

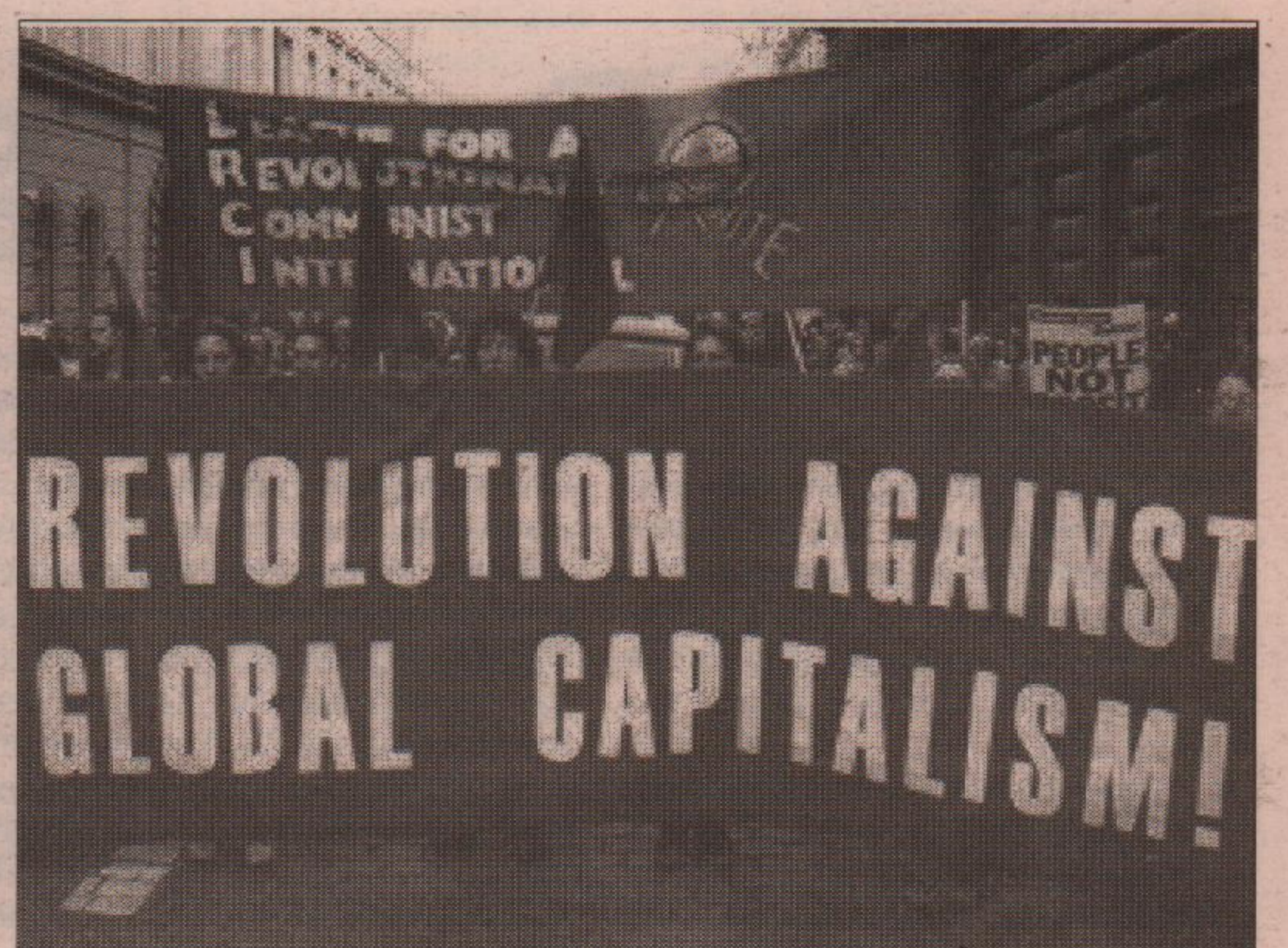
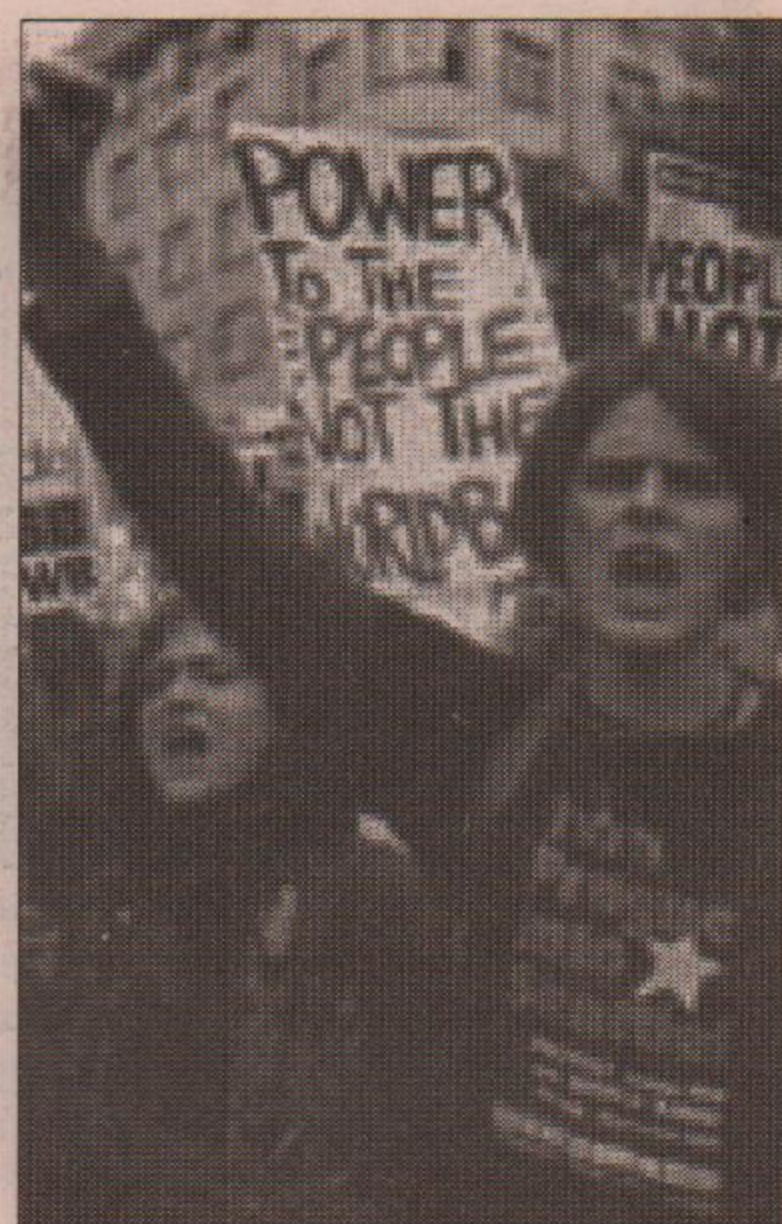
workers POWER

Report from
Melbourne S11
page 5



INSIDE	Nato <i>The enforcer of the new world order - pp 8 and 9</i>	Yugoslavia <i>A workers' alternative to Serb nationalism - p 10</i>	Fight sell-offs <i>Hospital workers take strike action against privatisation - p 12</i>	Fuel crisis <i>What is the socialist answer to the protests about fuel - p 14</i>
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Globalise this!



Build the anti-capitalist movement

● Special report from Prague pages 2 and 3; where to now? pages 6 and 7 plus more

THE BATTLE OF PRAGUE

Turning Prague into Seattle

ON S26 we did turn Prague into Seattle! Militant anti-capitalist, demonstrators laid siege to the congress centre where IMF and World Bank delegates were meeting.

The *Washington Post* observed:

"In scenes reminiscent of protests outside a meeting of the two institutions in Washington in April, delegates from 182 countries found themselves trapped for six hours inside a downtown convention centre as demonstrators blocked all exit routes."

The *Los Angeles Times* acknowledged:

"For a time late Tuesday afternoon, protesters achieved their goal of blocking access to and from the meeting hall for the opening session of the three-day gathering. Delegates eventually left by special subway trains, but evening plans for many were disrupted."

A glittering gala performance planned for delegates at the Czech State Opera had to be cancelled because the building was surrounded by over a thousand demonstrators while the approach road to it was blockaded by other protesters.

Faced with reports that hundreds of delegates had made unexplained exits from Prague on the night of S26, IMF head Horst Koehler declared, "there was no fear." Yet World Bank President James Wolfensohn announced that he felt the shared "feeling of stress" from the street battles.

The conference of 14,000 bankers and bureaucrats packed up their bags and left a whole day early – one-third of the time planned.

IMF spokesman David Hawley claimed: "It has nothing to do with the protests." But his lame excuses for the early cancellation of the conference excuses were undermined by World Bank Vice-President Mats Karlsson, who admitted that the decision to end the meeting early "probably is also prompted by the demonstrations yesterday."

If it was true that, unlike the WTO meeting in Seattle, they had "finished



their business" this was because the decisions of the IMF and World Bank had already been made by small committees of top bankers.

The WTO is a forum where sovereign states decide their trade and tariff policies. The IMF and World Bank are dominated by a clutch of top US and Western European bankers and finance ministers.

The congress of 14,000 delegates is there simply to ratify decisions that have already been made. One of the "reforms" promised by Wolfensohn, as a direct

result of the battle of Prague, is to drastically reduce the number of delegates.

Demonstrators confronted heavily armed riot police on all sides of the Congress Centre. Some even reached the doors of the huge fortress-like building

Police and government estimates claimed that there were 10-12,000 protesters. The figure was probably more than 15,000 people – from all over Europe and the Czech Republic – not far short of the 20,000 the organisers, INPEG, had expected. If the obstacles

facing demonstrators crossing the frontiers are taken into account this was no mean achievement.

Delays of four to 18 hours were imposed on many trains and buses from Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, France and Britain. Protests by Czech Communist Party MPs and left-wing Euro MPs eventually proved effective in getting many through.

But the delays, and the rumours that the frontier would be closed, undoubtedly meant that thousands more did not make the journey.

Given these conditions, a remarkable mobilisation from all over Europe took place. The demonstrations seriously disrupted and cut short the IMF and World Bank's timetable, keeping the delegates nervously within the walls of the Congress Centre whilst battles raged outside.

Reports by the world's media make this clear. The sounds of the battle were audible within the centre and delegates nervously gravitated to TV screens to watch. Bolder spirits went onto the terrace to watch the battle below.

S23: Raising the red flag

THE MOBILISATIONS against the IMF and World Bank began with a 2,000-strong demonstration on Saturday, S23. The biggest contingents were from the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI) and the international youth organisation World Revolution, the Italian *Rifondazione Comunista* and the Greek KKE.

There were also official delegations from the KSCM, the former Communist Party in the Czech Republic and the KSM, formerly the Communist youth organisation, the French railway union of SUD, the German engineering workers' union IG Metall, the US dockers' union, ILWU, and branches of the NUT and Unison in Britain.

The rallies at the beginning and end of the march both heard LRCI speakers calling for internationalism, solidarity and a working class offensive against the global capitalist institutions.

The demonstration then set off through Prague, red flags and banners everywhere, flying in the faces of the secret police who stalked us throughout. As we marched, groups of Czech workers and youth – at first surprised and then delighted – joined the demon-

stration. Prague's historic Wenceslas Square reverberated to the chant "one solution – revolution", leading *Le Monde* to write that our slogan, shouted in many languages until we were hoarse, was the "unifying slogan of the march".

Those who doubted the wisdom of trying to appeal to the Czech workers' movement through the S23 march were proved wrong. INPEG, the main organisers of S26, had called a separate demo for S24 to appeal to the independent unions in the Czech Republic. This march was smaller than S23 and did not attract the workers in any numbers.

After years of Stalinism the Czech workers' movement is weak and fragmented. But by trying to mobilise workers for S23 we played a vital role in beginning the regroupment of the workers' movement. Indeed at a follow-up meeting for trade union activists on S24, called by the LRCI, the presence of Czech miners, who had recently been on strike proved that the workers' movement can be rebuilt and revolutionaries are in the front ranks of doing this.

The overwhelmingly labour movement character of the S23 demo was far from accidental. It was the fruit of a year's work by the LRCI, and especially its Czech section, the SOP, to build an

explicit working class orientation into the anti-IMF/World Bank movement.

The SOP first raised the call for a demonstration against the imperialists' talkfest a year ago, after J18 in London, but before Seattle. At first, the only positive response came from the groups that later formed INPEG. Attempts to interest the former Communist organisations were rejected because of their leaders' fear of antagonising the Social Democratic government by encouraging "foreigners" to demonstrate in Prague.

However, within the youth organisation and unions organised in the KSCM-dominated federation there was greater enthusiasm. Under the impact of Seattle and the increasing support internationally for the anti-capitalist movement, the KSCM began to change its position.

On the other hand, SOP's willingness to draw in the "former communists" was violently opposed by some anarchists within INPEG which, with the support of the SWP's sister organisation in the Czech Republic, refused to admit the SOP to this "united front".

This sectarianism, reflected in Socialist Worker's refusal even to report the S23 demo, despite the fact that several

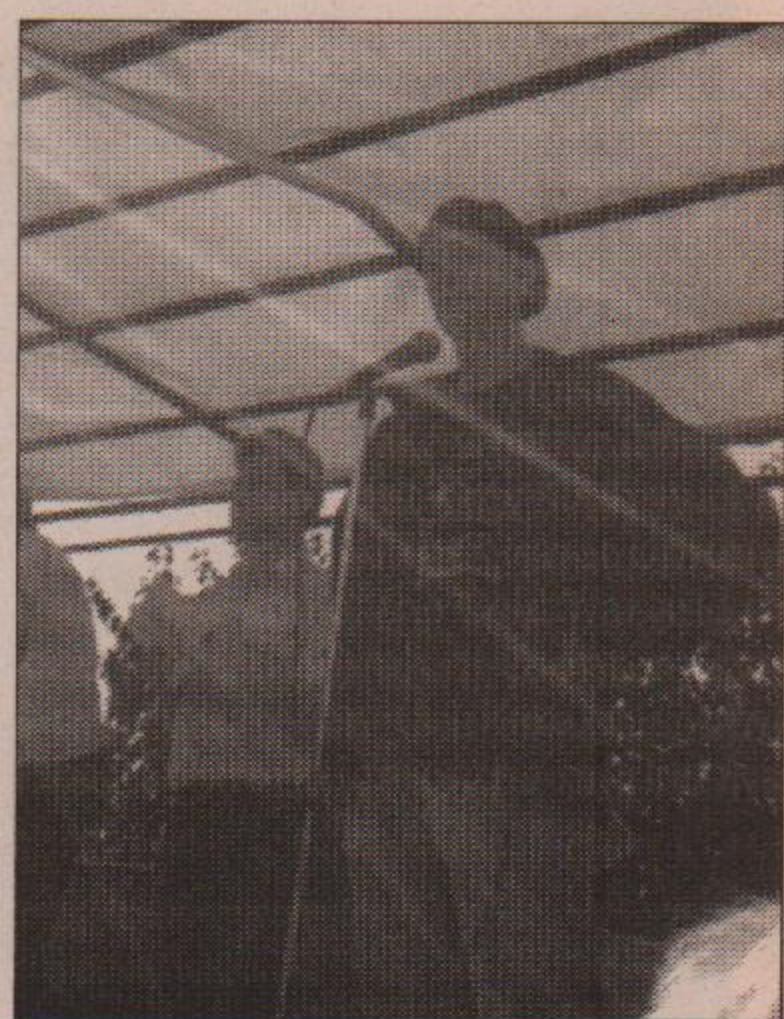
leading SWP members were present on it, is an obstacle that has to be overcome.

Although it did not prevent the demonstration being a considerable success, it obviously did create an unnecessary barrier between different currents within the anti-capitalist movement.

The fact that the demo was endorsed by the KSCM and KSM undoubtedly played a role in convincing unions and parties outside the Czech Republic to mobilise their members to take part. Revolutionaries should make the most of all such opportunities because they can help to break down the national centredness that is all too common in the labour movement around the world.

To stand aside because of the political errors, even crimes, of various leaders is to leave those leaders in complete control of the workers in and around their parties. It is not only politically incompetent but dangerously one-sided – the social democratic leaders are every bit as capable of both errors and crimes.

But, if S23 showed the continued importance of the "former communists" it also showed something else. Despite having the support of some 20 per cent of the Czech electorate according to latest polls, the KSCM and KSM did



Speaker from SOP addresses S23 demonstration

not mobilise for the demonstration.

Whether this was because they could not or they would not, those members who realised the importance of the demonstration need to demand answers and draw lessons about the parties they are in and the kind of party that is needed.

For the LRCI and Workers Power, S23 was the first attempt to take the initiative internationally in calling for a concerted labour movement mobilisation. It gave us the chance to measure our own strengths and to develop as an international organisation. There will be many more such mobilisations in which to put the lessons into practice.

The siege of the IMF

INPEG'S PLAN for S26 was a three-pronged march (Pink, Yellow and Blue) to surround the congress centre at every point of approach. To fulfil this plan effectively what was needed was a disciplined, co-ordinated central organisation. To get this you need a democratic and inclusive united front that takes decisions, and whose constituent parts then carry these decisions out.

Unfortunately, INPEG stood for organisational chaos masquerading behind a quest for "consensus". Its model of hundreds-strong convergence centre meetings, supposedly made up of affinity groups' delegates, simply did not work.

The Black Block anarchists and German Autonomes had no intention whatsoever, of following INPEG's non-violent strategy. From the outset they used a variety of weapons including volleys of cobbles and Molotov cocktails to break the police lines.

Taking INPEG's blue route, they broke through the lines of non-riot police and stormed up the river side of the Vysehrad hill on which the congress centre stands, before being halted and eventually repulsed by water cannon, gas and stun grenades, and lines of heavily armed riot police.

The courage of these protesters in the face of the state forces was remarkable. But their "autonomous" approach meant that they had no call on other parts of the demonstration for reinforcements at the decisive moment and no communication with other wings of the march. Indeed, the Black Block's courage is matched by their sectarian arrogance, decamping from the "Blue Cluster Group" meeting on the evening before the demo, just as the meeting started.

Such an approach is not dictated by "security considerations". Security can be maintained within a democratically accountable command structure (though the INPEG centre was wide open to police infiltration). It is pure sectarianism, motivated by a political philosophy that sees the battle with the cops as an end in itself rather than as a means to a political goal.

