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socialist OUTLOOK

Labour flunks Maastricht challenge

Bosses' Europe

attacks

welfare state



Labour missed a golden opportunity to defeat the Tories in parliament last week over the Maastricht agreement. Fifty-nine Labour MPs voted against the agreement; if all Labour MPs had done the same the Tories ran the danger of defeat, and the government falling.

But the Labour leadership – Kinnock, Gould, Smith and the rest – believe the myth that European Monetary Union offers a progressive way forward.

This is a myth. Monetary union means harmonising budget plans, inflation and interest rates to the deflationary levels laid down by the German Bundesbank. *The outcome will be huge cuts in public spending in Britain and throughout the EC.*

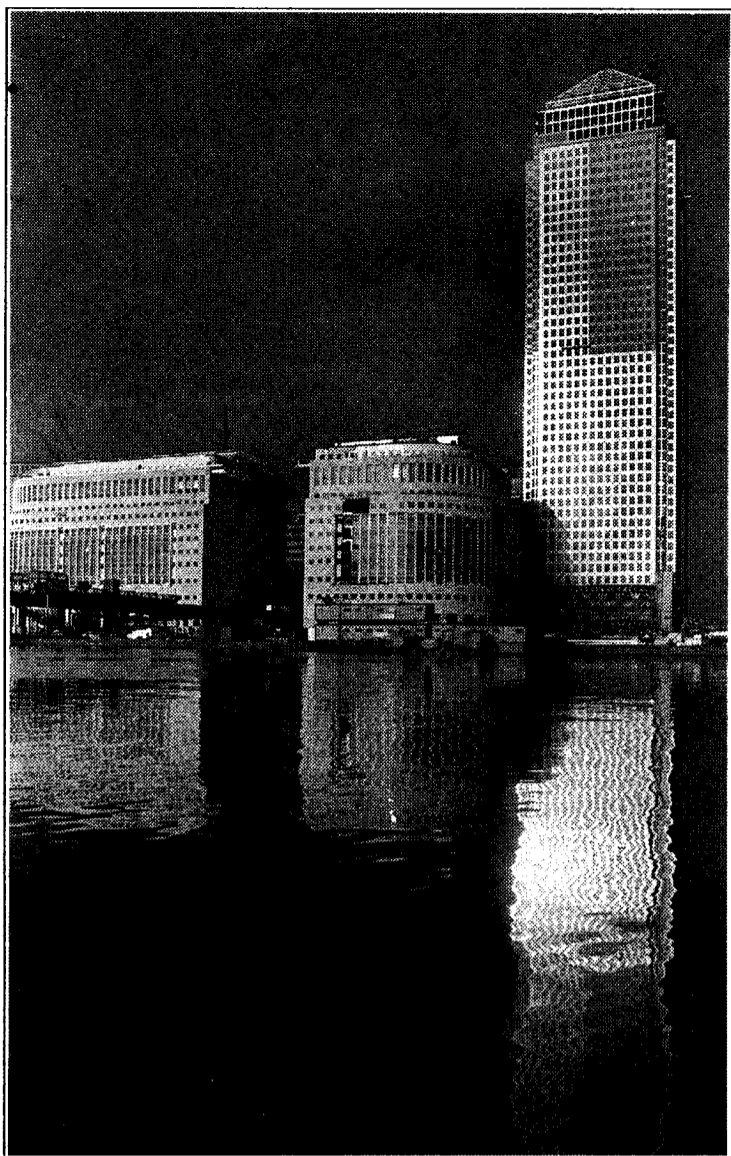
Faced with the Japanese and US challenge, Europe's bosses are determined to smash the welfare state. Wage increases

will have to be held down to meet low-level inflation targets.

Europe's social policy is a myth – it is an *anti-social* policy which will call the shots.

The new Europe – 'Fortress Europe' – will impose harsh policies against immigrants and asylum seekers. Control will continue in the hands of the unelected and secret Council of Ministers, not the European parliament.

European unity *is* the way forward, but not unity on the terms prescribed by the multinational bosses. Unity on the bosses' terms is being imposed on the people of Europe without them having the right to decide. In Britain and Europe-wide there should be a referendum. The left must fight to reject the carnage of living standards which Maastricht will impose.



Towering catastrophe: Canary Wharf

The office block that sank the world

By Jamie Gough

THE LARGEST property company in the world, Olympia and York, has gone bust, owing \$12 billion to its bankers. At its peak the company was worth \$35 billion – three times the value of Barclay's Bank for example.

It has been badly hit by the collapse of office rents in North America. But the main problem is the Canary Wharf office development in London's Docklands.

This is the largest-ever development in Europe. Its first phase, just completed, is the size of twenty Centre Points and is guessed to have cost around £1.3 billion. O&Y have let only around half of it, and to do so have virtually given the space away.

Canary Wharf was planned during the mid-1980s boom. Demand for central London office space soared following financial deregulation and rapid growth of financial capital.

Business was happy to invest in offices, apparently less risky than industry. So the

developers piled in, each ignorant of the others' plans.

These offices arrived on the market just as the boom was ending – in 1989 the equivalent of 25 Centre Points were completed in the City alone. The result was oversupply, and since then rents have halved.

This absurd waste could be avoided if the overall amount of office building was planned by a single organisation, by nationalising this sector.

Tory policies

Ironically, Canary Wharf has been weakened by the Tories' infrastructure policies.

Reacting to the market meant that the government did not plan the necessary underground line (the Jubilee extension) until after the development got going, and it will not be ready until 1997.

The Tories also relied on O&Y to pay a third of the cost of the tube extension. This money will not now be paid, and it may not go ahead, thus hitting both other businesses and residents in Docklands.

The coordination of capitalist state and private investment is

always chaotic, but this takes the biscuit.

Not that the Tories have been mean in Docklands. John Turkie has estimated that Canary Wharf will receive £4 billion in public subsidies, including tax breaks and infrastructure.

The net public benefit has been to shift some offices two miles east from the City. Though typical of the Tories' generosity towards influential sectors of business and their fondness for spectacle, this is a lunatic waste of money for British capital as a whole.

Banks worldwide are in a serious crisis, in which the collapse of world property prices is playing a major role. O&Y is so large that it will have a substantial effect on the whole system.

When the banks write off its debt, they will have to cut their lending by several times that sum. This will deepen the world recession.

This wonderful banking and property system is the one that John Smith refuses to nationalise because 'the market should do what it is best at'.

Birmingham Rally Livingstone sounds alarm on coalitionism

KEN LIVINGSTONE MP sounded the alarm in Birmingham on 20 May, warning that Labour leadership candidates were sliding towards coalitionism.

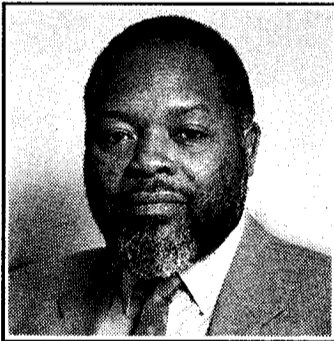
Over 100 activists came to hear Livingstone launch his leadership campaign with a rousing call to defend the party's links with the trade unions – now openly under threat.

He went on to outline an alternative agenda for the Labour Party, based on a

defence of the welfare state and a massive cut in arms expenditure.

But when asked how to vote in the forthcoming leadership elections, Livingstone repeated that he was prepared to lend his support to John Prescott and Bryan Gould.

He won a better reception for the final point of his speech – that the left should begin to organise to rid the party of the likes of the rotten right wing leadership of Birmingham City Council.



Bernie Grant

Grant on campaign trail

FORTY SOCIALISTS from across Merseyside came to hear Bernie Grant MP launch his campaign in Birkenhead on May 11.

Despite the continuing witch hunt of Labour Left activists across Merseyside, the turnout showed that a layer remains that can be mobilised around campaigns in the party.

Grant was joined by prominent fighters against the witch hunt – Paul Davies, the TGWU official who defeated Birkenhead MP Frank Field in a reselection battle, only to be witch hunted by the Labour bureaucracy; and Lol Duffy from Wallasey, another victim of the witch hunt.

Coming the week after Labour's losses in local elections in Liverpool and Wirral, discussion focused around the politics of Grant and Livingstone's campaign. A call for support for the the conference of the left called by the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs won enthusiastic support.

Merseyside transport to Campaign Group conference: call 051 647 8160.

Women spoke – Bernie listened

By Sam Inman

WITH MARGARET BECKETT standing as the 'women's candidate' in the Labour deputy leadership contest, and Bryan Gould proclaiming his 'woman-friendly' New Man image in the leadership election, one might have felt that their campaigns would have welcomed an opportunity to talk to women at the grassroots of the movement.

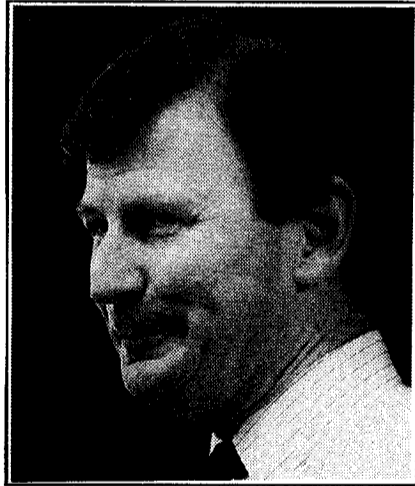
But these days Important Leaders do not have the time, or even feel the need, to attend meetings such as last weekend's 'Women speak – Labour Listens?'

sponsored by Women for Socialism, Labour Women in NAC, Women in Black Sections and the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

As it turned out, only Bernie Grant was able to attend – Ken Livingstone having been incapacitated by the sudden onset of the hay-fever season. The only candidate who did not even bother to send apologies was John Prescott, although the rest – along with many Labour women MPs – did.

Despite being a fairly small meeting, the level of discussion was extremely good. If one looks at the meeting as preparation for women's input into the Campaign Group conference on 20 June, there will be plenty of ideas to put into the general melting pot of left political debate.

Perhaps the most refreshing part of the meeting was when the problems that young women face were addressed. With several school students present, this was a rare opportunity for many older women – plus Bernie – to hear how important it is that the left taps into the anger and frustration of youth, and starts to positively address ways of working collectively with young people.



How new is 'New Man' Bryan Gould?

If the left can do this, it will go a long way in revitalising the fight for socialism.

Basic issues of solidarity, collectivity and cooperation in struggle came across from the mood of the meeting. Defending the party's trade union links, but also democratising that relationship, and extending links with autonomous and community groups, was also thought to be essential.

Leonora Lloyd encapsulated the confident spirit of the women present when she said that 'women's ability to work together could be the saving of our movement'.

Bernie Grant, there to listen and respond, made copious notes before coming back after the discussion to make a very positive contribution to the debate. He made it perfectly clear where he stood on voting for the leadership – unlike Livingstone he argued 'you couldn't slide a cigarette paper between Smith and Gould'.

He did say that he personally would be voting for Prescott, but agreed that a campaign of writing his and Livingstone's names on the ballot papers would be a good idea.

Socialist Campaign Group of MPs

After the general election Relaunching the Labour Left

Saturday, June 20th

West Indian Centre, Laycock Place, Leeds
11am - 5.30pm

All Labour Party members welcome
Admission: £2 full-time employed/£1 everyone else

For further information contact SCG, c/o Jeremy Corbyn,
129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7
Creche places available; please contact Steve French 071 733 3403

New realism slides rightwards

It was utterly predictable that following the election defeat the Labour right wing would draw the conclusion that Labour should move further to the right.

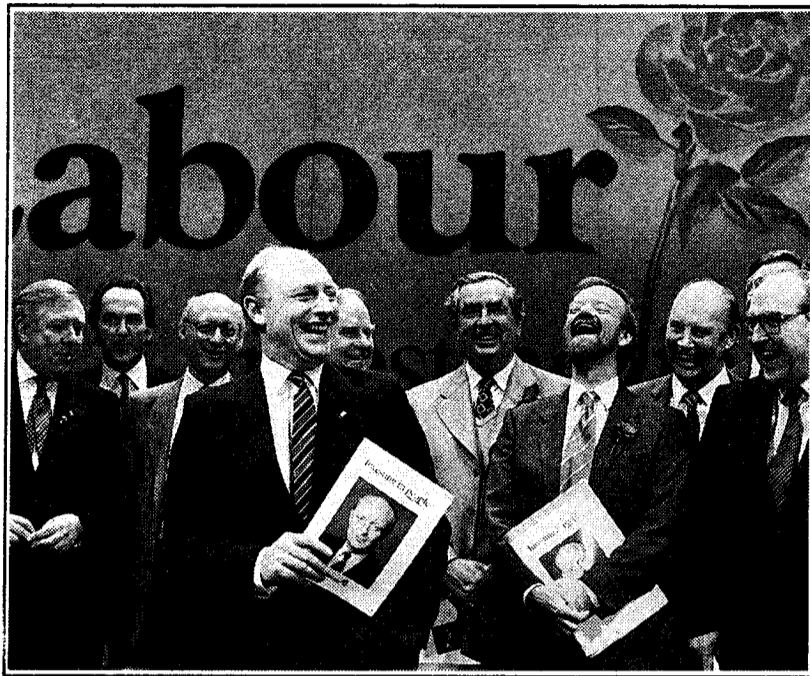
Now Jack Cunningham has come out openly for the scrapping of Clause Four – that section of the Labour constitution which calls for the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Revolt

The last time that happened was after Labour's 1959 defeat, when Hugh Gaitskell's attempt to scrap Clause Four led to a massive revolt of the party's ranks.

