

Socialist OUTLOOK

BOSNIA: Tuzla
Interview pp8-9

IRELAND: behind
Downing St deal p6

CLOSE Campsfield Detention
Centre! - campaign, p 3

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No. 55, January 15, 1994

As 'Back to Basics' fraud collapses

SAVE OUR WELFARE STATE

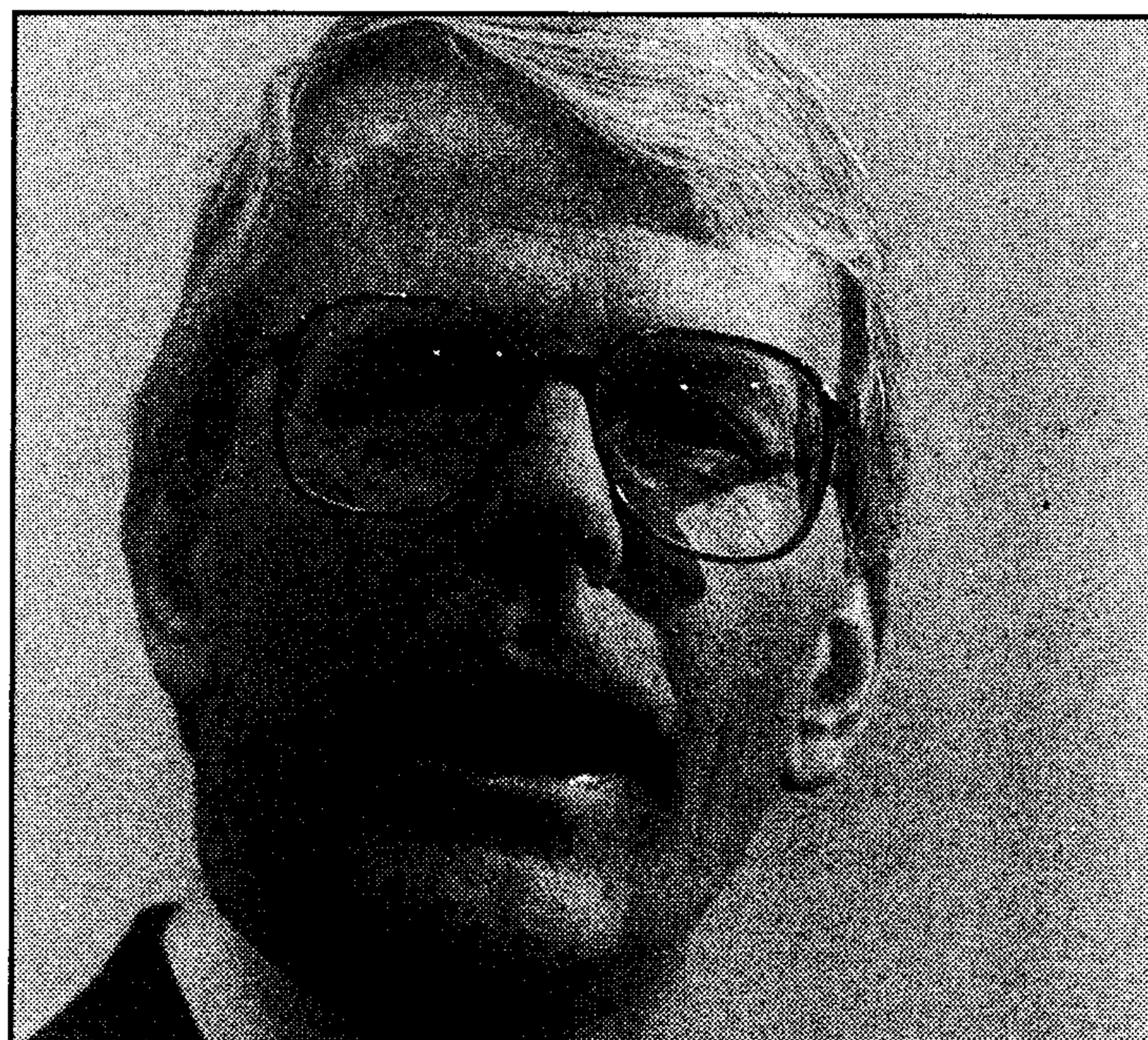
- EDITORIAL - p2
- LABOUR's policy vacuum - p5
- BACK to the drawing board - Back page



Break the economic consensus

Defend the welfare state

Socialist
OUTLOOK



Editorial

IN A COUNCIL by-election in Barrow-in-Furness last week the Tories suffered a mammoth 23 per cent swing against them, to lose a safe seat. It was just a small indication of the extent of Tory unpopularity and the electoral defeats being stored up for the Tories in the council and European elections this year.

John Major's cynical and ill-fated 'back to basics' campaign was partially designed to give the Tories a popular cutting edge when their economic policies are crashing and living standards falling.

VAT on fuel, the new council tax assessments, mass unemployment, and the huge tax rises and benefit cuts to come in April are all feeding widespread popular resentment.

The unmistakable evidence of general social decay and breakdown – crumbling infrastructure, rampant poverty and soaring crime rates – help reinforce the public perception of a government that has been derailed by its own ideology.

But Major's attempts to divert attention from these problems by a nostalgic

trip down the memory lane of a mythical golden age have gone seriously wrong.

The 'moral crusade' element of the back to basics campaign has been overturned by the hypocrisy of Major's own ministers and their parliamentary aides.

As the Tim Yeo affair and Patten's climbdown on the national curriculum shows, 'Back to basics' morality collides with deep social changes which have occurred over more than 30 years.

Hysterical

As a result, Major's 'big idea' to reunite the Tory ranks last October has been reduced to little more than hysterical calls for a crackdown on crime – so long as it is petty crime rather than multi-million pound fraud – and a renewed onslaught on social welfare.

That's the reason for the Tory attack on single mothers, involving a battery of measures including the cruel fiasco of the Child Support Agency.

Yet despite their deep unpopularity, despite evidence of the long term social damage they are doing, and despite the unravelling of 'back to basics' the Tory anti-welfare steam roller is driving on relentlessly.

They are determined to undermine key fundamentals of the welfare state. This is

a long term process, but as the budget measures showed, it is gathering pace.

Every aspect of the welfare state is in peril – unemployment and social security benefits, pensions, the NHS, housing and the right to free higher and secondary education.

Defence of the welfare state is now a key task for the labour movement for a whole period. It will be a long and difficult fight, though one in which the workers' movement starts out with a large majority of public opinion already in support.

But instead of tapping in to this support and recognising the need to step up the fight, the Labour leadership is once more passive and quiescent in the face of this attack.

Consensus

One reason is the tacit *economic consensus* between Labour and Tory leaders, so rightly exposed by Bryan Gould in the past two weeks.

Labour's John Smith and Gordon Brown are so scared of saying anything which might be seen as a spending commitment for a future Labour government that they are plunged into silence.

The Labour leadership has effectively given up the fight for full employment

and the welfare state because it has renounced any economic alternative to the crude free market ideology of the Tories.

The economic policies of the Labour leadership are a major obstacle to a sustained fightback against the attack on the welfare state.

Although it will be the struggle of public service workers and users of welfare services which will determine the outcome, the political and ideological fight over the economy is an important determinant of how that struggle proceeds.

A forthright socialist challenge to the capitalist market system would reinforce those fighting the Tory offensive.

It is now a key task for the left of the labour movement, inside and outside the Labour Party, to *break the economic consensus* over deflationary, anti-welfare policies.

There is widespread anger and frustration over Labour's feeble performance at every level of the labour movement.

The fight against the economic consensus must be taken *both* into the unions and the Labour Party, where even in this period, a broad audience for an alternative to free market economics can be found.

Teachers defeat Tory schools testing

By Chris Brooks

The government has made a humiliating climb-down over the compulsory tests built in to their reactionary National Curriculum.

The curriculum will be limited to English, maths and science up to the age of 14. Compulsory history and geography

A widely supported teachers' boycott of the tests has forced hated Education Secretary John Patten to accept Sir Ron Dearing's report criticising the proposals.

The report said that the scheme had 'gone over the top', reducing the amount of time teachers can spend helping children to learn.



Knuckles rapped: Patten

The collapse over the tests is a big blow against the National Curriculum, introduced in 1987. The curriculum stresses grammar, arithmetic and the rote learning of facts against previous attempts to give children the skills to critically assess the world around

them.

The collapse also registers a big victory for leftwingers in the teaching unions. One mark of the new confidence teachers have acquired is the election of Carole Regan, a leader of the Socialist Teachers Alliance, as Vice-President of the National Union of Teachers.

NUT members have also voted almost unanimously to keep up the boycott of the re-making tests.

It seems likely however that teachers will have to fight for the united boycott to remain. The NUSAWT and non-TUC ATL leaders will be eager to get back to normal. Socialists must support the teachers fight for the education our children deserve.

RMT left notches up key victory

By Jake Farrier

Long-time revolutionary Marxist Patrick Sikorski and two other class struggle leaders won positions on the National Executive of the RMT transport union last week.

Elected secretary of the union's London Transport District Council, Sikorski's victory comes shortly after Underground bosses attempted to sack him following a verbal altercation with a local manager after putting up a notice for a union meeting to discuss the sacking of another member.

Support for Pat and another victimised tube worker, Ray Stelzner, was widespread.

The RMT's appeal in their defence was circulated to working class organisations worldwide by Socialist Outlook and the support of the TUC's general council members was gained by RMT leader Jimmy Knapp.

Selzner and Sikorski were reinstated on the tube only after a four-to-one ballot victory led to a one-day strike on the Underground line they worked on, and the threat to ballot the whole network.

This is a welcome victory for the left at a time when victories are few and far between.

Close down Campsfield! The racist face of Fortress Britain

By Bill MacKeith
and Paul Clarke

ANTI-RACIST campaigners in the Oxford area warned at the end of last year that the opening of the new Campsfield detention centre was part of a new offensive against immigrants and asylum seekers.

Less than one month later their warnings were dramatically confirmed when officials detained 190 people out of 356 on a flight from Jamaica - and promptly shipped many of them to Campsfield.

But what surprised many was that the swoop was not against asylum seekers, but against

mere Christmas visitors! The 190 detained and the dozens later deported were accused not of what they had done, but what they might do - an 'intention' to overstay their visits.

Instead of spending Christmas with families and friends more than 100 spent it in detention. Welcome to Britain!

Visitors

The function of Campsfield and the detention system was thus revealed. It is to *intimidate* potential visitors and asylum seekers, especially from black countries.

If you are black and you try to come to Britain you stand a good chance of being banged up or deported. Imagine the furore if the plane had been full of

Americans, Canadians or even white South Africans.

The new 'Fortress Britain' policy is linked to the new 'Fortress Europe' strategy of the European Union.

Major and Home Secretary Howard are doing a double act with French interior minister Charles Pasqua, who has declared 'war' on immigrants and asylum seekers.

According to Pasqua, people should stay 'in their own country' and (what a joke) France should 'lead a crusade' to economically develop the third world.

The problem is the future hypothetical economic development of the third world is not much use to someone fleeing persecution in the here and now.



In November 1992 the government declared its intention to create 330 new places in detention centres for its stepped-up immigration campaign.

Profit-making

In addition to the 100 places at Haarmondsworth and 100 at Haslar near Southampton, the 200 new places at Campsfield, near Kidlington, Oxford, include places for men women and children. Built at a cost of £5m it will be run for profit by Group 4.

Just so people know what kind of people the centre is designed for, compasses have been installed so that Muslims will know that they are facing

Mecca.

The first detainees arrived at the new immigration prison on 29 November.

By the time the second minibus arrived, demonstrators were at the gates with placards saying 'Refugees Are Not Criminals' and 'Stop the Detentions'.

On 25 November a torchlit demonstration by some 50 people took place in central Oxford and 1000 leaflets saying 'Stop the Refugee Prison' distributed.

Support the campaign against Campsfield and the government's racist immigration policies. The Campaign against Campsfield can be contacted on 0865 724452.

Walls go up around Fortress Europe

NEW REGULATIONS are being brought in by the European Union in a drive to keep out people from black African and Caribbean countries, and Asia.

EU countries are establishing a 'negative list' of countries whose nationals will have to apply for a three-month visa in advance.

Whites exempt

Only a tiny number of predominantly white Commonwealth countries will be exempt.

The total number of countries on the 'negative list' is 127. High on the list are all black African countries, most Caribbean countries, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The move confirms the 'twin track' strategy of the Schengen agreement, signed by nine EC states in 1985.

This provides for much greater freedom of movement *within* the EU, but a determined attempt to keep out immigrants and black asylum seekers.

Study exposes how Tories fiddle figures

Jobless Britain

THE GOVERNMENT is lying about the real unemployment level. That was the conclusion of a detailed study made by Cambridge economics lecturer John Wells, published on 1 January.

Based on official statistics, including those of the International Labour Organisation, Wells showed that the number of people actively seeking work but unable to claim benefit is 1.08 million.

The government's 'official' unemployment figure is 2.92 million. So the real figure is around 4 million.

But says Wells, if people who have not sought work in the last four weeks are included, the figure is closer to 5 million. Those extra million are workers who did not seek work because, quite rationally, they believe there is none at their level of skills.

The 5 million figure included 306,000 people on government 'work' programmes, designed to massage the unemployment figures.

Since 1979 there have been 29 (!) changes in the way that unemployment figures are calculated, all of them designed to reduce the number of people officially classified as unemployed.



Timex strikers led the fight for jobs last year: who will follow in 1994?

Five million unemployed does not exhaust the toll of human misery caused by the recession and Tory policies however. Millions of people are now on part-time or doing short-term contract work.

Between 8-10 people face permanent insecurity, either unemployed or only precariously employed.

Hard on the heels of Wells' report came another, again by a Cambridge economist, which showed an almost 100 per cent match between the levels of crime and the levels of unemployment.

In particular, the number of burglaries exactly matches the changes in the level of unemployment among young men

between 17 and 25.

This new study is a dramatic refutation of John Major's claims that crime is caused by individual wickedness and has no social causes. It shows the hypocrisy of the 'self help' and 'back to basics' campaigns.

Crime is going up and the Tory solution is not to tackle its causes, but to put more people in prison.

Scandal

The scandal in current situation is the passivity and resignation of the labour and trade union leaders in the face of this toll of human misery. Even on the left there is no big campaign.

