by protectionist barriers.

We are not in a post-imperialist age. Imperialism is alive and kicking.

6. Class struggle is not dead

THE CAPITALIST CLASS is mercilessly attacking the working class in a class war in which the latter is on the defensive. Much ground has been and is being lost to the advantage of Capital, the combativity and militancy of the class is fast becoming a memory of the distant past.

However in none of the imperialist countries has the working class suffered such great defeats that it is completely out of the equation. In fact aside from the inherent need of capital to span the globe, the so-called "flying geese" strategy of capital, wherein it migrates from country to country looking for lower paid workers, bigger tax breaks, non-unionised or repressed labour movements, poor environmental standards and so on, is because it is unable to push down its costs in its home countries below a certain limit. It hasn't given up but it hasn't succeeded yet either.

Socialist strategy

ON THE LEVEL of socialist strategy, certain conclusions should be drawn from the analysis above.

These trends suggest that the nation state will remain a terrain of struggle between Capital and Labour and that the locus of political power will for the foreseeable future reside there as well. We are not facing a global state or even at the Western European level a super-national state.

There has been a redefinition of the state and its functions in the present phase of capital accumulation. It has also become much clearer particularly in the Third World that the state which was seen as a shield against neo-colonialism has all along been subordinated to



Workweek must be reduced: Hanover VW workers demonstrate that Saturdays are for "living, loving and laughing"

it by the local ruling class.

The state does not have a neutral class character nor can a workers' government aim to change the inequalities of power and wealth in society without confronting and changing the capitalist

pronounced. Therefore it is also an important lever for change and tool for transformation of society.

Campaigns around work must become part of the agenda of the British Left. Our comrades in France have

A radical reduction in the working week is a pre-condition for a democratic, pluralist, self-managing society run by and for a regime of the associated producers

state. Important battles will take place between global capital and the working class at the level of the state because that is where the tensions are most pro-

taken up and popularised the slogan of a thirty-five hour week with no loss of pay. We too should use this realistic demand to discuss the nature of work

and its potential in a future society where the worker would have time not only for leisure and developing other creative interests but also to exercise political power in a socialist democracy. A radical reduction in the working week is a pre-condition for a democratic pluralist self managing society run by and for a regime of the associated producers.

Our response to global capital is for global solidarity between the oppressed and exploited.

While this will be second nature to the comrades of the Fourth International, revolutionaries must assimilate even in their national programmes and strategies the international dimension. Of course we give our unconditional

support to these struggles but we also need to find ways of co-ordinating these movements and of joint initiatives and discussions.

Finally, that the labour movement to make itself relevant to the working class desperately needs to feminise itself. Where new jobs are being created either in the Free Trade Zones of Asia or the homeworkers and sweatshops of Europe, it is women who predominate in this low paid, ununionised, casualised sector.

Unless women become leaders and members of trade unions, unless the particular concerns of women workers are integrated into the agendas and working practices of the labour movement, it becomes impotent.

Reasons for the passing success

BECAUSE OF the demand increase which followed Reaganist policies, especially the military spending, the outbreak of the third recessionary wave was delayed. The world economy developed an asymmetrical set-up, in which Japanese and German capital financed the substantial US deficit by increasing interest rates to unprecedented levels.

At the same time the cracking and collapse of the bureaucratized societies made it possible to present capitalism as the unsurpassable horizon of humanity.

Only the Marxists pointed out the limited and contradictory character of this recovery: rather than sustainable growth it was a cyclical movement based on an almost mechanical kick-starting of investment founded on the restructuring of production worldwide.

The relapse

THE THIRD generalised recession set-

led this debate and opened a new phase, marked out by very important reversals. Seen this way, the rôle of the Gulf War was secondary - the recession began before the oil crisis in several counties and continued long after the war. It had limited economic repercussions.

The characteristics of this third recession clearly illustrate the current period: deep, durable and costly in terms of jobs. Much more than the two previous recessions, it has revealed the growing contradiction between economic globalisation and the survival of national trajectories.

International Finance

THE FRENZIED neo-liberal economic deregulation in the 1980s underlay and amplified the globalisation process.

Contrary to all the theory's forecasts, this did not lead to reductions in the real interest rates. They have remained at record levels.

Inter-imperialist rivalries

GLOBALISATION of the world capitalist economy is unmanageable, and not just because of the instability of exchange rates and finance. The principal source of the disequilibrium lies in the quite new situation - which has established direct relations between economic zones with very different levels of productivity.

This is different from the internationalisation of capitals: multinationals used to be the agents of a single imperialist centre. The dominated countries had one-to-one relationships with these multinationals; completing a system of political domination.

With Globalisation, the relations start off as multilateral, and the group of multinationals have come to another stage of internationalisation which leads, bit by bit, to them getting more autonomy in relation to their country of origin. This is new.

What some have called the "Triad" does not just signify the tri-polar (US, Japan, Europe) domination of the world economy, but also a

certain kind of relation between these three poles. Nothing in this configuration is stable or harmonious. Each is accompanied by fundamental imbalances. The three are endowed with very different cohesiveness.

The Asian zone is the best protected and the best organised. While Japan and Korea are present in all the world markets, the penetration of their interior markets is, in practice, extremely difficult.

The organisation into concentric circles of the region's economies and China's involvement have achieved formidable economic efficiency and commercial aggressiveness.

Europe differs completely from that plan. It is an agglomeration of capitalist nation-states which are largely open to external competition. Europe is less present in the third-rank markets and, above all, has shown itself to be incapable of a dynamic structuring of its natural periphery: the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe.

