

After June 10 European elections Left unity call

As expected, the votes achieved by the Communist Party of Great Britain in last week's EU elections were very low indeed - we had hoped for 2,000 or so. Our candidates, standing as the 'Weekly Worker' list, polled 878 in the North West and 846 in London (0.09% and 0.07% respectively).

The main reason for this was of course the undemocratic ban imposed by the registrar of political parties, preventing us standing under our own name. The excuse for this was that only one organisation bearing the name 'communist' could be allowed for electoral purposes, and the registrar, advised by a committee of MPs dominated by Labour, awarded the franchise to the Communist Party of Britain (*Morning Star*).

The CPB did not of course even consider contesting the EU elections itself. As usual it called for a vote for Labour, even though it was simultaneously condemning bomber Blair's imperialist onslaught on Yugoslavia. But such niceties as which of the two organisations more accurately reflects the name 'communist' is the least of the registrar's concerns.

Another reason for our low return was the fact that we were left to fight alone in both regions after our Socialist Alliance partners abandoned the field. The few weeks we had were inadequate to raise sufficient cash to organise a more powerful campaign, which could have included the printing and distribution of an election address to every household.

Nevertheless we made some impact, our challenge being at least mentioned on TV and radio and in the national press. But this publicity did not come close to compensating for the loss of our name, which undoubtedly cost us many thousands of votes.

The collapse of the SA outside the West Midlands - where the list headed by Dave Nellist won 7,303 votes (0.85%) - was caused by Arthur Scargill's announcement that he was to be the Socialist Labour Party's top candidate in London. First the Socialist Workers Party, followed in quick succession by the International Socialist Group (*Socialist Outlook*), the Independent Labour Network, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the Socialist Party in England and Wales, decided they were not "viable" compared to Scargill. This cave-in in London coincided with a demoralised withdrawal in the North West too.

Only in London, where the SLP put in the most effort in terms of an election address (three million, featuring Scargill's photograph, were delivered

by Royal Mail), was anything like a respectable result achieved. The SLP gained 19,632 votes (1.72%). Elsewhere, the SLP was always beaten when opposed by a left bloc. Ken Coates's Alternative Labour List won three times more votes than Scargill in the East Midlands and also headed the SLP in Yorkshire and Humber.

The Socialist Alliance beat the SLP's total by more than 2,000 in the West Midlands, while in Scotland the SLP could only manage 9,385 votes (0.95%), as against the 39,720 (4.02%) for the Scottish Socialist Party. Last month's election of Tommy Sheridan to the Scottish parliament has boosted the SSP's fortunes across Scotland as a whole at Socialist Labour's expense. In May the SLP surpassed the SSP's total. Compared to then the SSP's share of the vote doubled, while the SLP's was more than halved.

Scargill delivered his promise of contesting in every region, winning 86,749 votes overall. But this represented less than one percent. Surely even Arthur will now have to drop his absurd boast that the SLP is "Britain's fourth largest party".

Scargill's pretence that his party's membership is continuing to soar has already been dismissed by all but the most naive in view of the crumbling of most of the SLP's organisation. But the June 10 poll destroyed the claim in terms of electoral support as well. Apart from the three main parties, the SLP was beaten by the UK Independence Party, the Green Party, the Pro-Euro Conservative Party and the BNP. If we discount three other groupings that won more support - the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Party (split from the Lib Dems) - on the grounds that none of them operate in all parts of Britain, then we can safely say that the SLP is the Britain's eighth largest party, electorally at least.

The truth is that the SLP's attempt to tap the chauvinistic Euroscepticism that exists in England particularly proved disastrous. Scargill's decision to restrict his propaganda - both in his TV broadcast and his election address - almost entirely to the question of 'pulling out' of Europe backfired. The virtual absence of any

kind of specifically working class opposition will no doubt have cost him support amongst the small minority of class conscious workers. He also failed to pick up much from those more backward workers who are opposed to the EU because they feel more attached to 'British' interests. Why vote for the UKIP mark II when you can back the real thing?

However, despite Scargill's dire national socialist sectarianism, his ruthless ambition to create a new party with himself as its labour dictator at least ensured that voters in every part of Britain had the opportunity to put their cross against an organisation that had 'socialist' in its name. Which is more than can be said for the SWP and SPEW. While both groups were part of the Socialist Alliance (Nellist) slate in the West Midlands - which suffered a self-inflicted wound due to the foolish refusal to include Christine Oddy at the top of the list - elsewhere they deserted the field and, worse, refused to give their members and supporters a clear guidance on how to vote nationally.

Apart from the West Midlands, SPEW made only one recommendation: a vote for the SSP in Scotland. *Socialist Worker* backed in addition the Alternative Labour List in the East Midlands and advised its readers to vote SLP in London only. The 'Weekly Worker' list was predictably ignored. But what about the rest of the country? This was the first national election since May 1 1997, and the first ever under proportional representation. Yet the left was paralysed.

Clearly a vote for New Labour is now a big problem - not least for left Labour activists - but neither the SWP nor SPEW has the slightest confidence in their own ability to be part of a national alternative. (This contrasted sharply with the unity achieved by the Lutte Ouvrière/Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire bloc in France, whose alliance won over five percent.)

The *Socialist's* coverage of the June 10 campaigns concentrated on the council by-election in Lewisham, south London and the parliamentary contest in Leeds Central. The morale of the beleaguered SPEW leadership will have been lifted by the Ian Page's victory in Lewisham's Pepys ward. Comrade Page, a former Militant Labour councillor, lost his seat in 1998 having been expelled from New Labour and announced his membership of Taaffe's organisation. SPEW mobilised what remains of its London membership in a successful bid to build on comrade Page's local popularity. He polled 786 votes (40.43%), and the announcement of Labour's defeat led to scuffling in the hall between supporters of the Blairite candidate and their old Labour 'comrades'.

The intervention of SPEW's Chris Hill, standing for the Left Alliance in Leeds Central, was less inspiring. He won 258 votes (1.96%).

Comrade Page's victory, following the success of Tommy Sheridan in Glasgow and Karen McKay in a Coventry council election last month, represents another small advance for the working class. It shows that workers will back a left alternative - if only it could muster some self-belief.

The CPGB's Anne Murphy, who headed the 'Weekly Worker' list in London and is the coordinator of London Socialist Alliance, said: "We must learn the lessons of June 10. The building of a nationally coordinated alliance now assumes the greatest importance."

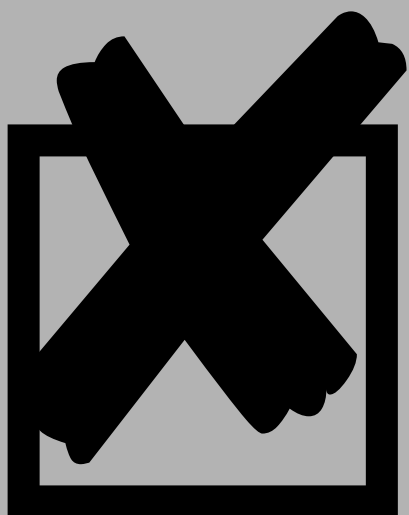
But is the left capable of rising to that challenge? ●

Peter Manson

Left Euro results

'Weekly Worker' list

North West	878	0.09%
London	846	0.07%



Socialist Labour Party

London	19,632	1.72%
North East	4,511	1.17%
North West	11,338	1.11%
Yorkshire and Humber	7,650	1.03%
Scotland	9,385	0.95%
East Midlands	5,528	0.76%
Wales	4,283	0.68%
Eastern	6,143	0.62%
West Midlands	5,257	0.62%
South West	5,741	0.55%
South East	7,281	0.49%
Total vote:	86,749	(0.87%)

Alternative Labour

East Midlands	17,409	2.41%
Yorkshire and Humber	9,554	1.28%

Independent Labour - Oddy

West Midlands	36,849	4.34%
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Socialist Alliance

West Midlands	7,303	0.85%
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Scottish Socialist Party

Scotland	39,720	4.02%
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Socialist Party of Great Britain

North East	1,510	0.39%
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Party notes

No breakthrough

So, there was no breakthrough for Scargill in the European elections. Standing in all 11 regions, his organisation was only able to poll 0.87%. In London, the party did marginally better with a more credible 1.7%. This relatively healthy 'blip' is explained by a number of factors, not least the fact that Scargill himself headed the list in the capital and spent the necessary money to mail three million households.

The backing of the Socialist Workers Party in London (as well as the shamefaced support from others such as the Socialist Party) will have counted for little - in any part of the country. The SWP did not campaign for Scargill. Indeed - in common with the general public - the majority of its politically dumbed down membership barely knew there was an election taking place.

As an organisation, the SWP has sunk no roots in any significant section of society. This accounted for its ignominious collapse in the face of the announcement of Scargill's pole position on the London SLP list and its call for a vote for this sad rump on the basis of its alleged 'viability' compared to the SWP, even in alliance with other forces of the left.

The people who did support Socialist Labour are mostly unorganisable by the SLP. First, because Scargill's successive waves of paranoid purges has ensured that the SLP has no infrastructure that can integrate that small percentage of its voters who might have expressed an interest in becoming further involved.

Second, these 80-odd thousand are atomised individuals. Scargill's vote represents no mass movement, no wave of militancy in the trade unions finding electoral expression. If this were the case, his lack of national organisation going into the elections would not have mattered so much. He could have come out the other side having built a viable structural skeleton composed of militants experienced in building campaigns and organisations.

Clearly, Scargill's vote was an expression of a *vestigial* sentiment amongst some small sections of the left and the wider population. For these elements, his name is still synonymous with the Great Strike of 1984-85 (and to a lesser extent with the upsurge around the miners in 1992). Scargill fought these elections harking back to the 1970s. As his own history underlines, these already inadequate politics were hopelessly dated by the mid-1980s, let alone now. His clumsy attempt to give his politics a *contemporary* cutting edge - that of militant anti-Europeanism - failed totally.