This time however the centre of the right's offensive is over the links with the trade unions. The attack from all sides on the block vote is not about democratising the Labour Party, it is about weakening its position as the party of the organised working class.

Anyone who saw the grovelling performance of AEEU president Bill Jordan on Question Time two weeks ago will realise the direction which the far right of the Labour Party wants to go in. If Jordan had his way Labour would become just another capitalist party, like the US Democratic Party.



"...and then, I'm going to cut off their block votes!"

PHOTO: John Harris

In the two years before the general election Socialist Outlook argued that Kinnockism was heading for a crash; either it would lead to the most right wing Labour government ever, or alternatively towards the imposition of Smith as the new leader and another decisive shift to the right.

It is this latter scenario which is being played out. Of course, a short term destruction of Labour's union links is highly unlikely. Not

only will the block vote be retained in some form for the moment, but the unions remain the indispensable basis for financing the party.

But the important thing is the trend of development. The current attack on the block vote is just the beginning of the process, which if unchallenged and uninterrupted would eventually lead to a frontal challenge to the union link; that is why the assault on Labour's union links has to be fought now.

Implicated

In the leadership election however the basis for judging candidates cannot be their attitude to the block vote alone. Whatever candidates like Gould and Prescott say about the unions, they are deeply implicated in new realism, and the whole disastrous process of undermining the labour movement which Kinnockism represented.

The attack on the block vote cannot be combatted without rejecting new realism as such.

Although it may be possible for the left to make partial political alliances with people like Prescott on the specific point of the block vote, any general political alliance is precluded.

Fighting left unity has to attack new realism all along the line.

German workers double their money Another slap in the face for Kohl

By Patrick Baker

German engineering workers dealt Helmut Kohl's right wing government another slap in the face, as bosses almost doubled their 3.3 per cent 'final offer' for this year in response to threats of massive strike action.

After public sector workers' union OTV had won more than 5 per cent, it was clear that IG Metall, Europe's biggest union, would not settle for less. And workers in the pace-setting region of Baden Wurtemberg actually won 5.8 per cent for this year.

Setting the rate

This is likely to set the settlement rate not just for other engineering workers, but also in sectors such as construction and media, where action had already begun.

The immediate government reaction was to warn of economic doom and gloom – particularly in the east. Kohl made it clear that any price would not be paid from the massive profits notched up by German industry in the 1980s, but out of workers' pockets. Government investment in eastern Germany is likely to be

cut. The deal was a step forward in the sense that it sent out a clear message – strike action gets results. But rather like the OTV deal, it wasn't so good in terms of what could have been won. Union leaders withdrew any threat of action as soon as

The measly 3 per cent that the deal will mean in 1993 could certainly have been improved on. Given all-out action, there was a good chance of winning the original 9 per cent claim.

OTV members voted not to accept the deal that their leaders agreed to – union president Monika Wulf-Mathies said 'We simply did not expect this mood'. She could now get a nasty shock in forthcoming elections for her post. Likewise, IG Metall members are unlikely to be content with their deal for long.

Problems

They have nearly doubled the bosses' initial offer through taking warning action – union leaders are likely to have problems persuading them not to go back for more. A campaign for further action could be launched from union conferences this summer.

Combined with mounting anger at the lengthening dole queues in eastern Germany, the militancy seen in these warning strikes could turn Germany from the model of 'social peace' in Europe to a centre for a growing fightback.



Caught out by workers' fightback: Kohl

the original offers were improved on.

Relief

The bosses' real view was summarised in the *Financial Times*: 'Generally the deal was greeted with relief for avoiding a damaging and possibly prolonged strike'.

Socialist Outlook £7000 Development Fund

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK supporters have launched a £7000 development fund, to be completed by next November. The fund drive has two objectives – to stabilise the fortnightly production of the paper, and to buy new equipment.

When the newspaper was launched we relied heavily on the equipment acquired up to seven years ago to produce a monthly magazine. Much of that equipment is now wearing out and becoming unreliable.

More up-to-date equipment will make a substantial contribution to a more attractive and better laid-out paper.

We have entered a period of rapid political changes, domestically and internationally. It is now clear that the semi-collapse of Stalinism has completely failed to stabilise international capitalism.

The strikes in Germany, the uprising in Los Angeles and other US cities, and the turmoil in Thailand are indicators of the period we are entering.

At home the left is undergoing rapid changes as it debates the consequences of the electoral defeat. In this political situation the need for revolutionary marxist ideas is greater than ever.

Over the past few months our sales and subs have been going up. Help us ensure that we continue to go forward.

Our thanks to two supporters in Potters Bar who kicked off the fund drive this week with a £100 donation.

Send all donations to: Socialist Outlook(FD), PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



Rail union climbs down on Plan Tube strike called off

Pete Williams

THE NATIONAL Executive of the RMT has called off strike action against London Underground's Company Plan.

The settlement commits the management to negotiate any changes through the existing agreed machinery.

Management threatens to cancel the 1956 Machinery from June this year, and to impose a new one with or without the agreement of the seven LUL unions, have been withdrawn.

The document contains an explicit instruction to all managers to adhere to the machinery otherwise they will be acting 'against Company policy and will not be supported.'

This means that basic terms and conditions of service, and crucially the seniority principle enshrined in the Promotion, Transfer and Redundancy Agreement, have been safeguarded.

The past and current policy of LUL against compulsory redundancies has been upheld.

However management retain the initiative. Only strike action could have forced management to withdraw the Plan. They will now try to introduce parts of it by agreement. If that doesn't work then sooner or later they will revert to imposition.



Knapp - only following orders

The principal culprits for this position are the national full time officials and the right wing majority of the NEC.

At the beginning of March, management forced all Depot Foremen to apply for their own jobs which were redesignated Team Leaders. The District Council called for a ballot.

Election

RMT General Secretary, Jimmy Knapp, acting on instructions from Labour Party HQ Walworth Rd, fought tooth and nail - with the backing of turncoat LT NEC representative Dave Hatt - to avoid a ballot before the election.

The vote on holding a ballot was

lost by 18 votes to 2. Had a ballot been called in that period, it would have got a much bigger 'Yes' vote than the 2 to 1 majority registered after Labour's disastrous election defeat.

More importantly there would have been a chance of saving the Depot Foreman's grade, which has now gone. Due to the fatal delay, the workers involved were forced to sign new contracts while the balloting was still taking place.

Crucial also was the last minute turnaround by the full time officials of the engineering Confed unions. At mass meetings in the lead up to the ballot they had told their members that they would ballot with the RMT. But then they used a refusal by management to concede a formal failure to agree as an excuse not to do so.

As usual, ASLEF campaigned against the RMT ballot. Their Assistant General Secretary, Lew Adams said that in the event of a strike he would instruct his members to go to work and 'drive ASLEF trains'!

The new anti-union legislation will mean fully postal ballots. The RMT has never achieved more than a 20 per cent turnout in a postal ballot. When the management come back demanding more changes, only unofficial action that breaks the law will be effective.

NUT surrender brings mass sackings for teachers

IN THE WAKE of the NUT Easter conference, which failed to vote for effective action against job cuts, the NUT has admitted that thousands of teachers now face the sack.

The sackings stem directly from the government education reforms, especially Local Management of Schools (LMS) which puts schools in charge of their own budgets.

Capping

Behind the LMS crisis is the drastic cut in local authority spending, a consequence of poll tax capping. Nationwide, schools are going into the red; for many, which have been already cut to the bone, sacking teachers is the only way to balance the books.

The NUT says that 2,000 teachers will be sacked in the north of England alone. Staffordshire intend 400 compulsory teacher redundancies.

It is the more experienced teachers which will go first, since their salaries cost more - a lot more given the current salary structure. The consequence of course will be worsening education standards.

In the red

The financial situation in Oxford middle schools is typical. There only one school is not heavily in the red - and that is because the headmaster is on sabbatical and replaced for one year with a cheaper substitute!

Ironically it is the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers which is threatening strike action against redundancies, rather than the NUT.

But NUT members at Walthamstow Girls school say they will strike unless redundancies are withdrawn by 1 June.

At the NUT conference calls for strike action against redundancies from the Socialist Teachers Alliance were defeated by a combination of the right wing, led by general secretary Doug McAvoy, and the so-called Broad Left.

Nasty

As the deadline for redundancy notices, 31 May, approaches, more and more teachers will be getting a nasty surprise from their postman.

It is the result of years of sell-out from NUT leaders, and of the capitulation by local authority unions and Labour councils to rate capping and the poll tax.

With a public spending deficit of £30 billion, and the Maastricht demands of economic harmonisation to be met, the government will over the next two years make the biggest cuts in public services seen since the Tories came to power in 1979.

Waiting for the next Labour government won't pay either for teachers of any other section of public sector workers.

Europe-wide anti-racist mobilisations called

ANTI-RACIST and anti-fascist organisations from all over Europe met in Strasbourg on 15 May to discuss co-ordinated continent-wide action.

Britain was represented by the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA).

An initial proposal was for co-ordinated demonstrations on 9 November, the anniversary of 'Crystal Night' when the Nazis smashed the windows of Jewish-owned shops all over Germany.

But the 9 November proposal was blocked by SOS-Racisme from France, and replaced by a more general call for action around that date.

■ The ARA is calling a national Convention on 13 June, at the University of London Union, Malet St. Delegates are allowed from national and local organisations. Contact ARA, PO Box 2578, London N5 1UF. 071-607-3988.

Nurses lead new fightback against cuts and closures

By John Lister

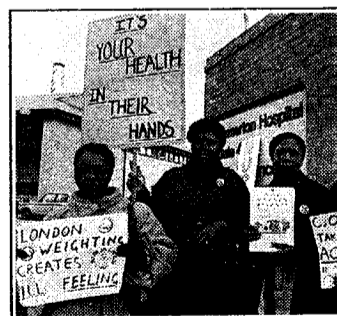
DESPERATE managers at London's University College and Middlesex Hospitals, wrestling with a £20m deficit, are closing beds and trying to cut 60 posts for newly-qualifying nurses.

But nursing staff, with official support from NUPE and COHSE, have hit back.

Following the lead of their colleagues in Bloomsbury & Islington's mental health unit, whose successful strike action forced management to increase staffing levels, they have staged angry strikes and protests beginning on May 15, with a further walkout on May 22.

This battle is likely to run for some weeks: but it is only the first of many that are likely to be fought in London and throughout the country, as NHS chiefs try to balance their books in the Tories' new internal market by cutting staff and services.

In Central Manchester, staff have protested at chiefs' plans for cuts of



£3m; London's threatened St Thomas's - likely to face the axe in forthcoming 'rationalisation' proposals for the capital's NHS - is looking towards a £5m cuts package.

In many districts and Trusts cut-backs of over £1m are now being drawn up. Almost all of these cut-backs will mean attacks on levels of nursing and support staff.

But the cuts in Bloomsbury & Islington, the health authority covering the UCH and Middlesex Hospitals, are clearly the biggest so far: management have for some time planned to close the Elizabeth Garrett

Anderson Hospital for women.

Now they have admitted they are discussing closure of either the Middlesex or UCH, which have been bankrupted by the government's NHS reforms.

By fighting back, nurses and health workers are not only defending their own jobs and those of union colleagues: they are defending our NHS - the hospitals, beds and services we all depend upon for treatment.

Health workers have consistently been among the more militant sections of the working class throughout the 1980s. They will need all the support they can get from the rest of the labour movement as they fight John Major's new round of attacks.

■ A new issue of the campaigning newspaper *Health Emergency*, with a round up of latest developments in the NHS, is now available. For a copy, send a 36p stamp and your address to LHE, 446, Uxbridge Rd, London W12 0NS.

Why oil workers' leader will back Unshackle the Unions conference

North Sea battle for union rights

Socialist Outlook spoke to RONNIE MCDONALD, President of the Offshore Industry Liaison committee (OILC).

The OILC, a union for offshore oil workers formed to fill the gap left by the inadequacies of 'on-shore' unions, has been met with hostility from both oil bosses and the TUC.

But increasing numbers of oil workers are turning to it. Ronnie is to be one of the speakers at the coming Unshackle the Unions conference.

The OILC are to hold their founding conference on June 27/28. What is its importance?

This conference will mark the end of the two-year process towards legal certification of the OILC as a trade union.

A union conference is legally recognised and indeed should act as the supreme governing body of a trade union. It will also endorse the objectives of the union and agree a constitution.

Steps towards certification began once sufficient oil workers had begun to turn to the OILC for action over safety on the North Sea.

The conference will also continue the debate on the practical organisation of members on oil platforms, where they have to operate clandestinely for fear of victimisation.

This process will continue until unions are able to operate openly throughout the North Sea.

What are the main aims of the OILC?

Our main area of activity is and will remain the campaign for offshore safety.

It has been proved over the past 22 years that the nine on-shore unions which claim members in the area can't work together to tackle the safety issue. It is their failure which gives the OILC the reason for its existence.

The other important aim is to achieve a democratic union. Where OILC is able to operate

'We clearly need a network of solidarity between trade unionists, so that we can pool resources. We want to participate in setting up such a network ...'

openly, as in Piper Claymore where there are around 150 members, it is possible to practice democratic organisation.

On other platforms, anyone found to be an OILC member can kiss their career goodbye.

This clandestinity restricts the democracy of the union. It is this non-acceptance of unions which is the main structural problem facing the OILC.

Piper Claymore has recently been taken over by Elf, the first time this company has operated in the British sector. It has a very relaxed attitude to union organisation, in contrast with other operators.

