

# Socialist OUTLOOK

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# THREE WHEELS ON HIS WAGON



## but New Labour keeps rolling along ...

**AFTER** two years of seeming to walk on electoral water, Tony Blair and his team are showing themselves to be fallible.

The European elections saw Labour voters stay home in droves, most conspicuously in areas with safe Labour seats.

This has allowed a limited revival of the Tories, though they remain discredited on many key issues where Labour has not stolen their policies.

Blair will be pleased that the far left, with few

exceptions, has failed to win over disillusioned Labour voters to its candidates, and will claim that in a general election they would have "nowhere else to go" but vote Labour.

But New Labour's links with Murdoch and the press are under strain; there is no

short-term chance of winning support for the EMU project; the Irish "peace" process is on the edge of crisis; John Prescott's transport policies are a sick joke; scandals are still brewing over GM food; and the full cost of the bombing of Serbia is still to emerge.

So there is still scope for things to go horribly wrong for Blair.

His solution to the dip in the Party's poll ratings has been to emphasise again his New Labour credentials, step up the offensive on welfare rights and asylum seekers, and focus his

attention on winning well-heeled middle class support.

It is not clear whether Blair even realises a wheel has come off his bandwagon. But New Labour has no way to repair the damage.

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## Trades Councils Conference refuses to let itself be neutered

The annual conference of Trades Union Councils met in Blackpool from May 21-23, with about 80 delegates present. Pete Firmin, chair, Brent Trades Union Council reports.

The main problem with the Trades Councils national structure is that it is unable to take decisions which go beyond those of the Trades Union Congress itself. The national Conference is only consultative. The TUC keeps Trades Councils over a barrel, with the threat of withdrawal of support and funding if this relationship is challenged.

Because of this, many of the resolutions to conference, while worthy, do not make serious proposals for campaigning.

Thus the resolution on the new employment rights made many good criticisms of the legislation, but could not propose affiliation to the Reclaim Our Rights campaign because this had been ruled out of

order by the TUC nominee on the Joint Consultative Committee.

Resolutions were passed on many important issues, such as opposition to the sale of Council Housing, PFI, arms sales to Indonesia, student tuition fees and much else, most of them unanimously.

Despite the restraints, conference did discuss an emergency resolution on the war and passed opposition to NATO's bombing overwhelmingly.

Socialist Outlook and the Socialist Party also held a joint fringe meeting on the theme "NATO out of the Balkans, self-determination for Kosovo" which about a dozen delegates attended.

The most contentious item was a proposal from Tyne and Wear that next year's conference, instead of discussing resolutions, should discuss 6 areas of campaigning as decided in advance by consultation.

This produced a lively debate with several delegates arguing this would take the conference down the road of Labour Party conference, where resolutions are marginalised or excluded in favour of 'policy presentations' and workshops.

The movers attempted to argue that the reason many Trades Councils do not send delegates to conference was because it is resolution-based (where have we heard that before?), although it was pointed out that there are many other potential reasons - such as cost, ability to get a day off work, the fact that each council cannot automatically submit a resolution etc.

The resolution was defeated, but the discussion on how to make the conference more attractive will obviously continue. Not least, trades councils must consider ways of escaping the straitjacket imposed by the TUC.



While tube staff fight privatisation, RMT right wingers are fighting the left

## Stop Prescott's Tube hive-off

JOHN PRESCOTT's announcement that sub-surface London Underground lines are to be given to Rail-track marks a further step down the road of privatisation.

In separating off the deep lines, to be offered to other companies, Rail-track have been allowed to cherry-pick the economically safer lines. Despite much talk, before the General Election of standing up to the fat cats Prescott has once again given into Railtrack. With Railtrack already making £1.3 million profit every day from the ex-BR railway their share price rose over £1 at the expectation of even greater profits.

Prescott continues to present his "Public Private Partnership" as some kind of short term leasing arrangement. After all everything will revert back to public ownership in the end. But this is a sick joke.

For the Underground workers

involved it means immediate privatisation, with their jobs being transferred to Railtrack sub-contractors. They won't even have the safeguards that ex BR workers received under the Tory privatisation, losing pension and travel facilities if their new bosses transfer them from Underground work to other areas.

For Underground users the plans will inevitably mean massive hikes in prices. And despite the promise of investment in upgrading track and in new lines no guarantee of improvement in the rapidly deteriorating service.

The House of Commons Transport Select Committee has published a damning report on the proposals. They point out that PPP is the worst financial option possible, costing up to £1 billion more than the (non-privatisation) alternatives.

But of course, as well as helping their business friends, the scheme has the (one) advantage of keeping the Treasury's "Public sector borrowing requirement" down. A consideration much to be valued in meeting the Euro convergence criteria.

Underground workers' trade unions had been divided in their response.

While the RMT has organised strikes against the privatisation, last year the ASLEF welcomed Prescott's plans. But as the reality of a threat to all tube workers has become apparent this has now changed. At an important rally to mark the resuscitation of the campaign against privatisation Dave Rix,

ASLEF General Secretary joined with Jimmy Knapp of RMT to condemn Prescott's proposals. This is a major step forward and must be welcomed. The prospect of united campaigning of all tube unions must be encouraged.

Certainly that was the view of the three hundred or so tube workers who came to the rally. Speakers from the floor repeatedly urged the unions to call joint industrial action in defence of their jobs. Rix and Knapp tried to duck out of any such commitment, pledging only to produce some joint propaganda. But with ASLEF reps no longer able to argue that this is an issue which does not affect them the opportunities to build unity of purpose in the depots among rank and file members of both unions must not be missed.

Jimmy Knapp has never wanted to take the action necessary to win this campaign. On the one hand he has refused to allow any public criticism or calling to account of RMT sponsored MPs, despite RMT policy specifically laid down by last year's annual conference. On the other he did his best to frustrate the industrial campaign last year, which then fizzled out this spring when some Left members of the Underground Regional

Council took fright at wavering support in some depots.

The Campaign Against Tube Privatisation needs to be supported with local campaigns built right across London. Every candidate for the London Mayor (Tory, Lib-Dem and Labour), with the exception of Trevor Phillips, has already denounced Prescott's privatisation plans. The whole issue must be made a central part of the London Assembly elections.

An industrial campaign must also be reinstated. RMT members have shown they are prepared to fight. ASLEF must be drawn in as well. Above all, it is important that the rank and file is in control.

Tube workers know that united action can be effective in bringing services to a halt. On previous strike days many ASLEF members honoured RMT picket lines despite advice to the contrary from their reps.

With both unions standing together tube workers are unstoppable. Encouraging such joint action must form a central part of the strategy for the next months.

CATP - contact it at 47c Wadeson Street E2 9DP, 0171 981 8065.

## Tameside Strikers - still fighting for justice

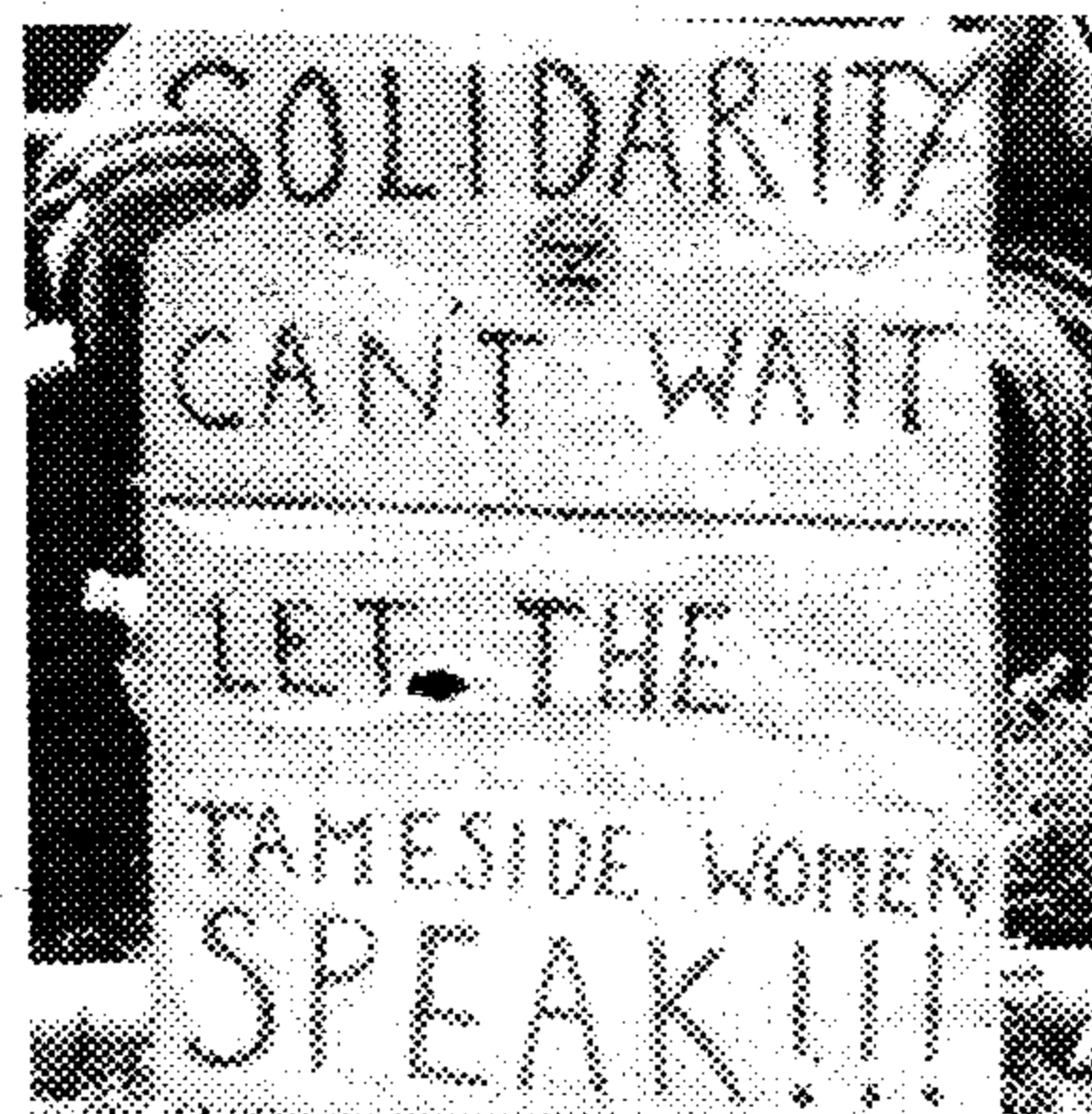
AFTER 14 months on strike, more than 20 Tameside care workers are still continuing their dispute - in the industrial tribunal. They are asking the labour, trade union and community movement for support, and issued the following statement on June 2.

"We are asking you to extend your support to our just cause because over 20 of the strikers are continuing the campaign for justice against all odds.

We do not feel what we have been offered by the Tameside Care Group is a just settlement. The offer was made ten days before the industrial tribunal and was accompanied with a biased letter from the solicitors acting for UNISON in the Tribunal. Some strikers felt that they were being railroaded.

The offer was described as "fair and substantial". But the offer of £400,000 was to be divided between over 200 people: therefore we feel the offer was neither fair nor substantial.

The offer was based on redundancy terms, and did not include



pension protection or any amount for damages or for financial difficulties the strikers have found themselves in after 14 months on strike.

All those who had Industrial Tribunal cases were balloted (ie 187 people), regardless of the length of time they were strike. 85 of the original strikers were still on strike. 62 of those balloted voted against the offer, several strikers did not receive ballot papers, and others did not get their ballot paper returned within the short period allocated.

The ballot papers were sent out by UNISON on a Tuesday and had

to be returned by 5pm the following Tuesday. 39 ballot papers were not returned. Some who never came out on strike were also balloted.

We do not think the ballot process was democratic, since it has come to light both UNISON and Thompson (the solicitors) are aware who voted for and against. After the ballot those who voted against have been sent letters and been telephoned in an attempt to apply pressure on them to accept the offer.

We are now preparing our case for an industrial tribunal. A new date for the tribunal will be announced in four weeks time".

■ Contact Liz Taylor Tel/ Fax 0161 339 2467 19 Edward Street, Cock Brook, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6RF.

■ Tameside Strikers Support Group meets every Monday night at 7pm Station Pub, Warrington Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside

■ Please make any cheques to: Tameside Support Group/Strikers Hardship Fund.

## July 10: Defend Public Services!

THE SACKED Tameside strikers have called a conference in Manchester on Saturday July 10 on the theme of their local election campaign this year, defending public services and opposing privatisation in all its forms.

They found themselves on the sharp end of privatisation when they were sacked last year by the privatised company who had taken over the running of the care homes where they worked from the Council, for striking over yet another cut in pay and conditions.

The strikers who stood in local elections on a Defend Public Services slate gained a significant portion of the vote, showing a high level of opposition to continuing privatisation of jobs and services in local government.

Their platform was one of maintaining public services under local authority control, and with proper funding. They also opposed all privatisation, cheap labour, casualisation, corruption, sleaze and all forms of prejudice and racism.

They wanted to expose the corruption of the Council, for example, in the running of an arms

length company running the care homes where they had worked.

The strikers want to work with all those coming into battle: fire fighters, council workers, community campaigners against hospital closures and housing sell-offs.

Speakers are invited to the conference from trade unions and community campaigns around the country fighting attacks on public services in many forms: Best Value, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), Trusts, redundancies, casualisation, intensification and so on.

The conference has so far been sponsored by Banner Theatre, FBU District Committee, Greater Manchester Socialist Alliance, Tameside Strikers Support Group, TGWU 6/389 and others.

● Conference: 11 am - 4 pm Saturday 10 July Mechanics Institute, Princess Street, Manchester

● Cost: Unwaged/unemployed £1, waged £3, delegates £5, disabled access.

Conference:  
July 10,  
Mechanics  
Institute,  
Manchester



# Sacrificing Labour's core support

## Rover workers to pay heavy price for BMW subsidy

**Graham Doyle**

BMW-owned Rover Cars started selling the new Cowley built R75 on June 17. This is the first new car since BMW took over 5 years ago, and the media has presented it as the "last chance" to save Rover.

This fits in with the campaign to make workers think they have no choice but to do whatever the employer wants if they are to save plants and jobs.

There is no questioning as to how Rover – a company which 10 years ago was as big as BMW – got into such a total state of collapse.

Whatever happened to the British Aerospace takeover of the then state-owned Rover? We were told then that this was "the only answer". Where did the money go from the sale of vast amounts of land, in Oxford and elsewhere? This was done by a property subsidiary of BAe.

Why aren't the workers allowed to go through the books to see the answer to these questions? None of the media asks these questions because they supported what BAe did, and they don't want the workers to question their 'masters'.

Alongside the launch comes the continuing saga of government money to be paid to BMW to build the replacement for the 200/400 series at Longbridge.

### Banking hours

Last November workers were bullied into voting for a "banking hours" agreement. If they accepted this, then the BMW investment would go ahead. Then BMW threatened to build the cars in Hungary unless it also got vast sums of taxpayers' money, and succeeded in getting the promise of £150million.

Now the EU is threatening to veto this aid, because they say that BMW was not serious about the move to Hungary.

But the government is willing to give these vast sums of money to a private company, although they refused subsidy when it was state-owned.

At the same time the government is backing the employer, by saying they will only give the money if the workers productivity is increased by 10-20% each year. So they are using our own money to speed us up! New Labour is proud of this 'unique' aspect of the deal.

The vast sums that BMW is investing in Rover are just one third of their overall investment. The other two thirds are going into BMW itself, which is only a little bigger than Rover, and whose plants are already mostly state of the art plants.

Longbridge has to be almost com-

pletely rebuilt. They are also insisting that many parts of it will be contracted-out 'modules', which will mean a lot more job loss, and that many component purchases will be transferred to cheaper sources abroad, thus endangering many of the 50,000 jobs that the media say have been saved.

### Stoppages

The reality of last November's deal is now working itself through. Stoppages took place in Solihull that were not publicised nationally. Workers stopped work when they were told that they would have to pay back their 'banked' hours.

Straight after the signing in November the management in each plant worked out how to lay off workers so that they nearly all owe 200 hours, ready for the peak production periods. The Solihull workers were told that they would have to work from 5.30 to 11.30 on Friday evenings, as well as an extra 15 minutes every day, all for no pay.

Previously they wouldn't work such a shift even if they had been paid. Under the old agreement, when workers were laid off with pay, they didn't have to pay any time back. It would appear that they when voted on the deal last November, the implications had not been properly explained.

The hostile attitude of the TGWU to their members trying to defend their conditions can be seen by the statements of the National Automative Officer, Tony Woodley, in the Birmingham Evening Mail:

"People should not lose sight of the big picture. This agreement was voted in by over 72% of the workforce for the sake of the future of the whole company..."

"Make no mistake about it - we have got an agreement that is needed to secure the long term future of the company. That democratic decision will be honored."

### Longer hours

The "big picture" ignores the affect on workers' lives of longer hours, and unsociable shifts. The same goes for the whole of Rover: the workers at Cowley will soon be on a 41 hour working week, but only paid for 37. There is to be no wage rise in Rover over the next two years.

If the workers did not know what they were voting for when they were blackmailed into the deal, then they have a right to resist and look to resist the issue of banking hours.

Instead of being played off against each other by management, Rover and BMW workers should be brought together in order to plan a joint fightback against the company's "productivity" offensive.

**T**HE HONEYMOON is ending. After two years of seeming to walk on electoral water, Tony Blair and his team are getting increasingly damp, and showing themselves to be fallible.

Although the clearest warning sign came in Labour's feeble showing in what might be seen as a special one-off event – the European elections – it is not so easy to dismiss the wider implications.

Welsh leadership contender Rhodri Morgan is only one of those who have warned that the results reveal structural flaws in the New Labour project itself and its strategy of securing a majority by implementing conservative, right-wing policies to draw in middle class floating voters.

In the Euro-elections, Morgan pointed out, the turn-out in Labour's traditional "core" areas – the inner cities and council estates – was generally as low as 10 percent; in the more affluent areas, the turn out was 20 percent, while in the most prosperous Tory-voting areas the turn-out was closer to 30 percent.

Although there are obviously more people on the lower income scales, Morgan points out that Labour paid the price for mobilising too few of its core voters at a point where the Tories were having some success in reviving their support.

New Labour has offered too little to galvanise the enthusiasm of low-paid working class voters, warned Morgan: and though the demoralised and disappointed have so far largely rejected the option of voting for alternative left wing candidates, Labour would be in big trouble if these core voters decide at the next election not to vote at all.

The are not enough middle class votes to be won by New Labour to compensate for a drop in its heartland vote on the scale of recent local and European elections.

All of a sudden, with the shattered Tories beginning to reawaken and regroup, the previously unthinkable prospect of Blair – like the Wilson government of 1966, which lost to Ted Heath in 1970 – going from a large majority in one election to defeat at the next, has become a tangible danger.

Wilson's stumbling block was his determination to confront and shackle the trade unions, with the damaging attempt to impose Labour's own anti-union laws in 1969.

Interestingly among those participating in New Labour's post-mortem on the Euro Elections was TUC general secretary John Monks, himself an eager "moderniser" and advocate of "partnership" between unions and bosses.

**M**onks attacked New Labour leaders for seeming embarrassed by Labour's traditional supporters and what they believe, and warned that the Party cannot win without them.

"I always understood the new support was supposed to be in addition to Labour's traditional support. The worrying Euro-election result shows a real danger that some of it may now be at the expense of core support."

After the grovelling silence of the union bureaucracy had been broken from this unlikely quarter, one or two other union chiefs have nervously raised their heads above the parapet. John Edmonds of the

GMB plucked up courage to criticise the feeble £3/£3.60 level of the minimum wage, while still leaving room to argue that the problem was the "presentation" of policies.

But there is no sign that Tony Blair and his inner team of modernisers and spin doctors have any intention of changing course.

Blair's response to the electoral setback was to seek ways of bringing back the high priest of New Labour's electoral strategy, Peter Mandelson, and to insist to a docile meeting of Labour MPs that Blair himself and his cabinet remain "100 percent proof New Labour".

There is talk of a reshuffle to purge the few remaining ministers associated with "old Labour" values. The government's brutal attack on welfare rights for the disabled, for single parents and for refugees is to be stepped up by the arrogant Alistair Darling.

Within the party itself, the inexorable logic of New Labour dictates a fur-

ther-dismantling of the local party apparatus.

A secret internal report leaked to the *Independent* proposes scrapping both the membership fee – effectively obliterating the distinction between members of the party and members of the public – and abolishing the local CLP committees in order to reduce even further the influence of "activists". Instead there would be occasional meetings of members to discuss policy issues.

This suggestion – already implemented by one CLP in Enfield – raises a number of interesting questions. Of course, if the party works hard enough to do so, it can eventually drive away its remaining activists: but then who will do the work of getting out the vote, and who will organise it?

**T**he Blair project still has important factors helping it along. The utterly spineless composition of the Parliamentary Labour Party, dominated by careerist, apolitical Blairite droids with neither roots nor scruples, is his big asset: the cowardice of the union bureaucracy and low level of strikes and rank and file union activity another.

Blair will be pleased that the Tories remain discredited on the key issues where Labour has not stolen their policies: and the far left, with few exceptions, has failed to win electoral support.

But with New Labour's links with Murdoch and the press under strain, the Irish "peace" process on the edge of crisis, John Prescott's transport policies a sick joke, scandals brewing over GM food, and the full cost of the bombing of Serbia still to emerge, there is still scope for things to go horribly wrong for Blair.

His reforms have cut off the mechanism for democratic debate within the Party, neutered the Party conference, gagged the activists and surrounded himself with a cabal of sycophantic spin doctors.

So it is not clear whether he knows a wheel has come off his bandwagon, or has any idea of how to repair the damage.

And to win back Labour's core support means adopting radical policies which are anathema to Blair, Brown and the New Labour team.

Will any leading figure in the trade union or Labour movement have the courage to get up and fight on this platform?

● See centre pages

## EDITORIAL



Drumming up support – or drumming out supporters?

# Civil service union bureaucrats stitch up ballot

**Darren Williams, Branch Secretary, PCS ONS Newport (personal capacity)**

THE NATIONAL Executive Committee of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), which represents 250,000 mainly civil service workers, has recently announced the outcome of a crucial ballot of the union's membership.

The ballot-paper asked five questions: three on the union's constitution, and two on PCS campaigns against privatisation and the anti-union laws.

On all five, those members who voted (less than a third of those eligible) overwhelmingly supported the recommendations of the NEC, rejecting proposed changes to the running and policy of the union. So – is this an inspiring demonstration of democracy in action, and an convincing endorsement of the NEC's leadership?

Far from it. Not for the first time, PCS' national leadership have secured members' support by presenting their case in a deliberately misleading manner. In so doing, they have beaten off the latest attempts by activists to turn PCS into a democratic, fighting union.

## Lunatics in charge of the asylum

The latest developments are in keeping with the recent history of civil service trade unionism. The record, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, has not been an impressive one.

Key to this has been the bizarre approach of the political factions which have 'led' the major unions over this period (called the "Moderates" in CPSA and "Membership First" in NUCPS/PTC, in defiance of the Trades Descriptions Act).

Faced with the most anti-union, anti-public sector government in living memory, they quickly

decided that they wouldn't get anywhere by actually fighting the government's attacks on their members' interests and rights.

While they deplore those attacks in public, they also engage in a "constructive dialogue" with the very people looking to slash their members' jobs, pay and conditions.

