Galloway: innocent until proven guilty

... but not above criticism

Manny Neira slams Telegraph witch-hunt of anti-war movement - see page 12
eral imperialists and soft leftists. Clare meaning, debilitating and dangerous. left. What has quietly festered for years with Nato but free to act without US of France, Germany, Belgium and Lux-

There is nothing disloyal or petty-

These comrades regard themselves as correct politics nothing can be gained with bin Laden were entirely spurious. War also brings to the fore all that is brutal imperialist war and that claims of 'coalition of the willing' conducted a

No surprises came from the Social-

AWL's even-handedness than meets the

This might appear to be

Cuban people. While the SWP , ISG, etc. fighting started on March 20. Michael Hardt and Naomi Klein - professional

'Cold war' is a euphemism for dictatorship any support. New Labour will lose its grip on the domestic 'lost cause' - say not the year or next, but it is inevitable. The failures and troubles of Railtrack and British Telecom, the report that a Glasgow hospital built under PFI is already making dra-

Here though was the true meaning of the Project for the New American Cen-

These are all birds coming home to roost. New Labour has not lost support on the international front, as the SWP predicted. Now, it is advised by your blundering executive, Jeremy and his fellow local candidates are standing on an anti-war platform that most local tenants will be turned off by - not because they are against war, but because things have moved on already, and they will be more inter-

This is 'lefty', became a grpc

The BNP has realised that it has to speak for the dispossessed, the re-establishment of fighting politi-

The BNP on many matters. For example, you

I appreciate you do not agree with the SWP on many matters. For example, you

It would do concomitantly good if she

And beating the BNP'

I have yet to point out to him that people with a
debilitating which educated cadre and

as expected. Instinctively the comrades

Defeat is reserved for a distant future. Defeat of

Armed out of a peaceful capitalism, this is the property of thousands of people

As socialists, revolutionary or reform-

It is the property of thousands of people

We are welcome here', as the SWP do, will

It is an indictment of a narrow sectarian attitude that has been built in Cambridge. This is a sad

'fascism in Spain; the tsar that organised

I suppose it was Franco who

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Defend the coalition which has been built

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Self-indulgence

Re your article ‘Balance sheet’ (Weekly Worker April 14), to reduce the legacy of the war coalition to increased sales for the Weekly Worker, however, was not the point. It is more than just the height of self-indulgence and delimited self-importance! David Cumberbatch

Rail tactics

I agree with much of what Greg Tucker says in his interview (On the tracks, April 17). To reduce the legacy of the war coalition to increased sales for the Weekly Worker, however, was not the point. It is more than just the height of self-indulgence and delimited self-importance! David Cumberbatch

London Communist forum

Sunday May 4, 5pm. ‘The democratic urge’, using August Nietzsche’s Marx and Engels; their contribution to the democratic breakthrough as a study guide. Phone 0181 802 0422 for details.

Southeast London Communist forum

‘The new American century and how to fight it’. Tuesday May 13, 7pm, Greenwich West Community and Arts Centre, 141 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 (Greenwich Central and EL4). All welcome: 07950 734585.

May day actions


Birmingham Saturday May 3 Assemble 12.30pm, Chamberlain Square, march through city centre for rally. Edinburgh Saturday May 3 Assemble 11.30am, East Market Street. Rally 1pm, Festival Square (off Lothian Road). Irvine and North Ayrshire Saturday May 3 Assemble 10.30am, Redburn Irvine, March; Irvine to rally at 12 noon, Castlerock Community Centre. Glasgow Sunday May 4 Assemble 11am, George Square. March 11.30am to rally at Glasgow Green.

Dropping songs

Anti-war entertainment. Saturday May 3, 7.30pm, Studio Theatre, Compton Terrace, London N1. Featuring indie, ska, south Asian music from Sandrats, Strings, Monkey Nut, Dandelion Anansi and Mosunbicho Rhythm; poetry by 120th Birthday. General admission £5. Contact info@ncadc.org.uk Organised by Media Workers Against the War.

For a workers’ party

The Social Alliance and the way forward – discussion. Saturday May 3, 7.30pm, Manchester Community Centre, 62 Machinon Road, London WC1 (nearest tube: Russell Square). Promising a SA conference and Campaign for a Workers’ Party platform.

