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socialist OUTLOOK



● Cholera ● War ● Famine ● Unemployment

The brutal face of capitalism

FORTY million people are estimated to be at risk from starvation in the latest African famine. Countless millions more children and young adults have been irrevocably damaged by malnutrition. Yet African countries are still plundered from low cost raw materials and shamelessly milked of billions of pounds each year to bolster the balances of western banks.

● CHOLERA, which has not ravaged the big cities of Western countries since Victorian times, is again moving rampant through the slums of Latin America, feeding off chronic poverty and the lack of elementary sewers and clean water. And each year billions are being pumped out of Latin America into the vaults of the big banks.

● After the carnage in the Gulf, WARS are still taking their toll as brutal Western-backed forces kill, torture and maim in their efforts to overthrow governments in Angola, Mozambique and Cambodia – just as the US-backed contras did in Nicaragua. Elsewhere, western arms, aid and influence prop up dozens of bloody and repressive regimes against mass opposition – in El Salvador, Israel and now even Saddam's Iraq.

Capitalism in its heyday speeded the development of science and technology, ushering in a huge expansion of the productive forces. There are now easily enough resources to house, feed, clothe and educate the world's population. Enough resources to build sea defences for Bangladesh, ensure stable food supplies in Africa, and provide clean water in Latin America.

But modern capitalism – imperialism – continues to hold the third world in utter poverty, through systematic exploitation of the big multinationals and banks, and the murderous austerity imposed by the debt.

A new world order is needed – not George Bush's, but a new order built on social justice and solidarity between peoples. But that means not increased charity, but the fight to destroy imperialism. We can make a start by campaigning to cancel the third world debt.

See editorial p.3 and centre pages

INSIDE: Ireland talks ● Tories crucify NHS



A long tradition of struggle against cuts: Liverpool demo 1984

Liverpool fight continues

THE FIGHT against the nearly 1000 redundancies announced by Liverpool city council is continuing.

Rotating strike action, mainly by NALGO and GMB workers, has affected a large number of council services.

Nearly 400 redundancies were agreed by a full meeting of the council on 6 March, and more than 500 by a council sub-committee on 26 March.

NALGO is challenging the legality of the second wave of redundancies in the high court.

The jobs axe has far from finished its work in Liverpool. The financial crisis of the city will mean that unless this present wave is defeated, many thousands more will follow.

The political situation on the council has been complicated by the outcome of the local government elections. Five 'ward' Labour candidates, backed by the Militant, defeated the 'official' Labour candidates imposed by the party leadership.

The five have joined with 20 suspended Labour councillors to form a 'Broad Left' group on the

council. There are 25 Labour councillors backing council leader Harry Rimmer and another two suspended councillors who have not joined the Broad Left council group.

In effect this means that in Liverpool there is now a right-wing Labour-Liberal coalition running the city.

The five 'ward' Labour candidates won a total of around 8000 votes, in a total of 50,000 votes for Labour in the council elections. This compares with 90,000 won by the Labour Party at the last local government elections.

Lambeth cuts face mounting opposition

by Councillor John Tuite
LABOUR councils have a neat way of making their financial crises disappear – you hand the crisis to others to cope with.

Voluntary sector nurseries closing down, refugees denied access to English classes, the elderly shunted to more 'economical' housing, workers sacked. The list goes on, as what could have been a political crisis for the Tories is turned into a social and personal crisis for thousands of sacked workers or tenants denied services.

Lambeth council is no exception, despite its recently underlined left-wing image and the witch-hunt against 13 Labour Councillors, including the council leadership.

Having aroused the chagrin of the national Labour Party and the Tories by voting against the Gulf War and Poll Tax bailiffs, the council leadership seem determined to see through the £26 million cuts process, and alienate their supporters among the local trade unions. Poll Tax capping will mean another £10 million of jobs and services abandoned.

Resistance is mounting. Two Consumer Advice Centres were to be closed. The workers occupied the centres and have opened up for business whenever possible, giving advice on welfare benefits, housing, and fee bills to some of the poorest in the borough.

Locals bring in food and small change in support. Having had the telephone cut off by the council, NALGO have supplied two mobile phones. Now into its third week, this example of how to fight closures is showing every sign of digging its heels in until the council gives way.

On May 1 London NATFHE called a strike against cuts in adult and further education.

They then failed to build it, except in Lambeth. Lambeth NUT came out solidly in support, as did many NALGO workers. It was just a start to what may happen as education cuts accelerate.

There have been huge lobbies of committees by groups facing closure or grant reductions, anger mounting as a handful of councillors sweep away services with a small, ashamed movement of their voting hand.

The black community have been particularly vocal, as in the year we commemorate 10 years since the Brixton uprising, the partial gains forced out of the council and government are evaporated.

There is a need to overcome the sectionalism of the response to cuts. Lambeth Anti-Cuts Campaign (LACC) has been established and begun the work of building joint union/community action. There is a long way to go.

But there is a growing understanding that the cuts can only be met with solidarity, as each group that begins by lobbying for its own service experiences the council's refusal to take heed of their arguments.

Lambeth NALGO is balloting for all-out strike action as we write. If won, it represents a chance to focus a real fight against the cuts. But a major opportunity has been lost. At least six London NALGO branches have recently balloted on strike action.

Linking up these ballots would have been a step towards overcoming workers' fear of fighting the cuts in isolation. What has the NALGO bureaucracy been doing, as thousands of its member's jobs and services get slashed?

LACC is considering convening a meeting of London trade unionists and community groups to tackle this isolation. It can be contacted for information on 071 733 5670.

Wales swings to the left

by E.Madden and D.Rhys

THE LOCAL elections produced important changes in Wales.

In the Labour heartlands of the Southern valleys, Plaid Cymru(PC) gained significantly. For the first time in its 17 years history, Labour lost Taff Ely council. It also lost seats to PC in the Rhymni, Cynon and Lliw valleys and in Neath.

Anti-Poll Tax activists formed a 'Council of Action' and unseated the Labour deputy of Merthyr council. In these Labour areas, councils brutally implemented Poll Tax collection. This slavish obedience to Tory policies caused the swing to Plaid Cymru – a sharp rebuff to Labour. This follows the Pontypridd and Neath by-elections, where PC sharply cut Labour majorities.

In Cardiff, Labour ran a minority administration. Here the result was different, with Labour gaining from Tories and Liberal Democrats and winning control. In the key Canton ward, which saw a massive swing to Labour unseating three Tories, anti-Poll Tax activists mounted a 'Don't Vote Conservative' campaign.

There is a clear pattern to the anti-Tory vote in South Wales. Where Labour implemented Tory policies, voters looked elsewhere to protest. Where it was a minority, there was a turn to Labour to test it out.

Now the task of anti-Poll Tax and left activists is to pressurise Cardiff council to ensure that there is no return to past practices – doing the Tories' dirty work. Labour councillors can no longer claim that their hands are tied by lack of a majority. This must be the approach throughout South Wales: to

bring Labour councillors to book.

Plaid Cymru is no alternative. In Taff Ely they are forming a council with independents and Liberal Democrats – hardly a left opposition to Labour. The party remains unable to confront right-wing Labourism. Plaid Cymru has shifted rightwards recently, illustrated by its refusal to back Poll Tax non-payment.

Opportunities

Paradoxically, both the increased Labour and PC votes represent a left swing by sections of the working class. Though the left is not well-placed, opportunities are open in the election aftermath.

Local anti-Poll Tax activists – the backbone of the campaign – need to link up with the Labour left, given the leadership's abstention and Militant's sectarianism. They can work together against the continued effects of the Poll Tax on jobs, services and local democracy. The Labour left can use such links to strengthen their position and bring leaders to account.

Attacks on PC by student supporters of the Campaign Group of MPs, the only organised left in the Welsh party, will not help. Their anti-nationalist approach has more in common with Kinnockism than the left that must be built in Wales.

The Poll Tax and its effects on local government jobs and services will be felt as the recession deepens in a depressed area. It must be a time of organisation and preparation by left wingers inside and outside the Welsh Labour Party.

Unipart stewards sacked

by Martin Anthony

UNIPART, the supplier of spare parts for Rover cars, has embarked on a new offensive against union officials at its main depot in Oxford.

Since privatisation four years ago, the union leadership has made one concession after another to the company. This has led to the acceptance of employment on short-term contracts – something that has been rejected in every other section of the Cowley car complex.

But now the Unipart management has moved to destroy union organisation wholesale. Moves to institute 'team leaders', a key part of the process of 'japanisation', were strongly rejected by a mass meeting on 6 March.

An attempt by the management to prevent the organisation of a further mass meeting two days later was ignored, with workers insisting on a response from the Unipart management to the unions' representations.

In the event, the management response was swift. At 3.30pm the same day – ten minutes before the end of the shift – the Senior and Deputy TGWU stewards were sack-

ed and expelled from the premises, along with the AUEW Senior Steward.

All three had around 30 years service with the company and many years as convenors.

A further mass meeting was then organised, which saw the sacked convenors argue strongly against any industrial action. They pointed to the possibility of legal threats and recommended a procedure culminating in a ballot.

In practice this took nearly two months. Throughout this period workers were warned by Unipart that any worker taking action faced the sack – and that a ballot would not protect them. In addition, the company organised showings of videos of non-union companies where workers were 'better off'.

Eventually, on 2 May, all three senior stewards were offered a £25,000 buy-off – which they accepted. An important opportunity to roll back the anti-union offensive has been wasted. Instead, trade unionism has been all but destroyed in a plant that was once among the best organised in the industry.

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A toll of not so natural disasters

NO SOONER has a star-studded international pop concert been organised to help the Kurds, than the catastrophe in Bangladesh happens. Tens of thousands are dead, and cholera - fast becoming the modern plague - threatens millions more.

The organisers of last weekend's pop concert could have organised it for many more causes. On top of the crisis in Kurdistan and Bangladesh, famine is stalking Africa on a huge scale and a tragic cholera outbreak is threatening millions in Latin America.

The disasters hitting the third world are coming so thick and fast that it is difficult to keep up with them. But are they natural? Just a series of accidents? In fact they are not. Each and every one of these 'natural disasters' has a human cause and a human cure.

Take the cyclone in Bangladesh. Of course a cyclone is a natural event (although the erratic world weather patterns may be affected by global warming). But the scale of the disaster was entirely predictable and preventable.

The worst devastation was on the islands off the coast. They are heavily populated because of the lack of land for the peasants. Hunger forces them to take the risk of farming the exposed islands.

Bangladesh has repeatedly suffered tidal waves from cyclones. It needs an effective sea-defence system and much more numerous cyclone shelters. But the rich urban middle class has spent a lot more on defences against river-flooding, a small danger by comparison.

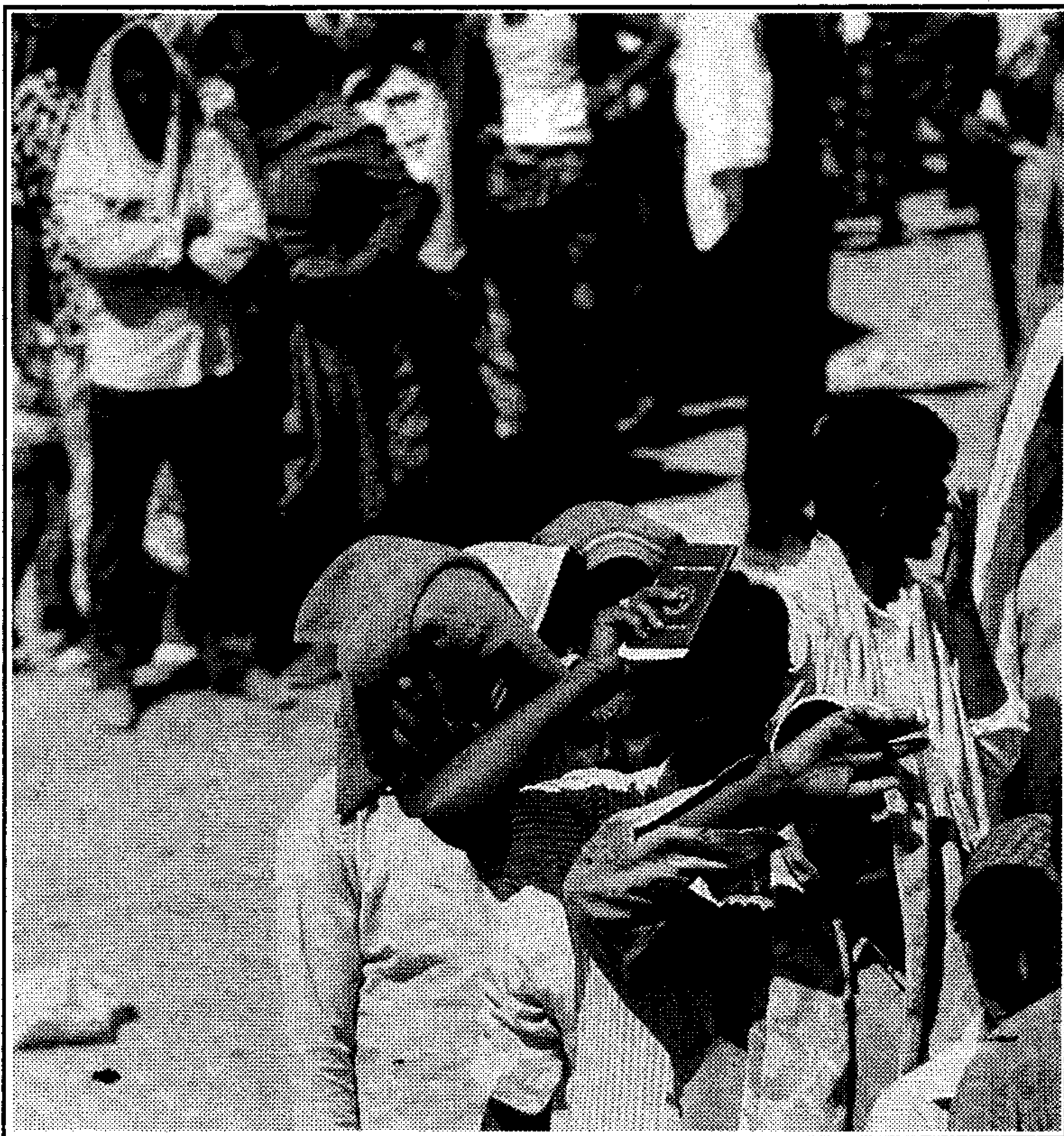
Land reform and the investment for sea defences could stop this periodic carnage. Neither the International Monetary Fund which polices Bangladesh's economy, nor the country's rich rulers are interested in either land reform or effective sea defences.

The cholera epidemic in Latin America tells a similar story. Only an ample supply of clean water, basic hygiene and adequate food can keep cholera at bay. But millions of people in Peru, Colombia, and the other countries of the Andes basin do not have these.

'Natural' disasters are worsened by poverty or simply caused by it. These disasters are accelerating because the third world, in a period of capitalist crisis, is getting poorer.

The desire to raise money to give immediate relief to the millions suffering and dying is commendable and should be supported. But not as an alternative to a longer-term resolution of this third world crisis.

A major cause of the crisis is *debt bondage*. Once a country is unable to repay its debt, the World Bank and the IMF come in to impose austerity - which means terrible suffering and poverty for millions.



Queuing for food: more casualties of the capitalist market

The left in Britain must take up the campaign for the cancellation of the third world debt. Fighting the debt strikes at the heart of the present unjust world economic order. It is true that imperialism, the exploitation of the poor countries by the rich, existed long before the debt crisis - and would exist even if debt bondage were abolished.

But the fight to cancel the debt immediately leads in to a fight for a new world economic order. This summer the leaders of the seven richest nations come to London for their economic summit (see centre pages). The demonstrations against them are the opportunity to strike a blow for all the oppressed of the third world.

Who will improve public services?

As election fever mounts the Tories have carried out a gobsmackingly hypocritical ploy in launching their 'Charter' for decent public services.

The only rational point in this offensive is public services are in crisis in decay. Anyone who has to use public transport in most of the country, or relies on social services, or can even see the state of the streets in most major towns can tell you as much.

But the core of the Tories proposal is the idea that wrecked public services are the fault of the workers.

If you're homeless, then it's the fault of the NALGO workers at the council housing department. If the dustbins aren't emptied then it's the fault of the GMB workers emptying the bins. And if the tube is impossibly crowded and dirty, then of course it's those ASLEF and RMT workers who've sabotaged it. They must be held to account through performance related pay and other sanctions.

No rational person could believe this nonsense. The services and infrastructure of Britain are in crisis because of underfunding, because of privatisation and deliberate run-down.

But Labour's response is hopeless. All Kinnock and Gould can say is 'they stole the idea from us'. John Major's line that Labour's promise to improve things all round and not raise taxes is empty has a point.

Where would Labour get the money to renovate the NHS and improve public services all round? Especially when Labour says it will not cut defence spending. Especially when there are no plans for radical attempts to redistribute wealth from the rich.

Labour's promise to improve public services sits ill with the 'we're promising nothing' line. Labour is promising nothing because if it comes to power it will do so on the basis of *not* reversing the main planks of Thatcherism. Official party politics is becoming a 'beauty contest' where the three main leaders pedal what are essentially similar policies.

If Labour wanted to really defeat the Tories public services scam then they should expose its content - that of blaming the workers. Neil Kinnock and Bryan Gould are a million miles from associating themselves with anything so principled.

Build on our success

The first issue of the new newspaper-style Socialist Outlook got a good response from our supporters and sympathisers. Sales were higher than they ever were when we had a magazine format. We have had a steady flow of new subscribers, and donations, including some from people we did not previously know.

The good response has been heartening - but there is a long way to go before the paper is as good as we want it to be; and we think that we can improve the level of sales to make a bigger impact.

