

# workers POWER

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### COLOGNE

## Build a massive demonstration against the bosses

IN COLOGNE, Germany, on 29 May, workers from across Europe will come together in a massive demonstration, called to coincide with the European Union Heads of Government meeting. It will be a demonstration against the Europe of the bosses - the Europe of brutal war, of sackings, corruption, of racism and of poverty.

The march is supported by Europe's biggest union, the Germany's IG Metall, as well as a host of other unions, national union federations and major

working class parties like Italy's Rifondazione Comunista.

In Britain, trade unionists, including Workers Power supporters have been raising support for the march over the past two months. Our work has paid off. A number of local union bodies have signed up and the campaign had an enormous boost from the decision of the Unison national executive to back it. This should be used as the spur to build a massive British working class and youth presence on the march.

Workers unity across Europe is vital. Tony Blair, in a speech in the USA leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of Nato celebrations spelled out why. He told the assembled bosses:

"We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not. We cannot refuse to participate in global markets if we want to prosper. We cannot ignore new political ideas in other countries if we want to innovate. We cannot turn our backs on conflicts and the violation of human rights within other countries."

In reality, Blair outlined a new blueprint for internationally organised plunder on behalf of the national ruling classes of a handful of rich and powerful states.

The answer to this is working class international solidarity. The decisions of the EU summit in Cologne, of the multinational companies and of the military top brass in Nato's HQ in Brussels must be met by a co-ordinated response of workers organised in common unions, rank and file combines, industry wide committees and interna-

tional strike committees.

Above all the response must be to build an international workers' movement led by an international working class party, a Revolutionary International. The European March Against Unemployment, Job Insecurity, Social Exclusion and Racism in Cologne will be a step towards building an international workers' movement.

● Come to Cologne on 29 May. Coaches leave on 28 May. Ring us to book a place on 0181 981 0602.

### TARGETS OF WAR

# Nato's bloody work

**N**ATO HAS launched its first full scale war in Europe. Night after night, the 11 million inhabitants of Yugoslavia descend into air raid shelters.

Despite official Nato propaganda that only military targets will be attacked, Nato bombs have hit factories, railway trains, refugee convoys and residential areas. Civilian casualties have been appalling.

Recent atrocities include the destruction of the Serbian TV and radio station, killing at least 10 journalists and injuring dozens more.

Bombs have shattered oil depots, government buildings, the headquarters of the Serbian Socialist Party and Milosevic's official residence.

Nato has so far failed to "degrade" Serb military targets to any substantial degree. Despite the air war being launched ostensibly to defend the Kosovars, it has made their situation infinitely worse. The bombings have rallied the Serbian people behind Milosevic like never before.

So now the allies have resorted to the "bomb them back into the stone age" tactic. Their aim is to break the will of the Serbian people and the ruling élite to carry on this war.

At first the bombing was relatively light and restricted to military targets. But when it became plain that Milosevic used this as a cover for wholesale ethnic cleansing, pro-war opinion, whipped up by the media, demanded that "more must be done".

Hence the marked escalation of the attacks in the last two weeks of April and their extension to non-military targets. Bombings and missile attacks have been particularly heavy in the multi-ethnic northern province of Vojvodina – a

province with a strong history of opposition to Milosevic. Novi Sad, the country's second city, has been under heavy attack.

All three bridges across the Danube have now been destroyed, despite the heroic efforts of the people to protect them by occupying them after nightfall, when the attacks come. Now the river traffic of this 1,700 mile artery of European trade has been brought to a halt. Barge and shipping workers in Germany and Romania, steel workers in Austria and Hungary, shipbuilders in Slovakia—all will lose their jobs as a result of Clinton, Blair, Jospin and Schroeder's "smart bombs".

Purely residential areas of the city of Subotica have been hit with the depleted uranium tipped missiles that were used against the civilian population of Iraq. There terrible birth deformities and a massive increase in cancer rates were the direct result. The working class people of Serbia could be suffering the effects of these nightmarish weapons for decades after this dirty war is over.

Night after night workers, students, women and old people have formed "human shields" to protect vital elements of the economic and social infrastructure. They have occupied factories at night to prevent their destruction. But to no avail. Workers at the Zastava car plant in Kragujevac occupied the factory and faxed the map co-ordinates of the plant to Washington. Far from preventing an attack, cruise missiles destroyed the factory, injuring some 160 workers. It was nothing short of miraculous that no one was killed.

Two missiles struck passenger train no. 393 crossing the Southern Morava River. Ten passengers were incinerated and 16 others badly wounded.



A Kosovar killed by Nato bombs

Chemical factories in and around the major cities have been hit, threatening the population with terrible respiratory and skin conditions and creating a potential ecological disaster.

Nato's bloody work has not been restricted to Serb civilians. A convoy of fleeing Albanians was hit by laser-guided bombs fired from one or more US F16s. This was not simply an accident – they were dropped from 5 km above ground level.

The reason such "mistakes" are made is that the Nato planes are flying at incredibly high altitudes for combat missions. Why? Because of the order that there must be no Nato casualties. As a result no significant numbers of tanks,

heavy artillery or transport have been hit. Indeed the Serb military are still shelling villages, refugees, and KLA fighters with impunity.

The cost to the working people of Serbia, Montenegro and Kosova is incalculable. They are seeing their own work and that of their parents and grandparents since the Second World War go up in flames and toxic smoke.

But the war has also cost the working class people of Britain, America, France and Germany. Money that is not available for hospitals and schools is being poured into the war. According to John Llewellyn, chief economist for Lehman Brothers, the cost of each month's aerial campaign is around \$3bn

(£1.9bn). Each cruise missile costing \$1m. Each laser guided missile or bomb fired by an aircraft costs \$100,000.

This barbarous and cowardly war – conducted under the false pretext of helping the Kosovar refugees – must be stopped now.

Working class people in Britain have a particular responsibility to oppose the New Labour warmongers.

All authoritative bodies of the trade union and labour movement, from top to bottom, should be recalled to condemn the war and demand its immediate cessation.

At the same time medicine, money and arms should be given to the people of Kosova, without strings, to defend themselves against Milosevic's ethnic cleansing. The independence of Kosova should be immediately and unconditionally recognised and Britain should open its borders to all refugees who wish to come here.

Trade unionists should send messages of condemnation of Nato's attacks, demand their immediate cessation and express solidarity with the workers of Serbia, Montenegro and Kosova who are the direct targets of Nato bombs. The call must go out for war reparations – paid for by taxing the rich and the multinational corporations – to the victims of bombing and to rebuild the infrastructure, factories and houses destroyed in this "humanitarian war".

Only a mass movement across Europe can split the forces which support this imperialist war and inflict a defeat on the criminals responsible for it: Clinton and Blair. We must do all we can to hasten the day when they – alongside Milosevic – will be tried for war crimes by the workers of Europe and North America.

### ACTION AGAINST THE WAR

## Italy

Alone in the European Union, Italy has a mass anti-war movement.

The targets of its anger are the Nato air bases in the north of the country which are being used to launch the daily raids on Serbia.

On 3 April, the first Saturday anti-war demonstration brought 100,000 people and a host of trade union banners onto the streets of Rome to demand an end to both the Nato bombings and Serbian ethnic cleansing.

The left-wing party Rifondazione Comunista (RC) is playing a major role in the demonstrations. So are many

student unions. Some branches of the ruling PDS party are even joining the marches, in protest at the support given to Nato's war by their leader, prime minister d'Alema.

But while RC has denounced the bombing of Serbia, it has been more muted in its criticism of Milosevic. The editor of RC's newspaper, Curzi, had absolutely nothing to say about Serbia's genocidal actions on TV during the first week of the war.

This is a result of RC's Stalinist origins. The contrast between their consistent denunciation of Turkish atrocities against the Kurds and their silence over Serbia's oppression of national minorities is striking and constantly commented upon.

against the war, but were called to order by prime minister Jospin and have since kept quiet. Many PCF members are alarmed by this further dependence on the Socialists. A ground war could bring these divisions out into the open.

Left-wing parties Lutte Ouvriere and the LCR (which have formed a joint electoral list for the European elections) both oppose the bombings and back self-determination for the Kosovars.

But one LCR leader, Catherine Samary, has called in the newspaper *Rouge* for a multinational force under UN control to occupy Kosova.

## Germany

Twenty thousand marched against the war in Berlin at Easter, with protests in other cities reaching up to 10,000. All called for an end to the bombing campaign and the withdrawal of the Federal German army from its first ever military engagement.

Trade unionists have launched petitions and open letters against TUC leader Schulte's backing for the bombs, with some calling for his immediate resignation. In the industrial Ruhr district, a group of metalworkers has set up an anti-war initiative.

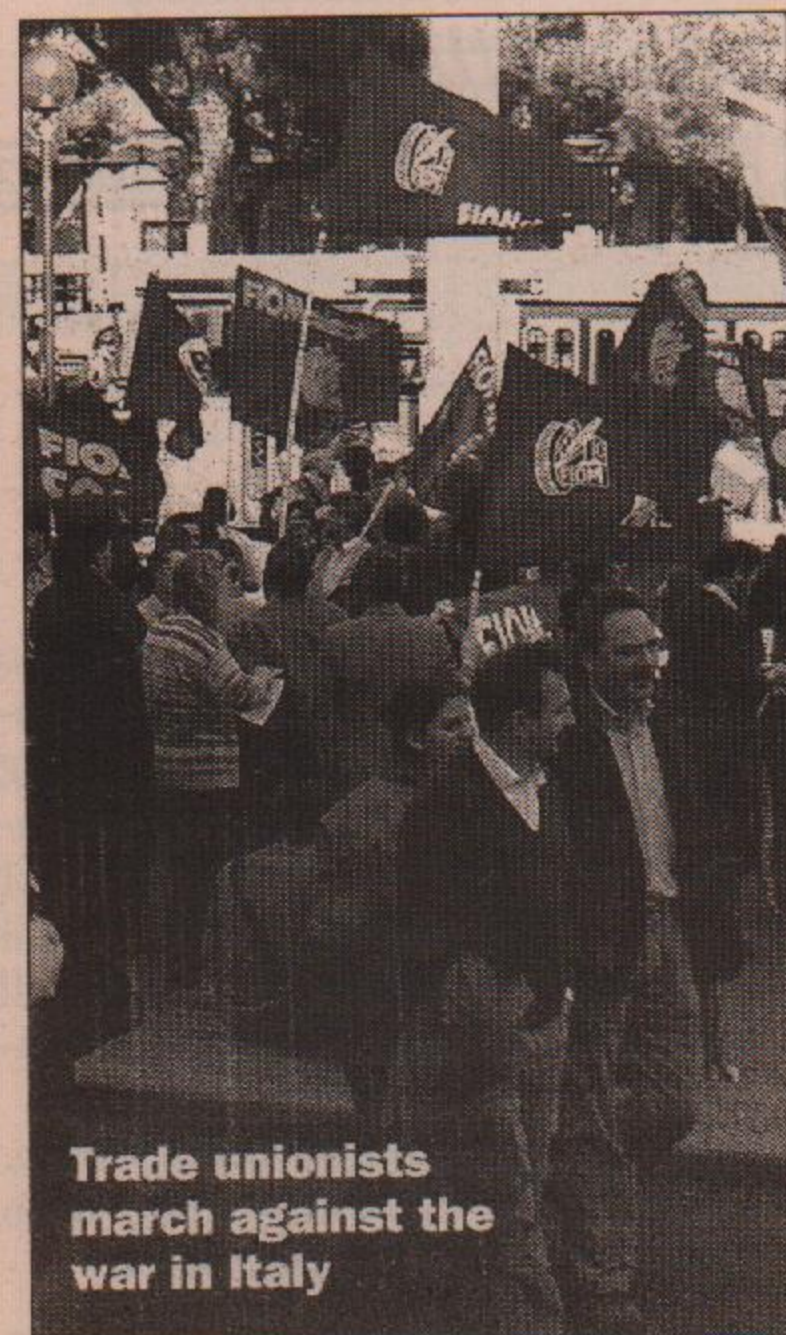
Some leaders of the ruling SPD's youth movement, the Jusos, have called for an end to the war. SPD coalition ally, the Green Party, is opposed to the bombings, but its foremost representative – foreign minister Joschka Fischer – backs the Nato onslaught.

## France

Eight thousand people joined two marches against the war in Paris. On the first, failure to link the call for an end to the bombings with support for the Kosovars led to a large contingent of Serbian nationalists joining the march raising reactionary slogans for a Greater Serbia.

But the second demonstration raised a clearer position, and was dominated by working class organisations.

The Communist Party (PCF) and its trade union federation, the CGT, opposes the bombings. But the party is in a coalition government with the Socialist Party, and wants to stay there. PCF ministers initially spoke out



Trade unionists march against the war in Italy

### GET ACTIVE!

Workers Power and the independent socialist youth organisation REVOLUTION are campaigning at work, in the trade unions and on the streets to build opposition to Nato. We have taken the lead in rallying the internationalist forces in the anti-war movement, raising the slogan of Kosovan independence and building internationalist contingents on demonstrations. Get involved. Get active. Join us! Ring 0181 981 0602 for details, for leaflets, pamphlets and papers.

#### WORKERS POWER PUBLIC MEETINGS

**Cardiff**  
Tuesday 4 May 7.30  
Clwb Ifor Bach  
Womanby Street Cardiff

**Coventry**  
Tuesday 4 May 7.30  
West India Club  
Spon St, Coventry

**Sheffield**  
Wednesday 5 May, 7.30  
The Rutland Arms,  
Brown St and Paternoster Row,  
Sheffield

**London**  
Meeting jointly organised with other internationalists:  
■ Stop the Bombing  
■ Self Determination for Kosova  
■ Open the Borders to Refugees  
■ Nato out of the Balkans  
Tuesday May 11, 7.30  
ULU, Malet St, London

#### DEMONSTRATIONS AND RALLIES

**London**  
National anti-war demonstration, 8 May, coaches from all areas. Join our contingent.  
■ Nato out of the Balkans!  
■ Support Kosova's fight for Independence!  
■ Open the Borders!

**Cardiff**  
Saturday 1 May. Assemble 12 noon outside the St David's Centre. Rally 1.00pm at the Welsh Office.

**Birmingham**  
Leafleting: Saturdays 1.00pm  
New St/Victoria Square  
Stop the War Rally: Friday 7 May, 7.30  
Dr Johnson House, Bull St.

**Resolution for trade unionists**  
This branch condemns Nato's bombardment of Serbia and Serbia's war of ethnic cleansing against the Kosovar Albanians. It calls for:  
■ Stop Nato's bombing, Nato out of the Balkans  
■ Support for Kosova's right to independence  
■ Open the borders to refugees

This branch will support any demonstrations called to promote these policies. We call on our NEC to donate £.... to aid the Kosovar refugees, to send a rank and file delegation to deliver the supplies and make direct links with the Kosovar organisations in the camps and to co-ordinate this solidarity work with sister organisations in the European labour movement.

# Preparing the ground war

*Dave Stockton explains the unfolding logic of Nato's bombing*

NATO'S ATTEMPT to bomb Serbia to the negotiating table has failed. Clinton and Blair's original hopes that the low level bombing of largely vacated military barracks would give Milosevic the chance to back down and accept the Rambouillet agreement have been confounded. There is no sign that Milosevic will allow in a Nato-led force or let the Kosovars to return to their homes. The leaders of Nato grossly underestimated the degree to which Milosevic needs another war to safeguard his own crisis ridden regime.

Having used the Kosovars as a pretext for its role as world policeman, the USA and its allies are now forced to step up their murderous campaign. They have agreed to piracy on the high seas – stopping and searching any ships they suspect are supplying Serbia with oil. And, they are preparing a ground invasion of Kosova.

Plans for such an invasion will be complete as early as the end of May. In the USA 80,000 troops are already being trained for the mission.

Eight thousand troops are to secure the border between Albania and Kosova, and a further 200,000 Serbia's borders with Bosnia, Hungary and Romania. US troops based in Tuzla, Bosnia, have already been briefed on an operation to deploy along the Drina valley and the border with Montenegro, and to go into Montenegro if necessary.

The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have given the go-ahead for the transit and deployment of this large force. The intention is, according to one US official, "to all but throttle Serbia and to cage Milosevic".

Such a strategy will pose political problems for the Nato powers. France's public dissent over the naval blockade is a sign of the fragility of the imperialist alliance in this war. But Clinton, and especially Blair, will continue to push for some sort of ground war in order to impose their "peace" on the Balkans.

A ground war could have three possible variants:

- a limited incursion into Kosova, when Nato believes the Serb forces are sufficiently weakened by aerial bombardment to put up little resistance. The aim would be to establish a safe haven for returning Kosovars

- a general invasion aimed at occupying the whole of Kosova and imposing a Nato protectorate

- a general invasion of Serbia aimed at achieving near unconditional surrender, toppling Milosevic and imposing the fullest Nato terms on a defeated state.

Nato is probably unwilling to risk the enormous casualties a full-scale invasion of Yugoslavia would entail. Its political costs are mass revulsion against heavy casualties in the USA and Europe and the total alienation of Russia, maybe even drawing it into the war as a supplier of weapons and intelligence. Such a campaign would require a massive military build up and the violation of the sovereignty of two states (Macedonia, Montenegro) and even strong-arming Nato-member Greece. A general invasion of Serbia is the least likely option since it would probably bring in the Russian "volunteers" and logistical support and set the whole of the Balkans alight.

A full scale invasion of Kosova, aimed at occupying the whole country, is also unlikely because it would require the use of Macedonian and Greek territory as well as Albanian. The best strategic



option would be a pincer movement from northern Albania/Montenegro and from Macedonia, trapping the Serb forces in central and western Kosova. Only if the Nato planes and Apache helicopters are willing to take casualties by low-flying sorties aimed at pulverising the Serb forces, breaking their lines of communication, shocking and demoralising the Serb infantry, could a massive offensive produce a rapid break up of the defensive position of the Serbs. In fact – given the mountainous terrain – this option would probably lead to heavy Nato casualties too.

The most likely action will be a limited attack to seize part of Kosova. The objectives will still be to strike devastating blows against Serbian forces, showing Nato's capacity to win any all-out ground war against Serbia and to create a "safe haven" into which the refugees can be herded, effectively an international protectorate. Kosovars would be kept in the region rather than migrating to Western Europe.

*Socialists and democrats should support the defeat of Nato forces; we should take heart from the political disarray in the imperialist camp that would follow each military reverse for Nato*

The enormous problem with this, the most militarily feasible option, is that it amounts to a de facto partition of Kosova. In reality it would be very close to what Milosevic wanted in the first place.

Under a partition scenario, the Kosovar leadership already fears that Belgrade will offer the West a truce and hand over most of the woods and mountains of Kosova to the Albanians in exchange for the province's strategic, economic and historical assets in the north. These include valuable mines, as well as the Orthodox monasteries important to the Serbs. As a result, fighting between the Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA) and Serbian security forces is especially intense in the Lapski and Shalja region of northern Kosova.

The Shalja region contains the Trepca copper and zinc mines where, in 1989, Albanian miners staged an underground hunger strike following Belgrade's removal of Kosova's autonomous status. Before 1989, the Trepca Mines were Europe's second most productive lead and zinc mines. In 1995 Belgrade leased the mines to the Greek company Mytilineos. But because of the war there has been little investment and the mines are

no longer operational.

Albanians believe the separation line will stretch from the north-western city of Pec (Peja) to the south eastern region of Kraj Morave (Anamorave). This line would give the major cities of Pristina, Mitrovica, parts of the Drenica region, and Kosovo Polje, site of a Serbian 14th century battle, to the Serbs.

Economically, Belgrade is believed to be aiming to secure not only the mines but also the major highways that lead west to the Montenegrin port and naval base of Kotor Bay, via Pec. This is Serbia's only outlet to the sea. By taking the region of Kraj Morave, Belgrade will build a buffer to the major highway that currently skirts Kosova and leads, via Macedonia, to the Greek port of Thessaloniki.