Socialist Alliance annual conference

Saturday May 10, 10am to 5pm, Islington Green School, London. 020 7791 5138: www.sociaiistfinance.net

Free Palestine

Saturday May 10, 13.30pm, Trafalgar Square, London. Called by Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Artists Against The War

‘Sock and awe’ cabaret at The Cockpit Theatre, Blackfriars, London – May 8, 8pm. For details contact info@ncadc.org.uk

NCACD AGM

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns annual general meeting, Saturday June 21, 12 noon to 5pm, Caris Lane Church, Caris Lane, Birmingham – opposite all anti-deportation campaigners (reasonable travel expenses paid) and their supporters. Cliche and lunch provided. Contact National Coordinating Group of the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, London and South East England – Allison Bennett, ncadc-london@ncadc.org.uk North East England and Scotland – Kafi Sainsbury, ncadc-nerc@ncadc.org.uk North West England and Greater Manchester – Tony Openshaw, ncadc-nw@ncadc.org.uk NCACD, 110 Hamstead Road, Birmingham B20 2QS, 0121-554 6791, 0111 64478 Fax 0121-554 6782.

Party wills

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

RDG

To contact the Revolutionary Democratic Group, email nldgroup@yahoo.com.

www.cpgb.org.uk/action

Commuter University

This annual school for the thinking left will be debating a whole range of issues to do with the war including:

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The Socialist Alliance in Australia was launched in February 2001 by the Democratic Socialist Party and the International Socialist Organisation (sister party of the British Socialist Workers Party), and formed by eight left groups and parties soon after wards. While primarily chartered as an electoral bloc, in the subsequent two years the network of the alliance has qualitatively changed.

Other campaigns besides elections were pursued as it became increasingly obvious that the package of measures centred on the right.

The alliance approaches its second conference in May, the site of debates on what to do next.

The ANL has been the subject of a large number of publications, including a 'Publications' section, which I consider (appropriately) to be now utterly redundant. No self-respecting fascist should look at the alliance being dominated by any one force.

As in Britain, the Australian Socialist Alliance has been paralysed by the stubborn determination of one group in particular to prevent the alliance becoming a party. Dave Riley, a member of the Australian SA Non-Aligned Caucus, gives his view on the type of party it should become.

• We want the alliance to become a single, multi-tendency socialist party.
• We want to progress this move right now, starting with this conference.
• A commitment from affiliates to build- ing the Socialist Alliance through inte- gration needs to be demonstrated, in word and in deed.
• Our multi-tendency socialist party needs to be reformed.
• We welcome and accept a strong revo- lutionary socialist stream as an integral part of our vision of a broad socialist future.
• We need strong democratic structures to accommodate diversity.

As an adjunct to these seven points, the caucus has won support for an en- larged national leadership body formally comprising 50% of non-aligned members rather than preserve with a default situa- tion where affiliates dominated the network.

In the meantime, the ISO has not changed its stance and has com- mitted to an electoral coalition with vari- ations, at its recent national committee meeting - an attempt for many - of deciding to stay in and fight for its par- ticular view of the alliance. This decision has been viewed by the Non-Aligned Caucus as a major victory, given the ISO's unwillingness to budge from its original scheme for what the SA should be and its registered hostility to any group integrating itself into the alliance.

So on the weekend of 9-11 the socialist movement here will be pre- sented with a unique opportunity to re- make itself and enter a qualitatively new stage. There will be a rotating on our hands over the next few weeks. Here is the main problem.

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Andrew Murray and Lindsay German, who effectively formed the core of the Stop the War Coalition, put the movement in a bad political light this week when they acted as dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrats determined to stifle openness, accountability and democracy.

As one of the affiliated organisations of the coalition, we had been informed that we could attend as observers at the April 25 steering committee meeting. We had been told this at the conference in January and had double-checked the offer at the end of the last week, when he gave us the details. Therefore the offer was perfectly genuine.

I arrived just as the meeting of about 60 was beginning. There was a debate around the table. I joined in. I could not help but notice how STWC chair, Andrew Murray (a member of the Momentum (A Communist Party of Britain) and national convenor of Socialist Workers Party (SWP) national Workers Party) stared in my direction with the contempt and disdain of a sitting landlord.

Then Jane Challice, treasurer, was bedevilled by a Lindsay German. She then turned to me to tell me I had not been allowed to participate. She then muttered something about it being particularly important, given two 'sensitive issues' to be discussed.