There are a number of ways in which our supporters and readers can help the newspaper develop. First, by making suggestions for improvements and for articles. All the criticisms and comments we receive are being collated and regularly discussed by the editorial staff. Tell us what you want to see in the paper.

But we need more reports of local and labour movement events. If you have a proposal for an article, or news on which we can base an article, send it to us at PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

We need to ensure that we maximise sales, and especially subscriptions. Supporters should utilise the opportunity

of the 2.50 introductory subscription to get people to subscribe. And we want supporters to tell us of any left wing bookshops which do not get the paper.

Most of all we need to get money back from sales to our office as soon as possible. Socialist Outlook supporters who take a regular bundle can help us by paying for it through a standing order.

Socialist Outlook, in line with our support for the Socialist Movement, supports its new paper *socialist*. In order that we do not clash with the launch issue of *socialist*, there will be a three-week gap between issues 2 and 3. Our next issue will be out on 8 June.





Was the deal done by Jimmy Knapp and other rail union officials a sell out or a necessary retreat? The issue is now being debated among rail workers. Below is one point of view from a Socialist Outlook supporter

Step up fight against sexism in unions!

by Carolyn Sikorski
WOMEN ACTIVISTS in the trade union movement face sexism and discriminatory practices both in the workplace and in their trade union. Combine this with the sexism and discrimination in society in general and the result - women are under-



Side by side on the picket line women join male engineering workers

represented at all levels of the movement.

This fact, which would hardly surprise any woman who at some point in her life tried to get involved in her union, has recently been studied in some depth by the Labour Research Department (LRD) and the results published in a booklet *Women in the trade unions - action for equality*.

According to LRD only 26% of the 11 million women in employment are in TUC affiliated unions compared with 47% of men. Despite this, women represent about a third of the trade union movement.

The booklet contains statistics revealing the disproportionately low number of women on national executives, attending national conferences and holding general secretary or national full-time positions.

Unfortunately figures showing the number of women who are shop stewards or branch officials are much less comprehensive and only 11 unions keep statistics revealing a contradictory picture. For instance NUPE has 71% women in membership with 46% of the NEC but only 30% of branch officers. The NUT however with 72% women membership has only 29% of the NEC but 50% of branch positions held by women.

Most unions over the past few years have made some effort to increase the participation of women in their structures. This is a result of women themselves demanding changes.

The approach advocated by the TUC is to urge unions to improve women's equality at work. Their 'Charter for working women' outlines 18 areas for negotiation with employers including paternity/parental leave, subsidies for child care costs and occupational health issues including cancer screening. The TUC also encourages changes in union practices detailed in the Charter for equality of women within their trade unions.

The Charter includes the establishment of 'advisory committees', holding of union meetings in work time and representation of women on union committees proportionate to the membership in the unions.

However, the recession is resulting in steadily increasing attacks on workers' existing terms and conditions and their very right to organise. With a trade union leadership that

refuses to confront these assaults the improvements in conditions of work and any extension of union rights (such as facility time for union meetings) will be very hard to achieve.

In other words women are likely to be further marginalised in the trade union movement rather than see their position improved. Particularly if the TUC's strategy is the only one adopted.

The crucial area that is deliberately excluded by the TUC is the encouragement of women to organise as women in the unions. This means that that such organisation is less likely to be part of the union structure and decision making process.

The LRD booklet makes some reference to women-only 'initiatives' but gives little detail. Some of these 'initiatives' clearly do feed directly into the structures of the unions. However they should not be confused with certain unions national or regional 'women's committees' that include men and are not elected by women.

In NALGO for instance women's groups in the branches sometimes elect representatives to branch executives and national conference. This structure was fought for very hard by women in the union over the past few years. However it is now under threat as NALGO dissolves itself into the 'superunion' - NALGO-NUPE-COHSSE. The signs are that the women's structure will be dumped and replaced by reserved places on union committees possibly even being elected by men as well as women.

To discuss women's involvement in the unions, the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee (SMTUC) and Women for Socialism (WIS) will be holding a national meeting in November. Planning has already begun and the special needs of younger women, black women, women with disabilities and lesbians are being recognised in the wide variety of workshops and caucuses that will take place.

The SMTUC would be grateful for details of women's experiences - successful and otherwise - of organising in their unions.

Anyone who can supply information or who would like to attend the meeting please contact Carolyn Sikorski, Secretary SMTUC, 53a Geere Road, London E15

Tube workers suffer defeat on jobs

By an RMT Tube Worker

800 JOBS have been lost on London's underground. Two of the unions representing tube workers, the RMT and TSSA had voted 2-1 for industrial action to oppose over 1000 job losses.

But by the close of the balloting period and after London Underground (LUL) had called for negotiations at the arbitration service ACAS the unions felt unable to implement the action.

The two clear reasons for this were a massive and unprecedented campaign of intimidation by management and the splitting of the union side by ASLEF - the train drivers' union.

Negotiations at ACAS 200 jobs and instituted talks on rosters which could increase staffing. Proposals to cut another 800 jobs were withdrawn and working parties on staffing and pay levels set up after the 1989 strikes, but abandoned by management, were reconstituted.

The talks reinstated promotion and transfer arrangements and extended from 18 months to three years the protection of earnings of displaced staff. Nevertheless, large-scale reorganisation of the 'permanent way' and engineering staff, which at this stage involve no

job losses, remains.

Management could move quickly towards the break-up of these departments. Individual line managers would control their own permanent way and engineering services, with the option of putting the work out to private contractors.

However, it is unlikely that any major changes to passenger services will be proposed this side of a General Election. LUL management is severely discredited in the eyes of the public. All their macho style has produced is a £100 million deficit and worse services. The public want better and safer services with more staff on trains and stations. Only a new Tory election victory would give management a fresh mandate to cut back in these areas.

ASLEF, the association which represents 50% of LUL train staff, collaborated with management's plans from the start.

They adopted a position that they would not fight for booking clerks or station staff. But worse they did not even fight the loss of 272 train jobs - because there were no compulsory redundancies.

For the first time in living memory, one union negotiated a deal with management after the others had failed to agree, and

before they had finished balloting. Their national officials stated that they would not support any of their members who respected official picket lines. Their local officials actively campaigned against the RMT and TSSA ballots and declared support for management's plans to sack activists.

During previous ballots in 1987 and 1989 management took no initiatives. This time, threats of the sack were widespread and backed up by individual letters to the whole workforce. In addition, management imposed the package while unions were still balloting. Compliance with the new anti-union laws meant that the new arrangements were in place four weeks before balloting could be finished.

By the time LUL management called talks at ACAS, activists were concerned that a repeat of 1985 was on the cards. Then, an all-out strike called by the RMT against the one person operation of trains was ignored by the majority of the workforce and had to be called off within 12 hours.

In view of this situation the decision to call off the strike was unavoidable.

The immediate task is to deal with the problem of ASLEF. For ten years this organisation has been the tail that wagged the dog of the Federation of railway Unions. At the same time as consistently refusing to ballot for full amalgamation, ASLEF has poached more than 1000 members from RMT on both BR and LUL.

The bureaucratic sham of the federation must be taken on board at this year's RMT AGM. Fighting for one industrial union must be combined with consistent propaganda to defy the anti-union laws.

The RMT LUL District Council has an excellent tradition of mass leafleting both in between and during industrial disputes. To this must be added a new tradition of assemblies of activists which alone can organise widely enough to combat management intimidation.

**Socialist Movement
Trade Union Committee
Public Meeting
Unshackle the Unions
Thursday 13 June, 7.30pm
City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow**

Speakers:
Judy Cotter, Liverpool NALGO
Carolyn Sikorski (SMTUC)

This meeting has been sponsored by the Scottish Socialist Movement and Scottish Labour Party Socialists. After the meeting there will be a discussion on the formation of a Scottish sub-committee of the SMTUC.



Northern Ireland negotiations

A new guarantee for partition

by Piers Mostyn

ALL BUT ONE of the parties in the north of Ireland are to participate with the Dublin and London governments in a process of negotiation.

Secretary of State Peter Brooke appears to have pulled off a coup in initiating the first significant round-table talks on Northern Ireland in 18 years.

The 'bottom line' has been the objective of a new partitionist settlement based on devolution, and the exclusion of Sinn Fein. The initiative should be opposed on this basis alone.

Excluded

It excludes both a party representing 10% of the six county population and the aspiration of the majority of the Irish people (confirmed in recent opinion polls) for national unity and independence.

Simultaneously the British are drafting in military reinforcements and preparing legislation (the 1991 Emergency Powers Bill) to add new unprecedented repressive powers to uphold the border.

The last such initiative was the 1974 Sunningdale Agreement. That was based on a combination of 'power-sharing' (government of the six counties by majority rule, but with the 'minority' given minor executive responsibilities) with an 'All-Ireland Council'.

The Unionists' desire for a return to the unfettered sectarianism of pre-1968 Stormont was politically unacceptable. The bourgeois nationalist SDLP had to be persuaded that becoming junior coalition partner in a reformed Six County government was worthwhile.

Sop to nationalists

Dublin involvement was thus seen as a sop to nationalist aspirations and a brake on any Unionist misuse of their position. The power-sharing executive was brought down by loyalist resistance, culminating in a general strike. Their main objection was not so much to power-sharing with Catholics, as to any hint of southern involvement in decision making.

In 1985, the Dublin and London governments signed the Hillsborough Accord which sought to address the same objectives. Paper recognition was given to the aspirations of Northern nationalists and regular consultation between London and Dublin initiated. But support for partition was copper-fastened.

The Accord was little more than an attempt to realign all the main bourgeois parties against

militant republicanism. It failed. Support for Sinn Fein was not significantly eroded. The Unionists were intransigently opposed. If anything, violence increased.

Softened up

But the Accord did help to soften up the constitutional nationalists into accepting further political compromise. Under Sunningdale the all-Ireland dimension was there at the beginning as an integral element of the devolved power-sharing package.

Under the current talks there will be three stages that will ensure an internal settlement is agreed between the Northern parties, before discussions begin with Dublin. The SDLP will thus have to agree to a devolved six-county government without any guarantees about the South.

At stage two (North-South talks) the Unionists, will refuse to countenance any institutional set up giving Dublin a say. But the trap will be set. By then it will be difficult for the SDLP or Dublin to withdraw, as the former will already have stated its acceptance of the internal settlement.

The final stage, London-Dublin talks, will formally set the seal on the whole deal.

Thus, contrary to the media's hype, the initiative is not about a Unionist climbdown. It's success would be in drawing constitutional nationalism into the first devolved partitionist administration since the fall of Stormont. How has Brooke done it?

First, the Accord not only softened up the SDLP, but also helped to marginalise the Republicans. After the mass mobilisations around the 1981 hunger strikes and the electoral rise of Sinn Fein, Republicans failed to mobilise against the Accord.

Underestimated

Indeed, they underestimated the threat it posed. The period since the early 1980s has seen a decline in the mass struggle. The SDLP can now enter a new arrangement with less fear of a Republican-led boycott.

Second, politics in the South are on the move. The long-term effects of a national debt of Latin American proportions, and the erosion of its electoral base, have forced the Fianna Fail government to rethink its strategic alliances.

It can no longer rely on its traditional role as majority party, the occasional token nationalist posture, and an alliance with the church. Political stability and a partnership with British, European and International capital are essential to stave off economic crisis.

Hence Haughey, who opposed the Malvinas war and the Accord and described the six counties as a 'failed non-entity', has done a U-turn.

Gulf War

He breached the 26 counties' neutrality by allowing Bush refuelling facilities in the Gulf war; he has embraced the new talks; and is now offering articles two and three of the constitution (embodying the aspiration to Irish unity and independence) up for negotiation.

Third, European unity is on the horizon. Post-1992 socio-economic harmonisation with the North and Britain poses a type of economic unity that is far more attractive to the Irish capitalists than the risk of national unity, with the dangers of instability and a re-unified working class.

The result will be a historic compromise of the Irish people's rights to self deter-

mination, independence and unity. The package will be sold as 'democratic' - with the backing of all major British and Irish parties. Even the loyalist paramilitaries have guaranteed not to put a spanner in the works. So far the silence of any opposition (particularly from British Labour) has been deafening.

Nonetheless, it remains a high-risk strategy for Britain. A resurgence of mass nationalist struggle in the North remains a possibility and could challenge the acquiescence of the SDLP.

Southern politics are very unstable - especially given a strengthening of the left, reflecting dissatisfaction with Haughey's vicious austerity programme. Even in Britain, the Irish vote will be important in the forthcoming election.

Link-up

A link-up between the left and the Irish community could help crack the appearance of consensus. Socialists in this country need to build such an opposition and expose the lie that this is a democratic peace process, rather than another neo-colonial settlement imposed undemocratically and upheld by force.



Sinn Fein's failure to fight the Accord has helped to marginalise their influence on the situation

Bangladesh - much more than just a natural disaster

by Oliver New

JUST SIX helicopters were available to the Bangladeshi government. With this they had to deal with the devastation left in the wake of the cyclone which killed up to 200,000 and left 4 million without clean water or food - a pathetic contrast to the mighty array of technology used to blast Iraq.

Bangladesh itself felt obliged to contribute 2,000 troops to this imperialist war against another third world country. Yet it has probably suffered more than any other country outside the Gulf, losing \$500 million in exports, Kuwaiti aid and remittances from Bangladeshis working in the Gulf. And many of the latter have 'disappeared', to the total disinterest of Bangladesh's 'allies'.

Bangladesh is regularly inundated by water, either through the flooding of its two great rivers or by sea storms driving across it. The whole country is low-lying and highly populated, with an average of 1,700 people per square mile.

It is therefore little wonder that so many people are attracted to live in even the most low-lying sand spits, but few shelters have been built by the government against these inevitable typhoons for the last ten years.

Thanks to the TV cameras jolting living-room consciences in the West, more shelters may now be built. But charity of this sort is no long-term answer to the basic problem of dependency.

The horrifically violent partition of India in 1947 led to an artificial boundary between Bangladesh and Calcutta, where jute, still the main export, was processed.

Bangladesh was exploited by West Pakistan and only achieved independence twenty years ago - after a war in which a million people died. Sixteen of those twenty years have seen the country ruled by military dictatorships. It is a history of suffering.

Today's disastrous flooding comes only two months after the election of a civilian prime minister, Mrs. Khaleda Zia. American state department officials were drooling with euphoria over the election results.

Mrs. Zia, widow of the first military dictator, was just the sort of leader they wanted. To help to prop her up, they wrote off \$292 million in debts.

This, said a spokesperson of the State Department, 'will encourage Bangladesh to stay the course of economic reform outlined in its IMF-enhanced structural adjust-

ment facility.' So they give with one hand and take with the other!

An overwhelmingly agricultural country, Bangladesh is also very much at the mercy of India, its big sister, which surrounds it. Unsurprisingly, neither the Indian bourgeoisie, nor the IMF have shown any interest in the construction of concrete coastal shelters, any more than in the construction of industry.

Mass student and youth demonstrations at the end of last year led the military to give a final push to Ershad, the dictator, and usher in elections.

But for Bangladeshis to have a government that will act in their interests will take more popular mobilisations. The revolutionary left movement was crushed and forced underground in the 1970s. Its re-emergence in the next few years will be a matter of life and death.

El Salvador

It's hard to make deals with terrorist governments

by Gareth Mostyn

IT LOOKED as though an important deal had been struck in El Salvador at the end of April.

For the past two years, the left wing guerrilla fighters of the FMLN have been putting major emphasis on reaching a negotiated settlement to the 11 year old civil war.

On April 29 the rebel radio station *Venceremos* quoted FMLN commandante (and Communist Party leader) Shafik Handal as saying that the agreements were 'significant achievements'. Though partial, they would have overwhelming consequences.

The past two years have seen an advance in the FMLN's fortunes on a domestic front, while the international balance of forces have moved against them. There has been considerable pressure on both sides to reach a settlement.