Has the attitude of other unions to OILC changed?

The leaderships of other unions have become more hostile to OILC, but when we are able to address union members they give support.

At the recent CPSA conference a member of their executive described us as 'a breakaway scab union the same as the UDM'.

We fortunately had the opportunity to counter these accusations which we totally reject. First, we are not a breakaway union. The other nine unions have failed to cooperate in the North Sea for 22 years. The OILC is a unifying factor acting primarily on safety.

Also, the OILC has never asked any member to resign from another union. We encourage members to retain their membership of their existing onshore union when they join the OILC.

This dual-card approach encourages union participation and is the opposite of 'scabbing'.

By their failure to cooperate or solidarise, it is the other unions who are breaking away from union



Injured oil rig worker rushed to hospital after Piper Alpha disaster

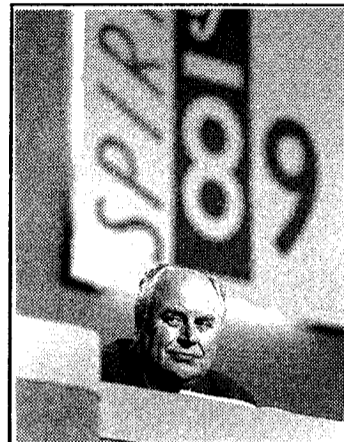
traditions. When the issues were presented to them, the CPSA members supported the OILC.

Why are you going to the Unshackle the Unions conference?

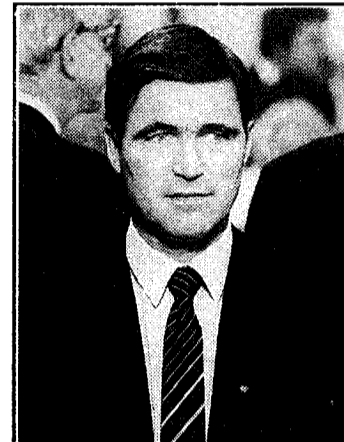
During the two major North sea disputes between 1989 and 1991, the OILC suffered from a lack of a network of resources and support.

For example, when Shell took legal action, lawyers' fees cost OILC £12,600. But through solidarity networks we now have links with sympathetic lawyers who can donate assistance. And during these disputes, trade unionists throughout the UK donated more than £60,000.

No one organisation can stand on its own. We clearly need a network of solidarity between trade unionists, so that we can pool resources. We want to participate in setting up such a network assisting trade



Hostile to OILC: TUC leader Willis unionists throughout the UK.



AEEU chief Bill Jordan

One of the main issues at the conference will be the Tories' anti-union laws, which are intended to destroy effective trade unionism. As an effective trade union, how do you see the conference contributing to OILC's struggle?

OILC has proved by its record that it is prepared to push the anti-union laws to their limits and beyond. On the issue of offshore safety,

we won't be cowed. The safety of our members is paramount - all other issues are secondary.

In terms of the 1990 Act, if our members find themselves in conflict with it over a genuine safety issue and the employers demand we back down, we'd refuse.

I'll be speaking at the conference about our experiences with the law. I think it'll give trade union activists a chance to discuss the laws and building networks of solidarity with both lawyers and people like us.

S THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT
Trade Union Committee

Second Conference 1992

18th - 19th July
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London
WHICH WAY FOR SOCIALISTS IN THE UNIONS?
Fighting the employers' offensive

We would like to register _____ people for the Unshackle the Unions Conference
 We enclose £ _____ (£10 waged/ £3 unwaged per person)
 Name/position/organisation _____
 Contact address _____ Phone _____

Cheques payable to Socialist Movement (TU)
 Send to Carolyn Sikorski 53a Geere Road, London E15 3PN

What do you do when your workers have a serious accident?



The rise of Europe's far right

IN RECENT elections far-right organisations like the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Freedom Party in Austria and the Lombard League in Italy have made spectacular gains. What lies behind the rise of the far right, and how can it be fought? Socialist Outlook spoke to OLIVER MACDONALD, a member of the New Left Review editorial board.

For forty years many people thought that fascism and the extreme right was dead. What lies behind its new rise?

The essential background is the economic and social crisis of the Western economies which started in the 1970s.

This includes, of course, the growth of mass unemployment, the housing crisis, the growth of poverty, the fiscal crisis of the state and other well-known crisis symptoms.

This has two connected consequences for bourgeois politics; the imposition of harsh austerity and anti-welfare policies involved the gradual emergence of more authoritarian types of bourgeois governments, like Thatcherism in Britain, and led to a reorganisation of capitalist politics.

This was an attempt to insulate all government decision-making from pressures from below and force official politics into a narrow right-wing straight-jacket.

But as part of this, and in line

'The great danger is that the left, will underestimate the damage that these new extreme right parties would do'

with the generalised cynicism about the mainstream parties, was a reorganisation of the right wing of capitalist politics.

It is a mistake to see new parties, especially pro-capitalist parties, as emerging simply 'from below'. New capitalist parties are generally the result of the mobilisation of elites, or influential groups of intellectuals, around new projects.

Thus we see in the alliance around Le Pen in France the crucial role of people organised in the Club D'Horloge, whose origins were in the Gaullist RPR. Or the people around the Schoenhuber, the leader of the Republicans in Germany, who came out of the CSU - the Bavarian wing of Kohl's party.

These people were able to link up with more sinister forces, namely the semi-submerged fascist and neo-fascist currents who had been marginalised, or kept their heads down, since the defeat of fascism in 1945.

The crux of the question is the merging of 'hard right', authoritarian, neo-liberal currents, with the old fascists. So in Germany the Schoenhuber crowd linked up with people from the NPD, a neo-Nazi group founded in the 60s; the same happened with the German Peoples Union, an organisation

with much clearer fascist links than the Republicans.

In the 1970s the French Front National was more of an openly neo-Nazi current than today. It was a very small minority current on the French far-right, which was mainly led at that time by the 'Party of New Forces'.

The Austrian Freedom Party is one of the most important parties of the new far right. But Austria is the one country where there was never any systematic purge of Nazis after the second world war. These unreconstructed Nazis, often in powerful positions in society, have now come forward in Haider's Freedom Party.

As for the Belgian Vlaams Blok, here again we see how the traditions of post-war Flemish nationalism, which had made an accommodation with liberalism and the Belgian state, have been replaced by the inter-war neo-Nazi and Catholic reactionary traditions.

The MSI in Italy goes right back to people from the Mussolini movement, and has been more or less openly fascist since its foundation after the war. But this is a special case; it is not one of the 'new' parties.

Another factor we should mention is the revival of the Catholic right, given its impetus by the election of the Polish Pope Jean-Paul, which has spawned a whole network of Catholic reaction across Europe.

Finally we should mention the influence among the new far right elites of the thinking of 'Conservative revolutionaries' of the 1930s. I have in mind people like Carl Schmitt, people who were not open Nazis, but very definitely part of the January 1933 coalition which brought the Nazis to power.

Why is there in a period of crisis the growth of the far right and not the far left?

The far left suffers from any retreat of the labour movement as a whole; it is of course part of that movement.

The crisis of the labour movement starting in the 1970s involved the tremendous dislocation of the social democratic forces, and the fantastic crisis of the Communist parties.

In that situation the forces of the far left were simply too weak to play the role of genuine alternative leaderships to



Le Pen: a fascist, or just racist scum?

which the working class could turn; that is the essence of the labour movement crisis.

As a subsidiary point I would argue that the far left didn't understand the dynamic of the emerging crisis in Europe, from the viewpoint of the internationalisation of capital, and the need for internationalist responses. This would have meant a socialist programme to reunify the continent and generate economic growth, a programme for a united socialist Europe.

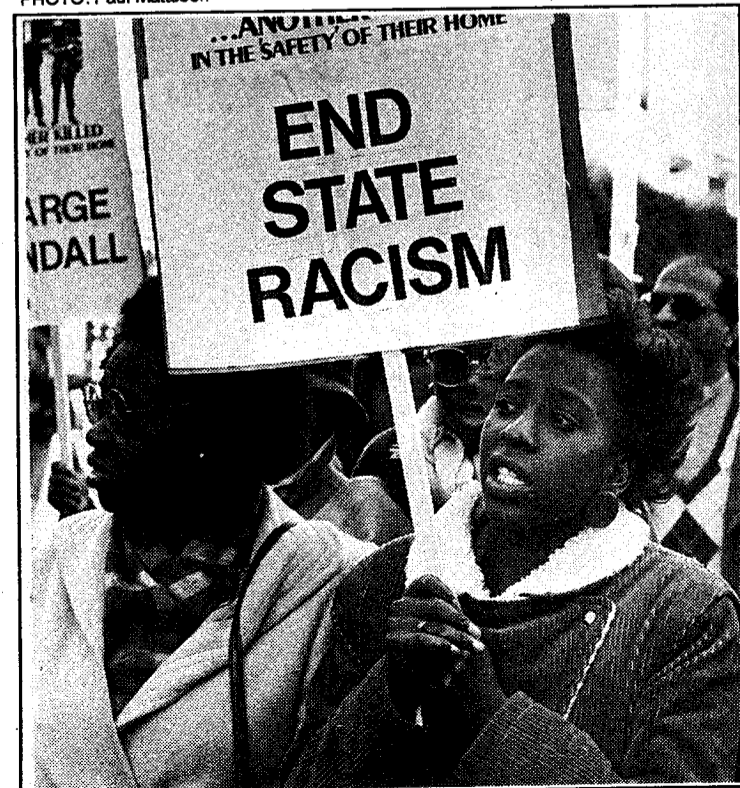
In a situation of growing nationalism, the 'natural' defenders of nationalism, the far right, come to the fore. And we see this in the growth of anti-federalist currents in most of the parties of the right in Europe.

The traditional petty-bourgeoisie has declined. Doesn't this rob fascism of a mass base, the kind of mass base that the German and Italian fascists had?

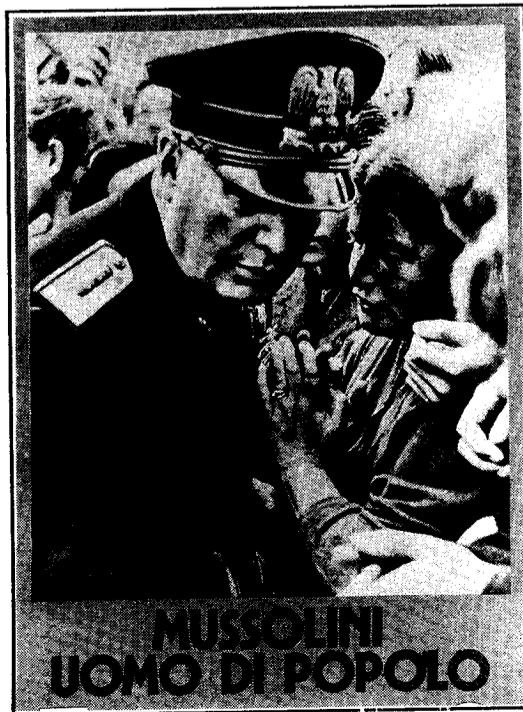
Yes, but we are not having a simple re-run of the German and Italian fascist movements.

If we call these parties 'neo-fascist', we mean they are the functional equivalents of the inter-war fascist parties. Anti-labour movement, anti-progressive, the new parties of the counter-revolution.

PHOTO: Paul Mattsson



'Official' state racism fuels its unofficial racist followers



Italian fascist poster

some curious results, if you look at the overall balance sheet of Hitler and Mussolini for their respective ruling classes!

A resort to dictators is unlikely, if for no other reason than the forms of liberal democracy give fantastically good access to the bourgeoisie in controlling governments.

Traditional petty-bourgeois layers are not the only possible source of support for radical right populist capitalist parties. If the crisis deepens they can win support in new middle class layers, and even demoralised sectors of the working class, especially the unemployed – as did Hitler of course.

What is unclear is what the final programme of the far-right parties will be.

But if the Front National came to power in France through the ballot box, would it really be anything but a rather nasty right wing capitalist government? Would it be real fascism?

If the Front National came to power, it could have a different appearance to the one it has now. What I'm saying is that you can carry out the essential programme of the counter-revolution, imposing massive historical defeats on the working class, without resorting to an openly Nazi-type of state.

You could maintain competing bourgeois political parties, but utilise a feature of 'democracy' the Nazis were very keen on – the plebiscite.

Don't forget that frequently after 1933 the Nazis resorted to plebiscites to get popular support for their measures. And with the structure of mass communications today, you can imagine how Le Pen, if he were president could use the press and TV to organise plebiscites.

You already have within Western 'democracy' fantastic anti-popular legal powers. We have already seen these legal powers used against the labour movement, but not as yet to deport immigrant workers *en masse*.

But of course Europe does have one 20th century experience of mass deportations of ethnic minorities – the mass expulsion of the Jews from Germany and central Europe. The extermination programme real-



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard

Exposure of nazi links can help isolate far right. Here a BNP member gives a nazi salute at an anti-fascist demonstration

ly got under way in 1941. Until then, Himmler was merely expelling the Jews. This kind of thing could easily happen if a Le Pen-type government came to power, irrespective of whether it conforms with the classical model of inter-war fascism.

The great danger is that the left, on the grounds that the Front National or the German Republicans are not classical fascist movements, will underestimate the massive damage that authoritarian government of these new extreme right parties would do.

