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Bush takes the decisions, while demoralised US troops are left to their hopeless mission



... and Brown promises £7bn boost to help bail out US in Afghanistan — p3

Brown's Britain

Will the summer triumph herald an autumn election?

Danny McIntosh

It could not have been a much better summer for Gordon Brown, having finally succeeded to the top job he has coveted for 14 years.

So effectively and thoroughly has he reshuffled the cabinet and assumed total control over the government that already Blair's name is seldom mentioned. Indeed many commentators have been left wondering how such a transparently shallow and manipulative leader could have held such sway for so long.

Brown has not only ridden the storms of the summer – the failed airport car-bomb, the floods, the foot and mouth – but he has ensured that he was filmed by suitably unctuous BBC political staff doing so.

Vital peak time news broadcasts depicted Gordon decisively taking the helm in crisis meetings, intervening to ensure increased numbers of water bowlers were dispatched to submerged areas of

Gloucestershire ... and, after heroically dashing back from just 4 hours of holiday in Dorset, all but wielding a shotgun and stoking the pyres of dead cattle in the fight against foot and mouth.

He has dumped a clutch of failed Blairite ministers and promoted a new cohort of loyalists who have set out to create an impression of "new brooms" sweeping through ministries and departments to revisit some of the more controversial Blairite policies.

The "new broom" approach has included the novel appointment of top surgeon Sir Ara Darzi as a junior health minister with an apparent brief to draw up a new strategy for the NHS – but more likely a mission to create a short-term distraction and debate on what appears to be bold and technocratic change, while local health chiefs force through cash-saving cuts and closures.

Brown has also taken his own stand on some policy

issues. He has ditched the ludicrous policy of promoting supercasinos and bowed to the conservative lobby in re-opening the legal classification of cannabis. He has made it clear he wants to increase to 90 days the length of time "terror" suspects can be held without charge or trial.

But he has also announced what appear to be spending commitments estimated to total £39 billion, with an extra £7 billion for defence, £15 billion more for railways, £8 billion more for housing and £4 billion extra for Sure Start pre-school centres.

And Brown has also managed to pull off a visit to one of Tony Blair's more infamous friends, George W Bush in which Brown managed both visually and in his statements to convey a cooler and more distant relationship with the increasingly unpopular lame-duck President.

All of this – plus the vital and hugely popular factor that he is not Tony Blair –



Having axed the supercasino, will he try his own luck early?

has helped boost Brown's poll ratings, while the honeymoon period of Tory leader David Cameron has come to an abrupt end, and Tory poll ratings have slumped.

Cameron faces a challenge from the Tory right to his woollier liberal policies, while his attempt to position himself in the eyes of middle England voters as the natural successor to Tony Blair has proved ridiculously ill-judged amid the palpable sighs of relief that the grinning warmonger himself has quit British politics.

With the neo-con right regrouping behind the spooky figure of John Redwood to demand the Conservative party commit itself to slash taxes and embrace policies even more neoliberal than Brown, and

many more traditional Tory voters wondering which of Cameron's policies they can support, the crisis in the main opposition party seems set to grow.

But there is a further unexpected bonus for Brown: the trade union leaders, cowed for so long under Blair, but with a constant murmur of empty threats of revolt, have swung with a new and quite inexplicable enthusiasm behind Brown.

Perhaps the most remarkable turnaround is UNISON, which six months ago was recoiling in shock as Brown stepped in personally to impose a cap on the pay settlement for health workers and others in the public sector, and vowing to ballot for industrial action in the NHS for the first time in 20 years.

UNISON has also been among the unions which have been most opposed to the Blair-Brown policy of increased private sector provision of health care and other public services and the ruinously expensive Private Finance Initiative as a means to fund new hospitals, schools and public infrastructure.

These policies have been marginally tweaked since Brown's take-over, but remain substantially intact. And cutbacks in district hospital services threaten not only to antagonise local communities, but to axe the jobs of thousands more UNISON members.

None of this has stopped UNISON's supple-spined leaders rolling over to have their tummies tickled by Brown – who they nominated for the leadership post. Indeed the union's

Head of Health Karen Jennings went further, securing the selection as a candidate to be a Brownite back-bencher after the next election.

A national demonstration against cuts and privatisation in the NHS which the union had been pressed to organise, and reluctantly called for October 13, has been postponed to November 3 – and re-branded as a "celebration" of the fact that most of the NHS has not yet been privatised by Brown and Blair.

And after the most cosmetic of concessions the public sector pay fight has been effectively abandoned: instead the union is mounting an increasingly vicious and paranoid attack on its own left wing members and any involvement even with the Labour left.

The conclusion is unmissable: unless there is a dramatic change in circumstances, leaders of UNISON and many other unions will be eagerly digging once again deep into their Political Fund coffers to finance any future electoral campaign Gordon Brown may choose to mount.

Couple all of this with a new line-up of ludicrously wealthy millionaires and billionaires reportedly jostling for the chance to donate seven figure sums to a Party that has become the political equivalent of Chelsea Football Club, and we have a political and financial basis that seems certain to lure Brown towards securing his own mandate for a further five-year spell of "modernisation".

The only fly in the ointment appears to be the Labour Party's organisational state – after the departure of so many disillusioned activists under Blair – and the prospect of growing economic problems if Brown waits until next Spring.

Overall commentators are divided on whether or not Brown will exploit the total weakness and disarray of his opponents and go for it – or revert to the expected previous plan of an election in 2009.

Either way, these are likely to be testing times for the left, and the need to strengthen organisation and support in the trade unions has never been greater.

Housing: look at the small print!

Gordon Brown is trumpeting the question of housing as being one of the issues which distinguishes him from his predecessor Tony Blair.

But when you examine the new Housing Green paper in more detail, what is promised does not go very far to meet the real housing needs of working people.

The Green paper "Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable", published in July, sets a target of 2 million new homes by 2016 and 3 million by 2020.

But when it comes to defining what kinds of housing this will be, it is much more problematic. The talk is of "social housing" which conflates council housing, which is subject to a measure

of democratic control, with housing association housing which is clearly not. Housing Associations may be called Registered Social Landlords in the jargon, but in reality they are more and more run on the basis of the profit motive. If you don't believe me, ask anyone who works for one.

In the meantime what has been happening under new Labour is that many council tenants have seen their homes hived off into PFI schemes and ALMOs – something the Green Paper does promise will stop in the future.

Indeed its whole language is filled with the same ideas which are common to the neo-liberal approach to education and health – that the role of local government today is to be

a purchaser rather than a provider of services.

So when we hear that at least £6.5 million more will be invested in social housing over the next 3 years and at least 45,000 new social homes a year by 2010-11, this unfortunately does not mean that Brown has turned his back on the destructive attacks on the welfare state carried out under Blair.

In his introduction to the Defend Council Housing's interim response to the Green Paper, Austin Mitchell MP puts it this way:

"On the face of it goes a long way towards the 'level playing field' (at least for new council housing) that our broad alliance.... is calling for.

"But the language and

formulas are deliberately ambiguous. It is not clear how many council homes will be built, how much pressure will be put on councils to enter into public/private partnerships producing more expensive and less secure homes rather than building new council homes themselves."

Defend Council Housing has extensive support across both the tenants' movement and the trade unions.

That support needs to be mobilised between now at October 15 – the date consultation on the Green Paper ends – in support of a real future for public sector housing and in rejection of the illusions put forward by Gordon Brown

www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

Editorial

Social Change yes, climate change no

Climate chaos has been particularly impossible to avoid this summer – you really would have to put your head in the sand.

Across Britain, torrential rain has lashed down, bringing floods to large areas of the country. Less reported at home, but of major concern to those who have family and friends in the sub-continent has been the worst monsoons for decades – resulting in hundreds dead and around 20 million displaced across wide swathes of northern India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Other areas of the world have not escaped either, for example at least 600 people are dead as a result of severe floods in North Korea, while fires have devastated large areas of Greece and Italy.

So the climate camp at Heathrow took place in the context that more and more people are beginning to think that climate change is an issue they need to address.

The camp brought together around 1400 people for a week of discussion and protest in a smoothly organized operation marked a significant step forward for the movement against climate change.

The camp and the publicity it received succeeded in achieving something that few left initiatives manage – it triggered a debate in the mainstream media and one that was won by the activists.

BAA's inept attempts to ban the protests boomeranged back in their faces after they sought injunctions that would have banned thousands of members of groups like the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds from travelling on the Piccadilly line, resulting in more publicity and more support for the protesters.

But those involved played an intelligent game too. Part of BAA's cry was their responsibility to those trying to get away on their summer holidays. The final press release issued from the camp points out: "As previously stated, none of the actions were intended to disrupt passengers, but instead, targeted the corporations who profit from climate chaos."

The direct action that did take place around Heathrow itself focused on other targets. So for example there was a blockade of Israeli company Carmel Agrexco's main British warehouse near Hayes. Action also took place at BA's World Cargo depot while BAA's national HQ at the Heathrow site was the focus for an overnight encirclement which prevented it opening for business on August 20.

As previously stated, none of the actions were intended to disrupt passengers, but instead, targeted the corporations who profit from climate chaos.

But the camp also went beyond the issue of aviation. Protestors dressed as red herrings targeted carbon offset companies in Oxford and London. Activists also targeted BP, while a 'lock-on' took place at Sizewell A and B where a banner was flown

proclaiming "Nuclear power is not the answer to Climate Chaos". Then there was the demonstration through the local area, already plastered with "No Third runway" signs which aimed to mark out the area that would be destroyed if BAA gets its way. Local MP John McDonnell, who spent much of the week at the camp, told the 500 demonstrators that the runway would be stopped.

A third runway would increase flights from Heathrow to a staggering total of 71,000 a year – equating to

100 million passengers. 31 millions tons of carbon dioxide is currently produced and this would increase by a third. It is not surprising that local communities are up in arms about this.

Certainly there can be no doubt that the vast majority of local people supported the camp, and many visited it and thanked activists for their involvement.

As always, there were things that could have been done better. It is particularly a shame that the demonstration on the Sunday was not decided on until the Saturday, as it had the possibility of drawing in thousands who oppose climate change and want to take collective action against it, but for a whole series of reasons were not able to commit to camping at Heathrow for the week.

It is certainly right that direct action can have an important role to play in building the movement against climate change and other movements against aspects of neo-liberal globalisation. Indeed direct action, such as occupations and sit ins has been among the tools of the labour movement for centuries.

In order to build a movement that can stop climate change we need inclusive methods of organizing. We need 'lock ons' and mass demonstrations, actions that involve hundreds of thousands as well as symbolic protests that only a handful are involved in planning. That's why activists need to start building now for the December 8 demonstration against climate change and for the February trade union conference too.

The climate camp has taken us several important steps down the road to building such a mass movement, *Socialist Resistance* is fully committed to contributing to the next stages in strengthening those voices of protest.



Locked on to the campaign of direct action outside the Sizewell nuclear plants

Bush on threshold of defeat in Iraq

George Bush is staring political and military defeat in the face in Iraq. The American commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, will report to Congress in mid-September on the success of "the surge" of 30 000 US troops into key parts of the country.

Bush had tried to influence Petraeus' views by asserting that the Americans will not leave Iraq in the manner they left Vietnam. They may have no choice.

In July *The Economist* wrote, "Continuing to support this war has now become a near-suicidal strategy for any ambitious politician".

This is because it is obvious to anyone with a grip on reality that there is no longer any way in with the occupying forces can impose their will on the country.

British troops in Basra are planning to withdraw from their frequently attacked base in the centre of the town to the relative safety of the airport on the outskirts. Even the puppet government of Nuri al-Maliki in Baghdad showed that it is deeply pessimistic by deciding that the month of August was better spent on holiday than trying to run the country.

Bush had declared that the surge would give al-Maliki's government a chance to establish a political consensus and the popular legitimacy necessary to face down the insurgency. Instead it has

shown itself to be weak, clueless and sectarian. Only a party which has distinguished itself by opposing the occupation will have the credibility to bring peace to Iraq, that is if the country does not fragment along sectarian lines.

In Iraq the slaughter of innocents in suicide bombs is attributed by the occupiers to

those resisting occupation. In Afghanistan it is the British and Americans whose hands drip with civilian blood. Brown has just got in on the act with an extra £7 billion for "defence", primarily the Afghan war.

According to Human Rights Watch half of the people who are killed in Afghanistan in fighting between British, American and other occupation forces and the insurgents are civilians.

This is up from about twenty five percent last year when more than 4,400 died, including over 1,000 civilians. Much of this carnage is caused by British and American troops using aircraft to bomb villages in which they claim there are Afghan fighters.

These war crimes pass without comment in much of the British media. The comments made last year by John Reid that British troops might leave Helmand province without firing a shot have proven to be a cynical lie.

Socialists will welcome the defeat of British and American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet the peoples of those two countries have endured unimaginable horrors on account of Bush and Blair's determination to dominate the region. Their societies have been pulverised and almost every progressive organisation has been crushed.

This is the true cost of imperialist war.



Bush left with only imaginary friends in the US – and just one in the UK

NHS

Manchester cuts highlight doubts over Darzi role

Harry Sloan

The announcement by Health Secretary Alan Johnson that he is rubber-stamping controversial closures of maternity and other hospital services in Greater Manchester has raised again a major question mark over the “review” of the NHS in England being carried out by new junior Health Minister Sir Ara Darzi.

Darzi, a leading consultant and academic with something of a maverick reputation, was a shock ministerial appointment in Gordon Brown’s post-Blair reshuffle.

The appointment preceded by a week or two the publication of Darzi’s controversial report on reconfiguring London’s NHS – the outlines of which must have been known to Brown before he offered him the job.

He is only weeks into his review, yet the Manchester cutbacks already pre-empt a number of possible proposals for the North West, and fly in the teeth of very strong and popular local campaigns, at least one of which, in Salford, has involved Labour cabinet minister, then Party chair, Hazel Blears.

The Manchester cuts are just one of a series of plans for rationalisation of hospital services which are currently out to consultation in various parts of England: if they were all to be nodded through in the same way in the next few months, the Darzi “review” could be a superfluous exercise in locking the stable door after the horse has been put down.

Elsewhere there are concerns that Darzi’s activities may be little more than a smokescreen to divert attention from local level cuts pressed home under the pretext of “urgency” or “clinical need”.

In London, especially, Darzi’s plan is both contradictory and flawed: but unlike previous plans to rationalise

hospital services in the capital it begins with a recognition of the need to remedy long-term and chronic inequalities in health and access to services in the capital, and also takes account of the whole of the capital and not simply inner London.

But what Darzi does not take account of is the financial crisis gripping many of London’s hospital Trusts and Primary Care Trusts, which has been forcing them into a process of cutbacks involving “consultations” on unpopular closures.

In proposing a London-wide plan for the allocation of

access to suitable Accident & Emergency services.

Darzi proposes to fill some of these gaps by establishing so-called “urgent care centres” which would deliver services for minor injuries, and by enhanced primary care, much of which he hopes would be located in a new network of 150 “Polyclinics” in which teams of up to 25 GPs would be based along with associated nursing and professional staff, becoming a hybrid of a massive health centre and a hospital outpatient department, with a combined budget of £3.1 billion per year.

There are no signs that the juggernaut towards closure of Chase Farm’s A&E, which launched in June at a meeting of NHS London, will be slowed or halted for the Darzi debate.

health services, Darzi is in effect cutting across the fragmented and competitive “market” system that New Labour’s reforms have created. Nor is he explicitly plugging privatisation: all of the examples of good practice he singles out are from NHS, public sector hospitals.