Even the left political organisations and non-black block anarchists, and radical environmentalists rapidly abandoned the "consensus" painfully arrived at the night before. A large part of the left (especially the International Socialist Tendency contingent, led by the British SWP) and the trade unionists who had been mobilised – such as a 300-strong contingent of workers from Norway – marched towards the high level bridge leading directly to the congress

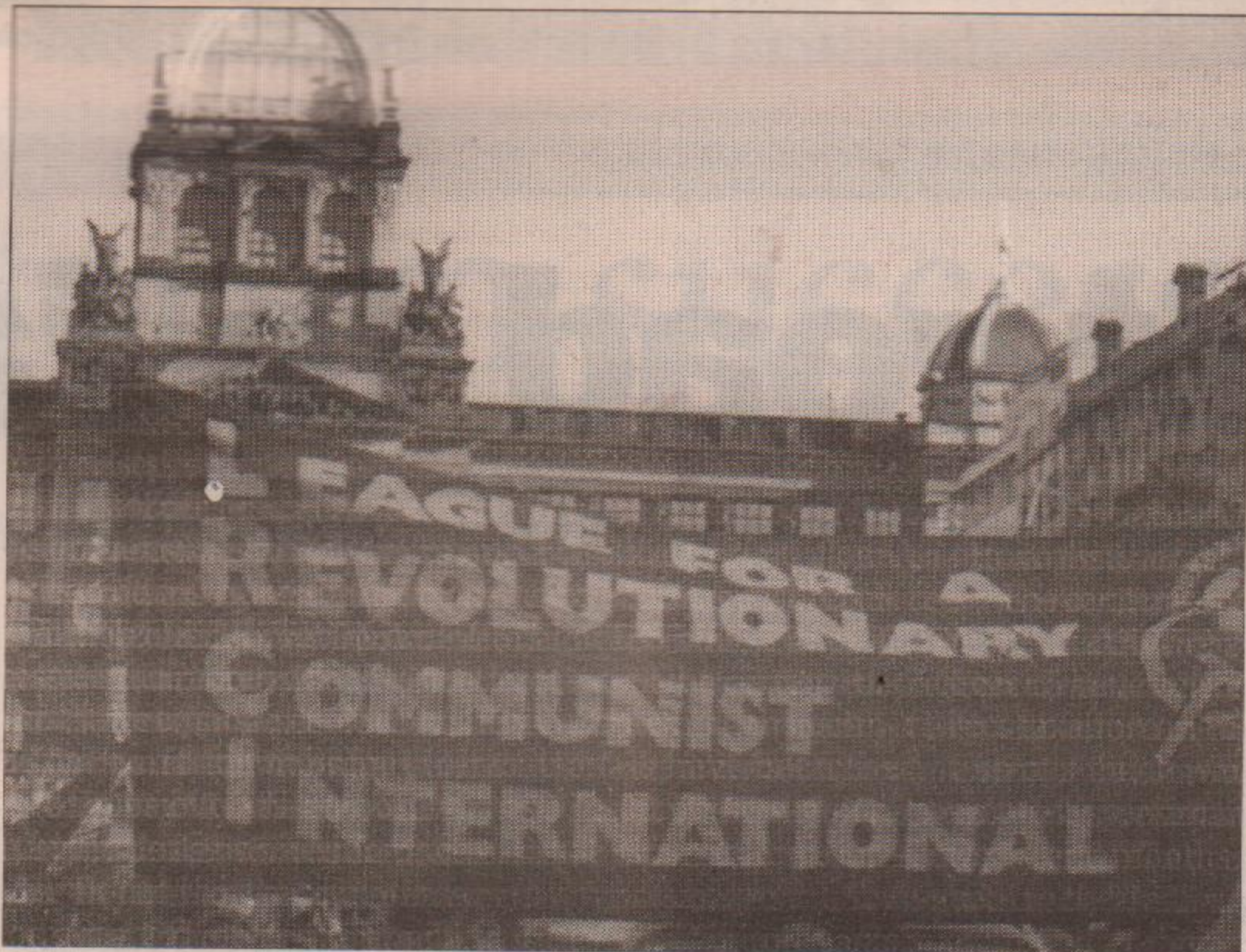
centre which they reached around mid-day.

They followed the INPEG "yellow route", rather than the pink route that they had agreed to the night before! Meanwhile a section of the "Pink" demonstration, numbering several hundred, detached itself and began a longer march round to the back of the Vysehrad hill. It was clear that INPEG's plan – with no stewards, no co-ordinators and no command structure to carry out – was breaking down. Confusion followed because at the bridge a battle had commenced.

The Italian Ya Basta group – in heavy duty protective clothing – tried to demolish the metal barricades which blocked the bridge and then to push the riot cops back across it. This proved impossible. The cops in full riot gear and gas masks were backed up by armoured personnel carriers and water cannon.

Ya Basta, facing black jacks, pepper spray and a warning gas attack, appealed to the left to stay put and back them up to prevent the riot police from launching a full scale attack on them. The police were clearly considering such an attack giving the march two warnings to disperse.

Given that battle had commenced at the bridge the left and the trade unions – including the LRCI and Revolution contingents – responded to Ya Basta's appeal. We formed up to occupy the area in front of the bridge, parallel to the Ya Basta column, and prepared to confront the expected police charge. When this did not immediately materialise, the left, in conjunction with Ya Basta, launched a second attempt to break the police lines using metal barricades and weight of numbers.



Demonstrators confront police, September 26



This did turn into a frustrating stand-off. However, it was necessary to block the main entry to the congress centre – the shortest and quickest route for the delegates back to their hotels.

It later became clear that the smaller contingents of the "pink route" had found a lightly guarded route up the easterly and more gentle slopes of the hill. Television coverage showed these demonstrators – some of them dressed as fairies – rushing headlong into a line

of ordinary cops (of course like all the Czech police armed with batons and side arms) and putting them to flight.

They got up to the level of the congress centre, terrifying some delegates trying to leave, before riot cops hit them with tear gas and drove them back down the hill. Another contingent got round to the back of the congress centre and briefly entered its doors.

In all this there was little or no co-ordination and the plans, such as they were, were not followed. However, the "battle of Prague" was not in essence a defensive one but a serious attempt by all involved to surround, besiege, and if possible, reach the congress centre. Given the numbers of defenders and the enormously favourable terrain for defence, the sheer courage and endurance of the demonstrators were truly admirable.

Nevertheless, INPEG spokespersons quickly "condemned the violence" of the demonstrators in an unprincipled manner. In fact it was no surprise that faced with the tear gas canisters, water cannon, stun grenades and pepper sprays the liberal, Gandhian strategy of NVDA broke down, as it always does.

It is true that later on the night of S26 the trashing of the symbolic Mercedes Benz, McDonalds and KFC outlets in the centre of Prague served no use. Our aim as revolutionary com-

munist is to abolish private property not inflict superficial damage on it. It would be a step in this direction to organise the super-exploited workers of McDonalds rather than to smash up their workplaces.

Worse, the damage to Czech shops later in the evening had no political function, except to alienate the population of Prague and give a weapon to those who wish to make the whole demonstration centre on "demonstrators' violence".

Of course even such petty vandalism melts into insignificance compared to the violence inflicted on millions by the policies of the IMF and WB. But we must not use this as an excuse and fail to learn the lessons of Prague.

In place of INPEG's chaotic application of "consensus" – which actually meant "do what you want, when you want" with no democratic accountability – we need a centralised stewards' structure for all such demonstrations. With such a structure plans can be made, adjusted and executed in a co-ordinated and effective manner. Deploying our forces to try and reach our objectives becomes an organised effort rather than being left purely to luck or accident.

And the key to moving towards such demonstrations lies in a campaign to win the organised workers' movement to the cause of anti-capitalism.

Winning over the workers' movement

PHYSICALLY STOPPING the IMF/World Bank meeting was always going to be difficult given the venue's location: on a very high hill defended by 11,000 police and 5,000 troops. But the disruption on S26 and the cancellation of the third day of the congress was a real victory for the protesters.

In Prague the thousands strong delegations from Greece, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia and Britain and the hundreds from France, Spain, Turkey and the USA, made this an historic occasion – the first pan-European, militant, anti-capitalist demonstration.

The forging of real comradeship between workers and youth from many different countries, organisations and political traditions was tremendous.

But one important difference with Seattle was the virtual absence of the NGOs and the official Trade Unions. Representatives of the NGOs roundly condemned the violence and clearly hated the influence of the anarchists and communist left.

"It was mayhem in the streets," said Andrea Durbin, director of international programmes for the Washington-based Friends of the Earth:

"This kind of behaviour does discredit this form of protest because people who want to demonstrate peacefully can't."

The fact that it was robo-cop police who perpetrated most of the violence is overlooked by these fair weather friends of the anti-globalisation movement.

The real problem of Prague was the way the main umbrella organisation,

INPEG, built for S26. They concentrated on the NGOs and the radicalised youth of the anti-globalisation movement but ignored the labour movement in Europe. Even in their own terms this was to neglect a major part of the "Seattle coalition" – the trade unions – who made up half the protesters in the US mobilisation.

Worse, INPEG was sectarian towards both the revolutionary communists and the Stalinists. The LRCI section in the Czech Republic was bureaucratically excluded from INPEG and obliged to build a separate "STOP IMF" committee and organise the S23 demo without the support of INPEG. To their shame the Czech sister organisation of the SWP, itself a major part of INPEG, failed to protest or oppose this exclusion or even

to criticise the anarchists for it.

This sectarianism and crude anti-communism on the part of much of the Czech anarchist movement actually let the Stalinist-dominated unions off the hook while failing to mobilise the independent unions at all.

The Czech Communist Party and their affiliated unions failed to mobilise any organised mass contingents for any of the protests.

The official unions made a formal declaration of protest against the IMF but kept clear of the protests, as did the main union federations of the EU, with the notable exceptions of the Greek TUC and the militant Turkish union federation Disk.

The absence of the unions at an official level reflects the extreme right-wing

social democratic leadership of most of them and the fact that "their" parties are in power in most EU countries.

The absence of the sizeable organised contingents of the CGT, the CGIL, the TUC or even of left unions like IG Metall, Sudrail and Cobas accounts for why the scale of this mobilisation did not match Seattle. With an extra 10,000 organised workers on the streets we could have stopped the congress on S26.

The LRCI was proved right: the presence of organised workers is an essential part of any anti-globalisation movement. Militant tactics by youth and the left alone are not sufficient. The workers' movement must be won to anti-capitalism and the anti-capitalists must bend every effort to winning over the workers' movement to our cause.

THE BATTLE OF PRAGUE

For a global revolution

Speech by *Clare Heath* of the LRCI addressing the September 23 demonstration against the IMF

A new Iron Curtain has descended on Europe. On the borders of the Czech Republic, people who wish to demonstrate peacefully, people who have committed no crime, are being turned back, refused entry, deported.

From this demonstration we must demand that they are allowed in, with no conditions. We call on Czech workers to protest: for every one person stopped on the border another 10 people must take their place.

The real troublemakers in Prague are the thousands of delegates at the IMF conference. They have come here from all over the world to ensure that the next 10 years are ones of increasing poverty for the many and of increasing luxury for them and their kind.

They are here to plan social cuts, privatisation, unemployment and lower wages for working class people, for youth, for women and for peasants, across the globe.

The IMF imposes a brutal economic policy on the world. For Eastern Europe, Africa, East Asia and Latin America they demand "structural adjustment": it means cut public spending, privatise the economy and work in sweatshops. Now the World Bank's "poverty reduction program" has replaced structural adjustment. All that means is "plan your own starvation".

It's all designed so that the big US, Western European and Japanese corporations can buy up anything profitable for next to nothing. The same economic programmes – the same mega corporations – are wrecking the environment, preventing the treatment of AIDS, preventing investment in healthcare and increasing inequality.

The staggering debt of the poorest



countries means that they have to pay huge interest to the banks. In the past two years alone, sub-Saharan Africa – the poorest part of the world – has made a net transfer of \$1 billion to the IMF!

They say there's no alternative. We are here to prove there is: we call on everybody to join our demo on Tuesday.

The millionaires' newspapers and TV stations mock the new alliance of trade unionists, human rights activists, environmental and anti-debt

campaigners. They say we are incoherent.

WRONG! We are demonstrating unity in action against a common enemy – GLOBAL CAPITALISM.

More and more people around the world are saying things have got to change. On the streets of Prague we are demonstrating that working people are not going to rely on politicians and campaigners to change things for us: we are going to do it ourselves.

In the last year alone massive protests and general strikes have rocked Argentina, Ecuador, South Korea, Nigeria. Three months ago in India, 30 million workers took part in the biggest general strike in history.

These protests were aimed at IMF-sponsored austerity measures. Some were directed at visits by the IMF and World Bank representatives themselves.

In Seattle, eco-warriors united with steelworkers, teamsters and dockworkers against the brutal tear gas attacks and baton charges of the police.

But where do we go from here?

The anti-globalisation movement must unite with the workers' movement. Only the workers have the common interest and the collective strength to replace this vicious system.

The working class movement must become anti-capitalist in its goals, ideas and actions.

Capitalism is global – we need a global resistance. We need a new revolutionary workers international.

We say:

■ Cancel debt: no delays, no conditions, no compensation.

■ Health, education and welfare for all – tax big business to pay for it.

■ Abolish the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forum.

■ Massive aid to compensate developing countries for the plunder by the G7 mega-states. Tax the multinational corporations to fund it.

■ Women must have equal pay, equal rights and an equal part in the struggle against capitalism.

■ Halt the market 'reforms' that are restoring capitalism and deepening inequality in the former Stalinist countries.

■ Save the planet: stop global warming through a worldwide plan for sustainable energy production

■ Stop the major powers from bombing their enemies into the Stone Age: scrap NATO and all imperialist military alliances.

They say we are incoherent, that we know what we are against but not what we want. **WRONG!** We are fighting to destroy capitalism and the only way to do that is by a global socialist revolution. That means we want a democratically planned economy to meet the needs of the majority, run by workers' councils.

We are not going to get there by consultations and dialogue with the World Bank and IMF leaders.

The only thing that challenges their rule is direct action. That is why we want this week of action in Prague to launch the fight for a global shutdown on May day next year.

We must mobilise for a one-day general strike and marches in every city against the symbols of corporate power. Shut down global capitalism on May Day!

Capitalism cannot be reformed: One solution – Revolution!

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The reformist road to failure

Non-Governmental Organisations' attempts to reform the IMF and World Bank are doomed, argues *Colin Lloyd*

ON THE eve of anti-capitalist protests in Prague, the world's finance chiefs were supposed to be in conciliatory mode. But not Stanley Fischer, second in command at the IMF. Railing against opponents of globalisation, he observed: "We are in the process of becoming one world. Or at least that is how it felt to me recently as I sat on the banks of the Zambezi, eating breakfast and watching the Republican Convention on CNN."

Most of the local inhabitants would probably have been glad of just breakfast. In Zambia – whose GDP per head has fallen from \$438 to £300 over the past 25 years – half of all five year olds are malnourished or stunted. Average life expectancy is just 40. But Zambia pays the West on average \$217m a year in interest on debt, and will not get debt relief until it complies with a World Bank "poverty reduction strategy".

Opposition to crippling debt was one of the issues that united the protesters converging on Prague. There were eco-warriors, anti-sweatshop campaigners, anarchists, Trotskyists, UK hospital workers fighting privatisation, and Czechs angry at the way their living standards have been eroded since the 1989.

On the streets this diversity was something to celebrate. But to mainstream commentators, "incoherence" was our biggest crime.

At one level, the charge of incoher-

ence reflects the fact that we just don't fit the stereotypes of people like Stanley Fischer. How can we be against globalisation but not be economic nationalists? How can we be anti-capitalists but not Honecker-style Stalinists? How can we picket Nike shops but wear Nike trainers?

But at another level the charge of incoherence has to be taken seriously. In the months since Seattle, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been hard at work on strategies to turn the IMF/World Bank into democratic forum for global economic justice.

The Bretton Woods Project, an NGO dedicated to IMF/World Bank reform, says: "IMF governance structures must be reformed to give developing countries equal opportunity and power to engage in and direct the IMF."

Worthy objectives but impossible. The World Bank and IMF are central institutions for a world system where economic growth relies on the plundering of poor countries' wealth, low paid and insecure work, and a systematic war on welfare. The NGOs' reform proposals are open to charges of naivety and incoherence because international financial institutions cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the poor.

The dead-end character of reform strategies has been demonstrated by ructions within the World Bank itself. In June, Ravi Kanbur, an economics pro-

fessor hired to write the Bank's Development Report, stormed out after he was ordered to change the initial draft. Kanbur suggested that globalisation was not uniformly good for the poor and tried to incorporate some of the suggestions made by NGO representatives during a consultation exercise. The draft was rewritten by US treasury secretary Larry Summers, to ram home the central message: globalisation, privatisation and public spending limits are good for the poor.

These ructions within the IMF reflect a wider debate that is about more than different ways of reforming the system – it is about reform or revolution.

After the Pinochet coup in 1973, the debate focused on the power of the unelected state – the generals and the secret police – to block the wishes of an elected left-wing government. Today that problem is overlaid by the global impact of the IMF/World Bank. These institutions have the power to dictate economic policy to governments across the globe. What they dictate is more privatisation, lower spending on health and education, lower commodity prices, the free movement of goods and capital, and penalty for the majority of the world's population.

When we say "Destroy the IMF" and reject the strategy of dialogue and piecemeal reform it is because the project of reforming global capital is a Utopia. That

will not stop us from fighting for partial and immediate demands – like the dropping of all debt without condition, and massive reparations from the IMF/World Bank to the third world countries they have plundered. But a UK government committed to meeting the needs of working class people would be expelled from the IMF.

The post-Seattle protest movement is teeming with good ideas to change the world: a tax on currency movement, a world plan to stop global warming, replacing the car with a free, safe public transport system. But none of this can be achieved as long as the profit system survives.

And who can get rid of it? The answer will provoke yawns of boredom among the writers of personal columns in the press: it's the organised working class.

Since Seattle, when US steelworkers broke ranks with their union leaders and joined the protesters in street battles with the police, organised labour's role in the anti-globalisation movement has been building.

The union leaders see our protests as a useful lever to secure a place at the bargaining table and on the conference podium. But thousands of rank and file workers joined the anti-capitalist demo in Melbourne on September 11 and thousands from across Europe went to Prague. They wanted an end to low-pay, insecure employment, to attacks on

welfare, and relentless privatisation.

After Prague there are two ways the movement can go – amply symbolised by the two demonstrations that kicked off the week of action on Saturday 23 September. Three hundred hand-picked NGO delegates wended their way up the steps to Prague Castle, to meet Vaclav Havel and World Bank chief Jim Wolfensohn, over tea and biscuits.