As for the US, its vocation to direct the American continent was reaffirmed by the treaty signed with Canada and Mexico. However the differences in development between the north and south of the continent are too important to be simply secondary considerations for much longer.



"There will continue to be revolts of the oppressed"

Two campaigns

THERE ARE TWO campaigns I would suggest we need to take up. In 1996 the Inter-Governmental Conference of the European Union will be held. Let us start our counter campaign against the logic of Maastricht, of austerity measures, attacks on the working class and poor and the racism and discrimination within the EU against black and migrant workers and the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers from the poor countries.

We have another conception of Europe. Not the bosses' Europe, not the capitalist, imperialist Europe but a social, democratic Europe open to the East and in solidarity with the Third World. We must begin to advance this campaign initially of course with our comrades in other sections of the Fourth International in Europe – East and West – but broaden it to include other parts of the workers movement.

Also the campaign for cancellation

of the Third World Debt. We have had some experience of this work in the student movement. Unfortunately it has not had the same resonance here as it has had in other parts of Europe notably Belgium where our comrades are pivotal to this campaign.

However we cannot pre-judge the possibility that it could yet capture the imagination of young people and others. For now we can use our press to explain the debt and therefore imperialism while making modest initiatives as well. It is a very real form of solidarity to call and achieve the cancellation of the debt, it would make an enormous difference in peoples lives if that burden was to be lifted from them.

We have considered the objective contradictions of capitalism and the pressing need for its overthrow and replacement by a saner, more humane social and economic order. However within the Left and also the workers' movement there is a profound crisis of credibility in the socialist project. In a number of his talks and writings over the last few years, our comrade Ernest Mandel spoke of three steps that revo-

lutionary socialists need to take to overcome this crisis of credibility and to renew our project and vision for society.

First, he was fond of quoting Lenin (who himself was quoting Napoleon) who remarked, "First start the struggle and then see!". We cannot afford the luxury of reticence or conservatism if we want our ideas and praxis to make a meaningful contribution to the shape of the world we live in.

When we are on the sidelines looking in on the terrible struggles taking place, we are often overawed by the strength of our enemy and our weakness, but by simply engaging in that battle the relationship of forces changes. There is no guarantee that we will emerge the victor but of course unless and until we intervene – we will never know.

Now more than ever is the time for combativeness on our part. We know that capitalism is dragging humanity down to the depths of barbarism and we know that we have a superior alternative called socialism. Let's say so!

Secondly, Mandel now quoting Marx reminded us "That the educators themselves need to be educated!"

We believe that as revolutionaries we have a better understanding of the world and we are justifiably proud of the lessons, triumphs and tragedies of the workers movement which we share with others so that new sectors of struggle, new generations too may learn from them. So that they may not repeat our mistakes.

However we also know that our programme is not a holy book which is either infallible or has the answers to the questions of all time.

In the explosions of rage that take place from the Los Angeles uprising to the valiant Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico we take comfort that contrary to the post-modernist intellectuals not everyone has given up fighting back. Capitalism has not won.

Revolts

THERE WILL continue to be revolts of the oppressed which have contradictory politics and are not formed in the shape and vocabulary of our choosing. However it would be wrong of us to hector them brandishing a pristine pure programme which is never tested in struggle. We believe that these movements have much to teach us as well and are actors in the making of history.

Thirdly, Mandel stressed over and over again the categorical imperative that Marx defined. "We fight for and be with the oppressed, downtrodden, exploited and despised, no matter who they are, where they are and what their particular struggle may be".

The way we make our ideas more popular and accessible than they are is to demonstrate by example that we have something to contribute towards the effective execution and hopefully success of that struggle. That is how we begin talking about socialism again, how we put some content into it which ordinary people can relate to their everyday lives. If we do not do so the vacuum is filled by reactionary oppressive ideologies like nationalism and religious fundamentalism.

In every age, in every society since the birth of humanity there have been a small number of people who have been able to free themselves from the dominant ideology, to look beyond the nar-

row self-serving prejudices of those around them and aspire for a better system.

They have been reviled, persecuted, ridiculed and killed. However future generations have hailed them as visionaries and innovators who dared to believe and struggle against the odds for what they believed in.

We do so now in the hope that those who join our ranks tomorrow will realise that even when it was unpopular to do so, others struggled for and had faith in them, and so too must they struggle for the socialist future.

theory+practice

looks in-depth at key issues of socialist analysis and strategy.

Each issue examines a subject of importance to socialists in greater depth and at greater length than is possible in *Socialist Outlook*.

Back issues available

5 *Can Marxism Survive?*

6 *Revolution & Counter-Revolution In Nicaragua.*

7 *Asian War on the Horizon?*

8 *A World in Crisis*

9 *A fighting programme for socialists*

Send 50p each copy to Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.

Half-price bundles

Many *Socialist Outlook* readers will be interested in carrying forward the discussions reflected in *theory+practice* by taking copies to sell.

Bundles in multiples of 10 carry a 50 per cent discount.

Contradictions in building Europe

EUROPE APPEARS to be the weakest pole in the "Triad". The fundamental difficulty for the European countries is building something Europe-wide which can take up basic functions normally given to the state. The other poles of the "Triad" are organised hierarchically around one nation-state, which remains the bastion of the dominant groups.

The situation differs in Europe, especially since the multinationals rarely aspire to function with a European logic.

The Treaty of Maastricht was, perhaps, the fastest route to a solution. It was also the most constraining.

Its failure results not only from underestimating the specific details of national economies but also from the different balances of force between the social classes within each of those countries making up the European Union.

The incohesiveness of the European Union is shown whenever it finds itself in a confrontation with the other two imperialist powers. The most recent GATT talks showed this plainly.