However he has alarmed many by making vague proposals to replace London’s existing network of busy district general hospitals with a combination of fewer, more specialised “major acute hospitals”, a handful of elite “hyper-acute” hospitals which would be equipped with enhanced systems to treat stroke victims, and another elite of teaching hospitals.

This would leave far larger gaps between hospitals equipped to handle emergencies. By implication DGHs that are not upgraded to one of these new specialist units would be effectively downgraded to lesser “local hospitals” or “elective units” – and this has raised questions over

Organisations representing London’s GPs have already stridently denounced the plan for polyclinics, raising serious questions over whether they will ever get beyond the drawing board.

Even assuming such objections could be overcome, and the principle of such polyclinics (even if much smaller in scale and more local than Darzi’s suggestion of just five per London borough would imply) is accepted, whether or not the whole Darzi plan could work depends heavily on key details: **how many** of each type of hospital would be provided with **how many beds**; **where** they would be located, and whether sufficient **new investment** would be available to allow the specialist hospitals to expand capacity to cater for the increased demand they would face.

None of this detail is to be found in the report.

A detailed report by campaign group London Health Emergency has pointed to worrying gaps in Darzi’s plans and



Manchester unions fighting to defend local services

numbers that do not add up convincingly – but also highlighted consultations that are about to begin and the services already being run down in at least five main areas of London.

In the South West the main threat is to A&E and services at Epsom General; in the

NHS London for its part has allocated a £15m budget for consultation and further “work programmes” on Darzi, setting a timetable for completing the consultation by February 2008. But it has pulled up short of imposing a moratorium, allowing PCTs to press ahead with “urgent service change proposals” which cannot be left until next year.

So far health chiefs in South East London claim to have postponed the consultation process, due to start in September, but have continued – despite their public denials – to meet behind the scenes and prepare to implement their planned cutbacks.

There are no signs that the juggernaut towards closure of Chase Farm’s A&E, which launched in June at a meeting of NHS London, will be slowed or halted for the Darzi debate. Elsewhere campaigners have to wait and see.

So is Darzi and his reports simply a sideshow to facilitate easier cutbacks? Or will he be allowed to use his ministerial post to force through some of the changes he proposes?

The answer from Manchester seems to be that with or without Darzi campaigners will have to remain active and vigilant throughout, using every avenue to defend local, accessible services.

And the unions, which have in general taken such a low-key line on the hospital cuts and closures, need to mobilise now if they are to stand any chance of protecting their member’s jobs and local services.

■ www.healthemergency.org.uk

Education

Fighting New Labour's academies TUC report points movement in wrong direction

Richard Hatcher

The TUC's report on academies, 'A new direction', published in July 2007, argues for "a new direction for the programme that would lead to a more positive engagement by all stakeholders and a more equitable distribution of the educational benefits for disadvantaged communities in particular." (p4).

It advocates a number of reforms, including more representation for parents, school staff and local authorities on governing bodies, and recognition of unions and national agreements.

But in exchange for these concessions – which are certainly significant ones – the report is prepared to accept the continuing role of private sponsors in running academies. In fact the report does not even state that it is opposed to such sponsors continuing to have majority control of Academy governing bodies.

The 2005 TUC Congress passed a resolution calling for opposition to academies, consideration of a national demonstration, and 'meetings with affiliates and others supportive of a campaign against the establishment of academies'.

The resolution was never put into practice, but now even the pretence of resistance has been abandoned. There are two reasons for this.

The first is the belief that opposing academies is a lost cause. This month will see a total of 83 Academies open in 51 Local Authorities, with a further 50 projected to open in September 2008. The TUC, never in favour of



Is TUC just serving up the same old menu of social partnership?

the sort of militant campaign which could stop them, now sees them as a fait accompli.

The second reason is the belief that the Brown government marks a significant change of direction and the negative features of academies are being removed.

One of the promoters of the idea that Academies are becoming acceptable, even progressive, is Peter Wilby, ex-editor of the *New Statesman*, who claims in an article in the *Times Educational Supplement* (3 August) that 'the central idea behind academies has indeed finished: the involvement of private business, which was expected to put in £2 million in sponsorship in return for control.'

Others point to the increasing role that local authorities are playing in the academy programme, even sponsoring some, to the new admissions code, to sponsorship by colleges and universities, and to the recent announcement that academies must follow the national curriculum in core

emies programme that would achieve genuine support from all parties.' (p4). This proposed consensus is with the sponsors, but not with those who reject private sponsorship on principle.

The latter are dismissed: 'Too often, neither the analysis nor the response have been adequately informed or substantiated.' (p31). No reference is made in the report to the many local campaigns against academies, nor to the Anti-Academies Alliance. And of course the TUC resolution is forgotten.

In contrast, consensus with sponsors is desirable and feasible because, it is claimed, we all share a common aim:

"The sponsors are a group whose contribution to the programme is itself evidence of a major commitment to raising aspiration and achievement amongst disadvantaged communities, so the discussion would essentially be about reforming and modernising that contribution. (p37)"

The report offers a long-term aim of returning academies to the maintained sector 'in some way' (p36). Even this would not necessarily entail getting rid of sponsors. In other words, the academies would become Trust schools!

However, even this is too bold a step for the report. In the immediate future:

"The simplest option may be simply to further amend the nature of the model funding agreement that applies to academies, in particular to improve the present governance arrangements in order to address the deficiencies in accountability." (p36)

In other words, increase the representation of parents, school staff and local authorities on academy governing bodies, but leave the sponsors in place, retaining their overall majority control (unless they volunteer to accept minority status).

The danger for the anti-Academies movement

Undoubtedly a section of the anti-academies movement will embrace the TUC report gratefully as a much more attractive alternative to active popular campaign-

ing. They may still support campaigns, at least formally, but their own priorities will be quite different – lobbying for reforms in the corridors of Brownite power.

There may already be an indication of this in Ken Purchase MP's article in the Interim Report of the Anti-Academies Alliance's Committee of Enquiry, published on the AAA website on the same day as the TUC report.

He comments favourably on Ed Balls' statement on academies, saying:

"Also welcomed is the minister's statement that 'the test of ...a potential sponsor should not be its bank balance, but whether it can demonstrate leadership, innovation, and commitment to act in the public interest'."

This explicitly takes the view that there are good sponsors and bad sponsors, acceptable ones as well as unacceptable ones.

How should we respond?

Up to now the left has been rather reluctant to criticise the more 'moderate' wing of the anti-academies movement in the interests of unity. But private business or religious interests having any role in controlling academies has to be unacceptable.

What attitude should we take to the specific reforms that the supporters of the TUC report are demanding? Some, such as full union recognition, are unproblematic.

But we should oppose the widening of participation on academy governing bodies while they are still run by sponsors. It's a form of 'social partnership' designed to co-opt potential opposition and legitimise private control.

Finally, how likely is the TUC report's strategy to succeed? I think it's impossible to say at present whether Brown might move further on academies.

One factor is how much resistance can continue to be mustered by local campaigns (with their local electoral implications).

But it may be that Balls' statement represents the limit of concessions and the TUC report's strategy is destined to fail – in which case, what is their Plan B?

Respect

Ealing Southall flop and prospect of an early election ...

A wake up call for Respect

Alan Thornett

The Brown bounce is now a central feature of British politics.

Taken alongside new Labour's strong showing in the Ealing Southall and Sedgfield by-elections, where the Tories came third behind Labour and the Lib Dems, it has made a snap general election a near certainty.

Of course it means what we mean by "snap". The issue is whether it will be in the autumn of this year or the spring of next year - depending on Brown's assessment of the durability of the "bounce" and when the problems are likely to set in.

October of this year must still be a possibility since from Brown's point of view he is riding high and things can only go downwards from here.

The crisis of the Tory Party is absolutely profound and they would be in complete disarray if faced with an October election. But Labour is not ready in organisational terms, so the most likely date must be to coincide with the London Assembly elections in May 2008.

One thing is as certain as it gets in politics. By this time next year there will have been a general election and the most likely winner will be Gordon Brown.

Brown's agenda is to look different to Blair (in fact his main electoral asset is that he is not Tony Blair) but this does not mean there will be any change from a reactionary government with a hard-line neo-liberal agenda.



Local Respect activity has dwindled in many areas

Brown aims for the continuation of all the main features of New Labour: deregulation, privatisation, the war, the replacement of Trident, the new relationship with the employers, and the old relationship with the USA.

On civil rights Brown is not only proposing yet another terrorism bill, but is

re-raising the issue of detention without trial and its extension from the current 28 day to the originally proposed 90.

But an election in the next year, whatever month it is held, would also be a huge challenge for the left and in particular for Respect.

During the summer Respect did extremely well in winning a hotly contested council by-election in Shadwell in a very sharp political fight with Labour.

This shows that Respect's validity remains intact: in fact its validity is enhanced by the arrival of Brown.

It shows that Respect's support remains strong where it has won bases and bastions out of its anti-war stance and the anti-war vote.

In the parliamentary by-election Ealing Southall, however, the story was very different. Respect secured a very poor result, winning no more than any left candidate would get who went into a campaign without adequate

preparation and no local base.

The lesson from Southall is that whilst Respect has hung on to its anti-war vote in East London, and no doubt this is the case in Birmingham and several other places, it has not reached out into new areas or generalised its electoral influence across the country.

This is a major problem with a general election and the GLA election round the corner. If Respect does not start an effective election campaign now it could face disaster in a year's time.

In fact far from preparing itself for a huge campaign Respect has declined as an organisation over the past two years - despite warnings from some of us who argued as best we could at the last Respect conference that this was a problem.

Then the leadership denied or tried to minimise the importance of the decline in membership and the withering of branches outside of key target areas. But the problem was real, and it is no better now.

The lesson from Southall is that Respect cannot win in a new constituency unless it has built a base well in advance - and that means establishing a viable and active local branch before the election and afterwards.

As we remarked in our last issue (SR 46) despite a discussion at its last National Council on the failure of the McDonnell campaign and the crisis of the Labour left, and despite a number of suggestions on ways that Respect could respond to the situation, the organisation's leadership took no initiative.

Yet the failure of the McDonnell campaign was and remains a major challenge to those who cling to a reclaim Labour perspective. I made proposal in June for an initiative towards the Labour left, the trade union left, and the CPB in the light of the McDonnell defeat which could continue the discussion started by the conference organised earlier by the CPB and the one organised by the RMT, both of which took up the issue of labour representation in one way or another.

As far as I know this has not been discussed by Respect's officers. Yet Respect cannot advance

beyond its present stage without winning people from the Labour and trade union left.

It cannot be successful in the medium to long term unless it wins the best sections of the trade unions into its orbit.

The much-vaunted Fighting Unions conference also lacked focus and failed to make any progress on this key issue: we need a far more targeted, engaging and inclusive approach if we are to succeed in the unions.

At the moment the RMT is considering whether to stand union candidates in the GLA elections. Respect should do everything it can to reach an accommodation with the RMT which would avoid such a clash.

We have to convince the trade union left - and that means people like RMT General Secretary Bob Crow - that there is a democratic space within Respect in which they can function and have an influence. We cannot simply say "here is Respect, it is the best thing around (which is certainly true) and you should join it or affiliate to it".

We have to accept that Respect is a start, but only a start in building a genuinely broad left wing alternative to New Labour.

If Respect is to mount a serious challenge in the general election the following is crucial:

■ Respect needs to build itself as a national organisation. This means having much more of a national profile. It also means much more attention to building local branches. It needs effective fund-raising.

■ It must have an elected leadership which is seen to prioritise building the organisation and which works to create an inclusive, democratic space in which people from a variety of political currents can cooperate in leading the organisation.

■ Respect needs an effective means of propaganda, preferably a newspaper, as well as a much more dynamic website, broad sheets and leaflets, which can get Respect's ideas and policies across in a more systematic way and persuade other elements on the left that we are serious about building an organisation on a firm political basis.

Germany's vital Linke

IN CONTRAST to the stagnation and conservatism of the Respect leadership, a new left party Die Linke has been launched in Germany this summer, at a conference in June. 750 delegates voted to merge two parties into a new common party with 72,000 members, making it the third largest force in German politics: and opinion polls suggested it could immediately win 24 percent of the German vote.

Die Linke incorporates former Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Oskar Lafontaine as well as layers of activists and officials from the SPD and the former Communist Party, PDS. It has elected representation at national and local level; it spans a variety of currents and traditions, incorporating union activists, students and anti-globalisation campaigners.

But the process of unification into a single party began after Respect was already up and running, and while Respect's leadership has clung to the notion of a "coalition" and rejected all calls for progress towards a single party, the German experience shows how attractive a genuine merger can be to workers and voters desperate to see a serious left wing alternative.

Climate camp

Respect needs an effective means of propaganda, preferably a newspaper, as well as a much more dynamic website

■ It needs a much more serious approach to recruitment. As some of us argued at the last conference 2,000 members is a major under-achievement for an organisation with the potential of Respect.

■ It must have clear socialist politics. This does not mean that we have to mention socialism at every opportunity, but Respect has to operate within a consistent socialist framework.

The current leaflet for the GLA campaign, for example, is politically bland - and does not mention socialism at all!

Almost all of it (apart from anti-privatisation) would be acceptable to a Lib Dem, and all of it would be acceptable to the Greens.

■ Respect needs strong material on the environment and on climate change if we are to challenge the Greens across the country. The strong positions on climate change we have adopted are marginal in most of Respect's very limited literature.

Whilst being strong on the environment we have to be politically distinct from the Greens - otherwise what is the point?

■ Respect also needs to address the issue of democracy, including electoral reform - which Brown is saying he will raise as a part of a constitutional convention - and the need for a referendum on the European constitution, which he has insisted he won't. Electoral reform is a key issue for the success of smaller parties.

On the basis of this platform, Respect should be seeking urgent discussions with left trade union leaders such as Bob Crow, and other currents and organisations to lay the basis for a new and more inclusive alliance at the next election, and for a new left party.

Heathrow climate camp

A week of sustainable living, debate and protest action

Sheila Malone.

I couldn't go to last year's climate camp at Drax power station, so was determined to get down to the Heathrow protest last month, even if not for every day.

A week of co-operative, sustainable living, with workshops, debate and protest action was something to look forward to, and I wasn't disappointed. The camp doubled the numbers at Drax to 1500 - mainly young activists.

I have to own up to not staying nights, since had I bedded down on a tent floor, arthritis might have stopped me getting up again the next morning.

But daytime life was fine - from collective preparation of local, vegetarian food to recycling to composting toilets (although these seem to have been designed by a very tall man, since the only way women could sit on them was with our legs dangling in the air!)

Especially well catered for were the many children present - lots of activities for them - and I regretted that the rain had put me off bringing my five year old granddaughter, who had been pestering me to come.

Daily workshops on site discussed the huge threat facing us, as our planet heats up towards the dangerous 2 degrees 'tipping point' and including the part aviation is playing in this, as the fastest growing source of polluting greenhouse gases.

But doom mongers we were not. A wealth of inventive and imaginative solutions were debated - from the evident need to switch our fossil-fuel economies to renewable energy sources, to countless ideas for energy efficiency and reduction and the need for both political and personal action.

The need for socially just solutions also ran like a thread through these discussions, as it is the poor who are already suffering most from the effects of climate change - the increasing floods, storms, drought, disease and so on



This was clearly not to the liking of those with vested interests in continuing and profiting from excessive polluting. BAA had tried to stop the camp going ahead at all, by attempting to injunct five million environmentalists and protesters. But they failed, scoring themselves a spectacular own goal, which instead gave massively increased publicity and sympathy to campaigners.

I spent Saturday leafleting and talking with local residents in the neighbouring villages. These include Sipson, where at least 700 homes and a local school will be flattened to make way for BAA's planned new runway. Others will have their noise and air pollution levels dramatically increased.