The FMLN believe that they would not receive the military aid that would be necessary to run El Salvador if they came to power by military means. The

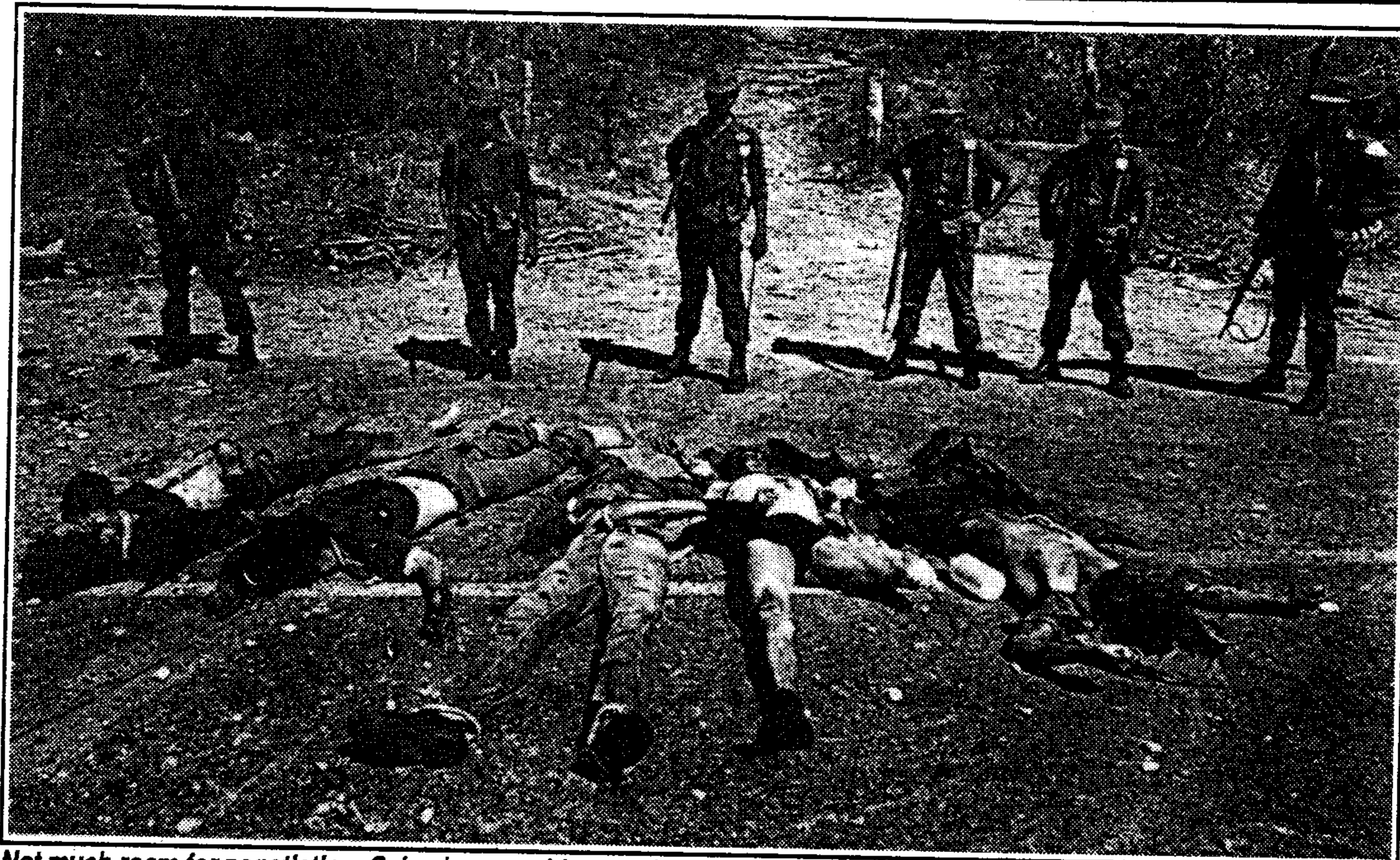
right wing ARENA government and the Salvadorean army are very unpopular internationally and in the USA. They are too stubborn, anti-American, violent, and overall a 'bad investment' for the USA.

The FMLN have used all kinds of pressure to force concessions out of the government. A constant military attack has worried both the army and the rich elite, who cannot make the profits that would be available if the war ended.

Meanwhile, exposure of the worst excesses of the death-squad government has won powerful domestic and international support for far-reaching reforms.

The main aim of the negotiations is to have major sections of the army disbanded. This would open up the possibility of sufficient democratic space for the FMLN to participate openly in political life. The FMLN are proposing a demilitarised El Salvador in which there is only a professional police force left.

As with many negotiations, they get bogged down on issues such as the shape of the table,



Not much room for negotiation: Salvador armed forces shoot first discuss later

where it meets, and so on. The past year has occupied this ground.

The hard-liners in ARENA, however, do not want to see any deal. They see President Cristiani, on the 'wet' wing of the fascist party, as a crypto-communist, ready to sell the country on a plate. They are thus particularly pleased with Article 248 of the constitution, which stipulates that any change to the constitution must be ratified by two consecutive National Assemblies. In other words, it would take up to three years to confirm any reforms negotiated with the FMLN.

The recent negotiations were the first concentrated attempt to thrash out real changes to the constitution. It started with the easier sections, and so did not include Article 248, nor, most contentious of all, the army.

There was an important deadline for the talks. The old national Assembly ended in April, and the new Assembly, elected in March, met at the beginning of May. So constitutional changes could be ratified by both in the same period.

The agreements reached included the subordination of the

army to civilian rule, and the establishment of a police force under civilian control. In addition, changes were made to the legal system to safeguard human rights, along with alterations in the electoral system and the establishment of a 'truth commission'.

The talks in Mexico overran considerably and were interrupted by the right and centre parties, who came to intervene in support of their own version of an agreement. The major achievement of the talks was the unanimous agreement on substantial reforms. These did not, however, change the nature of the state or undermine the foundations of the oligarchy.

Different version

Considerable bullying was necessary to get agreement on the reforms from the outgoing National Assembly. It was rejected in the morning, and was only later agreed after intervention from the US embassy, the UN, and the President.

It subsequently emerged that the Assembly had agreed a different version of the agreement,

leaving out the most important elements of the reforms.

The result is that the methods of election of Supreme Court magistrates and the 'Supreme Electoral Tribunal' remain as ARENA had argued. The FMLN are now returning to the UN, arguing that there has been foul play.

Though it is significant that the talks have taken place at all, a ceasefire is still a long way off. It appears that the intervention of the UN is insufficient to ensure that the government negotiates in good faith. Without the backing of the USA, the UN is a toothless beast.

The Bush administration is now slightly changing tack, but will continue to try to prevent the FMLN from gaining power, whether by parliamentary or military means.

Its latest gambit is to attempt to persuade the National Assembly to elect Ruben Zamora, a long-standing ally of the FMLN, to the powerless vice-presidency of the Assembly. The intention is to create a democratic image - but in reality the war goes on.

The end of Apartheid a long road ahead

by Charlie van Gelderen

DURING his recent visit to Britain, South African President FW De Klerk convinced John Major that he had gone far enough in abolishing apartheid to justify the end of sanctions.

Major, of course, did not need much convincing. Like Thatcher before him, he was never very enthusiastic about sanctions. For the black majority in South Africa, however, the picture does not look quite so rosy.

At the opening of parliament in February, De Klerk announced the repeal of what he called the 'four cornerstones of apartheid': the two Land Acts, which restricted black ownership to 17% of the land; the Group Areas Act, which prescribed where people of a 'designated race group' would be able to live and work; and the Population Registration Act (PRA), which classified people as white, coloured, or black.

The PRA is being replaced by the Residential Environment Bill, which was described by the South African Council of Churches as 'A new form of apartheid in a non-racial guise'. There is no mention of the now disavowed term 'race' in the text of the Bill. The purpose of the Bill is 'to provide for the conservation and protection of the urban environment' and for the maintenance of 'appropriate norms and standards in any residential area and

mediation in the settlement of disputes disturbing neighbourhood relations.'

This will be enforced by government-appointed 'mediation boards' and is therefore obviously designed to continue the privileges which whites have enjoyed under the Group Areas Act (GAA).

Instead of the GAA we will now have something called the 'Less Formal Townships Establishment Bill'. Again, officials will have 'unchallenged discretion' as to where townships will be established.

The repeal of the Land Acts supposedly gives blacks freedom to farm where they want - providing that they can find capital to buy out the white farmers. Its proposed replacement, the 'Rural Development Bill' gives officials 'vast powers' to decide where blacks can farm, and imposes severe conditions.

In the face of this, the ANC leadership is continuing to act indecisively. Having postponed its ultimatum to the government from April 30 to May 9, it has now backed down again.

Meanwhile, the slaughter in the townships continues. The government seem to be in no hurry to attempt to put a stop to it and the ANC leadership seem unable to do much about it. De Klerk is quite happy to play off Buthelezi's Inkatha thugs against the ANC.

The road to the end of apartheid is a long, rocky and bloody one.

From austerity to epidemic

PERU is under a state of emergency with the first cholera epidemic in the country in more than a hundred years.

It is the first major outbreak of the disease in the Western hemisphere since 1911. Alberto Fujimori's government declared the state of emergency back in February, when the Health minister estimated that 300,000 people were infected and 10,000 were expected to die as a result.

By the beginning of May over 1200 people had already lost their lives. By the end of this year more than two million will be infected.

Eventually the disease will spread to the US and Europe: but here it will be contained relatively easily, while cholera will remain endemic in the Americas for a whole generation.

The reappearance of this grim disease in Peru graphically illustrates the extent to which the country has moved beyond economic crisis and into economic disintegration.

Huge foreign debt forms the material basis for the political and economic instability that engulfs the entire sub-continent. Peru's debt is \$20 billion.

Between 1989 and 1990 inflation in Peru rose from 5,230 to 7,000 per cent. Only one in five has a steady job and over half the population suffers from some form of malnutrition.

Peru's neighbouring countries are now staring their own future in the face. Under the direction of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank the line of the Peruvian bourgeoisie, in common with other Latin American ruling classes, is 'if it moves, if it can be sold, export it'.

The aim of the export fever that has swept across the Peruvian bourgeoisie is to generate foreign currency in order to service the debt.

To attract foreign capital, production costs have had to be reduced. Over the last seven years this has resulted in real wages falling by 27 per cent, alongside large-scale privatisation.

Cholera is not a particularly difficult disease to treat or prevent. But elementary health and social provision have been in the frontline of cuts resulting from the Fujimori government's savage austerity programme designed to reduce the debt.

When Fujimori was elected last June it was because he rejected the deflationary 'shock therapy' that had been supported by the more right-wing candidate Llosa.

Once in power though, he lost no time in implementing such a policy. In one stroke he abolished all price support.

The poor are told that they should boil their water to kill the cholera bacteria. They are not told, however, how they are expected to cope with a 3000 per cent rise in fuel prices.

Of 22 million people in Peru, 15 million live crammed into slum neighbourhoods. Forty per cent of urban districts are not connected to running water and in many areas there is only one tap per 1000 people.

Millions of dollars in emergency aid are needed now. But the only effective long-term measure is an adequate supply of clean water. This needs the development of large infrastructural projects as part of an extensive and radical health and social programme.

Such programmes however, and a life free from disease and poverty, will not be handed out by charity. They will be won by the political struggle in which the Peruvian people are now engaged.

Roland Wood

Peru Support Group
20 Compton Terrace
London, N1 2UN.

World Order

Yugoslavia - Collapsing Fast

The break-up of the state of Yugoslavia, in all probability through civil war, draws closer every day. The problems faced by the near impotent federal presidency headed by Ante Markovic are not purely those of national conflict.

A quarter of Yugoslav firms have already collapsed and unemployment has soared past the 20% mark. But the often conflicting national aspirations of the Serb, Croat and Albanian sections of the population (among others) have dominated the scene.

Brazil - economy minister resigns

Along with her team of economic advisers the economy minister of Brazil, Zelia Cardoso de Mello, was forced to resign last week after President Collor withdrew his support for her. She had rather embarrassed Collor's 'business-like' image by saying that Brazil couldn't afford to keep its foreign debt repayments up to date.

Collor with his new economy minister, former banker Marcilio Marques Moreira, look ready to accept the IMF's latest and most savage austerity package for the country, tempted by the carrot of a \$1.2 billion standby loan. The plan is very similar to that which the Mexican government is now implementing.

The managing director of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, wants Brazil to 'eliminate its \$122 billion debt problem' within three years. Who's kidding who?

Italian Communists Organise

The abandonment of any commitment to Marxism and class struggle by the mainstream Italian Communist Party has led to a split, with a substantial portion of its base preparing to form a new party. In February the Italian Communist congress in Rimini changed the name of the party to 'Party of the Democratic Left', removing any reference to traditional communist goals.

Dissidents will hold a congress in November to establish a new party. So far 144,000 membership cards for the new party have been distributed. Leading figures include Cossutta, long-time leader of the old pro-Soviet tendency in the PCI and Garravini, former trade union leader and PCI deputy.

The main Italian far left organisation Democratic Proletaria (DP) seems certain to go into the new party.

US Marine faces death penalty

Erik Larsen, a US Marine Reservist who campaigned against the Gulf war, now faces the death penalty for 'desertion in time of war'. Out of the 3000 or so GI registers who spoke out against the war, Larsen is the first to be charged with desertion.

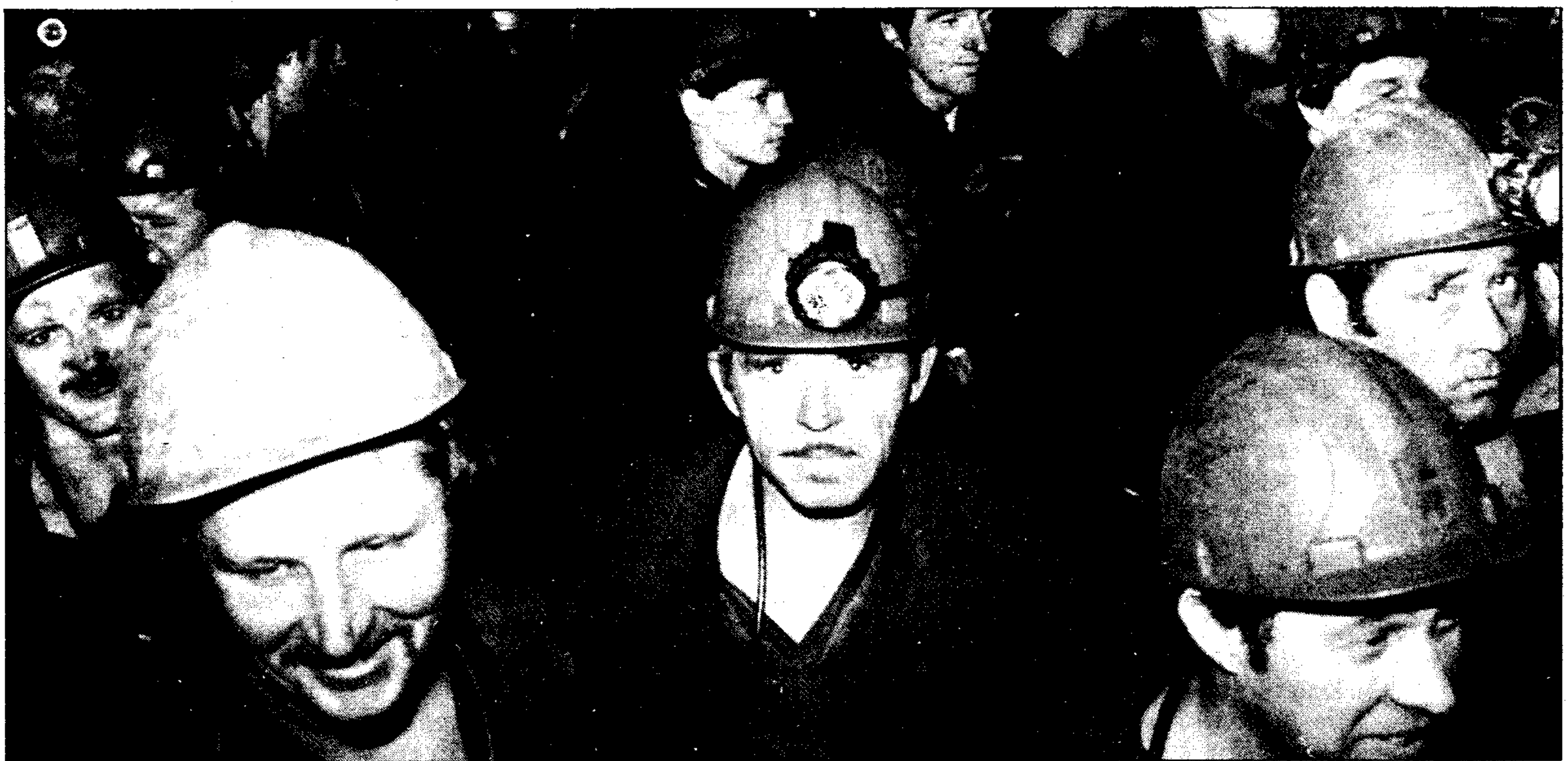
His civilian attorney, Robert Rivkin, represented thousands of contentious objectors since the Vietnam war. He maintains that the Marine Corps acted illegally in issuing Larsen's activation order for deployment to Saudi Arabia in February. He says that there was an unnecessary delay in processing the soldier's application for contentious objector status.

The anti-war movement in the US is mobilising support both for Larsen and also Tahan Jones, a black marine and prominent anti-war activist, who is expected to face the same charges when he gives himself up soon.

Tory backs Labor

While he was Tory Party treasurer in Britain, Lord McAlpine was busy supporting the Labor Party election campaign in Australia during 1985. The embarrassing news came to light during an inquiry into the suspect wheeler-dealing around the Government of Western Australia.

McAlpine has large business interests in the state and has never denied the close relationship he has with the ultra right-wing Labor Party. He said at the time 'I am the treasurer of the British Conservative Party. I don't find my strong conservative philosophies incompatible with the Labor Party in Australia'. Enough said really...



Soviet miners: how will they respond to Yeltsin's plans for a market economy?

Gorbachev under siege

IN RECENT months Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has faced an unprecedented combination of political threats.

A third of the Soviet Union's miners took industrial action, demanding a wage increase of more than 200%, as well as Gorbachev's resignation. At the same time, Russian premier Boris Yeltsin launched a bitter new struggle for power. PATRICK BAKER looks at the political situation in the Soviet Union today.

THE NINE WEEK strike by Soviet miners now looks close to an end, but Gorbachev's problems are far from solved. The authority of the state apparatus is under siege.

Other sectors of workers are now threatening action, encouraged by the miners' partial success, while the Soviet republics' struggle for independence gathers momentum.

Armed force

Meanwhile, Gorbachev's response to the continuing dispute over Nagorno Karabakh has been the tried and tested method of the stalinist bureaucracy - armed intervention on a massive scale.

This has been combined with warnings of the economic consequences of secession - many of the republics are still heavily subsidised by the central state.

Lost production

The miners' strike has cost the Soviet economy more than seven million tonnes of lost production, as well as providing an example of militant struggle for both political and economic objectives.

Though some miners in the Kuzbass and Vorkuta are still sceptical of government promises, and have pledged to continue the action until they have cast-iron evidence that these will be fulfilled, a settlement now seems likely.

But Gorbachev has lost the battle in a number of respects - even if miners haven't yet achieved their demand for his resignation.

Other sections of workers, including Siberian oil and gas workers, are now threatening action in support of wage claims and in opposition to Gorbachev's draconian programme of anti-union laws. They have also raised the demand for Gorbachev's resignation.