They therefore concentrated their flak on those who argued for a different approach – particularly if this involved industrial action – characterising them as a sinister lunatic fringe, probably in the pay of the Kremlin.

While the Thatcher and Major Governments cut tens of thousands of civil service jobs, sold off whole departments, introduced performance-related pay and ended national collective bargaining on pay and conditions, they met no more than a show of resistance. Successive conferences condemned this and passed resolutions insisting that the unions take a real stand – so the leaderships simply ignored the resolutions.

Then the merger of CPSA and PTC gave the bureaucracy a chance to ensure, once and for all, that they could go on running things their way. They drew up the constitution of the new union in a way which gave them greater powers than ever before, at the expense of democracy for the members.

Conferences and NEC elections were to be held every two years instead of annually. Sovereignty was effectively transferred from conference to the NEC, which was given the power to make policy, provided that it then held a ballot of the membership to confirm its decisions.

The merger process itself gave a foretaste of the way this would work in practice. Having drawn up

*NUJ General Secretary John Foster and Employment Minister Andrew Smith MP were among the platform speakers at a debate on Fairness at Work which concluded a meeting in Oxford to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Pergamon Strike. Around 100 union activists past and present, including many of the original Pergamon 23 attended the June 6 "Maxwell Bash", held in the lavish mansion which the unlamented union-bashing tycoon rented at peppercorn rates from Oxford Council until his sudden demise.*

*After the meeting concluded, food was served, drinks were taken, and entertainment included stand-up comic Rob Newman and singer-songwriter Leon Rosselson.*



a rulebook which ignored conference decisions, the NEC then presented it to members in a completely misleading way; unsurprisingly they voted to accept it.

## Meet the new boss, same as the old boss

The first conference of the new union, in Brighton in November 1998, gave grounds for greater optimism than might have been expected.

The President, Peter Donellan – a member of the ex-PTC Membership First group – chaired in a refreshingly even-handed way, ironically causing pleasant surprise among his 'enemies' on the left but annoyance among many of his supposed allies.

Partly for this reason, conference managed to get a reasonable amount of business done, passing many worthwhile motions. Some aimed to restore the comparatively democratic practices of CPSA and PTC; others committed the union to serious campaigns on pay, jobs, privatisation, and a range of other issues.

Early post-conference circulars suggested that the NEC might even be serious about carrying out the resolutions.

Reports from NEC meetings also gave a certain amount of cause for optimism: although the new committee was packed with the same people who had run CPSA and PTC, differences between the Moderate and Membership First groups started to emerge, with the latter sometimes taking a slightly more honest and principled approach, successfully opposing some of the Moderates' more cynical manoeuvres.

The first real test of the new NEC has, however, been this ballot: a test which it has spectacularly failed, as the dominant factions have reverted to type.

Five motions passed by conference required the NEC to ballot members and to ask them to agree changes to the constitution and direction of the union, in an attempt to repair some of the damage done by the incumbent leadership.

Rather than carry out conference decisions in good faith, the NEC looked for a way to hijack the ballot and ensure that members allowed them to carry on as before.

## Ballots in Wonderland

Each of the resolutions passed by conference required the NEC to call for a 'yes' vote. It did this – but only by changing the questions to make it look as if the NEC was making a positive proposal, instead

# Boost needed for union rights campaign

**Neil Murray**

THE CONFERENCE of Reclaim Our Rights/United Campaign for the Repeal of the Anti-union Laws met in London on June 12, attended by about 60 delegates.

New affiliations from unions at national and local level are welcome (the latest national union to affiliate being MSF). So is winning the argument against the anti-union laws (even GMB conference is reported to have called for their repeal). But the campaign itself has been lacking in life.

Many regional committees of the campaign barely function, and the attempt to make May Day this year into a national demonstration in favour of trade union rights faltered. Partly this was due to competition with local May Day events and difficulties with the routine London May Day committee: but the campaign has been unable to mobilise people as well as getting resolutions passed. Yet the meeting was reluctant to acknowledge this latter problem.

While this is partly attributable to the extremely low level of trade union struggle, with the result that few workers come up against the laws in practice, it is also down to the way many of those involved see the campaign.

Winning affiliation is seen as sufficient to automatically

mobilise the membership rather than as a step along the way.

This confusion was shown by the rejection of an amendment to the constitution which would have allowed left formations within unions to affiliate, on the grounds that the campaign did not want to support 'factions' within the unions.

While this is not the biggest issue facing the campaign it does show a reluctance to recognise the sloth of union leaderships even when they support something on paper.

An additional problem is that much of the left will not get involved in Reclaim Our Rights because they see it as an SLP campaign. While many (by no means all) of the leading figures are SLP members, this becomes self-fulfilling if others stay out.

The conference heard several good speeches, including from John Foster, General Secretary of the NUJ about the difficulties of organising in the media and Shirley Winter of the Magnet Wives Support Group, reflecting both the problems facing the movement and ways of fighting back.

On the basis of a statement from the committee and a resolution from Waterloo RMT the conference also attempted to address the future of the campaign. The test will be if they can be put into practice.

of simply opposing initiatives which had been democratically agreed at conference.

Thus, instead of asking "Do you agree with conference resolution A560, that PCS should campaign for the repeal of laws which curtail the rights of union members?", the ballot-paper asked the bizarre question, "Do you support your NEC's recommendation to keep members' rights under existing trade-union laws, and therefore to reject conference resolution A560?"

By asking leading questions like this – and by abusing the union's resources to bombard members with propaganda, in the form of letters "reminding" members to vote, etc. – the NEC has achieved its objective of ensuring that it continue to do the bare minimum to defend members' interests, without worrying about any come-backs.

The link between constitutional issues and day-to-day concerns

about jobs, pay and conditions need to be made clear by the left. Without a democratic structure to ensure that they act in members' interests, the NEC cannot be relied upon to fight for anything other than its own power and privilege.

Activists have a responsibility to rebuild a culture of participatory democracy in the union, with members making informed decisions after collective discussion, instead of voting in isolation on the basis of the NEC's mendacious circulars.

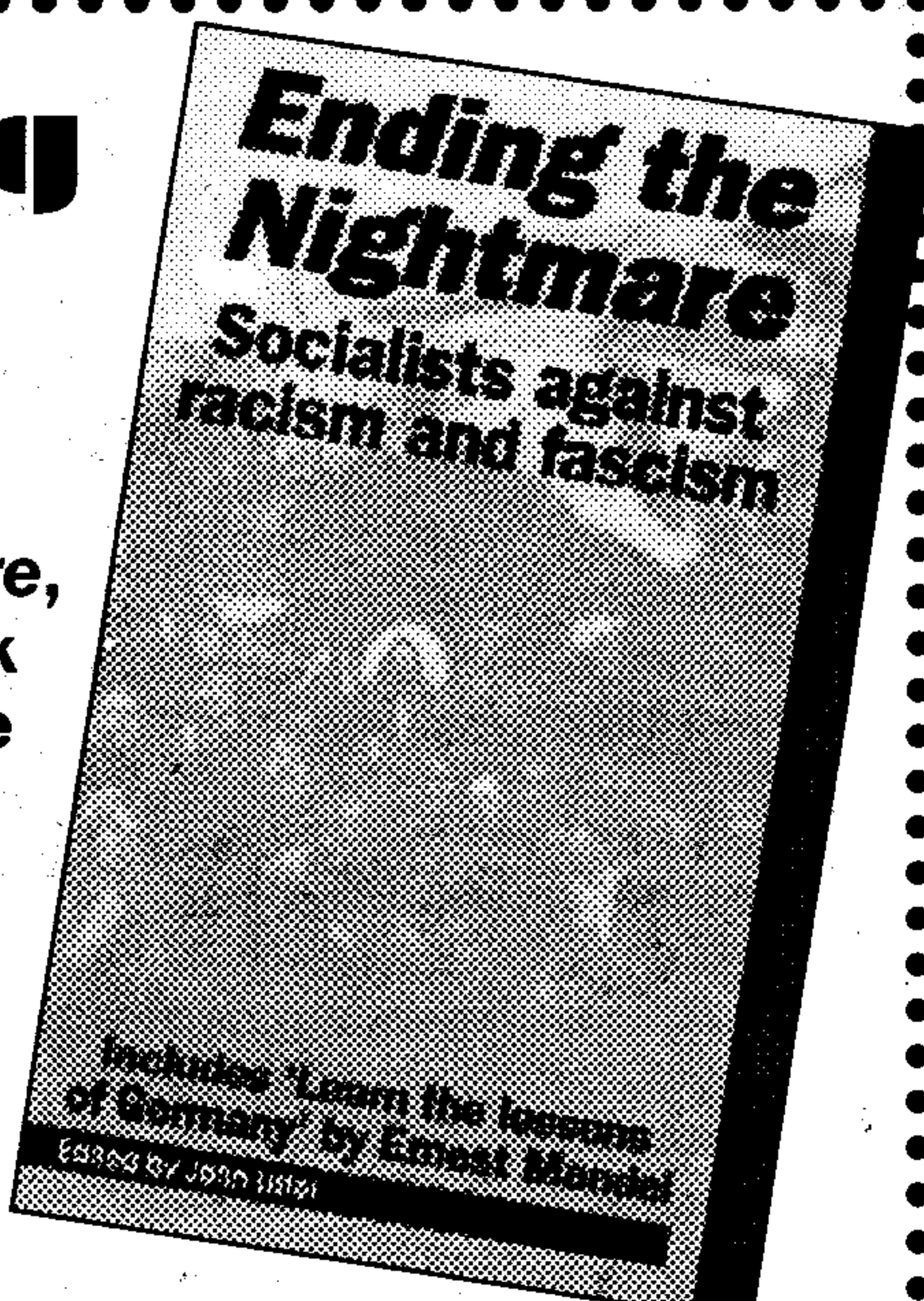
The current right-wing leadership have demonstrated that they can't be trusted to defend members' interests – or even to carry out conference decisions.

PCS members who recognise the need for a change in direction will have to mobilise to secure the election of an alternative leadership – in the form of the Left Unity slate – in the national elections, next year.

# Fighting the far right

**Ending the Nightmare, the Socialist Outlook book on the struggle against racism and fascism – the lessons of history**

£5 including postage from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1102, London N4 2UU



# Left revolt stems offensive by UNISON right wing

**Fred Leplat, Islington UNISON (personal capacity)**  
**DISILLUSION** with the Labour government was the dominant mood at UNISON conference in Brighton.

Fifteen hundred delegates representing 1.3 million public sector workers gave only a polite reception to government minister Mo Mowlam when she addressed conference. For her part she made little attempt to defend the government's record, instead spent time telling amusing personal anecdotes.

UNISON leaders were prepared to reflect this mood in their rhetoric.

NEC member Jean Geldhart, opened the local government sector conference by saying "we have a government prepared to subordinate the needs of public services and their users to a market economy. We expect them to deliver what many of us campaigned for 2 years ago."

In the main conference debate on privatisation, General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe repeated an often used expression during the week when he said that "if millions could be found at the drop of a hat for that war (in the Balkans), then millions could be found at the drop of a hat for the war on poverty and unemployment".

Despite left words the only concession by the platform in terms of action was to support another national demonstration early next year for a decent minimum wage. The national demonstration in Newcastle on the 10 April had attracted 20,000 people and the bureaucracy could hardly be seen to drop the Campaign for a Living

Wage so soon after this success.

However, on other issues which affected members, such as privatisation and the anti-union laws, the leadership steered the conference to prevent it adopting policies which might lead to conflict with the government.

The NEC supported co-operation with Best Value, and opposed an amendment which simply described as worse than the Tories' Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Delegates knew better, and on a card vote the amendment was carried.

In the debate against privatisation in education, the NEC introduced an amendment to omit Education Action Zones from a list of forms of privatisation. Again, delegates knew better and defeated this amendment.

Although the NEC and Rodney Bickerstaffe declared their support for individual branches such as Sefton taking action to protect jobs and conditions, it avoided supporting national campaigns against privatisation and other government attacks.

The NEC also stopped debate of resolutions on the anti-union laws, hiding behind lawyers' views that even to discuss campaigning against such laws may be illegal.

Conference also upheld policy on the only other area of difference UNISON has established with the government, its opposition to the Maastricht convergence criteria and joining the Single Currency. UNISON was the only national union to back the recent Euro-marches demonstration in Cologne.

The disaffection of delegates with the New Labour government also influenced the major recurring

theme of recent UNISON conferences: the defence of union democracy and opposition to the witch-hunt against left activists.

The first test (and first card vote) was delegates voting for the reference back of the Standing Orders Committee Report ruling out of order emergency resolutions demanding the re-instatement of the suspended Birmingham branch. Unfortunately, the Standing Orders Committee came back reaffirming their position and this second report was carried narrowly by delegates.

However, concern amongst delegates against attacks on democracy was so widespread that 400 of them attended a fringe meeting on the issue. It was addressed by London convenor Geoff Martin, as well as members from Sheffield, Birmingham, Liverpool and Leeds, where disciplinary actions against left activists are taking place.

This large meeting (a third of conference) was able in turn to convince enough delegates to stop new disciplinary rules being introduced.

Conference also voted against the introduction of a £25 fee for branch observers. This was seen as a means to prevent branch activists from attending conference, and the NEC speaker on the issue confirmed this by implying this would make it too expensive for SWP supporters in UNISON to attend!

The NEC were nevertheless able to obtain a subs increase despite the left making it known to delegates that UNISON officials have probably one of the best redundancy schemes on offer anywhere: six months pay, plus one month for every year of service and statutory redundancy pay.

Conference was however able to stop the closure of the union's convalescence homes.

The broad left in UNISON, the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON, organised a large meeting of 160 delegates on Single Status.

At the meeting, branches recognised that the warnings of the CFDU that Single Status was being used to attack conditions had come true. The CFDU also helped organise a meeting on Kosova and the large meeting on democracy.

## Cooperation

There was a greater degree of co-operation between sections of the left at this conference. Many independent left activists and the CFDU were discussing the need for a wider broad left than the CFDU.

Over the coming months, it will be necessary to work together to defend union democracy and oppose the witch-hunts, to develop a fighting strategy against the privatisations through Best Value and PFI, and to co-operate in elections for regional and national bodies.

This co-operation may well build the trust necessary to create a new organization of the left in UNISON, which will have the credibility and weight to seriously challenge the NEC's collapse in front of the government's attacks.

CFDU c/o 37 Linale House, Murray Grove, London, N12 7QH



UNISON's April 10 demonstration for a Living Wage: if bureaucrats had their way, the "campaign" would have ended there.

## RMT witch-hunt deepens

# Kangaroo court attacks leading left winger

THE CAMPAIGN to halt the privatisation of London's tube system is not helped by the deepening witch-hunt inside the rail union RMT.

This is aimed at the Left in general, and Pat Sikorski, key Secretary of the London Underground Regional Council, in particular.

Standing in the Assistant General Secretary elections, Pat got 45% of the vote against the right wing incumbent Vernon Hince.

In response the Executive have proposed that Pat be "suspended from holding any office in the Union for five years - implementation to be suspended for a three year period".

In addition he is to be denied any union benefit for six months. This is a clear green light for LUL management to attack Pat, as they have done in the past.

Ostensibly Pat's "crime" was to distribute unofficial election material. But in practice his real crime, apart from giving Hince a close call, was to expose the fact that the election was being organised in breach of Union rules, and to have forced it to be re-run properly. It is a blatant case of "shooting the messenger".

There was a travesty of an "investigation", which included a questionnaire to all RMT branches asking loaded questions about any contacts with Pat (all this taking place during the election itself and clearly designed to discourage support for him).

After this the Executive decided to punish Pat without any hearing - giving him no notice of charges, no interview or right to

make representation, no notification of sentence or right of appeal.

The fact that this process was supported by members of the Socialist Labour Party (Pat's own party) on the Executive only makes the matter worse.

In addition it is also proposed to give the Executive the right to remove from elections any future candidate deemed to be "in breach of Rule".

This would give the Union leadership unwarranted powers to interfere in the electoral process to safeguard "their" candidates or settle personal grudges against anyone whose face did not fit.

The witch-hunt has provoked deep concern across the RMT. As we go to press the RMT AGM (annual conference) is just starting.

Delegates will have a chance to call a halt to this particular attack. But whatever happens at the AGM, RMT members will need to organise, more than ever before, to ensure the rightward drift in the union is brought to an end.

For many years, key figures on the Left have argued against building a rank and file movement inside the RMT. Their arguments are looking increasingly thin.

Whilst it is necessary to be sensitive to the historical organisation of the union and also to avoid getting caught up in sterile arcane theoretical debate, it is clear that a new rank and file movement does need to be built.

# Trade Unions for Kosova

**Elkie Dee**

TRADE UNION activists in this country have launched a campaign to give practical support to trade unions and trade unionists in Kosova.

The aims of the Trade Unions for Kosova campaign, discussed at an initial meeting in May, are to:

- maintain contact with and respond to requests for assistance from trade unions and trade unionists in Kosova
- assist the Kosovar trade unions and trade unionists in sustaining their work in refugee camps and amongst their people in temporary exile
- support Kosovar trade unions and trade unionists in rebuilding their organisations and the social infrastructure of their country
- publicise human rights abuses and war crimes committed in ex-Yugoslavia
- develop where possible contacts with trade unions and trade unionists in Serbia, Montenegro and throughout ex-Yugoslavia on the basis of opposition to ethnic cleansing and the promotion of working class solidarity
- campaign in the British trade unions and labour movement, and where possible internationally, for

the recognition of the right of the Kosovan people to self-determination

Campaigners organised a successful fringe meeting at UNISON conference. Harude Latifi, an activist in the Journalists' Union in Kosova, spoke to delegates about her experiences in Kosova as one of a group who tried to continue the near impossible task of producing an Albanian-language daily newspaper in constant danger.

The campaign has collected £3,500 in donations to send to the Education Workers Union in Kosova, and is now trying to re-establish contact with other unions such as the Miners' Union.

Clearly, after the war and the bombings, Kosovan trade unionists still need help to get up and running again, and to give their members financial and other assistance as refugees return.

● Contact the campaign, invite speakers to union meetings and send donations (make cheques payable to Trade Unions for Kosova) and messages of support to Trade Unions for Kosova c/o Camden UNISON, 59 Brill Place, Phoenix Road, London NW1.

**Rank & File Transport Workers**

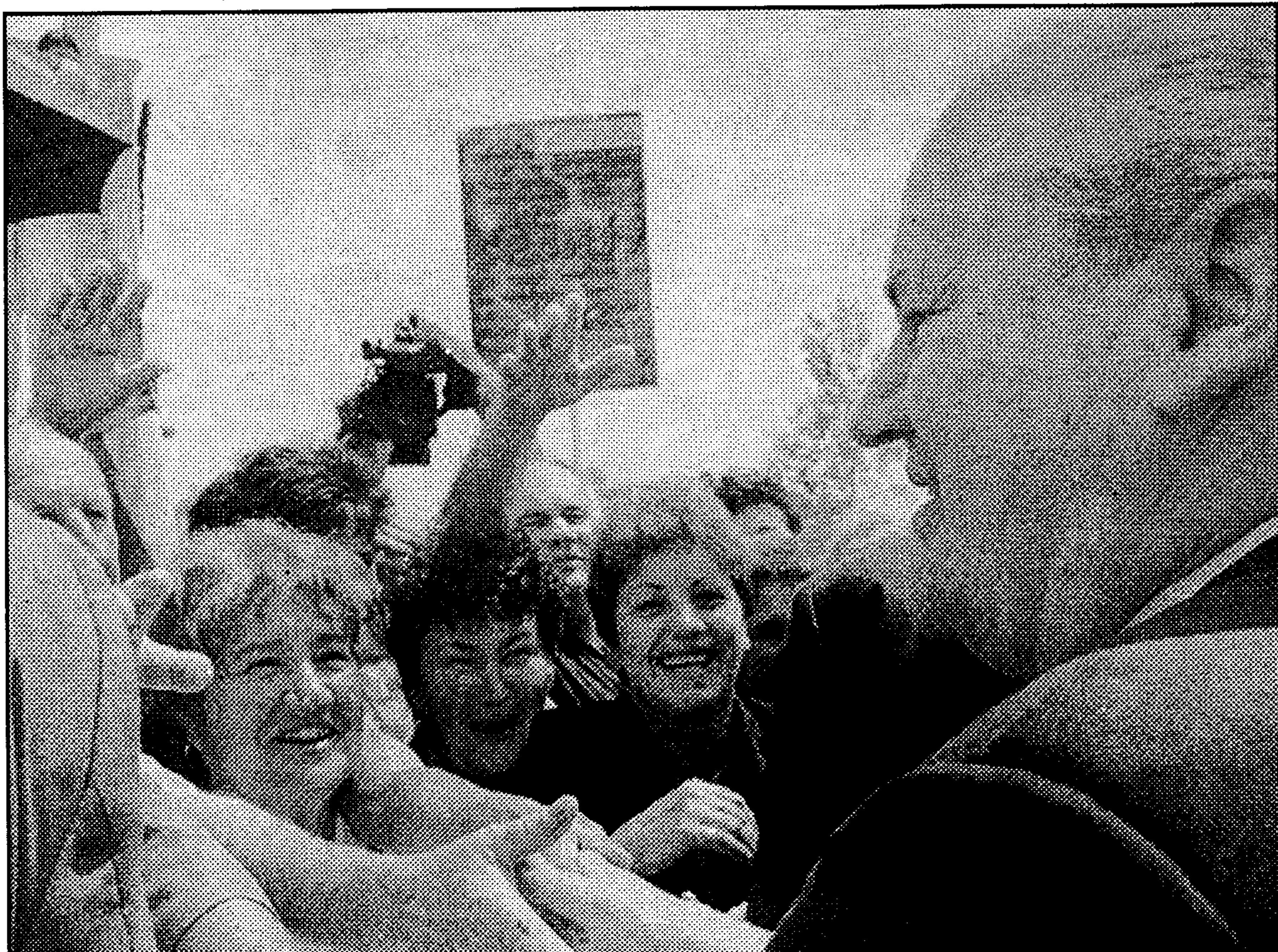
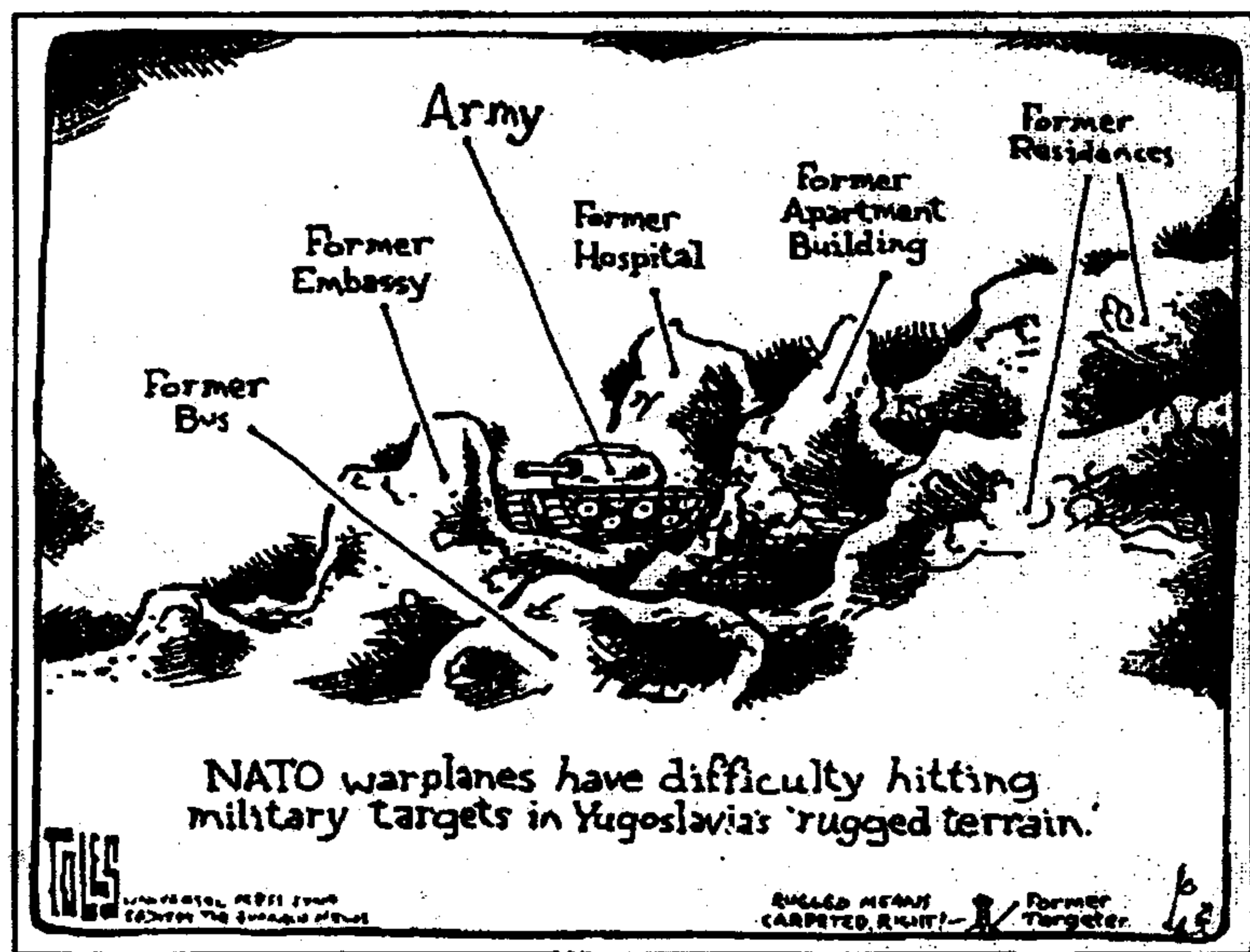
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Serbian workers are left with a shattered country – and still stuck with Milosevic, while Kosova still lacks independence



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# SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

THANKS to all those who have responded to our Appeal Fund in issue 25: your donations have helped us restore this issue to 20 pages.