So our march the following day united long term campaigners against this expansion with overall protest against climate change. I feel this protest could have been much bigger if organised and publicised well in advance. Perhaps wider access to journalists than was allowed at the camp would have helped. But it was a powerful, peaceful and optimistic protest nevertheless.

There are currently over a dozen planned airport expansions in the pipeline in Britain. These are being driven by the Blair/Brown agenda of

'predict and provide. This falsely claims to be just keeping up with growing demand for air travel. But, as with roads, the more airports you build, the more the air traffic you create. So our quarrel is with those who are promoting and profiting from this artificially created demand' - not with families taking a hard-earned annual holiday.

According to the Stop Stanstead campaign, the average annual income of the

mainly business and long-haul travellers from Heathrow is £54,000 and from Stanstead (mainly leisure) £51,000.

These are people who can afford to hop on and off planes many times a year. However, as prices are driven ludicrously low binge flying is being held out as an aspiration for everyone.

Both airport expansion and the possibility of £10 flights around the globe are also being driven by the massive £9bn

government subsidy airlines enjoy, due to tax-free aviation fuel. This is an anomaly Gordon Brown could end immediately. However, our new Prime Minister is as staunch a supporter of big business and as dishonest a politician as his predecessor.

Last year Brown commissioned the Stern report on (albeit market-led) solutions to climate change. This year he approved a Climate Change Bill aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60 by 2050. On each occasion he was able to present himself as seriously tackling the issue. Yet his promotion of GDP growth at all costs (whether social or environmental) causes him to ignore even these inadequate solutions. Greenhouse gas emissions in Britain are rising, not falling. And Brown's enthusiastic backing of aviation on the grounds that it is 'good for the economy' will mean emissions from this sector will anyway cancel out all other possible savings.

This is a path to catastrophe, which we have little time to reverse. We need now to build on the success of the Heathrow camp and other growing protests.

Serious and Organised Crime: are they really serious?

New Labour's topsy-turvy world

Jan Smith

Way back in October 2006 I was in London, standing on the pavement minding my own business when along came a policeman who started to read out to me a Section of the Serious Organised Crime & Police Act 2005.

'I don't understand' I said. All the policeman did was to read it out again!

Then things got nasty He dragged me away and said that he was arresting me. If I hadn't given my name and address, I would have been taken to the local police station in a van, kept in overnight and brought before the court the following morning.

What was my offence? I was standing in Parliament Square holding a piece of sheeting on

which were written the numbers of those who had died in Iraq.. I certainly hadn't caused the death of any individual unlike Blair whose 'illegal' action in going along with the moron from the USA has resulted in many deaths.

Almost six months later, I received a summons to appear before Horseferry Magistrates Court. I pleaded guilty and was fined £100 plus £60 costs and now have a criminal record.

Could someone explain to me what REAL offence I have committed?

What is the concern about protesting in Parliament Square.

Are acts of terrorism going to be perpetrated by demonstrators holding up an old bed sheet or

the side of an old cardboard box."

Was the real objective behind Blair's legislation the desire to save him embarrassment? Did he really want to see a group of people outside Parliament telling him, on a regular basis, that he is a liar, a murderer, a fool and a knave?

The war in Iraq is, and always has been an illegal war.

I now have a conviction under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act. Blair on the other hand, will probably never be brought to trial. Instead he has been given the post of Middle East Envoy.

That is the equivalent of asking Caligula to chair a debate on moral values.

Trade unions

Brown-nosing UNISON chiefs take aim ... against the left

Veronica Fagan

The priorities of the leadership of public sector union UNISON are all too clear to see. They are interested in cuddling up to Gordon Brown rather than protecting the rights or jobs of their members

A consultative ballot on local government pay in August delivered an 81 per cent rejection of the 2 per cent pay offer then on the table, clearly indicating members believed it to be a pay cut – not surprisingly given that inflation is running at around 4 per cent.

The employers did come back to the table with an “increased offer” of 2.475

per cent for the overwhelming majority of members, alongside 3.4% for those on the lowest grades. But even the “increase” for the lowest paid is below the rate of inflation.

Despite this, the union seems keen to buy into the deal – trumpeting it as a “breakthrough for the poorest paid”. The original claim included a 5 per cent rise for those on the lowest grades

All this happens a few weeks after the union expelled Plymouth branch secretary Tony Staunton after twenty-three years of activism in the union.

Tony’s expulsion, following six months during

which he has been suspended from membership has important implications for the left as a whole.

It was clear from the beginning that the attack on Tony was political in origin, but the panel decision on August 11 made this more explicit. The ruling defined Unison United Left as a factional organisation and suggests that by supporting such a group one is acting against the interests of the union.

In the meantime a ballot has gone ahead amongst UNISON members in health on their “improved” pay offer, which at 2.5 per cent for the majority would again represents a cut in pay



On the Brown bandwagon: the Prentis bureaucracy is mounting a witch-hunt against any opposition

for many. But there was no strong recommendation to reject the offer and prepare for industrial action – just a wishy washy comment that this was the best offer likely to be obtained through negotiation alone.

Meanwhile health workers in Manchester have delivered a resounding vote in favour of strike action to defend branch chair Karen Reissmann.

Karen was suspended from her job earlier in the year after speaking out against

the transfer of NHS jobs to the voluntary sector. A series of three-day strikes are planned in her defence – but it will be vital for local activists to keep a tight control of the action.

There can be no doubt that many officials would be happy to see the back of Karen – who again has a long term record of organising within the union and speaking out against the leadership where necessary.

At UNISON conference in June, General Secretary

Dave Prentis told a cheering hall during the debate on pay:

“We will work with our sister unions. We are prepared to fight. We are prepared to strike. We will coordinate action locally and nationally, and we will win.”

What happened?

Members’ anger at the pay cuts being imposed by New Labour hasn’t diminished – but the leadership are now showing no stomach for a fight.

‘Suspended’ postal dispute at crucial point

By a London postal worker

At the time of writing, the main (Royal Mail) postal strikes are still “suspended”, while those at Post Office Counters continue.

There are three ongoing postal disputes, the third being in “supply chain” – those who distribute cash to offices.

CWU members in all three sectors were balloted at the same time over strike action and initially struck together. The common issue is pay, with all three employers offering below inflation pay increases, but Counters and Royal Mail workers also have much more far-reaching issues over the future of their jobs, conditions and the service to the public. The strikes in the supply chain are also suspended while negotiations take place.

In Counters, the issues are the closure of post offices and the franchising out of Crown Offices to W.H.Smith with the worsening of conditions involved. In Royal Mail the



immediate issue is the strings management want to attach to the pay offer, such as later starts (and hence loss of shift allowance) in delivery offices, covering (for no extra pay) for people on holiday, and a host of others. Behind this lie even

bigger issues – management’s intention to cut 40,000 jobs and worsen our pension rights.

Despite the healthy information put out by the union in advance of the strike ballot and the excellent vote for strike action, the CWU leadership has seemed reluctant from the start to treat the dispute with the same seriousness as management do.

While management said, “it’s going to be bloody like the miners’ strike” and “we are prepared to sit out six months of strikes” [in the hope of a drift back to work], the CWU leadership reduced their demand to “getting management to the negotiating table”. They delayed before calling action after the ballot result and delayed again before calling further after the first highly successful strike. Each time the pause was said to be to enable management to “come to its senses”.

When much-needed escalation – to a rolling

programme of “functional strikes” eventually took place, it did not take long for management to start making concessions. They put back their date for the unilateral implementation of later starting times and agreed to continue paying the shift allowance to existing workers, although this would have created a two-tier workforce. They agreed to talks.

But instead of pressing on with the strikes to force Royal Mail to drop their whole package, the CWU leadership agreed to a “period of calm” while negotiations take place (the same has happened with the “supply chain” strikes), leaving Counters workers to fight on alone.

Of course, management have been using this to clear the massive backlog of mail which built up, and have also attacked reps and sections of workers. South London postal workers are on strike in the run up to the Bank Holiday weekend because management

have been attacking them for “doing the job properly” – not coming in early, not using private cars on delivery, etc.

The root of this attitude is that the CWU leadership believe they can have common ground with management over how the business should be run, instead of bluntly saying that the problems caused by liberalisation of the postal market should not be solved at the expense of the workforce.

Thus the leadership has been happy to go along with job losses (and still is), provided “there is something in it” for the workers, i.e. payment.

Rumours abound as to whether the talks are going anywhere, but they are committed to being over by September 4th at the latest. Until then there is a blackout on progress.

Chances are that management will only make minor concessions (if that). The question will then be whether the CWU leadership tries to sell such a deal to the membership or moves to reinstate the strikes. However, this will not be an easy matter.

The membership have been demobilised, and while many did not understand why the strikes should be suspended, hopes have been built up that something will come out of the talks. If the talks collapse,

people will be asking why they lost four (or more) days pay for nothing only to start again all over.

Just because there was a massive “yes” for strike action and overwhelming (98%) support for the strikes, doesn’t mean the membership can be treated like a stage army to be switched off and on at will.

Of course, workplace reps will pull out all the stops to win people over, but the leadership’s tactics make their job harder.

If the strikes are reinstated, they must not be on the basis of one day every two weeks.

Even the escalation which took place, while welcome, was problematic in that different parts of the network weren’t sure when others were on strike, the union was encouraging people to cross each others picket lines (!), and management found it easier to move office workers and junior managers around from one place to another to give the appearance the strike wasn’t working.

Of course, this, rightly, led to unofficial action in several places, but this merely added to the confusion.

Now more than ever a coordination of postal militants is necessary to ensure we are not sold short and we fight with the same determination as management.

SAVAGE CAPITALISM

This is an edited version of the main document that will be discussed at next month's Annual General Meeting of Socialist Resistance.

The document explains why Socialist Resistance is discussing changing its political programme, perspectives and public profile towards being an anti-capitalist, ecosocialist organisation.

This is to make explicit a change in our perspectives that has been underway for at least a year and now needs to be signaled publicly.

At the core of this change is the contention of the authors of the text that free-market, privatising neoliberalism has over 20 years arrived at a new and deadly phase – what we call 'savage capitalism'.

The document explains why now only a socialist response that centrally addresses the environmental crisis is adequate to the current period.

1. Introduction: Savage capitalism – wrecking lives, wrecking the planet

Hardly anyone now doubts that humanity is facing an enormous environmental crisis. The recent report by the International Panel on Climate Change, although watered down to meet the objections of the worst polluters, spells out what this means in graphic detail.

Billions will face disaster from flooding, desertification, water shortage and other environmental consequences of global warming – unless there is a radical reversal of humanity's production and consumption consequences.

The events of this year's 'Typhoon Summer' in which there have been massive floods in China, India, Australia, the UK and many other European countries – combined with soaring heatwaves of 40°-plus in southern Europe – can only be explained by climate change, around which there is now a massive scientific consensus.

Climate change may be a result of the industrialisation in general, but has been given a massive boost by capitalist productivity, which has greatly intensified during the last 25 years of neoliberalism. To see how this has happened, it is worth looking at the old



debate about the 'collapse' of work that was supposed to happen as computer technology became generalised.

In 1979 ASTMS General Secretary Clive Jenkins published a book with the union's chief researcher, Barrie Sherman (now a Labour MP), entitled *The Collapse of Work*. The basic idea was that with the application of computerisation, productivity would grow massively, leading to a rapid decline in the need for human labour.

The question would be – how will we use all that leisure time? How are we going to ensure that the limited amount of work is spread around, and that everyone gets paid? These problems, it was argued, could be easily overcome with a little bit of social engineering.

A quarter of a century on, nothing like this has happened. Computerisation has not led to the collapse of work; on the contrary there are more workers on a world scale than ever before – as Paul Mason puts it in his recent book *Live Working or Die Fighting* (1), the working class has 'gone global'. Even in countries with high levels of employment like Britain, people are working longer and harder. Average hours worked have gone up since 1979. The paradise of short working hours combined with affluence never happened. How can we explain this paradox?

Jenkins' and Sherman's idea would only have worked if labour is mainly about social reproduction and satisfying human needs. But under capitalism it isn't. The authors missed the cru-

cial point – capitalism is about generating ever larger amounts of profits, which requires ever larger numbers of commodities and ever larger inputs of labour to exploit.

So, 28 years down the line we live in a society with 42 brands of washing powder available at most supermarkets, 93 different personal bank account options, 72 family saloon car models available, 17 celebrity magazines, 56 brands of mp3 player in the shops (not counting the internet) and 541 different types of telephone you can install for your landline.

Cheap airlines go to 423 destinations from Britain, but domestic rail transport is unaffordable by most people! In return for all this, people work longer and harder, have less secure pen-

sions and a more difficult old age, bad public services and health care, and the poorer sections of society have a much worse quality of life overall. The gap between what is possible under the Sherman/Jenkins scenario and the realities of daily life today is immense.

It is this massive intensification of the production of (often useless and environmentally damaging) commodities that has given an extra twist to the environmental crisis.

All this has happened not only because of the general priorities of any form of capitalism, but because of the present phase of 'savage capitalism', stalking the earth with all sense of social responsibility abandoned, increasing amounts of surveillance, violence, war and torture, and aimed at short term profits squeezed from the labour of the poor, rather than the development of social solidarity, peace and the possibility for most people to live a happy life.

It is now obvious that this morbid phase of capitalism has brought upon humanity the biggest ever threat to its existence – the threat of environmental catastrophe.

The overall threat to humanity and the planet we sum up here under four headings – environmental catastrophe, imperialist war and the crushing of the third world, savage capitalism in everyday life and the surveillance- security lock-

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SAVAGE CAPITALISM

down state. They are all linked; they all are part of a single system of power and exploitation.

‘Neoliberalism’, with the added ingredient of US-style neoconservatism, has degenerated into a new and more barbarous phase – ‘savage capitalism’.

This new phase of capitalism forces an inevitable conclusion – only by a total transformation in politics and production, in other words a transformation of our social relations, can a sustainable future for humanity be established.

We are facing the biggest - ever crisis of human civilisation. No previous crisis has ever posed the existence of human civilisation so directly. Revolutionary answers are needed, qualitative answers which go way beyond the standard ‘no to’ slogans of daily campaigns, and point the way to an eco-socialist alternative.

For Socialist Resistance this means a turn in our political stance, our campaigning priorities, our forms of organisation and our self-definition.

2. Ecological materialism and revolutionary ecology

Contemporary Marxism has been late in relating to the looming environmental crisis, ceding ground to the ecologists and the Green parties in the latter part of the 20th century - at least as far as the urgency of the situation is concerned.

It is now time to reassert that not only is the defence of the environment firmly located in the Marxist tradition, but that it is only through such a critique that a lasting and adequate solution to the ecological crisis will be found.

A key theoretical refounder of this tradition has been John Bellamy Foster in his book *Marx's Ecology*. He systematically established that ecological conceptions were central to the ideas of Marx (and indeed of Darwin) in their battles to establish a materialist conception of history in the middle part of the 19th century.

That it was the idea that humankind was a part of nature, a product of it rather than divine creation, which

established the basis for the relationship between humankind and nature and an ecological as well as an historical-materialist conception of history.

Bellamy Foster consequently contends that: “Marx’s world-view was deeply, and indeed systematically, ecological and that this ecological perspective derived from his materialism”.

From the start Marx’s notion of the alienation of human labour from what it produced was connected to an understanding of the alienation of human beings from nature. Marx pointed out that the commodification of nature under the capitalist mode of production and private ownership led to the “practical degradation of nature”.

In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx points out that the large towns’ workers had to endure conditions where light, air and cleanliness were no longer part of their existence but rather darkness, polluted air, and raw sewage, constituted their material environment.

