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Socialist OUTLOOK

RUSSIA

**CRISIS SPECIAL: 3
pages of coverage**

ON THE SPOT report from
MOSCOW - p4

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No. 50, October 9, 1993



SEIZING the moment, Boris Yeltsin (left) cracks down on isolated old-guard opponents: but who will be next?

DIKTATOR YELTSIN!

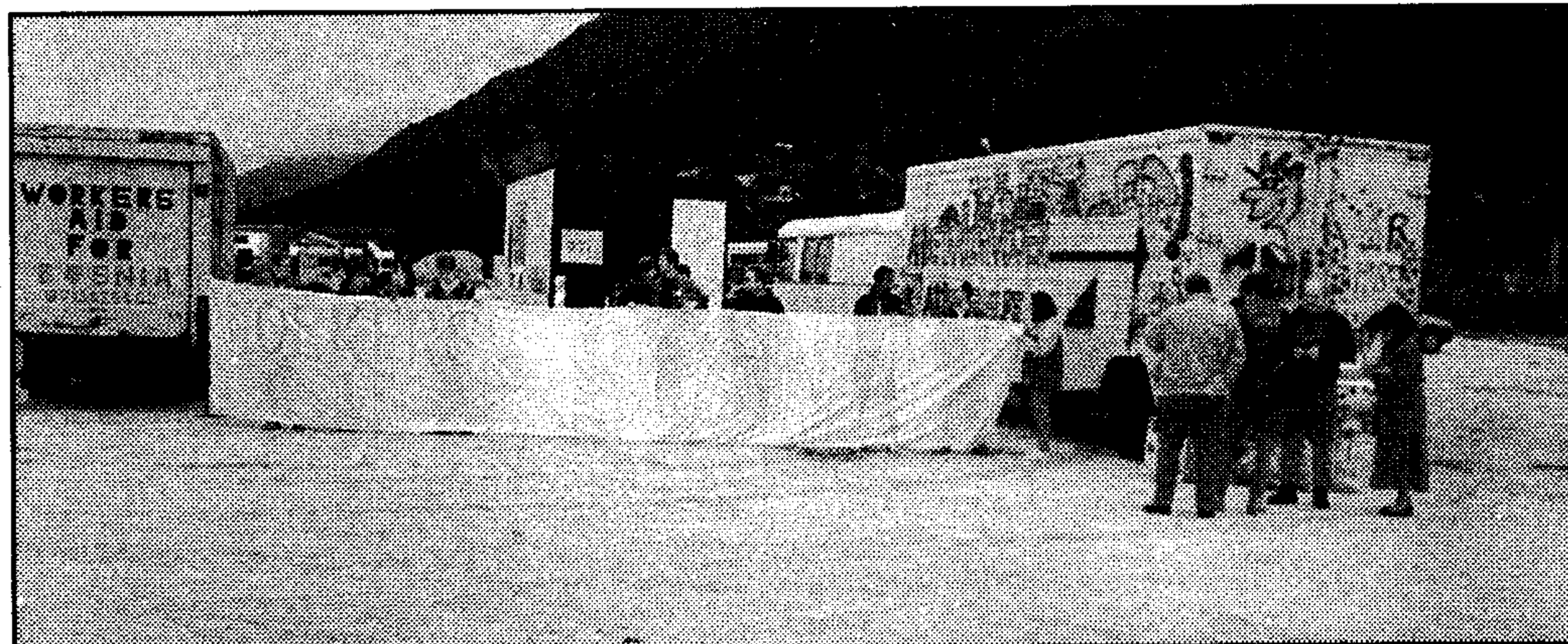
Bosnia Aid convoy a huge success throughout Europe

Internationalism delivers the goods

The WORKERS AID TO BOSNIA convoy is now in Slovenia. Aid has already been distributed to refugee camps in Croatia, as the convoy fights to get to Tuzla, a key centre of the Bosnian working class.

The worsening military situation means getting into Bosnia cannot be guaranteed. But whether or not the convoy gets into Bosnia now, or whether its food, clothing and medical equipment go to refugees or into Bosnia at a later date, the convoy is already a success. Socialist Outlook editorial board member ALAN THORNETT reports from the convoy.

AT THE TIME of writing the Workers Aid convoy is in Zagreb campaigning for UN troops (UNPROFOR) to provide protection through the front lines into Bosnia and on to Tuzla.



A campaign has been mounted throughout Europe - supported by British MPs, Euro-MPs, trade unions, and trade union federations in both France and Italy to urge UNPROFOR to give the convoy the necessary protection.

The convoy represents an important working class response to the plight of the Bosnian people and to genocide and 'ethnic cleansing' in the ex-Yugoslavia.

Refugee camps

Four lorry loads of aid have already been taken to three Bosnian refugee camps in Croatia and an orphanage for refugee children.

The response to the convoy in Britain is already known to readers of *Socialist Outlook* - more material aid was collected from Dundee to Dover than could be packed into the ten lorries which crossed the Channel. The response throughout Europe was similar.

In Paris the convoy was supported by the Mayor of Montrouil, a member of the French Communist Party, who provided facilities and accommodation.

Important sections of the CGT union federation supported the convoy, and a stall was provided at the French CP's *Humanité* fete.

From Paris the convoy split

into three to conduct extra meetings and campaigning. Between them they covered Nancy, Lille, Besancon, Strasbourg and Thionville in France; to Antwerp, Coutria, Charleroi and Liege in Belgium; Berlin, Oberhausen, Hanover, Hamburg and Munich in Germany, Vienna and Graz in Austria; Geneva and Basel in Switzerland and Brescia in Italy.

Publicity for the convoy in most countries was much better than we were able to achieve in Britain. In Belgium, for example, the progress of the convoy appeared on each hourly news broadcast.

By the time the convoy reached the ex-Yugoslavia it had almost doubled in size. Two heavy lorries joined from Sweden, two lorries from Belgium, two from Italy, one from Hungary and a mini-bus from Denmark.

Big sums of money had also been raised in the campaigns in the various countries; £4,000 in Italy, £11,000 in Sweden and £10,000 in Denmark - much of this from the labour movement.

Fourth International

In Europe sections and supporters of the Fourth International have been a key force for the convoy's campaign: The sections involved were the LCR in France, the Socialist Party in Sweden (working together with the Syndicalist Union, which has 15,000 members and provided the bulk of the aid), the Workers Socialist Party in Belgium, the Socialist Workers Party in Denmark, and the Bandiera Rossa current inside the Refoundation Communists in Italy. In Germany support was also organised through supporters of the FI.

The first base in ex-Yugoslavia was established in Jesenice in Slovenia by International

Workers Aid. It could not have been better placed. Jesenice is a small town with a big steel plant (threatened with closure), a strong trade union movement and an 80 per cent Bosnian population.

The local unions could hardly have given the convoy more support, providing an office, phone and a fax and a warehouse for the surplus aid.

The president of the steel union addressed the convoy and many of the steel workers came to meet us. The local media gave the convoy wide coverage.

Contact was made in Zagreb with the biggest independent trade union in Croatia - the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia - with 900,000 members covering a range of industries including coal mining.

A delegation from the convoy met Jasna Petrovic, the coordinator of the union's International Department, and others from the union's leadership.

Backing Bosnia

Remarkably (even though the majority of their delegation were Serbs) the union supports the Bosnian people, even to the extent of calling the lifting of the arms embargo.

They run a programme getting aid to refugees on a multi-ethnic basis. They are fighting the Croatian government over the introduction of anti-union laws.

As with the unions in Jesenice, they gave the convoy maximum support. Among other things, they got the convoy access to a meeting with both the Croatian and Bosnian authorities at foreign ministry level to discuss safe passage through the war-zones to Tuzla.

At the same time a delegation from the convoy then went to

Split, half way down the Adriatic coast, and partly isolated by military action. There we met an Italian convoy of 86 vehicles which has been held up for six months trying to get through to Bosnia.

Its problems were different to ours because the drivers are Bosnian - a major additional reason why they were not being let through.

The drivers are trapped in a car park they are unable to leave, sitting under a notice saying 'The World Forgot Us'. We were able to tell them that we had arranged for their plight to be raised at our meeting with the Bosnian and Croatian authorities.

With no progress in the fight to make UNPROFOR guard the convoy, a protest meeting and a press conference were held last Friday outside the UN HQ in Zagreb.

If this is not successful in persuading the authorities to escort the convoy, there are important decisions to make.

Positive options

Even if the military situation still makes a journey to Tuzla impossible there are several other positive options. More aid could be taken to Bosnian refugee camps in Croatia which desperately need it; or aid could be taken to Bosnian towns in Croatian-occupied Bosnia, which are a desperate situation; or it could be put in the warehouses of the Tuzla Centre in Zagreb and taken in as soon as there is an opening.

These options, although they would fall short of the original objective, fully reflect the objectives of the campaign which is to take aid to Bosnian victims of the war, as an act of political solidarity with the Bosnian people from the working class of Europe.

This has already been achieved in a way far more successful than could have been envisaged. In particular the convoy has made much stronger links with the unions in the ex-Yugoslavia than anyone could have expected.

The challenge now is to consolidate this campaign into an ongoing solidarity campaign on a European level, with the working class of Bosnia and the workers' organisations throughout ex-Yugoslavia.

BOSNIA CONVOY

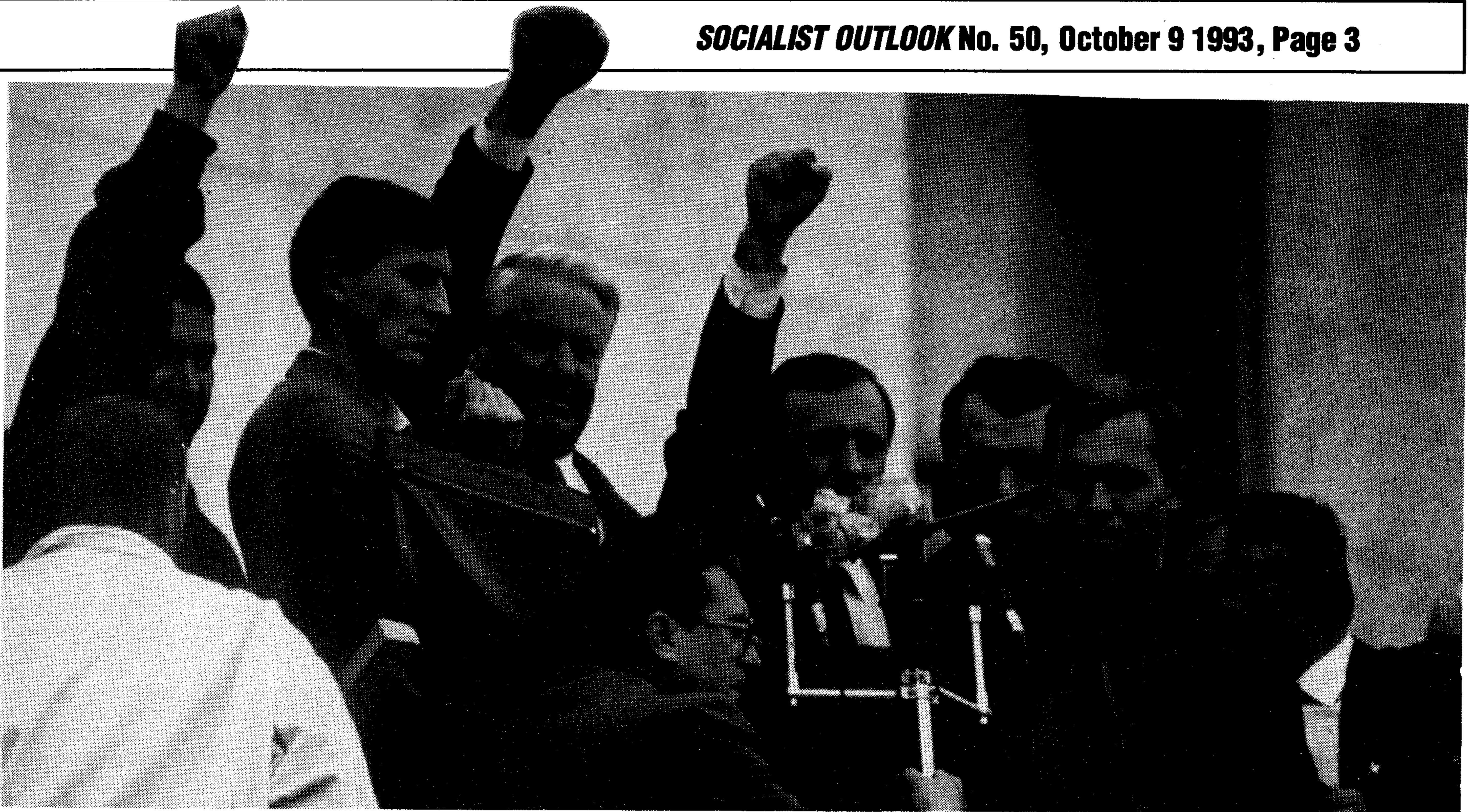
Workers Aid to Bosnia

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday 30 October 11am

Manchester Town Hall

All supporters of the campaign are welcome to attend: £5 waged/ £3 concessions



Yeltsin shoots down democracy

Socialist
OUTLOOK

THE DRAMATIC events in Russia have resulted in a victory for the most ruthless free-market proponents of capitalist restoration and will ensure a deepening attack on the (very limited) democratic gains of glasnost.