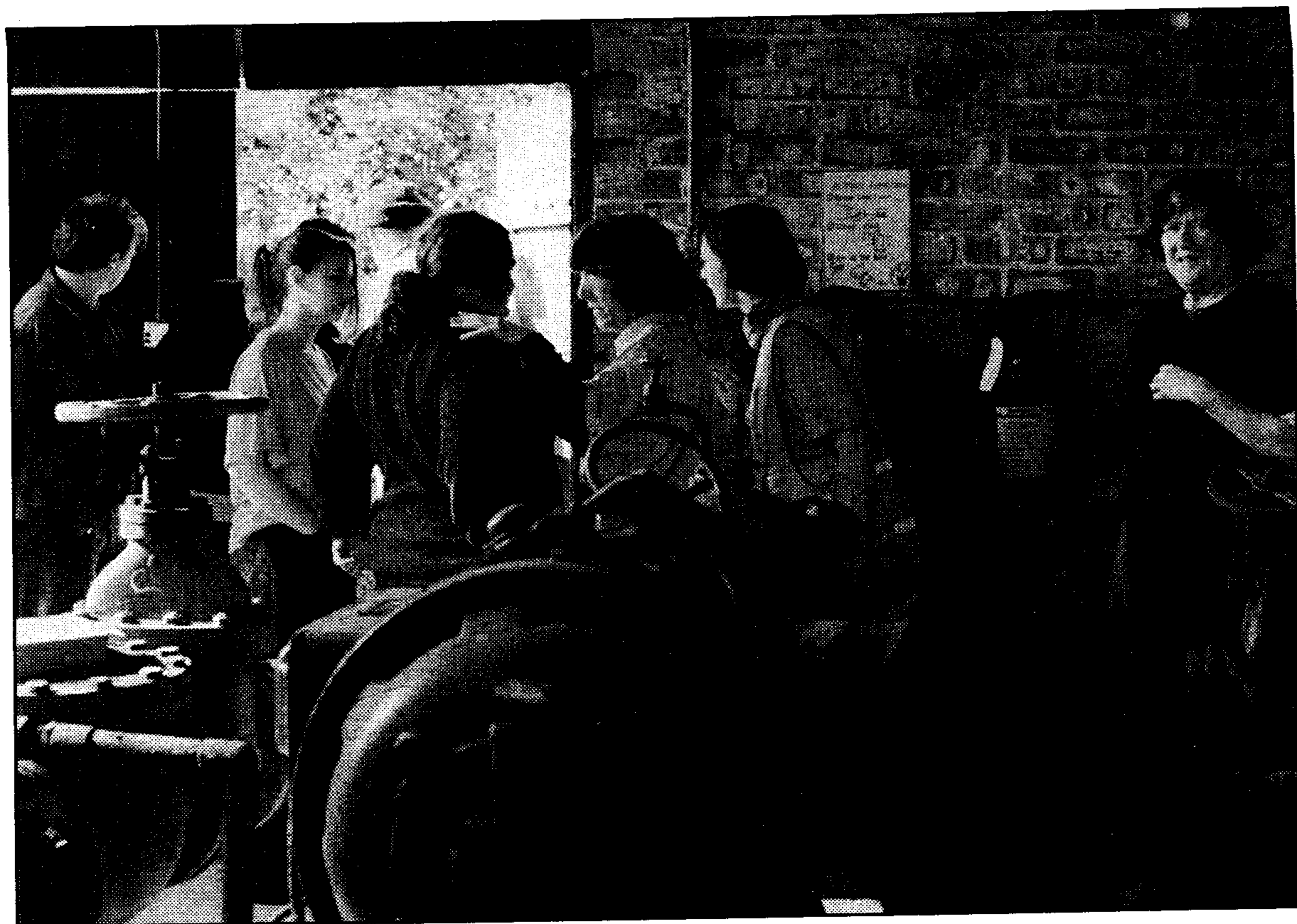
In various European countries there is an active debate on the reduction of the working week to 35, or 32 hours with no loss of pay.

In France a massive campaign ('Agir ensemble contre le chômage') has been launched, fighting for a 35-hour week, with the perspective of an eventual 30-hour week.

Capitalism permanently creates unemployment, which of course skyrockets during recessions and slumps. Only a socially-planned economy can overcome it.

The task for the labour movement now is to fight back against it, around demands for the reduction of the working week with no loss of pay.

HOME NEWS



Defending the machinery: the Parkside women held a rally in the pump room

Linking up to fight fascism

By Paul Wozny,
Secretary,
Southampton TUC

other main campaigns (eg ANL, YRE, AFA and ARA).

Labour Party

The campaign is open to affiliation from both Labour Party and trade union bodies.

The proposed constitution reserved half of the ten steering committee places, elected at conference, for Labour Party delegates.

This generated the most controversy. The proposal was agreed, but only two Labour delegates were willing to take up the positions.

London Chauvinism

The conference was dominated by local London Trade Union Councils. TUCs in the South East Region will be allowed to affiliate and send a delegate to the steering committee.

A proposed amendment to open affiliation to TUCs throughout the country was rejected out of hand, the chair would not even put the proposal to the vote. Several delegates referred to SERTUC as the 'London Region' of the TUC. It seemed that many delegates saw the BNP and racial violence as a local 'London problem'.

The campaign will be seeking affiliations from national trade unions. Delegates at the conference came from as far as Sheffield and Nottingham. The parochialism of comrades in the metropolis came as a big surprise.

March 19 demo

The key test of the new campaign will be in mobilising for the national demo. It must coordinate and support the work of local organisations. If it succeeds, it can go on to initiate further activities.

This campaign is too important to fail. Its success, no matter how limited, must be built on.

The TUC call for a national demonstration in the East End of London, on March 19 is a major step forward. The full weight of the labour movement must be mobilised against racism and fascism.

But we cannot rely on the TUC bureaucracy to organise anything larger than a press conference. Activists in union branches and Trade Union Councils will have to rally support for the demonstration.

Saturday 4 December saw the second 'Labour and Trade Union Conference; Fighting Racism and Fascism'. It was organised by Bexley Trades Union Council, which covers Welling, the site of the BNP HQ.

The conference, held at the TUC's Congress House, launched a new 'Labour and Trade Union Campaign against Racism and Fascism' (LTUCARF).

This is very welcome, if long overdue. There were approximately 100 delegates and observers, most representing local union branches and Trade Union Councils.

Speakers included Joe Gordon (TGWU Region 1), Nick Stone (Anti Fascist Action) and spokespeople from the South East Region TUC, the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism and Women United Against Racism. Speakers who failed to show were representatives of: the Labour Party, TUC General Council and Anti Racist Alliance.

The conference was refreshingly non-sectarian. No group dominated or tried to dominate the proceedings. Places were reserved on the Steering Committee for representatives of the

having been formally 'shut' for over six months.

Untenable

Lancs WAPC however, as well as the continuing support movement expect renewed attempts to close the pit for good in the very near future, since the present situation is untenable from a safety standpoint and cannot be allowed to continue.

Lancs WAPC have issued an appeal to the wider trade union and working class movement to help prevent this from happening. As well as continuing to raise money (the camp costs over £300 per week to maintain) they are asking for support for their vigil via workplace delegations, etc.

If you can help in any way then please come along to the Open Day on 18 January and/or get in touch with the camp on 0925 291799.

from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua as well as greetings from the Navaho nation of North American Indians.

Though Parkside's workforce has now gone, the Parkside Pit Camp has nevertheless become an active symbol of working class resistance to the Tories' and bosses onslaught on jobs, services and living standards in general, representing the determination of working people not to be bullied into submission and to fight on regardless of the difficulties.

Machinery

The Pit Camp's most important achievement had been to prevent the dismantling and removal of much of the expensive mine machinery and the capping of the pit shaft which would have ended the life of the Colliery.

This means Parkside may still resume coaling despite

Pit camp fights on

By Steve Hall
(Leigh, Atherton
and Tyldesley
Miners' Support
Group)

ON JANUARY 18 1994 Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures will be staging a special Open Day to 'celebrate' their year long, twenty four hour, seven days a week presence at Lancashire's last remaining deep mine colliery at Parkside, Newton-le-Willows.

Throughout this period their pit Camp has received tremendous support from rank and file miners, the NUM and the working class in general.

Indeed such has been the breadth of this support, that it has received delegations

Tories dumped in Barrow

By Jake Farrier

TWO Barrow-in-Furness by-elections have recorded massive swings against the Tory-run council.

As well as suffering from the Tory decline nationally, the council did nothing to prevent the closure of the town's shipyards.

Tenants

The council's plan to hand over council housing to a housing association was rejected by a tenants' ballot. An attempt to close the town's women's refuge produced a 10,000-strong petition organised by women who hadn't previously been ac-

tive in politics.

The electorate overturned a 250 Conservative majority in Parkside ward and massively reduced the majority in Roosecourt where left-wing Trades Council secretary Gary McDonough was the Labour candidate.

McDonough had played a leading role in the tenants' struggle to keep the housing stock in social hands. His campaign broke a 'ban' from Labour's regional office against using loud-speaker vans, a traditional tool in British elections.

Now the Tories are held in power by two independents, one of whom was elected as a Labour candidate and previous Mayor!

Age of consent: urgent campaign launched

By Peter Purton

THERE IS likely to be a vote on a proposal to equalise the age of consent for gay men in the week starting 17 January.

There will be an amendment to the government's Criminal Justice Bill launched by Edwina Currie and other Tories, backed by an all-party group of MPs, which will bring down the age of consent for gay men from its present 21 (as a result of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act) to equality with heterosexuals at 16.

This follows months of preparation and lobbying by the lesbian and gay rights organisation Stonewall.

An urgent campaign has been launched to attempt to win the vote.

To generate pressure and publicity, there will be a lobby of Parliament and public meeting in the Grand Committee Room on the evening of Monday 17 January. All supporters of equality are being urged to take part.

Advance

Though the issue itself is of immediate concern only to gay men - there is no specific age of consent for lesbians - there is no doubt that success in this vote would be a fantastic advance for the lesbian and gay rights struggle.

Crucial to victory will be

solid support from Labour MPs. Despite absolutely categorical Party Conference Policy in support of equality at 16, a substantial number of Labour MPs - including some on the left - seem to be shaky on the issue.

It is therefore important that pressure is brought to bear from within the labour movement to ensure that there is a maximum turnout from Labour MPs, in support of full equality.

The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights has thrown itself into this task - but success can only be achieved by ALL socialists mobilising in the next few days to try to bring about what would be a remarkable victory against the current reactionary consensus.

Union chiefs step in to Labour policy vacuum

Gould campaign confronts Smith's Trappist tendency

By Harry Sloan

FED UP with Labour's abject failure to present any coherent challenge to Tory 'market' economics, union chiefs, MPs and CLPs have thrown their support behind Bryan Gould's new pressure group, the Full Employment Forum.

Gould, heavily defeated in his 1992 bid for the Labour leadership, has clearly struck a chord of popular anger and resentment at the constipated silence which constitutes Labour's present economic policy.

His call for an end to the damaging economic 'consensus' with the Tories will be as widely echoed in the party and trade union rank and file as it is feared by the Trappist tendency that surrounds John Smith.

Under the banner of 'closed for modernisation', this group has pursued a tactic of constant retreat on all economic questions since the general election defeat.

Silenced

The extent of the yawning gulf that has supplanted any serious economic policy can be deduced from the sudden silence of Labour's new Employment spokesman John Prescott, who has discovered how hard it is to challenge Tory policy when you have none of your own.

The modernisers' stance is best typified by Peter Mandelson MP, who as Kinnock's right-hand served as the architect of two successive electoral disasters.

He has written to the *Guardian* to warn that any discussion of possible alternative economic policies should be gagged, since the Tories could latch on to suggestions for increased borrowing or public spending and use them against Labour. Careless talk could cost votes, warns the man who helped lose Labour millions.

The response from Smith's circle of 'modernisers' to the initial manifesto issued by the Full Employment Forum was equally non-political, branding it as some kind of personal attack on John Smith.

What is the heresy of Gould's new pressure group? Far from a marxist manifesto or any challenge to reformist politics, it is in a sense a 'back to basics' call, urging a Labour government to use 'all the instruments of macro-economic policy in order to promote full employment'.



Interrupting the Trappist conspiracy - Bryan Gould

The scale of the response to Gould's relatively modest policy initiative shows that even on this front, confidence in John Smith's team of ditherers is waning fast.

Among the early recruits to the FEF are 35 Labour MPs including leading members of the Campaign Group and three members of the shadow cabinet. 50 CLPs have lent their backing, and on Christmas Eve the FEF's funds were boosted by the official support of Britain's third biggest union, the GMB, which joined three other national unions in affiliating.



Edmonds (centre) suffered defeat at 1993 conference: now taking revenge

This move by GMB leader John Edmonds is just the latest symptom of the anger and frustration at Labour's feeble performance that is running through the whole trade union movement.

Edmonds, like TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris, is furious that after defeating the unions on the OMOV issue at last year's Labour conference, John Smith's leadership has heeded none of the pointed criticisms about its lack of profile, and continued to retreat before the Tories.

No say, no pay

Union chiefs last summer warned that a Smith victory on

OMOV could result in a union response of 'no say, no pay', in which they take a more independent line on the funding of the Labour Party.

Since that conference, the traditionally right wing and staunchly 'new realist' GMB has expressed its displeasure by withdrawing its £500,000 a year support for the Trade Unions For Labour electoral machine.

It has also joined with the TGWU and UNISON to back a November conference in defence of the welfare state called by left MP Ken Livingstone, before now throwing its support

and cash backing into an unofficial policy forum. These decisions underline the isolation of Smith's 'modernisers' from the organised sections of the labour movement. But the emergence of the FEF as a rival pole of policy also raises doubts on its character and the extent to which it can offer a real alternative.

The party has strayed so far to the right of what were mainstream left reformist notions of a 'planned capitalism' as popularised in the Alternative Economic Strategy of the early 1980s, that even Gould's basically Keynesian call for public spending to pump-prime a new



Sharing collective constipated silence: Prescott

economic expansion is seen as dangerously radical.

The fact that such policies would bring a Labour government into conflict with the Maastricht agreement and the EU, and would risk a further devaluation of sterling means that they go far beyond the boundaries of Labour's modernisers.

Falling short

But the policies put forward so far fall well short of full-blooded socialism. In fact the FEF proposals do not go as far as suggesting any extension of public ownership - leaving open the question of how the newly-expanded economy could be controlled in the interests of working people.

It is not clear whether and to what extent the FEF will encourage or allow political debate within its ranks. It seems more likely that union leaders like Edmonds, not best known for encouraging democratic debate in the GMB, will be keen to limit any such development, and to use the FEF as a lever to force the official leadership into a more aggressive, campaigning posture.

Open up

However there may be opportunities for affiliating CLPs and union bodies to press for the Forum to set up a more open policy-making process in which wider issues and an explicitly socialist perspective can be introduced.

Though Gould has appeared in the national press and on television launching the new initiative, the campaign work of the FEF for 1994 seems to hinge on a year of 'regional seminars' targeted at existing Labour

Party members and trade unionists.

Either way, the fact that the silence has at last been broken, and the issue of an alternative policy put at the centre of discussion must improve the prospects for the beleaguered left fighting on for socialism in the Labour Party.

AEEU faces split danger

The giant right wing union which merged engineering workers with the old electricians' and plumbers EETPU in 1992 is in deep crisis as top bureaucrats jockey for advantage.

The mega-union is divided on how its annual conference should be run.

The original merger proposed a hybrid conference which would be a large (800-delegate) conference like those of the old EETPU, but unlike the EETPU would be composed only of lay delegates and would have policy-making powers.

When this was blocked by the electricians' leaders, engineering members stormed out of a joint executive meeting.

EETPU leader Paul Gallagher is due to take over the merged union in May: but almost two years after the merger there is still no progress on a new rule book, and the two sides are at loggerheads on many issues.

LABOUR PARTY

Downing Street Declaration Irish struggle in danger

By David Coen

IN BOTH Britain and Irish Republic the 'thirty year rule' governs the revelation of secret documents.

So about this time every year we are fed carefully edited snippets about events in both countries 30 years ago. In Britain it's the Profumo affair; in Ireland, the visit of John F. Kennedy, who until fairly recently shared a place of honour on many an Irish mantelpiece with the Pope.