It was in *Capital* that Marx’s materialist conception of nature became fully integrated with his materialist conception of history. As Bellamy Foster points out: “Marx employed the concept of ‘metabolism’ to define the labour process as ‘a process between man and nature, a process by which man, thorough his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism with nature in a rational way’, completely beyond the capabilities of bourgeois society”.

True Marx and Engels saw the issue of ecology as mainly from the point of view of the degradation of the life of the proletariat rather than a major factor in the revolutionary process itself – which is the concept ecosocialists or revolutionary ecologists have to come to terms with today. The goal, as Bellamy Foster puts it, is to “understand and develop a revolutionary ecological view that links social transformation with the transformation of the human relation with nature in ways that we now consider ecological”.

The Socialist Resistance ecosocialist turn also bases



itself on work done by third world activists, including those clearly identified as part of the radical left, on the question of the environment.

Vandana Shiva’s 1992 critique of the Green revolution in India for example is a searing indictment of productivism in a rural agricultural context. Her activism and that of a whole section of the Indian left, particularly feminists, around water and in particular the question of dams has important lessons for us.

Our Latin America solidarity work has allowed us to discuss some of these questions, as Cuba and Venezuela have both attempted to integrate ecological dimensions into the revolutionary process.

3. Capitalist productivism

Revolutionary socialists have always been in favour of the development of the economy, on a global and national basis, to meet the needs of humanity. But that

doesn’t mean we favour the production of an increasing number of commodities of any type whatsoever.

On the contrary, huge swathes of production under capitalism are socially useless, and either redundant or directly harmful. Some products – like cars - harm the environment directly; others are useless and just use up huge amounts of the plant’s resources.

In the past Marxists have acted as though the production of commodities and the use to which they are subsequently put have no impact on the environment.

In fact they can have a huge effect. The profligate waste of the planet’s resources in pursuit of an unending cascade of commodities, artificially created ‘wants’ generated by the advertising industry, is criminal. It only exists because that’s the way that capitalism functions. The constant stream of ‘new’ commodities is vital to maintain profits and fight off rival firms.

However, our critique of the so-called ‘commodity spectacle’ does not mean we are against all further economic development, especially in the third world. Neither does it mean that decisive new inventions in the future should not be applied, and the level of technology should remain stagnant.

But it does mean that new products have to be justified on the basis of their social usefulness, and not because they are a repackaging of an established product to make more profits. We cannot abandon industrialisation and go back to the feudal village. But we can reorganise society so that the goods and services produced are socially useful and environmentally friendly.

And we can make democratic decisions about the trade off that people want to make between working time and economic development. Maximising economic growth is far from rational because it means that the central priority in the lives

of most people is (increasing amounts of) work.

That much production under capitalism is useless is obvious. A classic example is Margaret Thatcher’s ‘great car economy’. No rational person could possibly think that the socially and environmentally most friendly way to organise transport was to centre it on private cars, and leave public transport to fill in the gaps. But that is just what has happened in the last 25 years with catastrophic results to the environment and neglect of public transport.

Huge inputs of socially useless labour time are put into the design of competing yet near identical models, their advertising and sales, the consequences in terms of deaths and injuries on the roads, the production of oil to keep the cars going, etc.

A fraction of the inputs of labour time and energy could produce a functioning, socially useful and much more environmentally friendly integrated public transport system. But it doesn’t happen because that is not the way that capitalism works.

The ‘great car economy’ is a classic example of how human priorities are distorted by the priority of profits.

4. Social dimensions of the environmental crisis – Apocalypse Soon

The recent UN report highlighted the likely outcomes if global warming and carbon emissions are not tackled. It is not a question of whether climate change will occur – we are already in the thick of it.

Rather the question is whether starting from today’s position, how can we minimise further emissions of greenhouse gases and how we can manage the effects of global warming as they kick in.

In Britain the discussion of climate change has escalated but the “solutions” proposed remain marginal. The government has come up with a draft Bill which, though proposing statutory target for emissions, falls far short of what is necessary to tackle dangerous and accelerating climate change.

Its proposed 60% cuts by 2050 and an interim 26-32%

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by 2020 are way below what is needed to prevent reaching the 2°C 'tipping point', when potentially global warming could spiral out of control.

Many scientists and environmentalists now agree that reductions in the order of 90% are going to be necessary to reverse the global warming process already underway. Meanwhile airport expansion goes ahead at a great pace and the government tells us that there will be no need for people to restrict their flights.

We are told that in any case Britain only accounts for 2% of world emissions (not an accurate figure of course) and whatever we do will be massively cancelled out by the escalating rate of emissions in China and India - with China completing a new power coal-fired station every two weeks.

This ignores the fact that it is the rich countries which have polluted the world and continue to be the main polluters. It also ignores that fact that there is little chance of countries like China and India doing anything serious about their emissions whilst the rich countries carry on polluting just the same.

As the IPCC report makes clear, the effects of desertification, water shortage and drought, crop loss and food crisis, an upsurge in diseases caused by lack of clean water and other environmental effects, will hit disproportionately at "those who are worst placed to deal with it" - ie the poor.

The rural and urban poor are the least able to find the resources to quickly modify their lives - to change location, to find alternative sources of water and food, to find medicines and medical care or to get emergency help in case of disaster. It will be the poor who will be the first victims of environmental crisis as the state and the ruling elite mobilises to defend the rich. This is true both in rural and urban areas, in the poor countries and the advanced capitalist countries as well.

In this context, the effects of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans was a highly symbolic warning. It is highly likely that it was a climate change induced event - hurricanes and tropical storms are becoming



more frequent and fiercer as the oceans off West Africa and the Caribbean get hotter each summer.

Second, the victims were disproportionately poor. The troops rushed to the city were there to defend order (in the rich areas) and property (ditto). The poor were left to fend for themselves for days on end while hundreds died, while the rich plotted how to use the catastrophe for a class-based eviction of undesirables (ie the poor and black people).

The tourist downtown area is restored to its full glory to ensure the tourist economy ticks over, while a huge section of the indigenous population is evicted.

In the third world, the increasing frequency of events induced by climate change, particularly floods, always hits the poor worst - because they live in the flimsiest housing, often in places where are insecure and dangerous - on floodplains, next to environmental squalor, with no adequate drainage and sanitation facilities.

Capitalism always rations resources in short supply towards the rich. Its weapons are military repression and the market - both are brutal killers.

Environmental crisis will make security, health, food, water and adequate housing in extremely short supply - and the poor will go the wall unless they fight back.

That's why we shall see increasingly that class struggles in the third world and beyond will take the form of struggles to get and to defend basic resources like food, food and housing.

Privatisation will be deepened to make all resources difficult to obtain by the poor - and always available to the rich. For the rich, everything is cheap.

According to Mike Davis, of the world's 6bn people, one billion live in slums - and the number is increasing rapidly. Subject to the vagaries of environmental damage, especially through floods, and with grave shortages of drinkable water and sanitation, the third world slums are likely to become - even more than today - massive centres for disease and the generation of pandemics.

As Mike Davis points out, the first great wave of Avian 'flu is much more likely to come from Jakarta than East Anglia.

Mark Lynas in his book *High Tide* points out that the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has estimated that 160,000 people are dying each year from the consequences of climate change - malaria, dysentery and malnutrition. And even that excludes some of the most extreme storm disasters plausibly linked to climate change, notably the tropical cyclone in Bangladesh in 1991,

which killed 138,000, as well as Hurricanes Mitch and Andrew in the Caribbean, both hyper-intense category-five typhoons.

In its infamous document for a 'worst case' scenario, the Pentagon projects a world ecological collapse - not in 200 years but in 20 or 30 years. According to the *Observer* (22 Feb 2004):

"A secret report, suppressed by US defence chiefs and obtained by *The Observer*, warns that major European cities will be sunk beneath rising seas as Britain is plunged into a 'Siberian' climate by 2020. Nuclear conflict, megadroughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world.

"The document predicts that abrupt climate change could bring the planet to the edge of anarchy as countries develop a nuclear threat to defend and secure dwindling food, water and energy supplies. The threat to global stability vastly eclipses that of terrorism, say the few experts privy to its contents."

The response of the Pentagon is a highly militarised society, "Fortress America", whose primary purpose is to keep out those fleeing from the poor countries, and to defend the rich internally from the wrath of the dispossessed poor.

It envisages using massive amounts of violence, including nuclear weapons,

against anyone who stands in the way of the US gaining the resources it needs from anywhere in the world.

If it is always the poor who will pay the price for environmental disaster, it will be particularly women and children who pay the price. Children because they are more vulnerable to disease, and less able to defend themselves from violence; and women because they have the main responsibility for childcare and child raising in nearly all poor societies - urban and rural, third world and first world.

In the third world, it will be overwhelmingly women who have to try to find water, firewood and food for families. Climate catastrophe is not only a class question, it is also a gender question.

Lack of food, shelter and water will increasingly force families to sell their children to become bonded labourers, virtual slaves (as already happens on a mass scale in India) or sex slaves, as already happens in many countries of the third world.

A world of environmental catastrophe opens up the danger of massively increased militarism, repression and war. Ecological collapse may be survived by the rich minority, but it will devastate the poor. The fight against it is a vital part of the class struggle for socialism.

SAVAGE CAPITALISM

5. Population growth and the empowerment of women

World population is forecast to rise from a current 6 billion to 9 billion by mid century, if not before. Such levels are unsustainable under capitalism.

So the debate about population control is already with us. If Malthusian, misogynist and racist solutions are not to triumph, ecosocialist solutions based on overcoming poverty and empowering women have to be fought for.

Whilst it is true that high birth rates generally accompany poverty and ignorance, most poor women do not actually want to spend their lives in childbirth and rearing. So a central demand of women's movements in both North and South has always been for access to safe and reliable (preferably free) contraception and abortion.

Poor people often have large families as an insurance against poverty in old age. When people become richer, birth rates go down.

Collectivisation of housework has also been a demand of feminists and socialists, and we need to revisit this area, when considering an alternative to capitalist individualism. Domestic violence and violence against women always increases dramatically during any societal breakdown.

A world of environmental catastrophe opens up the danger of massively increased militarism, repression and war.

Ecological collapse may be survived by the rich minority, but it will devastate the poor. The fight against it is a vital part of the class struggle for socialism.



6. Savage capitalism in the advanced countries: Treadmill Society

For 25 years the Western countries have been gripped by the policies of neoliberalism. This replaced the Keynesian, mixed economy, welfare-state model of the 1950s and '60s.

The essence of this system is massive privatisation and marketisation; nationalised industries like the water and energy utilities are privatised, and privatisation to varying degrees is even introduced in to the education and health systems.

Neoliberalism destroys social goods in favour of private goods; through privatisation of utilities and key aspects of social care like homes for the elderly, the financial surplus is squeezed out of workers' current incomes and savings – all to the benefit of finance capital to whom all the utilities have huge debts. Mass insecurity is the result: the work process is transformed and labour discipline tightened. People work harder and longer to lead less secure and healthy lives.

This has been rightly characterised by John Bellamy Foster as the "treadmill society". The devastating effects on the environment of the treadmill society have been described above. But

now neoliberalism, as it degenerates into savage capitalism, is preparing another twist of the screw.

This is called private equity capital (PEC). PEC constitutes a new and massive threat to millions of workers. Briefly summed up, private equity companies are short term arrangements for borrowing vast amounts of money for a limited time.

These huge amounts of money are then used to buy up companies which are said to be 'under-performing' (like Sainsbury's, a target of private equity spivs). Once in the hands of PEC capitalists, the companies are asset-stripped, workers fired, those retained pushed onto poverty wages without pensions or benefits, and a huge profit made on the borrowed money.

PEC evidently builds nothing, contributes nothing and makes nothing – except short-term profits. Gordon Gecko – Michael Douglas' asset stripping sociopath in Wall Street – is a model of sanity and conscience compared with today's equity capitalist robbers.

Needless to say PEC is warmly welcomed by New Labour, in particular Gordon Brown. According to the *Independent* (2nd March 2007):

"Gordon Brown praised the private equity industry's ability to create jobs yester-

day despite the scathing attack on the sector from trade unions concerned over job losses.... Mr Brown is the latest Labour politician to address the private equity issue amid a growing storm around the industry.

"Trade unions and some Labour politicians have lambasted private equity companies for asset stripping, job cutting and a lack of openness over recent weeks as a potential bid for the supermarket chain Sainsbury's has thrown the publicity-shy industry into the spotlight....

"Mr Brown's defence of the sector comes in the wake of Tony Blair's public support of private equity investment this week."

PEC mania comes at a time when savage capitalism is preparing for a major assault on the last-ditch redoubts of welfare capitalism – the NHS and education, where the methods of the market, artificial targets and the introduction of private capital are evident.

Neoliberalism has swivelled the priorities of production into luxury production, as more and more companies covet the luxury end of the market where profits are highest.

You can see this clearly in the space allocated to 'first' and 'business' class on airlines, or on trains. Luxury goods – haute couture clothes, watches, luggage, yachts, luxury cars (including SUVs), luxury hotels, luxury mansions, high-value tourism and cruises – all these make much higher percentage profits per unit (often in the hundreds of per cent) than mass production goods.

Luxury goods production adds insult to injury as far as the ordinary workers and the environment are concerned. Flaunting an unsustainable lifestyle of comfort and 'style', these goods are literally socially useless and consume huge amounts of scarce raw materials (gold and silver!) and energy.

Savage capitalism is a counter-revolution against the gains of the workers movement in the post-war world. It wrecks the health and lives of millions of the working class and the middle class, and consigns them to the treadmill of insecurity and endless work, and increasingly to a poverty-stricken old age.

All this in the interests of the mega-rich, who become richer by quantum leaps as class divisions and social inequality are deepened.

All this is held together by a deepening cultural dumbing down, the erosion of social solidarity and a brain-dead culture of 'success' and 'celebrity'.

In a ghastly parody of Any Warhol's prediction that everyone would become famous for 15 minutes, people now become celebrities for being famous, not for anything they have actually done. On humiliating and idiot TV programmes like *Big Brother* and *Castaway*, people compete to 'win' – and thus become famous and rich for being...a celebrity.

The empty and boring lifestyles of the rich are endlessly celebrated to create a new morality which fundamentally breaks with that of even welfare capitalism – to be rich is worthwhile, to be poor is worthless.

The inevitable result is a dumbing down of mass culture and the multiplication of worthless 'cultural' commodities – 85 television channels, nothing worth watching.

Our conclusion is that the fundamentals of inequality, power and wealth cannot be addressed in the advanced countries without a revolution in work, education, leisure and culture – not only in equality of reward, but in the nature of what is produced and how it is produced.

Getting off the treadmill means leading a more human life with different priorities, different products, different sources of energy – and a different set of relations between people. A human society which defends the environment is incompatible with capitalism.

7. Fake pro-capitalist "solutions"

However, before turning increasingly to authoritarian solutions, capitalism will also try to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as co-opt anti-capitalist opposition.

This involves the market, new technology and some rationing and taxation. It centres on the commodification of everything, down to

the air itself. This is the meaning, for instance of Kyoto and similar regional and national agreements, which create carbon markets basically advantageous to the imperialist North.

We can expect a radical switch to 'low carbon economies' through lucrative investment in renewables and energy efficient products. This will include nuclear and all sorts of socially and environmentally damaging technology, spun as ways to save the planet.

As climate instability accelerates, corporate capitalism will also be faced with massive insurance bills (Hurricane Katrina is estimated to have cost \$140bn), a large part of which will be passed on to workers, but a significant part of which will be paid for by business itself.