Meanwhile, union delegations from as far as Sweden, Greece and Poland marched in the opposite direction – on the IMF conference itself.

Those whose strategy, behind the radical words, amounts only to dialogue will find the IMF/World Bank prepared to make soothing noises. Stanley Fischer, for one, believes that "some who argue for stronger labor standards and better environmental standards" are only asking for "better globalisation", and should be listened to.

Those who set themselves the task of dismantling the sick social order that condemns 73 per cent to poverty in a country like Zambia were not listened to. We were fired at with grade-A teargas, specially imported for the occasion.

But every baton charge and every teargas rocket will be testimony to the fact that ours is the only coherent alternative to global capitalism: global revolution, a globally planned economy and the world's wealth in the hands of those who actually create it.

Andrew Janson, of Workers Power Australia, reports on the build up to and aftermath of the mass blockade of the World Economic Forum in Melbourne on S11

Masses march on WEF

NEARLY 30,000 people attended the blockade against the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Melbourne from September 11 to 13. These protests were the most significant mobilisations in Australia since the Vietnam Moratorium of the 1960s.

The non-violent blockade of the WEF, was met with a vicious response from the police under the direction of Victorian Labor Premier Steve Bracks.

In the aftermath, many debates and discussions have erupted about the lessons of S11. The key questions of campaign organisation and leadership are central.

These questions have been raised in several forms – consensus decision making versus voting, the role of affinity groups in mass action, spokescouncils versus mass meetings, the role of protest marshalling – and were largely reflected by the existence of two organising groups: the S11 Alliance, and its subsequent split S11 AWOL (Autonomous Web Of Liberation).

The Alliance set itself the task of organising the blockade and developing a co-ordinating apparatus in the form of marshals, with the view that decisions during the three days would be made by mass meetings.

AWOL concentrated more on support functions including organising the Legal and Mobile Medical Teams, puppet making, organising safe convergence spaces and activist workshop weekends. AWOL participants argued for protesters organising themselves to blockade through affinity groups facilitated by a

spokescouncil to which each affinity group would send a spokesperson.

AWOL took its organising methods from Australian environmental and peace movements while at the same time being heavily influenced by the Seattle and Washington organising models. The Alliance, made up of socialists and a diverse range of activists, took the approach of many trade union, social justice and student campaigns, aiming to organise a centrally co-ordinated action.

While the Alliance handed over organisation of the blockade to the marshals and the Rally working group after its mass meeting, the AWOL

spokescouncil co-ordinated the distribution of affinity groups (organised into clusters) to different sections of the blockade. The organising methods of the two groups had the potential to complement each other.

However the tension between a highly co-ordinated mass action with a centralised structure and a less centralised action based on networking between affinity groups remained.

On S11 this tension was overcome by the sheer size and success of the blockade action. On that day 15,000 protesters initially prevented two thirds of the WEF delegates from entering the conference, forcing police to get dele-

gates in by boat and helicopter. By the end of the day a third of the delegates had still not been able to make it through, causing the organisers to threaten cancelling the remaining two days if the Victorian Government didn't "get tough on protesters".

The majority of police attempts to break pickets were easily repelled by the sheer number of protesters. Every time it was clear that the police were massing in numbers to attack a particular picket, there would be an almost spontaneous swarm of protesters rushing to strengthen it. Every picket was buoyant and the feeling of solidarity between protesters was high.

From the second day onwards, as tensions grew within the ranks of the marshals and between marshals and protesters, the divide between the two organising structures grew.

A feeling grew amongst protesters that the marshals were not to be trusted. The serious consequences of this were evident on the Power Street picket when a marshal trying to warn protesters of an impending attack by hundreds of riot police was ignored.

Soon after, an estimated 500 police in riot gear, attacked the picket of 200. This picket sustained the highest number of injuries of any picket over the three day period.

What the events of S11-13 show clearly was the need for the maximum co-ordination of forces through a democratically appointed apparatus that is linked to the pickets and the masses of protesters.

Workers Power had consistently argued that whatever the differences between the AWOL and Alliance methods of organising, what was needed for the Blockade to be successful was maximum unity in action.

On the Monday this occurred because of the sheer size of numbers and the absence of riot cop thugs on the streets. But as soon as the action was tested on the Tuesday, when clear leadership and maximum co-ordination was needed, divisions in the campaign became more obvious and led to mistakes.

Nevertheless the success of S11 was there for all the world to see, and that is something we can begin to build on.

VICTORIAN PREMIER Steve Bracks has come under fire from the Trade Union movement and the ranks of the Labor party for his hearty endorsement of the police violence against the S11 to S13 protests.

Bracks condemned S11 protesters as "un-Australian" adding that they "deserved what they got". He highly commended the job done by police and was even planning a BBQ for the 2000 strong force that guarded the WEF in Melbourne. Bracks has since had to cancel this event in the wake of rising opposition to his actions.

The Victorian Trades Hall Council on September 15 unanimously condemned the government's actions. Meanwhile the premier's own branch in Williamstown overwhelmingly voted (29 to 2!) to condemn "the state government's statements endorsing police violence against protesters at the World Economic Forum". Other Branches have followed suit, many have resigned from the ALP in disgust

and many others have been calling up Labor Party offices swearing never again to vote for the ALP.

Now, with protests planned for the State ALP Conference in late October, Bracks can be sure that this issue will not go away quickly.

What is also becoming clearer is the wider implication of S11 for the ALP nationally - the unions are disheartened with it and new forces are growing to its left.

On November 11 activists will be gathering to discuss the question of an ongoing alliance of the left in Victoria. Workers Power, other left organisations, Friends of the Earth and key sections of the Trade Unions all plan to be there.

While it is too early to tell to what extent S11 and the new global movement is facilitating a break from the ALP, it is true that this movement is throwing up a real test for Labor: Whose side are you on?

REVOLUTION

Youth forum success

ON S25 over 130 young people held a global youth gathering in Prague. The meeting was called by WORLD REVO, the independent youth organisation in political solidarity with the LRCI.

Richard Brenner, facilitating, stressed from the outset that this gathering belonged to its participants. All contributions were translated into Czech for the numbers of young people there who could not speak English; other translations were done individually or in small groups. As well as the Czech Republic, participants came from Slovakia, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Britain, the USA and Australia.

The meeting discussed the lessons of the success of the demos on 23 and 24 September when World Revo and the LRCI had lively contingents bristling with REVO flags, chanting anti-IMF slogans in many languages plus the repeated "One solution – REVOLUTION!" Hundreds of copies of a Prague 2000 edition of Revolution were sold and thousands of leaflets distributed.

Both the capitalist and the independent media had picked up on the Revolution-LRCI contingent, with its yellow speaker van and its crowd of young people. Speakers from Czech Revolution and the LRCI section, SOP, emphasised the need for disciplined contingents both against the police and also (unfortunately) against some "anarchists" who had tried, unsuccessfully to exclude us from the start of the INPEG demo on S24.

British, Swedish and German Revo

members all agreed and amplified on the tactics needed to make this self-defence effective. They said that we must all learn chants in each other's languages. It was good that when bystanders and journalists asked "which country do you come from?" we could surprise them by saying, "from many countries – we are an international!"

A speaker from the KSCM, the youth organisation affiliated to the Czech Communist Party, praised the role of SOP and REVO in working with them, both to initiate and build for the demo on S23. He heavily criticised the leadership of the CP, who were now claiming all the credit for the march, when in fact they did not support it till a few weeks before and even on the day mobilised few party members for the demo itself.

People spoke from two Turkish organisations, the Freedom and Solidarity Party and the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist. The former stressed the importance of understanding the roots of globalisation in imperialism and the exploitation of the third world and the second the need for international solidarity between workers and youth in countries like Turkey, where there was much repression of the left and the unions, and those in western Europe.

One woman speaker from the youth organisation of the Dutch CP complained of the anti-communism of INPEG and many parts of the "left". Comrades replied that there was no anti-commu-

nism or sectarianism in REVO and that we would work alongside anyone who wanted to fight capitalism, racism and state repression. A member of the International Bolshevik Tendency urged unity in action between communists on the S26 demo.

Richard Brenner took up this theme. Tomorrow he said a large section of the anarchists would be known as "the Black Block". Whatever their courage in fighting the police we did not agree with their adventurist tactics and lack of discipline. He proposed that we should form a Red Block and invited all who considered themselves revolutionary socialists or communists to join it.

One older comrade, Dave Stockton of the LRCI, said that the present anti-globalisation movement reminded him very much of the movement in the 1960s and pointed out how this movement of young people, both students and workers, had helped overcome the reactionary period of 1950s and brought a whole new revolutionary spirit into the labour movement.

Groups of young people from countries all over the world could and should get in touch with World Revo now, discuss with it and join it. World Revo will work alongside existing youth organisations like the comrades of the KSCM. Youth organisation could blaze a trail for what was most clearly needed in the twenty-first century if we were to abolish global capitalism and imperialism – a new revolutionary communist international.

POLICE BRUTALITY

Free the S26 prisoners

IN THE aftermath of the S26 demonstration, from about 8.00pm, the Czech police began mass arrests on the streets of Prague.

Almost 1000 people were picked up over the next 24 hours or so. Few were doing anything at the time and few were charged with any offences. This was clearly a case of revenge and intimidation.

Reports from released prisoners say that Czech citizens (the majority of those arrested) were treated with even greater brutality than foreigners and women worse than men. More than 60 per cent of those released report being subjected to heavy beatings, women to sexual harassment and black prisoners to racist abuse.

A black prisoner was "hog-tied" for several minutes and repeatedly struck on the head and back by police with truncheons.

One woman being interrogated by police "fell" from an upper floor window, breaking her spine.

INPEG issued a statement on September 29, which cited Paul Rosenthal from Seattle, who was released Thursday morning from the Olsanska jail in Prague after forty hours:

"What is happening inside the Czech jails is more than frightening. People have no rights, they are being beaten severely, they are disappearing. Women are being forced to strip in front of male guards and perform exercises. People with serious medical problems have been denied help. What kind of democracy is this?"

Protests have taken place outside Czech embassies across Europe. In London a campaign has been launched by the S26 Collective after pickets for three days outside the Czech embassy at 26, Kensington Palace Gardens W8.

Pickets will continue on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 4-6pm. An appeal for funds to help prisoners has been launched. Donations should be made out to Mobilisation for Global Justice and sent to c/o S26 Collective, Prisoners Support, PO Box 30549, SW162WD.

There will be a fund-raiser on Saturday 28 October. Ring 020 7793 1468 for details.

The entire European labour movement should bombard the Czech government and President Vaclav Havel with protests demanding the immediate release of ALL prisoners and an independent investigation into all cases of police brutality and violation of human rights.

THE BATTLE OF PRAGUE

The lessons of Prague

PRAGUE WAS a historic event – the first truly pan-European, militant, anti-capitalist demonstration. It disorganised and cut short the meeting of the 14,000 bankers and bureaucrats from 182 countries.

It sent a powerful signal to all the workers and peasants around the world struggling against IMF austerity measures and privatisation – you have comrades in Europe, just as Seattle showed you have comrades in North America. Let us use the new media and communications which globalisation has given us against their masters. Let us unite the oppressed and exploited of the “three worlds” and co-ordinate our struggles against our common enemy, global capitalism and imperialism.

In Prague the discussions, the networking, the unity in action, the comradeship experienced by workers and youth from many different countries were inspiring. Everyone could feel it. It was written on people's faces.

The spread of knowledge of conditions facing workers, and the rural and urban poor in Africa, Asia, the former Soviet Union, China and Latin America is now greater than at any time since the 1970s. Moreover, it is not limited to viewing them as victims but as fighters, as

teachers, as allies for workers and youth in Europe and North America.

In Prague, thousand-strong delegations came from Greece, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia, Britain and hundreds from France, Spain and the USA. Smaller numbers from Russia, Poland and other Eastern European countries made it through the enormous obstacles of travel costs, visas and state harassment.

Of course, there were serious failures too. The most important of these was the failure to draw in the forces of workers organised in the trade unions – with the exception of Greece. Declarations of support and small delegations did come from significant unions in Turkey (Disk), Russia (Zaschita), the USA (Longshoremen), Canada, South Africa, Bangladesh, etc.

But the most striking thing was the total lack of active support from the major unions of Western Europe, though groups of rank and file activists, and local and workplace banners were present in significant numbers.

We also failed to draw in the Czech trade unions and workers' parties. Again individuals and small groups were in evidence and Czech youth clearly rallied to the S26 demonstration. The mere fact that two-thirds of those arrested on 26 and 27 September were Czech citi-

zens testifies to this. But without the support of major trade unions the sheer scale of Seattle – 40,000 – proved unachievable. And unless we draw the mass of unionised workers into the anti-globalisation movement it will fall victim to its internal differences and to state repression.

OTHER DEFECTS lay in the weakness of the organising model of INPEG. This centred on the model developed by US radicals in Seattle. It draws its inspiration from anarchist notions of autonomy and consensus as well as from the campaigns launched by radical NGOs and trade union activists. This model sees the individual activist as the basis of everything. These activists can combine freely into affinity groups of around five to ten individuals. And these in turn can combine their forces into clusters.

The tactic that this type of organisation centres on is non-violent direct action (NVDA). Basically this amounts to unlawful blockading and obstruction, occupation of property etc. The dominant forces in INPEG were anarchists, American NGO radicals and British RTS eco-warriors.

What they could agree on was Gandhi-style mass civil disobedience, organ-

ised by affinity groups and decided on in meetings of their representatives. These meetings could reach agreement only by consensus, not by majority voting because the majority has no right to bind or oppress the minority.

Clearly, INPEG hoped that most demonstrators would turn up days in advance and be drawn into the formation of affinity groups, would learn NVDA tactics and ideology and adopt non-violence. This proved utopian.

Its petit-bourgeois character hits one in the eye from the start. Individualistic, moralistic, utopian. Most demonstrators – even those who considered themselves anarchists – came in groups, whether recently formed campaigns to mobilise for Prague, or pre-existing political or trade union organisations. NVDA broke down the moment it became clear that police lines could or had to be broken, that the violent attacks of the robo-cops could only be resisted by force.

All INPEG's preaching about non-violence did was to prevent some demonstrators being adequately prepared for the inevitable violence. All the “non-leadership” structures meant was that the actions were badly co-ordinated or unco-ordinated. This entire method was shown to be vastly inferi-

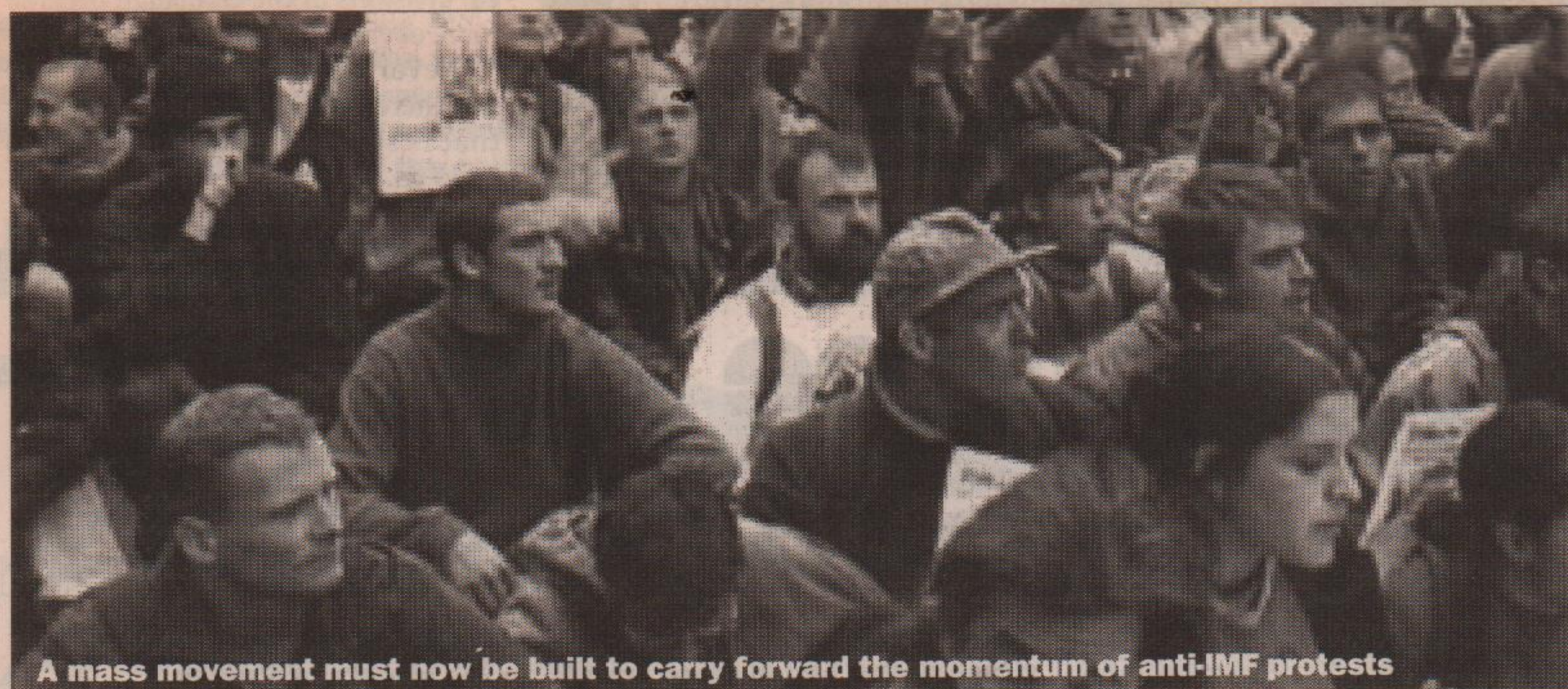
or to the methods of the united front, developed in the early twentieth century by the revolutionary workers' movement.

This is based on the principle: “march separately, strike together”; no confusion of banners (programmes or principles) but clear agreement about “who to strike, when to strike, how to strike” (Trotsky's words). Communists and anarchists, reformist workers and trade unions do not have to agree with each other's slogans. They simply have to agree to unite their actions for the given objective – in this case stopping the IMF/WB meeting.

At the centre of such proposals for common action is the need for organised self-defence units, capable of defending a mass demonstration against police attack and in the right conditions taking the offensive against the obstacles placed in our way by the state.

Only if the revolutionary left vigorously advocates this and puts it into practice on a preliminary basis can the disorganising and disruptive influence of anarchism (and police provocateurs) be combated. Those “revolutionaries” who refuse to do this because it is too advanced will only hand the movement over to the Black Bloc anarchists or to the pacifists.