In my view the complete prostration of the social democrats and liberal democratic forces before the neo-liberal, anti-welfare state offensive of the right and far right is disastrous, and can play into the hands of the far right parties.

Le Pen and those like him have a programme of gutting the essence of the post-1945 consensus, of social and democratic rights, even if they preserve some of the forms.

Is what you're saying then that the form which the fascist movement took in

the inter-war years was determined by the existence of a revolutionary wing of the workers movement which had to be militarily crushed? And that today the same programme can be implemented without recourse to the

That's exactly what I'm saying. Except that the form of inter-war fascism was not entirely determined by the need to crush the Communist parties.

It was also because important sectors of the ruling classes had never committed themselves to liberal democracy, and saw it as a weak form of government which opened itself up to a revolutionary challenge.

Many of these sectors were not modern capitalist forces at all.

Another factor was the need to unify the different fractions of the ruling classes, which were pulling in so many different directions. The emergence of dictators was a coercive way of doing that.

But of course the experience of fascism in its old form was an important learning experience for the ruling classes. The prob-

lem with dictators is that they can have cranky kitchen cabinets which make all kinds of irrational decisions from the point of view of capital accumulation. That's why ruling class support for old-style fascism is unlikely.

How should the left respond? Is it a matter of street demonstrations to expose the fascist core of these movements? Or fighting against racism? Or more generally advancing a socialist programme to build an alternative?

All these are valid approaches which need to be integrated into a coherent socialist response. But demonstrations and other mobilisations against the new fascists are very important. All of these movements, while not being based on storm troopers, do have their semi-military, street-fighting wings.

In Germany we have the great threat to immigrant workers represented by the skinhead movement; and in France the Front National youth do engage in attacks on immigrant workers. So I am very much in favour of an activist approach towards demonstrations and mobilisations against the far-right parties.

Mobilisation against the far right is directly linked to the question of self-defence of the black communities. So, while in Britain the fascist parties are relatively marginal, the level of racist attacks in the 1980s has been going up and up. Self-defence of immigrant workers needs to be linked directly to mobilisation against fascist provocations, like marches through black or immigrant areas.

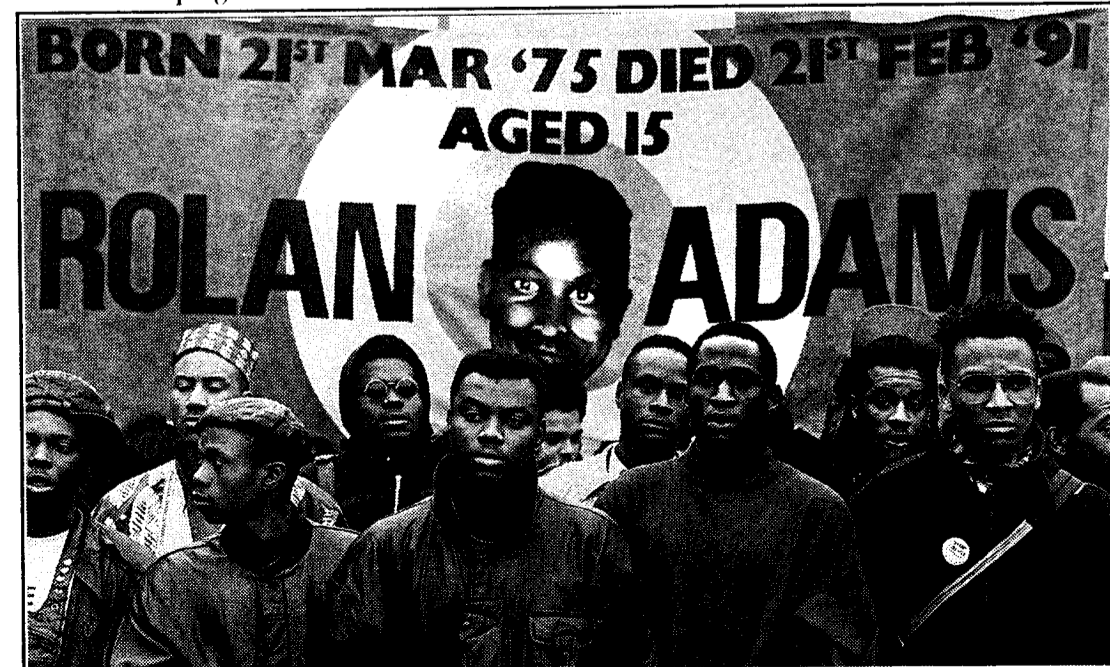
Exposure activity against the fascist hard core of the far right is also important. In 1991 the German Republicans were increasingly split over revelations that their deputy chairman had made a speech about concentration camps for the reds when they came to power.

But of course, in the end the approach which says we need to fight for a socialist programme and a socialist alternative is correct. That's quite obvious, and was the bedrock of Trotsky's approach to fascism, and indeed any form of counter-revolution. Unless there is a regeneration of the fighting spirit and socialist left wing of the labour movement, then the door will be more and more open to the new far right parties.

Official politics in Europe, given the complete prostration and bankruptcy of social democracy, is being reduced to competition between the far right and different brands of pro-capitalist technocratic politics. That is a complete disaster.

So the socialist forces have to ram this message home among all those who can be mobilised against racism and the new right. A united front against the far right is a good step forward; but the final defeat of the far right depends on building the socialist alternative.

Interview by Phil Hearse



Bitter fruits of the British racist right. Protestors mourn the murder of Rolan Adams

PHOTO: Andrew Wiard



Italian fascist poster

Democratic rights in a new 'Commonwealth'

Benn's

challenge

to bosses'

Europe

TONY BENN is introducing a parliamentary Bill proposing the creation of a Commonwealth of Europe. Part of the function of the Bill, he says, is to fight the idea that you are either for the EC and capitalist Europe being built through the Maastricht process, or otherwise you are anti-European. His Bill proposes a Commonwealth including all European states, not just Western Europe, and outlines fundamental social and democratic rights that it would embody. SAM INMAN and WILL McMAHON talked to him about it.

Socialist Outlook: Can you outline the main features of your Commonwealth of Europe Bill?

Tony Benn: It is a Bill to replace the Treaty of Rome with what I call a Treaty of London, to extend the framework of European co-operation beyond the countries of the European Community to the *whole* of Europe, including all the Eastern European countries and former USSR.

The principles I put down here for the foundation of an association of the peoples of Europe – the Commonwealth – are not anything to do with the free movement of capital and labour.

It must be based on mutual respect, the fully self-governing status of member countries, working for co-operation, committed to uphold the Charter of the UN, believing that the different identities of member states must be preserved, resolving to work for these ends with good-will, and a spirit of tolerance and understanding.

I also include a Charter of Rights, but not the same as the Bill of Rights that the lawyers want. It has social and economic rights, the things that would require a very active political role.

The reason I've done it, is that this idea that you're either pro- or anti-Europe is a complete illusion. The question is *what sort* of Europe we want.

What they're trying to do is to say that there's only one type of Europe that you have to be for or against. It's like saying if you're anti-Major you're anti-British, if you're anti-monarchy you're anti-British. It's not anti-British at all, it's a question of trying to offer people an alternative perspective.

The Labour leadership has completely

capitulated to the EC idea. What Smith says to himself is, if there's any possibility of a Labour government being elected, there'd be such a run on the pound that the economy would be destroyed before Labour got there. So if you're in the EC, then they would control our economy.

SO: Would you see your ideas, as set down in the Bill, as a socialist alternative for Europe?

TB: It isn't explicitly socialist. It would provide that if a state wanted to vote for a different system it could. But it would make it possible. It is an enabling bill for socialism, which

"What the Common Market is about is the liberation of capital and the enslaving of labour. We have to have a programme for the control of capital and the liberation of labour – and that must be done on an international basis"

under the Treaty of Rome is impossible – it would be excluded by constitution, by the judges. What the Bill does is remove some of the obstacles for socialism rather than create it itself.

But, of course, when you set out a Charter of Rights then you are beginning to set out the constitutional changes that contain a political objective. And these are socialist objectives.

SO: But isn't a socialist alternative implicit in the Bill, for example in posing a guarantee of full employment?

TB: There are some fairly radical proposals. But it's presented within the framework of you've got to have the power to do it. For example we could demand all these things in practice, but in theory we couldn't achieve them. It would be illegal to do it.

SO: Your Bill is not going to get passed by Parliament, what are you intending to use it for?

TB: Of course it won't get passed but these things can have an educational role. I've sent it round a little bit. I've been working on this for about ten years one way or another.

I think there are a lot of people who may be open to this alternative, look at the striking German workers for example. If as a result of the strikes they got subsidies to the industries they work in, the European Court would say that was illegal. I think there's an audience for our sort of ideas.

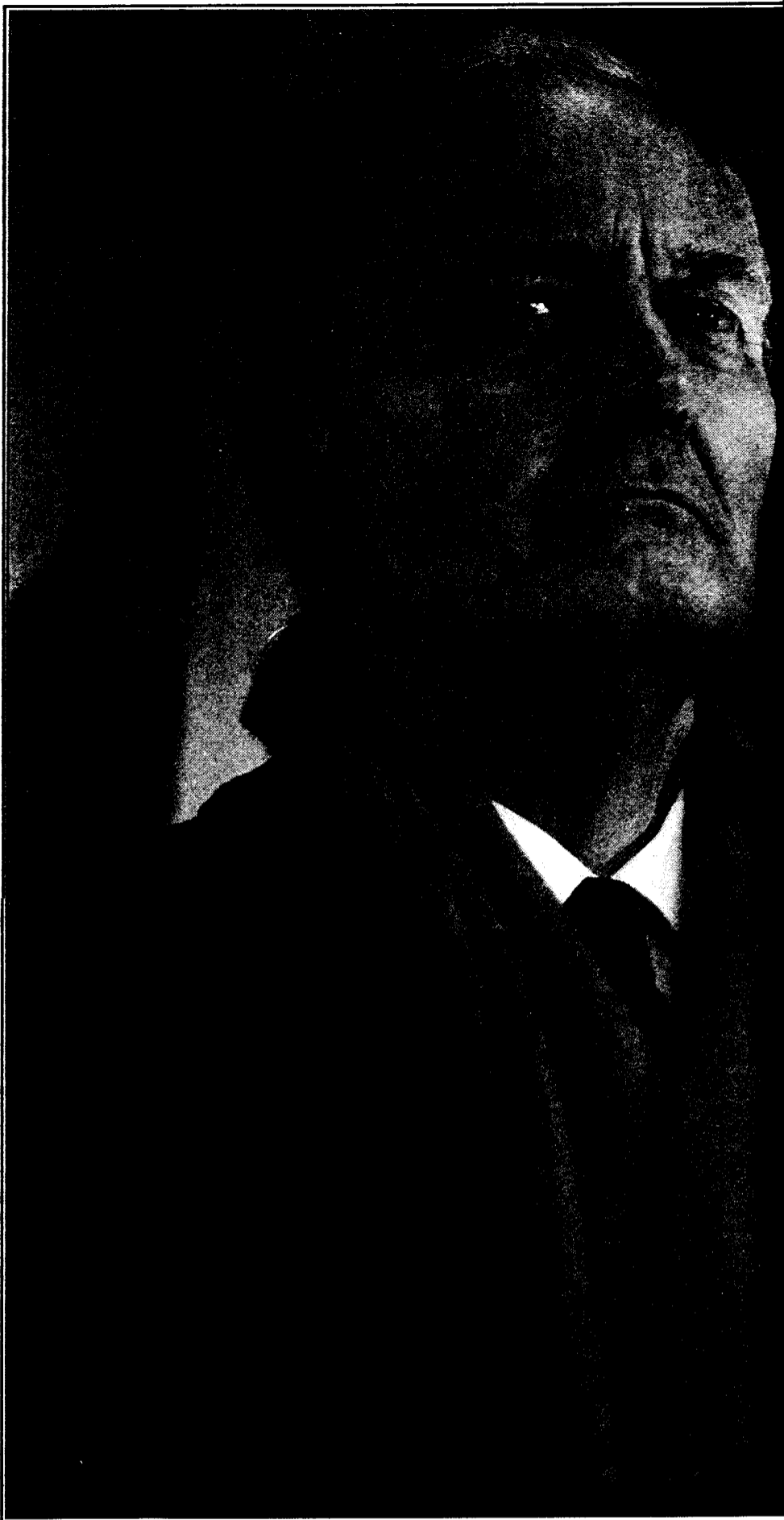
SO: How do you see events around the Maastricht Treaty evolving now?