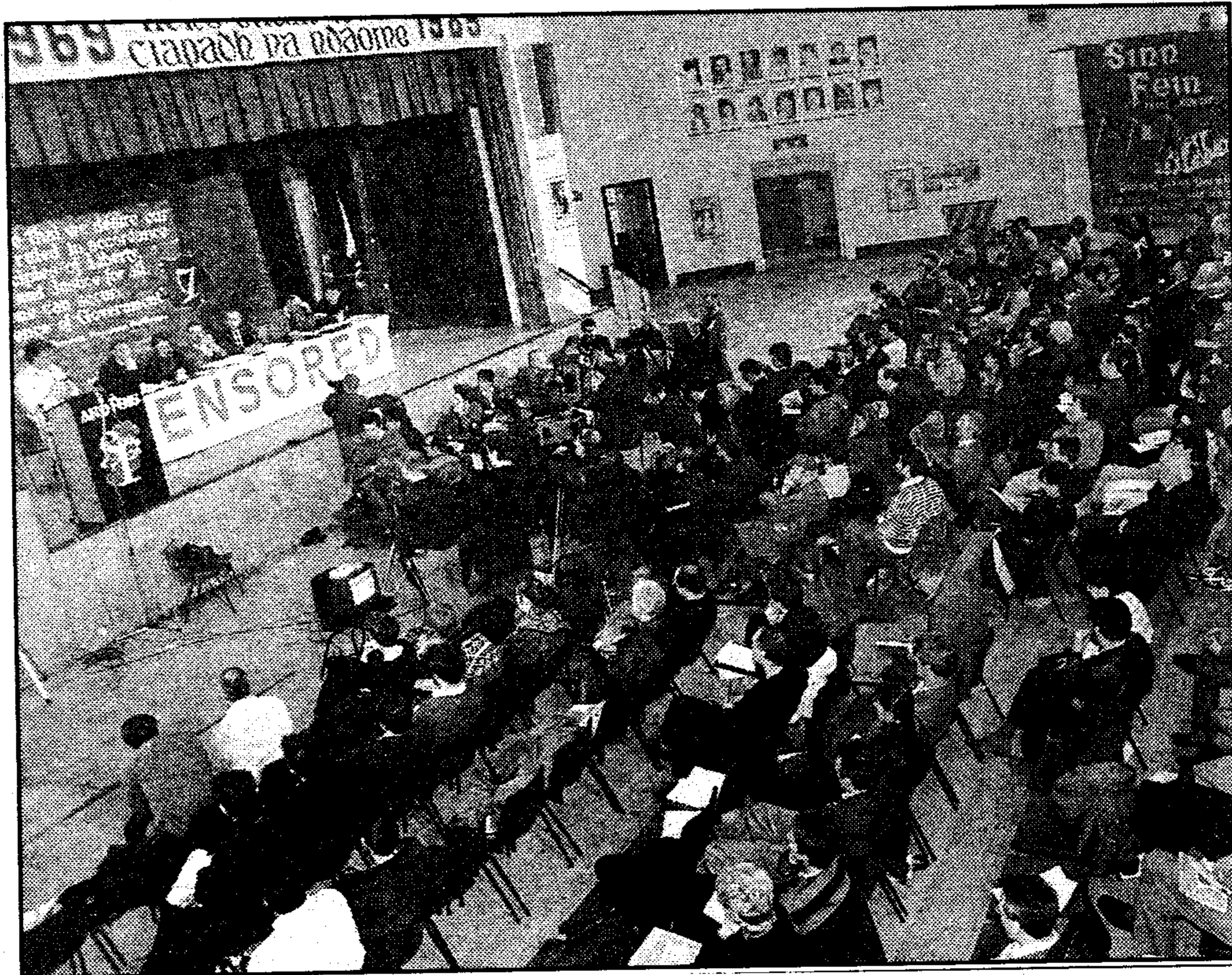
One of Kennedy's worries when he visited in 1963, according to the latest gleanings from Dublin, was the pressure he was being put under by the Fianna Fail Government to get the British to state publicly that 'they were not opposed to the unity of Ireland'.

The Major/Reynolds Downing Street declaration barely goes beyond the position which Kennedy told Dublin that he could not deliver in 1963.

Island

True, the British now state they have no 'selfish strategic or economic interest in Ireland' and apparently concede for the first time that it is for 'the people of the island of Ireland' to decide on the future of the whole country.

But the declaration puts the right of the Unionists to self-determination above the rights of the majority on the island. The Unionist veto is the lockstop on Britain's continued rule in part



Sinn Fein 1989: the historic weakening of Irish nationalism now offers gains to British

of Ireland.

It is for this reason that Sinn Fein and, in a more muffled way, Dublin, have been trying to edge the British towards taking a more persuasive role in bringing about Irish unity.

There is absolutely no chance that the British will do so and this is the reason why Dublin has been offering some additional sweeteners to the republicans to get them to stop fighting, including talk of an amnesty and de-militarisation.

The repeal of the notorious Section 31 which banned Sinn Fein from the media in the

South is another enticement.

The Hume/Adams talks and the process leading to the Downing Street declaration undoubtedly sprang not so much from a war weariness on the part of republicans as the perception that it was impossible to force the British out militarily.

Weakest

The problem is that the republicans are politically at their weakest in 10 years and are relying on Dublin to negotiate with the British on their behalf.

This is only partly due to the fact that Hume/Adams Agreement was hijacked by Dick Spring for Dublin's own purposes.

In every decade since Partition in 1921 there has been a military uprising against what Charles Haughey called a 'failed political entity' - the Six County statelet. Both the IRA and the British recognised early in the present phase that a decisive military victory by either side was impossible.

The IRA have traditionally been distrustful of politics and considered the military campaign as the 'cutting edge' against the British. But their present predicament ruthlessly exposes this political weakness.

Whatever the bravery, resourcefulness and determination of the IRA fighters, they can't drive the British out through military means alone;

recognition of that is one of the reasons for the current talks.

A correct political strategy would have involved attempting to mobilise sufficient forces in Ireland (and Britain) which could achieve that. The military campaign too often clashed with the needs of politics, especially when civilians were killed or injured.

Sinn Fein has not developed a programme for the whole island, which would appeal to workers in the South as well as to loyalist workers in the North.

On social questions, such as divorce, contraception and abortion, the republicans allow themselves to be portrayed as conservative and backward nationalists and they didn't offer a rounded out solution to the crisis which would appeal to workers, the unemployed and emigrants.

Little support

Their share of the vote in recent general elections in the South never rose above two per cent.

The worst mistake was the failure to challenge Fianna Fail because they assumed that, in the end, Fianna Fail or, at least its base, was on their side. A leading Sinn Fein member spoke in London recently of the 'nationalist family', embracing, presumably, everyone from the IRA to Fianna Fail and sections of the Catholic Church.

The implication of this kind of thinking is that family members look after each other and that betrayal by Albert Reynolds would be unthinkable.

The signs of Fianna Fail capitulation have been there for a long time. Former Fianna Fail leader Haughey's silence on the hunger strikes, his implementation of the Anglo-Irish agreement having opposed it in opposition, his changes in extradition law to placate the British, his inaction on the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four and other such cases were sufficient warning that, despite his republican reputation, he would not confront the British.

Distraction

Haughey was willing when necessary to make republican noises but that was only to distract attention from the economic crisis. Because they didn't address that issue, Sinn Fein were treated as being irrelevant to the concerns of the working class.

As a strategy it is a disaster for Sinn Fein to entrust the Dublin Government to negotiate with the British on its behalf.

The class interests of the Dublin Government are totally opposed to those of the working class people in the nationalist areas in the North.

The as yet unpublished Hume/Adams Agreement seems to contain Adam's agreement on some version of the Unionist veto, probably along the lines of John Hume's position that the most important division in Ireland is among its people and that therefore Irish unity and the ending of partition depends on the prior agreement of the Unionists.

The logic of this position leads Hume to argue that were it not for IRA violence, the British army would have no reason to remain.

Further, he claims that if the IRA laid down its arms, the British would dismantle their fortified border posts and the border would disappear. Partition itself is down to the republicans!

At best, this kind of thinking would be acceptable in a post-British Ireland, when provision would obviously have to be made for the proper representation of the Unionists at



What is Paisley's price for a deal?

ANALYSIS

"Partly because of the historic weakening of Irish nationalism, the British seem to be on a 'win/win' roll. If the republicans reject the Downing Street declaration the British have at least got Dublin on side. If they accept, then the price paid by Britain - a mere form of words - is far less than they originally reckoned on paying."



Mass movement in support of Hunger Strikers marked last serious republican attempt to build in southern working class

every level in the new state. But you cannot have self determination for the Six Counties separately from the Twenty Six Counties.

The Unionist veto is the Irish foot-in-the door which prevents Irish self determination. Hume's 'divided people' argument is partitionist and anti-self-determination. Any settlement based on it would lead inevitably back to a re-jigged Unionist statelet.

Boxed in

It looks as though the republicans have been boxed in. Massive public expectations of peace will make it extremely hard for the IRA to reject the peace proposals.

The greatest danger of all is evident in a throwaway remark by British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd. It might not matter, he said, if a Dublin/London agreement couldn't be sold to the IRA.

The hidden British agenda is obviously to split the 'pan nationalist alliance' in which Sinn Fein places so much faith and draw Dublin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party into a combined repression of the republicans. The threats by Douglas Hurd have been echoed from Dublin.

Politically and economically weakened as they are, the Dublin government has little interest in Irish unity. Their main concern, apart from the cost - spending more per head on security than the British do - is to ensure that the republicans do not ignite the political opposition in the South.

Playing with republican rhetoric to distract attention from the economic crisis is seen increasingly as bad form, if not downright dangerous.

EU funds

The new mood music in Dublin is 'modernisation', the orientation is European and the EU funds necessary to fend off the social crisis.

At the same time, Dublin's perception is that British methods of attempting to defeat republicanism are too crude and calls for a more realistic approach provided by themselves.

Partly because of the historic

weakening of Irish nationalism the British seem to be on a 'win/win' roll. If the republicans reject the Downing Street declaration the British have at least got Dublin on side. If they accept, then the price paid by Britain - a mere form of words - is far less than they originally reckoned on paying.

No interest

While the Downing Street declaration claimed the British had no strategic or economic interest in Ireland, there was no mention of their political interest - a point made by several Tory backbenchers in the House of Commons.

Policy towards Ireland is dictated by a number of key, political, considerations. Firstly, a forced withdrawal is unthinkable - there would be uncomfortable parallels with Portugal after its retreat from Africa.

While the end of the Cold War means that the strategic reasons for occupation are less important, any retreat could be treated as weakness and therefore imperil Britain's standing as a world power.

And while the economic reasons for staying are in fact negative, holding the Six Counties enables the British to exert a degree of control over the whole island.

Rumblings

The rumblings on the Tory right have so far been muffled but should Unionist support start to waver there is a fair chance they will start shouting 'betrayal'.

The orientation of the withdrawal movement in Britain could now cause serious problems. It has generally oriented towards Irish rather than to British politics.

The slogans may have been different to those of the republicans but the politics was often similar.

The danger now is that such a close identification with Sinn Fein could now divert the core of activists around the Troops Out Movement away from its main purpose which is to build support for British withdrawal and for self determination for Ireland.

Spanish workers prepare for general strike

From Patrick Baker in Barcelona

SOUNDS familiar. Thousands of workers booted out every day, their rights disappearing like snow out of a ditch.

This was the generous present that workers in the Spanish state could expect from multinationals such as Volkswagen/Seat as they headed for the festive season, ably aided by our Socialist government.

But are they sitting back and taking it? No. Far from it.

But first a little background. Last year's elections returned a minority Socialist (PSOE) administration, with the crypto-Tory Partido Popular (PP) a few percentage points behind.

The PSOE, headed by Felipe Gonzalez, generally rely on the right wing Catalan Nationalists of Convergencia y Unio for their majority, though on the rare occasions when they implement a progressive measure they don't object to support from the Izquierda Unida (United Left, of which more later).

Despite much scepticism born of bitter experience, most on the left breathed a sigh of relief after the elections. Spain was, at least, not going to get a dose of Thatcherism a la Aznar (the PP's leader).

And the Izquierda Unida, a hard-left regroupment dominated by the Communist Party, did get 15-odd per cent of the vote.

Since then the Socialist administration has fulfilled the worst nightmares of the left, launching a bitter offensive against workers' rights.

And the justification for these attacks would warm the cockles of John Major's heart. Spain is deep in recession, with 23 per cent unemployed - so obviously the only way out is to make it much easier to sack workers, to employ workers with no rights to social security, to employ young workers for a pittance.

Yes, in that respect there are marked similarities with Britain. But there they end. Because rather than the feeble moan that one could expect from John

Comisiones Obreras (Workers' Commissions, Communist led) and the UGT (previously Socialist).

A day of action called by the two federations in December was massively followed, with demonstrations of tens, and sometimes over a hundred, of thousands right across the Spanish state.

Since then the unions, along with the UL, have been conducting a mass campaign for a general strike on January 27 - 'the only way to get these attacks withdrawn'.

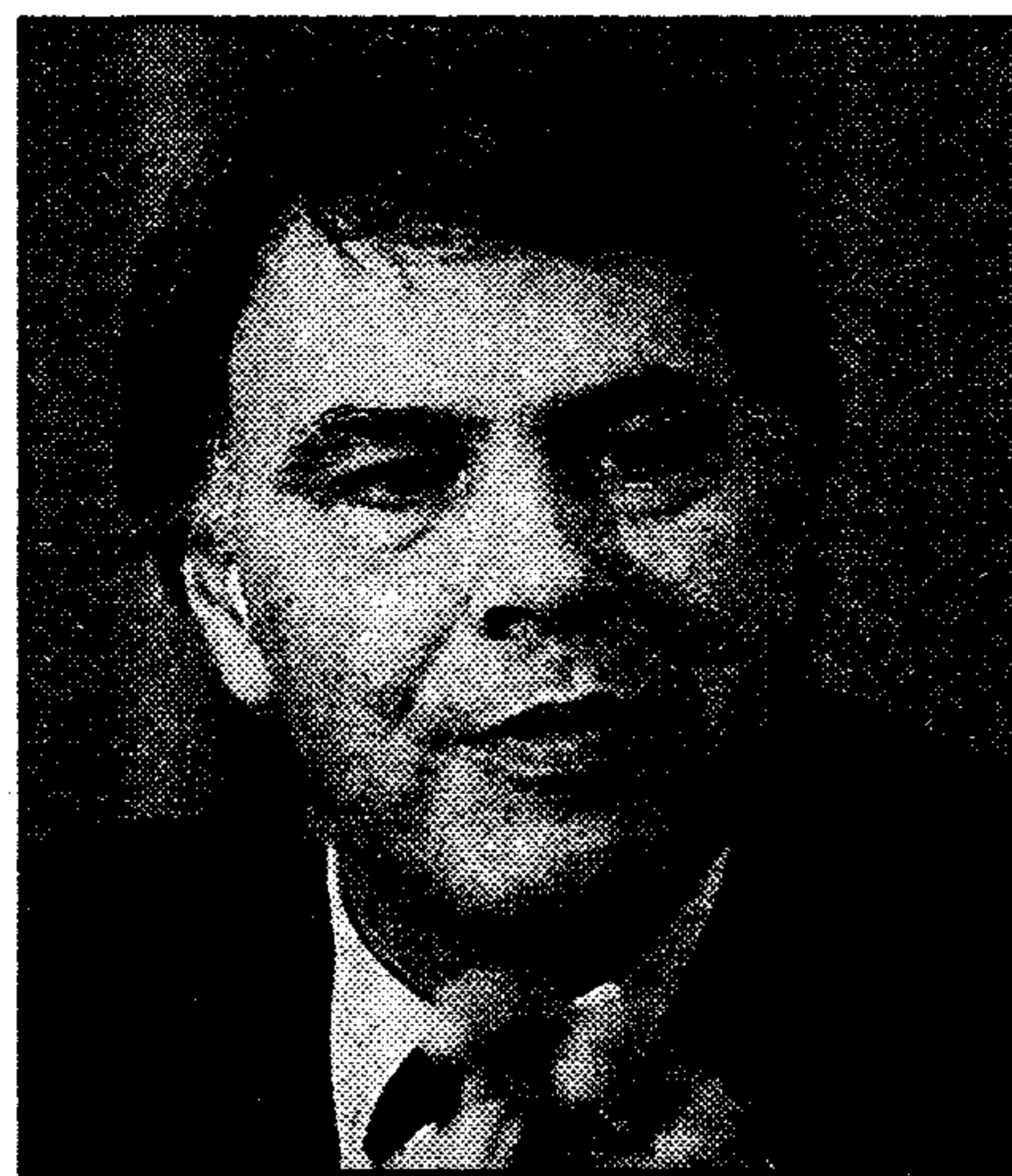
Polls shortly before Christmas revealed that supporters of all parties, PP included, thought that the strike would be a big success.