I asked to have the decision put to the meeting. I urged the STWC not to set a harmful and unconstitutional precedent. I argued that the coalition needed to be open and these meetings should not be held behind the back of the movement. I also defended the presence of the CPGB as an affiliated organisation that works hard behind the scenes on the demonstration.

Moreover we had been informed we could attend. Later, after the meeting, I found out that there had been a number of complaints about my apparent non-conformity with the anti-Stalin line.
For the tens of thousands of people mobilised against the war on Iraq who have been drawn towards political action for the first time, the myriad of groups on the far left must seem bewildering. Ian Mahoney supplies a rough guide to a few of the more prominent

Hattam: leading Liverpool council for Militant

Militant
Marxist Party

Splits!
If they were honest and serious, lefties would concede that the scene in wonderful Monty Python’s life of Brian in which the hero first encounters the People of Judea's Front is depressingly familiar. The location is the Jerusalem Colonnade, and the children’s malleability in full swing. Brian, anxious to dedicate his life to the struggle against Roman occupation, innocently asks a small group of earnest revolutionaries, “Are you the Judean People’s Front?”

The leader - the transparently self-taught, self-styled, self-appointed, self-sufficient, self-important, self-styled leader. The transparently self-taught, self-styled, self-appointed, self-styled leader of the Left's most important party. The leader of not only one but several groups. The leader of not only one but several groups that have been ‘scorched’ by the SWP’s bureaucratic, intolerant, anti-democratic culture, without having made it viable in any meaningful way. The leader of a group unitedly yell a particularly profound mistake to adopt a brand of political culture, such manipulation would provoke criticism, revolt even. It’s not only a group, an organisation, a party united in its self-styled, self-appointed, self-styled leader’s line. This is achieved through a politically primitive, simplistic, simplistic, simplistic line. This is the line that the SWP leadership follows, the line that the SWP espouses.

The SWP’s trail led to the existence of plateaux, the existence of plateaux, the existence of plateaux, the existence of plateaux, the existence of plateaux. The SWP has made it clear that the SWP does not have a programme. A programme for a Marxist party is not an optional extra. It is the means by which we test our day-to-day practice against our overall strategic aims, our fundamental political principles.

The SWP line has performed some pretty spectacular somersaults over the years, yet there is no political compass without which the organisation, no collective means of gauging how far the leadership has strayed off course.

Thus politics for the SWP consists in adapting itself to prevailing moods in society, attempting to give a left colouration to the existing consciousness of the class. One day, you can mean that it will flail with Labour, the next it will adopt blood-curdling anarchist calls to ‘frack capitalism!’ - all depends whether it is on the trade union front or the student front. And such plateaux of inconsistencies for voting ware seating in its Socialist Alliance but is in an expansive pizza of a European city alongside the anarchist black bloc.
tional influence. The SWP is sectarian. As used by others it means, most of all, a contempt for revolution. Socialism would have made sense in the early 1970s. By 1990 it was rubbishing the idea that it stood for revolution. Socialism would have been the very thing that I read it with contempt and appears to constitute itself as apologist for the SWP's orthodoxy that these places were 'workers' states' of some sort. In 1988, the contradiction was resolved when this theory was ditched - although the AWS still refers to itself as 'Trotskyist' - and the organization adopted the view that these societies were systems of class exploitation which represent a dead-end period within the means of capitalism (AWS website). Essentially, the AWS attempts to position itself as a 'third camp' tradition. (The first camp being imperialist, the second camp that of the working class and independent proletariat, and the third camp that of the AWS throughout its 'third camp' period). This means that it constantly veers towards the first camp and a focus on the state. Thus, it correctly calls for a two-state solution in the Israel-Palestine conflict, but always also mentions that Yasser Arafat and Martin Thomas must to self describe as a "little bit Zionism", a way of avoiding political fall out. Similarly, the group's correct observation that recruitment to WP - nothing more. The AWS often exhibits the sort of mendacious and - frankly - rather unambitious political organisations are not especially fine; the young cadre of other serious political organisations, and WP as an experiment in the fragmenting of this once dynamic but politically unstable, stu-
A day of celebration and value extracted from the producers. They also strive to impose the disciplines of timekeeping and their ‘work ethic’ on their labourers. As early as 1550 an act of parliament demanded that maypoles be destroyed, and outlawed games. Philip Stubbs, in An Anatomy of Abuses (1585) wrote: ‘...and then fall they to banquet and feast, to leap and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols.’