We were not alone in highlighting the parallels between Scargill's pronouncements on the "Common Market" and the platforms of the ultra-right. His attempt to position his organisation to gain from any left-inclined, anti-European backlash has fallen flat on its face. He is clearly not plugging into any real sentiment on the left with these tactics: it is the right that has articulated anti-EU prejudices.

Therefore, Scargill's real victory in this election has nothing to do with the SLP vote, no matter what up-beat spin he subsequently puts on the result. As we have emphasised, he has positioned himself well in the fight for the leadership of the left wing of the workers' movement. Despite his low poll, his has been the only *national* leftwing electoral challenge. He pigheadedly refused cooperation with any other section of the left - even when this could have resulted in SLP electoral successes.

The man is clearly out for *political monopoly* for himself and his hare-brained national socialist schemas. This is what has driven the SLP project forward and may still see it pose a real danger to our movement. In this, we should admire Scargill's guts in comparison with most of the left, whatever we think of his politics.

We have used the phrase 'labour dictator' to characterise Scargill's ambitions. His vote has done him little good in the attempt to break into mainstream politics. It has certainly strengthened his project of political domination of the rest of the left, however. Next year's London mayoral and assembly elections will be interesting. SWP apparatchiks have been assuring their rank and file that the London Socialist Alliance project was scuppered to avoid "splitting the vote". Will the SWP split the vote in 2000 if Scargill refuses any electoral agreement and presses ahead with an SLP slate? Can anyone imagine that he will not adopt such a course, having seen how easily most of the rest of the left can be faced down?

Our militant opposition to Scargillism must not evolve into a mirror image of his sectarianism. Again, the parallel with that other labour dictator, Lassalle, is instructive. While Marx vehemently mocked the man's pretensions to a divine right to rule, he recognised that he had the real merit of having revived and to a certain extent reconstituted the workers' movement in Germany after a period of defeat.

We must take a similar balanced view of that small sliver of our class who vote for Scargill in today's conditions. They are clearly not voting for bureaucratic arbitrariness, the madcap politics of the Stalin Society or the prospect of a 'socialist' island prison. On some level, these votes represent an inarticulate opposition to the existing order, to Blairism and capitalism. Communists must evolve serious tactics to intersect with them and lead them in the direction of genuinely revolutionary politics ●

Mark Fischer
national organiser

Main enemy

In your article "'Left Trotskyism' and imperialism' (Ian Donovan *Weekly Worker* May 13) you refer to an "acute dilemma" for many would-be socialists and a "naked clash of two principles".

I believe the detailed logical argument in the article is built on an implicit, incorrect disposition to side with one "principle" against another. While some on the left downplay the oppression of Kosova Albanians you downplay the massive, barbaric bombing of the peoples in ex-Yugoslavia. Many would-be socialists support the remnants of Yugoslavia against Nato for similar reasons for supporting Iraq and Argentina in the past. It was Nato who set the terms for initiating *their* war - "*the main enemy is at home*".

I find your paper refreshingly thoughtful and democratic compared to many other leftwing papers. Many groups seem to utilise an orthodox 'democratic centralism' to prevent quality debate amongst the left and seemingly try to *impress* people that all their members think exactly the same about politics.

Bob Harding
Norwich

Norman wisdom

I have previously made the point that the principle of self-determination has to be subordinated to unconditional opposition to global imperialism.

Now, according to Ian Mahoney (Letters, June 10), this is a "wretched position" because it meant the subordination of Kosovo's democratic right to secede to the reactionary "war aims" of the Milosevic regime. Marcus Larsen takes up the same theme. At the end of his article, Larsen asserts that "Capitalism could exploit the two million inhabitants of Kosovo for 100 years and still not recoup financially what it has spent in the last few weeks on the war. Surely it is time for people on the left to think again".

Does Larsen not yet understand that it is the oppressed classes who pay for imperialist war and the imperialist classes that always recoup, in their profits from destruction, exploitation and reconstruction? Does he not yet understand that, in a war between a non-imperialist state and the combined forces of imperialism, the principle of revolutionary defeatism simply does not apply? Does he not yet understand that subordinating the 'right to secede' to the unconditional opposition to global imperialism is therefore based on the principle of self-determination for Yugoslavia?

Surely it is time for the 'CPGB' to "think again" on the question of revolutionary defeatism.

Dave Norman
London

Clarification

In my letters to the *Weekly Worker* I was simply trying to point out that a slogan which in one period can advance the cause of workers' liberty can in another be a rallying call for counterrevolution. The particular democratic demand has to be viewed in the concrete situation within which it is advanced. I accept that this is hardly a brilliant or original insight, but for some reason comrade Conrad chooses to ignore it and chase off in another direction.

Working class direct democracy is superior and counterposed in practice to bourgeois representative democracy. The ruling class will attempt to use illusions in the non-class nature of representative government in order to help derail the development of workers' power. Democratic counterrevolution is the preferred option for a ruling class confronted by a proletariat that is becoming self-active. Portugal in 1975 is one example. The campaign for a ballot during the miners' strike is another.

It would seem that comrade Conrad either ignores or downplays this essential contradiction, which can only be tran-

scended by the triumph of proletarian power and destruction of bourgeois rule.

Communists should advance those democratic demands that tend to promote the self-organisation of the working class. It is with this in view that movements for national self-determination in Scotland, Quebec, Basque country, etc should be assessed. None of the above countries are oppressed. The demand for self-determination advanced in these countries is reactionary and should be opposed by communists. However, any attempt to force these countries to remain within a larger state against their will should also be opposed.

Comrade Conrad claims that Scotland is oppressed insofar as the UK does not have a written constitution guaranteeing Scotland's right to self-determination. He thinks that there is a good chance the UK ruling class would sabotage any move towards Scottish independence. I think he is wrong on both counts. It is taken as read that if Scotland votes for independence it will get it. The debate is about whether the Scots will be better off if they ditch the English. The call for independence is not a demand for more democracy. It does not tend to promote working class self-activity. As for the demand for a federal republic - if the Scots gained a parliament with full powers, why support or negotiate a federal Britain rather than a federal Europe?

I think a more potent way to tackle the influence of nationalism is to point to the fact that the working class in Scotland will not advance its cause by cutting itself off from our comrades in England and Wales and that in the light of increasing globalisation we should rather be uniting to drive back the attack on our living standards through common struggle against capital alongside workers throughout Europe and the world. We should demand a European Constituent Assembly and annual parliaments within this context of promoting a working class fightback.

Comrade Conrad does not address my contention that the right of national self-determination was the slogan under which imperialism and decaying Stalinism organised the fragmentation of the Yugoslavian working class. He is also silent on what exactly is the essential character of Nato's assault on Serbia. Is not the war about the right of the major imperialist powers to intervene anywhere in order to protect the interests of finance capital? Should our intervention against the war not have this point at its centre rather than calls for independence for Kosovo (in effect a greater Albania or a Nato protectorate or both) and arming of the KLA (which comrade Conrad accepts will repress the working class if given half a chance)?

I am not suggesting that the CPGB are as far down the opportunist road as the AWL, who are currently promoting resolutions in Labour Party and trade union branches calling simply for independence for Kosovo with no mention of opposition to Nato. But for a British organisation to direct the main fire of its propaganda against the Serbs as Nato bombs drop on the people of Yugoslavia does somewhat smell of craven opportunism.

Sandy McBurney
Glasgow

WP U-turn

In June Workers Power made a new U-turn in its electoral tactics. Regarding the European elections it said: "We call our readers to vote *against Labour*, and for the Scottish Socialist Party, the Alternative Labour list in the East Midlands, and the Socialist Alliance list in the West Midlands headed by Dave Nellist."

This represents a 180-degree shift in the policies of a group that for nearly a quarter of a century has called for a vote for Labour. In the 1997 general election WP demanded no vote for Nellist, Sheridan or any SLP candidate. Voting for small left-reformist or centrist candidates was apparently to endorse non-revolutionary programmes; while voting Labour was to be with the workers' majority.



Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed.

This method was applied everywhere. In France, for example, they voted for the 'socialist' government, despite its measures against workers, youth and immigrants. WP tried in vain to convince 1.6 million radicalised people not to vote for the 'Trotskyist' LO/LCR. A minority in the LRCI French section criticised that method. In early 1999 this faction was bureaucratically expelled.

WP explained that they could only vote for "credible anti-war candidates within the workers' movement ... In all other Euro constituencies we call on readers to spoil their ballot papers by writing, 'Nato out of the Balkans - independence for Kosova'." The workers' party which achieved the most votes - raising an anti-Nato war position - was the SLP. And the only list that had exactly the same slogan on the Kosova war was the 'Weekly Worker'. However, WP refused to vote for either of them.

We are in favour of defending the Albanians (and the Serbs) against ethnic cleansing, but in the context of Nato's major military attack we have to be for the victory of Yugoslavia. We cannot back imperialist pawns. WP explained that 'Weekly Worker' is an "irrelevant sect". This is precisely an irrelevant sectarian response.

In London I voted 'Weekly Worker' despite its small size and the fact that I seriously disagree with its position in favour of arming the pro-Nato KLA and its strategy for a (bourgeois) federal republic. I wanted to support a broad left front against New Labour. But after the SWP, SP, AWL and ILN failed I decided to critically back a group that fought for that perspective.

I call on my former Workers Power comrades to re-examine their position and to demand a public explanation and open debate.

John Stone
LCMRCl

Instant revolution

I note with interest the results of the Euro elections: 'Weekly Worker' (CPGB) - 1,724; SPGB - 1,510.