In addition, the transfer of mines to the control of the Russian republic will clearly fuel the USSR's movements for national independence.

Weakened

This weakening of central control of the economy, coinciding with rallies of hundreds of thousands in the Baltic republics, reflects the crisis of the central state apparatus. It will undoubtedly strengthen the position of Russian premier Boris Yeltsin in his challenge to Gorbachev for ultimate power in the Soviet state.

He quickly moved to consolidate his new-found strength with the establishment of a Russian branch of the KGB. But does this devolution of

power to the Russian republic provide an answer for the miners, who have led the struggle in support of decent wages and workers' control since 1989?

The deal may answer some grievances in relation to central state control, though vague promises of 'worker management' are unlikely to materialise.

But the real aim, from the viewpoint of Yeltsin's administration, is betrayed in the statement that 'the deal involved a transfer to market relations'.

Shatalin Plan

Given Yeltsin's consistent advocacy of rapid marketisation, including the Shatalin Plan for marketisation of the Soviet economy in 500 days, miners may be in for a shock.

The destruction of the Polish and east German economies over the last year is an indicator of what such plans involve. It was explained quite clearly at a recent economic conference in Moscow, organised by the American far-right 'Cato Institute' that: 'The Soviet industrial base has to be wiped out'.

Such views may not be those of the mainstream yet - though prime minister Pavlov leans heavily in this direction. But President Gorbachev is responding to the repeated threats to the

federal state, and thus to his position, with increasing desperation.

It now appears that he may be moving to transfer his vast array of personal powers from paper to practice. As before, the testing ground appears to be the crisis-torn regions of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Serious fighting is now raging over the disputed enclave of Nagorno Karabakh. But it has already been claimed that Soviet troops are exacerbating the conflict, and even involved in sectarian slaughter.

Whatever the precise details, experience teaches us that the heavy hand of the stalinist military apparatus will not solve such problems. Indeed, the bureaucracy's repression of national struggles lies at the origin of many such problems.

No alternative

The outlook for the Soviet Union looks bleak. With the strengthening of the hand of Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev's ability to hold the union together must be in question. No serious political alternative is on offer.

However, the struggles of the Soviet peoples for their national rights and living standards will continue. It is only through these struggles that a positive solution will emerge.

International Viewpoint

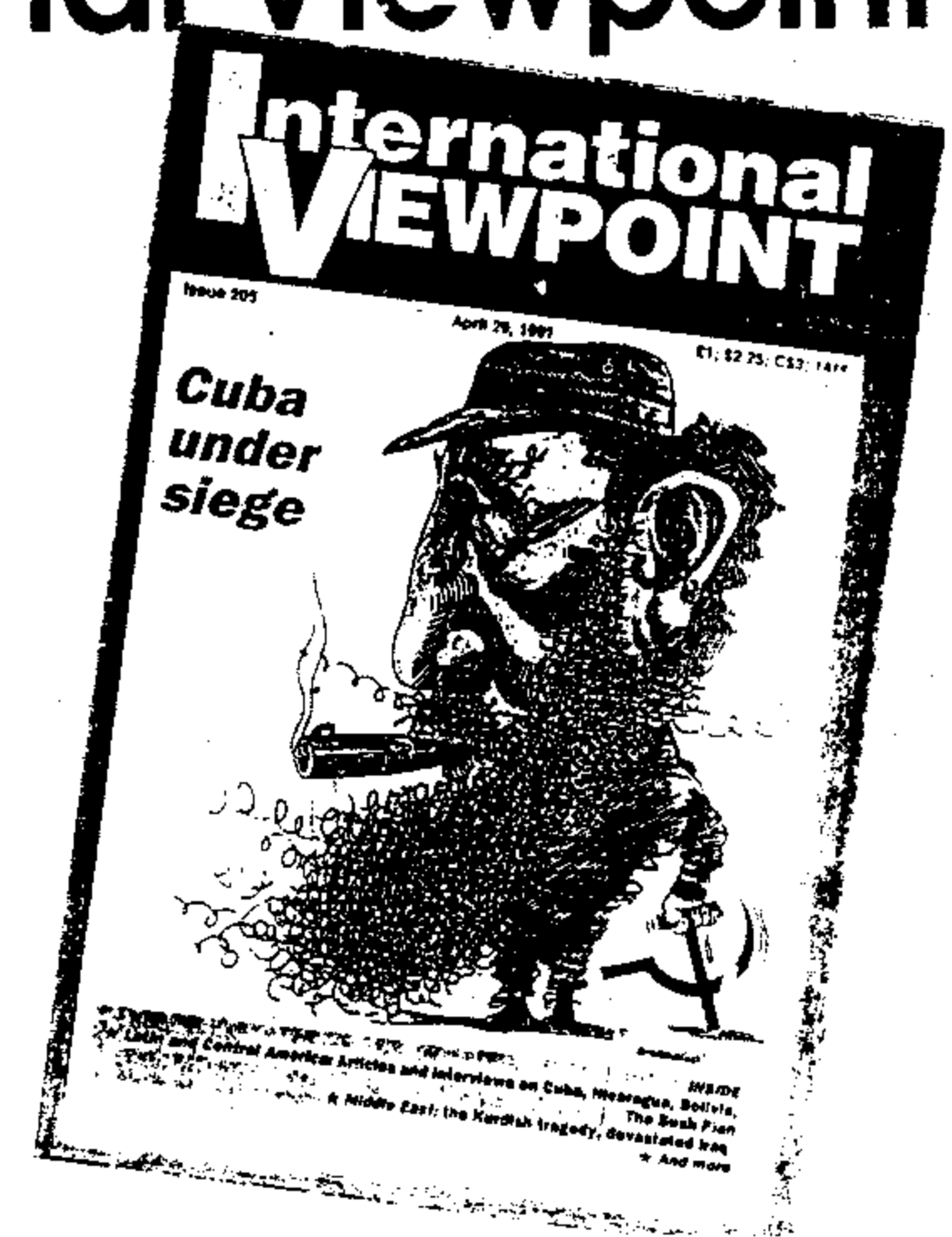
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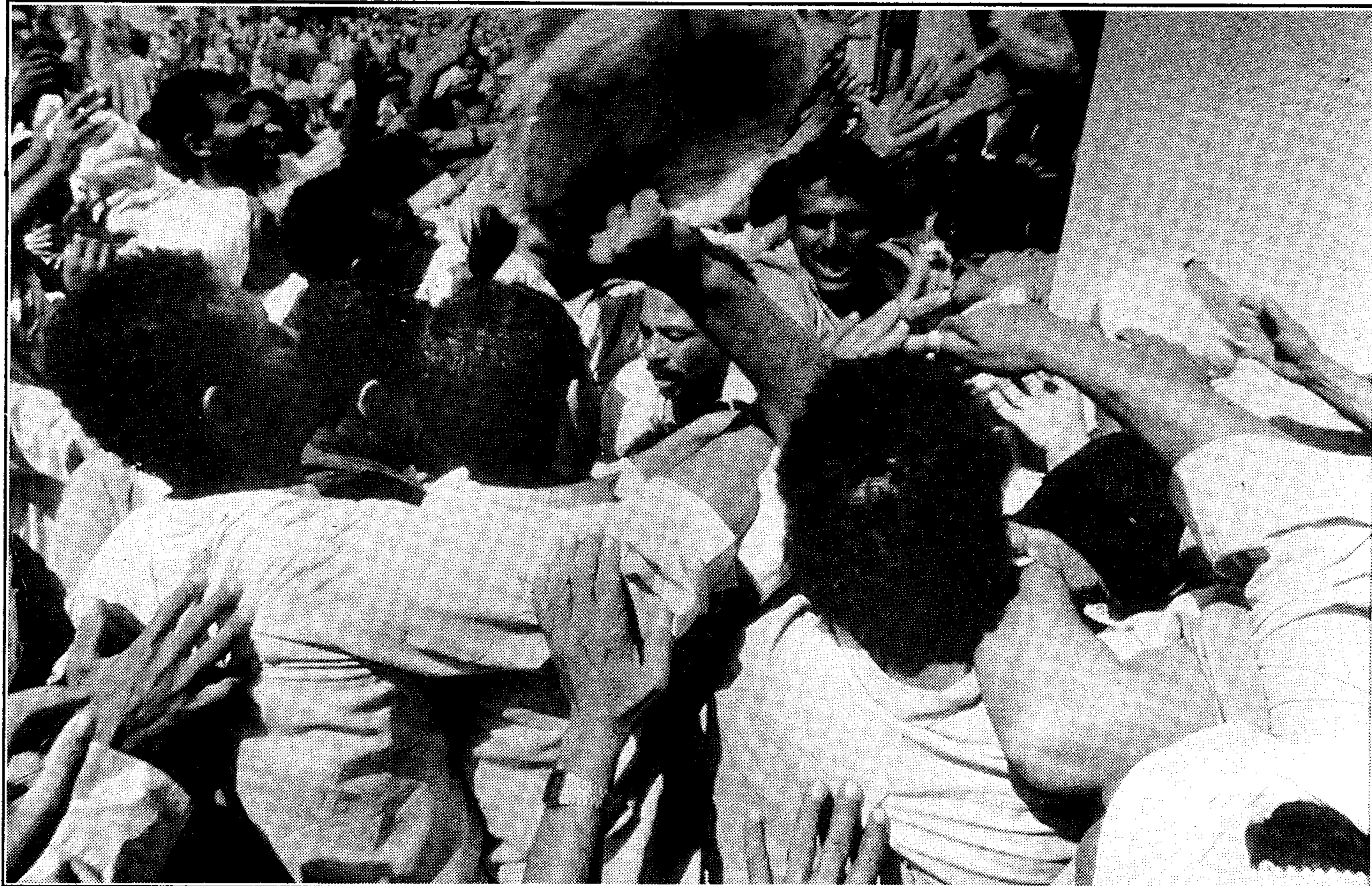
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Fighting for food supplies in one of a catalogue of refugee camps in today's third world



George Bush: The west has no doubt where its next meal is

Third world faces \$1200 billion debt crunch Banking on misery of

The poor third world countries are getting poorer. A central cause of their misery is the austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to cope with the \$1200 billion owed to the West. The debt crisis is literally murdering thousands annually. Here SAM INMAN looks at the background to the crisis.

WHEN THE MEXICAN government announced in August 1982 that it faced bankruptcy and might not be able to pay its debt, shock waves spread through the international banking system.

Mexico was not the first state to face insolvency - other third world countries were in a similar position - but the sheer scale of its debt threatened a major crisis in the world economy.

Mexico was the world's biggest debtor after Brazil, owing some 10 per cent of the world total. Letting Mexico default

would have signalled to other countries that this was a way out for them too.

An international bank crash was only averted by a rescue plan cobbled together by governments, private banks and the IMF.

Short-term relief for the bankers though, merely served to extend the burden of debt on the third world. Debts were not written off but simply re-scheduled for payment at a future date. Even tougher austerity measures were laid down by the IMF and third world governments were strong-armed into accepting these penalties. The debt crisis has continued to deepen, rising from \$763 billion in 1982 to over \$1200 billion today, and it remains just as unsolved today as it was nine years ago.

What are the fundamental reasons for the debt? Foreign debt is nothing new. All the imperialist powers were originally built on it and still gorge on it today. In fact the largest debtor country in the world is the USA - although it has the immense advantage of being simply able to print more dollars. Unlike Brazil, Sudan or Bangladesh.

In fact the third world debt trap dates back to the last century. In those days payment of debts was enforced militarily. Today the IMF imposes debt repayment through threatening to cut off future credits - which would make new imports

impossible and financially wreck the countries concerned.

Bretton Woods

The IMF came into existence at the end of the second world war. However, its roots lie in plans that were drawn up during the war to ensure the expansion of US capital in the post-war era and thus increase the economic and political hegemony of the US.

The founding conference of the IMF took place in 1944 at Bretton Woods in the US. Most third world countries were still under the yoke of the colonial powers. Not surprisingly, the interests of the colonial and semi-colonial world were not represented here.

What the key imperialist players wanted was a plan that could avoid a repetition of the world economic crisis of the 1920s which had facilitated the rise of the Nazis in Germany and consequently the second world war.

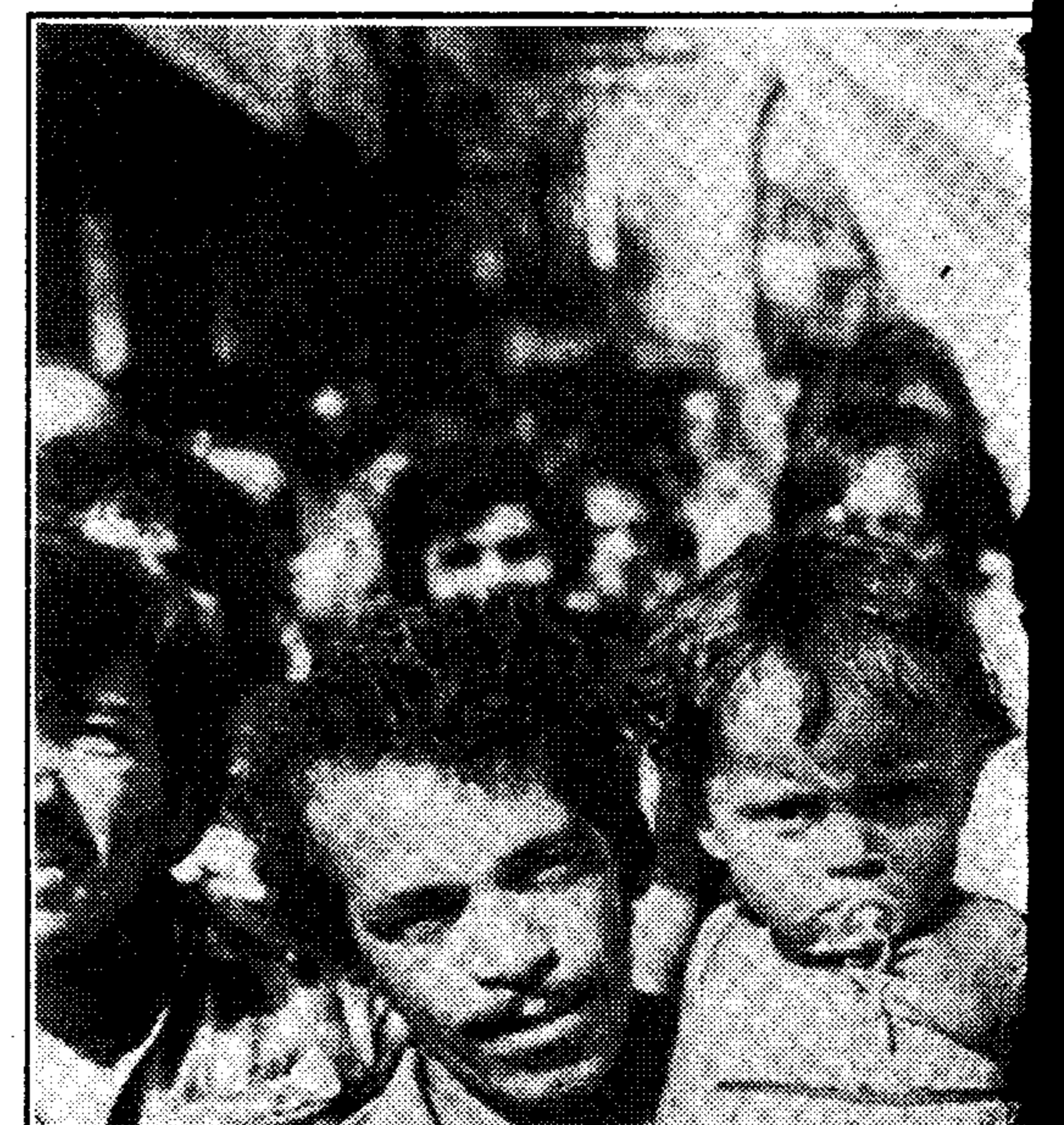
The main players in the conference were Britain and the US. It was inevitable given the declining role of sterling and the ascendancy of the dollar that US interests won the day. Stalin's representatives were also present, but in the era of 'peaceful coexistence' and 'socialism in one country' they had no impact on the outcome of the talks - indeed the Soviet Union has still not (yet) joined the IMF.

Whilst there was agreement between the main imperialist powers around the pillars of the 'new order' (free world trade, fixed exchange rates and equal treatment for trading partners) there was disagreement over what to do about balance-of-payments deficits - foreign debt.

John Maynard Keynes, leader of the British delegation, proposed a plan for countries with a surplus to finance the deficits of others. Both debtors and creditors would end up paying towards the imbalances.

IMF

Realising that in the future it would have high balance-of-payments surpluses, the US rejected Keynes's plan.



Fighting back against the international bosses

Instead they pushed through a plan to put the burden of debt onto the debtor countries themselves. The IMF would be responsible for short-term debt aid and in conjunction the World Bank was set up to provide long-term development aid.

Since 1945 membership of the IMF has been crucial to third world states to ensure credit for imports and development. But IMF 'aid' is always on the terms of the capitalist West.

Real power in the IMF lies with the US, Britain, France, Germany and Japan - but with the US as overwhelmingly the dominant power.

If debt has always been a problem for the third world, the present chronic crisis started at the beginning of the 1970s.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli war led to the Arab states using oil prices as a weapon against the West. In October 1973 OPEC doubled the price of oil, then in December doubled it again.

Rich oil producing states were consequently awash with financial surpluses which they deposited in European, and especially American, banks. Eager to make profits from these deposits the banks then turned to lend these 'petrodollars' to countries in the third world. The huge amounts of money lent to the third world were rarely used productively by those countries' rulers,



While millions go hungry, third world countries export food to the west



Coming from



Street seller in Mexico City

millions



but generally for 'prestige' projects, armaments or even salted away in private fortunes in Swiss bank accounts.