Europe is playing the game of free trade alone. The permeability of its economy weakens it against its competitors.

The imperialist coalition thus has the potential for internal conflict because of its multiple imbalances.

Unless it breathes life into a European "nationalism"—something which won't correspond to the interests of the dominant groups, let alone the peoples—the European bourgeoisies will be solidly set to resort to the more traditional nationalisms.

East and south

THE WHOLE logic of the world economy is based on competition between the countries of the south and east. Not every country can win at this game.

The main reason is simple arithmetic: the ability of the economies of the north to take in products from the south is limited in contrast to their ability to sell to the south because of social effects of the north's success.

In this market the "sellers" are the low-waged countries which are brought by a seamless logic to maintain their 'comparative advantage', which rests mainly on their low wages.

This model is very different from Korea's trajectory and it is practically excluded that we will see new countries arrive, from within the international division of labour, to any mastery of the industrial sectors. Any success will be against neighbouring competitors.

Only China, with a very specific mixture of ultra-capitalism, the mass peasant economy and repression, can hope to put in place a more even and relatively self-centred model.

The same considerations weigh on the restoration process which has opened in the eastern countries, which is largely determined by the new arrangements of the world economy. Far from forming a new frontier, or a limitless zone of expansion for the accumulation of capital, the eastern countries in a sense represent a burden which international capital is not able to take up.

The experience of German reunification is clear evidence of this. Even with a strong political will and enormous financial means, assimilation remains a contradictory and difficult process. This would be even more the case for countries too poor or too vast to be ready for such assimilation.

Again, the dominant logic is to choose from these countries those with sufficient interest which can in a certain way be drawn into capi-

talist Europe. Hungary, the Czech republic and Poland appear to be the best positioned.

The Yugoslav precedent is a special case, but the internal tensions obviously were reinforced by the different levels of attraction Europe had for the different parts of Yugoslavia.

The current functioning of the capitalist economy

THE RECESSION at the start of the 1990s proves that the neo-liberal solutions have not put the capitalist economies on a trajectory like the 1960s.

No successful connection between profits and outlets has emerged, and the current situation remains dominated by a relatively new phenomenon—the conditions for profitability have been reestablished while growth is being continually restricted.

Today this contradiction takes the form of growing contradiction between production determined by profitability, and humanity's most urgent needs.

A WAVE of workers' struggles and strikes has broken out since the election of the People's Alliance government in Sri Lanka last year. One of the most dynamic strikes has been that of the 300 employees – almost all of them women – of the Ceylon Diamond Company.

As part of their campaign for compensation or re-employment, six women from the locked-out workforce climbed onto the roof of the 10 storey Department of Labour on hunger strike, and occupied it for five days. Their demand: meet us for negotiations or we'll throw ourselves from the roof.

Their action brought widespread support, was accompanied by large solidarity demonstrations and eventually forced the General Manager and the Labour Minister to meet the workers' union for negotiations. GILL LEE interviewed DHARSHANIE DE SILVA (Secretary) and M.I. REYAL of the Ceylon Diamond Company Workers' Union.

Q. Can you describe the events that led up to the decision of six of the women to undertake their roof top protest.

A. Our struggle began on the 19th of May when the 287 workers - overwhelmingly women - were dismissed by the company. We were given no reason at the time, simply locked out. Later, they gave a variety of reasons, that some girls had been stealing diamonds, that regulations had been breached: but at the beginning they didn't say any of that.

For two months we tried to get negotiations. The women and their families were in a very desperate state. The wages we had been earning – between 2,500 and 6,000 rupees (£35 - £75) per month were sometimes the only incomes the families had and the jobs were very important to us.

On the 24th of July we were supposed finally to get a meeting with the General Manager of the Company. We'd spoken to the Labour Minister because we couldn't talk to the G.M. He promised he would turn up. He didn't show.

We were very frustrated.



Fighting back: strikers from the Ceylon Diamond Company in the more peaceful surroundings of their union office

Sri Lanka rocked by strike wave

Angry women hit the roof

We'd been picketing and putting up posters for two months and we weren't getting anywhere. So six of us climbed up onto the roof of the Labour Department. It was very hot and women were fainting. We stayed up there for five days and we were ready to throw ourselves off.

The rest of the workforce were blocking the entrance to the Department of Labour and members of the public and other workers were joining the demonstrations. Eventually we forced the General Manager to come to the Labour Department and he and the Labour Minister and the Labour Commissioner had discussions with our representatives.

It was a big victory that we'd forced him to meet with us.

Q. What support have you had for the strike?

A. It was fantastic during the time we were on the roof - the public were very supportive. Even the police who'd come to clear the demonstrators were sympathetic – one of them was married to one of the women.

We had lots of help from United Labour Federation (NSSP-led union). They helped us get money from other workers and helped us achieve a settlement. ♣

We had been in the All Ceylon Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (LSSP-led), but they didn't do

anything to help us. While women on the roof were fainting in the heat and ended up in hospital, the General Secretary did nothing to help - just shouted at us. He didn't take any action to force the company to negotiate

Q. What were the details of the agreement that was reached as a result of your action?

A. We wanted them to re-open the factory and re-employ all the old workforce. They haven't agreed to that. Originally they said they wanted it completely closed, then they said they would re-open it and wanted to choose two hun-

dred of the original workforce to reemploy.

We weren't having that – we weren't going to let them choose who could get their jobs back. So we said that they should compensate all the workers for losing their jobs. They also owe us for the last month we'd worked before the lockout and we want to be paid for the two months of the lock out.