Specifically, I note that the latter party only stood on one list to achieve a similar share of the vote as garnered by the former in two. Further, I note the former party practices a policy of setting out immediate demands so as to attract more workers to the cause, whilst the latter advocates unconditional and immediate revolution. If the aim of the former is to attract more votes through advocating reform, they seem to have failed. Perhaps it is time for a rethink, if the CPGB are actually interested in full socialism.

Bill Martin
SPGB

Election victory

The Socialist Party, standing as 'Ian Page - Socialist Alternative' regained the Pepys ward in a by-election on June 10 with the support of Lewisham SA comrades.

The local branch has been fully supportive of the SA and wanted to stand as Socialist Alliance, but came under pressure to stand as Socialist Alternative. My view is that the SP in gaining this seat will strengthen those arguing for closer work in building SAs.

We have another by-election on July 15 in Churchdown ward and the AWL have expressed an interest in standing Jill Mountford under the banner of the Socialist Alliance. The AWL appear to be willing to run an open and inclusive campaign, building the SA rather than the party. The SP have offered to help despite the AWL only a year ago calling for a vote for New Labour in Pepys ward - an indication of the defrosting going on in the left.

Nick Long
Lewisham SA

Reclaim Our Rights

What kind of unity?

The second annual general meeting of Reclaim Our Rights - the united campaign to repeal the anti-trade union laws - was held on Saturday June 12. About 50 delegates attended. As chair Bob Crow emphasised, the campaign is "in no way an alternative to the TUC". It was simply about "picking up the vacuum to fight for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws" and would cease to exist once that aim was achieved.

ROR secretary John Hendy gave the national activities report. He announced that 11 national unions had affiliated: Bakers Union, CWU, Natfhe, Aslef, NUJ, NUM, RMT, Ucat, Scottish Prison Officers Association, FBU and the Professional Footballers Association - it is hoped that MSF will follow suit in the near future. Eighty local trade union councils have also affiliated. Hendy spoke about the parliamentary bill which he and Tony Benn are drawing up to repeal the anti-trade union laws. Benn is to take it to the trade union group of MPs to lobby for support, having already gained the backing of the Campaign Group. The bill will be publicly launched at a rally/conference.

Speakers from the floor included several SLP members, although John Hendy was keen to have it known that the campaign is "not an SLP front". Ann Brooks, London SLPer and NUT member, spoke of the problems in getting her union to affiliate, the conference motion having been ruled out of order. Paul Hampton, also of the NUT, said that the leadership had decided that the campaign is "outside the aims of the TUC". It was therefore agreed that John Hendy would produce material showing that the campaign is within the aims of the TUC.

Then there was a question from the floor as to whether a strike committee could affiliate. Bob Crow replied that it would have to be decided whether it was a "bone fide dispute, including whether it has the backing of the national union". He was adamant that "we are not having political parties or broad lefts affiliating". Does this mean that Crow is against unofficial strike committees affiliating? It seems a little bizarre to insist that only those disputes that stay within anti-trade union laws can join an anti-trade union law campaign.

Lee Rock, PCSU Employment Services London, rose to disagree with Crow and argued that the United Campaign needs to be a broader one, including rank and file bodies and political parties. He argued that it was ridiculous that the SWP, with such a large number of trade union activists, should be excluded and that "it is a mistake to just go down the road of the official trade union movement". Unofficial bodies need to be involved. He proposed that the draft constitution be amended to delete the restriction to "bone fide trade union organisations" alone joining.

Mark Sandell of the Free Trade Unions Campaign strongly opposed Lee Rock's amendment. Blocking the open affiliation of political parties and rank and file movements is perhaps a little surprising for a leading member of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty (although he omitted to mention his political affiliation). Yet comrade Sandell insisted that the campaign should only allow representation from official trade union bodies and backed Crow's line that this had to be the criterion of deciding what was "bone fide". From the significant number of AWL members present it is clear that



No to May Day 2000

they consider it right that their own organisation participates under the FTUC umbrella, while the right of others to affiliate is blocked.

Comrades Hendy and Crow want to keep firm control of the campaign while marginalising large sections of the left. The AWL must surely recognise this. Why then does it support them? Those with experience of the SLP can attest to the fact that conniving at the exclusion of others is no guarantee that Scargill and his allies will not eventually mete out the same treatment to you. Opposition to comrade Rock's proposal also came from comrade Brooks and fellow SLP member Alec McFadden; Crow was clearly reluctant to allow voting on the amendment, but he need not have worried, as it was soundly defeated with only five voting for - which included to their credit Socialist Outlook members.

The constitution was thereby voted through unamended and the officers voted in unopposed. Vic Turner is therefore honorary president, with Tony Benn and Shirley Winter from Magnet strikers sharing the post of honorary vice-president.

Bob Crow then addressed the meeting on the complete inadequacy of the so-called trade union 'rights' granted by Blair. He also spoke about the May Day demonstration and referred several times to "misreporting in certain papers" that the ROR campaign had tried to hijack the demo. He went on to express his anger that the May Day committee had refused to allow Scargill speaking rights at the rally on the basis that he is a leader of a political party. This is of course the same sort of rotten criterion that com-

rades Crow and Hendy apply to others. But when it comes to the SLP it is a different story.

So annoyed are the leadership of the 'united' campaign at the allegations of hijacking and the denial of speaking rights to Scargill that they have taken the decision "to keep away from such close involvement in the May Day demo next year and instead build our own march in September". Crow went as far as to say that "next time we should organise our own thing and have complete control of it". Hendy agreed with him that the reason things went wrong on the day was "because we were not in charge". With two fingers up to the CPB spoilers on the May Day committee they have decided to ply their own course. Delegates backed this proposal. Instead of fighting to build a mass, inclusive demo on international workers day they have opted for an 'Arthur day' in September.

With just over an hour left for debate on the strategy document and the way forward it was unfortunate, though perhaps predictable, that John Foster, general secretary of the NUJ, was allowed to drone on for 20 minutes. However, there was still time for Shirley Winter of Magnet strikers

to make a short, but uplifting and defiant, speech aimed at the openly anti-working class attitude of New Labour. The strategy paper presented by John Hendy was approved and the meeting ended.

Outside in the corridor the left produced its papers and became the left again. Unfortunately the division between being a trade unionist and a politician remains as much an article of faith for the Trotskyist left as it was for the old CPGB. It is only when you get outside a trade union meeting that they tell you what party they are a member of.

The Reclaim Our Rights campaign has the potential to form an important area of struggle against the anti-trade union laws. However, it can only lead an effective fightback if it builds an alternative within the workers' movement to the rotten misleadership of the Blairite TUC. It appears however that, in line with Scargill's general approach, comrades Hendy and Crow would rather win general secretaries than the rank and file ●

Anne Murphy

Website

Our newly revamped website carries a comprehensive archive section including extensive background reports on the SLP's degeneration.
www.duntone.demon.co.uk/CPGB/

Class War sell out

James and Becky accept a bourgeois institution. Congratulations nevertheless - Tom

action

■ CPGB seminars

London: Sunday June 20, 5pm - 'Trotsky, anarchists, social democrats and the dictatorship of the proletariat', using Hal Draper's *The dictatorship of the proletariat from Marx to Lenin* as a study guide.

Sunday June 27, 5pm - 'Anatomy of the proletariat', using Hal Draper's *Karl Marx's Theory of revolution* Vol 2 as a study guide. Call 0181-459 7146 details.

Manchester: Monday June 21, 7.30pm - 'Theories of crisis in overview'. E-mail: cpgb2@aol.com.

■ Party wills

The CPGB has forms available for you to include the Party and the struggle for communism in your will. Write for details.

■ Socialist Alliance (London region)

To get involved, contact Box 22, 136-138 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS, or ring Anne Murphy on 0973-231 620.

■ Sheridan MSP

Tommy Sheridan speaks. Thursday June 24, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, London (nearest tube - Holburn). Organised by the Socialist Party.

■ Support Tameside careworkers

Support Group meets every Monday, 7pm, at the Station pub, Warrington Street, Ashton under Lyne. Donations and solidarity to Tameside Strike Support (Hardship) Fund, 15 Springvale Close, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.

■ AWL school

Debates with CPGB: Saturday June 19, 6.30pm, 'Revolutionaries and democracy', University of London Union, Malet Street.

Sunday June 20, 11am, 'What is imperialism?', South Camden School, Charrington St, Euston.

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Eurotalking

While the Euro election votes were being counted, the CPGB's regular monthly aggregate provided the opportunity for comrades to discuss the election campaign throughout Britain.

The biggest bone of contention arose around a section of Mark Fischer's column in the *Weekly Worker* ('Assessing Euro '99', June 10). Comrade Fischer, CPGB national organiser, dealt with the collapse of our Socialist Alliance partners, which had forced the CPGB to stand alone (under the 'Weekly Worker' banner) in the Euro elections in the London and the North West regions. He then went on to make a call for support for other lists where the CPGB was not standing, expressing critical support for the Scottish Socialist Party, the Socialist Alliance in West Midlands, and the Alternative Labour in East Midlands. The column continued: "Elsewhere the SLP could be given *extremely* critical support" (original emphasis).

A minority of comrades were opposed to what they called "unconditional support" for Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party. They considered this to be a reversal of what the CPGB had long campaigned for, one comrade in particular emphasising that our aim should be "to kill" the SLP. They asserted that if this was so, it was inexplicable and contradictory to call for a vote for the SLP. Scargill is a labour dictator and would lead the working class to disaster. The Euro elections could increase that danger. It is not in these comrades' view correct, therefore, to bolster the SLP by calling for a vote for it; such a stand makes us appear inconsistent.

Comrades from the majority noted that the call for "extremely critical support" for SLP lists was only for those Euro regions where the CPGB, the Scottish Socialist Party, the Alternative Labour List, or the Socialist Alliance were not standing. In effect, five of the Euro election regions (Eastern, North East, South East, South West, and Wales) out of 11 in Britain; in these five regions the SLP received a total of 27,959 votes, about a third of its total of 86,749. The major reasons for making such a call, outlined by several comrades, was to underline our non-sectarian method and expose the bankruptcy of the old left. After all, both the Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Party, to name but two groups, failed to make any call as to which lists members and supporters, let alone the working class as a whole, should vote for in the country as a whole.