The half-cock attempted putsch by the parliamentary forces handed Yeltsin and his most uncompromising supporters like Gaidar victory on a plate. Far from being a serious attempt at taking power, Rutskoi's orders to supporters to seize government buildings was an act of desperation.

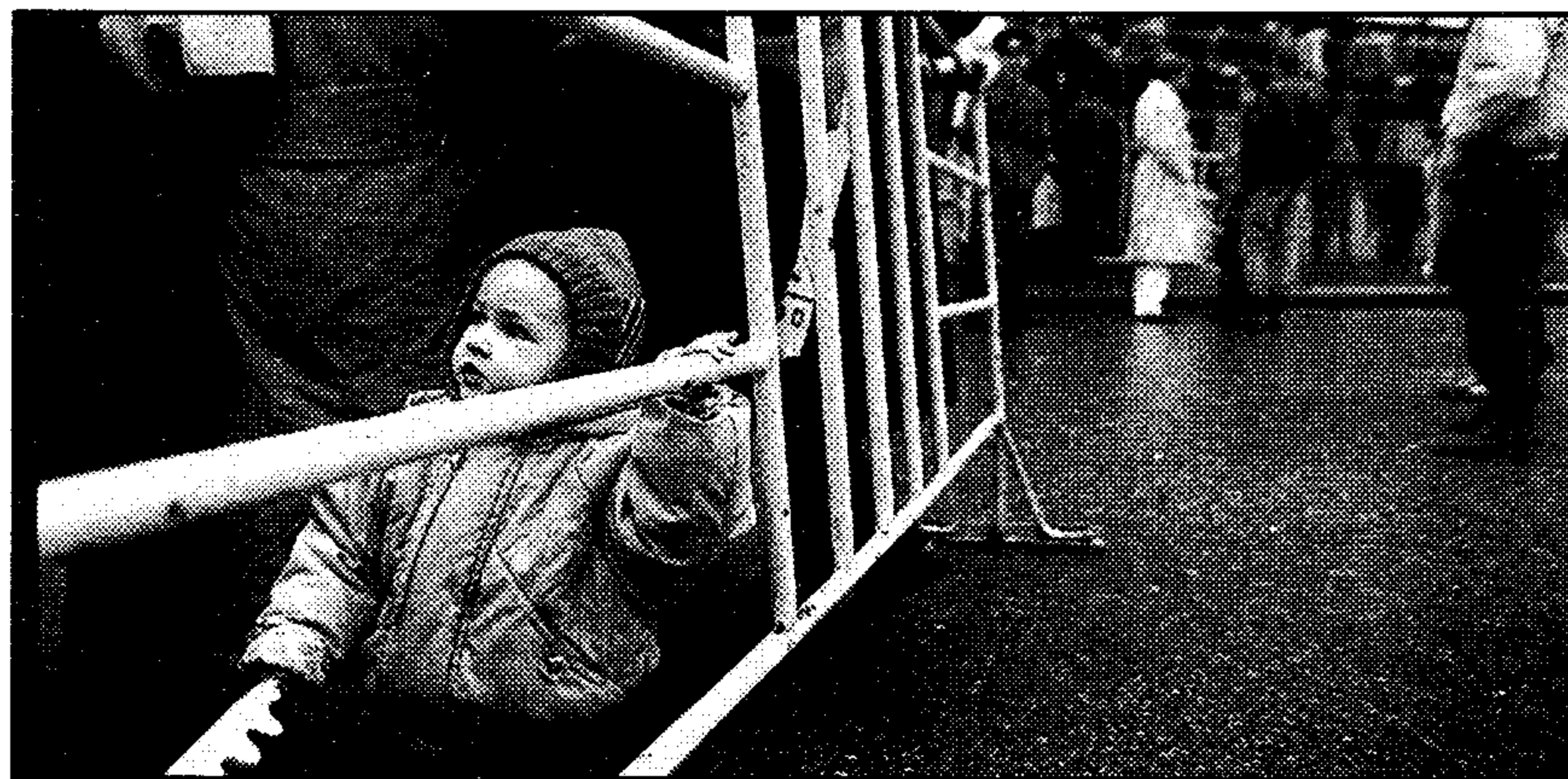
Yeltsin's decision to close down parliament was an open step towards instituting dictatorial power. The promise to hold parliamentary elections in December would not have stemmed the trend towards an ever-greater concentration of power in presidential hands.

The underlying reason for the drift towards an authoritarian state, now dramatically accelerated, is obvious; divisions inside the bureaucracy and resistance from the working class double the already-difficult task of imposing free-market, pro-capitalist reforms.

In Russia and beyond there has been growing talk of a 'Chilean solution' - the need for harsh, semi-military government to crush all resistance to the drive to restore capitalism.

As reported by our Moscow correspondent on page 4, the whole of the Russian left opposed Yeltsin's anti-parliamentary coup. As an elementary step to oppose dictatorship this was correct; but any political support to Yeltsin's main opponents, people like Rutskoi and Khasbulatov, would have been misplaced.

The political alliance of semi-Stalinists and nationalists which backed the parliamentary leaders represents not a working class alternative, but sections of the industrial and military bureaucracy. These people are not principled opponents of capitalist restoration, but are worried about its pace and impact on their



bureaucratic role and privileges.

Doubtless a military victory for Rutskoi would have slowed down the pace of attempted pro-market reform, but not blocked it altogether. But there is no guarantee that it would have led, eventually, to a more democratic outcome. The Stalinist and nationalist forces are deeply mired in authoritarianism and vicious opponents of working class self-organisation and workers power.

But Rutskoi did not win and indeed could not have won. The reason can be simply seen by comparing the Rutskoi grab for power with the Romanian revolution four years ago. Yeltsin could easily win, as Causcescu could not, because the armed insurgents in Moscow were backed by perhaps ten thousand demon-

strators, whereas the Bucharest insurgents were backed by millions.

It is not armed groups that make real revolutions but armed groups supported by insurrectionary general strikes, by really mass demonstrations, by the actions of millions. But the overwhelming majority of the working class, in Moscow as well as in the rest of Russia, were passive spectators of these events.

The lack of involvement of most workers represented a sober estimate of reality on their part. While disillusionment with Yeltsin is widespread, very few had any confidence in the parliamentary leaders. As Colin Mead and Pohl Funders-Larsen explain elsewhere in this issue, the parliamentary leaders had in the past themselves been complicit with market reforms which have dramatically worsened working class living standards, and made alliances with Yeltsin when it suited their careers.

So the mass of workers ignored the calls by the various union federations for strikes; and while thousands turned up outside the White House to protest Yeltsin's actions, they were a minority - and not even all of these protesters supported Rutskoi and Khasbulatov.

Doubtless there was some passive support for the rebels, but all reports talk of this being concentrated among pensioners, people with a strong nostalgia for the Stalinist past and for the triumphant

Great Russian nationalism of the Stalinist period.

The passivity of the workers, and the deepening attack on democracy represented by the outcome of these bloody events, tragically highlights the weakness of independent workers self-organisation and the political organisation of the left.

Up till now the only substantial 'left' organisation has been grouped around *Trudovia Rossia* ('Labour Russia'), dominated by the Stalinist Communist Workers Party of Russia, which has tens of thousands of members, and by hard-line nationalist forces.

Weak unions

Groups like the Party of Labour and the smaller Marxist and anarchist groups have a few hundred supporters, if that, and the trade unions are very weak. There is a long, hard struggle ahead to build a real working class alternative. Such an alternative will not prepare the basis for a really mass opposition to capitalist restoration if it fails to break with the Stalinist past.

The immediate future for Russia is grim. The road is open to dictatorial rule and to further misery for tens of millions as pro-capitalist reforms further deepen unemployment. The danger of the break-up of Russia has been brought nearer.

But there is one qualification to this grim scenario which has all the Western leaders quaking, even as they hand out hypocritical plaudits to the 'democrat' Yeltsin. For Yeltsin has conquered in a conflict in which the working class was not engaged, in which the working class had no confidence in his opponents, and in which its mighty power did not move. In this sense, the early panic in the confrontation with Rutskoi revealed Yeltsin's weakness not his strength.

The gigantic strength of the Russian working class has yet to be brought into play - when it is Yeltsin will be revealed for what he is - a temporary and weak figure.

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EDITORIAL

New bid to force through
'market' reforms

Now it's Yeltsin's coup

By Colin Meade

ON SEPTEMBER 21 Russia's 'pro-democracy' president Boris Yeltsin dissolved parliament and announced elections for December. Only the lower house of parliament is to be re-elected, while there will be no presidential elections until next summer.

Clearly, Yeltsin's aim is to use his powers over the media and his presidential position to ensure a docile legislature to push a stepped-up programme of free-market economic reforms. This will further worsen the already grave material situation of the Russian working class.

Thus far, the armed forces have stayed loyal to Yeltsin and there is no sign of mass opposition to his putsch despite dramatic appeals from the president's opponents, headed by former Vice-President and Afghan war veteran Alexander Rutskoi.

Western leaders, including US president Bill Clinton, have greeted Yeltsin's coup. They see it, or *claim* to see it, as a definitive step towards fulfilling the promise of Yeltsin's defeat of the coup attempt of August 1991.

Western democracy

This, commentators believe, would open the way to a rapid move to a Western-style liberal democratic system and would also mean 'an end to equivocation about moving towards a market system and privatising the economy.' And this in turn would give a big boost to living standards and boost to western capitalism.

Unfortunately the whole scenario is a fairy-tale, excluded by the real nature of western capitalism and the actual and potential place of the former Soviet bloc countries in the world market.

Writing in Moscow News



(22 August) Lilya Shetsova sees Yeltsin's 1991 victory as 'signalling the passage of power from one group of the nomenklatura to another'. The 'nomenklatura' were the holders of posts considered sufficiently sensitive or responsible under the Stalinist system to require political vetting and selection by higher party bodies.

Collapse

More precisely, Yeltsin's assumption of power marked the moment in the crisis of the system established by Stalin when the political unity of purpose of the nomenklatura collapsed in the face of economic failure, mass discontent and the temptations of pursuing individual wealth through access to the world market.