If you have not yet got around to posting off that cheque, please do so as soon as possible (for as much as possible!) so that we can finalise plans to sustain the 20 pages in a new, improved and redesigned *Socialist Outlook* when we return to regular monthly publication after the summer break.

The next (September) issue of *Socialist Outlook* will be produced on the weekend of August 21-22, and any letters or feature articles for publication in that issue should be sent to us by August 16 at PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU, or (preferably) by email to [outlook@gn.apc.org](mailto:outlook@gn.apc.org).

# “Victory” in Kosova: but who really wins after NATO blitz?

NATO never expected that the war in the Balkans would last more than a few days. A quick display of US air power would bring Milosevic to heel and force him to accept the Rambouillet “agreement”, they thought. But it did not work out that way.

Within weeks they had more than trebled the number of aircraft originally deployed (from 300 to 1100). After seven weeks of the most intense bombing the world has ever seen, they got a deal which they could probably have got at Rambouillet.

Those talks broke down over Western insistence on two conditions which were virtually impossible for Milosevic to accept: that NATO should have free run of not just Kosova but all Serbia, and that there would be referendum on independence for Kosova after three years. (These conditions were now dropped. But although the KLA would still be disarmed the whole of the Serb military and police would have to leave Kosova).

By the end of the bombing the economic and social infrastruc-

ture of Serbia (including Kosova and to a lesser extent Montenegro) was smashed up, the region destabilised, and nearly a million Kosovans driven out in an orgy of ethnic cleansing the intensity of which would not have been possible if the bombing had not taken place.

A war which was launched ostensibly to stop the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovars, which had been on the increase in recent months ostensibly in an offensive against the KLA, escalated it many times over. Instead of the grizzly 240,000 of the previous two years over a million people were displaced (internally and externally) in the course of a few weeks. Ethnic tension which had been deliberately fostered since the rise of Serb nationalism 10 years previously, intensified massively as the first bombs fell.

Once the war started the ethnic Albanians were a vulnerable minority who were held responsible for it and persecuted as a result. If a policy could be devised which would ensure that ethnic tensions were driven as deep as possible, such bombing was it.

Many of the massacres now

being discovered in the aftermath of the war were committed in the backlash which took place in the days following the start of the bombing.

This does not at all excuse them – they are brutal crimes against humanity – but it does put them in context. Milosevic was not about to miss the opportunity nor were the various Serb nationalist and fascist paramilitaries who arrived on the scene to vent their racist hatred.

But it was not just them. The bombing whipped up hostility between Serb and Albanian communities which had been living together for generations many of them right up until the bombing started. Now it is hard to see how they can live together in the short term without some serious safeguards in place.

The 19 NATO governments held together, with some divisions and difficulties, in order to carry out an extraordinary (NATO) casualty-less war, conducted from 15,000 feet up.

But there was never an agreement reached on the ground invasion being advocated by Tony Blair and new Labour in Britain.



KLA marching in to Pristina - only to be disarmed by NATO

Clinton always ruled this out, as did a number of the European members of NATO. A bombing war was the only tactical approach open to them and they conducted it to the full, increasingly smashing up the economy of Serbia.

**T**he results are shown in the casualty figures. NATO zero. Serbian soldiers maybe four or five thousand. Serb civilians over two thousand dead, many more wounded.

Certainly tens of thousands of Kosovars dead, maybe many more. To this must be added the refugees, tens of thousands internally displaced and 80,000 driven out of the country.

Many of these may never go back, despite the current rush, if only because there is not much to go back to. Others will be driven back into intolerable conditions to escape the conditions in the camps.

Then there are the casualties which will follow the war, from the residue of uranium-tipped shells and unexploded bombs and land mines to health problems caused by pollution and damage to the infrastructure.

Much of this is the responsibility of Milosevic, of course (about 3000 had been killed in Kosova before the bombing), but NATO created the best conditions for an escalation of his slaughter.

Not that creating this kind of mayhem gives NATO and US imperialism, which provided most of the hardware and resources for the war, any less of a victory. Or at least not much less.

The war may not have been planned, but it fitted into the general geo-political aims of US imperialism. NATO needed a new role after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the USA needed to reinforce its global hegemony as well as its role in Europe and in the region. These goals have now been achieved in a way which exceeds their expectations.

NATO has been reborn with a new authority and US imperialism and its main supporters like

new Labour in Britain have been strengthened. Sections of public opinion, particularly in Western countries, have been further desensitised to this kind of action.

Bombing people - particularly with zero casualties for those doing the bombing - is now more publicly acceptable and easy to carry out in the future. At the same time the anti-war movement was marginalised and the left who opposed the war defeated.

The war caused tensions within the EU, although in the end there was no breaking of ranks. The war gave a new impetus to the drive for a common defence policy and common military capacity in order to be able to conduct wars without such reliance of US hardware, but the problem is too big to be tackled with the current EU financial structures.

Fortress Europe held the line against the mass of Kosovan refugees. The policy of keeping them in tents to ensure that they went back when the time came was successful.

**F**rom the point of view of the Serbian people the war has been an unmitigated disaster. Not only has the country been bombed to pieces but Milosevic is still in power. The bombing drew most of the Serbian opposition, many of whom are nationalist anyway, towards Milosevic. How soon the

defeat will now undermine Milosevic's position is very hard to say, although eventually it may well do so.

Currently, as NATO forces deploy across Kosova, the Serbian and Roma populations are being driven out, their property destroyed, and dozens of them killed. We condemn this unequivocally.

A multi-ethnic society has to be defended in Kosova and the urge to blame all Serbs for the actions of the army and the paramilitaries strongly opposed.

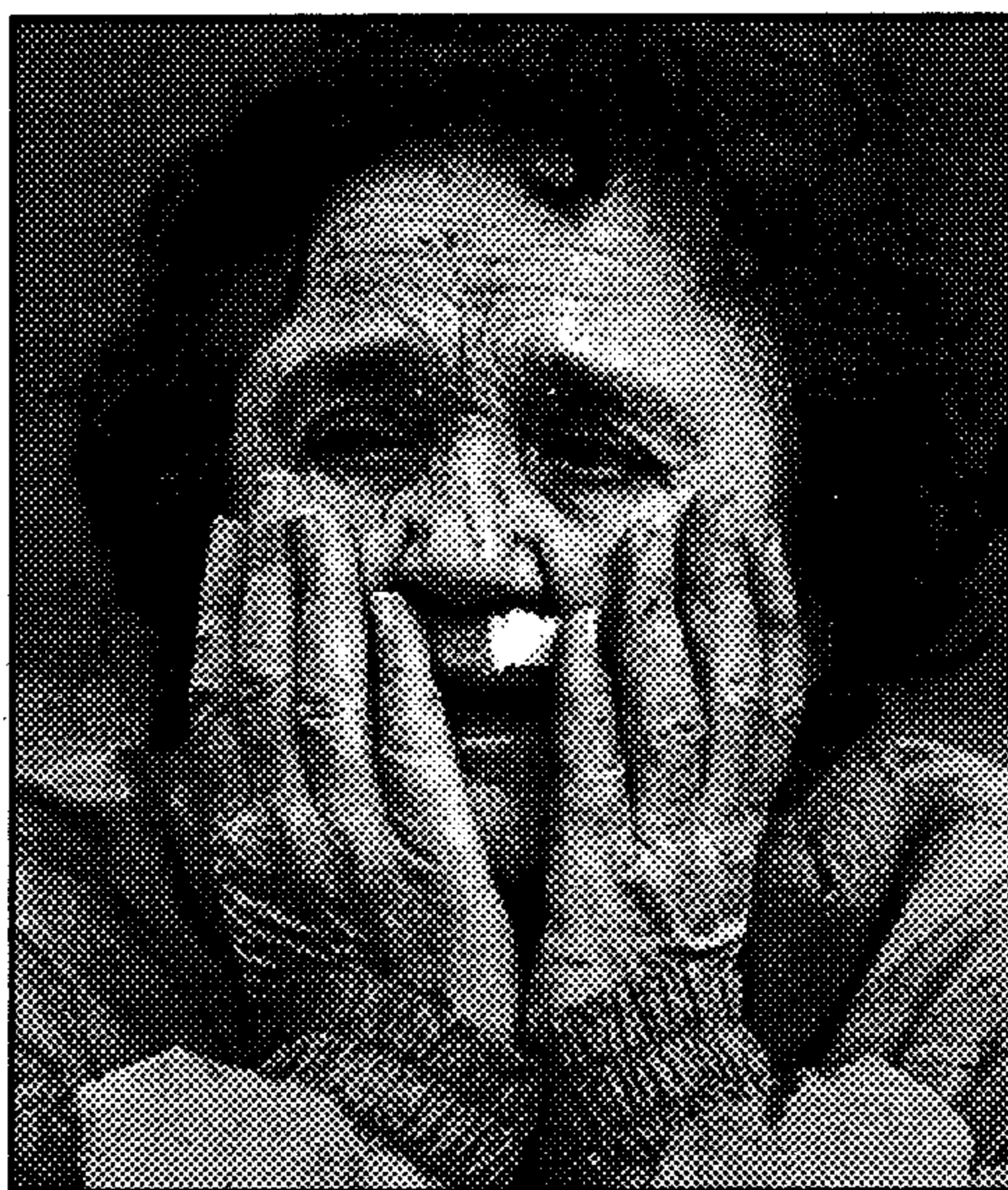
It is true that NATO has exacerbated the problem and certainly has no solution. At least initially (until it became politically indefensible) NATO was in favour of



The damage done by exploding bombs and missiles is now compounded by unexploded bombs, pollution and radioactivity

all Serbs leaving Kosova - which would be ethnic cleansing. This was reflected in their demand that all Serb reservists leave with the Serb army, which means all men between 18 and 50.

As for the future of the region we now have the reconstruction plan, or new Marshall Plan as it is being called (war reparations as it should be called).



Thousands of Serb civilians have died, with unknown numbers injured.

Despite the huge figures being banded around, much of it is promises which may or may not be kept. In any case there are deep divisions over the implementation of the plan, not least over whether Serbia should be included in it whilst Milosevic is still in power.

Even if this resulted in the removal of Milosevic as an individual, it will not undermine the power of Serb nationalism - it is more likely to increase it. At the same time it is hard to see how the infrastructure of the region can be rebuilt without rebuilding sections of the Serbian infrastructure on which others depend.

**I**n Britain the antiwar movement failed to make any impact on the situation both because of the success of government and NATO propaganda about a "just war", and because it was politically focused towards Serb nationalism.

Those leading it saw Serbia as the last bastion of socialism in the Balkans and refused to give any profile to either the ethnic cleansing of Milosevic or the national rights of the Kosovans. The biggest far left organisation

within it, the SWP, collapsed into this position.

The campaign against NATO, though correct in itself, was used to subordinate the rights of the Kosovans which, at best were relegated to a subordinate position.

With the inevitable discovery of mass graves on a grand scale since the end of the war it is time for those who denied or played down

the ethnic cleansing and atrocities by Serb forces to put the record straight and admit they were wrong. The experience of Srebrenica and the Bosnian war should have been enough to show them what the Serb army and the Serb paramilitaries were capable of doing.

Others on the left went in a completely different direction. Ken Livingstone and others supported the bombing, whilst the AWL, stopping short of that, were ambiguous (even neutral) on the role of NATO and held the view (for example) that once the bombing

had started it would have been a disaster for the Kosovans if it "had stopped after the first few days". They deny that US imperialism had any strategic interest in the war at all.

*Socialist Outlook*, throughout the war, opposed both the NATO intervention and the oppression of the Kosovans by Milosevic. We were for getting NATO out of the Balkans and Milosevic out of Kosova.

We fully supported the right of the Kosovans to determine their own future including the right to

an independent state. We were for the defeat of the NATO military intervention and for the defeat of Milosevic in his war against Kosova. And we were for the arming of the KLA, with all its political problems, as the means by which the Kosovans could pursue their own future.

We recognised that the KLA was created as a response to the ethnic cleansing of Milosevic, and to defend the Kosovan Albanians against it.

**S**o what is the future of Kosova? If there was never an easy road to Kosovan independence, there is certainly not one now. Kosova is now a UN/NATO protectorate - and as such is to remain a part of Serbia.

Hostility between the different communities has been massively compounded by the bombing. The KLA is being disarmed by NATO.

Yet their remains no solution other than self determination for the Kosovan people, with full rights for minorities, if they choose an independent state.

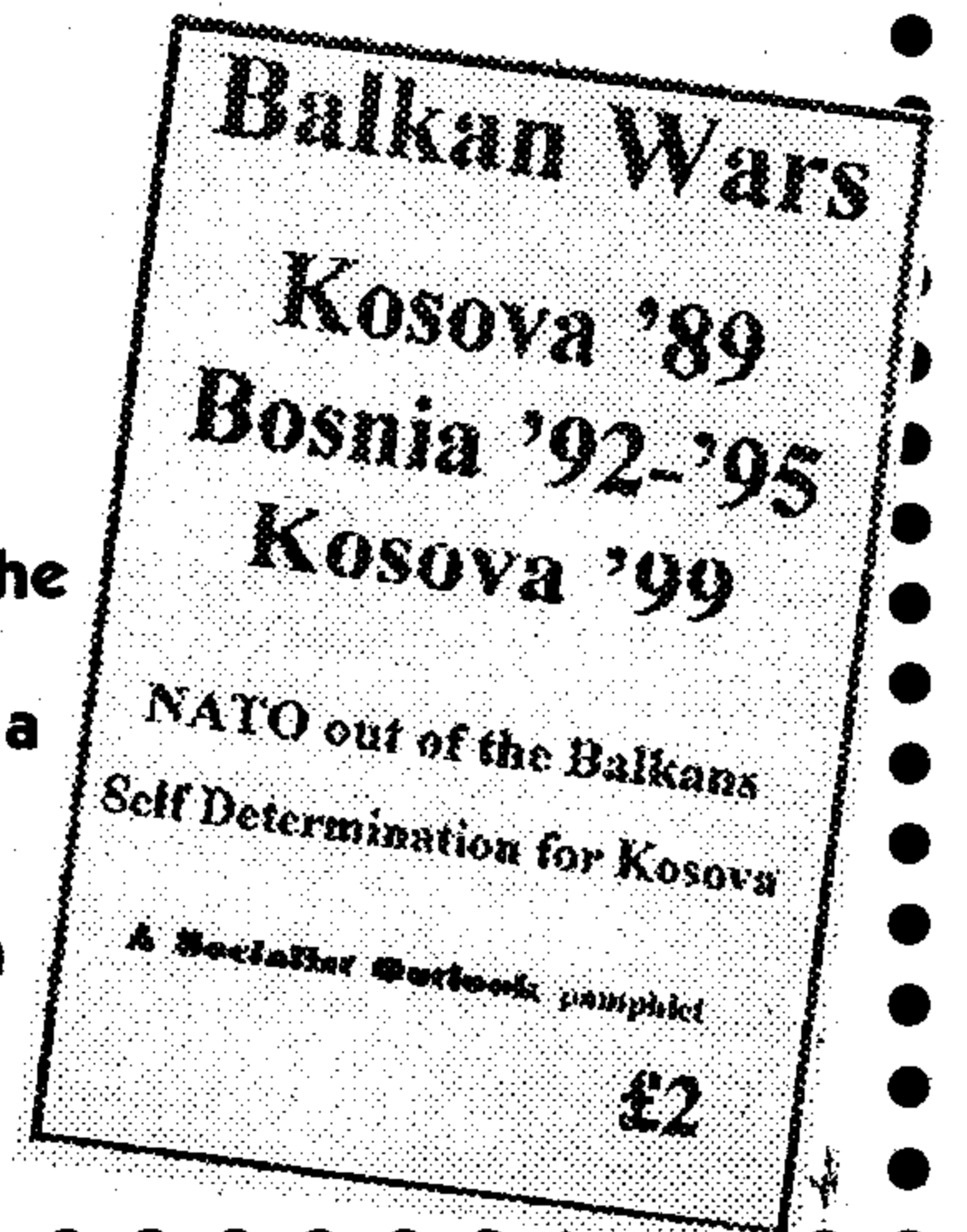
The compromise agreement with Milosevic is not a solution, it is a means of preventing a political solution. It leaves the key political problem - the denial of national rights - completely unresolved.

There is no other solution in the region as a whole. Bosnia under Dayton remains a NATO protectorate in the way that Kosova is becoming a protectorate.

The starting point for a political solution in the Balkans is the right of all the peoples of the region to determine their own future, free from outside interference.

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# Labour strengthens state racism

**Simon Deville**

ANYONE not yet convinced of the racism and hypocrisy of the parliamentary Labour Party need only look at the despicable role it has played over immigration and asylum legislation over the last few years.

In 1996 when the Tories introduced the Asylum and Immigration Bill, many Labour MPs actively campaigned against those racist laws. Even at that time, however, the Labour leadership refused to condemn the bill outright, hiding behind some weasel formulation of opposing the "racist aspects of the bill".

Labour did make two pre-election pledges: that it would remove the requirement for employers to carry out immigration checks on their employees,

and that it would restore benefits to all asylum seekers if it could be shown that the cashless system was more expensive. Having conceded that the voucher system is more expensive, Labour has subsequently reneged on both counts.

The timing of the current legislation's passage through parliament seems as if it were planned to highlight the racist hypocrisy of the Labour leadership. The second reading of the bill went through parliament without a single Labour MP voting against, just as the MacPherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence was published.

Tory and Labour leaders all denounced the "institutional racism" that the MacPherson report acknowledged, whilst

arguing for a strengthening of Britain's racist immigration laws, and for increased powers to lock up and harass those fleeing persecution.

The third reading of the bill went through on the eve of a war that Blair and co have claimed was in defence of those facing persecution and ethnic cleansing. It is clear that the labour leadership have been prepared to spend billions of pounds bombing Serbian civilians, but are not prepared to spend a fraction of that in offering those fleeing persecution a degree of dignity when they arrive in Britain.

Milosevic closed down all the Albanian language schools in Kosova in 1989. The home office response has been to lock up Kosovan children in detention centres on the basis that they must be lying about coming from Kosova as they couldn't name the school they attended!

Although the threatened rebellion of some MPs forced Jack Straw to make some minor concessions, the Bill as it stands is still an appalling piece of racist legislation that is far worse than the Tories thought they could get away with just three years ago.

All asylum seekers will be forced to live wherever the government tells them to, regardless of what support structures exist on a local level: in fact the legislation specifically states that an asylum seeker's preference must not be taken into account when deciding where they will live.

Anyone who has tried to live on the meagre level that state benefits offer will realise that it is not enough to live on. Asylum seekers are to be offered a package that is equivalent to a measly 70% of benefit levels, and even then most of that is in the form of vouchers.

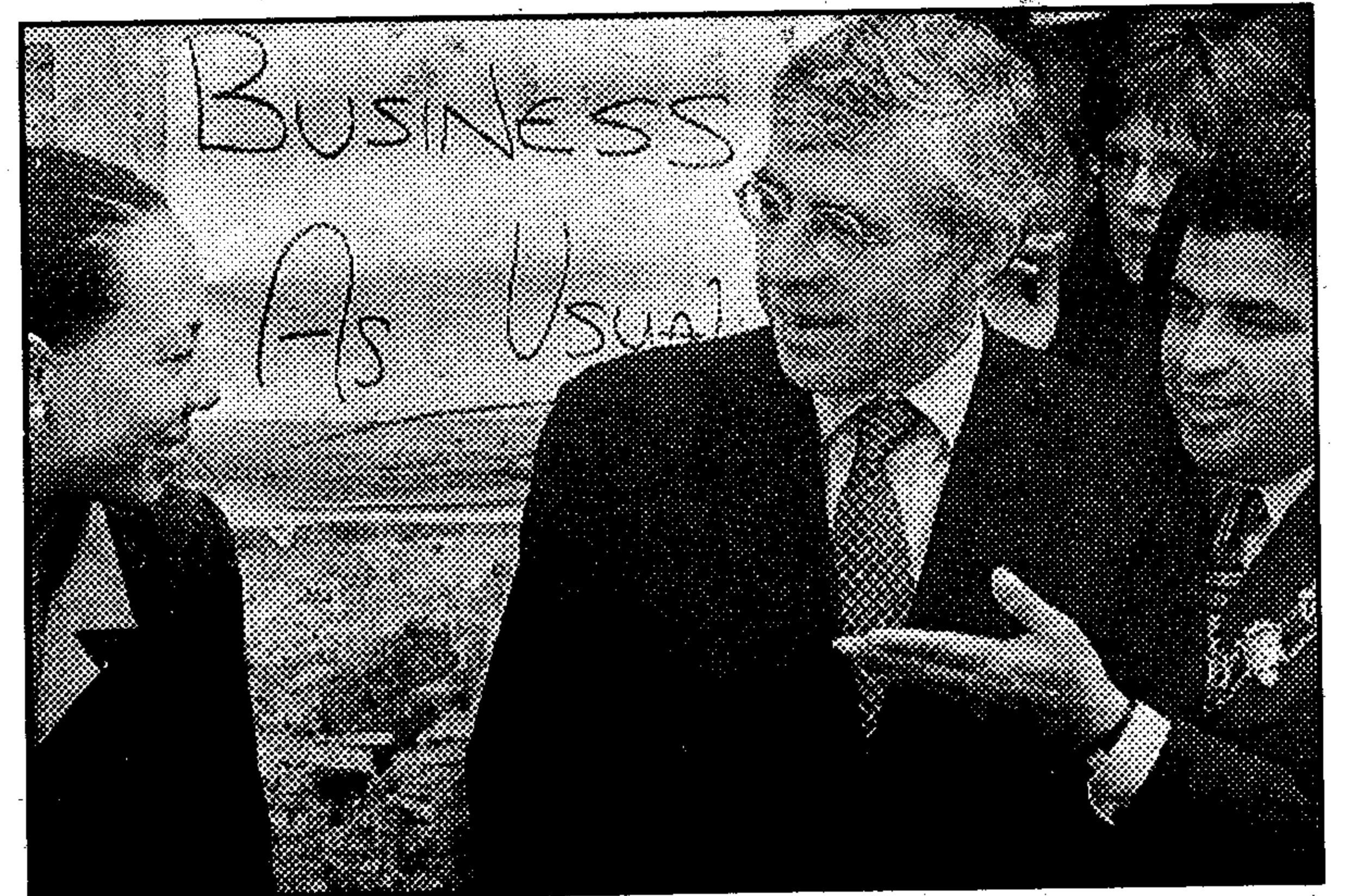
Whilst the government has claimed that there will be a fairer, more streamlined process in which cases are dealt with quickly, this is in fact a further attack on asylum rights, with a more limited appeals procedure and less time given for asylum seekers to obtain necessary documentation for their case.