No comrades disagreed with the aim of *positively* 'killing' all sects and sectarian projects. Therefore we want a non-sectarian approach. All communists, left socialists and partisans of the working class should be fused in one party under true democratic centralism - unity of action, freedom of criticism. Evidently the mass of those who voted SLP on June 10 are part of our *natural* constituency. Whatever we think of the leadership, those who vote SLP are not to be mourned, but organised. Hence, some thought the minority's approach of not calling for an SLP vote anywhere smacked of leftism.

Our organisation beyond two regions, London and the North West, where full CPGB lists were standing, is virtually non-existent. While the CPGB did stand in what were the equivalent of 20 Euro constituencies (incorporating well over 100 parliamentary constituencies) following abandonment of the field by our al-

lies in the Socialist Alliances in these areas, the party's weakness beyond these two regions was of course illustrated by the call for a critical vote for the SSP, the Alternative Labour List, and the Socialist Alliance, as well as an "extremely" critical vote for the SLP in those regions where none of these was putting up a list. Whilst minority comrades accepted that the Party should indeed have made its call in relation to the left lists covering four regions, they were opposed to the call for a vote for the SLP in the remaining five regions, especially, as they, wrongly, asserted we had previously called for no vote to be given to Scargill's lists.

Minority comrades were challenged on the special status they accorded the SLP. Other comrades refuted their contention that the SLP was now so thoroughly reactionary that it could never be supported in elections. No articles in the *Weekly Worker* have at any time called for no vote to be given to Scargill's party on a blanket basis; the fact remains that the CPGB put forward no conditions when arguing for support for the SLP and Socialist Party candidates in the May 1 1997 general election. What in the SLP had changed materially in the interim? Very little. Had there been a fundamental qualitative break in the SLP? No. Minority comrades cited the undemocratic internal regime of the SLP. But as comrades from the majority noted; the internal regimes of the SWP and the Socialist Party are nothing to write home about, and indeed that of the New Labour Party may be more democratic formally than any of them. Still, the minority comrades would not object to a call for votes to the SWP and SPEW on the basis of their lack of internal democracy, would they? So why use this criterion to reject a call for votes for the SLP? Some comrades present concluded that minority comrades' objections to the call for the vote for the SLP had a moralistic, not to say naive, tinge to them.

The left got it wrong, mightily so, in the Euro elections. The working

class, which each sect purports to aim to lead, was given no indication of how to vote in most of Britain. In addition, indications from the SWP or SPEW where they did give them were sorely lacking any coherent argumentation, let alone Marxist analysis. In calling for a vote for the SLP in the way it did, according to majority of comrades, the CPGB made clear its antipathy to sectarianism and avoided both passive abstentionism and political silence.

Comrades from the minority were adamant that *unconditional* support for the SLP was anyway impossible. They appeared to be content, however, that comrade Fischer's article called for "extremely critical" support; it was just that support should have been *conditional*, too. Other comrades derided such a suggestion. They were keen to know what *particular conditions* minority comrades had in mind. When challenged over a specific case, that of Dave Rix, an SLP union official in Aslef who trounced the left Labourite Lew Adams for the post of general secretary, the minority comrades were in some difficulty. Surely it was of benefit to the working class, argued majority comrades, that Blairism was challenged and beaten. Therefore Rix's election had to be supported. But minority comrades still wondered if it would be better to have put conditions on support for Rix.

One minority group comrade suggested that the Humanist Party was closer to the CPGB than the SLP. It was pointed out to this comrade that the Humanist Party was not a working class party. The SLP still is. Support for the SLP from our quarter is like the rope supporting the hanged man, as one comrade put it, quoting Lenin. The left's crisis of auto-Labourism contains all sorts of possibilities: moralistic boycottism, anarchistic abstentionism, aloofness, localism and organisational disintegration. Our task is to resolve the crisis positively, however. We cannot overcome sectarianism with sectarianism ●

Tom Ball

Socialist Alliance (London) Challenge delayed - once again

As agreed at its last meeting, the Socialist Alliance (London) electoral bloc reconvened on June 15 to discuss the European elections and prospects for a united socialist challenge for the Greater London Authority elections next spring.

In a sign that does not bode well for such a challenge, only half of the organisations - the CPGB, Socialist Outlook and the Independent Labour Network - turned up. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty had indicated it would attend, but was absent. The SWP, for reasons not given, failed to turn up and the Socialist Party in England and Wales also did not show. The failure of SPEW to attend is particularly strange, as the meeting was originally suggested by its representative, Julie Donovan, the chair of the election bloc.

The meeting took place in the shadow of the ignominious collapse of the Socialist Alliance's challenge at the European elections in London. After the SWP was thrown into crisis by Scargill's announcement that he was to head the Socialist Labour Party's London list, one by one the organisations withdrew, leaving the CPGB alone to stand. The low vote of the 'Weekly Worker' list, despite the necessity of our intervention, reflected the weak position of the whole left following the buckling of the SA bloc.

Chairing the meeting, comrade Marcus Larsen of the CPGB suggested an agenda of discussing the European elections, the status of the bloc and the impending GLA elections. Immediately, a comrade from the ILN suggested we end the meeting as the SWP and the SP, the "main players", as he described them, were not present.

Comrade Larsen considered this indicative of the same method that led to the collapse of the Alliance in the lead-up to the European election. While it was true that the SWP was a major factor, its ongoing programmatic crisis was rendering it an unreliable ally with regard to elections. The 'anti-electoral' faction on the political committee might have been strengthened by the relatively poor showing of the left outside Scotland. It is also entirely possible for the SWP to decide to go it alone, he added.

Critical of both the SWP and of his own organisation, Socialist Outlook's Alan Thornett said that it had been wrong to stand down in deference to Scargill. Quite rightly, he argued that if we had stood united, we would have beaten the SLP. For comrade Thornett, as for most others in the meeting, what was important was not 'star' candidates, but a credible alternative. Comrade Thornett

pointed to the very real space that exists for a socialist electoral challenge to New Labour that genuinely unites the left. The electoral success of the Scottish Socialist Party reflected this, as does the crisis in Labour's vote in their 'old Labour' heartlands.

Discussion briefly centred on the content of what was 'credible'. For social democratic elements in the alliance (the ILN), credibility lay in developing a minimal platform attractive to "environmental activists" and adequate for the "immediate needs of the working class". In other words, a sub-reformist programme.

Speaking for the CPGB, comrade John Bridge stressed that what was important and credible was what was real. And in London what is real is the coming together of the six organisations that have so far expressed a real interest in united electoral work on a socialist platform. There was no use in watering down our programme for phantom rightwing or green elements that have yet to show themselves. This is particularly the case now that the Greens have won an MEP. They will have no pressing interest in joint electoral work.

To underline the concrete basis upon which we must approach Labour and Green elements, comrade Bridge argued that the behaviour of the Socialist Alliance in the West Midlands was precisely what not to do. With Christine Oddy breaking from the Labour Party's European slate and approaching the SA, all manner of compromises could legitimately have been made to incorporate a concrete break from Labour (with the right of each organisation to present its own "distinctive and separate" propaganda). Instead, the Socialist Alliance split, and some comrades campaigned for Oddy, who stood as independent Labour, vastly outpolling the list headed by comrade Dave Nellist.

Comrade Thornett expressed a common understanding that there was a real mood for unity and that is what we need, as no group could be successful alone. A comrade from the ILN said that a credible alternative was urgent, for there is the very real danger that the socialist left and the working class as any sort organised force could be thrown back to levels existing in the United States.

It was agreed that the meeting should not decide anything premature. Comrades from all three organisations present are open to any development that will successfully unite the socialist left in London, and will cooperate with any non-sectarian proposals to that end ●

Marcus Larsen

Communist University '99

A full week of debate, argument and political controversy at the CPGB's annual school
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Teach-ins or gaggings?

From teach-ins to troops out' is the title of an interesting article by Martin Smith in *Socialist Worker* (June 5). Comrade Smith discusses the growth of the mass movement against the Vietnam war and cites approvingly the role played by the 'teach-ins' which were initiated in US colleges during 1965. These were open discussions and debates, without time limit, which involved both supporters and opponents of the war. "Through protest and debate, we can forge a new anti-war movement. We have to start building that now," the *Socialist Worker* piece concludes.

The article is interesting because the practice of the Socialist Workers Party with respect to the Balkans war has everywhere been diametrically opposed to the methods described by Smith. This phenomenon has been brought into sharpest focus in areas like Manchester, where distance from the House of Commons committee rooms and left Labour MPs such as Tony Benn and Alice Mahon has placed the SWP as the leadership of the anti-war campaigns.

The *Weekly Worker* (April 22) reported the inaugural rally of Manchester Against War in the Balkans. This was addressed by speakers from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Labour left and the SWP, but no contributions from the audience were permitted. No discussion took place. At this rally, and at the subsequent regional anti-war demonstration in Manchester, the platform rhetoric was restricted to opposition to Nato's bombing of Yugoslavia. The just struggle of the Kosovars for independence was not mentioned. At the MAWITB committee meetings, demands from internationalist socialists that Kosovars be allowed to speak from the campaign's platforms were brushed aside by the SWP/CND majority. So much for the example of the teach-ins.