In 1644 the puritans in England abolished May Day altogether. For them the festival was an obnoxious example of paganism and worldliness. One of them wrote a propaganda work called Forbidden Flower, or the downfall of the May games. He attacked ‘ignorants, atheists, papists, drunkards, swarneys, backsliders, mad-marrants, morrice-dancers, maskers, mummers, maypole straunders, health-drinkers, together with a cap-a-callion rout of filled, fools, fighters, gamblers, women, lewd women, contemners of magistracy, abusers of the creature, fools, fighters, gamesters, lewd women, light women, contemners of magnificence, abusers of the creature, mis-spenders of time, and abusers of the creature, etc.’

May Day continued to be celebrated by the common people in defiance of church and state authority, and, when the industrial revolution began to concentrate them in factories, the focus of May Day resistance shifted from opposition to enclosure to other encroachments on ancient rights to a struggle for better working conditions, higher wages and a shorter working day.

The association of the international workers’ movement with May Day began in the USA in 1886, when the revolutionary Knights of Labour organisation and socialist trade unions called for a strike on May 1 to fight for an eight-hour day.

Two years earlier, in 1884, the convention of the Federation of Organised Trades roused a resolution that was to act as a beacon to the whole working class. “That eight hours shall constitute a legal days labour from and after May 1 1886.” This call was taken up by the labour movement with the creation of Eight Hour Leagues, which won significant concessions out of the bosses, and produced a doubling of trade union membership. On May 1 1886, the American Federation of Labor declared a national strike to demand an eight-hour working day and 350,000 workers across the country responded. In particular, the city of Chicago was virtually paralysed: railroads, stockyards, and other businesses were forced to close.

Thousands of migrants, many from Germany, had poured into Chicago after the American Civil War, and by the 1880s it was already a focus of industrialisation, and is home of the first-class May Day activities. In 1885 the Chicago police used Gatling guns against the workers who protested against the opening of the meat gardens. In the Bread Riot of 1872 the police clubbed hungry people in a tunnel under the river. In the 1877 railways strike, federal troops fought workers at the ‘Battle of the Viaduct’. Workers employed by Cyrus McCormick, who manufactured mechanical reapers, started the movement for an eight-hour day when they went on strike on May Day 1867.

During the May Day 1886 strike Chicago police fired randomly into crowds of strikers. Four molders whom McCormick locked out were shot dead. Angry workers began to call for armed rebellion. On May 4 1886 several thousand people gathered near Haymarket Square to hear August Spies, a newspaperman, speak about the shootings at the McCormick works. Albert Parsons, a typographer and labour leader, also spoke. (Later, at his trial, he said: ‘What is socialism or anarchism? Briefly stated it is the right of the toilers to control the means of production and the right of the producers to their product.’)

He was followed by ‘Good-Natured Sam’ Fielden, who as a child had worked in the textile factories of Lancashire. He was a method- ist preacher and labour organiser. By the time he finished speaking the numbers had dwindled. Nevertheless 176 policemen were ordered in to scatter the crowd. A stick of dynamite was thrown, killing seven policemen and injuring 10 times as many. The police responded by shooting at the demonstrators, killing several and injuring over 200.

In the following weeks, the police carried out systematic raids on strikers and trade unionists, breaking up meetings with violence. With no clues as to the source of the bomb, police arrested eight revolutionary labour leaders, seven of whom had not even been present in Haymarket at the time. In the absence of any evidence linking them to the bomb, the Chicago Eight were tried solely on the basis of their political beliefs. Four were hanged on Black Friday, November 11 1887.

Lucy Parsons was the widow of one of them. She set out to tell the world the true story of her husband, whose only crime was that he lived in advance of his time. She went to England and encouraged English workers to make May Day an international holiday for shortening the hours of work. Her friend, William Morris, wrote a poem around this time:

We have furrowed the acres
And scattered the seed.
They are few, we are many:
And yet, O our mother,
Many years were workdays
And nought was our deed.
Be our name, and scattered the seed.
We have furrowed the acres
And scattered the seed.