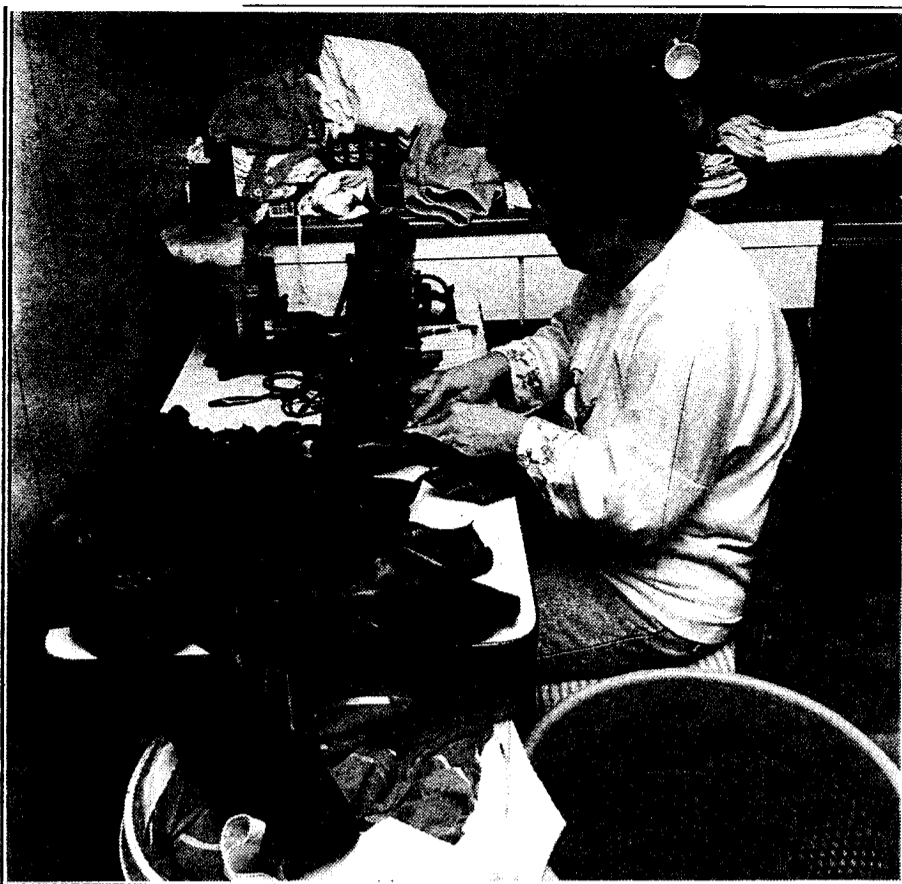
TB: I think that the Maastricht Treaty and those moves towards federalism are now a dead duck. I'm much less worried about it than I was. The Common Market was set up after the war to prop-up capitalism in Western Europe, NATO to defend capitalism in Western Europe at the time of the Cold War. The 'Russian threat' has disappeared.

But we are now seeing in Russia an attempt to apply capitalist forces having a catastrophic effect upon the standard of living of the Russian people. Yeltsin is a demagogue, a capitalist, a Thatcherite, even fascistic in what he's doing.

So people there, although quite properly they're not prepared to go back to the old system, must be thinking now quite carefully.

It's producing a disintegration. If you remove a socialist perspective and analysis from the political scene, then what happens is the vacuum left is filled by religious fundamentalism, nationalism, racism, anti-semitism, every sort of superstition and dangerous nonsense.





Sweatshop labour - already the plight of millions - could grow in post-Maastricht Europe

they've never liked the EC, but they were told by Kinnock they've got to live in the real world - I don't know what he would've said if he'd been in South Africa, would he have told Nelson Mandela 'now come on, you've got to live in the real world of apartheid?'

Kinnock bull-dozed the party into accepting the EC, but they don't really accept a federalised capitalist Europe.

Now we're out for another five years, and the pressures on all our trade union members to resist all these cuts and restrictions and restraints coming from membership of the ERM.

My fear is that if you go along this road, it'll either lead to people copping out completely or going nationalist. If the Italians or anyone else return to neo-fascism, they certainly shouldn't be able to control legislation governing Britain.

Of course we would have to work with the Italian working class movement, so underpinning this has got to be the closest association between the different socialist movements in Europe.

SO: Jacques Delors has argued for increased powers to the European Commission. Some socialists support this, and it is certainly a debate within the left, indeed within the Socialist Movement. How would you respond to this?

TB: I don't think that progress ever comes from above. I think this idea that a Good King or a Kind Commissioner will give you your rights, runs contrary to the whole history of working class struggle.

This is all about changing the balance of power in the British constitution, let alone the European one. It is about the erosion and destruction of our democracy. The people in the City of London and so on, have been so worried since the onrush of democracy, since the victory of the Suffragettes, universal suffrage and the welfare state, they are saying we'll pass power back to the Crown, through the Prime Minister, so that the Crown can make the laws of Brussels.

SO: With capital organising on an ever greater international level, and seeing the huge power the multinationals have over the world economy, not just the European, don't we need to promote new forms of international workers' organisations to fight this?

TB: The future of socialism has to be thought through very carefully now.

The collapse of the centralised Stalinist system showed that without the vital ingredient of democracy that project was an absolute dead end.

What the Common Market is about is the liberation of capital and the enslaving of labour. We have to have a programme for the control of capital and the liberation of labour - and that must be done on an international basis.

SO: You say the 'objective' conditions for socialism have never been riper, but that of course begs the question of the subjective mood. Given the last years have been a time of defeat, some sections of the left are drifting over to the idea that the class struggle is dead. Don't the recent events in Germany and Los Angeles show this to be totally untrue?

TB: The intellectuals who say all this, the professional pessimists, are themselves doing quite well out of the tax cuts that the Tories have made for the rich - and then they say the class struggle has gone! I don't want to sound cynical but all these leftists who write articles in papers and appear on TV to say this, there's something quite funny about it, it doesn't correspond.

Until we can root socialism back into ordinary peoples' experiences, represent and articulate their views, support their struggles, we can't really talk about having a base for socialism.

If you're not on a picket line, if you didn't support the miners' strike and you don't support struggles now, then your credentials as a representative of working people might be legitimately questioned. The same thing, of course, can be said of most of the trade union leaders, Bill Jordan and the rest.

There is an element among these pessimistic intellectuals who don't see any future, who see Britain condemned forever to being some sort of slum. And because it's difficult to mobilise people at this point in time, they conclude that they don't want to mobilise anyone to change things. But it's a complete illusion that you can bypass the working class, and just look to the EC.

You see socialism has become a rather refined intellectual thing. And what you have to do is root the debate on Europe in peoples' real experiences. That's the road to go down.

socialist OUTLOOK

Comment

No to the Maastricht road!

THE PLANS DECIDED at the Maastricht summit, for a single European currency and economic integration, affect the vital interests of the labour movement across Europe. On the face of it, one might conclude that European economic integration is no better or worse than nationally divided capitalism. But when the real meaning of Maastricht is analysed the picture is very different.

The plan for monetary union involves a 'harmonisation' of public spending deficits and interest rates. In effect public spending and economic growth will be determined by the most powerful economies, above all Germany.

Despite its difficulties over unification, Germany is still overwhelmingly the most powerful European economy. Low interest rates, low inflation rates and historically low public spending deficits have been the norm.

Economic integration means massive public spending cuts throughout the EC, and especially in Britain and Italy. Social benefits of all kinds will be wiped out in many countries.

A Europe dominated by its economic headland around Germany would wipe out huge swathes of capital on the 'periphery', destroying jobs and worsening living standards.

It is an illusion to imagine that deeper European unity is going to 'level up' living standards to German levels. Such illusions have been rampant in social democratic parties because of the EC's social policy.

Dead duck

But the image of Jacques Delors forcing European capitalists to give their workers decent wage rates and working conditions has been shown to be a dead duck in recent weeks. The EC will not even compel Britain to accept a 48 hour minimum week - more than a hundred years after workers won the 8-hour day in many countries!

There is nothing whatever democratic about the EC, nor will there be an economic harmonisation programme. The real power in the EC is the Council of Ministers, in other words the national governments meeting in secret.

The 'fastness Europe' being constructed will be a result of the Schengen Agreement, have harsh policies against immigrants and asylum seekers.

An economically integrated capitalist Europe is being carved up behind the backs of the people of Europe. But the labour movement cannot respond merely by defending 'national sovereignty' - the existing capitalist Europe. The choice between the Maastricht road and today's undemocratic and anti-working class structures should be rejected.

Economic recession, ecological crisis, the growth of racism and fascism and tens of millions unemployed require a Europe-wide answer. Such an answer, based on international planning and a new relationship with the third world, must be hammered out by a democratic debate accessible to the people of Europe, not just the multinationals and their political representatives.

That's why socialists should demand a *Constitutional Assembly of the Peoples of Europe*, the people themselves, not the bosses, must decide.

But on the immediate issue of how to oppose Maastricht, socialists should support those Labour MPs who went into the voting lobby against it. Maastricht is a road of lack of workers throughout Europe.

Revolt challenges dictatorship in Thailand

By Paul Clarke

THE SLAUGHTER of up to 100 pro-democracy demonstrators in Bangkok last week has cast a spotlight on the persistence of military rule behind the facade of 'democracy'.

The army carried out a bloodless coup in 1988, and promised a return to civilian rule. But the 22 March elections gave governmental power to political parties controlled by the army and, especially, the air force.

Their appointment of a non-elected prime minister, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, led to an explosion of anger amongst the middle class and workers of Bangkok.

Thailand has, except for short periods, been ruled by the military since 1932, when the army pushed aside the king and his immediate circle. Military rule reflected the social structure of the country - a small working class, and a weak middle class. National unity and cohesion was provided by the armed forces.

Electronics

But Thailand has been undergoing rapid social changes, becoming a centre for the assembly of electronic goods from foreign components. Its main exports are no longer agricultural goods like rice and teak, but computers and silicon chips.

These social changes have created a strong middle class, especially in the Bangkok area, which no longer sees why the corrupt military should hold all the reins of power.

The first major challenge to military rule came with the mass student mobilisations in 1973. At that time the King intervened prevent to an army massacre. But after three years, in 1976, the military finally cracked down with a bloody coup that killed hundreds.

Thousands of the student activists fled to the jungle to join the pro-Chinese Thai Communist Party (CPT) in guerilla warfare. But following the 1979 border war between Vietnam and China the CPT went into crisis. Its supply lines from China through Laos were blocked by the Vietnamese and their Laotian allies.

The students were disappointed by the ultra-authoritarian and crisis-ridden CPT. Gradually they drifted back to the towns. Dispersed, most of them dropped out of political activity.

With the decline of the CPT and the growth of the economy, civilian parties were allowed an increased political

role, until the military stormed back in 1988.

The March elections were carefully prepared by the military. Massive corruption was used to buy politicians - a transfer fee of 8 million baht, about £115,000, is thought to be the going rate to buy an MP.

The Chart Thai party was taken over by retired air Chief Marshal Somboon Rahong, a notorious crony of the vice-chair of the National Military Council, Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rojananin.

The Social Action Party leadership was taken over by a retired general, this time an aide of army commander, now prime minister, Suchinda Kraprayoon.

With two other parties effectively under military control, the military stacked the electoral cards. But in the capital Bangkok the Palang Dharma party, led by former army general Chamlong Srimuang, won a landslide. This party fought on an anti-corruption ticket against the pro-military parties.

Even if the elections had been an exercise in staged-managed 'democracy', with massive corruption and vote buying, the military might have got away with it.

But they made the fatal mistake of appointing Suchinda as prime minister, when he was not even an elected MP. The fact of continuing military rule was too open not to provoke opposition.

The 48-member cabinet announced on 17 April also contained a host of top generals and people in the pay of the armed forces. Chamlong Srimuang responded with mass rallies and a one-man hunger strike.

This set the scene for last week's rioting and the eventual bloody repression of the revolt. The dramatic intervention of the King to restrain the army has put Suchinda's future in doubt. It seems unlikely that the mass movement will be held back for long.

No left winger

It is unclear whether organised left wing forces have been involved in the revolt against military rule. Obviously Chamlong is nothing like left wing himself.

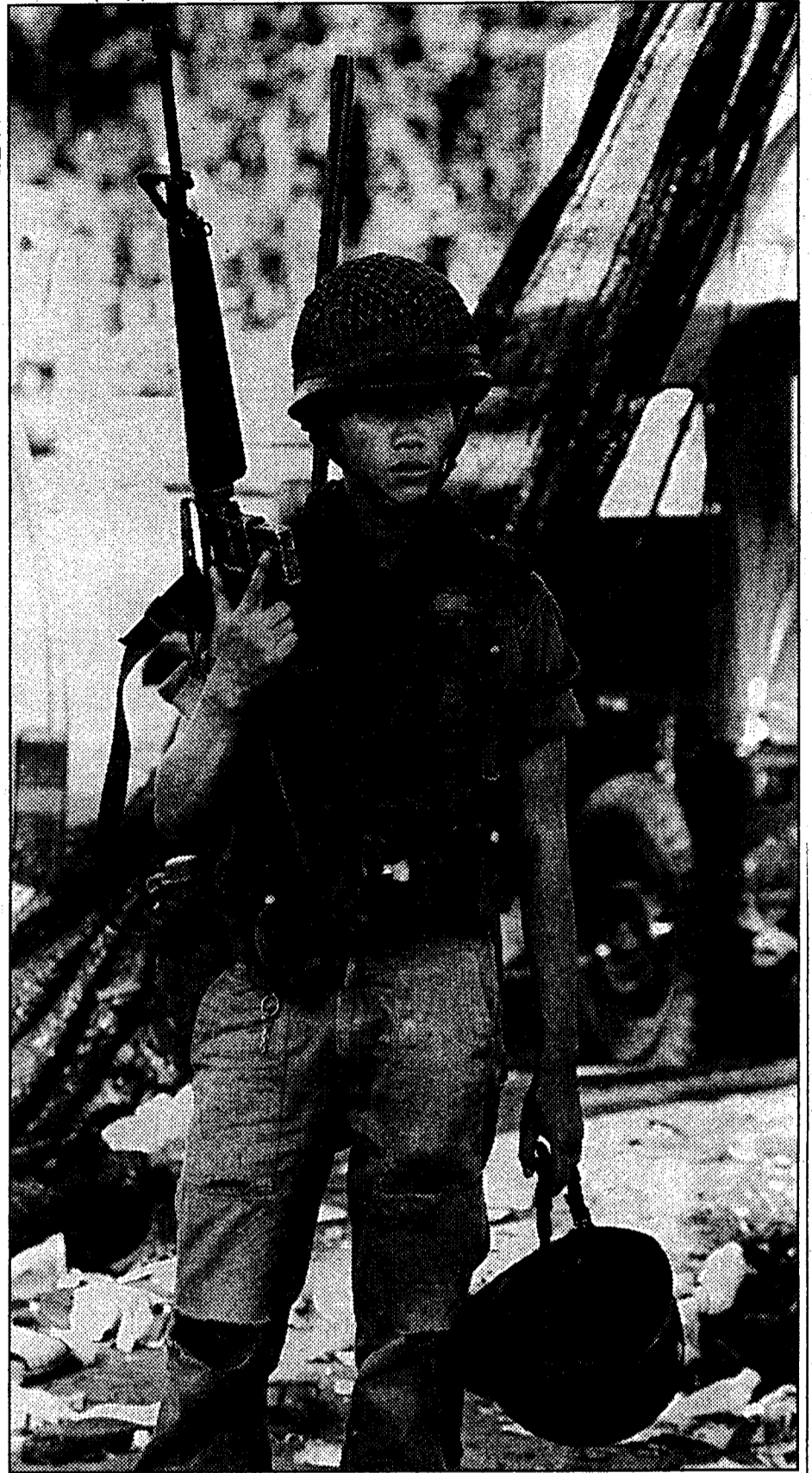
Although personally an ascetic, he represents the middle class which is mired in corruption and hungry for a share of power.