But although the oil crisis gave the debt problem a special twist, in fact it had been accelerating since the 1960s.

Oil Crisis

In 1960 third world debt had stood at \$18 billion. By 1970 it had shot up to \$75 billion. At the beginning of the oil crisis it was \$112 billion. These figures show that there has been a long term worsening of the overall position of the third world countries which has progressively worsened their debt situation.

In 1950 the share of world trade involving third world countries was 32 per cent. By 1970 it had fallen to 17 per cent. High inflation in the advanced capitalist economies pushed up the costs of imports to the semi-colonial world even further.

Banks

Between 1973 and 1982 there was a mass explosion of loans to the third world. As the recession deepened the debtor countries were forced to borrow

more and more purely to service the interest on these loans.

After the near disaster with Mexico in 1982, the IMF stepped in much harder to keep the semi-colonial world in line. Debts were rescheduled through IMF negotiations and debtor governments forced to adhere to a strict IMF 'stabilisation programme'. These adjustment policies are used to control the debts of more than 80 per cent of loans granted.

Their effects are devastating for the peoples of the semi-colonial world.

Governments are told to cut spending on welfare, subsidies on food and housing, cut wages, deflate and restrict credit, devalue the currency, and of course encourage 'free enterprise' and foreign investment.

In order to force through these austerity measures state terrorism and repression are often used

against workers and peasants who organise or who are suspected of organising opposition to the onslaught.

The facts speak for themselves. In 1970 Africa fed itself. By 1984 140 million out of 531 million African people were being fed on imported grain. Today 29 million people in this continent face starvation in the coming weeks.

AIDS

Millions of people worldwide die from preventable disease each year. The cholera epidemic now sweeping Latin America is not caused by an 'act of God'. It is caused by poor sanitation and lack of investment in local infrastructure and healthcare - all of which have been cut back because of IMF-imposed austerity programmes.

The AIDS crisis in many third world countries, and events like the disaster in Bangladesh, have the same roots in world poverty.

There is increasing concern that the debt will never be finally repaid. As a result, new and not-so-new methods are being employed to seize the assets of debtors. The secondary market in foreign debt is growing rapidly. This means that

a third party buys up a portion of debt at discount, and then trades it for some asset of the debtor.

Another idea which is already widely being put into practice is 'debt for equity' swaps. In other words, the banks annul part of the debt in exchange for ownership of industries and businesses in the debtor countries. This just increases the economic stranglehold of the capitalist world over the South.

Sanctions

How can the third world break out of the debt crisis? For an individual country it is incredibly difficult to repudiate its debt. Repudiation of the debt would lead to an immediate cut off of credits, and the debtor country would be unable to gain loans and foreign currency to buy imports. Trade sanctions by the US and other Western countries would devastate the economy of a country which defaulted on its debt.

Repudiating the debt could only be realistically achieved by a series of major countries like Brazil and Mexico acting together. The main obstacle to that of course is that a full-scale confrontation with the imperialist powers is not in the interests of the capitalist leaders of most third world countries. Repudiating the debt is a task of revolutionary proportions which needs revolutionary answers in the third world. Meanwhile, it is an elementary duty for socialists in the West to demand that the debt be cancelled.

International Demonstration and Carnival Support third world struggle against the debt

Saturday 13 July

Assemble: 12 noon, Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park

Rally at Trafalgar Square 2.30pm



Cancel the debt

by Terry Conway

THE CAMPAIGN to Cancel the Third World Debt has been set up in Britain in response to the Group of 7 summit taking place in London in July. Many of those involved have been involved in long term work against the debt, but want to use this opportunity to focus the minds of activists on this vital question.

Despite the fact that the demands of the campaign have the support of many heads of state in the 'Third World' and now even of the Pope, it is rather harder to get support here in Britain. The Green Party are supporting the campaign, as are the Student Liberal Democrats, National Organisation of Labour Students and the Scottish National Party. But from the main political parties, despite the horrors of the famine in Africa and the cholera epidemic in Latin America - both obviously affected by debt - there is a deafening silence.

It is crucial that this issue is raised at every level in the labour, black and women's movements, amongst anti-war activists and those involved in international solidarity campaigns. It is vital to explain that it is the self-same World Bank and IMF that is stealing from the workers and peasants of the poorest countries that is imposing austerity policies leading to low wages, casualisation and unemployment in the West. The campaign seeks to celebrate the struggles against debt and oppression taking place in many countries across the world, rather than to promote a passive image of 'poor starving people'.

Resolutions should be put supporting the campaign and agreeing to publicise the demonstration and arrange transport. Donations are desperately needed, as are performers prepared to give their services both for the demonstration itself and for fundraising activities between now and then. Speakers are available from the campaign, as are leaflets for the demonstration and lists of people interested in your area.

The campaign is attempting to ensure that activity takes place in as many major cities as possible. As well as the separate Scottish campaign, groups are being launched in Manchester and Oxford and plans being laid in a number of other places. But time is short and action is urgently needed.

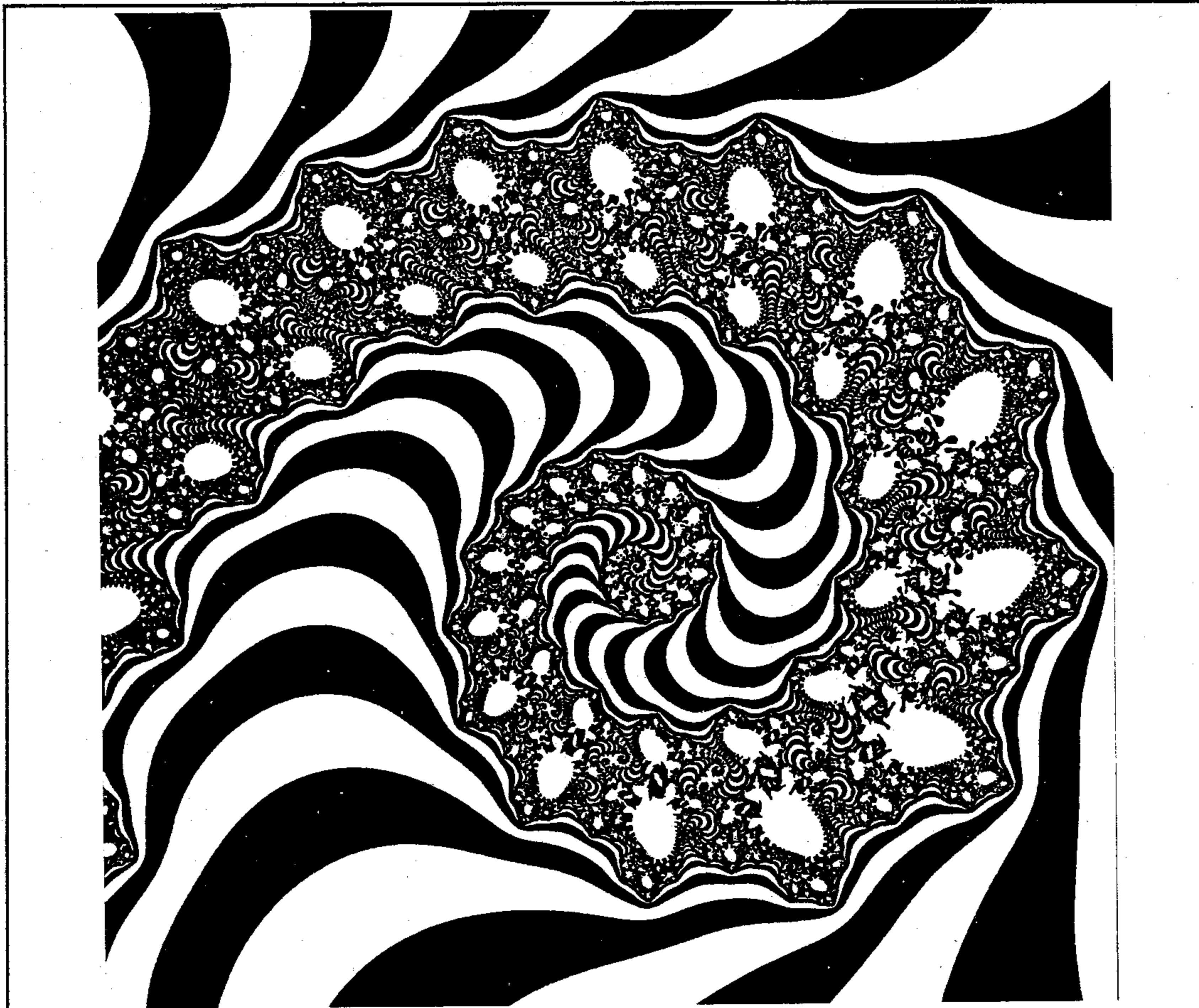
● For unconditional cancellation of the Debt

● An end to the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and the World Bank

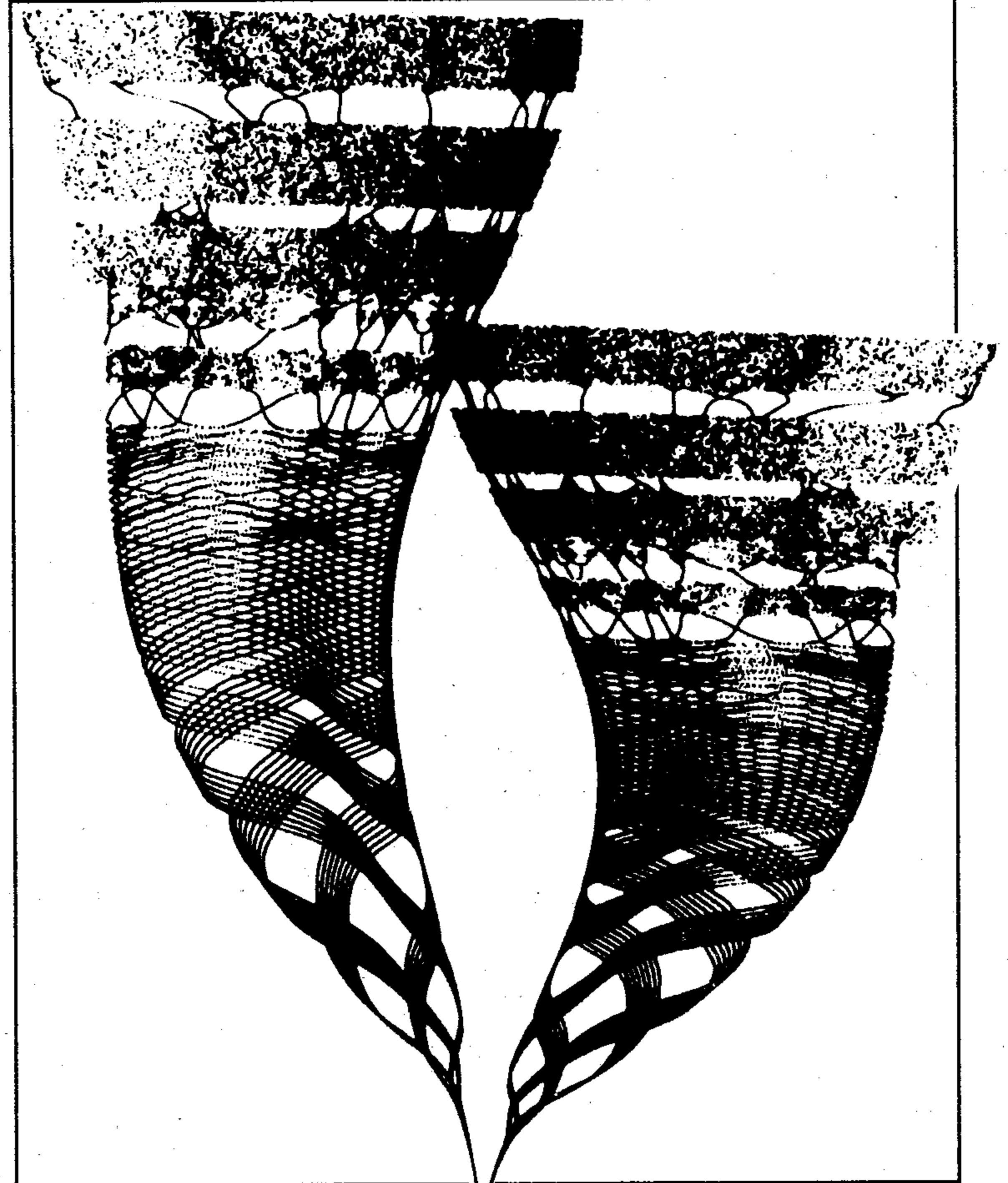
● For a just and fair economic system to prevent the reappearance of the debt.

For further information contact: *Cancel the Debt, c/o 23 Beveden St, London N1 6BT or phone 071 263 8289.*

Cancel the Debt (Scotland) c/o Latin America Institute, 60 Oakfield Ave, Glasgow.



No these pictures aren't Abstract paintings, but computer produced images from the Mandelbrot Set



Chaos - attack on marxism?

FOR THE LAST five years the 'new science' of chaos has been the subject of intense controversy. Whole sections of bookshops are devoted to it, Douglas Adams says he's seen the light, and Living Marxism denounces it as bourgeois pessimism. What exactly is it, and is it compatible with Marxism? PAUL CLARKE investigates.

CHAOS theory has been applied to such a variety of phenomena that it is difficult to sum it up in a few simple propositions. But at the most general level the proponents of chaos say the following.

First, all events and systems in the real world have determinate causes and are law governed. *But* there are phenomena governed by particular mathematical laws which despite being determined and law-governed have unpredictable, apparently random and chaotic outcomes.

Randomness

Second, within the apparent randomness of 'chaotic' phenomena are general patterns and structures that underpin the apparent randomness of chaotic events, and give them order.

* Anyone in the least familiar with the basic propositions of dialectical materialism will instantly see how the ideas of chaos parallel some basic Marxist ideas about the world.

To see what the real interest and application of chaos theory is, it is necessary to look at how it arose. Chaos theory grew up within separate and apparently

diverse disciplines - meteorology, fluid dynamics, and of course pure mathematics.

Weather forecasting and predicting the behaviour of liquid flows regularly come up against a similar problem. At a certain point regular and ordered events suddenly go 'chaotic'.

Models

Building mathematical models of these events is incredibly complex, because the number of variables involved is so large. In other words, the mathematical equations which govern outcomes are *non linear*. Beyond a certain point developments in the weather or liquid flows seem random and unpredictable, *by definition*.

Marx's closest collaborator, Frederick Engels, made a striking remark about the historical process which can be taken as summing up his concept of dialectical materialism. Events, he said, are governed by a 'parallelogram of forces'. In other words, there can be thousands of individual determinants of a single event, but in principle, if you knew all the different determinants you could trace the course of a particular event with absolute certainty and predictability.

Chaos theory says something different. It says you can know all the determinants, and *not* know the outcome.

Sub-atomic particle theory has known this for a long time. In a particle accelerator you can repeat a particular experiment over and over again, in exactly the same conditions, and never get the same result.

You may be able to predict the range of results over, say, 100 experiments. You may in certain cases be able to predict the average result over a large number of experiments. But the result of a particular experiment you cannot predict.

Many physical events can be modelled in terms of linear

equations - i.e. those with few variables. Their progress is more-or-less orderly and predictable. But at the heart of chaos is what happens in the iteration of non-linear equations (the repeated multiplication of these equations by a constant).

Progress in this branch of mathematics has been accelerated by the progress in computers, enabling huge numbers of iterations of non-linear equations to take place in a short period. The results are striking.

Instead of the regular progression of results you get with linear equations, non-linear equations seem to produce *random* results, with no pattern at all.

Strange attractors

But then something peculiar happens. Periodically, the *same* results occur over and over again; the result often settles down around three or four standard outcomes. In the heart of chaos there is order. In the parlance of chaos theory these repeated results are known as 'strange attractors'.

The rapid advances in computers have enabled strange attractors to be depicted visually. Every equation can be represented by a graph - a picture. Benoit Mandelbrot, a scientist working for the computer giant IBM, pioneered the computer graphing of huge numbers of iterations of non-linear equations.

The results have been spectacular - patterns of infinite complexity, and numerous levels, which at different levels of magnification never repeat themselves, but throw up the same images over and over again.

Startling

These images ('Mandelbrot sets') are startling because they appear to show pictures of phenomena in the natural

world - shorelines, leaves, sea horses, valleys. They powerfully suggest that a wide range of natural systems are governed by non-linear equations.

Now why should any of this be of interest to Marxists? Apart from the trite answer that Marxists should after all be interested in the world which they seek to change, it is because of the light which chaos theory sheds on our notion of *determinism*. Marxism is a determinism. More precisely, historical materialism is a socio-economic determinism. Marxists assert that all phenomena, natural or social, have specific causes, and are thus not random or accidental, but law-governed.

Contradictions

All Marxist theory has been particularly concerned with the notions of contradiction and rupture. In other words, Marxist theory seeks to explain how, at a certain point, systems - natural or social - go into crisis, decay and are reborn as something else.

Chaos theory, strictly speaking, deals with the physical world - the behaviour of non-linear dynamical systems. But many people, not least the US Defence Department, have been quick to try to find parallels in the social and political world, for example crowd control.

Might not a rioting crowd be considered a 'non-linear dynamical system'? Might there not be a hidden lawfulness in its apparently random

and chaotic behaviour? Marxists, of course, know there is.