So what lies ahead? Well, the campaign of action and the general strike are clearly a very positive response from the workers' movement to Gonzalez's attacks.

Whether they will be sufficient to beat back the austerity offensive is hard to say. But what is as plain as the nose on your face is that attacks from both government and employers and would come thicker and faster if the workers' movement sat back and did nothing.

The unfortunate aspect of the situation is that there is now no state-wide far left organisation to build politically on these struggles.

Though the UL have played a very positive role thus far, the recent self-dissolution of most of the Izquierda Alternativa, the only substantial far left organisation that organised across the Spanish state, was particularly ill-timed.



'Socialist PM Felipe Gonzalez

Smith et al in response to such measures, there have been a wave of mass demonstrations which are shortly to be followed by a one-day general strike.

Strike call

The first call for such a response was issued back in Autumn by Julio Anguita, leader of the United Left (UL). This call was rapidly taken up by both main union federations - the

WORLD NEWS

"We can't tell you how important these three lorries are for us"

BOSNIA CONVOY

JENNY MEES, member of the Workers Socialist Party, Belgian section of the Fourth International, recently returned from Bosnia. She had reached Tuzla as part of the International Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy. She will be visiting Britain in the next few weeks to speak at a series of International Workers Aid meetings. We publish here an interview she conducted with SELIM BESLAGIC, mayor of Tuzla.

Jenny Mees: What do you think about the current situation in Bosnia?

Selim Besagic: The world refuses to face the truth, the world refuses to call to account the aggressors and war criminals, the world avoids saying that Radovan Karadzic (leader of the Bosnian Serbs) and Mate Boban (leader of the Bosnian Croats) are fascists who want to nail the Bosnian people to the stake.

No, public opinion puts the aggressor and the victim on the same level. The Bosnian people, and especially the Bosnian Muslims, are threatened with death. They are the victims, not one of the three warring factions which are referred to



Jenny Mees, next to Mayor of Tuzla (centre, with glasses)

nowadays. In Bosnia all the people want to, and can, live in peace.

Tuzla is the proof of this. We have no other choice: our population has lived together for centuries and is very mixed. Because of the war life has become so hard I fear that even here extremism can gain ground.

The nationalist parties want to claim that the war, starvation and deprivation are the results of our policies and that our ideas are therefore wrong. But we know that we are acting correctly and the multi-ethnic composition of the population demands such policies. The world must know the truth about Tuzla and help us.

JM: What is the biggest problem for the region?

SB: Hunger. People are hungry and, if the situation does not improve, the weak and the poor are going to die through a combination of hunger and

cold.

Because of the blockade no convoys are getting through. You started out with fifteen lorries and only three reached our city. No other civilian convoy has been able to get through.

We have no diesel and therefore no transport, which also makes the situation very difficult.

JM: Our convoy led a campaign to open up the so-called Northern Route (the Posavina corridor). Do you think that this route is possible?

SB: Yes, it is a logical route! But there are other possibilities, through Banja Luka or Belgrade for example.

But everything comes down to a question of political will and the relationship of military forces. The best way of saving our people now is, however, to open up our airport in Tuzla.

"Our conception is that all the refugees must be able to return to their own region. We do not accept that frontiers can be drawn by force, we don't accept a peace which deprives people of their home"

JM: We tried to force a way through the Northern Route. That cost us a lot of time, energy and money. Perhaps it was a mistake or stupid to do that?

SB: No, it was brave! We are pleased that you gave this issue its pressing political importance, that you have exposed the facts about this route.

The Bosnian people are equally brave and if we ever decided to force a way through this passage it would not be a question of stupidity but of exceptional bravery.

JM: Tuzla now has 70,000 refugees, particularly Muslims coming from central and eastern Bosnia. Does that not create tensions now that the ethnic composition of Tuzla has been changed?

SB: The problem of the refugees is not on such a scale that it has changed the original ethnic composition of our region. But, of course, there is a massive shortage of housing and food for these people. A large part of the refugees are housed with families.

Only the refugees get aid from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees but for some months only 20 to 30 percent of their needs have been met. Our own population gets no aid from anyone.

The city administration has two bakeries and, in the past, we also had several kitchens. For the moment, however, they are all closed because we no longer have the basic necessities.

Our conception is that all the refugees must be able to return to their own region.

British campaigning stepped up

AN OPEN planning meeting of International Workers Aid in Britain was held on December 18 in the Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre.

The aim of the meeting was to elect a committee to run the work in Britain pending a full conference of the campaign.

The meeting took a report from the international meeting in Copenhagen

and discussed its various proposals.

It was agreed:

* To organise a second Tuzla Airport protest in Britain - on January 29.

In London the protest will be on Friday evening (28) because of the clash with the Bloody Sunday demonstration.

Campaigns outside London will take their own decisions on the date.

* To organise a speak-

ing tour in Britain with Jenny Mees from IWA in Belgium who reached Tuzla with the convoy.

* To organise lorries onto the IWA convoy scheduled to leave in March.

* To raise money for one of the vehicles to be based in Split.

* To support Education/Student Aid.

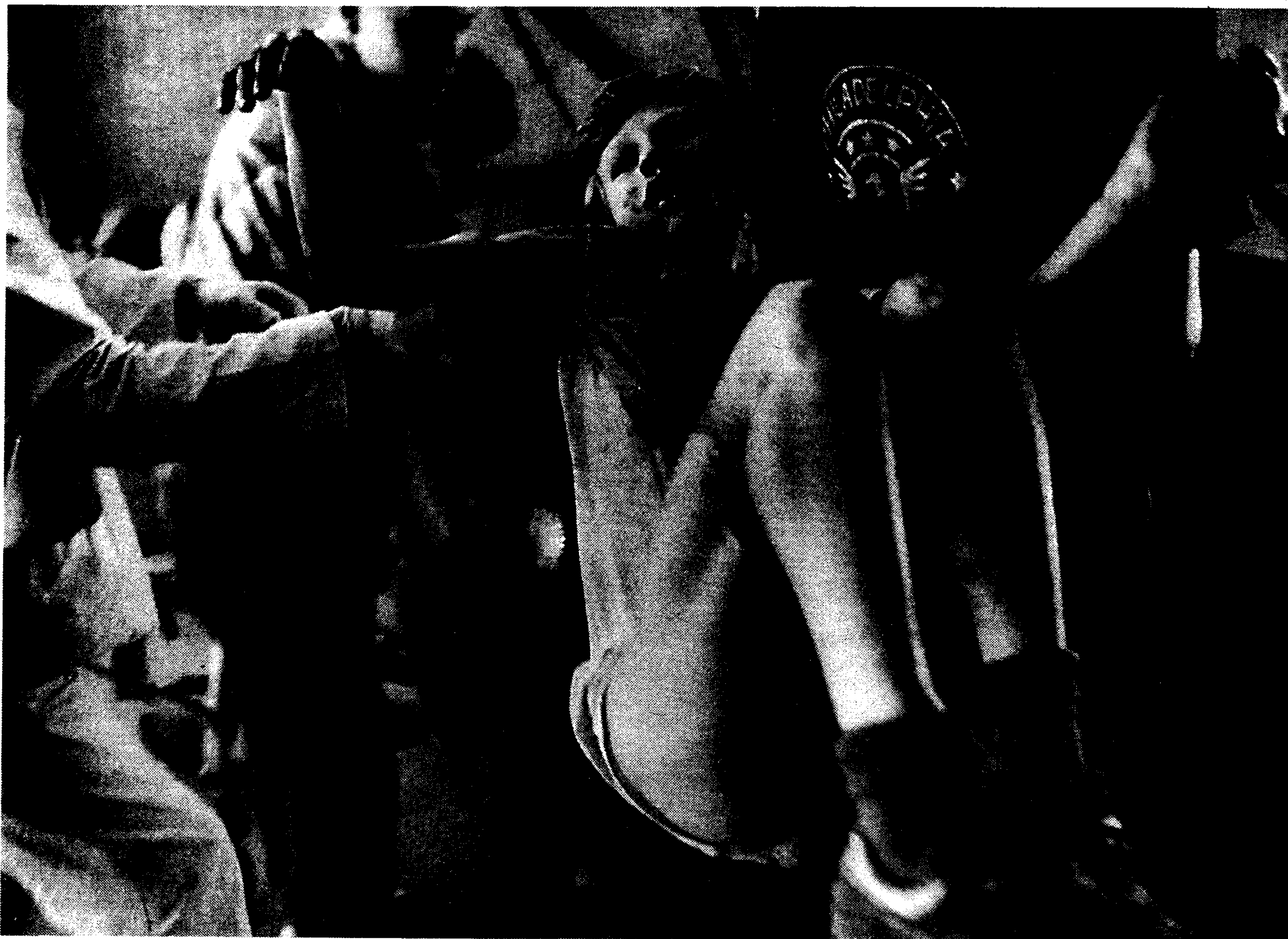
* To ensure that International Workers Aid has a strong women's perspec-

tive and campaigns around issues which effect women in ex-Yugoslavia.

Committee

The meeting elected an interim steering committee and appointed a series of working groups to take responsibility for the various aspects of the campaign.

The next meeting of the steering committee will be held on January 22 at the IWA office.



BOSNIA CONVOY

We do not accept that frontiers can be drawn by force, we don't accept a peace which deprives people of their home!

JM: What do you think of the way in which the peace negotiations are progress-

ing? You are, yourself, an important participant...

SB: Well, no war has ever been stopped because of a slip of paper. What matters are the military relationship of forces. No lasting peace is

possible if it is unjust.

We don't accept having to negotiate with war criminals, we don't want to find ourselves on an equal footing with war criminals because we are legally elected. We want peace, we are in favour of negotiations, but we

don't want to sign a peace which will mean the death of our Bosnian population.

JM: You mentioned the airport at Tuzla which is usable but cannot be opened. International Workers Aid led an action in several countries on 11 November to demand its opening. What are your views on this?

SB: I am very pleased. Everyone here has been waiting for more than a year for the opening of our airport.

I hope that you can put political pressure on your MPs and

governments, and that this question can reverberate throughout your media and so become a burning political issue. I also want to say this.

You arrived here with three lorries. It's not much and will in no way relieve our distress here. But the quantity isn't important. What counts is moral support. We cannot tell you enough how important these three lorries are for us.

For everything you have done I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish you a good journey home and hope it will be easier than getting here. Goodbye until better times.

International plans for next convoy

INTERNATIONAL Workers Aid held its first international meeting in Copenhagen on December 11.

Attended by delegations from Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, the meeting also received messages of support from campaigns and supporters in Holland, France, Italy and the Czech republic.

Delegates heard a report from the successful IWA convoy which reached Tuzla in November and reports on campaigning in the individual countries.

Jenny Mees from Belgium, who was with the convoy through to Tuzla, reported on the meetings she had had with women's organisations. Women make up the majority of refugees and have faced rape as a method of ethnic cleansing. IWA resolved to campaign on the effects of the war on women.

There were detailed discussions on the logistics of further convoys over the next few months.

The campaign will establish an office in Croatia to organise aid convoys and to monitor possible aid routes. Initially this will

be in Split because the Southern route from Split will probably offer the best opportunity for non-military convoys towards the end of the winter.

Other routes will be used if there are changes in the political/military situation or if an opening to get through comes earlier.

Special vehicles

The meeting discussed detailed costing of getting aid through to central Bosnia. Specialised vehicles which can cope with the terrain and weather conditions are being purchased for the journey across the mountains. This means raising a lot of money.

Resources are being raised in a number of countries for convoys to leave for Split in March. Even after the vehicles are purchased, transporting each tonne of aid from Split to Tuzla will cost about £120.

The campaign is appealing for £25,000 to meet these logistical requirements.

Other aspects of the campaign for working class solidarity with the Bosnian people were

also discussed.

Central to this is the role of the UN - which, as has become increasingly clear, is a part of Western efforts to force the Bosnians into an unjust carve-up of their country. Their continuing refusal to open Tuzla airport to humanitarian aid shipments being the clearest example.

The airport is the fastest and most effective route for aid into central Bosnia in the present conditions and there is a growing awareness that it remains closed by a political decision and from a practical point of view could be opened at any time.

With this in mind the meeting called a second European wide day of action on the opening of Tuzla airport for Saturday January 29 (in Britain this will be on Friday 28).

Also planned is a conference of trade unions, women's and anti-war organisations from ex-Yugoslavia and other parts of Europe in the spring or early summer to be preceded, if possible, by a European speaking tour of trade unionists from ex-Yugoslavia.

Watch *Socialist Outlook* for further details.

Tuzla students appeal for help

STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
MINING - GEOLOGICAL FACULTY
TUZLA UNIVERSITY

Respected Colleagues!

We address you from Tuzla, the centre of north-eastern Bosnia, which is at the same time the most powerful mining centre of our country.

Soon, the whole two years will pass since the war has begun in this area. The war affected all of us, including students and our faculty. Besides, faculty is still in function. Professors and students still work hard and learn in order to use their acquired knowledge in after war industrial development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this difficult time, our work is getting to be worse, because we are faced with a lot of problems.

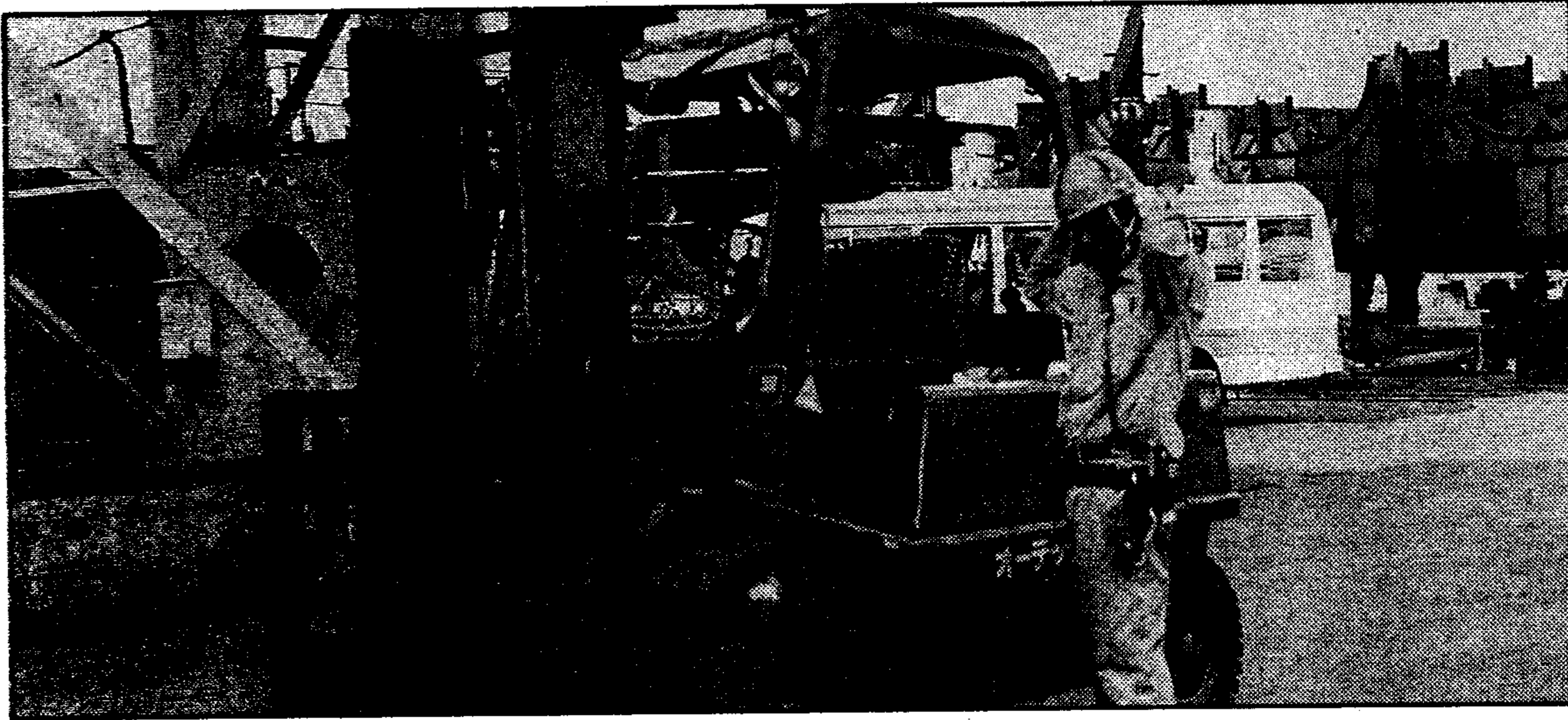
Our town and country are kept in blockade from all sides, so we are not in the position to make a contact with the outside world.