Indeed, the fight against military rule is precisely a campaign by the urban well-to-do to implant themselves in the power-structures, and against the monopoly of power by the officers of the military academy's 'Class 5'.

The social forces set in motion however go way beyond the political leaderships fighting for power.

The tragedy in the present situation is that after the debacle of the CPT, there is no viable mass left wing party capable of challenging for power.

But the destabilisation of the rule of the officers creates the best conditions for the creation of such a mass working class force.



Kagarlitsky article slams privatisation

WELL-KNOWN Russian socialist activist Boris Kagarlitsky used the opportunity of a guest column in the 7 May edition of Pravda to launch an all-out assault on the folly of attempting to privatise the economy.

Kagarlitsky argues that the ex-USSR is slipping into economic chaos not because the economic reforms are too slow, but because they are wrecking planning and the collectivised economy.

Advances

He says, 'It is possible to think that by destroying state enterprises, we are laying the foundations for a new, more advanced method of production (sounds familiar doesn't it?). But this is not so.'

The structure of large-scale production in the ex-USSR is

such that it wittingly presupposes state ownership. That is how it was created. Forms of ownership are quite closely linked with the organisation of production, and at times even with the technologies that are used.

Civilisation

'It is impossible to divide the state sector into a multitude of private enterprises without disbanding it. But having disbanded industry and the major agro-industrial complexes, it is impossible to avoid undermining the very foundations of modern industrial civilisation, the foundations of any modern development, be it capitalist or socialist.'

Kagarlitsky says that the term 'wreckers' for those opposing pro-capitalist economic reforms is a deliberate preparation for future repression. And he denounces efforts to establish

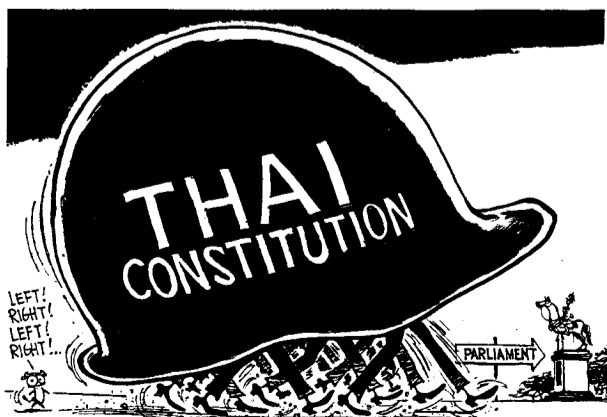
'collectives' which involve the workers in co-operatives, the better to blame them for future failures.

Turning to the fate of agriculture, Kagarlitsky notes that in the Baltic republics where de-collectivisation has proceeded apace, this has resulted in a catastrophic decline of production, not an increase or new prosperity for private farmers.

Capitulation

Gorbachev and Yeltsin, says Kagarlitsky, have carried out a shameful capitulation to world capitalism - and are portraying it as a victory.

As for the accusation that left-wing opponents of privatisation and capitalism are 'conservative elements' and 'enemies of democracy', Kagarlitsky says 'those who use such insults against others are really using them against themselves'.



Asking for the Earth – and getting no answers

'There are none so fit to break the chains as those who wear them' James Connolly, Irish socialist and republican, once said. Apply that wise adage to the Earth Summit and few, if any, of the Rio delegates would be allowed to attend. SAM INMAN argues that it is high time the left worked out *its* vision of a socialist strategy to defend the planet we live on.

IGNORE THE HYPE, this month's events in Rio are just a very expensive charade, masking the real causes and effects of the world's social and environmental crises.

If anything constructive comes out of the summit, we'll be seeing the fluttering of porcine wings in our parched polluted skies this summer.

No-one on the left should deny the enormity of the world's ecological problems. Over the past weeks the media have been full of stories about EC energy taxes, global warming, population control, deforestation, and 'third world' debt.

Anyone who saw John Pilger's excellent TV documentary in May – *War By Other Means* – knows ecological destruction in the developing 'third world' is related to the imperialist plundering of these countries' economies.

This is precisely the reason why the US, Japanese and EC governments have used their clout in the UN to water down the Earth Summit's agenda to the point where it is now virtually meaningless.

\$1.3 trillion

Many of these powerful governments are facing very difficult domestic problems. The last thing they need is to arrive on the world stage at Rio, ready to argue that 'third world' countries should stop cutting down their rainforests (which is just about the only ecological point of agreement between them) only to be reminded very public-



Bush: supporting the drive for megaprofits

ly of the \$1.3 trillion that has flowed from 'third world' to 'first' over the last ten years.

In Pilger's documentary, Susan George pointed out the strong correlation existing between those 'third world' countries that are the top deforesters, and those that are the top debtors.

Only a fraction of the forests are cleared by landless peasants seeking to scratch meagre short-term subsistence from poor-quality forest soils.

Most are cleared for industrial development, to build factories under transnational corporate control that utilise the cheap labour and natural resources of the 'third world'.

Productive agricultural land is also being swallowed up by the same process – the merciless drive for megaprofits.

No matter how 'green' they claim to be, this is the reality of World Bank/IMF/western government 'development strategies'.

Poverty

The consequences are there for everyone to see – massive poverty, population drift to overcrowded and under-resourced cities, homelessness, unemployment, drought, famine, disease, the list is endless.

There is only one answer to this – the complete and unconditional cancelling of the debt plus reparations for

the parasitic leeching of literally billions by the imperialists.

While many on the left could be accused of ignoring the problems before, the spectacular success of the British Green Party in the 1989 Euro-elections ensured that the politics of ecology were placed on the left's agenda.

There have been two false approaches on the left.

One is to deny that there is anything unecological about traditional socialist programmes for change. The left frequently criticises the Greens for arguing that there *are* limits to economic growth (and sometimes even consumerism).

The other is to condemn all previous socialist practice as *inherently* anti-ecological. This response is entirely within the framework of 'post-class' radical politics and dovetails neatly with the obsessional search, on the part of an increasing number of left intellectuals, to find a Red-Green-Democratic-Citizens'-Alternative.

Sustainable

These false approaches need to be combatted by outlining an *ecologically sustainable* socialist alternative.

While there may not be theoretical limits to economic production in an abstract sense – depending on the nature of that production – there are certainly real material limits to unfettered industrialisation.

There needs to be *massive* global investment made into detailed ecological research to ascertain exactly what these limits are. This information should be freely available for public scrutiny – an ecological as well as financial opening of the books.

Any sort of democratic ecological planning requires this sort of knowledge. But, of course, there are some things we know already.

We know, for example, that polluting 'greenhouse' gases – principally carbon dioxide, but also others – need to be massively cut back. Even the most radical of bourgeois proposals promise only to stabilise emissions at current levels.

Emission cutbacks need to go far deeper than this, though. But so far the loudest voices from the green movement only call for 'energy taxes' or for 'abolishing the private car'.

Socialists would be all in favour of heavily penalising industries that churned out enormous quantities of poison every year.

But all the proposals about 'energy taxes' that I've ever read about would result in the costs being handed on to

the vast majority of working class people – it's currently fashionable to call these 'consumers'.

Abolishing the car would not be a problem if we had an extensive, cheap, accessible and ecologically safe public transport system.

Utopian

But this we certainly do not have today. It is utopian to call for this now, and will certainly win green activists no friends among carworkers – whose jobs and livelihoods are already being massively decimated – unless a positive alternative is presented whereby no-one loses their means of survival.

What both of these examples show, and there are plenty more besides, is that you cannot successfully challenge the very nature of capitalist industrial production without at the same time offering those exploited by the system an alternative – you cannot talk about changing the system, without also looking at who owns and controls it.

It should be no surprise to anyone, that this Earth Summit will not produce anything other than yet more hot air. There is *no* solution to the world's enormous problems within a capitalist and imperialist framework.

In its ruthless and systematic drive for profit, 'free market' capitalism is waging war not only against the impoverished masses of the world but also against the complex ecological support system that humankind is an intricate part of.

Immediate measures

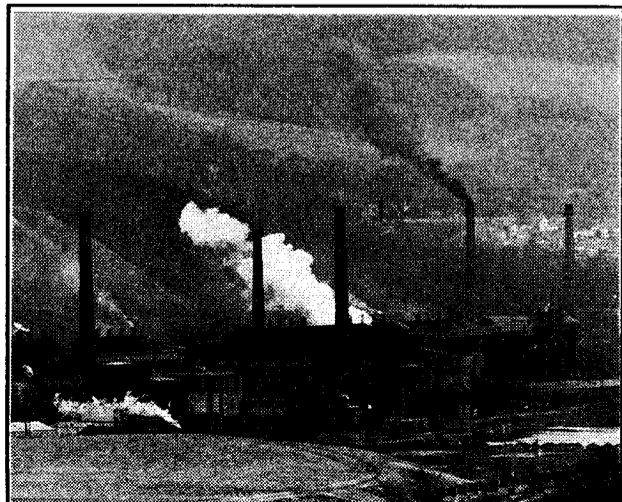
Even if we do not know all the answers to an ecologically-sustainable socialism, there are urgent measures which could be taken to immediately tackle global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer and world poverty.

The Earth Summit will not even try, because solving these problems hits immediately at the interests of world capitalism. Demanding action on these questions, and working out detailed proposals for a sustainable socialist society, must be put on the left's agenda.

■ *Socialist Outlook will carry further articles discussing the challenges and problems of green politics. What should socialists make of calls for population control? Is there a future for nuclear power? What sort of workers' control should there be for ecological sustainability? Watch out for future issues.*



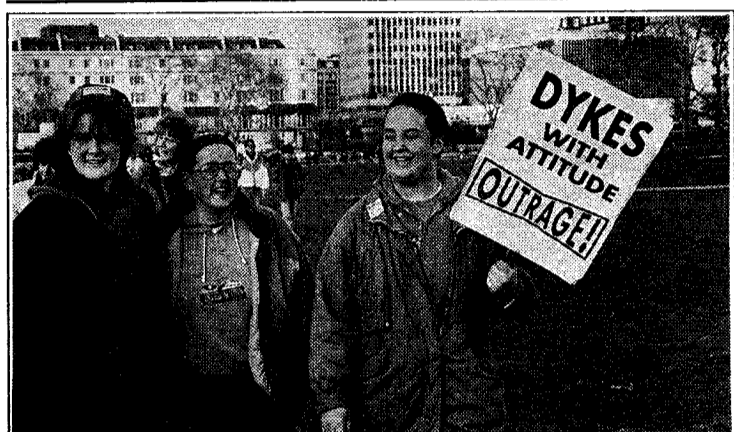
Cancelling the debt plus reparations is the only way to break the vicious circle of hunger and poverty



Stabilising pollution emissions at current levels is not enough

Feedback

We welcome letters on any subject but please keep them brief. Letters over 350 words will be cut. Send your letters to: **Socialist Outlook PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU**



How much does 'radical queerness' achieve? PHOTO: Paul Mattsson

Hands off Outrage!

One of the signs of retreat from class politics is a focus on individual issues rather than general questions. This has broadly been the case in times of retreat for the workers' movement since the decline of the Chartists in the 1850s.

Your article, or rather long complaint, about Outrage seems to be another example of this 130-year process (SO21). It is of course quite possible to doubt whether 'radical queerness' will really do much to achieve lesbian and gay liberation.

But for socialists the decision by Outrage to allow all-comers,

gay or straight, black or white to join the fight for such liberation on an equal footing should be welcomed.

Of course the oppressed should organise to fight their own oppression.

But that is very different from arguing, as you seem to, that the oppressed can gain liberation only by their own efforts. Socialists have no interest in splitting people into smaller and smaller groups to pursue individual issues. 'Only generalise' should remain our key slogan and task.

**Keith Flett
Tottenham**

Red lie machine

The Labour left paper *Socialist Organiser* has printed an article by its editor stating that Socialist Outlook thinks the votes of Northern Ireland Protestants should not be counted in elections. This is a lie. We are against racial or communal qualifications for the right to vote.