One of the ironies of Nato's current war against Serbia is that Milosevic was accepted by the US, France and Britain in the early 1990s as the strong man most likely to hold together the remnants of the ex-Yugoslav federation. This

reacted to Milosevic's genocide with a policy of reliance on Nato. This is foolish and short-sighted. Nato's "humanitarian concern", unlike the genuine sympathy felt by hundreds of thousands of working class people in Nato countries, is cynical.

At the Rambouillet talks the Kosovar delegation signed up to the plan for Nato troops and their own disarmament, and signed away their justified democratic right to an independent state. But even in terms of this limited agreement, Nato has betrayed the Kosovars.

It launched an air assault on Serbia without even a provisional military plan for the defence of the ethnic Albanians in Kosova. Nato refused to countenance arms for the KLA; it avoided operations against Serb units on the ground in Kosova; it failed to prepare for the scale of the mass expulsions into Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Nato is fully responsible for the hundreds, possibly thousands, of deaths that

have and will continue to occur among the refugees as a result of lack of shelter, food, medicine and sanitation. To this must be added the wanton destruction of parts of Pristina by Nato bombs, much of which will not be repaired because the west will not donate sufficient reconstruction aid.

Just as tragically for the Kosovars, Nato's operation against Serbia has buried Serbian opposition to Milosevic under an avalanche of jingoism and hatred of "fifth columnists". Out of sight and hearing of this well-orchestrated campaign, a beleaguered few send reports via the internet, but others are assassinated by order of the secret police. Yet these were the Kosovars' best allies inside Serbia, organising protests against the regime and keeping alive a stream of information about the repression inside Kosova that contested the state-media lies of Milosevic. A future multi-ethnic Balkans depends upon the overthrow of Milosevic by the Serbian people. Nato's bombing has set back this cause.

What can the Kosovars expect of their Nato allies when there are no more targets left to bomb in Serbia? Nato has set its face against Kosovan independence and will at best set up glorified refugee

camps in part of Kosova and call it a "protectorate". Kosovars be warned: Palestinians expelled from their homeland in 1948 are still living in refugee camps in the Gaza strip – they are as old as Nato and the UN!

What fate can Kosovar refugees hope for if they do manage to make their way to Europe or the USA? Their governments' touching humanitarian concern was well revealed by their collusion in the forced expulsion of thousands of Kosovars from Macedonia after being violently separated from their families. Make no mistake, once a political settlement is enforced upon the region, Kosovars in London, Paris, Washington and Berlin will be hounded as scroungers, criminals and deprived of meaningful benefits and democratic rights.

It is not enough to ask for Nato's bombs to stop. It is essential that in its air war over Serbia Nato is roundly beaten. Nato's war over the skies of Serbia is not about stopping ethnic cleansing in Kosova; this actually accelerated with the start of the bombing. It is about reducing the relative political and military independence of a sovereign semi-colonial state and its ability to say no to imperialism.

Socialists and democrats should support the defeat of Nato forces; we should take heart from the political disarray in the imperialist camp that would follow each military reverse for Nato. Not because we support the genocidal Milosevic, but because Nato's defeat will allow the political straitjacket that has been imposed on Serbian society to be discarded and an independent opposition to re-emerge.

A defeat for Nato will open up deep divisions between Nato members and within the US political establishment, which even now are simmering. This would strengthen the struggles of all the oppressed and exploited in the world. It will help the struggle of the Kurds against Nato member Turkey and everyone who is resisting governments backed by the US State Department and Pentagon.

The current balance of international relations is unlikely to survive the outcome of this conflict.

Russia emerged from the end of the Cold War humiliated and economically devastated; its journey back to capitalism has stalled. The successive cliques of pro-imperialist politicians under Yeltsin's increasingly weak rule have done little or nothing to resist the dominance of the US in the international arena.

But the unilateral attack on its ally Serbia inside Europe has alarmed Russia. It now seeks to promote its influence over the southern Slavs and use them as a pressure point on the USA and EU. It hopes to prevent a full Nato settlement in the Balkans which would increase its influence over the central Asian republics of the ex-USSR. Russia is trying to draw the line in the Balkans.

Germany's plan to invite a defeated Serbia into the European Union is countered by the Great Russian chauvinists – who may soon have the Russian presidency in their hands – with a proposal for a new pan-Slav confederation. This signals a new Russian determination to set limits to the USA's advance. And Russia remains a nuclear power.

The Nato offensive, led by the Third Way liberals Clinton and Blair, has set a match to the Balkan powder keg, which might well blow up in their faces.

# The KLA: Nato's willing foot soldiers or freedom fighters?

Many on the British left have dismissed the KLA as a Nato pawn. *Keith Harvey* disagrees and explains how its rapid growth in recent years is due to its resistance to Serb attacks and fight for independence

**T**HIS TIME last year no one in the US or European Union governments had a good word for the Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA). As *The Guardian* reports, they were "repeatedly dismissed as an anti-democratic terrorist group linked to drug smuggling and intimidation of ethnic Albanians who did not share its militant approach" (21 April).

Now, Nato spokesperson, Jamie Shea praises them as "a phoenix risen from the ashes". Hundreds, even thousands of Kosova Albanians make their way from the United States and Europe to join the KLA in their camps inside Albania with assistance of the west.

So what is the KLA? A genuine force for national liberation and Kosovar independence, or a gang of Balkan *contras* helping the USA establish a colonial presence in southern Europe?

The origins of the KLA lie in a small network of former Albanian Stalinists (loyal to the now dead Stalinist leader of Albania, Enver Hoxha) in Kosova and among Albanian emigrants in Western Europe and the USA. The most important of the KLA founding groups came from the Kosova Peoples' Movement (LPK) and several splits from them.

After the 1995 Dayton agreements over Bosnia-Herzegovina, many Kosovars concluded that the peaceful road to independence was a dead end. More and more decided that Albanians would only be heard by the "international community" when they took up arms. The KLA grew quickly as Serb paramilitaries increased their actions against Kosovar Albanians. In May 1997, around 300 members of KLA launched several attacks on the Serbian police.

The KLA grew substantially during spring 1998. They were also able to arm themselves as a result of the flow of weapons that occurred after the breakdown in the Albanian state from February 1997 onwards. In several weeks an organisation of 300 grew to a movement of 30,000. Before the mass expulsions from Kosova it was fighting a classic guerrilla struggle, with solid roots in a number of villages and represented, militarily, all the elements of Albanian Kosovar society struggling against Serbian oppression.

Socialists give the KLA critical support in their fight against oppression and for self-determination. Support because the Kosovars have shown repeatedly they wish to have their own state and the exercise of this right does not involve the oppression of another people. The KLA is fighting a just war of national liberation.

None of those who denounce the KLA on the left can answer the simple question: if the KLA is a tool of imperialism why do these most powerful and modern states not arm it with high-tech, sophisticated weapons so that it can defend the Kosovan Albanians against Serbian tanks, artillery and aircraft? Why does Nato not arm them even now, when they are bombing Serbia, despite repeatedly appeals from the KLA?

The reason is simple. While the KLA leadership would like to become Nato's ground troops in exchange for Nato support for their struggle, imperialism has no interest in them. Because of their mass character and their struggle for Kosova's independence imperialism can't trust them and therefore will not give them more than tactical support in



exceptional situations. Should this change, in circumstances where imperialism invades the Balkans for example, then we can review our position. But to denounce the KLA - as so many on the left do - because of a future possible turn in events, is a criminal betrayal of the Kosovars' just struggle.

As Marxists we develop our tactics not on the basis of the wishes of a leadership but from the objective character of the struggle and the relation between the fighting masses and the organisations which represent them.

If the KLA has received arms from Germany is this a crime? If so, then greater crimes were committed by the anti-fascist Serbian guerrillas in the Second World War when they welcomed Winston Churchill's imperialist planes bombing Chetnik positions, when they took their money and operated with their officers on the ground.

If drugs money has paid for the KLA uniforms and AK 47s then that too is entirely legitimate since they would be an even more ineffective fighting force if they had to rely solely upon

the financial aid from impoverished Kosovar villagers.

Yet our support of the KLA is critical - of the KLA's methods, aims and ideology. Crucially, the KLA leadership is completely wrong to support the Nato bombing of Serbia and urge its ground troops to invade. The pro-imperialist sentiments of the KLA leaders are not in doubt. Their recent communiqués are fulsome in their praise for Nato:

"The Kosova Liberation Army and the whole of our nation strongly and unreservedly support the new philosophical, political and military trend followed by the [USA and EU] for freedom, peace and the future of human kind regardless of the ethnic origin."

But from the mass student demos of 1996-97 to the guerrilla war of 1998-99 reliance on Nato was not an inevitable development in this struggle. The guerrilla struggle dictated the separation of the vanguard fighters from the towns where the Kosovar working class lived. Mass strikes, arming of the people and the organising of militia based on the masses, local workers' and poor peas-

ants' councils and workers' control should have been the primary weapons of struggle and could have been effective in countering the Serb onslaught.

Instead, as the Serb police moved through Pristina and the major towns of Kosova after 26 March 1999, the KLA was on the defensive, in the countryside. As well as being functionally disastrous, the strategy of guerrillism was also politically disastrous. Rejecting mass urban struggle meant that, without outside help, in terms of modern heavy weapons and communications the KLA could never go on the offensive.

Thus it threw all hopes of an offensive liberation struggle onto an intervention by the USA, provoked by the worsening "security situation" in the Balkans. The KLA should break its political subordination to Nato. This imperialist alliance will not back independence nor give the KLA the arms they need to fight for it effectively, against either Serbia or a Nato administration.

In addition, and decisively, the KLA leadership, and still more so the moderate Kosovan leader Rugova have

never sought to mobilise the small but important Kosova working class as the central political force to rock the Milosevic regime. Despite their materially weak conditions because of the mass sackings, the Kosovar working class is organised in the independent trade union movement BSKB which is critical of Rugova. The northern mining working class has repeatedly shown its willingness to strike and protest but the KLA has embarked on a guerrilla struggle which ignores the social and political power of these workers.

All guerrilla groups elevate military struggle above politics regardless of circumstance. They are hostile to any genuine mass democracy of those they claim to represent. If they were ever to take power they would be bureaucratic and high-handed. Only mass democracy and a militia of the people themselves - now in the camps, later in the villages and towns of Kosova - can act as a counterweight to the bureaucracy embedded in guerrilla armies.

But despite these political criticisms, the KLA are not "terrorists", Albanian *contras*, drug barons or crazy killers fuelled by ethnic hatred. They are a legitimate politico-military force rooted in the Albanian villages of Kosova that arose to defend the population against the Serb paramilitaries who routinely terrorised them in the 1990s.

They have grown into a substantial guerrilla fighting force but one that is outnumbered, under-armed and crippled by a false strategy that sidelines the mass political struggle of the working class in favour of armed actions in rural areas.

What faces the KLA, and the hundreds of thousands of Kosovars who look to them today, is a sharp crisis of leadership. The "sign Rambouillet and wait for Nato" strategy has proved a disaster. But even if the dearest wishes of the KLA leaders were fulfilled - with a Nato ground war, and an autonomous protectorate - that would create a roadblock to national independence.

Nato has made it very clear that it wants Rambouillet, not independence for Kosova. Thus "victory" will involve Kosova being forced back either into a federation ruled by the man Nato calls a "war criminal" or into an imperialist protectorate where decisions are made in Washington and Bonn but not in Pristina!

Today Kosovar refugees join demonstrations with placards saying "We love Nato" and "Nato - Now or Never". We say to them: break with Nato. Only when its own defeat is threatened will it contemplate a ground war. It will never arm you enough to beat the Serb military on your own because the force that defeats the Serb occupation forces is the force that will impose the next social order on Kosova.

If Nato is forced into all out war on the ground, the only outcome will be a reactionary protectorate, not national self-determination: the road to socialism will be blocked within Kosova and the road to a socialist federation of all the peoples and nationalities of the Balkans will be blocked as well.

The KLA have no political alternative to this. That is why we say the central task remains building a revolutionary socialist workers' party as an alternative leadership of the struggle to the KLA and to conciliationists like Rugova. Such a party will fight for a working class revolution in Kosova and throughout the Balkans.

### Does the KLA kill Serb civilians?

**THE SOCIALIST Workers Party claims that "killing Serb civilians has been part of the KLA's guerrilla strategy." (Stop The War April 1999). What evidence is there for this, since the SWP provide none? The Yugoslav authorities claim that the KLA have carried out massacres and executions of Serbs in three villages between April and September last year, with a combined death toll of several dozen.**

**However, an examination of the available evidence does not support the charge. If we take the source most hostile to the KLA, the Serbian government, their website lists 200 "atrocities" committed between 14 October last year and the end of February this year. Of these 41% are straightforward military attacks on police.**

**A further 20% were attacks on people of Muslim origin. This is explained both by the existence of collaborators**

**among Kosovar Albanians, and by political in-fighting within the Kosovar resistance.**

**Most of the remaining 40 per cent of attacks consist of: grenade attacks on cafes in Pristina; roadblock hijackings, resulting in either the beating or shooting of Serb civilians; and raids on Serb houses to get weapons.**

**Some of these may have been ethnically motivated revenge attacks. Likewise some could have been the dirty work of Serb undercover forces. In the entire list of attacks there is not one allegation of rape.**

**What is true is that with the 10 per cent Kosova Serb population armed to the teeth - like Northern Ireland's Loyalists or West Bank Jewish settlers - clashes with them and killing of them was inevitable once the guerrilla struggle began. The website does not log how many roadblocks, killings and beatings were meted out by Serb forces**

**in that period - but it numbered thousands.**

**If the KLA are guilty of any killings of Serb villagers fuelled by ethnic hatred then such actions must be denounced and the KLA leadership must make it clear that it will punish such actions. The workers' movement must never "turn a blind eye" to reactionary and self-defeating chauvinist crimes even when they are committed by oppressed communities themselves. This is self-defeating for the Kosovars because they will never finally establish their national freedom in peace and security without the goodwill of the great majority of the workers and peasants of Serbia and Montenegro. But even if we take the lying mouthpiece of the Serb regime's own figures, it is clear that there is no evidence of ethnic cleansing or attacks on civilians per se as the strategy of the KLA.**

# Let the Kosovars into Britain!

Hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians are living out a nightmare in the refugee camps on Kosova's border. If Home Secretary Jack Straw gets his way, argues *Rachel Thomas*, that's where they will stay

**I**MAGES OF the terrified and traumatised refugees flood our television screens. Stories are told by children separated from their families in the rush to escape; others hid among the dead to avoid detection; yet others watched as their loved ones were shot.

The sheer scale of the suffering in Kosova defies belief. The number of victims grows day by bloody day. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) more than 400,000 Kosovars had fled their country between 24 March and 5 April, in the first instance to the impoverished states of Macedonia and Albania.

By 19 April another 200,000 had sought refuge outside Kosova. Some estimates suggest that the total number of Kosovars who have become refugees since March 1998 now exceeds a million - excluding people forced from their homes but still in Kosova.

Over half the population have been driven from their own country.

The plight of hundreds of thousands of persecuted people lacking food, adequate shelter and basic hygiene has moved many people across Europe and the USA. Charitable appeals have raised millions in Britain alone. Even readers of the *Daily Mail*, which has for months carried endless racist stories whipping up a frenzy of hatred towards Kosovan refugees in Britain, had donated £2 million to an emergency relief fund by mid-April.

And what of the politicians? We have heard Bill Clinton's rhetoric promoting a war supposedly waged in support of "principles of humanity we hold sacred". We have heard Tony Blair tell us Britain is engaged in a just war, in humanitarian action, in an attempt to stop a human tragedy. These are their words. What of their actions?

The vile hypocrisy of the response of western governments, foremost among them Britain's, to the refugee crisis exposes the great lie that these warmongers are perpetrating.

Clinton and Blair did not consider the probability that Nato's aerial offensive would provide the signal for a dramatic escalation of the Serbian policy of ethnic cleansing in Kosova. Within 48 hours of the start of the bombing it was obvious that the Nato allies had invested no time or money in assisting dirt-poor neighbouring states to deal with Europe's worst refugee crisis in more than 50 years.

In early 1998 the UNHCR had requested £105 million "to provide relief to the people made homeless by the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia". A year later the UNHCR had received less than a third of that figure from member states.

In the first week of April the Clinton administration announced a \$50 (£32) million humanitarian aid package in response to the catastrophe unfolding in the fields of Macedonia. This is less than one-fortieth of the \$2.1 billion price-tag on a single Stealth bomber. Just one day of bombing costs more than this entire aid package.

Britain, meanwhile, pledged only £12 million to relieve the immediate plight of refugees. The response in terms of money is pathetic, at the level of policy it is nothing less than gruesome.

The reaction to the plight of the refugees by Nato governments has laid bare the racism at the heart of New Labour and the rest of social democratic "Fortress Europe". The Kosovars are not only victims of Milosevic's stirring of a murderous Serbian chauvinism; they are also the victims of west Euro-



Kosovar refugees fleeing Serbian bombardment near the city of Pec

pean politicians who regard them as "a lesser breed of whites".

The Labour government's policies towards asylum seekers have pandered to and reinforced popular racism. Only last autumn Labour's immigration minister at the Home Office, Mike O'Brien, declared that "there is no distinct nationality of Kosovan and those claiming to be Kosovan are usually found to be among nationals of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." O'Brien last year authorised the deportation of up to 30 of these "Yugoslav nationals" from his own Midlands constituency. When he watches the pictures from the refugee camps, maybe he'll see some of their faces twisted in an agony that he helped inflict.

In early April Tony Blair indicated that Britain would be taking in several thousand Kosovars. But this softer tone was strictly for propaganda purposes. In practice it was swiftly contradicted by Home Secretary Jack Straw and until the fourth week of April Britain had admitted only one Kosovar refugee (see table below). The *Irish Times* reported that UK officials had even vetoed the offer by local councillors in Omagh, scene of last August's horrific bombing, to host 100 Kosovars.

Straw responds to muted criticism in the *Observer* and *Guardian* of the government's reluctance to allow Balkan war refugees into Britain with the claim that Britain had admitted 10,000 Kosovars prior to 24 March. He conveniently glosses over the fact that at least 7,000 are still awaiting Home Office rulings on their asylum applications, while several dozen have been imprisoned at notorious detention centres like Campsfield.

It is nauseating to hear Defence Sec-

retary George Robertson boast that these 10,000 Kosovars prove that Britain is doing its best to help the refugees. How did these refugees get to Britain? They came here despite government immigration laws, not because of them. They arrived illegally and they have been treated by New Labour like criminals.

Those not imprisoned live a hand-to-mouth existence in hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation, receiving the statutory minimum from local authority social service departments.

Meanwhile International Development Secretary, Clare Short, visits Macedonia for the obligatory photo opportunity in a refugee camp and to lecture its government on its moral responsibilities to the refugees. She justified the government's reluctance to open Britain's borders to Kosovars on the grounds that this was exactly what Milosevic wanted. This spin from Short is hateful and sickening, coming as it does against a backdrop of unbearable human suffering.

And what of the future? Under the New Labour asylum legislation currently before Parliament things will get even worse for refugees in Britain. Even as you watch the nightly news from the refugee camps, the government is pushing through a new Immigration and Asylum Bill. Next time you hear them bleating over humanitarian action to save the refugees, bear this in mind: New Labour intends to introduce a law which will make it impossible for any refugee from war to come to Britain.

Their law will make it illegal for any asylum seeker to work; to live where they choose, with the compulsory dispersal of asylum seekers away from London into whatever accommodation

the Home Office deems adequate; it will deny them access to housing and disability benefits. This law will mean refugees in Britain will be given just £1 a day to live on, 50p if you are a child - barely enough for a one-way bus fare in Blair's New Britain.