Thus one of Yeltsin's key initial measures was to outlaw the Communist Party, the forum through which the nomenklatura had collectively decided the fate of the Soviet Union.

However, the loss of unity did not abolish the rule of the nomenklatura. Instead each of its members and groups is striving to improve its own position using all the powers and privileges inherited from the past.

Enrichment does not pass

through productive investment but through corruption, stealing and the use of monopoly control of vital resources. This process involves the opening up to the outside world and maintaining control of Russian productive forces in Russian hands. Thus nationalism is an integral part of the new ideological panorama.

From the viewpoint of economic development, 'nomenklatura capitalism' is a disaster. As the president of the Russian parliament Khasbulatov has written:

'The pyramid of power controlled by the state-party was a terrible thing. But one way or another it managed to govern. Nothing has replaced the

budget and the central bank has in its hand very powerful and concrete means to make decisions'.

At the heart of this lament is the fact that the bank and the parliament outwit any attempt to control inflation - running at an estimated 1000 per cent in 1993 - by dishing out funds to any institutional claimant.

The effect of this combination of the 'worst of two worlds' can be seen in the energy sector. Plans to raise oil prices founder on the needs of enterprises for cheap fuel, while some of the recipients of this cheap fuel sell it on at world market prices - and salt the proceeds away in foreign bank accounts.

Meanwhile domestic production of oil had fallen from 516m tons in 1990 to an estimated 351m this year.

Production has been plummeting for several years, inflation is thundering ahead and living standards for the majority are sliding.

Social services are in crisis. Foreign investors meanwhile complain about the absence of the 'right conditions' for investment in Russia and often insist that their operations are underwritten by their own governments.

They too intend to pick what they can off the bones of the Soviet Union without risking their shirts.

It would be a tragedy if the left decided that defence of the rights of the non-Russian peoples of the former USSR can be sacrificed in the name of the 'higher goal' of defeating Yeltsin.

100,000 or so links of this mechanism's chain from the central Committee to the oblast committee, from the factory to the collective farm.'

Russian finance minister Boris Fedorov has complained that:

'I basically do not have a single instrument of economic policy. The parliament makes the



Despite the enthusiasm of Western politicians for Yeltsin, business analysts see changes at the top as of only minor importance to investment attitudes.

Not surprisingly the notion of 'strong government' is attracting more and more support in Russia. But any state resting on the shoulders of the predatory ruling layers - whether headed by Yeltsin, Rutskoi or another - will be an instrument for their aggrandizement.

The left have reacted to Yeltsin's coup with indignation and contempt for the free marketeers who identify democracy with their own right to rule by decree. However, the principle that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend', applied to the likes of Khasbulatov and Rutskoi, will be a poor guide if it goes beyond temporary agreement to denounce Yeltsin's coup.

Careers

All the parliamentary leaders have teamed up with Yeltsin when it suited their own careers; and Yeltsin's leading critics are tainted with aggressive Russian nationalism.

It would be a tragedy if the left decided that defence of the rights of the non-Russian peoples of the former USSR can be sacrificed in the name of the 'higher goal' of defeating Yeltsin. Such cynicism lies at the heart of the 'crisis of socialism'.

At the turn of the century Russia's Marxists debated how their country could achieve the 'tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution', which I take to include stable constitutional government and the rule of law. Changes at this level were seen as inseparable from deep-going social and economic change.

Trotsky put forward the idea that the only class capable of leading modernisation in Russia was the working class - and only then with the conscious support of the workers' movement in the advanced countries. This insight retains its validity today: the problem is to put some flesh on its bones.

The Dictatorship of the 'Democrats'

Pohl Funders-Larsen in Moscow describes the events leading to the bloody battles on 3/4 October.

YELTSIN'S dissolution of the Russian parliament was the coup which his supporters had been calling for since August 1991, and which he only just stopped short of launching in March this year.

The Yeltsenites claimed that 'Presidential rule' would be terminated with elections to a new two-chamber parliament in December. But as the centrist daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* remarked in an editorial on 23 September '...it is only in fairy tales that democracy returns after three months of de facto dictatorship. If you dissolve one parliament, what is to stop you dissolving another?'

Yeltsin, before last Sunday's events, tried to maintain a facade of legality, as large-scale repression initiated by him would have imperilled western support. But censorship is implemented ruthlessly in broadcasting, which has reverted to its pre-glasnost state, and one of the leading opposition papers *Rossiskaya Gazeta* has been already closed down.

Shake-up

Even before the bloody clashes last Sunday and Monday a major shake-up of the apparatus was underway, as functionaries and elected bodies loyal to parliament were suspended and replaced.

The Federation of Independent Russian Trade Unions had already come under attack. Its chairman Igor Klochkov told the newspaper *Trud* on 23 September: 'We have called on the Moscow trade unions to organise actions of protest, including strikes. It is necessary to stop the enterprises and take to the streets to defend the White House. Following this statement the phones of the trade unions were cut, and the government was rumoured to be preparing a decree on a six-month moratorium on strikes and trade union activities.'

The failed anti-Yeltsin *putsch* by the pro-Rutskoi forces has given Yeltsin a golden opportunity to push ahead with further repression and purge of his opponents. But before, his position did not seem so secure, and repression and authoritarian rule alone will not stabilise the situation.

The economic reform is in tatters. A continuing collapse in production, skyrocketing inflation at 30 per cent a month and a budget deficit far exceeding IMF targets bring daily hardship and misery to the vast majority of the population.

Politically, neither the more-or-less impromptu 'Constitutional Assembly' convened by Yeltsin in June and July, nor attempts to win over regional elites through a 'Federation Council' had yielded any clear results.

It was against this background of economic and political failure that Yeltsin decided to dissolve the parliament. But no big political victory gained through vanquishing the parliamentary *putsch*



can turn the bureaucratic command economy into a perfect Hobbesian 'free market' overnight; nor can it instantly transform the deeply factionalised bureaucratic state apparatus into a workable bourgeois state.

It is these basic contradictions which underlay the failure of the 'Democrats' to utilise the breakthrough they made in August 1991 to achieve decisive results for pro-market reforms. These contradictions make themselves felt at the heart of the of the Yeltsenite alliance.

Conflict

Before the fighting there was inside the government a rapidly developing conflict between the 'conciliationists' (including prime minister Chernomyroin and Yeltsin's advisor on regional affairs Serge Shakhrai) who wanted a compromise with the regions, the industrialists and the moderate parliamentarists; and on the other hand the die-hard monetarists (including deputy prime minister Gaidar and finance minister Fyodorov).

The latter group will almost certainly have the upper hand now. They want a wage freeze in state industry, a cut in social spending and subsidies, and harshly authoritarian political measures.

The various pro-liberal currents have been able to use the presidency as a rallying point and Bonapartist bulwark for their interests. But the opposition had not

succeeded in developing any coherent organisational alternative or political programme which could appeal to broad layers of working people.

It remains divided into dozens of endlessly bickering parliamentary factions, fronts and parties, many of which come across as dubious in their commitment to democracy, or harbour a strong nostalgia for the Soviet past and have made no break with the logic, or even the structures, of the bureaucratic apparatus.

Moreover the credentials of the parliamentary alliance in resisting the liberal reform were hardly impressive - after all they had endorsed Yeltsin and his policies for a long period, opened the flood-gates for the neo-liberal Gaidar reforms in the autumn of 1992 and enthusiastically accepted Cherno Myroin, now firmly behind Yeltsin, as prime minister less than a year ago.

It was no surprise then that this opposition was incapable of waging a consistent fight against Yeltsin, until the military adventure last Sunday and Monday.

Determined

The trade unions acted in a somewhat more coherent and determined fashion; but they were unable to reach their membership base and motivate it for political action.

Meanwhile the whole left wing, from

the Congress of Democratic Left Forces and the Party of Labour, to the various small anarchist and marxist groups, came out against Yeltsin. But their acute lack of organisational resources forced them to structure most of their activity either through parliament of the trade unions.

Many Moscow leftwingers participated actively in the pickets around the White House, where tens of thousands of people gathered every day to discuss and listen to news and speeches.

In spite of the dominant nationalist and Stalinist currents (with their large contingents of pensioners) the permanent picket attracted many new activists, including quite a few younger people and women, attending not out of support for the conservatives but simply to protest against the Yeltsin regime.

Hardcore

The outcome of the *putsch* is a big victory for the hardcore free-market wing of Yeltsin's supporters. The big issue now will be the impact in the regions, and whether there is a further fragmentation of the Russian state. In any case the 'Latin Americanisation' of Russian economic, social and political life - with its pauperisation of whole social layers, rampant inflation, lawlessness and the permanent threat of political instability and coups - will continue.

ANALYSIS

BNP's Millwall victory: a Straw in the wind?

By a local correspondent

IF WE ARE to believe the bourgeois press - and Jack Straw MP - the BNP won the Millwall by-election because of a massive protest vote from white residents encouraged by racist leaflets from the Liberal Democrats to vote BNP.

This analysis is superficially correct: but it is a year out of date.

Yes, since they won control of Tower Hamlets Council in 1986, the Liberal Democrats have played the race card. Council policies, notably on housing, have sought to scapegoat black people, and particularly Bangladeshis (23 per cent of the Borough's population) for cuts in Council services.

Tabloid-style Liberal Democrat Party leaflets have screamed racist slogans around the Borough for years, and the number of racist attacks has sky-rocketed - and the BNP has begun to organise.

Where the Liberals raised the slogan 'Island homes for Island people', the BNP popularised the blatant slogan 'Rights for Whites'.

The Liberal Democrats were warned that their active racism was playing into the hands of the fascists. The prompt action of Paddy Ashdown and Simon Hughes last month in calling an inquiry into the local party is contemptuous - given the number of times Mildred Gordon, the local MP, has sent them copies of racist Liberal Democrat leaflets over several years.