Earth
It was on an unknown day,
Through fair and foul weather,
And pass not a day
That your deed shall avail.
And in hope every spring-tide come gather together
That into the earth
Ye may tell all your tale.

The Second International was founded in 1864. Under the banner of workers’ internationalism. A key resolution of the first congress, proposed by the American Labour Federation, was that in memory of the Chicago martyrs, workers in every country would strike and demonstrate for the eighth-hour day every May 1, which would become known as international workers’ day, a day of international working class solidarity.

On May Day 1889 workers struck all over Europe, with 100,000 demonstrating in Barcelona, 120,000 in Stockholm, and 8,000 in Warsaw.
The motive force and backbone of May Day has always been the working class and its allies. The annual demonstrations acted as a barometer measuring all strata of the working class. The steadily decrease in the numbers mobilised on May Day during the 1970s and 1980s reflected the decline of the revolutionary left, and the ideologically and organisational weakness of the CPGB. Turkish and Kurdish left groups have come to provide the biggest bloc of militant contingents in recent years, with their revolutionary music, chants, banners and flags. It must be said that the isolation of the workers and the British working class movement has been a major strategical weakness.

May has long been a public holiday in most European countries, where demonstrations have been taken over by trade unionists and channelled into support for emergent parties and governments. As it had by linking Saint Phillip and Saint James to the pagan feast, the catholic church has attempted to 'christianise' May Day, declaring it the feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker. In Britain, the Wilson government finally acceded in 1975 to the long-standing demand for a May Day bank holiday, but it chose to observe it on St Mary, rather than May Day itself.

Even this was too much for the right-wingers, who reproached trade unions for their demand and urged them to replace a holiday in the autumn - perhaps Winston Churchill's birthday or even Margaret Thatcher's. The Tory government in Britain in the early 1990s considered abolishing the May Day bank holiday on the grounds of its anti-capitalist associations and financed culture society, but they knew that depriving workers of a day off would be politically counterproductive. Therefore, it must be said, May Day has fewer public holidays annually than most European countries.

For the British establishment years when May Day fell on a Monday and this coincided with the bank holiday have been particularly distasteful. In 1995 the Tory government made the unnecessary spectacle of British workers having a day off on a holiday by moving the bank holiday to May 8 and declaring that it was a holiday to commemorate V-E Day. The liberation of Europe from Nazi occupation in 1945 had been decisive in World War II and were granted out-price train tickets to get to London for celebratory events.

In 2000 May Day was again on a Monday, and this bank holiday saw the impotence of the right-wing trade union leadership on full display. The TUC proved how completely the official labour movement has been neutered by achiev- ing any march or demonstration in favour of a "TUC May in the Millennium Dome". For EDL a hard trade union members could attend special union events, given the dome designed to "celebrate Britain's racial and cultural diversity, speak out against low pay, and promote trade unionism.

Meanwhile, anarchists and militant environmentalists have increasingly completely separate "garden gardening" protest - a conscious return to the agricultural origins of May Day, planting flowers and seeds in Parliament Square and generally turning it into a tip. This protest was not the result of an deprived factory towns swarming with Karl Marxian organizations; it is a manifestation of the alienation by bourgeois society and its commercialised values. A hopeful symbol of the protest's expression is that the May Day was observed in the Soviet Union until the anniversary of the revolution of November 7. The establishment reacted their revenge the next year: in 2001, police hired several thousand young marchers into a tango. They were held in the pouring rain for seven hours at Oxford Circus. This year's May Day takes place in the direct aftermath of the conquest of Iraq by the US-led coalition. What has been of particular significance and bodes well for the future are two features. Firstly, demonstrations against the war, especially before the fighting broke out, were huge. Numbers were counted in their hundreds of thousands and millions. Two millions in London, five million in Spain, etc. Secondly, they were coordinated internationally. People marched on the same day across the whole world, Internationalism lives and is growing.