Next time you see images of refugees queuing for bread in the camps of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, remember that if they manage to make it to Britain under New Labour they will be living on food stamps. Those on income support are on the official poverty line in Britain; New Labour will ensure that refugees are given 30% less than that - a deliberate act to punish those who escape from war.

New Labour's law will be pitiless. Next time you hear them lecturing on human rights remember this: children in Britain are protected by the Children Act, ensuring basic levels of benefits such as free school meals. New Labour intends to remove that protection from refugee children.

In the midst of the war, no one is telling the true story about New Labour and its asylum and immigration policy. Those on the left in the Labour Party have been told to keep quiet. And what of the great British free press?

The refugee camps have been overrun with journalists earnestly telling the story of the misery they have witnessed. Yet the British press has been complicit in whipping up anti-refugee, anti-Albanian feelings for months prior to the war. And at least one British broadsheet has refused to declare a ceasefire in its own ideological offensive against those fleeing Kosova. The *Sunday Telegraph* carried a story under the headline "Violent refugees trigger British backlash", claiming Kosovars "have been involved in a series of attacks, fights and disputes after arriving in Britain". Little wonder then that New Labour is under no pressure from the press.

We must also ensure that the anti-war movement in Britain stops turning a wilfully blind eye to the plight of the Kosovar refugees, the principal victims of the Balkans wars. A key plank of the anti-war campaign should be:

- Refugees welcome here - open borders with full citizenship rights
- Stop New Labour's asylum bill
- Scrap the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act
- Smash "Fortress Europe"
- Organise defence of refugee communities from racist/fascist attack.



Kosovar refugees on the Macedonian border

## Double standards in Fortress Europe

Britain is not unique in its racist response to the war's Kosovan victims. Prior to 19 April 16,000 refugees had been airlifted out of Kosova - the majority of them to Germany.

A number of other European Union countries have pledged to admit tens of thousands, though few have done so to date.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, who has already betrayed most of his 1997 election pledges to immigrants, triggered public outrage when he indicated that France would not be accepting any refugees. He has since changed his public position.

Anita Gradin, a European Commissioner from "liberal" Sweden, spoke volumes when she described Europe's obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees as an "out-of-date" nuisance.

A real indication of social democratic Europe's attitude to the victims of war came between December 1997 and January 1998 during the flight of several thousand Kurds from the "dirty war" with Turkey.

Austria swiftly mobilised increased border patrols on Alpine passes. The French state followed suit, sending police to its Italian frontier. EU interior ministers agreed an emergency programme of draconian measures, including fingerprinting of aliens and the relocation of refugees "into safe areas within their own region of origin".

By mid-January the Turkish authorities arrested nearly 1,400 Kurds in Istanbul, describing them as would-be "economic migrants", in other words "bogus" asylum seekers.

Turkey's move elicited no criticism from the EU whatsoever. Then again, Turkey is a loyal Nato ally and an important bulwark on the edge of "Fortress Europe".

### KOSOVAR REFUGEES RECEIVED AS OF 19 APRIL

Country	Number
Germany	9,974
Turkey	3,692
Norway	1,104
Iceland	23
United States	n/a
Britain	1

# SWP abandons the

The Socialist Workers Party claims to support the struggle of the oppressed everywhere but this principle appears not to apply to the Kosovars' fight for freedom, writes *Jeremy Dewar*

**B**RITAIN'S BIGGEST far-left party has refused to support independence for Kosova. While campaigning for an end to the Nato bombings, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) refuses to back the Kosovars' fight against ethnic cleansing and for a state of their own.

In the process, the SWP has tried to play down the full scale of the genocide carried out against the Kosovars. They put forward the following arguments:

● **There is no genocide in Kosova:**

"The press, politicians and Nato generals are using words like genocide, fascist and holocaust lightly. They are wrong to do so." (*Stop the War*, SWP Pamphlet, March 1999)

● **The Kosovars' fight for freedom is reactionary:**

Their fight for independence has an essentially reactionary dynamic and the Kosovars should not have arms to defend themselves: "Arming the Kosovo Liberation Army and backing Kosovan independence would make the situation worse." (Alex Callinicos, *Socialist Worker* 10 April 1999).

The SWP's leaders have decided to accommodate to the politics of the anti-war movement's leaders in a cynical attempt to get rich quick in terms of new members. The price of a place on the platform with Tony Benn and the Stalinists of the *Morning Star* is to abandon the position many SWP members took spontaneously in the first week of the war – Stop the bombing, but support Kosovan independence.

But this has not worked. So far the anti-war movement has remained small because millions of people have seen the effects of Milosevic's ethnic cleansing on their TV screens as well as the horrors of the Nato bombardment. Unless the anti-war movement combines the fight against Nato with support for the Kosovars' struggle against genocide, millions of workers will reluctantly support the bombings because they wrongly believe this will help the Kosovars. They will be offered no alternative way of opposing the greatest genocide on mainland Europe since the end of the Second World War.

● **Are we witnessing a genocide in Kosova?**

An entire chapter of *Stop the War* is devoted to the argument that Milosevic's treatment of the Kosovars is not a genocide and should not be called a holocaust or compared to Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

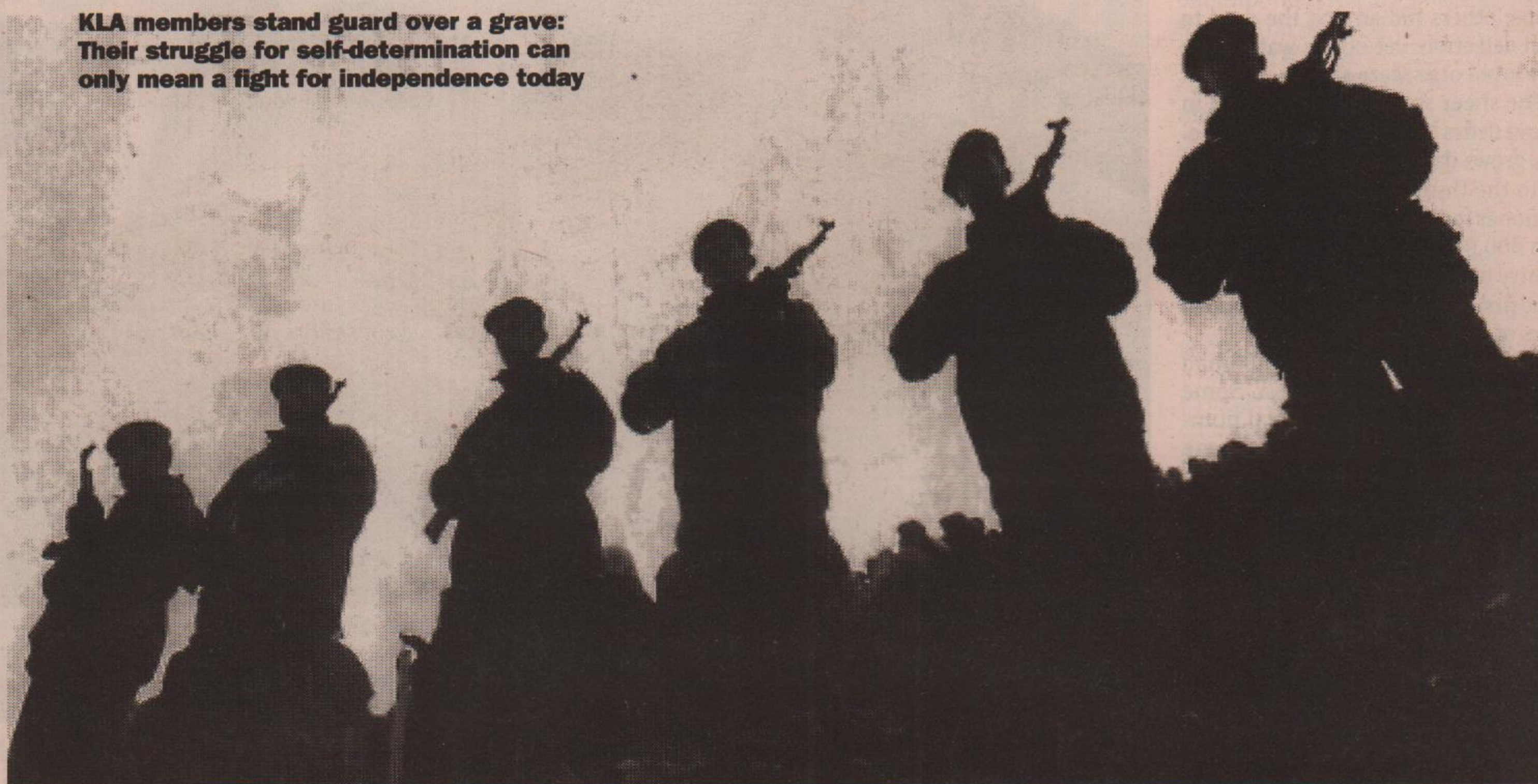
The pre-war population of Kosova was 1.9 million. Of these, 1.7 million were Kosovar Albanians. Over half a million have fled the country and a further 800,000 have been displaced within its borders in the first few weeks of April. Those who refuse to leave their villages and cities have been shot. Thousands – especially men of military age – have been murdered.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a genocide is "the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, religious, political, or ethnic group." By herding them to the border and wiping out official records of their existence, Milosevic is attempting to drive the Kosovars off the map of Europe. His genocidal onslaught may be in its early stages. But its intent is patently obvious.

But the SWP refuse to admit this. Instead, they focus on a comparison with Nazi Germany. *Stop the War* says Milosevic "is the Serbian version of Norman Tebbit rather than the Serbian Hitler"; that "Hitler was the leader of the world's second largest industrial power when he smashed the German workers' movement and took over in 1933; Serbia is a minor country with a totally devastated economy which produces less than Tunisia"; and that "the Nazis did not attempt to drive the Jews out of Europe but held them within Europe in order to murder them".

To put the perpetrator of the greatest forcible depopulation in post-war European history in the same league as a racist former Tory MP is to lose touch with reality. Tebbit, vile racist that

**KLA members stand guard over a grave: Their struggle for self-determination can only mean a fight for independence today**



he is, never called for compulsory repatriation, let alone set about forcibly driving people that he would view as "non-British" from their homes.

So eager is the SWP to play down the parallels with Nazi genocide, that it says: "There are real fascists in Yugoslavia today, but they are not in power." This is not true. The deputy president of Serbia, Voislav Seselj, is a fascist. Moreover Milosevic's own politics have long been those of the "red/brown bloc" – the alliance of reactionary nationalist Stalinists and open fascists that has been a feature of Stalinism in its last years of decay. The militias carrying out mass murder and rape in Kosova, in collaboration with the special police force, include many Serb fascists.

What about the argument that Serbia is a

side, something must be done, therefore send in the ground troops." But simple denial of the facts cannot undermine that argument. When the Kosovars call for Nato intervention, it leaves socialists saying, effectively: "No – because the situation is not as bad as under Hitler."

It will not convince the Kosovars, it will not provide them with an alternative strategy to reliance on Nato and it certainly will not help build the anti-war movement.

The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky had a different approach when, as a journalist, he reported the Balkan wars in 1912-13. He wrote of those who covered up the genocide of Albanians and other Muslims in the Balkans:

"An individual, a group, a party or a class that is capable of 'objectively' picking its nose

be for harmony with Serbians and for an end to ethnic tensions." (*Stop the War*)

But the right to self-determination, in this instance, can only mean independence. The Kosovars have "decided their own future" and, like it or not, it is outside of the rump Yugoslav republic. Anyone who tries to obstruct the Kosovars' right to independence is not "fighting nationalism" but supporting reactionary Serbian nationalism, the very nationalism that is trying to retain hold of an oppressed nation against the overwhelming will of its people.

An internationalist approach means supporting legitimate national rights. Only this could win Kosovar Albanians away from the nationalist politics of the KLA leadership and Serbian workers away from Milosevic's Serb chauvinism.

The SWP used to recognise this. John Rees, in his pamphlet *Socialism and War*, made the point very well:

"As Lenin put it, those who wish to see a pure revolution without nationalist revolts in oppressed countries, will never live to see a revolution. Such revolts can manifest all sorts of religious and nationalist prejudices. But Lenin argued that the political complexion of the leaders of small nations – be they nationalist, fundamentalist, dictators or democrats – should not determine whether socialists in the major imperialist countries support them against imperialism." (*Socialism and War*)

Exactly. But the SWP refuses to apply this to the Kosovars today, despite the fact that they are a small nation fighting for freedom against national oppression.

Presented with the obvious discrepancy between the SWP's principles and practice, leading member Alex Callinicos has decided to "bend the stick" even further against Kosovar independence. He wrote: "an Albanian nationalist army, hardened by war and enjoying mass support in refugee camps throughout the Balkans, could threaten the integrity of half a dozen states throughout the region." (*Socialist Worker*, 10 April 1999)

Since when have Marxists respected the territorial integrity of any bourgeois state – let alone borders drawn and redrawn by successive imperialist conferences, against the wishes of peoples divided and oppressed by states created against their will?

The "answer" given by the SWP to these problems is the call for a socialist federation of Balkan republics, which, they claim, means they stand in Trotsky's tradition.

This slogan was developed as a weapon against national oppression and nationalist ideas. It cuts with the grain of the oppressed peoples' desire for national sovereignty, while challenging divi-

*One argument used by the SWP is that the KLA might become like the Afghan Mujahedin. Perhaps the SWP has forgotten that it supported the Mujahedin on the grounds that it was fighting Russian imperialism*

"minor country"? The implication is that non-imperialist countries cannot produce genocide. What rubbish. Rwandan Hutus massacred a million Tutsis in a country industrially much weaker than Serbia. Saddam Hussein gassed and murdered thousands of Kurds.

But what about the Holocaust? The Kosovars have not been systematically exterminated, it is true. But before the Nazis could commence the unparalleled horror of the "Final Solution" in 1941, they first stripped the Jews of their democratic rights, their property and their jobs (1933-35), then herded them forcibly from their homes, into ghettos and concentration camps (1936-41); finally they shot, hanged and gassed six million.

Milosevic carried out the first kind of attack on the Kosovars in 1988-89 and has moved to the second phase in the past 12 months. Should we wait till he carries out the "final solution" before we are allowed to draw historical parallels?

Many SWP members repeat the argument that this is not genocide because they feel it answers those supporters of the war who reason: "It's geno-

while it watches men drunk with blood and incited from above, massacring defenceless people, is condemned by history to rot and become worm eaten while it is still alive."

● **Should we support independence for Kosova?**

The SWP claims to support the right of nations to self-determination, but refuses to back the Kosovars' fight for independence.

In Kosova all Albanian language newspapers, television and radio stations are banned. Unemployment among Kosovan Albanians stands at 80 per cent. Their average income is just 28 per cent of the Yugoslav average. All education in Albanian is banned.

No wonder a 1991 referendum returned a 98 per cent vote for independence on a 90 per cent turnout.

The SWP tries to fudge the issue: "Serbians have to support the right of Kosovan Albanians to self-determination, to decide their own future, and Kosovan Albanians have to

# Kosovars

sive nationalists and cynical imperialist powers.

But the slogan does not replace the slogan for the right of self determination. Quite the opposite. A socialist federation has to be voluntary and must include the right to break away from the federation. Otherwise it becomes a prison-house of nations, like the old USSR.

A socialist federation means a federation of workers' states, within which national minorities should have full democratic rights. Self-determination, up to and including the right to secede and set up a separate state, is a pre-requisite for a socialist federation, not an obstacle to it.

If socialists refuse to support the fight for Kosovan independence, Kosovan workers will continue to believe that their only friends are the Nato imperialists. At the same time, Serbian workers will feel no counterweight to the propaganda of Milosevic. In Belgrade today, the voice of those who have defended Kosovan independence has been silenced, by the Nato bombardment and Milosevic's repression. It is the duty of socialists internationally to raise loud and clear the twin slogans: Against Nato bombing, For Kosovan Independence.

## ● Should socialists support the KLA?

The KLA is a mass guerrilla movement that has the support of the mass of Kosovar people. Within it however there are a variety of political factions (see article, page 4). Socialists should give no support to the nationalist politics of the KLA leaders, nor to the coalition government it formed at the Rambouillet conference.

But the task of defending Kosovar workers and peasants against ethnic cleansing would have to be carried out in alliance with the KLA – even though that means fighting alongside workers who have illusions in Nato.

For the SWP, the KLA's reliance on Nato means that, though the Kosovars have a "right" to self determination, we have to oppose them fighting for that right:

"The Kosovan Albanians have the right to self determination, just like all the other peoples of the Balkans. But that does not mean that socialists should support the KLA. Nationalist movements which allow themselves to become subordinated to the designs of the Great Powers cease to be independent political forces. All the signs are that the KLA is becoming an instrument of Nato." (Alex Callinicos, *Socialist Worker*, 17.4.99)

But the KLA is not yet reduced to being "an instrument of Nato". That is why socialists must now rally support for its fight rather than abandon it to the clutches of the imperialist powers. Because Nato can only deliver the Kosovars a powerless enclave, policed by foreign troops in alliance with the most reactionary Kosovar forces, and with the KLA disarmed, we have to win them away from their illusions in Nato.

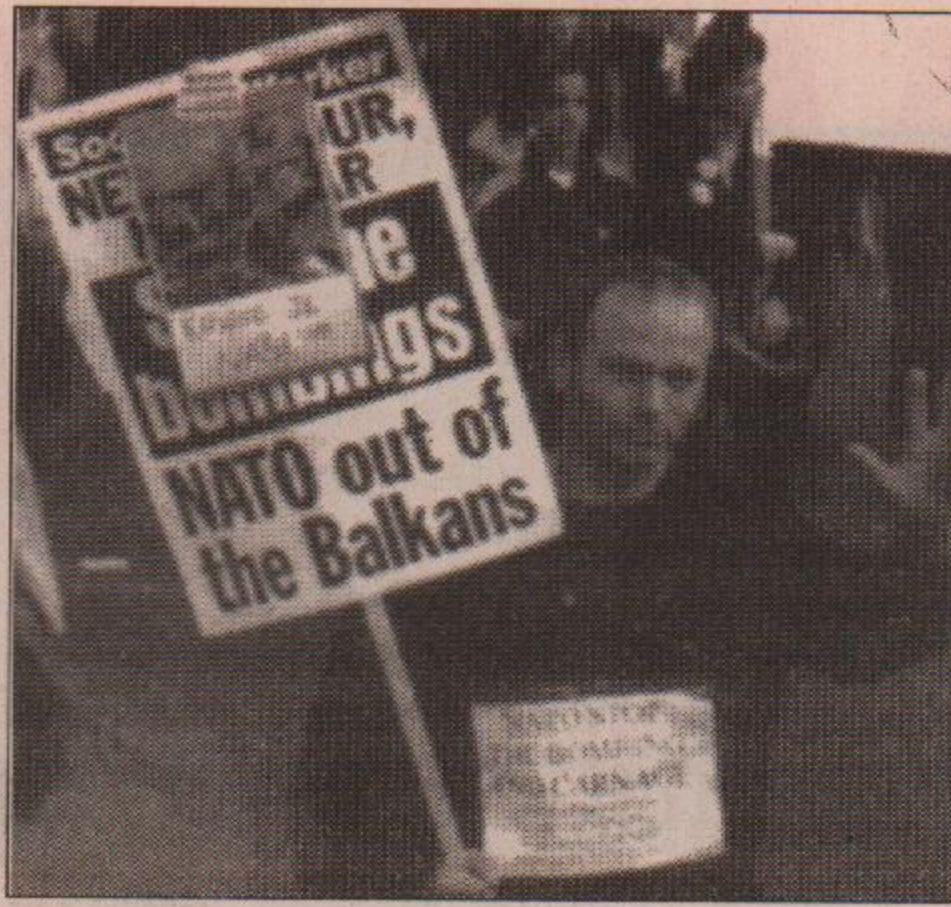
The Bosnian Muslims had just as great illusions in the USA in 1992, but were quickly disabused. So were Northern Irish republicans who initially welcomed British troops to the province in 1969. Within the KLA there will have to be a political struggle against reliance on Nato – likewise with the thousands of refugees whose only allies in Britain are in the working class movement.