At the close of the April 24 Manchester demonstration, the suppression of the issue of the democratic rights of the Kosovars was highlighted in a manner which was almost surreal. After the 'usual suspects' had spoken, a Kurdish speaker was called to the rostrum. He delivered a passionate speech on the oppression of his people by the Turkish state, and he described the Kurds' bitter struggle for nationhood. The unarticulated thread between these speakers was the message that Nato was *not* bombing its member state, Turkey, which has sustained a murderous war against the Kurds. Of course, it was quite proper that a Kurdish militant should be invited onto the platform of an anti-imperialist demonstration, but *not* as a fig-leaf for the exclusion of a Kosovar.

SWP sensitivities were again challenged at a public meeting on May 27 entitled, appositely, 'Censorship and the Balkans war'. Twice during the week preceding this meeting, the CPGB had requested the facility to speak at the event, emphasising its action in mounting a working class challenge to bomber Blair in the European elections. No reply was received and last-hour requests for an answer, prior to the commencement of the meeting, met only with a succession of 'I know nothing' pleas from the organisers. Bearing in mind the subject of the meeting, and the fact that the star-billed speaker, Tam Dalyell MP, had not showed up, it was unsurprising that this event should have closed with half an hour of contributions from the floor. And, indeed, it was equally unsurprising that none

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"There is only one trend which has put itself outside of the workers' movement, and that is the social-chauvinists; the cheerleaders for bomber Blair and imperialism"

.....

of the raised hands seen by the SWP chair brought forth a speech supporting the Kosovar struggle.

The rottenness at the heart of the SWP's politics spewed forth at its own forum, 'The new imperialism: Nato after the war', held in Manchester on June 12. This event had been publicised in leaflets distributed on the coaches to the national anti-war demonstration in London on June 5. The leaflet had, as usual, radiated the SWP's time-honoured "All welcome" embrace. Once again, actions belie the words.

Amongst the throng of left paper sellers outside the meeting hall, was a lone comrade from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, who was distributing an 'Open letter to the SWP'. The contents of the letter can accurately be described as an antithesis of the SWP's politics on the earlier phase of the Balkans crisis. It opened with a quotation from Trotsky in 1913 that is highly pertinent and worth repeating: "An individual, a group, a party or a class that is capable of 'objectively' picking its nose while it watches men drunk with blood, and incited from above, massacring defenceless people is condemned by history to rot and to become worm-eaten while it is still alive. On the other hand, a party or a class that rises up against every abominable action wherever it has occurred, as vigorously and unhesitatingly as a living organism reacts to protect its eyes when they are threatened with external injury - such a party or class is sound at heart" (*On the Balkan wars*).

The letter correctly lambastes the SWP for "talking down ... Milosevic's genocidal war against the Kosovars". It suggests that the SWP "wants" to blame Nato for this "crime against humanity" and, justifiably, charges that "a socialist who blames

Nato for the ethnic cleansing becomes a moron in the face of the facts". Most telling of all is the reference to Alex Callinicos's piece in *Socialist Worker*, in which he argues against Kosovar independence: "Arming the KLA and backing Kosovan independence would make the situation worse ... An Albanian nationalist army, hardened by war and enjoying mass support in refugee camps, could threaten the integrity of half a dozen states throughout the region." All communists would be bound to endorse the condemnatory observation that "Callinicos has balanced the rights of the oppressed to fight against the 'integrity' of the capitalist states in the region, and come down on the side of capitalist integrity". The SWP's failings and inconsistencies on self-determination, the national question, and the duties of revolutionary socialists towards the oppressed, are all devastatingly exposed.

Just as tellingly, of the AWL's politics, however is that which is omitted from this polemical broadside. This of course is the crucial point that the necessary attitude of revolutionary socialists and communists towards all of the above questions has nothing whatsoever to do with altruism. And I have little doubt that Leon Trotsky will have gone on to emphasise this in the quoted work. It is, of course, *everything* to do with the championing by the working class of the struggles of the oppressed, and of the project of human liberation, as the means by which the working class seizes political power and makes the international socialist revolution.

The laddered stocking that resembles the AWL's politics is revealed by its approach to the question of the revolutionary attitude to imperialism and its armed wing, Nato. Not for the AWL is our main enemy at home: "The main feature of this war is the Serb war against the Kosovars," it asserts. The AWL will not join anti-war demonstrations that include Serbian nationalists, it announces. References to Nato's air war are brief in the extreme. The internationalist demand,

'Nato out of the Balkans', is conspicuous by its absence.

The AWL's approach to the 'Stop the bombing' demand has ladders within ladders: "We agree with you that Nato bombing of *civilians* in the Balkans must be opposed," they concede (emphasis added). But this concession is soon qualified: "Nato's military policy is mainly to smash up the Serbian economy, bombing bridges, factories and power installations ... A Serb official has claimed that Nato's bombing has killed over 300 people."

The question that remains unanswered is, does the AWL, having declined to demand that Nato gets out of the Balkans, "want" Nato to stay there only to undertake ground operations? Or does it indeed have no problem with the 'clinical' bombing of economic targets, together with the collateral damage caused by 'errors'. I see a distinct softness here, towards the world oppressor.

It was hardly surprising that the 'Open letter' attracted a rapid response. The SWP's stewards emerged from the hall to order the AWL comrade off the premises. (Ah - the role of the accidental in politics - all of the paper sellers were only stationed in the lobby because of a near-monsoon lashing down on their usual spot on the building's steps.) When the comrade replied that he was about to move into the hall to attend the meeting in any case, he was firmly told that he would not be allowed into the meeting. The explanation given for this disgraceful banning was that this was an "anti-war meeting and the AWL is not against the imperialist war". A CPGB comrade intervened to call for a retraction of this ban on the expression of sincerely held views within the workers' movement. He received the response that the AWL had placed itself "outside the workers' movement by refusing to oppose the Nato war".

There was a delicious irony in all of this. At what had been - insofar as it could be in view of time limits on speeches - a truly 'open forum' on

the Balkans war - ie, that held under the auspices of the North West Socialist Alliance, in Manchester on May 15 - an AWL comrade had forcefully expressed the view that comrades of the Socialist Labour Party "have no place in this meeting". This had been in response to the forthright espousal of the politics of Yugoslav defencism that had come from the SLP's representatives.

But back to June 12 - it did not end there. Down the corridor shuffled the imposing political figure of comrade John Nicholson, convenor of the Greater Manchester Socialist Alliance; chair of Manchester Against War in the Balkans; and a billed speaker at the 'forum'. When asked to intervene on behalf of the debarred GMSA affiliate, Nicholson muttered, "I'll see Sean" (the SWP full-timer). He entered the hall. He spoke to Sean. He walked on, to his seat on the platform. He did not return to report the outcome of his representations. The ban remained operative.

Important lessons are to be drawn from this sorry saga. There is only one trend which has put itself outside of the workers' movement, and that is the social-chauvinists; the cheerleaders for bomber Blair and imperialism; those who are the sworn enemies of independent working class politics. Even so, within appropriate forums, we still need to engage with these class traitors. This is because they retain mass influence within a class that currently exists only sociologically. It is dangerous and wrong to speak of trends within the class which stand for workers power and socialism as being outside of the workers' movement.

The seeds of the new are contained within the old. The Communist Party will not spring immaculate from the head of Zeus, or anyone else. Its core will come out of the revolutionary left which presently exists. It will emerge out of the dialectic - from debate; from united fronts; from polemic; from struggle. It certainly will not come from exclusions ●

Derek Hunter

Euro bolt from blue

The Tories' staggering victory in last week's European Union elections hit New Labour like a bolt from the blue. The Conservative Party's 36% of the vote earned it 36 out of the 84 seats, while Labour's support fell to a remarkable 28%, and its number of seats was slashed from 62 in 1994 to just 29.

Despite last month's local elections, when the Tories were running Labour close, Sunday night's results were completely unexpected. Blair's party is still running high in the opinion polls, with his own rating way above William Hague's. But the very low turnout of 24% was a significant factor. Britain's first national election under proportional representation also saw the UK Independence Party pick up three seats; the Green Party two.

Like the Tories, they were campaigning against the euro - the theme which dominated an otherwise low-key contest. Clearly Blair was more than a little distracted by the Balkans war, but what cost him was Labour's virtual silence on the single currency, which Hague had ensured was the central question.

With opposition to Britain's membership of European monetary union at 61%, according to a recent *Guardian*/ICM poll, Blair's gamble on waiting for gradual acceptance of the euro in Britain to come through its successful adoption by the 'first wave' countries is now seen to have failed. Not wanting to speak out openly in favour of membership of Emu for fear of losing out electorally, Blair has been biding his time, hoping to eventually take advantage of a change in public opinion before launching a referendum campaign.

Big business has been banking on Blair being able to pull it off. It knows of no other strategy than backing closer European convergence. The Tories' Euroscepticism is viewed as a dead end by British capital's most dynamic sections, which have mostly switched its support away from the traditional party of the bourgeoisie to a suitably 'modernised' New Labour.

But Blair's grand plan of first fashioning an acceptable replacement for the Tories and then introducing a totally new politics through whole-

sale constitutional reform has at last hit a snag. The EU election results have not only thrown into question his 'softly, softly' approach to the euro, but called into doubt his ability to implement PR for Westminster elections. Both are vital for his scheme of repositioning Labour in a dominant centre coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

So Blair's honeymoon has suddenly come to an end. Not in the way the left has been stubbornly predicting for more than two years - through a "crisis of expectations" amongst the working class, giving rise to a mass upsurge of discontent from below - but through the strengthening of an anti-working class narrow chauvinism which Hague now intends to wield for all it is worth. Such a turn of events reflects the left's dismal failure even more than Blair's own change of fortunes.

All this could mean a rapid return from the wilderness for Peter Mandelson, whose sure-handed spin-doctoring had previously served Blair so well ●

Alan Fox

*Indonesian elections***Reform incomplete**

Just over a year after president Suharto was toppled from power by a mass movement for democracy and *reformasi total*, Indonesia has held relatively free and fair elections. The local elite and international financial interests are breathing more easily now. However, the plethora of democratic, national and economic problems facing Indonesia are far from being resolved and could cause a new eruption at any moment.