Alongside our co-thinkers in the Fourth International we campaign against qualifications like this in South Africa or the Israeli state. In Britain we are for the right of foreign nationals resident in Britain to vote in elections to legislative bodies.

John O'Mahony's slur was printed in *Socialist Organiser* 523, replying to a Socialist Outlook article by Paul Clarke. In his article Clarke pointed out that Gerry Adams lost his West Belfast seat because a number of loyalist voters had switched to the SDLP to defeat him.

O'Mahony says of our report '...it blamed Protestant workers who voted SDLP for Adams' defeat, thereby implicitly proclaiming that Protestant votes should not count, echoing the obscene

Catholic sectarianism of Sinn Fein'.

Looking over Clarke's article for themselves, readers will clearly see that this 'implication' which O'Mahony detects is a simple invention.

Maybe, as O'Mahony says, Socialist Outlook shares Sinn Fein's analysis of why Adams was defeated. But we do not share Sinn Fein's programme for Ireland.

Of course we are not pacifists and are for the self-defence of the oppressed Catholic community. But we think mass mobilisation in the national struggle and the fight for socialism is the way to peace and unity in Ireland, not one-sided reliance on armed struggle.

Until a few years ago *Socialist Organiser* carried a statement each week saying that it was for 'clarity in debate'. Now it seems to be turning into a 'red' lie machine, justifying its existence by lies about other left currents.

**Duncan Chapple
Manchester Socialist
Outlook**

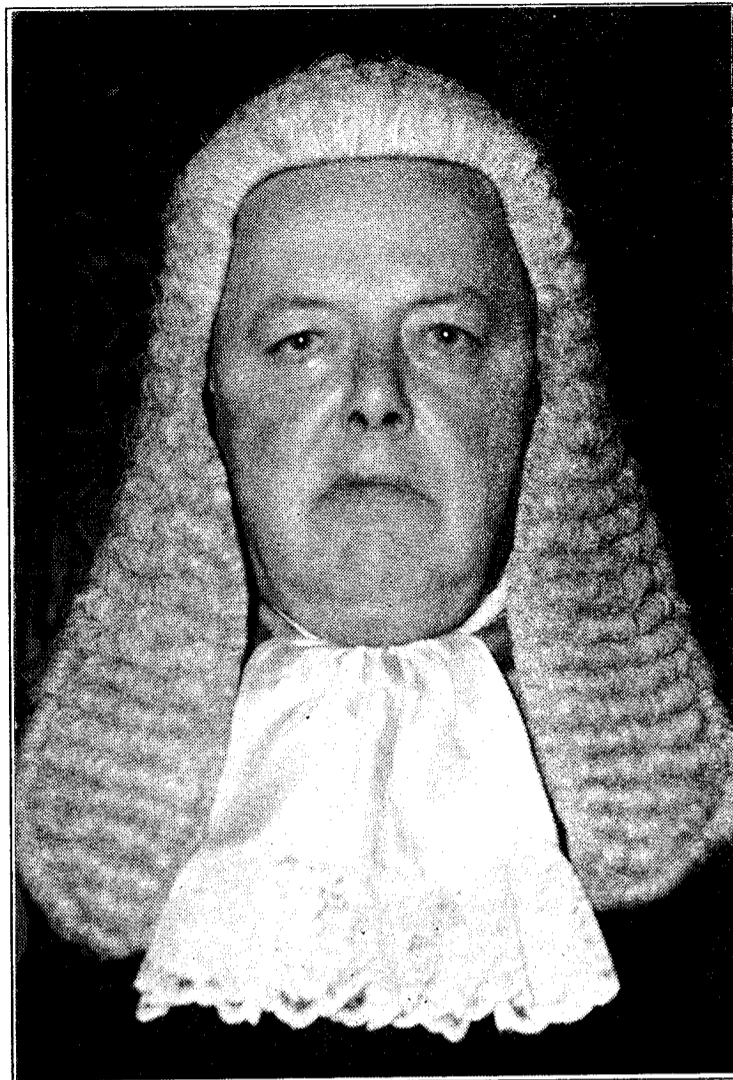
Socialist Organiser out-lefted by Ken?

I read with some interest Paul Clarke's article on *Socialist Organiser* in issue 21. Perhaps they have a hidden agenda? That is, that their real opposition to Ken Livingstone is that he is well to the left of them on Ireland (and on women, black people, Eastern Europe etc.)?

But I thought that the comparison with the International Spartacist tendency was a bit unfair... on the Sparts.

After all, the Sparts would use terms such as 'Anti-Bolshevik Ken Livingstone', followed up by a bizarre and exotic 'truthkit' - but even they haven't degenerated as far as *Socialist Organiser*.

**Mahon O'Dwyer
Catford**



Socialist Organiser wants judges to defend NUS democracy

Beyond left orthodoxy...

In his article on Socialist Organiser, Paul Clarke finds the thought of worked-out ideas dominating politics, even when the ideas offend the average left conventional wisdom, so alarming that he can interpret it only as 'eccentric', 'bizarre', 'sectarian' and 'loony'.

And if the alarming ideas are not visibly loony at all, he has to garble them so that they do seem weird.

Item: SO said it was 'good news' that Gerry Adams was defeated in the general election. Our argument? That the defeat was a blow to Sinn Fein's increasingly narrow and aggressive Catholic communalism.

Instead of dealing with this argument Clarke invents two quotes which do not appear in the article at all, that the result was a result of a 'rejection of sectarianism', and that the SDLP is 'the party of the Second International'.

In fact the SO article called the SDLP a bourgeois party. I hope that Clarke understands that we could welcome Adams' defeat without positively supporting the SDLP.

Item: SO attacks Ken Livingstone. But, says Clarke, 'someone on the left has been prepared to get up and fight back against the new realists', so we should 'stand behind Livingstone's campaign, while quite rightly making criticisms of his policies'.

Where are *Outlook's* criticisms? Where for that matter is Livingstone's 'fight' against new realism? His main pitch has been to attack John Smith's redistributive tax policies from the right.

Livingstone's candidacy is not that of left against right, but of a shyster trying to promote

himself as the new leader of the Labour left.

Item: SO students intend to take NUS to court over its abolition of Winter Conference.

Winter conference is crucial for spreading ideas and calling the NUS leaders to account. After a series of dirty tricks, the NUS leaders are now declaring Winter Conference 'abolished' on a 'presidential ruling', against a declaration by the previous conference that it has not been validly abolished.

But says Clarke we have to let the NUS leaders have their way in the name of 'independence of the NUS'. Independence from what? From their own conference?

Item: SO denounces 'the whole of the far left as irrationally bigoted against Israeli Jews for backing the Palestinian struggle'. Another Clarke-quote! We ourselves back the Palestinian struggle, but denounce those who want Is-

rael wiped off the map - and they are not the whole of the left.

Item: SO gives 'almost uncritical support to Boris Yeltsin'. Another Clarke-quote, although without quote marks in his article. We have called Yeltsin 'a Mussolini', 'a nationalist demagogue', an 'enforcer of market madness'. If anyone should give me almost uncritical support I hope they choose kinder words than that.

Item: SO is increasingly based on students. Untrue (compare our trade union coverage with *Outlook's*!). But SO does attract young people willing to challenge all received ideas. And the less young of us try to stay true to our ideas, instead of collapsing into weary alarm at all ideas beyond the bland, carefully-hedged reshapes of left orthodoxy.

**Martin Thomas
Socialist Organiser**

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Peru coup leaves workers in a squeeze

By Roland Wood

THE MILITARY coup unleashed in Peru last month followed years of increasing militarisation, beginning under former President Alan Garcia. Before April, 40 per cent of the country was already under military control or administration.

As soon as Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori came to power in July 1990, he imposed an austerity programme that was unprecedented even by Latin American standards.

The results have been bitter – the economy has plunged further into recession and shanty town markets were closed to try and prevent the spread of cholera. Millions have lost jobs, with no aid or benefits from the state.

This economic policy has been carried out in the shadow of the military. Like other Latin American countries during the period of so-called 'democratic opening' in the early 1980s, the military in Peru retained significant influence in the state apparatus.

Power

However, increasing power for the military has not translated itself into any greater efficiency in its protracted war with Sendero Luminoso or the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). The Peruvian Army is 50,000 strong compared with 5,000 Sendero and 1,000 MRTA.



An MRTA patrol in the upper Huallaga Valley

On the contrary, Sendero is apparently extending its influence, in particular in the capital Lima. Sendero believe they are nearing the threshold



Pro-Shining Path graffiti at a graveyard on Lima's outskirts

of the 'strategic offensive for taking power'.

Article 82 of the Peruvian Constitution states that the people have the right to rise up against an illegally constituted government – which is clearly the case with Fujimori's administration. Sendero have been milking the situation to gain international legitimacy.

With the subsequent rise in repression, Sendero are better placed than any other organisation to respond. Increasingly they are seen as the only effective form of opposition there is.

Initially Sendero's violence was directed against corrupt elements, families that had often ruthlessly dominated whole

communities for centuries. This won them support.

But with the spread of their activity, many on the Peruvian left began to characterise Sendero not so much as Maoist but as Pol Potist. The reason? Sendero began to attack the left as much as the right.

They have been responsible for the 'execution' of important trade union and peasant leaders. One of their most recent victims was a leading activist in the women's movement, Maria Elena Moyano.

Vicious

How is it that Sendero have been able to continue to grow despite their particularly vicious form of sectarianism?

They move into a community, kill the rich and the police, and then leave. The Army move in to find out who the leaders of this community are. They are killed, they disappear, or are put in prison.

They find out what families helped Sendero and then kill them. Then the Army leaves too. Sendero return to find out who informed on the people who

were killed. Those who are found guilty are then killed. Sendero then leave.

In these conditions the poor are squeezed between the army and Sendero. They are faced with a choice in a climate of fear. Further, membership or support for Sendero guarantees food every day.

Democratic workers and peasants organisations are squeezed in the same way. Where such organisations have developed, Sendero has been smashed.

This is what happened in the district of Puno, in the north-west of the country where Sendero first emerged. Where such organisations have not developed, Sendero has grown.

Significant sections of the Latin American left have for many years understood the centrality of democracy to the overall struggle for socialism.

But Sendero have quite consciously rejected this. They seek to be the only organisation leading the mass movement – whether the Peruvian masses like it or not.

Stalemate in South Africa

By Charlie van Gelderen

AFTER MONTHS of negotiations, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which is supposed to draw up a blueprint for the new 'democratic' South Africa, has reached deadlock.

Since the opening of CODESA II in February, there have been hundreds of debates and almost as many 'working groups'. The sticking point has always been the determination of De Klerk and the National Party that

'power sharing' does not mean the end of white dominance.

As Mercia Andrews, National Organiser of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), puts it 'negotiations are only an attempt by the South African government to draw the liberation movement into a deal that offers black people a limited form of democracy – in order to blunt the struggles of working people'.

Bottom line

In the all-white referendum last month, De Klerk laid down his 'bottom line' in a pamphlet signed jointly by him and the four National Party provincial leaders. This promised 'Constraints on the powers of future presidents to ensure that there would be no risk of a black dictator.'

This is what white voters expected when they voted 'yes' in the referendum.

Though De Klerk has made a few significant withdrawals since then, he has been adamant that South Africa will not end up with a Westminster-type democracy.

His negotiating team at CODESA insists on 'minority protections' and 'checks and balances' – constitutional



Mandela: pushing for 70 per cent

guarantees that blacks will not be able to do to whites what whites have done to blacks for 400 years.

Interim government

The main negotiating parties – the ANC and the government party – have agreed on the setting up of an interim government whose main function would be the drafting of a new constitution. The ANC has previously insisted this task should be the work of a constituent assembly elected by universal franchise.

At CODESA's most recent meet-

ing, the working groups entrusted with the arrangements to ensure free and fair elections agreed on a system where all parties would share executive control over the security forces, state spending and broadcasting.

A Transitional Executive Council would be set up parallel to standing government structures. All seemed clear for this to be in place by July and possibly elections by the end of the year. Then it all broke down!

The ANC insisted that after the elections the transitional council would decide on the clauses in a new

constitution on a two thirds majority.

The government and its allies – Inkatha and some of the 'homeland' leaders – wanted 75 per cent. Then the ANC offered a compromise on 70 per cent.

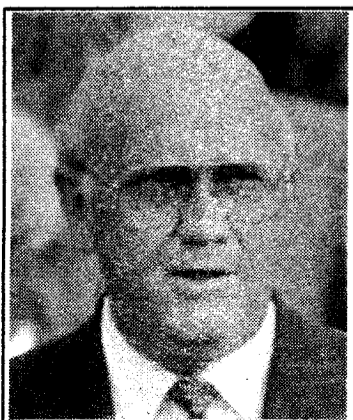
Impasse

But at the time of writing, that 5 per cent is a gap that they cannot bridge. The ANC would lose credibility if it gave in to the government's demands any more; and the government knows that it could never command much more than 25 per cent of the popular vote and would face the loss of the last vestiges of white rule.

While all these negotiations were going on, the massacres of blacks in the townships and on commuter trains have continued, with increasing proof of the involvement of the security forces.

The Johannesburg headquarters of the ANC is under heavily-armed guard, following threats from former agents of an undercover hit-squad, the Civil Cooperation Bureau.

In these conditions, a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems seems highly problematic – and that could be the understatement of the year.



De Klerk: stuck in a corner

CPSA leaders hope to do deal with Major

By Dave Osler

CPSA civil service union leaders last week effectively overturned a clear conference decision to recommend rejection of this year's 4.25 per cent plus performance pay offer, just seconds after losing the vote.