Of course the KLA could become completely subordinated to Nato following a massive ground intervention. But the more socialists refuse to support the Kosovars' fight now, the more they refuse to support the KLA's right to arm itself, the more likely this outcome becomes.

A further nonsensical argument used by SWP leaders is that the KLA might become like the Afghan Mujahedin. Perhaps the SWP has forgotten that it (wrongly) supported the reactionary hand-choppers and veil enforcers on the grounds that theirs was a struggle for self-determination against Russian imperialism. This was despite the fact that the Mujahedin were, unlike the KLA, armed to the teeth by the USA. But so far the imperialists have refused to supply heavy weapons to the KLA and prior to the Rambouillet conference they threatened to bomb them.

## ● How are we going to stop the war?

"Stop the War" is a fine slogan to start with – but it begs the question: how? The SWP is unable to answer this question. Not only does it



**SWP placards and Serbian victory signs. Failure to raise independence for Kosova condemns the anti-war movement to a pro-Serb dead-end**

fail to deal with the struggle for Kosovar independence, it fails to raise the revolutionary position on the war of Nato against Serbia.

To call on Nato to stop the bombing is not enough. While backing the Kosovars' own self-defence, socialists should also support the defeat of Nato in its war with Serbia. We should take heart at every military reverse, at the disarray in Brussels when military and diplomatic offensives are set back, at the divisions in the imperialists' camp which would emerge with a defeat.

This is important because many in the anti-war movement, like Tony Benn, believe that a peaceful imperialist intervention, preferably via the United Nations, is the only solution. But such a negotiated settlement would most likely consign the Kosovars to a meaningless protectorate where any rebellion would be put down by the very forces claiming to protect them. It would allow Milosevic to stay in power and pose as a great "anti-imperialist" national leader.

A defeat for Nato, on the other hand, would drive the most reactionary force on the planet out of the Balkans. Workers in Serbia would be able once again to openly oppose Milosevic and restart the fight for wage rises, jobs and against privatisation – issues over which Milosevic and Nato are at one.

The oppressed Kurds would be more confident of challenging Nato member Turkey. And, yes, here in Britain too, workers would face a deflated, anxious and divided capitalist class in our struggles against racism, welfare cuts and factory closures.

As John Rees put it "Socialists are not pacifists...Where imperialist powers are involved in colonial wars we hope they get beaten". (*Socialism and War*, pp 18-19)

Unfortunately, the SWP has ignored its own advice and become indistinguishable from the pacifists in this war. This is why the Kosovars are ignored, why the defeat of Nato is not called for, why Milosevic's crimes are hushed up. The anti-war activists, largely pacifists and many of them Stalinists with illusions in Milosevic, are often hostile to Kosova's independence.

So, the party line goes, drop support for the Kosovars, put our finest comedians onto platforms with Tony Benn, and hand out the party cards at the end of each rally.

This is deeply opportunist and an abandonment of international socialism. It also weakens the building of a mass anti-war movement. Many workers are sympathetic to the Kosovan refugees and at the same time suspicious of Nato's war aims. Many reluctantly back the bombing, but can be won to opposition to the war, if socialists tell the truth, face up to the difficult arguments and provide an alternative working class answer that includes defence of the Kosovars and all victims of national oppression.

Unless the SWP's members demand the opening of a discussion within their party and seek to change this disastrous line, they will continue to fritter away the chance of building a mass anti-war movement.

■ For copies of *Workers Power's Open Letter to members of the Socialist Workers Party on the war* contact us on 0181 981 0602

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COMMENT

## Blair's Third Way war

At late April's Nato summit, Tony Blair emerged as Europe's new hard man. After a month of repeatedly ruling out the use of ground troops in the war against Serbia he changed tack.

All options – including a land war – should be considered, said Blair. In the meantime, journalists, make-up artists, tea ladies at fuel depots and cleaners at Milosevic's private homes were all legitimate targets.

Blair's belligerence seeks to demonstrate to the west's ruling class, the bosses of the imperialist "great powers", that New Labour, will be utterly ruthless when it comes to defending their global economic and political interests.

Blair said as much, describing himself and Clinton as "a new generation of leaders in the United States and Europe who were born after the Second World War, hail from the progressive side of politics, but are prepared to be as firm as any of our predecessors, right or left, in seeing this thing through."

Blair also hammers home the message that this is a "humanitarian war". Military might is deployed for a noble cause that all right-thinking people can support – a "Third Way War".

Not only can he resolutely prosecute an imperialist war; he is adept at hoodwinking the British people into believing it is also a just one.

The Labour government and a servile media have spent gallons of printers' ink, miles of videotape and a thick atmosphere of hot air to cast a halo over Blair's war. But in truth this war is run by a second-rate Thatcher impersonator. It is dirty, cowardly and designed to further US and EU interests alone.

As we demonstrate elsewhere it has nothing to do with saving the Kosovars and everything to do with imposing imperialist order in the Balkans. For all Blair's would-be Churchillian rhetoric about the heroism of the Nato servicemen and women, this war is comparable to Nixon's blanket bombing of Cambodia in 1970. Serb civilians and Kosovar refugees pay a terrible price, while high-flying planes drop high-tech bombs from a safe distance – with no body bags to trouble Clinton and Blair.

In classic fashion this war was decided upon by decree and is being conducted by decree. In place of the cabinet – itself undemocratic, but judged too broad – Blair is running the war himself, not even via a war cabinet, but with a small team of ministers: George Robertson, Robin Cook and Clare Short.

This team, aided by generals and spin doctors, is also unaccountable to parliament. This supposedly sovereign chamber has never had to endorse this war. To get any vote at all dissidents had to use a procedural motion. Against pleas for parliamentary control, Robertson and Cook simply quote the royal prerogative in war-time. And Robertson, who opposed any new inquiry into the murder of unarmed nationalist demonstrators by the British Army on Bloody Sunday, cites "security" as a pretext for refusing to answer any question about the conduct of the war.

To bolster their constitutionally sanctioned, war-time rule by decree, Labour's war leaders are waging a media offensive to neutralise opposition. One example was Clare Short's broadcast denunciation of Labour MPs who opposed the war as like those who appeased Hitler in the run-up to World War Two. Short's shadow cabinet post came to an abrupt end in 1991 when she opposed the invasion of Iraq. She uses this record (from the safety of the opposition benches) to prove to doubters that this current war is just. No matter that Short is defending a policy that keeps Kosovar refugees herded in camps on the freezing mountains of Macedonia and Albania.

Likewise, Robin Cook, with his strong "old Labour" credentials, explains the war as an example of his "ethical" foreign policy. This ethical policy involves arming the murderous Indonesian regime and sanctions against Iraq – never mind bombings – that kill thousands of civilians.

What of the Labour's left? They are in disarray. In the past you could count on a good few left reformists uniting around an anti-war stance. Today, utter confusion reigns. The tiny number who oppose the war, among them Tony Benn, Alice Mahon and even Jeremy Corbyn, are actually hindering attempts to build a mass opposition to the war. Why? Because they all share, with their Stalinist mentors, a shameful disregard for the plight and national rights of the Kosovars.

Benn says the KLA "is armed and supported by the Germans and the Americans. Now we have provided the KLA with an airforce and called it Nato." As for Kosova, he asks, "has international law advanced to the point where, if we do not like a country we can take one of its provinces and call it a protectorate?"

To discount the ethnic cleansing that the Kosovars face is to condone it. And workers will not be inspired by an anti-war movement led by people who cover up for genocide. Benn and his supporters are ironically helping Blair, not the anti-war movement.

On the other left pole stands Livingstone, like Benn something of a figurehead. Unlike Benn, a champion of the war, he reminds followers that he and Thatcher called for Nato strikes in the Balkans back in 1991. This "Nato Socialist" and a career politician – who should now gain the security clearance necessary to stand any chance of becoming a future Labour leader – argues that "where the west has the power and uses it wisely, I will support that intervention."

Pro-Nato Livingstone and anti-Kosovar Benn: Blair must be laughing all the way to his bunker. He knows that so long as the left reformists remain incoherent and divided his ability to promote the war as a saintly crusade, even escalating to the point of creating a potential Nato colony, will go unchecked.

We need to stop the current air war and the accelerating drift towards an all-out land war that may be the only means of saving Nato's credibility as an imperialist police force.

We need to build mass opposition to the war and to challenge Blair at every level of the labour movement. To do this means not only fighting to stop Nato but also defending the right of the Kosovars to independence and to secure whatever aid – including heavy weapons – with no strings, they need to win it. Failure to fight for both will strengthen Blair's hand by giving credence to the lie that Nato is the Kosovars' best defence.

Labour has put its imperialist credentials beyond doubt. The left reformists have exposed their political bankruptcy. Workers must not pay the price for imperialist war or reformist disarray. The task today, with Europe once again plunged into war, is to build an international, revolutionary alternative to Labour. We need a party of socialist revolution more than ever, to stop imperialist war by overthrowing imperialist capitalism itself.

# marxism THE BASICS

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

## On war

Jenny Scott explains the socialist attitude to war

WAR IS a bloody and brutal business. Our rulers deliberately air-brush the images we get of the wars they are involved in. The Gulf war against Iraq in 1991, was presented by the media as a computer choreographed fireworks show in aid of "democracy". Later, the pictures of hundreds of mangled and charred bodies on the road to Basra came to light. Iraqis had been wantonly slaughtered by the US, British and other forces.

We are now being treated to the same sort of propaganda barrage as our rulers blanket bomb the Balkans. They are having a harder time of it given Nato's "mistake" in bombing a refugee column and its targeting of journalists, television technicians and make-up artists at the Serbian television headquarters. But to soften the impact of the scenes of carnage, this time much emphasis is being placed on the "humanitarian" objectives of the Nato onslaught.

Unlike our rulers Marxists never try to prettify war in order to justify it. We tell the truth. Part of that truth is that war is an inevitable product of a class divided society and a world divided into competing nations. It is also a necessary part of the struggle to overthrow class society.

Unlike pacifists – who reject all wars – socialists oppose some wars, support others and will be prepared to wage war against the capitalist enemy. Our aim is to create a world free of national divisions and in which classes have been abolished: world socialism. Only such a world can get rid of war altogether and to achieve that we will have to fight, arms in hand.

Clausewitz, a nineteenth century German soldier and philosopher, provided an important insight into wars when he wrote:

"We see, therefore, that War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means."

Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky all took Clausewitz's insistence that war was not something separate from politics as their starting point for analysing wars. They went on to analyse the class character of each particular war. Writing during the carnage of the First World War, Lenin noted that the key questions were, "what caused that war, what classes are waging it, and what historico-economic conditions gave rise to it."

By posing these questions Lenin drew the conclusion that there were both just and unjust wars. In the former category he included wars fought by nations oppressed by imperialism – Ireland's war for independence for example. In the latter category he pointed to the war then being waged between the major imperialist powers. He recognised that beneath the superficial question of "who fired the first shot?", lay the important fact that those powers were fighting each other in order to divide the world between themselves. He wrote:

"This is a war firstly, to fortify the enslavement of the colonies by means of a 'fairer' distribution and subsequent more 'concerted' exploitation of them; secondly, to fortify the oppression of other nations within the 'great' powers, for both Austria and Russia (Russia more and much worse than Austria) maintain their rule by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to fortify and prolong wage slavery, for the working class is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists gain, making fortunes out of the war, aggravating national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries, even in the freest and most republican."

The imperialist system described by Lenin – and the wars waged by the "great powers" in that system – retain the same reactionary characteristics he noted. The principal difference is that since the second world wars most of the oppressed countries have been transformed from colonies into semi-colonies. That is, colonies

### IN BRIEF

■ **War is a product of class society. So long as there are class divisions there will be war.**

■ **Marxists are not pacifists. Under capitalism – and particularly in its imperialist stage – there are different types of war, some of which are just, some of which are unjust. Marxists support – and participate in – just wars.**

■ **The way to decide on the character of a war is to understand the class and political issues at stake. Our policy flows from this concrete assessment, not from any abstract or moral standpoint, or from the standpoint of "who started it".**

■ **The only way to put a stop to all wars is to overthrow capitalism itself. The starting point for achieving this in imperialist countries, such as Britain, the USA and France, when they are at war is the policy of revolutionary defeatism.**

have been given, or have won, formal independence but remain subordinated to the economic power and political pressure of imperialism.

Imperialism goes to war against such countries in the name of "democracy" – against the "military dictator" Galtieri of Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas in 1982, against the "tyrant" Saddam Hussein in 1991 (and he is still being bombed by Britain and the US today) and against the "new Hitler" Milosevic at the moment.

Socialists recognise that this "democratic" pretext is a lie. In each case imperialism has used and backed the dictators in question when it suited them. Only when they went against imperialism's will and threatened to upset its world order – and the profits of its multinationals or the stability of the regions it seeks to control – does imperialism turn against these countries.

Socialists have a clean conscience. We have fought these dictators while they were imperialism's friends and we will continue to fight them despite them becoming its enemies. But, in each case the concrete question in the wars by imperialism is not the fate of the dictators themselves – Thatcher had no wish to overthrow Galtieri, Saddam Hussein was kept in power courtesy of George Bush and Milosevic may yet be used as the guarantor of stability in the Balkans – but the subordination of the oppressed nation to the will of imperialism. If imperialism succeeds, it represents a defeat for workers internationally.

The Gulf war was fought by the imperialist-led coalition to keep Iraq in this subordinate state and to end any threat to their exploitation of the area.

The imperialists' claim that they were fighting for democracy against a cruel dictator was a lie. Kuwait – the country invaded by Iraq and "liberated" by imperialism – was a vile dictatorship in which workers and peasants were denied any democratic rights whatsoever. Its royal family, restored by the "liberation", set about reinforcing its dictatorship under the protection of the USA and Britain.

The importance of this example is that it demonstrates why Marxists were not simply against the war in the Gulf. We were against imperialism's war on Iraq, a war waged for oil and political control of the Gulf region. We supported Iraq's war against imperialism. This was a just war – even though it was being waged under a leadership which we want to see destroyed by the workers and peasants of Iraq.

In the Balkans today we apply the same principles, but with one important difference. In Kosova, Milosevic himself is engaged in a reactionary war of ethnic cleansing. We therefore make a distinction between the war in Kosova and the war in Serbia itself. Different class issues are at stake in each war. We are against the policy being continued in Kosova – reactionary, nationalist ethnic cleansing, and therefore do not support Serbia. We are against the policy being continued by Nato – subordination of the Balkans and therefore do not support Nato. In Serbia itself, however, the justified defence of an ex-Stalinist country in transition to becoming a capitalist semi-colony against imperialism means we do support Serbia's struggle against Nato.

Some "Marxists" throw up their hands at this and plead for easy, catch-all solutions. But war provides no easy answers. Wars can rapidly change their character. Only by a class analysis, an understanding of the politics of each war, can we understand why some wars are just

and some are unjust and only thus can we determine whose side we are on, if any.

This method has proved vital for revolutionaries in many wars, but none more so than the two world wars of this century. Both, despite the so called "anti-fascist" character of the Allied war effort in the Second World War, were unjust wars as far as Britain, the USA, France, Germany, Japan and the other imperialist states were concerned.

Neither world war was fought to preserve democracy. Both were fought in order to re-divide the world for exploitation between the imperialist powers. They were unjust, imperialist wars.

As Lenin put it with regard to the First World War: "Picture to yourselves a slave owner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slave owner who owned 200 slaves for a more 'just' distribution of slaves. Clearly, the application of the term 'defensive' war, or 'war for the defence of the fatherland', in such a case would be historically false, and in practice would be sheer deception of the common people... Precisely in this way are the present day imperialist bourgeoisie deceiving the peoples by means of 'national' ideology and the term 'defence of the fatherland' in the present war between slave owners for fortifying and strengthening slavery."

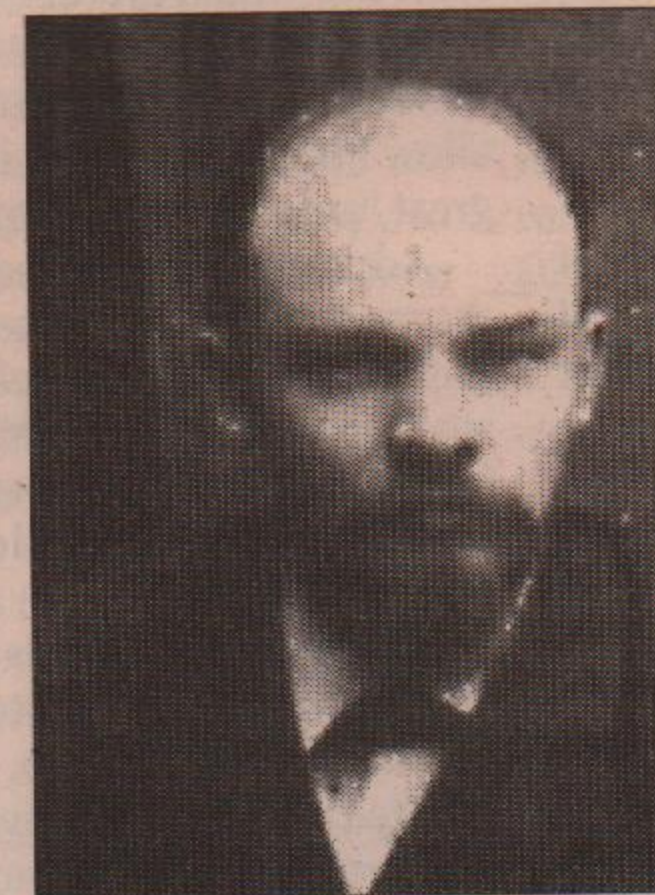
Lenin formulated a policy for Marxists that went beyond simply analysing the class character of wars and supporting or opposing them. He developed the policy of revolutionary defeatism – waging the class struggle in your own country against your own bourgeoisie even at the cost of it being defeated in war – as a means of creating the conditions under which imperialist war could be transformed into a civil war, a war by workers on their own ruling class. He argued:

"A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, cannot fail to see that its military reverses facilitate its overthrow... Socialists must explain to the masses that there is no other road of salvation except the revolutionary overthrow of 'their' governments, and that advantage must be taken of these governments' embarrassments in the present war precisely for this purpose."

The successful application of this policy led directly to the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the world's first workers' state. But even the establishment of such a state, in a single country, will not eradicate war and its attendant horrors.

Until the socialist revolution is victorious on a global scale – freeing the world from the economic and national competition that causes war – the capitalists will resist each and every worker's revolution since they stand to lose their fortunes, their privileges and their political rule. Always and everywhere they will fight arms in hand to defeat workers' revolution. Civil war to defeat them will be necessary. It is a stage towards the creation of a world free from war, and such an objective justifies the use of warlike means to achieve it.

That is another reason why Marxists are not pacifists and are not in favour of general and abstract calls for "disarmament". We know we cannot defeat a warful enemy other than by revolution and civil war. To win such a war we need arms. We are for the disarmament of the bosses' by the armed working class. As Engels put it: "If the working class was to overcome the bourgeoisie it would first have to master the art and strategy of war." To say otherwise is a deception, one that will result in wars without end.