Narrow

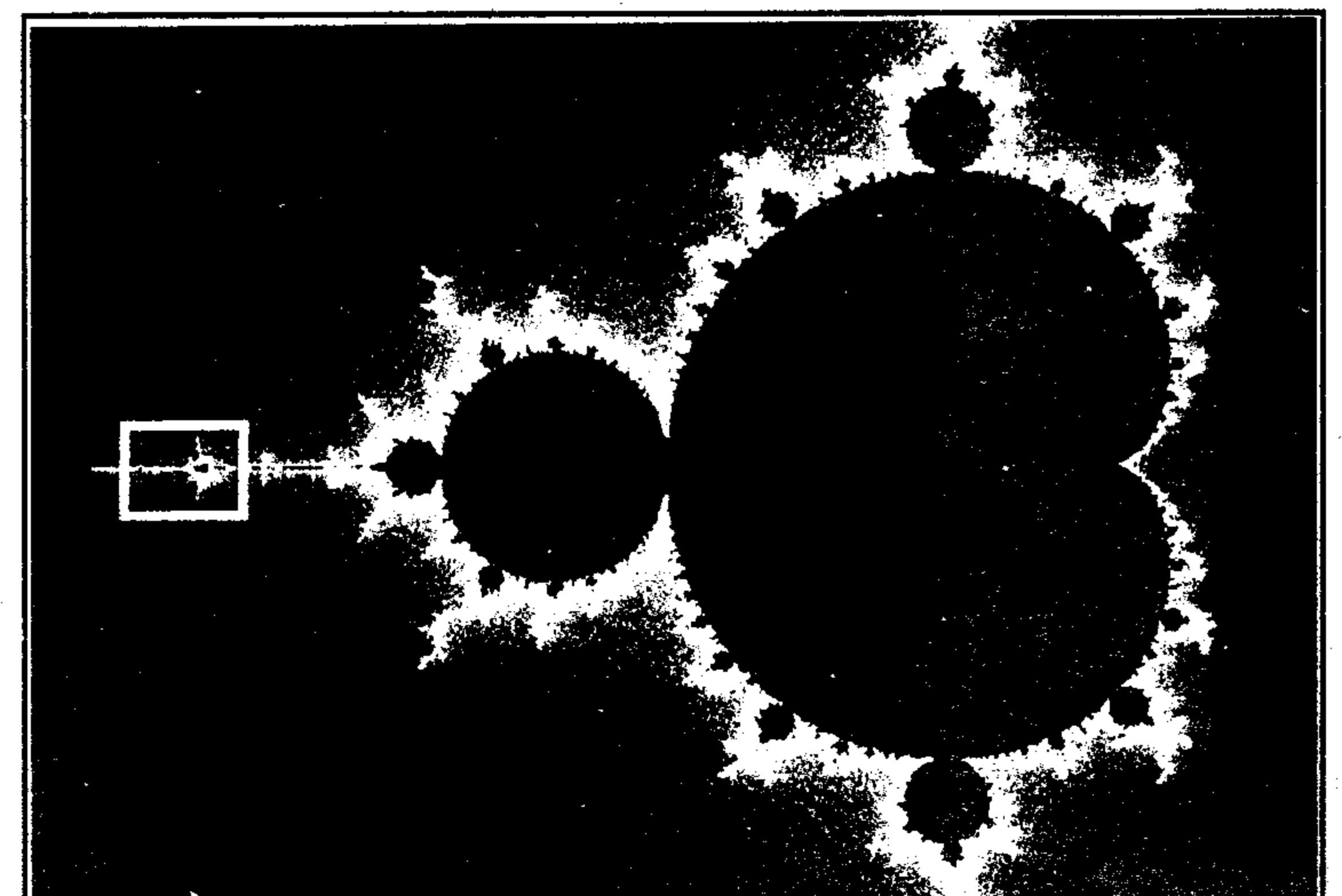
However, at the present state of our knowledge, it is far too early to start to claim that chaos represents a new magical key that will reshape the whole of human knowledge and every scientific discipline - its proved applicability is so far too narrow.

But the insights of chaos are broadly in line with Marxism, and have been even anticipated by Marxist theory. Chaos shows us that reality is law governed, even if particular events, in principle, cannot be predicted.

It shows that extremely complex systems, involving many variables, are extremely sensitive to initial conditions - ie as they develop, initial errors and deviations become magnified in a dramatic way (apply that to socialist organisations and you get some interesting results!). It shows that although science cannot 'explain everything' - ie predict every event - it can trace the parameters that give rise to apparent disorder.

All this of course is death to a particular kind of mechanical, non-dialectical, determinism. Marxists should not worry about that. Reality can be looked at as ordered chaos or chaotic order. Whichever way, it is subject to intervention and change.

Is chaos compatible with Marxism? Yes. Is it a major step forward in human knowledge? Wait and see.



IT person

Debbie Epstein

Reflections on Being 'Out'

The experience of 'coming out' and being 'out' as a lesbian or gay man is different for everyone, but there are some common features. In this article, I want to reflect on my own personal experience and how it fits into what is common to all lesbians and gay men.

Something which few heterosexuals understand is that coming out is not a once and for all action – something you do once and never have to repeat. It is a continuous process, not only because you meet new people, but also because what it means to you to be lesbian or gay may change.

I came out as a lesbian on national television at Labour Party conference about four years ago. Before that the number of people who 'knew' could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Some of my fears about coming out so publicly have proved to be groundless – that *all* my straight friends would drop me forthwith, for example – but others were confirmed. I have been subject to verbal abuse – not just from *Sun* readers – on occasion, it has come from people who 'ought to know better' including, occasionally, members of left groups. I have been the subject of personal abuse in meetings.

Clothes

After I spoke, some work colleagues refused to speak to me. I am, at the moment, finding **it** difficult to get a job. I have no way of knowing whether or not this is because I am a lesbian, but I know that my clothes (I always wear trousers) and hair (very short) are signifiers of lesbianism. I have been threatened when holding hands with a girl friend in the street.

All this is difficult, but what I find more difficult in many ways, is the profound lack of support and understanding from heterosexuals on the left. This has ranged from total marginalisation to being told that the issues I was concerned with were unimportant, and certainly shouldn't (couldn't) be prioritised for discussion at, for example, my union conference. The assumption is there that everyone is heterosexual, and this is true on the left as well as in wider society.

Straights – even sympathetic ones – don't, perhaps can't, understand how emotionally exhausting the constant marginalisation is. They don't seem to appreciate that speaking at a meeting as a lesbian is not an easy option, but fraught with difficulty and even physical danger when the meeting is public.

Marginalised

I am one of a handful of lesbians willing to speak on public platforms, but every time I do it, I have to screw myself up to come out publicly yet again. Sometimes I make the effort and find myself marginalised on the platform, either because the organisers have not stated that there would be a lesbian speaker, or because there of a (deliberate?) marginalisation of lesbian and gay issues from certain left groups, which have the ability to dominate meetings by force of numbers.

So when I want real emotional support, I don't feel able to go to my comrades on the left. I look to lesbians and gays active in the community – many of whom are hostile to left groups because of the appalling record they have – at best marginalising the issues, and at worst claiming that 'homosexuality is a bourgeois deviation'. Despite this, I think it is right to be a socialist and to call on lesbians and gays to take up the wider struggle – in their own interest as well as everyone else's. So the question is, where do I, as a socialist lesbian, go? Answers on postcards please.

Stoned and confused

The Doors

directed by OLIVER STONE
reviewed by Sean Tunney

SIXTIES America. It was a whole different scene, man. Vietnam and shit, it blows your mind.

Music was different then too, none of today's manufactured shit. Hell, we had Dylan, the Stones, and Herman and his Hermits. But the craziest dude of them all was Jim Morrison.

Hey, and that new film by Oliver Stone (great name!), sure brings it all back to life. And it's the truth man. We ain't talking typical Hollywood biog.

Why, in this, Jimbo meets his future keyboard player (looking remarkably like Agent Cooper from *Twin Peaks* with an unconvincing blonde wig), who says: 'Let's form a band and make a million bucks'. And, hell, they do!

Liberated

Sure in those days we were liberated. Why, when Jim sees a groovy chick by the name of Pam, he just follows her home. Before you can say Lizard King, he's grabbed and kissed her and she's fallen for his animal power.

Hell, though, what free-love rock star wants to be held down by just one woman? So later on Morrison even gets Nico of the Velvet Underground to give him blow job in front of Pam.

Weird but true, Pam freaks at this. Stone, though, sure makes us feel this is just one of Pam's hangups. Later on again when Pam just gets a little too heavy, why Jim's so together that he locks her in a closet and sets fire to it.

The director-man just luvves this wild guy!

Dick

Like though, Jim is shown to be on the edge, man. While chicks and dudes opposed the war and called for black rights, he was taking on the police. For not letting him show his dick on stage.

Also, man, Jim was deep – and so's this film. The man's shown to be a full-blown mystic. He's followed round by the ghost of an old Indian his parents killed by accident when he was young. Its like Stone is saying that he's been infused by the old man's spirit and is in touch with a higher culture. Why the final scene shows that of all the great writers in Pere Lachaise cemetery, including Wilde and Balzac, hey Morrison's the greatest of them all.

More than this, the deep trip Stone lays on in this film is if you continually drink and take drugs, you get stoned. If you carry on, you get stoned and put on weight. And if you still keep on, you die. Heavy man.

PS. This film does have some strengths. Val Kilmer makes a totally convincing Jim Morrison. Moreover the large doses of concert footage are both exhilarating and beautiful in a one-dimensional video-promo kind of way.

While some critics have described it as too long, this combined with the unsteady camera style, gives the film a convincing trippy quality.

Overall though Stone's grandiose epic is a triumph of style over substance, and stiflingly sexist.



FILMS

The great escape

Sleeping with the enemy

Directed by JOSEPH RUBEN

Reviewed by Louise Whittle and Sean Tunney

OVERALL, this is a good film by male Hollywood's standards. Women have had enough of the portrayal of neurotic women pursuing poor old men in such films as 'Fatal Attraction' and 'Play Misty for Me'. They know in real life it is almost always the other way round.

Laura (Julia Roberts) is, on the surface, happily married to a successful financial consultant. However, unknown to the outside world, Laura is also the subject of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Locked away in a modernist mansion isolated by the sea, she is only allowed out of her jail a few days a week. Martin (Patrick Bergin), the stereotypical chilling 'psychopath', even down to his dark suits, watches her constantly.

He demands perfection in everything, from making sure towels hang at the right length, to checking the tins of food in the cupboard are placed straight with labels at the centre.

Watching Laura submit herself to his abuse in mute terror is pretty horrifying. Paradoxically, these scenes are all the more effective because generally the violence isn't actually shown, just implied. Meanwhile, Laura has been planning her escape.

The sea which has been her captor

provides her flight for freedom. Secretly she has been having swimming lessons. So, when she goes yachting with her husband, she fakes a drowning and leaves to find a new life.

Commemorating her mode of escape, she renames herself Sarah Waters. Eventually she finds friendship with a drama teacher (Kevin Anderson), who is everything Martin is not. For starters, he wears casual suits and doesn't have an eerie voice. They start a tentative relationship, and she opens up about her past for the first time.

But, of course, Martin is on her trail, his twitches and mannerisms becoming even more exaggerated. When he finally meets up with her, the scenes resort to cliché.

Setting the story among the rich has its strengths and weaknesses. It means that Laura has a financial independence not afforded to working class women. However, it also questions the myth that abuse only happens in working class families.

Equally, Julia Roberts is quite convincing in her multi-layered role. She has, at the same time, to convey the idea of being under her husband, while undermining him and also trying to find herself. Sometimes such a task is too much and she resorts to expressing one-dimensional terror.

The biggest cliché though, is the portrayal of Bergin's character as in some way 'inhuman', while Anderson's character is all new man. It would have been much more interesting to see their personalities switched. Despite these criticisms though, the film is well worth seeing.

Don't blame Lenin for Stalinism!

THE DULL THUD of the hapless baby being thrown out with the bathwater has been heard all over eastern Europe as angry intellectuals and workers reject the shambolic bureaucratic parody of "communism", and increasingly blame Lenin for Stalinism. HARRY SLOAN looks into things a little more deeply.

LENIN was no more to blame for Stalinism than Marx and Engels were responsible for Neil Kinnock, Felipe Gonzalez or the other luminaries of today's so-called 'Socialist International'.

In each case a revolutionary theory, a movement and a tradition were established, only to be taken over, distorted out of all recognition and turned into their very opposite by others who responded to very different class pressures.

Marx and Engels fought for the First, and then the Second International as an expression of class solidarity and the political independence of the working class from its capitalist rulers in each country.

But in many European countries the Second International's member sections became mass parties in which the leaderships were politically "bought off" by their own powerful imperialist ruling class. They abandoned revolutionary politics, to seek reforms within capitalism through parliamentary and trade union pressure.

By the outbreak of the First

World War they had reneged on marxism and politically degenerated to such an extent that each major 'socialist' party voted in Parliament to back the war efforts of its 'own' ruling class.

Emerging in opposition to this degeneration in the left wing of the Russian social democratic party, Lenin's principal legacy consisted in his struggle to reassert the principles of marxism - the rigorous fight for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie; the uncompromising defence of internationalism; and the concept of democratic centralism as the method for organising a vanguard party to lead the struggles of the working class.

Attack

Without these strengths, the Bolshevik Party would never have led the October Revolution of 1917, in which Tsarism and capitalism were overturned. And it was against precisely these traditions that Josef Stalin, emerging in 1922 as General Secretary of the CPSU, aimed his most deadly attack.

Like the leaders of the Second International, Stalin's strength was not as an individual, least of all as an advocate of wrong ideas, but the fact that these ideas reflected and represented material class forces which threatened to undermine the October Revolution.

The backward Russian capitalist economy had been further dislocated by World War, and then by years of civil war and imperialist wars of intervention aimed at ousting the Bolsheviks. Stalin represented the bureaucratic administrative layer that emerged, using police powers to regulate the queues and shortages.

The Communist Party itself

had grown rapidly in the revolutionary upsurge, but many of its best cadres were killed fighting, with others over-stretched in their efforts to fight the war, consolidate the revolution and develop the economy.

Careerists

Stalin's approach echoed both the more conservative layer of 'Old Bolsheviks' who had been reluctantly dragged into the October Revolution by Lenin, and a vast new influx into the Party of careerist elements with no marxist culture, keen to prosper by joining the side that had won.

The largely peasant-based economy had forced the Bolsheviks in 1921 to make a temporary retreat from premature 'communist' economic policies, and to concede limited market freedoms to small peasants and producers to get production moving - the New Economic Policy. Stalin in the years up to 1928-29 reflected the backwardness of these petty bourgeois forces.

It was from this power-base in the economy, the countryside and the Party that Stalin was able in the aftermath of Lenin's death to mount a major undeclared onslaught on Leninism.

Mummified

While ikonising Lenin's mummified remains, Stalin rejected his fight for internationalism and the concept of world revolution. Against Lenin's consistent warnings of the dangers of bureaucracy and capitalist restoration should the Soviet Union become isolated, Stalin insisted that it was possible to build 'socialism in a single country'.

In place of Lenin's emphasis on the USSR's obligation to



defend socialist revolutionary struggles elsewhere, Stalin stressed the duty of revolutionaries to subordinate their struggle to defence of the USSR.

Under Stalin the Communist Parties became an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, courting 'influential' reformist and even bourgeois leaders - including the British TUC prior to 1926 and Chiang Kai Shek in China.

Gag opponents

To gag Leon Trotsky and other defenders of Leninist principles, Stalin led a crack-down and bureaucratisation of the CPSU. A ban on internal factions, (mistakenly) introduced as a temporary emergency measure at the height of the civil war, was used to gag all internal debate: democratic centralism was extinguished, and the ability of the Party to correct its errors through open criticism was eradicated.

Stalin also rejected Lenin's clear class analysis of the peasantry as a layer of small property owners: instead at first he believed them to be the leading force in the revolution, increasing the concessions made to them under the New Economic Policy.

Only when it became inescapably obvious that these measures were recreating a burgeoning new capitalist class did Stalin abruptly and brutally switch course. His bloody turn to forced collectivisation and crash industrialisation was then dressed up in frenzied sectarian pronouncements of a new 'Third Period' of class war. This disorientated the entire Communist International, precipitating the fatal divisions in the German workers' movement that opened the door for Hitler in 1933.

On every level Stalin represented not the continuation but the antithesis of Leninism. In consolidating his grip on the Party and state apparatus, and transforming Lenin's party into a monolithic parody of itself he was forced to wipe out every vestige of Leninist tradition, even while he erected a facade of statues and paid empty homage to the dead revolutionary.

We should shed no tears as the masses today in eastern Europe uproot many of these monuments to Stalin's hypocrisy. But the fight must begin anew for these and other workers to learn the real strengths of Leninism.

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BOOKS

Neither Washington nor Moscow nor international socialism

Trotskyism

by ALEX CALLINICOS
Open University Press
£6.99

Reviewed by Stephen Valentine

Alex Callinicos is on the way to becoming one of the leading Marxist intellectuals in the English speaking world. He has written a bagful of books and proved himself a lucid and tenacious scholar.

Callinicos's erudition matches his commitment: he is an active member of the British SWP. However, his work - from earlier books like *Is there a future for Marxism?* to his recent *Against Post Modernism* - all suffer from the same flaw. Suddenly the flow of argument is interrupted by the key to answer everything, theoretical Batman taking the unlikely shape of Tony Cliff and the theory of state capitalism. In most of these explanations the caped crusaders' Robin is played by Chris Harman.

'Trotskyism' departs from the pattern of academic precision followed by startling sectarian lurch. It is much more straightforwardly the SWP's line given academic expression.

Callinicos' argument is this: Trotsky saved the revolutionary heritage of 1917. He kindled the flame of October while European capitalism lit the pyre of Fascism, and Stalin razed the worker's state to the ground.

He was able to keep together - in terrible circumstances - a small band of socialists who rejected both social democracy

Stalinism.