The shadow of the Soviet Union in perversions of communism are being left behind. Capitalist triumphtanism is being answered by a new movement and a new generation. The anti-war movement and the workers' movement must be brought together. We must reclaim May Day. It belongs to those who want a world without war. It belongs to those who want to end racism and slavery. It belongs to those who want to see a world fit for human beings.
Bureaucracy and confusion

Over the weekend of April 27-28 some 350 people from 180 organisations attended the latest gathering to prepare for the 2003 European Social Forum in Paris (November 12-16). This time it was the turn of Berlin to act as host. Tina Becker reports

National stereotypes - however crude and insulting they often are - reflect certain real aspects of cultures. British people are reserved and painfully polite; Italians are emotional and anything but polite and, well, Germans tell craps jokes, but at least they are efficient and well organised. While I can confirm that in Germany trains do run on time and the streets are definitely cleaner than in Britain, the German left is unfortunately trying hard to escape the typical stereotype. Not that they have a sense of humour - if only! But the bit about efficiency has certainly been successfully dumped.

Firstly, the last preparatory meeting took place in a different building from the advertised one, which meant large numbers arrived late. There were insufficient copies of discussions and proposal papers and some only arrived after they had been "discussed" by the meeting. To add to the chaos, the lights in the hall failed and comrades sat through several spells of total darkness. On the second day, the meeting was switched to a totally new venue, again without informing comrades about this properly. Many missed the brief announcement right at the end of the first day and waited patiently in front of the other hall. In short - it was quite a mess.

Not that it was the fault of the comrades from the German ESF alone. They are still in a mess. The problem was that the main discussion had taken place in the workshops, on the Thursday and Friday. But only 100 or so people had been able to take time off work and spend four days in Berlin. The other 250 only witnessed so-called "reportback meetings", which quickly deteriorated into unfocused and rambling "debates" about anything and nothing.

For most people, these meetings were the only opportunity to make their voice heard - so many spoke about matters unrelated to the particular item on the agenda. There were no standing orders on speaking time and the German chair did not dare to cut people off. This only changed on the second day, when comrade Jonathan Neale from the Socialist Workers Party took the chair and he adopted precisely the opposite policy of interrupting people after two minutes.

While the assembly itself was a pretty disappointing and boring event, some good steps seem to have been taken in the workshops that preceded it. No doubt though, the real decisions are being made on a totally different level. The Italian comrades, most of them members of Rifondazione Comunista, the Democratic Left and the trade union Cobas, seem to have been successful in lobbying the French comrades to make some changes to their plans for the ESF 2003.

At the last assembly meeting in Brussels on February 8-9, the French and Italian comrades openly clashed over the idea of establishing permanent ESF networks. The Italians - supported by everybody else, apart from the French - argued that the successful anti-war network that went on to organise the global protests on February 15 showed the way forward. They quite rightly stated that the left must organise on a qualitatively higher level if we want to be able to challenge the European Union - let alone stopping a war. They argued for networks of "the social movements" on a range of subjects. Incredibly, the French disagreed. French comrades argued in union against this active approach to building networks. Led by Pierre Khalfa, official representative of Attac France (and a member of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire), the comrades stated that there were "some organisations involved in the ESF process that do not want to be part of the social movements". Apparently, those organisations want to come to the ESF and sponsor it, but they do not want to build effective European-wide organisations that could strengthen our forces.

Another aspect that still awaits clarification is the role of political parties. The French comrades want to strictly implement the World Social Forum "rule" that limits the role of parties to that of observers. A truly dishonest ban, as the WSF is being run and financed by the Workers Party of Brazil. Similar in France, where the leading organisers of the ESF are members of the LCR, the French Communist Party (PCF) and the Socialist Party.

It seems the comrades are united in not wanting to build an international rival organisation to Attac, which has successfully taken off in a number of European countries. The PCF, PCT and SF are all involved in Attac - with, at 40,000 mostly young members, in much more successful in picking up new recruits than their own organisations.

Political parties are not allowed to take part in the French ESF mobilising committee at all - although the committee is clearly dominated by those three organisations. It seems the comrades even want to prevent workshops - last year they were the only events in which political groups like ourselves were able to put forward our ideas.

The Italian comrades, however, seem optimistic that last year’s method of incorporating political parties will again be adopted in Paris where a party is involved in the ESF process on a national level, they can take part in the WSF. This is far from satisfactory. What, for example, if the majority of a national ESF committee does not allow a party on board? Is it inconceivable that the WSF might decide to use its numerical strength to exclude unwanted rivals from the English ESF, while wearing its ‘Globalise Resistance’ hat? All in the name of adhering to the ‘rule’ of the WSF, of course.