Where now?



A mass movement must now be built to carry forward the momentum of anti-IMF protests

PRAGUE WAS part of a movement against capitalist globalisation and its international institutions which was launched on J18 in the City of London, reached global significance in Seattle and has seen major events in Washington and Melbourne.

Its parallel in the so-called south is the wave of anti-IMF general strikes and mass mobilisations across Latin America, Africa and Asia. Prague shows that this movement is still moving forwards, into new areas and continents.

We have to put all our efforts into keeping this movement growing and spreading. Wherever the vultures of global capitalism – political and military – gather they should be met by huge and militant protests exposing them and running them out of town. Let's harry and harass them so that no country offers to host their gatherings.

The task now is to build up a mass movement. We need to take the message of Seattle, Melbourne and Prague into the schools, colleges, workplaces and trade union branches. In October and November we should organise teach-ins, actions, conferences, to draw in larger and larger numbers.

Locally and nationally we need to build organising committees – united fronts of political organisations, trade

union branches, anti-debt and ecological campaigns – to develop the movement. We should target symbols or institutions of the power of the mega-corporations, Nato etc. We should campaign against the sweatshop conditions imposed by the big brand name companies like Nike and Gap.

We need to mobilise support for the struggles of workers, peasants and youth around the world. Alongside organising action we need to discuss – democratically and without bans and exclusions – the different strategies and alternatives within the movement.

The anti-globalisation movement's key task, as the LRCI has emphasised from the beginning, is to help direct the masses of radicalised young people to the only class in society which can really stop capitalism in its tracks and destroy it – the working class.

But equally this movement must erupt within the old, bureaucratic workers' movement itself, helping to restore its historic anti-capitalist character.

One way to do this is to fight for a global day of anti-capitalist action on May Day 2001. In countries where May Day is not a public holiday this will mean a one-day general strike. Where it is a public holiday it will mean transcend-

ing the normal May Day parades of the bureaucrats – drawing in the youth, undertaking militant mass actions against the institutions of corporate greed and profit.

In the first instance we can organise revolutionary youth across the continents to take up this challenge. That's why in Prague the LRCI and REVOLUTION issued an appeal to organised youth movements, to groups of young people wanting to do so now, to sign this appeal, to contact us, to combine our actions (see facing page).

We also need to organise militant, anti-bureaucratic, internationalist elements in the trade unions. For this reason the LRCI has launched an initiative, with other working class forces, to combat merger mania, privatisation and other attacks.

The lesson of Prague, as of Seattle, is not to be daunted by the power of the corporations, of the international financial institutions, of the military alliances grouped around the single superpower.

The lesson is to think big, think boldly and to act with real determination to put these ideas into effect. There is a world to save, a world to win and millions of people are ready and waiting for the word to do it.

WHY THE WORKING CLASS?

THE IMPORTANCE of the working class to the anti-globalisation movement is clear in the semi-colonies, those countries which suffer directly from the IMF and World Bank's diktats.

■ **ARGENTINA:** The newly elected centre-left government introduced anti-labour laws suggested by the IMF. When these laws were passed by congress on 27 April 2000, thousands of demonstrators picketed leading to violent clashes with the police in which more than 30 people were injured and about 50 arrested.

In May IMF-prescribed cuts in the social security system led to violent demonstrations in the Salta region. The protesters set fire to public offices before being subdued by armed riot police, leaving dozens injured and many arrested. Rural communities blocked roads and organised protests.

On 31 May protests against the IMF austerity plan to raise taxes, reduce social spending and cut salaries, culminated with 80,000 people taking to the streets.

In June, a 24-hour general strike was supported by more than 7.2 million workers. On 29 August teachers and scientists went on a one-day strike to protest against a 12 per cent cut in wages in line with IMF austerity measures.

■ **NIGERIA:** The IMF has demanded an “acceleration of the implementation of structural reforms” by which it means the deregulation of the oil sector and the raising of petrol prices. The newly elected president, Obasanjo, has obediently carried out the IMF's diktats.

In June 2000, when the Government pressed ahead with the IMF-advised fuel price rise, workers responded with a massive general strike. Oil workers were joined by public sector and transport workers, and Lagos port and highways were blockaded and domestic flights disrupted. The government was forced to slash the price rises and apologise to the people.

■ **BOLIVIA:** IMF structural adjustment reforms led to water prices in Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city, rising by as much as 200 per cent. This provoked widespread mass protests. President Hugo Banzer had to declare a state of emergency and mass arrests of the leaders but only by revoking the concession to the multinational controlling the city's water supply was the movement brought to an end.

Similar mass struggles erupted twice this year in Ecuador. Mass strikes and protests have rocked India and Bangladesh

All of this proves that the workers, the poor peasants and the urban poor of Asia, Africa and Latin America are waging real and militant struggles against the IMF. They are not simply the victims of global capitalism but its gravedigger.

The global anti-capitalist movement, including that in Europe and the US, must form the strongest possible bonds with these forces, support their struggles, defend their leaders and militants against repression, raise material aid for them, mobilise here against the multinationals that exploit them.

But as well they must learn a striking lesson from each of these countries – the social power of the working class, its general strikes and protests, its defiant militancy, is the key to hurling back the plans of the capitalist overlords. That is why we say, turn to the working class in every country, and win the workers to a renewed struggle against global capitalism.

For a global shutdown of capitalism on 1 May 2001

THE 21ST century has opened with a great wave of resistance to the institutions of global capitalism. Anti-debt campaigners, eco-activists, trade unions, peasant land movements – wherever there is resistance, there is a growing minority who want to fight not only the symptoms of capitalism, but the disease itself.

The protests in London J18, Seattle N30, Washington A16, Millau in July and Melbourne S11 show:

● New layers of activists against globalisation are ready to act in concert with organisations, with devastating impact.

● International co-ordination is now easier and more effective than ever before. Capitalism has globalised itself – but in the process it has globalised the forces of opposition.

Global capitalism has created global anti-capitalism.

And our rulers instinctively recognise the power of this threat to their control. That is why their international meetings now take place not just behind closed doors but behind a ring of steel.

The global anti-capitalist movement must speak for all the peoples of the world:

● For the Third World, which faces gross indebtedness to Western banks, underdevelopment, starvation, super-exploitation and cruel austerity.

● For the former “communist” countries, which – with the restoration of the capitalist system – face the abolition of state welfare provision, privatisation, the rise of nationalism, criminal gangs and mass unemployment.

● For the rich, industrialised countries where, while a tiny elite live in unimaginable luxury, hundreds of millions face insecurity, inequality, racism, militarism and pollution.

The movement must build on the alliances that have brought us success so far. In Seattle and Millau, trade unions representing workers from industrial and service sectors of the economy marched alongside peasants, activists and youth. But that's just the start: the anti-capitalist alliance needs to go beyond “summit sieges” – though these are important for exposing the crimes of the system. We need an action plan to replace capitalism with a classless society.

The same academics, journalists and politicians who tell us that there is no alternative to the market economy insist that the working class is a thing of the past, a disappearing social layer whose organisations have failed for good.

IT IS A LIE

As global capitalism forces the pace of industrialisation in developing countries it has created a working class on every continent, numbering hundreds of millions. The organised workers are a powerhouse of resistance.

The last year alone has proved this beyond doubt. In India, in May 2000 the biggest general strike in history took place, against the International Monetary Fund's demand for more austerity and cuts despite hundreds of millions living in desperate need. In Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Argentina and China mass strikes are no longer aimed just at the local bosses but at the ultimate enemy: the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forum.

In the USA – at the heart of the internet economy – 85,000 telecoms workers took strike action, defied the law, sent flying pickets... and won.

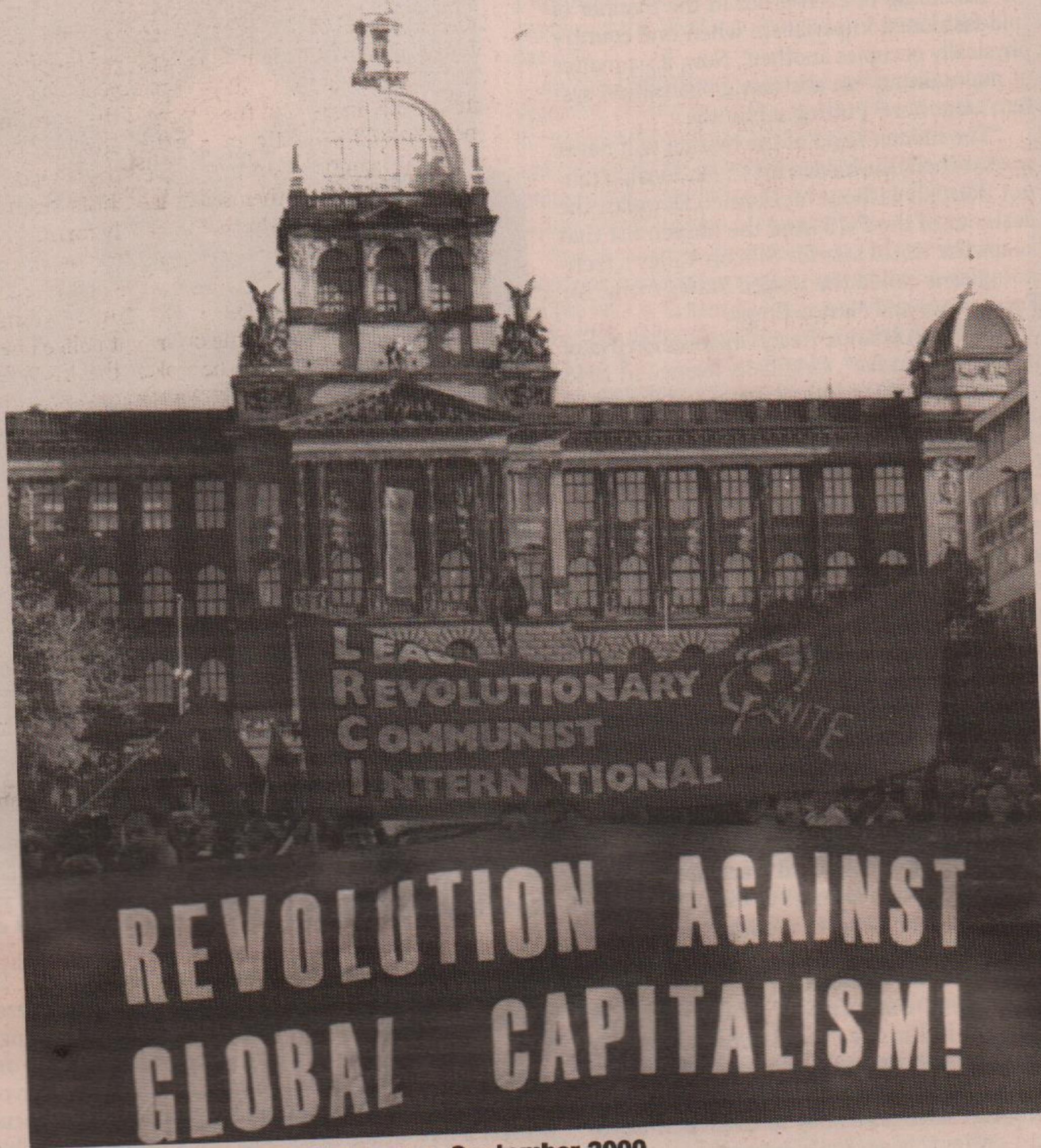
The giant corporations of the “new economy” cannot escape the fact: no workers = no internet and no e-commerce.

Mass action, with the working class at the centre, is the key to winning the struggles of today. Working class power is the key to a future free from poverty, exploitation and war.

The anti-capitalist youth can bring to the working class movements an unequivocal hostility to the global system. The working class can bring to the anti-capitalist movement its solidarity, its power, its mass character, its high levels of organisation and discipline.

We must use the breadth and variety of this worldwide movement to generalise everything that is effective, energetic, militant, imaginative

workersPOWER



LRCI marches against IMF, Prague, September 2000

and infused with hope. And we must reject everything that is exhausted, conformist, bureaucratic, narrow, self-serving and filled with despair.

The task is clear: to turn the anti-capitalist movement decisively towards the working class – and to make the workers' movement anti-capitalist.

But the present leadership of the workers' movement is at best sporadically engaged with anti-capitalist protest: they see direct action as a weapon to force the employers to negotiate – at worst the union and party bureaucrats side with the capitalists against us.

The majority of the leaders of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities, socialist parties and trade unions are intimately tied to the capitalist system. We will hear impassioned pleas for moderation and compromise from this layer of go-betweens who rightly sense that they will be dispensed with once class divisions are abolished for good. All they want today is a place at the negotiating table – and their support for protests that put them there has to be understood in light of that.

GLOBAL AIMS

Our experiences of campaigning under different national conditions can help us to develop a truly global strategy for resistance. How can we do this? By coming together to define our goals and our means. Our goals should be:

■ Cancel the entire debt owed by nations to the banks: no delays, no conditions, no compensation.

■ Health, education and welfare for all – paid for by punitive taxes on corporate profits and the wealth of the super-rich and by confiscating the factories, businesses, funds, real estate and technology patents of the corporate giants.

■ Abolish the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forum.

■ Massive aid – free, with no strings attached – to compensate developing countries for the plun-

der by multinationals and the G7 mega-states. Tax the multinational corporations to fund it.

■ Root out inequality through redistribution of wealth – and a relentless challenge to all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, gender and sexuality.

■ Halt the market reforms that are restoring capitalism in Eastern Europe, the former USSR, China, Vietnam, Korea and Cuba. For working class democratic socialism based on the rule of workers' councils.

■ Save the planet through a planned global shift away from the burning of fossil fuels and nuclear fission towards sustainable forms of energy production.

■ Stop the major powers from bombing whole nations into the Stone Age by scrapping Nato and all imperialist military alliances.

■ A democratically planned economy in which society's resources are owned by all, matching prod-

ucts to needs through mass electronic communication and popular control.

■ A world federation based on solidarity and co-operation in place of competition, nationalism and war.

WE'RE MAKING HISTORY

The capitalists are ashamed of their history, which they conceal and distort at every opportunity. But we can be proud of ours – it is a record of tenacious struggle against exploitation and oppression in every country and in every form.

The heroism and agony of the last hundred years speak directly to us today:

■ Capitalism cannot be reformed out of existence through partial constitutional measures – the exploiters' state apparatus will be used ruthlessly to repress serious challenges to private property. It must be broken up through mass revolutionary action.

■ A socialist society without class divisions cannot be constructed unless the mass of working class people determine their own economic and political priorities. Capitalism can exist without popular working class democracy – socialism cannot be built without it.

■ There is no “national” road to socialism: only international action, guided by an international strategy, can beat the global capitalist menace. Socialism in one country was always a delusion. No country can beat global capitalism on its own – nor can socialism be imposed by one country on another on the tracks of tanks.

■ Only through socialism can we end racism, genocide, women's oppression and the oppression of young people, lesbians and gays.

ORGANISE!

The next steps for our movement:

■ Unite the anti-capitalist activists and youth with the worldwide working class movement.

■ Make Tuesday 1 May 2001 a worldwide shutdown: with a one-day general strike and protest marches in every major city aimed at the symbols of corporate power.

■ Build an international, anti-capitalist revolutionary youth movement.

■ Link workers fighting closures, privatisation, low pay and unemployment.

■ Build a New International – a world party of socialist revolution, relying on the fullest international democracy and unity in action.

The all-pervasive culture of global capitalism is founded on the myth of individualism. The billionaires pray that the chase for individual survival will stop us fighting for a better future.

But there is more to life, more to humanity, more to history than this.

Capitalism is an invisible barrier that separates us from each other and our collective interest.

Let's tear it down and build a classless society, so that human history can really begin!

■ League for a Revolutionary Communist International

Send your message of support to:
paper@workerspower.com

For more on the global shutdown on 1 May 2001 and the struggle against the IMF and world capitalism check out www.workerspower.com and www.destroyimf.org

Nato: the hidden fist

Last year Nato celebrated its 50th anniversary with a win over Serbia.

Keith Harvey charts how the United States administration transformed Nato from its Cold war buffer in Europe to enforcer of its global new world order

THOMAS FRIEDMAN, one of the main columnists of the *New York Times* said in March this year that the USA is the country that benefits most from globalisation of trade and investment. As a result it has to take the main responsibility for sustaining it, even if not in the manner of "old-fashioned imperialism when one country physically occupies another". Now, it's a matter of maintaining "an abstract globalisation system". But how? Putting it bluntly:

"The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist... McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) is this "hidden fist". Originally formed in 1948 as an alliance of the United States and European powers, it was designed to deter a supposedly "bellicose" USSR from attacking member states. But with the Cold War won in the late 1980s, what was Nato to do?

If Europe no longer depended upon the USA to defend it against Russia then how could the USA insist upon its military presence and leadership in Europe?

At first Nato diplomacy issued soothing noises to the pro-capitalist leadership emerging in Russia, who were in need of support by imperialism against the Stalinist forces within. They even declared: "We have no aggressive intentions and we commit ourselves to the peaceful resolution of all disputes. We will never in any circumstances be the first to use force."

This strand of post-Cold War Nato thinking led eventually to a number of initiatives in the 1990s designed to try to mollify Russia's pro-imperialist rulers and convince them that Nato was not a threat to them.

The Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was launched in December 1994, grouping the members of Nato and the ex-Warsaw Pact together with the other European states as a body to reach pan-European collective security agreements along lines favoured by Moscow.

But the OSCE was never intended to replace Nato. Indeed, during the early part of the first Clinton administration (1992-94) when the anti-western nationalists and Stalinists appeared to strengthen their hand against Yeltsin, Clinton decided that Nato must be rebranded and rearmed to secure US interests.

Saddam Hussein had already provided an excuse for this in August 1990 when, as if on cue, he invaded Kuwait. Thus was born the first of several "rogue states" that could threaten the West's vital interests, and whom only the USA had enough power to defeat. It was during the Gulf War early in 1991 that George Bush proclaimed the advent of a "new world order" maintained and controlled by Washington.

At its Rome summit in November 1991 Nato decided officially to stop restricting itself to the defensive posture laid out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (1949). It sanctioned "out of area" interventions when the USA decided it was necessary to secure its interests.

In consequence, the Rome declaration announced that the conventional armed forces of Nato member countries were going to "be given increased mobility to enable them to react to a wide range of contingencies, and will be organised for flexible build-up, when necessary, for crisis management as well as defence."