So we can expect panic measures to include ever more wacky and dangerous techno-fixes, such as giant sulphur screens to block out the sun and silver iodide bombs to divert the storm clouds (to where?).

At the same time countries such as Canada and Russia will profit from a short term 'gold rush', as the melting ice-caps of the Arctic open up the last remaining fossil fuel deposits.

Measures such as the Clean Development Mechanism will colonise the South with carbon sinks and biofuel plantations, enabling the North to carry on polluting without changing lifestyles: ecological profligacy in the North will bring a consequent catastrophe in the South.

However it is necessary to be aware and critical of the role of the Southern elites in this process. Ugandan President Museveni recently called global warming "an act of aggression by the rich (of the North) against the poor (of the South)". Yet this man is currently allowing the selling off and destruction of his own country's rainforests and is brutally repressing opposition.

As precious resources are depleted and climate instability increases, so will the current wars in the South become more and more brutal (Darfur writ large). Millions will be forced to flee or submit 'for protection' and survival to ruthless warlords. We urgently need



Howard Davies www.reportdigital.co.uk

to integrate an understanding of this into campaigning work around refugees and asylum.

8. War and imperialism

Savage capitalism is at its most open and overtly brutal in its profligate use of violence. The term 'imperialism' to describe the US and British relations with countries of the third world, especially in the Middle East, is now hardly challenged – indeed in the case of people like Niall Ferguson and Michael Ignatieff – openly celebrated.

Imperialist military intervention is justified as part of the "war against terror". But it is clear that American imperialism has gone to war in the Middle East to capture control of the world's largest known oil reserves and the oil routes, but also to occupy a crucial part of Eurasia, which it regards as central to ensure continued US economic and political dominance worldwide.

Faced with growing competition from Japan, Europe and now China, the United States has in the last 20 years unleashed the one power in which it is completely dominant inter-nationally, the military.

Today there are more than one million US service personnel stationed abroad. Eighteen years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the 'peace dividend' has not materialised, showing in its own way that US military aggression abroad was certainly not a matter of defending US interests against

'Communism'.

Today US military aggression – supported by the British, giving political cover – is aimed not just at regimes that the US regards as hostile, like Iran, but also against popular movements.

In both the Philippines and Colombia US advisors and security 'consultants' from military firms like Blackwater, are part of a large scale US military intervention capability. US troops are now ensconced in the Central Asian republics and in the Horn of Africa, as well as their hundreds of bases worldwide.

The vast expense of this massive military machine – and Britain's small scale imitation of it – is itself one of the most irrational uses of resources imaginable, and itself is causing massive environmental damage. Indeed imperialist militarism, savage capitalism and third world exploitation are at the 'cutting edge' of environmental damage.

Examples from imperialism's recent wars are legion. Israeli attacks on the Jiyee power plant in the summer of 2006 led to an oil slick which has probably destroyed Lebanon's coastal marine life and threatens the whole ecosystem of the eastern Mediterranean.

According to Mark Lynas: "More than 15,000 tonnes of fuel oil has leaked from the Jiyee power plant since it was attacked by Israeli warplanes on 13 July. As if deliberately to hamper any attempts to staunch the flow of oil, Israel then bombed the power plant again two days later, preventing emer-

gency workers from gaining access to the site.

"An indication of the scale of the disaster comes from satellite photos showing a 3,000-square-kilometre slick along two-thirds of Lebanon's coastline. The oil has now begun to wash up in Syria.

"None of this will come as a surprise to the Palestinians, who have suffered the environmental consequences of Israel's scorched-earth policies for decades. The water supply to nearly a million people in Gaza was cut off by bombing last month.

"Untreated sewage lies in pools on the beach, thanks to Israeli shelling of the Gaza City waste-water treatment plant in 2002. Landfill sites are overflowing and on fire, and two pilot composting plants – constructed with outside help as an alternative to landfill – lie idle, having also been damaged by Israeli bullets."

The environmental effects of direct military intervention are of course just a small part of the overall environmental crisis for the peoples of the most exploited countries.

Much of the most immediate environmental damage comes from extraction industries, notably logging, mining and the oil industry. Much of this is the result of bandit and semi-legal capitalism, which is generally in league with national governments and 'respectable' transnational corporations like BP, who drop their respectable mask when confronted with the 'natives'.

Logging in particular is doing the most long-term

damage with global implications, particularly the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the destruction of Siberian forests to feed the demand of Chinese industry for wood, after the Chinese government banned logging in its own country because of a number of high profile disasters caused by logging (flooding and landslips).

The insanity of the military-imperial system is revealed by the massive expenditure and waste of two systems – the US anti-missile shield which over time will cost hundreds of billions of dollars and the Blair-Brown pledge to renew the Trident submarine missile system, which is expected to finally run out at a cost of something like £70 billion.

Today, the bi-partisan policy of the US ruling class that backed the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan has crumbled in the face of the setbacks (quagmire), which the US-led coalition has suffered.

However, the debate in Washington is not questioning the strategic importance for the USA of controlling the Gulf region, but how to do it successfully.

Nonetheless, the US administration has shown its determination to continue its war effort with the policy of the 'surge', but not only in Iraq.

In Afghanistan, Palestine, the latent war in the Lebanon, its intervention in Somalia and its very public preparations for war against Iran, indicate its preparedness to broaden the scope of its interventions. (See FI

resolution: Middle East in Flames, published in *Resistance* No 43, March-April 2007.)

The divisions in the imperialist ruling classes are creating favourable conditions for a renewed offensive by the anti-war movements in the imperialist centres and it is urgent that we build/rebuild the movements.

We stand for:

- An end to all imperialist expeditions and the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan;

- Against any provocations or attacks on Iran;

- For the withdrawal of NATO troops from Lebanon;

- For an end to interference in Palestinian internal affairs and for the lifting of sanctions on the Palestinians.

- We support all resistance movements against imperialist intervention that do not engage in sectarian killings, in particular Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, while criticising their religious fundamentalism and their political and social programme.

- We prioritise establishing links of solidarity with the trade unions (for example, the independent Oil Workers Union in Iraq), and political forces who are constructing progressive and socialist struggles in the region (for example, the Lebanese CP). Our aim is to assist in the emergence of a socialist left in the region, which is democratic, feminist and anti-imperialist.

SAVAGE CAPITALISM

9. Global injustice – Latin America fights back

Savage capitalism everywhere attempts to further enslave and exploit the countries of the third world. It is not surprising that some of the most advanced examples of revolt against neoliberalism and imperialist exploitation have emerged in the poor countries – particularly Latin America.

As we saw negatively with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the existence of positive examples – in life and not just in theories and programmes – is vital to the development of opposition movements and an anti-capitalist perspective.

On no continent is neoliberalism so widely rejected as in Latin America, and nowhere has the resurgence of the Left been so powerful. The election of Evo Morales in Bolivia and the evolution of the Hugo Chávez government in Venezuela are hugely ideologically important.

Whatever the direction and eventual outcome of these governments, they have already done an enormously important thing – raised the banner of socialism as a mass current with mass credibility again. This is especially important in relation to the younger generations for whom the ideology and reality of socialism has less purchase.

Even the election of moderate centre-left governments, like those of Lula in Brazil, Bachelet in Chile and Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay are the product of a long period of struggle against neoliberalism and the right.

While we solidarise with all movements fighting back against savage capitalism internationally, the central thing about the Latin American developments is that they centrally raise the question of socialism. A central part of our orientation in the next period will be:

- Solidarity with the developing revolutionary processes in Bolivia and Venezuela.

- Defence of Cuba against the deepening reactionary offensive of imperialism, which will hit crescendo levels when Fidel Castro dies.

- Propaganda on the advances made in Cuba, especially in the fields of social welfare, health and the environment, as demonstrations of what can be achieved, even in a poor country, on an anti-capitalist basis.

10. The surveillance-security, lock-down state

Today a new regime of security is being introduced by the major states, in the first place Britain and the United States. Savage capitalism has created a more unstable world and for the ruling class new methods of surveillance and repression as well as restrictions on civil liberties are needed to deal with it.

Terrorism is in reality a small problem and used only as the banner headline behind which the new repressive state mobilises against national and international protest movements.

The real targets are labour movements, global justice and peace movements and movements for national self-determination. Only a small minority of these struggles have a military dimension (Palestine, the Kurdish question), but increasingly movements which use the normal methods of mass mobilisation (which may include civil disobedience) are the victims of paramilitary repression.

The worst examples are still in the third world – for example the struggle in Oaxaca State Mexico in 2006, led by the school teachers, against a hugely corrupt state government. Dozens were killed and disappeared; others committed to indefinite jail with no appeal.

However mass movements in advanced capitalist democracies also find themselves increasingly hemmed in by new police powers and restrictions, and sometimes simply by brutal police.

Surveillance of the domestic population is at its highest level ever. Vast new databases and sophisticated computer equipment enables the US government especially, but also governments in other imperialist states, to monitor all email and internet traffic and to build up a detailed real-time



profile of the activities of any citizen.

There is a secular trend towards the criminalisation of more and more forms of protest, or at least to make forms of protest dependent on the indulgence and toleration of the state – which can easily be withdrawn.

In the United States this has resulted in the Patriot Act, which essentially gives the state the right to illegalise anything, and hold anyone in secret detention for indefinite amounts of time.

At an international level this has led to the re-legitimisation of torture and the huge secret Gulag of US prison camps and 'special rendition', where torture is used or – in the case of special rendition, torture is outsourced to third world regimes.

The security-repressive state goes hand in hand with the new imperialism. In many places (the

Philippines, Colombia and Palestine) local repressive states work hand-in-hand with US special forces, private armies like Blackwater and/or the CIA. Savage capitalism has created a vast continent of repression and violence with a daily toll of the murdered, the disappeared and the tortured. This is justified and even celebrated in the ideologically most backward parts of modern society (like video games). Defending civil liberties and opposing militarism is a crucial part of the fight for socialism and human civilisation today.

The move towards mass surveillance and restrictions on civil liberties, including the para-militarisation of the policing of protest is, as we have seen in the Pentagon's plans for eco-catastrophe, laying the basis for a more total lock-down state if apocalypse happens.

The catastrophic results of environmental breakdown,

including an outpouring of desperate eco-migration, could only be managed on the basis of military dictatorship.

11. Strategy and the fightback

Our strategic conclusion on planetary crisis should start with the following assumptions:

- a) Creating a sustainable civilisation requires a wholesale conversion of production and consumption, and this is incompatible with capitalism. Not only are the corporations and government unwilling to act against short-term capitalist interests, but as we explained above a sustainable environment is contrary to the inbuilt productivist bias of the capitalist mode of production.

- b) Environmentalism without class, without anti-capitalism, has massive limitations which invalidate it

as a long-term strategy. Indeed the kind of green politics which attempts to counterpose itself to left and right can be positively damaging to the kind of alliances necessary to confront eco-catastrophe.

- c) At the same time as trying to elaborate a new Marxism for the 21st century which builds on Marx's understanding of a materialist approach to the environment in order to meet the challenge of climate change, we continue to put forward a Marxism that is feminist, anti-racist and opposed to homophobia.

In Britain at least some of the programmatic gains in sections of the revolutionary left that were won as a result of the self-organisation of women and of black people particularly have to some extent been lost in a period where the working class as a whole suffered a whole range of defeats under first Thatcherism and then New Labour.

This means that we need to rediscuss some of these questions in and of themselves with comrades who were not part of the same historical experiences and bring our analysis up to date in order to attempt a new synthesis in developing an accessible Marxism for today.

We don't think there is any contradiction in doing this while at the same time developing an eco-socialist approach – rather we think that these discussions will enrich and complement each other.

This is important at two levels: giving us a chance to succeed in the synthesis that is necessary in its own right and developing the sort of profile we want through our press, web sites, educational events etc

- d) As is traditional in our politics we do not counterpose reforms to anti-capitalist transition. However we do point out the extremely small gains which are likely to be made on climate change without national and international planning and without a massive social and economic conversion.

- e) The decisive force on a world scale for anti-capitalist struggle remains the workers' movement. A central fight for Marxists is to win the workers' movement to an environmentalist (and

... the Ecosocialist Alternative

hence eco-socialist) perspective. A massive aid to this is the example of environmentally friendly mobilisation and policies of Cuba, and to a lesser extent Venezuela.

Evidently the major forces willing to take to the streets today on the environmental question are in diverse protest movements (and none), and generally not from the workers' movement.

Huge forces can develop on this issue outside the workers' movement. For us – as is normal in our united front politics – an alliance of the workers' movements and social movements, on a class struggle and anti-capitalist basis, is what we fight for. However, we do not consider all these forces to be equivalent in strategic terms. This is not a moral question, but one of hard headed political and social analysis which has been explained well in recent articles by Daniel Bensaid and Martha Harnecker.

Bensaid says: "From a certain point of view, capitalism will indeed be overthrown by an alliance, or a convergence, of mass social movements. But even if these movements, because of their liberatory projects, perceive capitalism to be their enemy (which perhaps is the case for the women's movement or the environmental movement, not just the workers' movement), I don't think these movements all play an equivalent role.

"And all are traversed by differences and contradictions that reflect their position, in the face of capital as a global mode of domination.

"There is a 'naturalist' feminism and a revolutionary feminism, a profoundly anti-humanist environmentalism and a humanist and social environmentalism... if you consider these arenas are not structured in a hierarchy, but simply juxtaposed, then perhaps you could devise a tactic of putting together changing coalitions ('rainbow coalitions' on immediate questions). But there would be no solid strategic convergence in such an approach.

"I think, on the contrary, that within a particular mode of production (capitalism), relations of exploitation and class conflict

constitute an overarching framework that cuts across and unifies the other contradictions.

"Capital itself is the great unifier that subordinates every aspect of social production and reproduction, remodeling the function of the family, determining the social division of labour and submitting humanity's conditions of social reproduction to the law of value. If that is indeed the case, a party, and not simply the sum of social movements, is the best agent of conscious unification."

Martha Harnecker says: "...when one criticizes parties, people think one is betting on the emergence of movements that will lead the struggle. Social movements are sectoral movements and require an instrument for articulation, call it party, sociopolitical movement, front, or whatever.

"But what's needed are political instruments that articulate and raise a national proposal, that make an ideological proposal in today's world, where the wars are fought in the plane of ideas, where the means of communication in the hands of the powerful are almost overpowering. We can see what is happening with the media in Venezuela."

Swiveling our orientation towards ecosocialism however does not alter our fundamental strategy, but it requires its renovation:

a) We maintain our orientation towards the creation of a broad anti-capitalist, ecosocialist party to the left of Labour, as a first step towards resolving the crisis of leadership of the working class and other popular layers.

b) We need to develop an action programme of immediate and transitional demands which incorporates the centrality of the fight to save the environment.

12. Anti-capitalist positions on key environmental debates

However, as well as exposing the incapacity of capitalism, especially in its present 'savage' or 'morbid' phase, dominated as it is by neo-



liberal economic strategies, to resolve the ecological problems it has created, we also have to develop our politics on more immediate issues raised by the crisis. But these responses have to be founded on a socialist framework – using Marxist theory and class analysis to pose solutions.

For example on the vexed issue of green taxes, all other mainstream parties, including the Greens, have a policy of taxation to try and deal with carbon emissions. The congestion charge, already in place in parts of London (and being introduced in Manchester, Durham and elsewhere), has reduced the number of cars entering the centre of London. But it is clear that the reduction is based on the cars of the poor.

Traveling in central London during the week shows this clearly – only large expensive cars and taxis are on the road. Poor people have been forced, especially since the hike in the cost to £8.00 a day, to take inadequate and overcrowded public transport.