Lenin developed the policy of revolutionary defeatism



# Fight for a Europe of the workers not the bosses

**ON 29 MAY workers from across Europe will gather for a massive international demonstration against the Euro bosses in Cologne, Germany. The European Union heads of government summit is to take place in this city the following week.**

**This demonstration will be an important step in building European working class unity. The need for such unity is clear to see.**

**Today we stand face to face with a European Union run by the bosses, for the bosses. Its member states rain bombs on Serbia in order to protect the Europe of**

**profit. The leaders of these same states inflict unemployment and welfare cuts on their own workers.**

**They claim to be defending Kosovan refugees, yet they ring the EU with barbed wire to keep "asylum seekers" out – the euphemism for this is immigration control; the real word is racism.**

**To defeat the Euro bosses the workers need more than just unity. They need a fighting programme that points the way towards an alternative Europe, a socialist Europe. To put this programme into practice they need a revolutionary international, grouping**

**together workers' parties committed to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.**

**The League for the Revolutionary Communist International exists to build such parties and such an international.**

**We advance the programme below as our answer to the Europe of poverty, war and oppression. We urge all European workers and youth who agree with us to join us: join our ranks on the Cologne demonstration; join our ranks as members of our organisations; join our ranks as fighters for socialism.**

**T**HE LAUNCH of the euro was another major step towards the creation of a federation of European states. Its rulers will be the giant multinational corporations and banks that are exploiting and sacking Europe's workers and plundering the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In short the European Union is capitalist and imperialist.

Monetary union has unleashed a tidal wave of mergers and rationalisation in finance, commerce and industry. It will speed up the creation of rival economic blocs in North America and East Asia.

As Europe's bosses try to compete with North America and Asia, the unemployed, the socially excluded, the racially and nationally oppressed will all face attempts to worsen their already intolerable conditions. The increase in the size and strength of the multinational corporations will lead to attacks on workers' wage levels, health and social welfare provision, on the education of young people and the democratic rights of immigrants and those seeking asylum in Europe. For the former "communist" countries of Eastern Europe and the countries of the "third world" it will mean intensified exploitation.

Does this mean that the answer for Europe's workers is to force "their own" national states to quit the EU as small capitalist states or to fight to break it up? No! Going back to small capitalist and imperialist states is no solution. Such "independent" states would have to adopt even more savage austerity policies than the EU, even more ruthless downsizing and rationalisation, to compete on the world market with big states like the USA and the mega-corporations.

The only realistic alternative facing the workers, youth and immigrant communities is to seize control of the vast resources and productive forces of the continent which their labour has created. The answer lies not in going back but forward. To do this we have to go beyond our nationally divided and bureaucratic labour movements.

A sharp either/or faces us in the coming years. Either an intensification of exploitation and oppression or increasing unity in a militant continent-wide class struggle. Defeat is inevitable if we cling to the old strategy of the Communist Parties or the left-wing of the Social Democratic, Socialist and Labour Parties. National labour movements which pledge themselves to unity with their own "patriotic bosses" against the EU, which sever their links with their European brothers and sisters, will be politically and organisationally crippled and disarmed.

Nor can we adopt the "pro-European" imperialist stance of Blair, Schroeder, Jospin or D'Alema. Workers must not sacrifice their lives to the dictates of the European Central Bank, to the united stock exchanges of Frankfurt, Paris and the City of London. We must not side with a new European policy designed to

gain a bigger slice of the economies of the "developing countries". We must not support a European "defence force" which will bomb and terrorise states that resist subordination.

We, the workers of Europe, must overtake and outstrip our bosses' unification drive. We must build a new Europe wide workers' movement – workplace, trade union and political – independent of all fractions of the capitalist class. This new movement can be an indissoluble link in an even wider, truly global chain. We can do it because we have done it before. In the 1860s, the 1890s and the 1920s, European workers launched powerful international organisations which reached out to workers on all the other continents.

If the globalisation of capital is a threat then the globalisation of labour is the answer to it. The national union federations must be combined into a European trade union movement. The millions of unorganised workers must be recruited to it. Every workplace must elect its council of elected and recallable delegates. Youth, women, immigrants must likewise organise democratic mass movements to fight for their rights.

Only by concerted action across Europe can the new mega-corporations be prevented from slashing wages and working conditions, weakening or abolishing trade union rights and workplace organisation. Only by Europe-wide action can the EU leaders' plans to erode social welfare provision be defeated. Only by common action between the workers of Western and Eastern Europe can the bosses be stopped from undercutting wages and social gains in the West and restoring a brutal low wage, dependent capitalism in the east.

Only by practical aid to the workers of South Korea, Indonesia and China, helping them to establish powerful unions, workplace organisations and political parties, can European workers undercut the plans of the multinationals – our common enemies – to repeatedly close and move factories to the locations of highest exploitation and lowest trade union and democratic rights.

But our goal must be more than a treadmill of defensive struggles. It must be a total alternative to capitalism. On the European continent there exist the accumulated productive forces, the scientific and technological innovations, the human skills that can lay the basis of a planned economy in which working people can end exploitation and the chaos of the market: a Socialist United States of Europe.

We must fight for measures which oppose the logic of the market system with workers' control and workers' power over the economy and society.

■ A maximum 35 hour week now, across Europe, without loss of pay, speed ups and further flexibilisation. All companies which sack workers or close down plants must be nationalised under workers' control and with no compensation.

■ For a guaranteed European minimum wage of 10 euros an hour. For a minimum income for the unemployed and pensioners set at two-thirds of the average wage. Equal pay for all workers, irrespective of gender, nationality and age. Full pay for trainees and apprentices from the first day of work.

■ Against all forms of unprotected work and forced work schemes. All waged workers in Europe must have the same legal rights: protection against redundancies, paid holidays, 100 per cent pay on sickness leave, maternity rights, pension rights. Across Europe, these rights have to be levelled up to the highest standard. Recognition of all qualifications across Europe.

■ No to privatisation. No to the back door privatisations typical of the "third way": contracting out, and private finance within the public services, transport, healthcare or education. For the renationalisation of all companies or services privatised during recent decades, without compensation and under workers' control.

■ For a European wide plan under workers' control to improve public transport, social services, health services, education, cultural facilities and to restore the environment. Such a programme must be under workers' control, paid for out of the bosses' profits.

■ Divide the work between all those available to do it with no loss of pay, to put all the unemployed back to work.

■ Tax the rich. For a swingeing tax on profits and unearned wealth.

■ Defend the social services and the education sector. Workers' control of the social security and pension funds. Full grants for all school and college for students over the age of 16 at the level of the minimum wage, so that they are not forced to work part time as cheap labour. Full right to movement of school and college students across Europe.

■ Full civic, economic and social rights for youth. The right to vote at the age of sixteen. Abolition of all legal penalties against consensual sexual relations between young people. For state and community funded entertainment and sporting facilities under the control of young people. Young people must not be a reserve of unemployed or poorly paid and unorganised labour used by the employers to undermine the gains of adult workers. Full wage rates and holiday entitlement for young workers. Down with compulsory, temporary and low paid work schemes! For wages or benefits paid at average adult levels.

■ For 24 hour childcare paid for by the state and the bosses. Free abortion on demand. A minimum twelve months paid maternity and paternity leave. Full employment rights and equal rates of pay for part time workers. Make equal pay for equal work a reality!

■ Lesbians and gay men are still subject to legal persecution, police harassment and employers' discrimination in most European states. We demand an

end to discrimination and full legal equality, including the right to a legal status for couples equal to civil marriage, rights to custody of children, equal rights to shared housing and equal terms for life insurance.

■ Against all restrictions of movement in Europe. Against all immigration controls. No restrictions of the right to work or stay for immigrants. Full access of immigrants to social benefits, no restrictions to their social and political rights and activity. For open borders. No to Schengen and Trevi! For full citizens rights for all who live in Europe, including the right to vote. For unrestricted the right of political asylum.

■ No to the Common Agricultural Policy – a conspiracy to support the large and medium-sized farmer base of the conservative parties at the expense of the working and lower middle class taxpayers. No subsidies for the agrarian capitalists and agri-businesses. Cheap credits for small peasants and support small farmers co-operatives, for investment into machinery. Average industrial wages and social and trade union rights for agricultural workers. European agriculture needs to be completely reorganised and planned in the interests of the direct producers, small farmers, agricultural workers and consumers. Expropriation of the big agrarian monopolies, landed estates, the food industries and supermarket chains without compensation.

■ No to NATO and the European Defence Union! Not a penny not a person for the defence of the EU. Spend the billions spent on defence of the bosses' system on abolishing unemployment and poverty. Dissolve the armies, police, the secret services, replacing them with the armed people. Hands off Kosova, Serbia and Iraq. Support the Kosova Albanian liberation struggle. Support the struggle of Iraq against the US-British alliance. No to sanctions against Iraq and Serbia.

■ No to all anti-union laws, to any restrictions of the right to strike, to take action as soon as the workers have decided, to take solidarity action, to join a trade union. Occupations and strikes to defeat lock-outs, redundancies, closures and privatisation. For militant solidarity action in support of other workers and the unemployed. Establish and use the right to take political and general strike action in all the states of the EU and across it.

■ The rank and file must control working class struggles. For mass assemblies and accountable committees of struggle, which are elected and recallable by the rank and file. Action committees of the employed and unemployed workers.

■ For a Europe wide unemployed movement. All unemployed must have the right to join unions.

■ For Europe wide co-ordinated collective wage bargaining rounds as a

step to create Europe wide industrial unions and to level up wages and rights to the highest level across Europe and reduce working hours. No to all restrictions on works council representatives to observe and report on management decisions. No to business secrecy. For their right to organise working class action. Build links between the rank and file of multinational companies. For cross-plant and international committees of workers in multinational companies.

■ An end to business secrecy and bureaucratic secrecy – open the accounts and the computer records of the banks, the businesses, the state and EU bureaucrats to inspection by the workforce and the public.

■ The expropriation of the large banks, industries, communications systems and the media, large farms and retail outlets. For their operation according to a system of integrated plans at a European, national, regional and local level. All to be democratically decided on by workers and consumers and with workers' management of production and distribution.

■ Solidarity with the countries exploited by the European banks and multinationals. Down with the Lomé Conventions that condemn "third world" countries to economic slavery. No to military intervention, whether by Nato or the CSCE, to prop up the military alliances or exploitation by the European mining and oil companies and agri-businesses. For the complete and unconditional cancellation of these countries' debts to the European banks and states.

■ Down with the unelected European Commission, European Central Bank, European Court of Justice. Down with the monarchies of the EU, the executive presidencies, the Senates, Houses of Lords and federal councils which thwart the democratic will. For the election of a sovereign European Constituent Assembly by all those permanently resident in the EU over the age of 16 and from those countries who wish to join it. Down with the treaties from Rome to Maastricht that enshrine the rule of capital. If such an Assembly – under the pressure of the masses – takes measures against big capital the working class must be ready to break resistance from big capital and its state forces.

■ No parliament can take the effective measures to expropriate the exploiters or destroy the machinery of oppression which defends them – the armies, police and secret security forces. Only a revolution can create the rule of the European working class – through organisations based on delegates directly elected from the workplaces and the communities and defended by an armed population. The state form of working class power in Europe must be:

**The Socialist United States of Europe – fighting for the world revolution!**

CHINA

# Ten years on — ech

The Tiananmen Massacre of June 1989 was the beginning of the tumultuous events which saw the collapse of the Eastern European and Soviet dictatorships. Ten years on, *Peter Main* looks at a student protest that shook the world.

THE "DEMOCRACY Movement" in China had its origins in divisions within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Deng Xiaoping, a veteran leader of the CCP, had been sent into virtual internal exile by Mao Zedong during the "Cultural Revolution" because of his support for market reforms. After Mao's death in 1976, Deng and his supporters took advantage of popular discontent to promote a public campaign against Hua Guofeng, Mao's appointed successor.

Deng used this campaign to get back into power, then turned against it and imprisoned many of its most outspoken leaders. This was enough to convince a majority of the party leadership that their rule would not be threatened by Deng's economic reforms, which were implemented in 1978.

At first, the reforms applied only to agriculture. Peasants were encouraged to leave the Maoist communes, which were generally unproductive, and to begin farming on a private household basis.

Freed from bureaucratic directives that forced whole districts to grow a single crop, the peasants reverted to traditional multi-crop production. Output began to rise. Between 1978 and 1984, grain production increased, annually,

by 3.7 per cent, cotton by 18 per cent and meat by 8.8 per cent. Peasant incomes grew at 12 per cent per year.

The successes encouraged Deng to propose extending similar policies to industry. Managers would be told to look on "their" factories the way a peasant looked on his farm. Rather than waiting for orders from Beijing or the provincial capital they should use their initiative to make the most of their productive capacity. To achieve this, laws and regulations were changed to give managers a right to greater autonomy in decision-making and accounting mechanisms were changed so that relative efficiency would be more visible.

After four years of these reforms of industry the result was ... virtually no change in output. Managers complained that it was impossible for them to change product lines or designs when the demands of the planning system still had to be met and raw materials and energy supplies, for example, were controlled by central planners.

In 1983-84, new reforms were introduced. Managers would be allowed to keep a percentage of any increase in income and would be free to buy and sell both raw materials and products, provided they first met a reduced set of planning targets. To reinforce the busi-

nesslike attitudes this policy was supposed to create, the central bank, the People's Bank of China, was reformed and instructed to issue credit only on a profitability basis.

It was the almost complete failure of these reforms which sparked the rebirth of the "Democracy Movement" in the mid-1980s. Plant managers, party secretaries, trade union leaders, academic economists, bankers, statisticians and central planners all had their own opinion about what the problem was and how to tackle it and saw no reason why they should not discuss these vital issues. Debates flared in academic and professional journals and began to spill over into semi-public channels.

Students in the prestigious universities, for the most part the children of party cadres, also wanted to join in the discussions with their professors and, indeed, their parents.

There were even top party leaders, notably Hu Yaobang, the general secretary, who saw a role for such discussions as a means of finding solutions to the recognised problems. But a majority, including Deng Xiaoping, believed that such openness was a threat to the right of the bureaucratic elite to determine policy for the whole party. Hu Yaobang was dismissed in 1987 and

replaced by Deng's new favourite, Zhao Ziyang.

Zhao's policy was one of accelerated expansion. Most of the remaining controls on agriculture were removed and banks were decentralised and instructed to provide finance for industrial projects.

The result was rampant inflation. Farmers began to increase output of "industrial crops" but neglected food crops, whose price naturally rose. Industrial managers, required by law to provide food for their workers, borrowed money to pay for it. To increase production, they borrowed money to extend existing plant, rather than to raise productivity.

Inflation could not be hidden. During 1988, it was this which fuelled the return of the democracy movement, most especially in the universities and amongst the "technocratic elite".

The root of the economic problems lay in the conflict between market reforms and the continued existence of rigid bureaucratic planning. Two problems in particular exercised the minds of the economists; profits could not be expected when management had no control over the hiring and firing of workers and inflation could not be controlled as long as factory managers

could draw credit from the state banks.

Linking these two problems was the continued role of the Communist Party. On the one hand, the leaders feared social instability if workers were laid off from industry. On the other, all plant managers, bank managers, trade union leaders and people in authority were party members. If their rights were restricted, then the party's control of society as a whole would begin to unravel.

This paralysed the party leaders in the winter and spring of 1989. The logic of the reform policies associated with Deng pointed inexorably towards free market capitalism, but the leadership was not prepared to abandon its control over the large-scale industrial sector which prevented the market from operating.

Although divisions in the leadership allowed the democracy movement to grow, they also fuelled fatal illusions within that movement. Believing that it was the rise in protests which had paralysed the bureaucracy, the student leaders concluded that they should follow a strategy of "moral pressure" on the government.

The central demands of the students - rehabilitation of Hu Yaobang, a public debate over corruption and control of

## Chinese road to capitalism

ALTHOUGH CHINA had the longest boom and highest growth rates of all the Asian economies in recent years, its economy has been least affected by the Asian economy crisis. This is because the heart of China's domestic economy, the industrial sector, has still not been subjected to the laws of capitalism.

What triggered the crisis in countries such as South Korea and Indonesia was the flight of foreign capital and the collapse of their currencies. In China, because the yuan remains non-convertible, the government has not faced a currency collapse and has even been able to use the threat of controlled devaluation to strengthen its hand in negotiations with the USA.

Foreign investments in China have been mainly in the form of fixed capital which could not be withdrawn at a moment's notice by nervous international investors.

Because the state controls the greater part of all foreign exchange held in China, with reserves of US\$145 billion, all foreign debt can be covered. Even last year when the international situation limited export growth to 0.5 per cent, China's trade surplus was US\$43 billion.

However, if China has so far withstood the turbulence, there are greater storms brewing within the country.

For two years after the suppression of the Democracy Movement, there was a clampdown on economic growth as the government regained control of inflation through price controls and the reimposition of planning targets. At the same time, western bankers, hypo-

critically condemning the Tiananmen massacre, waited to see which way the tide was running.

All this changed in 1992 when Deng gave the signal for renewed growth and foreign investment. As growth rates in the coastal provinces leapt to double figures, the government turned its attention, once again, to trying to dismantle the state controlled heavy industrial sector. At least one-third of the "state-owned enterprises" (SOEs) were making a loss but were kept afloat by soft loans from state banks. As a result, the banks themselves were still not functioning on the "commercial" basis that the state had been calling for since the mid-1980s.

For the Beijing leadership, now under the day-to-day control of Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin, the objective was to transform the lumbering giants of state industry into state-capitalist corporations, still under the control of the Communist Party, but acting as independent companies responsible for their own profits and losses.

The example of the Soviet Union and much of Eastern Europe convinced the Chinese leaders that a free-market, "big bang" strategy, to break up the state industries simply by removing all subsidies at a stroke, would threaten economic slump and social unrest on a scale that they could not control.

But in the coastal provinces, especially in Guangdong, adjacent to Hong Kong, the so-called "frontier capitalism" of foreign investment, sweated labour, smuggling, speculative land deals and embezzlement of state funds had been connived at and actively

promoted by party officials. Particularly after the return to China of Hong Kong, there was a developing potential for a conflict between Beijing and Guangzhou (Canton, the capital of Guangdong).

In March 1998, the National People's Congress confirmed significant changes in the government. Li Peng, who signed the order for the troops to go into Tiananmen, stepped down as Premier and was replaced by Zhu Rongji.

These changes completed a transformation of the government which for the first time has no army representative within it. The regime is committed to forcing through the last stages of capitalist restoration on the state capitalist model.

On the economic front, this has resulted in significant banking reforms which, if implemented, would open the way to the creation of a fully fledged capitalist banking system and mark the final restoration of capitalism in China.

China is to establish an asset management company which will be state backed and will be given responsibility for the bad debts of the state banks that are more than two years overdue. At the same time as the banks are relieved of these debts, they will also be recapitalised, probably by the issue of government bonds, so that they can start afresh with clean balance sheets.

The state-owned corporations which are to be their customers are also in the process of transformation. Millions of workers have been laid off, prices decontrolled and the corporations themselves reorganised into a greater number of



Zhu Rongji goes with arms stretched wide to the USA

nominally independent firms.

Yet the success of the policy still hangs in the balance. The pace of change has had to be slowed in response to the Asian crisis. Soft credits have actually increased to keep non-profitable plants open and their workers employed. The percentage of state-owned enterprises making losses has risen to 51 per cent.

The consequences of earlier waves of redundancy have led to unemployment of 30 million in the urban areas alone and the loss of income has contributed to a serious decline in domestic demand and, for the first time, a price deflation.

To offset this, the government has increased infrastructural spending, financed by a bond issue of 100 billion yuan (£7.7 billion) to mop up some unemployment and provide a stimulus for the whole construction industry which had gone into decline with the slowdown in foreign investment.

Economic reform has also hit the Army which, since the early 1980s, has created an empire of industrial and commercial enterprises. It has been ordered to divest itself of 20,000 companies producing everything from fridge freezers to buses, aircraft to televisions and shoes to pharmaceuticals.