The Danish foreign minister outlined the tasks which the CJTF might be called upon to deal with: "Historically based mistrust and friction between ethnic, religious or national groupings, aggressive nationalism, social disruption and uncertainty in light of fundamental economic reforms, illegal migration, drug trafficking and organised crime, and environmental and ecological threats."

The rhetoric of "rogue states" was useful when it came to justifying the USA keeping Nato together. But the usefulness of Nato to the USA lay elsewhere. The redefined goals of US policy



Nato tanks and troops impose the new world order in Kosova

were spelt out straightforwardly in a 46-page Pentagon document entitled Defense Planning Guidance of 1992. The Pentagon paper stated that: "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival... First, the US must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order that holds the promise of convincing potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interests."

"We must account sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership

Ex-National Security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski put it more starkly: "For America, the chief geo-political prize is Eurasia". The three pronged strategy for securing US interests involves: "To prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together."

The scenarios seen as most dangerous, to be averted at all costs in this titanic programme to divide and rule, are "a grand coalition of China, Russia, and perhaps Iran", "a Sino-Japanese axis" and "either a German-Russian collusion or a

"McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

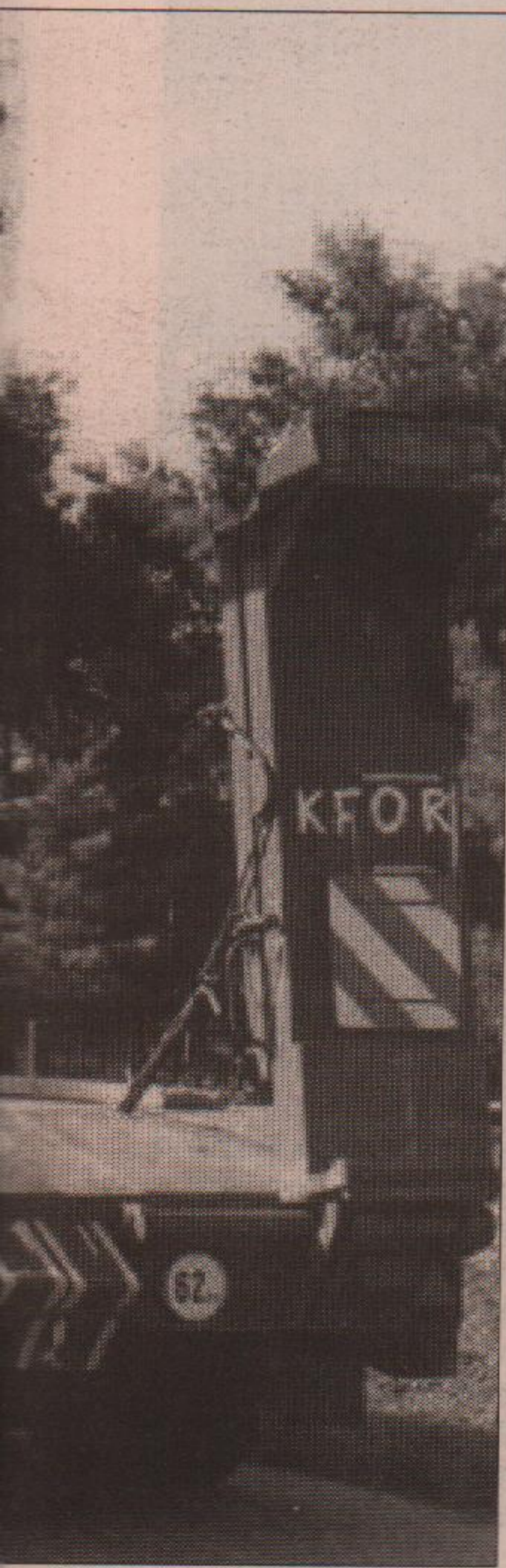
... Finally, we must maintain the mechanism for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.

"It is of fundamental importance to preserve Nato as the primary instrument of Western defence and security as well as the channel for US influence and participation in European security affairs... We must seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements which would undermine Nato."

Franco-Russian entente".

The vassals to be kept dependent are the European and Japanese allies. Europe is "America's essential geopolitical bridgehead on the Eurasian continent"; Japan, lastly, is a "world-class power being simultaneously a protectorate". It should not be pressed to assume a larger geopolitical and security role, but confined to the status of "a much more powerful and globally influential equivalent of Canada."

st of globalisation



The barbarians who have to be prevented from coming together are Russia and China.

The series of Balkan wars between 1992-99 provided another catalyst for the reshaping of Nato. Clinton adviser Kaplan was frank about what was at stake:

"With the Middle East increasingly fragile, we will need bases and fly-over rights in the Balkans to protect Caspian Sea oil. But we will not have those bases in the future if the Russians reconquer south-east Europe by criminal stealth."

In short, the US oil multinationals want to control the flow of oil to the big European market.

The simple way to get Caspian oil is via a pipeline southward through Iran or further north through Russia. But both options would evade US control.

The preferred US route, a pipeline from Azerbaijan to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan has been rejected as too costly. Turkey has vetoed massive oil-tanker traffic through the Bosphorus on ecological grounds.

That leaves the Balkans. The US administration would like to build a pipeline across the Balkans. Bechtel, a major US construction firm, would be first in the queue for the contracts and for this reason former Bechtel executive and Reagan administration Defense Secretary, Caspar Weinberger, was a leading supporter of Nato intervention into Kosova last year. Bechtel has already obtained major contracts in Tudjman's Croatia.

Naturally, the wars in the Balkans could not be conducted under the banner of naked economic interest. Other, "humanitarian" reasons were discovered. The ideology of the humanitarian war did not emerge for the first time in Kosova last year. It had been an ideology long in preparation in the post-Cold war era.

The idea of a humanitarian intervention arose in the 1990s out of the increasing involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Third World crises. Medécins Sans Frontières, founded in the wake of Biafra crisis in Nigeria in the 1970s, originated a more aggressive and politicised style of intervention compared to the practices of Western governmental and international aid agencies.

Its founder, Bernard Kouchner, initially a

member of the French Communist Party, became in the 1970s a key figure in the group of disillusioned ex-leftists, who rallied to the Mitterrand's Socialist Party. Kouchner himself served as a minister under both Mitterrand and Jospin, before, appropriately enough, being appointed the West's proconsul in Kosova after the war.

In the 1980s the NGOs used a succession of disasters, chiefly in Africa, to compete for public support. The NGOs' dependence on media – and especially TV – coverage to secure attention encouraged a depoliticised interpretation of the causes and solutions of humanitarian crises.

And the need to show results in order to prove their worth to Western public and private donors led the NGOs to assert what came to be known as the "Kouchner Doctrine", according to which their right of access to disaster areas overrode the sovereignty of the state in question, and to demand military protection for their activities.

In the 1990s, the Western powers began to take up the idea, leading to forcible intervention in a state's territory, violating sovereignty under the authority of the UN Security Council, avowedly in pursuit of humanitarian aims. First came the establishment of "safe havens" for the Kurds of northern Iraq in 1991.

Somalia was a UN-sanctioned but US-led operation purportedly to defend relief convoys in a country wracked by civil war. Operation Restore Hope, launched during the dying days of the Bush administration in December 1992, rapidly developed into a war with the Somali warlord, General Aidid.

The Somali operation was a disaster for Washington because 18 American soldiers died. But the concept of humanitarian intervention was established. Pioneered mainly in disintegrating African states, it was then exported to Europe to legitimise first UN and then Nato military involvement in the wars that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The Kosova War of 1999 was the occasion for humanitarian imperialism led by Nato to emerge fully clothed. Whereas during the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 the specific justification for the war on the USA's side was the violation of Kuwait's sovereignty by the Iraqi invasion of August 1990, Nato's war against Serbia, overrode Yugoslavia's territorial sovereignty on humanitarian grounds – namely, securing the physical safety and political rights of the Kosovan Albanians.

This justification for the war played an important role in securing the support of many on the Western left. "Nato's war", was Blair insisted, "a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values".

All this ideological rebranding of Nato by the US was inevitable in the aftermath of the Cold War. But it remains a deceit. The Kosova War was not a humanitarian war. It precipitated the humanitarian catastrophe – the flight of the Kosovars – that it was supposed to prevent. Moreover, the war that began by failing to prevent the ethnic cleansing of the Kosova Albanians ended with the ethnic cleansing of the Kosova Serbs.

Nato is first and foremost the global military arm of American political and economic power. Its command structure and top personnel remain dominated by the United States.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the US redefined its foreign policy objectives. The path was open for imperialism to tighten its grip over semi-colonial states in the "second" and Third World that had achieved a measure of economic and political independence during the Cold War years.

The United States and its European allies have arrogated to themselves the role of "world policeman". The reactionary consequences have been demonstrated in the 1990s in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, in Sudan and Afghanistan and in Bosnia with the implementation of the 1995 Dayton Accords. Despite Friedman's belief that only abstract globalisation is being defended now by Nato, not the old colonial imperialism with its territorial acquisitions, Bosnia and Kosova are ruled today by Nato in much the same way as the Viceroy of India acted on behalf of British imperialism until 1948.

The purpose of every one of these interven-

WHAT IS NATO?

■ The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington on 4 April 1949, created an alliance of 10 European and two North American countries.

■ Four more European nations joined the Alliance between 1952 and 1982, bringing the number of members to 16. The admission of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland on 12 March, 1999 brought the number of members to 19.

■ Nato's members are: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

tions is to ensure that the rulers of these weak states – whether long term semi-colonies or former degenerate workers' states in the process of restoring capitalism – carry out the political and economic diktats of imperialism.

That means complete subordination to the profit-making of North American, western European and Japanese multinationals. The US government is pledged to tear down every trade and investment barrier in the path of US multinationals. It is determined to guarantee access to oil and raw material reserves, especially in the Middle East and Central Asian republics of the ex-USSR.

The political, economic and military agencies (the United Nations, the IMF and World Bank, Nato) exist to enforce compliance or deal with the dire consequences of economic impoverishment and to weaken or destroy Russian influence and control over its ex-Empire.

The 1999 war against Serbia was the fourth US-led attack on a sovereign state in the 1990s. These are justified in the name of democracy and the need to strike against tyranny. But if this was their real concern Israel, Indonesia and Turkey would have seen bombs rain down on them decades ago. Israel has brutalised successive generations of Palestinians, stolen their homeland, expelled countless thousands from their homes, denied their national identity and refused their right to return.

The reaction of the US and Nato? To arm Israel, support its economy with billions of dollars, and to collude with its security forces against Arab states and the opponents of Israel living around the world. They have passed over in silence the constant mockery and defiance with which Israel has greeted each and every resolution of the United Nations against its tyranny.

The same goes for the murderous Indonesian regime that has butchered hundreds of thousands of the people of East Timor since its invasion in 1975. And Turkey's slaughter of 30,000 Kurds living in its country has been sanctioned by its Nato partners. One does not need to be a rocket scientist to understand Nato and the UN's alternative willingness and refusal to act. Turkey, Israel and Indonesia are regional allies of the US military and big business. Each and every abuse of human rights, case of torture and mass execution can be disregarded as a result.

Nato may have added a sophisticated PR battalion to its war machine in the 1990s, but it remains a vile tool of imperialism and the big business interests that stand behind the governments in office. It is a debt-collector for the IMF and World Bank when threats of exclusion from the financial markets fail to achieve compliance from the Third World, and trade sanctions fail to make no-compliant regimes bend the knee to Uncle Sam.

No more than the institutions that it serves, Nato cannot be reformed – neither peacefully disarmed nor transformed into a democratically accountable peace-maker. It must be smashed and dismantled along with the power of the big corporations.

"We must seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements which would undermine NATO"
The Pentagon



Yugoslavia: no lesser evil

Slobodan Milosevic lost the 25 September presidential elections, but so far has prevented his rival, Vojislav Kostunica, from taking his job. *Keith Harvey* argues that the working class must impose its own solution

THE OUTCOME of the Yugoslav election made it clear that many workers rightly hold the Milosevic regime responsible for the economic collapse of the economy and for starting the four bloody ethnic wars that contributed mightily to this collapse. But the elections themselves were far from free. None of the candidates or parties represented workers' interests. And Milosevic's rival, Vojislav Kostunica, is as rabid a Serb nationalist as Milosevic himself.

Kostunica's ability to establish himself as the main opposition candidate rests on the fact that as a professor of law he was never personally implicated in the policies or the corruption of Milosevic's regime. But his Greater Serbian chauvinism goes as far back as the 1970s when he opposed Tito's constitutional reforms because they gave a degree of autonomy to the non-Serb republics of Kosova and Vojvodina.

When multi-party politics returned to Serbia in the 1980s, Kostunica was among the founding members of the Democratic Party, but he left in 1992

because he considered it was not sufficiently nationalist. His newly-established Democratic Party of Serbia then formed an alliance with the charismatic Vuk Draskovic's royalist Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO). Within a year this alliance broke up and Kostunica actually moved closer to the fascist leader, Seselj.

When most of Serbia's opposition parties came together to form the Zajedno alliance in 1996, Kostunica formally joined it but stayed aloof. He boycotted the mass public protests in late 1996 and early 1997.

The revival of Serb nationalism with the escalation of the Kosova conflict gave Kostunica another chance. His radical nationalism, his condemnation of Nato, his anti-Milosevic record, but at the same time his support for entry into the European Union, provided maximum electoral appeal.

Unlike such opposition leaders as Zoran Djindjic or Milo Djukanovic of the Alliance for Change who led the mass protests two years ago, Kostunica never received the open backing of the impe-

rialist powers. At the same time, unlike Vuk Draskovic of the SPO, he has not made compromise deals with Milosevic. Kostunica could pose as an intransigent opponent of Milosevic, while not appearing as an open agent of Nato.

But this is already changing fast. Kostunica has promised to work with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). At the same time he promises to "safeguard Yugoslavia". This is a flat contradiction.

Already two prominent members of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia have met with representatives of the IMF, the World Bank and the Nato governments at a donor conference. A draft Letter of Intent already exists. This includes a Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies.

These policies envisage an end to government price controls, the introduction of free markets, cuts in social spending and public transportation, a credit freeze to enterprises with consequent massive layoffs of workers and drastic pay cuts, and a pledge that reconstruction work on Nato bomb damage be

entrusted to companies from the Nato countries.

These policies mean that food prices would rocket, enterprises would be driven into bankruptcy and foreign capital would seize all the key sectors of the economy.

Milosevic's position has never been weaker. Internationally, his staunchest ally, Russia, has said it will recognise any winner in the second round of elections and has backed off from siding with Milosevic. Internally, the Serbian Orthodox Church has demanded that Milosevic stand down immediately. Even the support from his backers in the state machine is weakening. Up to two-thirds of the army voted for Kostunica and this has clearly coloured the army command's outlook. The army chief-of-staff, General Nebojsa Pavkovic, is personally loyal to Milosevic but has said that the army will respect the will of the people.

In addition, discontent is widespread among the soldiers themselves. Especially in the south, where the opposition parties are strongest, armed units have

blockaded roads as they demanded unpaid wages.

At the same time the mass demonstrations are a crucial factor in the current situation. In several southern cities there have been huge protests. In Leskovac, for example, 25,000 took to the streets after a TV technician called for a demonstration during a basketball game. These demonstrations have been bigger than the ones called by the Alliance. Their demands have been for the removal of local governors as well as Milosevic himself and in some places they have been joined by soldiers.

The working class is now engaged in a necessary and legitimate struggle against the reactionary Milosevic regime. But although Kostunica clearly won the election this does not mean that the working class should accept him as the legitimate Head of State. The working class should not let itself be bound by the results of an election in which its voice could not be heard. Instead, the turmoil must be used to assemble politically independent working class forces in Serbia.

Programme for working class power

CLASS CONSCIOUS workers have to fight for the most militant forms of working class action such as strikes and occupations, up to and including a general strike to bring down Milosevic. But they also have to oppose all attempts to harness the struggle of the working class and rank and file soldiers into support for the bourgeois opposition and their imperialist backers. No confidence in or support for Kostunica and the Opposition!

Action councils, elected from the factories and barracks, must take the initiative from the bourgeois opposition in calling demonstrations against Milosevic. They must assert their right to control townships, throwing out both Milosevic's governors and their bourgeois replacements, and must take control of the distribution of supplies and mobilise against the hoarders and speculators.

Across the country, every opportunity must be taken to unite workers' and peasants' organisations, not only to strengthen their forces but to stop the regime from playing one region off against another. The aim should be a nationally co-ordinated workers' movement, independent of the bourgeois parties. To ensure working class control of the movement all elected leaders must remain accountable and recallable by their electors.

Revolutionaries fight for a programme that can lead workers from the demands of the democratic movement to the overthrow of the regime and its replacement by a revolutionary workers' gov-

ernment based on workers' councils and defended by a workers' militia.

■ Fight all attacks on democratic rights! For full freedom to assemble, to demonstrate and to publish. Down with state censorship! Employees of papers, state radio and TV must put all media under the control of the mass protest movement!

■ Disarm the local police. Arm the people. For armed defence of demonstrations! Soldiers should distribute their weapons to organised self-defence units of the masses. For a workers' militia to defeat the troops loyal to Milosevic and the armed gangs of fascists and reactionaries!

■ It is crucial for the mass movement to support the right of national self-determination for all national minorities inside Yugoslavia (Hungarians, Moslems in Sandzak and so on). For unconditional and immediate recognition of the republic of Kosova! No to the continuing repression of the Albanian minority inside Serbia! No ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Kosova. On the basis of this free recognition of the national rights of the minority peoples, the struggle for a socialist federation of the Balkans can take place.

■ No to any military coup by Milosevic against the Montenegrin government!

■ For an emergency plan of the working class. Nationalise under workers' control all big enterprises. For a public debate on where to put the limited resources of the country.

■ For the immediate expropriation of the Milosevic clan and all their corrupt cronies!

■ For international trade union solidarity. Build links with the unions in Kosova, Albania, Macedonia, Croatia and Greece. Solidarity with the struggles which are underway at the moment in Greece, Croatia and Serbia!

■ Nato forces out of the Kosova, and the whole of the Balkans. Down with all sanctions against Balkan countries!

■ Instead of recognising a Kostunica government, and its plans for an IMF dictatorship over the economy, and Nato "democracy", Serbian workers must demand immediate elections to a Constituent Assembly. These elections should be under the control of mass action councils.

Such a Constituent Assembly should debate and agree on the future state of Yugoslavia (centralised, federation or confederation) while recognising the rights of minority nationalities.