With almost 60% of the vote counted, Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) looks certain to be the largest fraction in the new parliament. Megawati's party has so far gained 35.8% of the vote. In what will be a shock to some, the second party is likely to be Golkar, the widely discredited 'above class' movement of ex-president Suharto and of incumbent BJ Habibie. Golkar has around 21% of the vote as counted.

Despite the lead of Megawati's party, it is as yet unclear just what coalition will form the government. A bloc of the three predominant opposition figures seems most likely with Amien Rais's National Mandate Party (PAN) gaining 7.76% and the National Awakening Party (PKB) of Islamic leader Abdurrahman Wahid, registering 12.2%. Nevertheless, given that the military has an uncontested 38 seats in the 500-seat parliament, it may yet be possible for Golkar to squeak back supported by the army and smaller factions. The chance of this is increased, given that late returning voting figures will predominantly come from rural areas where Golkar is stronger.

However, the Islamic forces each have their own agenda. PKB leader Wahid told *The Australian* newspaper: "If you don't elect Megawati you will have riots. If you do elect Megawati you face the same problem" (June 15). He said Megawati's candidacy would be opposed by some muslim groups, which are firmly opposed to a woman becoming president. Wahid also insisted there were problems with alternative candidates, including incumbent president Habibie, Amien Rais and armed forces commander general Wiranto.

Senior PAN officials have said its leader Amien Rais had ruled out any coalition with either Golkar or the PDI-P. However, this is surely more to do with positioning in the lead-up to coalition negotiations.

This election, while far short of a revolution, is born of a revolutionary situation. Its timing and conduct are designed to stabilise Indonesia under liberal bourgeois hegemony as the dominant families and their system try to survive an economic crisis, the toppling of a despised dictator and centripetal forces from armed national liberation movements. Because of this background, given that the political process is attempting to placate the mass democratic movement, the elections are marked with an imprint from below. There is a mass hunger for real change.

The vote was on the basis of a party list system: elections were by proportional representation with people being eligible to vote at 17, or younger if married. The day of the vote, June 7, was a national holiday in order to overcome the culture of employers overseeing how their workers vote - normally for Golkar. In addition, prisoners are eligible to stand - a right



The struggle continues

denied UK subjects after the stunning election of IRA hunger striker and martyr Bobby Sands. The left-wing Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD) put their imprisoned chairman on the top of its list in Jakarta.

According to most pundits, what has been remarkable about the probable victory of Megawati is her total lack of policy in the lead-up to the polls. In fact, the only policy statements she made seemed to place her to the right of the incumbent, president Habibie. Speaking to *Time* magazine about the nature of change in Indonesia in the week before the election Megawati said: "Don't talk about radical change in this place. There are so many islands in Indonesia where conditions are very fragile. Radical change will only make things more difficult ... Problems in East Timor have developed to the stage that [independence] might encourage others to follow. The current government has taken steps too hastily. This might create new problems in the future, destabilise the entire country and prevent us from getting out of this economic crisis."

Megawati has even made conciliatory noises regarding prosecution for corruption of the man who removed her from the leadership of the PDI in 1996, ex-president Suharto. The new Indonesian president will be elected in November by both houses of parliament and, depending on the outcome of the elections, there is the possibility of Megawati running for president with general Wiranto, currently defence minister, as her vice-president. Wiranto was head of the armed forces under Suharto.

This should come as no surprise. Megawati, daughter of the first Indonesian president, Sukarno, comes from praetorian stock and is a confirmed nationalist, staunchly opposed to the liberation movements in East

Timor, West Papua and Aceh in northern Sumatra. Her successful election, far from being of concern to the ruling class, is perhaps the best outcome for a neo-liberal capitalist and nationalist Indonesia. Change to prevent change is preferable for the country's tiny and immensely rich elite. And they are not alone.

According to Martin Anidjar, an Asian debt analyst at Wall Street stockbroker JP Morgan, "The best result would be a majority vote for the opposition, not because I think the Golkar party would be bad, but because there is already too much hope in the population for an end to this regime."

According to Reuters, most financial analysts believe that "a win by the ruling Golkar party could spark riots by those opposed to the party that ruled Indonesia with an iron hand under former president Suharto. Rioting would likely sour interest among investors who crave stability" (June 3). It is in this context that Megawati has been downplaying popular expectations of a PDI-P-led government. However, whereas Blair was able to degrade hopes in a Labour government in Britain, it is unlikely that Megawati will have the same success. Yet much of Megawati's politicking has been designed to placate the military, especially on the issue of East Timor. While she seems to have succeeded with the military, the appetite of her supporters on the ground will not be so easily satisfied.

A prominent commentator on Indonesian affairs, who writes anonymously for *Joyo Indonesian News*, visited East Timor at the time of Megawati's election stop there; this surprising move on the last days of the campaign (given that the province only has four seats) was done purely for the consumption of the military. Nevertheless, the popular

mood is all too evident.

While Megawati was visiting Nobel peace prize winner bishop Belo, "A small group of young men painted in PDI-P's red peered through bishop Belo's iron gate surrounding his compound. 'Are you PDI supporters?' 'Yes,' they responded. 'Are you pro-integration?' 'No, we want independence.' 'But Megawati has not spoken out in favour of independence. So why are you here supporting her?' 'We're here to let her know how we feel and what we want.'"

Interestingly then, the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* warned that the "vote may spark [a] crisis of expectations" (June 4 1999). Expectations in Megawati exist not just as the figurehead of opposition to the current government, but to decades of Golkar rule.

And it is with this in mind that any revolutionary force must place itself strategically. The PRD, which called for a government of the reactionaries - Rais, Megawati and Gus Dur - during the revolutionary upsurge that toppled Suharto has thankfully altered course.

Its minimum demands now include: the complete withdrawal of the military from political life, the prosecution of Suharto and Habibie and the state confiscation of 'ill-gotten' gains, a 100% pay rise, self-determination for East Timor, Aceh and West Papua and for the formation of local committees fighting for a transitional government for total reform.

As one of the 48 parties which successfully registered for these elections, the PRD stood, so far gaining 54,259 votes (0.08% - exactly the same percentage as that achieved by the 'Weekly Worker' list in the June 10 EU elections). In Jakarta, the PRD's vote is 0.2%. While this may seem disappointing, for a small organisation facing a situation where the working class and most radical elements in the population have big expectations in Megawati, the result is not surprising. It is how the PRD and any other revolutionary elements position themselves in the period after the election that will be most important.

If Golkar manage to squeeze back into power there will be all hell to pay. Denying victory to Megawati and the PDI-P through a rural democratic counterrevolution will surely provoke another social upheaval. Megawati has shown herself quite capable of maintaining her millions of supporters when they feel she is leading them forward. But the masses would instantly escape her control if they took to the streets.

Any outcome that unfairly denies the PDI-P victory is to relight the fire. The revolutionary situation will then take its own course.

Yet a Megawati victory does not necessarily amount to a peaceful resolution - though this is possible. Like Pandora's box, a Megawati victory will unleash all sorts of uncontrollable class, national, democratic and reactionary forces. Indonesia is therefore still a country where the ruling class cannot rule in the old way and where the masses refuse to be ruled in the old way ●

Marcus Larsen

Fighting fund

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Robbie Rix

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A nod and a wink

Dave Spencer discusses the dispute in the West Midlands Socialist Alliance over the candidacy of former MEP Christine Oddy

Supporters of Coventry Socialist Alliance have been involved in two rival campaigns during the Euro elections - those of the West Midlands Socialist Alliance (WMSA) and of expelled Labour MEP Christine Oddy.

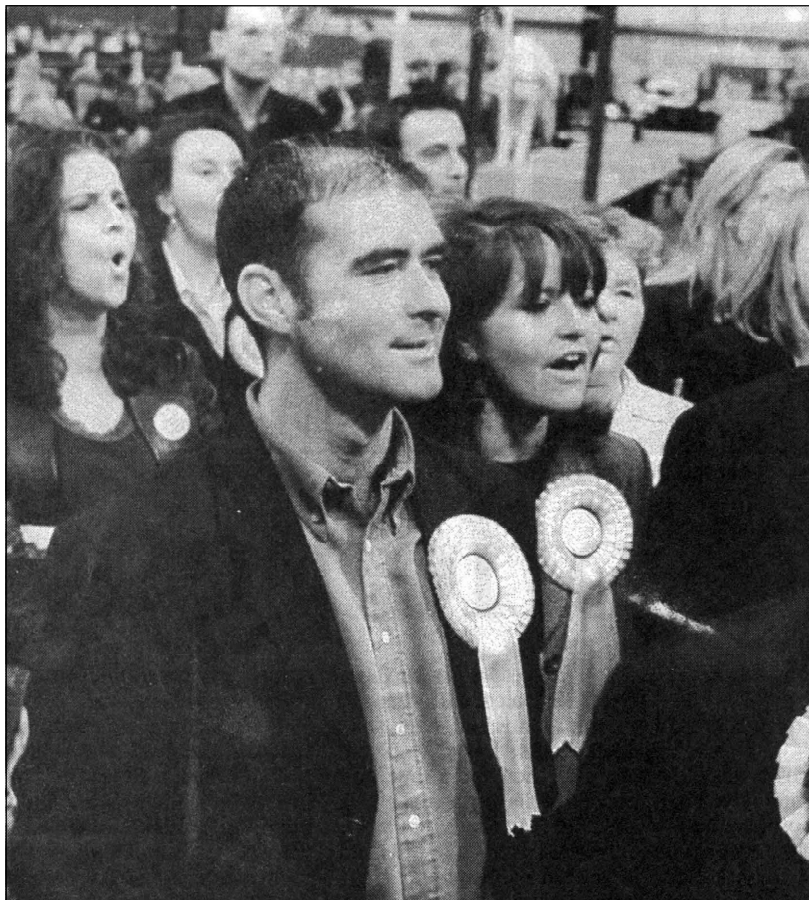
The West Midlands was the only region in which a Socialist Alliance slate was eventually offered after slates in London and the North West had been withdrawn. In the event the WMSA slate of eight comrades consisted four from the Socialist Party, two from the Socialist Workers Party, one from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and one from the Democratic Labour Party, based in Walsall. Dave Nellist was listed as number one.