The stage is being set for new political turmoil. Divisions within the party and state bureaucracies are sharpening and the international economic climate is closing down the options for achieving the growth of 8 per cent per year believed necessary for stability.

Demonstrations by unemployed workers are reported regularly, especially from the industrial north east of the country.

The tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre looks likely to be commemorated against a background of tensions as profound as those which generated the Democracy Movement itself.

# oes of Tiananmen

inflation - expressed the belief that what China needed was a democratisation of the existing system. This appeal to reason no doubt helped mobilise popular support. But it could not prepare and organise that support for the fight to the death that proved to be inevitable.

The fight for democratic rights against a Stalinist dictatorship raises ever more fundamental questions over all aspects of social life. A public debate over economic reform could not avoid questioning bureaucratic control over the planned economy. Any inquiry into corruption could not avoid the central role of party cadres in bribery, embezzlement and nepotism.

Despite their economic disagreements, the overwhelming majority of the party leaders were united in their refusal to allow any questioning of their

power. There were no limits to what they would do to maintain their rule. To win even their most basic democratic demands, the protesters would have had to mobilise forces that could not only resist repression but break up the state machine itself.

The starting point for such a mobilisation was there. The increasingly active involvement of Beijing's working class through strikes and demonstrations led to the formation of the Autonomous Workers' Organisation, itself an important stage in the class' political development.

The powerful propaganda apparatus of the party began to crack as journalists demonstrated with the students, demanding the right to print truthful reports of what was happening in Beijing. When the first troops were sent

into Tiananmen in late May, fraternisation with the students and workers on the square rapidly rendered them unreliable for use against the protesters.

Tragically, the political strategy of the protesters stopped them developing these first alliances into an effective counter to the state. Workers' mobilisations were seen as moral pressure on the CCP, supportive soldiers were seen as proof that the "People's Liberation Army" could never turn against the people themselves.

What was needed, then and now, was a political leadership with the aim of destroying the Stalinist dictatorship by working class revolution. Instead of seeing workers as useful auxiliaries for the passive protest in Beijing, it would have organised mass mobilisations of workers demanding not only free speech

but the opening of the books of state enterprises to lay bare the corruption and inefficiency of the party. It would have fought not only for pay rises against inflation, but for workers' control of planning and production.

To oversee all this workers' councils, based on elected delegates from the factories, needed to be built and co-ordinated on a national scale. Such a movement would have had to create a workers' militia, beginning with the defence of marches and strikes but prepared to confront the mainly peasant-based PLA and the paramilitary police.

In the weeks after the Tiananmen massacre, general strikes broke out in cities across China. This proves that the working class was prepared to be much more than a stage army to support the democracy movement.

These strikes were quickly broken, the ferocity of the party leaders proving too much for a movement that was only just coming into existence and had no agreed programme, no tested organisation or leaders.

Ten years on, the hardships and mass unemployment resulting from pro-market reforms have again led to a wave of strikes, demonstrations and unrest in city after city across China. As capitalism becomes more and more dominant, this class struggle will grow and deepen.

The highest priority for revolutionaries in China will be to ensure that the lessons of 1989 are not forgotten and that the approaching conflicts see the building of a revolutionary leadership that can finally destroy the butchers of Beijing.

## China 1989 - Timeline

### January 6

Astrophysicist Fang Lizhi writes open letter to dictator Deng Xiaoping calling for the release of an electrical worker imprisoned for supporting democracy demonstrations ten years earlier.

### February 26

During his state visit to China, US president George Bush invites Fang to a banquet. Police detain Fang to prevent his attendance.

### April 15

Death of Hu Yaobang, former general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), identified with a conciliatory attitude towards the democracy movement and ousted by "paramount leader" Deng Xiaoping in January 1987. His place was taken by Zhao Ziyang, another protégé of Deng.

### April 16

First student demonstrations demanding Hu's rehabilitation and free speech in the universities.

### April 22

After a week of demos and meetings in the universities, the students move to Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

### April 26

The People's Daily calls the demos a conspiracy to overthrow socialism.

### May 4

Zhao Ziyang tells a meeting of the Asia Development Bank that there are divisions within the party over how to respond to the

growing demos in Tiananmen. Anniversary of the revolutionary student movement of 1919 sees hundreds of thousands demonstrate with students in Tiananmen. Zhao publicly agrees the students' ideas "coincide with those of the party".

### May 15

Soviet leader and advocate of reform Mikhail Gorbachev visits Beijing. One million demonstrate in Tiananmen for three days. The Chinese government has to cancel all Gorbachev's planned visits because of the scale of demonstrations. Students begin the Tiananmen hunger strike.

### May 17

Deng convenes a meeting of the seven highest party and army leaders, they decide the students have to be crushed because strikes and demos have now spread to 23 cities across China.

### May 18

Zhao convenes meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, proposes concessions to the students but is defeated. Zhao signals his dissent by visiting the students.

### May 20

Premier Li Peng declares martial law in Beijing. In response, over a million protesters and striking workers flock to Tiananmen. Troops sent to occupy the square are turned back by the crowds. The Autonomous Workers' Organisation of Beijing is founded.

### May 24

Zhao deposed and replaced by Jiang Zemin as general secretary.

### May 27

Provincial students arriving in Beijing revive the militancy of the demonstrations. Troops are openly fraternising with the demonstrators.

### May 31

Leaders of the Autonomous Workers' Organisation are arrested and workers are ordered to end all strikes in the Beijing region. The number of strikes increases and a workers' demonstration takes place at the Ministry of the Interior.

### June 1

Original troops withdrawn and replaced by new detachments.

### June 2

More troops, unarmed, march towards central Beijing but are turned back by even bigger demonstrations.

### June 3

Student leaders receive warning that the army is preparing to attack, they call on protesters to leave but approximately 150,000 refuse. At 10.00 pm the army begins to advance on the square from three directions, killing anyone in their path.

### June 4

At 4.00 am troops reach the square and tanks crush the central student camp and those in it. Demonstrators are shot indiscriminately, the bodies bulldozed into piles and burnt. By daybreak, the square has been fully secured by troops but shooting continues around the city.

## EAST TIMOR

# Independence activists face terror campaign

DILI, THE capital of East Timor, is again being terrorised by the Indonesian army. An "anti-independence militia", sponsored and armed by the Indonesian armed forces, is hunting down pro-independence activists.

The house of one leading independence supporter, Manuel Carrascalao, which had become a refuge for activists driven from their homes, was stormed at the end of April and at least 18 people killed. The army blocked access to the house and army lorries took away bodies and the survivors.

The violence is not limited to the capital. In early April the militia massacred over 40 refugees in a church in Liquica. The army stood by, intervening only to remove the bodies and prevent access to the international press.

The violent offensive has led Xanana Gusmao, imprisoned leader of the CNRT/Fretilin, the Timorese independence movement, to end the recently established cease-fire and call on his

supporters to take up arms to defend themselves. The Indonesian government, he argued, had broken every promise and was trying to destroy the independence movement while discussing with the UN about allowing a vote on autonomy.

East Timor was invaded by Indonesia in 1976 and the Fretilin government driven into the mountains. It has sustained a guerrilla war against the occupation ever since. Since then at least 200,000 have died as a result of the Indonesian army's murderous attempts to wipe out all opposition.

Indonesians and international observers were stunned when President Habibie suddenly announced in February that East Timor would be offered autonomy and that if it was rejected it should have independence. But since then opposition within the army and from other political parties has led to Habibie playing a double game.

In East Timor sections of the army and the Governor have been seizing con-

trol of the streets and intimidating the pro-independence movement through mass terror and massacres. The BIA, the Indonesian army intelligence agency, and the special forces, Kopassus, have been to the fore in organising sectarian violence.

These forces have been given aid from a surprising quarter. Megawati Sukarnoputri leader of the misnamed Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) denounced Habibie's new policy before an election rally of 120,000 in Jakarta.

A press release from Megawati declared that:

"The integration of East Timor into the state and the nation of Indonesia is politically and constitutionally legal in accordance with the will of the people of East Timor. It has been approved by the House of Representatives in 1976 and the People's Supreme Assembly in 1987."

Like the other major bourgeois parties, the PDI-P is terrified that allow-

ing the people of East Timor the right to secede will set a precedent for other oppressed nations within Indonesia.

The people of East Timor have received nothing but pious phrases from the international community. The UN has never recognised Indonesia's seizure of East Timor as legal, but unbelievably it still recognises the old colonial power of Portugal as the legal administrator of the island. It is in negotiations with Jakarta about how the East Timorese will express their opinion on the autonomy within Indonesia proposal, but says it will rely on the brutal Indonesian army to maintain order during any campaign!

Jakarta has already rejected the idea of a referendum along with Kofi Annan's suggestion of indirect voting options, yet the proposal is meant to be put to the people by June. This is why the army has stepped up the terror, to prevent any meaningful expression of Timorese opinion or even to sabotage the proposal completely.

Meanwhile the *Sunday Times* report-

ed that Tony Blair's government has permitted the exports of twice as many small arms and machine guns to Indonesia in its first year in office. Other weapons sold included howitzers, mortars and flame-throwers. This month also sees the delivery of the first of 16 Hawk jets to Indonesia. These are likely to be deployed in the South China Sea to protect the Natuna gas fields where British companies have important interests.

The labour and socialist movement should denounce the ongoing repression being perpetrated against the people of East Timor and Labour's "ethical foreign policy" which arms the Indonesian butchers to the teeth.

- All Indonesian troops out of East Timor.
- For organised defence to smash the reactionary militia.
- Release Xanana Gusmao and all political prisoners in Indonesia
- Independence for East Timor n.o.w.
- Stop all arm sales to Indonesia.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

# No change at the top

In 1994, the ANC was elected as the government of South Africa promising a radical change in the way the country was run. But with a new election looming, the poverty and racial inequalities still exist. *Lesley Day* outlines the ties that bind the ANC to the bosses and which result in the betrayal of the masses

**T**HE AFRICAN National Congress (ANC) looks set to win the 2 June general election in South Africa. Although the ANC government has backtracked on a whole series of the promises it made before the first non-racial election in 1994, it still commands the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the working class and black masses. They are willing to give the ANC another chance. This will prove a costly mistake.

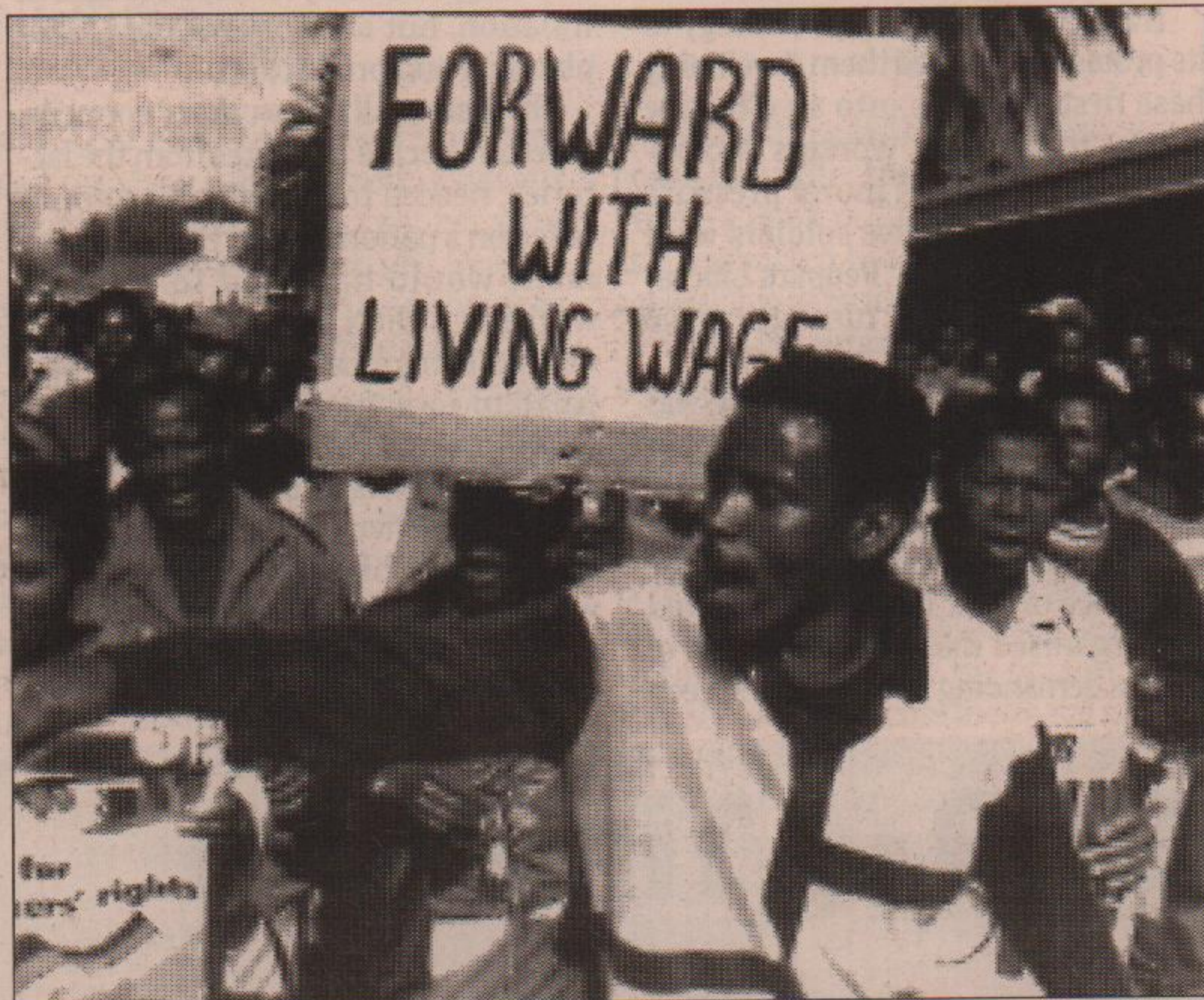
South Africa is still one of the most unequal societies on earth. Its big businesses, led by the giant Anglo-American corporation, are among the world leaders. But 46 per cent of South Africans live in absolute poverty. The top 20 per cent of the South African population accounts for 70 per cent of its national expenditure, whereas the bottom 20 per cent accounts for 1 per cent.

Unemployment, according to government figures, runs at 23 per cent. According to the South African Reserve Bank, it is even higher. More than a third of the working age population are jobless. The "jobs crisis" has hit youth in particular.

Racial inequalities still mar South African society; the overwhelming proportion of the poor are black. White faces still dominate business. Formal segregation has been removed, but the cities are still ghettoised.

The trade union leaders of the main federation, COSATU, together with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and most of the left still call for a vote for the ANC. COSATU points to the achievements of the government, which include extending water to 3 million people and electricity to 2 million homes. It points to the promises of further job creation, of reducing the tax burden on the poor and increasing spending on infrastructure and social services.

But the problem is that the ANC has accepted the boundaries set by the bosses both nationally and internationally. It has already done this by effectively abandoning the Reconstruction and



The masses demand a living wage; the ANC demands sacrifices

Development Programme in favour of the "fiscally responsible" Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR). This plan has much more modest aims and accepts the need for strict budget controls.

High earners and big business breathed easy after the last budget, which sketched out some increased spending on health and education – but refused to increase the tax burden on the rich.

All the plans for improvements, therefore, rely on the current projected recovery in the economy – but this remains as fragile as the international economy as a whole. South Africa is particularly vulnerable to speculative capital washing in and out of its financial markets.

The COSATU leaders also point to improvements in the position of unions and in workers' rights. But these gains are the result of workers' struggles, for instance the strikes and demonstrations that forced the ANC to abandon the bosses' right to lock-out in the Labour Relations Act.

Many of the improvements in the unions' status and rights depend on various corporatist forums. But the bosses have given notice that, in the event of further economic problems, they will be on the attack.

The bosses are issuing stern lectures to the ANC government to stick to the GEAR principles and to resist the pressure from the working class for more expansion and redistribution. As the *Financial Mail* put it:

"Senior ANC politicians on the election trail must keep in mind that the electorate is not the only audience out there listening".

It wants the government to keep listening to international capital instead of South African workers.

Thabo Mbeki, who will take over the presidency from Mandela, can deliver radical speeches when needed – for instance with his talk of an "African renaissance" – but he is essentially a good friend to the bourgeoisie. He was a key architect of the compromise with the old National Party rulers of apartheid, a compromise which brought

the ANC into political power but left the capitalist system and most of South Africa's terrible social inequalities intact.

Over the last year, as ANC leader and Deputy President, Mbeki has increasingly taken over the reins of power. And he has been at pains to reassure the bosses at home and abroad that capitalism in South Africa will be safe in his hands. At the same time he has faced down opposition to GEAR from the South African Communist Party (SACP) of which he was once a member.

Mbeki's talk of African advancement refers to increasing the prospects of the new black bourgeoisie. While some former leaders of the liberation struggle live it up in the government and civil service, others have been lining their pockets in the boardrooms, taking up directorships in white-owned firms or setting up black-owned businesses. New African Investments Limited (NAIL), led by former ANC and PAC leaders, has recently been embroiled in a scandal when the directors tried to pay themselves huge bonuses.

The former National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) leader Cyril Ramaphosa left NAIL this year – but only after he had made millions of rands. Former left-talking NUM deputy leader, Marcel Golding, has made a reported £800,000 from the Mineworkers Investment Company.

The new black capitalists are no more sympathetic to workers than their white colleagues. Former Robben Island prisoner Mzi Khumalo explained when he sacked workers at the major company, JCI: "I have spoken to the unions at JCI and made it clear: we are here to run a business. I'm not for any of this brotherhood stuff."

COSATU is correct in arguing that opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party, New National Party and the maverick United Democratic Party will all back up the bosses in the drive for more "flexible labour markets." But the ANC is just as tied to the bosses – in fact it is their preferred party, the party that has carried through the

construction of a capitalist post-Apartheid South Africa. That is why the working class needs its own party.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) claims to be that party. But it is totally tied to the ANC. In this election, COSATU and the SACP will not even have designated candidates within the Alliance list. They are now simply two of the groups that are "represented" within the ANC's list.

Last year there were signs of unrest in the SACP. The 10th Congress passed resolutions critical of GEAR. Many delegates were outraged by Mbeki's attack on the party. Two of his closest supporters failed to get elected to the SACP inner executive. New General Secretary Blade Nzimande reasserted his commitment to "a strong, self-sufficient, independent and militant Communist Party".

But this was so much rhetoric. Having criticised GEAR, the party then meekly agreed to carry on participating in the government implementing it. It declared:

"Only the alliance led by the ANC is capable of transforming this country in a progressive direction".

So anxious is the party to hang on to its place in government that Nzimande has just declared that even an ANC merger with Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party "would never impact on the partnership of the SACP and the ANC".

The strategy of the SACP and COSATU leaders of sticking to the Alliance at all costs will prove disastrous for workers. Mbeki's government will, yet again, fail to deliver on promised reforms and it will be prepared to continue to attack the working class.

Instead of voting for the ANC, workers need to fight for militant policies of resistance – occupations against redundancies, solidarity strikes, resisting privatisation. And instead of relying on a treacherous, and ultimately pro-capitalist, workers' party like the SACP, South African workers need to build their own revolutionary workers' party.

**PINOCHET**

# Don't delay extradite him today!

Last month, Home Secretary Jack Straw confirmed that former Chilean dictator, General Pinochet, can be extradited to Spain to stand trial for the mass terror and torture that took place under his regime. But at the same time the "friends" of the General are putting millions of pounds into legal moves that will drag on for months and could prevent the extradition altogether.