■ Put Milosevic and all leading figures of the police and army in front of a workers' tribunal where both Serbian and Albanian delegates should judge them. Find out all those who are guilty of war crimes in Kosova in the past and put them on trial!

■ Overthrow Milosevic but do not replace him with his erstwhile allies or the current allies of the Nato killers. For a revolutionary workers government based on action councils of workers, peasants and soldiers. For a democratically planned

economy to meet the needs of their masses.

■ For an international workers' campaign to force the imperialist powers to finance the rebuilding of Serbia and Kosova without any conditions. No delays in financing Serbia's reconstruction until Milosevic is removed. Put reconstruction funds into the hands of new democratically elected local councils and a Constituent Assembly.

■ Down with the reactionary regimes in all Balkan countries who rob their people to enrich themselves and spread national hatred. For workers' and peasant' revolutions in the whole of the Balkans. For a voluntary, socialist federation of all the Balkan peoples!

Militant tactics and mass mobilisations can gain time for the working class in the coming months, but will not spontaneously create a leadership committed to such a revolutionary programme. It needs to be developed, understood, explained and propagated by a conscious nucleus of revolutionary activists. To build such a revolutionary organisation in Serbia (and in all other Balkan countries) is the highest priority today.

The last decade has made it more clear than ever that the future of the Balkans is bound up not only with the future of Europe, but of the whole world. It is equally true that the creation of a revolutionary party in the region has to be part of the building of the new, revolutionary international – that is the goal of the LRCI.

PALESTINE

No more retreats

A struggle within the Zionist ruling class over the fate of Jerusalem in the peace talks with the PLO led to a provocation and justified uprising from the Palestinians argues *Mark Robbins*

AT LEAST eighteen Palestinians and one Israeli soldier died and hundreds were injured in three days of fighting at the end of September. Palestinian youth responded to a Zionist provocation with mass demonstrations throughout Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Clashes erupted on 28 September after the leader of Israel's right-wing Likud party, Ariel Sharon, visited the holy site the Jews call the Temple Mount. Muslims call the site Haram al-Sharif, or the Noble Sanctuary. To the Palestinians this was an act of "religious war."

The Palestinians want east Jerusalem as the capital of their state, while the Israelis demand that the city remain undivided and under their control. As for the Temple Mount, neither side will grant the other sole control, and both are uneasy with shared control.

Fearing a deal between Prime Minister Barak and the PLO over the future of Jerusalem Sharon's actions were designed to mobilise the rejectionists inside Israel who are opposed to a peace deal with the PLO.

These latest events illustrate the fragility of the whole peace process, the extent to which the right wing in Israel wants to undermine the process and the extent to which the Palestinian side constantly comes under pressure to make more concessions. Now the Palestinian masses are signalling their opposition to any further retreats.

The peace process has stumbled from crisis to crisis. Breakdown in 1998 was averted by the signing of the Wye River Accords in the USA. After Prime

Minister Netanyahu broke the deal, his Likud party fell from office. The election of Ehud Barak's Labour-led New Israel coalition on a platform geared to getting the peace process back on track, signalled that a majority of Israelis were keen to see progress.

Barak promised to negotiate a comprehensive peace with Syria, as well as withdrawal from the quagmire of southern Lebanon, and a full settlement of "final status" issues with the Palestinians including statehood, borders, Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and the Palestinian refugees.

But Barak has so far only achieved one of his stated objectives, the unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The "Syrian track" of the negotiations has been derailed because of Syria's insistence on Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, captured during the Six-Day War in 1967.

The last round of US diplomacy at Camp David over the summer got nowhere. Unlike on previous occasions, an agreement could not be reached by offering PLO leader Yasser Arafat face-saving and meaningless concessions. This is because no compromise is possible on the issues at stake without completely discrediting Arafat and the peace process in the eyes of his people.

They have seen delay after delay and experienced constant bad faith in the implementation of agreements, such as the continuation of Israeli settlements. Throughout the various talks, the Palestinian masses have been kept out of the process while their leaders bargained away their future.

For Arafat to sign away the Palestinian claim to sovereignty over East Jerusalem, and to abandon claims to repatriation or compensation for the refugees, would lead to mass rejection of any such agreement.

Arafat knows this, and has sought to prevaricate rather than cave in to American pressure. The popular Palestinian mood now seems to be that no agreement is better than a bad agreement, in stark contrast to the situation in 1993 when the Declaration of Principles was signed on the White House lawn.

This is unsurprising given the proposals reportedly on the table. The American proposals at Camp David, leaked to the Israeli press on 21 July, were as follows:

- There would be a "Palestinian state" in 95 per cent of the West Bank
- The remaining 5 per cent, comprising four Israeli settlement blocs, would be annexed to Israel

- There would be free movement for Israelis to and from 183 settlements in the area

- Israel would have early warning stations in the region and deploy forces in the Jordan valley, while retaining control of the airspace

- Additionally, Israel would maintain a "security nexus" which would divide the West Bank into four non-contiguous blocs (Bethlehem/Hebron, Ramallah, Jericho and Nablus/Jenin).

In other words, the Palestinians would have a slightly enlarged version of the motley collection of apartheid-style bantustans they have now, without

borders, territorial continuity or forces.

It was, however, the proposals on Jerusalem and the refugees which really rankled. Israel was to express "regret" for the suffering of the 4.5 million 1948 and 1967 refugees, and to absorb some "tens of thousands" – but strictly under a family reunification programme, and without admitting any moral responsibility for creating the refugee problem.

An additional 500,000 would be allowed residence in the tiny Palestinian entity in the West Bank, while the rest would be expected to settle in their host countries. In other words, Israel would wash its hands of the refugee problem, at the expense of the Palestinians in the West Bank, the Arab states, and, not least of all, the refugees themselves.

On Jerusalem, Israel was to change the demographic balance in its favour by handing over to the Palestinians 28 Arab villages absorbed into the Jerusalem municipality since 1967, while annexing 3 nearby Jewish settlements.

This would have the effect of reducing Jerusalem's Arab population of 233,000 (33 per cent of the population of the city) to 60,000 or 10 per cent. Jerusalem would become Israel's united and eternal capital, with the eastern half of the city annexed, and with "shared sovereignty" in Palestinian areas.

This would take the form of Palestinians having control over amenities like hospitals and education, while Israel would retain control over construction, planning and so forth – a future weapon in the long struggle to ethnically cleanse the city, and a recipe for permanent future tension.

The conclusions for socialists and anti-imperialists should be clear. The present situation exposes the limitation of a bourgeois nationalist leadership which fears bringing the masses into action and which seeks a Palestinian state created through historic compromises with world imperialism, Zionist colonialism and the Arab ruling classes.

It exposes the programme of a "two-state" solution, which in real life could never have led to much more than the present impasse of dependence and subordination of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, and the abandonment of the Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian refugees in the Arab states.

Most of all, it exposes the need for a movement, led and controlled by the masses, which fights for a secular workers' state in the whole of historic Palestine by revolutionary means.

Such a movement should not accept national divisions as a condition of national liberation, but should seek to break them down, both by firm action to destroy Zionist privilege, and by appeals to the progressive sections of the Israeli working class for solidarity on issues of common interest.

Such a movement should seek to include elements of the Jewish population of Israel who have been won to a just solution of the national question, and make clear that a workers' Palestine will respect their national rights.

And such a movement should reject any solutions that maintain partition, whether based on the pre-1967 borders or any other.

DENMARK

Racists boosted by "No" vote

In a vote that sent shock waves across European capitals, Danish voters rejected the euro in a 28 September referendum. The result came despite virtually unanimous backing from the major parties, trade unions, business and the media for the "Yes" campaign. *Peter Larssen* looks at how the upset happened

"VICTORY IS OURS!", chanted supporters of the Danish People's Party on the evening of 28 September. They were celebrating after 53 per cent of the Danish electorate voted "No" in the referendum.

This result will further boost the rising fortunes of this populist, racist party. The Danish Peoples' party, led by Pia Kjaersgaard, rose from practically nowhere to almost 16 per cent in the opinion polls at the beginning of this year.

With openly racist propaganda the party has struck a chord with some of the Danish electorate. Their propaganda's main thrust savages the "the establishment" for giving out money to "foreigners" and thereby causing cuts in social services.

Pia Kjaersgaard wants to be seen as speaking for the "little person" on the street against the EU, the euro, against globalisation. The rise in Denmark of Kjaersgaard's party has been accompanied by a marked weakening of social democracy. Denmark's Prime

Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen and his social democratic government are in serious trouble. The traditional reformist party is now down to just 25 per cent in the polls.

Of course, not all the "no" voters were supporters of the right. They were expressing their frustration with the government and their anger at the continued attacks on social welfare. They turned the referendum into a political protest vote against the record of the Rasmussen government. They also associate the EU and the euro with further austerity measures.

However, unless the forces of the left are able to put up an effective alternative to the bankruptcy of social democracy then the right will be the main beneficiary. Neither the left reformist Socialist Peoples Party (SF) nor the Unity list (Enhedslisten), which is a combination of centrists and left reformists, has been able to put up such an alternative or organise an effective struggle against the bosses.

This failure has allowed the rightist

and nationalist opposition to present itself as the most intransigent opponent of the government and to use the issue of European integration as a weapon with which to beat the government.

Both left-wing blocs took part in the "No" campaign. The Enhedslisten are trying to find left-sounding arguments for keeping capitalist Denmark out of the EMU. Instead of denouncing both sides – those who look forward to further integration in capitalist Europe, and those who want to keep Denmark out of EU politics – they fall into the trap of "lesser-evilism". This gives the impression to working class voters that the EU or the euro, rather than capitalism itself, dictates the austerity drive. It also cedes ground to the right wing defenders of a capitalist "Little Denmark".

Enhedslisten, which includes supporters of the self-styled Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International claims that a no vote can lay the basis for "the building of international economic collaboration,

which can shield the individual countries against speculation." It sees the alternative to the EMU and the EU as "an alternative project, which is built upon the wishes of the populations . . . a collaboration in Europe, which is not based on uniformity, but on taking advantage of the strengths of the different populations."

There is not a word about socialism or the need to fight capitalism. If Enhedslisten is turned into a party, this can only generate further confusion inside the left and create a second left reformist party – slightly to the left of the Socialist Peoples' Party, but much smaller.

The socialist alternative – fought for in neighbouring Sweden by the LRCI's section, Arbetarmakt – was for an active campaign to spoil the ballot paper in the name of working class resistance to all measures directed against the living standards and rights of workers – regardless of whether this is done in the name of further capitalist integration in the EMU, or in defence of "self-determination" for Denmark.

DUDLEY HOSPITALS

Privatisation, no way!

UNISON MEMBERS at the Dudley Group of Hospitals have now clocked up a record number of days of strike action for any dispute in the National Health Service. The 600 healthworkers have staged an escalating series of strikes against the effects of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme.

The Dudley Group's management wants to build a new "super hospital". Under the Labour government's rules, this has to be done using private finance. The immediate cost will be 170 jobs and 70 in-patient beds. The strikers do not want the run down of the National Health Service with the resulting transfer to the private consortium, Summit Healthcare.

The workers have held first a two-day strike, then one for four days. These were followed in September by two sep-

arate seven-day actions. The Trust management raised the stakes by bringing in agency workers as scabs and the workers have responded with a ten-day stoppage from 2 October.

The strikers are still united and determined to win. Messages of support and donations continue to pour in from across the country and internationally. A local opinion poll in the *Stourbridge News* reported 80% of respondents supporting the strikers.

Management are claiming that the handover to Summit Healthcare is imminent and that will mean the dispute is over. This is untrue. The best greeting for new bosses would be workers on strike demanding their return to the NHS. The strikers should call management's bluff and launch an all-

out indefinite strike. A number of strikers would back this call, but recognise they would need more money than Unison is now offering.

Unison have said they will support whatever the workers decide but have backed away from all-out action. Officials say it "has to be built for" and is "the ultimate weapon"! This is a false perspective. We need a speedy victory not a long strike with all the problems of increasing demoralisation. Indeed, the strike has lasted long enough already to warrant deploying the "ultimate weapon".

Unison must raise the strike pay. Action should spread to clinical staff. Unison leaders may well be supporting this strike but victory is not guaranteed. A national campaign of solidarity action

is vital. Rodney Bickerstaffe dropped by to show his support for the strikers on his way up to the junketing at the TUC, but the national leadership is still dragging its heels. One sign of this was the notable lack of Unison banners from around the country on the September Stourbridge demonstration.

Nevertheless at rank and file level, support has been enormous. Messages and donations continue to arrive. This shows that a national campaign against PFI and to win the Dudley strike is possible. If the national leadership will organise this then rank and file workers must. The Dudley strikers have recognised this by calling a national conference on fighting PFI and privatisation. This must be turned into a serious discussion on how to build solidarity action.

STRIKE DETAILS

Strike starts: 12.01am, 2 October; ends: 11.59pm, 11 October

Rally: 11.00am Stourbridge Town Hall, 2 October. All welcome.

Demo: 7 October, followed by conference on fighting PFI and privatisation: 1pm - 3pm, Castle High School, St James Road, Dudley

Messages of support to Unison Offices, Wordsley Hospital, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 5QX, Phone/fax 01384 244 350. Cheques payable to Unison Dudley Group of Hospitals

SHEFFIELD

College bosses cave in

MEMBERS OF NATFHE at Sheffield College have seen off compulsory redundancies following a climbdown by the College Governors. Two days before an indefinite strike was due to start, the management withdrew all compulsory redundancies and agreed to pay this year's pay increase in full.

The NATFHE branches, led by the Co-ordinating Committee, ran a massive campaign, mobilising support from students and from the local labour movement, targeting the local Labour MPs and the District Party as well as trade union branches. Members collected 5,000 signatures and kept up town centre petitioning all through the summer.

By the start of term, their NATFHE branch had huge support across

Sheffield and an 87 per cent yes vote for strike action.

Faced with this pressure the corporation began to buckle at a meeting on the 15 September and called for talks on the basis that they were confident compulsories could be avoided. It became clear they were looking for a face-saving formula and so, despite some justified reservations and discussion about continuing the strike, the co-ordinating committee put back the start date of the strike to allow the talks to take place and for a reconvened Governors' meeting to finally remove the compulsories.

In these talks it was agreed that an IT franchising operation run by an outside agency would come into the College, but that the terms and conditions

of those workers would be the subject of detailed negotiations with the union, with a view to establishing a contract to be operated in the next academic year.

This gave the fig leaf the governors needed, increasing the revenues of the College in the short term to the tune of £500,000 - which miraculously was exactly the sum they said they still needed to save. In return the corporation removed all compulsories and is now in the process of redeploying and reinstating the staff who were under threat.

Through its actions the union has saved the jobs of between 30 or 40 of its members and put the local organisation in a much stronger position to resist future attacks. This is the case despite the fact that around 100 accept-

ed voluntary redundancies.

There are certainly battles to come, over workloads, contracts and an expected attempt by the management to bring in a general "instructor" grade.

The campaign in Sheffield was a model for other branches to follow. Already, branches facing similar threats are talking about "doing a Sheffield". They will need to. As Sheffield Co-ordinating Committee secretary Jon Cowley put it:

"The crisis facing FE is not restricted to Sheffield College. Every college in the area is facing financial crises, management restructuring, impossible workloads, poor pay and poor morale among staff. Unless there is a clear change in direction none of us will believe that Further Education is safe

in David Blunkett's hands."

Indeed, the attempts to carry through mass redundancies at Sheffield were instigated by David Blunkett. It was he who imposed George Sweeney as Acting Principal to carry out the restructuring job, and then promptly knighted him for services to further education!

Blunkett is presiding over a continuing squeeze on college budgets and is currently pushing a performance-related pay scheme.

It's time that the national leadership of NATFHE moved to "do a Sheffield" all over the country and fought the cuts, redundancies, worsening conditions and poor pay that are the reality faced by NATFHE members in further education under this government.

UNISON

Scottish workers battle council bosses

IN SCOTLAND officials of the public sector union, Unison, have called a third day of strike action for 11 October in an ongoing battle with local authority bosses over pay.

The umbrella body for the 32 Scottish councils, COSLA, originally offered workers a real pay cut, with its offer of only 2.5 per cent - less than the local government settlement in England and Wales.

After months of fruitless negotiations Unison members voted in favour of a series of one-day strikes. The first walk-out on 29 August involved nearly 80,000 Unison members and gained substantial support from the rank and file of the other two main unions, the TGWU and GMB. Ballots in these unions had produced narrow votes against industrial action.

A second strike in mid-September proved equally effective, hitting the gamut of local authority services from libraries through to refuse collection. Another 5,000 workers have joined Unison in the midst of the dispute as the only union showing any commitment to a real fight.

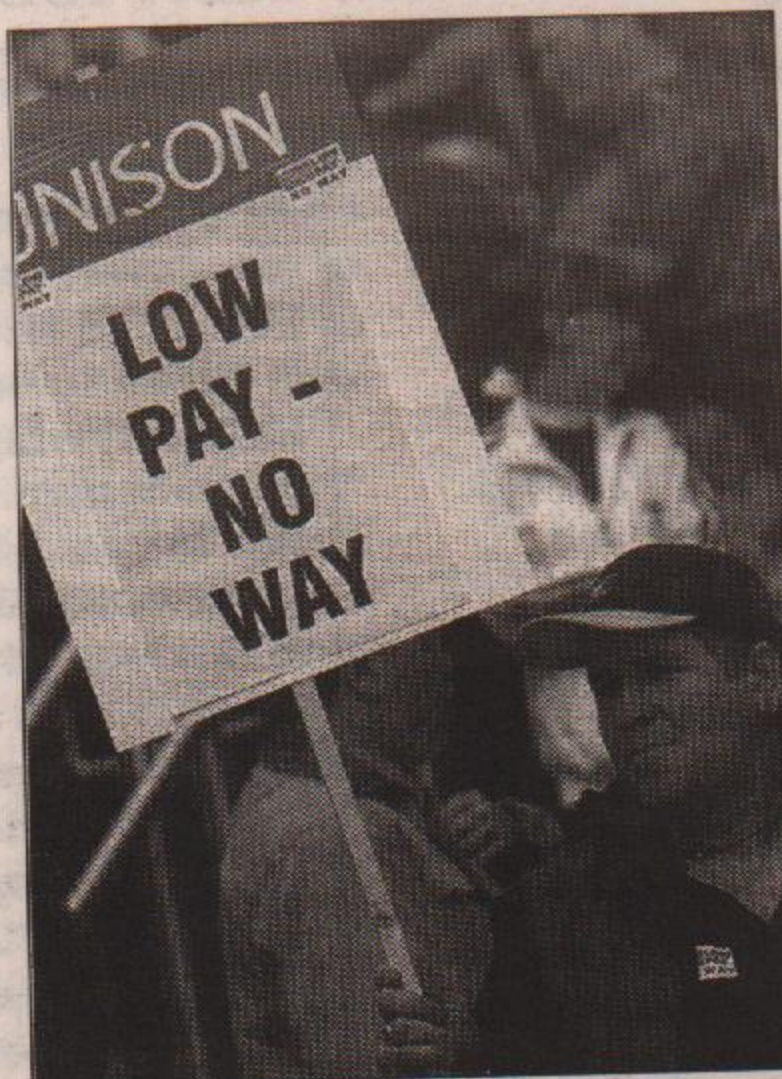
There has been plenty of public sympathy for the strikers and the action thus far has panicked the Labour-led coal-

ition in the Scottish Executive. Finance minister Jack McConnell has earmarked an "extra" £1.2 billion for next year's local authority settlement, though the council bosses continue to insist that there will be no new money on the table this financial year.