If they're going to re-employ workers, we have a list of two hundred, including 187 of the original workforce, who want the jobs and we've presented it to them. They've got 21 days to come up with our compensation money and they're now saying that they can't afford to pay it.

So we've said they should give us our jobs back.

They're trying to draw out the situation to lower the resistance of the women. Things are very desperate. Even finding the money for transport from where we live to the office we're campaigning from is very hard. Despite these problems most of the workers are sticking round the dispute. We won't give up, we'll fight to the last.

■ Messages of support/donations should be sent to: Ceylon Diamonds A&C International (Private) Limited c/o United Federation of Labour, No17 Barrack Lane, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka.

What has been happening to Chinese girls?

CHINA is one of several Asian countries, including India, Taiwan and Korea whose demographics have become skewed by the overwhelming desire for male children.

This, in the case of China, is in a country where there is a strict one child policy, and where abortion has become common.

A massive 97.5 percent of all abortions are of female foetuses.

This is largely due to in-

creased access to ultrasound equipment enabling accurate determination of the sex of a foetus, especially during the last 15 years.

In 1993 the government banned hospitals from using ultrasound to disclose the sex of a child.

However sex-selection abortions continue as the centuries-old preference for sons is bolstered by changing economic circumstances around the country.

The break up of the collective farms has led to many

rural families feeling the need to have male children to perpetuate the family name and inherit the property. Boys are also valued over girls for their ability to do farm labour!

The reduction in pension benefits for the elderly has made them more dependent on their families and sons for support.

There has also been female infanticide and the abandonment, starvation and neglect of girls. Newspapers recently reported that one couple in rural China had five girls and

Zone of women's misery

Women working in Sri Lanka's free trade zones face a variety of oppression and maltreatment.

Although Sri Lankan women retain their dowry, they have to have a dowry to get married.

Many women in the zone work intensely hard in order to get together their dowry money. This means that they can be slow to resist appalling conditions – but they can also be very radical when threatened with loss of jobs.

It is common for divorce to be granted on grounds of women not seen to be virgins on consummation of marriage.

The women sleep in shifts in dormitories, facing a high incidence of rape. They are seen as 'bad women' in their home villages, and women are frequently tricked out of dowry money by men who make a speciality out of relationships with women who work in free trade zone.

The largest source of foreign revenue in Sri Lanka is remittances from workers in the Middle East, many of them married women.

Care of children in Sri Lanka is by extended family structure, which allows women to be superexploited as domestic servants in the Middle East.

Home working is also widespread. Outside Kandy women work making 'local' cigarettes – they're paid 75 rupees (£1) per day for hand rolling 1,000 cigarettes, which sell for 0.5 rupees each. In fact the 'local' rolling leaf is imported from India.

■ United Federation of Women, Chandrani Jayasinghe, 143/3, Colombo, Sri Lanka, has campaigned against rape, for legalisation of abortion, decriminalisation of prostitution as well as in support of groups of women workers.

drowned each in succession.

However the problem of abandoned, aborted, murdered and neglected girls has only been raised when it is posed as a problem for men getting brides – which is discrimination in itself.

"People become concerned about the issue because of the fear of men who may have difficulty finding a wife. Women are still not part of the picture", said Gu Baochang of the China Population Information and Research Centre.

Ireland after a year of 'peace'

By Simon Deville

MARKING THE first anniversary of the IRA ceasefire, leading republican Martin McGuinness addressed a rally of around three hundred people in Trafalgar Square.

All the speakers echoed the message of the Sinn Fein leadership. One year on and the British government is holding up the "peace process", even to the extent of threatening the process altogether.

Britain is dragging its feet over the release of political prisoners, and at the same time its insistence on the decommissioning of republican weapons is proving a barrier to all party talks.

The placards and slogans at the rally demanded the release of all political prisoners - "Clegg out - all out!", and for "Peace talks now!".

This rally demonstrated some of the central contradictions in republican thinking.

A leading member of Sinn Fein was quoted in *New Statesman* outlining the republican strategy. "Adams has spoken of not permitting a veto to the Unionists while stating their consent is necessary". In other words the Unionists must agree to a settlement, but this will not be called a veto.

The SDLP share this view as their chairman Mark Durkan

explains "the positive quality of [Unionist] consent should not be seen as a veto"

Veto

Apparently "the republicans have entered a wider alliance by dropping what the British didn't like". Though it is not clear exactly what the British didn't like, imperialists don't tend to like anti-imperialist demands.

Martin McGuinness insists that Sinn Fein still demands an end to British rule "...we want a united Ireland. But I'm prepared to negotiate all of these things with the Unionist people and the British government... What we can't negotiate is our opinion that British jurisdiction must end."

The current position would imply that in such "all party talks" British imperialism and the Unionists would have an in-built majority, and the Unionists would not be forced into any settlement they didn't agree with (though this wouldn't be called a veto).

The republican leadership are demanding such talks, provided they are allowed to keep their opinions. The only way this could take the struggle against partition forward would be if the nationalists could convince British imperialism to stop being imperialists, and the Unionists to stop being Unionists.

The other stumbling block to talks is the question of de-



Just who is demilitarising

commission arms. Gerry Adams has complained that the British government was trying to "win victory through stalemate that it could not get through conflict... it is deliberately trying to sow disillusion and dissent within the republican ranks".

The British government are openly demanding a decommissioning of arms as a trade off for the release of republican prisoners, which the republican leadership have not particularly objected to in principle.

One sided

Given the release of Lee Clegg and the capitulation to

the Unionist marches recently, the one sided nature of these demands is obviously causing disquiet within the republican ranks. Even the demand "Clegg out - all out" implies that British armed forces have just as much right to shoot civilians as oppressed people have to take up arms against imperialism.