As if this wasn't enough, Immigration Officers are to be given police powers to monitor, harass and arrest asylum seekers, without even the limited accountability that exists with the Police Complaints Authority.

There are two worrying aspects of the current legislation.

Firstly, this is not simply an attack from the Blair government, but is part of a concerted effort on the part of all EU governments to create a common framework of racist legislation based on the worst aspects of each individual member state.

The second aspect is the absolutely abysmal level of opposition to the current legislation. The fact that only seven Labour MPs voted against the bill at its third reading isn't simply a matter of



*The Tories set the pace: but Straw is equally keen to get tough on asylum seekers*

having the wrong individuals in parliament. It also reflects the lack of pressure that the rest of parliament feels it is under to oppose these laws.

On one level, anti-racism has been given an enormous boost over the last year with the inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. This has not, however, translated to a mass anti-racist movement that can challenge racism on all levels.

Nor have demands for Immigra-

tion and Asylum rights yet reached the mainstream of the anti-racist movement. These weaknesses can assist anti racists in pointing out how we can start to build an effective anti-racist movement:— one that aims to mobilise all anti-racists, one that sees immigration and asylum rights as central to its programme, and that builds beyond national boundaries, and that makes links throughout Europe and beyond.

## Straw's feeble bill would strengthen state secrecy

AFTER THE Asylum Bill, Jack Straw's latest draft legislation, on Freedom of Information, looks like being the next example of donning Tory clothes.

In opposition and in the white paper, 'Your Right to Know', Labour promised to open up Britain's secret world of decision-making. From being one of the countries with the least transparent state machinery, Britain was going to be at the forefront of opening up to scrutiny.

Yet Straw's draft bill reverses all this. While it does open up new areas to transparency, it includes a wide range of exemptions — up from seven in the white paper to 21 in the draft bill — and allows public authorities which have a discretion to withhold information to do so without challenge.

Instead of the bodies concerned having to show that release of information could cause "substantial harm", they can merely decide to restrict access.

Release of information can take up to 40 days, those seeking information can be asked for their reasons and can be asked to keep secret what information they are given.

An indication of how little would change under Straw's proposals is shown by the fact that the 'change of policy' which the Tories made in order to sell arms to Iraq would be just as difficult to uncover as it was under Thatcher.

While the bill opens up new information to the public on education, health authorities, the

prison service and the administration of the police and provides for public authorities to be held in contempt of court if they refuse to cooperate, the list of exemptions rather undermines the effect of this.

The 21 exemptions include national security; defence; policy advice; international relations; relations between the parliaments and assemblies of the United Kingdom; the economy; police investigations; court records; commercial information and information provided to the government in confidence.

### Hostility

Straw, having fought tooth and nail in Cabinet to secure the watering down of the proposals and secured the sacking of David Clark, the minister responsible for the original white paper, has found his bill met by universal hostility by a whole range of organisations concerned with public information.

He has begun to make noises about concessions, but like on the asylum bill these are more likely to be about defusing parliamentary opposition than changing the substance of the bill.

Freedom of Information is important to all those who want to hold the activities of those who rule over us up to the light of day.

The left must support moves to stop Straw in his tracks and amend the bill to lift the shroud of state secrecy.

■ **Labour's secretive record in government — page 18**

## We are not criminals - we are victims!

**Susan Moore**

THE REALITY facing asylum seekers — even before the draconian measures in the new legislation come into force — has been highlighted yet again by detainees at Campsfield detention centre, Oxfordshire.

Protests by those held at the centre have been a regular feature of campaigning against immigration detentions over the last several years and have also found echoes in other centres such as Rochester.

While the early protests did receive a fair amount of national media coverage this has become harder to obtain since Labour's election victory. Refugees in Kosova are news — those imprisoned by Labour's immigration regime are not.

Detainees at Campsfield staged an eight-day hunger strike against the Asylum Bill which ended on June 15.

The largest group of strikers were Algerian, while most of the rest were from Eastern Europe. There were three suicide attempts during the protest — one by hanging and two by the cutting of wrists — a graphic illustration of the desperation of those imprisoned for the "crime" of seeking refuge in this supposedly civilised society.

"We are not criminals — we are the victims! Why are we treated like animals?" asks an appeal signed by 18 detainees.

One of the last hunger strikers, a Pole, was deported as the hunger strike came to an end. There was better news when two Eastern European refugees managed to escape the Group Four-run camp.

This was welcomed at June's monthly demonstration by supporters of the detainees which assembles outside the jail. Protesters also saluted the hunger strikers.



*An earlier protest by Campsfield detainees led to a frame-up trial in Oxford*



# Swedish peace activists freed

## Fisher Gate

THREE Swedish peace activists were released on bail after a jury at Preston Crown Court failed to convict them of conspiring to cause criminal damage to a submarine carrying Trident nuclear missiles.

The three - Annika Spalde, Ann-Britt Sternfeldt and Stellan Vinthagen - had entered the VSEL submarine base in Barrow in September 1998 with the intention of 'disarming' Trident missiles.

They were imprisoned for nearly eight months undergoing the two week trial in May. But in a sensational decision and after being heavily directed by the Judge about the 'legality' of weapons of mass destruction, the Preston Jury were unable to agree a majority verdict and the three were freed face a retrial in the autumn.

The three protesters were members of the international 'Swords into Ploughshares' movement which believes in non-violent direct action against war under the slogan 'Bread not Bombs'.

During their trial dozens of supporters from all over the world converged on Preston - travelling from Sweden, Finland, USA,

Australia and many other countries.

A week long festival of 'Peace and Resistance' was held with a daily vigil outside the Court and socials, a well-attended rally at the local University and other meetings in support. Members of the local peace movement, Labour Party and church groups provided accommodation and assistance.

The protesters were invited to address and join the local May Day rally, organised jointly by Preston Trades Council and the Radical Preston Alliance, sharing a platform with international and trade union speakers and local Labour MP, Audrey Wise. Local Labour MEP, Michael Hindley, supported the campaign.

Supporters from Merseyside peace and church groups and East Timorese refugees regularly attended events, though the leadership of the Labour, Trade Union and CND movement kept their distance. Four Swedish activists were arrested and held overnight by police, ironically for 'breach of the peace', in a protest at Barrow during the trial.

## International solidarity

In addition to campaigning against Trident missiles, the

protesters raised many other peace and international campaigns in particular opposing NATO's war in the Balkans and solidarity with the people of East Timor.

Particularly significant was a joint 'Ploughshares' meeting with the Radical Preston Alliance, where a US Gulf War veteran presented a slide show about the devastation caused by UN sanctions against Iraq.

Clearly criticising those who argue for a UN intervention in the Balkans, the speaker explained how economic sanctions could be just as violent and destructive as bombing, as he outlined the death and devastation unleashed on ordinary Iraqis, including the Kurdish and other opposition to the current Iraqi government.

The Gulf War veteran is touring Europe to campaign for the breaking of sanctions and solidarity with the Iraqi people.

## Remarkable

The jury decision was quite remarkable in a town and region that is heavily dependent on the armaments industry.

It follows the earlier decision of a Liverpool jury to free peace activists who caused damage to a



*The real winner in the Balkans was the arms manufacturers*

Hawk aircraft, based near Preston, in a protest against the war in East Timor.

The Ploughshares activists served nearly eight months on remand before being released on bail to face retrial. Also remarkable was the complete lack of UK press coverage of the events.

Local and national media in the UK completely ignored the trial as it unfolded, despite the Swedish national media giving it extensive coverage, including a full page report in one of the leading Swedish daily newspapers.

It must be suspected that the British media is so overwhelmingly in support of NATO's war in the Balkans that it would embarrass them and the Blair leadership if opposition to imperialist war is highlighted in their

news reporting.

## Mass campaign

The individualistic 'direct action' tactics of the 'Ploughshares' group are not shared by *Socialist Outlook*, which believes in building a mass campaign based in the labour movement against imperialist war: but no-one can fail to be impressed by their determination and willingness to confront the armed might of the imperialist state.

For this they deserve to be defended by much wider forces in the British Labour and Trade Union movement.

Internet contacts: plowshares@hotmail.com.  
http://www.plowshares.se/bnb/english/

# Kashmir: deadly duel of the fundamentalists

## Terry Conway

THE DANGER of an all-out war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is greater than it has been probably since the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war.

This is the bitter fruit of the nuclear deterrence we were promised last year both by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif.

Yet again those who argued in both states against the obscenity of testing have been proved right, nuclear armament is not a guarantor of peace but a harbinger of war.

But the very climate whipped up by the escalation of conflict in Kashmir makes driving this lesson home to a wider audience more difficult as chauvinism and jingoism are on the rise.

Indeed it is with more than a glance to the domestic agenda that both nuclear testing and the escalation in Kashmir have been carried through by these two governments.

For Vajpayee and his Bharatita Janata Party (BJP) the general election campaign this autumn will be fought, as all its political campaigns have been, on the basis of



*Anger and arrests as marchers in Kashmir protest at Indian rule*

a strong Hindu state - where mobilisation against the supposed Muslim enemy outside is a crucial counterpart to the deepening of communalism at home.

Meanwhile in Pakistan Sharif, who is gaining a near dictatorial hold on the economically crippled country with one of the most corrupt elites anywhere in the world, Kashmir may be a useful pawn in the domestic agenda.

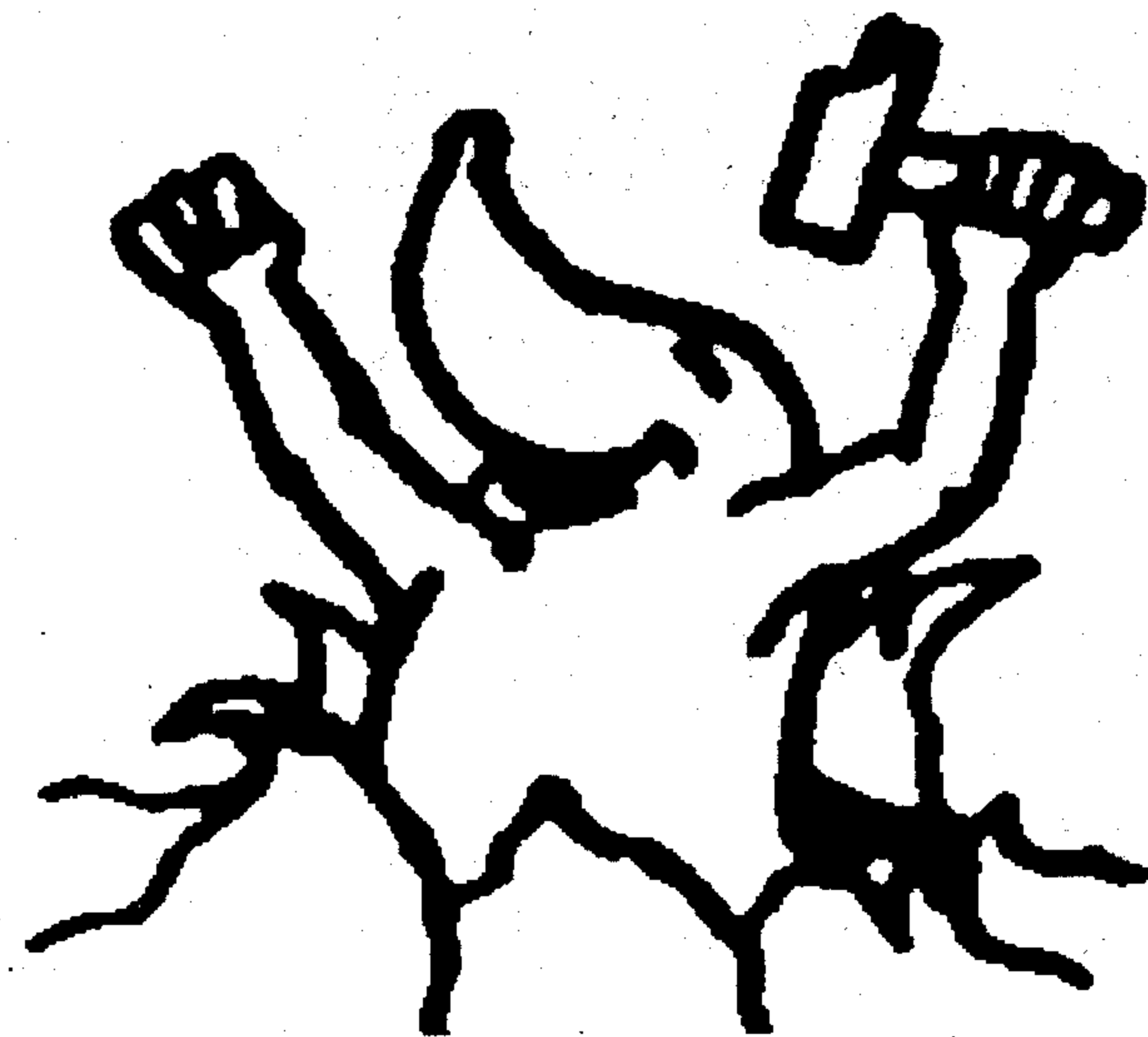
The electoral verdict within Pakistan itself will, he hopes, be aided by his championing of Kashmir to placate militant Islamicists at home.

He also hopes his destabilisation of Indian Kashmir will bring popu-

larity with a wider layer, who may be distracted from the problems at home by militant action against the increasingly communal Indian state.

As those who have fought against communalism and fundamentalism in both states have long argued, far from being real antagonists in fact Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism within the sub-continent have a deadly symbiotic relationship.

They feed off each other while undermining the prospect of organising against the poverty and corruption that blight the lives of the overwhelming majority of people in the sub-continent.



## International Youth Summer Camp

July 24-30

600 young revolutionaries from across Europe will gather for a week of partying and politics in the French Massif Central.

As well as the regular streams of education and discussion on ecology, feminism and lesbian/bisexual/gay liberation, the theme of this year's camp will be "Fighting for change - against the bosses' Europe, against the NATO bombs and Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, self-determination for the Kosovars - for a different Europe of popular and socialist democracy".

For more details contact 0181 800 7460.



Krivine (centre) with banner of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, on the recent Euromarch in Cologne

## An interview with Alain Krivine

# Left MEPs will reach out for mass support

**Alain Krivine, newly elected as an MEP in France on the joint LO/LCR left slate, draws a balance sheet of the electoral campaign. He also discusses the plans of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire over the coming months in relation to the left within the European Parliament.**

**Rouge: What is your assessment of the LCR's campaign?**

**Krivine:** This was the first time that we led a mass campaign with such appeal and resonance. We learnt a great deal from it. On TV we addressed millions of people, and tens of thousands in meetings. The campaign's credibility was a valuable tool for our activists to talk to people at work.

The whole Ligue was mobilised not just to organise joint meetings with Arlette and Lutte Ouvrière, but also in their other political work, and was able to break new ground.

Over the course of several months, many new people discovered the Ligue and we set up a number of new branches around the country. The general impression is that the LCR made a big impact on the political landscape.

Finally, the joint meetings with Lutte Ouvrière allowed us to reach a different audience, who do not usually meet together. This reciprocal discovery benefited everyone.

**Rouge: What will be the axes of intervention for the Ligue now?**

**Krivine:** I would define four which go hand in hand.

First, we will seek to have debates and organise joint work with LO wherever possible, particularly in campaigns around the joint platform in Europe.

For example, in the last few days we have worked with Lutte Ouvrière in supporting the "sans-papiers" [people without papers] and the homeless. I hope we can carry on working together on the question of the 35 hour week or for example.

Second, we must use this lever to address all those on the left and ecologists who want to change the politics of government, and reach out to mobilise them into united action.

Third, we must continue to build a new political movement, a new party that is not simply a fusion between the LCR and LO - that is not on the agenda today.

There are many activists in left parties, in the trade unions and in various organisations such as Ras l'front (an anti racist organisation), DAL and AC! etc, who feel like orphans of a political crisis and wish to direct their activities towards building an anticapitalist alternative.

These activists, from different backgrounds and traditions, are ready to get together in a common project of social transformation, on condition that there is a real unifying dynamic and genuine need for this.

Certainly our success in the last elections was not strong enough to push forward this recomposition quickly. Again, it is difficult to foresee, for example, what

splits may develop in the PCF [French Communist Party] or among the Greens.

So events in the period ahead of us may or may not accelerate the development of class struggle. But it is important to start to popularise the project of a new party as an indispensable element to avoid all the phenomena of demoralisation.

Finally, we must now more than ever continue the battle begun at our last congress to develop the LCR, to open it up, to rejuvenate and feminise it.

**Rouge: What work is possible in the European Parliament?**

**Krivine:** We are going to intervene first and foremost as militants, with an extra place to intervene in. We need to know how to cross the street after the demo of unemployed people to make their demands heard in the belly of the parliament, and then to come back into the street with the political means to build a better basis for the next demo.

In this parliament we will try to draw out information which will interest the social movements, and : we will also put forward proposals putting every MEP and every party on the spot.

We will use every means at our disposal to advance the social movements and assist the development of these mobilisations on a Europe-wide level. With a regular bulletin, we will be accountable for our actions.

Whatever our status, as an independent group or part of an existing group, we will do all we can to maintain the unity and identity of the LO-LCR bloc.

**"We will make everything public, and put forward proposals putting every MEP and every party on the spot."**

# European elections expose cracks in New Labour

**Veronica Fagan**

THE EUROPEAN elections in Britain delivered the first serious questioning of Blair's supremacy and also confirmed some of the important new trends that began to unfold in the elections to the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament.

Turn-out is always low at European elections, both here and across the continent but this election plummeted new depths in both cases.

At home it also comes after the worst-ever turn out in the local elections. Indeed there is a long term trend, which certainly has not yet reached the depths of the USA, where elections are seen as irrelevant by increasing sections of particularly inner city populations.

This generalised long term trend was hardly likely to be bucked by such a lacklustre campaign.

## Mythology

Since the election results came through, New Labour spin has tried to minimise its effects with the usual series of myths.

Everyone had always accepted, they remind us, that the Tories would do better under PR. Well, while it is true that PR probably did give Hague victories in Scotland and Wales, in fact Labour would have done even worse under First Past the Post.

Margaret Beckett, the fall woman in the studio as the results came in, was quick to point out that the results would be "bad in the long term" for the Tories.

Certainly Hague's subsequent shadow cabinet reshuffle has further strengthened the voice of Euro-scepticism within the party.

But the success of the UK Independence Party as well as the Conservatives, alongside the virtual eclipsing of the Pro-European Tories will hardly have convinced the likes of Ken Clarke that the time to wage war again on European policy is nigh.

It's true that the ship of Conservatism may yet sink on the icebergs of Europe, but these results have given Skipper Hague new buoyancy.

It was all very well too for Beckett to make constant refrain that this election was not about the single currency - and that the European Parliament has no jurisdiction in this regard (Michael Ancram was quick to point out is not actually technically true).

## Backfire

More importantly New Labour's attempt to run this election campaign with no reference to European politics at all certainly backfired.

The contempt in which many potential voters were held by the government was graphically demonstrated by Labour's last election broadcast: Blair is wonderful - so vote for him was the only discernible message. The verdict was clear.

In both Scotland and Wales the

nationalists continued to take votes from Labour to the left. Plaid Cymru did better than it expected - winning two Euro-seats when they only expected to take one. Again it did particularly well in areas where it had gained strength in the Assembly and local elections earlier.

The SNP with 27.17 per cent were not far behind Labour in Scotland who polled 28.69, with the Conservatives on 28.69 per cent.

For the left the election results in Scotland were particularly significant, with the Scottish Socialist Party polling 4.02 per cent across the country. This is a highly successful showing, particularly when combined with the 1.03 per cent across Scotland that the SLP scored.

If you add the votes together, the far left in Scotland did nearly as well as in France, where 5 far left MEPs were elected.

This underlines that the form of PR that New Labour brought in for these elections was of the most undemocratic kind, with sprawling anonymous constituencies and closed lists where you could not favour particular candidates whose policies or record you wished to reward.

This is particularly significant given the fact that for the SSP the elections to the Parliament rather than the European elections were the priority. But these results have clearly taken a step further what was demonstrated there by Sheridan's victory.

## Left divided

In England on the other hand the left was not able to capitalise on the disillusion with New Labour.

It is true that Christine Oddy, the West Midlands MEP initially allowed onto the Millbank slate but then dropped on the supposed basis of not campaigning hard enough, made a credible showing with 36,849 votes and 4.34 per cent of the poll.

Her fellow MEP Ken Coates however in the East Midlands polled less strongly - with only 17,409 and 2.41 per cent (probably a verdict on the way Coates alienated many potential supporters with his high-handed behaviour and the eclectic nature of the rest of his slate).

Oddy's candidature also coincided with one of the most credible far left slates. Certainly the West Midlands Socialist Alliance headed by Dave Nellist would have been expected to do rather better if Oddy had not been standing.

Overall the lesson is clear. If the far left is to have a purchase with those voters - whether those that stayed at home, or voted Green or nationalist, or oh so reluctantly voted for New Labour - it needs to get its act together in the way that the Scottish Socialist Party has begun to do.



Sharing a policy of slashing welfare spending – and electoral failure – Blair with German leader Schroder. Fighting back against austerity: Euromarch banner in Cologne

## Eurosetback for “Third Way”

**Susan Moore**

THE EUROPEAN election results should have given Tony Blair pause for thought – though nothing in his subsequent actions indicates that it actually has done.

Not only was there bad news in Britain with the Tories out-polling New Labour and the disastrously low turn out especially in Labour's heartlands: but there was no consolation from the results in the rest of the continent.

All the social democratic governments – with the exception of Portugal – saw their votes fall. Many will have seen that on TV screens and in the papers. Less commented on by the media was the more worrying outcome for Blair: while his friend Schroder also suffered a bad night at the polls, in France the Jospin government did rather better.