Unison officials have indicated that they are prepared to call out "strategic" sections of the workforce indefinitely if management makes no concessions after 11 October. Such an escalation is well overdue and is definitely welcome.

In the meantime, however, it is crucial that rank and file members start to assert control over the course of this battle. Directly elected and fully accountable strike committees in each council are a must. They should seek to draw in not only members of other unions who have honoured picket lines but also service users.

There is a real chance to turn the anger over pay into a much bigger fight against the Edinburgh-based Executive and New Labour authorities in Scotland, which are determined to pursue a tartan version of the Blairite blueprint for further cuts and privatisation.



STOP THE WITCH HUNT
Keep Candy Udwin and Dave Carr in our union
LOBBY THE UNISON APPEAL
Monday 9 October, 8.15am. Great Northern Hotel, Kings Cross, London

POST OFFICE

Wildcat strikes show the way

Royal Mail bosses across London are looking to slash jobs and hammer CWU organisation as they proceed with plans to shut major sorting facilities, including the North District Office in Islington and the world's second largest office at Mount Pleasant. A similar restructuring exercise in East London also threatens jobs and working conditions.

In addition Royal Mail management has struck a deal with a Dutch-based company to part privatise aspects of its international operation. This is clearly part of New Labour's drive to give the Post Office greater "commercial freedom".

Postal workers have already shown that they are not about to lie down and accept thousands of redundancies and the transfer of much of their work to a greenfield site in Berkshire. On 31 August some 4,000 CWU members at Mount

Pleasant and Heathrow airport mounted an unofficial 24-hour protest strike in opposition to the closure plan. This wildcat walk-out, which caught local management on the hop, showed the real power of sorting office workers. Literally millions of letters and parcels remained undelivered and Royal Mail's operation at Heathrow was paralysed.

The workers' bold defiance of the anti-union laws is precisely the sort of action that will be required to beat back the bosses' plans. Mount Pleasant must not, however, fight alone. The battle needs to spread across all of London's sorting offices. Militants in Royal Mail must organise to up the pressure on their union officials to organise an official ballot for indefinite strike action, but in the meantime they should be linking up with the aim of pursuing unofficial action across London.

Conference decides on election strategy

FOUR HUNDRED activists including a number of non-aligned socialists, members of several far left organisations and delegates from local socialist alliances attended a special conference of the National Network of Socialist Alliances in Coventry on 30 September.

Attendance far exceeded expectations and two overflow rooms were needed to accommodate delegates. The conference discussed organising a challenge to New Labour at the next general election.

The conference was dominated by organisational issues connected with the coming election. It did, however, commit the alliance to holding another conference in February 2001, specifically to discuss the election programme.

The Coventry meeting debated an election protocol, which had been drawn up by the officers. Amendments and contributions were taken from Workers Power, the CPGB (Weekly Worker), the Socialist Party, International Socialist Group, Alliance for Workers Liberty and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Revolutionary Democratic Group and non-aligned members from Merseyside.

The conference was a positive step forward for the Socialist Alliance. Over the course of four hours it managed to debate all the key amendments and reached an agreement, with the election protocol being carried overwhelmingly by the conference.

However, key differences emerged around the precise nature of the alliance and the relationship of affiliated political organisations to it.

The argument at the conference was mainly between the Socialist Party and everybody else. It was in many ways a convoluted and obscure argument – over this or that aspect of the protocol. But behind it lay a clear division. The Socialist Party want to fight the election as the Socialist Party – using the alliance as a loose framework for them and others to use.

Their argument is that the alliance is not a party and therefore should not adopt what they branded as a centralised party structure (a unified campaign, directed centrally by a committee of the Alliance) to fight the election.

In practice this amounts to them demanding to be part of the Alliance but running their own campaign around their own candidates (and they promise 18 of these, despite the fact that the alliance has not decided exactly where it is standing yet).

Others, including Workers Power and the SWP, argued for greater unity at an organisational and political level. If we are to fight a general election with the Socialist Alliance then we should – without pretending that we have resolved all our differences – fight a single, unified campaign around an agreed manifesto.

In general the conference supported moves towards greater unity and trust among the political organisations involved. The Socialist Party's amendment to allow political organisations, in negotiation with others, to "have responsibility for electing their own candidates and agents" was defeated. But a move to set up an election committee in order to oversee the selection of candidates proposed by the SWP was also defeated.

The Socialist Party's leadership and much of its membership harbours a deep distrust of the SWP. While partly understandable given the SWP's undemocratic role in previous campaigns, (something the Socialist Party themselves are guilty of too, by the way) this suspicion is simply translating into sectarianism on the part of the Socialist Party. It fails to recognise that the SWP's commitment to working with other sections of the left, to abiding by decisions of Alliance meetings and so on, has changed the situation.

We need to build on this in order to engage the SWP still further, not turn our backs on them in the hope that they will go away and leave the alliances alone

– or rather leave the Socialist Party as the dominant force within the alliances as it was previously.

And we need to make sure that the Alliances are really democratic and inclusive so that they do not end up as the playthings of their biggest component (the SWP).

Regardless of our disagreements with the SWP we and they agree on the need to mount an effective, co-ordinated challenge to New Labour. The conference was the opportunity to construct the organisational means of doing this. It is sectarian folly on the part of the Socialist Party not to recognise and take advantage of this.

Peter Taaffe may want to shun concerted work with the SWP, Workers Power and the rest of the left, and to avoid a serious battle of ideas around the election programme. But for those Socialist Party members who really are committed to putting socialism on the agenda at the next general election, the time has come to take a good hard look at where your organisation is headed.

Overall, the conference has signalled a new stage in the development of the Socialist Alliance. It is necessary to move towards greater practical unity, while also recognising that the alliance brings together individuals and political organisations from very different traditions.

In the election we need to present a common front. At the same time we must ensure the greatest possible democracy within the alliance, and we should not be afraid to argue out our political differences. A Workers Power amendment, carried at conference, called for the right of all organisations within the alliance to be "free to publicise their own programmes in their own name."

The most disappointing aspect of the conference was the lack of time spent on discussing activity in the here and now. We did hear a speaker who had

been in Prague for the S26 demo as well as Mark New, the Unison branch secretary at the centre of the Dudley Hospital strike against the Private Finance Initiative.

But most of the conference was taken up with hammering out the organisational issues around fighting the election. An exception to this came from a Workers Power amendment calling for active, fighting local Socialist Alliances that was carried by conference.

It is important that the Socialist Alliance does not simply turn up on workers' doorsteps on the eve of the general election, with no track record. If we really are to become a pole of attraction for those disillusioned with Blair and New Labour, then we have to make sure that every local Socialist Alliance is out there now campaigning: battling alongside those opposing the sell-off of council housing, supporting workers striking to save their jobs, organising alongside the anti-capitalist youth, and fighting to scrap the racist asylum legislation.

Of course, the one question the conference did not resolve was the political basis for fighting the election together. This is to be decided at a recall conference in February.

A Workers Power amendment that was carried by the conference called for the submission and circulation of draft programmes now – as well as deleting all references to "minimum programme" in the election protocol. Indeed we circulated our draft manifesto at the conference.

In moving the amendment we called for the alliance to adopt a revolutionary programme if it was to really appeal to the wide layers of anti-capitalist youth and to the growing number of workers angry at Blair's betrayals. We know full well that we will have a fight on our hands to get the Alliance to adopt a revolutionary programme.

Support Socialist Alliance candidates

OCTOBER SEES a flurry of local council by-elections where Socialist Alliance candidates will be battling for seats and Workers Power urges its readers in Hackney, Newham and Bristol to get stuck in.

In Wick ward in Hackney, East London, health worker and Unison activist, Diane Swingle, is the London Socialist Alliance candidate in a 12 October by-election, triggered by the resignation of a Liberal Democrat councillor. A Hackney Unison's black workers' group has thrown its weight behind Diane's campaign. To get involved in the 1998 campaign, ring 0958 987471.

The following Thursday (19 October) sees a by-election in the neighbouring borough of Newham, where Paul Phillips is standing for the Alliance in Stratford Central ward.

Newham Council's leadership projects an image of the borough as a New Labour flagship, but beneath the surface gloss Newham remains one of the ten poorest local authority areas in Britain. Contact 0793 995 1376 to help in the Stratford campaign.

A ward by-election in south Bristol, again fought by a Socialist Alliance candidate, also takes place on 19 October.

But we are absolutely clear that if we are going to advance the cause of lasting left unity, rally ever larger numbers of workers and youth to the Alliance and lay the foundations for a serious and sizeable revolutionary party, then fighting the election as a revolutionary socialist alliance on a revolutionary socialist programme is the best means of achieving these aims.

LABOUR CONFERENCE

Unions back pensions revolt

FOR TONY Blair, in the words of the old song, "sorry seems to be the hardest word".

This year's Labour conference took place following a significant dip in Labour's opinion poll standing. On the eve of the conference a NOP survey for Channel 4 put Labour on 32 per cent, eight points behind the Tories on 40 per cent. Their poor showing in the polls was put down to a mishandling of the fuel crisis and a general perception that New Labour "wasn't listening".

Blair's speech to the party conference was a less than convincing response. He mentioned the government's mistakes, ranging from the Dome fiasco to the petrol pumps. He assured his audience that he was listening (nine times, in total) but when it came to what he was actually going to do, his speech descended into the kind of vacuous platitudes for which he is becoming justly notorious: I listen, but I've got to lead; I hear, but I've got to act; there are many good causes but I've got to prioritise, you can't

please all of the people all of the time, and so on.

A sorry example of his capacity to avoid saying anything of substance came in his comment on pensions:

"Seventy-five pence. I tell you now, as Gordon made crystal clear yesterday, we get the message."

What message? Who is this man listening to? Clearly not pensioners and not even the tame trade union leaders, who have bottled up the anger of their members with New Labour policies. The very next day the Labour Party leadership attempted to fight off the "crystal clear" demand for the link between earnings and pensions to be restored.

First the New Labour fixers attempted to broker a backroom deal with Unison's Rodney Bickerstaffe and the GMB's John Edmonds. They offered extra money and another discussion at a policy forum, but refused to concede on the immediate restoration of the link with the rise in average earnings. The union leaders took it to the conference floor

and won.

Conference voted 60 to 40 for Unison's motion calling for the link between earnings and pensions to be restored, which would mean an immediate increase in the basic state pension to £97 per week.

This was one of the brief but vital signs that there might yet be some life in the opposition to New Labour within the Labour Party itself. In contrast to the desperately dull and compliant conferences of the past few years, this year's Brighton gathering occasionally showed a willingness to vote against the leadership on major issues. The pensions issue was key, but the leadership also faced defeat over rail safety and measures to ensure corporate polluters pay for their damage to the environment.

Of course, a success at party conference is no guarantee of a meaningful change in party policy. Both Blair and Chancellor Gordon Brown made it very clear in the wake of the vote that they would not accept a restoration of

the link. A little extra cash, a few extra allowances for the most needy – possibly. But a guaranteed, decent pension for all – no.

Socialists and trade unionists must step up the fight around pensions. We need to expose the scandal of private pension funds which have resulted in thousands of workers being defrauded of their full pension rights. We should demand the immediate nationalisation of all pension funds, and fight for a single, state-subsidised pension fund, run by the trade unions.

We should demand the restoration of the link between pensions and earnings to immediately halt the slide into poverty faced by hundreds of thousands of pensioners – this means an immediate demand for a minimum of £100 a week.

But we have to fight for a decent minimum wage and guaranteed minimum income for all. The demand for £7 an hour as a minimum wage would translate into a weekly state pension of £200 per week. Only when we win such a

demand can we begin to talk about a life of dignity for all pensioners.

In addition to the pensions showdown, the week saw TGWU general secretary, Bill Morris win a concession from the Labour Party leadership on the issue of supermarket voucher scheme devised to deter and stigmatise asylum seekers.

Facing the prospect of a serious defeat, the government announced an immediate review of the voucher scheme. Morris chose not to press home the advantage and the leadership avoided the prospect of a humiliating, defeat on the conference floor for the second consecutive day.

But the writing is on the wall. New Labour is no longer invulnerable to attack. While the union bureaucrats are far from prepared to break from Blair, they are beginning to feel pressure from many of their members to an extent not seen in the previous three and a half years. We must build on this in the coming struggles against Blair.

Blair over a barrel

September saw a week of fuel blockades had brought much of Britain to a halt. **G R McColl** looks at a "direct action" protest movement that the *Daily Mail* came to love and puts forward a socialist answer to the fuel crisis.

IN LATE August and early September, BBC and ITN news bulletins regularly featured interviews with irate British holidaymakers stranded in France by protests over fuel taxes. UK lorry drivers joined the chorus of denunciation of the French fishermen, farmers and hauliers mounting blockades. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott all but demanded that Lionel Jospin's "left" coalition government take immediate action to clear the roads and shipping lanes.

By 13 September the *Guardian's* front page lead proclaimed that Britain was "Down to the last drop" of petrol after six days of demonstrations that began at Shell's Stanlow refinery in the north west of England and fanned out across the whole of Britain. The fuel blockades had probably involved action by no more than 2,000 to 3,000 people. The vast majority of them were small to medium-sized businessmen: farmers and independent road hauliers, whose sole unifying objective appeared to be a cut in fuel taxes.

They did, however, gain widespread, though passive, support among the "general public". The wave of refinery protests became a lightning conductor for all those with a sense of grievance against New Labour in government. With panic buying exacerbating petrol shortages, Tony Blair faced the most serious crisis of his premiership. He and his party have yet to rebound from the damage, according to most opinion polls. The politicians were so desperate that they suddenly felt obliged to turn to the very trade union bureaucracy which they had previously treated with such disdain.

Sectors at the heart of the fuel protests have been hard hit by the 350% rise in the price of a barrel of oil which had occurred since early 1999. In addition, Britain has among the world's highest levels of taxes and duties on petrol, accounting for nearly 75% of the price at the pump.

A significant section of smaller farmers and road haulage operators have become cynical about such organisations as the National Farmers' Union and the Road Hauliers' Federation. Loose coalitions of hauliers as well as National Farmers' Action had emerged in the past two years. These elements were initially to the fore in refinery blockades.

Some of those involved had been fixtures on demonstrations called by the Countryside Alliance at Labour Party conferences. The *Daily Mail*, in particular, and other tabloids welcomed the protests, with the *Telegraph* also lending its seal of approval. William Hague called the demonstrators "fine, upstand-



The fuel protest movement

THE EVENTS between 8 and 14 September outside the oil refineries were not a simple "bosses' blockade". But nor was the movement an alliance of sections of the petit bourgeoisie with the working class as we witnessed in Britain in opposition to the Poll Tax in 1989/90. However popular its demand for a cut in petrol taxes may have been with many workers, this was not a progressive movement.

TUC general secretary John Monks was talking melodramatic nonsense when he compared the hauliers' actions last month to the actions launched against Salvador Allende's left reformist government in 1972, but many trade unionists remember only too well that independent lorry drivers proved more than willing to drive through picket lines during the miners' strike and other major industrial battles throughout the 1980s. Little wonder that there was no concrete expression of support for this movement from within the organised working class.

At the same time, however, socialists had to sound the alarm against the government's threats

to use troops and its invocation of the 80-year-old Emergency Powers Act. We were not in favour of the might of the capitalist state sweeping away a handful of tractors and lorries. Support by the union bureaucrats for the kind of repression that Blair blustered about can only rebound on the unions themselves.

Rather than waiting for the expiration of the "60-day deadline" and another round of protest by this "movement", socialists in the unions should be pushing for a labour movement campaign for the abolition of indirect taxes, not only on fuel but across the board.

Such a labour movement campaign, with action committees in cities and towns would be the most effective way of winning the demand as well as the best means to break up the alliance of farmers, hauliers and big bosses, and win the most militant, and hardest hit, small business people and small farmers to the labour movement's side. The abolition of VAT and other indirect taxes, however, should just be the starting point for our demands on Labour.

ing citizens".

Their militancy did, however, stand in stark contrast to the few and pathetic protests mounted to date by the official leadership of the unions against New Labour's attacks on various aspects of the welfare state and its continuing determination to privatise public sector services.

The actions around the oil terminals were also a great deal more effective in putting the issue at the top of the national media's agenda than the laughable "dump the pump" consumer boycott campaign. But there is no doubt that the

dramatic effect of their protests relied heavily on the attitudes of the police and some important sections of the capitalist class in Britain.

The policing of the protests outside the refineries could not have been more different from what would have happened if the pickets had been striking trade unionists. Instead of cups of tea and friendly banter with free parking on company property, there would have been riot gear and baton charges, followed by beatings and mass arrests.

In addition, there is substantial evidence of collusion between the oil companies and big transport firms such as P&O that helped to ensure oil did not get out of the refineries. Both the *Guardian* and BBC's *Panorama* programme (25 September) carried reports indicating that employers actually ordered drivers not to defy the demonstrations.

While there was a mixture of sympathy with the protests and fear of violence among the directly employed tanker drivers, the key factor strengthening the "blockades" at the BP and Shell refineries appears to have been management instructions to remain in the terminals. Oil company bosses are a significant faction within the capitalist class globally. This is especially true in Britain, when compared with other European Union states. Though these giant corporations had nothing to do with orchestrating the original protests, they had very good reasons for acting to ensure that they were relatively successful.

First of all, the object of the demon-

strators' anger was government policy. There was no hint of criticism of the oil giants' super-profits. In 2000 alone, the five biggest oil corporations will chalk up a record total of £30 billion in profits. To a very large extent the current corporate profits illustrate how the petroleum multinationals have been the real winners as a result of the skyrocketing price of crude oil on international markets.