In March, the Law Lords confirmed for a second time that the General could be extradited, but they gave him immunity from crimes committed before 1988 when Britain ratified the UN Convention on Torture. This cut the number of charges from 32 to just two. However, the Spanish investigating magistrate, Judge Baltazar Garzon, retaliated by sending in 43 new cases that occurred after the Law Lords deadline.

These cases illustrate the horrors of the General's murderous regime. Take just three for example:

- Wilson Valdebenito Juica, a 28-year-old trade unionist, died September 1988. Subjected to persistent high voltage electric shocks.
- Jorge Antonio Sala Rojas died October 1988 after being tortured by the "submarine method" where fizzy drink was put up his nose to choke him.
- Patricia Correa Campusano, detained in October 1988, tied to a dentist's chair and tortured by electric shocks to her genitals.

Thousands died in the General's torture chambers, thousands more suffered, not only facing torture themselves, but forced to listen to the cries of comrades and family.

Yet Pinochet's friends plead for

his release on compassionate grounds. Straw received representations from those well-known humanitarians Margaret Thatcher, George Bush and Henry Kissinger all pleading Pinochet's cause, along with an appeal from the Pope and another from the Dalai Lama. He also received material from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence, both of which are said to be concerned about arms deals with Chile which have been halted since the arrest of Pinochet.

This coven of ghouls, murderers, mumbo jumbo merchants and cynics only ever invoke compassion for their own kind. For everybody else they favour cruelty and injustice. Not one of them utters a word of compassion for Pinochet's victims, only for the brute who turned his country's soil crimson with the blood of countless Chileans.

The real danger is that this malignant crew could still get its way. When he heard the news of the Home Secretary's decision Norman Lamont, another Pinochet supporter, said:

"Jack Straw knows that in the end, the courts will free General Pinochet, but only after tens of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money has been spent."

The legal wrangling will take months, if not years. The huge funds available to the butcher's legal team mean they can challenge the extradition through from the magistrates court, possibly right up to the Lords again.

Meanwhile, the arms dealers, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence will continue their behind the scenes pressure to let the General off the hook.

And all the while the General stays in his mansion in leafy Virginia Waters

– instead of rotting in the prison cell that Labour should have put him in from day one – holding court, apologising to Thatcher that he has to receive her in such humble surroundings, sharing jokes and memories about the good old days when he could torture, kill and rape his opponents at will, and get British backing for his regime regardless of what crimes it carried out.

The British state continues to spend thousands of pounds providing him with security.

Mrs Thatcher declared that it would be "highly embarrassing" if the General died in custody in Britain. No, it would be cheating Pinochet's victims of justice. We need to step up the pressure to stop this legal farce and send Pinochet to face his accusers in Spain.

Labour must extradite him now. No more delays!

# Taking the politics out of Pollock

Warren Groppe takes a critical look at an exhibition that marginalises Pollock's early radicalism.

**W**HEN CONFRONTING the 1952 drip painting "Blue Poles: Number 11" (see figure 1), in the last room at the Tate Gallery's current Pollock exhibition, you cannot help but wonder how this late work, could possibly relate to an earlier work, "Going West" (figure 2) of 1934-38, displayed near the exhibition entrance.

The earlier painting is a stylised depiction of the Great Depression's effects on small farmers, as families uprooted by the collapse of the agricultural economy were forced to migrate westwards in a desperate quest for work. "Blue Poles", in contrast, is a massive 7x16 foot canvas, strewn with multi-coloured aluminium and enamel paint to create an abstract vortex of interlacing lines. This is broken only by seven blue vertical bands, seemingly placed at random.

The exhibition literature claims that the later painting represents "the final desperate, explosive manifestation of Pollock's tortured genius, the culminating moment in the development of the free flowing abstract art that he had for years been fitfully but inexorably moving towards." Such a reading is the art critics' consensus on Pollock, a reassertion of the interpretation of his work that elevates form above all other considerations and has been dominant since the 1950s.

This formalist view relegates works such as "Going West" to the status of historical curiosity, too representational to have any real aesthetic interest. The work of the 1930s, however, represents more than just a mis-spent artistic youth, and is, in fact, of crucial significance in any materialist attempt to contextualise the monumental abstract work of the late 1940s and 50s.

"Going West" was produced during the period when young American artists, radicalised by the Depression, saw art as a weapon in the class struggle. In 1930 Pollock left art school in Los Angeles to join his older brothers in New York to study painting under Thomas Hart Benton, the closest thing that America had produced to a muralist, influenced by the Mexican "school" of Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros. Known as *los tres grandes*, this trio had launched the state-sponsored mural movement that had embod-



FIGURE 1: 1952 drip painting "Blue Poles: Number 11"

ied the masses' aspirations in the wake of Mexico's uncompleted revolution.

Benton, then still a socialist, had worked with Orozco, and was the obvious role model for young American artists wishing to produce a radical, politicised art that could appeal to the masses. Under the influence of Benton, and his eldest brother Charles, who later became an artist for the United Auto Workers' journal in Detroit at the height of its militancy in the late 1930s, Pollock came into contact with the US Communist Party (CPUSA).

The move towards a state-funded public art in America had begun with the John Reed Clubs, named after the socialist journalist who had reported on, and supported, the Russian Revolution. Inaugurated within days of the October 1929 Wall Street crash by the CPUSA, under Moscow's instructions, these clubs were the cultural vehicle for aligning writers and artists with the working class in its struggle against capitalism. Rapidly becoming the focus for left-wing art and literature, the Reed clubs demanded that the federal government intervene to partly supplant the Depression devastated American art market. They called for state sponsorship of the arts both to assist the unemployed artist and to create a new cultural resource for the "community" as a whole.

This campaign was largely successful and by late 1933 Franklin D Roosevelt had authorised the first of the federal arts projects. By the time of their demise during the Second World War such pro-

jects would account for some \$40 million of New Deal spending.

When Thomas Hart Benton returned to Missouri in 1935, it was these projects that sustained Pollock in his career as an artist. He became a militant in the Artists' Union, formed by the leadership of the John Reed Clubs to defend artists' working conditions on the projects, as well as to fight against fascism in Europe, and at home. As a contemporary said of Pollock, "he was involved in all the Artists' Union strikes at the time. In between strikes he would get drunk and go out and fight cops."

This is the context for "Going West" and other overtly political works produced under the federal art projects, such as the lithograph "Miners" (figure 3). Unsurprisingly, this does not feature in the current exhibition. They were the products of the vibrant cultural and political milieu of the 1930s, the period of the Popular Front, when radical artists sought to use the federal art projects to produce a didactic public art that they hoped would both engage and enlighten the American working class. The mural paintings in schools, post offices, hospitals, and other public buildings, gave art a social role that transcended the crushing limitations of the bourgeois art market.

While none of Pollock's federal mural work survives, "Going West" and "Miners" were also designed to decorate the walls of public buildings through a government-sponsored scheme. And if Pollock's turn to mural art was shaped by his work on the projects, then his subsequent experience under the Mexican David Alfaro Siqueiros would influence the development of his abstract technique.

Siqueiros was a Stalinist (involved in the first assassination attempt on Trotsky) who, while in New York, ran the Experimental Workshop. This was organised as a revolutionary syndicate and worked on commissions for the CPUSA, producing floats for the May Day parade and other political events.

Its stated aims were to:  
 "1) be a laboratory for experimentation in modern art techniques  
 2) create art for the people."

It was here that Pollock was first introduced to industrial paints and began experimenting with the drip technique that would become his celebrated trademark.

If many radical American artists

questioned the European avant-garde's preoccupation with technical radicalism, anxious about its accessibility to working-class audiences unversed in the specialist concerns of art, then Picasso's "Guernica" offered a significant counterpoint. Commissioned by the Spanish Republican government to commemorate the fascist bombing of the Basque town of the same name in 1937, it succeeded in combining political commitment and the norms of mural art with a highly personal form influenced by surrealism.

The mural arrived in New York in January 1939 in a last-ditch attempt at rallying support for the Republican cause in Spain. This was a crucial work for Pollock and it encouraged his own attempts to combine psychoanalytic insights with visual art through an exploration of the unconscious and myth. A dramatic example of this turn came in Pollock's



FIGURE 3: "Miners"

use of Jungian motifs in "Guardians of the Secret" (1943), a kind of iconography developed from the psychotherapy he had been receiving intermittently since his first breakdown in 1938.

In the huge drip paintings of the late 1940s and 1950s this imagery is at first "veiled", as Pollock put it, and then obliterated, as in "Blue Poles". These paintings combine his former commitment to a public mural art with a personal and private subject matter released through "automatism" – the random dripping of paint onto the canvas.

He wrote as late as 1947, "I believe the easel picture to be a dying form, and the tendency of modern feeling is towards the wall picture or mural". By then, however, the context had changed. The radical political and cultural aspirations of the 1930s were gone. The CP's "Popular Front" fragmented, leaving many artists and intellectuals disorientated and demoralised as it veered from support of Roosevelt's New Deal to hapless defence of the Nazi-Soviet pact and, finally, into the war camp of the "democratic" imperialisms. In the wake of the Second World War came the "Cold War" and the rise of McCarthyism, as most liberal intellectuals ceased to be the CP's fellow travellers and joined the witch-hunt of the Stalinists and the left as a whole.

When the federal art projects finished in 1942, it marked the end of any moves towards a greater cultural democratisation for a return to the "free market" in artistic commodities. Meanwhile, art was safely restored to its ivory tower. By focusing on Pollock's abstraction alone, and marginalising the work of the 1930s, formalist interpretations of his work were complicit in this process.

These depoliticised the artist and his product. Formalist criticism gave its seal of approval to his work being sent abroad in state-sponsored attempts at winning cultural prestige for the United States during the Cold War. Pollock was an ideal choice – dead in a car crash by 1956 – he was unable to contest this appropriation of his work.

By taking his work in its totality, however, and viewing the later paintings in the context of his political commitments of the 1930s, it is possible to see how the drip paintings could represent more

than just the inevitable end point of a triumphant march towards a disinterested abstraction. With his continuing commitment to the mural he may still have seen himself as producing a public art of the only kind he thought possible in the alienating conditions of 1950s' America.

By no means was Pollock's late work a model of political art, but the Tate's current exhibition is a gross denial of the significance of his earlier work and a misrepresentation of its relationship to the high point of his abstract expressionism.

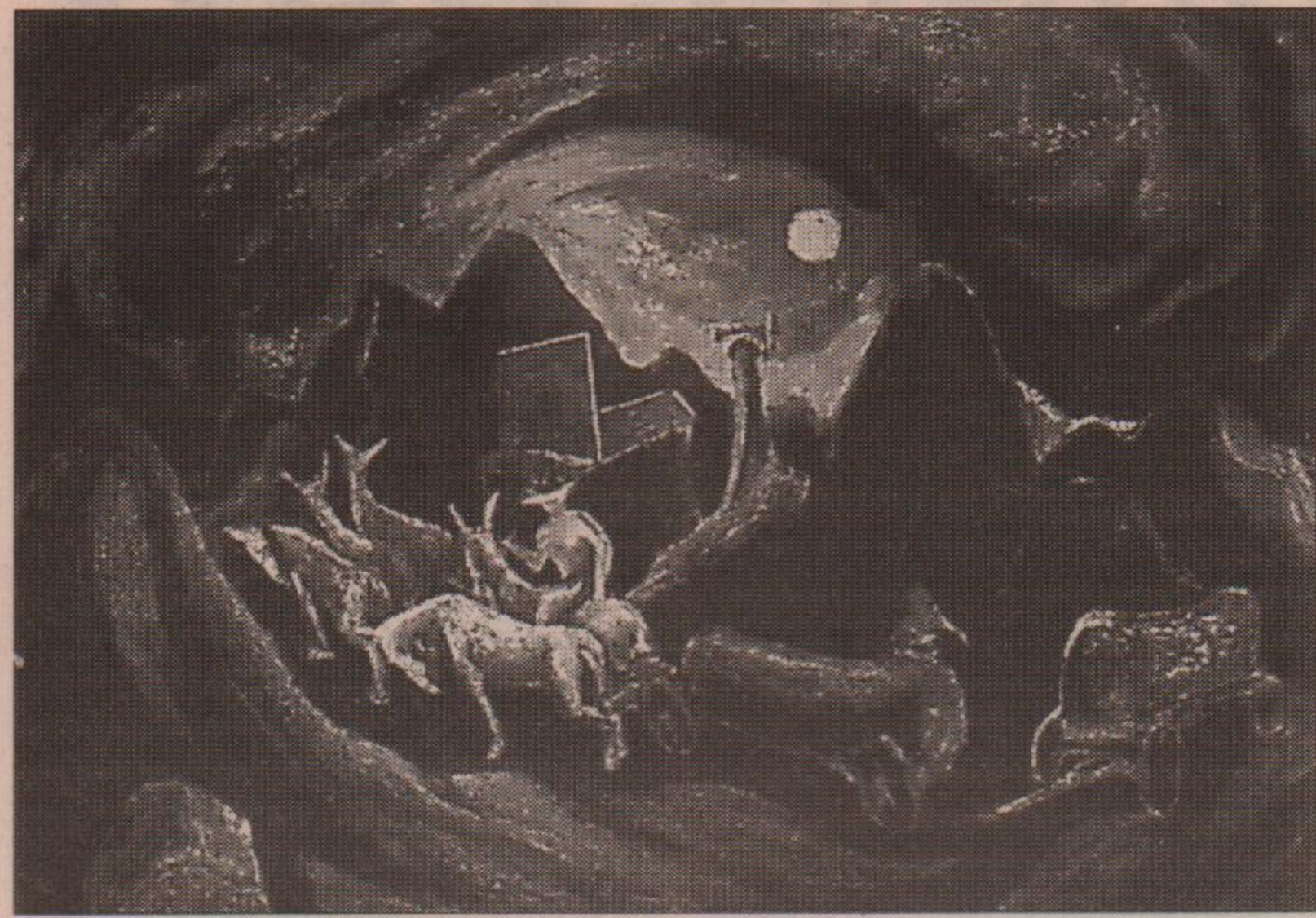


FIGURE 2: "Going West" of 1934-38

## UNISON

# Fight the bosses not the members

THE 10 April minimum wage demonstration in Newcastle attracted 20,000 marchers in the biggest protest to date against New Labour's policies. It was reluctantly called and carefully stage-managed by the Unison leadership. No speeches, no rally, just a pop concert and a family fun day.

Nevertheless, the demo still marked the first instance where a key section of the union bureaucracy had been obliged to mobilise opposition to the Blair government.

The Bickerstaffe leadership, however, wasted little time getting back to business as usual. The witch-hunt of the organised left in Britain's biggest union has intensified still further since 10 April. Branches where the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) plays an influential role have been the key targets in the bureaucracy's renewed drive to make Unison safe for New Labour.

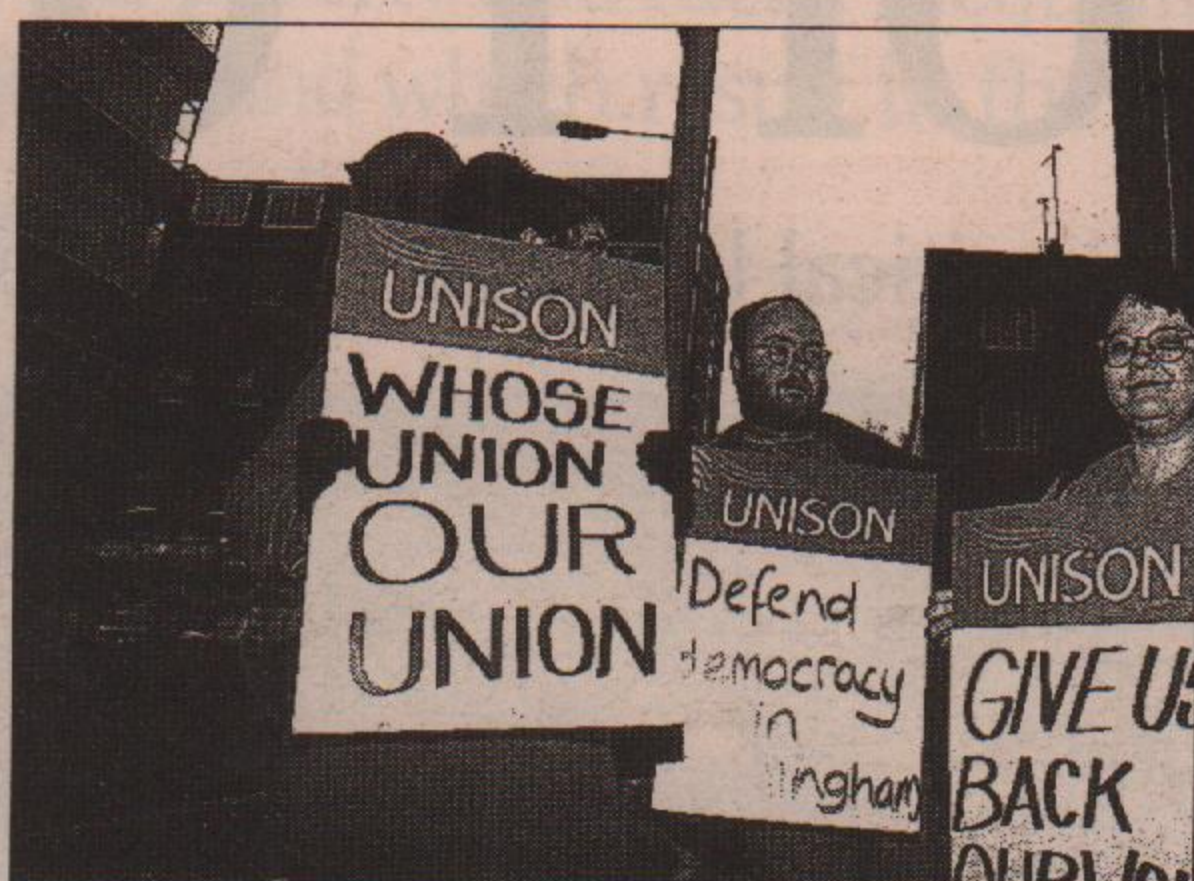
The outcome of this battle is crucial. But the left are making key mistakes. After the Newcastle demo there was a joint left rally that attracted more than 1,500 marchers. The platform, featuring members of both the SWP and the Campaign for Fighting Democratic Unison (CFDU), had the opportunity to launch a united fightback against the already long list of attacks by the Unison bureaucracy. Unfortunately, no such call came out of the meeting. This was a major opportunity squandered in front of a large audience of union activists.

The following week in the wake of a lobby in support of the Birmingham branch outside the 17 April NEC, the SWP held a meeting that agreed to launch a petition calling on the Unison leadership to start fighting New Labour and stop attacking its own members. We support this initiative, but it falls short of what is needed to repel the current attacks and fundamentally alter the union's current disastrous course.

Branches currently in the firing line such as Birmingham, Sheffield and UCLH should join with others that have recently been under the cosh, including Bromley and Leeds, to call a national conference against the witch-hunt. Any such fight to defend and extend democracy in the union must be linked to developing an effective strategy to resist the growing offensive by public sector bosses in general and New Labour councils in particular on pay, conditions



Unison calls Newcastle demo over low pay but attacks its own members for fighting back



Photos: Molly Cooper

and the vary notion of public sector provision through PFI, Best Value and Education Action Zones.

Workers Power supporters in Unison, organised around the bulletin *Well Red*, are fighting to achieve such unity in action in the run-up to and during the union's national conference in mid-June. But we will also be pressing for resistance to the witch-hunt to be turned into a serious attempt to build a rank and file movement that poses a real threat not just to the Bickerstaffe faction on the NEC but to the domination and misleadership of our union by a layer of privileged bureaucrats who make life much easier for Tony Blair and his clones across the country.

**BIRMINGHAM:** Having suspended the 18,000-strong Birmingham local government branch, the union's single largest, the full-time national official charged with investigating its activities, Phil Lenton, has fuelled a vicious attack in the local media on key activists.