Could it be co-incidence that the French government, but a few days before the election had refused to sign a common document on the “Third Way” with Blair and Schroder?

Jospin is by no means a radical, but the balance of forces in France, where the social movements have been much better organised than elsewhere on the continent, perhaps convinced him that it would be electorally

foolish to throw in his lot too closely with his British and German counterparts.

As well as the first questionings of the Third Way project there were some important results for the far left. Most crucial was the election of 5 deputies from the LCR/LO slate in France with 5.2 per cent of the vote. The slate beat the French Communist Party in 5 regions, and did particularly well in working class constituencies and districts (with votes ranging between 6 -13 per cent).

In other places too the far left scored some successes. In Germany the PDS votes remained largely confined to the East, but were important enough to suggest that they might prefigure genuine expansion across the whole country – something that has so far eluded them.

The Greens had mixed fortunes – something in itself not bad for the far left. The German results indicated that the pro-war stance of the party came in for sharp criticism, as did the general increased tendency to tail end Schroder since the general election. The left in the party was and will be strengthened by the outcome.

Elsewhere the green vote had a different

meaning. Greens across Europe will be pleased that at last the British party has joined them in Strasbourg. They did so on the basis of a left platform – opposition to the war and opposition to the single currency – as well as the transparent stupidity of recent government statements on GM foods.

On the other hand to some prospective voters on the left the Greens seemed more internationalist than the SLP which stood to “defend British sovereignty”

**Far right**

For the far right too the results were mixed. As expected the Le Pen's Front Nationale suffered from the split with Megret – itself the product both of strong campaigning by the left and the manoeuvres of the Gaullist right.

In Britain however we would do well to shun complacency about the showing of the British National Party with a total of 102,647 votes. It's certainly true that they benefited from the overall strength of those showing outright opposition to the Euro: but election results themselves can breed further developments, and we need to be on the alert.

Before the election the overall situation in Strasbourg was finely balanced. In the outgo-

ing parliament the Centre Left, the Party of European Socialists, held 214 seats while the Centre Right – the European People's Party – held 201. Together these main blocks controlled roughly two thirds of the 626 seats, with the remainder scattered among seven smaller blocks. The next biggest block, the Liberals, had only 42 seats.

These elections saw the Centre left block fall to 180 while the Centre right rose to 224. The only other block to see a significant change was the Greens which grew from 27 to 38, to make it now the fourth largest block and only 5 seats smaller than the Liberals.

Whether or not this will have any major impact on the political direction of the EU remains however a moot point.

Despite the Parliament asserting itself against the Commissioners in the wake of the corruption scandals earlier in the year, little real power resides here.

Equally important, the project of austerity measures for the working class – as typified by Schroder's swingeing cuts in social spending – and greater integration at the economic and political level is one shared by the major blocks.

## Red faces in Millbank as Left makes new gains

**Pete Firmin**

THE LABOUR leadership broke another promise on 22 June when it announced the result of the election to the Constituency and other sections of the Party's National Executive Committee. On the ballot papers it had declared that the results would not be announced until September, always a rather silly suggestion.

The leadership, through the press, has trumpeted the results as a setback for the left, since the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance won 3 places rather than the 4 last year.

However, in addition to winning the elected place on the National Constitutional Committee overwhelmingly with Teresa Pearce, the results show not only that the proportion of votes won by the CLGA increased (from 46 per cent to 48 per cent), but the Left clearly improved its position within the alliance. While the loss of the fourth place is to be regretted, lessons can be learnt from it.

The 6 candidates elected to the CLPs section of the NEC were Tom (now Lord) Sawyer, ex-General Secretary of the Party, formerly a leftist NUPE official, now a director of an anti-union company; Mark Seddon, editor of Tribune; Liz Davies, disallowed

candidate for Leeds North-East in the general election and supporter of Labour Left Briefing; Christine Shawcroft, Secretary of the Network of Socialist Campaign Groups; Michael Cashman, ex-Eastenders actor and now MEP; and Diana Jeuda, sitting member.

Ironically, it was Tom Sawyer who, when introducing the reorganisation of Party structures, said that this section of the NEC was for ‘non-parliamentarians’, to exclude the left MPs. This stricture obviously doesn't include himself as a member of the House of Lords. Suspicion remains that the date of the election was brought forward to enable Michael Cashman to stand (just) before being elected as an MEP.

The only way the Blairites could secure half of the NEC places was to stand these high-profile candidates and with the USDAW union machinery backing Diana Jeuda. Even then, the votes of Cashman and Jeuda fell considerably as compared to last year, and Jeuda only beat the next-placed CLGA candidate by 2,000 votes (of 47,000).

The leadership hoped that by having a low-profile campaign this year they would sneak a ‘victory’. This obviously worked for Sawyer, who did not even campaign for nominations, and achieved top

place due to name recognition as retiring General Secretary. Yet even his 49 per cent is not that much of a ringing endorsement, given he only got 1,000 more votes than Seddon and Davies.

It did not work for the others: not only did Cashman and Jeuda's vote fall, but the other 3 Blairite candidates came behind all the CLGA candidates.

The other side of this calculation was that far fewer members would vote, increasing the proportion who voted for the Blairites. Yet the numbers voting, estimated at 110,000, was not significantly less than last year (133,000).

For the second year running the leadership's strategy has failed, both high-profile and low-profile. All they are left with is continuing to downplay the NEC elections and the role of the NEC itself.

Among the CLGA candidates it is clear that after name recognition (Seddon's strong factor), the level of campaigning was probably the biggest single factor in how candi-

dates fared.

Liz Davies' vote fell by only 1.5%, whereas Willsman's fell by over 6%. Liz Davies campaigned exhaustively and kept members informed of what happens at the NEC. Willsman did little - he belongs to that school of thought among Labour activists (mainly prevalent among the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy) that the bourgeois media should not be brought into internal Party affairs.

Ann Black, a first-time candidate who was not that well-known outside of small circles apart from her work on the National Policy Forum, did better than Willsman, again because she was willing to go out and campaign for votes.

The biggest success of all however, went to Christine Shawcroft. Unsuccessful last year, her vote increased from 40% to 46%, giving her fourth place above Cashman and Jeuda. Again, Christine had fought for the vote.

The results also show that, at the very least, campaigning against NATO's war in the Balkans was no hindrance to winning the election. Liz Davies spoke at countless anti-

war meetings (making clear, unlike many speakers, that she not only opposed NATO's bombing but also Milosevic and his ethnic cleansing).

Christine Shawcroft, Ann Black and Pete Willsman were all against the war, unlike Mark Seddon who supported it and favoured the sending in of ground troops. Seddon, who did very little campaigning in the election, saw his vote fall by 8.5%.

The results have much wider implications for the Labour Left. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and above all Socialist Action, attempted to keep Christine Shawcroft off this year's CLGA slate, arguing that the CLGA had won all the votes there are going for the left and the need was to bring on more “centre” candidates.

The result is a slap in the face for this strategy, and shows that it is possible to win new support for the Left with the right candidates and serious campaigning.

The result also gives the lie to those on the left who write off the whole Labour Party membership as Blairite. For the second year running the membership has shown both them and the Labour leadership that they do not support Blair's policies.

**The result shows that it is possible to win new support for the Left with the right candidates and serious campaigning**

## 12 SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

EURO POLL: Irish left "nul points"...

# Dana leads the reactionary charge

**T**he continued existence of a confessional state in the South of Ireland was graphically exposed by the Euro-election victory of Dana (Rosemary Scallion), former Eurovision song contest winner and born-again Christian.

It's easy to dismiss this combination as an eccentric offshoot of real politics. (In her spare time Dana speaks in tongues). Yet this is no joke. Dana links a traditional far-right Catholic layer with the organisational and financial power of her contacts within the US Christian right.

She is moving towards an alliance with the "official" Catholic establishment to force a new referendum on abortion rights - an issue that has not been decisively resolved despite protestations that the confessional state has been banished by the forces of modernisation.

**W**hile abortion has come to the fore after the vote, during the campaign there was an almost complete absence of political debate. Yet the previous period had seen a ferment on a whole range of issues.

Europe itself, the movement towards links with NATO, a massive privatisation of Irish Telecom arising directly from the Maastricht terms, major corruption scandals, a housing crisis and the imminent collapse of the deal with Britain in the North, had all been in the public eye.



Getting away with it: Bertie Ahern

None of these made an impact in the election, because on the fundamental issues the major parties have been singing from the same hymn-sheet for many years, taking their turns in coalition governments that apply largely identical policies.

The consensus between left and right in support of largely unrestricted capitalist rule extends beyond the parliament to "partnership" between government and the unions.

The European elections could have provided real issues for progressive candidates. Following the privatisation push around Telecom further threats are being made to other state companies. These threats are all part of the state's obligations under the Maastricht treaty which itself is a logical part of the European Union.

These attacks were not mentioned at all by anyone. The nearest we came to a criticism of EU policy was on the issue of fishery quotas - and raised by Fianna Fail in West Cork rather than by left candidates. There was no debate, because no candidate explicitly rejected the EU integration proposal and the Maastricht treaty. All accepted it and campaigned within its parameters.

Within this context the main capitalist party, Fianna Fail, was able to hold its own despite overwhelming charges of corruption. The main gains were by Dana and the Catholic right and the main losers the "left" supporters of the "third way", who had hoped to gain from the absorption of the former Stalinists of Democratic Left.

**B**ut what of the local government elections? These should give more opportunities for smaller and more radical parties to mount a challenge.

At first sight this is what appears to have happened. The Sinn Fein vote almost doubled to 3.5 per cent, putting it on the same level as the Progressive Democrats, one of the parties in the coalition government.

This is at the level where historically parties have been well

placed to attract voter rebellions and pose a real threat to the major capitalist parties. Sinn Fein seats increased also, especially in working-class areas around Dublin.

A similar process on a smaller scale saw an increase in the vote for the Socialist Party candidates in the Dublin area.

But first sight can be deceptive. Overall the local government results mirrored the European results, and were a triumph for Fianna Fail. The Sinn Fein was content to campaign on constituency work and avoid political confrontation. When it is forced to define itself it does so as junior Fianna Fail rather than as a socialist organisation.

After the election Martin McGuinness spelt out the strategy quite clearly "There will be more Sinn Fein TDs elected next time. You could have a situation where SF is in government in the North and SF is in government in the South" McGuinness is of course talking about coalition in a capitalist government.

The limitations of this sort of approach were shown in the same elections by Democratic Left finishing its long 30-year journey from revolutionary nationalism by joining the Irish Labour Party. And today's Sinn Fein don't even have the advantage of a left rhetoric or any orientation to the

## Through Irish Eyes

A column from Socialist Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International

trades unions!

The Socialist Party vote quite clearly shows a more class-conscious layer, but it is handicapped by confusion on major elements of the capitalist offensive around the Northern peace process and its understanding of the national question generally. So it lacks a realistic project for rebuilding the working class movement, and veers wildly around the political spectrum, from the spokesmen for the UVF to the tired remnants of the Communist and Workers Parties.

**O**verall the elections showed that there is a lack of a clear alternative and very little debate on the left about what are the issues facing the Irish working class.

Irish elections historically have an explosive character and the working class are always ready to punish the parties of government.

The left needs to engage this, link up with the whole range of struggles that the elections managed to avoid. It must begin to discuss seriously the issue of political programme as a way of breaking out of its present sterile political sectarianism and leading the battles that are to come.

## No surprises in the North Sectarianism 3 Democracy 0

ELECTIONS are often a good snapshot of society - as the European elections in the six counties proved.

It didn't matter who won because the party in real control doesn't have to stand. Whichever party of imperialism is in power knows it doesn't require the flimsiest mandate. It can lecture about its commitment to democracy without being put to any democratic test.

The election was another sectarian headcount in a gerrymandered constituency that guarantees victory for the unionists. Their only concern was the possibility of demoralisation leading to a fall in unionist participation.

This in turn feeds the republican dream of Catholics outbreeding the unionists and voting for a united Ireland. This unlikely scenario in a very distant future would have to rely on both the British and unionists holding their hands up and declaring it a 'fair cop.'

The election showed the hollowness of this dream. Sinn Fein ran a sectarian campaign for a second nationalist seat, relying on a unionist division so deep that they would rather see a Sinner elected than a unionist rival. There never was and never will be any likelihood of that.

The reasonable vote for the Ulster Unionist Party's Jim Nicholson and the transfers that finally got him elected reflected fear of a republican victory, both among anti-agreement Official Unionists and 'non-sectarian and terribly nice middle class' Alliance party supporters.

The election was also a series of separate sectarian contests.

John Hume's ridiculous claim to be campaigning on European issues was parroted without the slightest hint of derision but even the dogs in the street know that the key issue was sectarianism.

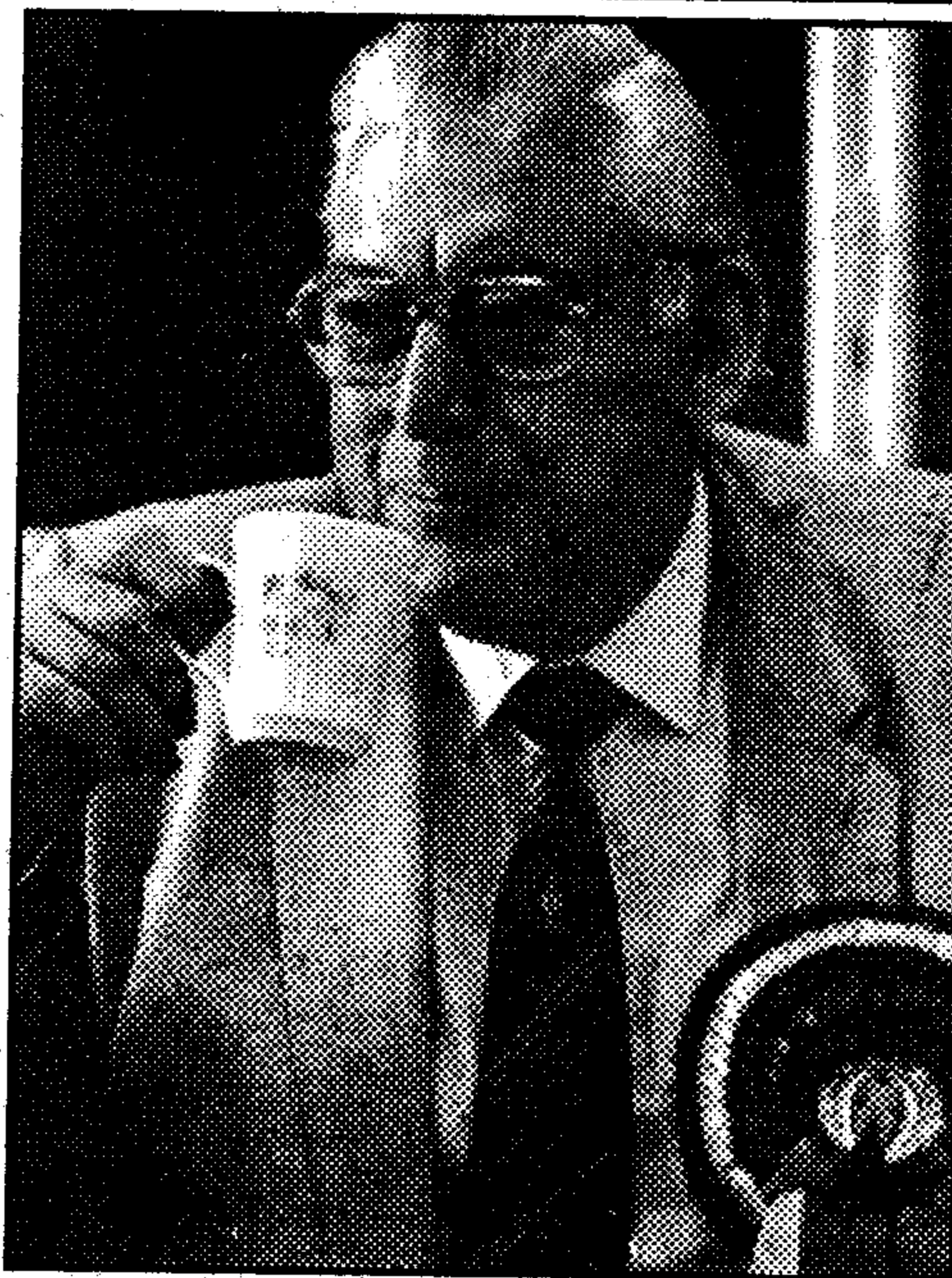
Paisley demonstrated his status as number one rottweiler in this sec-

tionary dog fight. His election marked a consensus that 60 per cent of unionists now oppose the Stormont Agreement, undermining the moral legitimacy of the new deal.

Hume and Sinn Fein both argued this didn't matter - there was still an overall 70-30 majority in favour. But the rotten, sectarian framework they now so vigorously support only gave a veto to nationalists because it also gave one to unionists.

Were the Assembly to reflect the European election nothing would happen without Paisley's prior approval. This is the potential future of the peace process.

The British will do all they can to shore up Trimble's wing against such an outcome, and Nicholson's election holds off the complete victory of Paisley's raw sectarianism, and spared Trimble an imme-



Clinging on to the Assembly: Paisley

diated challenge to his leadership.

But unionism is demanding that republicans not only vote for the unionist veto in the south's constitution, accept that self-determination means partition and sit in Stormont, but completely surrender. This is the programme of all unionism, not just Paisley.

This election also demonstrated Paisley's weakness. His post-election rant appealed to the British to respect his mandate. The UUP Assemblyman Esmund Birnie ridiculed the Democratic Unionist Party's participation by wondering

how they were defending the union by sitting on the Assembly's gift shop committee.

Paisley clings to the Assembly that the Agreement gives him but he cannot use it on his own terms. Trimble repeatedly points out his lack of alternative. If the deal collapses so might his beloved Stormont.

Paisley's only hope is to put pressure on the British by destroying Trimble. His other hope is Drumcree and a victory for the most rabidly sectarian forces that will establish 'facts on the ground' that the nationalists will have to accept, powersharing or not.

In this framework the increased vote for Sinn Fein is no more than an advance in narrow party terms that clouds the underlying reality of the collapse of their political programme. The *Irish Times* quoted Sinn Fein saying that their good result should give heart to Tony Blair. This says everything about the current process and republican support for it.

There was no working class voice in this election. No one proclaiming opposition to the new sectarian deal and to the new Stormont. No one advancing the case for workers unity and independence. The analogy of a football match in which sectarianism wins is inappropriate, for at least in a football match there is an opposition.

Our task now is to create one.

# No Drumcree 5!

## Time to stop sectarian intimidation!

THE PEACE process is dead – long live the peace process! That's the reality. The British pacification process is about to collapse, but the British will remain in charge – and will continue with the same strategy, no matter how disillusioned and discontented many of its former supporters become.

As we go to press, and the deadline of Wednesday 30 June approaches, Blair is desperate to show progress and Sinn Fein is desperate for the new executive to be formed with them taking up 2 places.

Blair has made clear he has no 'Plan B'. It is reported that Sinn Fein may be willing to accept that decommissioning of IRA weapons must occur by May 2000 as a condition for forming the executive.

If this were to be true it would be likely to presage a major split in both the IRA and Sinn Fein, who could not accept this ultimate capitulation, particularly at a time when loyalist intimidation is on the increase.

The promise of the referendum



Blair: "No Plan B"

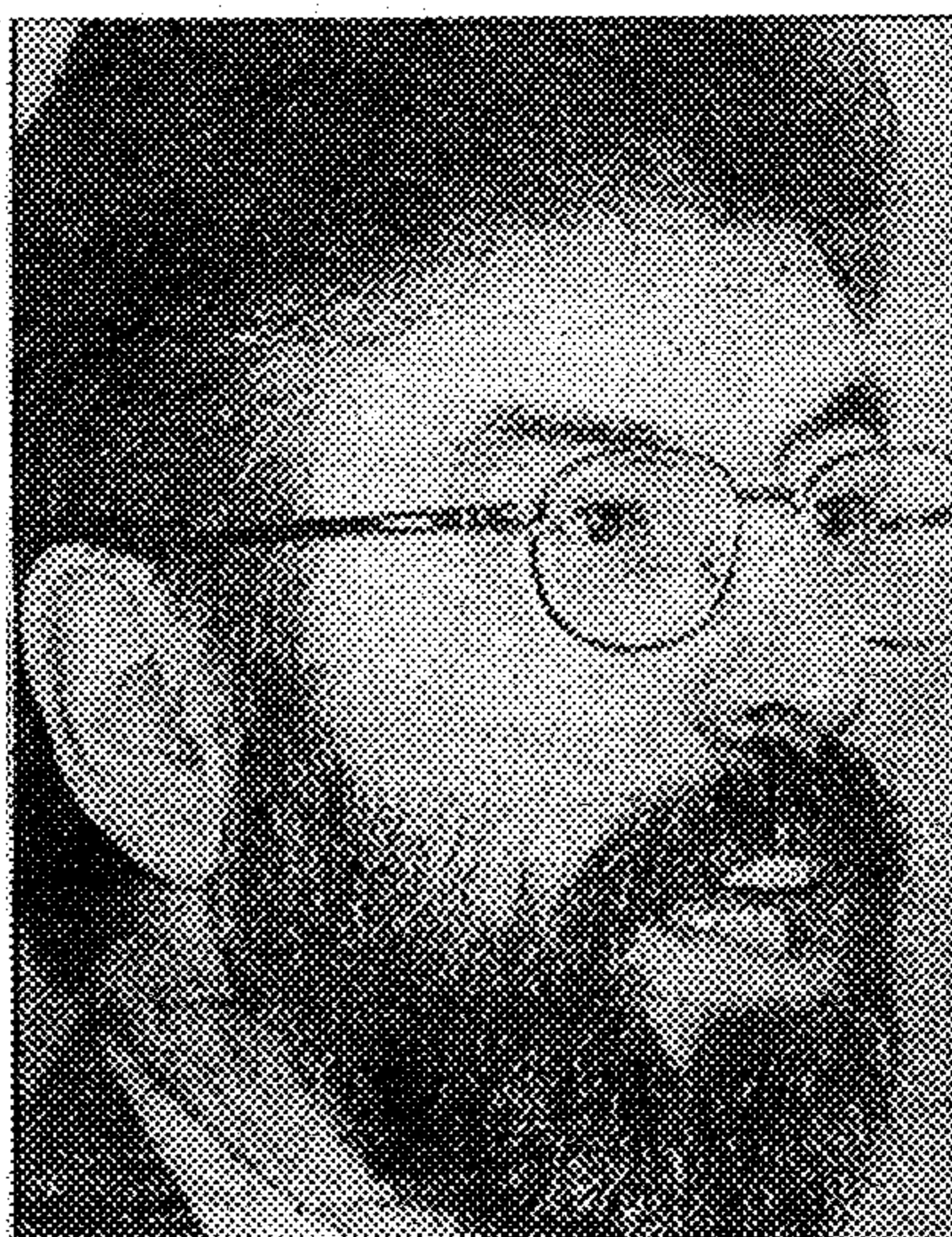
on the peace process was very simple. It was that we would move into a new era where human rights would be respected and sectarian provocation outlawed. Yet now, like the sequel to some bad movie, we are facing into Drumcree 5.

Many commentators despair of putting any sort of positive spin on the Orange mob. They discount the marching season as symbolic. It doesn't feel that way on the receiving end.