By embracing the "nationalist family" the Sinn Fein leadership are in danger of becoming no different from the "constitutional nationalists" of the SDLP or the southern bourgeoisie.

Nearly a quarter a century of often heroic armed struggle has failed as a strategy and left the republicans in an ex-

tremely weakened position.

To attempt to go back to that failed strategy would be extremely difficult now even if it were desirable. To see the only alternative as a return to a Stormont in which nationalists are a minority would be a disaster.

The only lasting solution will come from those who have a real interest in fighting against imperialism and for class unity - the Irish and British working class.

To place hopes in a solution to the Irish national question coming from the Southern bourgeoisie or from British or US imperialism would be to sow illusions in an impossible utopia.

What's Happening

September

Day of first French nuclear test

PROTEST outside French Embassy 58 Knightsbridge, London W1

Saturday after first French nuclear test

CND national demonstration London tel 0171 700 2393

Fri 8

BOSNIA solidarity campaign meeting 7.30pm with Billy Pye and Geoff Ryan Bolton Socialist Club, Wood Street

Sat 9

SCHOOL-STUDENTS conference sponsored by Nottingham FACE 12 noon to 4.00pm International Community Centre, just past the Victoria Centre, Mansfield Road. Details phone 0115 9654428.

IRELAND and the trade unions conference Manchester.

Tues 12

LOBBY of the TUC 11am The Level Brighton

Mon 18

STOP deportation of the Onbiyo family details of protest from Lambeth UNISON on 0171 737 2134

Sat 23

LANDMINES day of action details phone/fax 01296 632056

Sat 30

FACE demonstration meet 12.30 Victoria Embankment for march to Hyde park

October

Fri 13

CELEBRATE the life of Ernest Mandel rally at Friends House Euston 7.00pm to 9.00pm with speaker including Duncan Hallas (SWP), Catherine Samary (USFI), and Charlie Van Gelderen (Socialist Outlook). Tickets £4 or £2 (UB40, students) from Ernest Mandel Memorial Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

Sat 14

SYMPOSIUM on the marxism of Ernest Mandel 10.30am to 4.30pm central London speakers include Duncan Hallas, Charlie Van Gelderen and others

NATIONAL protest against immigration detention centres

AFRICA in the world celebration Details Simon Katzenbogen 0161 275 3112

Sun 15

COMEDY night for London Hospital campaigns 7.30pm Wimbledon Theatre SW9: Jo Brand, Mark Thomas, Arthur Smithtel 0181 540 0362

Sat 28

TUC demonstration: Unite against racism. meet 12 noon Platt Fields for march to Albert Square. Leaflet from Kay Carbury at TUC on 0171 636 4030

November

Sat 25

STOP hospital closures conference sponsored by London Health Emergency 11.00am to 4.00pm Malet St. London.

After 50 years of 'independence' Vietnam banks on capitalism

By K.Govindan

SEPTEMBER 2 marks the fiftieth year of Vietnam's declaration of independence from French colonialism. However July 1995 may turn out to be more important in future years.

That month witnessed two events of importance for Vietnam's present economic and political course.

First, the United States announced full diplomatic relations with the country its bombs had ravaged. Last February the Clinton Administration lifted the embargo on trade between the countries, also enabling Vietnam to have access to loans from international financial institutions which are dominated by the United States.

That same month the stridently anti-communist Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) admitted 'Communist' Vietnam into membership of the regional bloc. In many ways this move is far more difficult for the pro Western capitalist countries than Vietnam which was shunned against its will, iso-

lated by a US trade embargo and censured for its intervention in Cambodia to oust the Khmer Rouge.

Trade between Vietnam and other ASEAN countries has been rising steadily ever since it embarked on *doi moi* or economic renovation in 1986. In the early 1980's 70-80 per cent of its imports originated from, and 50-60 per cent of its exports went to Eastern bloc countries.

By 1993 35 per cent of Vietnam's trade was with other south east asian countries and much of the foreign investment comes from within the region too.

USSR

Vietnam's one billion ruble annual subsidy by the USSR was cut off after the August 1990 putsch. It had to look for investment capital externally because it had - and has - no capitalist class to speak of.

Certainly the embryo of that class exists in the local agents for joint venture schemes that are mandatory under law. They are party cadres in the peoples committees, army officials, state bureaucrats and in petty commodity production, the ethnic Chi-

nese minority.

What is aimed at is for foreign capitalists to "piggy back" their agents by passing on technology and skills and of course profits.

Neat theory, pity about reality.

The Vietnamese Communist Party believes that the State can substitute itself for a national capitalist class, blind to the reality that such a class is in formation and must eventually challenge the Party's monopoly on political power.

In the export processing zones, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea are the top three foreign investors involved in everything from textiles and chemicals to electronics. They are not permitted to sell to the local market, although this is changing. Presently the attraction is a low waged, literate and 'passive' workforce.

Disciplined by the state run trade unions the factory owners need not fear labour unrest and strikes which though not illegal are actively discouraged by the "business unionism" style of union officials.

The pressures on the workers to be submissive are great. Official unemployment is running at 17 per cent and

their ranks are swelled daily not only by the 1.3 million new entrants to the labour force annually but also the millions thrown of the land who migrate for work to the cities and those made fired by state enterprises.

These state owned concerns are being 'privatised' by managers who steal assets and take machinery and land transforming themselves into individual capitalists.

Private sector

It is no wonder that the private sector's share of gross domestic production has risen to 45 per cent of the total when half of the state enterprises around before the reforms have been closed down.