In this way we would like to accomplish all kinds of co-operation with you.

As we are not able to provide the new books and literature journals we kindly ask you to help us as much as you can.

Our financial situation is tragic so we ask you for support.

Our address is: **Student's Association,
Mining - Geological Faculty,
Bratstva 1 Jedinstva,
75 000 Tuzla,
phone: (075) 238 552
239 492**



US victory prepares trade war GATTastrophe?

By Chris Brooks

THE APPROVAL of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) marks a great victory for America's billionaire families in their fight to defend their share of the world market. Because of the economic decline of the US, US share of world trade has declined dramatically.

In 1970, the US produced 13 per cent more than Japan and the countries now in the European Union (EU). Today the US produces one-third less than those competitors, leaving US trade with its highest trade deficit for several years.

Over the last decade, new trade blocs have built up. Japan's investments in Asia have tripled. In 1983, it invested just \$2 billion, mainly in Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. Last year it invested \$6 billion, mainly in Indonesia, southern China and Malaysia.

At the same time the now-unified Germany is the heart of the EU and has influence throughout eastern Europe. The EU and the Japanese-dominated Asian bloc are the major challengers to the US-dominated North American bloc.

The battle over world trade is a product of inability of big capitalist powers to find a way out of the economic recession which has now lasted for 20 years. The recession has hit Europe hard. Germany exports fell 10 per cent last year, and production fell six per cent.

Devaluation of EU currencies has hit US and Japanese exports, but the failure of European Monetary Union has put the EU countries at a disadvantage.

Without the unified economic policy that EMU was needed for, the European-wide corporations lack institutions strong enough to defend their interests. This has encouraged confused nationalist and protectionist responses in Europe to the US trade offensive.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) sounded the opening guns of a US offensive against European

and Japanese protectionism. Clinton's Democratic Party government has also overseen a massive offensive against working people in the US.

Labour costs in the US are 30 per cent lower than most of their competitors. Productivity is 17 per cent higher than Japan and 21 per cent higher than Germany. Four million jobs have been cut in the US since 1980.

America's defensive billionaire families have now opened a world trade offensive. NAFTA aids the deepening penetration of Mexico by US and Canadian capital, giving the US more leverage in attempts to force open markets abroad.

At November's conference of Pacific Rim countries, NAFTA was used to advance the US's now-successful campaign to open markets for rice in Japan and Korea.

NAFTA also puts up barriers to competition with Mexico from EU countries and Japan.

The US especially aimed to

There is no suggestion of free trade with Cuba

increase agricultural exports and sales of TV and films through the GATT deal. The GATT negotiations had been running since 1990. European politicians especially emphasised the threat from US culture. Hollywood earns \$4 billion each year from European sales and the head of the US news network CNN said it intended to 'conquer' Europe.

Civilisation

The response to the US campaign was startling. Belgian premier Willy Claes argued the threatened opening up of Europe to US TV and films meant 'the defence of our civilisation is at stake'.

In France, the Socialist Party's Jack Lang, former minister of culture, said 'It's war, and in a war our nation must stand together'.

The ultra-right Front National organised attacks on the US-owned McDonalds restaurant chain. Spanish Culture Minister Carmen Alborch has forced cinemas to screen one day of European films for every two or three days of US-made

pictures, prompting a 'strike' by owners of Spain's 1,800 cinemas.

TV and movies were excluded from the GATT deal agreed last month, prompting French Prime Minister Eduard Balladur to say the 'the cultural identity of Europe is protected'.

In exchange however the French government agreed to cut its agricultural production by 21 per cent over the next six years. This is a major gain for US agribusiness, which will remain protected at home by 'anti-dumping' laws.

Cuba

The effects of the GATT deal - like this cut in agricultural production - show that the real aim of the US offensive is not free trade but *managed* trade. There is no suggestion of free trade with Cuba, 35 years after that country took the road to socialism.

NAFTA has the words 'Free Trade' in its name, but it includes tariffs on wheat and peanut butter from Canada and on orange juice from Mexico. US trade barriers are being lowered only over 15 years.

Added to the existing depression, the GATT deal and coming protectionist trade war is bad news for the developing countries. Already the recession means that demand for primary materials is very low. That cuts export earnings and increases the poverty built up by the massive third world debts.

Trade blocs will also create difficulties for the working class in the imperialist countries. Blocs carve up those who work in the cities and on the land internationally, making easier for the ruling rich to weaken international solidarity. Protectionism often encourages restrictions of immigration and travel.

None of the capitalist carve-ups of world trade are in the interests of working people and their allies.

Our task is to build the international collaboration of the oppressed: for the cancellation of the third world debt, for a cut in the working week without pay cuts to provide employment for all, to make the ruling rich pay for their crisis.

Russia

Unemployment too low, wages too high - IMF

UNDER the pressure of the drive to restore capitalism, Russia has lost its all-embracing system of creches, kindergartens and after-school supervision.

Many creches have been closed down. Others have been privatised so that only the rich can afford them.

Having to look after children is part of the explanation of why unemployment is higher among women. Women are 51 per cent of the workforce, but 75 per cent of the unemployed.

Women's Jobs

But as the labour force is cut back, women are put out of work first. Why should women be employed when men are unemployed, asked Russian employment minister G. Millkyan three months ago.

The IMF is demanding much higher levels of unemployment to push through its market reforms. The Fund says: 'In other East European countries unemployment has reached 12-14 per cent [whereas in Russia it is about 3.9 per cent -Ed].



Working collectives are still too stable, and although the standard of living has fallen sharply, it has not fallen as sharply as the fall in production, and is therefore still too high....'

The brutal logic of restoring capitalism could not be explained better. Under the old bureaucratic system, despite its inequalities, there were real gains for the working class in terms of social and health services, security of employment and the price of basic necessities like rent and food.

Now all that is going. The 'stability of the work collective' which the IMF refers to is the resilience of the nationalised industries. A key target of the pro-market reforms is to bankrupt them and 'shake out' their labour force.

Nicaraguan health service fights for life

KILLER diseases such as polio and German measles are returning to Nicaragua, because of cuts being imposed by the government and the IMF. These diseases were eliminated by the health campaigns of the former Sandinista (FSLN) government.

But the IMF is demanding cuts to 'revive' the economy and the Chamorro UNO government is hell bent on privatising the health service.

Gains undone

Vaccines are in short supply, and the transport to get them where they are needed does not exist. The health gains of the revolution are being undone.

Infant mortality has risen from 6.1 per cent to 7.6 per cent. The health service has been cut back to an expenditure of £10 per person per year.

Wages do not even cover

the food needs of most ordinary families and unemployment is an incredible 60 per cent.

Health centres are closing down. Many people do not go to the doctor any longer because they know they will not be able to afford the drugs.

As health workers' jobs are cut back, those who remain suffer an intolerable strain. Eighty per cent of health workers are women.

They work 12 hours a day. In a Catholic country they have on average between 3-5 children; and the creches are also closing, putting them under further strain.

It is virtually impossible to take holidays because of the pressure of work. Losing a day's pay and leaving 50 patients untended is not an option.

The Health Minister not wants to totally privatise health care, putting it out of the reach of ordinary Nicaraguans.

ANC's
Mandela: his
deal will leave
capitalism
intact, the
struggle
unfinished

South Africa: 'struggle must continue'

By Charlie van Gelderen

On 6 December, for the first time in South Africa's 400-year history, blacks and whites sat down together in the parliament buildings in Cape Town.

It has been hailed as the beginning of a new era, of 'power-sharing' and, once again, the end of apartheid. What is the reality behind this rhetoric?

The historic meeting - and it would be stupid to deny its importance - is the culmination of two years of negotiations between the ruling National Party and the representatives of some 20 organisations.

Unelected

None of these delegates were elected and some are quite unrepresentative of the constituencies which they claim to represent.

It could hardly be called a democratic process.

The provisional constitution

agreed sets up a Transitional Executive Council which will work with the present government, which remains in power until the elections in April.

In the process the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) have made many concessions.

It has been agreed that certain pre-determined constitutional principles cannot be overturned by the Constitutional Assembly which will be elected by universal franchise in April of next year.

To take one example, property rights cannot be questioned. The nationalisation demands of the ANC's long-time central manifesto, the Freedom Charter, have been thrown overboard.

South Africa may be non-racist, but it will remain capitalist.

The De Klerk government has also won important concessions from the ANC in the form of the only racial provision to remain in the new constitution.

In a bilateral deal with the ANC, it was tentatively agreed that whites should be given a guaranteed 30 percent of seats

on municipal councils and a budgetary blocking mechanism.

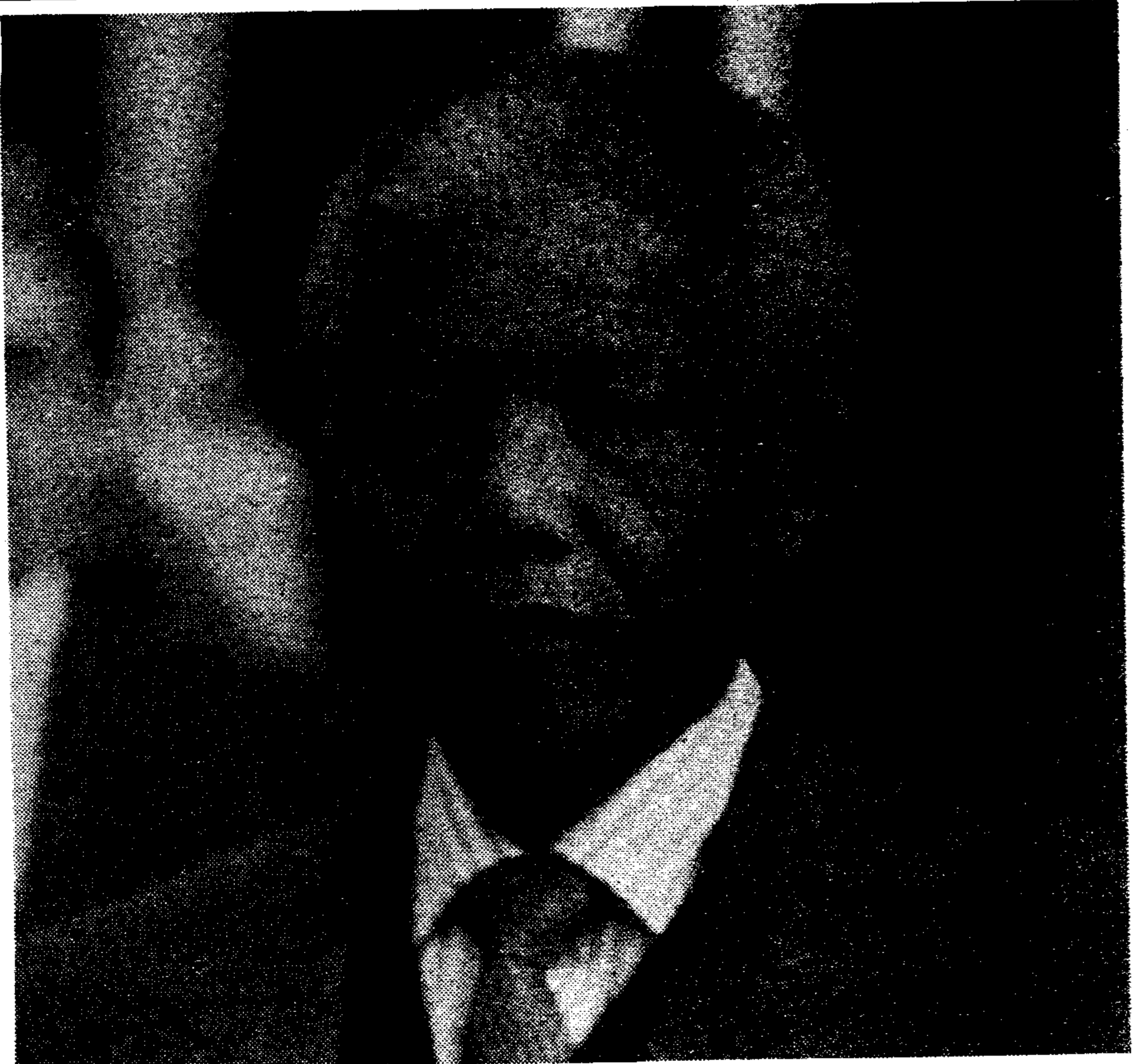
This was to placate right-wing white extremists who had made a stand on this issue, threatening not to allow town councils to be taken over by blacks.

Council executive committees, responsible for the day-to-day running of municipalities, will have to take decisions by a two-thirds majority, effectively handing the power of veto over to the one-third white representation.

Separate state

Of course even these major concessions are not going to satisfy the extreme right-wing white groups, such as the Conservative Party and the AWB, who are demanding a 'Volkstaat', a separate white state, where blacks would be voteless.

But there is not a single area of South Africa where the races are not inter-mingled. This will not stop the extremists trying to



impose a 'Yugoslav' solution - their own ethnic cleansing.

And there are thousands of armed and embittered whites who are prepared to fight. Much will depend on the disposition of the armed forces, still predominantly in white control.

It is of course farcical to talk of a peaceful transition to a democratic, non-racial South Africa. Since De Klerk announced his plan to dismantle apartheid in 1990, more than 10,000 people have died in political violence. This is going to get worse.

It would be fatal to underestimate the threat from the white extremists, and from Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party.

The only force which can

save South Africa from the impending chaos is the working class. But they will have to break with the present ANC-SACP leadership. This is why the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) is supporting the call for a Workers Party.

In the words of leading WOSA spokesperson Neville Alexander: 'We socialists are saying that the struggle must continue. We have to find new ways of promoting the struggle against exploitation and oppression.'

'You are going to have racism so long as you have capitalism. You have got to get rid of the capitalist system...'

Viva Zapata!

Why the Chiapas peasants rebelled

The hundreds of tourists in San Cristobal got more than they bargained when the guerrillas of the Zapatist Revolutionary Army (EZLN) hit the streets. Only the shop selling film and camcorder cassettes stayed open, doing a roaring trade.