Racist Liberals

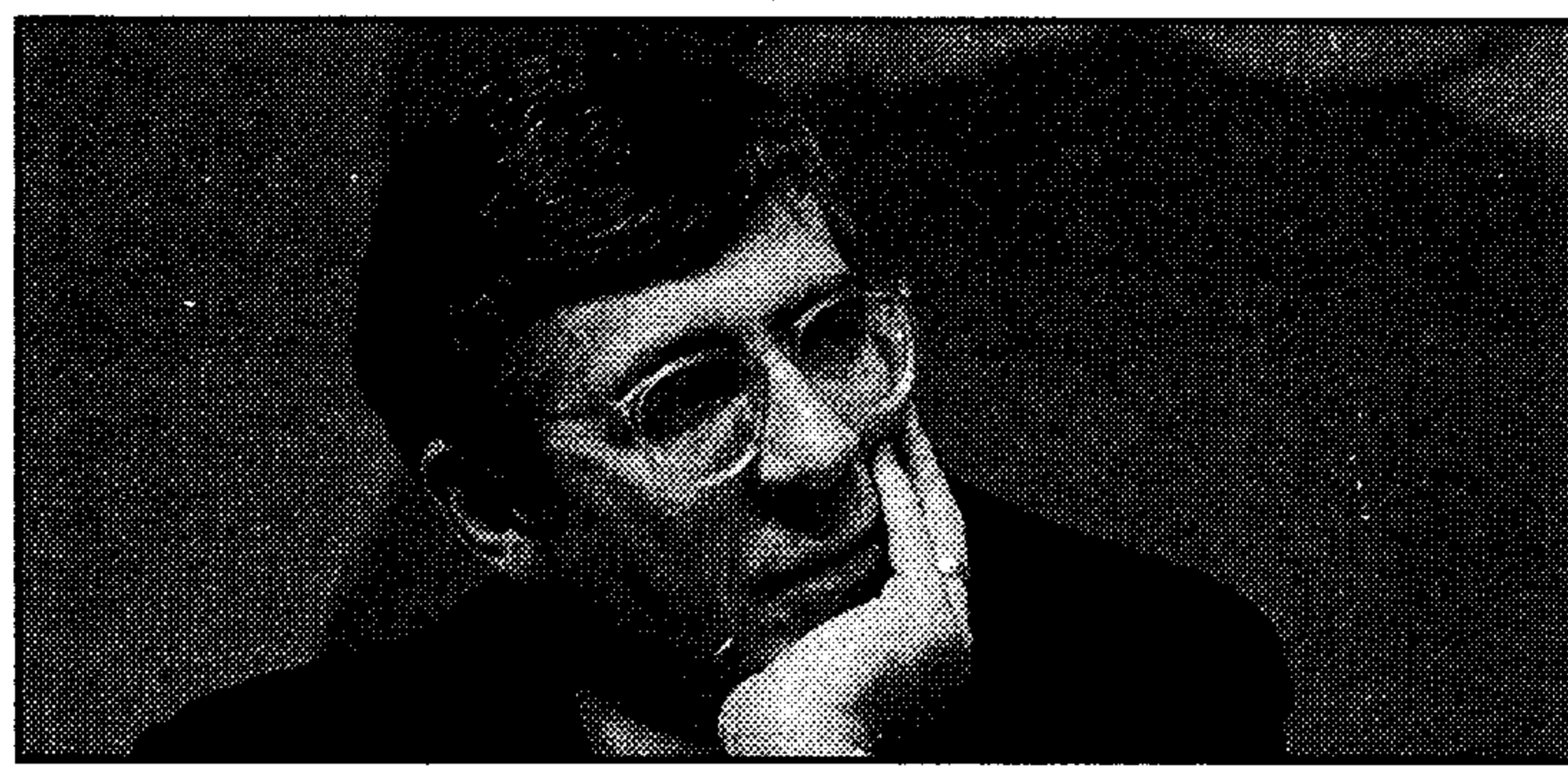
In the October 1992 by-election, the Liberals fought their most overtly racist campaign yet. The Labour candidate, a prominent local activist who promised anti-racism at Bengali meetings and appeasement to white meetings, scraped home. The BNP secured 657 votes - 20 per cent.

The Liberal Democrats learned the lesson of this result. Their racist campaigning had mobilised a racist vote - but not for them. Last month saw the Liberal Democrats' least racist campaign ever. They fought on traditional territory: counting broken lifts and droughty windows, with just enough racism to put them in context.

But the Labour Party did not learn the lesson. Their cold calculation was that the BNP had taken votes from the Liberal Democrats and thus had enabled Labour to win.

They rejected out of hand left demands to put out anti-racist propaganda and began a process of systematic appeasement to racist demands - 'to reflect more accurately people's real concerns'.

By the time of last month's campaign, the Labour Party was more or less explicitly occupying the old racist territory of the Liberal Democrats. Still working on its analysis of the vote the previous year, Labour Party members leaked falsified canvass returns showing huge support for the BNP to the local paper in an aim to keep up the BNP's electoral support and thus keep the Liberal vote down.



The local paper obliged with a banner headline: 'serious chance of first BNP Councillor being elected'. As an attempt to keep the fascist vote up, of course this worked brilliantly.

Labour's campaign provoked mass abstention from Bengali voters, who clearly could have affected the result. This subtlety is likely to be lost on Party members.

Last month's vote was not a simple protest vote about the state of affordable housing on the Isle of Dogs. It was the vote of an electorate which has been told to see Bangladeshis as the cause of all their problems, which has been offered no political alternative for a very long time and is now solidifying behind the racist slogans.

Jack Straw is unlikely to learn the real lesson of the September 1993 result. At a fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference he answered calls from black Party members for an inquiry saying: 'I'm damned if I am going to be party to establishing an inquiry with non-existent allegations [sic]. ... There is no racialism in our leaflets' and 'no one tolerates racism in the Labour Party'.

Post mortem

The Regional Labour Party however, is mounting a 'post mortem'. But the results of this are more likely to lead to local individuals being scapegoated than in a wholesale change in policies by the Labour Party in the area.

This vote should be a warning to the whole of the left: that where racism is allowed to go unchallenged, fascism can grow and flourish. If anyone needed any more good reasons for fighting racism - fighting it seriously, on the streets and in the labour movement - this is it.

With the fascists promising to field candidates for all three seats in Millwall and seats in other parts of Tower Hamlets when the Council is up for election next May, it is vital that this lesson is learned very quickly.

Fascists retreat on the streets

WHILE the BNP have won a seat in the south east of Tower Hamlets, anti-racists and anti-fascists have won the upper hand in the west of the borough - in and around Brick Lane.

Bengali youth organisations came together over the summer in the federation 'Youth Connection'. Supported by YRE and Panther, they began to organise for a demonstration in Brick Lane in September.

They had just decided to postpone it to allow more time to build support when Quaddus Ali was attacked. It was back on for 3 October.

Campaign

A 'Free the Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Committee' has been set up to defend the nine people arrested and then charged with riot after the vigil for Quaddus outside the London Hospital.

The Committee is calling for the charges to be dropped and is organising a picket of Thames Magistrates Court at 9.30am on 26 October.

The night after the vigil BNP members ran up Brick Lane smashing windows.

The police admitted they had followed the fascists on a pub crawl from the Isle of Dogs - and went on to say they had lost them when the 30-50 fascists 'left one of the pubs by the back window'.

This was later changed to 'by

the back door'; and later still to losing them 'in the maze of streets around Brick Lane'.

The ANL called a mobilisation for Brick Lane on 19 September, winning support from YRE

Stewards.

As the march reached the point where the ANL began to file off to go and stand behind the crowd barriers YRE stewards ripped up the left side of the Lane, behind the crowd barriers and overturned the BNP paper stall.

The three BNP members there at the time ran off. A larger crowd of BNP members came back later and were chased off by the anti-fascist crowd - resulting in a further crop of arrests.

Following this success, anti-fascists mobilised again for 26 September. The BNP's paper selling site was occupied, and the fascists were not seen - apart from the 44 arrested by police at Mile End tube station some distance away.

1,000 anti-fascists gathered for the Youth Connection march on 3 October. The BNP did not turn up.

Bill Morris has called for the TUC to hold a demonstration in Tower Hamlets along the same route as the 1930s 'They shall not pass' Cable Street demonstration as have the GMB. This would be a welcome initiative to sustain the anti-fascist focus which must be held through until next May's council elections.

FIGHTING FASCISM

Social crisis boosts fascists

Labour movement can douse nazi Beackon

By Tony Freeman

THE VICTORY of fascist candidate Derek Beackon in the Millwall council by-election can be explained by local circumstances; the BNP is unlikely to easily repeat that victory.

Nonetheless this victory, together with the rash of fascist-inspired racial attacks, represents much more than a local event. The political space has emerged again for the Nazis to make political gains.

In the 1970s BNP leader John Tyndall was leader of the National Front, the then most important fascist organisation.

In 1978 the NF got 40,000 votes in London-wide council elections. With Labour in power, a growing economic crisis, and mass unemployment emerging the fascists could grow.

Two things happened to stem the NF's growth. Mass anti-fascist mobilisation by the Anti-Nazi League, Rock Against Racism and Schoolkids Against the Nazis dramatised the danger of fascism using the slogan 'Never Again'. The ANL inflicted a big political defeat on the fascists.

But more decisively in 1979 Margaret Thatcher came to power with her right wing and racist agenda: she squeezed the

political space occupied by the far right.

Anti-immigrant propaganda didn't cut much ice when the government itself was introducing racist, anti-immigrant laws.

Thatcherism thus demobilised the fascists. But they didn't go away. On the retreat, the movement went into a spin and divided.

The John Tyndall-Martin Webster leadership lost control of the NF, challenged by youth leader Joe Pearce who took the organisation in a 'Stasserite' direction involving links with Italian terrorist groups and infiltration of the Animal Liberation Front.

Terror

Out of the mess of the far right the BNP emerged as the key group, with Tyndall again as its leader. Column 18, a Nazi terror group responsible for numerous death threats and attacks on left wing bookshops, recruits from inside the BNP.

The reorganisation of British fascism was not enough however on its own to win new openings. That required major changes in politics. This was provided by the fall of Margaret Thatcher and changes inside the Labour Party.

The 1980s speculative economic boom has gone and been replaced by another recession, with mass unemployment and



the impoverishment of sections of the working class the result.

Major's government is a weak government. It is not that it is more 'left wing' than the Tories under Thatcher; but it is very divided on Europe, has a small parliamentary majority and is seen to have no answers to the crisis.

The Labour Party leadership has become so right wing that its policies are no further left than the Liberal Democrats. And many working class struggles, notably that of the miners in 1992-3 have gone down to defeat.

Economic crisis, a weak government, a labour movement dominated by the right wing and working class defeats: this is the situation which creates new opportunities for the fascists.

Out of these factors has come

a section of the working class which is impoverished and unorganised. The failure of the unions to organised the unemployment is a major factor here.

But there are growing numbers of young working class people who have had limited, if any, involvement with the organised labour movement.

Culture

As we explain on page 6, in Millwall a culture of racism has grown up locally. However this is a specific case of a more general phenomenon, a local white working class with high unemployment, living cheek-by-jowl with the affluent office blocks created by the 1980s speculative boom. It is here that the fascists can grow and win

support for racist ideas.

This puts the debate over anti-racist and anti-fascist activity in a new perspective.

Socialist Outlook has argued consistently that *state* racism, through immigration laws and racist policing, is the biggest threat to the black community.

Small-time

The fascists in Britain are small potatoes compared with movements like the Front National in France. It is a mistake for the left to throw everything into anti-fascist activity.