The investment is also unevenly spread. Presently the bulk of foreign capital is concentrated within two industrial triangles: Hanoi - Hai Phong - Ha Long in the north and Ho Chi Minh - Bien Hoa - Vung Tau in the south.

Ideologues for the reforms point to the decrease in absolute poverty from 70 per cent of the population to 51 per cent as proof of its success. However they gloss over the widening income differences.

Why we fight for the right of return

French campaign against HiroChirac

By Pierre Rousset

The lightning invasion by Croatia of the Serb-held Krajina area, and the subsequent flight of hundreds of thousands of Serb refugees, have again raised the issue of what stand socialists should take on Krajina.

Socialist Outlook has consistently recognised that the secession of Krajina from Croatia was not an act of self-determination, but an act of pan-Serb aggression against Croatia.

The self styled "Autonomous Republic of Krajina" was never a genuine independent entity. It was an extension of Serbia, acting as a springboard for further aggression against Croatia and Bosnia. It did not even represent the majority of Serbs in Croatia, many of whom fought alongside Croats in support of mixed communities, such as Vukovar and Dubrovnik.

We therefore recognise the right of the Croatian government to reintegrate the Krajina region into Croatia, and to enable the return of thousands of Croats forcibly expelled from the region.

But this does not necessarily imply support for the methods used by the Croatian armed forces.

Any expulsions, murders, rapes or other atrocities must be completely condemned. All socialists must raise the demand for the right of all refugees, from whatever community, to return to their homes.

This is a basic right. It does not depend upon their reason for departure—whether they were forcibly expelled at gunpoint, fled in fear, left because their neighbours had gone, or any other reason. We must also continue to demand the right of asylum in Britain for all victims of the conflict.

Embittered

The new wave of refugees has grave implications for Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia. Tens of thousands of embittered Serb refugees are being resettled in central Bosnia, bringing renewed efforts to expel as many as 12,000 Croats and 40,000 Muslims from Banja Luka.

There are also reports of refugees being resettled in Kosovo, already partially incorporated into Serbia, thus further destabilising this potential flashpoint and raising the fears of massive counter-expulsions of Albanians and others from the Serb-controlled areas, and of the widening of the war.

Far from indicating an impending end to the war, the developments since the Croatian reoccupation of Krajina threaten to intensify and widen it.

Ultra-nationalists are increasingly in the ascendant in Croatia, Bosnia and Greater Serbia. The need to support the forces of multi-ethnicism is stringer than ever.

The demands for lifting the arms embargo, and for the right of the Bosnian government and people to defend themselves against genocide and ethnic cleansing, must be raised throughout the labour movement in Britain.

THERE IS A very deep fear about the nuclear threat and a general sentiment that nothing in the present world situation justifies maintaining nuclear weapons.

Within two weeks of Chirac's decision, some 80 organisations — political parties, trades unions, environmental groups, NGOs — agreed a common appeal to demand an end to nuclear tests and French signature of the Comprehensive test ban Treaty.

For the first time in a decade, the conditions are very favourable. Ten years ago, at the time of the terrorist bombing [by the French government of the Greenpeace ship] *Rainbow Warrior*, the international reaction was very big, but

Greenpeace (France) was completely broken by the French secret service.

Stopping the nuclear tests will be extremely difficult to win. Chirac has put all his presidential authority on the line. Here we have a huge question of democracy: one man can make a decision full of incalculable consequences for humanity

The nuclear tests raise the question: will be 21st century be nuclear? We know all the nuclear powers want to keep nuclear weapons, but the majority of countries (and people) want to see nuclear weapons destroyed. That's why we demand in the appeal an immediate signing of the test ban treaty.

No European government will risk a serious falling out with the French government. They know that the French and the British are using the fact that they alone have nuclear



Sydney, Australia, protest on Hiroshima Day drew hundreds

weapons to strengthen their position in Europe. Only if mass movements develops the diplomatic isolation of Paris can be very great.

Over the summer we aimed

to convert the appeal into a mass petition, with more than 100 component organisations doing its best to have the appeal signed as widely as possible. This will put us in a

position to react massively at the time of the first test.

■ Pierre Rousset edits *Rouge*, the French Fourth Internationalist weekly.

Remember Tuzla's Serbs

Despite the best efforts of the British media to give the impression that all Bosnian Serbs are in favour of a Greater Serbia, a significant minority of Bosnian Serbs remain opposed.

Tuzla—currently under attack from supporters of the Greater Serbia chauvinist project—contains a considerable Serbian population. The same is true of Sarajevo.

We publish an interview with a leader of the Tuzla Serbs to present the side of the story supporters of ethnic partition would prefer kept quiet.

TUZLA—"The Serbs are the key to peace in the former Yugoslavia," says Miso Bozic, the chair of Tuzla's Serbian union.

"The current Serbian leaders, Milosevic in Serbia itself and Karadzic, the leader of rebel forces in Bosnia, are both following a policy that puts the notion of a Great Serbia above all other considerations."

"Such a policy is outright fascist. It is based on war crimes, repression and ethnic cleansing. Along with similar tendencies in Croatian policy,

this has led to there now being more than two million Bosnian refugees."

The ethnic cleansing policy, in Miso Bozic's view, is not going to lead to peace but to endless conflicts. The objective for the Serbian union in Tuzla and for similar unions all over Bosnia is, therefore, to develop another kind of policy; one built upon understanding among the nations.

Tuzla's Serbian union represents the city's Serbian population. Before the war broke out, about 33,000 Serbs lived in Tuzla, 30 per cent of its 110,000 inhabitants.