It is true that some money raised has gone to improve public transport – but not to reduce fares that are the most expensive of any city in the world.

The congestion charge is a flat tax (like the poll tax) that penalises the poor, and is divisive. The only form of capitalist taxation socialists can support would be steeply progressive taxation intended to drive the large

What does it mean to call Socialist Resistance 'Ecosocialist'?

To define ourselves by the term 'ecosocialist' does not mean dropping our commitment to anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, feminism and the rights of the oppressed, anti-racism, and so on.

Nor does it mean a radical version of the Green Party: rather it is a recognition that capitalism cannot solve the problems posed by climate change and global warming as, by its very nature, it is based on production for profit not need, regardless of the impact on the planet.

The choice is therefore either 'Ecosocialism or Barbarism'.

gas-guzzlers off the road. In other words a tax on the rich.

Similarly on the question of air travel emissions. The government pretends that these are not very high, but international air travel is not at present counted as part of British emissions. It is true that there is no tax on air fuel as there is on fuel for cars, buses, etc. but the proposal to raise a flat tax on air travel, either on fuel or flights will again hit the poor and we should oppose it.

But we also need an answer to the problem of increasing air travel. The fairest way to reduce emissions would be to ration its use to say one or two flights a year, or to a number of air miles traveled. In addition, so that the rich cannot buy others' rations, this should be made illegal.

No doubt in our present system an illegal market would come into existence, but we have to argue for what is just and fair and in the interests of the working class and the poor, not only

what is possible at once.

Nor is it not simply a question of justice. We have to work out ways of uniting as many as possible to what is necessary. Ordinary people will not change their outlook if they feel they are the only ones having to pay.

This will certainly be the project of the rich – make the poor pay, both here in the developed world, and in the developing world, but we have to propose an alternative.

"Contraction and Convergence" is another controversial issue on the left. Developed by Aubrey Meyer, the theory accepts that the present situation has been created by the industrialised world and that we have to drastically cut back our emissions – the 'contraction' bit. The developing world, quite properly also wishes to industrialise and this should be allowed – up to a certain point.

At a fixed point in the future and this must be agreed by international treaty for it to work, the con-

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tracting emissions of the developed world will coincide with the increased emissions of the developing world - this is the 'convergence' bit. But this theory incorporates a 'carbon-trading' element. That is the rich countries could buy rights of emission from the less emitting developing areas if they produce less carbon than their ration. We should therefore oppose it.

The majority of the more or less organised currents look to capitalist solutions in market mechanisms, carbon trading, supplemented by taxation. The currently operated system is the European Union's Emissions Trading System (ETS), is the most regressive of all carbon-trading schemes and operates according to the principle laid down at Kyoto. Permits for 6527 million tones of carbon dioxide emission have been allocated to big energy users.

This does not encourage cleaner energy but has simply given them a profit bonanza, as the price of permits rose to £27, making the whole distribution worth £177 billion. They have also passed on 'extra costs' to the consumer even though they did not have to buy the permits - leading to rising prices. The EU officials have said that they knew this would happen and state that the market economy is the only way (i.e., higher prices) that energy consumption will fall.

Most climate change activists oppose Kyoto and the EU schemes, Contraction and Convergence (C&C) is seen as an alternative to the EU (ETS) and the Kyoto protocol and is the most widely supported system, but there are other systems that are hotly debated, most of which involve carbon trading and taxation of some kind, but some are more equitable (a key word in the movement) than others.

The more equitable systems, for example, Cap and Share (C&S), or Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs), involve capping and the distribution of tradable allowances to the population based on the equal 'right to emit'. However, there is no such human right under

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capitalism except for those rights claimed by the owners of the means of production.

Our biggest immediate policy difference (there is a big programmatic gulf) with the capping movement is their insistence on tradable allowance. We oppose this because it benefits the big emitters and penalizes the working class (ironically this is often the main objection to a tax perspective by those left leaning Greens).

We should support planned capping (or equitable rationing) without the right to trade (e.g., as in Second World War). The reply, like all reformists of the existing system, is that we are unrealistic because without trading of carbon permits it would be totally unacceptable to big companies and would probably bring the capitalist system down.

Carbon trading (along with taxation) is the premier

bourgeois answer to climate change, allowing the rich north and west to buy their way out of trouble while keeping the poor south and east in a pre-or semi-industrialised state. The Stern Report itself, while recognising the failure of the market, nonetheless poses the same mechanism to solve the crisis.

13. Our Demands

Ecosocialists have to start from a class analysis, an analysis that can unite the largest possible number of people to make the rich, not the poor, pay. We support the building of a mass movement, nationally and internationally to impose the types of demand below.

- For a unilateral reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Britain of 90% by 2030, with similar reductions in other developed countries;
- For an international treaty to cap global carbon

emissions, not because we think this is an easy option, or even likely to be achieved (this depends on the balance of forces), but because it is necessary and can unite the movements internationally against the failures of the capitalist system;

- For international rationing of air travel, any market in rations to be made illegal;
- Opposition to nuclear energy and the building of any new nuclear power stations;
- For a massive expansion of renewable energy;
- For subsidies from national and local government:
 - to replace the use of cars by providing cheap, accessible and frequent public transport;
 - to ensure all new buildings are zero-carbon;
 - to provide insulation, energy conservation, etc. for all homes to make them energy efficient.

- On climate change we should campaign around the following transitional and immediate demands which are designed to halt and reverse the global warming process and thus prevent climate chaos and rising sea levels.

- These should include a 90% reduction in fossil fuel use by 2050, based on a 6% annual target, monitored by independent scrutiny. The industrialised countries, who have caused the problem, must take the lead in this. The most impoverished peoples are paying the highest price for the actions of the advanced countries. There is no point in asking them to take measures not being taken in the industrialised countries.

This means:

- Cancellation of the third-world debt. There is no point on calling on impoverished counties to tackle climate change if they are saddled with debt.

- A massive increase in investment in renewable energy including solar, wind, wave, tidal and hydro power (with the exception of destructive mega-dam projects). These should be monitored for anti-social consequences. No nuclear power.

- End the productivist throwaway society: production for use and not for profit.

- Tough action against industrial and corporate polluters.

- Free, or cheap, integrated publicly owned transport systems to provide an alternative to the car.

- Nationalisation of rail, road freight and bus companies.

- Halt airport expansion, restrict flights and end

binge flying. Nationalise the airlines.

- Redesign cities to eliminate unnecessary journeys and conserve energy.

- Scrap weapons of mass destruction and use the resources for sustainable development and renewable energy.

- Massive investment to make homes more energy efficient. Moves towards the collectivisation of living spaces.

- Nationalisation of the supermarkets, localised food production and a big reduction in food miles.

- No GM crops for food or fuel.

- End the destruction of the rain forests.

- Defend the rights of climate change refugees and migrants. Protect those hit by drought, desertisation, floods, crop failure and extreme weather conditions.

- Renationalise water and protect water reserves. End the pollution of the rivers and the water ways.

Our strategic approach will be governed by the following guidelines:

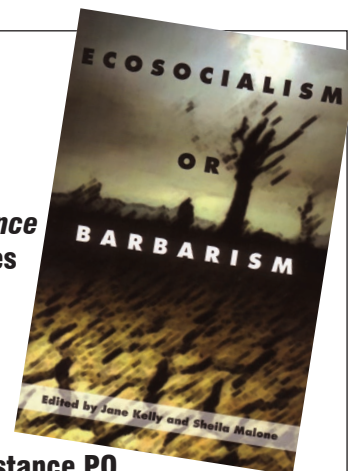
- We seek to build a broad ecosocialist, anticapitalist, current in the labour movement and the left, among young people and among environmentalists, including the Greens.

- We fight to win the labour movement to campaigning against environmental catastrophe as a central concern and priority.

- We fight to win environmentalists and youth to an understanding that ecological sanity is incompatible with capitalism and that an eco-friendly world means socialism.

MORE READING

A Socialist Resistance anthology of articles from a range of authors, edited by Jane Kelly and Sheila Malone
£10 plus £1 p&p from Socialist Resistance PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU



Europe

As rejected EU constitution rides again **PUT IT TO A REFERENDUM!**

Alan Thornett

In his recent meeting with German Prime Minister Angela Merkel, Gordon Brown has made it clear that the re-presented EU constitution resurrected in the form of a treaty will not be put to a referendum – as promised by Labour in 2004 – but will simply be put to Parliament.

Brown's stance recognises that people will not be taken in by this slight of hand, which comes alongside a shift to the right in European politics with the elections of Merkel and Sarkozy, and that the chances of winning a referendum would be more or less impossible in Britain and difficult elsewhere.

Having been defeated in referendums in France and Holland last year EU leaders have changed the name of the constitution and juggled with some of the wording.

Now they are presenting it again for acceptance, arguing that since it is no longer a constitution, therefore troublesome referendums are no longer necessary. Only in Ireland is such a referendum currently scheduled.

In Britain the Tory right have been allowed to make the running on the issue with the left having little to say.

It is therefore doubly important that the RMT and the GMB unions have put resolutions on the issue on the agenda of this year's TUC Congress calling for a referendum. These initiatives should be fully supported in the unions and more broadly.

As the RMT resolution rightly says, nothing of sub-

The treaty would set in stone the neoliberal management of the European economy, and consolidate a Europe in which the decisions of elected Parliaments (with all their limitations) are handed over to an unelected bureaucracy.

stance has changed between this draft and the previous incarnation. It is the old rejected constitution smuggled back in with a few cosmetic changes.

The treaty would set in stone the neoliberal management of the European economy.

It would consolidate a Europe in which the decisions of elected Parliaments (with all their limitations) are handed over to an unelected bureaucracy.

It would institutionalise the EU's democratic deficit

through increasing the voting power of the biggest and most powerful member states.

We want a Europe free from the neo-liberal policies of the WTO and the IMF, free from NATO, free from foreign military bases – a Europe free from weapons of mass destruction.

We want a Europe which respects the cultural, religious, political, and personal choices of its citizens.

We want a Europe which rejects nationalism and xenophobia, which bases itself on internationalism and supports the struggles of the oppressed and which protects the environment and challenges climate chaos.

The GMB resolution raises the issue of Britain's opt-out of the new charter of fundamental rights, which does not have much to offer at the European level – it has no reference to the right to strike or protection against unfair dismissal – but is better than the situation which exists in Britain.

Paul Kenny the general secretary of the GMB told the *Guardian*: "GMB members are sick and tired of being treated as second class citizens in Europe. If these rights are good enough for the French, German and Spanish workers they are good enough to apply to UK workers too".

Overall the RMT resolution (see box) is stronger, in particular because it calls for the General Council to campaign for a no vote in any referendum.

The debate on this issue could spell some tension inside Unite, since the T&G are very likely to support these resolutions while the Amicus side of the



Brown and Merkel: how many times do they need to be told people hate their constitution?

merger does not call either for a referendum or for a no vote in one.

While these resolutions must stand a very good chance of getting through Congress, that would only be the beginning of the battle.

The TUC leadership is notoriously pro-EU as they

have sought to get some crumbs from the EU table on trade union rights having given up any serious attempt to re-establish any here.

So if either resolution were passed, there would need to be concerted pressure to get it implemented.

The left inside and outside

the trade unions should open a campaign for a referendum, and for a no vote in it, and create a progressive alternative to the xenophobic right.

There are fundamental working class issues involved and there has to be a working class voice in the debate around it.

RMT resolution to TUC 2007

Congress notes the proposals in the new EU Reform Treaty are substantially the same as the EU constitution rejected by the French and Dutch electorates in 2005. Indeed the French architect of the Constitution, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing stated the new EU treaty would be "very very near to the original."

The Treaty includes

☐ changing the European Union from an intergovernmental arrangement into a state with a single legal personality and corporate existence

☐ form a centralised government and include an EU President, a Foreign Minister called a High Representative, a diplomatic service and an EU Public Prosecutor.

☐ give further powers to EU institutions including the European Court of Justice and European Central Bank

☐ give the EU power to change itself without further treaties or referendums

☐ consolidate the single market and the drive to privatise public services

☐ further

militarise the EU

☐ abolish Britain's veto over transport and many other areas

At the 2005 General Election all three main political parties promised a referendum on such changes. Congress therefore calls on the government to hold an urgent referendum on the EU reform Treaty and for the General Council to also vigorously campaign for a referendum

Congress also urges the General Council to campaign for a 'No' vote in line with the Congress policy decided in 2005

Finally the General Council is also urged to campaign for this position within the ETUC.



Turkey

Turkish elections Massive win for Islamist right wing

Sarah Parker

The election results on July 22 in Turkey were a sweeping victory for the right. The Islamist AK Partisi thoroughly beat its main rivals, securing 341 out of the 550 seats in the Parliament. This was not the first Islamist electoral victory in Turkey, as AK also won the last election in 2002, but it was the biggest.

AK gained 47% of the vote (compared with 34% in 2002) as the party successfully adjusted its programme to capture the centre ground, getting votes from many sectors who traditionally would have voted for the left: social democrats, Alevis, Kurds, erstwhile far-left supporters.

The basis of the AK victory seems to have been that many voters felt at least AK has so far offered some stability for the economy, and were pleased that it has sometimes appeared to disobey the wishes of the power

behind the scenes in Turkey, the military.

None the less the ascendancy of the AK will mean that Islamist ideas will continue to flourish in Turkey, at present without adequate challenge from secular or socialist parties.

Of the opposition, the main bourgeois opposition since 2002, the CHP (Ataturk's old party) in an alliance with DSP (the Democratic Left Party, Ecevit's old social democrats,) got 21% and 112 seats. The other old ruling parties, the old right wing parties ANAP and DYP seem to have passed into oblivion.

A big worry is that the far right Far right National Action Party (MHP) got 71 seats. They have been growing steadily for many years but this was the first time they passed the 10% barrier and got seats.

As for the left and the Kurdish national movement, the results were in a way encouraging. The Kurdish nationalists and some figures from the Turkish left,

such as Akin Birdal and Ufuk Urasand, stood as independents, in order to get round the obstacle of the 10% barrier.

These independents, mostly Kurdish nationalists, got 21 seats. According to the BBC, independents got 6% of the vote in Istanbul, the metropolis, and 47% in Amed (Diyarbakir), informally the Kurdish capital – beating AK there (41%). It is interesting that these joint platforms had in a way more success than with their constituents standing separately.

Is the relationship with America fundamentally changing? This has been the key question since Turkey refused to allow US troops to come through Turkey to open a northern front in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

It is hard to imagine that the US would forgive or forget such defiance, but so far, other than trivial temporary financial sanctions at the time, there have been no obvious reprisals yet.



Hands up if you are a right wing Islamist

Probably the reason is that US policy-makers are determined to keep their military bases in Iraq at almost whatever cost, and cannot risk completely alienating a country which is one of the lynchpins of their control of the whole Middle East.

The answer to this question is still not clear. Although the Turkish state is very dependent on the US financially, given the rocky nature of the economy, a look at current Turkish foreign policy shows that the country is very active on many fronts, and that its rulers are trying to play its allies and enemies off against each other for the benefit of the Turkish state (and of themselves no doubt).

Turkey has just signed a gas co-operation deal with Iran, which has attracted adverse comment in the Western press. This probably has several aims: to make themselves more valuable to the EU, as a conduit for energy supplies that does

not pass through Russia, perhaps to put pressure on the US, and no doubt to gain leverage over Iran.

How far Turkey will go in playing a double game with its supposed key ally the US is not yet clear to the outside world, but certainly they are trying to put pressure in various ways on the US.

For example, a recent article by a representative of the Reut Institute, a think tank close to the Israeli government, calls on the US to take more note of Turkey as a partner in its planning for the Middle East.