Union president Marion Chambers announced there would be an inquiry into the conduct of branches that tabled emergency resolutions opposing the package.

Delayed

This will delay implementation of the mandate until balloting, which began last Friday, is completed.

The manoeuvre was based on legal advice clearly prepared well in advance. Yet instead of ruling the resolutions out of order, a full two hour debate was held, and a statement made only after the outcome went the wrong way for the platform.

A protest meeting attended by over half of all delegates, including some appalled right-wingers, agreed to mount a united campaign for a 'no' vote.



But does John Major want to deal with them?

Some activists in the 125,000 strong union hope this marks a watershed for the notoriously factionally-divided CPSA.

Strike ballot

Two weeks ago the annual conference of the second-largest civil service union, NUCPS, recommended a strike ballot over a similar offer from the Treasury.

Both sets of proposals seek to massively extend performance pay, presently largely confined to civil servants at the

top of their grades. Increments would no longer be paid as of right.

Yet outgoing general secretary John Ellis hailed the package as 'a considerable achievement' and branded opponents as 'crackpot'.

His successor, right-winger Barry Reamsbottom, added 'We will do a deal with John Major. We are pragmatists and I respect the decision of the British people to re-elect him.'

Close result

The Broad Left candidate, Militant supporter John Macreadie, narrowly failed to take the post, polling a credible 10,561 votes to Reamsbottom's 13,649.

Peter Thomason of the Kinnockite Broad Left '84 got 3,918, although it is unclear how his backers would have divided had he not stood.

On the 26-seat executive, the self-proclaimed National Moderate Group took 20 places to Militant's three. The overall complexion of the leadership is thought to have shifted even further right.



Will he fight? Right wing UCW leader Alan Tuffin

Postal workers throw down the gauntlet

By Brian Soel

DELEGATES at the post office workers' union, UCW, conference told their leaders 'We are fed up with the executive telling us "The Post Office management won't like it".'

The Bournemouth conference voted time and again to ballot for industrial action, reflecting the frustration among postal workers at 'Business Development'. Delegates voted for action to defend victimised workers in east London, over 'team working' and 'team leaders', defending jobs and other issues.

The splitting up of the Post Office is clearly aimed at future privatisation, threatening job

losses on a similar scale to British Telecom. If management had hoped that by 'negotiating' a new industrial relations package they would weaken the UCW, this conference will come as a rude awakening.

The real test will now be whether the membership can make the right-wing UCW leaders carry out the conference decisions. Rank and file organisation is now necessary to organise in support of conference policies, against management attacks and to force the union executive into action.

Support shown to the victimised REM 11 workers in east London at the conference demonstrates that wide support exists for such a grouping.

Students mobilise for NUS democracy

By Duncan Chapple

STUDENT UNION activists are calling for an end to internal attacks on the democracy of the National Union of Students (NUS).

Rather than give a lead to student struggles, the Liberal and Labour-right leadership has tried to defend NUS from threatened government attacks by forcing through structural reforms of the union.

Winter conference

Leaders claim the central change, the abolition of NUS winter conference, has been agreed by the required two conferences.

But the required majority was only won after Labour officials added additional voting cards to the ballot box after the close of polling.

In response, *Left Unity*, the student group that reflects the positions of *Socialist Organiser*, has launched a campaign to take the union to court.

The 'Campaign for Democracy in NUS' will launch legal proceedings against the union to get a court order forcing NUS to convene the conference.

Socialist Organiser supporters have claimed that student unions often to their right - the University of London Union, Goldsmiths and Queen Mary Westfield - are backing the Campaign's court case.

They have made it clear that they do not rule out using court action in similar situations if they were to arise in the labour movement. Many activists feel that the NUS leadership has provoked the court action in order to divert student organi-



PHOTO: Andrew Wiant

Students must rely on their own strength, not the courts

sations from campaigns that might antagonise Tory leaders.

But court intervention in NUS would end its tradition of autonomy - that only elected student representatives should rule on its internal affairs and policies.

Pressure group

So activists have launched an ad hoc pressure group 'Defend Yourself! Defend Your Union!' (DY! DYU!) to oppose both the NUS bureaucracy's rigging of the conference and the dangerous court case.

The group has released a statement 'We are opposed to the undemocratic way in which the attempts at structural reform have been made in NUS. We are also opposed to

the court action being taken against NUS by the opponents of reform. We call for the resolution of the debate on reform to be carried out in an indisputably fair way - by NUS conference, according to NUS rules'.

NUS London activist Andrew Berry said '*Socialist Outlook* is helping to circulate this statement. NUS will not organise action while there is civil war between the right and a misguided layer of the left.'

'We do not blame *Socialist Organiser* for this court case.'

Blame

'The blame lies with the Labour-right leadership of the union. But *Socialist Organiser* are wrong to give up the auton-

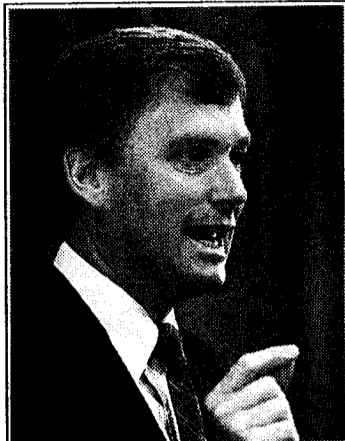
omy of NUS. The left can't defend NUS conference without winning the arguments in the colleges.'

Initial signatories to the appeal:

Manchester University: Doug Wong (Communications Officer); Bill Eyres (Academic Affairs Officer); Jamie Moore (Internals Officer elect); Duncan Chapple (Manchester Area NUS Council).

Anne Taylor (Campaigns Officer, Manchester Polytechnic); Anthony Gregory (President, University College Salford); Shelley Campbell (Campaigns Officer, University College Salford); Mike Brooks (President, Salford College of FE);

Quayle blames poor as thousands face jail



Blaming the soaps - Quayle

By Paul Clarke

TV HEADLINES were grabbed last week when US Vice-President Dan Quayle blamed the immorality of the poor for this month's riots in Los Angeles and other major cities.

But the real aftermath of the US riots is the wave of repression against 13,500 people arrested during the riots, and the hundreds who face deportation as 'illegal' immigrants.

Quayle made an idiot of himself by putting the blame for inner-city riots on single mothers and illegitimate children.

Bizarrely, he attacked the fictional TV character Murphy Brown, played by Candice Bergen, for having an illegitimate baby. Which led everyone to ask whether anti-abortion Quayle would advocate a fictional abortion instead.

But the joke is not so funny for those facing long terms of imprisonment. Details of the police repression during and in the aftermath of the riots are still emerging.

Apart from rioters, hundreds were arrested in Los Angeles and San Francisco simply for demonstrating against the Rodney King court verdict.

Open pens

In one San Francisco demonstration all 600 demonstrators were picked up. Hundreds were held for several days with little food and water in open pens.

Details of this repression appear in an article in US Marxist *Socialist Action* by student Jerry Caldwell, arrested with his mother near a demonstration. He says after his arrest:

'We were driven to a big warehouse on the waterfront. I could see hundreds of people who were already there enclosed in pens made out of police barricades.

'There were about 150 people in each. As we arrived we cheered and they cheered back...Then they threw us in a holding tank with only a cement floor, one bench and an exposed toilet. About 25 of us were packed on top of each other like sardines.

'I was lucky. My mother's boyfriend bailed us out at 4 am, by which time I had slept only 15 minutes.

'In 27 hours custody I received just an orange and a sandwich. Much of the time during the night it was freezing cold. We were lucky to get out early. Many people stayed there for days.'

Towards the end of the riots the Los Angeles police department started mass raids on apartment blocks occupied by Mexican-Americans. Hundreds now face deportation as 'illegals'.

Many of the arrested have been charged with crimes which carry very heavy prison sentences. A big defense campaign is under way. *Socialist Outlook* will be reporting in coming issues.

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Brits on the prowl in the six counties - paras are ready to lash out at anyone Irish

Brits' Coalisland rampage

Human rottweilers on the loose

John McNulty writes from Belfast

FOR MOST nationalist workers in the North, the only mystery about the '3 Para' terror campaign is that it has been reported in the press and on TV.

In an interview, Bernadette McAliskey gave the solution: where most troops confine their harassment to nationalist areas, the Paras' racism prevents them from distinguishing between any breed of 'paddy'.

Victims

The result is that their victims have included supporters of the collaborationist SDLP and the pro-British loyalists.

The area is a killing field where the British army have exercised their 'shoot to kill' policy to the full. A series of ambushes which have left no survivors have shown that the British have a far greater ca-

capacity for 'terrorism' than the IRA. Now the terror has moved on to attempt to break the will of the civilian population.

The membership of the Paras have embarked on a campaign of brutality that has turned the individual soldier into a human rottweiler.

Sealed off

Recent incidents have included the sealing off of Coalisland, rampaging through the town's bars.

After a fight between youths and troops, where the troops' guns were taken, the Paras moved in in a Rambo-like rampage. Shooting from hip, they mowed down four civilians.

All this has left the British in some difficulty. The old war cabinet of Peter Brooke as well as Michael Mates have shown that they oppose any cosmetic solution; the fact that they have supported the Paras shows

what sort of solution they have in mind.

The SDLP in Dublin has called for the Paras to be kept out of Coalisland, a nonsensical demand given that the Paras differ only in degree from other troops. Trade union leaders who regularly run around opposing IRA actions had nothing to say.

When Mates offered his support, he was aware that a number of Paras are on trial for shooting dead teenage joyriders.

Posters

For weeks afterwards, the soldiers' post has a poster outside with a picture of the bodies and the slogan 'Vauxhall Astra - made by robots, stopped by Paras'.

These mad dogs should be withdrawn from Ireland and disbanded. The rest of the British forces should follow in their wake. We have had two decades of this 'peacekeeping'. Enough is enough.

NUJ - a crisis set to run and run

By Patrick Baker, NUJ London Magazine

Defying all predictions that it couldn't make a worse mess of the union than the outgoing leadership, the National Union of Journalists' (NUJ) new executive has plunged the union into crisis once again.

The executive has ignored an overwhelming vote by the union's recent conference to reinstate the NUJ's financial controller, Daniel Stafford, at its first meeting. Attempts by the left to implement the conference policy were defeated by a slim margin.

Activists are unwilling to take the step that would really resolve the problem - to sack the acting General Secretary, Jake Ecclestone. Ecclestone was the mover behind the original sacking and has made it clear that he would not allow the conference decision to be implemented.

But sacking him would require a major campaign within the union, and

few activists have the stomach for it. The recent Steve Turner debacle, where sacking the ex-General Secretary cost the union in excess of £100,000, is fresh in people's minds.

Elections for the vacated post of NUJ General Secretary are currently in the pipeline. But the chances of victory for the left's candidate, Miles Barter, are unfortunately slim. The NUJ crisis looks set to run and run.

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socialist OUTLOOK

Milosevic prepares to destroy Sarajevo - as world looks on



Bosnia lacks big ex-patriate communities: but without voices raised, it could face a massacre

Bloodbath in Bosnia

For the past month, irregular Serbian forces, with the help of the Yugoslav army and airforce, have been tightening their grip on the Bosnian capital Sarajevo. The siege of the city is winding up to its inevitable climax - the final defeat of the Bosnian defenders, and the slaughter of many of the 20,000 innocent civilians trapped in the city.

The pillage and destruction of Bosnia is a slow-motion replay of the Serbian assault on Croatia; an attempt to seize as much territory as possible before the frontiers of the new Yugoslavia are drawn.

Civilians

The attack on Croatia concluded with the bloody mayhem in Vukovar, which fell after months of siege. Now the same fate awaits the civilian population in Sarajevo.

What is being played out is the last stage of the destruction of the old Yugoslavia and the creation of a new, highly unstable, state system in the area.

The new Yugoslavia is based on Serbia and Montenegro. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic is making sure that to this core area is added as much of Croatia and Bosnia as possible.

The bloodletting has provoked much outrage in the West about the evils of nationalism, and even talk of a 'Lebanisation' of Yugoslavia. But the conflict is not the result of irrational communalism or nationalism on all sides; it is a result of the very deliberate policies of the Milosevic leadership in Belgrade.

Crisis

As the Yugoslav economic crisis got worse in the 1980s, and conflicts between the different republics mounted, Milosevic played the nationalist card to keep his grip on power in Serbia. His first victims were the



Serbian-led Federal troops - now tightening the screw on Sarajevo

ethnic-Albanian population of Kosovo, brutally repressed in 1988 and 1989.

The attack on the people of Kosovo prepared the way for the later attacks on Slovenia and Croatia. In the subsequent war it is true that there were right-wing nationalist forces and atrocities on both sides.

Nationalism

But the responsibility for the conflict lies with Milosevic, and the Serbian ex-Communist politicians and generals who capitulated to his nationalist policies. And the overwhelming weight of the destruction and slaughter is down to the Serbian militias and Serbian-led army.

The fate of Bosnia is a particular tragedy because of the multi-ethnic make-up of the province, with Muslim, Croatian and Serbian populations living in harmony throughout the post-war period. That gain has been destroyed by the Milosevic forces.

The people of Sarajevo are not going to be saved by the United Nations or George Bush's 'new world order'. Bosnia, unlike Kuwait, doesn't have oil or big bank accounts in London and New York. Without voices being raised in protest from the outside, the fate of the people of Sarajevo is already sealed.