I would argue that the decision to go ahead in the West Midlands, as to pull out elsewhere, was taken in the national committees of the left groups involved, not at grass roots level. In other words the Euro-electoral alliance was a different project from building local alliances or even the national SA. Thus the SWP were part of the slate, but have no presence in local alliances. The SP used the banner of the SA where in local elections they would not dream of doing so. WMSA was a flag of convenience for the left groups.

The other campaign was that of Christine Oddy, the Labour MEP for the Coventry and Warwickshire area who was effectively deselected by the Labour Party, being placed at number seven on their list. This was because her politics are left of centre and she refused to be 'on message'. Eventually she was expelled from the Labour Party for not campaigning hard enough during the May local elections. She declared that she would stand as independent Labour. There was a lot of anger among Labour supporters in the Coventry area at the way she had been treated - even the lord mayor was quoted in the local press as saying that she was unhappy with the decision.

Christine Oddy made her announcement at the last minute, as did the WMSA, given the collapse in London and the North West. Some comrades felt that there should have been an attempt to unite the two campaigns. However, the question would have arisen as to who should go at number one on the list: Dave Nellist or Christine Oddy. The attitude of WMSA is fairly clear from page two of *The All Red and Green*, national bulletin of the SA, where joint convenor of WMSA Pete McLaren states: "Christine Oddy may take a few votes off us ... We actually feel confident that our balanced list, with Dave Nellist at the helm, will prove more attractive to protest voters." On page one Pete McLaren had already stated in upbeat mood: "WMSA not only expects to win back its £5,000 deposit, but it also feels there is a real chance of returning a socialist to the European parliament." In other words Christine Oddy was a minor irritant to a confident WMSA campaign.

The actual results were: Christine Oddy - 38,849 votes; WMSA - 7,203 votes and a lost deposit. Christine Oddy achieved 24.86% of the vote in Coventry North West, 24.50% in Coventry North East and 22.56% in Cov-



No Scottish turn for Nellist

entry South. WMSA achieved 4.31%, 4.35% and 6.05% in the same constituencies, Coventry South being Dave Nellist's traditional area. Even in the north of the West Midlands region, in Wolverhampton where Christine Oddy is little known, she still polled more than WMSA and the SLP combined.

I make no comment on the whys and the wherefores of the results, except to point out that Pete McLaren's assessment was clearly wrong.

Pete McLaren also got something else wrong in my opinion, and it is here that a serious dispute in the Coventry SA started. Many supporters of the Coventry SA backed Christine Oddy and not WMSA. However, when Pete McLaren produced a draft version of the Coventry SA June bulletin for the committee of six to look at, there was no mention of Christine Oddy at all - either that she had been expelled from the Labour Party or that she was standing. Two members of the committee asked for three sentences to be included in the bulletin, which was mainly concerned with how comrades could support the WMSA campaign. These are the three sentences:

"Some Coventry Socialist Alliance supporters will be supporting Christine Oddy MEP in the Euro-elections. She is standing as independent Labour in protest at the appalling treatment of her by New Labour. Anybody who wishes to contact the campaign - phone 552328."

After consulting the other three members of the committee, Pete McLaren refused to put in these sentences. The voting was three votes to three and he said he was using his casting vote as editor. In other words, the bulletin went out in the name of six Committee members, three of whom did not agree with the content

and who had been silenced by the others (Pete McLaren, Dave Nellist and Dave Griffiths, the local SP full-timer). In addition Pete McLaren announced that the bulletin would be posted to all 400 (cost: £76) instead of being delivered by hand. Presumably they thought that the hand delivery, which has been organised every month for the last seven years by two of the silenced three on this occasion might prove to be unreliable!

This is the bare bones of the dispute. There was of course much acrimonious discussion which, while entertaining, detracts from the main points of principle. The key point is that the SA is an alliance of various tendencies, not a democratic centralist party. On this occasion a large number - in fact probably the majority of Coventry SA supporters, including three of the six committee members - would be voting for Christine Oddy. However, these comrades were denied a voice: even three sentences in their own bulletin. The main arguments used by Pete McLaren were that WMSA had to maximise its vote and that the three sentences would make Coventry SA a laughing stock nationally, since it would appear that Dave Nellist and Pete McLaren could not control their base.

There is also a question of democratic method here. The end of getting the maximum vote does not justify the means. Those of us who were in the SLP will recognise bureaucratic thinking and manipulation when we come across it. Here is a blatant example carried out by two members of the national SA liaison committee.

It is not as though this is an isolated example of bureaucratic and sectarian behaviour by the Socialist Party. One of the reasons given by many comrades in Coventry for not supporting WMSA is that they do

not trust left groups, since they always put their own interests before those of the class as a whole. Dave Nellist has an excellent record and a reputation as a class fighter, and deservedly so, but he is a leading member of the SP, abides by democratic centralist decisions and puts his own left group first. In the Labour Party as Militant they tried to dominate the broad left; they would vote for rightwingers rather than independent socialists who they thought they could not influence. In the anti-poll tax campaign they tried to control the organisation. To me their behaviour in the Coventry SA appears to be in the same tradition.

In the light of the Scottish, Welsh and Euro elections, it would be a good idea to look back on the history of Socialist Alliances. It has to be said that even before the general election in 1997 it was known that the European elections of 1999 were likely to be fought under proportional representation, as well as the elections for Scotland and Wales.

In my view Arthur Scargill started the SLP in 1996 on the basis that PR was a chance to build a socialist party to the left of Labour; he had some sort of strategy. Likewise the Scottish turn of Scottish Militant Labour took place at the same time - the Scottish Socialist Alliance became the Scottish Socialist Party to include independent socialists, to be built through campaigning in the elections which would use PR.

The Socialist Alliance network in the rest of Britain has been held back by the Socialist Party policy towards it, which has not been that of the Scottish turn, but rather the building of their own small mass party and keeping the SA as an adjunct. This would explain the failure of the Liaison Committee to give any real lead in any field, including setting up a national network and the fiasco of the Euro elections, with slates being declared or withdrawn at the last minute.

Meanwhile the Scottish Socialist Party were prepared well in advance, getting roots in the labour movement and community campaigns and collecting the necessary money and new members over a long period of time.

Many people have used Coventry Socialist Alliance as an example of where the SP have been committed for a long time to united struggle or a form of the Scottish turn. After all Coventry SA was created in 1992 after the general election campaign of former MPs Dave Nellist and John Hughes as independent Labour candidates, when over 120 LP members were expelled locally. This *impression* of unity is a misrepresentation of the facts however. The SP were never active in Coventry SA until the formation of the SLP in February 1996. They saw the SLP as a potential threat to their own group. Then they saw the Socialist Alliance not as a means of uniting in struggle as in Scotland, but as a way of grouping some independents and stopping them from joining the SLP. Since 1996 they have sent along no more than two members to each monthly meeting and see that it ticks along: Coventry SA is not a very active organisation. In local elections the SP always stand under their own name, not as Socialist Alliance.

It seems to me that Socialist Party members, as well as members of other left groups, should come out on how they see the future of the left and the role of their own organisation in that future. How do they view the Scottish turn? A nod and a wink are no longer good enough ●

What we fight for

- Our central aim is to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain. Without this Party the working class is nothing; with it, it is everything.
- The Communist Party serves the interests of the working class. We fight all forms of opportunism and revisionism in the workers' movement because they endanger those interests. We insist on open ideological struggle in order to fight out the correct way forward for our class.
- Marxism-Leninism is powerful because it is true. Communists relate theory to practice. We are materialists; we hold that ideas are determined by social reality and not the other way round.
- We believe in the highest level of unity among workers. We fight for the unity of the working class of all countries and subordinate the struggle in Britain to the world revolution itself. The liberation of humanity can only be achieved through world communism.
- The working class in Britain needs to strike as a fist. This means all communists should be organised into a single Party. We oppose all forms of separatism, which weakens our class.
- Socialism can never come through parliament. The capitalist class will never peacefully allow their system to be abolished. Socialism will only succeed through working class revolution and the replacement of the dictatorship of the capitalists with the dictatorship of the working class. Socialism lays the basis for the conscious planning of human affairs: ie, communism.
- We support the right of nations to self-determination. In Britain today this means the struggle for Irish freedom should be given full support by the British working class.
- Communists are champions of the oppressed. We fight for the liberation of women, the ending of racism, bigotry and all other forms of chauvinism. Oppression is a direct result of class society and will only finally be eradicated by the ending of class society.
- War and peace, pollution and the environment are class questions. No solution to the world's problems can be found within capitalism. Its ceaseless drive for profit puts the world at risk. The future of humanity depends on the triumph of communism.

We urge all who accept these principles to join us. A Communist Party Supporter reads and fights to build the circulation of the Party's publications; contributes regularly to the Party's funds and encourages others to do the same; where possible, builds and participates in the work of a Communist Party Supporters Group.

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“Russia invades Kosovo” was the tabloid headline (*The Sun* June 12). Hype it may have been, but its melodrama accurately reflected the panic and disarray into which Nato’s political and military leaders were thrown by the events of June 11-12. The occupation of Slatina airport in the Kosovar capital, Pristina, by a light unit of Russian airborne forces detached from their Bosnian peace-keeping contingent, caused acute embarrassment. At a stroke, operation Joint Guardian - the planned triumphal and unopposed entry of Nato forces into Kosova - was reduced to a “bitter farce”, a humiliation that meant “Nato leaders have much to answer for” (*The Daily Telegraph* June 14).