In recent months there have been repeated threats from top Turkish generals and politicians against any strengthening or extension of the Kurdish entity in South Kurdistan (Northern Iraq).

This has got to the point where an article on the website of the KDP, party of the Kurdish Regional President, Masoud Barzani, suggested that the Turkish state may be behind the multiple petrol-tanker bombing of a Yezidi (Kurdish group with ancient partly pre-Islamic religious practices) area in Northern Iraq in August in which upwards of 500 poor villagers were killed.

The US have predictably blamed Al-Qaida – though of course using the name raises more questions than it answers.

The threats from Turkey have been accompanied by repeated calls on the US to deal with PKK forces in Northern Iraq, so far with little result, and repeated threats to invade Northern Iraq. Meanwhile various types of economic and intelligence warfare at least are

pursued against South Kurdistan.

The Turkish state remains concerned at the idea of any independence by the Kurdish nation, wishes in particular to stop the Kurds from controlling Kirkuk, which was once part of the Ottoman Empire and has huge oil reserves.

Given that the US is currently known to be negotiating with some Baathist and Sunni organisations in Iraq, and that Turkey apparently pursues its own independent diplomacy with political figures from across the spectrum in Iraq, it would be interesting to know how far Turkish diplomats see their interests coinciding or reconcilable with those of the US, and how far not – in dealings with Sunni, Shia, Kurd, or Iranian state.

On the question of the EU, realistically speaking, Turkey's EU application appears to be on ice for the next few years, arms purchases from France have dropped, no doubt as a form of pressure, and Turkey is clearly looking at the EU and other foreign policy matters from a longer term perspective.

As far as domestic policy and the Kurds and other oppositionists are concerned, the methods of the Turkish state have not fundamentally changed.

It is true that for the last few years the Kurds have been allowed to celebrate Newroz relatively unhindered in some places in Turkey: Amed (Diyarbakir) is clearly meant to be a show-case, for example, in that a big gathering out of town is now permitted on March 21.

Environmental crisis hits Turkey

One area where both the Turkish state and international capital have shown they have not changed is on the environment.

Deals with Swiss, Austrian and German companies, covered with government export credit guarantees, seem to be going ahead to finance the first stage of the notorious Ilisu Dam which will displace 70,000 or so Kurdish people and drown the beautiful and historic city of Hasankeyf, an ancient city in the Kurdish area of



Turkey.

Hasankeyf is imminently threatened with flooding and destruction because of the determination of the Turkish state to destroy non-Turkish heritage and the determination of certain greedy European governments and businesses to make money out of environmental destruction.

The first villagers are being turned off their land with trivial compensation. Local people have been in the forefront of opposition to the dams, and will continue to resist, as will those living in the area of similarly threatened Munzur.

At present the main European campaign is in Germany and Austria.

For further information go to www.weed-online.org/ilisu and www.hasankeyfgirisimi.com

Turkey meanwhile has such a drought this summer that it cannot even fill the hydro-electric dams it already has.

People in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, have just spent 10 days almost entirely without running water because of drought and mismanagement.

Palestine

PALESTINE'S DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS UNITE

Activists are routinely persecuted all over Turkey, including Diyarbakir, and state-sponsored assassination of opposition voices continues

But activists are routinely persecuted all over Turkey, including Diyarbakir, and state-sponsored assassination of opposition voices continues, as was shown by the gunning down of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink outside his office earlier this year.

The Kurdish Human Rights Project in London has just issued a report detailing the continuing use of torture in Turkey.

The left continues to be very weak and essentially, as in many other places, needs to rethink its methods and rebuild itself almost entirely.

The Kurdish movement seems to be in an impasse – the guerrilla war seems unable to move forward or to be ended.

Various struggles for democratic rights continue, but in terms of achieving their aims, little progress seems to be made.

Still, the new DTP deputies, mainly Kurdish nationalists elected as independents, have said they will raise Kurdish cultural rights (lack of), Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan's prison conditions, and interestingly, the question of Hasankeyf (see box below left).

And importantly, many Kurdish people do stubbornly continue to use and extend their language, music and literature, in spite of the penalties. In recent years in particular there has been a flowering of Kurdish film, albeit mainly made in the diaspora, much of it not surprisingly dealing with the problems of exile and borders.

Overall, one may say that there are signs of change for the better within Turkish society, but this is not yet reflected at the level of political organisation.

At the end of July, Socialist Resistance correspondent Tony Richardson visited Ramallah for the launch meeting of a very important new democratic trade union federation in Palestine – the Coalition of Democratic and Independent Trade Unions.



OVER THE LAST four or five years, workers in Palestine have been forming independent, and democratic unions.

The main pattern has been that they have formed workers councils in individual workplaces, and then by uniting these councils to form sector unions. They have often done this, with the assistance of the "Democracy and Workers Rights Centre". (DWRC)

These new formations have been meeting with some older democratic unions, and have now come together to form a coalition.

They represent workers in finance, health, pharmaceuticals, higher education, kindergarten, telecommunications, municipalities, electricity, and the unemployed and represent 50,000 members all together.

There has also been an increasing amount of strike activity that many of these unions have been involved in.

There were 105 delegates at the Conference which given the fact that there had been much pressure from political parties and the "official" unions against attendance was impressive.

The fact that it was impossible for anyone from Gaza to attend given the situation also means that the support for the initiative is greater than shown by the numbers of delegates. However there

are clearly real difficulties for trade unions attempting to function in Gaza at the minute.

The opening ceremony, in the Ramallah Cultural Palace heard Abdel Hakim Aleyan argue that they did not want to carry out factional activity, but to try to advance workers against those who exploit them.

National and Islamic Parties PLO Executive member Saleh Rafah said trade unions should ensure political plurality, and he called for unity of unions, but on a democratic basis. He also demanded a state based on 1967 borders, with no concessions, and called for Hamas to give their arms to Abbas.

Hasan Barghouti for the DWRC, facilitators of the conference, called for the protection of "the dignity of the people."

Ahmed Tawfiq, the Director of Labour Relations at the Palestinian Ministry of Labour said that they have relations with all federations, and this one consisted of real professional unions.

Speaking from Oxford and District Trade Union Council, Tony Richardson welcomed the formation of the new democratic unions, said that democracy was not a choice, and described the bureaucratisation of the long established British trade unions.

Leaders elected. A new, democratic trade union organisation is born.

He called for the new unions to control their leaders, and for them to make sure this bureaucratisation doesn't happen to them. He said their main support from outside would come from those fighting in their unions against these bureaucrats.

Tony also brought support from the National Twinning Network, which would help establish relations with their local counterparts in the UK.

Throughout the day there were constant votes and vociferous discussion.

The first issue was how the voting would take place. Some of the unions are quite long established, like the Hebron unemployed, and others very new.

Nobody wanted to find themselves voted down, so there were tensions. After about two hours it was agreed that voting on resolutions would require a two thirds majority; this vote was almost unanimous.

It was then agreed that as far as the rest of the constitution was concerned the groups would all give their opinions to a sub-committee, which was then elected.

Another long discussion took place over the name, and it was agreed to keep Coalition, rather than federation.

It was agreed that new affiliations would go before the full Executive. There would be a 15-person Executive, and 45-person National Council, the latter on proportional representation according to the size of the union.

On the second day, the National Council met to elect the Executive. Some people had met overnight, and made suggestions for a list. Here all kinds of tensions arose, some insults were exchanged, and a health union delegation walked out.

Finally 18 names came up and everybody had 15 votes each, an Executive was elected, and the new coalition was formed.

One of the weaknesses was that only one woman spoke at the conference proper, although one, Khould Asmar chaired the opening. There are also only three on the Executive.

This is clearly a problem reflecting the society, but there are strong women active in some of the individual unions, which gives the potential for this to change.

This clearly is historic democratic conference. It is not surprising that there are tensions between those involved – they want to form a body that does things, and all are risking a lot, with the occupation, and a violent authority and opposition.

Although these unions have only limited experience, this means they are not yet bureaucratised, and so this could be a qualitative development. All praise the DWRC for facilitating this activity, they are trying for moves in this direction in Jordan, and their affiliates also in Egypt.

All trade union activists should support this development, and develop links with their Palestinian counterparts to see if they can be of assistance.

For further information see www.dwrc.org

International

Niger Delta Another forgotten war for oil

Norman Traub

The recapture in June 2007 by units of the Nigerian army of an oil platform occupied by militants from the Niger Delta, is the latest battle in a long running war. Twelve militants, two civilians and a soldier were killed and nine civilian hostages were set free in the operation.

Since 1956, when Shell discovered oil in the Niger Delta, the people there have been engaged in a grim struggle against an unholy alliance of the oil multinationals and successive Nigerian governments, be they military dictatorships or civilian regimes.

The Nigerian army in the Niger Delta is an army of occupation and subjugation of the minority peoples of the Delta, the Ijaws, Ikweres and Ogonis.

The control and the manner in which exploitation of Nigeria's vast oil deposits is being carried out, is at the heart of the alliance against the peoples of the Niger Delta

Ken Saro-Wiwa, one of the leaders of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People(MOSOP), which emerged as the first resistance movement in the Niger Delta in the 1990s to challenge the alliance of oil multinationals and the Nigerian government, vividly outlined the nature of the struggle in which his people were engaged:

"Today the Ogoni people are involved in two grim wars. The first is the 35 year old ecological war waged by the multinational-oil companies, Shell and Chevron. In this most sophisticated and unconventional war, no bones are broken, no blood is spilled and no one is



Ken Saro-Wiwa

maimed. Yet, men, women and children die; flora and fauna perish, the air and water are poisoned, and finally the land dies. "The second war is a political war of tyranny, oppression and greed designed to dispossess the Ogoni people of their rights and their wealth and subject them to abject poverty, slavery, dehumanisation and extinction. "Taken together, both wars, waged against a defenceless and small people, amount to genocide and are a grave crime

against humanity". In a report to the Rio

Earth Summit in 1992, the people of the Niger Delta stated:

"Apart from air pollution from the oil industry's emissions and flares day and night producing poisonous gases that are silently and systematically wiping out vulnerable airborne biota and otherwise endangering the life of plants, game and man himself, we have widespread water pollution and soil and land pollution that respectively result in the death of most aquatic eggs and juvenile stages of finfish and shellfish and oysters on the one hand, whilst on the other hand, agricultural lands contaminated with oil spills become dangerous for farming..."

All the evidence suggests that the destruction of the Niger Delta by the multinational oil companies and in particular Shell has taken place with a near-total disregard for the welfare of the local people.

Why would Shell conduct rigorous and extensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for its operations in Europe and North America and refuse to do the same in the Niger Delta? This is a clear example of the practice of ecological racism to maximise profits

It is estimated that Shell derives 13% of its world-wide profits from crude oil exports from Nigeria. Oil flowing from the Niger Delta accounts for 95% of the country's foreign exchange earnings and about one fourth of its GNP. The politicians and military dictators in charge of the Nigerian state have between 1960 and 1999 have stolen not less than 200 billion dollars from the state exchequer.

While the oil wealth flows into the hands of the multinationals and the cor-

rupt Nigerian political elite, the peoples of the Niger Delta are driven away from the land.

With the soil ruined to a level where fishing and farming have become impossible, their means of livelihood are taken away from them and without compensation, they are left destitute. When they protest and demand reparations the army is sent in to occupy and subjugate them.

In resisting Shell and the military junta's actions in Ogoniland, the Ogoni people led by MOSOP incurred two thousand deaths, including Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other leaders of their movement, executed by the Abacha dictatorship.

Shell was forced to stop its operations in Ogoniland, which it has been unable to resume in spite of repeated attempts to do so.

Since the revolt of the Ogoni people, armed groups have sprung up all over the Niger Delta and attacked oil installations there.

The latest attack was on an oil platform operated by the Italian firm, Eni.

These groups, formed into the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), also seize oil flow stations, kidnap oil workers and inflict punishment on Nigerian security forces.

They demand a bigger share of oil revenue, greater employment opportunities in the oil industry for the youth of the delta.

Their movement has to be distinguished from criminal elements in the population, who demand ransom for personal gain.

One of the demands of MEND, the release of a militant leader, Mujahid Dokubo- Asari, accused of treason was granted by the newly elected president of Nigeria, Umaru Yar'Adua.

The actions of the militants led to Nigeria having to cut its oil production by 25% in 18 months, slashing of government revenues and helped to push world prices to record highs.

The crisis in the delta is one of the biggest facing the newly elected president following elections condemned by national observers as well as internationally as fraudulent.



Debate

“The Cuban Revolution lives in the streets of Caracas”

Liam Mac Uaid recently interviewed Cuban Trotskyist Celia Hart in Havana, asking her first about her forthcoming trip to

CH I am going to Caracas on an invitation by the Ministry of [Peoples' Power] for Labour and Social Security to commemorate one more anniversary of the assassination of revolutionary Leon Trotsky

LM Who has organised this, the government or Trotskyist organisations?

CH No, this has been organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and several comrades are going to participate, amongst them, fortunately, Leon Trotsky's grandson, Estaban Volkov; also a very old Cuban Trotskyist, Ydalberto Ferrera, 90 years old, who has had a consistent attitude towards the Cuban revolution and the ideas of Leon Trotsky, and he is going with me, together with Esteban Volkov, Ricardo Napuri and other comrades.

LM What has been the impact of the Venezuelan revolution on Cuba?

CH It has been the most impor-

tant thing in the world, I think that the Bolivarian revolution has proven the most important ideas of the permanent revolution, I think we are in the century of the permanent revolution. And I think, in a symbolic way, that the Cuban revolution lives in the streets of Caracas.

LM Some comrades say that the democracy that one sees in the Venezuelan revolution is having an impact in the Cuban revolution, would you say that is true?

CH This is true, because there are many Cubans who travel to Venezuela, as doctors or teachers, and therefore the forms in which Venezuela carries out her revolution have an impact in Cuba.

LM Is this having any practical effects? Do people arrive at a meeting and say “we need to be more democratic”?

CH My problem with you and in general with the Trotskyists is about what is democracy, the concept of democracy. As a Trotskyist myself, what is democracy? I think that in Venezuela there are more sections participating in the process.

It is a young revolution in relation to ours, which is now 50 years old, and this means that without the pressures of Stalinism and the Soviet Union, it is working well.

The question as always, and as Trotsky pointed out, lies in the

revolutionary leadership. Sometimes we are not able to understand the historic process we are living through.

I think that in relation to Venezuela and Cuba there is something I must say before the end of the interview: a lot of Latin Americans, Cubans and Venezuelans, think that there is only revolution on our side, but I think that without the collaboration of left-wing forces, the organisation of left-wing forces in Europe and Latin America, we will not be able to succeed.

For the first time there is a genuine globalisation of the world from the point of view of the left-wing forces. For this we need an organisation, so that the vanguard participates in the processes that are taking place.

LM We were here 4 years ago, my impression is that it is slightly more prosperous.

CH This is true, a few years ago we had to face the collapse of the socialist block, and now the economy has started to recover.

Last year the Cuban economy grew by 12%, but, what we must avoid is that this economic growth is of the same type as the Peoples' Republic of China. Economists will forgive me but we do not need to grow that fast, there are other priorities.

LM As a tourist in Cuba there are two economies, one for Cubans who work in the tourist industry and another for those

who don't.

CH All means of production belong to the state. What is true is that tourism, by being the one sector which brings more income, has become much more important from a purely economic point of view than other sectors of the economy (like education, teaching, etc). This is a contradiction.

LM You were talking about Fidel's role in changing the education system in a very positive way. What do people feel will happen after Fidel dies?