But when the war began things became more confused. Fear and insecurity were widespread. Many Serbs left the city.

The union was set up with strictly political objectives. Bozic stresses: "We do not want to fight for the Serbs' social rights. Here in Tuzla we have political parties for that. We want to fight for our political rights."

In Bosnia there is a long tradition of peaceful co-existence, of "harmonious division".

When Tuzla was occupied by the Croatian *Ustashi* movement during the Second World War, the Serbs and Jews were protected by their Muslim neighbours. Tuzla was the only area under *Ustashi* control where the slaughter of Jews and Serbs was prevented.

When Bosnia became part of Yugoslavia, all three popu-

lations were given equality. The constitution said explicitly that Bosnia should be the homeland of three equal groups—the Serbs, the Croats and the Muslims.

The new federation agreement, accepted on the basis of a US initiative, does not mention the Serbs as a population group equal to the other two.

Therefore the Serbs in Tuzla now have to fight on three fronts.

First, they are fighting the Chetniks. They have proposed that Serbs should form their own battalions on the front, but this has been rejected by the Muslim government.

Second, they are fighting to be recognised by the international community.

Third, they are fighting internally for equality with Bosnia's other nationalities.

Together with Serbs in other parts of Bosnia that are

under the control of the Bosnian government's army, Tuzla's Serbs have formed a consultative council. The first meeting of this council in Sarajevo in 1994 represented about 200,000 Serbs. The council also has contacts with Serbian nationalists.

Miso Bozic and the other representatives of Tuzla's Serbs are bitter about the international community's view of Karadzic as the only representative of the Bosnian Serbs.

Only building an alternative to Milosevic and Karadzic, giving all the Serbs an opportunity to choose sides, can bring real peace.

But the problem has been that these forces, like the peace forces in general, have had great difficulty in meeting, in being able to discuss together, and in putting views forward.

Miso Bozic has been in Germany and talked with many emigres and refugees: "In general, they didn't know anything about the real situation".

But he takes a hopeful view: "We are soon going to have the ability to appeal directly to the entire world. Tuzla is soon going to get a satellite station that the Serbian nationalists cannot jam".

"So, we are developing contacts with other opposition groups in Serbia. Soon, we will send a delegation of Tuzla Serbs to Belgrade itself in order to discuss with opposition parties".

[This interview was conducted by Vagn Rasmussen and published in *Internationalen*, the Swedish Fourth Internationalist paper.]

Subscribe to Socialist Outlook

Send your cheque/PO for £17 (one year) £9 (six months) to 'Socialist Outlook Fund', PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. For one year overseas: surface: £22. Airmail: £38 Australasia and far east, £30 Rest of the world.

Name

Address

Post Code Tel:

WORLD OUTLOOK

Theory + practice
without supplement
**Fighting back
for socialism**

**Serb activist
on Big Serbia
project p11**

Fight Tony
education
cuts p3

Socialist Outlook redesigns for 12 pages
BRITISH READERS will know that over the last year the cost of newsprint has increased by nearly 50 per cent. Rather than increase our cover price, we have chosen to start redesigning the newspaper to better fit 12 pages.

Socialist OUTLOOK

Bosnia: no to NATO bombings

Lift Arms Embargo

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK is opposed to NATO's bombing of Bosnian Serbs. The objective is not to liberate or unite Bosnia, but to enforce its partition.

The latest imperialist 'peace' plan involves handing 49 per cent of Bosnia to the Serbs, making the rest a Croatian dependency.

Unlike some who have denounced the bombing – such as MPs Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell – we do so as defenders of Bosnia. We have always defended the right of the people of Bosnia to secede from former Yugoslavia and to create an independent, multi-ethnic Bosnian state. Many of the British left, by refusing to 'take sides' in what they dismiss as a 'civil war', in essence, support the Greater Serbia project.

We understand why residents of Sarajevo cheered NATO planes dropping bombs. After suffering 4 years of siege, bombardment, and being denied weapons to defend themselves, such a reaction is hardly surprising.

NATO's bombs have been dropped on people living in the areas controlled by Karadzic. Many Bosnian Serb civilians have been killed. However, main objective of the military action has been to repress and intimidate those muslims, Serbs and Croats committed to fighting for an independent, multi-ethnic Bosnia.

NATO 'solution'

NATO's actions are designed, despite Michael Portillo's denials, to force a 'diplomatic solution'.

They are also designed to head off criticism in the West, particularly in the United

States, of the continuing arms embargo on Bosnia, and resolve the differences between the imperialist powers. That is why the United States has asserted itself as the architect of the current bombing campaign. Bosnian Serbs have been killed to prop up Clinton's flagging credibility.