Incredibly the peasant army had been training for 10 years without the Mexican government knowing.

As the government of Carlos Salinas moved to crush the insurgency with tanks and planes, explanations concentrated on the endemic poverty of the region, and the ruthless exploitation of the peasants by local landlord bosses.

Landless

Poverty and crude exploitation certainly is endemic in Chiapas. Landless peasants are forced to work for a pittance for long hours, and then compelled to spend a large part of their earnings of the landlords'

shops.

But the timing of the revolt is connected to the imposition of the North American Free Trade Alliance (NAFTA). The deal is catastrophic for Mexico's peasants.

Free trade means free movement of goods and capital. But the US has the biggest agri-business in the world and will flood Mexico with cheap maize, threatening the livelihoods of 1.6 million people.

But more than that, the basic need of all peasant producers - access to the land - is being threatened.

New law

Salinas' government has enacted a new law ending state ownership of land enacted under the Cardenas presidency during the 1930s. The land will be 'given to the peasants' - an apparently generous move.

But the small plots owned by peasants will not be able to survive economically. Eventually the peasants will be forced to

sell, probably to US-owned, agri-business. That's what the free market and free trade are all about.

Social ownership of the land is the basis of the numerous peasant co-operatives. The co-operatives will die. Agri-business will move in with hi-tech farming. And landless peasants will move to the city slums for a marginal existence as peddlers or rubbish-dump dwellers.

The revolt of the peasants is overlaid with the oppression of the indigenous Indian populations in Central America; many of the Chiapas peasants are of Indian origin.

In taking up arms the people of Chiapas have imitated the Indian-based revolutionary guerrilla movement in Guatemala, just a few miles away over the border. And of course they have been inspired by the guerrilla movements in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The government in Mexico is that of the PRI - the Institutional Revolutionary Party. It was the party of the 1910-1920 Mexican



First time around: Zapata with soldiers

peasant revolution, of which Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa were key leaders.

But the revolutionary wing of the government was defeated, leaving behind a bourgeois nationalist government.

The Cardenas PRI government in the 1930s was a radical form of nationalism which nationalised key industries, including oil, and nationalised the land.

Debased

But the present government is a degenerate and debased

form of this nationalism. By a system of patronage and gangsterism, topped off with a considerable amount of electoral fraud, they have stayed in power uninterruptedly, dominating even the labour unions.

The EZLN uprising had no chance of success and its crushing has been brutal. In next year's election the main challenge to the PRI incumbents will be the radical populists of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) led by Cardenas, son of the 1930s president. The whole of the Mexican left will back his campaign.

Kurdish hunger strikers protest repression

On December 13, 90 Kurdish refugees in North London joined a European wide hunger strike to protest against Turkish state atrocities including massive depopulation of villages, the detention and torture of thousands of Kurds and torture and murder of journalists from Özgür Gündem, the pro-Kurdish daily newspaper. SOCIALIST OUTLOOK spoke to a young Kurdish woman student from the Kurdish Workers Association and colleagues who are on hunger strike.

SO: Why are you on hunger strike?

Bahar: The first reason is the raid on the Özgür Gündem office on 10 December. It was United Nations International Human Rights Day. I think its very important because of the day – its human rights day and you can see how the Turkish state doesn't allow democratic rights and doesn't even tolerate a newspaper which is the only voice of the Kurdish people and is the only oppositional paper which is against the Turkish State.

SO: What has happened to the staff of Özgür Gündem?

Adar: We hear that about 30 people are under torture – they have not been heard of and there is no explanation by the government authorities. The Director of accountancy of the paper has been released and he said the others are under torture.

SO: What else is the protest about?

Bahar: The strike is also against the genocide of the Kurdish people. We are protesting at what the Turkish state is doing in the villages and also against the banning of Kurdish



Women fighters from the PKK

organisations in France and Germany.

SO: Why have France and Germany banned Kurdish organisations?

Firzat: Because Germany is one of the most important allies of Turkey – they don't agree with the self-determination of the Kurdish people. They are working with the Turkish state against the freedom struggle of the Kurds.

Bahar: Also they have an historical relationship: Germany has one of the best relationships with Turkey. It is not in their interests for the Kurds to secede, and by banning the Kurdish organisations they will stop the support of the Kurdish people for the PKK – or so they think.

Bahar: Can I say something

else about the war? An example – 400 people were killed in Batman during the last two years and they don't have enough room in the cemetery anymore. Those people are civilians – unarmed people – killed by death squads. During the house raids and air attacks a large number of youth are taken into custody every day and tortured. Many of them disappear – there are hundreds of disappearances.

SO: How do you see a way forward?

Bahar: I think the only solution is a political solution and it depends not just on the Turkish state but also on the European states – this is one of the demands of the hunger strike.

SO: How do you think it will come about?

Bahar: By pressure from the Kurdish people and the European workers movement on the European governments.

The hunger strike finished on December 23. It was followed by a protest march from Bonn to Brussels which arrived in early January. There is still no more news about the Editor of Özgür Gündem except that she has not been released or charged and that she has allegedly been tortured.

For further information contact: Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, 44 Ainger Road, London, NW3 3AT. Tel: 071-586 5892

Public meeting to Defend Özgür Gündem Feb 12 see What's Happening for details.

Sudan: roots of poverty and famine

by Bala Kumar

Neither the simmering diplomatic row between Britain and Sudan nor the simplistic analysis in the mainstream media should obscure the complex crisis in Africa's largest country.

Portrayal of the conflict as being 'North against South' and 'Islam against Christianity and Animism' is only part of a larger story.

For 28 years there has been a bitter war between the central government and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA).

Forcible

The largely Arab and muslim North has seen the African and non-muslim heritage of the peoples of the South as inferior for a long time. From the 1970s onwards there has been the forcible introduction of the *shariat* code and the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in the South.

However Mohamed Suliman has convincingly argued in *Africa World Review* (November 1993 - April 1994) that wars are now less a product of ethnic/religious tensions and more the outcome of resource conflicts triggered by environmental degradation.

This has caused great population movements leading to conflict in the Nuba mountains of central Sudan and Darfur in the West. The people affected are themselves muslim but this hasn't spared them from state sponsored atrocities.

ties.

Suliman observes, 'Abandoned by both nature and the market, people begin to suffer from famine, poverty and total neglect. When life becomes almost meaningless the society is then ripe for dislocation, turbulence and ultimately war.'

Islamisation policies were introduced by the military dictator, Ja'afar Nimery, in a bid to court the Gulf states.

After a brief period of multi-party government in the mid 1980s it was the coup led by General Omar Hassan al-Bashir in June 1989 that ushered in the severest phase of the Arabisation and Islamisation of Sudan.

Opposition parties, independent trade unions, secular womens' organisations and even professional associations are banned. A few Islamist opposition parties enjoy a semi-legal existence but their members are often harassed, tortured or worse.

Internal opposition is mute. The Sudanese Communist Party has been illegal for much of its existence. However its members are prominent activists in the National Democratic Alliance which groups the secular and progressive opposition. The NDA operates in exile because of state repression and is perceived as being weak and ineffective.

The government's economic pro-

gramme is a shambles. Inflation is running at 200 per cent and the devaluations of the Sudanese pound have made foreign goods luxury items.

In spite of its Islamic credentials, the Khartoum regime has been following a neo-liberal economic course including privatisation of the public sector, liberalisation of prices and exchange rates and the liberalisation of foreign trade.

One oppositionist quoted in *The Guardian* points out that none of these market reforms have won the confidence of the business community whom he estimates have stashed £47 billion in foreign banks.

In a remarkable admission, the Sudanese Minister of Finance was told by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that Sudan had the right policies but 'had to solve their political problems with the Americans'.

Western governments have blocked access to the missing ingredient from the self-imposed austerity programme – an inflow of foreign capital especially IMF and World Bank loans.

The 'political problems' are not the violation of human rights or the lack of democratic freedoms or the brutality of the war in the South.

It is Sudan's emerging role as a centre for Islamic fundamentalism that worries the West. Iran is a major source of finan-

cial and ideological support. The Sudan is a 'safe haven' for muslim militants from Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia seeing itself as 'an Islamic model' and a centre for the export of the Islamic revolution.

A split in the SPLA in August 1991 has weakened resistance to the military regime with fierce clashes between rival factions towards the end of 1993 rather than unity against their common oppressor.

The 'Torii' faction, led by long-time leader, John Garang, has supported devolution and autonomy for the Southern Sudanese but association with the North.

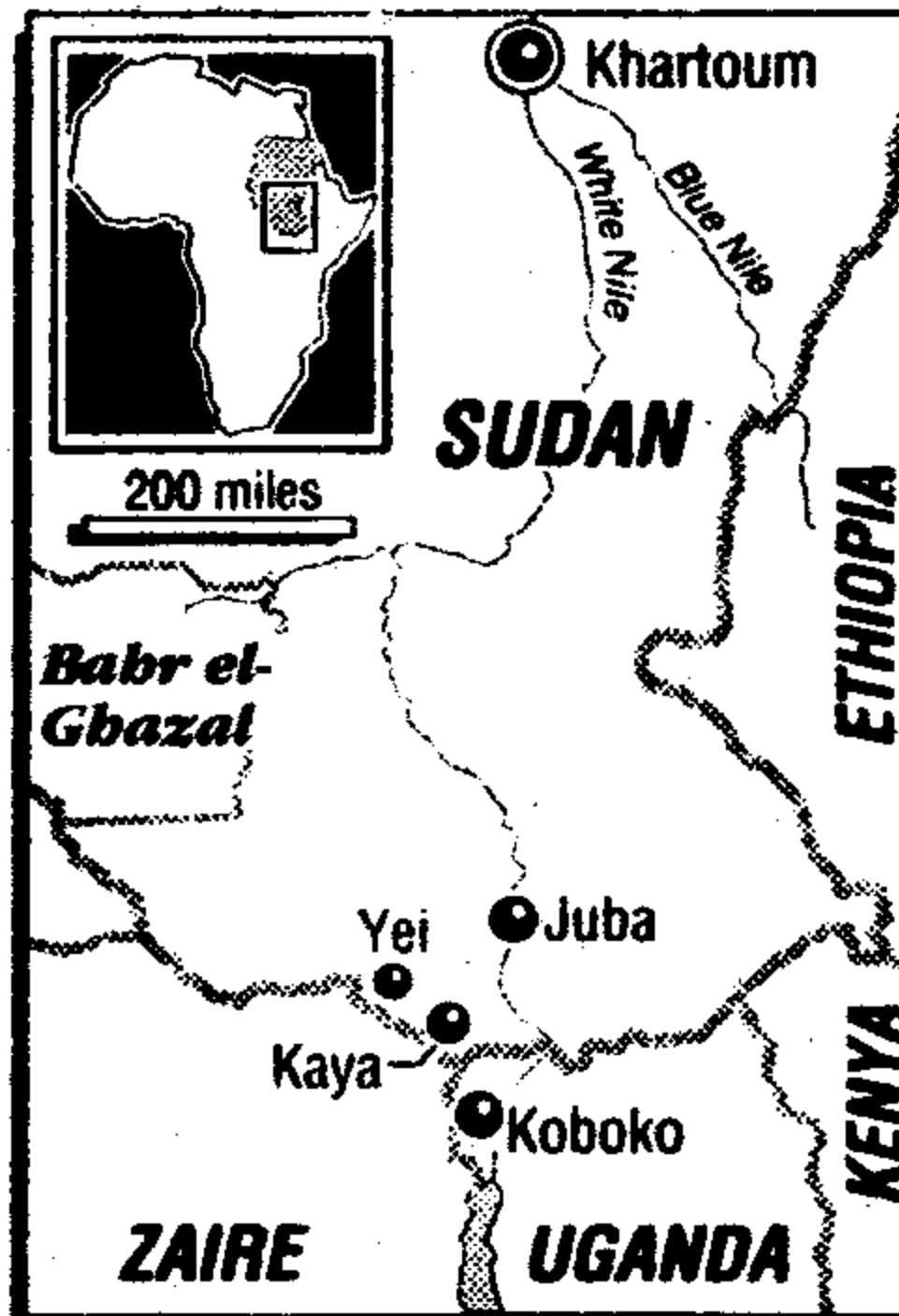
Alliance

Under his leadership, the SPLA was a member of the National Democratic Alliance and saw the struggle for self-determination as part of the wider struggle for secularisation and democratisation of Sudan as a whole.

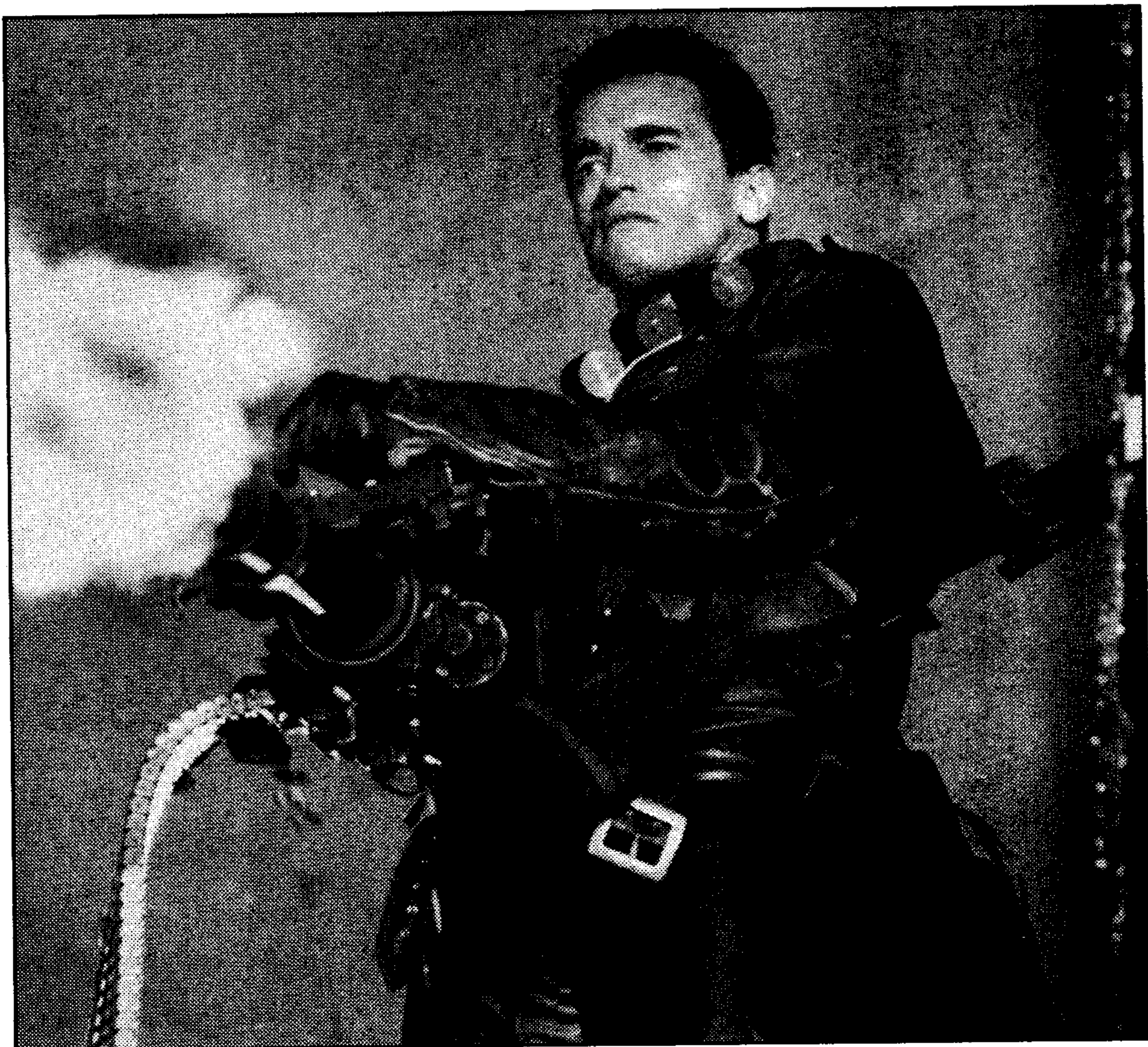
The 'Nasir' faction denounces all talk of federalism with the North. 'No ruling class, group or caste in history has ever surrendered its power or privileges out of human sympathy', they reason and their favoured model is full independence.