CH I do not know what people will feel. Honestly there is something much more important than even Fidel and my sons, and that is the revolution. When Fidel became ill, to us revolutionaries we saw it as he had fallen in combat, because there are still so many things to do.

Like Lenin's last fight, Fidel needs to wage his last fight, and Fidel's last fight will be linked with Leon Trotsky

LM Why?

CH Because is the only left that is left. It is the only real point of reference of Bolshevism. This is what Che Guevara fought until his death. Because Fidel Castro is like Lenin was, but the difference is that Fidel has been in power for 50 years, and we do not have a Trotsky, our Trotsky was killed in Bolivia

LM It seems Fidel has decided



“Fidel needs to wage his last fight, and Fidel's last fight will be linked with Leon Trotsky”

to wage his last battle on biology and bio fuels. We republished an article of his in the last issue of SR.

CH He knows the importance of

not turning food, grains, maize, and soy, into fuel. This is related to the survival of humankind. He has even questioned his alliance with Lula in Brazil regarding bio-fuels.

LM Your big nightmare is that China is the example that Cuba follows.

CH It is a nightmare. I am a physicist and I think it is one of the possible outcomes to the problem of Cuba. This is why I am terrified.

I think that the other outcome is to prove, together with all left-wing forces in the world, that there is another way forward.

We must give more emphasis to the role being played by revolutionary events in Latin America. We must remember what Che said, that there could only be revolution in Cuba if there was revolution in the world.

Interview translated by Jorge Martin

Lifting the lid on brutal wars in America's “back yard”

The War On Democracy, (John Pilger 2007). Reviewed by Jay Woolrich.

Two strands run through John Pilger's debut feature film. The first tells the story of the USA's brutal interventions in Latin America, focusing primarily on Guatemala and Chile.

The second, combining interviews with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and grassroots activists like barrio resident Mariela Machado, highlights the ongoing resistance and



John Pilger

the challenge it poses to North American hegemony. It captures both the precarious position of the progressive movements and also the

wave of optimism sweeping through the region.

Central to this process is the question of US power. As Chavez puts it during his interview:

“To have a revolution without crashing against the empire – it's impossible.”

Pilger provides an insight into the human cost of the US-supported coup in Chile through a tour of the national stadium with Roberto Navarette, a young student who was held there with thousands of others following the overthrow of Allende's elected government in 1973. Navarette's story, like that of fellow Chilean Sara De Witt,

brings history into focus with chilling clarity.

Interviews with the victims of US-sponsored terror in Chile, Guatemala and elsewhere are accompanied by interviews with its orchestrators.

Most notable of these is ex-CIA agent Duane Claridge, a key player in the Contra war, whose utter indifference to the mayhem caused by the Agency is a fine example of imperial hauteur and thuggishness. Claridge makes a perfect witness for the prosecution.

But Pilger's film is not just an account of US aggression. He also talks about the fight-

back, including the popular movement which thwarted the anti-Chavez coup in 2002 and forced the CIA-backed plotters to release the president.

Although much of this material is taken from an earlier film, ‘The Revolution Will Not Be Televised’, it's good to see the events covered in a mainstream feature.

Pilger weaves his interview with Hugo Chavez into an account of the grassroots changes taking place in the barrios, incorporating the voices and lives of ordinary people into the fabric of his film.

And it is to these popular

voices that he turns in his account of events in Bolivia, where a vibrant movement of social change underpins the tentative reforms of the Morales government.

This film does for Latin America what Pilger's previous documentary, ‘Truth and Lies in the War on Terror’, did for Iraq and Afghanistan. But here the message is more hopeful.

A powerful movement of resistance is sweeping the region, fuelled by the courage and hope of ordinary people.

Our task, Pilger concludes, is to engage with that resistance. This film is a weapon in the struggle.

Reviews

Vital reading for eco-socialists

2007 Socialist Register, Coming to Terms with Nature (edited by Leo Panitch and Colin Leys with Barbara Harriss-White, Elmar Altvater and Greg Albo)

Reviewed by Sarah Parker

The editors and authors of this year's Socialist Register have produced an excellent collection whose aim is "contributing to the development of a better eco-socialist understanding of contemporary capitalism, and the kind of politics that could lead to an ecologically sustainable as well as a democratic socialism". This book is a fantastic resource which I strongly recommend.

The wide-ranging essays deal with most aspects of the capitalism's creation of the environmental crisis, so its impossible to do justice to the different insights that they provide: I look at just a few of the articles, but I hope that readers will look at the whole book.

Several of the essays start from historical discussions on the relationship of humanity and capitalism to nature, pointing to the previous insights of Marxism into these relations, which have unfortunately been denied by people hostile to Marxism, and largely forgotten or never known by much of the far left until recently, and conclude with suggestions for transforming the situation.

In 'The Environment of fossil Capitalism', Elmar Altvater argues that the significance of the Neolithic revolution was that it enabled humanity to increase productivity through harnessing solar energy (which comes from outside the earth's finite system) more intensively, leading to the birth of agriculture.

Because of the limits of technology as applied to solar and other fuel, eco-



nomic growth was still very slow until the serious development of fossil fuels with the industrial revolution. Now capitalism is totally dependent on fossil fuels, notably oil, and treats them as though they are inexhaustible.

He suggests that there is only one 'realistic alternative to oil imperialism – a shift from dependence on renewable energy sources, on the radiation energy released by the sun (and its derivatives such as photovoltaic, eolic, water, wave and biotic energy etc.), or on volcanic and geothermal energy. He argues that 'A society based on renewable instead of fossil energy sources must develop adequate technologies and above all social forms beyond capitalism.'

In "Nature as accumulation strategy" Neil Smith describes how a new dimension of the capitalist production of nature has transformed the social relationship with the natural world. He argues that 'new ecological commodities ... owe their existence ... to the success of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Legislation ... created a certain scarcity of ... "allowable natural destruction" [and]... led to the development of entirely new markets in ecological "goods" and (especially) "bads".'

He suggests that Green capitalism 'has become nothing less than a major strategy for ecological commodification, marketization

and financialization which radically deepens the penetration of nature by capital', citing the products of carbon sequestration programmes as the best known type of ecological commodities.

He observes that this process 'is ... an integral element of a much larger project of neo-liberalism' and that 'The neo-liberalization of nature is far from complete, not without its obstacles, and anything but a smooth process.'

He analyses a key concept, the capitalist production of nature: 'naturally provided use-values, whether iron ore or labour power or services such as the ability to transport, are plucked for productive consumption and in turn alter the form of nature: the earth is gouged, soil is colonized, workers are transformed by work ... and transport technology shortens the temporal distance between spatially separate places', and that '... the universal production of nature was written into the DNA of capitalist ambition from the start; neo-liberalism only its latest incarnation.' while 'the production of nature under capitalism generates its own distinct ideologies'.

Returning to the present, he asserts that 'the market has now retaken and recolonized environmental practices... This represents a sweeping political co-optation and victory for capital and a defeat for environmental-cum-socialist politics.'

Finally he cites Donna Haraway's conclusions from her research into genetically transformed organisms in the 1990s that 'the body now represented an accumulation strategy for capital', and comments that 'Cindy Katz has broadened this into a suggestion that 'nature per se may now represent an accumulation strategy for capital.'

He concludes that today 'the increasing appropriation of nature as an accumulation strategy ... promises to provide the nervous system of a new phase of capitalist accumulation.'

Finally he outlines a response: 'While struggles over GM organisms, technology ... are of central importance ... it is just as vital to have a longer-term eye on the constitutive social relations.' and asking: 'if the production of nature is a historical reality, what would a truly democratic production of nature look like?'

Again starting with history, in "Socialist Metabolism and Environmental Conflicts" Joan Martinez-Alier outlines the long tradition of "Ecological economics, which views the economy as a 'metabolic system of materials and energy flows'.

He reminds us that we should be aware of social forces, mainly 'peripheral' peoples, whose lands, resources and lives have been plundered by imperialism, and who contest this plunder and the conventional methods of classical economics for measuring (or more usually ignoring) the unequal exchanges involved.

Then he looks at Marx and Engel's interest in the patterns of 'energy and material flows' within the economy, and at subsequent developments of this discussion.

He describes modern attempts of political ecologists and of states to measure these energy flows, describing a system known as Eurostat run by the EU which can show the overall

inputs and outputs of material and energy for national economies, providing information which could be used to help demonstrate the distortions that capitalism imposes on poor countries and on the planet as a whole.

In 'Garbage Capitalism's Green Commerce', Heather Rogers discusses the US waste management industry. She looks at the origins of the concept of "litter", which turns out to have been the result of a slick PR campaign in the 50s designed to blame individuals for the new problem of huge amounts of waste packaging, and to deflect criticism from the companies and the manufacturing processes from which the new packaging emanated.

Back to the present, in 'Unsustainable Capitalism and Renewable Energy', Barbara Harriss-White and Elinor Harris shed light into many corners of British energy policy, concluding that 'a mix of market-driven politics and state capitulation has undermined the framework of systematic regulation and stripped the state of its capacity to make the long-term plans necessary for capital to invest.'

They believe that 'Market-driven politics have ensured that renewable energy remains far from starting to form any kind of technological base', obviously an obstacle in the struggle for transforming society around renewables. Their article poses serious questions for green socialists.

The last three essays look towards solutions. First 'Eco-Socialism and Democratic Planning' by Michael Löwy looks at how an ecosocialist alternative can be built, while in 'Party-building for Eco-socialists', Otto Frieder Wolf writes on lessons to be drawn from the failure of the German Greens to build a radical alternative to social democracy, or recently, to neo-liberalism, that could have successfully challenged the existing order.

Green capitalism 'has become nothing less than a major strategy for ecological commodification, marketization and financialization which radically deepens the penetration of nature by capital.'

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What's On



Activist's DIARY

He discusses Joel Kovel's ideas for building an eco-socialist organisation, agreeing with some aspects but concluding that Kovel overlooks some important points in his ideas for building transformative parties.

In 'The Limits of Eco-Localism' Greg Albo gives a fresh look at why political organisations are needed to make local campaigns effective as part of the wider battle to save the planet.

He asserts that 'Political organization and capacity are, in the first instance, about reproducing these struggles across time in particular places in face of forces that are unrelenting in their efforts to undermine, incorporate and isolate oppositional political alliances and to commodify any ecologies and resources withdrawn from the accumulation process.'

In a plea to people who see 'the local as an ideal scale' to rethink their approach, he suggests that eco-localism has in fact gone in completely the opposite direction to what is needed: 'Under neo-liberalism, eco-localism has evolved into a practical attempt to alter individual market behaviours, and to disconnect and internalize

local ecologies and communities from wider struggles and political ambitions.'

John Bellamy Foster, the editor of *Monthly Review*, criticised the editors for calling on readers to avoid "anxiety-driven catastrophism". His article indicates that he thinks the editors underestimate the threat of an actual collapse of 'life as we know it'.

It is true that in the preface the editors point out that the existence of huge problems does not mean capitalism cannot survive them. In other words, dire environmental crisis will not automatically bring about the collapse of capitalism, and they suggest that given the inadequacy of the present left and green movements, and the dynamism (albeit unhealthy and destructive) of capitalism, the system itself may well be able to continue reproducing itself for some time, albeit at huge cost to the planet and all life on it.

However the book concentrates mainly on analysing the problems caused by capitalism not on working out solutions, (though these are outlined in some essays), on the premise that in order to understand the challenges

ahead, socialists and greens need to understand precisely what deep-seated and complex processes are at work.

In fact I think if you read this book you would be hard put not to draw the conclusion of that capitalism is indeed on a collision course with the biosphere, and that an absolutely unprecedented transformation of society on a world scale will be needed if there is to be any hope of saving the situation, so perhaps the gap between John Bellamy Foster and the editors of *Socialist Register* is not huge.

The book is fascinating and serious, and I would say it is vital reading for eco-socialists. Most of the essays are quite dense, and it would have been better if the language was more accessible. Admittedly the ideas are often complex, but it is important that these ideas reach the widest possible audience.

So it needs to be read with care, but if you want to get to grips with current creative Marxist analysis, buy it, or take the time to order it from your local library, which will reduce unnecessary personal consumption and make the book available to more people.

Saturday Sept 8

London Climate camp. What next? The Upper Room, 8 Greenland Street London NW1. 2pm

Saturday, September 15, London:

Stop the War Coalition Day School on Afghanistan. University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1. Speakers to be announced.

Sunday September 16,

Climate camp. Report back, What next? Common Place, 23-25 Wharf St Leeds. 12-6pm

Tuesday September 18

Birmingham Socialist Resistance Forum, Tony Foley on the Politics of James Connolly 7.30pm Bennetts Bar, Bennetts Hill

Sunday Sept 23

March with a message for Labour, Unite demonstration at Labour, 1pm Bournemouth See <http://www.amicustheunion.org> for information re transport

October 2

Birmingham Marxist Educational Women under capitalism, Sue Thomas 7.30pm Bennetts Bar, Bennetts Hill



Sunday October 7,

Paris. International ecosocialist meeting

Tuesday 9 October

at: US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1. Miami 5 vigil. Organised by: Cuba Solidarity Campaign. 17.30pm-19.00pm. Candlelit vigil outside the US embassy in London to mark the 9th anniversary of the arrest of the Miami 5, followed by a film screening at a London cinema to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia - at the hands of the CIA.

Wednesday Oct 17

Birmingham Socialist Resistance Forum, Alan Watkins, New Labour and pensioners, 7.30pm Bennetts Bar, Bennetts Hill

Thursday 18 October

National Rally for a Trade Union Freedom Bill, organised by: United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union Law House of Commons, Committee Room 14, 7pm

Saturday October 27

Stop the War annual conference, London

Sat Nov 3, London

Demonstrate to support the NHS

Saturday November 24

Socialist Resistance Forum on Women's Liberation, London

Saturday December 1

World against war international conference, London

Sat Dec 8

Demonstrations against climate change, London and internationally

Sat Feb 8 2008

Trade union conference against climate change, University of London Union

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Brown's new health secretary signs death warrants for key Manchester hospital services

FIGHT BACK against hospital cutbacks!



Health Secretary Alan Johnson took office a few weeks ago promising to listen to health workers and to local people: but by mid August he has shown that the NHS is already back to business as usual, banging through Patricia Hewitt's agenda of unpopular hospital closures.

In August Johnson rubber-stamped the closure of maternity units at four hospitals – Fairfield in Bury, Rochdale Infirmary, Trafford and Salford Hope along with Salford's neonatal intensive care unit.

Each unit has been strongly defended, with local campaigns and petitions mobilising thousands – but for ministers this is clearly the 'wrong type' of patient choice.

Thousands of women will now face longer journeys to have their babies – and tens of thousands of local campaigners up and down the country will fear that their hospitals will be next on Johnson's closure list as phony consultation procedures are forced through.

Campaigns, including those in Cumbria, Sussex, Hertfordshire and parts of London, will need to step up the pressure if this is to be avoided.

The Lobby of Labour conference on September 23 and the National Demonstration called for November 3 by UNISON to "celebrate" and defend the NHS should also offer a focus to reinforce the fight to defend local access to quality health care.

Sunday Sept 23

MARCH with a message for Labour, Unite demonstration at Labour Conference, 1pm BOURNEMOUTH

- an end to off-shoring - quality, secure jobs for all
- to ensure equal rights for agency workers - and trade union-freedom for all
- to close the yawning wealth gap
- to deliver fair pay to public sector workers and quality, publicly provided health and education for all
- to free councils to build decent housing for all

Saturday November 3

Central London

National demonstration in central London to celebrate and defend the NHS.

Further details from
www.unison.org.uk/healthcare/keepNHSworking