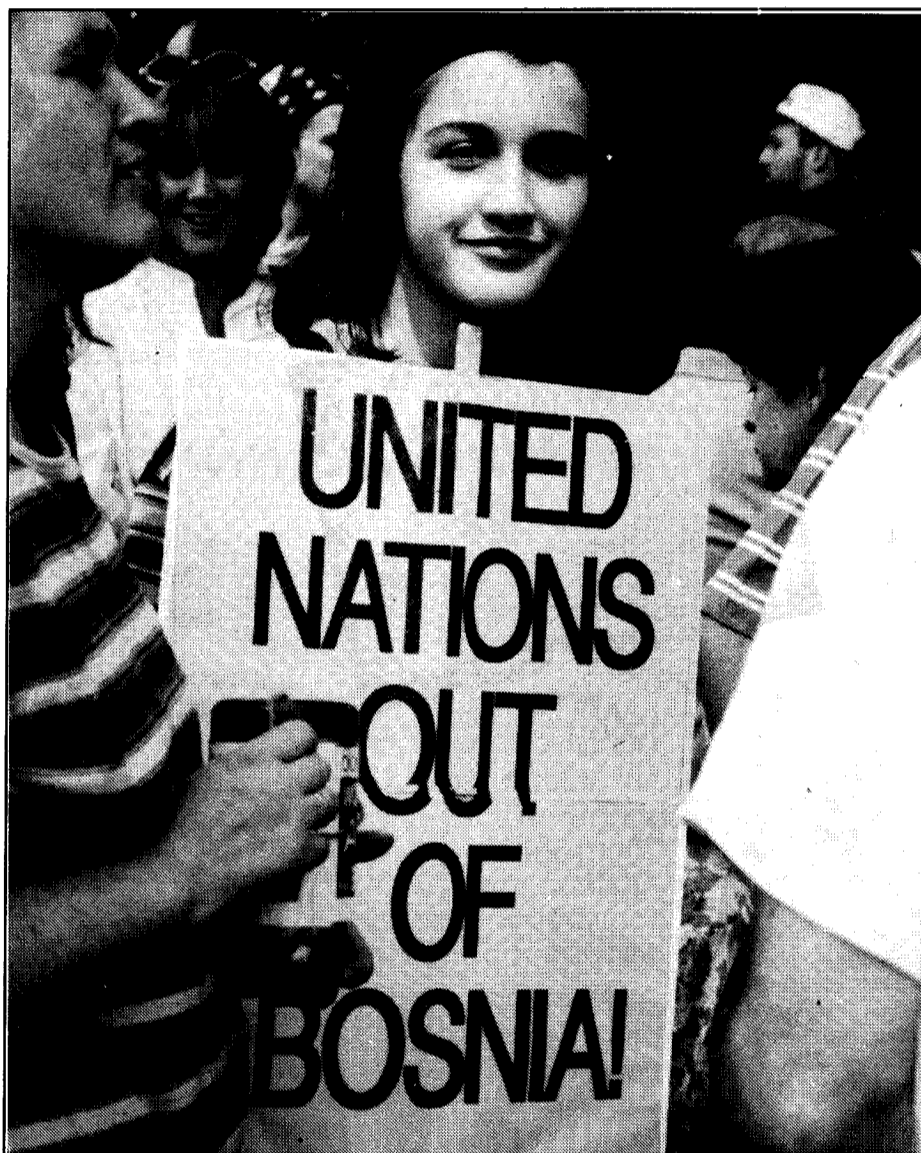
Far from being designed to preserve multi-ethnic Bosnia the NATO bombing campaign aims to force the acceptance of the latest 'plan' which, in common with all its predecessors, aims at the carve-up of Bosnia.

All the signs are that, perhaps under some pressure from Serbian President Milosevic, the leaders of the so-called Bosnian Serb Republic would be willing to negotiate a settlement which tinkers with dividing lines but leaves them controlling 49 per cent of Bosnia. NATO's bombing campaign is to warn those in Bosnia who want to continue to fight for an independent multi-ethnic state that they will get no support.

The bombing is also intended to strengthen those forces in the Bosnian government who are prepared to accept partition into a Bosnian Serb area – which will probably include the supposed 'safe haven' of Gorazde – and a Croat-Muslim federation.

Oddly, given western demonisation of Islam, this is an intervention designed to bolster up the most Islamist currents against the defenders of secularism. It is an intervention in support of Bosnian President Izetbegovic and Foreign Minister Sacirbey against Prime Minister Haris Silajdic.

Yet it is not as odd as it seems. Clearly the 'rising star' in the Bosnian government is Sacirbey who, as former ambassador to the United Nations, clearly has the strongest



NATO's actions have nothing to do with defending Bosnia

ties to the United States. Sacirbey and Milosevic (who also has strong personal ties with the U.S.) are clearly seen as the best vehicles for implementing a solution in the interests of U.S. imperialism. Those who continue to argue for a multi-ethnic Bosnia are seen an obstacle to western plans.

Over the summer Silajdic briefly resigned in protest at attempts by Izetbegovic and Sacirbey to force through a constitutional change reserving the post of President for a Muslim. Significantly Silajdic was backed by much of the army. In the Tuzla region every single military commander supported Silajdic's continued insistence on a multi-ethnic Bosnia. It was no doubt this military support that persuaded him to withdraw his resignation. NATO's bombing campaign aims to isolate these forces in favour of the *Realpolitik* of carving up Bosnia.

Swallowing up

The division of Bosnia between a Serb area and the Muslim-Croat federation will eventually lead to the swallowing up of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia – though the bombing campaign no doubts also serves to remind Milosevic and Tudjman of Croatia

that they should allow a decent interval to pass before embarking on such ambitions. The ultimate losers will be the Bosnian Muslims, despite the intentions of Izetbegovic and Sacirbey.

Yet, in many ways, the biggest victims of NATO's offensive will be the hundreds of thousands of Serbs who have remained loyal to a multi-ethnic Bosnia.

There will be no place for them in a Muslim-Croat federation, particularly a federation swallowed up by Tudjman. Nor will 'Greater Serbia' offer much of a prospect.

In the long run only the overthrow of Tudjman and Milosevic by the Croatian and Serbian working classes can bring about a solution.

In the meantime socialists stand with all those forces resisting the carve-up of Bosnia. We stand for the right of the people of Bosnia to preserve an independent multi-ethnic state.

That means total opposition to the NATO bombings and a continued campaign for lifting the arms embargo so that the people of Bosnia can defend themselves and determine their own future.

■ **Krajina recaptured: see p 11**