The Drumcree battle is simply the most visible aspect of a loyalist offensive. It can't be separated from the house burning, intimidation, assault, sectarian murder, RUC collusion and British cover-up that mark the steady, low-level ethnic cleansing that is a feature of life in the North.

When not transported by seizures of sectarian hatred the Orangemen say their central demand is; "The right of loyal subjects to walk the queen's highway".

That means their right to engage in sectarian provocation



Stand-off: Adams rejects any climb-down over Drumcree, while Trimble is demanding a Sinn Fein climb down over decommissioning



whenever they wish while opposing the right of anyone else to exercise their democratic rights.

### The Nationalist Family

When nationalist workers in the North try to organise in their own defence, they find that the elements of the defence contain fatal flaws. The 'nationalist family' of the Dublin government, SDLP and Sinn Fein suffers one absolutely fatal flaw as a weapon against Orange intimidation. The majority of the parties have made it perfectly clear that they have no intention of opposing the Orange mob.

SDLP leader Seamus Mallon went to the Garvaghy Road last year to call for agreement to an Orange demonstration.

Bertie Ahern has made it clear that he would like to see capitulation. He failed to answer numerous calls for observers from the Dublin government to be present during Orange demonstrations. Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams recently indicated that there will be no deal linking the overall peace process to a capitulation at Drumcree.

This statement was made necessary by the suspicion of many Sinn Fein supporters that such a deal was on the cards. The former republican leadership see no alternative to squalid politicking around the peace process.

They bought into it because their military strategy was running into the ground and can't realistically present a return to arms as a way forward.

### British influence

Even if we accept the good faith of the nationalist family we have to ask what likelihood there is that a strategy of persuading the British to stand firm against loyalist bigots will work.

The blunt reality is that it is not

the bigots who represent the major problem but the British state forces themselves.

Orangemen march not as a result of a battle between themselves and the nationalist residents, but because the RUC and British army assault and imprison the local residents. Of over 3,600 sectarian parades, less than a dozen face any serious restrictions.

When the British do restrict a march they base their strategy on dividing the Orangemen into moderates and extremists and appealing to the moderates. As a "moderate Orangeman" is a contradiction in terms, and as they all want to march, the usual outcome is that they are supported in their sectarian intimidation.

The parades commission blocked last year's march down the Garvaghy Road, but it has legitimised the sectarian siege of the area by allowing 170 parades to the edges of the area. All of these have involved sectarian intimidation and RUC collusion.

### Peace Process

The campaign in defence of the Garvaghy residents constantly and rightly

draws attention to the section of the Good Friday agreement that promises freedom from sectarian harassment. But can this be a strategy for resistance?

Is the marching season simply a hiccup in a process that will eventually lead to the suppression of sectarian intimidation? The answer is quite clearly 'no'.

At the centre of the peace process is the concept of cultural division and "equality of the two traditions". It is therefore the job of the state to seek equality of the two traditions and to constantly drag residents to proximity talks and blame them for refusing to agree to their own harassment. It is this policy that the British

have applied and the SDLP and Dublin government endorsed.

The settlement involves not just sectarian marches but a sectarian society and police force – as it has to be, to ensure the mass support in the North for the continued British military occupation which is also a part of the agreement.

### The alternative

Part of the offensive is the constant refrain that there is no alternative. We are offered a limited choice: whatever the British can persuade Orangeism to accept in an increasingly discredited peace process; or a return to a republican war that was going nowhere.

The leadership of the workers' movement, so vocal and visible in backing British plans, become invisible when it comes to opposing oppression.

Yet there is an alternative. We can break with capitalist parties determined to sell us out. We can expose the silent voices in the workers' movement.

Working class militants are politically disarming themselves by investing in a corrupt peace. Peace and justice isn't going to come from the British process. If we want a real solution we should say 'No' to the process and reject the capitalist leadership that asks us to buy partition and institutionalised sectarianism.

We should turn to the Irish working class and begin to mobilise the only force available to us with the potential to face down British manipulation and coercion. We can begin the building of a mass democratic campaign opposed to sectarianism just like the original civil rights campaign and the H-blocks campaigns.

We can begin to discuss alternatives to the sectarian peace process and begin to build a broad democratic workers' movement in all 32 counties. We start by saying no; No to Drumcree! No to sectarianism! No agreement that embraces sectarianism!

Build a Workers' alternative!

## WHAT'S ON

### July

**THURSDAY 8.** Troops Out Movement public meeting "British Rule in Ireland 1969-1999: 30 Years Too Long". Speakers include Tony Benn and a Sinn Fein representative. 7.30p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn underground).

**SATURDAY 10** Defend Public Services conference called by six sacked Tameside strikers, 11-4pm, Mechanics Institute, Princess St, Manchester (see p2).

**WEDNESDAY 14.** Socialist Outlook London public meeting "Fighting Back Across Europe" with Alan Krivine MEP of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French Section of the Fourth International. 7.30p.m, Friends Meeting House, Euston.

**TUESDAY 20.** Committee for Peace in the Balkans public meeting. "After the bombing - Stop NATO's economic war against the population of Yugoslavia". Speakers include Alice Mahon MP and Tam Dalyell MP 7pm. to 9p.m., Committee Room 11, House of Commons.

**SATURDAY 24** Network of Socialist Campaign Groups conference on a socialist approach to making policy in today's Labour Party. Speakers include John Cryer MP, Liz Davies, Ann Black and Christine Shawcroft. 2-5p.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn underground). Registration £5/£2.50, includes copies of policy documents and suggested submissions. To register write to NSCG, 7 Malam Gardens, London E14 0TR or ring 0171 515 3868.

**July 24-30** International Youth Summer Camp. 600 young revolutionaries from across Europe gather for a week of partying and politics in the French Massif Central. As well as the regular streams of education and discussion on ecology, feminism and lesbian/bisexual/gay liberation, the theme of this year's camp will be "Fighting for change - against the bosses' Europe, against the NATO bombs and Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, self-determination for the Kosovars - for a different Europe of popular and socialist democracy". For more details contact 0181 800 7460.

### August

**SUNDAY 1.** Re-launch London Socialist Alliance Conference. Speakers include a representative of the Scottish Socialist Party. 12-4p.m., Calabash Centre, 23 George Lane, SE13.

**FRIDAY 27-MONDAY 30** Socialist Outlook Summer School, "War, Revolution and the Rights of Small Nations: The World Political Situation After the Balkan War". Bangor, North Wales. For more details contact 0181 800 7460.

VISIT THE SOCIALIST OUTLOOK WEBSITE AT [www.labournet.org.uk/so](http://www.labournet.org.uk/so)



## 40,000 on Cologne Euro-march demo

**Alan Thornett**

40,000 people from right across Europe turned out, on a very hot day, to demonstrate in Cologne on June 29.

The mobilisation was aimed at the EU heads of Government meeting held under the German presidency of the EU. It was another remarkable success after the demonstration of a similar size in Amsterdam two years earlier.

Both demonstrations were protests against unemployment,

social exclusion, poverty, low wages, racism and the drive towards the single European Currency.

Given that the war in the Balkans broke out during the campaign for the demonstration opposition to the bombing and to NATO were added to the demands of the demonstration.

Like Amsterdam, Cologne was a clearly internationalist mobilisation with the majority of the demonstration coming from outside of Germany, although the

German delegation was at least 10,000.

Again the demonstration represented a vast coalition of groups and organisations and campaigns from across the continent: organisations of the unemployed, political organisations, anti-racist organisations, feminist organisations and trade unions. The composition of the demonstration was different to Amsterdam, however.

The core of this demonstration this time was the left trade unions from across Europe. The big

union delegations were from France, Italy and Spain from where some of the union delegations were huge. There were 300 from Greece made up almost entirely of official trade union delegations (most of which came on a chartered aircraft).

Of the political delegations the biggest was Rifondazione Comunista (RC) from Italy which looked to be well over 1,000 but contained union banners connected to RC. The PDS from Germany had a large delegation.

The Fourth International (FI) had the strongest contingent of any far left tendency and marched behind the banner of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR - French Section of the Fourth International). If one takes into account the many FI members marching with other delegations the size of the mobilisation becomes even more impressive.

The Committee for a Workers International (CWI) delegation, led by the Socialist Party in Britain, was well organised. Workers Power's International grouping had a delegation of about 150 from half a dozen countries.

There was also a very large contingent (several thousand) of German anti-fascist youth surrounded in the most provocative way by huge squads of riot police.

The delegation from the French

unemployed action organisation AC! amounted to several thousand. There was a big delegation from the World March of Women and another from the anti-racist caravan.

The event was very well organised and had a good carnival atmosphere. A main city highway was closed for the day and filled with stalls and meetings and demonstrators for several hours before the demonstration and into the evening with entertainment afterwards.

There was a ridiculously large police presence, thousands of police with hundreds of armoured vehicles, which caused some problems on some parts of the demonstration but it did not mar the overall event.

Five coaches went to the demonstration from Britain; one from Leeds, one from Newcastle, and three from London.

The fact that this is quite a good mobilisation in British terms reflects the very different political conditions which exist here as opposed to most other European countries.

Unlike Amsterdam (or even Cardiff last year) this particular summit had almost no publicity prior to the event.

Although the agenda covered issues such as the enlargement of the EU to the east and the introduction of "flexible" employment conditions across the EU in the event it was turned over to backing up NATO over the war, trying to cut a deal with Milosevic, and discussing the implications of the war for the EU itself.

Thus the key discussions were around the stepping up of moves towards a common foreign and defence policy and the "problem" of relying of US military hardware in order to fight such a war. Resolving that one, however, is a big one.

The idea that the EU could get itself in a position to put as many war planes in the air as the USA without completely restructuring the financial basis of the EU was a problem which was unresolved. However these discussions will now continue with Blair on side for the first time in supporting these moves - clearly parroting as usual the voice of the USA in Europe.

The next targets for the strengthened Euro-marches movement across Europe will need to be discussed over the next few months.

Certainly in Britain the need for an internationalist campaign against both the single currency and the effects of European integration have been strongly demonstrated by the results of the European elections. Let's hope we can measure up to the task by building on the strengths of Cologne.

## General Strike in Euskadi demands 35-hour week

**Jim Padmore**

The Basque Country came to a standstill in a general strike on Friday May 21.

The strike, which was supported by the four main trade union federations (CC.OO, UGT, ELA, LAB), demanded the introduction of a 35 hour week.

The struggle for the 35 hour week has in recent years been an important objection of European trade unions, with the French and Italian governments being forced to agree to its introduction.

The reason for its importance is clear: today in the EU we have 20 million unemployed, with 5 million in Germany, 3 million in France and 3 million in Spain.

The left must demand the immediate introduction of the 35 hour week with no exceptions and with no loss of pay.

The Spanish employers say they "can't afford" such a measure. This in a situation where they've been making record profits and where, since 1993, the stock market has gone up by 125 per cent!

As Friday morning dawned, it

was clear that not many people were heeding the employers' call to "work as normal". Although the media did their best to find some strike breaking heroes, they had little success.

By 6 am thousands of pickets were in place, not only outside the factories and offices, but in all the main roads across the city. In San Sebastian, Vitoria, Bilbao and a dozen smaller cities, workers

were seen directing traffic and communicating with each other by mobile phone. The response of the Basque police, the Ertzaintza, varied a lot

from area to area. In some places, they more or less stood by, knowing it was after all only one day. In other areas, they were tooled up and looking for a fight, and at least 20 pickets needed hospital treatment.

By 10 am, pickets were doing the rounds in the city centres, reminding any shops and bars that had opened that they should be closed. At 12 o'clock, the demonstrations started, with more than

50,000 people taking part in demonstrations throughout the day.

One of the most positive things about this strike was that it was supported by all the trade union federations.

The greatest source of weakness in the Basque trade union movement is the chronic division between the nationalists, ELA and LAB, and those that exist in the whole of Spain, CC.OO and UGT.

### Disgrace

In this context, it is disgraceful that the trade union leaders refused to hold joint demonstrations, preferring to maintain this division.

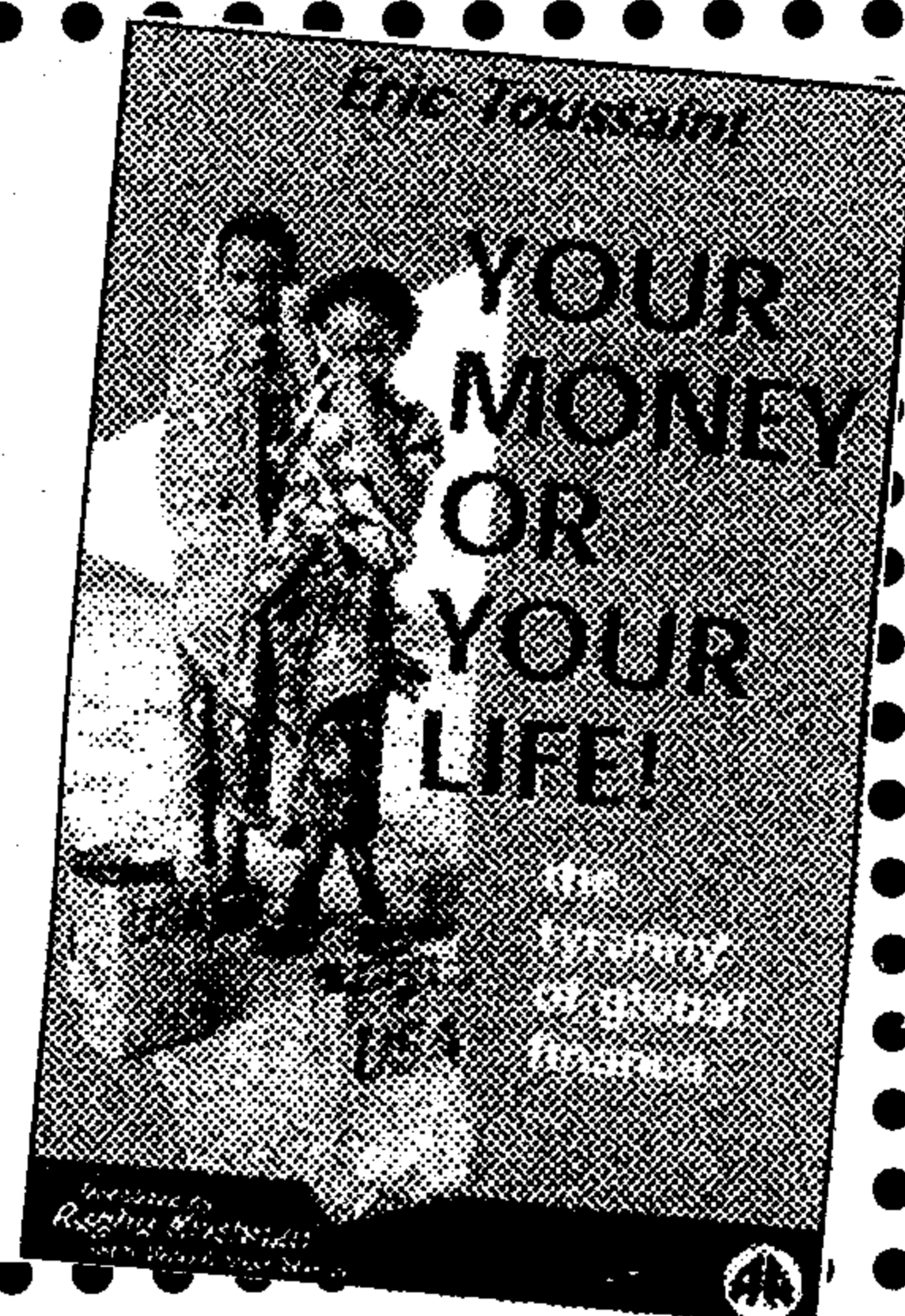
In Bilbao, for example, both demonstrations assembled at the same time and at the same place - CC.OO and UGT on one side of the square and ELA and LAB on the other. Both demonstrations then set off to march, by different routes, around the city.

Despite this, May 21 can only be seen as a big success.

It is only the first step in what will probably be a long fight against government and employers, in the Basque Country and across Spain. The trade unions should set a date for a general strike in Spain as a whole.

**Spanish employers have been making record profits and the stock market has gone up by 125 per cent since 1993!**

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**Eric Toussaint**

**D**uring the recent G7 summit in Cologne, a 17-million signature petition asking for the cancellation of poor countries' debts was handed to the heads of State of the seven richest countries.

The summit leaders announced on June 18 1999 that the problem of the poor countries' debt burden had been solved. 90% of the debt would be written off. This is untrue.

The real amount of the cancellations covered by the announcement adds up to a maximum of US\$ 25 billion, i.e. about one percent of the total Third World debt<sup>1</sup>. One drop's worth of reduction in an ocean of debts.

Seen against the total debt of the 41 poorest countries<sup>2</sup>, the measures announced represent no more than 12 percent of their debts, which come to US\$ 205 billion.

The majority of the world's poor live in India, Indonesia, Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico. None of these countries is affected by the debt reduction measures announced in Cologne.

Probably only 20 of the 41 countries which could benefit from the reductions will qualify for them. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, will not.

Furthermore, at best it will take 3-6 years for even the "concessions" announced to be achieved.

**I**n the short term, to "benefit" from the measures, the poor countries will have to fulfil draconian conditions - aggravated structural adjustment plans.

Candidate countries will have to apply these harsh austerity measures for three or even six years: this will mean reduced purchasing power for the poorest citizens due to increased taxation, combined with rising costs of basic commodities, ever more limited access to health care and education, and so on.

Yet in these countries, 50 percent or more of the population already live below the threshold of absolute poverty (in cases such as Mozambique and Rwanda, over 70% do).

The measures announced constitute an extension of the HIPC (or Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative) policy adopted in 1996 by the World Bank, the IMF and the G7.

# G7 to cancel debt? Don't believe all they tell you!

Have those measures improved the circumstances of the populations concerned? They have not. The World Bank itself admits this, and advocates patience ...

If the standard of living hasn't improved, has there at least been an improvement of the economic situation of those countries? Are they paying out less in annual debt repayments?

No again ... on the contrary, those countries have to repay more than they receive.

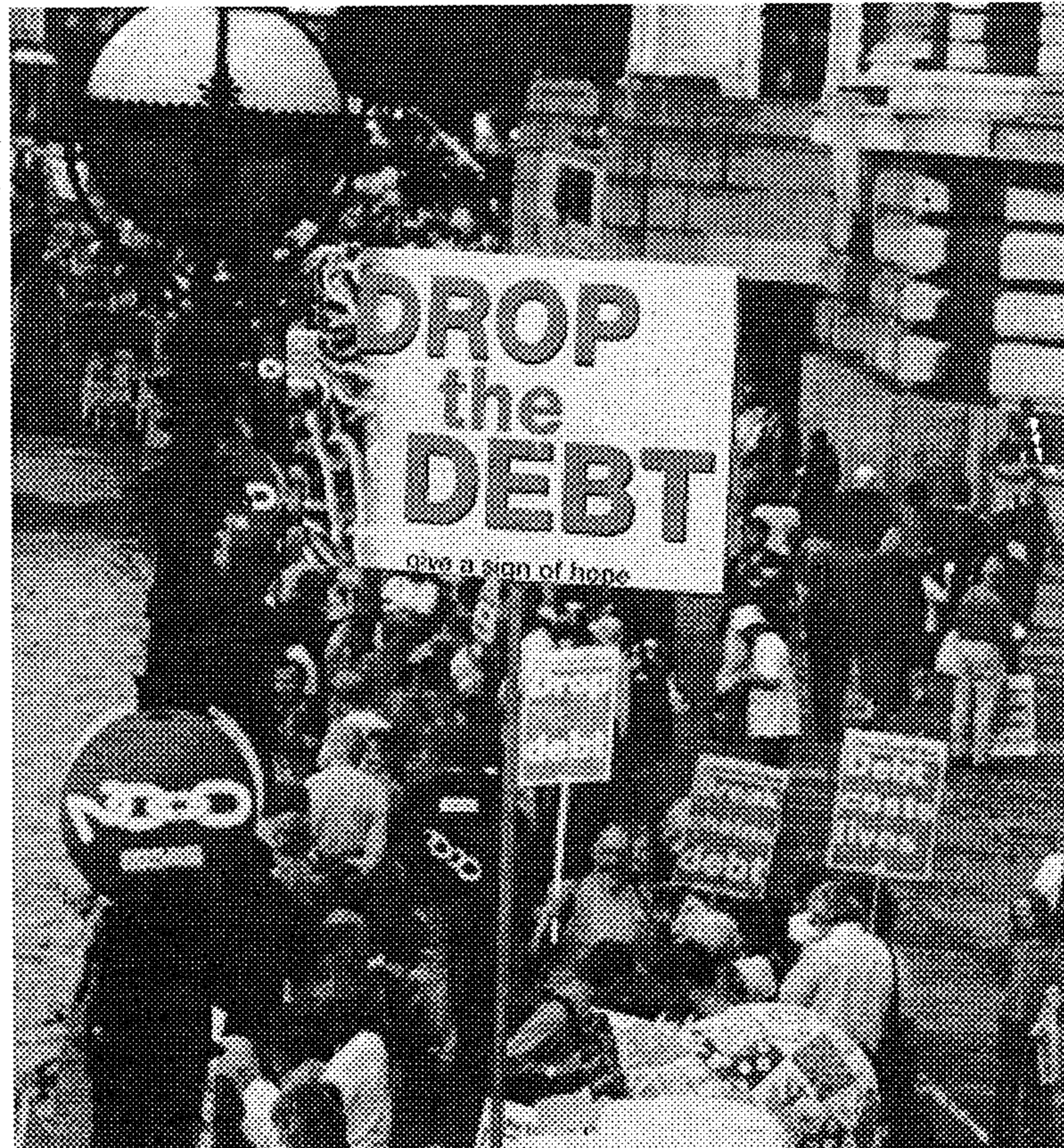
In 1997, the rich countries lent \$8 billion to the poorest countries, while these countries repaid \$8.2 billion, i.e. 200 million dollars more. The BIRD (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank group) and the IMF get more in repayments from the poor countries than they lend!

For the future, the World Bank has just announced that despite the promised debt reduction measures, the amounts to be repaid will not decrease. Worse still, some countries (for example Mali and Burkina Faso) will have to repay more than before.

**T**he G7 has put the IMF and World Bank in charge of overseeing the implementation of adjustment policies. According to the G7 communiqué, these plans should bring about improved health care and education.

Yet how can such improvements be envisaged within the narrow framework of austerity budgets?

Even after debt reduction, Mozambique will still have to devote over 40% of its budget to debt repayments. In such conditions, how can there possibly be improvements in the provision of health care for



Protestors in London backed the global campaign against the Debt

the population?  
It is time to stop plundering these countries.

Public Development Aid has reached an all time low. It has dropped by 33% since 1990 while the amounts repaid by the entire Third World have continued to increase.

In 1998, the Third World taken as a whole repaid \$250 billion, whereas Public Development Aid barely scraped past the \$30 billion mark.

This means that the Third World transferred eight times as much to the rich countries as it received from the so-called generous Public Development Aid.

The results are there.  
**A**ccording to the World Bank, between 1987 and 1998, worldwide, the number of people living below the absolute poverty line (less than a dollar per day) increased from 1,200 to 1,500 million.

In fact, as is shown annually by the World Report on Human Development produced by the United Nations Development Programme, the North is not helping the South.

Instead the population of the South is transferring considerable wealth to the holders of capital in the North, at the cost of intolerable suffering and sacrifices. This transfer is effected through two basic mechanisms: debt repayment, and unfair trading.