Attempts to heal the rift between the two factions have been fruitless. Yet the dominant feeling among the Southern Sudanese is the need for unity within the liberation army.

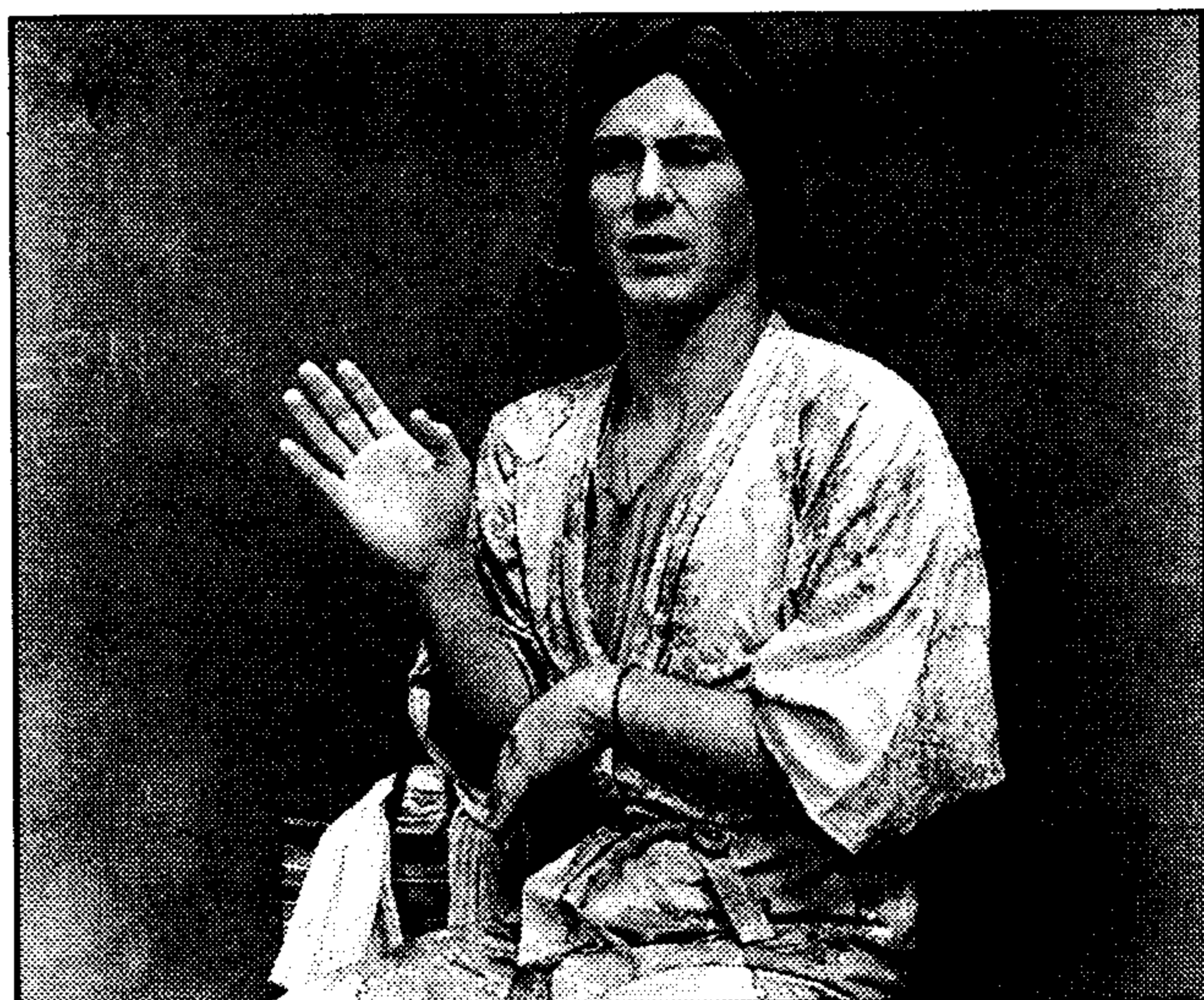
This experience proves once more the importance of internal democracy within liberation movements and the need for accountability to the people they claim to represent.



Hasta la vista, Tinsel Town!



FUELLED by the growth of multiplexes, British cinema attendances were up to 115 million last year. The years when TV and VCRs knocked the bottom out of the film industry are gone, in Britain and the USA. But what exactly are people watching? PAUL CLARKE takes a look.



Palace Pictures, distributors of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, now swallowed up in the latest takeovers

Some recent British films, for example Mike Leigh's *Naked* and Ken Loach's *Raining Stones*, have enjoyed enormous success in France, a country which takes its cinema rather seriously.

But people in that country are amazed when they hear that although these films will do well in Britain, but have no chance of a widespread showing.

Such films will not get a general release because of the stranglehold of a few key distributors and the criteria they have established for what makes a 'commercial' film.

The predominantly young film-going audience responds to films which conform to the 'formulas' which Hollywood and the distribution networks in its thrall have established.

Hollywood today is a shining example of cultural decay imposed by the 'free' market. Key aspects of that market are the corrupt 'star' system and the huge outlay needed to make a Hollywood movie, and hence the huge audiences needed to roll in substantial profits.

Juggernaut

The quest for profits creates a juggernaut which crushes creativity and anything controversial or challenging in its path.

The Hollywood/distributors stranglehold is neatly demonstrated by the fate

of the independent British film company Palace Pictures. After a series of commercially unsuccessful films Palace set out to make the enormously successful *Crying Game*.

Because of financial difficulties, to complete the film Palace sold the royalties to the US distributors in advance. The net result was that when the film was a smash hit in the US, the distributors scooped \$50m in profits, and Palace Pictures went bust.

Subversive

According to Dan Quayle and the US new right, Hollywood is the centre of dangerous and subversive liberalism (and this accusation is often overlaid with implicit anti-semitism). But with notable exceptions this doesn't work its way into the movies.

The stock-in-trade is a sign of the times: escapism, militarism, disasters, fantasy, horror, sexism, unbridled and infantile sentimentality. Oh yes, and a world in which everyone is a thirtysomething yuppie (generally a lawyer) who lives in one of those huge apartments in a former warehouse (*Fatal Attraction*, *Ghosts*, *Wall Street*).

Well what's wrong with fantasy and escapism? What's wrong with horror movies? Of course there's nothing wrong with *Jurassic Park*. But there's something morbid about a film industry which provides merely a means of escape.

The star system has reached obscene proportions. Bruce Willis was paid \$18 million for *Die Hard 3*. \$5m plus is common nowadays for big stars.

The huge cost of stars and hi-tech mega-special effects movies creates a vicious circle. To be a big hit, a movie is expected to gross \$12m on its first release week-end.

But to guarantee that you have to have a sure-fire big name star:

Kevin Costner, Michael Douglas, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Clint Eastwood, Tom Cruise

or maybe Stallone (yes, all men). And you have to have a lowest common denominator story.

The 'big bucks movie' and star syndrome creates a spiral of a tiny mega-rich elite inside the system, with thousands of aspirant actors, writers, directors outside it or trying to get in.

In every field - acting, directing, producing - the movie industry is one of the most male-dominated. And women are paid less at every level.

So can the Hollywood stranglehold be broken? Small independent film and video distributors are prey to takeovers by the big fish - Palace started out distributing videos, and then sold out to Virgin.

Challenging Hollywood, or at least creating independent centres of film production, has to tackle the central issue of financing.

Channel 4

In Britain some support comes from Channel 4 and the BBC for independent films. But the issue of state subsidies is the key one for maintaining film production almost anywhere outside the US.

To do that means breaking with 'free market' logic. America's final showdown with France in the last stages of the GATT negotiations hinged in part on France's box-office subsidies for French-made films - which is the sole reason why France retains a vibrant

and creative film industry.

The global media market - the giant communications corporations like Warner and Sony which control film studios, the popular music business, TV, Cable, video, satellite, newspapers and magazines - want to smash any state subsidies which challenge their monopolies.

This monopoly borders on a semi-totalitarian control of all kinds of recorded information and popular artistic production. It is moreover a monopoly which produces a stifling homogenisation of cultural production internationally, with everyone from Buenos Aires to Bangkok watching *Robocop* at the same time.

Which is why the left should have no qualms at all about supporting the demand for substantial subsidies to the British film industry.

Of course the same Hollywood which produces *Top Gun*, *Wayne's World* and *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* produced *Thelma and Louise* and the succession of radical Oliver Stone movies like *Salvador* and *Born on the Fourth of July*.

Abject

It even produced Warren Beatty's *Reds*, a great movie notwithstanding Beatty's abject apologies at the Oscars and the grotesque caricature of poor Zinoviev.

Hollywood liberalism is not dead, but it is *liberalism*. Hollywood has a way of taming its radicals and subversives in the end, and their productions are a tiny minority.

While independent producers struggle on, there is no long-term solution other than the democratisation of the means of information and artistic production.

Access always poses the question of control, and in our society that means ownership. Cultural diversity will continue to be crushed so long as artistic production is first and foremost a *business*.

Hollywood makes films, but its most powerful figures are accountants, and they have the final say.

Which is why there is another mediocre thriller, starring Clint Eastwood and Kevin Costner at a cinema near you (wherever you are in the world) soon.

COMMENT

Fingers In the TILL

A regular look at the world of business, compiled by Insider Dealer.

Sugar boss left to lump it

STEPHEN Brown, managing director of Tate & Lyle, joined the ever swelling ranks of Britain's jobless and homeless last March, when he got the boot for 'failing to resolve differences over management style'.

The poor man lived in what must have been Britain's swishest tied cottage, a luxury house in Kensington.

Brown paid just 30 per cent of the mortgage, while Tate & Lyle picked up the rest of the tab. When he lost his job, the company turfed him out.

But when you work for a sugar company, there will inevitably be a sweetener. It was revealed last month that Tate & Lyle gave Brown a golden handshake (or should that be a golden syrup?) of £1.1 million.

He also picked up a £285,000 from the sale of the house. Shares rose 2p to 397p as the story broke.

Lucky Jack Hoerner pulls out a plum

ALL YOU public sector types struggling to make ends meet on nugatory 1.5 per cent pay rises will be pleased to hear that not everyone is finding things as tough as you suckers must be.

The recently published annual report of fashion retail giants Burton revealed that chief executive John Hoerner got a 60 per cent salary hike in the year to August, taking



his pay to £624,000.

As well as Burton itself, the group also owns Debenhams, Top Shop, Top Man, Dorothy Perkins and Principles outlets in 450 towns across Britain.

Most of the employees take all year to earn the £12,000 Hoerner picks up every week. But as all my kit is either Armani or Boss, why the hell should I care?

Miners son is still the pits

GRAHAM Kirkham is the only son of a Yorkshire miner who failed his O-levels, was turned down by the RAF, and ended up as a sofa salesman. So why give him a mention in FITT?

Well, it turns out that flogging furniture through his Doncaster-based Northern Upholstery Group has earned him £300 million.

That is more than the combined family fortunes of the Fortes (or Trust House Forte fame) and the Weinstocks (father and son on the main board of GEC), and three times as much as Charles Saatchi. I must be in the wrong game.

Mind you, this man is reportedly the Mussolini of the whacky world of three-piece suits. One of his lieutenants commented:

'Genuinely ambitious people are rare. Some end up as dictators, some go into business. He is the most com-

plete example of the latter type I have ever met.'

What has the great man got to say for himself? 'I'm not happy to be a multi-millionaire. I hear this talk of billionaires.'

High cost of Levittation

REGULAR Fingers devotees will recall my last column on the trial of Roger Levitt, who originally faced 21 charges of obtaining property and services by deception, forgery, false accounting and making misleading statements.

A deft plea bargain later, the Serious Fraud Office dropped 20 charges, while Rog pleaded guilty to the one that remained and was sentenced to 180 hours of community service.

Sir Nicholas Lyell, the attorney general, admitted in a Commons written reply that the case cost the SFO – and thus the taxpayer – £1.4 million. But then, it is impossible to put a price on justice.

Loan ranger rustled up £100m

EVERYONE who's ever had a shirty letter from their bank manager after going a few bob over their overdraft limit will be interested to hear of the case of Wallace Duncan Smith, who stands accused of swindling £100 million from a string of banks.

Smith's own merchant bank, the Wallace Smith Trust Company, ran into financial difficulty in 1990, Timothy Barnes QC, prosecuting for SFO, told the Old Bailey. Smith then illegally used and re-used certificates of deposit to obtain loans from a number of different banks.

Much of the dosh was routed to two Smith-controlled shell companies in Canada, which claimed to have substantial interests in oil, gas and land with development potential, and a wide-ranging share portfolio.

In fact, they had no assets whatsoever and did not even employ any staff.

Nevertheless, Wallace Smith Trust Company charged substantial fees to these companies for 'investment advice', said Barnes. The Bank of England was completely taken in.

Smith denies two charges of obtaining \$37 million by deception, three charges of theft of certificates of deposit worth £4 million, two charges of false accounting and one charge of fraudulent trading with intent to defraud creditors.

Fingers makes no presumption as to the outcome of the trial, naturally. That only the jury can decide. But should Smith be found guilty, he can presumably expect even more community service than Levitt.

WHERE WE STAND

Facing mass unemployment, rampant employers equipped with savage anti-union laws, and a war on hard-won education, health and welfare services, the working class in Britain faces a real crisis – an avoidable crisis created by the historic failure of its official leadership.

Socialist Outlook exists to fight for a new type of working class leadership, based on the politics of class struggle and revolutionary socialism, to tackle this crisis.

The capitalist class, driven and politically united by its own crisis, its requirement to maximise profits at the expense of the workers, has been given determined, vanguard leadership by a brutal class-war Tory high command.

The Tory strategy has been to shackle the unions with legislation, and to fragment and weaken the resistance of the working class and oppressed, allowing them to pick off isolated sections one at a time, using the full powers of the state.

In response, most TUC and Labour leaders have embraced the defeatist politics of 'new realism', effectively proclaiming total surrender on every front, while ditching any pretence that they offer a socialist alternative. Every retreat and concession they have made to the employers and the government has simply fuelled and encouraged the offensive against jobs, wages, conditions and union rights.

New realism is the latest form taken by the politics of *reformism*, seeking no more than improved conditions within the framework of capitalist rule.

Socialist Outlook rejects reformism, not because we are against fighting for reforms, but because we know that the needs of the working class – for full employment, decent living standards, a clean environment, peace and democracy – can never be achieved under capitalism.

Nor, as we argued long before the collapse of Stalinism, could these demands ever be achieved under the bureaucratically deformed workers states and degenerated USSR, whose regimes survived only by repressing their own working class.

We are a *marxist* current, based not on the brutish totalitarian parodies of state marxism, nor on the tame, toothless version of 'marxism' beloved by armchair academics, but the *revolutionary* tradition of Marx,

Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Our socialist alternative is not based on parliamentary elections or illusions of peaceful legislative change. We fight to mobilise and unleash the power of the working class – the overwhelming majority of society – to topple the corrupt and reactionary rule of capital and establish its own class rule.