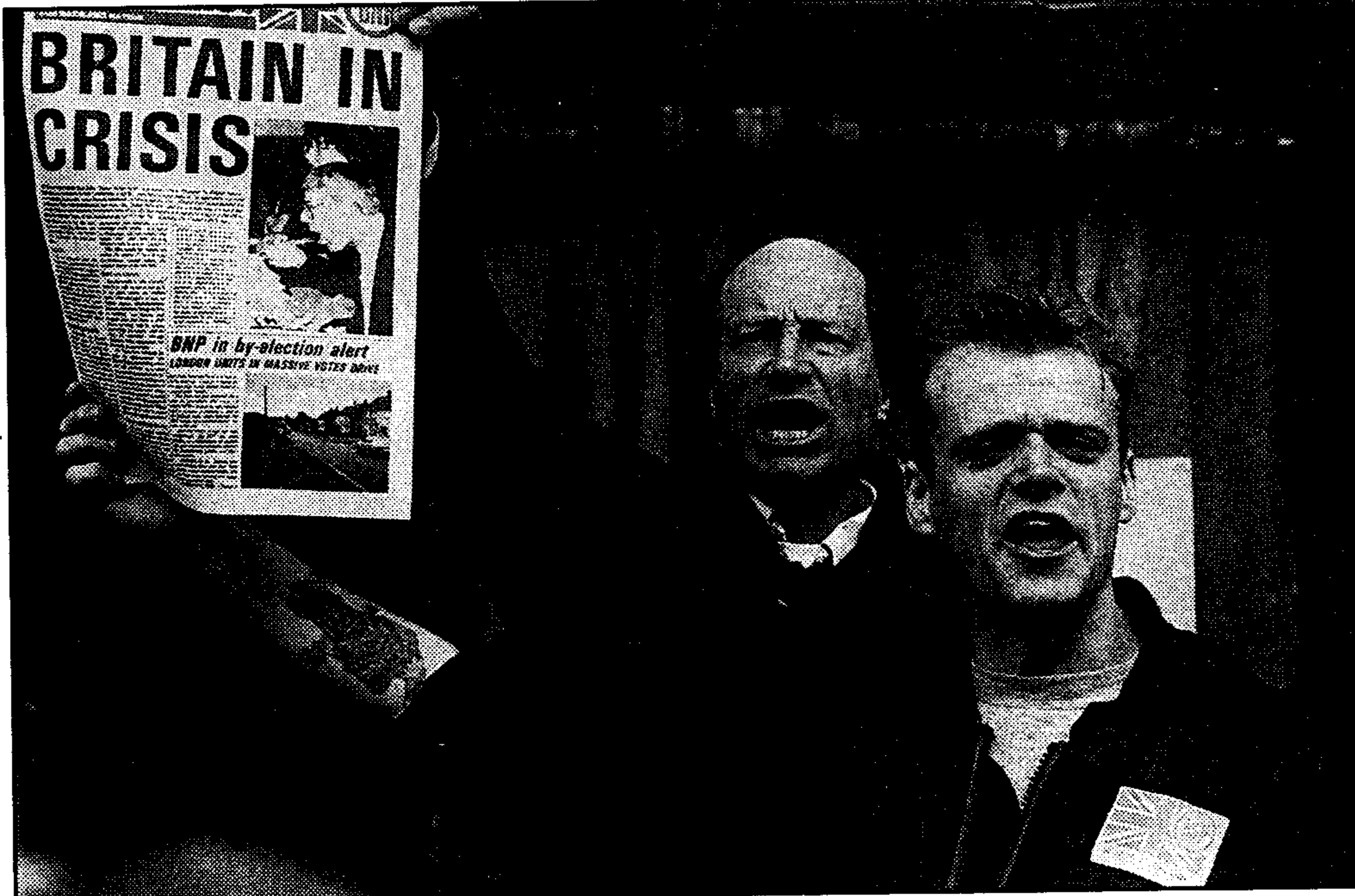
But anti-fascism and anti-racism need not be artificially counterposed. There is obviously a need now to remobilise against the fascists.

That is not just a matter to be argued out in the labour movement, but crucially concerns the struggle for self-organisation and self-defence in the black community itself.

The fight to organise the youth on an anti-racist and anti-fascist basis is a crucial one to isolate and defeat the fascists.

In the end however a key responsibility for the BNP victory and the renewed fascist danger stems from the failures of the labour and trade union leaderships.

It is their failure to fight for a programme of radical social change which opens up a space for reactionary ideas and currents. Without the building of a socialist alternative the fascist menace will not be defeated.



October 16: We need unity!

EVERY effort has to be made to make the October 16 'Unity' demonstration against the BNP a massive success. But the organisation for that day has been marred by another display of disunity and narrow-minded factionalism inside the anti-racist movement.

While the ANL and Youth Against Racism in Europe mobilise in south London against

the BNP, the Anti-Racist Alliance is holding a separate demonstration in central London.

The initiative for a united demonstration came out of the fiasco in the early summer of three different demonstrations in south London organised on successive weekends by the three above-named organisations. This was clearly crazy.

Bringing together the ANL and YRE was an important

success, especially as they were clearly competitors for the same political 'turf' and audience.

But the ARA, which has scored important successes in the black community and in the trade unions, went ahead with its own demonstration.

Arguments about 'who did what' and who is to blame for there being two demonstrations are now beside the point.

With the BNP victory in

Millwall, it is obvious that a demonstration to the BNP headquarters will become the focus for militant anti-racists.

The presence of TUC general secretary John Monks on the ARA platform is to be welcomed; but it will not stop many sections of the black youth and anti-racist movement going to south London for the Unity march.

The ARA risks inflicting unnecessary political damage

on itself and its reputation by refusing to face the facts: it could find itself out-gunned, out-mobilised by its apparent creation of disunity.

The needs of the movement are for one giant demonstration of defiance against the fascists and racists. ARA cannot pretend to be the sole legitimate anti-racist or anti-fascist movement. It should think against before it shoots itself in the foot.

FIGHTING FASCISM

Women, work, welfare, and the crisis

By Jane Kelly

'I DON'T think mothers have the same right to work as fathers. If the good Lord had intended us to have equal rights to go out to work, he wouldn't have created man and woman.'

This 1979 proclamation of Tory ideology on the family by Patrick (now Lord) Jenkin is completely contradicted by statistics on women and work during the early years of Thatcher's rule.

By 1982 60 per cent of married women saw themselves as economically active, and that excluded full-time students and 5 per cent unemployed. In addition 14 per cent did some regular or occasional paid work. So, 79 per cent of married women were in one way or another either working or looking for work.

This gaping chasm between Tory rhetoric and reality in the early 1980s has not narrowed since. But there have been significant structural changes in the nature of work and in the workforce in the last 13 years, which have led to changes between the levels and types of male and female employment.

According to the Incomes Data Report of May 1993 women are now 49 per cent of the workforce compared to 40 per cent in 1973. But this does not mean that men and women enter the work force on equal terms, nor that they do the same kinds of jobs.

Lost jobs

The decline in heavy industry has led to massive job losses in the traditional male areas of employment - steel, coal mining, engineering, ship building etc. More recently there has also been a loss of white collar jobs, both in the private and public sector.

These were more equitably divided between men and women. The only growth area has been in Social Services!

At the same time there has been an increase in work in the service sector, in the tourist and leisure industries, and some small growth in small scale manufacturing. These changes have led to an extraordinary overall loss of 2.8 million 'male' jobs and a rise of 2 million 'female jobs' between 1973 and 1993.

The loss of 'male' and rise in 'female' work is not a straight swap. The free domestic labour that women provide in the home, caring, feeding and cleaning - reproducing the current and future labour force - has always meant that women go to work on unequal terms to men.

Working in different jobs, at a greater rate of exploitation and in worse conditions, has been the lot of the vast majority of working women, with black women in the very worst positions.

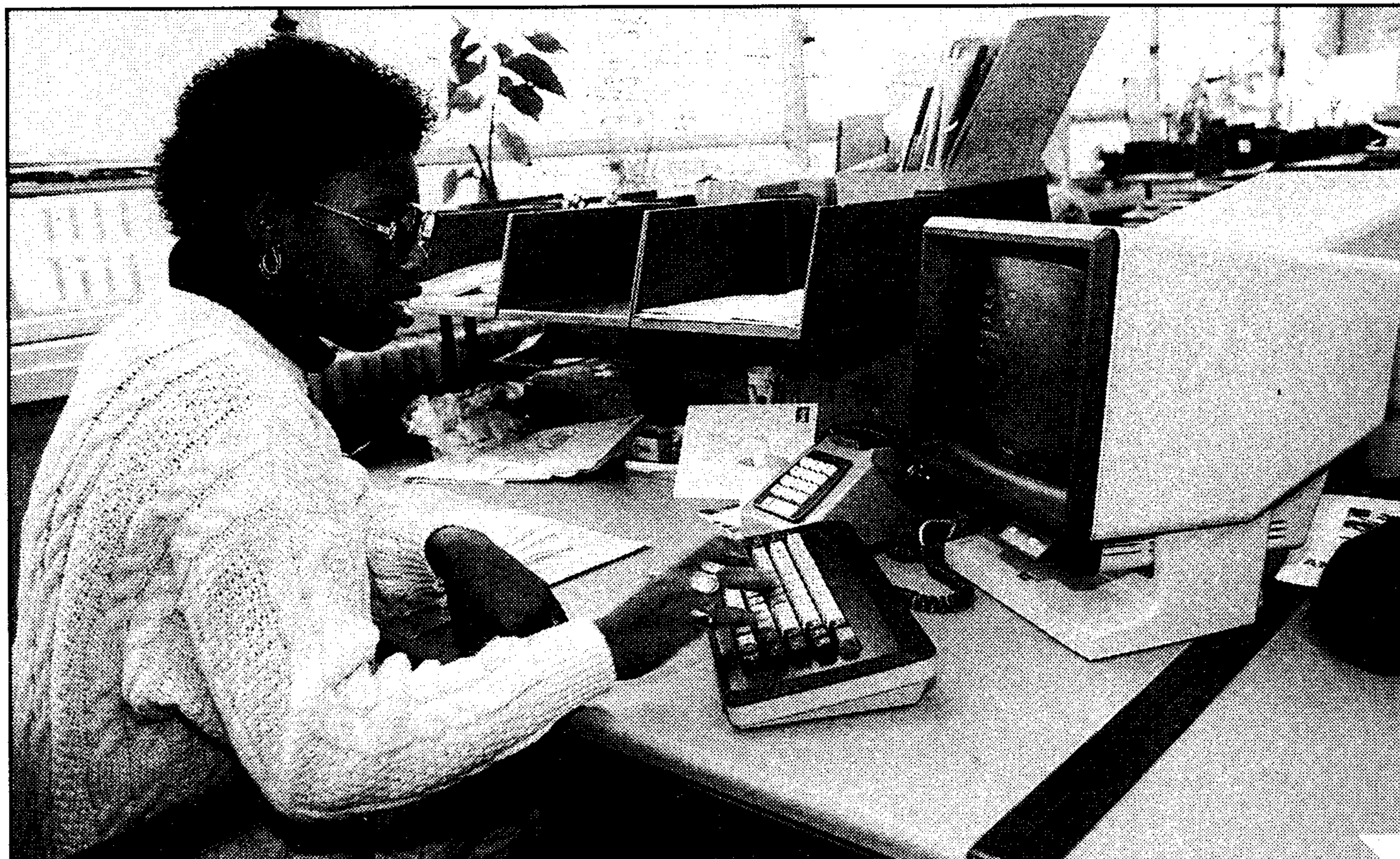
The current growth in women's employment is an increase in part-time, temporary, flexible, seasonal work and homeworking. What has changed is that these poorly paid and highly exploited women are now often the sole wage earners in the family.

Part-time

45 per cent of women workers are now in part-time jobs and this shift in work patterns is being used to force men too into part-time jobs. Compared to a previously insignificant percentage, 10 per cent of men now work part-time.

Tory rhetoric on the sanctity of the family and the need for women to remain in the home is at complete odds with ordinary people's lives. People know it is ridiculous to blame every social ill on single parents or bad parenting.

But the Tories need this kind of rhetoric to divert attention from the fact that while: trying to create a low-wage econ-



Families under fire!

omy in Britain they are faced with a huge and increasing public spending deficit.

The huge social security 'overspend', is not something new. It is part of a continuing upward curve since 1950. The government needs the tax generated from the equivalent of 50 plus companies the size of British Petroleum to pay off what the Sunday Telegraph describes as 'the Welfare equivalent of the Dreadnought'.

Pensioners

The most difficult aspect for the Tories (and for Labour if they were in office) is that 24 per cent of social security spending is permanent. It won't go away after the end of the recession - because it is the result of long term, demographic trends.

There are now 24 per cent more pensioners over 75 than in 1978-9 and numbers are expected to rise to 4.1 million in 2001.

People in this age group are the most expensive to the welfare state, costing £1005 per head compared to £220 for the population as a whole. The Public Spending Review's interest in changing the ways pensions are paid is no coincidence.

The proposals of the Review are bound to lead to cuts in public services, welfare provision and public sector jobs. Education, nursery provision, health, benefits, the care of old people and the disabled, all face huge cuts. The effects of such changes will fall disproportionately on women.



Much of the caring now publicly provided will fall to women, and the same women will increasingly fill the poorly paid and super-exploited jobs.

A good example is what has happened to the school meals service. What was originally a subsidised and nutritionally regulated provision, with free meals for children of the lowest paid and unemployed, had been reduced, by the 1980 Education Act, to free meals for children of families on social security and no other statutory provision.