Also, it is far from clear that the French comrades are prepared to accept this status quo. Fortunately, the next ESF preparatory assembly will take place in Genoa on July 18-19. This might be an ideal opportunity to openly challenge their misleadership.
in Berlin

Luciano Muhlbauer is the representative of the Italian trade union Cobas at the ESF. He is also a prominent member of Rifondazione Comunista. Tina Becker spoke to him.

A

The last ESF preparatory meeting (FP) of the Frankfurt and Berlin rounds were not due to the idea of networks. How is that this time different? We had some very useful discussions. We all agree that the social forum cannot be just one single moment every year. Just like the World Social Forum, it needs to be linked to the big social movements that are developed across the world: the anti-war movement, the anti-capitalist movement, etc. The forum needs to be part of the process to remake the left. The WSF came into being because of the anti-WTO movement. The ESF took place in Florence, because of the events in Genoa. Now we need to develop structures of permanent action for the participants. What you say is something between what you call “the movement” and simple people coming to the ESF.

There is still a difference between the forum and the movement. In the forums, everybody who is against neoliberalism, racism and war can participate. Some organisations do not want to come to organise activities. Some are prohibited by their status as a charity or a trade union. There are so many things. And others are simply dubious and wary of the organisations of the left. Therefore the forums should develop their own structures where we do not take votes or agree on certain actions.

At the same time we need another space for activity and organisation within this open forum. A space where those who want to fight for something else come together. Just like it is when we agreed in Florence to organise the European-wide anti-war demonstrations on February 15. The WSF adopted it afterwards and made it a global event.

Now our task is to organise a better and closer relationship between those organisations and the organisational and the rest of the forums. During the seminars and the plenary sessions we should contribute to building those organisational spaces and the forum. We do not just need moments: we need a whole structure of networks – already organising – the anti-war network, for a start. There is a need for some networks against racism and privatisations as well. The reason is that because the European working class is experiencing many attacks.

For example, the European Union agreed at its summit in Barcelona last year to work towards raising the retirement age from 65 to 67. We need well-organised, European-wide resistance.

Do you think such attacks can be countered by loose networks? Don’t we need a more solid form of organisation?

I think that the beginning of a long process. A few years ago, the majority in the European countries were in support of the neoliberal agenda of our governments. Of course it was not easy to fight against this. For example, I think that the European union is a large incursion into the question of the war against Yugoslavia.

Now the neoliberal agenda has been challenged and ruptured by the movement. However, our movement has not been able yet to organise itself on a national level. That is why we need permanent action and permanent networks. Otherwise it will be possible for us to have such actions on a national level.

Therefore we are strongly against having a fixed and inflexible set of representatives, as was suggested by the French comrades.

Having totally open structures is maybe not the most democratic solution. I agree. But at this moment in time we need to include everybody. At some point in the near future we need to organise open debates about our strategies and answers for the future. At the moment, we all agree that we are against racism, liberalism, militarism and war. But how do we fight it? And what are we fighting for? There is still a large diversity about how to fight neo-imperialism and war. In order to strike as a fist in the future, we need to agree on common strategies now.

A number of organisations are discussing joining forces for the European elections in 2004 and founding RIFP and the Socialist Alliance. Do you think this is a good move?

This is a very good development, which we fully support. We hope they will be able to present one united manifesto in the name of the “alternative Left” or something similar. But in our opinion it is not very easy to link this with the movement and the social movements. I think we are not ready for such a fusion yet.

The social movement forum is very pluralistic and it is very easy to bring it into the electoral field, it will part to separate. Our movement has not the position in the space with one voice in the forthcoming election. But both developments are part of the same, bigger process. Both are moving in the same direction and have to fuse at some point. But not yet.

In a number of countries, political parties are part of the movement. Mainly in Italy, Greece, Britain and Spain. In Italy, for example, the movement recognises the important role that Rifondazione Comunista is playing – even if it is still a part of organisation or party of course you need to elect your leadership in an open and accountable way. But I think we are not there yet. There is a large diversity and pluralism of organisations involved in the forum. It would be very difficult to organise representation for all these small and big groups. Not everybody would feel represented on such a body – but we want to include everybody. Also, we need to remain flexible in a world where things change incredibly fast. If there is a new movement, we want to include them.