We struggle against fragmentation by building solidarity, working to link and unite the various struggles of workers, the unemployed, of women, of pensioners, of the black communities and ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gay men, of students, of youth – and of those fighting imperialism in Ireland and throughout the world. *Socialist Outlook* is above all an *internationalist* current, in solidarity with the Trotskyist Fourth International, which organises co-thinkers in 40 countries world-wide.

Unlike some other groupings on the British left, we do not believe a mass revolutionary party can be built simply by proclaiming ourselves to be one. Too often this degenerates into sectarian posturing and abstention from the actual struggle taking shape within the labour movement, playing into the hands of the right wing.

Nor do we believe that the demands of women, black people, lesbians and gays or the national demands of people in Scotland and Wales should be left to await the outcome of a socialist revolution. The oppressed must organise themselves and fight now around their own demands, which are a part of the struggle for socialism.

But propaganda alone, however good, will not bring socialism. The fight for policies which can mobilise and politically educate workers in struggle, must be taken into the unions, the Labour Party and every campaign and struggle in which workers and the oppressed fight for their rights.

To strengthen this fight we press for *united front* campaigns on key issues such as fighting racism and fascism – in which various left currents can work together for common objectives while remaining free to debate their differences.

If you agree with what you see in *Socialist Outlook*, and want to join with us in the struggle for socialism, readers' groups meet in towns across the country. Contact us now, get organised, and get active!

HOME NEWS

KEEP AN EYE OUT: for the biggest prize this side of the Rio Grande!

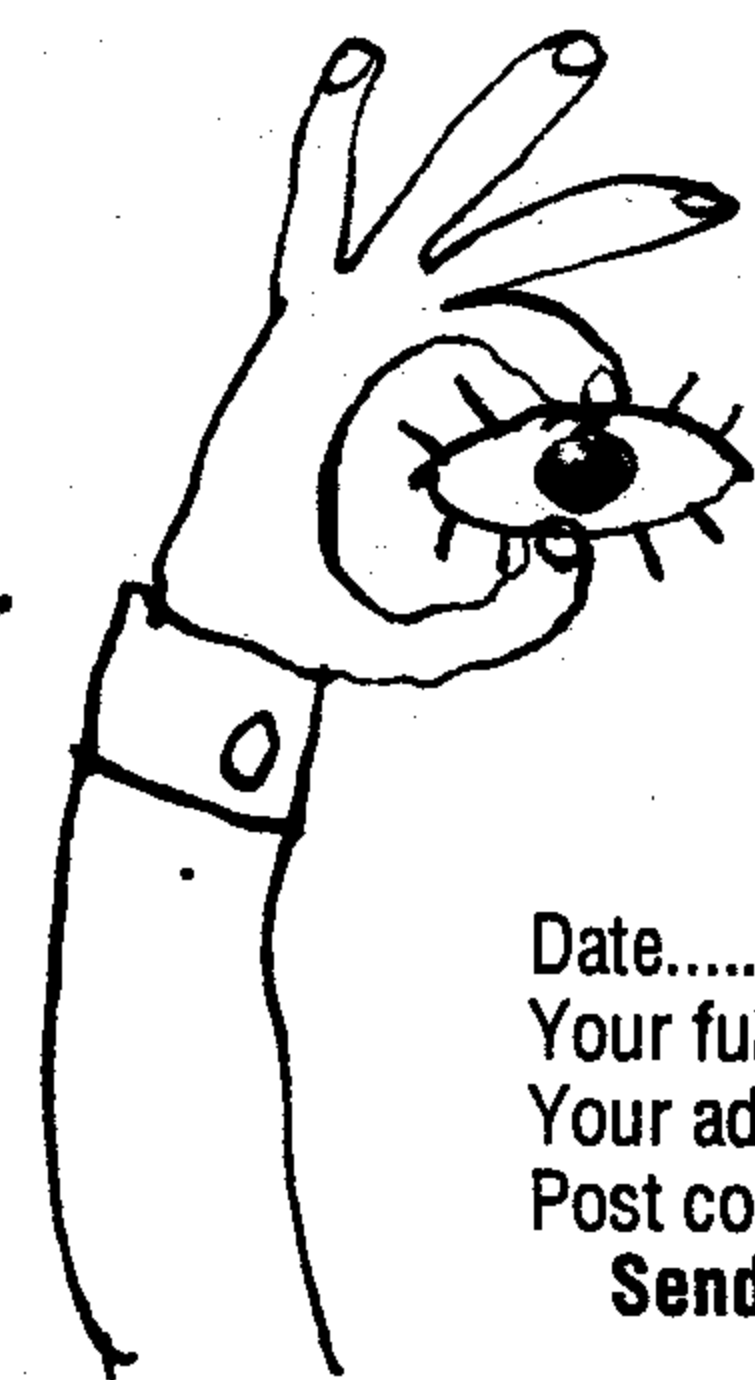
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What's HAPPENING

WANT YOUR event included?
Send details by January 21 to What's Happening?, P.O. Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

JANUARY

Thursday 13

DEFEND the Bloody Sunday march! 6.30pm Red Rose Club 129 Seven Sisters Rd N7 Finsbury Park tube

Saturday 15

Lobby of NATFHE FE Sector Conference called by Welsh region

Tomorrow's Africa conference London School of Economics details Oxfam 58 St. John's Hill SW11 Tel: 071 585 0220

Tuesday 18

Demonstrate to defend jobs! 5pm Bath College main entrance

Monday 24

International Workers Aid

public meeting 7.45pm Ealing Town Hall London W5

Tuesday 25

International Workers Aid public meeting 7.30pm Unicorn Pub, Church Street Manchester City Centre

Wednesday 26

Ireland: can the talks bring peace? Socialist Outlook forum 7.45 Queens Head pub 66 Acton St WC1 Kings Cross BR

International Workers Aid public meeting 7.30pm Leigh Unemployed Youth Co-op Twist Lane, by bus station

Thursday 27

International Workers Aid public meeting Leeds

Friday 28

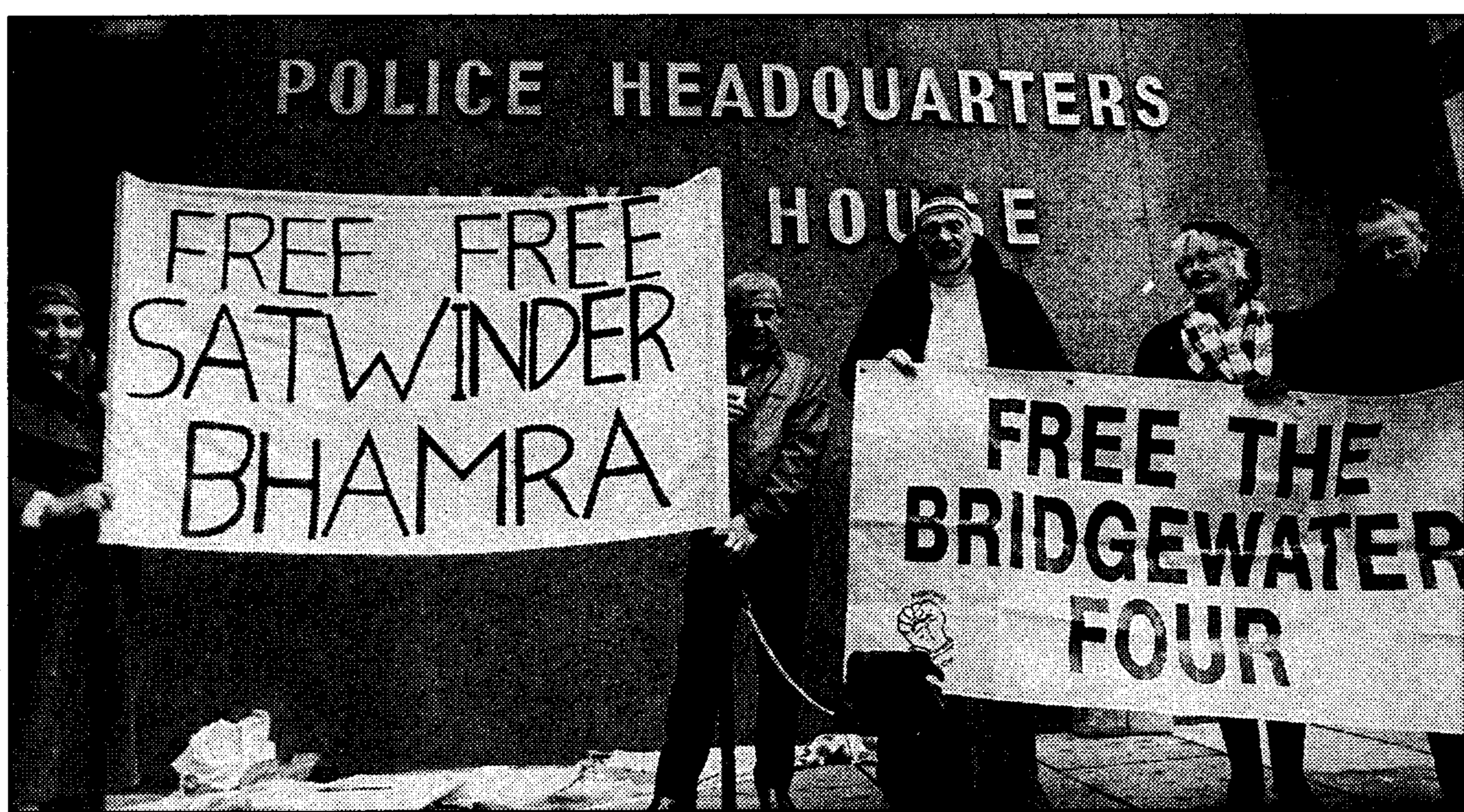
OPEN TUZLA AIRPORT! picket the Foreign Office 6.00pm Whitehall SW1

International Workers Aid public meeting Leicester

Saturday 29

International Workers Aid public meeting 2.30-4.30pm Smethwick Council House High Street Birmingham

BLOODY SUNDAY DEMO London



Christmas Day 1993. Vigil outside West Midlands Police HQ, in solidarity with frame-up victims

Sunday 30

International Workers Aid public meeting Cardiff

Manufacturing Consent - Noam Chomsky and the Media London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £3.50/£2.00

Monday 31

International Workers Aid public meeting 7.30pm Friends Meeting House Page St Swansea

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 1

INTERNATIONAL Workers Aid public meeting 1.30pm Debating Chamber Falmer House Sussex University INTERNATIONAL Workers Aid public meeting 7.45pm Brighthelm Centre North Road Birmingham

Tuesday 2

International Workers Aid public meeting Southampton

Sat 5 & Sun 6

Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee conference Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £10/£6/£3

Saturday 12

Friends of Özgür Gündem launch meeting with Harold Pinter and Jake Ecclestone (NUJ) 2-5pm School of Oriental and Oriental Studies Russell Square WC1 details 071 5886 5892

Monday 14

Anti-imperialist Strategy Today *Socialist Outlook* discussion Speaker: Sarah Parker 7.30pm Stationers' Park Community Centre Mayfield Road off Weston Park N8

Fri 18 & Sat 19

Re-thinking Worker Democracy Conference Centre Congress House Great Russell Street WC1 details CAITS 404 Camden Road London N7 0SJ

Wednesday 23

Europe between Recession and Revolt *Socialist Outlook* forum

7.45 Queens Head pub 66 Acton St WC1 Kings Cross BR

Saturday 26

Racism, Fascism & the Euro-elections Conference details Reading Labour Party, 81 Kings Rd, Reading Berks RG1 3DD Tel: 0734 573756

Liberation! committee meeting 11am Manchester

Sunday 27

Roger and Me: London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £3.50/£2.00

MARCH

Saturday 19

NATIONAL demonstration against racism in East London called by TUC General Council

Sunday 20

THE PATRIOT Game London Socialist Film Co-op showing 1.30pm for 2pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square WC1 tickets £3.50/£2.00

SATURDAY 22 JANUARY

Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. (Holborn tube), London 10am - 6pm

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HOME NEWS

Socialist OUTLOOK

Bosnia:

International Workers Aid
Speaking Tour: for dates
and details see centre
page pull-out poster

Heave-ho for Yeo starts Tory rout

Back to ... the drawing board!

The Tory 'Back to Basics' crusade lies in tatters as the Tim Yeo scandal reached its height with the revelation of his fathering another child outside marriage.

Following hot on Yeo's heels is the resignation of MP Alan Duncan as parliamentary private secretary to Health Minister, Brian Mawhinney, after revelations of dubious morality in a property deal involving two ex-Westminster Council houses.

The issues in themselves are not the point. The Tories have been caught out by a monster of their own creation. Bereft of any policy solutions to the crisis, their solution, to attack single mothers and bemoan the lack of basic 'moral' values has backfired.

'Back to Basics' follows two other discredited con tricks - the ill-fated Citizens Charter and consumer

choice - in the dustbin of history. All three were designed to provide a distraction from the inadequacy of Tory policies, the mess they have made of the economy, and the devastation they have wreaked on the welfare state.

But this fraud has been going on for years - the natural successor to Thatcher's 'Victorian Values', Major's 'Back to Basics' covers similar terrain. Whilst espousing the importance of individual moral values the state attempts to intervene more than ever into people's personal lives.

Crime

The Tory policies of the market are their true 'basics': they have brought us soaring unemployment and crime, while the Thatcherite cult of individualism, rejecting any concept of society and collectivity, have caused the problems Major now claims to be so keen

to put right.

This government announces 'Back to Basics' - but at the first whiff of scandal denies it has anything to do with morality; it proclaims the virtues of the family - then denies them in practice, with a Budget which slashes support for poor families.

Pamphlet

Then they spend £2 million sending round a 30-page pamphlet telling parents that they should create spare space and unpressured time to cosset their children!

Single mothers on income support don't need £2 million spent on John Patten's moral homilies on the virtue of giving kids breakfast: they need enough money to be able to give them breakfast.

The fiasco of Back to Basics underlines once more the painful truth: this Tory government has run out of luck as well as ideas: it is kept in office now largely through the ineptitude of a spineless opposition.



Oh Yeo of little faith! The man of the moment, who wishes he wasn't.

Build The Fightback - Unshackle The Unions Conference

Saturday -
Sunday 5 - 6
February 1994,
Conway Hall,
Red Lion
Square, London

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS include
John Hendy QC, Patrick Sik-
orski (RMT), Christine Hulme

(CPSA), Tony Benn MP, Ron-
nie McDonald (OILC) and
Jaide De Barrios (Teachers
Union and PT South Para,
Brazil).

THE SATURDAY sessions of the
conference will focus on par-
ticular areas of struggle includ-
ing defending the welfare state,
fighting unemployment, privati-
sation and the anti-union laws.

The Sunday sessions will open
with a discussion 'For Political
Trade Unionism' followed with

practical forums on trades coun-
cils, left formations in the unions
and TU/Labour Party links.

Saturday Evening rally and so-
cial at 7pm with speakers from
Cuba, Bosnia, Sinn Fein, Kurdish
solidarity and Jaide De Barrios
from Brazil.

Jaide is the President of the
teachers union in Maraba in South
Para, Amazonia.

She is a head teacher in a com-
munity school where she has been
elected by the school committee
formed from the teachers, stu-
dents, cleaners and parents. She

has had to fight to keep her position
and defend her school from mili-
tary police who used tear gas
against students demonstrating in
her favour.

A veteran of organising
women's struggles, bringing to-
gether women from urban and ru-
ral areas, She is also a long
standing environmental activist
and has been involved in land
occupations and fights against land-
lords. She is also on the regional
executive of the Brazilian Workers
Party, the PT.