Meanwhile, Trotsky also began to deepen the tactical and strategic applications of Marxism. Because of the circumstances though, these were very partial and imperfect.

It was these weaknesses which were to dominate, after the Old Man died. Post-war boom and the extension of Stalinism in eastern Europe left Trotskyists in a quandary. Like medieval scholars they manipulated and twisted the theory, sheltering it from criticism rather than reworking Trotsky's ideas, which became dogma.

The SWP's orthodoxy

Callinicos identifies two fatal flaws in orthodox Trotskyism. The first is 'substitutionism' - the urge to supplant the working class as the key agent of socialism. Thus the Fourth International, according to Callinicos, has regularly extolled the virtues of third world peasants, students, non-proletarian oppressed layers etc as the vanguard of socialist change.

The second is 'dogmatism' - the rigid defence of Trotsky's thought, irrespective of the evidence which disproves substantial parts of it.

In fact, both these accusations turn out to be necessary by-products of the defence of the SWP's own special dogmatism - the theory of 'state capitalism'. In order to justify it, Callinicos is forced to repeat the traditional SWP slander that orthodox Trotskyists have seen the USSR, eastern Europe, China and Cuba as 'socialist', which is of course untrue.

What the Fourth International has said is that is that post-capitalist states, transitional societies, could come into existence without the working class wielding direct political power. At one level this argument is obvious and accepted by the SWP. They think that 'state capitalism' arose in Russia in 1928; but concede that socialist democracy, the direct rule of the workers, was dead by 1923. So what was Russia for those five years? Nothing other than a deformed/degenerating workers state with the growing power of the bureaucracy.

At the heart of the 'state capitalist' theory is an idealism: the belief that post-capitalist states can only exist when the workers wield direct political power through soviets. Everything else, of whatever shade or complexion, is simply a variety of capitalism. The end point of this idealism is the (absurd) current line of the SWP that the restoration of capitalism in eastern Europe would simply be a 'step sideways', and not a defeat for the working class.

Moreover orthodox Trotskyism has never abandoned the central role of the working class. It has recognised that in many third world countries the building of a mass base amongst the poor peasantry is crucial for revolutionary strategy. It has recognised that in advanced capitalist countries there is a potentially anti-capitalist dynamic in the struggles of the specially oppressed. The search for credible revolutionary strategies, which always have the working class at their centre, is not a product of a



John Harris

manic 'urge to capitulate', but vital for any serious struggle for socialism in the real world.

International socialism

Along with fabricating the Trotskyist view on the workers states, Callinicos can't make up his mind about the Fourth International. This reflects an inherent contradiction in the raison d'être of the SWP. It can't admit that it was correct to found a new revolutionary Marxist international in 1938. For, if the FI was a good idea then, it is surely is even better now. Revolutionary forces are stronger, Stalinism is dying and capitalism is in deep structural crisis. If this is granted, then a whole new approach is implied.

Revolutionary organisations would need raising their sights from this island's shores towards a Marxist International.

The SWP doesn't fancy this at all. Like most British far left groups its focus is on building itself, establishing international contacts mainly where they speak English, and leaving the hard work of building an international to unspecified future.

This was not Trotsky's view. His politics could be distilled down to one word, 'internationalism'.

Today, there is no purely 'national' politics. Only through practical application the world over can Marxist politics be tested and enriched. This means a permanent framework of discussion and joint international work and co-ordination. In other words, an International.

This is why the FI was founded on the dead bones of the Stalinised Third International. Far from 'disabling' Trotsky and his followers, it has been Trotskyism's very life-blood.

Trotskyism began as a critique of Stalinism. At the end of the life of one, what better to consider the career of the other. This book misses the chance. Callinicos is able to fortify 'Trotskyism' by the addition of a York University lecturer's learning, invoking Lakatos and Popper. But these are only bolt-on accessories. The argument is marred by the crudities of Tony Cliff-thought. It is the same one you can have with any Socialist Worker seller in a shopping precinct.

**Fighting Labourism
SWP offers half a strategy**

By Pete Firmin

THE SOCIALIST Workers Party has produced two pamphlets on the Labour Party - 'Can Socialism Come Through Parliament?' and 'A Dream Betrayed' - in an attempt to explain reformism in Britain.

The easiest part is showing that the ruling class would not peacefully give up power and that Labour governments have always managed capitalism rather than bringing about socialist change. But the explanation is partial. We are told 'Labour's betrayals are not due to a right wing stranglehold on the party. They stem from the very politics of "parliamentary socialism", of Labourism'. But this does not explain why Labour has always been reformist.

The SWP says that while Labour has an organic base in the working class, this is in fact a political expression of the union bureaucracy, and because of the bureaucracy's role of

mediating between bosses and workers, this constitutes 'an absolute obstacle' to the Party becoming socialist. But what prevents the left overthrowing the bureaucracy in the unions and the Party?

Missing is any explanation of how and why the role of the unions under capitalism is reformist - trying to secure a larger share of the cake, but not the whole cake, for their members.

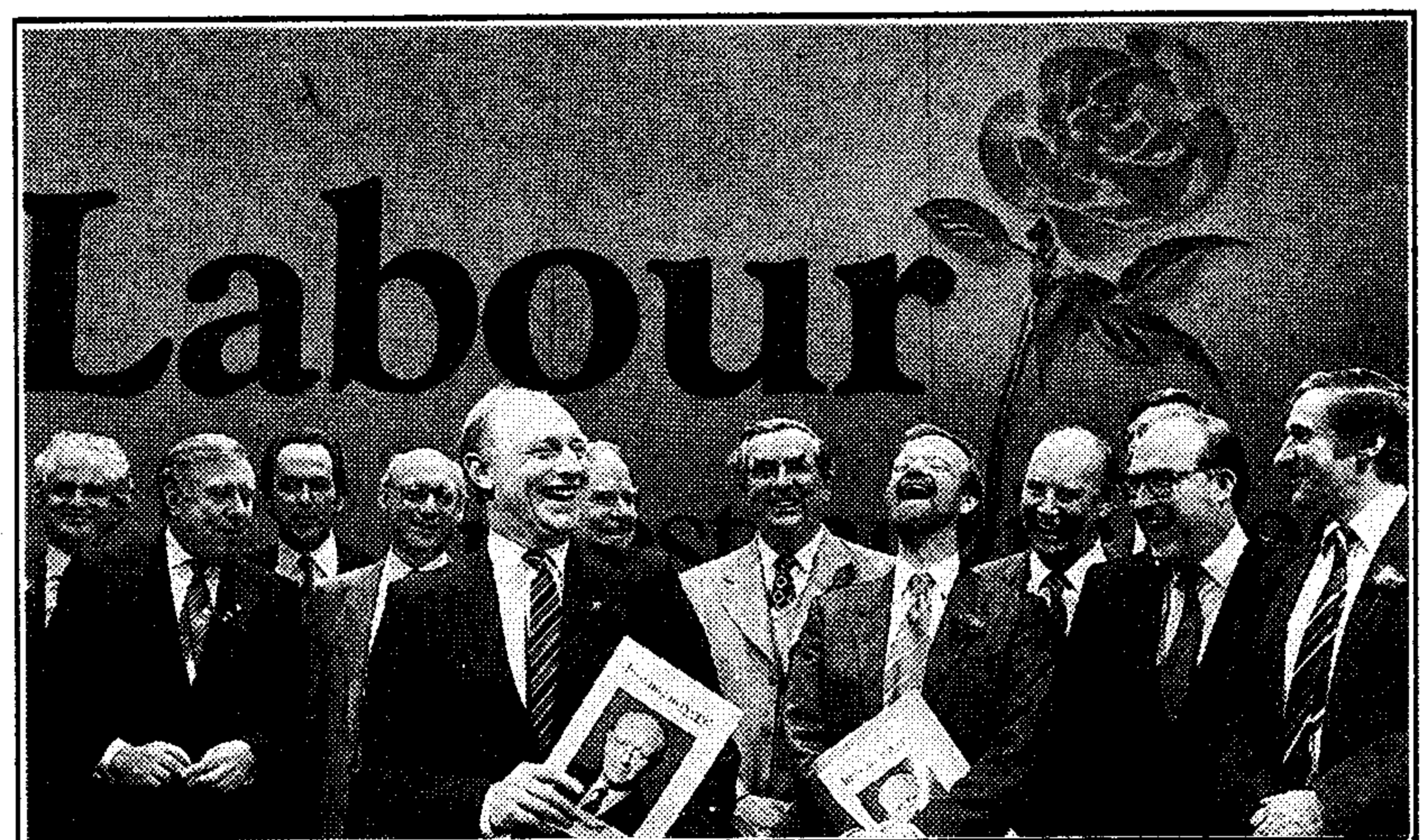
But this would sit uneasily with the SWP's view of industrial struggle and how workers' consciousness changes. Their view of industrial struggle is rosy in contrast to their view of the struggle in the Labour Party. It is not explained why the rise in strikes in the '70s, should have led in 1979 to a Tory government. We are told 'every one of the Left's "successes" in the early 1980s (in the Labour Party) has proved illusory.' One might as well say 'the gains made by all the industrial disputes in the '70s has proved illusory'.

The SWP also say that nobody is

changed by an election, ignoring the possibilities they provide for socialists to speak to a wider audience about what a government really acting in their interests should do.

The growth in strength and influence of the left in the Labour Party throughout the 1974-79 Labour government and for a few years afterwards is mentioned only in respect to its demise. Its growth is not mentioned and the only reason given for its defeat is that 'ultimately, the upswing in the left's fortunes was bound to be brought down by the deep pessimism in the working class'. An 'explanation' which begs more questions than it answers: why was this left unable to give a lead in the battles against the Tories? Why was a working class which had seen off Heath and Callaghan unable to deal with Thatcher?

The SWP's answer to how the



Laughing all the way to the bankers: Klnoock follows an inglorious tradition

Andrew Ward

consciousness of the working class will change and break with Labourism is a simple one - during the course of strike action, militants learn lessons about the state, racism, sexism etc and some retain these lessons. This is true, but not the whole story.

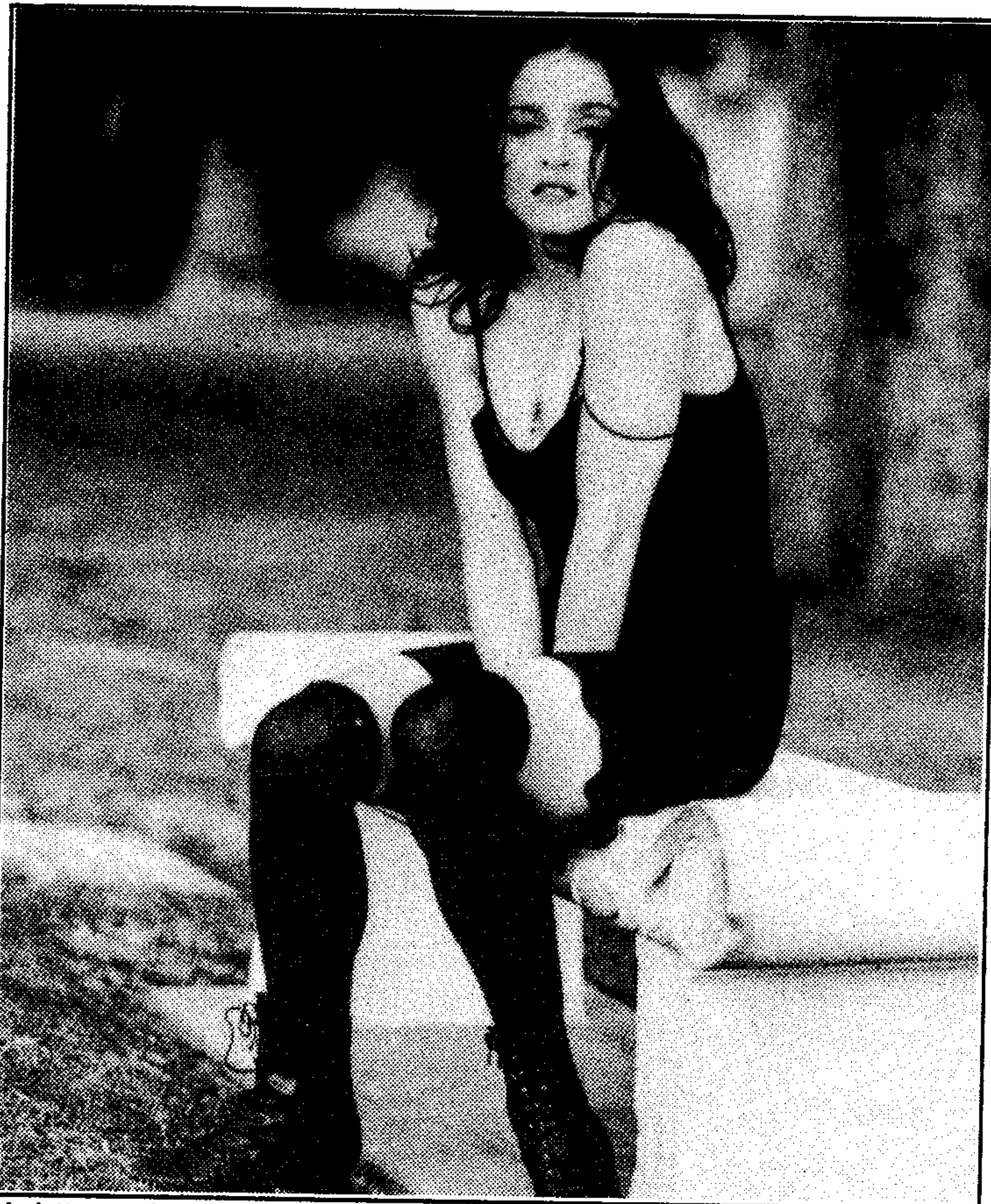
The main failing of these pamphlets, in line with the SWP's whole trend towards idealising 'struggle' and especially trade union struggle, is this. While they admit that when trade union struggle rises workers will turn towards the existing mass reformist alternative - the Labour Party - no account of this is made in their strategy.

The struggle inside the Labour

Party is not something which has no affect on the overall level of class struggle or the level of consciousness of the working class. Indeed it has a profound impact. How, then, can socialists stand aside from it?

The labour bureaucracy in Britain is divided between the trade union and the Labour Party bureaucracy. But this is a division of tasks, not a fundamental difference of character. The fight against the bureaucracy has to go on in both wings of the labour movement, and especially in periods when the working class vanguard turns towards the party. A strategy which ignores the fight inside the Labour Party is only half a strategy.

Feedback



No letter yet from Madonna!

Madonna - boringly predictable?

WELCOME to your 'New Look' journal. It's good to see a new socialist newspaper, at a time when the Left press is fighting for survival.

As a woman and a feminist, however - as well as a socialist - I look to any new Left publication for an understanding of the importance of feminist politics and at least an attempt to take their feminist readers seriously. An article on Madonna: 'Is she a feminist or isn't she?' (S. Pickett and Sam Inman) is hardly original for a Marxist publication recently, and neither, unfortunately is its line.

Glossing over the complex debates on sexuality and sexual politics taking place in the feminist movement at the moment, S. Pickett and Sam Inman unquestioningly accept Madonna's liberal individualist position on the meaning of feminism, fantasy and sexuality. Feminism is reduced to individual women 'taking control' of their sexuality - and such control, it seems, is to be found in 'dressing like a bimbo' and 'choosing' to be 'chained up'.

Personally, I always thought that being sexually submissive and masochistic, and 'dressing like a bimbo' were precisely what this culture intended women to 'choose' in their sex lives. I fail to see any 'breaking of bourgeois taboos' in a woman singer expressing her (hetero)sexuality by dressing in familiar pornographic codes and singing that she likes to be spanked and told what to do. On the contrary, this is pretty boring and predictably what women performers have been doing for years.

Perhaps what is different about Madonna - and here the article gets it right - is that she expresses a new form of bourgeois individualism: and also a new form of so-called sexual liberalism. Let's not be fooled for one moment that this has anything to do with feminism.

Madonna may have learnt how to use libertarian language in order to re-define her depressingly traditional female sexuality, but this presents no threat to either capitalism or patriarchy.

The very attempt to distinguish between consensual and non-consensual sex in this way is a problem. Unless you happen to believe - which presumably as marxists and materialists we don't - that power is held by individuals to give or take at will, then it's blatantly ridiculous to argue that any woman freely consents to being tied up or dominated, and freely 'like it'.

The notion of consent here is no more relevant than it is relevant to say that women 'choose' to go into particular (worse paid) jobs, or to married or to be heterosexual. These are hardly 'free' choices made from a shopping list of fairly presented options.

Sexuality in our society is constructed in a context of male domination and women's subordination; when this subordination is eroticised this is hardly 'breaking bourgeois taboos'. As socialists we know that women's sexual subordination - like their economic subordination - can only be challenged on a collective basis, by challenging the underlying unequal power relationships existing in capitalist and patriarchal cultures.

Feminism, like socialism, is a term which the liberal right has long attempted to appropriate. It's a shame to see Socialist Outlook going in the same direction as other left journals of male dominated organisations - depoliticising both power and sexuality, and thereby trivialising feminist politics.

I hope to see the balance redressed in future issues!

Rachel Wingfield
London N4

Hands off the family!

SOME PRAISE and criticism. The praise comes from the arrival of the new Socialist Outlook. This is an important step in getting to a wider audience the ideas of revolutionary marxism. The criticism, concerns the supplement and the attitude it took towards 'the family'.

The line of the article towards the family was clearly expressed - 'as a form of social organisation the family and its' associated ideology oppresses women, young people and lesbians and gay men whether they live in a nuclear family arrangement or not.' This sentence expresses a hostile - and incorrect - attitude to the family. The conclusion of this is that the destruction of the family is a step forward.

It is true that the family in bourgeois society is one of the major weapons the ruling class. But I disagree with the article's purely hostile view.