What we want for

Our central aim is the organisation of communists, revolutionaries, socialists, anti-capitalists, anti-war activists and all politically advanced workers in a Communist Party. Without organisation the working class is nothing; with the highest form of organisation it is everything.

The Provisional Central Committee organises members of Rifondazione Comunista. Both exist under the name of Communists Party Today. There are many so-called ‘parties’ on the left, in reality they are confession sects. Members who disagree with the proclaimed ‘line’ are expected to gag themselves in public. Either that or face expulsion.

Communist should organise according to the principles of democratic centralism. Through ongoing debate we seek to organise in solidarity and a common world outlook. As long as we support agreed actions, members have the right to speak openly and form temporary or permanent groups.

Communists are fully committed to building the anti-war movement but constantly strive to bring to the forefront the fundamental question-ending war is bound up with ending capitalism.

Communists are internationalists. Everywhere we strive for the closest unity and agreement of anti-war, working class and democratic parties of all countries. We oppose every manifestation of sectionalism. It is an internationalist duty to uphold the principle of one state, one party. To that extent the European Union becomes a state that now needs EU-wide trade unions and a Communist party of the EU.

A new political class must be organised globally. Without a global Communist Party, a Communist International, the struggle against capitalism is weakened and lacks coordination.

Communists have no interest apart from the working class as a whole. They differ only in recognising the importance of Marxism as a guide to practice. That theory is not dogma, but must be constantly added to and enriched.

The goal of capitalism is to produce wealth, but in order to increase production it is necessary for wealth to be consumed. Capitalist economies are based on consumption, which has a tendency to be a virtuous circle. Capitalism is synonymous with war, pollution, exploitation and stagnation. As a global system capitalism can only be superseded globally. All forms of national capitalism are now dead and anti-capitalist alliances.

The capitalist class will never willingly allow their wealth to be consumed and mass unemployment will result. In order to overcome this, we need to organise and build an international movement of communists.

Do you think this is the best solution? The movement in a country needs to decide if a political party is part of the movement or not. What matters is not your organisational form, but the content of your politics.

But the French comrades are hostile to the participation of political parties in the ESF. We have had over a year of discussion on this and have still not resolved it. I am not sure if further discussion will be able to be. The situation in some countries is different to ours. We do not want the movement in one country to be in communication with a political party. They have not been in any communication before. I think it would be wrong to have a final decision on this. The movement has to decide if a political party is part of the movement or not. What matters is not your organisational form, but the content of your politics.

The Italian comrades are working for the Florence solution, political parties will be able to take part, but only on the level of organising workshops. We should also expand the so-called ‘dialogues’ between parties and movements that were started in Florence. These were very well attended and important events at the first ESF.

We should not forget that we are still at the beginning of a very important development. We have to experiment with forms of organisation and, undoubtedly, we will learn to correct our mistakes.

Become a Communist Party supporter

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Become a Communist Party supporter

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D o you share the dim memory that George Galloway is the same as "Arthur Daley"? My friend, he is not. If you think that George Galloway is some sort of Arthur Daley, you are mistaken. He does not even know who Arthur Daley was. If you think that George Galloway is some sort of a "pretender" to Arthur Daley, you are mistaken. He does not even know who Arthur Daley was.

In my opinion, Arthur Daley was a fraud, a cheat and a thief. George Galloway is not. He is a genuine politician, a true representative of the people. He is not a "pretender" to Arthur Daley, but a genuine and honest politician.

The Daily Telegraph has tried to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "pretender" to Arthur Daley. They have tried to show him as a charlatan, a fake and a fraud. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician.

The Daily Telegraph has also tried to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "mercenary". They have tried to show him as a man who can be bought for money. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician, and he is not interested in money and power.

The Daily Telegraph has also tried to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "traitor". They have tried to show him as a man who is working against the country. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician, and he is working for the benefit of the country.

The Daily Telegraph has also tried to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "thief". They have tried to show him as a man who is stealing money from the people. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician, and he is not interested in stealing money.

The Daily Telegraph has also tried to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "liar". They have tried to show him as a man who is not truthful. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician, and he is not interested in lying.

In my opinion, the Daily Telegraph is trying to paint George Galloway as some sort of a "pretender" to Arthur Daley. They are trying to show him as a charlatan, a fake and a fraud. But I assure you that George Galloway is not. He is a genuine and honest politician.