The proximate cause of this debacle was Clinton’s insistence that US marines should be at the front of Nato’s occupation army when the TV cameras started to roll. Perhaps he had in mind the admonition of the spin doctors in *Wag the Dog*: “Ten years from now, they’ll have forgotten what the war was about. It’s the pictures they remember.” In the event, the “pictures” were of general Mike Jackson behaving like the grand old Duke of York, marching his British paratroops hither and thither in the sweltering summer heat while he waited for the yankees to turn up.

For us communists, the interesting thing is the light which the Russian “invasion” throws on the political situation in Washington and Moscow. So far as the US is concerned, it serves to confirm the long-standing failure of imperialism to set its foreign policy towards post-Soviet Russia on any kind of coherent basis. After the Gorbachev regime’s capitulation to bourgeois ideology and its embrace of capitalism brought about the inevitable counterrevolution in the USSR, Washington’s response was and remains characterised by a puerile triumphalism, the hubris engendered by a bloodless victory over ‘communism’.

True, international capital in the form of the IMF has poured billions of dollars into Russia - most of which ended up in the foreign bank accounts of the criminals who have run the succession of Yeltsin governments since 1991. But the United States and most of its western partners have consistently treated Russia with ill-disguised contempt and high-handedness, symbolised by Nato’s incorporation of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into the western alliance. Rumania and Bulgaria may be next. The lessons of Versailles have clearly been forgotten, and there is every sign that imperialism has yet more ambitions in eastern Europe, dangerous ambitions which could easily provoke new crises.

Where Moscow is concerned, there seems little reason to doubt the assurances of Russia’s foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, that he knew nothing in advance of the Pristina operation, which appears to have been planned and executed under the orders of colonel-general Anatoly Kvashnin, chief of the Russian general staff - a situation which raises justifiable questions about the extent to which president Yeltsin is in effective control of his own armed forces. Whatever the truth of this, it is self-evident that Russia’s generals are animated

New crises lies ahead for Nato

.....
“We were not seduced by nostalgia for the ‘former workers’ state’ and their own variant of red-brown politics”
.....

by the *red-brown* nationalism that has filled the vacuum created by the demise of the Soviet Union.

The term ‘red-brown’ has been deliberately misunderstood by some comrades on the left, who have come to the erroneous conclusion that it is a synonym for fascism. Not so. Fascism does exist in Russia, in the form of Zhirinovskiy’s grotesquely misnamed Liberal Democratic Party and dozens of ‘black hundred’ organisations such as Pamyat. The term ‘red-brown’, however, denotes in this context the sort of Great Russian chauvinism disguised under an increasingly thin veneer of communist rhetoric. It is personified by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, effectively the successor of the CPSU and Russia’s only truly mass party. Having abandoned the formal vestiges of socialism and internationalism, the CPRF was at the forefront of attempts to involve Russia in military support for its Slav brothers in Serbia.

Despite their nauseating espousal of nationalism, the CPRF and its comrades in the Russian military clearly have a case when it comes to Russian involvement in the post-war settlement in Kosova. It was always a nonsense for the western powers to imagine that they could simply exclude Russia from participation: desperate at all costs to avoid a ground offensive, the Clinton administration was happy to use Viktor Chernomyrdin as an intermediary with the Belgrade government; without his intervention, Milosevic’s capitulation to the G8 proposals would probably have taken much longer.

Given the refusal of Hungary and Bulgaria (and probably Rumania, anxious as it is to join Nato) to allow Russia to overfly its airspace with military traffic, there is little prospect of the force at Pristina being reinforced directly from Russia at present. Nonetheless, under the impact of Russia’s

“masterstroke” of “dash and daring” (*The Times* June 14), Nato now has no choice but to concede Russia a major role in the occupation of Kosova. This recognition of political reality was encapsulated in a statement by Strobe Talbott, the US special envoy, to the effect that Russia’s aspirations represent “a legitimate objective and an objective the US supports” (*ibid*). Talks to be held in Helsinki between US defence secretary Cohen, secretary of state Albright and their Russian counterparts are likely to result in Russia being allotted a zone of occupation, with the thorny question of a ‘unitary command structure’ being solved along the diplomatic lines used in Bosnia. Russian forces will notionally be under the command of general Jackson, but will in practice answer to their own commanders.

Jackson’s position has undoubtedly been undermined by the Russian operation in Pristina. His claim not to be interested in the airport - an unconvincing case of sour grapes - is simply a lie. It is self-evident that Nato planned to use the airport not only as its HQ but as the hub of its reinforcement operations in Kosova. Poor Jackson, landed in this mess by the arrogance and stupidity of his political bosses, must now pretend that running operations from a disused furniture warehouse on the western outskirts of the capital is an adequate alternative.

Nato’s confusion and ineptitude stretches beyond the Russian question to embrace the other issue central to the implementation of Joint Guardian: namely, the problem of what to do about the KLA. On paper, the KLA was to begin disarming from midnight on June 15, the end of phase one of the “Entry into Force Agreement” stipulated by the G8 proposals, but there are already some clear signs that the situation on the ground is rapidly running out of Nato control in a way which anybody could have foreseen. Far from meekly surrendering to its Nato patrons, the KLA has already begun to constitute itself as a *de facto* indigenous police force and embryonic Kosovar army, not only in the capital but throughout Kosova.

In an interview given to western reporters on June 14, Rustem Mustafaer, the KLA’s commander in the Pristina region, made it clear that the KLA rejects the UN resolution calling for their disarmament and demilitarisation. According to Mustafaer, the goal of the KLA is to “transform itself into the army of an independent state of Kosova” (*Financial Times* June 15). Claiming that senior

Nato officers, with whom he is engaged in regular negotiations, had not asked him to disarm his troops, Mustafaer stated that “there will be a reconstruction of the KLA and we will keep our weapons and I hope Nato will help us in this” (*ibid*). Mustafaer’s “hope” may turn out to be ungrounded, but his contention that the KLA already controls Pristina (“Most of the city is guarded by our men but not in uniform”) seems credible enough for the time being. KLA members have mounted vehicle checkpoints around the city and have vowed to “execute” any Serb military left in the region after the expiry of Nato’s deadline for withdrawal. Not surprisingly, the dominance of the KLA on the ground has led to an exodus of Serb civilians, who fear that the few isolated cases of reprisals that have taken place so far are merely the harbinger of a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing by their vengeful Kosova Albanian neighbours.

Although the political leadership of the KLA has not yet commented on their strategic aims, it is becoming clear that Kosovar independence (specifically excluded from the G8 settlement, with its references to preserving the “territorial integrity and sovereign status of Yugoslavia”) is merely the *minimal* demand. Sali Mustafaer, the Pristina city commander of the KLA, told the media that “the ultimate aim of the KLA was to unite all the Albanian people in one homeland, *including areas of Macedonia*” (*ibid* my italics).

This entirely predictable stance, foreshadowing demands for what amounts to a Greater Albania, incorporating the current Albanian state as well as disputed territory in Macedonia, is obviously political dynamite from the point of view of the imperialists, threatening as it does their own strategic concept of Kosova as a supine protectorate, enjoying purely notional self-governance. Both militarily and politically, relations between the Nato occupation powers and the KLA look set to be heading on a collision course, with Nato embroiled in ‘counter-insurgency’ operations against the very people its ‘humanitarian’ intervention in Kosova was supposed to defend against Serbian terror.

In Serbia itself, Nato’s goal of inducing the fall of Milosevic may be a few steps nearer fruition, but again the costs in terms of political instability and conflict will be high. Milosevic, with characteristic impudence, is trying to depict his capitulation to Nato as a victory. Addressing some 10,000 Serbs in the

bombed northern city of Novi Sad, he claimed: “We managed not only heroically to defend our fatherland but also to obtain UN guarantees of its sovereignty and territorial integrity” (*Daily Mail* June 15). On paper, of course, there is truth in the latter assertion, but the reality is different.

As we predicted, Vojislav Seselj, leader of the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party has left the ruling Belgrade coalition government in protest at Milosevic’s “surrender” to Nato. The departure of Seselj and his 82 deputies from the 250-strong Yugoslav parliament means that Milosevic now has no overall majority. Seselj and other contenders for the succession are likely to call for immediate elections - something echoed by the Serbian orthodox church - which could result in defeat for Milosevic. In the event of a Seselj victory (unlikely but not inconceivable) Serb politics would be even more national chauvinist than at present. Whatever the outcome of elections, Russian and Chinese demands for the implementation of the UN security council resolution guaranteeing the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia would only serve to deepen existing tensions over the future of Kosova. On top of this threat, the Montenegrin president, Milo Djukanovic, is now openly discussing the possibility of secession, asserting that “Montenegro will look for its own legal status” in the aftermath of the war (*ibid*).

After only a few days of ‘peace’ in Kosova, it is fast becoming apparent that Nato’s victory has created a raft of new problems, containing the seeds of much greater instability and bloodshed. Such is the fruit of imperialism’s arrogant determination to impose its new world order on the Balkans. No doubt many on the left will relish the west’s predicament. We too have no truck with imperialism and its wars, but unlike many such comrades, we were not seduced by nostalgia for the ‘former workers’ state’ and their own variant of red-brown politics into supporting Milosevic’s brutal regime of terror. As the evidence of his atrocities mounts, will our comrades now denounce Belgrade as the perpetrators of hideous crimes against humanity? I fear they will not, and their refusal will condemn them.

Let us not forget that the central unresolved issue behind the conflict was and remains the legitimate Kosovar demand for self-determination up to and including full independence from Yugoslavia. That demand, betrayed by the supposed ‘liberators’ of Kosova, still stands. We still support it ●