The real role of the family in working class lives is more contradictory. The contradiction is that it is not an innately oppressive form of 'social organisation' but rather, a battleground between classes.

The dominant class in our society provides the 'dominant' ideology of the family. This aims to use the family to oppress the

working class. It aims to use the family as an ideological school, moulding children to fit into the system, maintaining its labour force and disciplining its 'dissidents'. Many accept this role as the 'natural order of things'; including, it appears, the authors of the supplement. But why? The family is a 'social organisation' and as such can be used by either class, in the same way as schools and the education system.

It's important to clear up this falsehood. The theory in t+p doesn't correspond with my experiences of the family, nor, I am sure, with the experiences of many working class people. To many it can be the primary place of resistance to the onslaught of the capitalist state. I do not deny that to others it is the instigator of that oppressive onslaught, but if it is only a 'reactionary force', how do you explain its ability to play a progressive and defensive role for the working class?

Without my family I would not be a Trotskyist. Without my family I would not be able to survive in prison today, victimised for my beliefs, yet still confident in my politics and of my continued resistance to capitalism.

Matt Lee
Wandsworth Prison

Revolutionary to be black?

THE THEORY + practice supplement on lesbian and gay liberation in the first issue of *Socialist Outlook* was sturdy, thought-provoking and a serious analysis of an issue historically neglected by the left. However, despite its depth, I think that the overall analysis suffers from a fundamental flaw, which leads to immense contradictions.

The very first sentence asserts 'Our necessary starting-point is that all sexuality... is socially and historically, not biologically, determined.' This is an incredibly sweeping statement which appears to be a direct and heavy-handed response to the much-referred to 'liberal view' that homosexuality is the preserve of a fixed minority. I think that it is incorrect to counterpose to the fixed 'liberal view', an equally fixed assumption that every newborn child is like a blank sheet of paper, that biology plays no part whatsoever in the development of sexuality. The comparison with animals, which attempts to prove this theory, is very unconvincing, as it assumes a lot and proves nothing.

It is also fair to point out that the argument used against the so-called

'liberal' view - that it is contrary to the experience of many lesbians and gay men (coming out) - is an argument equally opposed to the 'blank sheet of paper' view, as one can only speculate as to how it is possible to discover one's sexuality if it has been socially determined in the opposite direction. This blanket view is even less able than the liberal view to explain why it is a minority who feel compelled to rebel against their social conditioning. Rather, I think that it is more realistic to adopt a more flexible approach (in the tradition of dialectics) and accept a compromise of the two extremes.

Even if sexuality is 90% socially determined and only 10% biologically determined, then that would explain the fact that there is literally no uniformity in human sexual behaviour and preferences.

The conclusion of this seriously flawed analysis is that the question of lesbian and gay liberation is not simply a question of democratic rights - but something more. But what? Could it be that being gay is itself a revolutionary act, in the same way as being a woman or being black?

Trevor Wongsam
Manchester

Is this really feminism?

SO MADONNA is a feminist - official! It seems her virgin-cum-whore promotions, her suspenders, chains, video with lesbian overtones and simulated masturbation on stage are 'sexually assertive'?

Funny...I've always thought being a feminist involved celebrating your sexuality on your own terms - not pandering wholesale to the fantasies of repressed males.

Madonna may be a versatile performer who isn't afraid to 'camp it up'. But she is also a prime example of how the ideas

of women's liberation can be cynically co-opted, distorted, commercially packaged and fed back to us by a sexist, money-grabbing entertainment industry. If, as your article suggests, millions of young women wanna be like her, it shows how much work socialist feminists still have to do.

There's nothing liberated or liberating about being 'sexually assertive' on men's terms. Don't be hoodwinked sisters. Kollontai wouldn't have been.

Kathy Kirkham
London N7

Hull engineers strike for shorter working week

by Keith Sinclair

SIXTEEN workers are on strike at a Hull factory owned by Parsons Brothers, a part of the Van Leer group, as a part of the national campaign for a shorter working week in engineering.

The majority of strikers are in the engineering workers union, the AEU, which is supporting them through a national levy.

The workers came out on indefinite strike on May 2 after months of negotiations and two ballots. Pickets have had important successes in turning back deliveries. The management have resorted to a 'dirty tricks' campaign of lies in the local media, claiming that the action is unofficial and that negotiations are continuing.

AEU Steward Dave Gemmill told *Socialist Outlook* 'The present management has been in charge for two years and labour relations have reached an all-time low. members are adamant that they will not lose this dispute.'

The price of official AEU backing has been an insistence on full compliance with all aspects of Tory anti-union laws. This will cause problems when the strike begins to bite, with machinery failing due to lack of maintenance. Efforts to build support for the action in other Hull factories owned by Van Leer need to be stepped up, building on the collections that have already been organised.

Spreading the action to the other plants would strengthen the union's position. Hull Trades Council has appealed for support for the strikers, who have a record of strong support for other workers' struggles.

Donations should be sent to: Parsons Strike Fund, 45 Strathmore Avenue, Beverley High Road, Hull.

SOCIALIST MOVEMENT A.G.M.

Saturday 1 June
11am to 5.30pm
Sheffield Polytechnic (opposite BR)
Registration 10am
£10 waged / £3 unwaged

- launch of socialist
- this year's campaigning priorities
- Women for Socialism will be having a breakfast gathering at 10am. All women welcome.

Renew your membership now.

Tories attack teachers' unions

by Martin Allen

THE TORY government has imposed a 'Pay Review Body' on teachers. This is the latest, and probably the most significant, attack on organised teachers.

It has come in the context of massive demoralisation among the workforce, as a result of the Tory offensive against education and the lack of response from trade union leaders.

Kenneth Clarke has rail-roaded the legislation through under the banner of 'teacher professionalism' and the need to discourage industrial action. According to Clarke, this will be done through giving teachers the same pay machinery as the medical profession.

Comparing the average classroom teacher with doctors and dentists is not just an unrealistic exercise. It should be borne in mind that both these groups have suffered reductions in pay levels under the Tories

Impose awards.

The Pay Review Body will be a continuation of the Interim Advisory Committee, set up after the defeat of the teachers pay campaign in 1987 to impose pay awards in line with government limits.

The legislation gives the government the right to amend the review body's recommendations in any way it sees fit. It covers conditions of service as well as pay, and will allow the introduction of 'Appraisal' of teachers to be linked to pay and disciplinary matters.

Despite the fact that the proposals contravene the Charter of the International Labour Organisation, the Labour front bench is not seriously opposing them. They are complicit in the denial of basic trade union rights to a significant section of the public sector workforce.

'Independent'

In addition, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) is the only one of six teacher organisations to oppose the bill. Even the

leadership of the TUC-affiliated NAS-UWT is going along with it, claiming that the body will be independent and will not affect teachers' right to strike. However, though the legislation does not touch on this, it is clearly the objective of Clarke and the Tories.

Activists from the Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Campaign For A Democratic And Fighting Union, having been outmanoeuvred in the recent ballot over action against the SATs tests, will be making determined efforts to ensure that the NUT leadership now holds the line.

This cannot be a foregone conclusion, given that the union executive's first response to Clarke's announcement was to ditch their own conference policy of campaigning for the restoration of negotiating rights.

The 'Broad Left' that dominates the executive are unable to control General Secretary Doug Mcavoy and have no strategy beyond 'waiting for Labour'.

Like *The Guardian*, the paper 'sympathetic' to teachers, the Labour leaders continue to attack the NUT if it does anything that hints of confrontation.

ditional pressure as a result of the decision of two non-TUC teachers associations, AMMA and the PAT (a no-strike organisation), to merge, forming the largest teachers' organisation.

This will be promoted as a 'non-political' alternative to the 'left wing' NUT. The future of trade unionism among teachers is at stake.

Condemn

Labour movement activists should argue for their organisations to condemn both the imposition of the pay review body and the role of the Labour front bench.

Among teachers, NUT activists need to take the arguments into the classrooms - particularly with NAS-UWT members - around 'professionalism', levels of pay and conditions of service.



Mark Salmon

Police protect Birmingham Nazis

HUNDREDS OF POLICE were bussed into Birmingham to protect a National Front (NF) rally on April 27. Despite predictions from the NF's candidate in local elections that hundreds would attend, and transport from London, only 70 nazis turned out. Anti-racist demonstrators, outnumbering the nazis 2-1, attempted to stop the rally, blocking access to the

assembly point. It was at this point that the notorious West Midlands Police moved in, attacking the anti-nazi demonstrators. Four protesters were arrested and two were later charged under the Public Order Act. Inaction from the Birmingham City Council and police protection mean that it is only mass mobilisation from the local labour movement that can stop the nazis.

The de-gaying of HIV

by Debbie Epstein

RECENT television coverage of HIV and Aids has generally been sympathetic. This is obviously a positive shift - no longer the 'gay plague', more a disease with 'victims' who deserve sympathy and support.

There is a catch however. While HIV and AIDS are used less to stoke up homophobia, they are now presented as if they were of no concern to the lesbian and gay community. A recent television programme, AIDS in the Family, for example, didn't mention that gay men constitute the largest group of people with AIDS and there was an implicit denial - by omission - that gays have families or close relationships.

In this context the Birmingham group RECLAIM organised Altered Images, a conference on HIV on May 11. Peter

Redman, one of the organisers said, 'We have seen an increasing bureaucratisation of HIV, with public professionals taking over and virtually excluding the most affected communities from having the power to control how it is dealt with. This has been coupled with the de-gaying of HIV, so that now the fact that it is of major concern in the gay community is almost ignored in public representations. We called the Altered Images conference, in part, to contest these new images - which are just as wrong as the old ones of the 'gay plague'.

With speakers like Simon Watney (producer of Red, Hot and Blue), Peter Tatchell and artist and activist Sunil Gupta, it drew people from all over England. While many were professional and volunteer workers in HIV and AIDS education and prevention, there were many community activists present.

The left has not made HIV and AIDS a major issue in the past. It is time that this changed. The prevention of HIV and AIDS and caring for people with AIDS is a major concern for thousands. Many are discriminated against in various ways - from housing and health care provision to the way HIV and AIDS is dealt with in education. People deemed to be in 'high risk' (a misnomer, because there are no high risk groups, only high risk activities) cannot get life assurance. GPs cannot always be counted on not to inform insurance companies when patients take HIV antibody tests. The only time homosexuality is mentioned in the education of most children, is with reference to HIV and AIDS.

The left cannot collude with this by maintaining silence. AIDS is a political issue, which must be taken seriously. The time for action is now!

Brighton plans campaigning Lesbian And Gay Pride

by Dani Ahrens

LESBIAN AND gay activists in Brighton are planning a packed weekend of activities for the first ever 'Brighton Pride' festival at the end of May.

The event is intended to be a mixture of protest and celebration and has been organised by the local group 'Brighton Area Action Against Section 28'.

In the wake of Clause 25 of the Criminal Justice Bill and the government's climbdown on its attempt to prevent lesbians and gay men fostering, Brighton Pride will be another marker of the lesbian and gay movement's determination to remain visible. The organisers hope that it will follow the London 'Outrage' demonstration in February and Manchester's 'Liberation 91' event in April as a display of strength and anger as well as pride.

The Brighton group is one of the few to have stayed active throughout the three years since the campaign against Clause 28. During this time the group has maintained its activity, monitoring the effects of Section 28 and tackling a range of issues affecting lesbians and gay men.

At a time when many London boroughs are closing down their lesbian and gay units, Brighton Council is taking faltering steps forward on this issue, largely due to pressure from local activists.

A successful Brighton Pride weekend will bring a new influx of activists into the group, and a further consolidation of its important role within Brighton's lesbian and gay community.

The weekend includes: busking, the creation of a giant chalk drawing in the town centre on May 24, a march through the town centre on May 25, followed by a cabaret; and other events culminating in a Pink Picnic on the Bank Holiday Monday.

Human fertilisation and embryology act guidelines

THE DRAFT guidelines under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act are now out. These guidelines lay down how clinics which provide In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and Donor Insemination (DI) should work. Considering that IVF and DI affect and are practised on women, an astonishing amount of the guidance concerns the men's rights.

The guidance is contradictory on access to Donor Insemination for lesbians and single women. It says that 'Centres should avoid adopting any policy or criteria which may appear arbitrary or discriminatory'. However, it also says that clinics must con-

sider the 'need of a child for a father'. This clause is actually in the law, and was said by Ministers to be intended to prevent lesbians and single women from gaining access to donor insemination.

In a throwaway sentence, which is potentially discriminatory against gay men and young men, the guidance says that, 'it is preferable that donors should be chosen who already have children of their own.' There is no explanation, so we don't know why it is there.

The date for responding to the guidance is May 20 and it is important that as many people as possible do. The raving right, in the form of 'Life' and 'SPUC', are campaigning to make the guidance more dis-

criminatory - despite the fact that 98% of all child sexual abuse is carried out by heterosexual men within families! We need an equally strong campaign to ensure that non-discriminatory practice is a fundamental principle of these services.

If you write a response, you should try to cover some of the general issues and welcome the statement that policies should not be discriminatory, but say that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) should make it clear that the law should be interpreted in a non-discriminatory way.

Write to: Prof. Colin Campbell, HFEA, Clements House, 14-18 Gresham St, London EC2V 7JE.

Everybody loses in new 'market' NHS

Socialist OUTLOOK

Tory 'reforms' crucify the NHS



By HARRY SLOAN
 HAVING TRIED and failed to rid themselves of the Poll Tax, John Major's crisis-wracked Tory government is now embroiled with another embarrassing legacy of the Thatcher years—the NHS and Community Care Act.

Best-known for its creation of opted-out hospitals, the Act also creates a new 'internal market' which is now wreaking havoc in health authorities across the country.

The crisis blew into the headlines in the run-up to the local elections, and cost the Tories heavily in lost votes.

But with even the British Medical Association once more aroused to angry protests, and shock revelations emerging almost daily, nothing short of a policy U-turn can prevent the issue becoming a huge liability to Major in the General Election.

After a decade of Thatcherism has starved the NHS funding, the Tory 'reforms' go much further: they are destabilising and could potentially wreck the entire NHS.

Within days of the Act taking effect, a barrage of scandals began to rock Ministers: there were cuts, closures, announcements of almost 1,500 redundancies, patients refused treatment, and the explicit emer-



gence of a two-tier service in major hospitals. Many who had ignored the passage of the NHS Bill have begun to wake up to the damage that has been done.

Competition

Dreamed up by Thatcher with a tiny handful of extreme right wing ideologues, the Act was intended to bring 'competition' into health care. The undeclared objective was to prepare the most popular of the public services for eventual US-style privatisation.

The Tories set out to create an 'internal market' by ending the system whereby local health authorities were responsible for planning and providing a balance of services in their locally-run hospitals.

Now smaller, even less accountable health authorities are simply

'purchasers', using their cash-limited budgets to buy health care for their resident population from separately-managed or opted-out hospital 'provider units', locally or further afield.

This completely untested new system needs prices: and this means that an expensive new bureaucracy has been created by each provider to cost, price and issue invoices for each patient treated, while purchasers need extra clerks and accountants to check and pay the bills.

Even before the new system got under way, rows had broken out between purchasers and providers over the costs of treatment and the number of patients to be treated, with the patients caught in the middle.

Because the new system puts each hospital into competition with others, it has also forced panic measures to wipe out long-running deficits built up by many health authorities, to create a 'level playing field' on which all will compete. Hence the huge wave of cuts, bed closures and job losses in health authorities all over the country in the run up to April 1.

Management were led to believe that they could improve their competitive position by 'opting out' under the Act to form a self-contained business — 'Self Governing Trusts'. 57 Trusts were given the go-ahead from April 1: the attraction for managers include the 'freedom' to tear up national agreements on pay, conditions and trade union recognition (while awarding themselves huge salary increases), and unlimited freedom to close beds, privatise services or sell off land without consulting anyone.

However few of the Trusts had any real financial viability: many began life in deficit and are now looking to cuts along the lines already made in Guy's and Bradford.

Financial crisis

Throughout the NHS the financial crisis is worsening: the new system has all the worst features of a 'market' with all the disadvantages of cash limits.

Health authority budgets are fixed. There is no extra cash in the system, but more bureaucracy to pay for. Any hospital that generates a 'surplus' can do so only by ripping off another health authority and potentially bankrupting another hospital.

The dog-eat-dog competition is most ferocious in London, where high overheads and property values bump up the costs of the major hospitals. The government has already insisted that it will not bail out any 'losers' in their internal market, while civil servants admit that at least one of the big teaching hospitals could go bankrupt and close.

While NHS managers ape their big brothers in private and privatised in-

dustries in their hunt for cash savings at the expense of the workforce, they are also looking for other ways to attract extra business from purchasers.

This is why some big hospitals, led by Manchester's Christie Hospital, are offering a two-tier service, with queue-jumping 'fast-track' admissions for patients from health authorities or GPs prepared to pay extra. The improved service for a few comes at the expense of cutbacks for the rest.

Chaos

Even as the chaos of the new system begins to show, more managers are lining up to join a second wave of hospital opt-outs that could include over 100 units. Health Secretary Waldegrave has made it clear that this will continue.

Public opposition to the Tory 'market' plans for health has always been massive: but the health unions and Labour Party have failed to tap this or build any serious campaign to stop the legislation, and there was little campaigning against the first-wave opt-outs.

Kinnock now is mealy-mouthed, making no commitment to immediate increased funding of the NHS or immediate steps to disband the Trusts, return the opted-out hospitals to direct management and move towards elected health authorities.

It is clear that the only way these catastrophic changes to the NHS will be halted or reversed is through a change of government. Building high profile campaigns on the NHS can help to ensure that this happens, and is followed by campaigning that ensures a Labour government acts to restore our NHS.

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