Second, at least some of the oil giants (Esso and Total/Elf-Fina) made it plain as the crisis ended that they had intended to use it as a cloak for jacking up the price at the pumps.

Predictably, of course, there was hard-

ly a critical word about the oil giants uttered by New Labour either. Tony Blair has been rather busy over the past four years recruiting the likes of one-time BP boss, Lord David Simon, to serve as a government minister. Chris Fay, Shell UK's chief executive, was Blair's choice to head the Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment!

As the crisis unfolded Chancellor Gordon Brown remembered some "old friends" in the TGWU bureaucracy. As the TUC staged its annual congress in Glasgow and overwhelmingly passed a pro-government resolution, TGWU officials were at Grangemouth refinery meeting with unionised drivers to discuss how to beat the blockade. As a number of union general secretaries queued to denounce the protests from the rostrum, the beginning of the end of the immediate crisis was already in sight – partly due to the intervention of full-time TGWU officials.

But what reward did the bureaucrats secure for their very public display of loyalty to the government? It consisted of an invitation to meet with Home Secretary Jack Straw to discuss future contingency plans. He made it plain that government was keen on extending provisions of the 1976 Energy Act in order to legally proscribe strikes by tanker drivers and effectively compel them to drive through any kind of picket line.

TGWU general secretary Bill Morris claims to have secured a pledge from Trade and Industry Stephen Byers that there will be no further anti-union legislation. He went on to sign a memorandum with the police and oil industry bosses pledging the free flow of oil supplies. At present the very union leaders who launch the odd rhetorical criticism of New Labour are proving the government's most useful allies.

This despicable behaviour by the union leaders – echoing the government's attacks on direct action per se – will help the government break and defeat future strikes. The union leaders have in fact colluded with the strengthening of a state machine that will be used primarily to attack workers in action.

The danger is that the Tories, and still more reactionary elements, will be the ones to benefit from the anger at indirect taxation on fuel that is one symptom of a much wider anger at the government's performance. Over the coming weeks and months, the task for the left, both in the unions and working together around the Socialist Alliances, will be to turn that anger not simply against Tony Blair and New Labour but against the profit system itself – a system which both Blair and William Hague are doggedly committed to defending.

Demands on Labour

VAT IS the most notorious form of indirect taxation in Britain. It hits people regardless of their incomes and it applies to many essential items.

There has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of the state's revenue generated by such taxation since 1979. This regressive tax must be scrapped. But how will the lost revenue be replaced?

The answer is simple and obvious, but currently beyond the pale: tax the rich and big business. A steeply progressive income tax that soaks rich individuals and households should be accompanied by a massive increase in taxes on corporate profits. The Tories slashed corporate taxes between 1979 and 1997 by 19 percentage points,

and New Labour has cut them still further to 30 per cent.

The oil giants had tried to hide from public anger during the September protests, but workers increasingly recognise that they have reaped staggering profits from the "crisis". The oil multinationals plunder the earth's natural resources with scant regard to the environmental consequences, bankroll repression from Colombia to Nigeria and then rip off motorists at the petrol pump.

The nationalisation of these multinational monsters, under the control of the industry's workers and with no compensation to the bosses, is long overdue. And straight away they should be subject to a massive windfall tax on their super profits.

Green taxes

SOCIALISTS ARE not categorically against so-called green taxes to discourage pollution. Clearly, we are in favour of heavy taxation of corporate polluters.

However, we do not support regressive "green" taxes on fuel or congestion charges. These will simply punish the working class.

Green taxes are at most a secondary component of any socialist strategy for defending the environment. The nationalisation of hugely profitable companies such as TNT and the road haulage industry as a whole is an essential first step in developing an integrated transport plan.

Such a plan would obviously

LETTERS

CAMDEN COUNCIL

Defy the anti-union laws

Dear Comrades,

The daily diet of individual casework, petty management attacks and countless bureaucratic obstructions can sap the strength of even the most hard-nosed shop steward in the public sector.

Then, when least expected, the membership gives a marvellous lesson in working class solidarity.

On 28 September Unison members working in Camden Council's Homeless Person's Unit (HPU) gave me just such a reminder. Earlier in the week the local management had informed Barbara Thompson, who had worked in the Unit for two years, that she would be dismissed on Tuesday 3 October.

Her heinous crime?

Phoning her 10-year-old daughter on the child's mobile. There was no

warning issued, no disciplinary hearing granted – just oral confirmation that she would be sacked.

Barbara Thompson may well have no legal rights since despite putting in all those hours for Camden she technically remained an employee of the AdEcco temp agency.

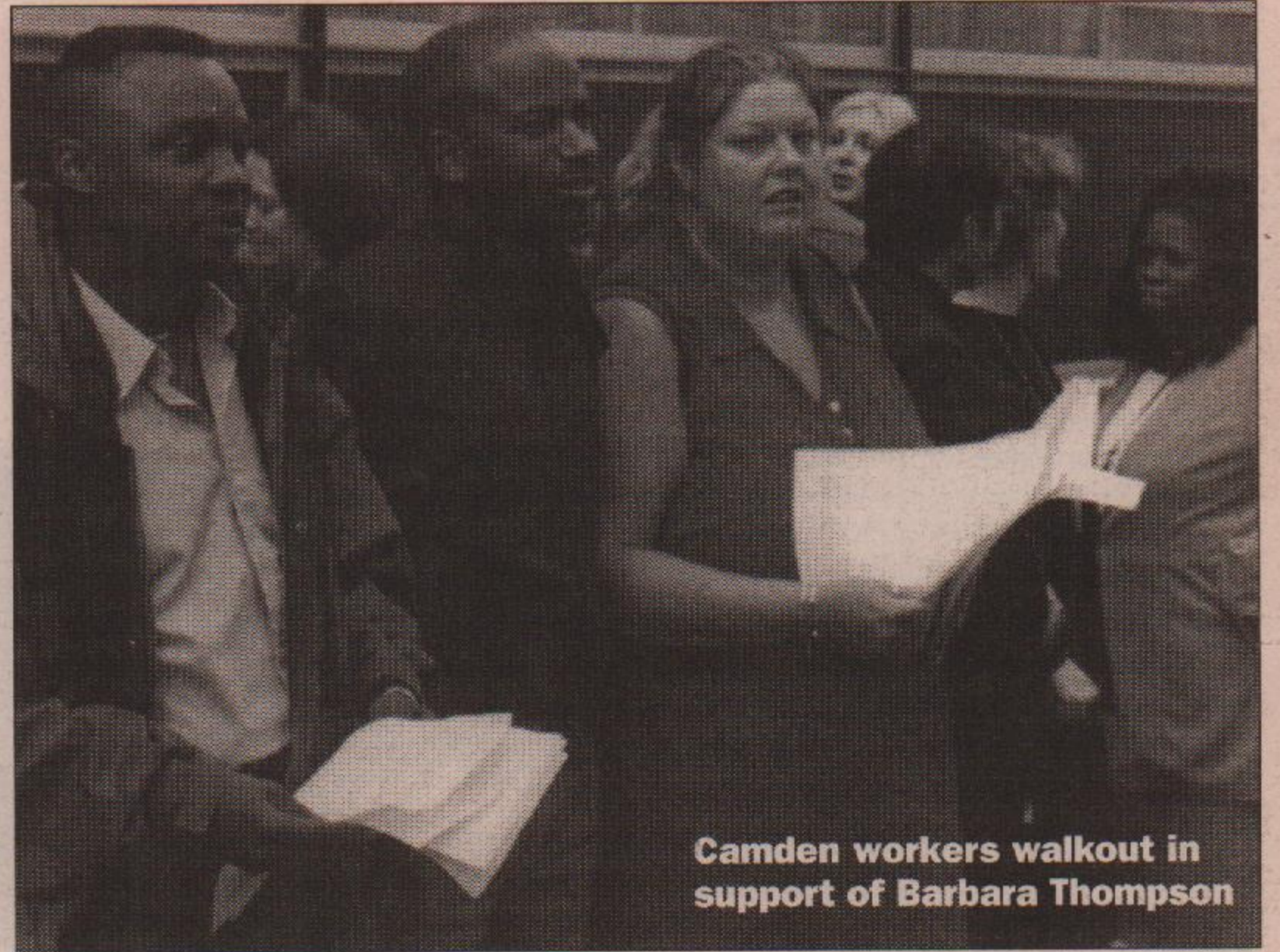
But to hell with the law. The Unison members were outraged and took advantage of a team training day to hold an impromptu shop meeting. There they voted unanimously to walk off the job unless their co-worker was reinstated.

Management refused to budge, so shortly after 12 noon the workforce walked out in defiance of the anti-union laws and, undoubtedly, with complete disregard for the advice they would have received from Unison's national headquarters directly across the road.

Along with a few other stewards, convenors and branch officers, I was proud to join their ranks outside the Housing Department's headquarters. A panic-stricken director on over £60,000 a year cancelled a regularly scheduled meeting with Unison representatives later that afternoon, and the local manager was reduced to irrational shouting at the Unison convenor the next day.

There is not yet a happy ending to this story. As I write this, Barbara Thompson still does not have her job back, but the determination is clearly there among her workmates to come out again, sacrifice pay and risk disciplinary action in order to win her reinstatement.

George Binette
Camden Unison co-convenor
(Chief Executive's department),
personal capacity



Camden workers walkout in support of Barbara Thompson

MORIBUND WORKERS STATES

Victory at Hackney school

Dear comrades

An update on your coverage of the events at Kingsland School in Hackney.

Some important victories have been won. The school term began with the NUT rep facing capability proceedings and most of the NUT members in the school suspended from the union for

attempting to defend him.

Last term, following an Ofsted inspection, the Head teacher started capability proceedings against Indro Sen, longstanding NUT rep in the school. The NUT members saw this as a clear case of victimisation and walked out on a one day strike. They were then suspended

from the union for taking unofficial action.

A disciplinary panel of school governors issued the strikers with a written warning, but the governors accepted that they were justifiably concerned about the misuse of procedures, possible victimisation of the rep and insti-

tutionalised racism.

The term began with the news that the Head had resigned. This was followed by a letter from the NUT lifting the suspension of the members. Then finally the replacement acting Head teacher informed Indro Sen that all action against him had been dropped.

These victories were based on a lively and militant campaign organised by teachers, parents and pupils at the school.

Kingsland School is still facing dif-

iculties: for years it has been seriously underfunded, it remains part of the Hackney EAZ and like all schools in Hackney faces the creeping privatisation of Hackney LEA, led by the private company Nord Anglia. Teachers at the school have committed themselves to continuing the fight to defend their school and comprehensive education.

Thanks to everyone who supported the campaign.

In solidarity
A Hackney teacher

MORIBUND WORKERS STATES

A travesty of a theory?

Dear Workers Power,

I was delighted to read in the September edition of Workers Power the change in your line on the nature of the current period and the characterisation of what you had called "moribund workers' states". My comments are based on the synopsis contained in your paper. As an ex-comrade who fought consistently against deeply flawed perspectives in the early 1990s and led a minority tendency against their adoption, I would make the following observations.

First, it is a tragedy that it has taken so long for you to correct your mis-

taken and subjective perspectives. Consciousness always lags behind developments. But to try and sustain the fiction of a revolutionary period for as long as 12 years requires more criticism of one's leadership than appears in your newspaper. And what about the phrase that you no longer "stick" to that characterisation? Fine, I accept you are no longer stubborn in supporting positions that fly in the face of reality, but what was wrong with your theory in the first place that led to this error.

Your failure of theory was not without consequence. It gave rise to false perspectives that were so erroneous

as to jeopardise the LRCI, because in misreading the situation by 180 degrees, you were raising expectations that could not be met and setting tasks that could have exhausted and disorientated the organisation.

Second, the concept of a moribund workers' state was a travesty of theory. It owed more to bourgeois empiricism than to Marxism. Once money could function as capital in the sense that it was now dominant, capable of purchasing or better still plundering means of production, how could one refer to the existence of planning in any form. It marked the definitive end of the

workers' states. This view did not, however, imply that these economies were now fully functioning capitalist economies or would ever become such.

My final criticism of the article is this: you have not gone far enough. You talk of the 1990s being transitional to a revolutionary period. This is political gobbledegook. Revolution you say was always on the cards, only now it has been deferred by almost two decades, a whole generation during the course of which, unbelievably, the United States has had the longest economic boom in its history. Some transition!

It really does not take us forward. Half a mistake is better than a complete mistake, but only slightly better. The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War and therefore the triumph of counter-revolution, whatever its liberal trappings. The restoration of the market was engi-

neered by imperialism, led by the bureaucracy and had the support of many sections of workers in the USSR. Without understanding that this was a decisive victory for imperialism, we cannot explain its effect on the international working class nor the revival of capitalism during the 1990s. To claim that the 1990s pointed in the direction of revolution is, yes, comrades to still be reading the arrow of history upside down.

Be brave, comrades. You have moved one foot, now try and move the other. As for whether we are heading for a revolutionary period, all eyes on Wall Street. A crash there may mark the beginning of the transition towards revolutionary period, which means that at last you may be in touch with reality.

Fraternal greetings
Brian Green

SOCIALIST ALLIANCES

Revolutionaries and elections

Dear comrades,

Alan Thornett takes issue with the idea of trying to establish the Socialist Alliance as a revolutionary alternative to Blair's Labour Party (Workers Power, September 2000). His argument has two themes: one it is impossible in "today's acutely adverse political conditions" to construct such a party; two it wouldn't be such a bad thing anyway to settle for a "half-way house", an "anti-capitalist party of some tens of thousands" (the Scottish Socialist Party is quoted as a model).

Thornett's letter encapsulates the

views of some of the major left groups within the Socialist Alliance, the SWP, the Socialist Party, Socialist Outlook, Alliance for Workers Liberty etc. While all of them claim to be fighting for a revolutionary transformation of society, to be building revolutionary parties to sweep away capitalism, when it comes to elections they appear to become shame-faced about such things. Rather than seeing an election – a period when workers are bombarded with alternative programmes for running the country; Tory, Labour, Liberal, Nationalist – as an opportunity to put a revolutionary alternative they run for cover.

The workers are "not ready" for revolutionary arguments we are told. We are standing in "acutely adverse political conditions". To push a revolutionary programme would "split the movement". But the fact of the matter is that the people who are pushing these ideas are not the workers or the masses themselves but the self-styled "revolutionaries". How do we know that workers cannot be won to a fighting, united, revolutionary organisation offering a real alternative to capitalism and Blair unless we try to win them to it?

Alan Thornett ends by offering us something else. We can't have a revo-

lutionary party, but never mind, we might get something nearly half as good. A half-way house that revolutionaries could fight inside to "turn into a revolutionary party". Half-way houses, Alan, like half-way revolutions, have a bad record. The Brazilian Workers Party was just such a party. As it grew; took positions in local, state and national assemblies, it silenced its left critics and threw them out. The Scottish Socialist Party, if it continues to grow on a left reformist programme, could well do the same.

Salvador Allende led just such a "half-way house" to power in Chile in 1970, a radical socialist alliance called "Popular Unity". Because it stopped half-way, because it refused to arm the workers, to raise the rank and file soldiers against

their officers, it led the workers to a crushing and bloody defeat from which they are only just recovering 28 years later.

Those who do not fight for the revolutionary programme, who do not try and exert every sinew to convince and win workers to revolutionary socialism – in strikes, in the workplace, in the struggles of refugees, of the oppressed, in election campaigns – are not revolutionaries. They are centrists, people who vacillate between revolution and left reformism. These are organisations which are ever so revolutionary in theory, even in their "where we stand" columns, but reformists in practice, especially in political and electoral struggles.

In comradeship
John Mckee

CAPITALISM is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need. Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

THE LABOUR PARTY is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

THE TRADE UNIONS must be transformed by a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production. We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

OCTOBER 1917: The Russian revolution established a workers' state. But Stalin destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism. Stalinism has consistently betrayed the working class. The Stalinist Communist Parties' strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist.

SOCIAL OPPRESSION is an integral feature of capitalism systematically oppressing people on the basis of race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

IMPERIALISM is a world system which oppresses nations and prevents economic development in the vast majority of third world countries. We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. But against the politics of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois nationalists, we fight for permanent revolution—working class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle under the banner of socialism and internationalism. In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of the imperialist army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

WORKERS POWER is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the revolutionary documents of the first four congresses of the Third International and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (the Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51. The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE

SCRAP THE VOUCHERS!



Thousands marched on 24 June against New Labour's racism

“Degrading and inhuman, stigmatising the victim and making them a target for racist attack”.

Union leader Bill Morris's description of the voucher system for asylum seekers was absolutely right. It is a complete scandal that anyone in 21st century Britain should have to stand in a supermarket queue and hand over vouchers for pathetically small amounts of food and household goods.

The charity Save the Children says the voucher system shores up racist attitudes and is driving families into grinding poverty.

Asylum seekers receive less than the already low social security minimum and have reduced access to social welfare benefits. Families and individuals fleeing persecution and destitution find themselves facing renewed persecution once here.

Morris, the general secretary of the TGWU, and fellow union leaders were lined up at the Labour Party conference to demand the complete scrapping of the voucher system. They had the overwhelming support of delegates and of the TUC. Morris's stand in defence of the refugees has helped trade union activists take the argument into workplaces and union branches. The Committee to

Defend Asylum Seekers and other local groups have fought back against the racist tide and won sympathy for the plight of the asylum seekers.

But at the last minute the union leaders did a deal which lets the Labour leadership off the hook. Jack Straw and the Home Office have been able to announce a "review" of the system. Unless they come under further pressure this could amount to kicking the issue into the long grass until well after the next election.

The voucher system cannot be

seen in isolation. It is part of a whole strategy outlined in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999. The system goes alongside the attacks on "bogus" asylum seekers orchestrated by Straw and his sidekick, Home Office minister Barbara Roche.

They want to deter the poor from coming to Britain. So they have refused the right to stay to unprecedented numbers of migrants, thrown hundreds into detention and introduced "forced dispersal".

They have allowed the gutter press

COMMITTEE TO DEFEND ASYLUM SEEKERS

- The right to work for asylum seekers
- The right of asylum seekers to claim Income Support
- The abolition of Campsfield and other detention centres
- The maintenance of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees
- The scrapping of the voucher system
- An end to dispersal of asylum seekers
- Full rights to legal aid and representation
- The scrapping of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Affiliate to the Committee £25 (local bodies),
£50 (national bodies)
BCM Box 4289, London, WC1N 3XX
www.defend-asylum.org

FEEDBACK ■ Contact us on 020 7793 1468

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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