The hope was to reduce costs by half, saving £200 million. The result was increased prices, reduction both in quality and quantity and - for women - an in-

crease in unpaid domestic labour.

The number of children taking school meals has dropped by 16 per cent in one year, with a parallel increase in packed lunches by 15 per cent in the same period.

At the same time the women workers in the school meals service had their jobs casualised, ending their permanent contracts, had their hourly rates cut, had their holiday retainer abolished.

So, women were hit in both parts of their lives: at work they faced worsening conditions and greater exploitation, while at home the burden of unpaid domestic labour was increased.

The 1980s saw a change in the relation between women's paid and unpaid labour which is continuing into the 1990s.

● Cuts in the state welfare services and benefits seek to shift the onus of caring for the very young, the old, the ill, the disabled onto the family - in other words women - many of these changes being laughably described as 'Community Care'.

● Attacks on conditions of work by a combination of anti-trade union legislation and giving free reign to market forces, deregulation and the abolition of rights for large numbers of workers. The objective is to produce a large part-time and flexible workforce, much of it made up of women workers, with black women worst off.

Pressure

This secondary workforce is being used as pressure on the better paid, full-time predominantly male workforce, to accept worse conditions and less pay.

The combination of increased responsibility as unpaid domestic labourers and as a badly paid part of the workforce, even where women are sole breadwinners, will continue to put extreme pressure on the institution of the family, creating an obvious contradiction between Tory ideology and daily reality.

The Child Support Act, focus of the Tory attack on single parents - depicted as feckless, irresponsible and female - is just one element in their attempt to place the economic crisis and its concomitant social distress at the feet of women.

Whether the Tory strategy succeeds or not depends partly on how the labour movement responds in the next period to attacks on the welfare state and on the standard of living of public sector workers.

What we can be sure of is that women, when they move into action against this government, will be at the sharp end of the fight - both at home and at work.

LIBERATION POLITICS

The Carrot, the Stick and the Big Lie ...

How John Smith just won the day

AT LABOUR Party conference all other questions were overshadowed by the Party-union link. Everything else took a back seat, or was merely a pawn in the main game.

Gordon Brown spoke of full employment, Jack Straw gave a commitment to the abolition of Compulsory Competitive Tendering and the NEC recommended (and got) support for a resolution which went much further than previously in a commitment to repealing the Tories' anti-union laws.

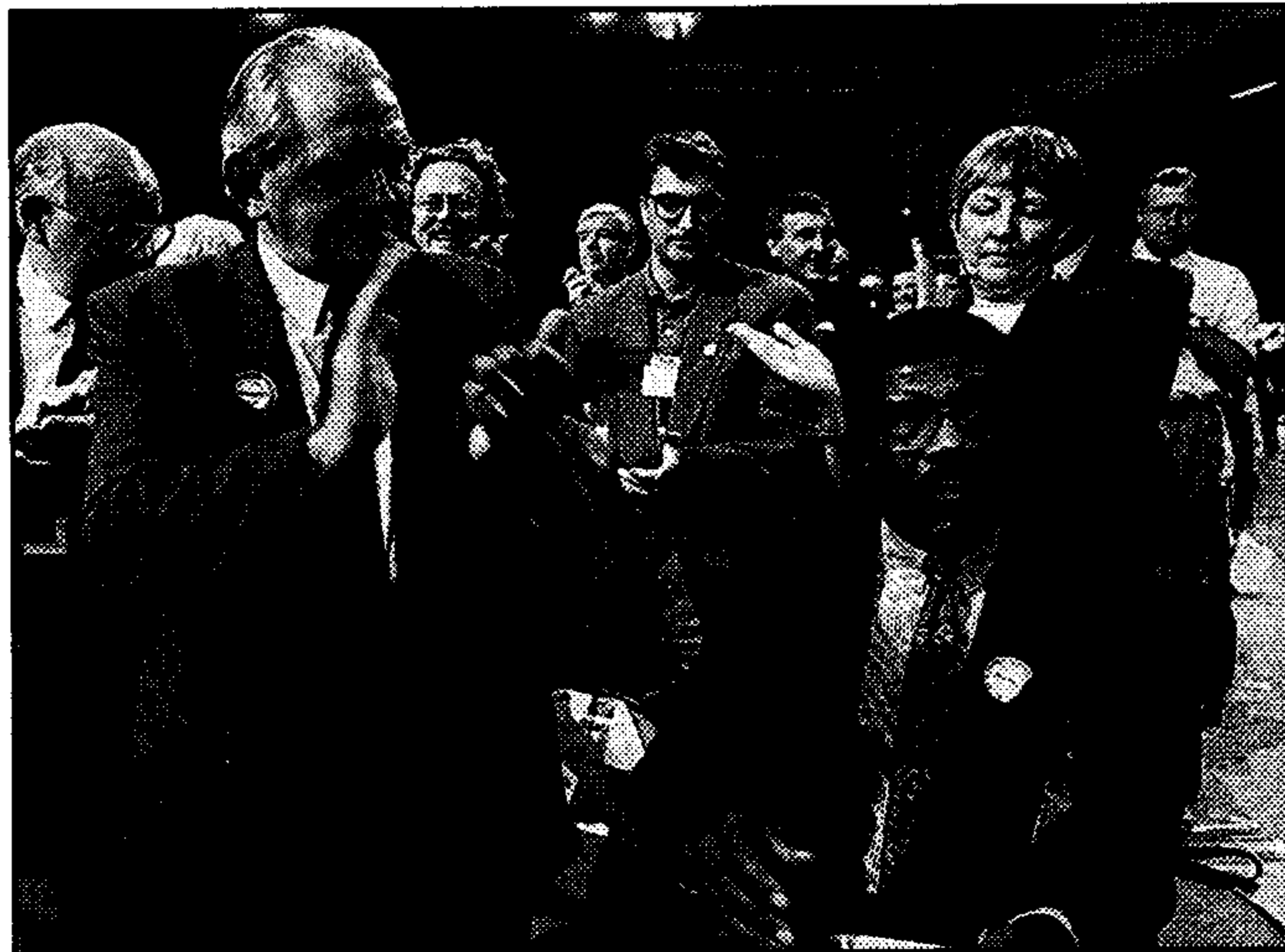
These promises were made in order to swing union votes behind proposals on the link.

What it won them was a narrow victory on rule changes which removed trade union input into the selection of parliamentary candidates and lesser, primarily cosmetic changes in how the unions vote in leadership elections and at conference.

Broken mandates

They had to pull out all the stops. Two union delegations, UCW and USDAW, broke conference mandates. But the clincher was the switch by MSF.

Their leadership accepted they had to vote for the TGWU resolution, so resorted instead to convincing the delegation (by



only two votes) to abstain on the rule changes.

The pretext was that the one vote covered both the new rules for selection and the provision for all-women shortlists (which MSF supports). This abstention alone made the crucial difference.

Underlying all argument from the parliamentary leadership and particularly John Prescott's summing up speech was the Big Lie that they were strengthening the link, not weakening it.

This was based on the claim that levy-plus will massively increase the number of trades unionists who join as individuals, despite the fact that a reduced membership subscription has existed for years for levy payers which hasn't halted the decline

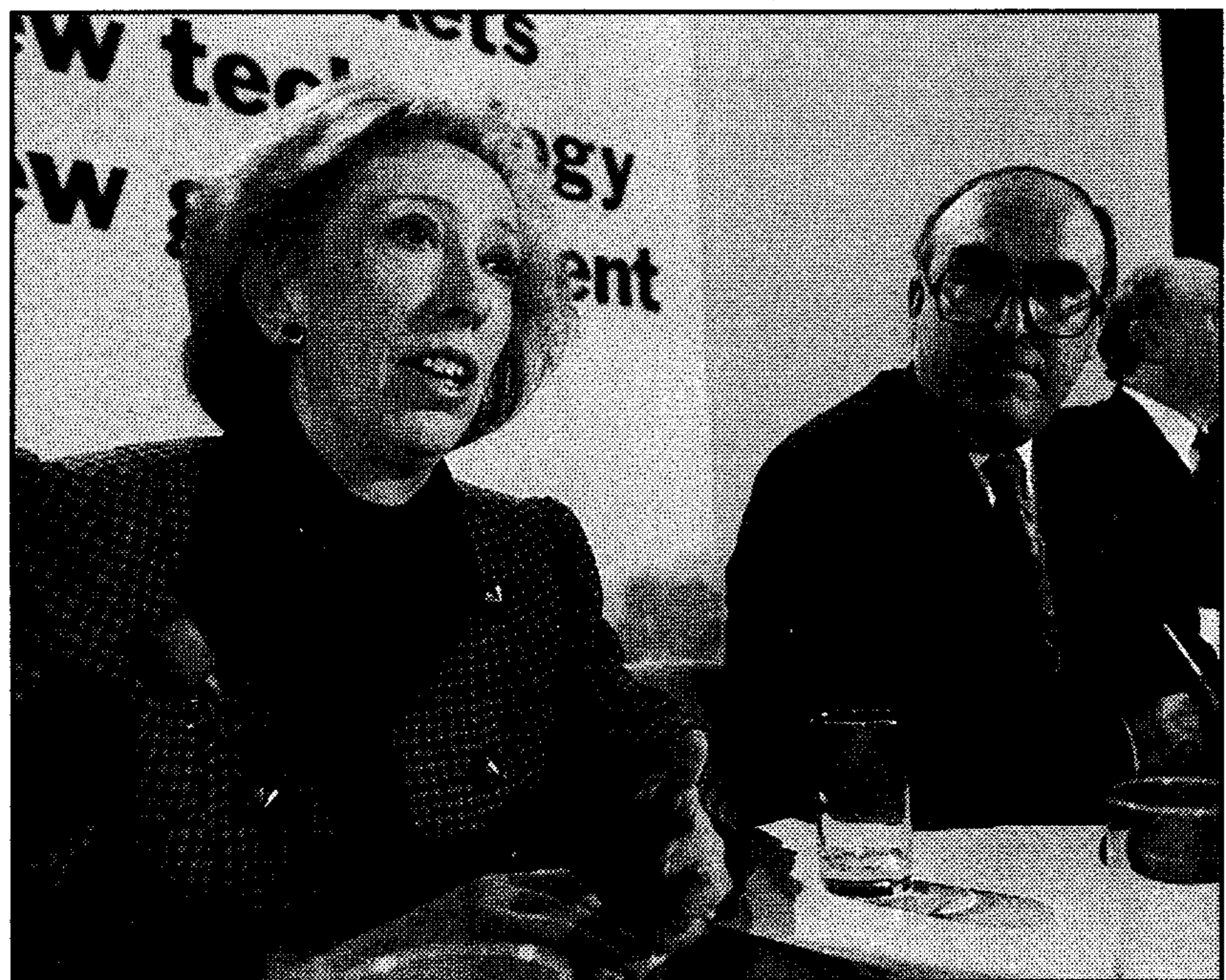


in membership.

They side-stepped the fact that they were abolishing the collective input of the unions.

Without this lie, propounded by Garfield Davies of USDAW and Jimmy Knapp of the RMT as well as Prescott, they could not have won.

No-one else on the NEC



could have made the speech Prescott did, attempting to convince conference that he was absolutely committed to the union link while calling for a vote to weaken it (with an appeal for loyalty to Smith thrown in).

To do so they explicitly distanced themselves from the most extreme modernizers. Brown and Blair kept away from the platform during the crucial session.

Media message

In themselves, the changes do not mean much. More important for the leadership is the message they hope to give the ruling class, its media and the SLD, that union influence in the party has been curbed.