At the time of writing, a new debt crisis has erupted, as prices of products sold by the Third World on the world market have dropped considerably while the interest rates applied to service debts have risen.

In other words, the Third World countries are earning less and repaying more. On the other hand, the leading industrialised countries are making savings on the cost of importing raw materials from the

Third World and the interest rates on their own public debts have dropped since the Asian crisis.

The Third World populations have already repaid more than enough. The external public debts of the Third World countries must be totally written off.

**T**o prevent corrupt and dictatorial regimes in the South from taking advantage of this cancellation, their holdings in rich countries must be frozen, and after due investigation, returned to the populations of the Third World countries via development funds run democratically in each country.

Other complementary measures must be taken including the cessation of structural adjustment plans, and the introduction of taxation of financial transactions (the so-called Tobin tax).

To prevent the recurrence of the mechanisms leading to indebtedness from resuming after debt cancellation, further steps must be taken, by laying the foundations of a new, fairer economic and human order.

The refusal to cancel the external debt, and the continued imposition of demonstrably damaging adjustment policies must be branded for what it is: a refusal of the bourgeoisie in the wealthy countries to come to the assistance of endangered populations.

■ Eric Toussaint is President of the Committee for the Cancellation of the Third World Debt (COCAD) and author of *Your Money or Your Life*, published in English by Pluto Press, London, 1999 and Vak, Bombay, 1999.

■ Contact: Committee for the Cancellation of the Third World Debt 29 rue Plantin, 1070 Bruxelles tel (322) 527 59 90 fax (322) 522 62 27 cadtm@skynet.be http://users.skynet.be/cadtm

## Jubilee South rejects G7's "cruel hoax"

The Cologne Debt Initiative does not offer relief for the 4.5 billion women and men in the South who suffer from debt domination. It makes a mockery of their right to a dignified life.

"Expanded HIPC" means increased misery and debt for peoples of the South.

HIPC is fundamentally flawed because it is linked to Structural Adjustment Programmes.

These programmes have been shown to have a devastating human impact on account of diminished spending capacities for social services and job creation.

HIPC is a scheme of the creditors for the creditors. The Expanded Initiative is not relief at all but rather a self-service formula to keep governments in the South from defaulting.

Judged by its own terms, the Cologne Initiative still deals with less than 2 percent of the total nominal debt stock of the South. It still remains confined to a small group of countries, ignoring the plight of the poor in all other countries in the South.

The plan is also inconsistent with the OECD commitment to halve the levels of absolute poverty by the year 2015.

Jubilee South sees nothing to welcome in this initiative. This Cologne scheme, like its predecessors, refuses to acknowledge the moral dimensions of the debt crisis and the historical responsibility of the rich countries for the current state of affairs.

For moral reasons, the debt of the South is illegitimate. Furthermore, it has been paid over and over again. Jubilee South does not speak of partial relief, but rather of full reparations.

We demand total, unconditional cancellation of all the debt of the South. The G7 has failed to meet the challenge of justice posed by Jubilee.

Don't owe!  
Won't pay!

■ Jubilee South is a coalition of Jubilee debt campaigns and social movements from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

■ Contact: Donna Andrews 0173 9705440/3.

**"Jubilee South sees nothing to welcome in this initiative"**

(1) US \$2,030 billion (not including the former Eastern block) according to the latest World Bank report (Global Development Finance, April 1999)

(2) The 41 most highly indebted poor countries by World Bank criteria are: Angola, Benin, Birmanie, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sao Tomé et Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Chad, Togo, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia

Only seven of these would actually qualify for debt reduction according to the present criteria laid down by the HIPC initiative: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guyana, Mali, Mozambique, and Uganda.

## British government keeps quiet and passes the ammunition for anti-Kurd onslaught NATO backs Turkish repression

**Shelia Malone**

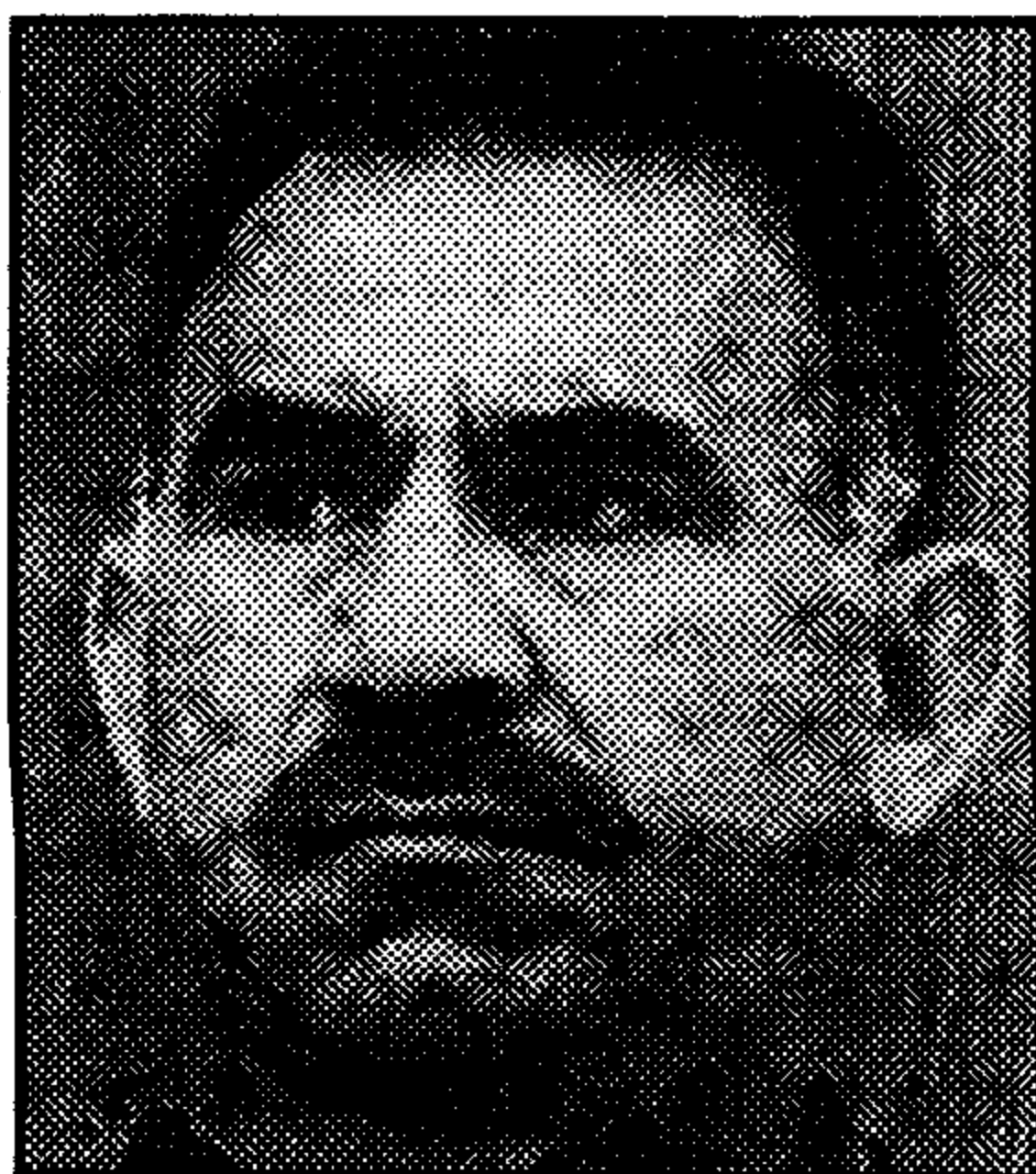
THIS MONTH, a Turkish court will probably condemn to death Kurdistan Workers Part (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan, hunted down and kidnapped last autumn with the aid of international security forces.

The PKK has been waging a 15 year struggle against the Turkish state's savage repression and refusal of nationhood to its 14,000 strong Kurdish population.

40,000 people have been killed, 3,000 Kurdish villages burnt and 3.5 million refugees driven from their homes. Organisations and parties supporting Kurdish interests have been continually banned and intimidated, and activists harassed, arrested, "disappeared" and murdered by state-sponsored death squads.

The trial of Öcalan, begun last month, seeks to show that organising for freedom from such oppression constitutes treason against the state, and is punishable by death. The aim is to destabilise, discredit and demoralise resistance movements by executing their leaderships.

However, the kidnapping provoked massive and world-wide protests, and Öcalan himself remains a symbol of continued



*Facing death sentence: Öcalan*

struggle. The trial itself has been widely condemned as unfair due to intimidation of defence lawyers, the presence of the military and a vicious "trial by media" vilifying both the PKK and the Kurds generally.

In his defence, Öcalan has repeated previous PKK offers of a cease-fire and readiness for a negotiated peace involving international mediation. Turkey, however, continues to reject such proposals because neither it nor the "international community" have any interest in a political settlement to the Kurdish issue. Why is this?

The US and its allies (who call the tune here) are well aware of NATO member Turkey's repres-

sion of the Kurds. They know, for instance, that it is far more extensive, longer lasting and bloody than even that of the Serbian forces in Kosovo, which they used to justify their interventionist war against Serbia. And they know that they (especially Britain) play a shameful part in this repression by arming the Turkish military to the teeth.

However, Turkey has always been too important a strategic ally to upset, and especially right now. In the words of US ambassador Mark Parris last month, it is "... a country that can make, and is making daily, a unique contribution to the peace, stability and prosperity of a region extending from Europe to central Asia and the Middle East."

The prosperity referred to here, of course, is principally the huge profits for multinationals from the Caspian Sea oilfields newly opening up after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and requiring pipelines through Turkey and the surrounding region.

The peace and stability is Turkey's guarantee to contain any unwelcome conflicts that might interfere with the extraction and exploitation of these and other resources. This means keeping the lid on any Kurdish aspirations to nation or statehood within Turkey

itself.

It also means denying the rights of more than 20 million Kurds elsewhere in the region (especially in Iraq, Iran, Syria and the former Soviet Union). Struggles by Kurds in these different states could begin to pose the question of a united Kurdistan - anathema both to Western powers and the states in the region.

Until now, the PKK had hoped the US and European powers would press Turkey to negotiate with them for an end to the oppression and for some form of self-determination.

Their main strategy recently was to increase diplomatic pressure towards this end. But it is clear, especially from the collusion in Öcalan's arrest, that any Western "solution" to conflict in the region falls far short of such demands.

Instead, a cosmetic clean-up of Turkey's abysmal human rights record, some involvement in the cash-starved Kurdish south east of Turkey, and some regional concessions on cultural autonomy are being considered sufficient to stay criticism of treatment of the Kurds and allow Turkey to remain a respectable and highly useful ally.

Most importantly, these limited palliatives do not require direct peace talks with Kurdish resistance

movements, which can be marginalised.

An independent voice for the Kurds is also being stifled by attempts by British and European governments to silence the Kurdish media in the diaspora. Med-TV was recently shut down by the ITV Commission in Britain and the 'Ozgur Politika' newspaper threatened with banning in Germany.

Maximum support and solidarity is now more vital than ever to the Kurds' long and hard fought struggle against oppression and for self-determination. The immediate aim is to stop Öcalan's execution by demanding an end to the present unjust and politically motivated show trial, and for his immediate release, together with the many other political prisoners in Turkish jails, both Kurds and Turks.

We can further build on the support that has united campaigners around the Öcalan case to demand the right of Kurds to decide their own future through their own organisations and leaderships. Only a political solution which recognises this can secure freedom and an end to the repression and conflict in Turkey and in the surrounding region.

Contact: Freedom for Öcalan  
c/o ICAD PO Box 8446, London  
N17 6NZ

## After Mandela, will the ANC deliver?

**Charlie van Gelderen**

SOUTH AFRICA's second election on a full non-racial franchise has resulted in an overwhelming victory for the ANC slate, led by Thabo Mbeki, achieving an even bigger victory than Mandela's.

The ANC, with 66.4 per cent of the vote, fell short of its target of a two-thirds majority. That would have allowed it to change the constitution, which Mbeki has stated that he had no intention of doing.

The minority opposition parties fared very badly. The former ruling National Party, the begetter of apartheid, got only 7 per cent of the votes. Four years ago it received 20.7 per cent. The

majority of white voters deserted it, voting instead for the racially-tainted right-wing Democratic Party. This party fought on the slogan 'right Back', which its supporters interpreted as 'Fight Blacks'.

The main beef of the whites is the affirmative action legislation, forgetting that affirmative action has been endemic in South Africa for more than 300 years - in favour of whites, of course.

A white farmer who was found guilty of killing a black child was sentenced to a fine. The judge who sentenced him was not appointed to the judiciary because he was the best person for

the job. He benefited from affirmative action because he was white. Today, nearly ten years after the ending of apartheid, there is only one black senior judge.

Undoubtedly the election result is a vote of confidence in the ANC, but it is more than that. There is also great disappointment that all the hopes engendered by the end of apartheid has not been realised.

As Winnie Mandela put it in one of her campaign speeches; "The people did not fight against apartheid just to be able to go to the polls once every four years. They want to see a redistribution of wealth which is still overwhelmingly in the hands of the whites."

Thabo Mbeki mildly echoes the same sentiments. Wealthier whites, he said, can afford to make a greater financial sacrifice. But how does he hope to achieve this when, in the same speech, he said his government would continue the 'market led economy'? He also says nothing about



*Mbeki (right) celebrates. What happens when the laughter stops?*

renouncing the crippling international debt inherited from the apartheid regime.

Both Mandela and Mbeki promised that they have no intention of reversing the protection for property rights [indiscipherable in original] on the grounds it would undermine international confidence [ditto] in the South African government.

Women will certainly be watching to see if he means what he said about continuing "to strive for their enlightenment and emancipation". A recent survey shows that in the still dominant private sector of the economy, women have gained little.

Preliminary results of a Commission for Gender Equality Report show that less than one in four jobs in the private sector are held by women. Black empowerment companies have done very little to improve the lot of women in the work place.

The study showed firmly entrenched racist and cultural stereotypes, such as "black women cannot be depended upon as they are always having babies", and "men are the heads of households and therefore should be in higher positions."

There are other challenges for the Mbeki-led administration including, among other things, the problem of rural poverty. In the small towns and hinterland of the Western Cape, and in other parts of the country, little seem to have changed, especially for farm workers.

South African wines in British super-markets are competitively priced. The unseen element is that wages range between R35 (£ 3.60) and 1160 (£6.25) per week.

There is great frustration about housing and unemployment. White farmers carry on as if nothing has changed. They do not really implement the labour laws. There are still some who think they can hit and intimidate people.

The ANC have received this overwhelming vote. Now the people expect them to fulfil their promises.

They do not want to wait another four years for jobs, decent housing, piped water and electricity. They want an end to economic apartheid.

If the ANC's pro-capitalist policies continue to leave the majority of the majority no better off, the space for a political alternative may begin to open up again.

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# Zionist policies survive Israel's election "landslide"

Roland Rance

**E**VEN as Israeli PM-elect Ehud Barak exchanges compliments with Syrian President Hafez el-Assad, and attempts to put together a new coalition, his outgoing predecessor Binyamin Netanyahu has launched another air raid on Beirut.

Governments and the bourgeois press around the world have expressed the hope that Barak will prove more accommodating than Netanyahu, will move faster to implement the Oslo agreement, and will usher in a period of peace in which the Middle East can be better incorporated into the global economy. His election has been seen as confirmation that Israelis are indeed ready for peace, and even the establishment of a Palestinian state.

For most Israelis, however, the last election was decided not on the issue of relations with the Palestinians and the Arab world, but on narrower domestic concerns.

In particular, the election saw a further polarisation between secular and fundamentalist Jews, and between different groups of Jewish immigrants. The final count of Knesset members showed a rise in support for orthodox and anti-orthodox parties, and for parties aligned to the Russian, Moroccan and Palestinian communities. The traditional Labour and Likud blocks now hold well under half the Knesset seats between them.

Israelis in fact voted in two elections on the same day. As well as the election for the Knesset (parliament), there was a separate election for Prime Minister. The winner of this election has to form a government from the parties elected to the Knesset, even if their party does not win the largest number of seats.

This system, it appears, encourages electors to vote for one candidate for PM, and then to support a party closer to their own views, knowing that this will not affect the choice of PM but may increase their party's coalition bargaining power.

**B**arak's "One Israel" Party (formerly the Israeli Labour Party) is the largest in the Knesset, but since it has only 26 of the 120 seats, this involves Barak in complicated coalition negotiations. His actions so far suggest that, for him, as for the Israeli electorate, relations with the Palestinians come a long way down the list of priorities.

In the PM election, Barak beat Netanyahu by more than 12%, in Israeli terms a stunning landslide. But, as many Israeli commentators have noted, it is probably true to say that Netanyahu lost as much as Barak won. Through his inveterate scheming, his broken promises and his continuing personal scandals, he alienated many of his former supporters.

Indeed, of the original five can-

didates for PM, two were from Barak's own Likud Party. Benny Begin, son of former PM Menachem Begin, challenged Netanyahu from the right. Yitzhak Mordechai, until earlier this year Netanyahu's Defence Minister, and like Barak a former army Chief-of-Staff, established a new Centre Party, and challenged Netanyahu from the centre.

Begin supported the new "National Unity" list of extreme right wing and settler parties, which gained four seats. Together with the five seats of the National Religious Party, this gives the far right nine seats in the current Knesset, compared with 16 in the last Knesset. The centre party gained six seats; it was not represented in the last Knesset.

Netanyahu and Barak were challenged from the left by Azmi Bishara, a Palestinian citizen of Israel and professor at the West Bank Bir Zeit University. Bishara, the first non-Jew to stand for Prime Minister of Israel, has been active in the radical wing of the peace movement, and was one of the initiators of the Covenant of Equality - an attempt to establish an Israeli identity and citizenship based on residence (or exile) rather than on religious or national identity.

His candidacy was opposed by, among others, the Communist Party, who have posed as the sole voice of Palestinians in Israel. Bishara stood down from the election two days before polling, and was swiftly followed by Begin and Mordechai, leaving a straight contest between Barak and Netanyahu.

The results of the Knesset election were less clear-cut. Both One Israel and Likud lost seats - Likud dropping from 32 to 19, and almost being overtaken as the main opposition by the North African religious Jewish Shas party, which rose from 10 to 17 seats.

Parties representing the recent large Russian immigration rose from 7 to 10 seats, while those representing mainly Palestinians rose from 9 to ten (within this, the Communist Party lost two to Bishara's Balad party).

As well as the Centre Party, the new anti-orthodox Shinui party gained six seats. Shinui, which represents parts of the Western secular intelligentsia, is a party of the right; many of its attacks on religious parties were criticised, and not only by the orthodox themselves, as bordering on anti-semitic. The religious parties had a net gain of 4, and now hold 27 seats - nearly one-quarter of the Knesset. The new One Nation/Workers List, led by Amir Peretz, a former Labour MK and General Secretary of the Histadrut, received two seats.

**I**n the new Knesset, 60 of the 120 delegates are from the "left" or centre, while 60 represent the right-wing or religious parties. Even for a leader committed to peace, democracy and a secular society, this would pose problems.

Since Barak, like most of the so-

called "left" in Israel, accepts the Zionist logic which rules out a government dependent on Arab votes in parliament, he is obliged to attempt to build a coalition involving some at least of the right and religious forces. In fact, all of the signs are that he is attempting to construct a grand coalition, which will exclude only the National Unity block on the right, and the Arab parties on the left.

Deals already made with other parties mean that new Likud leader Ariel Sharon, Begin's Defence Minister during the 1982 Lebanon War, is likely to be Finance Minister, Russian immigrant leader Natan Sharansky will be Interior Minister, and Netanyahu's Foreign Minister David Levi will regain the post under Barak.

Few senior posts will be left for members of the former Labour Party. In fact, Barak is treating his party in a strikingly familiar way. The Jerusalem Post reported on 25 June that "Several MKs told The Jerusalem Post that Barak is hell-bent on destroying the Labor Party and creating a new party of 'yes-men'".

Barak is committed to a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon within twelve months. This requires an agreement with Syria, which will not accept anything less than a complete Israeli pull-back from the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967.

Significantly, most Golan set-



Jerusalem's version of Tony Blair? Barak has found jobs for right wing ministers.

ters supported One Israel and other centre parties, and the Third Way party, which demanded permanent occupation of Golan, lost all four seats in the Knesset.

**I**t is clear that the Israeli public, too, is willing to make whatever concessions are necessary in order to withdraw from the mess in Lebanon and reach a deal with the ailing President Assad.

However, there is no such willingness to make concessions to the Palestinians. Barak has made clear that he will not dismantle West Bank settlements, and has recognised the legitimacy of the frenzied land-grab in the dying days of the Likud government.

Nor will he discuss the status of Jerusalem. Like his mentor, assassinated Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin, Barak will accept a nominally independent Palestinian

state on part of the land occupied in 1967, in order to ensure that Arafat, and his successors, rule over the Palestinians as Israeli proxies.

In this, he differs from Netanyahu, who over the past four years has done his best to sabotage this Labour/CIA strategy. It remains to be seen whether Arafat can still impose this approach on an increasingly restless Palestinian population. But such a solution cannot resolve the conflict for long.

In the absence of an effective left among both Israelis and Palestinians, able to build a movement which will struggle for a genuinely democratic, secular and non-sectarian future for all the inhabitants and exiles of the region, the likely prospect is for a further turn towards Jewish and Islamic fundamentalism.

## Cricket hits racial barrier

Terry Conway

**THE CRICKET** World Cup is over and predictably England ducked out after a poor performance not even making it to the Super Sixes. The effect of the contest on cricket in this country however is less clear than the media's nationalism would lead us to believe.

The final was certainly a damp squib - but there were highly memorable moments elsewhere. The Australia-South Africa semi-final was one of the best matches I can remember seeing in several decades, and the last over was unforgettable.

There are other cameos that will stay with me for a long time - Shoaib's sheer joy running into bowl, the impact of later order players like Klusner and Moin Khan, Warne's come back, the enthusiasm of the young Bangladeshis after their important victory over Pakistan, to name but a few. And I still think that Chanderpaul's catch outshone Jonty Rhodes' - despite what the BBC's panel of experts says.

These and other memories will impact on the many who watched them including those with whom the future of the game rests - the young people inspired by these and other role models.

Wasim's decision to stay in Britain and work the clubs in Smethwick may have been shaped by events back home in Pakistan, but it will still

make a crucial contribution to the future of the game.

Some of the highlights will even have interested those who don't like the game.