The contents of a memo from Lenton hit the front page of the *Birmingham Evening Mail*. The paper claimed that branch officers had made death threats against "opponents" and had attacked the homes of potential witnesses in the official Unison probe of the branch. The articles asserted that West Midlands police had been called in, but they have denied receiving any complaints and have not conducted any investigation of such allegations.

The underlying motive for the clamp down on the Birmingham branch has nothing to do with its supposed failure to follow the "reasonable" instructions of the union's National Executive Com-

mittee (NEC) and everything to do with its resistance to cuts and attempted privatisation by the city's New Labour council. The branch has fought a hard, long-running campaign against the closure of homes for the elderly and mounted successful strikes in Birmingham's neighbourhood offices.

In pursuing the suspension of the branch, General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe has ridden roughshod over union procedures, ignoring the position of the West Midlands regional council in opposition to the Birmingham branch suspension. Promises to consult with the branch and the region have been broken and Bickerstaffe has circulated a letter to all branch secretaries in an effort to enlist support for the witch-hunt.

**SHEFFIELD:** The latest attack came hot on the heels of regional full-timer Jim Cafferty's ultimately successful effort to browbeat housing benefits strikers to go back to work after a month-long strike against privatisation. On 16 April, a day prior to the NEC's most recent meeting regional officials entered the Sheffield Metropolitan branch office, accompanied by police. They seized a computer along with financial records.

The region had already nullified the previous branch elections after complaints from several candidates. But the bureaucracy is primarily interested in four SWP members and another four non-aligned left activists who have been the focus for a long-running investigation dating from late 1997. The indictment against them includes the catch-all charge of "intimidation". Among branch officers' grievous sins have been

support for an unofficial branch-wide strike against compulsory redundancies in July 1997 and another half-day strike over workloads in the Social Services department.

**UCLH:** The leadership also looks set to press ahead with disciplinary action against SWP members Candy Udwin and Dave Carr, who are both democratically elected branch officers at UCLH. Both were at the centre of recent strike action against the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) at the hospital. The Bickerstaffe

faction on the NEC pulled the plug on this officially sanctioned strike less than 10 days into the action. Carr and Udwin stand accused of referring in a leaflet to members that the action at the NHS Trust was about resistance to PFI!

**GLASGOW:** In Glasgow, Unison regional officials appear to be assisting the city council's management in an attempt to victimise Social Services convenor, Roddy Slorach, who is the SWP's candidate in the Glasgow Cathcart constituency for the Holyrood parliament. Slorach was in the leadership of a two-week long unofficial strike in the department in August 1998 after management had suspended three members. In mid-April a disciplinary panel issued him with a final written warning after he had used a work fax machine to publicise a meeting of a local anti-war committee.

More than 25 of Slorach's fellow members now face disciplinary action after they walked out of work in response to management's original decision to suspend their convenor. It looks unlikely that regional officials will lift a finger to defend them since they have been involved in supplying the local media with ammunition for a witch-hunt of Slorach.

## ACTION UPDATE

**AS WE** went to press Unison members at Manchester City Council were awaiting the result of a branch-wide ballot for strikes in response to the Council's threat to increase the length of the working week to 37 hours for many employees under the guise of implementing the 1997 single status agreement.

The Manchester dispute is crucial for the workers at the sharp end, but it has particular national significance because it marks an attack by a New Labour council on a 13,000-strong Unison branch that has historically backed the Bickerstaffe leadership.

In Camden ballots for limited industrial action are due in the Social Services department

against swingeing pay cuts for home care workers and in the Leisure department over the threat to close three branch libraries and merge two of the central libraries in the London borough.

Meanwhile, the Labour council gained an injunction against an indefinite strike by 24 rehousing workers who had already staged a solid, week-long action over the threat of still more job losses. Shop stewards are looking at the options for further resistance in the wake of a rebalot that returned a one-vote majority for renewed strike action. The initial delay in launching the indefinite strike was the direct result of interference by regional officials.

## TEACHERS

# Build the action against PRP

FACED WITH the threat of performance related pay (PRP), even the National Union of Teachers' right wing were talking about action at its recent national conference.

The Executive brought motions opposing the government's green paper on pay. They called for a boycott of appraisal, the key means for introducing PRP, and for a one-day strike. These were agreed unanimously.

The scale of the attack provoked this outbreak of superficial unity, though another factor is the upcoming election for general secretary. The incumbent, Doug McAvooy, is facing a serious challenge from left-winger Christine Blow-

er of the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union. In response McAvooy came to conference determined to pose as the fearless fighter against New Labour, rather than its chief apologist.

In general, he carried this off, apart from his grovelling reply to a speech by Education Secretary David Blunkett. Blunkett had little to say. Like a stand-up comic who has forgotten his punchlines, he seemed desperate for a few heckles to spur him. When some couldn't help themselves, he berated us like a badly behaved Year 9 class.

Instead of moaning we should "celebrate" New Labour's achievements in

education, said Blunkett, but he could not tell us what they were. That was left to McAvooy. It was a sorry sight to see a teachers' union leader, whose members face a savage attack, coming so swiftly to the defence of the attacker.

Instead of demolishing Blunkett's poorly argued case, he picked up his theme, polished it and delivered it in a more self-assured manner than its supposed author.

The unanimity of the conference fell apart on the final day. The right wing attempted to block a motion committing the union to outright opposition to Education Action Zones (EAZs). They argued that negotiating over the pri-

vatization of education was better than an all-out fight. This position was challenged by many, including teachers from Newham, who have to teach in EAZs. The motion for blanket opposition was carried, a significant step forward for the NUT.

The conference did not discuss and take positions on the Balkan war. A move to suspend standing orders to debate an emergency motion put by the SWP did not achieve the two-thirds required, though over half the conference clearly wanted a debate.

The task for militants now will be to ensure a massive "yes" vote for a boycott of appraisal. But we need to be

aware that appraisal is not the only way of introducing PRP and the government has already attempted to diminish support for action by postponing their plans for a year. Strike action will ultimately be necessary if we are to force the government to back down over PRP.

We cannot trust McAvooy to pursue the commitment to a one-day strike. He may well delay the idea after the election and then drop the idea altogether. Rank and file action will be needed to force the leadership to act. We should be organising now at association and school level to fight, including no cover, class size and workload action.

# Occupy to stop closures

ONE OF the two remaining shipyards on the Clyde faces the threat of closure with some 2,000 jobs immediately on the line. At least 3,000 other jobs are at risk in supply firms in an area where unemployment has remained well above average for more than two decades.

Bosses at the Norwegian-based multinational, Kvaerner, have announced their plans to shut down the Govan yard and two associated engineering plants in Greenock and Clydebank. In the words of GMB engineering section president David Falconer, "Faceless executives on inflated salaries have taken the decision to off load the shipbuilding interests and sell off 13 yards."

Kvaerner is but the latest name on a growing list of big bosses to declare mass redundancies in Scotland in the past year. Several electronics manufacturers have run down their operations in the one-time "silicon glens", while Volvo has revealed it intends to shut its bus and truck plant in Irvine. The Bishopston munitions plant at Renfrew is also under threat of closure.

The ongoing jobs slaughter in Scottish manufacturing urgently demands a militant response. Against this background resistance to the closure of Kvaerner's facilities on the Clyde will be absolutely crucial.

Workers cannot afford to rely on the Government task force established under the aegis of Lord Gus MacDonald, the Scottish industry minister, who



Shipyard occupation in Leith in 1984

was once a shop steward on the Clyde but made his very profitable peace with capitalism a long time ago. The task force may well find a buyer for the profitable engineering plants, but according to Kvaerner's accountants the Govan yard operates at a loss and has failed to attract enough new orders. Any profit-seeking boss will impose worse terms and conditions on the remaining workforce in order to ratchet up productivity.

Nor should workers rely on sup-

port from the union bosses. The leadership of the Scottish TUC will happily join in the loud applause when Govan workers enter the conference hall, but will sit on their hands when effective solidarity is required.

The Government has sprung into action for fear of the damage that could be done to New Labour's chances in the poll for the Scottish Parliament on 6 May if still another big employer abandons Clydeside. But there is no reason to believe that New Labour will secure

the future of thousands of jobs unless it comes under huge pressure to do so.

Just such pressure was mounted during Edward Heath's Tory government in the early 1970s during the work-in at Upper Clydeside Shipbuilders (UCS). The UCS campaign was flawed – the "work-in" was far less effective than a full scale occupation of the yard – but it did delay thousands of job losses and forced the nationalisation of the industry under a Tory administration. It was also a catalyst to a wave of working class resistance that brought an early end to Heath's government.

More recently in December 1996, AEEU members at the Glacier engineering factory in Glasgow defied their own union officials and mounted a successful occupation of the factory after management had threatened mass sackings in response to workers' action over dangerous working practices. This provided a vivid illustration of how important it is for workers to establish physical control over their bosses' private property, holding it to ransom until every job is secure.

Clydeside workers have a rich history of fighting back against massive job losses. They need to swiftly draw lessons from the inspiring examples of the battles which have been waged over the past 30 years.

In 1999 it is vital that workers at the Govan yard and its sister plants occupy the yards and seize control of the bosses' property to prevent Kvaerner's

bosses stripping valuable equipment from the site. A fully accountable, cross-union committee should be elected from a mass meeting of the workforce to oversee the implementation of an occupation and to organise its defence against any attempt by the police to take back the yard. It would be charged with forging links and rallying support from other Kvaerner workers both in Europe and across a multinational empire that spans North America and south-east Asia.

The demand on the Labour government must be for the nationalisation of the closure-threatened sites without a penny in compensation to the bosses, who have been given millions in public subsidies already, and who now want to asset strip the plants and dump the workers. Govan and its sister facilities would then operate under the detailed daily control of the workers themselves. The forthcoming Scottish parliament will lack the legal power to nationalise industry and the SNP, while keen to exploit workers' anger at job losses, will never lift a finger against the bosses' property.

A militant fight against Govan's closure could well prove the spark to much wider resistance to the ongoing butchery of jobs and workplaces not only in Scotland but also across England and Wales. For Lord MacDonald, the Blair government and the bosses as a whole this would be a nightmare scenario. The task of union militants on the Clyde is to ensure that this scenario comes true.

## FBU

## Firefighters prepare for action

DELEGATES TO the recent STUC conference in Glasgow heard fighting talk from Fire Brigades Union (FBU) General Secretary Ken Cameron. The FBU leader declared that the local fire authorities and, by implication, the Blair government were on a collision course with the union over the threat to "modernise" firefighters' terms and conditions.

Cameron said that the devolution of power to local bosses to vary conditions would sound the "death-knell" of the fire service. The FBU conference in May will debate a call from its national executive for strike action in response to this threat to national collective bargaining.

The employers' side has launched a propaganda offensive with leaflets being distributed to the home addresses of 50,000 firefighters and control staff across Britain to justify its call for local flexibility in crew levels, shift patterns and hours on duty.

In response the FBU has been staging mass meetings in cities and towns across Britain. In mid-April, for instance, 400 union members from the North West region gathered in Manchester to discuss the bosses' attacks and voted unanimously in favour of a call for a national strike.

This pattern has been repeated in virtually every region so far, high-

lighting the widespread anger of men and women who have witnessed the steady acceleration of job losses and station closures over the past five years. According to FBU national officer, Andy Gilchrist, more than 1,400 fire service jobs have been axed since 1996.

New Labour clearly sees it as a political priority to seriously damage the FBU as one of the remaining bastions of strong union organisation in the public sector. Home Secretary Jack Straw and Chancellor Gordon Brown have both pressured local authorities to find another two per cent in efficiency savings over the next financial year. This translates into nearly £1.73

million in local cuts, with a package demanding another £4 million in cuts over three years.

There has been determined opposition from FBU members in a number of authorities to local attacks, most notably in Essex in 1997 and 1998, where a prolonged series of one-day strikes won some concessions from the employer. But a national response to the attacks faced by firefighters is long overdue.

Activists in the stations should be building for the biggest possible "yes" vote in any forthcoming ballot for action. But it is important that a vote for strikes does not become just another

er bargaining chip for union officials to play in negotiations.

Activists will have to fight to ensure that such strike action is both national and indefinite. No county or region should fight in isolation. Rank and file control over the strike through elected, accountable strike committees will be essential.

A national, indefinite strike in response to the employers' attacks will mark the start of a battle not just to defend pay, terms and conditions, but also to reverse the cuts and to win a massive injection of new resources for the fire service nationally.

## RAIL

## RMT strikes planned

MEMBERS OF the RMT rail union are continuing their long-running battle over pay and conditions with two of the privatised track and infrastructure maintenance firms. Talks between union officials and management at GTRM and Balfour Beatty Rail Maintenance have again broken down after deals were agreed with nine other companies last autumn in the wake of limited strike action.

Balfour Beatty workers are due to come out on strike between 14 and 17 May, while action against GTRM should

start from midnight on 10 May and continue for a full week. In theory, the RMT is still in dispute with GTRM bosses over the sacking of branch officer Steve Hedley on trumped-up charges arising from last summer's strikes.

● Please send donations and messages of support to: Maintenance Engineers Dispute Hardship Fund, RMT, 205 Euston Road, London NW1. The campaign in support of Steve Hedley's fight for reinstatement can be contacted at: Strike Support, 145 Imperial Avenue, Victorian Road, London N16 8HL.

## TGWU

## Defend Jimmy Nolan

BILL MORRIS, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), is not satisfied with his betrayal of the Liverpool dockers' historic battle to win back their jobs. He wants to twist the knife further. Morris is now actively witch-hunting Jimmy Nolan, the long-standing chair of the

Merseyside Port Shop Stewards' Committee.

Nolan's crime? He supported and attended a conference held in Liverpool last autumn with the expressed aim of setting up a new open and democratic "broad left" organisation within the TGWU. Morris has made it plain that the

new grouping will not be tolerated since it is "an organisation within an organisation".

This is rich coming from Morris whose own base of support lies in the old Broad Left, a highly secretive clique that holds a number of seats on the general executive committee.

Nolan and others involved with conference now face disciplinary hearings. Jimmy could be stripped of all offices in a union he has fought for over the course of four decades. We urge our readers in the TGWU to push resolutions through their branches condemning this vindictive witch-hunt and calling for an immediate halt to the investigation of Jimmy and other members.

### SkyChefs picket

Strikers at SkyChefs, a subsidiary of Lufthansa airlines, have called for a mass picket on Monday 3 May as part of their fight to win back nearly 300 jobs. The mainly Asian TGWU members were sacked by bosses after holding an official one-day strike last November. Join the picket from 9.00 am onwards at Fagg's Road off the A30, nearest tube: Hatton Cross (Piccadilly line).

## WHERE WE STAND

**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 bourgeois 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!

## Nail bomb attacks target black community

# Crush fascist terror

THE NAIL bomb attacks in Brixton and Brick Lane are horrific reminders of the continuing fascist threat. Both caused serious injuries; further attacks could claim lives. Any of Britain's multi-racial areas could be targeted.

In the course of the same week, in an affluent suburb of Denver, Colorado two teenagers killed 12 fellow students and a teacher in a massacre timed to coincide with Hitler's birthday.

Commentators have been consoling themselves that in the above cases those responsible are "on the margins" or "disaffected" individuals acting in isolation. So they may be, but they emerge from a much larger cesspool.

Far-right groups staged a gruesome scramble to claim responsibility for the Brixton bombing. Combat 18 and an offshoot, the White Wolves, are the prime suspects for the latest attacks. They are well known to the security services.

A man claiming to be from Combat 18 phoned the police to lay claim to the Brick Lane bombing within two hours of the blast. Best known for its role in forcing the cancellation of a football friendly between England Ireland, its pathological hatred for "racial integration" lay behind a campaign of death threats against celebrities and sports stars in "mixed" relationships including Olympic swimming medalist Sharon Davies.

While the "mainstream" fascist outfit the British National Party (BNP) has courted a more respectable image, any of the fascist groupings are capable of unleashing racial violence. BNP leader John Tyndall was jailed for involvement in a campaign of armed violence in the 1960s. One of his key henchmen, Tony Lecomber, acquired the nickname "mad bomber" for a botched attempt to bomb the headquarters of the old Workers Revolutionary Party. He has since been jailed for a vicious assault on a Jewish school teacher at an East London tube station.

The far right has been associated with



Aftermath of the Brixton bomb

numerous firebombings, destruction of Jewish and left-wing premises and racial attacks. Its supporters have made life hell for thousands of black households and ethnic minority shopkeepers. The malevolent presence of the BNP headquarters at Welling in the early 1990s was linked to a series of racist attacks in the area, including the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

The two Denver area teenagers were probably not organised fascists, but were known to have strong Nazi sympathies. They wore swastikas, their Internet activity had been spotted by the Simon Wiesenthal Institute's monitoring service, their obsession with Hitler was common knowledge. Among their victims was one of the school's few black students, whom they subjected to a barrage of racist abuse before pulling the trigger.

Tiny fascist groups are able to survive, not only because the authorities let them, but because they feed on racist propaganda from "respectable" mainstream sources including the hysteria about "black crime" and asylum seekers whipped up by the British press, and on the virulent homophobia, misogyny and anti-immigrant preaching of the US religious right. The same politicians and commentators now anxious to label the

fascists as "fringe" groups, have themselves often been complicit in encouraging reaction.

The far right has been largely marginalised in Britain since 1993. If fascist organisations have indeed made a turn to individual terrorism, it partly reflects their failure to emulate the electoral success of their co-thinkers on the European continent and their inability to mobilise populist racism in significant campaigns and street demonstrations.

Even so the fascists remain ready to prey on those who wrongly turn to racist explanations for their own poverty or disadvantage. The BNP and the National Front remain active in areas where sections of the white working class can be persuaded that black people or asylum seekers are somehow responsible for unemployment, housing shortages or NHS waiting lists. The reality of New Labour's anti-working class policies can open a renewed audience for them to exploit.

The Brixton and Brick Lane bombings are also a backlash against widespread integration in British society and against the official "anti-racism" that is now a growth industry following the Macpherson report of the inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's mur-

## DEMONSTRATE!

### MARCH AGAINST THE BRIXTON BOMBING AND RACIST VIOLENCE

called by Lambeth  
Unison and the  
National Black  
Alliance.

Assemble Brixton  
for march to  
Downing Street

Saturday 1 May  
1.00 pm.

der. Jack Straw, aware that capitalist society in Britain can ill afford a black community completely at odds with the state, has told the police to clean up their act. Senior officers parade on our screens to assure us of their conversion to "anti-racism".

Up and down the country, managers are dusting down copies of their equal opportunities policies or hastily putting them in place for the first time. Amid this cynicism, there can be real gains for workers, real advances for black people generally. Trade unionists and black activists are rightly working to use the current climate to fight discrimination, to tackle employment policies, to challenge the way that black workers still suffer higher levels of unemployment and are stuck in less secure and worse-paid jobs.

Trade unionists and working class communities must, however, take the fascist threat seriously, especially in its latest, lethal form. Black and multi-racial areas need organised defence—the police will not provide the necessary protection, for all the current rush to prove themselves "anti-racist". Asian and African-Caribbean communities need vigilant organised surveillance and defence teams to help thwart any bombing campaign and deal with any racist attackers firmly and swiftly.

Meanwhile, any public fascist activity must be confronted head-on. Any demonstration, leafleting or meeting must be physically stopped by the united action of unions, anti-racist, anti-fascist organisations and the black community. No platform for fascists—tied to constant political propaganda to explain their real nature and goals—is the way to stop them growing.

When the economy hits hard times and unemployment starts to rise—then the fascist scum will be ready with their pat racist answers. They will be ready to recruit and they will line up for use against the labour movement. We should take every opportunity to stop them now.

## FEEDBACK ■ Contact us on 0181 981 0602

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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