While the right achieved little of its agenda, they are unlikely to come back for more too quickly. The scale of the resistance together with the unlikelihood of a significant leadership challenge this side of the general election will probably make them stay their hand. But they have inserted the wedge between the Party and the unions which they hope to drive further.

The Tory press have already made it clear the changes do not go far enough for them.

The parliamentary leadership

has been strengthened in their drive to distance Labour from class politics, but at a cost.

For the first time in 10 years there has been a real fight from large sections of the trade union bureaucracy – the same layer that has voted through the policy changes over the years.

They have weakened their link with the bureaucracy as well as the unions in general. Trade unionists, including some not very left bureaucrats, recognising the connection between the watering down of policy and the weakening of the union link, are beginning to fight.

This meant that scrapping Trident, cutting arms spending and renationalising privatised pits were passed against the platform.

Many unions will now have a drive to get members to join the Party as individuals. The left should use this to demand not only that the unions fight for Labour to adopt policies in the interests of the working class, and campaigns on its commitments like full employment, but also that the Party fully support the unions in struggle.

The TGWU leadership is already talking of calling a conference on the issue of Labour and the Unions, the left need to take this up in a serious way.

UNISON pulls back on pay

By Fred Leplat
(Islington Council
Unison A)

LOCAL government white collar workers in UNISON have rejected 6-day strike action against the government's 1.5 per cent pay limit by 180,000 votes to 60,000.

This was the second of two ballots. The result of the first was a small majority in favour of action. The ballots were agreed by NALGO conference in June against the recommendation of the NALGO leadership, reflecting the anger of delegates at the passivity of the leadership in accepting the government's pay norm. The rejection of the offer in the

March for the NHS!

TUC NHS Emergency Day, LONDON, Saturday NOV 20

first ballot can thus be seen as a condemnation of the lack of campaigning and fightback by UNISON's leadership on the issues facing members: jobs, conditions but also pay.

However the very discrete campaign for a 'yes' vote on the second ballot by the leadership

of UNISON, and the greater concern of the members and branches on jobs and conditions ensured a defeat in the second ballot for strike action.

UNISON has denounced the 1994 pay freeze, and called for a 'high profile' campaign, including industrial action, to oppose the freeze.

Whether UNISON carries this out remains to be seen. But a campaign against the pay freeze must go beyond UNISON.

It is the largest public sector union in Britain: it could submit a flat rate pay claim for all its members in local government, health and other services on a common date, thus uniting a large sector of public sector workers for action to break the pay freeze.

Gas unions must raise heat on jobs

By a Gas Worker.

BRITISH Gas management announced that 20,000 jobs are to go over the next three years in a major reorganisation and reduction in its service.

The trade unions have started to lobby and campaign against the break-up and secured the backing of the TUC for their fight.

But the campaign has got off to a slow start with many gas workers already leaving the industry in the absence of the kind of campaign they believe would knock an already

unsteady government off its perch.

If management is to receive a bloody nose in this fight gas workers need to strike the first blow by mounting a campaign of industrial action and winning public support in the fight against privatisation.

FBU retreat

● FBU leaders have postponed a ballot over industrial action in defence of their pay formula until a meeting with local authority employers.

LABOUR PARTY

Rome protest over welfare in ruins



By our correspondent

ONE HUNDRED thousand people demonstrated against the government's austerity policies on 25 September in Rome. Politically the demonstration was dominated by the Party of Communist Re-foundation (PRC). Such a large demonstration was important for reasserting the voice of the working class in the political crisis which has shaken the country this year.

Until now the political crisis, the exposure of the whole political system dominated since the war by the Christian Democrats as corrupt and mafia-ridden, has evolved without the direct intervention of the organised workers movement.

In part this paradox is explained by the defeats inflicted on the workers in recent years; in part by the role habitually played by the trade union bureaucracy and the leaders of the largest working class party, the Party of the Democratic Left



(PDS) - the right wing of the former Communist Party. Now the political crisis combines with a new wave of anti-working class austerity measures.

This year it has been marked by the emergence of an unprecedented social crisis. There is 11 per cent unemployment nationally, and in some areas like Calabria and Campagna it is 25 per cent.

Isolation

But there has been no centralised action against unemployment by the union leaderships, hence the isolation of long and hard-fought struggles against redundancy by groups like the Sardinian miners and the steel-

workers of Tarente.

The unemployment situation has been worsened by the results of a deal signed on 3 July between the union leaderships, the government and Confindustria, the bosses' organisation, which reduces job security; and the new finance law which drastically reduces state spending on social security and social services, as well as imposing a freeze on big areas of public sector recruitment.

The huge demonstration on 25 September was in effect a first massive protest against these new measures, organised around the demand for a reduction of work time without loss

of pay and for the defense of jobs.

The demonstration was first proposed for the 18 September by the PRC; it was pushed back so as not to coincide with the last day of the *Unita* fete organised by the PDS, due to be addressed by the party's leader Occhetto.

Pressure

This move enabled the organisers to pressurise the PDS left in supporting the demo; it was also backed by workers councils in the factories (COBAS) and by the National Forum for the Alternative, a permanent forum for debate between opposition groups in the unions.

However, despite the presence of some supporters of the PDS left, the PDS as such was not won to the initiative.

The party's 'number 2' Massimo d'Alema proposed a delay to 'better discuss the programme' of the demo; and Gavino Angius of the party's secretariat then announced that the party would not support the demo because 'the preparation was too rapid' and 'dominated by the Party of Communist Re-

foundation'.

The reality was otherwise: the PDS refused to participate in a demonstration which was clearly against the government and the new finance law, in light of the abstention recorded on this measure by the PDS in parliament.

Moreover, the PDS had supported the 3 July sell-out agreement with the bosses as 'necessary and positive for the workers'.

Despite the success of the demonstration it is not clear whether it will mark the beginning of a new round of struggle against the government. A similar demonstration in September 1992 unleashed a wave of struggles, but these resulted in defeat.

More secure

The present government of Ciampi seems more secure than the d'Amato government in 1992, since it is supported both by the PDS to the left and the Northern League to the right.

But once again a turnout of 100,000 organised largely by the PRC and the trade union left has confounded the sceptics.

EUROPEAN NEWS

'In life only solidarity brings victory'

Women from Ten Downing Street
Channel 4, Sept 30 ;
directed by
Anne-Marie Sweeney.

Reviewed by
Marian Brain

THIS REMARKABLE programme begins with an image of the desolate environment that working women and men endure.

But there is nothing desolate and no despair from the women who are the main focus of this programme -

women who are prepared to give all their energy and commitment to the struggle for union recognition and the right to be treated as human beings.

This programme highlighted what it is like to work in the sweatshops of the West Midlands and showed what life would be like if the Tories continue making Britain a cheap labour economy.

These women have taken one of the most dramatic and bold initiatives since the Grunwick dispute in 1976; their struggle illustrates the need to organise those millions in trade unions.

The strike was in progress for over a year and demonstrated the practical problems faced in organising a workforce made up of predominantly immigrant, women workers.

These workers know the re-

ality of Thatcher's, now Major's Britain. Their basic claim was for decent working conditions, an end to compulsory overtime, a safe environment and proper protective clothing and equal pay for the women who were paid between £20 and £30 less than the men.

On these issues they have not budged. They are also demanding that the sacked strikers be reinstated.

While the strikers themselves have mobilised a not insignificant amount of support, their union the GMB was found wanting. In fact GMB officials undermined the strikers and failed miserably to maximise support.

The programme makes clear that GMB officials attempted to block solidarity days called by the strikers, in conjunction with the support groups established in different parts of the country.



One of the most revealing scenes is a meeting with GMB official Joe Quigley, who arrogantly threatens to throw strikers out of the union if they don't dissociate themselves from the support committee.

This programme should be used throughout the black community, the women's movement and the labour

movement as a part of the campaign to get the GMB to reinstate the dispute. It gives a clear illustration of the necessity for the working class to turn back to its historical traditions of solidarity to win disputes. It ends up repeating the key lesson of the dispute 'in life only solidarity brings victory'.

Capitalism without capitalists?



What about the Workers? Workers and the Transition to Capitalism in Russia, Simon Clarke, Peter Fairbrother, Michael Buroway and Pavel Krotov, Verso £10.99

Reviewed by Paul Clarke

THIS BOOK is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand present-day developments in Russia.

The main author, Warwick University academic Simon Clarke, challenges the received wisdom that Russia is undergoing a more-or-less rapid transition to capitalism, and insists

on the resilience of the previously-existing relations of production.

For Clarke the bureaucracy, and more specifically the managerial bureaucracy based on the factories and enterprises, is still in power. And privatisation, at least in its present forms, is not creating genuine capitalism.

This thesis of course poses the question of what the 'previously existing' relations of production actually were. Clarke's terminology is not that shared by this journal since he considers the bureaucracy a ruling class.

Divisions

But his analysis, particularly that of the centrality of the 'labour collective' as the key element in the productive system, and his account of the divisions and stratification of the

working class, is important in the light of the underdevelopment of socialist theory on Russia and similar societies.

Stuck

For, although the 'Russian question' was a central debate among socialists for decades, much of this debate remained stuck in a repetitive groove of generalisations.

In what does the continuity of the production relations consist? A huge part of the economy is in state hands, although the central planning system has been disorganised.

Perestroika weakened the Party and the state, and the main beneficiaries have been the 'industrial nomenklatura' who were able to wrest control of much of industry.

However, for the industrial nomenklatura to stay in power it has to resist a fundamental

transition in the labour collective system.

Very refreshing here is Clarke's insistence on the power and strength of the working class (or at least its potential) in preventing a fundamental disruption of existing social relations. As he puts it 'the Russian working class is a sleeping giant which no one dare wake up'.

Capitalism without a bourgeoisie is a nonsense, and for Clarke 'if capitalism is to develop in Russia it can only be through the transformation of the industrial nomenklatura into a capitalist class'.

Manoeuvrer

Yeltsin is not the political representative of this layer, indeed he is seen as a classic apparatus manoeuvrer, attempting to balance between different bureaucratic interests;

although Clarke doesn't examine this, it is the forces organised in the Civic Union, opposing Yeltsin and the more extreme neo-liberal plans, which represents this layer.

Temporary

Compared with the neo-liberal politicians the Civic Union forces are much more grounded in present social reality. Compared with them, Yeltsin is a temporary figure.

Much of the book reviews, as its title indicates, the emerging workers movement and how the actions of the workers, particularly the miners strikes, have been crucial in determining the major political developments.

If you want to understand the reality behind the headlines on Russia, read this book together with David Mandel's *Perestroika and the People*.

Beyond the politics of racial identity

Black America: the street and the campus; Race and Class Vol 35 No 1 Reviewed by Bala Kumar

IN BLACK America resurgent cultural nationalism has taken two forms. In the academy as an intellectual movement known as 'Afrocentrism' and in the community as Hip-Hop culture and especially rap music. Straddling the divide is the 'Black Patriarch', Malcolm X.

The first essay takes us back to an America in the aftermath of the urban rebellions of the late 1960's. The ruling class co-opted the moderate elements and suppressed the militant. So there are now over 8,000 African-Americans in public office compared to 103 in 1964.

Death Row

The revolutionary elements were tortured, imprisoned and assassinated. Two Black Panthers, Geronimo Ji-Jaga Pratt and Mumia Abu Jamal are interviewed; their moving testimonies are powerful in the absence of rancour though the former is a lifer and the latter on death-row.

Rap music is now a global commod-

ity. The major record companies have packaged rebellions of black youth into a multi-million dollar industry. Rap artists are still slaves to a market system.'

Lusane surveys the Hip-Hop scene and the themes and lyrics which have been denounced by the establishment and became an issue in the 1992 Presidential election. The contradictions within this culture of resistance are notably its 'phallo-centric musings' or downright misogyny.