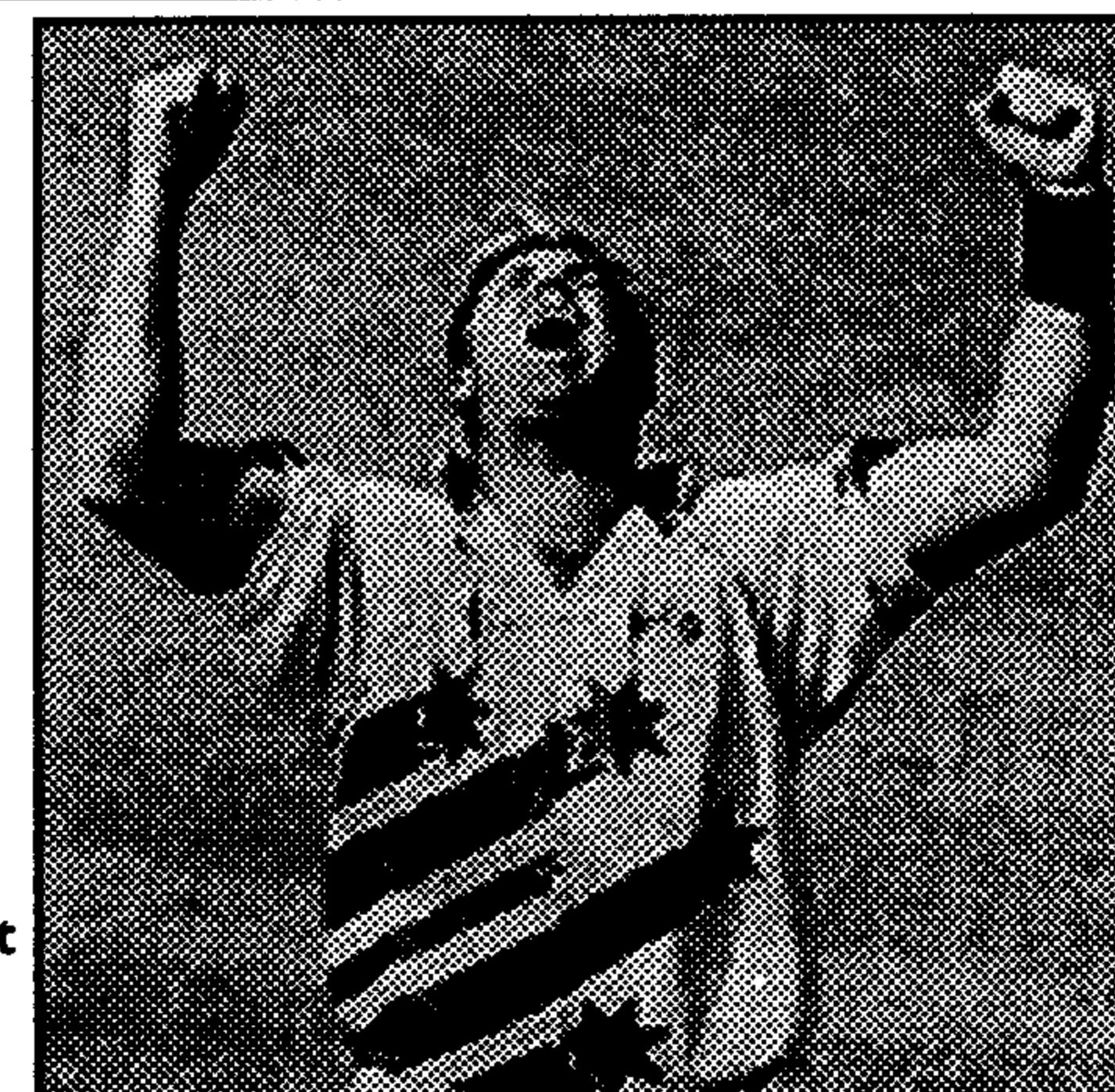
The India v Pakistan match at Old Trafford rightly merited the front page of the Eastern Eye - not for the quality of the play on the field, which was itself pretty gripping, but for the performance of the supporters.

Despite the escalating conflict over Kashmir and the fears that this would be used to stir up trouble at the match, supporters in Manchester were determined to enjoy a good day's cricket.

Leaflets on the conflict distributed by campaigning group **Hit Racism for Six** were extremely popular, and whenever things looked like they might get a little out of hand fans spontaneously held the flags of both countries corner to corner.

It has been common currency amongst the experts that if English cricket is going to undergo a rebirth after the familiar embarrassing showing of the host team, then it will have to draw in more Asian players and fans. Less common has been any real discussion about how that might be achieved.

Unless the cricket establishment faces up to the ways in which the game is riven by racism at every level then they will not succeed in this aim.



He's back: Shane Warne

Nasser Hussain's captaincy will not be enough.

The June submission by **Hit Racism for Six** to the English Cricket Board's (ECB) racism study group explains key ways in which racism operates:

- There have been numerous incidents of racist abuse at some cricket grounds
- Many black or Asian teams find themselves excluded from mainstream leagues
- Black and Asian cricketers suffer disproportionately from the poor access to cricketing facilities in the inner cities.

■ Many black and Asian spectators are deterred from attending matches by the ban on banners and musical instruments, the high price of tickets and the fear of racial harassment.

Action on these, coupled with pressure on more county sides to select players from Britain's black and Asian population could help provide the shot in the arm that British cricket so desperately needs.

# ABC of Labour's love of secrecy

John Lister

**L**ABOUR governments have always been craven servants of capitalism and eager guardians of the secrecy of its state machine.

Jack Straw's feeble "Freedom of Information Bill" actually offers today's campaigners even fewer rights on some issues than they had under 18 years of Tory rule.

This is not simply the fruits of New Labour: the same was the case under "old Labour", too. Straw's attempt to ditch Labour's bold promises and fob off critics with meaningless "concessions" is a latter-day echo of the inglorious efforts of the Wilson and Callaghan governments to gag anyone seeking to investigate or expose the powers of the state.

Two notorious episodes sum up this long-running saga of reformist deference to a system designed to monitor, stifle and – if necessary – repress any serious challenge to capitalist rule:

The first was the decision by Home Secretary Merlyn Rees in November 1976 to deport two American journalists, Philip Agee, a former CIA agent, and Mark Hosenball, an investigative journalist, "in the interests of national security".

**T**he second was what immediately became known as the "ABC" case, the arrest, prosecution and trial of Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell under the Official Secrets Act. Aubrey and Campbell were journalists; Berry, an ex-British soldier who had worked in Signals Intelligence, believed he had a responsibility to uncover the level of state surveillance.

The eventual trial ended late in 1978 in what was widely seen as a defeat for the state and a moral victory for the three defendants.

Agee, who had worked with the CIA in Latin America had been closely watched by British security services from his arrival in Britain in 1972, and during the three years in which he worked on his book *Inside the Company*,

## SPIES PROTECTED BY "CIA" EXPULSIONS

The Labour government intends to deport the American citizen Philip Agee (a campaigner against the CIA) and Mark Hosenball (a journalist) on grounds that they are a threat to "national security".

Despite a mounting campaign in the Labour movement and opposition by almost 100 MPs, Home Secretary Merlyn Rees has refused to give any details of the evidence against them allegedly produced for him by the spies and workers of the secret services.

### NOT TOLD

Rees is using the "Star Chamber" provisions of the 1971 Immigration Act under which foreigners can be deported at a mere "national security" but



PHOTO: Chris Perkins, Reuters



In the 1970s the left resisted Labour's attack on press freedom

lifting the lid on the activities of the his former employer.

But what drove the British and American secret servicemen from anger to apoplexy was when Agee then turned to active campaigning to promote the book and the information it contained, throughout Britain and western Europe, from his home in Cambridge.

The final straw seems to have been his visit to Jamaica in September 1976, in the midst of the CIA's efforts to "destabilise" the social democratic government of Michael Manley. Agee confirmed in public meetings that the pattern of events during the stormy election campaign was typical of CIA operations, and named seven CIA operatives active in Jamaica.

Perhaps Agee was naïve or ill-informed: he did not appear to be aware that a CIA operation of this type in an ex-British colony would have required at least tacit involvement of the British MI6.

Although no details were ever given, and none had to be proved or tested in court, it seems that this intervention into British and US efforts to control the Jamaican government was what tipped the balance and persuaded Rees to invoke a clause of the 1971 Immigration Act to deport Agee on grounds of national security.

Hosenball's deportation was ordered on the same day in 1976. He had worked since 1974 on the staff of *Time Out* magazine, specialising in stories about the British and US security agencies.

In 1975 he and others had collaborated on an article listing 50 CIA agents based at the US Embassy in London. And in May 1976, working with Duncan Campbell, he had written a *Time Out* article *The Eavesdroppers* which was the first to detail the work of what was then the little-known GCHQ listening post in Cheltenham, key to the British Signals Intelligence operation (SIGINT).

The *Eavesdroppers* showed the scale of the interception and monitoring of military and diplomatic communications not only in Eastern Europe, but throughout much of the Third World. It also described the scale of the US National Security Agency and its bases in Britain.

**P**rodded into action by back-room briefings from MI6, MI5, the defence Intelligence Committee and other highly-placed reactionaries, Home Secretary Merlyn Rees obediently invoked the controversial "Star Chamber" provisions of the Tory 1971 Immigration Act to deport Agee and Hosenball. And, using the powers of the Act, he refused to tell the accused or anyone else any of the specific accusations against them.

Despite a vocal defence campaign, and opposition from almost 100 of his own back-bench MPs, Rees stuck to his guns. Agee and Hosenball were allowed to appeal, but only to a hand-picked team of "three wise men" – one of whom was former post office union official Sir Richard Hayward.

The Agee-Hosenball Defence Campaign attracted wide support – and its leaders in turn were seen as subversives, and immediately fell under surveillance from Britain's secret state machinery.

**C**ars and flats of leading AHDC activists were broken into, and financial records of the campaign showing supporters names and details were stolen. Among the Labour MPs concerned at the level of state harassment was Robin Cook, who was assured by the Home Office minister that "it has not been possible to establish a motive for the offences."

The high-profile campaign, and the details published in *The Eavesdroppers* drew the attention of John Berry, who had been posted as a soldier to one of GCHQ's listening posts in Cyprus.

He contacted the campaign, and *Time Out* journalist Crispin Aubrey thought his information was sufficiently interesting to arrange a meeting with Berry and with Duncan Campbell, co-author of *The Eavesdroppers*.

The meeting in a Muswell Hill Flat was arranged over the phone, with MI5 listening in. The meeting on February 18 1977 was watched, and all three men were arrested by Special Branch at the request of MI5: they were charged with offences under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, which covered receiving and communicating official information.

Despite the fact that this section of the Act was discredited, and that the Labour government had promised to reform it, Attorney General Sam Silkin rubber-stamped the prosecutions.

Indeed, Silkin went even further and agreed to charges being laid under the more draconian Section 1 of the Act, which is supposed to deal with spying, and which carries sentences of up to 14 years.

The ABC case was not to come to trial until the end of 1978: but there were farcical events in the meantime.

At the committal proceedings

in Tottenham in November 1977, the prosecution made great play of insisting on the anonymity of their key witness, identified in court only as "Colonel B".

The following issue of *Peace News* revealed that this was none other than Colonel Hugh Anthony Johnstone, and this was also published in the *Leveller* magazine and in the *NUJ* newspaper *The Journalist*.

The Attorney General slapped contempt of court orders on the three newspapers, but the mainstream newspapers and broadcasting media refused in any way to stand up for freedom of the press.

**A**pril's *NUJ* Annual Delegate Meeting in Whitley Bay saw a determined effort to name Johnstone, which included drawing his name in large letters in the sand opposite the conference hall with a push-chair.

Four Labour MPs then raised the stakes when they named the shadowy Colonel in the Commons, which in turn opened the door to coverage by the press.

The contempt proceedings in May found all three papers guilty of flouting a "decision" of Tottenham magistrates, and imposed fines of £200-£500 – despite the fact that the magistrates themselves had testified to giving no such decision.

The *NUJ* subsequently appealed to the House of Lords, which unanimously overturned the High Court decision, and strongly criticised Lord Chief Justice Widgery.

In September the first trial of the ABC defendants came to an abrupt end amid revelations of jury-vetting by the security services.

A fresh trial saw the prosecution criticised by Mr Justice Mars Jones for "very oppressive" use of Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act in a case which clearly involved neither spying nor sabotage. Under pressure the Attorney General dropped these charges.

Eventually Aubrey, Berry and Campbell were found guilty of breaching Section 2 of the Act: but the sentences for such an apparently serious offence were laughable. Berry was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for two years.

Campbell and Aubrey were given three year conditional discharges.

The prosecution had cost the Labour government more than £250,000, and served to put the name and function of GCHQ firmly on the public agenda.

It is this inglorious and cowardly Labour tradition of allowing themselves to be manipulated by vicious and reactionary secretive state bodies which now underlies Jack Straw's pathetically weak Freedom of Information Act.

The lessons of the ABC case are that journalists and campaigners must have the courage to stand up against bad law and secrecy – and that the establishment media, however radical may be their rhetoric in abstract, are the worst defenders of press freedom when the chips are down and the state "security" forces breathe down the editors' neck.

The prosecution cost £250,000, and put the name of GCHQ firmly on the public agenda

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## Remembering Paul Wozny

RUSKIN COLLEGE in Oxford have agreed to set up an annual student award in memory of Paul Wozny, UNISON activist and Socialist Outlook supporter, who tragically died last year. The award is based on the fund established after Paul's death.

The decision was announced at a small ceremony on Friday, 11th June, at Ruskin, at which Paul's mother Cecilia, sister Krysia, and brother Bernard were present, along with College officers.

Also present were close colleagues and friends Maire Arthur, (Hampshire UNISON Branch Secretary at the time), and UNISON member Graham Clifford. Representatives from the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON, in which Paul played a leading role, and *Socialist Outlook* were also invited.

Explaining the decision, family members emphasised Paul's eagerness to acquire knowledge. Paul was a passionate reader who believed that education and knowledge were essential tools for social progress. He was involved in so many issues that to give the money to one instead of another seemed churlish. It was more appropriate that individuals from a working-class background be given an opportunity to study.

It is obvious from the words of those present that Paul is greatly missed. His family are determined to do something to honour both Paul and his principles.

The rest of us can help by supporting the award fund. Please send contributions to: Ruskin College, Walton Street, Oxford. Specify that the money is for the Paul Wozny fund.



## SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

### Where we stand

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

Many more people recognise 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, feminist, 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 and oppressed. 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 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 - an alliance which respects their legitimate autonomy.

By building simultaneously revolutionary organisations in each country and a revolutionary International, we aim to guide and encompass the 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.

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

# Why Clinton was so ready to bomb Serbia

**BOB WOOD reviews**  
The Twisted Road to Kosovo, by Peter Gowan, in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* No 62

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changes in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War, it seemed that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation no longer had any role to play.

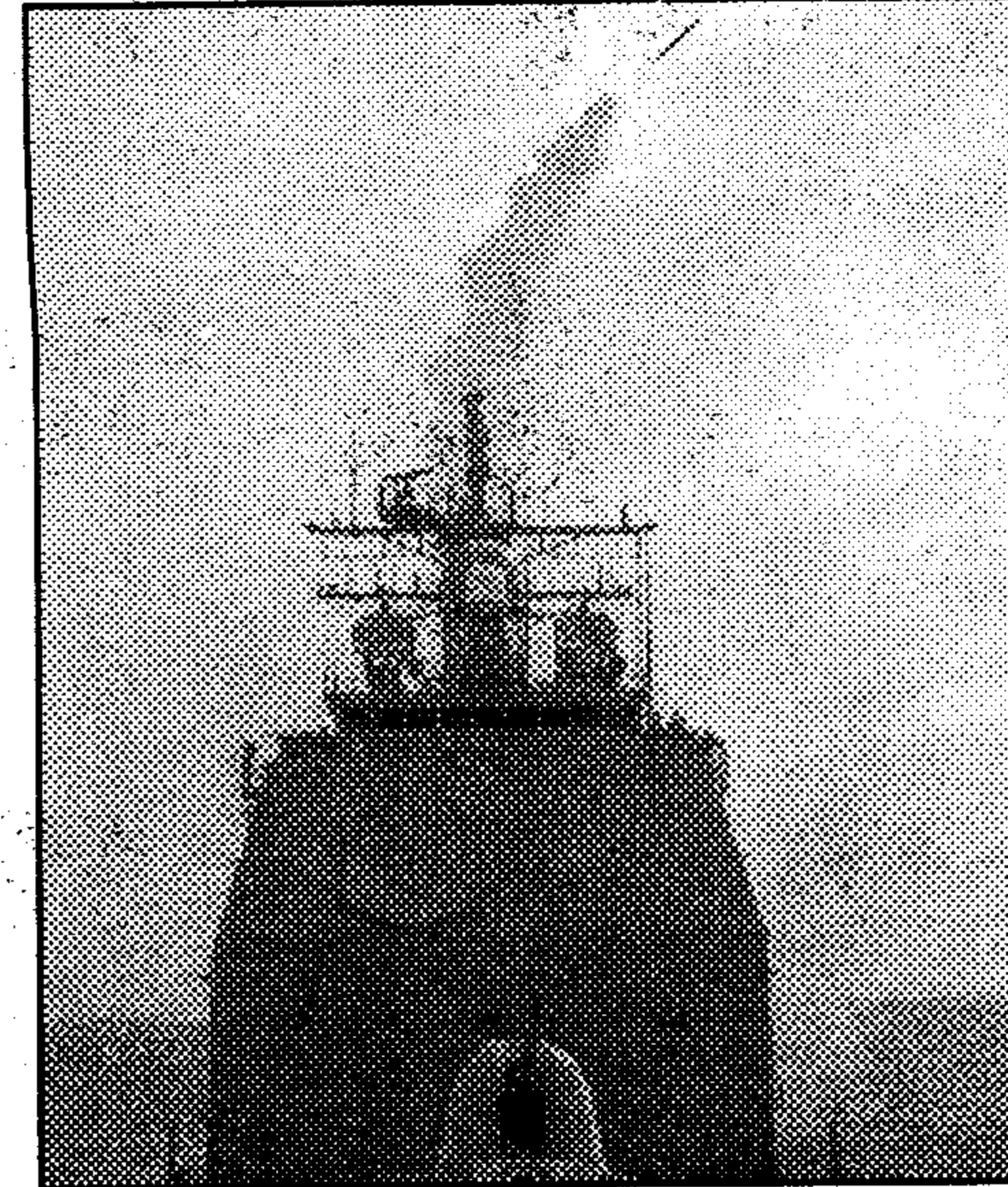
NATO's reason for being, the alleged threat from the east, no longer existed. Peter Gowan's analysis goes a long way to explaining why NATO has re-emerged to play a major role in the Kosovo war.

Finding a new task for NATO and re-establishing American control of Europe has been at the centre of American strategy for the last ten years.

In the aftermath of 1989, there were three possible scenarios for the immediate future of Europe, east and west, Gowan argues. First, it was possible to envisage a single Europe, stretching from Russia to the Atlantic, with a single security system. French President Mitterand favoured this solution, but lacked support from Germany and also faced the active hostility of the United States.

Secondly, the European Union could extend its influence eastward, combining the move to a single currency with an independent foreign and defence policy, making NATO redundant. Russia would be allocated its own sphere of influence in the east.

Or thirdly, using NATO, Europe could be brought back under American control. With the accession of Poland, Hun-



No risk warfare: a US Cruise missile is fired at Serbia from long distance

gary and the Czech Republic, NATO would act as the gatekeeper between western Europe and Russia.

By extending NATO first, the United States began to ensure the primacy of the Atlantic alliance over the European community. In conjunction with its extension, America needed to find a new aggressive role for NATO.

Gowan argues, convincingly enough, that events in the Balkans following the break-up of Yugoslavia can only be properly understood in the light of the determination of the United States to ensure that the project to transform NATO was successful.

In the early nineties, the US repeatedly scuppered European initiatives (in which David Owen played a leading part), by suggesting to the Bosnian government under Izetbegovic that by waiting they could get a better deal. In the event they prob-

ably got less, but importantly the agreement finally reached at Dayton was brokered by the USA.

Then, over Kosovo, clearly unacceptable demands were placed on Milosevic at Rambouillet, including free access for NATO forces to all parts of Yugoslavia, not just Kosovo. It does not seem to me to be stretching the truth too far to suggest that the war was deliberately provoked.

The Americans needed to tie western Europe firmly into NATO, not just in theory but in practice. The new

NATO has now been blooded.

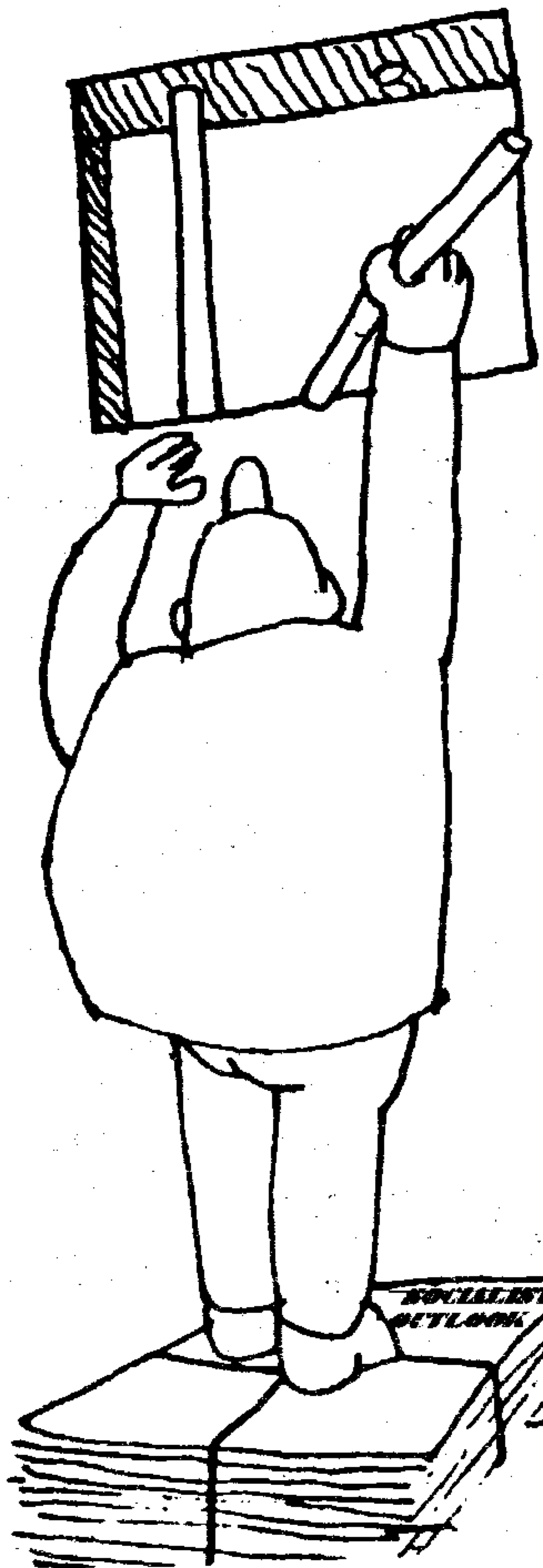
Gowan's argument is not without its weaknesses. He suggests that Serbia was targeted because Milosevic was opposed to the new global order and neo-liberalism. The privatisation of much of Yugoslavia's industry (remember Douglas Hurd's involvement as an advisor?) must make this doubtful.

On Gowan's own evidence, Milosevic is a familiar type in eastern European politics since the fall of the wall, opportunistically abandoning any residual lingering socialism, and playing the nationalist card.

But in peeling away the humanitarian veneer, to reveal the cynicism, duplicity and callousness of American imperialism beneath, Peter Gowan has done us all a service.

Individual subscriptions to *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* cost £12 for three issues. Write to LFEE, 30 Bridge Street, Oxford, OX2 0BA.

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# Socialist Outlook

## G7 debt relief fraud



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The majority of the world's poor live in India, Indonesia, Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico. None of these countries is affected by the debt reduction measures announced in Cologne.

The "cancellation of debt" agreed by leaders of the seven wealthiest countries will consolidate and even deepen the exploitation of the majority of the world's population.

The deal - endorsed by the British Labour government - has been widely condemned by campaigners. It is a recipe for increased misery and intensified repression across the world.

Only international solidarity and the mobilisation of the working class can stop the capitalist machine grinding more profits from the world's poorest people.

See **INSIDE**, page 15