Heroes and heroines

None of the writers are opposed to people of African descent discovering and reclaiming their past, asserting the right to have their own heroes (and heroines!) and a literary canon not solely consisting of white, dead males.

However Afrocentrism as defined by scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante 'is an ideology shrouded in mysticism and mythology which romanticises the past without giving any real strategies for the future.'

The Afrocentric prescription for the ills of black people neatly dovetails with those of white conservatives.

The problem with the black community is not 'political, economic or structural' but an internal one that is 'cultural, behavioral and psychological'. The breakdown of the family is the major culprit and single-parent female headed families the cause of drug abuse, gangsterism and teenage preg-

nancies. The Afrocentric solution seems to be, 'add strong black man an stir'.

Sid Lemelle points out that for all their anti-Eurocentrism, Asante and fellow Afrocentrist, Leonard Jeffries belong to the Hegelian tradition of idealism. Ideas in the form of words are the motor force of change in society.

Lemelle counterposes to Afrocentrism an ideology of revolutionary Pan-Africanism. He suggests it allows for a concrete materialist analysis of society and a means of achieving black empowerment. In order to be so it must be 'trans-racial and trans-gendered', inclusive of the aspirations of the working class as a whole and internationalist as opposed to the present inward looking narrow nationalism.

Duality

In a final and important contribution, Manning Marable charts a way forward to a 'multicultural democracy'. The Afrocentrists by focusing on Africa have ignored the duality of African-American consciousness. They are also Americans and must confront the struggle in their own communities.



Marable examines key social and economic indicators of the Latino community arriving at the conclusion that they fare as badly or even worse than blacks. This indicates the possibility or as Marable sees it a necessity, for a black-Latino coalition.

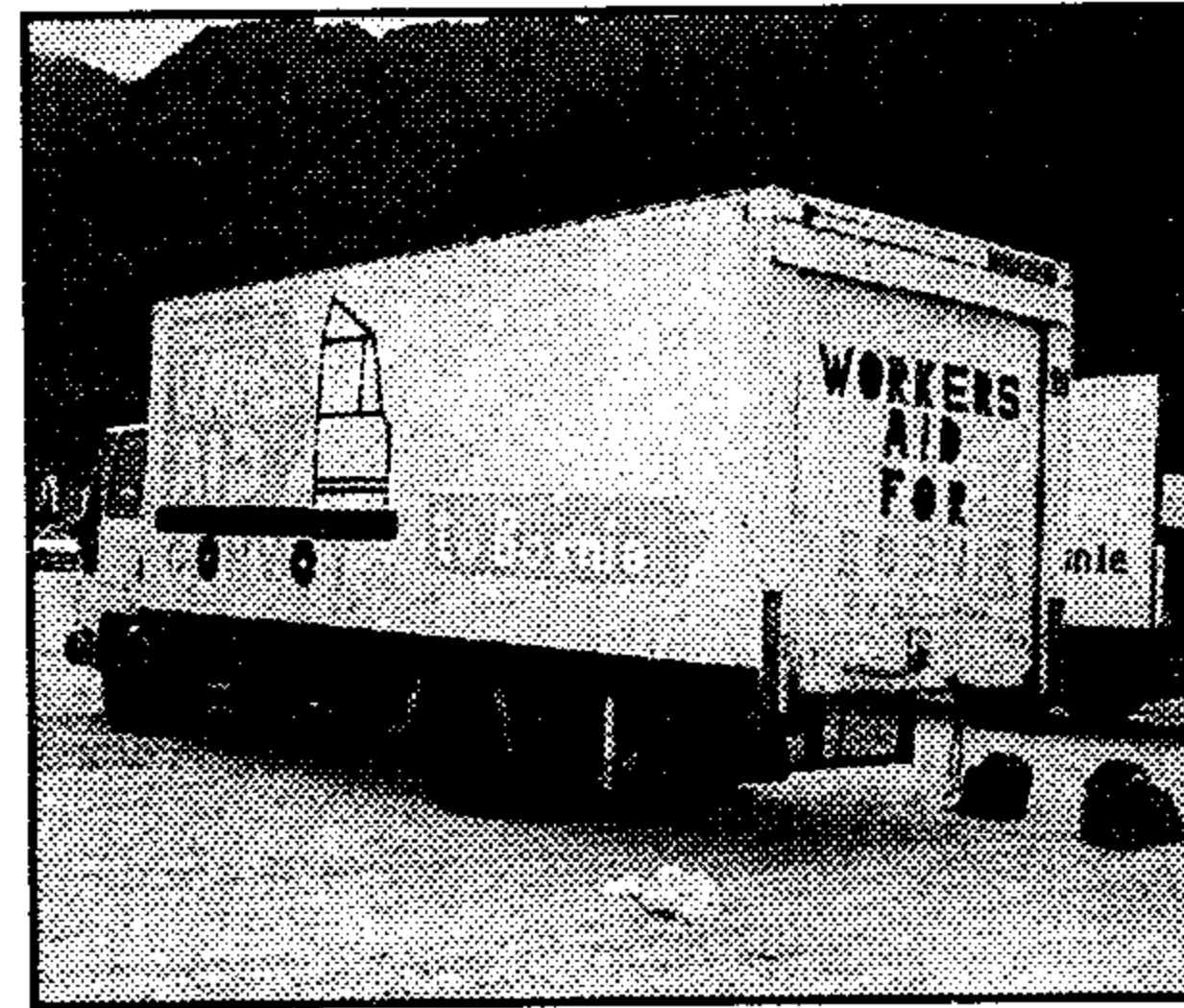
'What is missing is the dynamic vision and political leadership to build something more permanent...between these groups.'

The calibre of the many contributions in this collection are testament to the high standard of radical African-American scholarship and the ideological combativeness of 'Race and Class'. Read this book and discuss its ideas, in it are resources for the class and anti-racist struggle in Britain too.

£6 from Institute of Race Relations, 120-126 Lavender Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3HP.

REVIEWS

Socialist OUTLOOK



Bosnia convoy – see p2

Witch-hunt backs Tube victimisation

By Patrick Sikorski,
victimised RMT
Tubeworker

The witchhunt launched against me in the London 'Evening Standard' is a desperate attempt by London Underground management to claw back some of the ground they have lost following the outcome of the interim industrial tribunal hearing and the result of the ballot of the train crew members of the RMT on the Central Line.

The interim hearing had to decide whether management's allegations that I had used threatening behaviour held water, or if I had been unfairly dismissed.

After hearing all the evidence, the tribunal took just eight minutes to unanimously reject management's allegations that I had used threatening behaviour to a manager, and instead find that I had been unfairly dismissed for trade union activities.

The whole of the 'Red Guard...' article is peppered with descriptions of me as 'pushy', 'bullying', 'intimidating' etc – all aimed at undermining the finding of Tribunal.

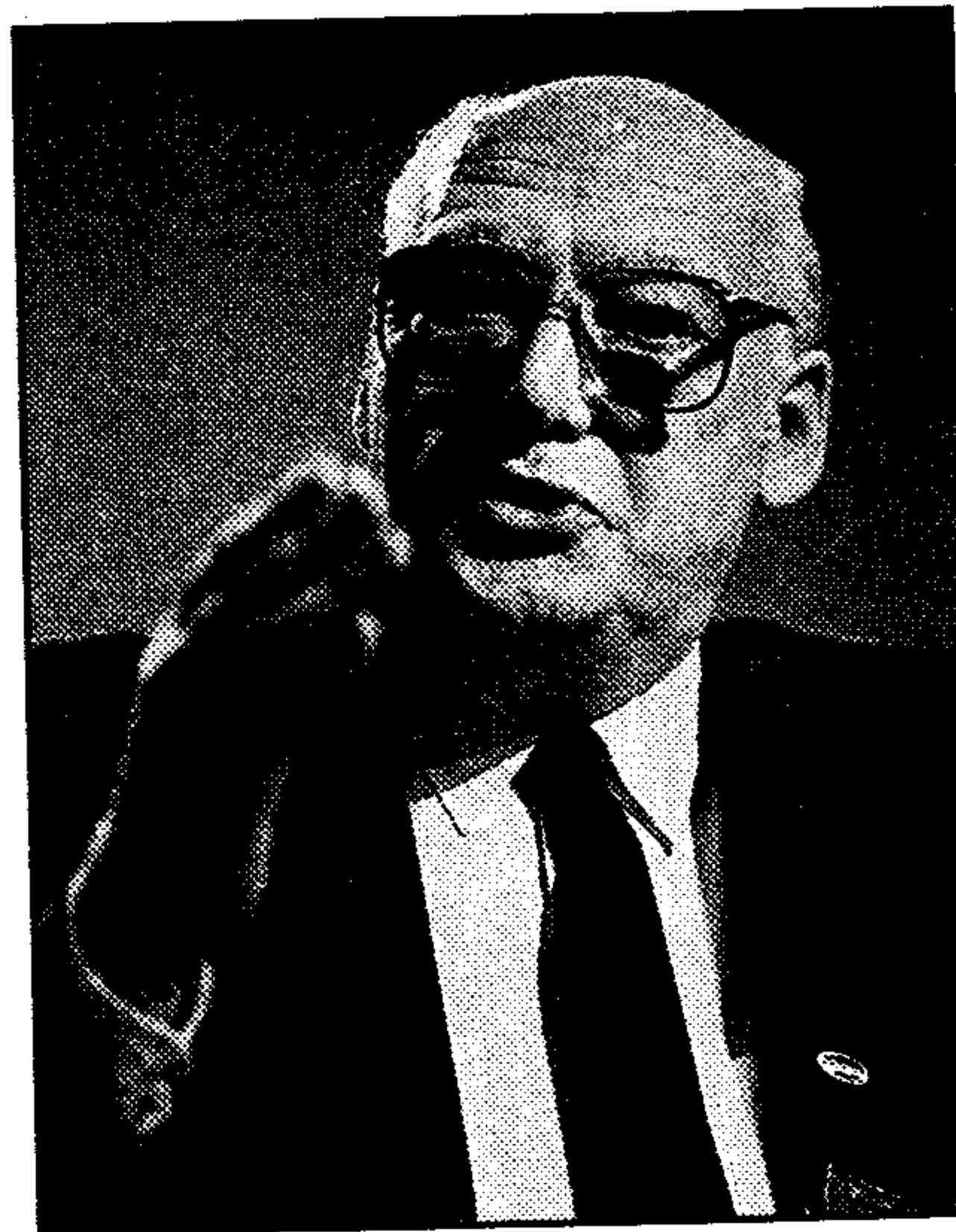
The fact is that trade unionists win less than 20 per cent of ordinary tribunal hearings – let alone the interim hearings at

which the burden of proof demanded of the applicant is much greater.

Winning the tribunal was a major vindication of the union's case and exposed LUL management's real agenda – the destruction of effective trade unionism on the Underground.

What was worse for management was that by the time of the hearing the vast bulk of the ballots had already been returned. The Central Line traincrew have voted by four to one in a 60 per cent turnout for two one day strikes for the full re-instatement of Ray and Pat.

The other aim of the witchhunt is to give the full time leadership of the RMT and the right wing NEC an



excuse first to distance themselves from the strike struggle, and then to sell it out.

Jimmy Knapp has already given his excuses for the two pre-strike

rallies on the Central Line pleading 'prior engagements'. ACAS has been on the phone asking if the union side would attend 'exploratory' talks.

The task of the left wing on the NEC this week will be to fight for the rest of the RMT members on LUL to be balloted for strike action. The Central Line traincrew must not be left to fight alone for trade unionism on LUL.

Meanwhile the rest of the movement must build on the paper support from the TUC General Council for the 'Friends of Ray and Pat' statement in order to raise and carry forward the fight for free independent trade unionism.